

June 23, 1954

Record of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Pierre Mendès-France

Citation:

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Summary:

Mendes-France and Zhou discuss the Indochina issue during their first meeting together. Both men feel they are in agreement with each other regarding several points (establishing a cease-fire before discussing political issues, that no US military bases should be established in Indochina, elections in Cambodia and Laos, cooperation between France and Vietnam and between the two sides in Vietnam). They end on a positive note, both certain that their few differences of opinion will be worked out.

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Chinese

Contents:

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Translation - English

周恩来与孟戴斯 - 弗朗斯会谈记录*
(1954年6月23日)

案卷编号：206 - Y0007

时间：一九五四年六月二十三日

地点：伯尔尼法国大使馆

中方出席人员：周恩来总理、李克农副部长、冯铨公使、宦乡司长、章文晋、董宁川（译员）

法方出席人员：孟戴斯 - 弗朗斯、萧维尔大使、鲁恩、吉勒马兹、利加罗斯（译员）

孟戴斯 - 弗朗斯：听说总理先生为了来这里，把去印度的行期推迟了一天，我很感谢。

周恩来：我很高兴在我短期回国之前能见到总理兼外长先生。

孟戴斯 - 弗朗斯：这次会见能这样迅速实现是好的，我对此特别高兴。因为我愿意很快地解决我们所关心的一切问题。总理先生知道，我国政府是在何种情况之下成立的。法国人民议会已经定下日期，希望在这日期内达成协议。这个协议对和平一定是有利的。

周恩来：正是因为这个原因，我们两国负责人的早日会面交换意见，我相信对今后会议的推进是有好处的。

孟戴斯 - 弗朗斯：总理先生一直到现在都在参加会议，我过去是没有能够去参加的。但我已得悉总理先生和皮杜尔先生的谈话的情形。我愿意知道总理对我们应采取何种措施，以达成印度支那和平的观感。

周恩来：我在过去的会议中，有许多意见已和皮杜尔、萧维尔两先生交换过了。但现在还愿意把我们中国代表团对会议的意见向法国新的总理兼外长说一说。

这回，中国代表团来日内瓦开会就是为了实现恢复印度支那和平，这也就是我们的目的，再无其他条件。我们反对战争扩大化、国际化，反对使用威胁、挑衅的办法，这样不利于商谈。中国不怕威胁，这总理先生是知道的。我们是用和解的办法来推动双方达成协议。

正因为有这样的共同精神，我愿意向总理先生说说我的意见。

关于解决印度支那问题，首先是要停战。军事和政治问题是有联系的。现在是讨论军事问题，以后还要讨论政治问题。协议达成以后，首先要停战。因为这样是法国、印度支那和全世界人民所赞成的，正如总理先生所说的，法国国会已表示了这种要求。在印度支那现在的情况是三国都有战争，这是相同的；三国都要停战，人民都要求独立、统一。法国政府曾有意愿承认三国的独立，各国的统一。中国也愿意看见它们留在法国联邦之内，我国也愿意和法国建立友好和平关系。

三国的情况各不完全相同，所以我们承认解决三国问题的办法会有所不同。就越南来说，它在停战后还要经过选举才能达到统一，确定国内制度，这只有由越南人民自己解决。至于老、柬，如果两国人民愿意还承认现在的王国政府，那我国也愿意看到二国成为东南亚型，如印度、印尼型的国家。这话我向皮杜尔先生说过。

当然，我们另一方面不愿意看到三国成为美国的军事基地，或美国和他们成立军事集团。这是我们反对的。如有美国军事基地，我们便要过问，不能置之不理。

我前几天和老、柬外长们都谈过，他们向我保证他们不要美国军事基地，我说好，并鼓励他们和法国友好，如果法国尊重他们独立。

我也听到越南民主共和国代表范文同先生向他们表示，他们愿尊重老、柬二国的独立、主权统一，即互不侵犯。我听到他们彼此这样谈，是好的。

政治上，我们认为三国是有所不同。越南现有两个政府。要把军事集结区划好，不能把这解释为分治，因停战后经过一定时期总要自由选举，这也要双方协商。这是他们自己的事，我们不能干涉，但要推动。在老、柬也要经过选举，求得统一。这一点我看越南民主共和国是能同意的。问题是两王国政府要承认当地抵抗运动，和抗战政府团结起来，而求得统一。保大越南国政府应采协商办法和越南民主共和国接近，而非对立。但他的政治方案洽（原文如此。应为“恰”。——编者）是要对立。独霸，引联合国来干涉。这是不能同意的。

