

# Mao Zedong's Awareness of Ruling Crisis in 1960s

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**Abstract.** Mao Zedong's awareness of ruling crisis in 1960s is mainly reflected at 3 aspects: firstly, worrying that the national security was threatened; secondly, worrying that the revisionism came back on the stage; thirdly, worrying that the bureaucratism made a comeback. In order to ensure national security and stable reigning position of Communist Party of China (CPC), and realize people as masters of the country, Mao Zedong has made great contributions. Based on change of time background and time features, some of his specific judgments may be out of date; however, generally speaking, there still exist many reasonable places in Mao Zedong's theories and practices about how to safeguard national security, stabilize reigning position of CPC, and realize people as masters of the country, and those theories and practices are worth our deep thinking.

## Introduction

Mao Zedong is not only a great politician with foresight and sagacity, but also a great strategist. He led CPC and Chinese people to overthrow 3 mountains and established new regime under which people were masters of the country; after CPC became the ruling party, he always kept eyes on threat on the state and regime from various aspects and had strong awareness of ruling crisis. His awareness of ruling crisis pays attention to different points in different periods. The author thinks that Mao Zedong's awareness of ruling crisis in 1960s is mainly reflected at 3 aspects: firstly, worrying that the national security was threatened; secondly, worrying that the revisionism came back on the stage; thirdly, worrying that the bureaucratism made a comeback.

## I. Worrying that the borderland security was threatened

In 1960s, China's surrounding situation suddenly became tense, which forced Mao Zedong to keep vigilant eyes on the world and pay attention to national security interests.

Mao Zedong was always strongly vigilant of imperialism, and he thought that "the imperialist love colonialism rather than peace." [1]411, "there exists the risk of war as long as the imperialism exists. We are not the chief of staff of imperialism, thus we don't know when it will start a war." [2]65

In 1960s, the Sino-Soviet alliance relation finally broke down due to debate between China and Soviet Union. As for Sino-India border conflict issue, the Soviet Union government ignored the fact, turned the fact upside down, and criticized that Chinese government should not launch a counterattack in self-defense; furthermore, it carried out large-scale subversion activities in Yili of Xinjiang, made troubles, and intervened Chinese domestic affairs. In Brezhnev's ruling period, Brezhnev mobilized the army to Sino-Soviet border to form a situation of deployment of mass troops, and enhanced military assistance on Mongolia. From October 1964 to February 1969, various events caused by Soviet Union frontier force in Sino-Soviet border region were more than 4,180, and China and Soviet Union entered into comprehensive confrontation state. Except for tense northern situation, other places also faced war threat. Firstly, Chiang Kai-shek group planned to invade Chinese Mainland; secondly, the Sino-India border crisis still existed; thirdly, the United States tightened the control on south of Vietnam, and the war threat from Vietnam made people anxious. Facing "anti-China chorus" made by "imperialism, revisionism, and counterforce", Mao Zedong felt that Chinese national security was seriously threatened.

With strong national pride, Mao Zedong always kept powerful counterattack against various

kinds of power which threatened national security. In January 1964, he said in the conversation with French councilor delegation: “we will keep firm resistance no matter which country, capitalist country or socialist country, want to bully us, control us, or oppose us.” [1]520 He thought that the imperialism and revisionism was birds of a feather and eyed China covetously.

In August 1964, the Secretariat of the Central Committee of CPC had a meeting to discuss three-line construction issue, and Mao Zedong spoke in the meeting: “we shall make preparations for the possible war launched by imperialism, and for union of imperialism, revisionism, Indian reactionaries, and reactionaries of other countries. The revisionism is also a paper tiger; the imperialism and revisionism may join hands to confront China. Two superpower are very similar, and both of them are robbers who want to destroy China’s gate. Let them come, we will return Yan’an at most.” [3]355

As the leader of CPC and China, Mao Zedong places national security at the first place and calls upon Chinese people to raise vigilance and prepare for war; this is completely correct. If the country dies, the socialist construction and people’s happiness will become nothing. However, in terms of analysis on war and peace issue, Mao Zedong made excessively serious estimation on realistic risk so that he proposed confrontation on imperialism, revisionism, and counterforce on the basis of establishing national economic construction on early fighting, large-scale fighting, and fighting nuclear war soon after he proposed that all domestic affairs should “take class struggle as outline”. In terms of the issue of relationship between revolution and war, he emphasized that the war caused revolution, the revolution stopped war, and asserted that the main trend in current world was revolution.

