The dual role of Kang Sheng in Mao's campaign against revisionism at home and abroad symbolized the close relationship between Chinese domestic and foreign policy. Mao opened many of his major speeches with *tours d’horizon* which clearly showed that he considered the Chinese revolution to be part of a world-wide series of events, with interaction both ways. This was particularly true of events within the Communist bloc. Khrushchev's attack on Stalin had implications for Mao personality. The Hungarian revolt helped precipitate a new kind of rectification campaign in China.1 Mao admitted that Soviet anger over the communes led him to modify the ideological claims made for them.2 By the early 1960s, Mao was beginning to speculate about the implications of Soviet revisionism for Chinese domestic politics.3

The connection between Chinese military actions and domestic politics is more obscure. China's involvement in the Korean War enabled the CCP's leaders to launch a patriotic campaign to solidify the people behind them, but that was a windfall benefit. The dispatch of the Chinese expeditionary force to defend the crumbling Kim II Sung regime was clearly a response to the threat of a united, anti-Communist Korea, allied to the United States, on China's borders.4

In the case of the Taiwan Straits crisis of 1958, again the Chinese were responding to external events: the Middle East crisis and the Soviet failure to take strong action.5 There was no direct threat to the PRC, as there
arguably was in the case of Korea. Honour might have been satisfied had the Chinese government merely repeated its behaviour at the time of the 1956 Suez Canal crisis, staging large scale protest rallies and threatening to send volunteers. But by bombarding Quemoy (Jinmen) from 23 August 1958, Mao was better able to whip up fervour for the commune movement as well as to teach Khrushchev a lesson in how to confront imperialism. China's renewed militancy in foreign affairs in the autumn of 1962 similarly helped to create an appropriate atmosphere for the domestic class struggle which Mao had demanded at Beidaihe and at the 10th plenum. But China was perforce responding to decisions taken in foreign capitals, New Delhi and Moscow. Mao did not like Wang Jiaxiang's san he yi shao policy, and events conspired to enable him to destroy it.

India's forward policy
It is clear, for instance, that the Sino-Indian border war of October 1962 was, at least in part, China's reaction to what came to be known in New Delhi as India's 'forward policy'. This policy was conceived in 1960, after the April summit in the Indian capital between premiers Jawaharlal Nehru and Zhou Enlai failed to resolve the border dispute that had led to clashes and casualties the previous year. The forward policy envisaged Indian troops patrolling as far forward as possible into the disputed Aksai Chin area on the Tibet-Kashmir border, up to what India considered to be the frontier. It was not implemented, however, due to the army's reluctance to push forward with inferior military resources and very poor resupply facilities.

In September 1961, however, a major appraisal made by New Delhi's Intelligence Bureau concluded that the Chinese did not challenge Indian outposts once they had been established, and on 2 November Nehru held a meeting with his Defence Minister and close confidant, Krishna Menon, and
senior military officers, at which a firm decision was taken to advance and establish new posts in Ladakh. Orders were issued that gave the cautious commander of the western region no further grounds for delay. Even in the eastern sector, along the border between Tibet and India's North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA), which was quiescent at the time, the existing prohibition on operations within 3 km. of the frontier was lifted, and the local commander was ordered to 'plug the gaps' with a 'systematic advance' towards the Indian-claimed McMahon Line.

Nehru was apparently unaware of the parlous condition of India's forces on the border, and certainly unwilling to contemplate emergency purchases of arms from abroad, but his policy was anyway posited on the belief that war between India and China was unthinkable, which was in turn based on the assumption that the Chinese would not launch a major attack.9 This latter misapprehension would be bolstered as late as September 1962 by Soviet advice to the same effect.10 Indian misperceptions were compounded by the lack of any systematic attempt by the New Delhi intelligence community to analyze Chinese domestic and diplomatic developments. Instead, reliance was placed on CIA briefings, newspaper accounts, and, presumably, despatches from the Indian embassy in Beijing about China's economic crisis, its split with the Soviet Union, and the threat of invasion from Taiwan. India concluded that the Chinese were too hard pressed to contemplate any major hostilities.11 Moreover, the swift victory of the Indian forces in the takeover of the Portuguese colony of Goa in December 1961 produced a false euphoria in which it was easy to gloss over the 'military inadequacies' exposed by that relatively simple operation.12

In the first half of 1962, the Indian forces in Ladakh were gradually reinforced, attaining a strength of four battalions, broken down into sixty posts and patrols, but were still outnumbered five to one and greatly outgunned. In NEFA, new posts were established, higher up the mountain
slopes, closer to the Tibetan border. In both sectors, these moves were made despite a continuing lack of adequate logistical support, at the insistence of the Chief of General Staff, B. M. Kaul.

After a lull lasting from the beginning of December 1961 through February 1962, the Chinese foreign ministry renewed its protests against these Indian movements on 1 March. In its seventh note of the year on 30 April, Beijing issued a threat. After listing fifteen alleged new intrusions made by Indian troops between 15 and 27 April, the Chinese note stated that the PLA would resume patrolling in the disputed area, from the Karakoram Pass to the Kongka Pass, suspended since the hostilities of 1959, and that if the Indian forward movement continued, PLA patrols would take place all along the frontier. Nehru was undeterred, still convinced that Beijing would not engage in a major war. His judgment seemed to be confirmed in May: a superior PLA force advanced on a new Indian post apparently intending to liquidate it, but then did nothing.13

The Chinese rules of engagement, which began to be laid down by the Military Affairs Commission on 1 February, were quite strict. Within the band of territory 30 km inside their line of control, Chinese units were not permitted to fire weapons, patrol, go hunting, or even put down rebellious Tibetans; within the 20 km. band inside their line of control, there were additional restrictions: no target shooting, manoeuvres, or demolition. If Indian troops penetrated its lines, a Chinese unit had first to issue a warning and try to push them into retreating; if this did not work, it had then to confiscate their weapons according to international custom, and after an explanation, return their weapons and allow them to leave.14 All easier said than done, was probably the comment of the average PLA platoon commander, but there was a reason for Chinese caution.

In May-June 1962, the main concern in Beijing was over the threat of an invasion from Taiwan. While India's actions may have been seen as part of
a strategy, backed by both the United States and the Soviet Union, to encircle China, Chinese leaders would have been reluctant to provoke hostilities in the Himalayas, which might have meant diverting military resources from the main danger point along the Fujian coast. A two-front war was certainly undesirable, and the Chinese press played down events on the Indian border.15 The People's Daily editorial of 3 June, possibly a reflection of the san he yi shao policy favoured by Beijing leaders at the time,16 expressed regret at India's refusal to renew the 1954 trade treaty, and affirmed that 'the Chinese government and people will never change their stand of safeguarding Sino-Indian amity. It was only from July on, after American assurances had lifted the threat of a KMT invasion,18 that the Chinese could focus on the Indian border as a discrete foreign policy issue.

