

June 17, 1954

**Telegram, Zhou Enlai to Mao Zedong and Others,
Regarding the Situation at the Fifteenth Plenary
Session**

Citation:

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Summary:

Zhou reports on the fifteenth plenary session on Korea. After several of their proposals of the Soviet, Korean, and Chinese delegations are turned down, the other 16 nations issue a joint declaration to end the conference. After this, Zhou proposes that the 19 nations issue a joint statement reflecting their common desire to achieve the peaceful settlement of the Korean issue. This proposal is also rejected, and the meeting ends with no agreements made.

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Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

Translation - Korean

Chairman Mao [Zedong], Comrade [Liu] Shaoqi, and the Central Committee:

(1) The Soviet, Korean, and Chinese delegations discussed our strategies on the Korean issue on the evening of the 14th. We assume that our counterparts will not accept the five-point proposal that Molotov presented on 5 June since they have already spread rumors outside the conference that the conference will be ended at the plenary session of the 15th. It will be difficult to present easily our side's second original plan (regarding the consolidation of peace in Korea) as well as the supplementary proposals that we originally planned to use as last steps. We must try to play every card we have at the last session. Even if we cannot prevent the conference from being sabotaged, we can at least drive our counterparts into an unfavorable position. The more modest our proposals are, the more passive our counterparts will be. It will also make it more difficult and more unreasonable of them to sabotage the conference. In addition, it will force our counterparts to take greater responsibility for ending the conference. Therefore we have decided that at the plenary session on the 15th, our side should: let Nam Il present proposals on the guarantee of peace in Korea; let me speak to support Nam Il's proposals and recommend that the conference should go into a restricted session of seven countries [China, the USSR, the UK, the US, France, the DPRK, and the ROK]; and let Molotov submit a [draft] declaration to guarantee that no action will be taken to threaten peace in Korea. We assume that our counterparts will accept none of these proposals. Therefore, at last, I will make a minimum proposal. Specifically, I will express our common desire for the peaceful settlement of the Korean issue and propose to discuss the issues of time and place for the reopening of the negotiations. We presume that our counterparts will not even accept this minimum proposal since the United States' policy is basically not to reach any agreement.

(2) At the fifteenth plenary session on the Korean issue on the 15th, Chairman Eden intentionally let our three delegations speak first. Nam Il made a six-point proposal on the guarantee of peace in Korea. I spoke to support Nam Il's proposals and suggested that the conference go into a restricted session of seven countries. Molotov proposed that the nineteen countries should publish a joint declaration assuring that no action will be taken to threaten the peace in Korea. It seems that Molotov's proposal for a joint declaration was beyond our counterparts' expectations. Thus, Eden immediately called for a short recess after our three delegations finished our speeches. The sixteen countries held an extraordinary meeting [during the recess] and requested an extension of the intermission. Although our counterparts did not reach a complete internal agreement at the time, the United States had already decided to sabotage the conference. Following the recess, our counterparts opposed discussing our side's proposals, and the Thai delegation presented the 16-nation joint declaration. They then declared the end of the conference. Molotov then made an overall statement on the Korean issue and pointed out that our counterparts should take the responsibility for sabotaging the conference. I spoke next and expressed my great regret that the 16-nation declaration announced its determination to end the conference. I then presented our minimum proposal. Specifically, that the nineteen countries should issue a joint statement indicating a common desire to achieve the peaceful settlement of the Korean issue on the basis of establishing a unified, independent, and democratic country of Korea. I pointed out that if they rejected this proposal, their rejection of negotiations could only have an unfavorable effect on future international conferences. This minimum proposal obviously threw our counterparts into confusion. After debating back and forth [among themselves], the Belgian delegate stated that he was not opposed to the spirit of my proposal and was ready to accept it. Eden agreed with the Belgian delegate's statement and asked the delegations if he could conclude that the conference had already accepted China's proposal. Nobody was responding at the time. Smith panicked and immediately took the floor himself with a statement against us. Eden then reversed himself and said that the conference had no procedure for voting. He pointed out that the conference would not be able to reach agreement on any of the proposals, and it was only possible to note the proposals as part of the record of the conference. I immediately praised the Belgian delegate's spirit of conciliation and said that it was also worth

noting that Chairman Eden asked the delegations to consent to China's last proposal. At the same time, I criticized the opposition and obstruction of the US delegation and pointed out how the US delegation had been preventing the Geneva Conference from being able to arrive at even a minimal agreement. At the end Eden declared that the conference would note all proposals and statements as part of the record and that the meeting was adjourned. In sum, the Soviet, Korean, and Chinese delegations' repeated efforts disrupted our counterparts' arrangement and completely exposed America's decision to sabotage the conference.

(3) At this point the sessions on the Korean issue ended. We are considering whether or not the Soviet Union, the DPRK, and China, the three countries of our side, should issue a joint statement or issue statements separately after we return to our countries summarizing the discussions on the Korean issue at the Geneva Conference and explaining them to the whole world.

Zhou Enlai
17 June 1954

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