

June 29, 1968

Discussion between Zhou Enlai and Pham Hung

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Summary:

China advises Vietnam against a weakened negotiating position with the United States; China also cautions against Soviet pressure to negotiate.

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

ZHOU ENLAI AND PHAM HUNG

Beijing, 29 June 1968^[1]

Zhou Enlai: ...It is good that you today make it clear to us that you are preparing for a protracted war. Your recent attacks on the cities were only aimed at restraining the enemy's forces, helping the work of liberating the rural areas, mobilizing massive forces in urban areas. Yet, they are not of a decisive nature. The Soviet revisionists are claiming that attacks on Saigon are genuine offensives, that the tactics of using the countryside to encircle the urban areas are wrong and that to conduct a protracted struggle is a mistake. In their opinion, only lightning attacks on big cities are decisive. But if you do [that], the US will be happy as they can concentrate their forces for counter-attack, thus causing greater destruction for you. The losses that you would suffer will lead to defeatism on your side. And the Soviet Union will exploit this situation to exert more pressure on you, forcing you to negotiate.

That you accepted holding talks with the US put you in a passive position. You have been trapped by the Soviets. Now, Johnson has the initiative. Faced with difficulties, he authorized partial bombing. And when he has fewer difficulties, he will resume bombing, and when he has more difficulties, he will again return to partial bombing. In reality, recently, bombing has become fiercer, concentrated on a smaller area, thus causing you more losses and creating more obstacles for your assistance to the South. That you accepted their partial bombing, and agreed to talk with them has bettered their present position compared with the one they were in in 1966 and 1967. Though you still maintain your principles in negotiation, you have reduced the amount of their difficulties in this election year. It is the fault of the Soviets. For long, the Soviets have been the US' henchmen and lent them a helping hand to oppose the world's revolutionary people....

We have made a list of mistakes committed by the Soviets. We would like to convey it to President Ho Chi Minh for his consideration.

Not long ago, the Soviets, in collaboration with the US, proposed at the United Nations the nuclear nonproliferation treaty which is aimed at opposing China. But China is not subject to the treaty. This treaty is designed to prohibit nuclear development by some countries other than the US and the Soviet Union because it allows no nuclear storage or underground tests. The treaty prohibits countries without nuclear industry to build up their nuclear capabilities. This is an act of Soviet neo-colonialism, Soviet nuclear neocolonialism. The Soviet Union has become the country of socialist imperialism.

...On June 27th, Gromyko delivered a speech to the Supreme Soviet. This speech was widely welcomed by the imperialist mass media.

^[1] Zhou Enlai received the Vietnamese delegation and had talks from 11 am-6 pm. Participants in the talks from Chinese side: Zhou Enlai, Kang Sheng, Li Xiannian, Ye Jianying, Li Qiang (PRC foreign trade minister), Han Nianlong; Vietnamese side: Pham Hung, Ba Long, Ly Ban, Ngo Minh Loan.