

**July 23, 1970**

## **Discussion between Zhou Enlai and Trinh Dinh Thao**

### **Citation:**

"Discussion between Zhou Enlai and Trinh Dinh Thao", July 23, 1970, Wilson Center Digital Archive, CWIHP Working Paper 22, "77 Conversations."  
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/113103>

### **Summary:**

Zhou Enlai discusses the advantages and disadvantages of signing the Geneva accords.

### **Original Language:**

Chinese

### **Contents:**

Translation - English

ZHOU ENLAI AND TRINH DINH THAO<sup>[1]</sup>

Beijing, 5 p.m., 23 July 1970

Zhou Enlai: There were both advantages and disadvantages involved in our signing of the Geneva agreements [of 1954]. In terms of advantages, North Vietnam won a period of stability, allowing it to conduct socialist construction. In terms of disadvantages, the soldiers in South Vietnam evacuated to the North. Some soldiers in Cambodia also evacuated to the North. In Laos, only Xam Neua and Phong Saly provinces were designated as the concentration area for the revolutionary forces. At that time, President Ho Chi Minh was reluctant. [US State Department official Walter Bedell] Smith refused to sign the agreements. At that time we had two choices, either to sign [the agreements] or not sign [the agreements] if the United States failed to do so. After the consultation among socialist countries, we believed that it was better to sign. Later Chairman Mao mentioned that the choice of not signing [the agreements] should be considered. President Ho Chi Minh, and Comrades Le Duan and Pham Van Dong all said that it seemed the advantages [of signing them] surpass the disadvantages. In retrospect, for a period the people in South Vietnam suffered, but there was also something good in the suffering, as the people in South Vietnam spontaneously emerged to conduct the fighting. Completely relying on their own strength, they have created the situation of today.

<sup>[1]</sup> Trinh Dinh Thao was vice chairman of the advisory committee to the Provisional Republican Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, who was then leading a delegation of "The Alliance of Nationalist, Democratic and Peaceful Forces in Vietnam" to visit China.