

May 16, 1965

Discussion between Mao Zedong and Ho Chi Minh

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Summary:

Ho Chi Min asks Mao Zedong for help to build roads along the border to South Vietnam; Mao agrees.

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

MAO ZEDONG AND HO CHI MINH
Changsha (Hunan), 16 May 1965

President Ho: We should try to build new roads. We have had discussions with Comrade Tao Zhu^[1] on this issue. If China is able to help us build some roads in the North, near the border with China, we will send the forces reserved for this job to the South.

Mao Zedong: It's a good policy.

Tao Zhu: I have reported it over the phone to Comrade Zhou Enlai. He said that China could do it.

President Ho: First of all, we need China to help us build 6 roads from the border areas. These roads run south through our rear. And in the future they will be connected to the front. At present, we have 30 thousand people building these roads. If China helps us, those people will be sent to the South. At the same time we have to help Lao comrades to build roads from Samneua to Xiengkhoang and then from Xiengkhoang to Lower Laos, and to the South of Vietnam.

Mao Zedong: Because we will fight large-scale battles in the future, it will be good if we also build roads to Thailand...

President Ho: If Chairman Mao agrees that China will help us, we will send our people to the South.

Mao Zedong: We accept your order. We will do it. There is no problem.^[2]

^[1] Tao Zhu was a CCP Politburo member and first secretary of the CCP Central-South China Bureau. He would later be purged during the Cultural Revolution.

^[2] In Hanoi on April 13, Tao Zhu had told Ho that "our Party Central Committee and Chairman Mao have held our four border provinces responsible for being the immediate rear for Vietnam. Of course, China as a whole is the rear for Vietnam. But these four provinces represent the immediate one."