

June 6, 1954
**Minutes, Wang Bingnan's Meeting with French
Ambassador to Switzerland Jean Chauvel and
Jacques Guillerma**

Citation:

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Summary:

Wang and Chauvel discuss hopes for reaching agreements regarding the Indochina armistice. Difficulties in reaching a compromise are covered.

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

(Top Secret)

Time: 6 June 1954, 5:30 p.m-6:40 p.m

Location: Mansion of the French Consul General to Geneva

Chinese participants: Wang Bingnan and Dong Ningchuan (translator)

French participants: Jean Chauvel and Jacques Guillermaz

Chauvel: Mr. [Georges] Bidault just made a trip to the lake. Has Mr. Zhou Enlai gone for some outings?

Wang Bingnan: No, Foreign Minister Zhou has no time now for an outing.

Guillermaz: [You] should suggest Mr. Zhou Enlai go out.

Wang Bingnan: [He] could be interested in an outing only had the conference achieved some of its goals.

Chauvel: Mr. Bidault is planning a return to Paris for two or three days. Before his departure for Paris, he intends to meet Mr. Zhou Enlai one more time after the dinner on Monday. [We are] not sure if Mr. Zhou Enlai has time [for the meeting].

Wang Bingnan: Mr. Zhou Enlai is very glad to meet Mr. Bidault.

Chauvel: Wonderful. Let's say 9:00 p.m. tomorrow [Monday]. We talked about the problems of the military staff meetings last time. It was said yesterday that their meetings have made some progress. Both sides have reached an agreement on tactical methods of regrouping their troops. Since both sides have further clarified their intentions, it should be easier for them to work out a solution.

I would like to add a few more words now about the supervision issue. The Chinese side seems not fully understanding of the French opinion [on supervision]. We did not mean that Laos and Cambodia do not need any supervision. Instead, our opinion is that these two countries have different situations, so that supervisory terms should be accordingly different. Our request is to talk about Vietnam first, and then Laos and Cambodia. We don't intend to facilitate the establishment of any military bases in Laos and Cambodia, or to prepare for a war in this region. Our fundamental goal is to solve the problems.

If my understanding is correct, Mr. Wang Bingnan proposed three types of committees for the supervisory machinery last time: an international guarantee committee, a neutral nation supervisory committee, and a combined [both sides] committee. We think that an agreement based upon this proposal can be reached. However, in order to make fast progress, the composition of the neutral nation commission should be discussed first. I expressed the French stand last time. I believe Mr. Wang Bingnan has thought about this issue. [I'd like to] now know about Mr. Wang Bingnan's opinion.

Wang Bingnan: [I am] glad to hear from Mr. Chauvel that the military staff meeting has made some progress.

Chauvel: Not much yet, only a little bit.

Wang Bingnan: This is a very positive sign, and it doesn't matter how small the progress is or on which subject. In the spirit of avoiding any delay, we must make

vigorous efforts to arrive at further results.

Regarding the supervision of Laos and Cambodia, we have stated that, as long as principles [on supervision] are agreed, implementation methods may be different [from that on Vietnam] according to their specific conditions.

In respect to the composition of the neutral nation commission, I have reported Mr. Chauvel's opinion to the head of our delegation. Currently, we are carefully studying Mr. Bidault's proposal, so we can't answer this question. We are endorsing the four nations suggested by the Soviet delegation. Nevertheless, we believe that, as long as all sides do their studies objectively, the problems can be solved.

Talking about the entire [Geneva Conference], there are some difficulties. However, we should overcome the difficulties and strive for settlements. We'd like to draw French attention to [the fact] that, on one hand, the meeting makes slow progress; on the other hand, it also has impediments. It is not impossible to settle the Korea problem, and all sides have many common points. But someone stubbornly asked for an election [to be] conducted under UN supervision. This unnecessarily impeded the progress of the meeting. In their speeches yesterday, the [North] Korean, Chinese, and Soviet delegations all fully expressed a conciliatory spirit. But Mr. Smith didn't. Throughout the meeting, not only did he not present any solid proposals, but also did not offer any help for any agreement at the meeting. It was just like his attitude at the Indochina meeting on the 29th, "no objection, but no acceptance." This continuing negative attitude against the meeting doesn't do any good to the conference. Our expectation is that the delegates should share their similar opinions first. Then, they can overcome obstacles and solve the different opinions in order to make the conference a full success.