The first clash

At first there appeared to be no change in PLA behaviour. A risky advance by an Indian platoon to a position behind a Chinese outpost provoked a confrontation in the first half of July, but though the Chinese forces had been built up to battalion strength from late May, they did not attack, thus providing further encouragement to the Indian side.19 On 21 July Chinese troops fired on an Indian patrol for the first time since 1959, causing two Indian casualties.20 Despite brave words in the Indian parliament, and Indian purchases of Soviet aircraft,21 no knowledgeable Indian officials could have had any doubts about China's military superiority on the ground if this small clash escalated into full-scale hostilities. A major paper on defence policy prepared by the Indian Chiefs of Staff in January 1961 stated: 'Should the nature of the war go beyond that of a limited war ...and develop into a full-scale conflagration amounting to an invasion of our territory, then it would
be beyond the capacity of our forces to prosecute war ...beyond a short period ...22 In July 1962, a respected former Indian Chief of Army Staff, Gen. K. S. Thimayya, under whom this appraisal had been drafted, wrote: 'I cannot even as a soldier envisage India taking on China in an open conflict on its own. China's present strength in man-power, equipment and aircraft exceeds our resources a hundredfold with the full support of the U.S.S.R. and we could never hope to match China in the foreseeable future. It must be left to the politicians and diplomats to ensure our security.'23 Extraordinarily, the Chiefs of Staff paper had not even attempted to demand from the Indian government the level of forces that might have stood a better chance of withstanding a full-scale Chinese invasion, but limited itself to indicating the forces needed better to cope with continuing border clashes. On reading the paper in early 1961, the incoming Director of Military Operations at HQ in New Delhi, Brigadier D.K. Palit, concluded that its proposals for counter-measures to the Chinese threat were 'perfunctory to the point of being simplistic ...It seemed incredible that so grave a matter could have been despatched so heedlessly...'24 It was perhaps consciousness of this fundamental weakness that led the Indian government to adopt a relatively conciliatory tone in its note about the clash. On 21 July, a Chinese note had included the statement: 'The Chinese Government has repeatedly stated that China is not willing to fight with India and the Sino-Indian boundary question can be settled only through routine negotiations.25 The Indian reply on 26 July said, 'the Government of India fully reciprocate this desire for settlement by peaceful negotiations'.26 Even before the clash, Prime Minister Nehru had seemingly made a major concession at a lunch which he hosted for the departing Chinese ambassador, Pan Zili, by indicating that India would be prepared to hold discussions without demanding withdrawal from disputed areas as a pre-
condition.27 The 26 July note reiterated this position by indicating a willingness to talk 'as soon as the current tensions have eased and the appropriate climate is created'.28 Almost simultaneously, at the Laos conference in Geneva, Foreign Minister Chen Yi was seeking out Defence Minister Menon, the chief Indian delegate for informal discussions on the border,29 and only a failure in communication with New Delhi prevented the issuance of a joint communiqué proposing further talks'.3O Another factor encouraging a more receptive Indian attitude to talks at this time may have been the visit to New Delhi of the Soviet first deputy premier, Anastas Mikoyan. The Indians were keen to have Soviet support, while the Russians were almost certainly anxious to avoid disrupting their truce with the Chinese by having to take a position if the Sino-Indian border dispute escalated as in 1959,31 Unfortunately for Mr Nehru, the pressure of parliamentary and public opinion gave him no room for manoeuvre at any time during the growing crisis. The publication of the Indian note of 26 July occasioned widespread accusations of a sell-out. The Chinese also embarrassed Mr Nehru in their reply by agreeing that there should be no pre-conditions for talks but suggesting that an Indian withdrawal would smooth away all difficulties. The Indian premier had to explain to parliament that the removal of tension referred to in the Indian note meant that previous alterations of the boundary by force had first to be rectified. This nullified the earlier concession.32

**China changes tack**

Despite the less flexible position which Mr Nehru, willingly or not, was now adopting, from 5 to 26 August Chinese diplomatic démarches and open propaganda diminished considerably, perhaps with the intention of reducing tension while chances of negotiation might still exist.33 Another
explanation, in the light of what is now known of Mao's political activities in 1962, is that this diminution of activity had to do with the summoning of the Beidaihe conference on 6 August. Officials running the Chinese foreign ministry in Beijing would have been reluctant to take major steps in the absence of Zhou Enlai and Chen Yi. More importantly, Zhou and his colleagues would immediately have appreciated that Mao's new leftist line would have implications for the conduct of foreign affairs, and that further initiatives could not be taken until these had been fully understood. At the very least it meant the end of san he yi shao.

According to one analysis, a 'critical change occurred in Chinese behavior following the collapse of negotiatory prospects in late August. ...manifested in fresh diplomatic protests to New Delhi after a hiatus of several weeks, sharpened warnings over the consequences of Indian activity, and actual military clashes on the border'.

In place of the mixture of carrot and stick employed in July and most of August, the Chinese now employed only the stick. This new pattern emerged on 27 August, after the conclusion of the Beidaihe conference, and the day after preparatory meetings for the 10th Plenum began in Beijing. Confirmation that the end of the Beidaihe conference was a watershed in Chinese attitudes on the border crisis is provided by an Indian reconstruction of the events leading up to the Sino-Indian war, which dated the major buildup of war matériel and an increase in the number of Chinese posts as starting on 29 August.

**China's Changing Attitude towards India**

27 Feb. Wang Jiaxiang formally writes to Zhou, Deng, Chen Yi on *san he yi shao*, having got Liu Shaoqi's earlier endorsement.

3 June Nostalgic People's Daily editorial on Sino-Indian relations.
16 June  Peng Dehuai letter reaches CC.
29 June  Wang's final programmatic statement on san he yi shao.
Late June  United States tells PRC it won't support KMT attack on mainland
1st half July  Indian advance; confrontation but no clash.
7 July (c.)  Mao reasserts himself on collectivization.
9-14 July  Peace conference in Moscow.
21 July  PRC troops fire on Indians for first time since 1959.
23 July  Laos conference agreement
26 July  Indian moderate note (Chen Yi seeks out Menon for informal talks in Geneva).
5-26 Aug.  PRC diplomatic activity vis-à-vis India diminishes.
6 Aug  Mao opens Beidaihe conference. Peng Dehuai's letter rejected as being in line with three 'Ni's and one 'Tie'
29 Aug.  Build-up of PRC forces on border starts.

