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August 23, 1966
Discussion between Zhou Enlai, Pham Van Dong and Hoang Tung

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Summary:

Zhou Enlai proposes sending more military personnel to Vietnam, he also criticizes Vietnamese press for writing about historical Chinese aggressions toward Vietnam.

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

ZHOU ENLAI AND PHAM VAN DONG, HOANG TUNG[1]

Beijing, 23 August 1966

Zhou Enlai: What about the fact that recently Vietnamese newspapers carried some documents about aggressions by Chinese feudal dynasties against Vietnam?

Hoang Tung: There have been no such documents in newspapers. Some institutes, however, are doing research on that historical theme.

Zhou Enlai: But you are studying this issue while you are struggling against the US. What is the implication?

...

Zhou Enlai: We should make full use of the road via Cambodia as well as the sea route. Yet, the best one is the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the road that runs through Laos to South Vietnam. And we should also find other roads. We agree to what you asked for [concerning] our reinforcement of forces for air defense, for defense of our railways, land roads, and for our aid to build roads. But we think there are limitations to that. These forces are not our volunteer combat troops. They are logistical forces. We therefore can refuse requests by some countries to send their volunteer troops to Vietnam, [saying] that Chinese volunteers are in Vietnam already. If it is said that China has volunteer troops in North Vietnam, then Cuba, Algeria, and the Soviet Union, etc., may ask to have their volunteers in Vietnam.

Zhou Enlai: ...The strategy has been defined: conducting a protracted war in the South, preventing the war from expanding to the North and to China…My fundamental idea is that we should be patient. Patience means victory. Patience can cause you more hardship, more sufferings. Yet, the sky will not collapse, the earth will not slide, and the people cannot be totally exterminated. So patience can be rewarded with victory thus causing historic changes, encouraging the Asian, African, and Latin American countries, and playing down the American imperialists.

We propose to send some Chinese military personnel serving in command staffs, logistics, chemistry, engineering, political training forces—the total number will be 100 people organized into 4 or 5 groups—to South Vietnam. They can go as far as to Tri Thien province, the Central Highlands, suburbs of Saigon, or to the central part of the Mekong delta.

[1] Hoang Tung (1920-), director of the ICP's Su That publishing house during the first Indochina War. Editor-in-Chief of Nhan Dan [People's Daily] 1951-82, from 1960 deputy and later Head of the Cultural and Ideological Committee of the VWP Central Committee. Retired in the late 1980s.