

**May 7, 1968**

**Zhou Enlai's talk with Xuan Thuy, Director of the  
International Liaison Department of the Vietnam  
Workers Party, in Beijing**

**Citation:**

"Zhou Enlai's talk with Xuan Thuy, Director of the International Liaison Department of the Vietnam Workers Party, in Beijing", May 7, 1968, Wilson Center Digital Archive, The Diplomatic History Research Office of the People's Republic of China Foreign Ministry, ed., Zhou Enlai waijiao huodong dashiji, 1949-1975 (Chronology of Zhou Enlai's Diplomatic Activities, 1949-1975) (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 1993), p. 524. Translated by Qiang Zhai. <https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/111803>

**Summary:**

Zhou Enlai advises Xuan Thuy concerning the negotiations with the US, Enlai draws some parallels between Korea and Vietnam

**Original Language:**

Chinese

**Contents:**

Transcript - Chinese  
Translation - English

5月7日晚9时45

分，在人民大会堂福建厅接见越南春水部长时说：朝鲜谈判那个时候的情况与你们的情况不同。那时是半个朝鲜的问题，现在你们是统一越南的问题。半个越南，那是14

年前的事了。上一次毛泽东同志向胡志明主席说过，那时的日内瓦协议可能签错了。协议签订以后越南南方很多战士撤到了北方。美国当时不肯签字，如果我们不签字也有理由。胡主席说这样也有好处，经过一个困难阶段，吴庭艳逮捕、禁闭、镇压，差不多

20多万人牺牲了，经过这一痛苦的教训，南越人民自觉地起来闹革命，才取得了今天这样一个形势。所以，朝鲜谈判时的情况差不多等于1954

年日内瓦会议时的情况。朝鲜谈判是在战场上进行的，前后差不多打了三年，谈了两年。但到1954

年日内瓦会议谈朝鲜问题时，战争已停下来就什么也谈不成了。我们怎么说他们也不干。所以朝鲜谈判只搞了个停战协定，任何其它政治协议也未达成。关于撤军问题，他不谈。1958

年我们撤军，他也不撤。这次你们的情况不同，是分步骤地同美接触谈判。这样也好。走一步看一步。但基本的问题还是，战场上得不到的东西，不管怎样，也不能从谈判中得到。日内瓦会议由于奠边府战役才谈成，定了个十七度线。我们的态度，可能范文同同志回去已经讲了。我们觉得，你们答应得太快了，太急了。这可能给美国人一个错觉，你们急于要谈。毛泽东同志向范文同同志说过，谈是可以的，但是一定要高姿态。第二点，美国、仆从国和伪军三方面现在有100万军队，不打破他们的脊梁骨，或十个指头打破五六个，他不会认输，不会走的。

At 9:45 p.m. on May 7 [1968], when meeting with [North] Vietnam's [Foreign] Minister Xuan Thuy in the Fujian Room of the Great Hall of the People, [Zhou Enlai] said that the conditions of the Korean [armistice] negotiations at that time are different from your conditions now. The Korean talks then concerned only half of Korea while you are now dealing with the unification of Vietnam. The issue of half Vietnam was discussed fourteen years ago. Comrade Mao Zedong told Chairman Ho Chi Minh last time that the Geneva Accords at that time might have been signed erroneously. After the conclusion of the Accords, many soldiers in South Vietnam were withdrawn to the North. At the time, the United States was unwilling to sign the Accords. We also had reasons not to sign the Accords. Chairman Ho said that the conclusion of the Accords had its advantages. The South Vietnamese went through a difficult period of arrest, incarceration, and suppression by Ngo Dinh Diem and suffered over two hundred thousand deaths. With this bitter lesson, the people in South Vietnam have risen up spontaneously to make revolution and achieve the situation they have today. Therefore, the situation of the Korean negotiations was similar to the situation of the 1954 Geneva Conference. The Korean negotiations were conducted on the battle ground. The war lasted for nearly three years and the negotiations two years. But when the 1954 Geneva Conference began to discuss the Korean question, nothing was achieved because the war had ended. No matter what we argued, they (the Americans) would not listen. As a result, the Korean negotiations only achieved an armistice agreement but failed to reach any political settlement. It (the United States) refused to discuss the issue of troop withdraw. When we withdrew our troops in 1958, it (the United States) refused to withdraw its forces. This time you encounter a different situation. You are beginning talks with the United States in stages. It is all right to do so. Watch while you are proceeding. But the fundamental issue is this: no matter what happens, you should not let the enemy gain from negotiations what it has failed to gain in the battlefield. It was because of the battle of Dien Bien Phu that the Geneva Conference was able to reach a result and settle on the Seventeenth Parallel. When he returned home, Comrade Pham Van Dong may have already informed you of our attitude. We feel that you have responded too quickly and too impatiently, perhaps giving the Americans a misperception that you are eager to negotiate. Comrade Mao Zedong has told Comrade Pham Van Dong that negotiations are all right but you must assume a high posture. Secondly, the United States, the vassal countries, and South Vietnam at present have a force of one million. Without breaking their backbones or cutting five to six of their ten fingers, they will not acknowledge their defeat and withdraw.