May 30, 1954

Minutes, Director of the Staff Office of the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs Wang Bingnan’s Meeting with President of the International Federation on Human Rights Joseph Paul-Boncour

Citation:


Summary:

Wang reports on his discussion with Paul-Boncour and Chauvel. Paul-Boncour makes suggestions on the upcoming secret meeting between Bidault and Zhou. Also, Wang and Chauvel discuss issues at the conference such as the cease-fire and supervisory committee in Indochina.

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

- English Translation
Time: 30 May 1954, 5:30 p.m.  
Location: Gleystt Mansion (Home of Paul-Boncour's mother-in-law)  
Chinese participants: Wang Bingnan and Dong Ningchuan (translator)  
French participants: Paul-Boncour, [Counselor to the French delegation, Colonel] Jacques Guillermaz, and [French Ambassador to Switzerland] Jean Chauvel  

(1) Arrangement for Foreign Minister Zhou to meet Bidault

Paul-Boncour: I had a long conversation with Bidault after our last meeting. He expressed that since it is possible to meet, the earlier, the better (because he will probably attend the Congress of the Popular Republican Movement [Mouvement Républicain Populaire] soon). He suggested next Monday or Tuesday. We are concerned about ways to keep the meeting secret. If Foreign Ministers Zhou and Bidault invite each other and have dinner together, the Swiss security would know. All the Swiss policemen communicate through their network, and the information [about the meeting] would leak to the public. So our suggestion is that the two foreign ministers have a meeting after sunset, about 9:00 or 9:30 p.m. in the evening. Therefore, the foreign ministers can have a long conversation. If they would like to, they could talk until midnight or even 1:00 am. Regarding their meeting location, we suggest this mansion. The mansion is close to where both foreign ministers are staying. It is convenient for all of us. There are no neighbors around so there won't be any disruptions from outside. [We'd like to know] if Foreign Minister Zhou agrees [with the arrangement].

Wang Bingnan: What is your security plan?

Paul-Boncour: If we use Swiss security guards, the information will leak. So we suggest Foreign Minister Zhou use his own bodyguards. They may come to the mansion about 9:00 p.m.

Wang Bingnan: How is Mr. Bidault coming here?

Paul-Boncour: He will come here himself. The Swiss security guards as usual will notice that he has left his place. They won't, however, know where he is going. During the conference hours, the Swiss security guards always escort [Bidault] as they do for all the heads of the delegations. But, outside conference hours, Bidault goes out quite often by himself. On Sundays, when his chef took time off, he and Chauvel went to the countryside by themselves and ate at local restaurants. If Foreign Minister Zhou wants to use the Swiss security guards, we don't have a problem. We just don't feel it is the best way.

Wang Bingnan: Has Mr. Bidault ever come to this place?

Paul-Boncour: He has never been here before. However, his wife has been here several times. I still have to repeat one of the points we discussed at the last meeting, that is, to keep the meeting absolutely secret before it starts. The two foreign ministers can decide themselves whether a press release or other documents may be necessary after their meeting.

(Chauvel arrived at this point.)

Chauvel: We can decide whether the Swiss security guards will come or not. If they don't come, they may just guess. If they do come, they will definitely know the whole arrangement. So it is better not to have them here. Regarding the issue of who will attend the meeting from the delegations, the French participants will probably include Bidault, myself, and Mr. Guillermaz. We consider it proper not to have many participants from each delegation.
(After the meeting, Guillermaz said that it may be appropriate to add Paul-Boncour [to the list], since he is the host.)

**Wang Bingnan:** I will report all of your suggestions to the head of our delegation.

(2) The Issues at the Indochina Conference

**Chauvel:** At the last meeting, Mr. Molotov summarized and outlined the opinions from all sides. Mr. Smith suggested discussing the supervision issue only. The French delegation considers supervision a very complicated issue. If it can be resolved first, the conference is certainly making good progress. The two specific but important issues at the present are to reach a military agreement on troop regroupings, and to reach a political agreement on supervision. If these two problems are solved, other problems can be dealt with easily. All of the six points proposed by the Chinese delegation should be discussed. We suggest discussing supervision, which we believe is a central issue. It doesn't mean that any other issues could not be discussed. If a positive result derives from the solution of the central issue, it will help the discussions on other issues. We are very much impressed by the recent talks. Especially at the meeting yesterday—we saw genuine progress.

