

## Telegram from Mao Zedong to Deng Zihui Regarding Consultation on the Strategy for Dealing with Rich Peasants

March 12, 1950

Comrade Deng Zihui,

I have received your telegram and agree with your decision not to attend the meeting in Beijing with Lin Biao, instead sending Li Xuefeng.

I request that, during the ongoing meetings of responsible comrades in various provinces, you solicit opinions on the strategy for dealing with rich peasants. Specifically, in the upcoming winter, during the land reform movements in the southern provinces and certain areas in the northwest, consider not only refraining from targeting capitalist rich peasants but also postponing the handling of semi-feudal rich peasants until several years later. Please evaluate whether this approach would be advantageous. The reasons for this proposal are as follows:

1. The scale of land reform is unprecedentedly vast, making it susceptible to a left-leaning deviation. If we focus solely on dealing with landlords and not with rich peasants, it will be easier to isolate landlords, protect middle peasants, and prevent chaos and violence. Otherwise, it will be challenging to avoid such issues.
2. Past land reforms in the north occurred during wartime, with the atmosphere of war overshadowing the land reform atmosphere. Now, with basically no war, land reform stands out prominently, causing significant societal impact. The voices of landlords will become particularly sharp. If we temporarily refrain from acting against semi-feudal rich peasants and only do so later, it will appear that we have even more justification and political initiative.
3. The united front with the national bourgeoisie has now formed politically, economically, and organizationally. The national bourgeoisie is closely linked to the land issue. Temporarily not dealing with semi-feudal rich peasants seems more appropriate for the sake of stabilizing the national bourgeoisie.

Regarding the issue of temporarily not acting against rich peasants, I raised it in the Politburo meeting in November last year, attended by comrades Rao Shushi, Deng Zihui, and Li Fuchun. Although mentioned, no detailed analysis or decision was made. Now is the opportune time for a decision. After the decision, amendments to the land law and other relevant land reform documents will be necessary and should be promulgated to facilitate the study of land reform cadres in various provinces in the new areas. This is essential for the land reform scheduled to begin in the autumn of this year; otherwise, the timing may be missed, leading to a passive situation. Therefore, I request not only the Central-South Bureau but also the East China Bureau, the South China Branch, the Southwest Bureau, and the Northwest Bureau to discuss this issue. Please forward this telegram to the provincial committees and city committees of each province and collect opinions in favor and against, then promptly inform the Central Committee. This is of utmost importance for consideration and decision-making.

Mao Zedong