Mao takes charges
It seems unlikely that contingency plans for military action would have been discussed at Beidaihe, except in very general terms. This was too sensitive a topic for wide dissemination. According to one official account, Zhou took personal charge of all arrangements, including notes, letters, news releases, and negotiations, and every move went to Mao for his approval. According to another, Liu Shaoqi also played a role, presumably presiding over a CC secretariat conference on 14 July, at which he and Zhou both reported on the border and the general staff issued appropriate orders thereafter. Mao is said to have approved and given two linked reasons why, despite ample justification, China should not yet hit back: Nehru had to be allowed to expose himself and the international community had to be convinced of India's aggression. On 16 July, Chief-of-Staff Luo
Ruiqing relayed the Chairman's eight-character comment on the situation: *wuzhuang gongchu, quanya jiaocuo* (armed coexistence, jigsaw pattern); presumably Mao was contemplating the long-term persistence of the situation that had begun to develop already, whereby Indian and Chinese posts were on the 'wrong' side of each other. Chinese accounts stress that because of the diplomatic implications of a border clash, all decisions were taken at the highest level: 'No matter to do with border defence is small; every matter must be checked with Beijing.'

Chinese defensive measures translated into dividing the Chinese units into three commands. In the disputed Aksai Chin area, the commander of the southern Xinjiang military district, He Jiachan, headed the western sector headquarters. Along the frontier roughly defined by the McMahon Line, separating Tibet from India's NEFA, an eastern sector headquarters was set up under the commander of the Tibet Military Region, Lt.-Gen. Zhang Guohua, who had commanded a corps of three divisions in the 2nd Field Army led by Liu Bocheng and Deng Xiaoping in the final period of the civil war. Zhang was backed by two of his deputies, Deng Shaodong, Zhao Wenjin, and a deputy political commissar, Lü Yishan. According to Indian estimates made after the border war, these men had three divisions at their disposal, a slightly larger force than that eventually assembled by the Indians before the final confrontation. Left in charge in Lhasa were the region's political commissar, Tan Guansan, a deputy commander, Chen Mingyi, an assistant political commissar, Zhan Huayu, and the Chief-of-Staff, Wang Kang.

These allocations of top brass suggested that the Chinese both anticipated more serious fighting in the east than in the west and were sufficiently concerned about their grip on Tibet, only three years after the flight of the Dalai Lama, to retain a strong reserve to keep the region under control. The Chinese dispositions also reflected their continuing overwhelming
superiority over any Indian probing from Ladakh into the disputed Aksai Chin area, despite the desperate plea of the local Indian commander for reinforcements and his warning that India's diplomatic posture should be consonant with its military capabilities. But even with their superiority, the Chinese left nothing to chance. As early as May 1962, Zhang Guohua's old chief, Marshal Liu Bocheng, one of the PLA's most brilliant commanders and head of the Military Affairs Commission's (MAC) strategy small group, had predicted an Indian attack, and was deputed to oversee the planning of a Chinese counter-attack.

Neither Mao's comments nor the Chinese command structures along the Indian border shed much new light upon the reasons for Chinese behaviour in the weeks after the Beidaihe conference. On the one hand, Chinese words and deeds unquestionably became more and more forceful. On the other hand, Indian words and deeds, including the establishment of forty-five new forward posts on the NEF A front, thirty-five of them on the McMahon Line, were also more and more forceful, and could have been construed in Beijing as legitimate grounds for Chinese reaction. Indeed, the Chinese appraisal was that having been checked in Aksai Chin, the Indian government decided in September to push forward north of the McMahon Line; the general staff decided to match the Indians man for man.

**Moves and missives**

On 8 September, a Chinese force crossed the Thag La ridge. This topographical feature was regarded by the Indians as part of the eastern frontier, though it was north of the McMahon Line, the Indian standard for defining the frontier elsewhere in this sector. The Chinese troops moved into positions enabling them to threaten a small Indian unit at Dhola post, though they did not attack. But the Dhola post had been set up only in June 1962, the first contravention of the implicit agreement between the two
sides dating from 1959 that no new forward movement should take place in the area, pending a comprehensive settlement. The Dhola post was within the territory claimed by India, but again, it was on the Tibet side of the McMahon Line. In New Delhi, the area was seen as indisputably Indian; in Beijing, it was claimed as Chinese, but recognized as disputed territory and thus subject to negotiation as part of a formal boundary delimitation.49

On 13 September, the Chinese delivered two notes which took strong lines. One protested recent incidents in the western sector, Warning that 'he who plays with fire will eventually be consumed by fire'.50 The other, part of the ongoing correspondence about the border situation in general, accused India of 'persisting in advancing into Chinese territory, changing the status quo by force and aggravating the border tension', and of using negotiation as a cover for 'nibbling Chinese territory', but proposed that there should be talks, starting on 15 October.51 On 16 September, a Chinese note protested the establishment of the Indian post at Dhola, again describing this as part of India's 'systematic nibbling activities' which 'fully reveal how ambitious the Indian side's aggressive designs are'.52 An Indian note of 19 September noted Beijing's 'undiplomatic language' and 'threats of force', countered that it was the Chinese who were attempting to alter the status quo by 'unilateral action and aggressive activities', but accepted the idea of talks starting on 15 October 'to define measures to restore the status quo in the Western Sector which has been altered by force in the last few years and to remove the current tensions in that area'.53

Although both sides professed a willingness to talk, they differed considerably on the topics they were willing to discuss. More crucially, while the Indian government had seemed ready to live with what Mao had called a jigsaw situation in the western sector, it was not prepared to accept what appeared to it an encroachment on a well-defined frontier in the eastern sector. Indian official thinking was bolstered by the belief that, however
outclassed their troops might be in the western sector, in the eastern sector India possessed the power to drive the Chinese out, despite reports to the contrary by local commanders who appreciated only too well the PLA's local superiority in manpower, weapons, logistics, and position. Overriding the warnings of junior commanders, on 9 September, immediately after the Chinese crossed the Thag La ridge, Defence Minister Menon ordered the army to evict them.54

Increasing troop movements and escalating intransigence on both sides inevitably led to bloodshed. A clash took place at Dhola on 20 September. One Chinese was killed, one seriously wounded; five Indians were wounded.55 By this time both the Indian Prime Minister and the Defence Minister were abroad, Nehru at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference in London, Menon at the UN in New York, and in the light of the increasingly evident strength of the PLA, the chief of army staff requested written confirmation from his minister of the order to evict the Chinese from the eastern sector. It was promptly cabled back from New York.56 On 24 September, there was a further clash and three more Chinese soldiers were killed.57 Further notes were exchanged; again, both sides offered to talk, but neither was yet prepared to accept the other's conditions. Both Beijing and New Delhi were quite conscious of the importance of influencing opinion throughout Asia, and so their notes combined truculence directed at each other and reasonableness addressed to the outside world.58

