

March 25, 1965

**Transcript of Conversations Between the Romanian
Delegation Led by First Secretary of the C.C. of the
R.W.P., Nicolae Ceausescu, and the Chinese
Delegation, Led by Premier of the Council of State
of the Chinese P.R., Zhou Enlai**

Citation:

"Transcript of Conversations Between the Romanian Delegation Led by First Secretary of the C.C. of the R.W.P., Nicolae Ceausescu, and the Chinese Delegation, Led by Premier of the Council of State of the Chinese P.R., Zhou Enlai", March 25, 1965, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Document 252 in Romulus Ioan Budura, *Politica independență a României și relațiile Româno-Chineze, 1954-1975: Documente*, Bucharest, The National Archives, 2008 and *Relațiile Româno-Chineze, 1880-1974: Documente*, Bucharest, Romanian Foreign Ministry and The National Archives, 2005, p. 690-714; ANR, fond C.C. al P.C.R. – Secția Cancelarie, dosar nr. 39/1965, f. 53-86.
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Summary:

This conversation between Romanian First Secretary, Nicolae Ceausescu, and the Chinese Premier, Zhou Enlai, states the Chinese desire to strengthen relations between the two countries and discusses the various courses of action that the two could pursue in regards to resolving the Vietnam conflict, should the United States escalate its involvement.

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Romanian

Contents:

Translation - English

[...]

Cde. Zhou Enlai: ... as I said on the evening of 23 March - we should tighten even more the relations between our parties, countries and peoples, in order to contribute even more to our common cause. One of the means for tightening these relations is a reciprocal exchange of information. ... we would like to discuss much more about international problems. We have come from the Orient and we know the problems there, especially the problem of Vietnam, which is accorded attention. Maybe comrade Hoang Van Hoan, the head of the Vietnamese delegation at the funeral, gave you a short presentation of the situation there. However, we would like to have a larger and multilateral discussion about this problem.

The problem that interests everyone is whether the situation in Vietnam will provoke a larger conflict or even a world war. Raising this issue, people have not sought to discover the root of the problem. If we discuss the issue only from the aspect of whether war will break out or not, the problem is difficult to clarify. The Vietnam problem is in the first place the problem of armed interventions and aggressive actions of American imperialism. That is the root of the evil.

[...]

The development of the partisan fight in South Vietnam has surpassed every level of partisan armed struggle known to history. You, the Romanian comrade leaders, know of the long-term armed struggle that took place in China. Among us, especially during the eight years of resistance against the Japanese imperialists, the partisan struggle was developed; however the partisan struggle of South Vietnam has surpassed the level achieved by us. On such a small surface, with many rivers, with a population of 14 million people, in South Vietnam the patriotic forces have succeeded to win to the National Liberation Front [NLF] $\frac{3}{4}$ of the population, which fight - directly or indirectly - against the American imperialists.

The armed forces of South Vietnam are of two types: central, principal forces and local forces. In the past, the puppet government of South Vietnam used the principal forces to defend the large cities and the coast; the local forces fought only against partisan; however, continuing in this way, the local forces could not manage, being destroyed. Undertaking new recruitments, the revolutionary elements have entered into these forces, which is not to their favor. As a result, now the principal forces of the puppet's troops cannot leave the cities and enter into combat with the partisan forces. Now, the South Vietnamese popular army of liberation already has a combat capacity such that it can destroy immediately, in the course of several days, two battalions of the army of the puppet government. Before it could conduct a battle of at most a day - a day and a night. Now, it can engage in battles of 2-3 days, continually.

In the past, the Americans used the method of deploying soldiers of the puppet troops from one city to another by helicopters. But the partisan defense troops have learned to shoot them down and the Americans no longer dare to transport troops with helicopters. Now the situation is clear: the U.S.A. can no longer base this fight only on the troops of the puppet government. The perspective of the puppet government is only collapse.

What is the exit path open to the U.S.A.? If they stay with arms crossed and watch how the collapse develops then there would be no sense to keep their troops in South Vietnam. Today I read a news story according to which Rusk said yesterday that, in order to fight in South Vietnam, the locals must fulfill, in principle, three conditions. One condition is the strengthening of the troops of the puppet government that, at the current moment, has a very, very small number. Another is the consolidation of the power of the puppet government, which is very thin and constantly exposed to coups d'état. Since the assassination of the Diem brothers^[1], the leadership has changed 11 times; similar changes will follow. The [frequency of] changes that took place in South Vietnam exceed the changes in all of the puppet regimes subordinated to the U.S.A. in the world, including South Korea. A third condition mentioned by Rusk is the consolidation of local power, which is even harder to realize; it is in fact even weaker, because within the framework of local authority are many from the NLF.

You have conducted illegal work, you took part in the military insurrection of 1944 and you know all of these things. In South Vietnam, at the current moment there is just such a situation.

An extremely complicated problem that the United States of America faces is whether to advance or to draw back. The friends of the American imperialists have told them to reach a peace, taking into account the prestige of the U.S.A. What does the preservation of prestige mean? Who made it lose prestige?

