

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Prime Minister Chou En-lai, People's Republic of China
 Chi P'eng-fei, Acting PRC Foreign Minister
 Chang Wen-chin, Director, Western Europe and American Department, PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Hsuing Hsiang-hui, Secretary to the Prime Minister
 T'ang Wen-sheng and Chi Chao-chu, Chinese Interpreters
 Chinese Notetakers

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

PLACE: Government Guest House, Peking

DATE & TIME: October 25, 1971, 9:50 P.M. - 11:40 P.M.

GENERAL SUBJECT: Communique

Dr. Kissinger: I didn't have an opportunity to thank you this morning, Mr. Prime Minister, for arranging for the showing of the film of our visit in July. It brought back very pleasant memories, and in addition I thought it was very well done.

PM Chou: It was quite short, however.

Dr. Kissinger: It was short, but I thought very well done. The background music was nice and the pictures were well selected.

PM Chou: This time they probably took more shots.

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Dr. Kissinger: I would think so.

PM Chou: You went to the Altar of Heaven today, and took a walk there.

Dr. Kissinger: That's right. It is very impressive.

Mr. Prime Minister, we have had only two hours to look over your document and therefore our reactions are not as detailed as they should be. (Second Chinese draft is attached at Tab A.) I understand what you attempted to do in this document. You attempted to put all the positions of each side together at the beginning of the document, and then to state the other material afterwards. The practical result of this is that of an eight page document; one page deals with technical aspects, four pages deal with disagreement stated in rather strong terms, and only two can be said to have any constructive aspects. I am talking about the English version, of course.

PM Chou: There seems to be quite a difference in pages between English and Chinese. The Chinese in our typed text is five and a half pages, but when it is printed in official documents it is four pages.

Dr. Kissinger: But the proportion will not change.

PM Chou: Not necessarily, because the first page will still be filled with protocol aspects because the names are not in it yet; that will take one page in Chinese. Then the views of each side take up less than two and a half pages, and then common views take one page. Then there is the Taiwan question, and the final part is about the resolution of problems. So in our version out of five and a half pages, two and a half deal with disagreements. Probably in the Chinese the ideas are expressed in a more concentrated way and in English it takes more words.

Dr. Kissinger: My problem is that the President will read the English version.

Let me make a philosophical comment, before I make specific comments. Ever since this Administration has come into office the President and I have attempted to start a new direction toward the People's Republic. And this is why for us the visit in China marked in many respects the high point of what we have attempted to do in our foreign policy. We started this when improving relations with the People's Republic of China was not at all a popular course.

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Now what fills me with some melancholy is the impression I have that for your own reasons you are under necessity to state our disagreements in the sharpest and most provocative way possible. All the drafts we have submitted have attempted to emphasize areas of agreement. Now I understand the pressures and the convictions that push you into an opposite direction. You did not go through what you have done for 50 years in order to alter your beliefs in anticipation of a President's visit. But we have an important decision to make, and the decision is whether we are starting a new period or engaging in a tactic in a struggle. I am speaking with great frankness. We are trying to begin a new era.

Now, for example, to ask the President of the United States to sign a document with the first sentence of the first substantive paragraph saying people of the world want to make revolution is rather strong medicine. Similarly, I have explained to the Prime Minister previously that we did not start the war in Vietnam -- that is, this Administration did not start it, and we are trying to end it. Indeed, we are hoping it will perhaps be ended by the time the President comes here. But for him to be asked to sign, if the war should go on, the Chinese determination to help to the end the struggle of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia where American soldiers are being killed is rather painful. We are not asking you not to support them, and the Prime Minister knows that we have asked nothing with respect to Vietnam and will take no advantage in any respect in our negotiations towards Vietnam. But the President will have to answer to the American people. So we are not trying to affect your actions. I am speaking now of your words. I could give other examples. We are not challenging your views; we are just challenging your expression.

So now a word about Taiwan. I am clear about what our understanding is. And we have repeated it on many occasions to the Prime Minister, and I am certain the President will repeat it when he is here. But I also told the Prime Minister at our first meeting that we could do more than we can say. The formulation which I have given the Prime Minister, while it doesn't go as far as he wishes me to go, goes far beyond what any other American administration could even have conceived. I don't mind telling him that I have gone beyond my instructions in offering the formulation of not challenging their views, and in respect to military measures we will take. And it may be that I can convince the President that some of the proposals of the Prime Minister on the issues of Taiwan are acceptable. I am not optimistic on that score. I think I can convince him of what I have proposed here.

