“In his April 1956 speech “On the Ten Major Relationships” Mao drew on insights from the socialist upsurge to explicitly challenge premises of the first five-year plan and, for the first time, important features of the Soviet development path. This controversial and highly sensitive speech—was not officially published until after Mao’s death in 1977—is a landmark in the formulation of an independent Chinese socialist development strategy and a classic formulation of the dialectics of development”. (Seldon. M. 1979:67)

Parallel to Mark Seldon observation, it is an edict truth that this essay apart from disclosing the puzzle which dangle many Chinese about which way to choose in attaining of the socialist society, it explicitly reveals Mao’s epistemological stand which is “contradiction of forces”. Using the term ‘relationship’ Mao shows that development isn’t a linear path as believed by the Soviet Union in achieve massive industrialization but rather a dialectical. He disagrees with its model (the Soviet Union model) which insists on investing in urban large industries on the expense of rural agriculture and light industries. Using the ten problems highlighted by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee, Mao shows how the mobilizing all positive factors, internal and external, help to solve these problems and develop the cause of socialism. This paper is divided into two sections, the first section will briefly summarize ‘the ten major relationships’ developed by Mao Zedong, and the second section will pose some comments upon them.

FIRST SECTION: SUMMARY OF THE TEN MAJOR RELATIONSHIPS

Before properly presenting my personal comments on this text It's important to emphasize that those opinions refer to the specific speech being debated here, therefore one must bear in mind that many gaps and paradoxes highlighted here may have been reduced through other theoretical and practical assessments of Mao on those same issues.

On this essay Mao starts by discussing the relationship between heavy industry on one hand, light industry and agriculture on the other hand. His main idea is that, for
China to industrialize, it must not adopt the Soviet Union approach which dump agriculture and allocates all resources to the urban heavy industries as a result the country undergo shortage of raw material as well as food. For him, agriculture should be the base for all; capital for the heavy industries, food for the workers as well as raw material for the industries. But this will be attained only if peasants in rural areas will be empowered through collectivization and light industries to meet their basic needs.

Apart from that, Mao discusses the relationship between industry in the coastal regions and industry in the interior. Mao claims that, the concentration of industries at the coastal and exclude the interior is due to historical factors. According to him, there must be a balance between industries in the coastal area as well as interior. Those already established at the coastal areas should be developed to help those in the interior, by doing so; China will achieve the goal of industrialization.

Mao also discusses the relationship between economic construction and defence construction. In his observation, China should not commit the same mistake committed by the Soviet Union on investing much on weapons instead of uprooting the economy. He agrees that weapons, especially bombs, in this era are essential part of national security. But country like China should not invest in bombs and other weapons instead of economy. Economy should be developed to help national security. By developing the economy, it’s easy to develop the weapons for the national security.

On the relationship between the state, the units of production and the producers, Mao insists the importance of improving the working conditions of workers as well as autonomy of the units of production such as industries. Mao also insists on the importance of state lowering the price of agriculture products in order to easy the peasant’s access to it. Apart from that, Mao talks about the relationship between the central and the local authorities. In his opinion, the local authorities should be given enough authority to decide issues related to their daily activities. There must be enough relationship between central and local authorities; the latter should be consulted upon decision making by the formal.

Mao did not leave to talk about the relationship between the Han nationality and the minority nationality. According to him, the Han nationality which is the majority must respect the minority because the latter has the vast land compared to the formal. To have the integrated society, both the Han nationality and the minority must learn to live together and respect each other. Also the government and the majority should help the minority to develop their economic base and improve their life standard. Mao also talks about the relationship between party and non-party, and observes that even the non-party should be given opportunity to view their opinion.

On this essay, Mao spends a lot of time explaining about the relationship between revolution and counter-revolution. He proposes ways to deal with counter-revolutions; execution, imprisonment, supervision and leaving at large. He goes further to explain how the reasons to take those measures upon the counter-revolution. Apart from that, Mao talks about the relationship between rights and wrong. He insists people
to learn from their past mistakes in order to avoid future ones, this is the only way to be 
retained back to the community. Lastly, Mao talks about the relationship between China 
and the other countries. He insists the importance of learning the good from others and 
excludes the bad. Using an example of Stalin, he shows how important to keep learning 
from him despite how failure he was.

