

June 15, 1966

**Transcript of Official Conversations Between the
Romanian Delegation led by Nicolae Ceausescu, and
the Party and Government Delegation of the
Chinese P.R. led by Zhou Enlai on the Occasion of
their Visit to Romania**

Citation:

"Transcript of Official Conversations Between the Romanian Delegation led by Nicolae Ceausescu, and the Party and Government Delegation of the Chinese P.R. led by Zhou Enlai on the Occasion of their Visit to Romania", June 15, 1966, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Document 294 in Budura, Relațiile Româno-Chineze, 1880-1974: Documente (2005), pp. 788-872; ANR, fond C.C. al P.C.R., Secția Relații Externe, dosar 87/1966, f. 12-42; 51-144. Translated by Larry L. Watts
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/122577>

Summary:

This document is the transcript of the official conversations held between the Romanian delegation and the Chinese delegation visiting Romania, during which the two parties discuss the situation in Vietnam and the Romanian effort to pressure the US.

Original Language:

Romanian

Contents:

Translation - English

[...]

Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu: Regarding the situation in Vietnam; I especially left this problem until the end because I consider that it is one of the problems with which we should be particularly concerned and that it is necessary for us to find a way to act more decisively in the defense of Vietnam.

□ We consider that, regarding assistance to D.R. Vietnam and, in general, the struggle of the Vietnamese people, we are not doing all we can. I am not referring only to material and military help; from this perspective the Vietnamese comrades have declared to us that they consider the assistance satisfactory and corresponding to their requests, but I am referring to political and diplomatic actions in support of the D.R. Vietnam.

□ You remember, during the Korean War, what mass political action was developed against American aggression. Today this action is minimal; I could say very weak, although the situation is completely different from that during the period of the war in Korea. With all of the pressures that they have exerted, the Americans have not managed to obtain the military support from their partners for the war in Vietnam. In Korea they managed to get the support of 14 states, which gave them direct military assistance. Now they have not managed to do this, which indicates that their partners do not want to support this operation. Moreover, partners such as the French have taken public positions against American policy; even other small NATO countries have declared themselves against this policy of aggression.

□ In the discussions we have had with representatives of numerous countries, we have seen that all are preoccupied with the ending of American aggression in Vietnam and they pronounce themselves in this sense. We signed a communiqué with the Shah of Iran that calls for the Vietnamese people to be left to resolve their internal problems on their own, without outside interference. In discussions with us the Shah called for the departure of the Americans from Vietnam, saying that even if the communists would then succeed to obtain victory in South Vietnam; that should be the affair of the Vietnamese without outside interference.

□ I underscore this with the aim of showing that conditions are favorable for a broader action, for convincing the Americans to end their aggression in Vietnam.

□ Certainly, we must accord all military and material support to the Vietnamese comrades in their struggle: we have accorded and we continue to accord this support, but we consider that we can also give other assistance, namely, mobilizing public opinion and policy circles with the aim of convincing the Americans to end the aggression. Recently, very many circles, including official ones, have raised the problem of unconditionally halting the bombing of North Vietnam; we could arrive at a situation in which very large circles, entire governments are pressing the Americans to stop the bombing of D.R. Vietnam. We consider that if we succeed to make the Americans renounce their bombardment, then that would be a great political success for us, it would be a very powerful aid for the comrades in Vietnam and it would facilitate the struggle for the end of the aggression and the departure of the Americans from Vietnam. Thus, I consider that along with the material and military support we must accord a more powerful political and diplomatic support to the Vietnamese people in the struggle that they carry out; we should isolate the Americans so that they can be defeated and so they leave Vietnam.

□ We support all of the proposals in their entirety: both of the government of the D.R. Vietnam and of the National Liberation Front and we consider that we must organize in support of these proposals a broad activity of the masses, politically and diplomatically.

□ In the discussions that we have had with comrade Brezhnev, in May, we raised this problem also with him: it was left for us to think upon it further and find ways to better act. In any case, to speak honestly, we are not happy with what has been done to assist the Vietnamese people from this point of view.

□ We have sought, before all of the foreign delegations - governmental and non-governmental - with which we have met, to raise the problem of assistance to Vietnam and present our position on the withdrawal of the Americans, and we have met with understanding with all of them, which gives us the right to say that, truly,

we must do more in this direction.

