

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~
~~EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

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

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

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 Ministry
of Foreign Affairs
Chao Chi-hua, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Chi Chao-chu, Interpreter
T'ang Wen-sheng, Interpreter
One Notetaker

DATE & TIME: Friday, February 25, 1972 - 4:50-5:25 p.m.

PLACE: Guest House, Villa 2, Peking

Kissinger: The President thought he would not do the actual drafting in a meeting and that he would convey his thoughts so that when you meet each would know exactly what the differences are.

I also want to tell you on behalf of the President that we recognize that you have dealt with this in a farsighted spirit. The difficulties have to do with how we present this at home and not your attitude. Nothing we say implies any criticism of what your side has done.

Our difficulty with the formulation the Vice Minister brought us this afternoon is really somewhat embarrassing because I recognize what you did was to meet 90 percent of our proposal. The problem is when we come home we have to meet the press and the Congress. Now then, we can explain that this doesn't mean anything and therefore anticipations will

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

2

not arise. After all we have discussed, this is an unworthy manner of dealing with you. So we don't want to have to be tricky in our explanation.

On the one hand, we have a problem that if we state a reduction of forces without reciprocity we will be accused of having come to Peking and being taken in. On the other hand, we recognize -- the President recognizes -- your issue of principle on reciprocity with respect to an island you consider your own. As the President explained to you, we can reduce our forces as long as we can present it to our people as our unilateral decision.

For example, we had not intended to mention it here because we didn't think it was proper to discuss it here... we have the intention of reducing our forces on Taiwan during the next year by 3,000, which is about 40 percent. But we would like to present this to our Congress as a unilateral American decision. So this is our dilemma.

Now on the text we have no problem about affirming the ultimate objective of withdrawal of American forces and military installations from Taiwan. We can say that with this prospect in mind, "it affirms the ultimate objective," etc. The difficulty arises with stating the progressive reduction unconditionally, and I know your difficulty arises from stating it conditionally. I repeat that this does not affect what the President has told you he will do.

Chou: Didn't you tell the Vice Minister that deleting the phrase "as tensions in the area are reduced" makes the position closer because it is linked to a peaceful settlement?

Kissinger: That's what the Vice Minister told me. We could put it "as progress is made toward a peaceful settlement" or, linking it to tension in the Taiwan Straits, "as tensions in the Taiwan Straits are reduced." We don't want to embarrass you.

Ch'iao: Please repeat the second formulation.

Kissinger: "As tensions in the Taiwan Straits diminish," I am thinking out loud, really, or secondly, "as progress is made toward a peaceful solution," or something like that.

Chou: If you say, "tensions in the area" they will say, "what area?".

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

3

Kissinger: I understand. That's why we could say "in the Taiwan Straits."

Chou: But there are no longer tensions in the Taiwan Straits now.

Kissinger: It's not... or "as progress is made toward a peaceful settlement."

Chou: Your problem is that you need some kind of condition for reductions.

Kissinger: We are not setting conditions. We will do it, as you know, in any event. You could draw up a sentence about progressive reductions and just end with the ultimate objective if you like.

Chou: The President's idea is that we should not mention this in our talks, since we discussed it yesterday?

Kissinger: We would just as soon not. If you want us now to explain our position to you, we can do it.

Chou: You said earlier that the Secretary of State would join the talks this afternoon on the Communique.

Kissinger: Not on the Communique. It was just for the press. If it were to be a long session then the ministers could come in for an hour for picture-taking purposes. The Communique we could do without unless you want. We will complete it by the process that was agreed to.

Chou: Mr. President said that the plenary meeting may be held in Hangchow.

Kissinger: Or Shanghai.

Chou: And therefore in the latter part of this afternoon's session, as he suggested, only the Secretary of State and the Foreign Minister take part and not the others.

Kissinger: Perhaps Mr. Green. But that was when we thought that we would meet at 3:00 and have a long time. It is not necessary. I think it is better that you and the President talk personally. But we leave this to you.

Chou: In the Communique there are two other points that are not completed yet. Those are not difficult.

