

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

DECLASSIFIED
PA/HO, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
Date: 6-30-06

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~
~~EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the
President for National Security Affairs
Winston Lord, NSC Staff

Prime Minister Chou En-lai
Ch'iao Kuan-hua, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs
Chang Wen-chin, Director of Western Europe,
North American, and Australasian Ministry of
Foreign Affairs

Chi Chao-chu, Interpreter
One Notetaker

DATE & TIME: Monday, February 21, 1972 - 4:15-5:30 p. m.

PLACE: Guest House, Villa 2, Peking

[There were some opening pleasantries.]

Kissinger: Mr. Prime Minister could I settle the matter of the press with the Chairman?

Chou: We have just drafted something.

Kissinger: What I would like to do, if you agree, Mr. Prime Minister, -- our press is wondering why the Plenary Session was delayed and were thinking maybe it was because you and the President had started quarreling in the car (laughter). So, what we would like ... (Chou asked Jack Reedy to sit on the sofa) ... we would like to say reasonably soon that there was a meeting and that that's why the Plenary Session was delayed; perhaps before the Plenary Session begins. Concerning the pictures, could we make sure our press gets the pictures?

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Chou: We will give the pictures first to you.

Kissinger: Our public relations people are going to be charmed by you.

I want to discuss the agenda. We have a complicated system of government. I want to tell you who knows what among our group. Nobody from the State Department knows that there is a draft of the Communique except for the two paragraphs on Taiwan which we have shown to Secretary Rogers. But nobody has seen anything else. We did that so that we could say it was discussed by the President and the Chairman and you.

No one else knows the five assurances I have given you on Taiwan. But the President will repeat them to you.

Chou: The President will repeat them in the private discussions or in the Plenary?

Kissinger: In the private discussions, and after we come back to America we will inform the bureaucracy of it.

No one knows what we have discussed -- how much we cooperated during the India/Pakistan situation, or you would have read it in the newspaper.

And no one knows how much we have told you about our relations with the Soviet Union.

No one knows about my trips to New York City to talk with your Ambassador. Secretary Rogers knows that our contact point is Paris, but he does not know of any of the messages that have come back and forth.

I say this so that by inadvertence your people do not say anything in the private meetings with the State Department that will be a surprise to them. After the election in November we plan to bring the two bureaucracies into closer harmony. But it would be foolish to do it now and have them leak to the press. And you may have noticed what they did to me.

Now in our discussions, Mr. Prime Minister, I recommend -- the President recommends that we proceed as we did in October. At the Plenary Session the President will make a fairly general statement, a very general statement, and he will list some topics and he will then propose that we break up into private groups.

We recommend that the Foreign Minister discuss first the issues of exchanges, diplomatic contacts and trade in these private meetings while you talk to the President about whatever you decided to discuss, including Taiwan. When they are finished with this, we recommend the Foreign Minister discuss Taiwan -- not the Communique so much, but the subject, because we want quite frankly that the archives of our State Department have your position.

The American folklore has said that the Chinese are complicated and we are simple, but when I hear myself talk I think we are complicated and you are much easier. We should schedule the meetings of the Foreign Minister and our staffs for the same time that you meet with the President so that both parties are occupied. And after these issues are discussed we can then decide -- the President and you -- what other subjects should be given to the Foreign Minister. This is, of course, subject to your approval.

If you would in the Plenary Session suggest that perhaps they should begin discussing all these issues we will agree, and we have already told the Secretary of State that we will do this so there would be no difficulty and embarrassment.

The second problem we have is that of the Joint Communique. We have to work out a schedule of how to complete it. I am responsible for it on our side, and the President wants to be involved only if a very great issue of principle arises. As I understand it there are the following issues we still have to discuss. We have to change the language on South Asia because it is now no longer relevant. We told you we would bring some new language on exchanges and trade, and we have brought that. We have to have some more discussion on Taiwan, not that we want to change our agreement on what I told you privately but on the issue of how we can present something publicly. General Haig already told you that. He left some language with you.

Chou: General Haig brought back our replies.

Kissinger: You said you would consider it.

Chou: We said we did not agree with the wording brought by General Haig. We still have our wording, but we said that we would consider the matter.

Kissinger: That's exactly right. We don't think you agreed to General Haig's wording. We recognize we need more discussions and need to approach it in a more constructive spirit. But we have to set some time when we can do it, and therefore I have raised it as one of the agenda items.

