

— New Political Reality in Beijing Could Spark Old Friendship: Nakajima —

China Expert Says Sino-Soviet Reconciliation Imminent

By HITOKI DEN

The second round of Sino-Soviet sub-Cabinet level talks being held in Moscow since March 1 has given rise to various speculations as to what extent the two rival communist nations can actually improve their ties.

Most observers here have so far taken rather cautious views that the meeting, resumed five months after the first round of talks held in Beijing last October, will not bring any dramatic breakthrough in improving Sino-Soviet relations, characterized for the past two decades by hostility and acrimony.

But, Mineo Nakajima, professor of Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and this nation's leading China watcher, maintains that Sino-Soviet reconciliation is imminent since it is probable that the two countries will be able to reach an agreement during their high-level consultation by overcoming various problems existing between them.

"Once momentum is reached, bilateral ties can be improved considerably, even to such an extent that the two countries will restore the alliance similar to one which existed in the '50s," Nakajima said in a recent interview.

In explaining his argument,

Nakajima points out the fundamental shift that has taken place in China's domestic politics since the death of the late Mao Zedong.

"As a result of Mao's death and following de-Maoization initiated by China's de facto ruler Deng Xiaoping, ideological barriers that have separated the two countries have been completely removed," he said.

Nakajima gives special attention to the ascendance within the Chinese Communist Party hierarchy of professional cadres or "pragmatists," who associated themselves with the late Liu Shaoqi, Mao's arch-rival who was denounced as the "follower of the Soviet revisionism" during the

Cultural Revolution.

Examples of Shift

He names Vice Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, a Russian expert and the Chinese delegation head in the first and second rounds of the normalization talks, as such an example, not to mention Deng himself and General Secretary Hu Yaobang.

The professor also cited the rehabilitation of the late Marshal Peng Dehuai, who was purged after challenging Mao's ultra-leftist economic policy in 1959, and the "Learn Russian Language" movement launched by Hu early last year as other examples of the shifting trend in China's internal politics.

"With Deng and Hu consolidating their powers within the leadership, conditions are ripe for Sino-Soviet reconciliation," Nakajima said.

At the same time, he underscored the need of the two countries to unite together to cope with what he called the "crisis of socialism," exemplified in the recent cases of Poland and Afghanistan.

"Both China and the Soviet Union are now determined to do what they have to do for the benefit not only of their respective socialist structures but also of world socialism.

"The ongoing consultation, in

this sense, is the mere tip of the iceberg and the two countries are destined to reunite for the cause of the international socialism," he said.

Commenting on the three conditions China has set forth to improve its relations with Moscow, Nakajima said, "I do not think these conditions are that much important because the issue (of normalizing their relations) is entirely of a bilateral nature."

(China is demanding the Soviet Union stop supporting Vietnam, remove its troops from Outer Mongolia and withdraw its troops from Afghanistan, none of which appears at least at the moment to be acceptable to the Soviets.)

"China is determined to improve ties as long as it can save its face," he said.

Notice

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