在军事上，对越南问题双方军事代表已在谈判。我们都希望更迅速地得出方案。老、柬两国有二种情况，一种是本地抵抗力量，在柬埔寨小一点，在老挝大一点。在柬埔寨，王国政府应与之直接商谈，停战，中立国监察，求得政治解决。在老挝也有（原文如此。——编

者)一样,王国政府也要和法国一起进行双方会谈。对地方部队还要有些集结区。这样才能求得政治统一。另一情况是,二国中的外国武装力量和军事人员应退出。越南曾有过的志愿军,如果现在还在,也可依照从印度支那全境撤退外国军队的办法在军事代表的会谈中解决。

现在对双方司令部代表会晤问题已达成原则协议,要在三周内加紧会商。现在交战双方的会谈成为主要的了,而法、越更是最主要的双方。我们很希望双方直接接触,早日达成协议。与会各国,包括中国在内,总愿供(原文如此。——编者)献力量来推动,而反对任何阻挠破坏。

以上即是我意见的主要部分。

孟戴斯-弗朗斯:总理的讲话使我认识到了,总理把问题提得很清楚。当然我不能逐点答复,有些特殊之点是应有仔细讨论的。我高兴的是,在主要点上,我们的意见是接近的,我知道,老、柬问题在这几天内有进展,并得悉进展大部是周总理所主持的代表团所做努力而得到的。我想关于老、柬问题,咱们中间并无不可克服的困难。

关于老、柬,对总理才提的解决内政问题也应有国际监察。当然,对这方面也得想办法,可是我想不难找到。

越南问题是不同的,总理提过这是较困难的,二则情况不很好,因为在那区域中战争的时间很长,而且总理说过,两国政府各有自己的制度,军队。越南人民分为两个阵营,多年来彼此作战,刚才总理提到一值得注意之点,就是许多问题可经有关双方直接接触解决。如能作到,我们自然很欢迎。但实际上有些困难。接触本身有困难,结果也是困难的。但我们要努力达到这个目标。不过对这个方向我们赞成。总理说过,对这个地区的目的是统一,方法、手续问题可以另外考虑。越南分成两个阵营,一时要达成协议有困难,不能一停火就完全统一。刚才提出时间问题,是因为战争进行了这样久,和平不能立刻实现,把手续(原文如此。指“程序”。——编者)弄得很简单,例如说立刻选举。事实上,如有真正统一,要越南人合作,一定的手续是必要的。总的说,目的原则上并无分歧。

末了,还有一点,很高兴总理提出这样的意见,即最好要经过两个阶段:先停战,然后政治解决。我完全同意,正是总理所说的理由。我们真要进展的话,第一步要集中精力解决停火问题,包括集结区问题的划定。这要现实研究,迅速解决。我请问总理是否也认为我们的共同点不少?

还有一重要之点，总理刚才提出建立美国军事基地问题。我完全同意这意见，并愿清楚地说，我们不预备在该地区设立美国基地，没有这样的计划。

周恩来：对您的几点意见，我要说一下：

对最后的一点您做了很好的回答，说明法国无意建立美国基地。这不仅对三国，而对中、法、东南亚都好，大家希望和平相处，为将来建立共同基础。

你先谈到老、柬的军事政治问题也要国际监察，这点我们的意见是相同的。

关于越南问题，情况不同，是有些困难。但我想先把军事政治原则定下来，解决的步骤总要先定军事集结区，先停战，再（原文如此。——编者）能求政治解决，总要两个步骤，而非一个步骤。第一、二步骤的长短主要看双方努力，要经过双方协商。法国有更多责任使他们接近，而不对立。双方不接近，话也不谈，是对停战有碍的。相信你会发现中国方面是推动越南民主共和国不仅与法方接近，而且和保大的越南国也接近。法国会发现要保大越南国与别人接近有困难。困难来自何处，总理会了解的。形势如此，萧维尔先生更清楚。