□ In this sense, we have thought about the organization of a meeting of representatives from all of the socialist countries that would discuss the issues connected with assistance to the D.R. Vietnam, to the Vietnamese people.

□ When our delegation was in Vietnam it discussed this issue first with the Vietnamese comrades. They declared themselves in agreement in principle and considered such a meeting useful. We also consider that such a meeting would be good thing and that it could have great importance both in raising the combat morale of the Vietnamese people and in mobilizing world public opinion, the opinion of governments, and of political circles regarding aid to Vietnam. Of course there are divergences on many problems, but in the final analysis the assistance to Vietnam is a practical problem, in connection with which one can put to the test - if you want to approach the issue from that angle - whether everyone wants to accord help or not; we should meet, listening also to the desires of the Vietnamese comrades, and we should exchange views.

We are not seeking to establish a unique command authority or similar such proposals as some others have made; we are speaking of a conference, a meeting in which an exchange of views can be made and which, in any case, would constitute a manifestation of unanimous solidarity with the struggle of the Vietnamese people. We see it as useful and we would like to discuss this with you. A meeting of the representatives of the countries in the Warsaw Pact will now take place. Of course, it cannot avoid discussion of the Vietnamese problem; likewise the problem has been raised of reaching a common declaration of the Warsaw Pact countries in support of the Vietnamese people. We have raised the issue of consulting us and we have asked the Vietnamese comrades. We are for a declaration because no one would understand if representatives of these countries met, discussed problems of European security and peace in general, and then failed to manifest any attitude towards the situation in Vietnam. Let's see what the Vietnamese comrades say. But, independently of that, we consider that it would be useful if the representatives of all of the socialist countries should meet in regard to the Vietnamese problem.

□ Here are several of the international issues to which I wanted to refer and express the point of view of our party.

□ I would like now, in closing, to underscore that whether or not there are differences of view and divergences in connection with some problems, it is nonetheless good to find paths of joint action on those problems upon which points of view are similar or shared.

□ I know your point of view, according to which it is difficult to talk with those who want to reach understandings with the American imperialists. I do not now want to discuss the basis of this problem but even in this situation I consider that if we act and decide that the principal problems cannot be resolved except after the socialist states have been consulted, we may more easily impede certain actions of isolation of one or another.

[...]

Cde. Zhou Enlai: Is or is not the intensification of American aggression due to the disunity of the socialist countries, to the divergences between socialist countries? Truly, it is correct (to say) that the existing divergences between the socialist countries are used by American imperialism. However, who offered them to the Americans for their use? Soviet revisionism. Khrushchev proceeded in that manner and so have his successors. In 1964, before his fall, Khrushchev blamed us in connection with the incident in the Beibuwan [Tonkin] Gulf, that China and Vietnam had provoked the Americans. This totally reveals the true face of the traitor.

□ Has the situation changed for the better under the new leadership of the Soviet Union? We believe that the situation is even worse; the new leadership is both more secretive and sneakier.

□ Last year, in February, Kosygin stopped in Beijing when he went to and came back from Vietnam. Even while he was heading to Hanoi, the Americans threatened the D.R.

Vietnam with bombardment. Kosygin spoke very finely, saying they support the Vietnamese people in the struggle against American imperialism, but in reality he was intimidated and immediately after his return to Moscow he proposed to Vietnam and to China that they sound out the Americans to start peace negotiations. Pham Van Dong responded that now is not the right moment. We responded that we must request the opinion of our Vietnamese comrades and because of that we could not reply immediately. Without taking into account the fact that the D.R. Vietnam opposed these proposals, this attempts, and that China had not yet given its response, the Soviet Union sought out through its ambassador in France the reaction towards peace negotiations. Likewise, it had secret contacts with the English and with U Thant. What is that if not betrayal?

[...]

□The Soviet Union created the impression among the Americans that it is in a hurry to push Vietnam into conducting peace negotiations with the Americans and that it fears an extension of the war. In many places of the world, where actions have been undertaken in the sense of starting peace negotiations on the problem of Vietnam, the Soviet Union was also present. In its words, in public, the Soviet Union said that it accords aid to the Vietnamese comrades, and that it is not for peace negotiations on the problem of Vietnam. However, in secret it has launched many rumors that the Vietnamese comrades agree with peace negotiations, while China opposes them. Very many newspapers in the West, especially those in the United States of America, present things in this manner. The Soviet Union has uttered not a single word to negate them.

