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RAISING PEOPLE'S DEFENSE FORCES FOR THE REVOLUTION

Our regular guerrilla forces are concentrating on military work; our guerrilla bases are steadily expanding, encompassing the equivalent of districts in advanced regions; and our enemy's campaign strategies ("heartland" and "gradual constriction"), to a certain extent, are wreaking damage on our Red areas and forces. These are some of the conditions which have given rise to the formation of people's defense forces at the district level.

*The following article is based on a study paper of the Eastern Visayas Regional Party Committee. **Ang Bayan** is reprinting it here with minor adjustments because of its significance and in response to readers' requests for study articles on base-building, army-building and agrarian revolution.*

Importance of People's Defense Forces

We are mobilizing People's Defense Forces (PDF) in connection with our overall efforts to create more and stable guerrilla bases necessary to advance our people's war to a higher stage.

Through the PDF, we can frustrate enemy initiatives to destroy our stable areas and sabotage the revolutionary program of the masses to enhance their economic well-being and consolidate their political power.

This way, our guerrilla bases can be expanded, consolidated and maintained. Abandoned areas are recovered. Local enemy forces are destroyed. The Party, New People's Army (NPA), mass organizations and organs of political power are strengthened. And the people in our guerrilla bases are defended.

Because of the PDF's mass character, we can mobilize and temper the people in military work, make them conscious of and rely on their own strength and actions to liberate themselves from their oppressed plight.

Types of PDF

One type of PDF is the local guerrilla unit (LGU). This is an NPA fighting unit which does full-time military work at the district level. It is the leading guerrilla unit in the locality which serves as a secondary force of the NPA regular guerrilla units in launching tactical offensives. It also serves as an NPA reserve force. It moves permanently around the territory of the district and assists in the defense and consolidation of guerrilla bases.

Another type is the armed propaganda unit (APU). This is another NPA fighting unit. It is administered by the district or section Party committee and principally engages in full-time political work in its territorial scope. It can assist in a big way in expansion and recovery of abandoned areas. It can also be mobilized to help the LGU and other guerrilla units in staging defensive and offensive military actions.

One more type of the PDF is the partisan unit. It is also an NPA fighting unit which is put up in white areas in order to launch guerrilla attacks at the enemy's rear. It conducts special operations such as punishing diehard people's enemies, attacking regular troops, sabotaging anti-people infrastructure and facilities and disarming enemy forces. It can also be of big help in the expansion and defense of guerrilla bases.

Another type is the militia unit. It is an NPA fighting unit too, organized at the barrio level. Its members provide military service for the revolution while staying on to earn a living. This unit is an effective partner of the LGU and other guerrilla units in the locality in defending the guerrilla bases against enemy attacks and preserving revolutionary gains. It can also assist in getting rid of bad elements and maintaining peace and order in guerrilla bases. Likewise, it renders service support to the main guerrilla units and is a source of recruits for the people's army.

Lastly, there is the self-defense unit (SDU). It is organized inside mass organizations in the barrios. Its principal task is to defend and secure these organizations against enemy sabotage and infiltration. In times of mass actions, it plays the role of marshalls and defenders of the organization.

Movement of PDF

When we speak of the defense of the guerrilla bases, we refer here to a system of defense which serves in the expansion, consolidation, maintenance of Red areas and recovery of abandoned areas, destruction of local enemy forces, strengthening of the Party, NPA, mass organizations and organs of political power of the people. To wield this defense system effectively, the Party

develops and advances revolutionary work in a sustained and comprehensive manner. And the setting up of stable PDFs is an important task which must be accomplished in order to achieve the objectives set above.

Towards achieving these objectives, first, the PDF must be of help in developing guerrilla warfare in general and in the locality in particular. It can serve not only the general objective of advancing the people's war but it can also be an effective means of defending our guerrilla bases.

Through the staging of sustained, active and widespread guerrilla warfare, we can make many areas perilous for the enemy, lure them, tax their morale, effectively disperse their forces, pinpoint them as clear targets and weaken their capacity to attack our guerrilla bases.

The PDF must be of help in actively launching annihilative and attritive actions. At the district level, the LGU will stand as the main guerrilla unit and lead in launching these types of warfare. For annihilative actions, the defense forces can be concentrated by combining various guerrilla units in the locality to strike at the enemy target. The LGU can also disperse its forces over a wide area; and with the assistance of other local guerrilla units, it can launch widespread attritive actions.

