

December 14, 1965

Report by the Adviser to the Bulgarian Embassy in Beijing, Ivan Dimitrov, to the Bulgarian Ambassador, Khr. Stoichev

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Summary:

Bulgarian report on the conversations between Mao Zedong and Ho Chi Minh. According to the report, Mao agrees with Ho Chi Minh that they should officially recognize the NLF as the government of South Vietnam, while expressing his reservations about asking for volunteers from other countries. He again fully opposes any negotiations with the United States.

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In recent times there has been much talk among the specialists of the socialist countries on the meeting between Mao Zedong and Ho Chi Minh. The conversations boil down to the following:

It is said that at the beginning of the month of November the chairman of the minister council of the DRV, comrade, Pham Van Dong, was on an unofficial visit to China.^[1] The conversation did not lead to any result whatsoever, considering that after his visit to Moscow,^[2] he posed some questions which the Chinese leaders did not like, and, for that reason, he returned to Hanoi highly irritated.

Toward mid-November Ho Chi Minh went secretly to China.^[3] The meeting with Mao Zedong took place in the city of Wuhan, where he [Mao] has resided repeatedly [in the past]. It is thought to be certain that Ho Chi Minh raised the following three questions:

1. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam thinks that it is advisable that the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam is transformed into, and declared as, the official government of South Vietnam, so that the majority of the territory and population finds itself under its control and rule.
2. The new government in South Vietnam requests through a declaration or appeal to all the governments and nations of the world to send aid in [the form of] equipment and volunteers for its struggle against the aggression of the United States.
3. The new government of South Vietnam could start negotiations with the puppet regime of South Vietnam.

Chairman Mao Zedong accepted the first point of the proposals raised by Ho Chi Minh. On the second point he said that it is too early to grumble and to demand volunteers. The Vietnamese nation is 30 million [strong], it has not yet unleashed its [full] strength, and its sacrifices from military action and bombardments are low. It might grumble in case it has lost at least half of its population. In case of raising the demand of volunteers, it is not necessary to turn to the world for assistance, because China as always will provide volunteers. But Mao Zedong again mentioned that it is too early to call for volunteers. Moreover he said that the Chinese volunteers will never agree to be together with volunteers from the Soviet Union or from other revisionist countries.

On the third point, Mao Zedong expressed his disagreement; he was against conducting negotiations in principle. For the Vietnamese it is necessary to implement consistently the promotion of the "four points"^[4] for the solution of the conflict.

From his side, Mao Zedong implored Ho Chi Minh that the Vietnamese comrades display clearly and decisively their standpoint with regard to revisionism. In this respect, he once more demanded strongly from Vietnam to commit itself.

Mao Zedong talked [in a] similar [vein] to such a point [?] [;] that he [even] told Ho Chi Minh that he [Ho] should not think that the war would really last 10-15 years. The war might end at any moment, as soon as it has reached a favorable situation.

Thus, it is advisable to keep in view that the Vietnamese comrades think from the present on about the situation in which they will find themselves after the end of the conflict. The entire industry, a great part of transport and communications of Vietnam will be destroyed, the government will not possess any resources; this will put them [the Vietnamese] in yet a more difficult position. Mao Zedong recommended to Ho Chi Minh to increase from this moment on the demands for aid from those European

socialist countries that are rich. The Vietnamese must not demand weapons for themselves, but machines and equipment for the outfitting of the new industrial enterprises and the rehabilitation of the old industry which suffered from the bombardment. It is not necessary that these materials be delivered to Vietnam; the Chinese government takes up the task to store them in China, and after the end of the war will give them to Vietnam.

It is said that Cde. Ho Chi Minh was left with much disappointment and pain after these talks with Mao Zedong.

[1] This unofficial visit could not be verified through other sources.

[2] Pham Van Dong was in Moscow after official talks in Beijing on 9 October 1965. See: "Zhou Enlai and Pham Van Dong, Beijing, 4 p.m. 9 October 1965,"

<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113065>

[3] Dates not clear, but Ho met Zhou Enlai in China on 8 November 1965, see: Nguyen Vu Tung, "Interpreting Beijing and Hanoi," 58, footnote 82.

[4] Pham Van Dong presented the so-called Four Points on 8 April 1965, as a proposal to end the Vietnam War through negotiations. They contained the following points: US troop withdrawal from South Vietnam, respect for the 1954 Geneva agreements, the demand that internal affairs of South Vietnam must be settled by the South Vietnamese themselves in accordance with the program of the NLF, and the requirement that the peaceful reunification of Vietnam must be settled by the Vietnamese people themselves.