

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

~~SECRET/NODIS~~

Feb 20, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger *Henry A. Kissinger*

SUBJECT: Chinese at Warsaw Talks Suggest US Send High-Level Representative to Peking

At today's session of the Warsaw talks the Chinese said that if we wished to send a representative of "ministerial rank or a special Presidential envoy to Peking for the further exploration of fundamental principles of relations" between the US and China, they would be prepared to receive him. They made it plain that the "fundamental principle" with which they were concerned was the Taiwan question, and that once this question was settled other issues could be resolved. They also made it plain that the resolution of the Taiwan issue could not be in the context of a "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan" procedure.

The Chinese have now picked up that element in our negotiating position which would be the most dramatic development in terms of the effects on the outside world. The Soviets could be expected to be taken aback by the appearance of a US envoy in Peking; the GRC undoubtedly would react adversely; and opinion in other countries which have fears and suspicions of Communist China might question our motives and the direction of our policy. The Chinese probably had all of these effects in mind in responding to our proposal. At the same time, however, the Chinese will also face problems in terms of the effects on their own public opinion if a US "imperialist" shows up in Peking after years of propaganda against us; moreover, they must be prepared to consider making some adjustment in their own stand against the US and the US role in Taiwan to avoid a dramatic collapse of this high-level contact. Such a collapse might encourage the Soviets to believe that Chinese explorations of the US option had failed and that the Chinese now had to face the Soviets on their own.

I consider that the advantages lie on the side of a positive response to the Chinese. While we should exercise great care in selecting our representative and laying out the line he should take with the Chinese, his presence in Peking could be very helpful in moving our relationship with the Chinese in the direction which you set in your foreign policy review. This step is

~~SECRET/NODIS~~

DECLASSIFIED

fully in consonance with the policy toward Communist China laid down in the foreign policy review, and can be explained as such to all comers, including the GRC. From our standpoint, we may wish to prolong the presence of our representative in Peking and thereby gain, if nothing else, some degree of representation there.

We need not move immediately in naming a representative, since Ambassador Stoessel raised a number of questions concerning the Chinese thoughts as to the arrangements and, in any case, the ball is in our court in proposing the time of the next meeting. However, we should not delay over long so as to avoid creating a negative impression, and I will very shortly have recommendations for you concerning nominees for the job of representative, the level of the position, and the guidance he will be given. I will consult with State on this. There may need to be one or two meetings before arrangements can be fully worked out.

As an interesting side-light on the Warsaw meeting, the Chinese referred to remarks they had made in 1955 on wishing friendly relations with the American people and not desiring war with us. You will recall that our negative reaction to their call for higher-level meetings in 1955 was one of the factors which led to the sterile nature of the talks. We now appear to be back in the 1955 atmosphere, and indeed the Chinese at this meeting avoided polemics and references to any other issue such as our military position on Taiwan which could have impaired the atmospherics of the session.

I have discussed the broad outlines of the foregoing with Dr. Kissinger and he agrees that we will probably have to respond positively to the Chinese initiative. He will be prepared to cover this with you in greater detail on Sunday.