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By

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10/19/01

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 3, 1972

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PLACE: The Great Hall of the People
Peking, China.

DATE: Midnight, January 3, 1972

PARTICIPANTS: Prime Minister Chou En-lai
Acting Foreign Minister, Mr. CHI P'eng-fei
Vice Foreign Minister
Mr. CHANG Wen-chin, Director of the West
European, American and Australian Affairs, MFA
Mr. HAN Hsu, Director, Protocol Department, MFA
Miss Nancy T'ang (Interpreter)

Haig: I am very honored that the Prime Minister is seeing me personally.

Chou En-lai: Yes, because I heard from Minister Fei and the Director of West European, American and Australian Affairs, who both told me that you had important matters to convey.

Haig: Yes, Dr. Kissinger and the President asked me to request an audience to give you, in blunt terms, a soldier's assessments of recent events in South Asia and discuss them in context of the President's visit.

Chou En-lai: How is Dr. Kissinger? I heard he had a slight cold.

Haig: He has had a touch of the flu but is much better today.

Chou En-lai: You have to be careful here too because it is snowing. I don't know whether it has snowed in Washington yet.

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Haig: We have had no snow yet. Usually by this time we would have had snow.

Chou En-lai: This is your first visit to China, I suppose?

Haig: Yes, both myself and Mrs. Hartley. We are very honored to be here. I said today that my father-in-law came to China some 48 years ago for his first visit to China.

Chou En-lai: 48 years ago. Very interesting. I believe he is still well? Your father-in-law? So you can now write him a postcard from Peking.

Haig: Yes, his trip was 48 years ago. Mr. Prime Minister, I thought what I would like to do is not belabor any of the special details that we have passed on in our messages but the Prime Minister will recall that we took a number of steps during that period.

Chou En-lai: Yes, I remember that you conveyed certain messages through a certain channel.

Haig: We believe and we have very strong confirmation that those steps were effective in convincing the Soviet Union to influence the Indians to accept a cease-fire rather than to proceed with attacks against West Pakistan -- in other words to stop short of what had been their goal against Pakistan. One of those steps was Dr. Kissinger's reference to the possible cancellation of the President's Moscow trip if the conflict continued. Since the cease-fire has gone into effect, we have made a very careful assessment of the overall implications of recent events on the subcontinent and we have concluded that up until recently the Soviet policy on the subcontinent has been, in general, to keep the subcontinent divided. This was manifested in their performance during the earlier conflict between India and Pakistan but we think they have decided on a

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rather precipitous shift in their policy to adopt one in which they would now seek to encircle the PRC with unfriendly states. We believe that this modified Soviet strategy has evolved as a result of recent events and has caused them to overhaul their former strategy for the subcontinent. We also noted when the crisis developed that the Soviets tried very hard to divert us from the course that would converge with the policy of the People's Republic. In short, they sought to influence us to maintain a hands off policy. During the period when this crisis started to develop, they invited Dr. Kissinger to visit Moscow personally on several occasions as guest of Mr. Brezhnev. They also offered to reach agreements with us in the accidental attack and provocative attack areas, all of which we rejected. We rejected these approaches by the Soviet Union on two grounds -- one was on the grounds of principle. We felt we had certain obligations with respect to Pakistan and we felt we could not tolerate use of force to dismantle that country. But we also rejected the Soviet approaches because we felt that the future viability of the PRC was of the greatest interest to us and a matter of our own national interest.

Again, speaking the blunt language of a soldier, I would not be so naive to infer that this is a precipitous shift in our attitude which has suddenly developed after the years of differences which have divided us. Rather, we have arrived at these conclusions because we are convinced that the Soviet strategy is first to neutralize the People's Republic and then turn on us. Therefore, our interests are self interests. I would want this clearly understood.

Since the cease-fire has gone into effect between India and Pakistan, we have carefully assessed subsequent Soviet actions and we are convinced that they intend

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to continue their efforts to encircle the People's Republic. We say this based on a number of factors. Included among those factors are their repeatedly announced support for the Bangladesh, and their offer to move advisers and assistance into East Pakistan, the recently announced visit of Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko to Japan and, above all, their stepped up expressions of support for Hanoi in its conduct of the war, as well as increased Soviet materiel support for Hanoi. In the context of what I have just said, I would also like to comment very briefly on the recent decision of the U.S. Government to launch a series of limited aerial attacks against North Vietnam.

This was a decision that was taken only with the most careful thought and with the greatest reluctance. We believe that our policy with respect to the war in Southeast Asia is very clear at this point. We have undertaken every reasonable step to bring the conflict to an early conclusion. On the 11th of October, we transmitted to Hanoi the most forthcoming set of proposals for settlement of that conflict that we could conceivably develop, including the offer to have the current leader in Vietnam step down prior to a post-settlement election. In the face of these proposals, no one can doubt that we have any intention of maintaining our presence in South Vietnam. We have told Hanoi that we would withdraw and withdraw totally and they understand this. Despite these proposals of October 11th, we have yet to receive any response from Hanoi nor have we even received from them an expressed willingness to discuss these proposals in Paris as we have offered to do.

Instead, from Hanoi, we have seen a step-up of attacks in Cambodia and Laos. We have seen increased attacks against our unarmed reconnaissance aircraft over North Vietnam. We have seen the continued development of Hanoi's supply route through the demilitarized zone and we have seen rocket attacks

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against populated centers in South Vietnam. We have seen increasing numbers of missile attacks from sanctuary in North Vietnam against our air forces in Laos. These actions we could not but interpret as an effort by Hanoi to humiliate the United States -- a humiliation that no great power can accept. In this context, our retaliatory strikes were launched. Also in this context, future U. S. air activity over North Vietnam will be directly related to Hanoi's future actions. For our part, our strongest wish is to settle the conflict as quickly as possible and on terms, the fairness of which cannot be doubted. On the other hand, we cannot subject ourselves to the kind of humiliation which Hanoi's actions seem designed to achieve.

In the context of what I have just said, we have concluded that the continuation of the war in Southeast Asia can only give Moscow an opportunity to increase its influence in Hanoi and to further the encirclement of the People's Republic. We feel strongly that Moscow is urging Hanoi in the direction of continued military action and as such, they are forging another link in the chain which is designed to constrain the People's Republic. In all of these circumstances, we also believe that President Nixon's visit takes on a new and immediate significance which transcends its earlier importance. In the context of the events I have just described, i. e., the immediate effect to the People's Republic and the revised Soviet strategy, the President's visit is not only one of long term historic significance -- the original motivation and the guiding force underlying the visit -- but now we see an immediate significance which must now be considered with respect to the President's visit. In the light of our own strategic interests -- America's strategic interests which I described earlier -- we are convinced of and dedicated to the proposition that the viability of the People's Republic should be maintained. We have accepted this premise in full consideration of those things which divide us. We recognize that these

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differences are both ideological and practical in nature. On the other hand, just as Dr. Kissinger outlined to you earlier, