



Beware of Thucydides Trap and Avoid the Tragedy of Soviet Union and Yugoslavia's Conflict — A Brief Analysis of the Reasons for the Changes in the Diplomatic Situation Between China and Yugoslavia before the Establishment of the Socialist System in New China

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Abstract: In modern and contemporary history, Yugoslavia once confirmed the existence of the "Thucydides Trap", and had disagreements and conflicts with the socialist camp led by the Soviet Union. Therefore, Yugoslavia's international status witnessed fluctuations several times. Taking this as a juncture, China, as a country that spared no efforts to avoid the "Thucydides Trap" and followed the path of peaceful development, was also inevitably affected. China had witnessed many twists and turns in diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia. With the rise and fall of Soviet Union and Yugoslavia's Conflict, China made corresponding adjustment in its diplomatic thought and practice. Against the backdrop of the current international arena, some people believe that China's rapid rise will inevitably lead to conflicts with the old hegemony such as the United States and Japan. However, as a matter of fact, there is no such thing as a "Thucydides Trap" in the world. However, continuous strategic miscalculation among major countries may create a "Thucydides Trap" for themselves. This paper aims to analyze the reasons for the changes in the diplomatic situation between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia and between China and Yugoslavia before the establishment of the socialist system of New China through the case study method, and expounds the great significance of vigilance against "Thucydides Trap" for today's peaceful development world.

Keywords: Thucydides Trap, Yugoslavia, China

1. Introduction

The "Thucydides Trap" refers that a rising power will inevitably pose challenge to the existing power, and the existing power inevitably responds to the threat, so that war becomes inevitable.

In modern history, Yugoslavia once confirmed the existence of the "Thucydides Trap", and it had disagreements and conflicts with the socialist camp led by the Soviet Union, thus leading to several fluctuations in the international status of Yugoslavia. Soviet Union and Yugoslavia's Conflict culminated in the firing of Yugoslavia from the Intelligence service in June 1948, and it was not until around 1954 that relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia relieved. During this period, conflict between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia fluctuated several times. Taking this as a juncture, the diplomatic thought and practice of the Communist Party of China also underwent major adjustments along with the fluctuations of Soviet Union and Yugoslavia's Conflict. During this period, China, as a country that tried to avoid the "Thucydides Trap" and followed the path of peaceful development, was inevitably affected, and its diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia went through many twists and turns. This influence was particularly evident before the establishment of the new socialist system in 1956.

During his visit to the United States in 2015, President Xi Jinping said at the welcome dinner that there was no "Thucydides Trap" in the world, but the continuous strategic miscalculations among major countries may lead to their own "Thucydides Trap". In an exclusive interview with the initial issue of the World Post, President Xi pointed out that in response to the concern that there was certain conflict between China, the United States, Japan and other old hegemonic countries after its rapid rise, President Xi retorted in an exclusive interview: "We should all try to avoid falling into the Thucydides Trap."

Yugoslavia suffered great suffering due to the strategic misjudgment of "Thucydides Trap" in its modern history. This paper aims to analyze the reasons for the changes in the diplomatic situation between China and Yugoslavia before the establishment of the socialist system in New China and expound the great significance of vigilance against "Thucydides Trap" for the peaceful development of the world today.

2. During the World Wars — friendly exchanges

2.1 History of friendly exchanges between Yugoslavia and China

The Yugoslav Communist Party also developed friendly contacts. During the founding Conference of the United Nations, the two parties had their first formal contact. The Communist Party of China representative Dong Biwu introduced to the Yugoslav delegates that the Seventh Congress of the Communist Party of China was held long before, and at the same time, presented to the Yugoslav delegates a memorandum on China's liberated areas. Later, a report of Mao Zedong was sent to the Communist Party of Yugoslavia through the British Communists. The memos and reports sent to the Yugoslavia Communist Party were published by the Yugoslavia Communist Party in *Thirty Days* magazine.

The Communist Party of China also gave top priority to the activities of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. The first issue of the *People's Daily* introduced Yugoslavia's experience in winning Western countries' aid and building a united front, and showed favorable meaning. The Communist Party was interested in reaching out to Yugoslavia and was considering establishing a propaganda center in Yugoslavia for the whole of Europe.

China's friendly interaction with Yugoslavia is not only based on the ideological identification of the two countries, rather it lies on the fact that both countries share a common "good brother" -- the Soviet Union. According to the Sino-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, the Soviet Union provided countless economic loans and military aid to China during the world War, and was one of the most important donors to China. Economic base determines superstructure, therefore, high economic dependence lead to the synchronization of our country and Soviet Union in political tendency. As "good brothers" under the banner of "eldest brother", China and South Africa conducted very frequent exchanges at this time.

2.2 History of friendly relations between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union

In modern history, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia were also two good-neighborly and friendly countries that helped each other. In the First World War, based on the foundation of both Slavs, Russia was willing to fight with the German Austro-Hungarian Empire to support the independence struggle of the Yugoslav nation. In the brutal struggle against fascism in World War II, the two peoples fought side by side until victory. The Soviet Union supported the overthrow of the pro-German regime in Yugoslavia and encouraged Yugoslav guerrillas.

On October 20, 1944, the Yugoslav People's Armed Forces liberated Belgrade with the help of the Soviet Red Army. On April 11, 1945, the two sides signed a treaty of friendship, mutual assistance and post-war cooperation. Soviet-south relations developed in various fields, and the Yugoslav Communist League was once regarded by the Soviet Union as the most mature and politically committed party after the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolshevik).

3. Before and after the victory of World War II — laying hidden dangers for Soviet Union and Yugoslavia's Conflict

Josip Broz Tito, a prominent Yugoslav leader, expressed his sincere gratitude for the Soviet Union's assistance to Yugoslavia, but at the same time, he was highly alert to the Soviet Union's attempts to control Yugoslavia and to violate its sovereignty. He had repeatedly expressed his displeasure to Stalin in person, and had steadfastly disobeyed the Soviet in order to preserve the interests of Yugoslavia. The Soviet Union repeatedly made explicit criticism of Yugoslavia, accusing Yugoslavia of not forming the habit of getting in touch with the Soviet Union in all things, and even imposing its own will on Yugoslavia by using its deterrent power to force it to give up its own ideas.

If we look back at the latent risks of the conflict between the two countries, it can be found that these are not irreconcilable contradictions in principle, rather is was more rooted in the fact that the Soviet Union's Grand Congress doctrine put Yugoslavia in an unequal position and thus leading to the power struggle between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

3.1 Relations between the Soviet Union and the government-in-exile of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia

One cause for concern was the relationship between the Soviet Union and the government-in-exile of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

In August 1941, shortly after the outbreak of the Soviet-German war, the Soviet Union and the Yugoslav government -in- exile restored diplomatic relations and kept in frequent contact. In August the following year, they were raised to ambassadorial level. At the end of November 1943, the Yugoslavia Communist Party held the second meeting of the Yugoslav People's Liberation Committee, at which it decided to establish a new regime body, the Yugoslav National Liberation Committee, and announced that the exiled government was deprived of its power as the legitimate government of Yugoslavia. This was strongly opposed by Soviet Stalin, who thought Tito was ignoring the Soviet Union.

Tito later reached a compromise with the government-in-exile under Soviet pressure, but he held grudge against it.

3.2 The Soviet Union's blow to the Yugoslavia's industrialization program

After the end of World War II, in order to prevent Yugoslavia from further expanding its military strength and becoming another "small Soviet Union" in the world with strong heavy industry and thus escaping from the control of the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union did not support the industrialization plan of Yugoslavia, rather it was the expectation of the Soviet Union to turn it into a raw material producing area and sales market. Although ravaged Yugoslavia was in desperate need of Soviet economic aid, the Soviets strongly opposed Yugoslavia's industrialization plans. In August 1946, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia held negotiations, and during the joint talks, the Soviet representative directly asked Yugoslavia the reasons why heavy industry was a need. Our Urals are enough. The Yugoslav side argued that the Soviet Union wanted to control its economic development in the negotiations, which put the two sides in an unequal position.

3.3 Disagreement on the establishment of a Balkan federation

The real reason for the break was their disagreement over the creation of a Balkan federation.