Kissinger: No. We can do it. The rest of the Communique may take maybe two hours.

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

4

Chou: You could do it after dinner.

Kissinger: There is no problem with that.

Chou: But I will have a meeting with the President to discuss some other matters. I will hold further consultations on this clause on Taiwan and the Vice Minister will reply to you after dinner. We want to see if we can approximate positions.

Kissinger: I have to say -- this is very unorthodox -- that you have made the bigger moves in recent days. We cannot complain about anything you have done. You have been very generous. We recognize you consider this your own country. You might take the position that you should not talk to us about this at all. I am sorry we have so many domestic difficulties, but our actions will be more impressive than our words.

Chou: As your President said, you can do more than you can say.

Kissinger: That will be the case.

Chou: I will go over at 5:30 and we can talk until 6:30 and have the banquet at 7:30. There is no need for the Secretary of State and Foreign Minister to take part altogether?

Kissinger: What do you think?

Chou: There is the question that if there's a meeting, everyone should participate for us, the Vice Chairman, Marshal Yeh, Li Hsien-nien and everyone involved, because they are not going to Hangchow. The plane tomorrow is at 9:00 o'clock. If we are able to agree on the whole Communiqué tonight, should we let the party see it only when it is published or beforehand?

Kissinger: After an agreement is worked out, we must show it to the Secretary of State. He will not leak it. This he does not do. We will show it to nobody else, and we would agree on when to release it. Maybe in Shanghai Sunday night -- what do you think?

Chou: The time for release may be decided by you. We will leave the decision up to you.

Kissinger: Perhaps it should be done from Shanghai on Sunday in the late afternoon. And I would agree with the Prime Minister and the Vice Minister on exactly what I would say when I talk to the press. I would tell you ahead of time. Until then only the Secretary of State will see it, if that is agreeable to you.

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

5

Chou: Yes.

One possibility is, as Vice Chairman Yeh and the Vice Premier Li Hsien-nien and others will be sending the President and his party off at the airport, maybe we could have a very quick session at the airport at which all could talk in the sitting room at the airport.

Kissinger: So they can also participate.

Chou: For us, all our people would take part who were at the plenary, and for you, your people could take part who were at the plenary. At this meeting we could say that certain agreements have been reached by the two sides and after making necessary preparations they could be turned into a Communique.

Kissinger: At Shanghai there would be the final Communique.

Chou: Yes.

Kissinger: All right.

Chou: There is no need for us to show the document at the plenary.

Kissinger: It should be done in a very general way. I cannot guarantee the security of everybody.

Chou: It might be better not to do it.

Kissinger: We could have a plenary session where the Foreign Ministers report about their work in the other meetings.

Chou: That would be too long then.

Well, maybe we could finish the Communique tonight. As for the question of people-to-people trade and exchanges, it could be said at the plenary that this was a possibility. Maybe that's not appropriate?

Kissinger: I must be honest. Mr. Rogers will not leak, but some of the junior men that are in the group, I have an uneasy feeling, do leak. I don't think we should let anything out before the Communique unless you want to.

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

6

Chou: It will just be a simple plenary meeting tomorrow morning at the airport. Because Vice Chairman Yeh and Vice Premier Li Hsien-nien must have an opportunity to take part in one more meeting. We can say that the five days of talks have been fruitful and say nothing about the contents.

Kissinger: Or say that we hope to have a Communique without saying what it is, and that we will finalize it in Hangchow, or something.

Chou: We will just tell them that we hope it will be completed but we haven't worked it out yet. We hope there will be a Communique but we haven't worked it out yet. We can talk in general terms in the plenary session.

So we will make a final session in Peking. When we go to Hangchow we will not bother with plenary meetings, just private talks.

Kissinger: At some point it would be helpful for the morale of the group if something could be done for those who feel neglected.

Chou: We can do that by some other means. But the meeting at the airport will still be a form of a plenary session. There will be fifteen on your side.

Kissinger: I guess the whole official party?

Chou: Everyone will be happier. A formal plenary session? And I will think of other things to improve morale.

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~