I have discussed this with many western correspondents and I have spoken also with the French Ambassador in Beijing about this. I explained to them in these discussions that the U.S.A. itself lost this prestige by sending the army to Vietnam, occupying this territory, repressing the population. If the U.S.A. wishes to avoid losing prestige, then it should withdraw the troops. If the U.S.A. will not withdraw its troops but, on the contrary, will increase their number then it will lose even more of its prestige. A current example: the United States of America has even used toxic gas, a fact disclosed even in the press and recognized by the Americans. Through that, they can only lose prestige because they have defied the objection of the entire world. Even the Labor government in England is against these actions. All of these things force the U.S.A. to reconsider its policies. However they have not taken a decision for fear of losing even more prestige. As a result, they say that it is impossible for the U.S.A. to withdraw their troops because they see a loss of prestige because of it. What will they do instead, if they do not want to withdraw their troops? The United States wants to force the people of South Vietnam to give up their arms, to no longer resist; D.R. Vietnam should be obliged not to assist South Vietnam in any way; China should accept not support the struggle of the people of South Vietnam in any way. This means that the people of South Vietnam should lay down their arms and give themselves up. If they would succeed in doing this then the United States of America would gain a respite in order to strengthen the puppet forces of South Vietnam. In this way the U.S.A. wants to redeploy forces. The moment they complete these actions, under any pretext, they can begin the massacre and repression of the people of South Vietnam. Then the sacrifices of the people of South Vietnam would be even greater than now; then it would no longer be possible to unify Vietnam peacefully; then the U.S.A. could keep their word only in a symbolic way, in the sense of regrouping the troops on the territory of South Vietnam, however, the people of South Vietnam will not support in any way whatsoever this new repression and will rise again to fight.

If at the current moment we were to submit to the Americans and engage in peace negotiations, in order to realize the desires expressed by people of good faith, that would mean new massacres, the sacrifice of even more people. Given that, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam published a declaration in which it says that in these conditions it will not accept any kind of peace negotiations. And the D.R. Vietnam government published a declaration in which it shows that it is against peace negotiations, at the current moment, when the air forces of the U.S.A. bombard the territory of the D.R. Vietnam. Have you read the declaration of the National Liberation Front?

Already from the middle of February [1965], when the Soviet government asked the D.R. Vietnam government about this, Premier Pham Van Dong explained to the government of the Soviet Union that they cannot hold peace negotiations. At the beginning of the month of February, when comrade Kosygin visited the D.R. Vietnam, the Vietnamese comrades told Kosygin that now is not the moment for negotiations. According to the Vietnamese comrades, negotiations cannot be accepted at present because they would only favor the Americans, allowing them to gain a respite.

If the Americans do not withdraw, peace cannot be realized. Then what is to be done? There exists a third possibility: that the Americans go further. We take this into consideration.

We have in view several possibilities. If we analyze them, we can see four stages of development.

□The first stage is the current situation: to intensify the war in South Vietnam and, at the same time, to intensify the bombardment of D.R. Vietnam. We have often said that if the war in Vietnam is continued this would mean, without doubt, a total failure of the puppet troops of South Vietnam. Where are the human resources for

strengthening the units of South Vietnam? In order to strengthen the armed forces of South Vietnam, the Americans must send their troops. Rusk and McNamara have said that they will increase even more the number of troops in South Vietnam. The first measure taken by the U.S.A. in the current stage is that of sending a division of marine infantry in South Vietnam. They have already disembarked two battalions in South Vietnam. We appreciate that the Americans will send an entire division. This division at present defends Okinawa. Now the Americans prepare to send a brigade of marine infantry to Okinawa to replace that division. The National Defense Ministry^[2] of the U.S.A. also foresees that, in case of need, the U.S.A. could send yet another infantry division to South Vietnam. At the start, the Americans thought in the following manner: in South Korea there are two divisions; it could send one of the divisions in South Korea to South Vietnam. However, the puppet government of South Korea feared that it would not be able to maintain and requested that the division taken from South Korea be replaced with another division. Because of that the plan was annulled. The Americans now think to bring the 24th Division from Honolulu or a division from [the mainland] U.S.A. This means that the maximal plan of the U.S. Ministry of National Defense is to send two divisions to South Vietnam. Aside from that, the U.S.A. would like to construct a division of troops from satellite countries. For example, South Korea sent 200 engineering troops. The Philippines Foreign Minister said that the Philippines will send 5,000 soldiers. But, in the Korean War, the Philippines only sent a battalion. As a result, it is difficult for them to send more to South Vietnam. Australia could also send troops. The Australian government talks a lot about this. However, it is impossible to send many troops. It is possible that New Zealand and Thailand send troops; but for Thailand there is also the problem of Laos, so that it cannot send many troops. The United States of America has also requested Malaysia to send troops but England does not agree because that would mean the sending of English troops. If we take all of these troops together, their number does not exceed 10,000 men. This means that there will be two American divisions and one division from satellite countries.

What will these troops do in South Vietnam? According to the concept of the United States of America, these troops should defend the water ports, the airports and the cities, and not fight. The Americans desire to push the puppet troops of South Vietnam out of the cities and into battle against the partisans. If the Americans proceed in this way, then the puppet troops will be defeated all the faster and they will be destroyed in even greater numbers. The American troops stationed in different ports, airports and cities will be more isolated and more exposed to danger.

Comrade leaders, you know how the German-Fascist troops were isolated in 1944 in your country: it is evident that once the puppet troops are almost entirely destroyed then the American troops will be obliged to withdraw.