It shall be pointed out that Mao Zedong always strives for independence of Chinese nation in his lifetime, and his great attention paid to security interests of New China is just the necessary selection for Chinese nation’s historical destiny of hundred-year humiliation. Most of Mao Zedong’s life is spent in extremely cruel revolutionary war, and the thing which guides him to win the victory of revolutionary war is Lenin’s view of revolution and view of war, which cause deep effect on his national strategy. However, Mao Zedong is certainly great strategist; when the national fundamental interests are involved, he can still clearly face the reality. In 1970s, he personally opened the door of improving Sino-U.S. relation.

## **II. Worrying that the revisionism came back on the stage**

Mao Zedong deeply knew the principle that the fortress could be easily broken through from internal part, thus he became more and more worried about “revisionism” in CPC while he opposed international “revisionism”.

Since 1960, the divergence between Communist Party of China and Communist Party of the Soviet Union was further intensified. On April 22, an article Long Live Leninism published in the name of Red Flag magazine editorial department called the roll to criticize Yugoslav Tito; actually, it criticized Khrushchev of the Soviet Union. In CPC, it was clearly pointed out that the Soviet Union had become revisionism, and China should draw lessons; besides, it was thought that the “revisionist” had appeared in China, and people should be vigilant to revisionism and prevent possible “peaceful evolution”.

In September 1962, Mao Zedong wrote in the bulletin of the 10th session of the 8th Central Committee of CPC: “the overthrown reactionary ruling class is not reconciled to perish, and they always attempt to come back. Among wide people, there are some people who haven’t accepted socialist transformation; although there are only few number of people and they only accounts for a few percent of total pollution, they will attempt to leave from socialist road and step on capitalist road once they have a chance. Under those conditions, the class struggle is inevitable.” [4]197-198 Mao Zedong asserted that the capitalist class would exist and attempt to come back in the whole historical period of socialism, and it became the root for revisionism in CPC.

On May 9, 1963, while forwarding 7 documents related to cadres participating in labor of Zhejiang Province, Mao Zedong pointed out: “the class struggle, production struggle, and scientific experiments are 3 great revolutionary movements in building powerful socialist country, the actual

guarantee which makes communists get rid of bureaucratism, revisionism, and dogmatism and remain invincible forever, and also the reliable guarantee which makes proletariat stand together with wide labor people and implement democratic dictatorship.” [5]292 In December 1964, Mao Zedong made written instructions on Xie Fuzhi’s selected spot report: “which proportion does the capitalist operation management account for in our industry? It is 1/3, 1/2, or more; we shall make clear checking to know the specific answer.” [6]256 In a speed made on June 16, 1964, Mao Zedong emphasized again: “the revisionism has happened in the Soviet Union, and it may also happen in China.” He felt that the problems in CPC were more and more serious and became more and more worried. He made instructions to General Office of the CPC Central Committee: “the confidentiality and safeguarding work are very important; we shall keep the secrets of CPC, and shall not be utilized by revisionism, and prevent occurrence of revisionism in CPC; in case of fighting war, we shall be cautious about all sorts of reactionaries’ destroy.” [7]325 In “23 Articles”, Mao Zedong pointed out: “the movement shall focus on fighting persons in authority on capitalist road”, and emphasized that “some of those persons in authority on capitalist road are under foreground, and some of them are under background; as for the persons who support them, some of them are at superior level, and some of them are at inferior level, and some even work in provincial or central department.” [8]19-30

On May 5, 1966, while meeting Albanian party and government delegation, Mao Zedong said: “we shall place 2 possibilities in our heart: the 1st possibility is counter-revolutionary dictatorship and counter-revolutionary restoration. If we regard this as the primary possibility, we will feel anxious; otherwise we will take it easy.” [9]995 However, if we drop our guard, the capitalist class will stand up to capture regime and the capitalism will come back. If the Marxism doesn’t overcome revisionism, the revisionism will overcome Marxism; after the capitalism comes back, it will hang the sign of communism to implement capitalist policy. [10]380

Through repeated thinking, Mao Zedong thought that China was just at the critical juncture on whether to insist on socialist road or capitalist road, and this was a primary event related to the future and destiny of CPC and the country, and all other things couldn’t be compared with it; it was able to thoroughly destroy the social foundation of revisionism and establish a kind of new social order only via making up our mind, spending great energy, and even disorganizing the normal order of CPC and the country; otherwise the problems couldn’t be solved. Then, Mao Zedong determined to launch “the Cultural Revolution” for the purpose of “universal peace and order” through “great disorder” and paid a heavy price.

