

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Participants: Prime Minister Chou En-lai, People's Republic of China
Yeh Chien-ying, Vice Chairman, Military Affairs
Commission, Chinese Communist Party, PRC
Huang Hua, PRC Ambassador to Canada
Chang Wen-chin, Director, Western Europe and
American Department, PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Hsu Chung-ching, Secretary to the Prime Minister, PRC
Wang Hai-jung, Deputy Chief of Protocol, PRC
Tang Wen-sheng and Chi Chao-chu, Chinese Interpreters
Chinese Notetakers

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

Place: Chinese Government Guest House, Peking

Date and Time: July 10, 1971, Evening (11:20 p.m. - 11:50 p.m.)

PM Chou: I'm sorry to be so late.

Dr. Kissinger: That's all right. We had a good walk.

PM Chou: I would like to discuss two specific matters. The first is the announcement. Ambassador Huang Hua will come very shortly and show you our draft. You also have a draft.

Dr. Kissinger: I am sure that his caligraphy is better than mine. We also have prepared a draft, which is very brief.

PM Chou: We can check the two drafts. If yours is very brief, ours is also brief. The second thing which I wanted to discuss is your time for departure tomorrow. Is it noon or one o'clock?

Dr. Kissinger: That depends on our discussions. I can stay until 1:00, but if our discussions are concluded in time I would prefer to leave at 12:00.

PM Chou: I think that two hours tomorrow morning would be sufficient, and then the time of departure can be decided. I think that this should be between 12:00 and 1:00.

Dr. Kissinger: Let's say 1:00, and then we will have flexibility.

PM Chou: You will take off then at 1:00.

Dr. Kissinger: If that's agreeable.

PM Chou: That doesn't mean you will leave here at that time.

Dr. Kissinger: About 12:30 p.m.

PM Chou: 12:20 would be safer.

Dr. Kissinger: You are our host, and you should decide.

PM Chou: Then there is a third question, that of the tape-recording. We discussed this before, but there is now no need for a tape-recording since we fully exchanged our views today and will tomorrow, and there is no need. I'm very sorry to keep you up.

Dr. Kissinger: Not at all. I enjoyed the opportunity to take a walk outside. I was resting until 10:00p.m. anyway.

PM Chou: I had to make you gentlemen get up from bed.

Dr. Kissinger: It's good for the members of my staff to see someone who works even longer hours than I do.

PM Chou: That's all the more reason to ask them to work harder when you get back to the U.S.

Dr. Kissinger: While we are talking -- if you have no other points -- I thought I might elaborate on two or three things if you are interested.

Mr. Prime Minister, as my first point, you mentioned the necessity of keeping troops to protect yourselves against an invasion from Taiwan.

PM Chou: That's right.

Dr. Kissinger: It is the policy of this Administration to give no support whatsoever to any nationalist attempt to invade the People's Republic of China from Taiwan, and without our support they are technically unable to invade the mainland.

PM Chou: That's right. It's not possible for them to send troops en masse. Generally speaking, Chiang Kai-shek is able to control his armed forces,

but there are those among his troops who deliberately want to make adventures -- deliberately to create trouble for him, and for you. That's why we maintain defenses along our coast -- to let people know that we are fully prepared and they cannot succeed. Some years ago Chiang sent spies against us by means of landing-craft, but all of these were wiped out. During recent years there has been less provocation. But once we make our announcement public, there will be a small number of such people who will want to launch adventures and deliberately cause trouble. That is why I tell you in all frankness that we keep on alert.

Dr. Kissinger: Mr. Prime Minister, we don't want to keep you from stationing troops for your defense: we only want to clarify our policy.

PM Chou: That's right, you have already made this clear. As you requested, if we gain any information to the effect that U.S. or KMT elements want to create trouble, we will tell you; you will do the same for us.

Dr. Kissinger: What I said about the Taiwan Independence Movement can be applied to this matter as well.

The second point which I wanted to raise concerns a possible meeting between the Soviet leaders and our President which you asked me about. Our position is this. I didn't want you to misunderstand our position. If there should be an agreement in the negotiations with respect to Berlin, or on strategic arms control, it is very possible that our respective leaders would meet to sign it. But we will not arrange a meeting in the abstract unless there is a specific occasion for one. This could happen within the next six months. I say this only so that you will not be surprised, but there is no fixed plan now.

PM Chou: I understand.

Dr. Kissinger: And on these agreements, as I promised you, when we have established communications, we will inform you of any provisions that could affect you. We have so far refused any proposal that could be applied to nuclear countries other than the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

PM Chou: Does this apply to the SALT talks?

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

PM Chou: May I ask what is your thinking on the Berlin question? If you haven't gotten into any specific stages yet, I won't ask.

Dr. Kissinger: I will tell the Prime Minister that I am notoriously indiscreet. Therefore, I'll be glad to tell you about this.

On Berlin, there are three major issues and one minor issue. The first major issue is access from the Federal Republic of Germany to Berlin across the territory of the Democratic Republic of Germany. The second is the presence of organs of the Federal Republic of Germany in West Berlin. The third is the Soviet political presence in West Berlin. Then there is the fourth issue, which is of interest primarily to the Germans, and concerns travel of people from Berlin in East Germany and East Berlin.

What we are trying to bring about is a situation in which Berlin becomes less of a source of tension and a source of conflict in Central Europe. And we are making some progress in our discussions.