Currently the Americans bombard the D.R. Vietnam, however, these bombardments are limited, controlled. After each bombardment they stand back and observe what happens. At the beginning they crossed the 17th parallel; after that they targeted the localities to be bombarded between the 17th and 19th parallels. Then they crossed 60 km to the north of parallel 19. This means that they are half the way between parallel 17 and the city of Hanoi. After that they retreated a little and now they again bombard localities between parallels 17 and 19. They also mount continuous propaganda that they will bombard D.R. Vietnam. What do they pursue with this? Their aim is to force the population in South Vietnam to stop fighting, [to force] the D.R. Vietnam to no longer support the struggle in South Vietnam and to accept peace negotiations. However, the Vietnamese people will not accept this, under any circumstance.

□Consequently it could happen that the first stage develops into two stages; we must take into account the worst-case eventuality. This means that the Americans could bombard the entire territory of D.R. Vietnam, including the city of Hanoi and we must prepare for that. Maybe they want to blockade the entire coastline of Vietnam and to bombard with warships the entire territory of North Vietnam. If that should happen, D.R. Vietnam is prepared.

If the Americans proceed in such a fashion, then they will certainly draw in our

country. D.R. Vietnam will request our country's assistance, because we are fraternal countries, and not only aid in the form of military materiel but also human assistance, volunteers. This is only if D.R. Vietnam will present such a request.

This means that the second stage could evolve in the direction of widening the war. The war could not be limited to the territory of D.R. Vietnam, but will also cross over into Laos and Cambodia, on the whole territory of Indochina. In the second stage the battlefield could no longer be delimited; what is North Vietnam and what is South Vietnam. Then there would no longer exist a line of demarcation at parallel 17. But the American troops of which I have spoken do not want to conduct this war.

□ There is a possibility that land forces are increased but the Americans are not disposed to do this because they will suffer as the result of sending land troops. The U.S.A. has only 16 infantry divisions and two divisions of marine infantry, plus a division of paratroopers. Now approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ of the American troops are sent to different corners of the world. If you take these troops from one corner of the world or another, then that would weaken the Americans' power of control in the respective locations. Given that, in the second stage, when the Americans are faced with these possibilities, they could extend the bombing and bombard China. They would bomb the air bases in our country, which are close to the D.R. Vietnam and even those in the interior of the country. If the situation should evolve thusly, they would bomb China just as they bomb D. R. Vietnam today. In that situation we would have no other alternative than to resist. That would be the third stage.

□ We also consider a fourth stage, which is an even worse possibility: a total war, an all-out attack against our country with land forces. The current government of the U.S.A., with the exception of a small number of people, does not agree with that. But we must also take into consideration that eventuality.

We have considered all of these possibilities. Now we follow what the Americans will do. We do not provoke them.

In our opinion, according to the reliable intelligence that we possess, the Americans take one step ahead and then observe to see what happens because they are afraid; they do not have a longer-term perspective. The principal aim of the U.S.A. is that in the first stage or in the second stage to convince the population of South Vietnam and North Vietnam to accept peace negotiations through pressure. Both D.R. Vietnam and our country are decisive in our stand, they will not submit to conditions placed by the Americans and they will not create illusions.

Some raise the problem of whether such an attitude of force of the people of South Vietnam, of the government of D.R. Vietnam, and of the government of the Chinese P.R. might or might not lead to a world war? We consider not. The Vietnamese problem provoked battles at the top of the Pentagon. But how could this conflict evolve into a world war? A so-called world war means war between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. You and everyone else know that the Soviet Union is not disposed to wage a world war. The United States of America, at present, does not want to provoke the Soviet Union. If these two countries are not disposed to wage world war then where could this world war exist? If the United States of America wants to attack China it would not be a world war but, possibly, only a local war. Even if the Americans will attack our country we will not request that the Soviet Union take part in that war. If the Soviet Union does not take part in that war then the Americans will be obliged to stand and think. How can the Americans be calmed by the idea of consuming their forces in China while the Soviet Union, a great power, stands aside? If the Americans attack our country then they must withdraw their troops from various military bases spread throughout the entire globe and redeploy them to our territory. Then that will create the occasion for the populations of the entire world to rise up against the American imperialists; then it will no longer be a question of an anti-American movement in the Congo or in Cuba. As a result, the Americans have not at present taken that decision. Not only did [British Prime Minister Harold] Wilson advise that the Americans should not wage a world war, but also Montgomery and McArthur advised Eisenhower and Kennedy not to wage a world war. Even Johnson has cited this today.

Relating a discussion he had with Johnson, Wilson said that Johnson affirmed that the U.S.A. would not attack China and added that in that case England is reassured. However, we cannot think that way, to delude ourselves; we are prepared for an American attack.

Certainly, we will fight for peace. When comrade Kosygin passed through Beijing, comrade Mao Zedong told him that we also want to win 10-15 years of peace. Kosygin said that he does not believe that the Chinese P.R. will provoke a world war. However he had others circulate such stories. On 13 March of this year, Fidel Castro said that China has a population so large and asked why China does not send a million men into Vietnam to fight. As a result, we must be prepared for the eventuality that the Americans will attack us. We will be prepared for the fight. However, we will not draw others into the water.

Yesterday, Mikoyan expressed the desire to talk with us. We thought about whether it is a good idea to speak our mind, and to see what his opinions are. However, we considered that this man is even less credible than Kosygin. If I tell him what I think he can tell it also to others. As a result, we considered that it is better not to tell it to him.

These then are the possibilities to which the Americans could take recourse.

The Vietnamese comrades have decisively affirmed that:

□The armed struggle should be limited only to South Vietnam. But now the bombing is extended against D.R. Vietnam and forces them into the struggle;

□War will be accepted so long as it is imposed, just as the Korean people had done. Korea waged war for three years, was completely destroyed and after 10 years it remade itself. You, comrades, know this.