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But I do want to repeat to the Prime Minister what I have said on at least three occasions before. One, within a reasonable period of time after the end of the Vietnam war, we will withdraw that part of our force on Taiwan which is related to the war in Vietnam, which is about 2/3 of the force on Taiwan. After that withdrawal is completed we will continue the withdrawal. And we will do nothing to encourage a separate Taiwan movement. So that the one sentence that the Prime Minister wants to put into the communique is agreeable in substance but would be self-defeating if it is stated in writing now.

I am afraid that if we accepted this draft we would be condemned in America for accepting a rather extreme formulation of the Chinese position, and in return we will have withdrawn all forces on Taiwan and been permitted to sign the five principles for coexistence which have been on the table for sixteen years.

What we have done in the limited time available is to take your document and take out those sentences we find most offensive. And we have restored one or two sentences which are of some symbolic significance in the U.S. but have no enormous operational consequence, such as the phrase that both sides have a responsibility to reduce the danger of military conflict. This should not be too painful for you.

On Taiwan, I believe that I will have trouble enough convincing the President of the formulation I have given you, but nevertheless I am prepared to go to the President, especially on the sentence about a separatist movement, to see whether we can find a formulation that meets your needs. I don't want to hold out much hope to you and I'm not sure it's necessary, because I think our understanding should mean more to you than the statement and the statement is very definite.

In practice this means that we have accepted 85 percent of your draft. (Dr. Kissinger asks Mr. Lord to hand over a copy of the long version of the two alternate drafts that had been prepared. This third U.S. draft is attached at Tab B.) I don't know if I should inflict a reading of this on the Prime Minister at this hour.

PM Chou: Yes.

Interpreter: I will translate it to the Prime Minister.

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Dr. Kissinger: The first page we can skip. We accept it without change.

PM Chou: You make some change in wording?

Dr. Kissinger: One that I forgot to tell you has to do with the psychology of the President. He wants to be in a position where he is working every part of the day and not just sightseeing.

PM Chou: So that was added.

Dr. Kissinger: So I added the phrase that he continued his discussions (referring to last paragraph on page one). I am assuming that by the time you are travelling together you will be still speaking. (laughter) So it was true. I won't explain the changes. They are self-explanatory.

[The interpreter reads new U.S. version to the Prime Minister.]

Dr. Kissinger: (interrupting) There is one sentence we took out which I don't object to putting back in. That is "all foreign troops should be withdrawn to their own countries." [at the middle of page three in Chinese draft].

(Interrupting at another point) This is from the original draft.

Interpreter: It is a matter of the Chinese, not the English.

PM Chou: The long English sentence makes it difficult to put it concisely into Chinese.

Dr. Kissinger: (Interrupting) When you read the part on Pakistan...

Interpreter: I am there now.

Dr. Kissinger: ...use the word "international" before "problems". Otherwise it might read as criticism.

PM Chou: (Interrupting) What is the significance of the phrase "both wish to reduce the danger of military conflict" (referring to second paragraph of page five). I am not clear. Is it that the two sides should be careful of violations of borders or air violations?

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Dr. Kissinger: Both sides should exercise restraint in relations so as to lessen the danger of bilateral conflict, and where they have a common interest, to reduce the danger of conflict elsewhere. It is really another version of the statement not to use force or the threat of force.

PM Chou: That is already included in the principle mentioned above, following the five principles of coexistence. That is, disputes should be settled on this basis without using force. That is a principle, but here you mentioned the two sides.

Dr. Kissinger: This is a more active form that they should show restraint in actions with each other, including the point the Prime Minister used.

PM Chou: Well, the places where there is contact between the two sides, one is the Taiwan Straits, one is our border with Indochina, another is from the air; and then another possibility will be Korea and there is an armistice agreement there already and it is a question of turning it into a more permanent arrangement. I notice that you took out the sentence from our former draft that we would try to find a more permanent arrangement.

Dr. Kissinger: Let's see what else there is in the draft. I don't think this sentence will break up negotiations.

PM Chou: That's true. I just want to make sure what you have in mind here because originally I was thinking of leaving it as it was.

Dr. Kissinger: What I have in mind is that we have an interest to show restraint towards each other, and where we can do some influencing to try to lessen the dangers of conflict -- such as in the Asian subcontinent.

PM Chou: That is, either direct or indirect.

Dr. Kissinger: That is right.

