

March 7, 1971

Discussion between Zhou Enlai, Le Duan, and Pham Van Dong

Citation:

"Discussion between Zhou Enlai, Le Duan, and Pham Van Dong", March 7, 1971, Wilson Center Digital Archive, CWIHP Working Paper 22, "77 Conversations."
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/113108>

Summary:

China and Vietnam's role in East Asia and the world.

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

ZHOU ENLAI WITH LE DUAN AND PHAM VAN DONG

Hanoi, 7 March 1971

Zhou Enlai: Comrade Mao Zedong has said to comrades Le Duan and Pham Van Dong that the Vietnamese comrades knew how to fight and how to negotiate. I also told comrades Xuan Thuy and Nguyen Thi Binh that the negotiations went quite well. I gained some experience in negotiations before, but now I have to learn from you.

...

The Thai government is very much afraid of the Thai Communist Party's armed forces. It knows that weapons to the TCP armed forces are transported via Vietnam and Laos. It also knows that China has a road that runs to the Sino-Lao border. Therefore, it faces the threat of the war expanding all over Southeast Asia. We hold that support to the peoples' revolutionary struggles cannot be sacrificed for the sake of relations between governments. Only traitors do that.[\[1\]](#)

If we take the Soviets' side, they will control us. And if there is disagreement between us, we should talk it out on the basis of independence and self-reliance. If we establish a world-wide people's front that includes the Soviets, they will control this front. So you have to take the initiative on this matter. Our government has supported your 8-point and 10-point proposals. The Soviets wish to establish a united front in which we have to listen to them.

Yesterday I told you what Chairman Mao asked me to convey to you. These words are sincere. It is we who have to thank you and learn from you as far as the anti-American war is concerned. Not to support the revolution of the Vietnamese people is like betraying the revolution. At the same time, we are also prepared to render our sacrifices in case the enemy expands the war.

Le Duan: Japan has a plan for Southeast Asia. It wants to control the region. We want to smash the US-Japan alliance as well as the alliance between the US, Japan, and the regional bourgeois class. We have to establish a world front that will be built first by some core countries and later enlarged to include African and Latin American countries.

Pham Van Dong: We have to stress the front's role in the name of the peoples.

Le Duan: The world's people wish to oppose the "Nixon doctrine," which also means opposing the US-Japan alliance. The questions, therefore, are how we establish this front, who is capable of doing this. Only China and no one else. Everyone knows that the Indochinese Summit took place in China. So in the future, it will be more influential if a conference of the world peoples is held in China. We propose this initiative to oppose the Nixon Doctrine, further isolate the US, weaken the US-Japan alliance and shake the Southeast Asian bourgeois class, thus contributing to the defeat of the US global strategy. The result is not only [good] for the near future, but is of long-term benefit as well. It is only China that has the strength to do this.

Zhou Enlai: This is a new issue. East Asia is a part of the world. The people in Asia, especially in Southeast Asia, are suffering from American and Japanese reactionaries' policies. Yet, on the problem of establishing a People's Front to oppose them, we need more time to think. Sometimes, you are in a more advantageous position than us. Sometimes and on some issues we [are in a more advantageous position].

[\[1\]](#) This conversation took place just as the South Vietnamese invasion of Laos, which had started on February 8, was coming to a standstill and North Vietnamese forces were regaining the initiative.