

**March 26, 1965**

**Minutes of a Conversation Between the RCP  
Leadership led by Nicolae Ceausescu and the CCP  
Leadership Led by Zhou Enlai**

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**Summary:**

Zhou Enlai, Maurer, and Ceausescu discuss US military engagement in South Vietnam and USSR's response.

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**Contents:**

Translation - English

[...][the two delegations meet and exchange pleasantries][...][end of page 54]

Com. Zhou Enlai:

Not everything can be accomplished. We must agree on another date. We can, at the start, tell you about a few things. First, we should say that, while we stayed only a little over two days, we've seen and learned a lot of things. [...]

What is more important is that we would like to discuss international issues. We come from the Far East, and we understand the problems there, especially the Vietnam issue, which gets a lot of attention. Maybe Com. Hoang Van Hong, who leads the Vietnamese delegation at the funeral, [maybe he] gave you a brief overview of the situation there. We, however, would like to discuss [this issue] in more detail, multilaterally.

Everybody is primarily interested [to know] if the situation in Vietnam could set off a bigger conflict, or even a world war. But, by raising this issue, they do not seek to find its root [cause]. If we only discuss this issue from the perspective of whether war will break out, then that is difficult to clarify (tell). Vietnam is, first and foremost, a problem caused by armed American intervention and oppressive actions of American imperialism. These are the roots of evil

The US is causing problems not only in South Vietnam, but also in Laos and Cambodia - through interference in [these countries'] internal affairs, and in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam through their bombing campaign - so in four countries in Indochina. They carry out actions like these not only in Indochina, but also in Malaysia: together with England [UK], the US gave birth to this child of neo-colonialism. With regard to Israel, it is the USA that encourages West Germany to establish diplomatic relations with Israel and arm [the Israeli], thus threatening the Arab states. In Congo (Leopoldville) it was the American imperialists that sent back Tshombe and, with the help of the English and the Belgians, are helping him destroy the patriotic forces. In Burundi, it was the US again, people from the US embassy, that assassinated the Prime Minister and forced Burundi to break off diplomatic relations with our country. It was at the instigation of the US that Japan signed the so called Japanese-Korean Treaty, which recognizes the South Korean government as the only legitimate government for the entire Korean peninsula. In Ceylon, as well, the US together with Britain helped the rightist National United Party to win the elections, by using the newspapers they control. As a result, the nationalist government of Mrs. Bandaranaike suffered a defeat. Even at the United Nations, at the 19th Session [of the General Assembly], as in a club, words were spoken, but they did not even get to have a session. You, your country, as a member of this organization, know the situation there better. This [General Assembly] session did not have any results, it was a failure. There are many examples as this, I will not go through all of them. All of them are caused by the United States of America. The root of all evil is their attempt at world domination.

All these US actions cannot help but raise the people of the respective [targeted] countries against American imperialism. After Johnson came to power, as president of the US, the global struggle against American imperialism developed further. In this struggle, the fight in South Vietnam took a most violent form.

The partisan fighting in South Vietnam far surpassed any case of partisan fighting known in history. You, the Romanian leadership, know of the long armed struggle that took place in China. There, especially during the eight years of fighting against the Japanese imperialists, the partisan struggle developed (improved); but the partisan fighting in South Vietnam surpassed the level attained by us. On such a small surface of land, with so many rivers, with a population of 14 million people, in South Vietnam the patriotic forces managed to bring to the side of the National Liberation Front 3/4

of the population-which fights, directly or indirectly, against American imperialism.

There are two kinds of armed forces in South Vietnam: the principal, central forces and the local forces. In the past, the puppet government of South Vietnam used the central forces to defend the main cities and the coastline; the local forces were the only ones fighting against the partisans. Yet, carrying out this policy, the local forces could not hold, and they were destroyed. When they carry out recruitment, revolutionary elements infiltrate the local forces, and that is to their detriment. This is why presently the central forces had to leave the big cities and begin fighting against the partisans. Now, the popular army for the liberation of South Vietnam is combat ready; it can destroy, in 2-3 days, two battalions of the central forces of the puppet government. Before, they could only have fought for one day - one day and one night. Now, they can carry out the fight for 2-3 days, continuously.

In the past, the Americans used helicopters to move soldiers of the puppet government from one city to the next. But the defense forces of the partisan [units] learned to bring them down, and now the Americans no longer dare move troops by helicopter. The situation is clear now: it is no longer possible for the US to rely only on the forces of the puppet government. The future of the puppet government is its collapse.

What is the way out for the US? If they are to stay back, arms crossed, and witness the collapse [of the GVN], then there is no point for them to maintain troops in South Vietnam. Today I read in the news that [Secretary of State Dean] Rusk said that in order to carry out the fight in South Vietnam, three goals must be accomplished. The first is the strengthening of the puppet government's military forces, which, presently, have very, very few men. A second condition is the strengthening of the puppet government, which is very precarious, always targeted by a coup d'etat. Since the Diem brothers were assassinated, the leadership changed eleven times; these changes will continue. The changes within the puppet regime in South Vietnam surpassed all the changes of all the US puppet regimes in the world, including the South Korean. A third condition mentioned by Rusk is the consolidation [end of page 57] of local power [centers] which is even harder; this is even more precarious [then the central government] since inside the local [offices] many sympathize with the NLF.