Vis-a-vis regular guerrilla units, the PDF serves as a secondary force which principally stages attritive actions in the locality. It will also serve as their reserve force in providing service support.

Second, the PDF must be of assistance in defending the revolutionary forces and masses in the guerrilla bases during times of enemy operations. Even before the enemy launches its operations, the PDF must already be active in the defense preparations. In these, the following must be addressed: 1) honing the masses in the sphere of organization, politics and military work; 2) destroying the local enemy intelligence network, preparing offensive and defensive plans and battlesites; 3) putting to order the system of communication; 4) training of forces in the locality for defensive actions and arming them; 5) arranging effective defense ramparts of the bases (i.e., air raid shelter, trenches, foxholes, tunnels, bunkers); and 6) preparing alternative hide-outs, routes for retreat, food and other war materiel.

Third, the PDF must conduct political work among the masses. It must get involved in various types of mass work in order to ensure that our local guerrilla forces do not get divorced from the political life of the masses. The PDF will assist in implementing the revolutionary land reform program and will help in improving the lives of the masses. The PDF can also engage in productive work to sustain itself with material requirements and assist the masses in their economic work. Through these, we can be sure of the masses' active involvement in defending the gains they have already won and likewise their organs of political power. Through political work, the PDF can effectively assist in the expansion, consolidation, recovery of abandoned areas and maintenance of guerrilla bases.

The PDF will also assist not only in the destruction of enemy forces through tactical offensives but also in the overall efforts to disintegrate them through political work within their ranks. The policy of liberal treatment of surrendered or captured enemy personnel shall be implemented. The PDF will help in devising ways to encourage them, especially those recruited from the lower classes, to join us or at least leave their counter-revolutionary service.

Organization of PDF

A command for people's defense (CPD) will be established at the district level and will be presided over by the highest territorial committee. It will act as a territorial command and commander of all guerrilla forces in the locality. It will also be responsible for the administration and supervision of the building of guerrilla forces.

In particular, the CPD will have the following responsibilities:

1. Stand as command center of all local guerrilla units;
2. Command and take responsibility for coordinated military actions at the district level;
3. Coordinate and order inter-barrio mobilization of militia units based on the plan and instruction of the higher command;
4. Assist in building various guerrilla units in the locality;
5. Provide sustained, programmed and systematic political and military training to all local guerrilla units;
6. Receive and implement orders from the higher command; and
7. Assess performance and report to the higher command.

The CPD will be composed of the commander (CO), vice commander (VCO), political officer (PO) and officers for intelligence, finance and logistics (FLO) and recruitment. The CO is the highest officer of the CPD. He will take charge of and be responsible for all the actions of the CPD and its members. The VCO will be the principal partner of the CO in performing responsibilities and will take over the function of commander in the event the latter, for one reason or another, cannot carry on. The PO will lead in political and ideological work. He will ensure that Party-building and political work among the local guerrilla units are done. The intelligence officer will be responsible for intelligence and security work. The FLO will manage

finance and logistics support work. The training officer will administer the recruitment and training of local guerrilla forces.

Given the scarcity of military cadres, the CPD can in the meantime base itself within the main force of the LGU. Apart from being a territorial command, it will also serve as a unit command of the LGU. This means that the group which will immediately stand as the CPD will consist of the same members of the unit command of the entire LGU who are based on its main force. The chain of command will flow from the district committee to the CPD and to the unit command of the LGU. At the start, only a few guerrilla units may be directly handled or administered by the CPD. Other guerrilla forces can be taken care of by the district committee and can later be transferred when the structure of the territorial command shall have been regularized.

The CPD will also have a dual character in the unit command of the secondary LGU forces. It will serve as the unit command of the secondary LGU and stand as coordinator and be responsible for the consolidation of militia units (MCT or militia coordinating teams) based on the plan and order of the higher command.

The work load of the MCT which will be borne by LGU secondary forces will be the following:

1. Provide sustained and systematic political and military training for militia units;
2. Assist the section committee in organizing militia units under its territory;
3. Assist in screening members of militia units based on the plan of the district or section committee;
4. Recommend ways and means of arming militia units;
5. Coordinate and command inter-barrio mobilization of militia units based on the plan of the higher command; and
6. Report to the higher command about the course of work in building, consolidating and mobilizing militia units.