Now the problem does not depend on what the Americans do, but on the decision that we have taken. This is another important element.

This refers to the activity that the Soviet Union conducts in favor of peace negotiations behind the backs of the D.R. Vietnam and the Chinese P.R. Just now we explained how the government of the Soviet Union asked the government of the D.R. Vietnam [to engage in negotiations] on 16 February of this year, and Premier Pham Van Dong responded on the spot that the government of the D.R. Vietnam does not agree with peace negotiations. In the course of the visit of Kosygin to the D.R. Vietnam, the Vietnamese comrades said that at that moment no sort of peace negotiations could take place. Then the Soviet Union also asked our government what opinion it had, whether there could be peace negotiations. We responded to the government of the Soviet Union that we must first know the opinion held by the D.R. Vietnam and only then could we give them any response. However, despite the opposition of the D.R. Vietnam government and lack of response from our government, the Soviet Union made contact with De Gaulle on 23 February of this year and after that with the British government pronouncing itself in favor of peace negotiations.

In London, Gromyko had a discussion with journalists, saying to them that the negotiations depend upon the interested parties. He responded that on one side is the U.S.A. while on the other side is the D.R. Vietnam. He did not explain the aggressive character of the war in Vietnam nor did he explain the roots of that war, nor did he make a distinction between the two parts of Vietnam. He did not stand on the side of righteousness but instead adopted an equivocal position. The next day, Rusk reaffirmed Gromyko's words, saying that Gromyko had spoken very eloquently. Rusk said that the U.S.A. seeks to ensure that the communists should no longer infiltrate into South Vietnam and, once that is achieved, it could withdraw its troops. This proves for whom Gromyko spoke.

From what we know, both the Ambassador of the Soviet Union in Washington and the U.S.A. Ambassador in Moscow have had contacts with the respective governments, of the countries in which they are resident.

In its public declarations, the Soviet Union says that it supports the Vietnamese

people. However all of these declarations also contain in the same measure phrases according to which the Soviet Union wants to have friendly relations with the U.S.A. and is against those who oppose peaceful coexistence. The government of the United States of America could easily understand what the Soviets want, that [the former] are just empty words and that these declarations play no role.

We can talk about the assistance that the Soviet Union accords to Vietnam.

Last year, the Soviet Union sent armament to South Vietnam: around 60-70 thousand rifles. What kind of rifles were they? They were some German rifles that the Soviet Union captured from Nazi troops in the Second World War, arms that could not be used. The Vietnamese comrades, who are very honest, sent very many people to check out these rifles; they found that only about 10 thousand rifles could be used. But even those were very heavy. We told them to send them back, but they responded to us that they do not have the courage, that it is better to leave them in the museum. In February of this year, when Kosygin visited D.R. Vietnam, he accorded South Vietnam only medical assistance and no armaments at all.

What is the situation of U.S.S.R. assistance for North Vietnam? Under Khrushchev, for a period of time, this aid ceased. After the overthrow of Khrushchev in December of last year, the government of the U.S.S.R. thought to accord assistance once again to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. As the Soviet comrades informed us, the Soviet Union agreed to send 500 wagons of armaments for the D.R. Vietnam. Up until the middle of March of this year, the quantity of armament expedited has not reached one half of that promised. The armaments wagons that have arrived to our frontier were sent immediately to Vietnam. After Kosygin's visit to the D.R. Vietnam a new issue arose. When Kosygin visited D.R. Vietnam, he agreed to offer a new assistance for Vietnam. When, returning from Hanoi, he arrived in Beijing, he said that he will accord assistance to North Vietnam, sending two regiments of ground-to-air missiles, anti-aircraft guns, amphibian tanks, MIG-17 aircraft, more than 10 instruction aircraft, various materiel for transmission and transport trucks. He told us that for the anti-aircraft rockets they could also send several cadres for training. We told him to give us a list of this materiel and as soon as it arrives at our frontier we will send it quickly to Vietnam. Comrade Mao Zedong said to Kosygin that, the more that the Soviet Union helps North Vietnam, the better.

After that Kosygin returned to Moscow, in the last ten days of February of this year, he sent us a list. And three new issues arose.

The first issue is that for the two anti-aircraft regiments, the Soviet Union wants also to send 4,000 soldiers of its regular troops. But an entire Vietnamese regiment has studied in the Soviet Union how to operate these anti-aircraft rockets. In 1959, the Soviet Union sold us a regiment of rockets and sent only 95 instructors. Our people learned to operate them in three months. Now they want to send 4,000 men to Vietnam. This is not for instruction, but to ensure their control over the country. Although there were anti-aircraft rockets controlled by the Soviet Union in Cuba, nevertheless, when the U-2 planes and the unmanned aircraft flew over Cuba, they were not shot down. And they did not give Cuba only two rocket regiments, but many more.