You carried out actions while [the party was deemed] illegal [munca in ilegalitate], you took part in the armed insurrection in [August] 1944, and know these things well. In South Vietnam, currently, the situation is the same.

The very complicated problem facing the US now is to carry on or to withdraw. The friends of the American imperialists are saying that peace should be reached, while taking into account the American prestige. What does this "keeping of prestige" mean? Who caused them to lose their prestige?

I discussed with many Western correspondents, I even talked to the French ambassador in Beijing about this. I showed them in these discussions that it was the US that lost its prestige, by sending their army to Vietnam, by oppressing the people and scorching the land. If the US does not want to lose prestige, then they should withdraw their troops. If the US does not withdraw its troops, and even supplements their numbers, then they will lose even more prestige. Here is an example: The US even used toxic gas, which was revealed by the press and the US even recognized it. Through this they only lost prestige, as there were stands against this throughout the world. Even the Labor government in Britain is against this action. All these things force the US to reconsider its position. But they do not make a decision for fear they will lose even more prestige. This is why they say that it is impossible to withdraw their troops, as they see this as a loss of prestige. What will they do then, if they will not withdraw their troops? The US want to force the people in South Vietnam to give

up their weapons, to give up the resistance; [to force] the DRV to promise that under no circumstances will they come to the aid of the people in South Vietnam. This would mean that the people in South Vietnam should lay down their arms and surrender. If [the US] would accomplish this, then the US would have breathing time to strengthen the puppet forces in South Vietnam. In this way, the US wants to redeploy its troops. When these actions will be finalized, under any pretext, the massacre and oppression of the people of South Vietnam could begin. Then the sacrifices of the people of South Vietnam will be even greater than now; the peaceful unification of Vietnam will no longer be possible; then the US will be able to only symbolically keep their word, and withdraw their troops on the territory of South Vietnam, but the South Vietnamese people will not be willing to put up with this new oppression and will rise and fight again.

If at present we would submit to the Americans and hold negotiations, in order to realize the desires of people of good faith, then this would mean new massacres, the sacrificing of more people. This is why the NLF in South Vietnam put out a declaration that it states that in the present conditions it will not accept any peace negotiations. Even the DRV issued a declaration in which they state that they are against carrying out peace negotiations in the present situation, when the US Air Force is bombing the territory of the DRV. Did you read the declaration of the NLF?

Ever since the middle of February, when the Soviet government asked the DRV government about this, Prime Minister Phan Van Dong showed the Soviet government that peace negotiations cannot be carried out. At the beginning of February, when Com. Kosygin visited the DRV, the Vietnamese comrades told Kosygin that now is not the time for negotiations. In the opinion of the Vietnamese comrades, negotiations offers cannot be accepted presently, as [negotiations] are only favorable to the Americans - they seek to gain some time.

The Americans do not want to withdraw, peace cannot be realized, and so what is there to be done? There is another possibility - that the Americans continue [this way]. We keep this possibility in mind.

We keep in mind different possibilities. If we are to analyze them, we can foresee four different evolutionary stages.

1. The first stage is the current situation: that they expand their involvement in South Vietnam at the same time as they expand the bombing of North Vietnam. I already mentioned that, if the war continues in South Vietnam, this would lead, without a doubt, to a complete failure of the puppet forces in South Vietnam. Where are the human resources for replenishing the forces in South Vietnam? To strengthen the forces of South Vietnam, the Americans will have to send their own troops there. Rusk and [Secretary of Defense, Robert] McNamara said that they want to increase the number of troops in South Vietnam. The first thing the US did in the present step is to send a division of Marines to South Vietnam. Already two battalions landed in South Vietnam. We believe that the Americans will send the entire division. This division is presently defending the island of Okinawa. Now the Americans are preparing to send to Okinawa a division to replace the current one. The US National Defense Ministry [Department of Defense] is planning, if the need arises, to send another infantry division to South Vietnam. At the beginning, the Americans thought this way: there are two divisions in South Korea; a division from South Korea could be sent to South Vietnam, but the puppet government of South Korea was afraid that it could no longer hold on to power in that case and asked that the division taken from Korea be replaced by another division. That is why that plan was scratched. The Americans are thinking that they could bring the 24th division from Honolulu, or another division from the mainland. That means that the maximal plan of the US [Department of Defense] is to send two divisions to South Vietnam. And aside from this, the US wants to make up another division from the troops of satellites countries. For example, South Korea sent 2,000 engineers. The Foreign Ministry in the Philippines said the

Philippines will send 5,000 soldiers. But in the Korean War, the Philippines only sent one battalion. This is why it's hard for them to send more to South Vietnam. Australia could also send troops. The Australian government speaks a lot about this, but it is impossible [for them] to send many troops. It is possible that New Zealand and Thailand also send troops. But since for Thailand there is the issue of Laos, they will not be able to send too many troops. The US also asked Malaysia to send troops but Britain is opposed, since that would mean sending British troops. If we consider these troops, their number cannot be greater than 10,000. This means that there will be two American divisions and one division from the satellite countries.