Building PDF units

The districts must create and shape up an LGU platoon (enlarged or reduced) depending on their capacity, condition of the terrain and support of the local mass base. Scores of APU squads must be set up to assist in expansion and the recovery of lost areas. Partisan units must also be organized to extend guerrilla warfare to the enemy's rear. Squads of local militia must be formed in the barrios. In populated places, a platoon-strength militia unit can be organized. Teams of SDU must also be set up inside mass organizations.

The establishment of stable unit commands in each local guerrilla unit must be ensured. This is important for the good management of units and for fruitful implementation of tasks. Unit commands at the squad level will be composed of the squad leader, vice squad leader and political guide. The tasks of the unit commands are the following:

1. Act as command center of the squad;
2. Set plans based on the mission ordered by the higher command;
3. Administer day-to-day work of the unit;
4. Manage the proper mix and assessment of the unit's work; and
5. Report to the higher command.

In building guerrilla units, recruitment work and the setting of appropriate standards for new recruits must be handled properly in order to ensure regular sourcing of quality recruits. In training, all local guerrilla units must be given or must have received standard army training such as the basic military course and basic officer's course. Refresher's training and special training for officers and Red fighters of local guerrilla units must be conducted from time to time. Partisan units must also be provided regular training which is responsive to the particular characteristics of their work.

Alongside the organizing of local guerrilla units is Party-building within. Party branches at the platoon level and Party groups at the squad level must be formed. The Party organization and the entire PO system shall ensure a high level of ideological and political consciousness, consistent fighting spirit, iron discipline, living democracy as to relations between officers and men in the army and firm adherence to the principles of mass line by guerrilla units. Aside from political work, it shall be the responsibility of the Party inside the army to expand membership and strengthen the Party organization.

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OVERSEAS FILIPINOS CONTRIBUTE THEIR SHARE TO THE REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE

This is the second of a two-part series on overseas Filipinos.

Frustrated by widespread poverty, unemployment, and lack of opportunities, half a million Filipinos leave the country each year to work abroad or to immigrate -- only to end up further oppressed and discriminated against in their host countries.

Even under the Aquino regime, overseas Filipinos continue to be put at a disadvantage by the same exploitative manpower export program promulgated by the Marcos dictatorship. Through the commodification of labor and its development into an "export industry," the regime earns the foreign exchange critically needed for debt payments, for importation of capital goods and industrial raw materials, and for profit repatriation by transnational firms. Thus have dollar remittances -- rather than providing protection and support to Filipinos abroad -- remained the top priority of a government intent on pursuing an export-oriented, import-dependent development strategy.

Oppressed and exploited in their host countries and by their own reactionary government, overseas Filipinos in increasing numbers are awakening to the need for struggle. Today, stories of our compatriots' struggles and growing unity for their economic welfare and democratic rights are heard from America to the Middle East and Africa, from Europe to Asia and the Pacific. And politicized by these sectoral fights, more and more Filipinos abroad are doing their share for the overall advance of the revolutionary struggle in their homeland.

Foremost examples are the trade union and political activities of Filipinos in the United States, the struggles of domestic helpers in Hong Kong and migrant workers in Saudi Arabia against repressive laws of the Philippine government, lobbying in the parliament of Italy, and the *Bayanihan sa Negros* campaign.

In the Asia-Pacific region

November 4 for our compatriots in Hong Kong is Migrants' Day -- an occasion to commemorate the victorious struggle against a repressive law of the fascist Marcos regime by hitherto timid and apolitical domestic helpers (DH) who compose 90% of Filipinos in the crown colony.

On that day in 1984 was launched a petition-signing campaign for the abolition of Executive Order 857. The law required migrant Filipinos to remit 50% to 70% of their monthly pay through state-owned banks; non-compliance would be penalized by non-extension of passports and exclusion from the list of eligible workers. This blatant violation of the right to travel, of abode and to livelihood brought together for the first time 12 different Filipino associations in Hong Kong that used to stick exclusively to their respective set of activities.