A second problem is that the Soviet Union wanted to send a large unit of MIG-21 BF aircraft to an air base in a frontier zone of our country next to the D.R. Vietnam, for instructing Vietnamese pilots. D.R. Vietnam had not requested MIG-21 BF aircraft because the Vietnamese pilots only know how to pilot the MIG-17 planes, and there is a difference of two generations between the two. The Soviets argued this intention as wanting to instruct the Vietnamese pilots to take over the operation of these aircraft. But the respective aircraft were only for instruction. The Vietnamese comrades told them: "If you want to help us, to train our pilots on MIG-21 aircraft, we can send our pilots to the Soviet Union." The Soviet Union wants to send this unit consisting of 12 MIG-21 aircraft together with 500 soldiers, which can control the airbase. The Soviets also argue that if the city of Hanoi will be bombed, then these aircraft will defend against the Americans. But they have chosen the airbase at Kumping as their base; and from what we know about the operational range of these aircraft, they cannot reach Hanoi. Their aim was to control our country because the operational range of the MIG-21 BF aircraft only allows them to reach to the border of China. Maybe they fear that the Chinese P.R. will provoke unrest. It is very difficult to say whether they

fear that our country will provoke unrest or whether they want to provoke unrest.

A third problem is that, under various disguises, for the provisioning of those 4,000 men for Vietnam and those 500 men in Kuming, the Soviet Union would have need of two air corridors through China. But this is a military action! The Soviets have not discussed this either with the Vietnamese comrades or with us. Regarding what they have told us, they have referred only to the armament; they have said nothing about the troops. We have consulted with the Vietnamese comrades and we have refused the sending of troops, both into China and into Vietnam.

As regards armaments, we explained that we agree to transport it, once it reaches the Soviet-Chinese frontier, to Vietnam. We have requested, in the last ten days of February, the list of armaments accorded Vietnam. However, before the middle of March of this year they had not given us this list. In the middle of March of this year they did give us this list, which foresees 300 and some armaments wagons. Now they have begun to send these armaments wagons through Manchuria. From Manchuria we take the wagons and we send them on to Vietnam.

Regarding the regiments of anti-aircraft rockets, before the middle of March of this year we had heard nothing. Only on 23 March of this year did the Soviet Union inform our Minister of Foreign Commerce that during 5-28 April the Soviet Union would send 12 trains, as well as 260 personnel for instruction. Certainly, we immediately said that we agreed to expedite them further. We explained that they could send them earlier. In this information the Soviets did not mention the troops that they wanted to send.

In some socialist countries of Eastern Europe and in Cuba, the Soviets say that our country does not permit the Soviet Union to transport armament for Vietnam over the territory of China. This is the little assistance that the U.S.S.R. accords the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

At the end of February of this year, the Soviet Union raised the problem that it would like to send 40 AN-12 aircraft to North Vietnam with which it would transport armament; 75 machine guns and 18 anti-aircraft 37 mm cannons; but the airport in Hanoi cannot receive such aircraft. What is the aim of this action? We told them that if we are speaking of such armament then we can send it through China to Vietnam. We have sent 100 machine guns instead of 75 and 66 anti-aircraft 37 mm cannons instead of 18.

And yet one more thing about which it is worth talking. Before, the armament accorded by the Soviet Union to Vietnam had to be paid for, just as you have to pay them. When Kosygin visited D.R. Vietnam, they told him that the armament accorded by China is free of charge. Kosygin said: "Okay, beginning now the Soviet armament will also be accorded free of charge." But in the list that they sent to us it is written very clearly that the greatest part of this armament - the machine guns and cannons - is used equipment.

We have told the Soviets that we agree that the Soviet Union should accord assistance, but we do not want to accept troops to control us.

Aside from the motive of which you are also aware in such cases, there is also the aim of starting peace negotiations. We can prove this with an example. When comrade Kosygin was in D.R. Vietnam, he said that the countries of the socialist camp should publish a common declaration of support for D.R. Vietnam. We said that all of the socialist country governments have published declarations of support for D.R. Vietnam and that, due to the situation in which each country finds itself, there are differences of nuance; there is not an absolute identity between these declarations. However the Soviet Union continues to pronounce itself in favor of publishing such a common declaration. Then we told them: for example, that China finds itself in a special situation and the declaration of our country needs to be stronger in order for the Americans to reflect upon it. And the Soviet Union, if it published such a declaration, would be compelled to use stronger words in order to make the Americans think. Due to the different situations in which the socialist countries find themselves, although the support is the same, nevertheless the formulation of declarations differs. But the Soviet Union has stubbornly pronounced itself in favor of publishing a common declaration. The Soviet purpose is to enable it to bargain with the U.S.A. with the help of this common declaration. If we accept the opinion of the Soviet Union then the U.S.S.R. could enter into contact with the United States of

America in the name of the countries of the socialist camp and what would be the perspective? They could even sell us down the road. The Vietnamese problem is one with worldwide implications, but the Soviet Union wants to act without taking into account our opinions.

The problem is so complicated not because the United States of America wants to extend the war, and not because we resist it, but because the Soviet Union wants to conduct negotiations with the U.S.A., to control and even to sell out our countries. This is what we are talking about on this issue.

[...]

Is the D.R. Vietnam, in an absolute way, against negotiations with the Americans? No, it is not. Certainly, when the conditions are ripe, at the opportune moment, D.R. Vietnam will take part in negotiations. Now, however, the Americans place unfounded conditions. The Americans want to force the D.R. Vietnam, through military force, to accept negotiations. Nor do the Americans want to conduct negotiations on the basis of the 1954 Geneva Accords. The so-called Geneva Accords foresee that the American troops should be withdrawn from South Vietnam. The problem of South Vietnam should be resolved by the population living there. If the Americans accept these conditions then the premise will be created for the resolution of this problem. However, at the present moment, the Americans do not agree with these conditions.