What will those troops do in South Vietnam? Based on the US plan, these troops will be used to protect ports, airports, and cities, rather than fight. The Americans seek to push the puppet South Vietnamese troops out of the cities to fight against the partisans. If the Americans do this, then the puppet forces will be defeated even faster, [they] will be killed in even greater numbers. The American forces stationed in various ports, airports, and cities will be even more isolated, they will be even more exposed to danger.

Comrades, you know how the German-Fascist troops were isolated in 1944 in your country; it is clear that when the puppet troops are destroyed almost entirely, the American forces will have to withdraw.

Presently, the Americans carry out bombing missions against the DRV, but those bombing missions are limited, are under control. After a bombing run, they wait to see what happens. At the beginning they crossed the 17th parallel. After that they decided which cities need to be bombed between the 17th and the 19th parallels. Then they passed the 19th parallel by 60km. This means that they are at the halfway mark between the 17th parallel and the city of Hanoi. After that they moved a little back and are now again bombing cities between the 17th and the 19th parallels. They are constantly carrying out a propaganda campaign that they want to bomb North Vietnam. What do they want to accomplish by this? Their goal is to force the South Vietnamese people to give up their fight, [force] the DRV to stop aiding the South Vietnamese people and accept peace negotiations. However, the Vietnamese people will never accept such a thing.

2. This is why the first stage could lead to a second stage; we need to keep in mind the worst possible outcome. This is that the Americans could start bombing the entire territory of North Vietnam, including Hanoi, and we must be prepared for this. Maybe they will try to block the entire coastline of Vietnam and use naval bombardment against the entire North Vietnamese territory. If things happen this way, the North Vietnamese are prepared.

If the Americans do this, it will certainly involve our country as well. The DRV will ask for our help, as we are fraternal nations, and not only for material and military aid, but possibly personnel, volunteers. This only if the DRV asks for them.

This means that the second step would evolve towards an expansion of the war. The war will no longer be limited to the DRV, but could extend to Laos, Cambodia, the entire territory of Indochina. In this second step, there will be no distinction on the battlefield between South and North Vietnam. Then the line at the 17th parallel will no longer exist. Yet, the American forces I told you about will not be able to carry out this war.

3. Another possibility is to increase the number of ground forces, but the Americans are not inclined to do this, because they will suffer if they have to send more troops. The US has only 16 infantry divisions, two divisions of Marines, and one division of paratroopers. Now, approximately half these forces are spread throughout the world. If they removed these troops from one region of the world or another, they will

weaken their hold on that region. This is why, when faced with the possibility of the second step, they could extend their bombing missions into China. Air bases in our country, those close to the DRV would be bombed, possibly even places [deep] inside China. If they reach this situation, they will carry out bombing missions against China the same way they carry out missions against the DRV now. In this situation, we will have no choice but to resist. This [resistance] would be the third stage.

4. We also consider a fourth stage, which is the worst case scenario: a total war, a full attack with ground troops against our country. The present US government, with the exception of a few people, does not want this. But we considered even this possibility.

We took into account all these possibilities. Now we wait to see what the Americans are doing. We will not provoke.

In our opinion, from the trusted information we obtained, the Americans now make one step forward, then stop and look to see what happens, because they are afraid, because they have no long term vision.

The goal of the US in the first or second stage is to [encourage] the population of North and South Vietnam to accept negotiations. Both the DRV and our country take a resolute position that they will not accept the American demands and will not allow them any illusions.

Some ask themselves whether such a resolute attitude on behalf of the people of South Vietnam, of the DRV government, and of our government could lead to a world war? We believe that it cannot. The Vietnamese problem caused a lot of headaches at the Pentagon. But how would it be possible for such a conflict to evolve into a world war? A so-called world war would mean a war between the US and the Soviet Union. You all know very well that the Soviet Union does not want a world war. The US presently does not want to provoke the Soviet Union. If these two countries are unwilling to have a world war, how could there be a world war? If the US attacks China, there will be no world war... maybe just a local war. Even if the US attacks us, we will not ask the Soviet Union to take part in this war. If the Soviet Union stays out, then the Americans will have to think about this. Will the Americans be content as they expand their forces against China while the Soviet Union, a great power, sits [the war] out? If the Americans attack us, then they will have to remove their troops from all other areas around the globe and bring them to our territory. Then the conditions will emerge for the entire world to rise against the Americans; there no longer will be just an anti-American movement in Congo, or in Cuba. This is why the Americans have not yet made any decisions. It wasn't [British Prime Minister Harold] Wilson alone who advised the Americans against a global war, it was [British General Bernard] Montgomery and [US General Douglas] McArthur as well who advised [US President Dwight] Eisenhower and [US President John F.] Kennedy against a world war. Even [US President Lyndon B.] Johnson cited this thing today. Recounting a discussion with Johnson, Wilson said that Johnson told him that the US will not attack China, and since this is so, Britain is content. We, however, cannot think this way, we cannot harbor illusions, we are prepared for an American attack.

