

October 20, 1965

**Mao's Conversation with the Party and Government
Delegation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam**

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"Mao's Conversation with the Party and Government Delegation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam", October 20, 1965, Wilson Center Digital Archive, The People's Republic of China Foreign Ministry and the Chinese Communist Party Central Documentary Research Office, comp., Mao Zedong Waijiao wenxuan (Selected Diplomatic Works of Mao Zedong) (Beijing: Central Documentary Press and World Knowledge Press, 1994), 570-573. Translated by Qiang Zhai.
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Summary:

Mao Zedong expresses his support of Vietnam in their struggle against the US.

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

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You are fighting an excellent war. Both the South and the North are fighting well. The people of the whole world, including those who have already awakened and those who have not awakened, are supporting you. The current world is not a peaceful one. It is not you Vietnamese who are invading the United States, neither are the Chinese who are waging an aggressive war against the United States.

Not long ago the Japanese Asahi Shimbun and Yomiuri Shimbun published several reports filed by Japanese correspondents from South Vietnam. U.S. newspapers described these reports as unfair, thus provoking a debate. I am not referring to the Japanese Communist newspaper, Akahata. I am talking about Japanese bourgeois newspapers. This shows that the direction of the media is not favorable to the United States. Recently the demonstration by the American people against the American government's Vietnam policy has developed. At the moment it is primarily American intellectuals who are making trouble.

But all this are external conditions. In fact what will solve the problem is the war you are fighting. Of course you can conduct negotiations. In the past you held negotiations in Geneva. But the American did not honor their promise after the negotiations. We have had negotiations with both Chiang Kai-shek and the United States. Rusk said that the United States has had most negotiations with China. But we stick to one point: the United States must withdraw from Taiwan, and after that all other problems can be easily resolved. The United States does not accept this point. China and the United States have been negotiating for ten years and we are still repeating the same old words. We will not give up that point. The United States once wanted to exchange press delegations with us. They argued that when we began with minor issues, we could better settle major problems later. We contended that only by starting from major issues could minor problems be easily resolved.

You withdrew your armed forces from the South in accordance with the Geneva Accords. As a result, the enemy began to kill people in the South, and you revived armed struggle. At first you adopted political struggle as a priority supplemented by armed struggle. We supported you. In the second stage when you were carrying out political and armed struggles simultaneously, we again supported you. In the third stage when you are pursuing armed struggle as a priority supplemented by political struggle, we still support you. In my view, the enemy is gradually escalating the war; so are you. In the next two and three years you may encounter difficulties. But it is hard to say, and it may not be so. We need to take this possibility into consideration. So long as you have made all kinds of preparations, even if the most difficult situation emerges, you will not find it too far from your initial considerations. Isn't this a good argument? Therefore there are two essential points: the first is to strive for the most favorable situation, and the second to prepare for the worst.

The Algerian experience can serve as a reference for you. Possibly in the fourth or fifth year of their war, some Algerian leaders became worried. At that time, their Prime Minister Arbas came to talk with us. They said that Algeria had a very small population of ten million. A million had already died. While the enemy had an army of 800,000, their own regular forces possessed only about 30,000 to 40,000 troops. To add the guerrillas, their total forces were less than 100,000. I told them at the time that the enemy was bound to defeat and that their population would increase. Later, after negotiations France began to withdraw its troops. Now it has completed the withdrawal, only leaving behind a few small naval bases. The Algerian revolution is a national democratic revolution led by the bourgeoisie. Our two parties are Communist. In terms of mobilizing the masses and carrying out people's war, our two parties are different from Algeria.

I talked about people's war in my article. Some of the statements refer to specific problems of ten to twenty years ago. Now you have encountered some new conditions. Many of your methods are different from our methods in the past. We should have differences. We also learn about war gradually. At the beginning we lost

battles. We have not done as smoothly as you have.

I have not noticed what issues you have negotiated with the United States. I only pay attention to how you fight the Americans and how you drive the Americans out. You can have negotiations at certain time[s], but you should not lower your tones. You should raise your tones a little higher. Be prepared that the enemy may deceive you. We will support you until your final victory. The confidence in victory comes from the fighting you have done and from the struggle you have made. For instance, one experience we have is that the Americans can be fought. We obtained this experience only after fighting the Americans. The Americans can be fought and can be defeated. We should demolish the myth that the Americans cannot be fought and cannot be defeated. Both of our two parties have many experiences. Both of us have fought the Japanese. You have also fought the French. At the moment you are fighting the Americans.

The Americans have trained and educated the Vietnamese people. They have educated us and the people of the whole world. In my opinion it is not good without the Americans. Such an educator is indispensable. In order to defeat the Americans, we must learn from the Americans. Marx's works do not teach us how to fight the Americans. Nor do Lenin's books write about how to fight the Americans. We primarily learn from the Americans.

The Chinese people and the people of the whole world support you. The more friends you have, the better you are.