

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

DECLASSIFIED
PA/HO, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
Date: 6-30-05

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the
 President for National Security Affairs
 John H. Holdridge, NSC Staff
 Winston Lord, NSC Staff
 Jonathan T. Howe, NSC Staff

 Ch'iao Kuan-hua, Vice Minister of Foreign
 Affairs
 Chang Wen-chin, Director of Western Europe,
 North American, and Australasian Ministry
 of Foreign Affairs
 Chao Chi-hua, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Chi Chao-chu, Interpreter
 Three Notetakers

DATE & TIME: Friday, February 25, 1972 - 3:35-4:00 p.m.

PLACE: Guest House, Villa 2, Peking

Dr. Kissinger: I want to be frank with you what our problem is -- the President is taking a nap, and I didn't want to wake him up. So in order not to waste the time I wanted to give you some of our considerations. We have not yet had time to discuss it with the President. And I understand what you have attempted to do. You have tried to weaken "premise" and strengthen "look to" and come up with a balance that way. Let me tell you something that we had done in the break, in the interval between the two meetings. This the President has approved; he approved it before I came here at 2:30. But I didn't table it because I wanted to discuss your draft with the President, and I was waiting for him. Now it doesn't look as if he will get up until just before the meeting. But of course we will discuss your draft with him.

Our problem is that the way your last sentence is formulated will raise this question. The first question I will be asked at the press conference is "What exactly does this mean?" They will say "are you going to withdraw

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your forces because you hope that there will be a peaceful settlement, or are you going to withdraw your forces only if there is a peaceful settlement?" Then if I say we will withdraw them only if there is a peaceful settlement, I think the Vice Minister will not be fully happy with me.

So what we had done in the interval before the 2:30 meeting was to take some of the third formulation of the Vice Minister before lunch, which we recognize was in no way official, and you are in no way bound by it, or committed to it. We used it just for our thinking -- and phrased it in a way which has the great advantage that we can do everything it says without having to give a tricky explanation. This is what the President worked on before. Let me just show it to you. If by chance you were able to accept this, it would solve all our problems.

I will submit your version to the President, and this is not to be taken as a rejection completely of all the elements, but this one I know we can accept; the other we have to wait. It has the advantage that it affirms the ultimate objective which the Prime Minister when he called on me briefly on some other matters said was the one with which he was concerned, and states the reduction which we can defend as an American initiative and not as a negotiation with you.

VM Chiao: I understand what you mean.

Dr. Kissinger: On one interpretation yours is easier for us.

VM Chiao: I think that there is some formulation which will be easy for you: for instance, "With this prospect in mind . . ." That is not right away but . . . then follows the word "anticipate." There is very little restraining effect. For instance, speaking purely from your angle, you could well say that as you consider progress is being made in a peaceful solution of this problem so you will be able to anticipate a progressive reduction.

Dr. Kissinger: "Progressive reduction" is not the problem. It's the final withdrawal that . . .

VM Chiao: You can link that up with the peaceful settlement. As I said this morning, once a peaceful settlement, there will be no reason for you to stay.

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Dr. Kissinger: No, there is no problem, and in fact, we can have a substantial withdrawal without a peaceful settlement as long as we don't do it as part of an agreement with you.

VM Chiao: You can say that entirely as your own initiative, not as an agreement between you and us. That is, you consider there is such a prospect. And you consider that that prospect is coming closer. And so you are able to make the progressive reduction. As for what happens finally, you can entirely link that up with the peaceful settlement.

Dr. Kissinger: But if we can do that in language then we have no problem.

VM Chiao: As the President said, the important thing is for both sides to leave some running room.

Dr. Kissinger: You see in this draft which we worked on over the luncheon break we linked up the final withdrawal with the prospect of a final settlement. Thus, we are then of course in the position if we are asked to interpret it the way the Minister suggested and we will say we will withdraw our forces anyway.

VM Chiao: I am . . . concerning your formulation on the reduction of tensions, speaking frankly, it is quite difficult for us to have this linked up with the question of the relaxation of tension in this area and if that is to be said it will be difficult for you to explain in the future as well. Because in that wording "The United States anticipates . . ." has no binding effect. We made great efforts in accepting this word "anticipate."

Dr. Kissinger: Even if we can't come to an agreement, I understand you have made a major effort and have come a long way toward us, and it is the objective difficulty of the subject which is between us. We can say "in Asia" rather than "in the area," but that makes it worse.

VM Chiao: Of course, as I said last time, people will say they are making use of Taiwan as a trick. Of course, in actuality, that is not so, but they can say that. The actual fact would not be that case, but to be open, for us to say that would be difficult. That is our consideration.

Dr. Kissinger: No, I understand.

VM Chiao: So it is our contention that we should leave it only linked with the question of Taiwan itself. And we accepted both words "prospect" and "anticipate."

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Dr. Kissinger: I understand. You haven't been unfair. Usually people can't agree on what to do. Here we have agreed on what to do and we can't agree on what to say.

VM Chiao: And it is indeed true that as to what is to be said you have your difficulties and we have ours.

Dr. Kissinger: I know it. I am fully aware of it. So our problem is, as the President explained, if we go home and people say we sold out in Peking and we use the vagueness of this formulation to prove we didn't and we have no obligation at all, and foreign radios start beaming it to your country that we tricked you, then you aren't going to gain a great deal either. If the President and I are going to spend the next two weeks explaining that this doesn't mean anything, then we are in trouble. If I say this means something only if Taiwan agrees to a negotiation, but Taiwan isn't going to agree to a negotiation -- this is the line of argumentation that we would use. Then we haven't anything; what have we achieved?

VM Chiao: How do you consider this suggestion ...

Dr. Kissinger: Thinking out loud again.

VM Chiao: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: I understand.

VM Chiao: "With this in mind withdrawal of U.S. forces from Taiwan. In the meantime it anticipates the progressive withdrawal of"

Interpreter (Chi): Do you want me to repeat that?

Dr. Kissinger: I know what he did.

VM Chiao: It's just my personal thinking. You can explain it only from the prospects.

Dr. Kissinger: I think it moves us closer to the . . . it moves us closer.

VM Chiao: Also it only anticipates.

Dr. Kissinger: I understand.

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VM Chiao: Nothing else.

Dr. Kissinger: "In the meantime, it anticipates the progressive reduction of those forces . . ."

VM Chiao: And military installations.

Dr. Kissinger: That's your problem. That is not the hang-up to us. The hang-up is . . .

VM Chiao: That is to say, this is the long-range objective.

Dr. Kissinger: Can we say "consistent with the Nixon Doctrine?"

VM Chiao: You can say it somewhere, but not in this communique.

Dr. Kissinger: You know you got me into bad trouble with the President. I told the President if he mentioned the Nixon Doctrine to the Prime Minister he would undoubtedly get a short response. He mentioned it and he did not get a short response, so now the President thinks I don't know anything about the Chinese any more.

VM Chiao: We have to ask for instructions from the Prime Minister.

Dr. Kissinger: Certainly, and I haven't seen the President. Could you hold up the Prime Minister for five minutes?

VM Chiao: Oh surely.

Mr. Kissinger: Hold him up for ten minutes because I don't want the President to meet without even knowing about your draft.

VM Chiao: Remind you this is only my preliminary.

Dr. Kissinger: I understand and we will not ever hold you to anything you say in this manner. If you get different instructions we will not hold you to them.

VM Chiao: I think five minutes is too short. We should delay until 4:30 p.m.

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