Of course, we will fight for peace. When Com. Kosygin passed through [Beijing], Com. Mao Zedong told him that we would like to win 10-15 years of peace. Kosygin said that he does not believe China will provoke a world war. However, he had others push us that way. On 13 March of this year, [Cuban leader] Fidel Castro said that since China is such a populous country, why don't we send a million people to fight in Vietnam. This is why we must be prepared for the possibility that the Americans might attack us. We will be prepared to fight, but will not drag others with us in the mud.

Yesterday, [Soviet Politburo member A.] Mikoyan said he would like to talk to us. I thought it would be a good idea to tell him our position, to see what he thinks. But then I thought, this man is even less trustworthy than Kosygin. If I tell him what I think, he can go and tell others as well. This is why I thought it might be better if I did not tell him [what I think].

These are the stages that the Americans might use.

The Vietnamese comrades have reaffirmed their decision that:

- the armed struggle will be limited to South Vietnam. But now that the bombing expands into North Vietnam, this too is forcing them to join the fight.
- they will accept war in case it comes to them, as the Korean people did. North Korea carried out a war for three years, it was completely destroyed, but after 10 years it was rebuilt. You, comrades, know this thing.

Now the core of the problem depends not on what the Americans will do, but on what decision we will take. This is another important element.

This refers to the activity that the Soviet Union is carrying out behind the back of the DRV and the PRC regarding the idea of peace negotiations.

Just a few moments ago I told you that the Soviet government asked the government of the DRV [about this issue] and that Premier Phan Van Dong immediately stated that the DRV government is not interested in peace negotiations. During Kosygin's visit to the DRV [in February], the Vietnamese comrades told him that at that time there can be no peace negotiations. Then the Soviet government asked our government what we think about this issue, if there could be peace negotiations. We told the Soviet government that first we must find out what the DRV government thinks of this, and only after that could we give an answer to that question. However, the Soviet government, even though the DRV government was against this and [despite the fact that] our government never answered the question, contacted De Gaulle and then contacted the British Government suggesting the idea of peace negotiations.

In London, Gromyko had a discussion with journalists, and he told them that negotiations depend on the interested parties. Some journalists asked him who he refers to when he said the interested parties. He said that on the one hand you have the US, and on the other hand you have the DRV. He did not stress the aggressive character of the Vietnam War, did not show what are the roots of this conflict, he did not make any distinction between the two Vietnams. He did not take the right side, but was rather neutral. The next day, Rusk repeated everything Gromyko had said, stating that Gromyko had spoken very nicely. Rusk said that the US seeks to prevent communist infiltration in South Vietnam so that they could withdraw their troops. This clearly shows who Gromyko was speaking for.

As far as we know, both the Soviet ambassador in Washington [Anatoly F. Dobrynin] and the US ambassador in Moscow [Foy D. Kohler] have contacts with the respective [host] governments, in the resident country.

In its public declarations, the Soviet Union said that it supports the Vietnamese people. But, in all these declarations, at the same level, there are a series of phrases that state that the Soviet government wants friendly relations with the US and is against those opposing peaceful coexistence. The US government can easily understand what the Soviets want (are saying), that these are empty words and these declarations have no meaning.

We can also speak of the aid that the Soviet Union is giving Vietnam.

Last year, the Soviet Union sent weaponry for South Vietnam: about 60-70 thousand rifles. What kind of rifles were these? These were German rifles that the Soviet Union took from the Nazi troops during the Second World War, these weapons could not be used. The Vietnamese comrades, who are very honest, sent a lot of people to check these rifles; they found only about 10 thousand rifles that could be used. But even those were very heavy. We told them to send them back, but they said they are afraid to, that it is better to keep them in a museum. In February of this year, when Kosygin visited the DRV, he gave South Vietnam only medicine, no weaponry of any kind.

What is the status of Soviet aid for North Vietnam? During Khrushchev's time, for a period, this aid was stopped. After Khrushchev was removed, in December of last year the Soviet government thought [to] help the Democratic Republic of Vietnam again. As the Soviet comrades informed us, they wanted to send 500 train carts to the DRV. Until March of this year, the actual shipments did not even reach half of the promised quantity. The train carts that arrived at our border, we immediately sent to Vietnam. After Kosygin's visit to D. R. Vietnam, a new thing came up. When Kosygin visited Vietnam, he agreed to give additional aid to Vietnam. When, coming back from Hanoi he passed through Beijing, he said that he will give aid to North Vietnam, by sending two regiments of surface-to-air missiles, air-defense artillery, amphibious tanks, MiG-17 planes, more than 10 training planes, different materials necessary for radio-communication and transport trucks. He told us that for the surface-to-air missiles he might have to send some advisors. We told him to send us a list, and as soon as it arrives at the border, we will quickly send them to Vietnam. Comrade Mao Zedong told Kosygin that the more the Soviet Union helps North Vietnam, the better [things] will be.

After Kosygin arrived in Moscow, towards the end of February, he sent us a list. Then three new problems arose.