On 4 October, due to disagreements between senior officers on the NEFA front, the Indian government appointed the Chief of General Staff, General Kaul, to take charge of the effort to throw the Chinese out, and despite Kaul's minimal combat experience, the Indian press immediately reported that his mission presaged an all-out effort. At this stage, desultory fire was regularly exchanged between the two sides. Unbeknownst to Kaul,
however, the PLA general staff had just transmitted a critical directive from the centre and the Chairman.
Sometime earlier, Mao had complained that the Indians had been pressing the Chinese along the border for three years, 1959-61; if they tried it a fourth year then China would strike back. The Dhola clash apparently decided the Chinese leaders that a military engagement was inevitable. On 6 October, the order was sent to the border forces: 'If the Indian army attacks, hit back ruthlessly ...If they attack, don't just repulse them, hit back ruthlessly so that it hurts.' During fateful discussions held by the Chinese leadership in October, Mao and Zhou were in charge, but Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping also participated, along with Marshals Liu Bocheng, He Long, and Xu Xiangqian, and General Luo Ruiqing as chief-of-staff. In the light of subsequent events, Marshal Liu's recommendations were clearly taken very seriously. He rejected the idea of simply dealing with border troops by removing them, forcing them back, breaking up their attack, and surrounding them. Rather, he advocated taking on India's best troops and swiftly beating them. Only that could be called a decisive victory.59
General Kaul had fixed on 10 October for starting his assault, but the Chinese attacked first and a major clash took place. Analysis of Chinese behaviour and orders suggests, however, that they intended the attack to serve as a deterrent and not as the beginning of an all-out offensive. General Kaul, whose reports to Army HQ in New Delhi had combined stark realism regarding the weakness of the Indian position with unrealistic optimism about his mission, was sufficiently alarmed to fly back to New Delhi to consult with Prime Minister Nehru on whether it should be aborted.60
As a result of the meeting on the evening of 11 October, it was agreed neither to build up Indian strength in order to attack the Chinese — a
decision made for military reasons — nor to retreat to less exposed positions, but simply to hold the line — a decision made for political reasons. But the next day, at the airport en route to Sri Lanka, in off-the-cuff exchanges with Indian journalists about what orders had been given to troops in the eastern sector, Nehru did not reveal this fact. Instead he said, 'Our instructions are to free our territory', hedging only on when this might be accomplished. In addition, he effectively ruled out talks while the Chinese remained on the southern slope of the Thag La ridge.61

Mao's India war
The Chinese seized on Nehru's unguarded remark, and indeed to this day it figures in Chinese accounts of the border war as the essential proof that India was the aggressor.62 In an editorial two days later, The People's Daily, declaring that a 'massive invasion of Chinese territory by Indian troops in the eastern sector ...seems imminent', went on to issue an implicit warning:

How could the Chinese possibly be so weak-kneed and faint-hearted as to tolerate this? It is high time to show to Mr Nehru that the heroic Chinese troops with the glorious tradition of resisting foreign aggression, can never be cleared by anyone from their own territory. ...All comrade commanders and fighters of the People's Liberation Army guarding the Sino-Indian border, redouble your vigilance! Indian troops may at any time attempt to carry out Nehru's instructions to get rid of you. Be well prepared! Your sacred task now is to defend our territory and be ever-ready to deal resolute counterblows at any invaders.63

Some credence was given to the Chinese charges by the Indian decision, apparently taken for domestic publicity purposes and against the advice of the local commander, to reinforce the line their troops were holding,64
which could have been seen in Beijing as preparations for attack rather than for defence. Defence Minister Menon's public statements would have confirmed that impression.65

On 16 October, four days after Nehru's fateful remark, the MAC decided to annihilate Indian troops north of the McMahon Line; the following day the operational order was given 'liquidate the invading Indian army'. During the days that followed, the Indian forces observed helplessly as the PLA prepared methodically for battle. In the east, the Chinese mustered a force of 10,300 men to attack the Indian 7th Brigade, whose strength they estimated at 6,000.66 In the west, their front-line troops were two battalions, the Chinese having increased their strength by 4,000 men, including an extra infantry battalion.67 The eastern sector was chosen for the main assault, both because it was militarily more advantageous and because the Chinese wished to demonstrate once and for all that they did not accept the McMahon Line.68 Finally, shortly after dawn on 20 October, the PLA attacked in overwhelming strength, both in the west and across the McMahon Line in the east, and within four days had captured virtually all the posts established so laboriously by the Indian army in both sectors over the previous several months.69 After a week, the Chinese halted their advance in NEFA and hostilities ceased there, though Indian posts in the western sector continued to be picked off.70 In the immediate aftermath of the Chinese victory, Nehru formally took over the defence portfolio, but kept Menon in the cabinet; on 8 November, however, the Prime Minister was forced by his parliamentary party to discard his long-time politically ally. General Kaul was flown back to New Delhi with pulmonary problems, acquired during his visits to NEFA units stationed at high altitudes.71

Had Nehru at this stage agreed to talks after the two sides had returned to their positions prior to the start of India's forward policy as the Chinese demanded, presumably Mao and Zhou would have considered that their
punitive expedition had achieved its purpose and no further use of force was needed. But what might have made military and diplomatic sense given the balance of forces on the ground was political nonsense in New Delhi. Far from cowing the Indians, the Chinese attack had induced a national mood of unity, defiance, and determination. Had Nehru decided that discretion was the better part of valour and agreed to sit down with the Chinese prior to their evacuating all the military gains they had just made and India returning to its posts in the disputed territory, even he might not have survived in office. As it was, he was roundly criticized for the relatively mild tone of his first letter rejecting Zhou Enlai’s offer of talks, and his subsequent correspondence was markedly more hostile in tone. Nevertheless, he refused to break off diplomatic relations with Beijing or to take the matter to the UN.

Though the position on the ground in both sectors was still unfavourable to the Indian forces, and made worse by inappropriate tactical dispositions in the eastern sector, New Delhi, fortified by the conviction that Beijing would not order another major assault, prepared confidently to drive the Chinese out of NEFA. In contrast to China, where the official media played down the military aspects of the dispute at this time, Indian newspapers reported every indication of Indian troops preparing for an offensive. Nehru was quoted as saying that though India was not 'technically' at war, 'the fact is that we are at war, though we have not made any declaration to that effect-it is not necessary at the present moment to do so, I do not know about the future.'

