

Feb 25

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

By RRS Date 1-6-98

PARTICIPANTS:

The President  
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the  
President for National Security Affairs  
John H. Holdridge, NSC Staff  
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 Affairs,  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Cha Chi-hua, Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Chi Chao-chu, Interpreter  
T'ang Wen-sheng, Interpreter  
Two Notetakers

DATE & TIME: Friday, February 25, 1972 - 5:45 P.M. - 6:45 P.M.

PLACE: The President's Guest House, Peking

(The conversation began with a brief exchange of pleasantries between Prime Minister Chou and the President concerning the President's trip to the Great Wall and weather conditions in Peking.)

Prime Minister Chou: I understand that the weather will be clear between here and Hangchow tomorrow, and there will be no trouble in your flight there.

We don't have too much time left tonight, so if we don't finish we can go on in Hangchow and Shanghai. We can also let the two negotiators (Dr. Kissinger and Ch'iao Kuan-hua) work later on tonight after the banquet.

The President: We should tell them to get finished!

Prime Minister Chou: Then we can meet for about 15 minutes to hold a plenary at the airport tomorrow before your departure (for Hangchow).

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2

The President: I think that a half-hour would be better. It would make some of our people who have not had a chance to sit in on the private sessions feel that they have had a part to play, too. We could also have some photos taken.

Prime Minister Chou: Yes, photos would be all right with me. And, if we go for a half-hour, you can say more.

The President: No. I'm through talking. We will let the negotiators have a chance to speak. They haven't talked enough.

Prime Minister Chou: We can also ask Secretary of State Rogers and Foreign Minister Chi P'eng-fei to say more. They can talk about what went on in their meetings.

The President: That's a good idea. They haven't had a chance to talk to us, and we should hear them.

Prime Minister Chou: Now I have two questions which I haven't discussed yesterday.

One is the question of Sino-Soviet relations. I have spoken very clearly about that question in the meeting of the 23rd in this very room. That was a recall of history. Now, we face a situation of great tension between China and the Soviet Union, but it won't be difficult to solve if there is truly an intention to solve it. There is only a further question, and therefore we are willing to solve the boundary question if it is not done under the threat of force. Then, we have always striven (sic) to reach a provisional agreement. That's what the question is all about. We have neither territorial claims against the Soviet Union nor the wish to impose our will on them.

As for other disputes on principle between the two centers, they are bound to continue. As Mr. President said, ideological disputes are of a long-term nature. But this should not prevent countries and states from improving their relations -- their good neighborly relations -- and reaching a state of harmony. That is what Chairman Mao told the deputy head of their negotiating delegation on May Day 1970. This was at a period when the head of the Soviet delegation, Kuznetsov, was back in the Soviet Union ill. We heard he was ill. Since 1964 and 1965, we have conveyed our

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3

opinions to the Soviet Union through the former Pakistan Head of State Ayub Khan. This was, first, we would not make provocations. At that time we conveyed this message to two heads of state, the Soviet head of state and President Lyndon B. Johnson, that we would not make provocations. The second point was that if you did attack us and came into our country, we would defend ourselves.

Prime Minister Chou: Just as the President mentioned yesterday, the Great Wall was for the purpose of defending, not dividing people.

President Nixon: That's right.

Prime Minister Chou: And our digging underground air raid shelters is becoming known. Every family is digging underground shelters and linking them together. I believe soon that Americans will find out about that.

President Nixon: Dr. Kissinger didn't know about it?

Dr. Kissinger: I didn't know this.

Prime Minister Chou: I don't think he mentioned it. He knows about it.

President Nixon: President Yahya told me.

Prime Minister Chou: Our Soviet friends also know because some also tried to see them.

A third point we made was that what we say counts.

The fourth point was that if your country from the air launches attacks against us, we would also consider that war; you should not think that you could get away with that.

Our attitude toward the Soviet Union at the present time still consists of these four points.

As for relations between our two countries, since Mr. President initiated contacts between our two countries, some changes have occurred in the tension that existed between our two countries. And Chairman Mao also

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4

mentioned to Mr. President when they met on the first day that the question of aggression by the United States against China or the question of aggression by China against the United States was not a major problem.

But another question exists, that is the question of the Soviet Union which has not yet been solved. But we are still maintaining a position of defense. We also maintain our position of willingness to improve state relations with the Soviet Union.