Contributing to the success of the anti-EO 857 campaign was the creativity and resourcefulness in choosing appropriate forms of propaganda and mass actions. To explain the issue and the call to action, campaign teams swept through markets, parks, trams, churches -- everywhere a Filipina could be found. One distinct propaganda method was the "walk-through" in Statue Square, a park in the Central District where Filipina DHs converge on their day-off. While personalities from the antifascist front in Manila traversed the Square, campaign teams mingled with the DHs to discuss the issue and get signatures for the petition.

Leaflets as well as red and white ribbons with the slogans "Abolish E.O. 857" and "Oust US-Marcos Dictatorship" were distributed. With media amply covering these walk-throughs (not to mention the deluge of letters to the editors of daily newspapers and phone calls to radio programs), the campaign surpassed the target projection of the 7,000 Filipinas within immediate reach in the Square. The campaign was widely projected in Hong Kong, and this being the Asia-Pacific region's media center, was also picked up by the press in other countries.

The campaign peaked in March 1985 with an "Alay Lakad," the first major militant mass action by Filipinos in Hong Kong. Despite the ban on outdoor rallies, the protesters were able to march through main thoroughfares, passing places frequented by Filipinos. To circumvent restrictions on the use of banners and streamers, slogans were printed on flaglettes and T-shirts; a big streamer had the anti-EO 857 slogan written below a call to support the disabled. Speakers took turns in denouncing the fascist law and the IMF-World Bank's role in its enactment. The event was reported in all radio and TV stations and in both Chinese and English newspapers.

The broad protest which greeted EO 857 was unprecedented in the history of the mass movement of migrants in the crown colony. The petition gathered 6,000 signatures which amounted to 23% of total Filipino migrants in Hong Kong then. Aside from mobilizing activists from the ranks of DHs, the campaign drew the support of Filipino churchpeople and professionals. Actively involved too were Chinese students, women and religious groups. The campaign was coordinated with Filipino migrant groups in Saudi, Hong Kong-based regional institutions and international bodies, and an anti-EO 857 alliance in the homefront.

The campaign's broad appeal and extensive projection forced the fascist dictatorship to rescind the penalty provisions of EO 857.

In the Middle East

But the Aquino regime, harassed by a growing deficit in the annual budget, refuses to learn its lesson. In 1987, it decided to enforce the Customs and Tariff Code of 1982 which had remained suspended during Marcos' fascist rule out of political considerations. Aquino imposed a 55% customs duty tax on all material and personal effects brought into the country by overseas Filipinos and whose total value exceeds P2,000. The campaign launched by migrant workers in response to the unjust customs law contributed to the early exposure of the reactionary character of the Aquino regime, locally as well as internationally.

An alliance of migrant workers in Saudi Arabia spearheaded the campaign for the abolition of the 55% customs tax provision. Within a month, their petition-letter collected 25,000 signatures from Riyadh, Jeddah and Damman/Al Khobar/Dahran. In Saudi and elsewhere, overseas Filipinos in common protested that while they who earn dollars for the country are burdened by onerous taxes, foreign investors who spend these dollars are showered with special tax privileges.

In a scheme to stamp out the protest, Aquino amended the Customs and Tariff Code. She raised the ceiling of tax free goods brought in by returning migrant workers to P10,000, and brought down to 50% the tax on all goods beyond the ceiling; she allowed them to bring into the country one-of-a-kind electronic goods and household appliances. Seeing that these concessions still meant additional taxes, overseas workers stood firm in their position that with the estimated two billion dollars they have injected yearly into the Philippine economy through sacrifices abroad, burdening them with a new customs tax was totally unjust.

The campaign alliance in Saudi continued camp visitations to discuss the issue with Filipino workers in relation to basic problems in Philippine society. Slogans such as "no votes for Cory bets" (during the congressional elections) and "non-remittance of workers' pay" began to surface, indicating the overseas workers' exhaustion over the government's lack of concern for their plight. At this stage, a multisectoral Campaign Against Unjust Taxation in the homefront was organized to support the migrant workers' demand.