The Chinese pursued a two-pronged diplomatic policy after halting their initial assault. On the one hand, Zhou Enlai pressed Nehru to come to the conference table in measured language—indeed, in his first letter he did not sign his name to the Chinese propaganda allegation that it had been India
which had attacked first. Simultaneously, he wooed leaders of the Afro-Asian non-aligned movement.75

But after Nehru had rejected Zhou's initial proposal for talks, an all-out denunciation of the Indian Prime Minister was made in a 15,000-word People's Daily article on 27 October, entitled 'More on Nehru's philosophy in the light of the Sino-Indian boundary question'. This was a sequel to the paper's article on Nehru's 'philosophy' and the Tibetan revolt, published three years earlier when the Dalai Lama had fled to India, but it was a still more virulent and personal attack on the Indian Prime Minister, and Mao contributed significantly to it. Its major contention was that Nehru was a 'lackey' of US imperialism and had become a pawn 'in the international anti-China campaign', an allegation that may have gained a spurious credibility from Nehru's appeal for American military aid in the aftermath of the Chinese attack.76

The tone and content of the article were consonant with that of Beijing's anti-Soviet polemics of 1960 and prefigured its anti-Soviet polemics of 1963-4, thus marking it as a weapon in the ideological struggle with Moscow rather than in the military struggle with India. Mao was again condemning Khrushchev's theoretical position that there could be peaceful transitions to communism in developing countries in general, and the consequent Soviet policy position of making friends with countries like India in particular. It was an 'I-told-you-so' riposte for Khrushchev's neutrality in the 1959 Sino-Indian border clashes which had so angered the Chinese leadership.77

**The second Chinese attack**

Nehru might have shrugged off Chinese abuse and could have lived with the personal enmity of China's leaders.78 Far more serious for him was the evidence of continuing Chinese military preparations in the eastern sector.
Even before the first Chinese attack, the staff of the Sichuan-based 54th Corps, which had fought in the Korean War, including the commander, Ding Sheng, and deputy commander, Wei Tongtai, were formed into a separate command to take charge of the 'defence' of the eastern section of the eastern sector, bringing their 130th division with them; a regiment was despatched from Qinghai.79

Yet the inexperienced General Kaul, now recovered and back in command in NEFA, 80 was as ebullient as ever, and decided to attack the Chinese on 14 November, in one area only and not as part of a general offensive, for no better reason than that it was Nehru's birthday. He happened to choose the eastern section of the eastern sector, where arrayed against him were Ding Sheng's Korean War veterans. Indian HQ staff appraisals of superior Chinese strength were ignored, and the result was a shattering defeat for brave but outmatched Indian units, prompting Kaul finally to acknowledge that he had insufficient forces for his assignment and to urge New Delhi to recruit foreign forces to come to India's aid!81 As one Indian historian later put it, 'It was clear that the Indian army command was in desperate confusion. Grip, insight and poise were wholly lacking. '82

This was even more the case when the Chinese followed up with what was clearly their pre-planned attack in both east and west on 18 November, deploying eight infantry regiments and three artillery regiments on the NEFA front. 83 Insufficient attention to military considerations and excessive concern for political ones had placed the main Indian forces in the eastern sector in highly vulnerable positions,84 and they were decisively routed as the Chinese pushed forward. Rumors spread that the Chinese would soon arrive on the plains of Assam, perhaps parachute troops into New Delhi itself, and morale in the capital collapsed. Nehru appealed privately to President Kennedy for American warplanes.85 A US carrier force steamed towards the Bay of Bengal, and a squadron of transport planes arrived. But
on 21 November, Beijing unilaterally proclaimed a cease-fire and announced that its forces would soon start withdrawing from NEFA. This time there was no question of India preparing for a counteroffensive. The Chinese had convincingly taught their lesson. China had no intention of giving up Aksai Chin and it had the means with which to defend that disputed territory. Moreover, a renewal of India's forward policy could once again result in a massive threat along the whole frontier.

But the protection of Chinese security interests and the concomitant humiliation of China's Asian 'rival' were not the only benefits achieved by this successful punitive expedition. Nehru's appeal for Western aid in his hour of need dented, if it did not destroy, India's image as a non-aligned nation, thus diminishing its status both in the Communist bloc and the Third World. China, on the other hand, had dispelled its most recent image as a country crippled by economic disasters, ripe perhaps for revolt and invasion. Beijing had also demonstrated to a deaf Moscow the unwisdom of choosing India over China as an ally. Most importantly, it had signaled to its erstwhile communist partner that the banner of militant Marxism-Leninism had once more been unfurled over Beijing. The question that remains unanswerable is: if Mao had still been in retirement, would Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai have chosen to teach Mr Nehru a lesson in quite so brutal a fashion? Probably not, in the light of their support for san he yi shao.

Khrushchev's position on the border war
In fact, Moscow had tilted more towards Beijing in the border dispute this time than in 1959, though the Chinese were still aggrieved about Soviet weapons sales to India. On 8 October,

a Chinese leader told the Soviet Ambassador that China had information that India was about to launch a massive attack along the Sino-Indian border and that should India attack we would resolutely
defend ourselves. He also pointed out that the fact that Soviet-made helicopters and transport planes were being used by India for airdropping and transporting military supplies in the Sino-Indian border areas was making a bad impression on our frontier guards.

In the week following this conversation, Khrushchev demonstrated how eager he was to propitiate the Chinese at this juncture by his unusually cordial handling of Ambassador Liu Xiao as he prepared to return home after eight years in his post. When Liu paid his formal parting call, Khrushchev gave him a two-hour tour d'horizon of his views on world affairs, and on 14 October the Soviet 1st secretary summoned the whole of the CPSU Presidium (Politburo) to a farewell dinner, seating the ambassador's wife between himself and his senior colleague, Frol Kozlov. Rising to his feet, Khrushchev recalled with nostalgia the strength of the Sino-Soviet relationship prior to 1958, and expressed the hope that the two countries would cease dwelling on past quarrels, and instead could turn a fresh page in their relationship. Socialist countries should respect each other's domestic policies, and if there were differences between Moscow and Beijing on the issue of transition to socialism, life itself would instruct them who was right.

On the question of the Sino-Indian border dispute, the Soviet Union was on China's side, Khrushchev said. This was the unanimous position of the CPSU Presidium. Nehru's comments as he left New Delhi airport for Sri Lanka showed that he was propitiating domestic reaction. If unhappily there were an attack on China, 'we stand together with China'. If the Chinese wished, the Soviet Union would proclaim this the following day; it had not done so previously to avoid driving the Indians into the arms of the Americans, who were trying to sell them arms. Turning to the aircraft issue, Khrushchev apparently did not refer to past Soviet sales to India, though in a
subsequent memorandum the Soviet government claimed that the planes which the Chinese had complained about had no military significance and did not affect the balance of power on the border. At the dinner, Khrushchev refrained from so impolitic a claim. Instead he expressed as his personal view, but with Kozlov and others indicating assent, that the Soviet Union should postpone selling Mig-21s to India until after the border dispute was settled, not because a few aircraft would make India stronger than China but to prevent 'our enemies' from sowing discord. Of course, after his experience in Beijing in 1959, Khrushchev was well aware that it would not be enemies but his 'friends' in China who would take him to task, and indeed the announcement of the Mig deal by the Indians in mid-August had been given prominent play in the Beijing media.

Liu Xiao informed Khrushchev that Indian troops were massing on the eastern sector of the frontier, and that if they attacked, China would resist them. Khrushchev said that this information coincided with the Soviet Union's, and, again mindful of 1959, added: 'If the Soviet Union were placed in China's position it would select the same measures.' A neutral attitude on the border issue was impossible; if China were attacked, it would be an act of betrayal to declare neutrality.