But it is absolutely impossible for us to enter into negotiations under the threat of force. Our request to the Soviet Union is not for them to withdraw troops, because we do not interfere in their internal affairs. Our request is only to disengage in areas that are disputed and this is a most fair position. That is what we mentioned the day before yesterday. Three points I mentioned on that day were: one, to maintain the status quo on the border; two, to refrain from military threats; and third, to disengage from disputed areas.

Yet from reports which we have received from various quarters, the Soviet Union is engaged in major military maneuvers in this part of the world or in others, and from what Gromyko told Fukuda, within the next five years there will be greater conflict between China and the Soviet Union than there was at Chen Pao. Perhaps they want to do as they did in Bangladesh, and maybe they will try to create a Republic of Turkestan, or something.

President Nixon: We won't recognize it.

Prime Minister Chou: But such words can not intimidate persons. We will resist. It is not so easy for them to enter the Sinkiang Province, and even if they come in it will be hard for them to get out. No matter what, we will not make provocations. At the same time our attitude toward contacts and negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union is not one of opposition, but rather an attitude of viewing these things as a normal phenomenon. And therefore we wish that the negotiations you are going to hold in May will be able to make progress and also be successful. We also have to admit that that will not be easy.

And we can't understand why we, who are much weaker than they, have greater confidence; while they, who are much stronger than we, show such

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great fear. This is something we cannot understand. Mr. President, you will understand their mentality.

President Nixon: They are pathological on the subject. The only major nation attacking this trip is the Soviet Union. I am sure the Prime Minister has noted that European nations, Latin American nations, all favor this trip. The press is very good in Europe.

Dr. Kissinger: Japan and India are not ecstatic.

President Nixon: Yes, but they can't do anything about it.

Prime Minister Chou: They'll have to wait and see.

Our attitude toward Japan is also one of willingness to promote good relations. And in the Communique we wish to issue, it may be written that neither of our sides seeks hegemony in the Pacific Ocean region and doesn't want other powers to do so, and that also includes them. And this is also our attitude towards the Soviet Union. If the Soviet Union asks the President about our attitude toward them, you may tell them that. Otherwise it may appear that we two here are colluding against them and are up to some tricks; for example, they may think that we're trying to subvert them.

The question for their own country is their business to solve. We don't meddle in their affairs.

President Nixon: And I'm glad to get this information from the Prime Minister, because when I go to the Soviet Union, under no circumstances will I negotiate about or discuss our relations with the People's Republic of China without his approval or knowledge. We are not going there for that purpose. And it will be our purpose as I indicated . . .

Prime Minister Chou: I said that because they might ask you about that subject.

President Nixon: Would you prefer that I not raise it?

Prime Minister Chou: There is no need for you to raise it, but they will probably ask about that. This should be your response.

President Nixon:(to Kissinger) That is something we will do. We will meet seven days and we will need topics in order to meet every day; we will also have to find the topics. They have already asked Dr. Kissinger three times about what was discussed when he was here in the People's Republic.

Dr. Kissinger: I expect a phone call from the Soviet Ambassador 9:00 o'clock Tuesday morning, February 28.

Prime Minister Chou: I also heard that Dr. Kissinger told the President to use the name People's Republic of China in a toast to Ceausecu, and the Soviet Ambassador immediately called attention to that, and when you also mentioned the title properly in the World Report.

President Nixon: Rather than "Communist China."

Prime Minister Chou: That is a very strange thing. Since they have been calling us by the People's Republic of China for so many years, why should they be unhappy when you call us the same thing? We find it very difficult to understand them. It is truly a kind of pathology.

President Nixon: I think they apparently welcomed an antagonistic relationship between the United States and the People's Republic of China. That is why they reacted when we showed we had changed our attitude. They did not want us to have more normal relations.

I would not try to judge motives, but based on their conduct they apparently want the People's Republic and the United States to be at odds. However, our policy is not, as I said to the Prime Minister, to have the People's Republic and the Soviet Union at odds. As I told the Prime Minister, I reject the proposition that it is in the interest of the United States to have the Soviet Union and China in a state of belligerency.

In a sentence, we want good relations with the People's Republic and we want good relations with the Soviet Union. And we would welcome better relations between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. That, however, is something the Soviet Union and the People's Republic will have to work out.

As I said when I was in Romania and Yugoslavia, my principle is any nation can be a friend of the United States without being someone else's enemy. That is my view.



I realize that is sometimes very difficult to achieve, because there is a tendency for some nations to gang up against other nations. But in the very delicate power balances in the world we in the United States would not gain in the long run by trying to stir up trouble between other nations. We, the United States, would not gain by trying to stimulate conflict between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic. The People's Republic would not gain, the Soviet Union would not gain, and we would not gain by trying to stimulate conflict between the others.

