

August 16, 1973

Discussion between Zhou Enlai and Pham Van Dong

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Summary:

Zhou Enlai discusses his concerns regarding US negotiations in Cambodia.

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

ZHOU ENLAI AND PHAM VAN DONG

Beijing, 16 August 1973

Zhou Enlai: The Americans told comrade Huang Chen that they want to solve the Cambodian question and that they were ready to talk with Sihanouk or with his representative. At the same time, they want representatives of the United National Front in Cambodia to hold talks with Lon Nol's faction.

What we are concerned about is that Sihanouk will change his position. We cannot change the joint position adopted by the Indochinese countries' summit. As long as the US continues its bombing operation, talks cannot be held. But at this moment, the US wishes to withdraw from Cambodia. If we can win the sympathy of some people in Lon Nol's faction, we will be in an advantageous position. It is therefore unwise if these chances are not exploited.^[1]

^[1] At the the 10th CCP congress in August 1973, Zhou Enlai said the following on the international situation: "We recognize that the US imperialists are the number one enemy of the people of the world and of the Chinese people. The Japanese imperialists are also our enemy. We, however, have to understand the contradictions between our enemies to solve our contradictions. We should define what are main contradictions and what are not. The US made much noise but it has not attacked us. The so-called Asian alliance headed by Japan is in fact designed to defend them from our attack. But the so-called brothers, namely the Soviet revisionists, are attacking us, threatening us. They collude with the American imperialists and the Indian reactionaries. If we do not know how to make friends with the ones who used to oppose us and establish relations with them, the Soviet revisionists will encircle and attack us. Then, we will be attacked from many directions, and our people will lead a miserable life again. Therefore, we have to base our policy on our national interests. Otherwise, our policy will be incorrect and wrong. The Soviet revisionists want to attack us. They have many new weapons that we do not have. We can buy them from other countries. The Soviet revisionists do not provide us with technical equipment. We can buy it from others. The other countries, because of their national interests, and moreover, because of having been cheated by the Soviets before, will want to have relations with us. So there will be benefits for international détente as well as benefits for us. Nothing bad with that! We, therefore, have to be flexible, taking into account different opportunities to solve different contradictions. Traitors like Liu Shaoqi and Lin Biao—the puppets of the Soviet revisionists—were trying to publicize their sinful allegation that the Soviets somehow are still our brothers and that the Soviet Union is still a socialist country. They were also saying that mistakes are avoidable and they should be settled between the two parties on the basis of fraternity. The two parties should not openly curse and attack each other, otherwise, the enemy will be happy and friends will be pained."