PM Chou: Your Excellency is probably aware of the incident which occurred along the Ussuri River at Chenpao Island.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, I am.

PM Chou: At that time there was high tension over the Berlin question because the Federal Republic of Germany wanted to have elections for its Parliament in West Berlin. The Soviet authorities created the Chenpao incident so that all the Parliamentarians from West Germany could go to West Berlin to have the elections there, and so undo the crisis.

Dr. Kissinger: You think so?

PM Chou: Of course, because Ulbricht found himself in a very difficult situation the Soviets made it appear that we created trouble. However, it was they who deliberately created the incident to escape their responsibilities over Berlin.

Dr. Kissinger: It was hard for us to judge because we didn't have all the information.

With respect to the incidents in Sinkiang, though, I can say the following. When I assumed my present position I thought that the Chinese were always the aggressors. (Chou laughs.) Then I looked at the map of that part of Sinkiang where the incidents took place -- this was in the summer of 1969 -- and saw that it was three miles from the Soviet railhead and 200 miles from a Chinese railhead. It then occurred to me that the Chinese military leaders would not have picked such a spot to attack. Since then I have looked at the problem with a different perspective.

PM Chou: It is also possible to misunderstand the origins of the Sino-Indian conflict.

Dr. Kissinger: That's possible.

PM Chou: The Indians said that we created the Ladakh incident. It occurred on a peak of the Karakorums on the Aksai-chin Plateau of Sinkiang. At this point a ridge of the Karakorums falls off very sharply downward on the Kashmir side. The elevation is very high and even the Soviet helicopters used by the Indians could only gradually work their way up the steep slope. Our people were on top of this ridge and could see down on the Soviet helicopters gradually coming up. The Aksai-chin Plateau is the route along which we have to travel when crossing from Sinkiang to the Ali district of Tibet. The height of the plateau is 5000 meters. We started to build this highway in 1951 --

Dr. Kissinger: The Indians call this region Ladakh.

PM Chou: Actually, Ladakh is farther below, but the Indians call all of this region Ladakh. Even the British colonial maps do not show this as a part of India, and Nehru was only able to provide a claim on the basis of a map drawn by a British traveller. Even three years after the road was built, Nehru didn't know about it. It runs all the way from Western Sinkiang to the Ali district of Tibet.

In my discussions with Nehru on the Sino-Indian boundary in 1956 he suddenly raised the issue of the road. I said, "you didn't even know we were building a road the last three years, and now you suddenly say that it is your territory." I remarked upon how strange this was. Although the so-called McMahon Line was a line that no Chinese government ever recognized, at least it was a line drawn by a Britisher, even though in drawing it he included more than 90,000 square kilometers of our territory in India. However, in the western sector there was no such line.

There was no agreement with us either in 1956 or 1957. And so in 1959 the Indians sent small patrols crawling up the steep slopes to attack our post. Our guards were at the passes. This was in December and the weather was extremely cold -- 40 degrees below zero. Our post was in the form of a fort and we could see them climbing up. So when the Indians attacked they suffered more heavy losses than we. However, we did have some wounded, and we raised a protest with the Indian Government. TASS said of this incident that the Chinese committed aggression against India. Khrushchev, without inquiring, took the same position on the grounds that the Indians had suffered such heavy casualties. This was the first such anti-China statement from the USSR.

Khrushchev wanted to go to Camp David. Just before, in June 1959, he tore up the Soviet agreement on atomic cooperation with China, and he brought these two things (the Soviet support for India and the tearing up of the nuclear cooperation agreement with China) as gifts to Camp David.

Dr. Kissinger: No, we didn't know about this until much later.

PM Chou: Were you there?

Dr. Kissinger: I wasn't in the government then, but because I had been a part time advisor to several governments I knew a number of our senior officials. They didn't believe that there was a split between Moscow and Peking until well into the 1960's. But whatever the Soviets do to you, they do for their reasons, not for our reasons.

PM Chou: I'm aware of that, but I wanted you to know what had taken place.

Dr. Kissinger: I wasn't present at Camp David, so I cannot tell what was happening.

PM Chou: You were not in the government at that time. When Khrushchev returned from Camp David he came to Peking for the Tenth Anniversary of the People's Republic of China. Here, in the same banquet hall which you saw this afternoon, he made a speech in which he openly declared that there were "roosters who like to fight."

Dr. Kissinger: Who were the roosters?

PM Chou: By this he meant the Chinese. We understood well what he meant, but he put it in abstract terms.

The next day we asked him why he said what he did in such an open forum. We also asked him first of all why it was that on the eve of his departure for the U.S. he had declared we had committed aggression against India -- without even asking us about it. He said that he did not need any other information, and the mere fact that India had lost more men proved that we were the aggressors. This was strange logic, totally illogical.

On the border question, at the beginning he didn't understand it, but afterwards he understood very well what the actual situation was. This is a thing of the past.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

PM Chou: Weren't you aware of the fact that in 1960 he withdrew all Soviet experts from China and tore up all Soviet contracts?

Dr. Kissinger: I personally became aware of this only in 1962.

PM Chou: That's right. It's not difficult to understand that. You entered political life only gradually.

Is there anything more that you wish to discuss tonight? If not, I will leave you to discuss the joint communique. I suggest you go into the big room for discussion. This one's too hot.