That is the idea, but in practicality we realize that the real world is very different than the ideal, and that is what we are concerned about, the real world.

Prime Minister Chou: Because we are speaking about practical questions, I would like to mention the question of the Middle East. Why is it not possible for Israel to return to the Arab nations the lands that it occupies? Wouldn't that be beneficial to the relaxing of tensions?

President Nixon: The return of territory is, of course, the key to the problem. But Israel feels that it cannot return territory unless there is a better balance -- so that it is better able to defend itself against an attack should one occur. But the subject of returning territory is one we are constantly discussing in these very intricate negotiations.

May I say to the Prime Minister that while this subject is not on our agenda, I can understand the Prime Minister's interest in it and his interest in some of the other countries on Israel's borders. I would like to authorize Dr. Kissinger when he comes in June to discuss this with the Prime Minister. It must be kept totally confidential, however, because otherwise it will blow. We may not get a settlement anyway, but Dr. Kissinger can inform the Prime Minister as it occurs. What is happening in this arena is like the tip of the iceberg.

No confidential talks have yet begun but we are considering, just the two of us, the possibilities here. That is why I am referring to. One of the problems is that I don't think I can sneak Dr. Kissinger into Cairo, as I did into Peking.

Prime Minister Chou: That would be rather difficult. But actually it originally was possible for you to have contacts with the Arab countries.



President Nixon: Our policy, as Dr. Kissinger can tell you, since the day I took office has been to develop better contacts with the Arab countries. I haven't visited most of the countries. I knew Nasser and, of course, several other leaders in the area, so that is a goal, but the Israeli problem, I confess, makes more difficult the attainment of that goal. But we are working toward it.

They in effect say, for example, that they cannot resume relations with us in a formal sense until they settle the problems of the Israeli-Arab dispute. But we have a number of informal contacts, and we are expanding those. It makes no sense, looking at the Middle East situation in terms of Israel, which as I pointed out is not the real problem in the Middle East, but in terms of the geopolitical forces there, to leave the Soviet Union as the only major power to whom the Arab countries can turn to for assistance.

Prime Minister Chou: After you have withdrawn from Libya, do you still help the Libyans exploit their oil?

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, we still have oil companies in Libya. The percentage being paid to Libya is being increased compared to what it was previously. Actually, the Libyans are becoming a foreign policy power because they have an enormous amount of dollars and a very small population. They have offered a subsidy to Malta, for example. (PM Chou laughs.)

Prime Minister Chou: That is also an abnormal development since the Second World War.

Dr. Kissinger: It's an indirect program of American aid. American economic aid goes through Libya to other countries. (PM Chou laughs.)

Prime Minister Chou: They also say that you have taken away their natural resources, and therefore you should give them a percentage of the profits.

President Nixon: They have a good deal, a better percentage than any other nations are given by other companies.

Prime Minister Chou: Therefore they're not only opposing your colonialism, but also Soviet colonialism. That is one of their advantages. You probably already know they do not have relations with us.

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9

President Nixon: I did not know that.

Prime Minister Chou: You withdraw your largest airbase from Libya.

President Nixon: Yes, Wheelus.

Prime Minister Chou: You made it impossible for the British naval base to stay on there. The Soviet Union cast eyes on that base, but Libya resisted that. So there are some good things in your oil profits.

President Nixon: Libya is one of the artificial countries the Prime Minister referred to, primarily in Central Africa; this is northern Africa. And I am not referring to boundary problems.

Prime Minister Chou: It is the only country in north Africa that I have not been to.

President Nixon: It is an artificial country which should never have been created. It has never been a country; that is my view. I don't tell the Libyans that, however. Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, the UAR - all have a certain identity but Libya just has oil.

Prime Minister Chou: I believe in the past it had closer relations with Egypt than with the Maghreb countries.

President Nixon: Oil.

Prime Minister Chou: It is one of the few places where Chiang Kai-shek maintains one of his Ambassadors. That is a very particular place. You, of course, also understand our policy towards that. We understand their policy and don't want to impose anything on them.

I would like to go on to another question, that of the Portuguese colonies in Africa. I'm just putting forward this question for discussion in an informal way. Why is it you don't persuade Portugal to give up its two big colonies in Africa, because those are places where the black people are subjected to the most oppressive policies.

