

1950

Speeches/Documents

Title: Zhou Enlai and Stalin cable Mao Zedong

Author: Zhou Enlai and Stalin

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Source: Michael Sheng (2014). Mao's role in the Korean conflict: a revision Twentieth-Century China, 39. 3, Page 281

Description:

1. The Chinese volunteer force designated to enter Korea has not been well prepared: it is poorly equipped, with very few artillery pieces and no tanks. The [Soviet] air force that is to provide air cover [also] cannot be in position for at least two months, while to equip and train the [Chinese] force needs six months at least.
 2. If we don't have a significant enough force that is well equipped to provide direct assistance [in Korea] within a month, the Americans will occupy Korea, because [Kim's] Korean force north of the 38th parallel has no strength to hold on.
 3. Thus, if six months are needed to provide the Koreans with reasonably well equipped [Chinese] troops, it will be too late, because [by that time] the Americans will have occupied [North] Korea [entirely], and the [North] Korean state would no longer exist to receive the [Chinese] troops' assistance. Judging from the above-mentioned reasons and considering Comrade Zhou Enlai's report, which listed domestic disadvantages that would occur due to China's entry into the war, we jointly decide:
 1. Although the international situation is favorable, because the Chinese troops have not yet well prepared, they should not cross the border into Korea, so that they will not fall into a disadvantageous situation;
 2. If some troops have already crossed the border, they should stay in the mountainous area close to the Chinese side, and should not go deep into [Korea];
- [...]

In regard to the tanks, artillery pieces, and aircraft that the Chinese comrades requested to re-equip the Chinese force, the Soviet Union will fully fulfill [the needs].

Awaiting your decision.

Stalin and Zhou Enlai

Remark

The omitted part addresses how the North Koreans should evacuate areas threatened by the UN troops and conduct guerrilla warfare.

When Roshchin handed Mao the Stalin-Zhou telegram at 3:30 in the afternoon on October 12, Mao asked Roshchin to relay to Stalin that he "agree[d] with your decision fully." That evening, Mao sent another telegram to Stalin to inform him that he had issued an order to the CPV to stop the planned entry into Korea