How sincere Liu Xiao thought Khrushchev was is unclear. But his wife, Zhang Yi, reminded Liu that in pursuit of its strategic aims, the Soviet leadership had treated radians with special courtesies since the 1950s. As a result of her own round of farewell visits, she was able to inform her husband that this policy was still in place. The wife of the Indian ambassador to Moscow had informed Zhang Yi that she and her husband, also about to relinquish his post, had been invited to spend a month in the Crimea a prior to returning home. This was contrary to diplomatic practice, and all that Liu Xiao and Zhang Yi rated was a more customary invitation from Mikoyan to return at some future time.
Zhou Enlai would have been sensitive to such diplomatic niceties; he never forgot Dulles's refusal to shake his hand at the 1954 Geneva conference. For Mao, they were doubtless bourgeois irrelevancies; he had hated having to receive ambassadorial credentials when he was head of state. Neither man trusted Khrushchev, however, and by the time Liu Xiao returned home and reported in minute detail to the centre about the Khrushchev dinner, they decided that the Soviet leader's expressions of support did not warrant a response.

Nevertheless, shortly after the Chinese attack began on 20 October, Nehru received a letter from Khrushchev in which the Soviet leader alluded to earlier reports of India's intention to initiate hostilities and urged him to agree to Zhou's offer of talks. Soviet officials followed through on Khrushchev's undertaking to Liu Xiao on Mig-2IS, telling the Indian embassy in Moscow that the Soviet commitment to sell these to New Delhi would not be fulfilled. The closest that Khrushchev came to a public commitment to the Chinese was a Pravda editorial on 25 October, which said only that the McMahon Line had been imposed on both Indians and Chinese, that the Chinese had never recognized it, and that Beijing's statement of the previous day constituted a satisfactory basis for opening negotiations. Slim pickings, from the Chinese point of view. Whereas a speech of support by the North Vietnamese Foreign Minister was accorded front-page treatment by the People's Daily, the Pravda editorial was reported on the back page, after stories of similar press support in North Korea and North Vietnam.

**The Cuban missile crisis**

Khrushchev's restraint in the Sino-Soviet dispute in the summer and early autumn of 1962, his modest tilt to Beijing and away from New Delhi, and his cordial treatment of Ambassador Liu Xiao, probably had less to do with
a change of heart on the Sino-Indian border issue and more to do with his anticipated confrontation with the United States. Khrushchev needed to face Kennedy with a united Communist bloc behind him. The Chinese had not wanted a two-front war in the summer of 1962; Khrushchev did not want to have to confront both America and China in the autumn.

Khrushchev anticipated provoking this confrontation in early November, after America's mid-term congressional elections. At that point, he would reveal to Kennedy that the Russians had placed nuclear missiles in Cuba. If Chinese 'militancy' in its relations with India could in part be attributed to Nehru's forward policy in the Himalayas, equally Beijing's renewal of the Sino-Soviet polemics in the autumn of 1962 could in part be attributed to Khrushchev's 'forward' policy in the Caribbean, which led to the Cuban missile crisis.

According to his own account, the Soviet leader had long worried that the Americans, unreconciled to the existence of a communist state on their doorstep, would again attempt to overthrow his ally Castro, and that next time they would be more successful than during the Bay of Pigs fiasco of April 1961. If the Soviet Union 'lost' Cuba, it would be 'a terrible blow to Marxism-Leninism. It would gravely diminish our stature throughout the world, but especially in Latin America.' Finally, in April-May 1962, Khrushchev came up with the idea of secretly emplacing Soviet missiles in Cuba to deter an American attack. This policy would have the additional advantage of exposing the United States to a threat equivalent to that experienced by the Soviet Union from American missiles in Turkey. Indeed, though Khrushchev did not admit this in his memoirs, the missiles he planned to send to Cuba could have 'quadrupled the number of nuclear warheads that Soviet missiles could drop on the United States'. Conceivably, this, and not Cuban security, was the real reason for Khrushchev's gamble.
The Soviet leader managed to persuade his colleagues and, with much greater difficulty, Castro to agree to the policy. His assumption was that if Kennedy were presented with a fait accompli, he would accept it. He failed to appreciate that an operation of this magnitude could not be kept secret from the myriad American instruments of surveillance on Cuba, and he totally miscalculated Kennedy's reaction. Khrushchev planned to reveal what he had done after the November elections to prevent embarrassing Kennedy into a heated response. But on 14 October, the same day as the Soviet leader entertained Liu Xiao to dinner, the CIA concluded that film taken over Cuba that morning by a U-2 aircraft showed that missile silos were being constructed on the island.

Thereafter, the crisis developed rapidly. On 22 October, Kennedy revealed America's discovery, demanded that the missiles be removed, and announced a naval quarantine of Cuba to prevent further shipments of Soviet weapons. No arms-carrying vessels tested the blockade, and after a tense week, and exchanges of notes between Kennedy and Khrushchev, the latter agreed on 28 October to remove the Soviet missiles and dismantle the installations for them. Despite Khrushchev's claim then and in his memoirs that his policy had been worthwhile, for it had forced the Americans to pledge not to invade Cuba, this dénouement was a humiliation, and the whole episode cost the Soviet Union a billion dollars.

The chronology of this period illustrates the overlapping development of the crises in the Caribbean and on the Himalayas:
**Crises Timetables**

**October**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Khrushchev pledges support for China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>United States discovers missile silos on Cuba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>First Chinese attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Khrushchev letter to Nehru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Kennedy reveals Soviet missiles, demands removal, imposes naval quarantine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>China proposes talks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Soviet ships halt en route Cuba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Pravda editorial tilts to China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>First ship stopped by US Navy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>First Chinese offensive ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Khrushchev agrees to remove missiles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**November**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early</td>
<td>Moscow resumes neutrality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-14</td>
<td>Chinese criticized at Bulgarian party congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Indian attack; Soviet ambassador conveys good wishes to Nehru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Second Chinese attack</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before 21\textsuperscript{st} Mig-2I sales confirmed

20-4  Sino-Soviet clashes at Hungarian party congress

21  Chinese cease-fire

**December**

1  Chinese withdrawal commences

4-8  Sino-Soviet clashes at Czech party congress

Ambassador Liu Xiao reportedly informed Beijing in advance about Khrushchev’s missile plan,\textsuperscript{107} though the Chinese probably knew about it anyway, for they had excellent sources of information in Cuba. But while Khrushchev undoubtedly handled the Himalayan crisis with the Caribbean in mind, it is highly unlikely that the Chinese did the same. The Himalayan crisis was clearly looming long before the first Chinese attack, with Chinese communications to Moscow as well as their propaganda giving Khrushchev ample warning of what might happen. But the Caribbean crisis did not erupt until after the first Chinese attack, and the Chinese had no means of foreseeing American reactions, which, if Khrushchev’s calculations had been correct, would not have resulted in a potential Armageddon.\textsuperscript{108} Moreover, if the Chinese had any inkling of Soviet plans, they would have known that any Soviet-American confrontation was unlikely to be precipitated by Khrushchev before the second week of November.\textsuperscript{109} By that time, had Nehru agreed to negotiate after their first attack, the Himalayan crisis would have been over.\textsuperscript{110}