(The interpreter finishes translation.)

Dr. Kissinger: Seven pages.

PM Chou: A little less.

Dr. Kissinger: Six and a half.

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PM Chou: Dr. Kissinger said while discussing the Taiwan question a while ago, something about a formulation on the separation of Taiwan. It is not here in the draft.

Dr. Kissinger: I haven't found it yet. I would like to discuss it with the President first, and if I find one, I will send it through our usual channel. But what is more important is to have our promise that we will not do it.

PM Chou: I would like to say why we made those changes, and it was somewhat difficult, from last night. Last night Dr. Kissinger said that you were for drafting so that each side states its position; and then state the common ground on which each side is found, that is, in order to show that our two sides are taking a positive approach in pushing things forward.

And Dr. Kissinger said that there appeared to be some ambiguity: while both sides said they would not negotiate on behalf of any third party there are common points on certain questions. That is why after studying those points in common there does appear to be a contradiction.

For instance, the Indochinese question. In our repeated public utterances we have always said when we talk about forces withdrawing from Indochina we talk about the people from outside; and let the three peoples of Indochina settle their problems for themselves. But in your formulation which you handed over to us you mentioned all foreign troops should withdraw from each country, and that the people of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia should settle their problems for themselves free from foreign interference. And as Dr. Kissinger said yesterday, we should proceed from a practical approach. That is, only on those points on which we are really in agreement should we say so. If it appears we are, but in reality we aren't, then we cannot really explain ourselves; and if a third country asks about it, it will be a dishonest communique because we cannot explain it.

Dr. Kissinger: I thought about it, and it does give the impression that the People's Republic and the United States are trying to exercise a sort of condominium and settle these issues. This is true even where we agree, like on the Indian subcontinent where we genuinely agree, and on Indochina where we can only make formulations that are dishonest. I understand what you did, and I respect this.

PM Chou: And it is true that probably only on the question of the subcontinent are our views more close. But indeed if we are to do so, it will make India feel we are working together to threaten her.

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Dr. Kissinger: I agree.

PM Chou: So there are disadvantages for putting our views on the various regions separately.

Then again for Japan. It is possible that with regard to Japan's future some of our views are approximate or even are the same, but if we put it together it will be difficult to find common wording. You will persist in honoring your treaty agreement while we must always show opposition to the treaty, and there will be no agreement there. And it is also a similar question with regard to the Korean question. That is why we try to put the propositions of the two sides all together.

Dr. Kissinger: I understand what the Prime Minister is doing, but if he reads over the formulations the practical result is that it concentrates all disagreements into the first two-thirds of the communique, and when I think of the explanation I will have to give to the press, which I will have to do, they will say you came 12,000 miles to do this? But I think we can handle the version we gave you.

PM Chou: This method you agree to was of concentrating the views of our two sides. But while doing this it cannot be said that you cannot find any common ground on our two sides expressed in these two concentrated portions. Because otherwise if you cannot find any common ground at all on the general statements in the beginning, you cannot arrive at the end of the communique with regard to the principles of international relations and the four points. This shows that even in general statements in the beginning one can find common points. Otherwise it will not be possible to promote the normalization of the relations of the two countries. So this is not an absolute thing.

Then let us cite an example. You delete a lot of our sentences; probably the most serious among these were the words "revolution." But you mentioned many times yourself about the word "revolution." You said Lon Nol's was a revolution, and I didn't want to debate with you. It depends on how one interprets the word "revolution." But this is a question that can be solved easily. Suppose the word "revolution" be changed to the word "progress."

Dr. Kissinger: "and the people want progress"? Certainly. Do you want that here?

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PM Chou: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: Certainly.

PM Chou: If the people of different countries don't approve and want to use another word, we cannot restrict them from using it.

Dr. Kissinger: In their own countries? I am talking about what we and you say together. We cannot object to what you or your friends say unilaterally.

PM Chou: So that is what I want to say first of all. It is not that we cannot find common ground in the general statements. And then in your general statement you reverted to some of your original formulations; and deleted quite a lot of ours.

Dr. Kissinger: In our general statement?

PM Chou: Yes. Of course, you restored the sentence that all foreign troops withdraw to their countries. It is a principle. It's a question of time. And we are not saying at what time. It is a matter of principle.

Dr. Kissinger: We have put back only one sentence in ours. We have taken out one that you left in in our position and put in one that you took out. If you like that sentence of ours that we took out and that you left in, we will put it back in.