当然，如我们希望能满足老、柬的合理要求，也应该满足越南民主共和国在越南的合理要求，这样双方军事会谈更易达成协议。

孟戴斯-弗朗斯：我无长篇大论的意见。有些意见我们相当一样。再说一次，如果可能帮助越南两个政府合作是很好的事。法国政府很愿意利用它的影响便利它们合作。可是也不是没有困难的。刚才说到多年战争，长期分裂。心理上、政治上难于接近。可是需要照这一要求得出一些结果。最好具体地提出在什么基础上来实现停火，军队集结等问题。您知道军事专家谈判仍在进行。虽无大困难，也未使会议明确化。如果我们能确切知道，在什么基础上可能达成协议，我们就容易对越南起影响。现在法、越会谈无大进展。昨天范文同先生和萧维尔先生也有接触。现在一切集中在军事问题方面，但是进步不大。今天晚上我回巴黎后要 and 埃利将军会面。我一定和他讨论这个问题，以便对此间军事代表发出指示，推进工作。但是，假如越盟也有同样指示，就很好了，容易达成协议。总理是否可以和我们一样，利用你们对越盟的影响，帮我们这样作？只有军事专家的讨论有进展，他们有了协议，有了基础以后，外交就好进行了。

还说一点，要根据越盟于五月二十五日所提出的建议成立二大集

结区，那就只有军事专家才（原文如此。——编者）提供我们外交讨论的基础。

周恩来：为了免除误会，我想作一点解释：我说越南民主共和国和保大双方应该进行“接触”，而不是说“合作”，因为双方已经作战多年，现在自然还谈不到合作。我们所希望的是法国能影响保大，使越南国能与越南民主共和国接触，以便减少困难，不让外国来破坏。关于部队集结的问题，现在应该进入具体讨论的阶段，在这点上，我与总理先生的意见是相同的。现在的讨论就是要把问题具体化。我们知道，越南民主共和国的军事代表也准备要使谈判早日获得结果。

我很乐意地听到孟戴斯-弗朗斯先生说，他回巴黎后将与法国远征军司令埃利将军会谈，并准备给于（原文如此。——编者）日内瓦法方军事代表以明确的指示。在双方把大集结区谈定后，就能使外交谈判有了基础，在这一点上，我也同意总理先生的看法。关于大集结区问题，不知总理先生有无具体的想法，如果还没有肯定的意见，现在可以不必接触这个问题。

孟戴斯-弗朗斯：为了避免误会，我也愿意解释一下，我所说的“合作”，只是用“合作”的方法来解决争端。

我同意周恩来总理的说法，我们很希望军事代表的谈判能够迅速进入具体化阶段，并希望越盟方面的代表也能得到明确的指示。大集结区的划定，可以作为外交讨论的基础，看来大集结地区问题是可以迅速解决的。至于大集结的具体化问题，我现在还不能表示什么意见，因为目前军事专家的谈判还不太清楚。他们准备划定一条从西至东的横线。越盟方面所要求的划线，比实际情况过于朝南，但是我方了解实际情况的专家已经注意到越盟方面于五月二十五日所提出的各点。我们想来，得出提供外交讨论的结果是可能的。还有一个论据，近日正在谈判关于监察的具体办法，我们认为，如果具体地知道监察的对象是什么，那末监察问题就容易解决。因此我们应该迅速推进关于集结问题的谈判，这就便利了监察问题的讨论。

