

June 6, 1973

Discussion between Zhou Enlai, Le Duan, Pham Van Dong and Le Thanh Nghi

Citation:

"Discussion between Zhou Enlai, Le Duan, Pham Van Dong and Le Thanh Nghi", June 6, 1973, Wilson Center Digital Archive, CWIHP Working Paper 22, "77 Conversations."
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/111503>

Summary:

Le Duan asks Zhou Enlai for Chinese help in building industry and infrastructure, as per a previous agreement between China and Vietnam.

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

ZHOU ENLAI AND LE DUAN, PHAM VAN DONG AND LE THANH NGHI

Beijing, 6 June 1973

Le Duan: We would like to have a multi-process refinery system with the capacity of 3 million tons a year so that we can produce gasoline, fiber, plastic, etc. Comrade Zhou Enlai last time said that this system could produce hundreds of different kinds of products. I was very happy and immediately reported to the Politburo. Everyone was glad because this would be a very valuable gift. However, later I was disappointed when I was told that China would be ready to help us to produce just a few kinds of oil. And we are unhappy. This time, I would like to raise the issue again, hoping that Chairman Mao would reward Vietnam with this system. This system is very important for us. I hope that you are positive this time.

Zhou Enlai: I was too careless in speaking the last time. I talked out of my enthusiasm. I myself was deceived by the Red Horizon Refinery Factory. I also talked about it with our African guests, including Emperor [Haile] Selassie of Ethiopia. Now I found that it is not that easy. The head of this project has died. Moreover, we have not been successful in handling the problem of waste processing. We are trying our best. And in case we fail, we have to send our people abroad to study more. Other things like feeding fish, ducks and watering rice fields with this waste are no good. I was told that in Canada, they have to burn this waste and that Japan is still unable to solve this problem. How can we be more developed than others? The whole thing related to this system was fabricated by bad people.

It is true that I brought up this issue with you. If we are unable to solve the waste problem, we will harm you and us as well because your sea is smaller than ours. There is no difficulty in helping you building the refinery system. This is the basic principle. So you do not have to ask Chairman Mao for this reward. To build one or two factories like this when the problem of waste is not solved will do harm to the fishing industry.

Le Duan: I have to tell you this. A Japanese company has offered to build for us a system capable of producing 4 tons of products. We, however, prefer to do business with China.

Zhou Enlai: Has it mentioned the cost?

Le Duan: It has not. But it said that it would send experts to Vietnam to make a feasibility study and later build a factory.

Zhou Enlai: What group does it belong to? At present, we have to import from the Netherlands a system capable of producing 2 tons of products.

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Zhou Enlai: You have gained some experience in maintaining production during the period of American bombing. Yet, industrial production is different from agricultural production. The former should be concentrated even though resources are scattered. Before, under Lin Biao's policy, Chinese industrial production was scattered. Now comrade Ye Jianying is improving the situation.

You have also to improve transportation by sea, railway and roads. Transportation is an urgent problem. You should think of a plan to standardize the railways connecting Hanoi and Haiphong.

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You are requesting facilities for another missile battalion in order to have 4 battalions according to standards. We accept the request. The Soviet standard requires 4 battalions, but the Chinese standard requires only three. We do not have to fight any more, so it will be all the same if the fourth battalion is placed either in China or in Vietnam. And it is not necessary to file the records of the placement of this battalion in Vietnam.

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Zhou Enlai: I say that we have to help Vietnam for at least 5 years to come. I hope that all other comrades present here will remember this, because I may not be here when that time comes. I do not mean that after five years we will not help you any more. We will, but the amount may be reduced.

Yesterday Chairman Mao said that the people in the world, including the Chinese people, should be grateful to you. He also said that we should keep our commitments.[\[1\]](#)

[\[1\]](#) During a separate conversation on this visit, Zhou Enlai said, "The Vietnamese people's great victory in the anti-American war is a great contribution to the cause of the people of the world. The people of the world, including the Chinese people, have to thank you." Le Duan replied: "Without the aid from the international fraternity, especially from China, we could even be facing famine. We are very grateful to you. When we return to Vietnam, we will have to think how to do things better, otherwise we will lose your trust."