PM Chou: Miss Matthews is even laughing at that.

Dr. Kissinger: I am just trying to be agreeable.

PM Chou: That's right. We will talk about those general statements later.

What we have is that we found common ground. And in the section on international relations you added that which you had originally (page 4 of U.S. draft, at Tab A), that is, "countries irrespective of their social systems, have a common interest in working toward a resolution of international differences in the interest of all mankind." This is a sentence which we should study, to find a proper formulation.

Dr. Kissinger: All right.

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PM Chou: Then concerning the principles guiding both sides (page 5 of U.S. draft), there was three and now there is four, i. e., the one about reducing the danger of military conflict.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

PM Chou: The really important question is to say something more on Taiwan because that really affects the relations of our two countries. You know we are not asking you to immediately withdraw forces.

Dr. Kissinger: I think we understand each other on substance.

PM Chou: Substance is one thing, but you must take into account our necessities with our people, just as we have to take into account your necessities. At the same time, you should be aware that negotiations between the Taiwan authorities and the Motherland are not so easy.

Dr. Kissinger: You didn't say you were conducting them.

PM Chou: No, it is not easy. Not only to you but also to some other American friends. That is because we know about the temperament of Chiang Kai-shek. So it will not be an easy thing to negotiate with the Taiwanese authorities, although you would say have peaceful relations with them. On the one hand it is wished that the Taiwan area will remain tranquil, but at the same time we must not give up our sovereignty over it.

On our side we only mentioned principles and did not go into specifics. That is, you expressed that you support efforts to reach an equitable and peaceful resolution of the relationship of Taiwan and the mainland. And then some people might make such an interpretation of this sentence, that is what is meant by equitable, to mean to let the people on Taiwan exercise a plebescite for so-called self-determination.

Dr. Kissinger: This attempts to say that all Chinese say there is only one China and the U.S. doesn't challenge that and will support a peaceful resolution of the effort. I think the three sentences point in one direction. Would you prefer if we dropped the word "equitable"?

PM Chou: Of course, it would be better.

Dr. Kissinger: Right. I have to tell the Prime Minister that I am operating on my assessment of what the President will accept. But what the President approved was the first draft which we have long since left. I have a

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rather good estimate of what the President's thinking is, working so closely with him, but I want to be sure that if we change something after we get back that you will not think that I have misled you.

PM Chou: It doesn't matter because between now and the President's visit, it is four months and you can tell us.

Dr. Kissinger: Then with that qualification, let us drop "equitable." I am quite sure the President will go along with it.

PM Chou: We want to avoid the possibility of guessing on the part of certain people. Because this state of affairs is bound to appear in the UN -- either two Chinas or one China, two governments. That would be a temporary phenomenon. You admit it, and so do we. Some people are saying that Dr. Kissinger came to China for the UN.

Dr. Kissinger: I know.

PM Chou: Because the President's personal representative also visited Taiwan at this time, Mr. Reagan.

Dr. Kissinger: Mr. Reagan is not equivalent to me.

PM Chou: We know that because we have contact with you, but some other people say this.

Dr. Kissinger: We have next year a particular political problem which I have been candid with you about. We do not want the China lobby to connect together with the radical left and have to fight both simultaneously, and also the pro-Soviet and pro-India groups.

PM Chou: It is easy to deal with the pro-Soviet people because they are revisionists.

Dr. Kissinger: Not in our domestic affairs, because there is no tradition of dealing with China but there is with the Soviet Union. So Governor Reagan tells you nothing about our foreign policy. He tells you something about our domestic policy.

PM Chou: Your President needed a visit by Governor Reagan for the present moment. We understand that.

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Dr. Kissinger: And for the policy I am pursuing here in Peking.

PM Chou: That is why he had to send someone to Taiwan to console them.

Dr. Kissinger: And that is why it would be better next year not to radicalize too many people when the trend is being established.

PM Chou: Chairman Mao has talked to Edgar Snow and expounded on that question. First, because your President is in office, so because he is in power, he is able to solve problems. Just to deal with your opposition is to talk empty words, and should they come into office, maybe what they say won't happen at all.

Secondly, your President is known as a chieftain of anti-communism, so he dares to do that. So although you may say so much and we may say so much, what counts will be what is done in regard to specific questions.

