

January 22, 1960

Transcript of Vice Premier Chen Yi's Meeting with Soviet Ambassador S.V. Chervonenko

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Summary:

Chen Yi and Chervonenko discuss a US plot to forge an anti-communist united front in Laos, and offer advice on the road forward for the Laotian revolution.

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Contents:

Translation - English

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Transcript of Vice Premier CHEN Yi's Meeting with Soviet Ambassador [S.V.]
CHERVONENKO

Time: 5:00pm, 22 January 1960

Location: Wucheng Hall, Zhongnanhai Compound

People in Attendance:

Soviet Union: Counselor Saffron

Us: Deputy Minister ZHANG [Wentian]; Deputy Director YU Zhan; Comrade MA Lie

Translator: YAN Mingfu

Soviet Ambassador [S.V. CHERVONENKO]: [I have an] important notification [for] you [which] Moscow has asked me to convey. This is absolutely internal [and not to be shared]. The announcement is thus: according to secret materials at our disposal, representatives of the Western countries in Vientiane, [among which the] United States is first [and foremost], are currently preparing a set of measures with the [goal] of actively interfering in the internal affairs of Laos. [These] representatives are now trying to encourage the current government of Laos and military leadership to unite with the domestic anti-communist forces. [They are in] close collusion with former Prime Minister Sananikone and the "Lao Coalition Party" to [present] a united front for the purpose of presenting a unified list of candidates by the "committee to defend national interest" and "Lao Coalition Party." Additionally, due to the upcoming elections [scheduled] in Laos, they are ready [and willing] to modify electoral law such it will be more likely for their reactionaries to be elected in the general election.

I [have been] entrusted to convey this message to you. In the same way, we are also notifying our Vietnamese comrades of this news.

Vice Premier CHEN [Yi]: Thank you. Last time Comrade Antonov brought us the message that a military coup in Laos [was about to take place] three days before it occurred. Afterwards it was confirmed. The same day [you informed us] we also received the same news from [other sources]. The news you have told us today is very good.

Soviet Ambassador [S.V. CHERVONENKO]: For now, I have no more news to be shared with you regarding that. This morning, [I] listened to the presentation on China's economic situation. I wish to once again express my gratitude.

Vice Premier CHEN [Yi]: With regards to the Laos issue, we and our Vietnamese comrades have the same viewpoint. We have talked to each other. At our borders, we have to be prepared to prevent the expansion of the situation. Of course, we will not try to interfere. Our party and the representative of the Laotian Communist Party have also talked [about this].

We told them: The struggles of Laos [are] entirely the responsibility of themselves. In the long struggle to become tempered [like steel], China and Vietnam can only give politically [appropriate] aid and moral support. They must rely on their own abilities to overthrow the reactionaries. Chinese and Vietnamese troops cannot cross the borders. This is because crossing the borders will shock the whole of Southeast Asia. This is not beneficial for us. Laotian reactionaries are vigorously colluding with the

United States, Britain, and France. But the Lao Party can only rely on the people of Laos to fight. It is in this way, after a long period of time, [perhaps] several years, that the Lao people will themselves be awakened; recognize who is a patriot and who is a traitor. This is the way in which victory is won.

Soviet Ambassador [S.V. CHERVONENKO]: [In] this way [they] can also gain experience at struggle.

Vice Premier CHEN [Yi]: They are strongly in agreement with this approach. Recently, some guerrilla comrades were forced to cross over our borders. We hosted them. Of course we also disarmed them. We estimate that the West wants to expand their interference in Laos. The Lao People's Patriotic Forces have been devastated [by the West]. This can only serve to expose the reactionaries' traitorous face. China and Vietnam do not want to intervene in Lao's problems. In this way, the people will have a better [impression] of us. We have received a message. Laos and the imperialist reactionaries may be colluding to build a missile base which will be a threat to the southern provinces of China. However, we estimate that this may not become a reality. Because, putting a missile base in such a prominent location is very unsafe. It is better [for them] to put in Thailand [where they are] safe. Are not Ngô Đình Diệm's place, Okinawa, or the Philippines better for [them]?! In fact, the United States, Britain, and France fear they will lose Laos. Therefore they have a defensive nature. Okay. I will immediately relay the news which you have told me to Comrade ZHOU Enlai.