□The number of accords that the new leadership of the Soviet Union has reached with the Americans surpasses by wide margin those concluded during the time of Khrushchev.

[...]

□If we participate in a conference convoked by the Soviet Union, or to other conferences convoked by other countries in which the socialist countries are participating, that means we will be adding to the political capital of the Soviet revisionists, enabling them to say to the Americans that they are able to control the respective conferences. In this way they will have even greater capital to betray, and all of us will be betrayed. And if that doesn't happen, after the insults proffered in these conferences, we will arrive at an open schism, in this way exposing even more our divergences before American imperialism. In the first case, of participation in a joint activity, we do not want to be betrayed. In the second case, of open fighting, you consider that there is too much of it, that we must not do. You have advised us to discuss with them. Of course you are well intentioned. However, because of our friendship, I must tell you that you are too naïve.

[...]

□Certainly, you have a different position than ours and you desire to preserve relations with them; there is the Warsaw Pact, there is the CMEA. You cannot do otherwise than fight along the interior lines of these organizations and of course it is a difficult fight; we fight against them from outside of those organizations, destroying their forces.

□The Western press now affirms that the Soviet Union cannot conduct peace negotiations on the problem of Vietnam precisely due to the opposition of China. Taking into consideration the real forces of the Soviet Union, if the Soviet Union is truly for assisting Vietnam in its struggle, why don't they help them more than us? In my opinion, the new leadership of the Soviet Union will not change its position. Its public words are meant to mislead the socialist countries, its own people. In reality, it practices revisionism.

[...]

□What are the Americans thinking regarding the war in Vietnam? One of the possibilities is that they would recognize the failure they have suffered, however the facts prove that they are not yet ready to do that, rather, they will further increase the number of American troops in Vietnam up to 800,000 men. Another possibility would be to conduct a war of long duration. Both possibilities exist, however the possibility of conducting a war of long duration is more likely. Of course, the so-called long-term as foreseen by Johnson cannot be longer than two and a half years, because in 1968 there will be a presidential election. As regards those possibilities, Vietnam and China cannot make preparations starting off from the presupposition that Johnson will end the war before the new elections, because it is entirely possible that the next president of the U.S.A., eventually a member of the Republican Party, will continue the war. Of course, there is also another possibility: the ending of the war, just as, for instance, Eisenhower, also a representative of the Republican Party, ended the war in Korea.

□In case of a war of long duration, there are two possibilities. One possibility: the war will be limited to South Vietnam, the 800,000 American soldiers will bear down on the shoulders of the South Vietnamese people and they will create new ports, new airports, new bases in Vietnam; at the same time, they would institute a blockade around D.R. Vietnam, both in the sea and on land; in Laos, in Cambodia - even now they are thinking about an international commission that can monitor the borders of Vietnam with Laos and Cambodia - they would intensify the bombing of D.R. Vietnam, and through the complete blockade of South Vietnam, so that they could not receive any assistance from outside and by exercising pressure on the D.R. Vietnam, the Americans would try to oblige the Vietnamese to enter into peace negotiations with them.

A second possibility: if the communication lines cannot be interrupted and the Vietnamese people do not submit, then it is possible that the Americans will extend the war in North Vietnam, in the whole of Indochina, including China. In this situation, the Vietnamese comrades have said that at present the conditions are not yet ripe for the beginning of peace negotiations and they have requested that we all support, with all of our forces, the war of long duration imposed upon the Vietnamese people, obligating the American aggressors to recognize their defeat. Certainly, this is the right thing to do. At the same time, we must be conscious that the continuation of the war will bring hardship to the Vietnamese people.

□Even before leaving Beijing we discussed with the Vietnamese comrades; we thought how to penetrate the blockade instituted by the Americans, in order to continue to help South Vietnam. The Vietnamese people must be supported quietly, so that the war is not expanded to the north of Vietnam, what is in interest of the D.R. Vietnam is in the interest of the entire world.

[...]