周恩来：很对，我们应该首先解决集结地区问题。我已注意到总理先生所谈问题的性质。我们相信，双方军事代表的讨论具体化之后，监察问题就容易解决。我曾就这一问题和艾登先生交换过意见，他也同意这样的看法。

我们现在的努力是要使双方早日达成协议，在三周之内获得结果，使交战双方都能获得光荣的和平，满足法越及世界人民的愿望，外长

们也可以早日回日内瓦。

孟戴斯-弗朗斯：三周应该是最大的限度，在此期内，当双方军事代表取得协议之后，应即与其他代表团进行联系，以便留出几天的时间，好让外长们回来。

周恩来：愈早愈好。我走之后，我们的外交部副部长李克农先生将在此负责，希望萧维尔先生继续与李克农先生保持联系。

很高兴能与总理先生会晤，并感谢你愿分出时间来到伯尔尼。

孟戴斯-弗朗斯：这是为了我们共同的和平事业。

周恩来：孟戴斯-弗朗斯先生在国会里说，一切为了和平与友好，这点我们完全赞成。

孟戴斯-弗朗斯：这是我们第一次的接触，希望以后还再有接触。我对这次接触感到很高兴，愿在此表示感谢。我自己虽因新〔内〕阁刚才组成，工作较多，但是我很愿意来此与您会晤。

现在有个具体问题，就是如何答复记者们的追问，不知您有何意见？

周恩来：可请总理先生提出建议。

孟戴斯-弗朗斯：我同意萧维尔先生所建议的这样一个公报草案：“我们就有关印度支那和平的问题进行了自由的交谈，而不是讨论，这次讨论（原文如此。似应为“交谈”二字。——编者）的结果，使我们能够期望日内瓦会议获得进展（此处原文多一“後”字，删。——编者）”，除此之外，似乎不能说得更多。

周恩来：不多说的好。

孟戴斯-弗朗斯：希望今后李克农先生和萧维尔先生多多联系。

周恩来：我愿在此表示一个愿望，在三周之内，如果孟戴斯-弗朗斯先生来日内瓦，或在其他的机会，希望能与越南民主共和国代表团团长范文同先生进行接触，我们想这样的直接接触是有好处的。

孟戴斯-弗朗斯：昨天萧维尔先生已经与范文同先生会面，他已告诉范文同先生我愿和范文同先生会晤，但现在还不知道在什么时候实现，也许要看会议的进展情况而定。我认为这样的会晤是很重要的，我希望这样的会晤能够实现。

周恩来：我愿把总理先生的意见转告范文同先生。我们希望越南民主共和国与法国在和平的基础上友好起来。

孟戴斯-弗朗斯：这也是我们的愿望。周恩来先生已是老的和有经验的总理兼外长，我是新的和没有经验的总理兼外长，所以许多事情都忙不过来，但是，我愿尽力使得法国、中国和越南之间的友好关系建立

起来。

* 法国政界对印支问题的解决存在分歧。法国民议会1954年6月8日—9日就印支问题进行辩论。在辩论中，许多议员抨击拉尼埃政府，特别是外长皮杜尔在日内瓦会议上采取的态度。10日，法内阁总理拉尼埃提出信任投票的要求。12日，国民议会以306票对293票否决了对拉尼埃的信任，内阁集体辞职。13日，法总统戈蒂邀孟戴斯-弗朗斯组阁。孟戴斯-弗朗斯以7月20日之前获致印支和平为条件，于6月17日以419票对47票的绝对优势当选为总理。当选后，孟戴斯-弗朗斯以总理兼外长身份出席日内瓦会议。法国国内政局的变化，对日内瓦会议的进展发生了积极的影响。

Time: 23 June 1954

Location: French Embassy, Bern

Chinese participants: Premier Zhou Enlai, Vice Minister Li Kenong, [Chinese Embassy in Switzerland Minister] Feng Xian, Huan Xiang, Zhang Wenjin (secretary), and Dong Ningchuan (translator)

French participants: Pierre Mendes-France, Ambassador [to Switzerland Jean] Chauvel, Luwin, Jacques Guillermaz, and one translator

[Pierre] Mendes-France: It is said that [you,] Mr. Premier[,] postponed your trip to India for one day in order to come here. I really appreciate it.