In the Afro-Asiatic countries there is also such an opinion: to arrive at an armistice, without any condition. That would mean recognizing that the war is provoked by both sides equally, or at least that both sides are belligerents. However, the situation in fact in South Vietnam is this. In the first place, the military conflict in South Vietnam was provoked by the Americans, who have sent their own troops and who gave assistance to the puppet government to repress the Vietnamese people. Then the government of the United States of America refused to recognize the National Liberation Front as a belligerent side and pretended that if North Vietnam would not interfere in the affairs of South Vietnam there would not be a problem in South Vietnam. The Americans calculate that if North Vietnam will not accept to drop its preoccupation with the problems of South Vietnam, then they can continue to put down the national liberation movement. The attitude of the Americans is different from that of the French in 1954, when the Geneva negotiations took place. Then France recognized the four countries of Indochina as belligerent sides. As a result, after the armistice in Indochina was realized, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand won their positions as independent states. The unconditional ending of combat would serve the United States of America and help the puppet regime in South Vietnam to rise again. Given that, an unconditional cessation of fighting is not a good solution and it cannot be accepted by North Vietnam.

The Americans tell their allies that if their troops withdraw from South Vietnam, then the other countries will also ask to get rid of the Americans. The Americans are both right and wrong. They are right that if American troops withdraw from South Vietnam then the other countries will ask them to withdraw from their territory as well. It will be a chain reaction. They are not right because such requests will be produced only in those places where the people have [a national] consciousness. For example, in Thailand, if the people do not rise, then the troops of the United States of America could stay there quite a while longer. Given that, the Americans do not want to leave anywhere, not even where the people have risen against them, because they are afraid all of the various peoples will break their chains.

This must be said very clearly to the Afro-Asian countries. For example, when Algeria was in heated combat with France, if someone had requested it to go into peace negotiations it would not have accepted. When, however, France recognized that it had no other perspective in Algeria except peace negotiations, Algeria accepted the negotiations. Only in this way could the Evian agreement be realized. At the beginning, France did not recognize the [Algerian] National Liberation Front as a belligerent party and it said repeatedly that Algeria is a province of France. After [France] recognized it as a belligerent, they began negotiations.

The Americans do not recognize the patriotic forces in the Congo, but only the

Chombe government. Only when the patriotic forces of the Congo, through their struggle, will reach a certain point of development will the Americans recognize them as a belligerent, as a representative of the Congolese people. There are many similar cases in the Afro-Asian countries. For example, in Laos there are three sides, but it is impossible to enter into negotiations.

Another example is the conference of the four countries of Indochina convoked in Cambodia. A decision was adopted at that conference, under the leadership of Prince Sihanouk. Regarding South Vietnam, it was decided to say that the American troops must withdraw, that the problem of South Vietnam must be resolved by the Vietnamese people and that a unified, independent, neutral and peaceful Vietnam must be created. Regarding North Vietnam, the decision requests that the United States stop the bombing. In regard to Laos, the decision says that first a coalition government of the three sides must be re-established and after that a conference be convoked of the countries participating in the Geneva Conference. Regarding Cambodia, it requested that the countries participating in the Geneva Conference be convoked in order to ensure the neutrality of Cambodia. And Cambodia agrees with the request of the conference. In regard to South Vietnam, Cambodia does not agree to go into peace negotiations.

Soon, on 29 June of this year, the conference of Afro-Asiatic countries will be convened. On the way back to [China] I will pass through Algeria, U.A.R. [United Arab Republic], Pakistan and Burma and I will discuss with the leaders of these countries about broaching the Vietnamese problem at the Afro-Asian Conference.

They must be told clearly that we must support Vietnam, that we should support the request of the peoples of Indochina, and that we do not cede before the threats of the U.S.A. and enter into peace negotiations. The fact that the Vietnamese people have drawn the Americans into Vietnam is a good thing. It will not be in conformity with the spirit of the Afro-Asiatic countries, with the spirit of the Bandung Conference, if, when the Vietnamese people refuse peace negotiations, the other Afro-Asiatic countries would hurry to go along the American path and pronounce themselves for peace negotiations.

Before coming here I met with a Syrian delegation, with the minister of foreign affairs and the minister of culture of Syria. Likewise, I met with the president of an organization for the liberation of the Arabs from Palestine. All were of the opinion that the U.S.A., through Israel, exercises very great pressures on the Arab states. They also manifested the desire that our country should draw American forces into the East, because that would weaken American pressure in the Middle East. I told them that Vietnam represents a very good example, that many American forces have been drawn there. They explained that they agreed with my opinion and that after they return home they will tell the governments of the Arab countries to support the Vietnamese people.

Before coming here I had a discussion also with the French Ambassador, who presented the opinion of De Gaulle. He raised two problems: a) whether unconditional peace negotiations could be organized; and b) the problem of the five great powers. I asked him whether he recognized the recent disturbances as being provoked by the Americans. He acknowledged that was the case, saying that De Gaulle sees things the same way. I said to him: "If that is how things stand, why do you support unconditional peace negotiations?" The Americans do not agree for unconditional peace negotiations to take place and they have placed conditions: the Vietnamese communists must stop intervening in South Vietnam, because only thus could the conflict stop. If the Vietnamese people would accept the conditions put by the Americans, that would mean that the stationing of American troops in South Vietnam should continue, even if the peace negotiations will take place. Things will not develop as France thinks, specifically, that the U.S.A. will withdraw its troops. The French Ambassador was not able to counter [my argument].

