Throughout 1949 Stalin pondered Mao's coming to power and finally they met in Moscow in December 1949 - February 1950. In those same months, Stalin celebrated his 70th birthday in grand style at the Bolshoi, Mao next to him, but two steps behind (to look the same height in the photographs!). Despite efforts, Stalin and Mao remained wary of each other, so instead of socialist internationalism, what resulted was Stalin's attempt to "contain" Mao's influence in Asia. In this talk, we examine three of Stalin's most important initiatives, all beginning in January 1950, even before Mao departed Moscow.

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