The militancy of our compatriots in Saudi Arabia is also reflected in the fact that among the current crop of Filipino migrants, it is they who have launched the most number of **factory-level** concerted actions. This is because industrial workers comprise 56% of Filipinos in Saudi and many have had experiences in union-building and factory struggles even before leaving for abroad. As in the homefront, their issues revolve around problems involving employer-employee relationships such as delayed salaries, inhuman working conditions, poor housing facilities and illegal terminations. Their spontaneous strikes, slowdowns, petitions and dialogues often succeed in getting the workers their long overdue salaries, their jobs back, or at least their plane ticket for home. But with union activities considered a crime in Saudi, many of these struggles are still crushed.

Filipino groups in the Middle East have learned in time that **factory-level struggles will not suffice**. Political actions are necessary to call the Philippine government's attention to problems encountered by overseas Filipinos and pressure it into doing its task of protecting the rights and interests of its citizens. Thus, they are now actively engaged in the campaign to have the Aquino government: (1) ratify the International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions and Recommendations on Migrant Workers, and (2) forge bilateral labor agreements with the governments of countries receiving Filipino migrant workers.

In Europe

Steps toward developing cooperative relations with progressive peoples abroad are also being taken in Europe. In Italy in 1986, migrant Filipinos, working closely with other migrant peoples and Italian civic and political organizations, initiated a major campaign for the regularization of status of those being considered as "illegal residents." Jointly they lobbied for a law providing genuine protection to the rights of foreigners. Their year-long campaign ended with the Italian parliament enacting a law dealing comprehensively with those rights.

But since many employers still refused to regularize the employment of their workers, the association of Filipinos in Italy was kept busy assisting compatriots applying for regularization. In this regard, they were supported by Italian trade unions offering free services to the migrant workers.

In America

Filipinos in the United States can boast of a long history of struggle in advancing both sectoral and national interests. From the trade union struggles in the first half of the century to the political struggle against the US-Marcos dictatorship in the 1970s and 1980s, the mass movement of Filipinos in the US flourished like no other.

This tradition of militancy originated from the ranks of Filipino plantation workers who perseveringly fought against starvation wages, long working hours, inhuman working conditions, racial discrimination and other forms of oppression and exploitation. The 1920s found them in the forefront of union organizing in Hawaii and California.

In 1920, the 2,000-strong Filipino Laborers Assoc., in solidarity with Japanese workers, struck for seven months. It was the first major inter-ethnic strike in Hawaii. An eight-month strike by 31,000 Filipino laborers followed in 1924, paralyzing the operation of half the sugar plantations in Hawaii. The state used brutal tactics to crush both strikes. In the 1924 strike alone, 16 workers were killed by the police and many more were wounded. Union leaders were incarcerated along with 60 others. Hundreds were blacklisted.

Despite repression, unionizing work among Pinoy plantation workers continued and peaked during the Great Depression. When the Filipino Labor Union led the strike in the lettuce fields of Salinas, California in 1934, it already had seven branch offices and 2,000 active members in the state. The Salinas strike was, however, just one of 20 labor disputes involving Filipinos between 1930 and 1936. Another was the June 1936 strike led by the under-ground union Vibora Luzviminda. After 85 days of this strike, the company negotiated with the union, an unprecedented development in Hawaii's labor history. The workers won a 15% wage increase.

As the trade union movement of our compatriots continued to advance well into the sixties and the seventies, it also branched out into political struggles. National democratic activists who had migrated to the US began to organize and conduct propaganda among Filipina nurses. But the declaration of martial law in 1972 made conditions even more excellent for political education and organizing work. As Filipinos, in general, actively fought the imposition of fascist rule in the homeland, there were also mass organizations in the US openly sympathetic to and supportive in various ways of the armed struggle being waged by the New People's Army.

Aside from the national democrats, many anti-Marcos reactionaries fled to the US to escape political persecution. Among them are those now occupying positions of power such as Foreign Affairs Secretary Raul Manglapus and Senator Heherson Alvarez, who were later joined by former senator Benigno Aquino and Corazon Aquino in 1980. They actively engaged in lobbying before the US congress and openly opposed the Marcos clique.

In 1985, Filipinos launched a militant three-month campaign to protest against US military aid to the repressive Marcos regime and the US government's interventionist policies in the Philippines. The nationally-coordinated campaign peaked in the first week of May with pickets and marches simultaneously held in San Francisco, Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington, Minneapolis, New York, Honolulu, and also in Toronto and Montreal; lobbyists at the same time besieged 450 offices in the House of Representatives and 100 in the Senate. This was preceded by varied forms of action aimed at broadening the militant mass movement like symposia, vigils, cultural shows, slide and film showings, house meetings, classroom lectures and poetry readings. Complementing these were leaflets, primers and newsletters that comprehensively discussed the campaign issues.