Zhou Enlai: We are so glad to meet Mr. Prime Minister and Foreign Minister before my brief return to China.

Mendes-France: It is very good to make this meeting happen quickly. I am very glad about this. The reason is that I'd like to solve all of the problems concerning us quickly. Mr. Premier knows under what kind of circumstance our new national government was established. The French National Assembly has decided on a date and hopes that a settlement will be achieved before this date. This settlement of course must bring about peace.

Zhou Enlai: It is for this reason that the leaders of our two countries have this early meeting to exchange our opinions. I believe this [will be] helpful in making conference progress from now on.

Mendes-France: Mr. Premier has been attending all the meetings. I couldn't participate in the conference before. But I had the information on your conversations with Mr. Bidault. I'd like to know more about Mr. Premier's observation and opinion on what measures we should take in order to achieve peace in Indochina.

Zhou Enlai: In the past meetings I have exchanged many opinions with Mr. Bidault and Mr. Chauvel. Nevertheless, I'd still like to talk to the new French prime minister and foreign minister now about the Chinese delegation's opinion on the conference. The Chinese delegation's purpose of coming and attending this Geneva Conference is to resume and realize peace in Indochina. This is our goal, and we do not ask for anything else. We oppose any enlargement or internationalization of the war. We oppose any use of threatening or provocative methods. They do not help negotiations. China, however, is not afraid of threats, as Mr. Prime Minister knows. We need to employ conciliatory methods to help both sides to arrive at an agreement. It is because of this common spirit, we'd like to address my opinions to Mr. Prime Minister.

To solve any problem in Indochina, the first [requirement] is a cease-fire. Military issues are always related to political issues. The military issue is being discussed presently, and the political issue can be discussed later on. After an agreement is reached, the first [step] is to stop the war. As Mr. Prime Minister said, the French Parliament has expressed this kind of desire, because the people of France, Indochina, and the world all support this. The current situation in Indochina is that all three countries are involved in the war. They have a similar situation. All of the three countries need a cease-fire, and their people demand independence and national unification. The French government has shown its willingness to recognize the independence of the three countries and their national unification. China is willing to see they will stay in the French Union. Our country also intends to establish a friendly and peaceful relationship with France.

The three countries, however, have different problems. Therefore, we should accept

different ways in solving the problems in each country. Vietnam, for example, needs a general election for its national unification after the war, and then [the new national government] decides on the type of its political system. This will be determined by the Vietnamese people themselves. Regarding Laos and Cambodia, as long as the people in the two countries are still supportive of their current

royal governments, our government will be very happy to see these two countries become part of the normal Southeast Asian countries, like India and Indonesia. I have expressed the same opinion to Mr. [Georges] Bidault.

Of course, on the other hand, we don't want to see that these three countries become military bases of the United States, or that the United States builds up a military pact with them. This is what we are against. If the United States establishes its military base there, we have to check it out, and we can't just let it go without checking.

I talked to the foreign ministers of Laos and Cambodia a few days ago. They all assured me that they don't want any American military base in their countries. I said that was good and encouraged them to make friends with France, as long as France respects their independence.

I also heard that [Minister of Foreign Affairs] Mr. Pham Van Dong, representative of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, talked to them and expressed that Vietnam will respect the independence and sovereignty of Laos and Cambodia, and assure a non-aggression between them and Vietnam. It was very good when I heard they were talking like this.

Politically, the three countries face different situations. Currently, Vietnam has two governments. The military regrouping areas must be determined, but it doesn't [require] a [political] division. During a period of time after the cease-fire, a free election will be held through negotiations between the two governments. This is their own domestic affair. We can show our support, even though we can't intervene. Laos and Cambodia also need to achieve their unifications through elections. I think the Democratic Republic of Vietnam can agree on this point. The question is whether the two royal governments can recognize the resistance movements in their countries, and unite with the resistance governments in order to achieve their national unifications. The Bao Dai government should approach the Democratic Republic of Vietnam through discussions and negotiations, instead of opposing it. Unfortunately, his [Bao Dai's] political proposal aims exactly at opposition, hegemony, and at inviting the United Nations to intervene. This is unacceptable.

