

November 15, 1963

Cable from the Chinese Embassy in Vietnam, 'Xuan Thuy discusses Chairman Ho's Unpublished Approval of de Gaulle's Suggestion'

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Summary:

The Chinese Embassy in Vietnam reports on the alleged maneuvers of Ngo Dinh Nhu, North Vietnamese diplomacy, and France's attitudes toward Vietnam.

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Cable Received by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Xuan Thuy discusses Chairman Ho's Unpublished Approval of de Gaulle's Suggestion

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

Cable dated the 13th was received. Chairman Ho [Chi Minh] has not yet released a public statement on this issue, indicating that he is preparing to approve the suggestions put forth by Charles De Gaulle.

Minister Xuan Thuy discussed the following related events in yesterday's conversation with Ambassador Zhu [Qiwen].

(I) Before the South Vietnamese coup, Ngo Dinh Nhu had taken the initiative to meet with the Polish representative of the International Commission. After the coup, the Polish representative remarked to his Vietnamese counterpart that Ngo Dinh Nhu had asked him what stance the socialist countries would be taking on the Vietnamese issue, to which he responded that the socialist countries wished to act according to the Geneva Convention. Afterward, the American press issued a report stating that the Polish representative had delivered a letter from Prime Minister Pham Van Dong to Ngo Dinh Nhu in which Prime Minister Pham suggested a cease fire. The release of this information prompted the representative from India as well as the French and American ambassadors to seek counsel with the Polish representative. In response, the Polish representative issued a correction stating that the meeting had been arranged by Ngo Dinh Nhu. The correction was immediately passed on by the AFP. Because of this information, elements of the coup later accused Ngo Dinh Nhu of being in secret communication with North Vietnam.

According to Xuan Thuy, after the Polish representative discussed the above situation with the Vietnamese representative, two suggestions were raised: (1) Both America and Ngo Dinh Diem are currently in difficult circumstances, so much so that even the Vatican disapproves of America's policy in Vietnam, indicating that the time for compromise has arrived.

(2) It was suggested that the Vietnamese send a delegation of Catholics to meet with the Vatican to prove Ngo Dinh Diem's claim of being Catholic, but not to send an [official] representative. The Socialist North, however, sent a representative. The Vietnamese party rejected these suggestions. Afterward, the Polish ambassador to Vietnam once more raised the above suggestions, to which the Vietnamese Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Hoang Van Loi responded as follows:

(1) Even though America has already failed in Vietnam, the failure has not been complete and they are therefore still unwilling to resolve the conflict. Compromise will only be possible after they have achieved a new victory.

(2) The Catholic priests in North Vietnam are all supporters of America and therefore cannot be sent as delegates. There are some fathers who could be sent, but the Vatican would not accept them. Besides, what is the use in sending them? Vietnam does not believe that this problem exists.

(II) The French delegation stationed in Vietnam asked on behalf of the Chief Representative what opinion Vietnam has of the suggestions put forth by Charles De Gaulle. The Vietnamese cadre responded: (1) It is France's responsibility to act

according to the Geneva Convention; (2) Charles De Gaulle's suggestions do not make it explicitly clear that America has broken the Geneva Convention.

France's treatment of South Vietnam and North Vietnam is not equal (South Vietnam has diplomatic relations with France, whereas North Vietnam is only allowed to station trade representatives.)

The French representative responded by saying that France has already fulfilled its obligations under the Geneva Convention and that it cannot deal with America in the same way that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam does; France's current relationship with North Vietnam is an irrational one, but it will only improve gradually with time.

(III) During the increase of Buddhists fighting against Ngo Dinh Diem, two American journalists arrived at the Vietnamese embassy in Laos asking for permission to go to Hanoi to interview Chairman Ho concerning the South Vietnamese issue. The Vietnamese ambassador responded by saying that Chairman Ho, Prime Minister Pham, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had already issued several reports on the matter and that their stance on the issue was already very clear. The interview, therefore, would be unnecessary.

Xuan Thuy says that Western publications have made various unsubstantiated claims, but there is nothing noteworthy besides the situations described above.

[Redacted text]

[Chinese] Embassy in Vietnam
15 November 1963