**Wang Bingnan:** I would also like to talk about our positions. We believe that:

1. The first task is to stop the bloodshed and resume peace in Indochina.

2. Different problems should be dealt with by adapting different methods.

3. Discussions must follow the importance of each issue and then decide which issue should go first.

4. A cease-fire can be achieved after all the issues are discussed satisfactorily.

The composition of the supervisory commission must be specifically discussed by both sides. We believe that the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission has two tasks:

1. Domestically, to prevent civil conflicts from occurring again.

2. Internationally, to stop entry of foreign troops and war materials into [the region].

We also have concerns about some specific problems of supervision. Our position is that a supervisory location can be identified either inland or in territorial waters to impose a supervision. In short, what we hope for is to establish effective supervision. The nine nations attending the conference [Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), France, Laos, the PRC, the State of Vietnam, the Soviet Union, the UK, and the USA.] should play a role in guaranteeing the implementation of the agreed settlement. A neutral nation should be among other proper nations besides these nine conference nations. The six points proposed by our Foreign Minister Zhou on the 27th are not for restoring a temporary peace in Indochina, but necessary for establishing a lasting peace in the region. This peace will benefit Asia, France, and the world. We have pointed out during the previous meeting that this war should not become complicated and internationalized. Mr. Paul-Boncour said that some French people intended to make the war more complicated by transferring the war issues to the United Nations. We believe that this doesn't fit into [serve] the national interests of France. Mr. Pham Van Dong had said that France could still maintain its economic and cultural enterprises in Vietnam. After peace is reinstalled, Vietnam will consider joining the French Union and build friendly relations with France. The delegates from Laos and Cambodia also indicated that the Free Laos and Kampuchean Liberation Movements are not strong forces. If this is true and their people support them, they won't worry any more after a peaceful order is established. Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai stated that the United States had to accept a peace in Korea. It should not stop France from accepting peace now in Indochina. At the
meeting yesterday, most of the delegates agreed to reach a settlement. It was said that the attitude of the American delegation would be neither supportive nor opposed. This is not helpful for the conference to reach an agreement.

**Paul-Boncour:** Please allow me to repeat to Mr. Chauvel what I said to Mr. Wang Bingnan at the last meeting. I had said that, if France was forced to accept terms that it had no way to cope with, it would have to ask for external assistance. After Dien Bien Phu fell, the situation changed drastically. If a similar incident takes place in Hanoi, France has no choice but to hand the war over willingly to the others in order to save the lives of its own people.

**Chauvel:** I am in full accord with what Mr. Wang Bingnan said. The tasks of the supervisory commission of the neutral nations are to prevent internal conflicts from re-occurring and prevent foreign troops and war materials from getting into the country. We also agree that locations for land and offshore supervision can be found, and the debates over the definition of a neutral state can be settled. According to Mr. Menon's activities at Geneva, he seems interested in this issue and has talked to the press about his opinions. Mr. Zhou Enlai has a systematic view of the problems of Indochina. He said that each of the three member countries in the Associated States has its own characteristics. Mr. Bidault is not quite familiar with Mr. Zhou Enlai's points of view because they don't know each other. Since there is now an opportunity to exchange their opinions, hopefully Mr. Zhou Enlai can talk to Mr. Bidault about any issue. At this conference France considers some of the countries as its friends. It must give enough attention to their opinions. It can't agree with any settlement they disagree with. Among these countries friendly to France is the United States. If the US distrusts the conference settlement, it will not endorse its implementation. This is dangerous. America's attitude toward the conference is not much different from that of France. But America attracts more suspicions. We should pay attention to it. Talking about handing over the war to others, there are two ways: handing it over to the left or to the right. If France hands the war over to the United States, then the other people will worry; if France hands it over to the other side, then the US will worry. It is the hope of France that solutions can be reached and agreed to by all sides. When we say to you that a certain problem will cause danger, please believe us, it is true. It must be avoided.

**Wang Bingnan:** A peaceful solution is beneficial for everyone. Handing the war over to the others doesn't fit into French national interests. We believe that our current efforts to strive for peace are justified. Problem solutions will arrive one by one. This has been proven by the agreement made yesterday—our efforts have achieved some success. As long as both sides are sincere, the difficulties can be overcome. Our goal is to restore Indochina's peace. Our desire is to reach that goal through common efforts by all conference delegates. It is not our intention to exclude any nation from the conference agreement. We need to overcome the obstacles, instead of being disrupted by them. Any solution should be based upon a nation's own interest so that the result will bring about satisfaction. With regard the discussions of the supervisory commission between Mr. Menon and our Foreign Minister Zhou, they did not touch the specific matters as far as I know. Who are these neutral nations besides the nine nations? What are the French suggestions?

**Chauvel:** I can't answer that question at this point. The French delegation will listen to the suggestions from all the delegations at the meeting tomorrow. Then, it will make its statements. If there is any opportunity from now on, I hope to exchange our opinions anytime. I am very interested in China's issues. I lived in Beijing for three years and have been in charge of Asian affairs in Paris for five years.