

March 1, 1965

Zhou Enlai Talking to Ho Chi Minh

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Summary:

Zhou Enlai discusses new Soviet Party leadership, a joint statement of support of Vietnam from socialist countries and close observation of Soviet military activities.

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

ZHOU ENLAI AND HO CHI MINH[1]

Hanoi, 1 March 1965

Zhou Enlai: When Khrushchev stepped down and the new leadership of the Soviet Party took power [in mid-October 1964], we thought that their policy would change somewhat in any case. This was why we proposed that we all should go to Moscow to celebrate, while at the same time observing the situation there. But the result made us greatly disappointed. As far as the new Soviet leadership is concerned, we believed that it was not sufficient to observe it just once, and we should observe for some more time. Now it is clear. The new Soviet Party leadership is carrying out nothing but Khrushchevism. It is absolutely impossible for them to change.

...

Kosygin suggested that the socialist countries should have a joint statement in support of Vietnam.[2] I told him that each country had its own position and judgment, so it would also be good if each country had its own statement. However, during their visit to Vietnam they [the Soviets] could have a joint statement [with Vietnam].

....

So in our course of revolution, and in our struggle against the US, the matters of top secrecy should not be disclosed to them. Of course, we can mention the principles which we also want to publicize. We oppose [the Soviet] military activities that include the sending of missile battalions and 2 MiG-21 aircraft as well as the proposal to establish an airlift using 45 planes for weapon transportation. We also have to be wary of the military instructors. Soviet experts have withdrawn, so what are their purposes [when they] wish to come back? We have had experience in the past when there were subversive activities in China, Korea, and Cuba. We, therefore, should keep an eye on their activities, namely their transportation of weapons and military training. Otherwise, the relations between our two countries may turn from good to bad, thus affecting cooperation between our two countries.

[1] Attending on the Chinese side were Zhou Enlai, Peng Zhen (member of the CCP Politburo and Mayor of Beijing), Yang Chengwu (Deputy chief of staff of the PLA; acting chief of staff until purged in March 1968), Wu Lengxi (director of the Xinhua News Agency and editor-in-chief of Renmin ribao [People's Daily]); on the Vietnamese side: Ho Chi Minh, Le Duan, Pham Van Dong, Vo Nguyen Giap, and Pham Hung. (For Giap and Pham Hung, see footnotes 147 and 200.)

[2] On 4-11 February 1965, Soviet Prime Minister Aleksei Kosygin visited Beijing and Hanoi and held a series of talks with Chinese and Vietnamese leaders, including five meetings with Zhou Enlai and one meeting with Mao Zedong.