As for the caution and prevention against revisionism restoration, Mao Zedong, as a leader of proletariat ruling party, always keeps highly political sensitivity which is extremely important for a ruling party. However, the problem lies at the situation that Mao Zedong and the Party Central Committee are not clear about what is revisionism under current historical condition. Mao Zedong’s speech in the 1st session of the 9th Central Committee of CPC made in April 1964 can most reflect his misunderstanding on revisionism. He said: “according to my observation, I am afraid that the leading power is not in the hand of true Marxists or workers, the attention is paid to material incentive, putting profit in command, and bonus award, but the proletariat politics is not advocated in most of factories.” [7]329 It is obvious that the “revisionism” criticized by Mao Zedong is not true “revisionism”; this theory will certainly result in political mistake and finally develop to confuse the demarcation between enemy and ourselves.

### **III. Worrying that the bureaucratism made a comeback**

In 1960s, the situations such as tight relation or conflict between the cadres and the masses, and serious isolation of cadres from the masses brought by forced command, high target in production, issuing of confused orders, tendency toward boasting and exaggeration, and cadre privilege in “great leap forward” and movement to form rural people’s communes often happened in various places, and the conflict in some places even became very sharp, which caused some vicious events about conflict between the cadres and the masses. The bureaucratism showed a trend of “not even a prairie fire can destroy the grass, it grows again when the spring breeze blows”.

As for increasingly flooding of bureaucratism, Mao Zedong showed deep worry. He pointed out that “people will change, and the revolutionists will also change. Without the masses’ supervision and disclosing, they may make corruption or theft, make speculative business, and isolate from the masses.” He even used a new concept to show the severity of the problem and his strong dissatisfaction, that is, “damned bureaucratist”. He pointed out that “the damned bureaucrats neither listen to the suggestions from the masses nor follow the command made by Central Government, and even block the passage of message to the Central Government.” He thought that those damned bureaucrats ignored people’s life and actually helped the enemies no matter what is there subjective desire. [11]286

Mao Zedong thought that “the reason why so many problems happened in our work is cadres’ responsibilities. We shall deeply and meticulously make investigation for all things, and the bureaucratic style of work of careless and passing the buck will kill people.” [10]464 “If we depend on lord rather than people, we will neither have rice to eat nor have clothes to dress.” In one talk with North Korean comrade, Mao Zedong pointed out that: “Although there are only few newly bourgeois elements of corruption, theft, or speculation, they are powerful; they can get bicycles from Guangzhou and then sell them in Hebei at a high price, and this one is a rural work head of one county.” [10]331 While talking with Prime Minister of Somalia on China’s rural condition in August 1963, Mao Zedong was very worried: “currently, there are still 1/3 production teams in rural area out of our control and under enemy’s control. Many grass-roots cadres degenerate with a change in their nature; 1/3 regime is not in our hand, but in the enemies and their allies’ hand.” [10]289

In order to solve bureaucratic style of work existing in cadres, since 1959, the Central Committee of CPC led rectification movement in rural area. In Mao Zedong’s opinion, “this struggle is a struggle which re-educates people, and also a great movement which re-organizes revolutionary class ranks, and fights against capitalist force and feudal influence which furiously attack us to suppress their counter-revolutionary arrogance, and then transform most of people among those forces into new people.” [5]293 To certain degree, those movements solved some serious problems existing in cadres’ work style in the “great leap forward” and difficulty period, and truly reflected people’s urgent desire. In 1966, Mao Zedong thought that the movement of the “four clean-ups” still couldn’t solve problems, and then launched “Cultural Revolution”.

The conflict between bureaucrats and the masses is a problem that Mao Zedong always pays great attention to. He has strong unshaken uncompromising desire to anti-bureaucratism. However, he hasn’t realized that the bureaucratism, as a kind of long-term existing complicated phenomenon, has its inherent historical, class, and social reason, and the most fundamental reason is that we copy the political system and economic system with excessively concentrated power established by the Soviet Union. Only through thorough reform on this system, we can fundamentally solve the problems. This is the lesson we shall learn.

In conclusion, Mao Zedong thought that the national security, revisionism, and bureaucratism were the three disasters that the ruling class should be cautious about at any time in 1960s. Therefore, he seized these three disasters and made unremitting fighting, and made indelible contributions for ensuring national security, stable ruling position of CPC, and realizing people as masters of the country. Based on change of time background and time features, some of his specific judgments may be out of date; however, generally speaking, there still exist many reasonable places in Mao Zedong’s theories and practices about how to safeguard national security, stabilize reigning position of CPC, and realize people as masters of the country, and those theories and practices are worth our deep thinking. If we can carefully borrow ideas from reasonable core, it is able to play an active promotion function in current construction of ruling party.

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