Militarily, the military representatives from both sides are negotiating the issue of Vietnam. We all hope that a settlement will be reached sooner. Laos and Cambodia have two situations. The first is that they have local resistance forces; it is small in Cambodia, and large in Laos. In Cambodia, the Royal government should talk directly to the resistance forces about cease-fire, neutral nation supervision, and political solutions there. So it should in Laos. In the meantime, the royal governments should also join France in the negotiations of both sides to determine the regrouping areas for the local forces. This will lead to their political unifications. The second situation is that all the foreign armed forces and military personnel should withdraw from these two countries. Vietnam had sent some volunteers over there. If it is still the case at the present, they may follow the resolution provided by the military staff meetings, requiring the withdrawal of all the foreign troops from all of Indochina.

By now the representatives from both commands have reached an agreement in principle about the military meetings. They will meet and talk intensively in the next three weeks. Currently, the meetings of the belligerent states became the center of the conference. France and Vietnam are the most important parties from both sides. Our desire is a direct contact of both sides and a signed settlement [to be reached] soon. All the nations at the conference, including China, are willing to make contributions to genuine progress, and [are] firm to oppose any obstruction or destruction.

These are the main points of my opinion.

Mendes-France: The Premier's points help me realize that the Premier's thoughts on the issues are very clear. Of course, I can't respond to every point, but some particular points should be discussed carefully. What made me glad is that our opinions are pretty close on the main points. I heard that the discussions on Laos and Cambodia have made some progress in the past several days. I also know that the progress was achieved mostly through the efforts by the delegation under the leadership of Premier Zhou. I believe that we don't have any unsolvable problems between us over the issues of Laos and Cambodia.

As the Premier mentioned, coping with the domestic problems in Laos and Cambodia also requires international supervision. Certainly, a solution requires some work, but I don't think it is too difficult to find out.

The problem in Vietnam is different. The Premier just said that it is tougher. And then the situation is not optimistic because the war has been [going on] in that country for so long. Moreover, as the Premier said, the two governments there have their own administrations and armies. The Vietnamese people are divided into two sides, and both sides have been fighting the war for many years. One of the points mentioned by the Premier needs to be noticed[:] that many problems can be solved through direct contact between both sides. If workable, we certainly welcome [direct contact]. In fact, however, it is difficult. Although it is difficult to contact and to obtain any result, we will make our vigorous effort to arrive at this goal. Nevertheless, we agree on this direction. The Premier also said that the goal in this region is unification, and that the methods and procedure can be considered differently. Vietnam is divided into two parts, it is difficult to reach any agreement in a short period of time. It is impossible to complete its national unification as soon as the cease-fire becomes effective. The time issue was just mentioned because the war has been there so long that peace would not be stalled immediately, and that procedure will not be that simple, for example, talking about an immediate election. In fact, if the Vietnamese people really want their unification, they have to cooperate and need certain procedures. Generally speaking, [our] goals are not much different in principle.

There is one more final point. I am glad the Premier made such a suggestion: it is the best to go through two steps. This first is a cease-fire, and the second is a political settlement. I fully agree for the same reasons the Premier stated. For genuine progress, the first step is to concentrate our attention and energy on the cease-fire issue, including the determination of regrouping areas. This is a practical solution, it should be reached quickly. I'd like to ask the Premier if you agree that we have many points in common?

There is another important point. The Premier raised a concern about establishing American military bases. I fully agree on this point. I want to make it clear that we don't intend to establish any American bases in that region. We don't have such a plan.

