

April 12, 1969

**Zhou Enlai and Kang Sheng's comments to a COSVN
Delegation**

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Summary:

Zhou Enlai discusses South Vietnam's negotiation with the United States and the Middle East question.

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

ZHOU ENLAI'S AND KANG SHENG'S COMMENTS TO A COSVN [\[1\]](#) DELEGATION

Beijing, 12 April 1969

Zhou Enlai: I am clear about the situation now. I also see your determination to fight until the US and the Saigon troops are defeated. We are happy about that. Nixon is facing a lot of difficulties, but he is still stubborn in promoting neocolonialism in South Vietnam. Chairman Mao once said to President Ho and other Vietnamese leaders: "There are still hundreds of thousands of US troops in Vietnam and they will not withdraw until they are defeated." Comrade Kang Sheng and I therefore wish to know more about the situation in South Vietnam, the difficulties you are facing, and the measures you are adopting so that we can respond fully to your problems.

Kang Sheng: We can also offer our experience in fighting, producing, and transporting.

Zhou Enlai: I have to tell you straight that you have sent many people abroad to study various subjects. Later, it will be difficult as the levels of technology and thinking will differ, thus causing complications. As comrade Hoang Van Thai has said, the supply of ammunition will be difficult if you use various types of weapons. We think that after victory is gained, if well-equipped with political thinking, students can be trained in technology in half a year. Earlier, we faced the same problem. We relied on other countries, especially the Soviet Union. When the Soviets cut their aid, we had a lot of difficulties.

Kang Sheng: At present, you have about 6,000 students in China. If they are in Vietnam, they can be grouped into 10 combat units. Will it be better?

Zhou Enlai: You send them abroad for two or three years. When they return, the war is not over. So the knowledge they have will not be used and will be forgotten gradually. We have the same problem. After the Cultural Revolution, a number of members of the intelligentsia are not creative any more; they are not absorbing anything new, neither ideologically nor technologically.

You have informed us about the present difficulties as well as your valuable experience. This experience is worthy for us to study. We follow what Chairman Mao told President Ho: all the plans and policies should be decided by the comrades in the South based on the reality there. You often stress the principles of self-reliance, independence. We have been taught these principles by chairman Mao since the [time of] the [Chinese] civil war.

Kang Sheng: The policy that the Lao Dong and COSVN propose, based on the actual conditions, are certainly most correct. The last time, after comrade Nguyen Van Linh [Muoi Cuc] had told us about the situation in South Vietnam, we suggested that you should conduct large-scale battles. Now, after we have had time to consider, we think that this suggestion is not feasible. Therefore, you should strictly follow the principles of independence and self-reliance in the protracted war.

Zhou Enlai: Today, I would like to ask you a question. How will the situation proceed when you are both fighting and negotiating?

Nixon is now facing those internal difficulties he inherited from Johnson. And also external difficulties. He has not realized any promise he made during the election campaign. Some American capitalists have come to South Vietnam only to realize that not only can no benefit be gained, [but] capital can also be lost. The situation

will be different if all are exploiting these visible difficulties. Yet, some are even lending Nixon a helping hand. I am not talking about the British imperialists, nor the American Democrats, but the Soviet revisionists.

Let me not talk about the Vietnam question and [now] turn to the Middle East. Nixon wanted to solve the Middle East question. A four-power conference proposed by the Soviet revisionists and supported by France is now taking place at the United Nations. The 6-point plan proposed by the US has been supported by the Soviet Union while the Arab countries are holding a different view. At the same time, the Soviet Union—through King Hussein of Jordan—put forth a 6-point proposal with the demands being less than those [made] by the US. The US 6-point plan is a bad one. Yet, the Soviet/Jordanian plan is worse. It forces the Arab countries to recognize the existence of the occupied zones. In this way, the Palestinian forces will be isolated and some bases of theirs along the banks of the Jordan river will be lost.

The Soviets also interfere in the internal affairs of the Arab countries. Syria is a case in point. Syria wants to have some changes in its coalition government, but the Soviets said it would cut its aid, thus forcing Syria to listen to what the Soviets had said and to retain the status-quo. The same situation can be seen in the United Arab Emirates. Other countries like Algeria and Morocco used to oppose Israel. However, after [Soviet President Nikolai] Podgorny visited and promised aid to them, these countries changed their position, supporting the US 6-point plan. The Soviet revisionists are doing that in order to share influence and the benefit from oil in the Middle East and North Africa with the US and Britain. The Soviet Union is close to the Mediterranean. It has asked for access to the port of Alexandria in Egypt and now wants to have access to seaports in Algeria. Why can a socialist country have such an imperialist policy? It is clear that the Soviet Union is no longer a socialist country which would help the national liberation movement. Instead, the Soviets are selling out the interests of the countries in the movement. Lenin's concept of "socialist imperialism" has emerged in the Soviet Union in its revisionist policy. In Czechoslovakia, [Alexander] Dubcek has been replaced by [Gustav] Husak and [Josef] Smrkovsky has been removed from the Presidium. This has created a precedent that allows a socialist country to intervene into another socialist country's affairs. The Soviets are luring Mongolia into the Warsaw Pact. Before, Czechoslovakia and Romania were opposing them. But now, Czechoslovakia has failed. Mongolia has in effect entered the pact. In a short time, North Korea will also join. There are two objectives in the policy of the revisionists to use these countries. One is to threaten China and the other is to compromise with the Western countries. As a result, there has been some response from NATO to the moves by the Warsaw Pact.

[1] Vietnamese Workers' Party Central Committee Office for South Vietnam.