

Dates of Meeting:

04-10-1950 - 05-10-1950

Type of Meeting:

Politburo meeting

Place of Meeting:

Beijing

Attendance:

Those at the meeting included almost all members of the CCP Politburo and other key leaders: Mao Zedong, Zhu De, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Ren Bishi, Chen Yun, Kang Sheng, Gao Gang, Peng Zhen, Dong Biwu, Lin BoYi, Deng Xiaoping, Zhang Wentian and Li Fuchun. Peng Dehuai arrived at the meeting at about 5 p.m., coming from Xian.(one hour late) , (Peng Dehuai did not arrive in Beijing until the afternoon of October 4. After arriving at the meeting-place, Peng found that "the atmosphere at the meeting was quite abnormal," and there was great disagreement. Peng did not speak at the meeting that afternoon.) Yang Shangkun, director of the Office of the CCP Central Committee, and Hu Qiaomu, director of the Central Information Agency, also attended

Major Agenda Items:

Korean war

Speeches:

Mao said: "What you have said sounds reasonable. But it would be shameful for us to stand by seeing our neighbors in perilous danger without offering any help." If China could stand by when North Korea was in peril, Mao argued, then, the Soviet Union could do the same when China was threatened.

"Internationalism [then] would be mere empty talk."

Most leaders find "too riskyto send troops to Korea"

Other Decisions and/or Actions:

- Mao decides to enter the war on October 15.
- Peng Dehuai is made commander of the troops to enter Korea.

Remarks:

1. "some comrades" (Dong Biwu, Liu Shaoqi) feared that China was completely unprepared for war with the most powerful country in the world and would probably be defeated. these individuals argued that it would be best to postpone intervention for a few years so that China could properly prepare itself. One bloc of opposition identified by many scholars is the economic bureaucracy Chen Yun, an economic planner and Politburo member, seems to have opposed a war, the most fervent opposition came from Lin Biao and Gao Gang, Liu Shaoqi's attitude on October 4 was "negative."
2. Mao wanted to enter the war. Peng Dehuai only after a sleepless night: "Chairman, last night I got almost no sleep. I couldn't stop thinking about what you said. I realized this was a question of fusing internationalism with patriotism. If we only stress the difficult aspect, don't consider the critical implications of American troops bearing down on the Yalu River, not to mention the uncertainties this holds for the Democratic Republic of Korea—which are linked—then can we not see that the defense of our country's northeast frontier is also directly threatened. Is dispatching troops advantageous or not? After thinking it over, I endorse Chairman Mao's wise policy decision to send troops to Korea." Peng continued: "... if [we] allow the enemy [the United States] to occupy the entire Korean peninsula the threat to our country is very great. In the past when the Japanese invaded China they used Korea as a springboard. First they attacked our three eastern provinces, then using these as a springboard, they launched a large-scale offensive against the interior. We cannot overlook this lesson of history. We must fight the enemy now, we cannot hesitate "
3. The politburo met again in enlarged session on the afternoon of October 5. Once again, many of the participants continued to stress the dangers of intervention. The mood changed, however, after Peng and Mao spoke. Peng had wrestled with the question of intervention during the night, and he had come to embrace it as feasible and necessary. Mao followed up by repeating his view that intervention was imperative and noting that Peng would take command of the Chinese troops. After this pair of presentations, opinion apparently swung in favor of intervention, and the group confirmed Peng's appointment.
4. Mao held with Peng Dehuai on the morning of October 5. Meeting privately in his office, Mao told Peng that some of the PRC's leaders were "scared stiff by the planes and artillery of the U.S." Mao then explained why he himself remained unfazed, even as he recognized the

seriousness of the challenge. "We have experienced decades of wars," Mao argued. "Didn't we beat enemies with superior equipment in all of them?" Mao's emphasis on the CCP's past military accomplishments at this key moment is worth noting. In response, Peng noted that the U.S. had difficulties of its own, and he then elaborated on Mao's point about the CCP's revolutionary experience. Peng recalled how the communists had survived when the Nationalists overran Yan'an in 1947 with 240,000 soldiers armed with American weapons. The PLA forces in the area numbered only 25,000 and were armed with older guns that came with only a dozen bullets. Yet the communists had prevailed, Peng argued, thanks in part to their creative strategies and tactics. He thus concluded, "If we can avoid committing serious mistakes in our strategy and tactics, we can be confident of beating the invading American troops." Mao completely concurred. "Your analysis is absolutely right," he told Peng. "Our minds are on the same track." In short, even in private discussions with his own commander, one can discern the influence of Mao's martial confidence – and the roots of his confidence in past military successes.

5. Around nine o'clock the next morning, as entrusted by Mao, Deng Xiaoping made a special trip to the Beijing Hotel and asked Peng to visit Mao at Zhongnanhai. Obviously, Mao wanted Peng to break the deadlock at the meeting. Mao came directly to the point, "We really have serious difficulties, but what favorable conditions do we have?" When Peng said he supported Mao's plan for sending troops to Korea and was willing to assume command, Mao said with emotion, "Then I feel assured. Now the U.S. troops are advancing along separate routes north of the 38th parallel. We should dispatch our troops as soon as possible in order to gain the initiative. This afternoon the Political Bureau will continue to meet. I hope you will express your views." In the afternoon, the discussion over Korea continued with two opposing sides. Then Peng spoke, resolutely supporting Mao's position, and his speech proved decisive. The meeting agreed to Mao's proposal to send troops. Afterward, Mao told Peng with certainty, "I'll give you ten days to prepare and the date for sending troops is preliminarily set at October 15