Zhou Enlai: I'd like to explain regarding your points:

You had a very good answer to my last point. France has no intention to establish any American bases. This is very good not only for the three countries, but also good for China, France, and Southeast Asia. All of us hope for a peaceful co-existence and for building a common foundation for the future.

You also said that the military and political solutions in Laos and Cambodia needed international supervision. Our opinions are the same on this point.

The situation in Vietnam is different and difficult. But I think the military and political

principles can be reached first. The problem-solving should deal with the troop regrouping and cease-fire issues first, and then turn to the political settlement. It should be two steps, not one step. The length of each step depends on the effort of both sides, and requires discussions between the two sides. France bears more responsibilities for them to get closer, not confrontational. If the two sides refuse to make contact or refuse to talk to each other, it will slow down the cease-fire. I believe that you have found that the Chinese delegation is pushing the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to approach not only France, but also Bao Dai Vietnam. France may find it difficult to ask the Bao Dai government to make contact with the others. The Prime Minister knows where the difficulty comes from. That is the situation. Mr. Chauvel knows [it] even better.

Of course, if we want to satisfy the reasonable requests made by Laos and Cambodia, we should meet the reasonable requests in Vietnam made by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Therefore, the military meetings between both sides may reach an agreement more easily.

Mendes-France: I don't have a whole package of opinions. We have the same opinion on some of the issues. Let me repeat this, it is a good thing if we can help to put the two Vietnamese governments together. The French government really wants to use its influence to facilitate their cooperation. It is, however, very difficult. We just talked about the long war, a long period of division, so that it is difficult for them to come together psychologically and politically. But [they] need to follow this guideline in order to achieve some settlements. It is better for them to set up some kind of foundation for implementing a cease-fire and troop regrouping. As you know, the negotiations between their military experts are still ongoing. Even though they do not seem to be having any major problems, the direction of their meetings is unclear. If we know what the foundation is and an agreement can be based on it, it would be much easier for us to push Vietnam. So far the French-Vietnamese meetings haven't yet made any important progress. Mr. Pham Van Dong made contact with Mr. Chauvel yesterday. Currently, the focus of the conference is on military issues, but there is not much progress. I am returning to Paris tonight and will meet [French Commander in Chief and Commissioner General for Indochina] General [Paul] Ely. I will surely discuss this issue with him in order to further instruct our military representatives here and push the negotiations forward. And, if the Vietnamese government could do the same and give new instructions, it would be very good and easy to reach an agreement. Could [you, Mr.] Premier[,] use your influence over the Vietnamese government to do this like us and help us on this? Once the military experts have made progress in their discussions, arrived at an agreement, and created a foundation, it will be easy for diplomacy to proceed.

I have one more point to make. If we go with the Vietnamese government's proposal on 25 May suggesting to have two main regrouping areas, only the military experts can provide us a foundation for diplomatic discussions.

Zhou Enlai: To avoid misunderstanding, I'd like to explain one thing. I said the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Bao Dai government should establish their "contact," not "cooperation." Since both sides have engaged in the war for many years, it is impossible to talk about any cooperation. Our expectation is that France could influence Bao Dai and make his government contact the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in order to reduce difficulties and leave no room for any external disruption. The negotiations on the troop regrouping should now enter the phase of discussing specific matters. My opinion is the same as Mr. Prime Minister regarding this issue. The current discussions should get into specific matters. We know that the military representatives of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam also intend to achieve early and positive results.

I am very glad to hear that Mr. Mendes-France is going to meet General Ely, commander-in-chief of the French expeditionary forces in Indochina, after returning to Paris, and that General Ely will give specific instructions to the French military

representatives at Geneva. The agreement on the main regrouping areas by both sides will lay the foundation for further diplomatic negotiations. I agree with Mr. Prime Minister at this point. Regarding the main regrouping areas, [I'd like to know] whether Mr. Prime Minister has any specific idea. If you have not decided on this point, [we] don't have to talk about this issue right now.

Mendes-France: To avoid any misunderstanding, I'd also like to give an explanation. When I said "cooperation," I meant using "cooperative" methods to solve problems.