The conjunction of the crises was crucially important for Mao, enabling him forcefully to remind his colleagues of what he clearly saw as Khrushchev’s perfidy and cowardice: perfidy in the Himalayas, as he had displayed under similar circumstances in 1959, and cowardice in the Caribbean, as he had
displayed in the Middle East in 1958.111 A year later, when open polemics had begun between Beijing and Moscow, the Chinese revealed how they had felt about Soviet behaviour during the Himalayan crisis: 'During the Caribbean crisis, they spoke a few seemingly fair words out of considerations of expediency. But when the crisis was over, they went back on their words. They have sided with the Indian reactionaries against China all the time ...a complete betrayal of proletarian internationalism...'

After the end of the missile crisis but before the Chinese cease-fire, the Soviet ambassador in New Delhi had conveyed his country's good wishes to Nehru, indicating that Moscow was tilting back into neutrality, though the sales of Mig-2IS proceeded only after the Chinese cease-fire.113 In that respect, Khrushchev kept his word.

Unlike the Russians on the border war, the Chinese were anything but lukewarm on the missile crisis. Massive rallies—which had not been mounted in connection with the border war—were held and Chinese leaders spoke in support of the Russians and Cubans. This was a strong testimonial to CCP belief in the importance of bloc solidarity in East-West crises, for Beijing's leaders actually disapproved of Khrushchev's policy of placing missiles in Cuba, regarding it, as they later revealed, as unnecessary and 'adventurist'. Far worse, however, was Khrushchev's agreement to pull the missiles out, which they characterized as 'capitulationist'.

In the light of these events, very few of Mao's colleagues would have been prepared to stand up for the policy of san he yi shao, and it was inevitable that Mao would eventually call an end to the uneasy Sino-Soviet truce that had prevailed since the beginning of 1962.

**Polemics resume**

Again, however, it appears to have been the Russians who struck first. The arenas were four East European communist party congresses, held
successively from early November 1962 through mid-January 1963. Almost thirty years later, the leader of the Chinese fraternal delegations to all four meetings, Wu Xiuquan, gave the CCP’s version of how the Moscow-Beijing split grew wider as congress followed congress.

At the first congress, that of the Bulgarian party in Sofia, there were many open attacks on the Albanian communist party along with veiled ones on the CCP, with a few delegations naming it tooY5 Clearly, critics were taking their lead from the CPSU; the Bulgarian leader, Todor Zhivkov, had been in Moscow only a couple of days before the congress opened. Wu did not attempt to debate the allegations. Instead, to indicate his disapproval of a critical passage, which he immediately picked up on from the simultaneous translation in Russian, Wu would neither rise to his feet nor applaud along with everyone else, and since he was on the platform, his behavior was widely noted. Wu's own speech was composed only of the customary greetings and brief report on domestic developments, with a comment that the CCP thought that the criticisms of the Albanians served only the imperialists. The audience stood and applauded at its start and end, perhaps, Wu felt, because he had been polite. At the banquet thrown by the Bulgarian party for its guests, however, he was less polite. Protocol meant that Wu had to sit next to the chief CPSU delegate, Suslov, whom he studiously ignored throughout the meal because of the criticisms the Soviet Ideologist had voiced in his speech.

At the customary formal call on Zhivkov after the close of the congress, Wu's main concern was to explain the Chinese position on the border war in order, he later wrote, to combat any wrong impressions the Bulgarian leader might have got from the Western media—an interesting acknowledgement of communist leaders' willingness to believe Western reports on a fraternal country rather than the latter's own information, presumably because they were only too well aware of the mendaciousness
of their own propaganda. Zhivkov, like Janos Kadar at the subsequent Hungarian congress, had in fact followed the resumed Soviet line of urging peace in the Himalayas while remaining neutral on the issues.

The widespread official antagonism to the CCP in Eastern Europe was further illustrated when the Chinese delegation went from Sofia to Bucharest for a few days' rest. When they went to buy their airline tickets in the Romanian capital to go to Budapest to attend the Hungarian party congress, the Chinese were told that no ne were available, and they got tickets only by appealing to the Hungarian embassy. The plane of course turned out to be far from full.

The Hungarians took precautions to avoid embarrassment from a repeat of Wu's tactics in Sofia by issuing an instruction that there was to be no standing up to indicate approval of speeches at their communist party congress. But of course, as Wu commented, they could not forbid applause and he would still be able to sit on his hands if he had cause to object to a speech. In fact, the CCP fared even worse under the auspices of the Hungarians than under those of the Bulgarians. The Chinese delegation calculated that twenty of the sixty-four parties attending the Sofia meeting attacked them, but in Budapest it rose to thirty out of sixty. Only the North Vietnamese delegation openly expressed friendship for the CCP. Wu reported all this to Beijing and requested instructions.

On the morning of the final day of the Hungarian congress, 24 November, an official asked the CCP delegation if there would be a Chinese speech at the closing reception that night. Since no directive had yet arrived from Beijing, the delegation had to temporize, promising a reply in the afternoon. Fortunately a telegram arrived in the lunch interval with instructions to use the reception to rebut critics, making three major points: the worsening of relations between the CPSU on the one hand and the CCP and the Albanians on the other was attributable to Moscow; the
current anti-China chorus was being directed by the CPSU; party congresses should be the occasion for promoting unity not fomenting splits. The telegram included an official Chinese statement which had to be read out.

Wu's heart sank, presumably because he knew the furore this would cause. Nevertheless, he quickly had the statement translated into Russian and Hungarian and devised a plan to prevent his being stopped in mid-protest. If he followed the normal practice of paragraph by paragraph translation, he anticipated being interrupted as soon as the audience got the drift, so on the pretext of saving time, he got his hosts to agree to his interpreter simply reading the speech in Hungarian. The trick worked, but after the strong Chinese protest had been read, a Latin American communist was put up by the Russians to counter-attack. Kâdâr personally came up to Wu Xiuquan and said: 'I did not think that your delegation could make a speech like this, and we can only express our regret at your conduct.' Wu replied that he understood what Kâdâr was saying and that his delegation could stay no longer at the reception.119

Wu and the delegation then went to Poland to spend time with his colleague Ambassador Wang Bingnan before the Czech congress opened on 4 December. He found the Poles much more hospitable than the Romanians, and he accepted an invitation to go boar hunting, a pastime he had learned while ambassador to Yugoslavia. But after a pleasant week he had to face the music in Prague.120

Clearly stung by Wu's seizure of the initiative at the Hungarian congress, the CPSU delegation, which included a hefty contingent of specialists from its international department, came well prepared for the Czech one. A few days earlier, at the Italian party congress, attacks on the Chinese had increased, and the member of Wu's delegation who had represented the
CCP was heard in silence. The People's Daily replied with a criticism of the Italian party leader, Palmiro Togliatti.

