

April 10, 1967

**Summary of Zhou Enlai's Talk with Pham Van Dong
and Vo Nguyen Giap**

Citation:

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Summary:

Excerpt from the talk in which Zhou Enlai offers encouragement and advice concerning the Vietnam War

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Transcript - Chinese

Translation - English

[4月10日]下午4时30分，在钓鱼台宾馆18号楼和范文同总理举行第六次会谈时说：对战争前途的估计，的确应该是两种或者三种。一种可能就是战争继续下去，并且扩大起来。战争的规律常常不以人们的意志转移，不仅不以我们的意志，也不以敌人的意志为转移，它有自己规律，敌人欲罢不能。所以我们从前途上着想，应该为战争的继续和扩大作准备。另一种可能，是敌人封锁海岸。如果它是全面封锁，它一定准备扩大，准备全面战争；如果只以封锁海岸迫使你们妥协，你不妥协，它怎么办？因此，它一定有下文，全面封锁海岸不是一件简单的事情，要布置很多舰队，是一个很大的行动，会使得它同其它国家的关系搞得很紧张。第三种可能，正如你们两位所说的，在明年旱季是关键性的时刻，可能把敌人打下来，迫使它不得不承认失败，撤出越南。至于说战争又不会结束，又不扩大，就这么消耗下去，不可能。战争总是要结束的，只是迟早的问题，不可能永远不死不活地这样消耗下去。关于政治斗争问题，政治斗争无论在什么时候都要进行，这是没有问题的。战争是政治斗争发展的最高形式，不可能在战争中没有政治斗争。加强国际宣传，争取同情，削弱和分化敌人，利用敌人之间的矛盾，都是政治斗争。过去这样作了，今后更要这样作。

At 4:30 p.m. [on April 10, 1967], during the sixth meeting between Prime Minister Pham Van Dong and Premier Zhou [Enlai] in Building 18 of the Diaoyutai Hotel, [Zhou] said: in considering the prospect of the war, we should include two or three possibilities. One possibility is that the war will continue and expand. The law of war is often not decided by the will of people, neither by our will nor by the enemy's will. War has its own law. Even if the enemy wants to stop the war, it may not be able to do so. Therefore, for the sake of the future, we must prepare for the continuation and expansion of the war. Another possibility is that the enemy will blockade your coast. If the enemy wages a total blockade, then it is very likely that it intends to expand the hostilities into a total war. If the enemy just wants to force you into compromise by blockading your coast and if you refuse to compromise, then what will the enemy do? The enemy must have a follow-up plan. A total blockade of the coast will not be a simple matter. It will involve the deployment of many fleets. It will be a major operation. It will strain the enemy's relations with other countries. A third possibility is what the two of you have just mentioned: the crucial moment will be the dry season next year. You may defeat the enemy, forcing it to admit its failure and withdraw from Vietnam. As to the likelihood that the war will neither end nor expand but simply wear on, that is inconceivable. The war will end inevitably and the question is when. It is impossible that the war will wear on forever without a result. Concerning the issue of political struggle, it is without doubt that political struggle should be carried out at any time. War is the highest form of the development of political struggle. It is impossible that war will not involve political struggle. Things like strengthening international propaganda, winning sympathy, weakening and dividing enemies, and exploiting contradictions between them all fall into the category of political struggle. You have done those things in the past and you must continue doing so in the future.