

May 30, 1954

**Telegram, Zhou Enlai to Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi,
and the CCP Central Committee, (excerpt)**

Citation:

"Telegram, Zhou Enlai to Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, and the CCP Central Committee, (excerpt)", May 30, 1954, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Zhou Enlai zhuan, 1949-1976, pp. 168-169; Xiong Huayuan, Zhou Enlai chudeng shij wutai, p. 89; Zhou nianpu, vol. 1, p. 372. Translated for CWIHP by Chen Jian.
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/121150>

Summary:

Zhou Enlai highlights the main problems with the Communist negotiation strategy, which lies in lack of proper understanding of the complexity of the Indochina question. He also stresses that both sides need to discuss "three key issues, namely, dividing zones, ceasefire supervision and international guarantee."

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

Zhou dispatched a long telegram to Beijing on 30 May, summarizing what he saw as the main problem existing in the Communist negotiation strategy, that is, the lack of a proper understanding of the complexity of the Indochina question.

The national and state boundaries between the three associate countries in Indochina are quite distinctive and have been strictly defined. The boundaries had existed before France established its colonial reign in Indochina, and among the people of the three countries these [boundaries] have also been well recognized. In the past, we in our own country have not regarded this issue with a serious enough attitude.... The royal governments in Cambodia and Laos remain being regarded as the legitimate governments by the overwhelming majority of their people, and they are the governments that have been recognized by more than thirty countries in the world.... This time after having contacts with them at the Geneva conference, we begin to understand that the Indochina question is not so simple. We must strictly regard them as three different countries.

Zhou further pointed out that on the ceasefire question in Indochina, the two sides would "now enter discussions of substance, which involves three key issues, namely, dividing zones, ceasefire supervision and international guarantee." Zhou recognized that "on all three issues, there exist huge differences between the two sides." Therefore, Zhou mentioned, both he and the Soviets believed that the Communist side would "need to develop a more clearly-defined solution that will better fit the current situation, and otherwise we will be unable to express our opinions in the negotiations, and will fall into a passive position." Zhou thus proposed that "we should persistently take the initiative to pursue peace, so that the Geneva conference will end with some achievement."