

September 30, 1962

Record of Talks from the Premier's Meeting with the Delegation of the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam

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Summary:

Zhou Enlai meets with the head of a Vietcong delegation, Nguyen Van Hieu. The two discuss the Vietcong's struggle inside of Vietnam and the organization's international ties, as well as disarmament and Afro-Asian politics.

Credits:

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- English Translation

Chinese People's Committee for World Peace

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We are forwarding a copy of the transcript of Premier Zhou's conversation with a delegation of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam on September 30. Please make sure you receive it.

The Party Organization of the Chinese People's Committee for Safeguarding World Peace

October 11, 1962.

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Record of Talks from the Premier's Meeting with the Delegation of the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam [Viet Cong]

(Not yet reviewed)

Time: Afternoon, 30 September 1962

Place: Fujian Hall, Great Hall of the People

Foreign Guests: Entire delegation

Tran Tu Binh, Ambassador of Vietnam to China

Accompanying Persons: Liao Chengzhi, Geng... [ellipse in original], Ou Tangliang, Wang Mingyuan, Zheng Senyu

Interpreter: Zhang Dewei

Recorder: Tian Huigong

Premier [Zhou Enlai]: It has been a week since you came to China, yes?

Nguyen Van Hieu: We arrived on the 23rd.

Premier: Did you go to Indonesia?

Nguyen Van Hieu: Yes, we arrived in China directly from Indonesia.

Premier: Indonesia very much supports you Viet Cong. From here will you go to other countries?

Nguyen Van Hieu: We are going to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam [North Vietnam] as guests of Ambassador Tran Tu Binh.

Premier: I hear that he already held a reception.

Geng: They are going to the Fujian Front Line.

Nguyen Van Hieu: After visiting Beijing, we are going to Fuzhou, Guangzhou, and Shanghai.

Premier: Going to the Fujian Front Line? Very good. There are fortifications there, as well as artillery. From there you can see the enemy situation in Jinmen [Quemoy]. You can try the artillery there.

Nguyen Van Hieu: We will be ready to try it.

Premier: Have you taken part in battle?

Nguyen Van Hieu: I have taken part.

Premier: Very good. How was the shooting?

Nguyen Van Hieu: I myself don't shoot well.

Premier: How about the others?

Nguyen Van Hieu: Ma Thi Chau [氏珠] works in a city. Nguyen Xuan Thuy [阮春始] works in the military as a medic and is also a poet.

Premier: (to Thanh Hai [青海]) You look very young.

Thanh Hai: I am almost 30 years old.

Premier: A young poet.

Nguyen Van Hieu: Nguyen Xuan Thuy and Thanh Hai participated in the World Youth Congress as representatives of Vietnam.

Premier: Did you not participate in the student congress in Leningrad?

Nguyen Xuan Thuy: Yes.

Premier: You participated in three gatherings.

Nguyen Xuan Thuy: Not Helsinki (referring to the youth festival). There was not enough time.

Premier: You did not go to the festival.

Nguyen Van Hieu: We had already decided in advance not to go. It is mainly a party, so it is unsuitable for us at present.

Premier: You are in battle.

Nguyen Van Hieu: We represented the Viet Cong at the Moscow Disarmament Conference. We then went to some countries in Eastern Europe, visiting Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic.

Premier: Oh, you two participated in the Moscow conference. Our country's delegation lacked energy for that conference and kept a low profile. Our Center paid insufficient attention to it.

We should explain clearly in public our view. We have made mistakes and made you feel dissatisfied. Many of our revolutionary friends in Asia, Africa and Latin American feel that the document's tone is too low and are dissatisfied. After the conference, some Southeast Asian countries separately issued a statement, right?

Nguyen Van Hieu: We and some Southeast Asian countries jointly issued a statement.

Premier: Revolutionary friends are dissatisfied with the Moscow Disarmament Conference, but imperialist countries are very happy about it. Kennedy met the black leader of the US delegation three times in the White House, congratulating the delegation on its success. That black individual was very cunning, deliberately putting forth at the conference a proposal that stood no chance of getting adopted. The result was that the Soviet Union lowered the tone and sought compromise, not bringing up national liberation movements. In fact, the US delegation clearly knew that their thing could not pass but was merely meant to lower the Soviet Union's tone. It ought to have been a case of you do your thing and I'll do mine. But they did not do so. The result was that they gave up supporting national independence movements and indicating that US imperialism is the enemy of peace. The goal of the United States was completely achieved. This error happened in one respect because we paid insufficient attention. In another respect, it was a lack of experience. The United States is very cunning. The host of the Moscow conference used deceptive methods. The result was at the conference there was no open statement of our position, which made many friends disappointed. However, this error was easily corrected. At the Tokyo Conference [Eighth World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs] in August, the situation was completely different. In fact that group also participated in the conference. The deputy delegation leader was Comrade Kang Yonghe. Did you the NLF have anyone participate in the Tokyo Conference?