Chauvel: We have noticed recently that Mr. [Vyacheslav M.] Molotov, Mr. Zhou Enlai, and Mr. [Anthony] Eden all look for our common position as what we are doing. This is a good approach. The United States shows their most distrustful attitude toward the conference. Nevertheless, talking about Indochina's issues, we have some alliances, such as the United States and the three [French] Union member nations. We can only accept solutions accepted by our alliances. It is not easy to convince an allied country. Hopefully, Mr. Wang Bingnan can give [his] attention to it.

Wang Bingnan: With respect to solving the Indochina problems, France is one of the key players. Restoring peace is an advantage to France. Extension or internationalization of the war is a disadvantage to France. Hopefully France can fully play its initiative role, and function as a powerful nation.

The Chinese delegation does not have any selfish purpose in its efforts to strive for peace in Indochina. What we want to see is not a continuous bleeding of France and Vietnam, but a normalization of French-Vietnamese relations and a friendship between the two countries. What we want to see is not the reduced international status of France, but the increasing status of France in the world. We believe that France has the same goal of a successful conference.

Chauvel: I really appreciate it that Mr. Wang Bingnan has such a remarkable opinion of France. In the past years, the Indochinese War was a problem for France and Vietnam. Now it has become an international problem. France seeks an internationalized peace, not an internationalized war. Even though France has difficulties in making its allies accept certain agreements, it is not impossible. We hope to eventually reach our common goal-peace-that is our common interest.

With regard to solving the Indochinese problems, France recognizes China's role among Asian countries. Therefore, we are glad to exchange our opinions with the

Chinese delegation on a regular basis for more help from China.

Regarding the neutral nation issue, France is not satisfied with merely signing an agreement on paper. It wants to see the supervisory organization be truly effective. Mr. Bidault did not enjoy criticizing the Soviet proposal. The Soviet proposal could only make the supervisory commission impotent. This is what all of us try to avoid. Mr. Bidault is going to meet Mr. Molotov tomorrow morning. They will talk about this issue. That the delegation heads can meet under good conditions is helpful for reaching an agreement at the conference. As long as the atmosphere changes for the better, any distrust between the two sides will disappear.

Wang Bingnan: I have the same feeling.

Chauvel: Peace is like the Pyrenees. Sometimes they look dark, sometimes bright. As long as we have confidence, we will eventually see the bright Pyrenees.

Wang Bingnan: The [Chang] Bai Mountains always stand tall without any change. Clouds and rain are only temporary conditions.

Chauvel: I don't know if Mr. Bidault has any other issues on his mind besides the conference topics when he talks to Mr. Zhou Enlai. I am sure, however, he is willing to talk about every issue that Mr. Zhou Enlai is interested in.

Wang Bingnan: Can you tell me the participants at the meeting?

Chauvel: It's just like the last meeting, Mr. Bidault, myself, and Mr. Guillerma. The two foreign ministers did not release any information on their last meeting to the media. It is desired to keep [things] this way in order to exchange opinions frankly.

I met the Swiss foreign minister at Bern two days ago. He said that it was astonishing that some people could question the neutrality of Sweden. Sweden's neutrality is not only a fact, but also legally recognized. Anyway, I explained [it] to them, and it is over.

It is said that a general meeting will be held on Tuesday, isn't it?

Wang Bingnan: That is the plan, as far as I know.

Chauvel: Currently, the French Assembly continues their debates on the Indochina issue. Mr. Bidault is going to speak at Geneva on Tuesday, and at the French Parliament on Wednesday. He hopes for some good news that he can report to the French Parliament.

Wang Bingnan: I hope that he can report some conference progress at the Assembly. This is also what the French people have been awaiting for.

Chauvel: This is our common hope.