I have brought with me two items I want to discuss with you. One, I have a list of all the negotiations we are conducting with the Soviet Union of which we simply want to inform you, or whomever you designate, so that you know of them for the purpose of the Moscow trip so that no misunderstanding will arise between us. This is no request for reciprocity. And secondly, we are prepared if you wish, and I have the information here, to give you on a very restricted basis some information on dangers we both confront in the military field in order that we both will understand any situations like the India/Pakistan situation if it should arise again.

Both of these items will take time and I mention it only so we can schedule it properly.

The only other item I have -- and I have already mentioned it to the Vice Minister -- usually we have somebody in the car with the President when he travels with somebody like yourself. In this case we would require only an interpreter. If you would be good enough to give me your notes so we will know what the President discussed. If we can also in the meetings with you and with the Chairman, we will not use our interpreters but will rely on your interpreters. We will tell the press that we have Mr. Holdridge there to check on your interpreter, and I apologize to your interpreter. It is only so our people won't say we put ourselves at your mercy -- which we are doing.

Chou: No question about that.

Kissinger: One final point. We have exchanged some notes on Vietnam and this is not the time to discuss the circumstances, but I want the Prime Minister to know we are aware of the criticism to which the PRC is exposed. You can be sure we never send a communication to you without sending a similar one or identical one to your northern neighbor. If I can tell the Prime Minister informally, they have replied somewhat more gently to us lately than the Prime Minister (laughter).

Chou: So after the Plenary Session we will be divided into two groups. Would it not be better for the Foreign Minister and the Secretary of State

to start discussing the overall international situation, and how to promote Sino-American relations, and how to get relaxation of tensions in the Far East, and to have that as a start and then to go on into specific matters? If we went into specific matters first it appears rather sudden.

Kissinger: We would prefer, Mr. Prime Minister, if you agree, if we could first have the general discussion with the President so that we could instruct our Secretary on the basis of these discussions, and this is why we took the liberty of suggesting first to discuss concrete issues. Logically you are correct, but bureaucratically it would be easier for us the other way. But the President is prepared to discuss normalization issues first, and then when he has discussed it with you, we can instruct the Secretary of State to discuss it with the Foreign Minister on the third day.

Chou: That means it is alright for the discussion by the Secretary of State and Foreign Minister to be held one day after the meeting with the Prime Minister and you.

Kissinger: We would prefer if they could talk tomorrow about these concrete issues and then the next day they can talk about the normalization issue. We will not release to the press what the subjects are so there will be no embarrassment.

Chou: When you say you won't release anything to the press, you mean on the talks with the Secretary of State and the Foreign Minister?

Kissinger: That's right.

Chou: That would be better.

Kissinger: All we will say is that they met for three or two hours. Our proposal is to tell the press at the end of each day that we met for X number of hours and give them no topic.

Chou: The Plenary Session this afternoon cannot be too long.

Kissinger: If the Prime Minister agrees, when he and the President meet, they can start with normalization issue and then go on to another issue. Then the Foreign Minister and the Secretary of State can take it up the next day. We will not say anything to the press.

Chou: Another way is if your President is not going to go on a sightseeing tour tomorrow morning we can have the Secretary of State and other officials of the State Department go on a sightseeing tour tomorrow morning, and the Secretary of State and the Foreign Minister can have discussions tomorrow afternoon. And then would it be possible for us to have discussions with your President both tomorrow morning and afternoon. When I say morning, I mean after 10:00.

Kissinger: I have to check because he had planned to do governmental work on Washington tomorrow morning.

Chou: In that case we can also have the discussion in the afternoon only, and then have it held for a longer period of time.

Kissinger: That's alright.

Chou: Then as for the drafting of the Joint Communique, our side will be Ch'iao Kuan-hua and Chang Wen-chin. And I still have to accompany the President on the other meetings.

Kissinger: Then I will work out with them when we should meet. I can meet with them tomorrow morning.

Chou: Yes, both of them can meet with you tomorrow morning.

Kissinger: Just so he will treat me better than he treats Mr. Malik.

Chou: I cannot guarantee that.

Kissinger: Then I nominate Mr. Lord. On this special information --

Chou: We can consider that after tomorrow, because your President will be still working on his Washington business. You can discuss it with Mr. Ch'iao. He will not speak to you like he speaks to Mr. Malik.

Kissinger: I will remind him of that.

Chou: And then I heard your President planned to sign some Labor Act. We don't know the content -- we don't know whether we need take part in it.

Kissinger: No, it is domestic.

Chou: You wanted to send a fountain pen to us.

