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March 11, 1954
Telegram, Zhou Enlai to Ho Chi Minh (excerpt)

Citation:

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Summary:

Telegram from Zhou Enlai to Ho Chi Minh encouraging him to send a delegation to attend the Geneva Conference. According to Zhou Enlai important decisions will be made in Geneva, including decision on where the boundaries will be drawn in Vietnam.

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

It has been decided that the Geneva Conference will begin to be held on April 26. The current international situation and the military situation in Vietnam are favorable for Vietnam to carry out the diplomatic struggle. No matter what result the Geneva Conference may achieve, we should actively participate in it. Therefore, we hope that you immediately begin the preparatory work, organize a delegation to attend the conference, collect relevant materials, and make all kinds of proposals.... If a ceasefire is to be achieved, it is better to have a relatively fixed line, so that a relatively intact region can be maintained. As a matter of a fact, the line for ceasefire today is possible to become the demarcation line in the future. Therefore, this is an issue quite big, and it will also depend upon the development of the military situation in the future. Where should this line be drawn and at which parallel? This should be considered from two aspects: on the one hand, it should be favorable to Vietnam; on the other, it should be acceptable to the enemy side. The more toward the south the line can be drawn, the better. It seems that the question of [drawing the line at] the 16th parallel could be considered as one of the options.... Please come to Beijing at the end of March or in early April, and then go to Moscow to exchange opinions with the Soviet Party Central Committee.... At present, the headquarters should assign some people to specifically work for preparing for the negotiation, but the main strength should still be placed on commanding combat operations and mobilizing the masses.