After the Marshall Plan was put forward, the Soviet Union tried to build a loyal alliance of countries in Eastern Europe, with itself as the leader of the alliance and relying on collective strength to counterbalance the Western forces led by the United States. So he brought Eastern Europe into his sphere of influence, and he controlled it ideologically, and he absolutely couldn't allow the Eastern European countries to build their own connections beyond the Soviet Union, to get out of its control.

In the Balkans, Yugoslavia, the regional leader, tried to create a union of countries in the region, including Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia and others. Such "treason" behavior was absolutely intolerable to the Soviet Union, and the contradiction between the two countries was finally put on the table.

On January 21, 1948, during a visit to Romania, Bulgarian Prime Minister Grigor Dimitrov made a set of shocking remarks: "Once conditions are mature, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Romania and other countries, together with Greece, will consider establishing a federation or confederation."

The talk attracted wide international attention. The Soviet Union, eager to dominate the Eastern European countries, showed strong opposition. On January 28, the Soviet government issued a statement strongly opposing the idea. To prevent Yugoslavia and other Eastern European countries from taking further diplomatic actions behind the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union forced the other countries to sign an agreement on future consultations with each other on diplomatic issues. This lack of respect for Yugoslav sovereignty caused a great deal of anger throughout Yugoslavia.

4. Cold War period — Outbreak of Soviet Union and Yugoslavia's Conflict

4.1 Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union

On 18 March 1948, the Soviet Union unilaterally announced the withdrawal of all military advisers and instructors from Yugoslavia, and decided to withdraw all civilian experts the following day, putting the entire industrialization of Yugoslavia in crisis. Then the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries began to impose an economic blockade on Yugoslavia.

From March to May, the two parties exchanged letters to elaborate their respective views. The Soviet Communist Party accused the Communist Party of Yugoslavia of being anti-Soviet, abandoning Marxism-Leninism, abandoning the leadership of the Party, underestimating the Soviet experience, pursuing opportunistic theories, and claiming that spies were rife in the Yugoslavia Party and government institutions. The Yugoslavia Communist Party retorted, saying that the party followed Marxism-Leninism with Soviet Union as the model for independence.

On June 28, 1948, the European Communist Intelligence Agency announced the expulsion of Yugoslavia. The Soviet Union accused Titoga of being a traitor and agent of foreign imperialists before, during and after the war. In December 1948, the Soviet Union imposed trade sanctions on Yugoslavia and called on the Yugoslavia to overthrow the Yugoslavia Communist leadership. The Soviet Union and Eastern European countries completely severed relations with the Yugoslavia. On September 28, 1949, the Soviet Union announced the Abrogation of the Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Post-war Cooperation between the two countries.

4.2 Yugoslavia's exchanges with China

Since the founding of the Soviet Union in 1949, the Soviet Union has provided China with many high-interest loans in the form of equipment, machinery and various materials. In order to help China recover as soon as possible after the war, the Soviet government assisted the construction of 50 key projects in the coal, electric power, iron and steel, non-ferrous metals, chemical industry, machinery and military sectors, which were badly needed for economic recovery. The project covers energy industry, raw material industry, civil machinery processing, national defense and military industry, paper industry

and other fields.

During the period of China's first and second Five-Year Plans, the assistance from Soviet focused on the construction of basic industrial facilities known as "156 Items". The machinery and equipment for these projects were mainly delivered by trade in goods rather than loans, while the technology was provided free of charge. In 1952, when China formulated its First Five-Year Plan, Stalin agreed to help build 141 key projects. In 1954, Khrushchev added another 15 projects and improved their quality, which became the famous 156 projects that laid the foundation for China's industrialization. Later, a total of 150 projects were implemented, 44 of which are military enterprises, including the army, navy and air force all kinds of main combat equipment manufacturers. The most important assistance provided to China during the Khrushchev era was to help build nuclear bomb and missile production enterprises and corresponding technology, which transformed China from a poor agricultural country into an industrial country capable of making sophisticated weapons such as aircraft, tanks, artillery and missiles. You could say that the Soviet Union helped China copy an entire industrial system.

This determined our high dependence on the Soviet economy during the transitional period. In the field of international relations, it is necessary for China to highly follow the foreign and political policy of the Soviet Union.