Kissinger: We will send you a fountain pen from another time. This has nothing to do with you. It is a Labor Act -- this is something that has to be done at a certain time, and you are not to be involved in any way in any publicity.

Chou: Otherwise we will be interfering in your internal affairs.

Kissinger: We had already cancelled sending the pen. The signing has to take place -- or do you object?

Chou: We don't care at all. You may use the Guest House.

Kissinger: We will sign it in your Guest House.

Chou: There will be only American correspondents that will cover it.

Kissinger: Right. And we will make it perfectly clear. Quite frankly, it is the only piece of legislation we have at this moment, and it was important for the President to show that the Government could be functioning even when he was away. It is also a way to show the citizens that he was running the Government when he was away. We will not involve you in any way.

Chou: And then on the question of the South Asian subcontinent and the part relevant to our Joint Communique -- what do you know? We will be most grateful.

Kissinger: As I told you in the message I sent to you, the President will also want to discuss it with you because we have the problem of recognition of Bangladesh, and the problem of future relations with India, and we want to do it in a parallel direction with you -- separately but parallel.

Chou: And we would like to know your views on these matters.

Kissinger: I will discuss it with Mr. Ch'iao. When will we meet tomorrow -- 11:00 or 10:00?

Chou: 10:00.

Kissinger: Where? Here?

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Chou: Meet here.

Now I will tell you what we plan to publish about the meeting with the President and Chairman Mao. "Chairman Mao Tse-tung meets President Nixon February 21, New China News Agency." "Chairman Mao Tse-tung met with the President of the United States of America, Richard M. Nixon, this afternoon in Chungnan hai and held serious and frank discussions with him. Taking part on the American side were Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, (Chou asked if Dr. Kissinger wanted the 'A' included in his name, and Dr. Kissinger said why not, it would please his father.) Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and Winston Lord, Senior Assistant to Dr. Kissinger...."

Kissinger: We better leave him out. We will leave it open.

Chou: We have it. If you don't plan to use it, let us know. (Back to the press release) "Taking part on the Chinese side were Premier of the State Council Chou En-lai, Deputy Director of the Protocol of the Foreign Ministry Wang Hai-jung and the interpreter Tang Wen-shen." It is our practice to include in these the names of our working people because if there was no interpreter it would be impossible to do this work.

Kissinger: I think it is better not to list Mr. Lord for reasons which are too complex.

Chou: Okay. But you would report this to the President that Mr. Lord will not be mentioned.

Kissinger: Yes, he will not object. Do you mind if in our release we just said the President because in America?

Chou: You can change the sentence structure -- the position of the wording.

Kissinger: I will discuss it with our people. If we can do this, I think they would prefer this.

Chou: No problem on our side.

Kissinger: They will ask us how long they met.

Chou: One hour.

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Kissinger: They will ask us, will they meet again?

Chou: No reply. It has not been set.

Kissinger: Not when, but whether.

Chou: It is his health you see, because he is convalescing. Chairman Mao told you and the President that he had a problem with bronchitis for a month, and he is convalescing.

Kissinger: The problem is not having been present. They will be very anxious if they don't get one picture with the President. I mean if we can say there will be another meeting in which they can get their picture it will ease our position.

Chou: But if we cannot guarantee that and it cannot take place... But at the same time it will not be good to tell them the Chairman has suffered from bronchitis.

Kissinger: I did not know we were going to see the Chairman today. I was going to raise this problem with you. It is not right for the President to wait until he is summoned to see the Chairman. This is not in conformity with the dignity of the President, and therefore if we say we don't know, they will say why don't we know? I am just telling you what the press will ask us. How should we answer them?

Chou: Well maybe you can say that the next meeting has not yet been determined.

Kissinger: That would be fine.

Chou: As for our press release, why don't we have it translated and give you a copy of it and also the pictures?

Kissinger: Can we use the text you gave us? I will have the secretary read it back to you. (Secretary reads text.) Do you mind if we say at his residence?

Chou: Yes, you may say Chairman' Mao's residence.

Kissinger: We can say the President met with Chairman Mao Tse-tung this afternoon at his residence. And say they had a serious and frank discussion.

Chou: When do you think it is better to release it?

Kissinger: It would be best to release it as quickly as possible to explain why the Plenary Session was delayed. And then we will release the pictures as soon as we have them.

Chou: Anyway, the pictures will not be published before you publish them. The newsreel will not be published before you publish it.

Kissinger: May Mrs. Gwyer type it? Should we say decisions were taken by majority vote?