The first issue was that for the surface-to-air missiles, the Soviet Union wanted to send 4,000 soldiers from its regular armed forces. But an entire Vietnamese regiment had learned how to use these missiles in the Soviet Union. In 1959 the Soviets sold us a regiment of these missiles and only sent 95 advisors. Our people learned to use them in three months. Now they want to send to Vietnam 4,000 people. These are not for training purposes, but to control the country. Even though in Cuba there are surface-to-air missiles, when U2 planes and unmanned drones fly over the country they are not shot down. And Cuba received much more than two regiments of missiles.

The second problem was that the USSR wanted to send a squadron [great unit-mare unitate] of MiG-21 PF to a Chinese air base close to the border with Vietnam in order to train Vietnamese pilots. The DRV did not request MiG-21 planes, since the Vietnamese pilots only know how to fly MiG-17 planes and between the two of them there is a two class difference. The Soviets argued that they wanted to send these planes in order to train the Vietnamese pilots, to teach them to use those planes. But these planes were not training planes. The Vietnamese comrades told them the following: if you want to help and train our pilots on MiG-21 planes, we can send our pilots to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union wanted to send 12 MiG-21 planes with 500 soldiers to control the air base. The Soviets also said that if Hanoi was bombed, then these planes would defend it. But they chose the Kunmig airbase, [and] as far as we know the range of those planes would not allow them to reach Hanoi. Their purpose was to control our country, since the range of the MiG-21 PF planes would only allow them to reach the Chinese border. Maybe they are afraid that the P.R. China would make trouble. It is very hard to say if they are afraid that we would make trouble or if they want to make some trouble.

The third trouble was that, presumably to take care of the 4,000 soldiers going to Vietnam and the 500 going to Kunming, the Soviet Union needs two air corridors through China. But that is a military act! The Soviets did not discuss this either with the Vietnamese comrades or with us. From what they told us, they only talked about weaponry, nothing about troops. We consulted with the Vietnamese comrades and refused to allow troops to be sent either to China or to Vietnam.

With regard to the weaponry, we told them that we agree to send it to Vietnam as soon as it arrives at the Chinese border. We asked, in the last days of February of this year, for the list of weaponry given Vietnam, but until mid-March of this year they did not give it to us. In mid-March of this year they gave us the list, which declared 300 some train carts of weaponry. Now they started sending this equipment through Manchuria. From Manchuria we take the train carts and send them to Vietnam.

Regarding the regiments of surface-to-air missiles, until mid-March of this year we did not hear anything. Only on 23 March of this year did the Soviet Union inform our Ministry of Foreign Trade that they are sending 12 trains and 260 instructors. Of course, we said we will immediately send them on their way. We told them that they could have sent them earlier. In this note, the Soviets did not mention the troops they wanted to send.

In some socialist countries from Eastern Europe and in Cuba, the Soviets say that our country does not allow the Soviets to carry weaponry to Vietnam over our territory. This is the little aid that the Soviet Union is giving the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

At the end of February of this year the Soviet Union raised the issue of sending North Vietnam 40 AN-12 planes that would transport weaponry: 75 [heavy] machine guns, 18 37mm anti-aircraft artillery pieces. But the Hanoi airport cannot receive that many planes. What is the goal of this action? We told them that if it is this type of weapon systems, we could send it to Vietnam from China. We sent them 100 [heavy] machine guns instead of 75, and 66 37 mm artillery pieces instead of 18.

There is one other thing that we should discuss. Before, the weapons that the Soviet Union was sending Vietnam had to be paid for, just as you pay now. When Kosygin visited the DRV he was told that the weapons from China are free. Kosygin then said, very well, from now on the Soviet weapons will also be free. But in the list that we received from them, it said very clearly that a big part of the equipment-machine guns and artillery-was used.

We told the Soviets that we agree that the Soviet Union should give aid [to Vietnam] but we will not accept troops that [will] control us.

Aside from the reason you know as well in such cases, there is another specific goal they have in mind, to carry out peace negotiations. We can prove this through an example. When Comrade Kosygin was in North Vietnam, he said that the socialist countries should issue a common declaration in support of North Vietnam. We said that all socialist countries have already issued declarations in support of the DRV and that, because of the situation present in each country, there is no exact match among these declarations, there are nuanced differences. Yet the Soviet Union continues to speak about the need for a joint declaration. Then we told them: for example, China is in a special situation, and our declaration will have to be even stronger so that the Americans will have to think about it. And the Soviet Union, if it were to issue such a declaration, will have to use stronger words, to force the Americans to think about it. Because of the different situations each socialist country is in now, even though the support is the same, the format of the declarations is different. But, the Soviet Union continued to suggest that a joint declaration be issued. The Soviet purpose is to use this declaration as a bargaining chip with the Americans. If we agree with the Soviet

proposal, then the Soviets could enter into negotiations with the US in the name of the Communist bloc, and what would the consequences be? They could even sell us out. The Vietnamese issue is one with global implications, but the USSR wants to act without regard to our opinion.

So the problem is complicated not because the US wants to expand the war, not because we stand firm [resitam] but because the Soviet Union wants to negotiate with the US, wants to control our countries and even sell them out.

This is what I wanted to say on this issue.