Then, he asked, what is to be done? I responded that there is a solution; that we could test to see whether the Americans are disposed or not to enter into negotiations. In Indochina there are four problems. The easiest problem is that of Cambodia. This is a country led by Prince Sihanouk, who has nothing to do with communists: however, the Americans have offended him too much and because of that he fights against the Americans. At present, Cambodia requests that the

Geneva Conference be convoked to ensure its independence and neutrality. France, the Soviet Union, China, D. R. Vietnam are for the conference. Great Britain is half-agreed. Only the Americans oppose this conference. This conference could be convoked without conditions, because there is no war there. I told him that France could step on the Americans tail and convoke this conference, to see if the Americans are sincere when they pronounce for negotiations. I told him that, from what I know, France is for this conference and that it could push the Americans to take part in it. If, with all of the efforts made by France, the Americans still will not come then what hopes can we place now and in the future in the Americans? Given that, if we are speaking of negotiations without conditions, we could begin with the problem of Cambodia. That was in regard to negotiations.

A second problem: France would like to know what opinion China has in regard to the fact that the five great powers should resolve all of the great problems of the world. Basically, this is the problem of the United Nations Organization. I said to him that there are no longer five great powers, because the United States of America recognizes the followers of Chiang Kai-Shek as the representatives of China. The French Ambassador said that France recognizes new China. So long, I said to him, as the new China was held outside the UN for 15 years, why is China not left to think whether it is not a good thing to not enter into the UN? We could even think about organizing a new United Nations Organization. I told him that we will never raise this idea in any public speech.

On the other hand, I presented some positive opinions. I said to him that the current United Nations Organization must be liberated from American control, it must be radically reorganized and its mistakes corrected. I said to him that in attaining this scope, the five great powers could play a greater role. I told him that China is against resolving global problems by the five great powers. We are for the equality of rights of all countries, great or small. Many important problems must be resolved through the conference of the heads of [all] states.

The five great powers could do something in the sense of impeding the United States of America from monopolizing the UN and dominating this organization. How do we proceed, he asked? The best way would be for France to give council to its ally, Great Britain, while we give council to our ally, the Soviet Union, in the sense that we, the four great powers, should unite, we should fight against the American monopoly, fight against the disturbances provoked abroad by the Americans, fight against the American control of the UN, fight against American nuclear blackmail, fight against the intensification of the arms race in the U.S.A. I told him that if these four countries would unite and act together, then they could play a great role in preventing a world war, in maintaining peace.

We could also have such a discussion with Mikoyan, but I was not disposed to do so. Why? Because when Kosygin passed through Beijing, we told him that we could exchange information regarding international problems because our countries are allied. This happened on 13 February of this year, thus on the eve of the 15th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Friendship, Collaboration and Mutual Assistance between the Chinese P. R. and the Soviet Union. We informed him on various international problems and he agreed that we should organize such informational reciprocity. However, after he returned to Moscow, the Soviets conducted negotiations with the Americans and the British on the problem of South Vietnam but they gave us no information about it. Given that, this time I said nothing to Mikoyan. Not even Mikoyan could do anything.

Regarding the Soviet Union, in what direction has its position evolved? From what we can observe, after the conference in March, we are of the opinion that it adopted a softer and not a firmer attitude. If the Soviet Union is for unity among socialist countries then after the visit made by Kosygin to Hanoi, China and Korea, it could have annulled the conference in March. But the Soviet Union insisted on convoking that conference. Maybe if they had not convoked that conference they could not have justified themselves to those who follow their conductor's baton! We however do not see what utility the convocation of this conference brought.

The conference only made it easier for the Americans to see that there are many fissures [in the communist bloc]. The conference proved that the common declarations published together with the D. R. Vietnam and the D. P. R. Korea are not

worthy of trust. Given all that, we cannot place any hope in it.

Certainly, if the Soviet Union agrees to give assistance to Vietnam then we will salute such a gesture, because all of the socialist countries should help D. R. Vietnam, should help the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam. Certainly the degree to which the socialist countries will help Vietnam depends on the capacity of each country and on the situation in which each country finds itself.

There is, however, a common element for all socialist countries and that is to refrain from speaking about negotiations, owing to threats from the U.S.A. The aim of the Americans is that, aside from the Chinese P. R., the D. R. Vietnam and the Korean D. P. R., all of the socialist countries should pronounce for peace negotiations. In this way the United States of America could exercise pressure upon Vietnam. On the contrary, the socialist countries should condemn the United States of America for the fact that it has sent troops into South Vietnam to extend the war; they should ask the United States of America to withdraw the troops from South Vietnam, conforming to the Geneva agreement; they should condemn the American bombing of D. R. Vietnam; they should pronounce against the U.S. extension of the war in Indochina; they should pronounce against the use of toxic gases by the U.S.A.

If all of the socialist countries and all of the Afro-Asiatic countries will unite their voices and pronounce in this sense, then the Americans will feel the existence of a powerful solidarity. For example, regarding the use of toxic gases, a serious protest would not fail to influence them.

This time I came to the P. R. Romania mainly to attend the funeral^[3] and, at the same time, to discuss international problems with you and with the attending leaders of the Afro-Asiatic countries. Certainly, we want to know the opinions of the Romanian leaders. If there is anything to be clarified, please name it, because I can clarify it.

Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu: I want to thank comrade Zhou Enlai and the other comrades for their extensive briefing on internal problems, especially on the situation in Vietnam and the problems connected with that situation.

