

July 11, 1954

**Telegram, Zhou Enlai to Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi,
and convey to Ho Chi Minh (excerpt)**

Citation:

"Telegram, Zhou Enlai to Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, and convey to Ho Chi Minh (excerpt)", July 11, 1954, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Xiong Huayuan, Zhou Enlai chudeng shije wutai, pp. 147-148; and Zhou nianpu, vol. I, pp. 396-397. Translated for CWIHP by Chen Jian. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121162>

Summary:

In this telegram Zhou Enlai first recounts his meeting with leaders of the Soviet Party and their discussion on the topic of the Geneva Conference. In the second part he says that the communist side has not proposed concession on the question of dividing zones, and lastly Zhou says that he will be leaving soon for Geneva to meet with Molotov and Eden before the conference resumes.

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

(1) In my meeting with the leaders of the Soviet Party, apart from introducing them to the meetings between China and India, China and Burma, and China and Vietnam, we mainly exchanged opinions on the Geneva conference. The opinions of the Soviet Party Central Committee are as follows: At present, what should be introduced [by our side] are fair and reasonable conditions that the French government is in a position to accept, so that the agreement on restoring peace in Indochina will be quickly achieved. In order to pursue reaching an armistice quickly, the conditions [introduced by our side] should be concise and clear, which will help excluding the interference and sabotage of the United States, thus allowing the agreement easier to be reached. If our conditions are complicated and loaded down with trivial details, the discussion will be prolonged and less important issues and new problems will crop up unexpectedly, which will delay the negotiations and cause the loss of opportunities, thus being favorable to America's sabotage effort. The bourgeoisie class in France is weak-willed, and it is impossible for them to accept conditions that go beyond their capacity. Therefore if the conditions raised by our side are complicated and loaded down with trivial details, it will be easier for the Americans to take the advantage. When the right timing is missed, the pro American and pro-war factions in France will rise again, and the Mendes-France cabinet will inevitably collapse. This is unfavorable to the settlement of the Indochina issue.

I believe that the analyses and opinions of the Soviet Party Central Committee are compatible with the opinions we have discussed in Liuzhou and in Beijing. On the questions of dividing zones, on the handling of issues concerning Laos and Cambodia, and on defining the duties and power of the supervision committee by countries of neutrality, and on the commitments that the participants of the Geneva conference will make, we should follow this policy-line, and should consider these questions from the angle of striving for quickly achieving an agreement. Therefore after I arrive at Geneva, I will meet with Comrades Molotov and Pham Van Dong, and will then make decisions on specific issues, so as to pursue reaching an agreement quickly.

(2) According to the telegram from Geneva, it seems that until the 9th our side has not proposed concession on the question of dividing zones. It is possible that Comrade Pham Van Dong had been waiting for putting forward the proposal of concession until after discussing with me at Geneva. Now, as judging from all angles, if we take the 16th parallel as the line, and plus allowing the French side to temporarily use the port Da Nang, as well as the condition that Laos will be allowed to use Route 9 for transportation, generally it is possible that an agreement could be reached...

(3) Mendes-France already arrived at Geneva today, and he will be meeting with Comrade Molotov tomorrow. Eden will be arriving at Geneva on the 12th. I will make an effort to leave for Geneva tomorrow. Since we still need to have discussions in advance, there is not much time left.