About the Afro-Asian countries' opinion on the Vietnamese problem, we should speak after lunch, of course, if you are interested in finding out about them. We would like to tell you about our relations with the western countries and with the Afro-Asian countries as well. Of course, we will take quite a bit of your time.

Com. Nicolae Ceausecu:

Of course we are interested

[there are a few short lunch toasts]

After lunch (the continuation of discussions)

Com. Zhou Enlai:

Many African and Asian countries are concerned about the situation that has developed in Vietnam, since many of them have no information about the situation there.

There is another issue I want to talk to you about. Is the DRV completely against negotiating with the Americans? No, of course not. Of course, when the conditions are ripe, at the opportune moment, the DRV will take part in negotiations. Now, however, the Americans are placing unreasonable demands [conditii neintemeiate]. The Americans want to force the DRV through military force to accept negotiations. Even the Americans do not want to carry out negotiations on the basis of the [1954] Geneva Accords. The problem in Vietnam is that the Americans violated the agreement [reached] in 1954 in Geneva. The so called Geneva Accords state that the American troops must withdraw from South Vietnam. The issue of South Vietnam has to be resolved by the population [living] there. If the Americans accept these conditions, then the premise for resolving this issue will be created. However, at this moment, the Americans do not agree with these conditions.

Among Afro-Asian countries there is also [another] opinion: an unconditional armistice must be reached. This would mean that it would be recognized that the war is caused by both sides, or at least that both sides are belligerent parties. But the situation in South Vietnam is not that. First of all, the conflict in South Vietnam was provoked by the Americans who sent their own troops and aided the puppet regime to oppress the Vietnamese people. Also, the US government does not recognize the National Liberation Front as participating in the conflict [parte beligeranta] and insists that if the North Vietnamese were not involved in the conflict, there would be no problem in the South. The Americans believe that if the North Vietnamese agree to not keep intervening in the problems of South Vietnam, then [the Americans] will be able to suppress the national liberation movement. The attitude of the Americans is different than the French attitude in 1954 when the Geneva negotiations took place. Then France recognized the four countries in Indochina as parties to the conflict. That

is why after the armistice in Indochina was agreed to, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam became independent countries. An unconditional ceasefire would be to the US advantage and would allow the puppet regime in South Vietnam to regain strength. That is why an unconditional ceasefire is not a good solution for North Vietnam, and that is why it cannot be accepted by North Vietnam.

The Americans tell their allies that if the American troops withdraw from South Vietnam, then other countries will also ask that American troops withdraw. The Americans are only partially right. They are right in the sense that if they withdraw from South Vietnam, then the other countries too will ask them to withdraw from their territory. This would be a chain-reaction. They are mistaken in the sense that such a request would only happen where the people are awake. For example, in Thailand, if the people don't rise up, then the Americans will be able to stay for a while. That is why the Americans do not want to leave from anywhere, even if the people have risen against them, because they are afraid that [other] people will [also] break their shackles.

These are things that I must say clearly to Afro-Asian countries. For example, if someone would had asked Algeria, during their bloody struggle against the French, to hold negotiations, they too would not have accepted. When France recognized that it has no future in Algeria outside of peace negotiations, Algeria accepted the negotiations. This was the only way the Evian accord could have been reached. At the beginning, France did not want to recognize the National Liberation Front as part of the conflict, and repeated numerous times that Algeria is a province of France. After they recognized it as party to the conflict, negotiations started.

The Americans do not recognize the patriotic forces in Congo, [they recognize] only Tshombe's government. Only when the patriotic forces, through their struggle, reach a certain level of development will the Americans recognize them as a party to the conflict, as representatives of the Congolese people. There are numerous similar cases in Afro-Asian countries. For example, in Laos there are three sides, but negotiations cannot be carried out. Or, another example, the four countries of Indochina were called to a meeting in Cambodia. At this meeting, under the leadership of Prince [Norodom] Sihanouk, they adopted a decision. Regarding South Vietnam, the decision states that the American forces must withdraw, that the South Vietnamese issue must be resolved by the Vietnamese people, and that a united, independent, peaceful, and neutral Vietnam must be created. Regarding North Vietnam, the decision asks that the American bombing campaign stop. Regarding Laos, the decision states that first the tri-party government must be recreated and then a conference of the participants at the Geneva Conference should be called. Regarding Cambodia, they ask that the countries that participated in the Geneva conference reconvene to guarantee Cambodia's neutrality. Even Cambodia agrees with reconvening the [Geneva] conference. Regarding South Vietnam, Cambodia is against peace negotiations.

Soon, on 29 June of this year, the Afro-Asian conference will take place. On my way home, I'll pass through Algeria, UAR, Pakistan, and Burma and I'll talk with the leadership of those countries about bringing up the Vietnamese question during the Conference.

I will have to tell them clearly that we must stand behind Vietnam, stand behind the demands of the people of Indochina, we must not give into the American threats and hold peace negotiations. The fact that the Vietnamese people lured the Americans into Vietnam is a good thing. It would not conform to the spirit of the Afro-Asian countries, to the spirit of the Bandung Conference if, as the Vietnamese people refuse to accept peace negotiations, the other Afro-Asian countries hurry into the arms of the Americans and call for peace negotiations.