Nguyen Van Hieu: No.

Premier: Vietnam did, right?

Liao Chengzhi: Yes.

Premier: That conference's struggle was clear. The revolutionaries were dominant, putting forth their position. The Japan Socialist Party (JSP) favored the rightists and thought to make trouble. The result was failure. JSP lower-level representatives were won over; there was thus no retreat. International activity requires the gradual gaining of experience and the accumulation of some amount of experience. Only then can one grasp quite exactly the tactics of struggle. International activity is exceedingly complicated. Political elements from the imperialists, in the guise of progress, make trouble. There are also rightists, pursuing national liberation movements, who call for compromise with imperialism. They do not oppose imperialism or colonialism. There are also pacifist elements who oppose all war and ask unconditionally for peace. Abandoning national liberation and the fight against imperialism, they beg for peace. There are also revisionist elements. Of course, there are also the right-wing elements of social democratic parties who dedicate themselves to the service of imperialism. The components of international activity are very complicated. Participation in each struggle must be treated seriously, conducting analysis and gradually gaining experience. You Viet Cong rarely come out. What happened this time?

Nguyen Van Hieu: This is the first time for us to come out. You can say that we have no experience at all.

Premier: You will gain experience. Do you see the international situation as complicated or not?

Nguyen Van Hieu: It is.

Premier: We should win over the majority. We cannot make ourselves fall into isolation.

We should unite all those whom we can. We believe that the absolute majority in the world, over 90 percent of people, is for revolution, or the workers, peasants, revolutionary intelligentsia, revolutionary national bourgeoisie and many anti-imperialist patriots who will favor revolution occupy the absolute majority of mankind. Imperialists, the reactionaries of various countries, and contemporary revisionist elements are only an extremely small minority. Our friends are all over the world. The struggle you are waging in Vietnam is evidence of this; the struggle grows day by day. The armed struggle is still fragmented. It will last a long time and will even be hard. But the struggle's influence grows day by day, even affecting the lower levels of Ngo Dinh Diem's reactionary army. Your struggle is by no means an isolated one. You have friends and a future. Here we held a mass meeting in support of you. You can see the warm emotions of the Chinese people.

Now we should study a question: is it necessary or not to establish an organization to support you? Friends of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam have proposed, whether possible or not, such measures as establishing a committee to support the Vietnamese people against the US imperialist invaders, donating medicines and relief supplies. I do not know what would be appropriate for supporting you, either such public actions or, without establishing another organization, just using the existing organizations such as the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization (AAPSO) or the Chinese People's Committee for Safeguarding World Peace to support your activities. I would like to ask your view, and see which way would be good.

Nguyen Van Hieu: This issue is not a major issue in China. It is not complicated. For other countries, we suggest that they establish organizations that support the people of South Vietnam. There can be some symbolic fundraising, but the main thing is that the masses develop activities in support of South Vietnam. In China, this is not a problem. It is fine, whether they establish a special organization or carry out such activities via other organizations. When visiting other countries, we made suggestions in this regard and are prepared to send them some materials.

Premier: Good. Wait for us to study this a bit. We are prepared to donate some medicines in support. Other than medicines, what other materials are needed?

Nguyen Van Hieu: We do not necessarily request some specific thing in aid. The main thing is consideration of its use as propaganda and forming a campaign to support South Vietnam. For example, in East Germany, I have asked them to donate goods to give to residents concentrated hurriedly into "strategic hamlets," carrying out propaganda by this activity.

Premier: There can be two kinds of fundraising for conducting propaganda. One is, after putting out information, deliver the aid to the Viet Cong. One can also deliver donations via the International Committee of the Red Cross to Ngo Dinh Diem. Of course, they will not accept them, but we will give it to them again.

Nguyen Van Hieu: These are both good.

Premier: Please tell us where are the most terrible "strategic hamlets" that the enemy has made, so that we may prepare donations.

Nguyen Van Hieu: All right.

Premier: It is not mainly in the areas of armed struggle but in the destroyed concentration areas. You can also have an international committee investigate and expose it. If you agree, you can do this work via the AAPSO. Did you read the communique of the 10th Plenary Session?

Nguyen Van Hieu: I did! In the communique there was also mention of the Chinese people's support for the struggle of the Vietnamese people.

Premier: This is very important. Your position in Southeast Asia is very important. You still need to go see Madam Sukarno. We will see you again in the evening. The Party Secretary-General also wants to see you this evening.

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