On the eve of the Hungarian congress, the People's Daily and Red Flag had published indirect criticism of Khrushchev's behaviour in the missile crisis though without naming him, and the CPSU had by now had a chance to assess these attacks and to co-ordinate countermeasures with its satellites. The Czech 1st secretary, Antonin Novotny, accused the Albanians-read the Chinese-of egging the Cubans on to a nuclear war, and attacked unnamed 'dogmatists, sectarians, and nationalists' who supported them. The leader of the Soviet delegation, Leonid Brezhnev, expressed concern that people who called themselves Marxists could regret that the Cuban revolution had been saved without war. From then on, there was re unremitting drumbeat of criticism of the Albanians and their Chinese allies from Czech and foreign speakers. The Chinese delegation again made a little list: of over sixty fraternal delegations, fifty attacked the Albanians by name, and of these, twenty attacked the CCP by name. Even the North Koreans were attacked for disagreeing with this procedure and strongly supporting the Chinese. The odds against Beijing were increasing. Wu, cautioned by Beijing not to retreat, once again protested the use of a party congress to attack a fraternal party, and once again, with a clever manoeuvre, he outwitted his host, Novotny, and won the right to hand out a copy of a new official Chinese statement to that effect to every foreign delegation. Almost certainly, these petty Chinese tactical successes in manipulating local procedural conventions infuriated the leaden-footed leaders of the East European satellites far beyond their intrinsic importance and increased the venom with which they imitated their master's voice. Equally, the East Europeans, doubtless guided by Moscow, got some revenge with protocol victories, though Wu Xiuquan did not record this in his memoirs: in his speech, Novotny listed the CCP in eighth place, below
all the East European parties, instead of second, after the CPSU, as had been customary; at the East German congress, Walter Ulbricht would list them ninth, below Mongolia as well.129

These events, big and small, were viewed with intense interest back in Beijing. On 14 December, the day that Wu and his colleagues returned there for a brief vacation before the East German congress, the People's Daily published a selection of Novotny's anti-Chinese remarks, and followed it up the next day with an editorial calling on proletarians of the world to unite against their common imperialist enemy. More significantly, Mao summoned Wu to Hangzhou and had him give a blow-by-blow description of his experiences. The Chairman pronounced himself satisfied, and commended Wu for his conduct.130

Wu returned to East Berlin for his final bout in mid-January 1963 to find that Khrushchev was leading the Soviet delegation, and that the East Germans had devised even tougher measures to prevent dissident foreign voices being heard. Only delegations led by the first secretary had the right to deliver their fraternal greetings orally; others would have to be content with presenting them in writing and having them published in the local press. Realizing that this would provoke an enormous row if followed rigidly, the East German excused China and Czechoslovakia-Novotny had not come-from the rule. Other parties had to be content with regional spokesmen: the Cubans spoke for Latin America, the Japanese for Asia. This meant that pro-Chinese parties like the North Koreans and the Indonesians could not speak, and their messages were in fact not published in the East German press.131 Worse still, in his opening report the East German party leader, Walter Ulbricht, blamed the Chinese for abandoning peaceful coexistence on the Sino-Indian border.

In what seems to have been a variation of the old 'bad cop/good cap' routine, Khrushchev followed up Ulbricht's hatchet job with a partially
conciliatory speech, perhaps another attempt to corral the Chinese delegation and to avert a Prague-type fiasco. He spent considerable time justifying Soviet behaviour in the missile crisis on the lines he later adopted in his memoirs, and went on to deride the Chinese, though without naming them, for the polemics they had issued on this subject:

Some people who consider themselves Marxists opine that the way to combat imperialism is not, above all, by building up the socialist countries' economic strength—thath tangible factor with which our enemies reckon; no, they have invented a new method of doing it, probably the cheapest ever known. This method, you see, does not depend on a country's economic level, it does not depend on the quality and quantity of armaments; it consists in nothing but abuse. These people imagine that to engage in endless swearing and cursing at imperialism is to do what will best help the socialist countries. This is a sort of voodoo belief in the power of curses and incantations.132

Khrushchev proposed that, from now on, public intra-party debates should cease, that within their own ranks parties should desist from criticizing fraternal parties, and that the Albanians should abandon their mistaken viewpoints and return to the large and fraternal socialist family. The East Germans immediately supported this 'correct advice', and demanded to know the Chinese delegation's response.

Wu and his colleagues reasoned that, despite the heated atmosphere, Khrushchev had not yet decided on precipitating a split and anyway did not want to assume the responsibility for one—which probably mirrored Mao's position, though Wu did not comment on that—and so had put up a smoke-screen to deceive middle-of-the-road foreign communists. This placed the Chinese in a dilemma: if they did not fall in with Khrushchev's suggestion, they would be seen as the splitters, but if they agreed to it, they would lose the opportunity of making their case. New instructions arrived from Beijing
along with the text of the CCP's official greeting. The latter was translated and printed, and all available Chinese officials were impressed into distributing copies in an effort to evade the anticipated East German refusal to publish it. On 18 January, with Khrushchev pointedly absent, Wu Xiuquan went to the podium to read it out. The Chinese line was that everyone should pay more attention to deeds than to words, in order to be able to distinguish between false unification and actual splitting. Wu also expressed 'extreme regret' that the host party had chosen to use their congress as the occasion for attacking a fraternal party.

Provoked by Wu's criticisms of Yugoslavia, whose representatives were at the congress, the East German chairman repeatedly tried to cut Wu's speech short by ringing his bell, but Wu read on. The East German delegates, led by their senior cadres, tried to drown him out with shouts and whistles, stamping their feet and beating on their desks. When they finally subsided, Wu started up again, briefly departing from his text to say: 'You German comrades have done well for you've let us see your "civilization".' When the German interpreter failed to translate this unscripted comment, a German-speaking Chinese jumped into the breach, provoking another noisy outburst of barracking. In protest at this rudeness, the Chinese delegation took no further part in the proceedings except to attend the final session. When Khrushchev and Ulbricht entered, Wu and his colleagues refused to stand or applaud and at the end of the meeting they did not even wait to sing the Internationale. Wu's coolness under fire earned him good coverage in the foreign press and hearty appreciation from his Chairman.133

But despite this unprecedented public confrontation, on the key issue, Wu indicated the CCP willingness to talk to the CPSU after a suitable preparatory period. The running battle of the congresses later in 1963
notwithstanding, the CCP and the CPSU would sit down together in one last, futile effort to resolve their differences.