Before I came here I met with the Syrian delegation, with the Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Syrian Minister of Culture. I also met with the president of an organization [seeking] the release of Palestinian Arabs. All held the opinion that the U.S., through Israel, exercises great pressure on Arab countries. They expressed their desire that our country [China] lure the Americans into the Far East, to relieve the pressure on the Middle East. I told them that Vietnam represents a very good example, that many American forces were lured there. They said that they agree with me and that as soon as they go back home they will tell their governments to support the Vietnamese people.

Before I came here I had a discussion with the French ambassador, who presented De Gaulle's opinion. He raised two issues: a) if unconditional peace negotiations can be organized; b) the issue of the five great powers. I asked him if he recognizes that the recent troubles are caused by the Americans. He said yes, that De Gaulle sees things the same way. I told him: if that is the way things stand, why do you support unconditional peace negotiations? The Americans are against having unconditional peace negotiations and they place conditions: Vietnamese communists should stop [their] intervention in South Vietnam, because that is the only way there can be a ceasefire. If the Vietnamese people agree with the American conditions, which would mean that the American troops would continue to stay in South Vietnam, even if peace negotiations would take place. What France believes will happen, will not, meaning the Americans will not withdraw their troops. The French ambassador was unable to persuade me [of the opposite]. Then he asked me, what can we do? I said there is a solution. We can have a test to see if the Americans are amenable to holding negotiations. There are four problems in Indochina. The easiest one is the issue of Cambodia. This is the country that is led by Prince Sihanouk, which has nothing to do with the communists; but the Americans have offended him too many times and that is why he fights against them. Presently, Cambodia asks to reconvene the Geneva Conference, [in order to] assure its independence and neutrality. France, the Soviet Union, China, the DRV agree with [re]convening the conference. England agrees halfheartedly. Only the Americans are against this conference. This conference can be convened unconditionally, since there is no war [in Cambodia]. I told him that France could step on the American tail and convene this conference, so we can see that the Americans are sincere when they call for negotiations. I told him that, as far as I know, France supports [the idea] of this conference and they could convince the Americans to take part in it. If, after all French efforts, they will not participate, then what kind of hope can we place in the Americans? That is why if we talk about unconditional negotiations, we could start with the Cambodian issue. This is [all] about negotiations.

[...] [continues with a discussion about the UN and China's role in the world, the Sino-Soviet split]

With regard to the Soviet Union, in which direction did its position evolve? As far as we can tell, after the March conference we believe that [the Soviet Union] has adopted a much weaker attitude. If the Soviet Union wants unity among socialist countries, then after the visit made by Kosygin to Hanoi, China and Korea, they could have canceled the March conference. But the Soviet Union insisted that this conference be convened. Maybe if they did not convene this conference they would not have been able to report in front of their followers! We do not, however, see what they have gained from this conference. The conference only made it easier for the Americans to see that there are plenty of fissures. The conference proved that the joint declarations published with the DRV and the DPRK are not to be trusted. That is why we place no hope in [the Soviet Union]. Of course if the Soviet Union wants to aid Vietnam, we will salute such a gesture, because all socialist countries must help the DRV, must help the NLF. Of course, the measure by which the socialist countries will aid Vietnam depends on the capacity of each country and the situation each country finds itself in. There is a common thing all socialist countries [must have] and that is that we do not talk about negotiations because of the US threats. The American goal is that aside from the PRC, DRV, and DPRK, all other socialist countries talk about

peace negotiations. In that way the US would be able to put pressure on [North] Vietnam. On the contrary, the socialist countries must condemn the US for sending troops to South Vietnam, for expanding the war; [they] must demand that the US withdraw its troops from South Vietnam, in conformity with the Geneva Accords; [must] condemn the American bombing [campaign] against the DRV; [must] take a position against the US expansion of the war in Indochina; [must] take a position against the use by the US of toxic gas.

If all socialist countries and all Afro-Asian countries will unite their voices and take such a position, then the Americans will feel that there is a very strong solidarity [among them]. For example, regarding the use of toxic gas, a strong protest cannot fail to have an influence on them.

This time I came to P. R. Romania with the primary goal of participating in the [Gheorghiu-Dej] funeral and also to talk with you and with Afro-Asian leaders about international issues. Of course, we would like to know your opinion [on these issues]. If you have any questions please let me know so I can answer them.

Com. Nicolae Ceausescu:

I want to thank Comrade Zhou Enlai and the other comrades for the detailed information about certain international issue, especially the situation in Vietnam, and other issues tied to it.

As the [Chinese] comrades know, our party and state leadership expressed its position regarding the American intervention in South Vietnam through a [public] declaration. Of course, the issues raised by comrade Zhou Enlai are of great importance. They need to be studied.

The [Chinese] comrades can understand that, given the situation we found ourselves in last week, we could not study these issues, including [the issues] raised by the declaration of the NLF. Without a doubt, the position of our party and government can only be that of condemning the American intervention in South Vietnam. Aside from the official declaration, workers in our country have organized protests against this intervention.

