

February 7, 1968

Discussion between Zhou Enlai and Ho Chi Minh

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Summary:

Zhou Enlai proposes to the Vietnamese to organize additional field army corps to carry out operational tasks far from home bases.

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

ZHOU ENLAI AND HO CHI MINH

Beijing, 7 February 1968

Zhou Enlai: Since the war in Vietnam has reached the current stage,^[1] is it possible for [the Vietnamese comrades] to consider organizing one, two, or three field army corps? Each of them will be composed of 30,000-40,000 soldiers, and each of their combat operations should aim at eliminating 4,000-5,000 enemy soldiers in whole units. These field army corps should be able to carry out operational tasks far away from their home bases, and should be able to engage in operations in this war zone, or in that war zone. When they are attacking isolated enemy forces, they may adopt the strategy of approaching the enemy by underground tunnels. They may also adopt the strategy of night fighting and short-distance fighting, so that the enemy's bombers and artillery fire will not be in a position to play a role. In the meantime, you may construct underground galleries, which are different from the simple underground tunnels, in three or four directions [around the enemy], and use them for troop movement and ammunition transportation. You also need to reserve some units for dealing with the enemy's reinforcements.

^[1] This conversation was held in the context of the battle for Khe Sanh, which had started on January 21, and the Tet Offensive, which had begun on January 31.