

**July 3, 1954**

**Main points, Zhou Enlai's presentations at the  
Liuzhou Conference (excerpt)**

**Citation:**

"Main points, Zhou Enlai's presentations at the Liuzhou Conference (excerpt)", July 3, 1954, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976, vol. I, pp. 394-395; Xiong, pp. 140-143. Translated for CWIHP by Chen Jian.  
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/121159>

**Summary:**

A summary of the main points of Zhou Enlai's presentations given at the Liuzhou Conference July 3-5. Zhou touches on the topic of crucial questions the communist parties are facing, Korea and US intervention, and conditions for armistice.

**Original Language:**

Chinese

**Contents:**

Translation - English

The Indochina issue has been internationalized, and this is a key feature [of the current situation]. In terms of the scope and degree of internationalization, the Indochina issue even has surpassed the Korea issue. In Korea, the enemy side of sixteen countries acted under the name of the United Nations, and China dispatched its volunteers, it was only one step away for the war to be changed into a world war. However, as both the Soviet Union and the United States wanted to localize the war, the war in Korea finally stopped, and a stalemate emerged between the two sides.

The question of the war in Indochina not only has involved the three [Indochina] countries, but also has influenced the entire Southeast Asia, and has influenced Europe and the whole world as well. This means that it will have impact on Burma, Thailand, Malaya, Indonesia, Pakistan, India, as well as on Australia, New Zealand, Ceylon, and the Philippines, and it will also have a big impact on France as France has colonies in Asia and Africa. It will also have an impact on Britain, as Britain has close connections with Pakistan, India, Ceylon, Malaya, Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand, and is extremely sensitive to any situation change in Indochina, and will not simply let it happen without doing anything. Because the imperialists are afraid of China's "expansion," they absolutely will not allow Vietnam to achieve a great-scale victory. If we request too much [at the Geneva conference] and if peace is not achieved in Indochina, it is certain that the United States will intervene, providing Cambodia, Laos and the Bao Dai [regime] with weapons and ammunition, helping them train military personnel, and establishing military bases there. Therefore, we must isolate the United States and break up its plans; otherwise we will fall into the trap prepared by the U.S. imperialists. Consequently even in a military sense we will not be able to seize [parts of] Vietnam.

There are seven crucial questions [that we are facing now]. (1) Does there exist contradictions between [peacefully settling] the Indochina issue and fulfilling the internationalist mission of the international communist movement? The answer is that there exists no such contradiction; otherwise it is not true internationalism. (2) Is it better to seize the entire Vietnam through a peaceful way, or through means of war? The answer is that from every perspective, it is now clear that it is impossible to seize the entire Vietnam merely by military means. (3) Can Laos and Cambodia be united [with us] through a peaceful way, or can they be united [with us] by means of war? The answer is that this should be done through a peaceful way, and the military way will only push them toward the United States. (4) Will we be able to separate France and the United States through a peaceful way or through means of war? (5) Will we be able to separate Britain and the United States through a peaceful way or through means of war? (6) Will we be able to divide the Bao Dai clique through a peaceful way or through means of war? (7) Will we be able to pursue cooperation with [other] Southeast Asian countries through a peaceful way or by means of war? The answer to all these questions is that peace is favorable to various aspects, and will make the United States isolated. If the proposals put forward by us are too demanding, and if we request too much, peace will not be reached in Indochina. The United States will surely intervene.

Korea is an example. The key of the Korea issue lay in the intervention of the United States. It was completely beyond our expectation that the [American] reinforcement would arrive so quickly.... If there had not been the American intervention, the Korean People's Army would have been able to drive Syngman Rhee's [troops] into the ocean. Because of American intervention, we only achieved a draw at the end of the war, and were unable to win a victory.... Because of this, we now have only one main task, and that is to achieve peace.... If the war were to become internationalized, that would not be favorable to us, and we would lose the space of maneuvering as our rear and flanks would be exposed to [the enemy's] threats. Therefore, to prevent American's intervention is the central issue.

If we want to achieve peace, but the United States is determined to sabotage it, then what should we do? Of course we will have to fight continuously. The Vietnamese

people want peace, and this will certainly influence the people in the whole Indochina, and will influence Southeast Asia. If Britain and France are also supportive of peace, then only the United States and Ngo Dien Diem will remain against peace. Then the reasons and justice are in our hands. If the war continues, the world's sympathy will be with us. The war will stop after fighting for another period, and at that time the United States will become even more isolated.

There are four basic conditions for an armistice: (1) Simultaneous ceasefire in all three Indochina countries; (2) Taking the 16th parallel as the demarcation line for the zones between the two sides (and if this does not work, then considering taking Route 9, which is close to the 17th parallel, as the demarcation line); (3) Forbidding transportation of weapons and ammunition into Indochina after the settlement; and (4) Removing all military bases from the three countries. The other side is not in a position to oppose this. We have no need to establish military bases there. Cambodia and Laos are different from Vietnam. In Vietnam, it is the Vietnamese comrades who have struggled to achieve what they have achieved, and their influence has reached the whole of Vietnam. The goals in Cambodia Laos should be freedom, democracy, and independence. They should become "India-style Southeast Asian countries," which should be characterized as (1) they should not join any military alliance or allow the existence of foreign military bases; (2) they should be friendly to us, and (3) they should have some domestic democracy, which should mainly be reflected in that the political part should have the freedom to have activities.

At present, the central task concerns the cadres, and the top cadres - namely members of the Politburo - in particular. It must be made clear among [VWP] Politburo members why it is necessary to achieve an armistice.