For instance, in talking about principles. One principle is that all foreign troops should be withdrawn back to their own countries. But we know how difficult it is in practice for foreign troops to be withdrawn into their country. The easiest was for China; after the war in Korea, in 1958, all Chinese volunteers withdrew back to China. In fact, Chairman Mao thought it was done later than it should have been. You mentioned the question of the engineering corps building the road in Laos and the anti-aircraft corps. If you solve Indochina through peaceful negotiations, these people of ours will be withdrawn in a day's time. With no war, we don't need anti-aircraft defenses, and all we need is our ordinary workers to finish the road.

Dr. Kissinger: Of course, it is not self-evident to me why you have engineering troops in another country.

PM Chou: It is not the engineering corps. Those building the road are workers. We have forces protecting them from air attack.

Dr. Kissinger: But they are building in a foreign country without permission.

PM Chou: No, because that is upon the request of the official administration of the neutralists. We have already built two sections of the highway for them. We will return as soon as we have finished. We do not want to fight there. You cannot find our people engaged in the war there. We have not undertaken that obligation. That we have stated. So it will be very easy for us to withdraw our anti-aircraft units.

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But it is not so easy to withdraw your forces, and for the Soviet Union it will be even harder. When will they withdraw from Mongolia? Do you know when?

Dr. Kissinger: I don't think ever.

PM Chou: Exactly. The principle is one thing, but putting it into practice takes a long time. But one should set an example. So it really takes time to bring about a relaxation of tension. Then there is the question of Taiwan, that is not separating Taiwan from the motherland.

Dr. Kissinger: But it is not easy.

PM Chou: If we think about a formulation, would you consider it?

Dr. Kissinger: Of course. I would be grateful, particularly if you are elliptical.

PM Chou: The formulation you have here creates a difficulty for us, "progressively reduced." I think that there are some points of advantage in leaving some so as to not let the Japanese send in their forces.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, while it is in our power. You will know if we are encouraging it, and we will strongly oppose it.

PM Chou: The public, when they see this, will think you are not completely withdrawing your forces. So I would like to think about a formulation. We are in no hurry, but the direction should be made clear.

Dr. Kissinger: It has for us the advantage of a certain ambiguity which is a disadvantage for you.

PM Chou: That is right. But in actual practice we are not opposed to your acting like that because so long as you still have forces on Taiwan you will have the responsibility of not letting Japanese armed forces go in. As a sovereign state we cannot publicly say that.

Dr. Kissinger: Of course.

PM Chou: But objectively speaking for you to keep forces on Taiwan to prevent Japan from sending its forces into Taiwan is beneficial to the

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relaxation of tension in the Far East. If Japan puts forces in to bring about a so-called independent Taiwan, that will be the beginning of the end for peace in the Far East. It will be the end of the relaxation of tension. For the Japanese armed forces to bring about a so-called independent Taiwan would be the same as the independence of Outer Mongolia if done by the Soviet Union. That is the seed of unrest in the Far East. We are not afraid to point out the dangers.

Dr. Kissinger: We will give it no encouragement and we will oppose it, and I am sure the President will repeat this to you and Chairman Mao.

PM Chou: So on this part let us think over what kind of formulation will be best. Of course, we can say only that it will be finalized in February. It's better if we can think of some formulation now than then.

Dr. Kissinger: The circumstances of a Presidential trip, the strangeness of the country, and with others along, this will make it harder. In fact, this type of exchange will be difficult. Anything we can settle before the trip would be better.

PM Chou: That is one thing. The second thing is that you said you couldn't come again before the President comes. Otherwise they would say why is Dr. Kissinger coming for a third time, and there is obviously a question unsolved. Isn't that the case?

Dr. Kissinger: I think so.

PM Chou: So between now and the President's visit someone else may come as a liaison?

Dr. Kissinger: No one sees our protocols, so it is difficult. General Haig knows them, but he is a better soldier than a negotiator. I have complete confidence in him, but this is not his strong point. He would be the best in the interval. Later on, Ambassador Bruce, after Vietnam is no longer a problem for you. But if we send any special envoy now it will attract attention.

PM Chou: That's true.

We will consider the wording again. It appears we will have to work deep into the night tonight. For me, I am accustomed to it, but perhaps your assistants are not.

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Dr. Kissinger: Mr. Lord is.

PM Chou: You can sleep for a few hours.

Dr. Kissinger: You will let us know when you are ready?

PM Chou: Yes. We must try to solve this tonight, at least in general terms.

Dr. Kissinger: General Haig can help on the paragraph on Taiwan, but not on the whole document.

I also have a number of other questions, but I will raise them after this.

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