The campaign culminated with the staging of "Philippine Lobby Day" in May 1986 in front of the US congress. But the campaign against US aid and intervention did not at all end with Aquino assuming power; it has now evolved into a campaign to remove US military bases from the Philippines.

In different parts of the globe

Aside from issues directly affecting their rights and welfare, overseas Filipinos also tackle popular issues that reflect objective conditions in the Philippines and strengthen their patriotic sentiments.

An example is the fund-raising campaign for famine victims of Negros. Although mainly humanitarian, the endeavor could not but touch on the country's fundamental problems. The *Bayanihan sa Negros* was in fact part of an educational campaign for overseas Filipinos that aimed to periodically brief them on the national situation and particular developments in their homeland.

Spanning a year (1985-86), the Bayanihan covered Hong Kong, Japan, Australia, Saudi Arabia, Italy and Sweden. Due to the broad appeal of the issue, the campaign was able to reach segments of overseas Filipinos who are barely organized and seldom mobilized, such as professionals and musicians.

From these struggles of our compatriots in different parts of the globe can be discerned the important role to be played by the revolutionary movement of overseas Filipinos in the struggle for national liberation and democracy.

Overseas Filipinos, in their numbers, can conduct economic and political struggles and wage vigorous propaganda campaigns that expose and isolate US imperialism and the local puppet reactionary regime in the homefront and abroad, and help turn national and international opinion in favor of the national democratic movement. Also from these struggles will spring forth cadres and activists for our revolutionary work overseas and in the homefront.

They can generate substantial political, material and financial support for the Philippine revolution throughout the revolutionary struggle and even during the reconstruction period.

They can serve as a link for developing close cooperative relations with revolutionary and progressive forces abroad, particularly mass organizations of host peoples and of other migrant peoples.

They can be mobilized to participate in the international solidarity movement such as extending solidarity support to other people's struggles and representing the Philippine revolutionary movement in multilateral solidarity undertakings.

The party of the proletariat must therefore build and advance the revolutionary movement of overseas Filipinos. It is its task to conduct revolutionary propaganda and education among the masses of the sector, develop their mass organizations, and engage them in a broad patriotic and democratic movement that is part of the overall revolutionary struggle of the Filipino people.

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===== L E T T E R =====

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SINO-SOVIET SUMMIT

This is a commentary sent to AB by a cadre involved in our Party's international work.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the People's Republic of China (PRC), the two most powerful socialist states, successfully held a summit meeting in Beijing this May, ending decades of hostilities against each other. The summit heralded a new era of cooperation between them under the aegis of proletarian internationalism.

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) welcomes this positive development in international socialist relations which has profound repercussions on the worldwide struggle against imperialism and for peace. The Sino-Soviet rapprochement indeed comes at a time when the trend towards economic restructuring and political reforms in both states is on the rise.

Sino-Soviet conflict: a historical view

The relationship between China and the Soviet Union before the split was that of an alliance between two ideologically-bound states. Both held concurring views over a wide range of issues, especially where the anti-imperialist struggle was concerned. Significantly, their views merged in several historical junctures.

The break in Sino-Soviet relations officially began in 1960 when the Soviet Union pulled out its advisers from China following nearly four years of running dispute over questions of theory and policy. As early as 1956, the dispute had turned into acrimonious debates. The two never ran out of arguments on such questions as the inevitability of war and the main danger to the international communist movement. Not even the COMINFORM, the last aggragation of communist parties, could patch up the difference. In fact, its demise coincided with the origin of the dispute.

After the COMINFORM, two conferences of communist parties were held in Moscow: the first in 1957 for ruling communist parties; and the second in 1960 for both ruling and non-ruling communist parties. These resulted in the temporary easing of the Sino-Soviet dispute. But what followed were more than two decades of open hostilities, leading to border clashes and the polarization of the Chinese and Soviet parties into two opposing camps, each viewing the other as equally dangerous as US imperialism.