4.2.1 China's strong criticism of Yugoslavia

After Yugoslavia was cleared out of the intelligence agency, on July 10, 1948, Xinhua News Agency broadcast the full text of the revised "Resolution of the Intelligence Agency on the Yugoslavia Communist Party". On the same day, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) issued the Resolution on the Question of the Yugoslavia Communist Party, responding to Soviet Union and Yugoslavia's Conflict. The resolution, broadcast by the Communist Party's radio station on July 11 and published in full in the People's Daily on July 14, criticized Yugoslavia's "treachery" to the international Communist movement and fully supported the intelligence Service's efforts to eradicate international "treachery". In response to the tone of the communist party of China is to fully support cia against the Soviet union's position and the route of Yugoslavia to first sentence that says "fully agreed to by the insured, the central committee of the communist party of China, Hungary, wave, Sue, France, Czech, Italy national intelligence conference of communist party about the communist Yugoslavia problem through the resolution", has a clear position.

On November 7, 1948, the October Revolution Day, the People's Daily published Liu Shaoqi's long article Discussion on Internationalism and Nationalism. Liu Shaoqi criticized the position of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia: the so-called "the Soviet Union is a red imperialist", "the Soviet Union invades China, Korea and other nationalities", "the Soviet Union implements an expansion policy" and other statements are baseless arbitrary propaganda and malicious slanders by the imperialist bourgeoisie.

4.2.2 "Shelving Policy"

Different from other countries, China and Yugoslavia did not implement strict economic blockade against Yugoslavia like the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries, and abolished the friendship treaty with Yugoslavia successively. The political differences between the two parties completely turned to confrontation between the two countries nor is it like the Western countries' wooing of Yugoslavia, which established a relationship between economic aid and aid recipients.

The condemnation, though vehement, was largely subject to propaganda. The CCP's criticism of Yugoslavia was basically the same as that of the Soviet Union, but the tone of the criticism was relatively low. However, the CCP believed that Soviet Union and Yugoslavia's Conflict was not an isolated incident of nationalism against internationalism, but an analysis based on the view of class struggle, which believed that the essence of the incident was the seizure of power by the bourgeois elements in the Southern Communist Party.

On October 6, 1949, Acting Foreign Minister Popovak of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia sent a message to Chinese Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai and issued a statement, announcing the recognition of the People's Republic of China and formally proposing the diplomatic initiative of establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries. According to the above, however, due to the complete breakdown of the relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, this political pattern made it difficult for the Communist Party of China to do anything about the relations between China and Yugoslavia. The Chinese Communist Party's proposal to establish diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia did not seem to be a strong opposition, but more like a "Shelving Policy", neither refusing publicly, nor taking the initiative; Political contacts through special channels have been maintained while no substantive measures have been taken.

It was not until 1954, after Stalin's death, that the new China accepted the Yugoslav proposal and began negotiations on the establishment of diplomatic relations, which was announced on January 10, 1955.

5. Conclusion

Soviet Union and Yugoslavia's Conflict was the biggest self-weakening act of the Soviet Union since the Cold War

began. Its original purpose was to clean up the noise in its own backyard kitchen in the context of the global Cold War, so that the Eastern bloc of the Soviet Union could compete with the United States and other Western countries as a powerful force. However, things went contrary to its wishes. The misjudgment of the "Thucydides Trap" made the Soviet Union lose an important ally in the early stage of the Cold War, which was a great loss to the Soviet Union's overall power in the Eastern bloc, which posed a significant impact on the exchanges between China and other socialist countries and Yugoslavia. At this time, the United States quickly took advantage of the favorable period formed by Soviet Union and Yugoslavia's Conflict and successfully disintegrated the internal unity of the Eastern bloc of the Soviet Union by providing economic and military assistance to Yugoslavia.

Thucydides based competition often leads to disastrous consequences. In today's world where peace and development are the mainstream, what we need to do is to try our best to find ways to avoid the "Thucydides Trap" and make reflections on Soviet Union and Yugoslavia's Conflict, learn from the US-Soviet competition, and draw lessons from the Cold War. The "Thucydides Trap" is a structural pressure. In the face of the rapid development of emerging countries, the existing powers should properly handle the differences of interests in key areas in order to avoid the occurrence of catastrophic war.

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