□The Soviets have told the Vietnamese comrades that it is possible that the war in Vietnam will conclude with their victory, however when the festivities for celebrating that victory will take place, they will no longer exist. That means that Vietnam will be occupied. Such words cannot only come from the mouths of enemies, never from the leadership of a socialist country.

□Given that, we consider that the Soviet Union has undermined the war in Vietnam enough. In this year, on the field of battle there have appeared some factors unfavorable to the relations between China and Vietnam. The Soviets have led the Americans to understand that, by exercising great pressure on the Vietnamese, in the end they will agree to conduct peace negotiations with the Americans through the intermediary of the Soviet Union, with the result that the Americans could preserve a part of their forces in Vietnam, just as they proceeded in Laos.

□Comrade Ceausescu has proposed that we exercise pressure on the Americans along political and diplomatic lines. If this pressure represents genuine pressure than we agree. If however, we convene a conference in which an even larger schism is produced then it would not be pressure at all, but an even more evident exposure of

our weaknesses. If a conference would be convened to which China does not participate and the tone of that conference was very low, that would give the Americans the possibility of being even more arrogant. Many such conferences were convened. We must thank the Romanian colleagues for the fact that they are not in agreement with convening a conference in which the majority controls the conference to the detriment of the minorities. The more often that such conferences take place, the more we reveal our weaknesses. In this situation it is better that each accord assistance separately, enabling the verification of the position of each one, whether it is a sincere position or a false one, whether each truly supports up to the end the struggle of the Vietnamese people.

□I have read the recent speech of comrade Ceausescu on the occasion of his visit in the Arges region. In this speech, comrade Ceausescu declared for supporting the Four Points position of the D.R. Vietnam and the Five Points of the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam, for supporting the struggle of the Vietnamese people, for the end of American aggression, for the halting of the bombing of North Vietnam, for the withdrawal of American troops and of U.S. satellite forces. We assess this position, which was jointly expressed and signed on the occasion of the visit of a delegation of the Communist Party of Japan in your country, as correct. Together we must maintain this position, with no change whatsoever. This represents a powerful voice, which strikes at the arrogance of the American military and is in the interest of encouraging the combat morale of the Vietnamese people.

□If a conference would be convened in which the tone was much reduced, this would show the Americans that we can do nothing extraordinary and they would feel much encouraged; or if we were to talk today in one way and tomorrow in another, the Americans would observe that our position was not firm and they would use this against us. Just as happened with the Soviet opportunists.

□The situation in which each one helps the struggle of the Vietnamese people individually, constitutes a serious test of the position of each one in assisting the struggle in Vietnam. The Vietnamese people have need of powerful assistance. Continually fighting, it will become more and more powerful, thus creating favorable conditions for beginning negotiations. It is a law of imperialism that anything that they cannot obtain on the battlefield they try to obtain at the negotiation table.

[...]

□The war in Vietnam is in the interest of the world revolutionary movement, because the forces of imperialism are concentrated there, and in the other parts of the world they have been weakened. Given that, all of the forces of the world that struggle against American imperialism must support the struggle of the Vietnamese people; acting in this way, the pressure of the Americans on Vietnam will weaken. We consider that we should not fear the extension of the war; we are prepared for the expansion of the war.

□You have probably taken note of our position in four points as publicly presented by me in the name of the party and the government. Our position is very clear. We told it to the Americans: we will not provoke you but if you desire to fight us, we are prepared; if you enter here, you will not be able to leave. Only proceeding in this way will they be made to think twice. If we show ourselves in a hurry to ask for the beginning of peace negotiations that will incur new hardships for the struggle in Vietnam because, seeing that all of the forces in the world are asking for peace negotiations, the Americans will intensify their operations. If the Vietnamese people suffer a defeat, then American imperialism will also defeat one after another the other forces in the world. Given that, the Vietnamese people cannot permit defeat in the war in Vietnam; we cannot permit defeat in the war in Vietnam.

[...]

Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu: Regarding the situation in Vietnam, I am completely in agreement with what comrade Zhou Enlai has said, that it is the duty of each socialist

country to assist the Vietnamese people in its struggle both materially and politically. Of course, the hardships of the struggle are borne by the Vietnamese people who are directly in the war; we must give them all support for this struggle. In this question we can verify the socialist internationalism of everyone, such that, through the struggle carried out by the Vietnamese people, with the aid given by the international communist and workers movement, we can convince the Americans to end the aggression; just as comrade Zhou Enlai has said, through this fight, through the actions undertaken by all of the countries, of the anti-imperialist movement, favorable conditions for the ending of the aggression and the beginning of negotiations can be created. Will can all contribute to that end. In such a way the Americans should be compelled to reach the conclusion that they must leave Vietnam.