I agree with Premier Zhou Enlai's point. We really hope that the military staff meetings can move into practical phase quickly, and that the Vietnamese representatives will receive their new and clear instructions from their high command. The determination of the main regrouping areas can be used as the foundation for diplomatic negotiations. It seems that the main regrouping areas can be decided pretty soon. Regarding particular ideas on the main regrouping areas, I can't make any suggestion right now, because I don't know how the military staff negotiations are going. They are planning to draw a horizontal line from west to east. The line, however, proposed by the Vietnamese staff is much more to the south than the real situation [reflects]. Our experts, who know the field situation, have taken note of all the points proposed by the Vietnamese on 25 May. I think it is possible for them to provide a basis for further diplomatic negotiations. Another [piece of] evidence is that the negotiations on supervision currently are about practical methods. We think that, if the objectives of supervision are known in particular, the problem of supervision could be solved easily. Thus, we should push the negotiations on the regrouping forward and quickly in order to advance the discussions on supervisory issues.

Zhou Enlai: That's right. We should resolve the problem of the regrouping areas first. I have noticed Mr. Prime Minister's stance on these issues. We believe that, after the military staff of both sides detail their discussions, the supervisory problem will be solved easily. I have exchanged my opinion on this issue with Mr. Eden. He agrees with my opinion.

Our current efforts should help [the military staff of] both sides to reach an agreement soon, achieving a result within three weeks. This result will bring both belligerent sides their glorious peace, and realize the desires of the people of France, Vietnam, and the world. All the foreign ministers can return to Geneva earlier.

Mendes-France: Three weeks should be the maximum time. During this period, as soon as the military representatives of both sides reach their agreement, they should inform their delegations. Thereby, there will be a few days for the foreign ministers to return to the conference.

Zhou Enlai: The sooner, the better. After my departure, Mr. Li Kenong, our vice minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will be in charge here. I hope that Mr. Chauvel will continue the communication with Mr. Li Kenong.

I am very glad to meet Mr. Prime Minister. I really appreciate you are willing to spend time in Bern.

Mendes-France: This is for our common task for peace.

Zhou Enlai: Mr. Mendes-France said in the Parliament that everything is for peace and friendship. We fully agree with this point.

Mendes-France: This is our first meeting. I hope we will have more contacts later on. I am really happy about this meeting. I'd like to express my appreciation here.

Although I am very busy with many things since I have just organized my new cabinet, I really want to come here and meet you.

I have another practical question, that is, what we are going to tell the reporters. What do you think about this?

Zhou Enlai: Mr. Prime Minister can make a suggestion, please.

Mendes-France: I agree with a news release draft suggested by Mr. Chauvel: "We had a frank conversation on the issue of peace in Indochina, not a negotiation. This conversation may lead to our desire that the Geneva Conference will achieve genuine progress." It seems that not too much besides this can be said.

Zhou Enlai: It is good not to say too much.

Mendes-France: Hopefully, Mr. Li Kenong will contact Mr. Chauvel often later on.

Zhou Enlai: I have a wish. Within the next three weeks, if Mr. Mendes-France comes to Geneva or has other opportunities, I hope you can make a contact with Mr. Pham Van Dong, head of the delegation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. We think such a direct contact beneficial.

Mendes-France: Mr. Chauvel already met Mr. Pham Van Dong yesterday. Mr. Chauvel told Mr. Pham Van Dong that I'd like to meet him. But it is not clear when and where the meeting can take place. It may depend on the progress of the conference. I agree that this kind of the meeting is very important. I hope this meeting can happen.

Zhou Enlai: I will be happy to pass on Mr. Prime Minister's idea to Mr. Pham Van Dong. We hope that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and France can build a friendship on the foundation of peace.

Mendes-France: This is also our hope. Mr. Zhou Enlai is a senior and experienced premier and foreign minister. I am a new and inexperienced prime minister and foreign minister. So there are too many things to be handled. But I will try my best to establish a friendly relationship between France and China, and between France and Vietnam.