Our party leadership will analyze the issues and decide which actions to take in the future so that it may contribute to aiding the DRV and the Vietnamese people in their struggle against American intervention.

[...][discussion about the 1 March conference of communist parties]

Com. Ion Gheorghe Maurer:

I want to say a few words.

[...]

Regarding the first issue, the Vietnamese issue, comrade Ceausescu said that the special situation [we faced] lately prevented the party and state leadership from carefully studying this problem. There is another thing though. We are not always certain that the information that we have regarding the way events unfold over there is always accurate. Our primary source of information is the press, with all that press coverage entails vis-à-vis [sic! No word], and, from time to time, the official position of a country or political entity directly interested in finding a solution for this problem. This is why the discussion we had today is very valuable for us. Even if we have spent a lot of time and attention on the issue of Vietnam, we would not have been able to

know the series of facts and judgments that the present discussion reveals to us. This is why it is very hard for us to immediately tell you our position.

It would be very useful for our leadership to know, to assimilate this discussion, and to think about things and decide on its position [through the prism of all the specifics that you told us]. If I were to express a feeling, which I am sure is shared by everyone who attended your presentation, the judgments you made about the way events are unfolding, about the grand directions in which the interests of American imperialism are headed, and about what it means for the interests of the revolution, of the liberation and progress movement in the world, then [your judgments] are things that it is not hard for us to agree with, since they spring from our common perception [of the world].

Here, however, there are other positions as well. This is about what we must do concretely, tactically, when facing American imperialism-which ones of the characterizations you made do we agree with-in order to better serve the interests of the global revolutionary movement. What you said and what we believe is the same thing. And these things must be carefully placed in balance. They must be carefully weighted because with the way things are evolving in Vietnam, any mistakes in planning will be paid through the nose. So, comrade Zhou Enlai, understand us well, we do not share the sentiment that it would be good to allow the Americans to get out of their own trap [sa'si scoata mana prin crapatura copacului in care au fost prinsi], but we must weigh things well, so that we can gain the most out of this situation while spending the least [necessary].

The opinion expressed by comrade Ceausescu that we must act massively, united, of course, in the just sense that the action must be directed, is a goal that we think we should not ignore.

Of course, personally, I have a series of points of view about the things you state, about the hurry with which some socialist countries were pushing the idea of negotiations, but it is normal that I express these ideas in the collective to which I belong, so that the collective could judge. You will understand why I ask you to allow me not to tell them to you, since what I think is less important than the decision of the collective I am part of.

Another thing is clear to me regarding this issue. The position that the countries fighting for freedom-the countries of Africa, and Asia, and Latin America-will adopt is very important. That is why I believe that the decision you took to visit some of these countries is very smart, because a position that is not understood by this people would be a position that has little chance to succeed at a certain time; it might even serve the interests of the American imperialists.

[...][discussion regarding the UN, other issues]

Com. Zhou Enlai:

You presented the common opinion of the party and government leadership. The points of view regarding the international communist and workers' movement and regarding the support given the people fighting for independence are identical because our aims are the same: to win the final battle. This is the main reason why our parties and countries feel the need to hold more meetings, more discussions. Our contacts last year prove this thing.

Of course, as the two [Romanian] comrades stated, the current international situation is very complex. However, the fact that people all over the world desire revolution, that did not change. We persevere in Marxism-Leninism, in supporting the

revolutionary and national liberation movement. The revolutionary movement of the peoples [of the world] did not change.

What changes did happen? The situation changed in the sense that relations between us on one hand and our enemies on the other hand got more complicated.

First let's speak of our enemy: American imperialism. American imperialism caused much trouble throughout the world, but also suffered many failures. Having learned from its failures, it now comes at us with different trickery. [American imperialism] wants to use the difficulties facing the various people of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. That is why lots of incidents [fenomene] come up, and, if we were to judge [only] by appearances, we would not be able to see the main problem.

Also, after the change in leadership in the Soviet Union, the current leadership is no longer Khrushchev. Khrushchevism without Khrushchev is, after all, something else.

Com. Maurer:

It is weaker.

Com. Zhou Enlai:

That is one of its main characteristics.

They [the American imperialists] are taking actions in order to trick others; those who do not know these tricks cannot see the main problem. That is why we must clearly show the socialist countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America where things stand. That is why we must intensify the exchange of visits, the exchange of views during the different visits between our parties and states, which have identical views regarding a series of issues. Also, we must intensify our work in the Afro-Asian countries.

That is why I agree with you that you should tell us what you think after you have a chance to study what we told you a few minutes ago, so you can tell us what you think about certain issues, because only through reciprocal consultations can we reach the proper solution. The identical views will reinforce [both] our trust in supporting each other and in fighting together towards our goal. In the present world, things come together. It is impossible that Asia would have no influence on Europe or that Europe will not influence Asia.

We hope that our two countries will intensify their exchange of views, be it either through our respective ambassadors, or in other ways.

Regarding the issue of Vietnam, we presented only the tendency [we see] in the evolution of this problem. Of course, this is a very complicated issue. We would like in the future to exchange more information between us. As a matter of fact, this is the beginning of an exchange of views.

[...]

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