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President Nixon: The influence I think we can assert on Portugal would be very minimal. The Portugal Government has a totally negative reaction towards providing independence for these countries.

Dr. Kissinger: They consider them technically part of Portugal. They are not treated as colonies, but they are treated as part of Portugal.

President Nixon: Just as France use to treat some of its colonies, like Algeria, as part of France.

Prime Minister Chou: France could say that, but Portugal is so tiny and yet has such great colonies abroad. It even has a very small piece of our territory, a very small place called Macau, and call it part of Portugal. It was acquired 400 years ago. Many of our comrades say that with a brush of one's finger we could get that territory back, but we have always maintained a very restrained attitude and want to wait awhile.

India showed her courage and reconvened Goa, which is as small as Macau. Mr. Menon once boasted to me about that, and asked why didn't we take back Macau? I said we were not in such a hurry because the major question was the national independence of Angola, Mozambique, and Portuguese Guinea in the south. Besides them, what is Macau in comparison?

We believe that this is the question most unequal toward Europe, and also toward Africa and Asia. There are two things. First, the Portuguese colonies. Second, there is the white rule in South Africa, also in Southern Rhodesia and South West Africa. This is something too unequal, too unjust. Recently in the U.N. our Vice Foreign Minister spoke about that, and also mentioned that in the Security Council meeting held in Addis Ababba, Ethiopia. And on these matters even the Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie II, and also the very conservative President of Kenya, were the most indignant ones when the issue was brought up.

And so, entirely based on the coming-closer relations (sic) which are happening between our two countries, I want to say that this is a question worth saying something about, because the U.S. could say something in this regard. Because the policy adopted by the governments of South Africa, Portugal and Rhodesia they impose on other countries to accept.



President Nixon: We have, of course, stated our position in the U.N. on many occasions on these points. The question is not really one of goals, or of ideals. We believe in majority rule; we don't believe in racism. We said that and we mean that. On the other hand, the military resolution of the problem in South Africa and Rhodesia would be a great tragedy, not so much for the whites as the blacks. That's our view. While other nations like the People's Republic may take a strong position, and may take a more immediate approach while we have a more restrained position, I think our goals are the same.

Prime Minister Chou: But the Portuguese Government is adopting an attitude of even greater military repression and suppression of those places according to what we have learned. And the white rule in Southern Rhodesia also is supported by the British, who support Smith. Of course, this is a very informal exchange of opinions. There is no major difference in our stands.

President Nixon: I hope the Prime Minister understands that we are not always going to vote the same way on resolutions in the United Nations. But he also understands that each of us must make the best judgment as to our best approach. We are, of course, vitally interested in the problems of the black people of Africa. There we are also allies of the British and of Portugal, and it is very difficult for us to take a position which goes as far as the Prime Minister goes on this. I think we can perhaps influence more effectively by more of a restrained course of action so that we can have some influence with our allies. (PM Chou checks the time.)

I wonder if the Prime Minister and I would have a chance to talk informally on the plane.

There is one personal matter which I would like to submit for the Prime Minister's consideration. That is the problem of Downey that Dr. Kissinger discussed with him in October.

Prime Minister Chou: Downey?

President Nixon: The American prisoner. We know that Downey was guilty. We know also the Prime Minister's government has shown compassion in commuting his sentence to five years.

Prime Minister Chou: Mr. Fecteau has already been returned.

President Nixon: Fecteau's and Harbort's release had a very good impact on our country.

Incidentally, we know, too, that there are two flyers involved in Vietnam about whom no action can be taken until the Vietnam problem is solved. Naturally we would appreciate that those two be treated as well as possible until we are able to work out the prisoner of war matter with North Vietnam.

What I now present to the Prime Minister for consideration is not a request -- there is no legal basis -- and he has no obligation to act, but Downey's mother wrote me before I came. She is now 76 years old. She is not well. After five years she will be 81 and the possibility that she will not be alive when her son returns is quite obvious. I told her I would raise the subject with the Prime Minister. You must make this judgment. It would be a very compassionate act, especially since the mother is old and not well. It would have an enormously good impression in the United States, as you know when you were there (looking at Ch'iao) the story Harbort and Fecteau did.

Prime Minister Chou: Last year we already commuted his sentence to five years. And it seems he has behaved rather well recently. And therefore it is possible for us to take further measures when we have the opportunity. Of course, that will take some time. It is a complicated process for us because there are no relations between our two countries and there exists no legal precedent.

President Nixon: Exactly.

I must get to the banquet before the Prime Minister.