Following changeovers of leadership in PRC and the USSR, conditions were set for the restoration of their friendly relations. In 1979, the Communist Party of China (CPC) acknowledged its mistake of accusing the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) as revisionist and stopped labelling the USSR as "social-imperialist." In 1982, political consultations at the vice-foreign ministerial level began. CPC then worked out the normalization of its relations with the German Socialist Unity Party, Czechoslovak Communist Party, Hungarian Socialist Workers Party, Polish United Workers Party and Communist Party of Bulgaria, setting the stage for the Sino-Soviet summit.

Lessons of the conflict

The ideological and political conflict between China and the Soviet Union and their subsequent rapprochement impart a host of valuable lessons in international relations to all communist and workers parties. Granted that distinct objective conditions in each particular country would necessarily define its perceptions and judgments, complete consensus on all theoretical questions and international issues among all communist and workers parties all the time is impossible. Emerging differences must be addressed through discrete and proper channels, never allowing them to become divisive factors that could lead to mutual alienation and armed conflict and harm the world socialist cause. Ideological and political debates must be undertaken to forge a stronger basis for unity. The absence of an international forum of communist and workers parties can be compensated for by establishing a series of bilateral relations on a state to state, party to party, or people to people framework to build up consensus.

The underlying principle of such means of dialogue is that while each party is founded on the universal theory of Marxism-Leninism, it is the task of each to apply and integrate this theory to the objective conditions and events in its own country, with no single party or state setting the line for others to follow. As a corollary, it is the revolutionary practice of a communist party in a specific country that determines its integrity and success, not the act of recognition from another party or group of parties. Finally, the principles of peaceful coexistence must be correctly understood as complementary to the overall anti-imperialist struggle, as well as to the necessary guidelines for international relations of communist and workers parties and socialist states.

The principles of peaceful coexistence

The Sino-Soviet summit conveyed the message of peaceful coexistence. Three preconditions to the summit had been agreed upon -- the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and the reduction of troops along the Sino-Soviet border -- all aimed at significantly reducing armed confrontation.

The fundamental principles of peaceful coexistence include "mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence." These suit a code of conduct that must govern the political, economic, military, diplomatic and cultural relations between states.

In essence, these fundamental principles are incompatible with foreign domination or control or intervention in the internal affairs of a country. Thus, there can only be affirmation of the right of nations to self-determination and the necessity of the fight against imperialist intervention and control. For instance, the summit called for the withdrawal of foreign troops from south Korea for whose presence there could be no logical justification.

By upholding the principles of dialogue rather than confrontation, PRC and the USSR have taken positive steps in averting a possible nuclear war, in an era where stockpiled nuclear weapons are capable of annihilating the world many times over. Moreover, the reduction of military expenditures and the establishment of normal relations with technologically-advanced countries would greatly accelerate the economic and technological progress of both states, benefiting not only their peoples but the whole of humanity.

Peaceful coexistence forms part of the greater principle of proletarian internationalism. It seeks to unite all communist and workers parties through peaceful negotiation and resolution of conflict.

While the PRC and the USSR were quick to point out that their summit "was not an alliance directed against any third state," it is clear that they would never condone any violation of the principles of peaceful coexistence.

Summit achievements

The Sino-Soviet summit must be viewed within the logic of economic restructuring and reforms and the reorientation of socialist democracy currently being undertaken by both countries. These reforms aim at the realization of the full economic potentials of socialism and the increased participation of the citizenry in all spheres of social activity.

The single biggest achievement of the summit was the normalization of relations between PRC and the USSR, marked by substantive agreements on diplomatic, economic and cultural concerns.

The Soviet-Chinese Commission was formed to take charge of the details of economic, commercial, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation -- putting as it were "real content and concrete deeds" into the talks.

Likewise, the reduction in military expenditures occasioned by nuclear disarmament initiatives and the cessation of armed hostilities would release precious resources that could boost their respective socio-economic programs.

And as far as political reforms are concerned, the experiences gained by both sides can be very crucial in infusing into their political structures a new dynamism rendered necessary by new perceptions and priorities.

Beyond doubt, the Sino-Soviet summit stands as a historical landmark.

It goes beyond the past and has laid the foundation for better relations among socialist states. Communist and workers parties all over the world have much cause for optimism because the normalization of relations between the two countries would benefit not only the international communist movement but the whole of humanity.

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