From what I know comrades, our party and state leadership has expressed its position in a declaration on the American intervention in South Vietnam. Certainly, the issues raised by comrade Zhou Enlai have great importance; they necessitate further study.

The leadership of our party will analyze the issues and will establish how we must act in the future in order to contribute to the assistance to the D. R. Vietnam and to the Vietnamese people in the fight against the American intervention.

Regarding the March 1 gathering, we have informed the other comrades about our position. We have sent them a letter of which you are aware, and there is not much more to add, because our position towards this gathering is clearly expressed there, that the meeting does not serve the interests of the unity of the communist and workers movement. Just a few days before the beginning of that gathering a representative of the CPSU, of the International Department of the CPSU CC, was here to propose our participation. We reaffirmed our position and advised him that there was still time to renounce the gathering. We told him that we consider that after the visit of comrade Kosygin in Vietnam, in China and in Korea conditions were created that justify the renunciation of this gathering.

As you know, they held the gathering nonetheless.

In discussions that we had with comrade Mikoyan yesterday, we told him again that we consider it a mistake to have held this gathering. There is not much more to say about that gathering because there is nothing good to say about it.

Our Central Committee, the government, and the entire population considers that the solidarity of the socialist countries must be strengthened in order to assure joint action, at times like those now in Vietnam.

We very much appreciate the discussions that we have had today with the Chinese comrades and we consider them as an expression of the fraternal relations and trust that has been established between our parties and countries. The comrades can be convinced that our party, government and people value highly the friendship with the Chinese C. P., with the Chinese people, and that we will act to strengthen and

develop this friendship, these relations.

Certainly, we also regret that the visit of comrade Zhou Enlai should take place under such painful circumstances for us.

Cde. Chivu Stoica: It would have been nice if it took place under normal conditions.

Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu: We hope, however, that there will be a visit another time, in other circumstances than those of today.

Cde. Ion Gheorghe Maurer: I would also like to say a few words.

Comrade Zhou Enlai, I can only reinforce, if possible, the gratitude that comrade Ceausescu has expressed for your exposition today. It is explicable and here's why: you have broached two problems that dominate international life at the current moment: one very current - the problem of Vietnam, the resolution of which depends on an entire series of factors, and one, whose currency is possibly of less acuity but which has a decisive importance for the future of the world - the UN problem.

Regarding the first problem, the problem of Vietnam, comrade Ceausescu said that our special circumstances recently have impeded our party and state leadership from devoting much attention to this problem. And there is another fact. We are not always sure if the information that we have regarding the development of events there is accurate. Our principal source of information is the press, with all of the qualifications necessary for what the press relates on the topic and, from time to time, the occasional official position taken by one country or political organism or another, directly interested in the resolution of this problem. You see why the discussion that we have had today has a special value for us. Even if we devoted great attention and effort to the Vietnam problem, we would be far from knowing a series of facts and of judging the revelations from our discussion. You can also see why it is very difficult for us to explain our position to you immediately.

It will be very useful for the leadership of our party and state to know, to deepen this discussion and, through the light of all of the circumstances that you have explained to us, to weigh things properly and to decide on our position. If I were to express a feeling, which I am sure is shared by all who have heard your exposition, your judgments regarding the development of events, regarding the main directions in the sense in which the interests of American imperialism are oriented, and on those that constitute the interests of the revolution, of the movement for liberty and progress in the world, are not at all hard for us to declare our agreement, because they spring from a common conception.

Here, however, there are also other problems in defining these positions. We are speaking of what we have to do concretely, tactically, in response to the intentions of American imperialism - and we agree with [your] characterization of those interests - in order to serve the interests of the global revolutionary movement. What you have said and what we believe is the same. And these things must be weighed very carefully. They must be carefully weighed because, in conjuncture with what is developing in Vietnam, errors of calculation could be very costly. As such, please understand comrade Zhou Enlai, we do not at all share the sentiment that it is good to leave the Americans to pull their hand out of the cranny in which it is caught by themselves, rather these things must be weighed carefully in order to gain as much as possible from the situation [while] paying as little as possible.

The opinion expressed by comrade Ceausescu regarding the necessity of massive, unified action, certainly in the correct sense in which action must be directed, is an objective that, I have the impression, our beliefs, those of all of us, must not neglect.

Of course, personally, I have an entire series of points of view on the things that you have said regarding the possible haste with which some of the socialist countries have launched the idea of negotiations, but it is normal to express these ideas in the collective to which they belong, because it is the collective that decides. So you'll please understand why I do not yet express my opinions because what I think is less important than the decision of the collective to which I belong.

[...]

You see why I believe, referring to all of these problems, that our opinions will not be precisely defined except in the course of time. Why? The proposal made by comrade Ceausescu that we should have similar exchanges of ideas more frequently is a good one. You have given here a vast material upon which our party leadership needs to ponder. Our party will analyze it and say what it believes. And, where our opinions are not concordance, it will be good to have further discussion.

Cde. Chivu Stoica: Where we have different opinions, we will tell you.

[...]

Cde. Zhou Enlai: In connection with the problem of Vietnam, we have explained only the tendencies in the evolution of the problem. Certainly, this problem is very complicated and in continual evolution. We desire to have a reciprocal exchange of much more information in the future as well. In fact, this is just an initial exchange of opinions.

[...]

[\[1\]](#) In fact, the Ngo brothers; Diem is the given name of the Ngo brother who held the position of President.

[\[2\]](#) Department of Defense

[\[3\]](#) Romanian Party leader Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej died on March 19, 1965.