

1950

Speeches/Documents

Title: Report from Zhou Enlai to Mao Zedong

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Description: Zhou Enlai sends detailed reports to Mao Zedong on new recruits from the Northeast; the replenishment of military supplies; the distribution of Soviet infantry weapons; the repair of railways and transportation; the condition of airports in North Korea; the use of artillery and tank units; and the stationing of command posts.

Chairman [Mao Zedong]:

Concerning all the questions raised by Peng [Dehuai] at 18:00 on [December] 8, and according to the results of two days of discussions, the following is the detailed report:

(1) New recruits, 110,000 people in the Northeast have been concentrated. Based on tonight's phone call with Gao [Gang], he thinks that [if they are] trained by mid-January, 65,000 people can be supplied to the front. I told [him] to prepare 70,000 people. In accordance with the Chairman's instructions over the phone tonight, if [we] can search and annihilate several sections of the enemy in areas not far from Seoul, then [we] should carry on fighting this campaign.

Otherwise, regardless of whether the enemy tenaciously defends Seoul or gives it up, our army should rest and regroup for a period of time. So when the new recruits are moved to the front in mid-January, it is precisely the opportune moment. The method of distribution should be according to Peng's telegram: add 45,000 people to the west line, add 20,000 people to the east line, in addition, add 5,000 people to the 19th Army. It will be better if cadres can be sent to the rear areas to strengthen management and training work after the end of the next campaign.

2. The completion of replenishment of all military supplies needed by the 28th Army and other army organizations (including bedding, clothing, shoes and hats, army provisions and ammunition, plus improved light cannons) is guaranteed by the end of December. If the Soviet rifles, light and heavy machine guns and tommy guns can be rushed over in time, the 19th Army can change uniforms as they pass through the Northeast in mid-January, and then can depart for the front.

3. It will be mid-February until Liu [Bocheng]'s and Deng [Xiaoping]'s three armies arrive in the Hebei area. It will be late February by the time [they] finish replenishing their equipment. It will be after January when [we] make a final decision about whether this part of the armed forces will be used in North Korea. So [we] intend to wait until the end of the next campaign to decide whether the Soviet-style infantry weapons from the Soviets (for 36 divisions) should be supplied to these three armies or to the Volunteer armies at the front, besides being given to the 19th Army.

4. Concerning the repair of railways and transportation, Lü Zhengcao, Liu Juying and Yu Guangsheng came to an agreement that it could be guaranteed that, by December 20th, the Ji'an-Qiuchang-Suncheon [Sunchon]-Pyongyang line will be repaired; due to the lack of bridgebuilding materials for two rail bridges, the Andong-Dingzhou-Sinuiju--Pyongyang line cannot be repaired fully until the goods come from Soviet Union in January or February. The

Pyongyang to Seoul line and Suncheon to Wonsan line both cross the Daedong [Taedong] River. [We] do not know the condition of the bridges and are now in the process of sending out personnel for reconnaissance. Today, two bridge [repair] groups were sent out from inside the Shanhaiguan pass to the Northeast, for transfer to North Korea. All transferrable domestic repair equipment will be supplied on an expedited basis to the front. It has been decided through consultation that tractors for clearing away blocked tunnels and cranes will be arranged by the Northeast. Based on this situation, the Chian to Pyongyang line can act as the main supply line, but the amount that can be transported is smaller than that of the Sinuiju--Pyongyang line. The two lines from Sinuiju- to the north of the Sinuiju Bridge and to Kuandian, through Suju to Tinja, currently can only be supplementary supply lines. After [things] arrive at Sinuiju-, [they] will be taken over and transported forward by cars. [The areas] east of Suncheon and south of Pyongyang are also like this. After the bridge groups arrive at North Korea, if they can manage to build temporary bridges at the Cheongcheon [Chongchon] River and the Daedong [Taedong] River, the difficulties can be reduced and vehicles can then move forward. Another difficulty is that the enemy planes drop delayed-fuse bombs along the railways, which obstructs us from rush repairs and rush transportation at night. For this, the railway engineering corps is studying methods to remove the bombs.

5. The air force is sending people to North Korea to investigate the condition of airports. If there is no jet-aircraft landing field in Pyongyang and other places, or there are damaged ones, [we] will have to wait for the [outcome of the] investigation before we know whether this kind of airport can be rush-repaired this winter. If there is no such airport, [we] will have to wait for the [outcome of the] investigation before we know whether this kind of airport can be rush-built this winter. If there is no such airport, neither our air force nor the Soviet air force will be able to take off from Pyongyang. [The air forces] can only be at Andong, covering the transportation to Pyongyang and nearby areas to the south. If too far [to the south], the return trip will take close to one hour, which will leave no extra time for fighting. In January and February, we can dispatch four regiments of 120 jet chasers to provide air cover for transportation. When the time comes, [we will] also need two Soviet regiments of chasers to coordinate the operations in order to feel confident of success. Whether this can be done or not, is still dependent on negotiations.

By mid-April, our air force will have five regiments of jet chasers, one regiment of R11 chasers, two regiments of attack planes and four regiments of bombers, for a total of twelve regiments of 360 planes that can undertake operations. But the decisive condition is that North Korea must have enough airports for chasers to take off and land. By the end of next year, we can have a maximum of twenty-five regiments of jet chasers, three regiments of R9 and R11 chasers, four regiments of attack planes, seven regiments of bombers and four regiments of transport planes, for a total of forty-three regiments of 1290 planes. Based on this estimate, simply staying within the country without fighting, airports with a value of 2,000 million *jin* of rice must be built and 180,000 tons of aviation fuel and kerosene must be consumed. Not even factoring in other expenditures, this has already reached the maximum of what we can allocate for the development of the air force and for railway transportation and oil storage for the air force. Therefore, considering [our] current material base, air force numbers can only reach this level next year and the speed can only be like this.

6. In mid-February, the artillery can send 37 mm. anti-aircraft gun battalions (one battalion for every division) to the front. The two artillery divisions that have been at the front can be strengthened. Other artillery units cannot be used until March or April. Detailed plans are still being worked out.

7. [Concerning] tank units, four regiments can be dispatched in mid-March, four regiments can be dispatched in mid-April and every regiment [will have] 40 heavy and medium-sized tanks.

8. After investigation of the airport situation, the headquarters of the air force can station its command post towards the front. Some of the personnel from the current frontline artillery headquarters can be left for the special forces to set up a command post at the front.

Zhou Enlai

Night of 12 December

Remark

Peng flies to Beijing for a showdown with Mao. Peng informs Mao that unless Stalin got off his ass and made good on his promised assistance, the Chinese Army has some surprises coming. Peng wants to know why the Chinese Air Force, equipped with fancy Russian MIG's, is not doing its share of fighting - American war ships and supply trains are sitting ducks waiting to be bombed.

What a hell are these planes for? And, lastly, Peng takes the blame for the astronomical casualties and offers to resign. Mao Zedong knows Peng too well and calms him down. New Chinese armies equipped with Soviet arms are ready to replace Peng's old armies. Heavy artillery, tanks, modern communications gear, trucks, and air support are on the way. Peng is satisfied and returns to his headquarters in Shenyang