

July 10, 1954
Telegram, Li Kenong to Mao Zedong and Others,
Regarding the Situation at the Twenty-Second
Restricted Session

Citation:

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Summary:

Li reports on the 22nd restricted session on Indochina. During the meeting, the American and Cambodian delegates state the necessity for defensive weapons in Cambodia and Laos. Li states that the issue of weapons should only be discussed based on certain principles: self-defense only, prohibition of foreign bases, and the countries' relationship with France. After the Vietnamese and French delegates spoke, the Cambodian delegate made clear Cambodia's intentions regarding weapons and defense.

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

Chairman Mao [Zedong], Comrade [Liu] Shaoqi and the Central Committee, also forwarding Zhou [Enlai] and [PRC Vice Foreign Minister] Wang [Jiaxing] in Moscow:

At the 22nd restricted session on the Indochina issue on the 9th, the American and Cambodian delegations once again created difficulties on the issue of the introduction of defensive weapons into Laos and Cambodia. The American delegation made a statement and emphasized the sovereignty of Laos and Cambodia and their requirements for self-defense. He [Smith] said that China's proposal regarding the introduction of defensive weapons into Laos and Cambodia had not recognized Laos and Cambodia's rights to seek foreign aid and employ foreign military advisors whenever it is necessary to the development of their defensive position. He also required China to clarify its position on French military facilities established in Laos. I spoke and made three points in response:

(1) I emphasized that the prohibition on the introduction of military personnel, arms and ammunition is one of the most important conditions that guarantees the ceasefire. I pointed out that the delegations of Laos and Cambodia had already agreed to introduce weapons for self-defense only on 6 July.

(2) [I stated that] the issue of the introduction of defensive weapons should be discussed based on the principles of prohibiting the establishment of foreign military bases. I also pointed out that the Cambodian delegation stated on 8 June that Cambodia had no intention of allowing foreign countries to establish bases within its territory.

(3) In consideration of the relationship between Laos, Cambodia and the French Union, [I said] that we can discuss Laos' and Cambodia's needs for French [military] instructors and technicians. At last, I said that issues concerning the quantity and type of defensive weapons should also be included in discussions between the representatives of the two commands based on agreements.

Pham Van Dong made an overall statement on the issue of supervision. [Jean] Chauvel spoke to support the American delegation. He disagreed with what I said about letting military representatives discuss issues concerning the quantity and type of defensive weapons. Regarding Pham's statement, Chauvel said that Pham mistakenly stated that we had agreed in areas where in fact there was no agreement. He denied that he had agreed that there should be a single armistice agreement for all Indochina. He believed that not one single commission, but three commissions [dealing with problems in each of the three countries] are necessary. Also, that there should be three armistice agreements and three different organizations. The Cambodian delegation claimed that Cambodia has no intention of allowing foreign bases to be established on its territory when it is not threatened. This means that [Cambodia] will allow the Americans to establish bases during a war. He also emphasized that Cambodia has the right to choose the origin and quality of military personnel and equipment, meaning that only the quantity [of the equipment] could be limited, not the origin and type. That is, there will be American personnel [in Cambodia] during peace time. Regarding Pham Van Dong's statement, the Cambodian delegate said that he shared the reservation expressed by Chauvel today, and emphasized that supervision could not be ineffective and the sovereignty of Cambodia should not be violated. Kuznetsov spoke to support my statement and pointed out that allowing foreign countries to build up military outposts in its own territory is, itself, a loss of sovereignty. Kuznetsov referred to the French delegation's efforts to discuss the issue of supervision in the past three weeks and warned the participants that we should continue these efforts and should not create any problems on issues on which agreement is almost reached.

The next meeting will be attended by the foreign ministers, and the two chairmen will decide the date for the meeting.

Li Kenong
10 July 1954