

**May 07, 1968**  
**Zhou Enlai's talk with Xuan Thuy, Director of the  
International Liaison Department of the Vietnam Workers  
Party, in Beijing**

**Citation:**

"Zhou Enlai's talk with Xuan Thuy, Director of the International Liaison Department of the Vietnam Workers Party, in Beijing," May 07, 1968, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, The Diplomatic History Research Office of the People's Republic of China Foreign Ministry, ed., Zhou Enlai waijiao huodong dashiji, 1949-1975 (Chronology of Zhou Enlai's Diplomatic Activities, 1949-1975) (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 1993), p. 524. Translated by Qiang Zhai.

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**Summary:**

Zhou Enlai advises Xuan Thuy concerning the negotiations with the US, Enlai draws some parallels between Korea and Vietnam

**Original Language:**

Chinese

**Contents:**

- English Translation

The conditions of the Korean [armistice] negotiations at that time are different from your conditions now. The Korean talks then concerned only half of Korea while you are now dealing with the unification of Vietnam. The issue of half Vietnam was discussed fourteen years ago. Comrade Mao Zedong told Chairman Ho Chi Minh last time that the Geneva Accords at that time might have been signed erroneously. After the conclusion of the Accords, many soldiers in South Vietnam were withdrawn to the North. At the time, the United States was unwilling to sign the Accords. We also had reasons not to sign the Accords. Chairman Ho said that the conclusion of the Accords had its advantages. The South Vietnamese went through a difficult period of arrest, incarceration, and suppression by Ngo Dinh Diem and suffered over two hundred thousand deaths. With this bitter lesson, the people in South Vietnam have risen up spontaneously to make revolution and achieve the situation they have today. Therefore, the situation of the Korean negotiations was similar to the situation of the 1954 Geneva Conference. The Korean negotiations were conducted on the battle ground. The war lasted for nearly three years and the negotiations two years. But when the 1954 Geneva Conference began to discuss the Korean question, nothing was achieved because the war had ended. No matter what we argued, they (the Americans) would not listen. As a result, the Korean negotiations only achieved an armistice agreement but failed to reach any political settlement. It (the United States) refused to discuss the issue of troop withdraw. When we withdrew our troops in 1958, it (the United States) refused to withdraw its forces. This time you encounter a different situation. You are beginning talks with the United States in stages. It is all right to do so. Watch while you are proceeding. But the fundamental issue is this: no matter what happens, you should not let the enemy gain from negotiations what it has failed to gain in the battlefield. It was because of the battle of Dien Bien Phu that the Geneva Conference was able to reach a result and settle on the Seventeenth Parallel. When he returned home, Comrade Pham Van Dong may have already informed you of our attitude. We feel that you have responded too quickly and too impatiently, perhaps giving the Americans a misperception that you are eager to negotiate. Comrade Mao Zedong has told Comrade Pham Van Dong that negotiations are all right but you must assume a high posture. Secondly, the United States, the vassal countries, and South Vietnam at present have a force of one million. Without breaking their backbones or cutting five to six of their ten fingers, they will not acknowledge their defeat and withdraw.