□ In this sense, I would request of comrade Zhou Enlai that he not consider closed the possibility of a conference of socialist countries on the issue of assistance to Vietnam. Because that could create the necessary conditions. Maybe they do not exist now, but we should seek them, within the framework of preoccupation for helping the Vietnamese people and putting an end to the American aggression, we should create conditions for such a conference, which could have a certain influence. I want to be clear, if the comrades consider that now is not the moment to convene it then we do not insist upon it, but we consider that the problem should be examined and that we should arrive at its convening. As concerns us, to tell you honestly, we consider such a conference as useful.

[...]

Cde. Zhou Enlai: We've reached the following problem: between us there is a fundamental difference in the way we view Soviet revisionism. According to your opinion, contemporary Soviet revisionists have changed since the period of Khrushchev and this change can be furthered under our influence. You consider them as comrades who have committed serious errors.

□ How do we see this? We consider that the contemporary Soviet revisionists - although we formally preserve relations with them, relations between fraternal parties, between fraternal countries - basically, they have betrayed our common cause, Marxism-Leninism. Beginning with February of last year, they changed their attitude of opposition toward the struggle of the Vietnamese people, being conscious that if they continued along the path of Khrushchev they would be unmasked. In appearance [they are] manifesting some changes, public declarations of support for the struggle of the Vietnamese people in order to conceal their ties with American imperialism, with other imperialist countries, with other nationalist reactionary countries, in order to influence the situation in Vietnam and arrive at negotiations, in the interest of American imperialism. Beginning with February of last year, when we told them that the more assistance they gave to the Vietnamese people, the better, they tried with all their might to sow discord in the relations between China and Vietnam and they spread pessimistic ideas in connection with the war in Vietnam.

[...]

□ In regard to actions of support along political lines, this can be done bilaterally, in conformity with the determining conditions of each country. In this regard it is not appropriate to undertake united action, because experience has proven that in the trade unions, in youth, women's and peace organizations, every time an attempt was made in this sense, major discussions were provoked, contradictions became obvious and, in the end, what was adopted lacked any force. Through these actions we did not demonstrate our force to American imperialism, instead we exposed our weaknesses to American imperialism. The anti-Chinese actions undertaken by the contemporary Soviet revisionists have never ceased, although their methods are more ingenious. At any given moment, on the issue of Vietnam, it is possible that the Vietnamese people do adopt a policy for starting peace negotiations; of course, that is the right of the Vietnamese people, of any sovereign state. Then, it is possible that the Soviet Union will begin a new action, of greater amplitude, against China, saying

that China did not help the Vietnamese people with all of its power. We have shared our appreciations with our Vietnamese comrades. The right of decision belongs to the entire Vietnamese people; we do everything in conformity with the desire of the Vietnamese people and we prepare to be the shield of the Vietnamese people; in case American imperialism will extend the war to China, we will not back down.

[...]

Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu: I would like to thank comrade Zhou Enlai for presenting the points of view both regarding common problems as well as international problems. Of course, there are many things upon which we have the same point of view; there are also those upon which we have differences of opinion, some of principle, others of methods of action. I consider, and I believe that the other comrades will also be in agreement with this consideration, that the exchange of opinions and discussions that have taken place in these days has been useful from every point of view, they have given us the possibility of clarifying many things and of understanding better the position of one or the other.

□I agree with what comrade Zhou Enlai said in his conclusion that from all of the discussions it emerges that we have a vast terrain of collaboration between our parties and states, for acting in this direction. The problems about which there continue to be different opinions will be further analyzed; life itself will help us to clarify them. I would like to tell you that if life proves that our point of view did not or does not correspond then we will tell you and we will seek to correct things.

Cde. Emil Bodnaras: We have had such situations.

Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu: I believe it would be good to seek in the future to enlarge our exchange of opinions and consultations regarding the problems of common interest and even more important international issues.

[...]