To make it brief, Mao attempts to show how difficult it is to apply the Soviet 
Union model in the Chinese context in order to develop the heavy industries as a way 
toward socialism. Using these ten major relationship, he was trying to show the 
different way of achieving socialist society differ from that envisaged by the Five-
Years Plan. To credit him, this essay is more convincing and rich in content in such a 
way it needs great attention to comment upon. However, like others it is not self 
sufficient, it has a lot to discuss.

The coming part, which is the essence of this paper, is my comments concerning 
this essay.

SECOND SECTION: THE COMMENTS

It should be remembered that Mao is a politician like others; he uses every 
possible means to gain popularity and mass support. Take it more strictly, this essay 
contains some Machiavellian element of The Prince which aimed to gain and maintain 
political power than solving people’s problems. It is nothing than a political speech 
aimed to conscientious people about his prejudice over the Soviet Union’s model of 
industrialization without giving the concrete solution. The rationale behind this repellent 
comment is the fact that, Mao explains ‘what’ without showing ‘how’. Take an example 
when he explains about the relationship between economic construction and defense 
construction, he seems to suggest that stopping to buy the weapons will increase the 
economy but he doesn’t explain how. You can cut the weapons expenditures but still 
embezzle in the other sectors. He was supposing to go further to explain how the cutting 
of military expenditure will lead to economic growth, and how the economic growth 
will lead to militarization.

Second, on the relationship between the Han nationality and the minority 
nationalities, Mao proves to be more material oriented than humanistic. He explains…
“The population of the minorities in our country is small but the area they inhabit is 
large. The Hans people comprise 94 percent of the total population, an overwhelming 
majority. If they practiced Han chauvinism and discriminated against the minority 
pople, that would be very bad. And who has more land?”… From this observation, it’s 
clear that the minority are valued on the account of what they possess, in this case the 
vast territory. At this point it’s sufficed to disqualify Mao from the classical Marxism 
who preferred an equal social relation regardless of material possession. To make it 
clearer, think about the condition of minority in the absence of land possession, would
they have chance to be heard or remembered? These are questions arise when read this essay.

Third is on the relationship between revolution and counter-revolution, it is not clear what the definition of counter-revolution according to Mao is. Is it to think different from him? Is it to go against the communist party ideology? Or is it an imposition of domination to the Chinese people? All these questions arise when read this part because he keeps insist on the punishments toward the deviant without clearly define what counter-revolution is according to him. Another thing to consider is when he disagrees that the counter-revolution criminals should not be taken to the court rather than special body. As far as I know, court is where justice can be done; out of the courts it’s rare to find the justice. Who will prove that the deviant committed real crime if there is no law expert? This part also shows the dual characters of Mao which proves him to be a smart politician. On this essay he stands firmly against the counter-revolution though he didn’t specify what it means to him, but later he seems to favor new ideas and contribution from intellectuals in order to improve the party, The Hundred Flowers.

On the relationship between right and wrong, Mao repeats the same mistake of jumping to the conclusion without analytical inferences. He jumps to the solution of the mistakes without clearly explains what kind of mistakes need such solution. He suggests that all criminals should be given time to learn from their past mistakes in order to avoid future mistakes. He also talks about giving helps to those people without clearly explaining which kind of help. The statement “learning from past mistakes to avoid future ones...” is too optimistic, what if an expected criminal will not meet the expectation? What measures will they taken upon him, more time to learn or execution?

Another controversial appears on the relationship between China and other countries. Mao suggests China to learn goods and exclude bad from the others but he forgets that what’s good for you is bad for me. This essay is an outcome of the criticism to the Soviet Union. He spends lots of time criticizing Soviet Union which was the great sponsor of the China economy. I wonder what good he meant if he can not appreciate the blueprint defined by the Soviet Union toward the transformation to socialism.

In order to conclude this analysis one must remind that the paradoxes presented by this text should not be taken as a clear picture of the paradoxes of the Peoples Republic of China itself, basically because, as already mentioned, those politics and propositions had to share the political arena with other measures and speeches which lead to a reduction or enlargement of many problems highlighted here as it happened to be the case.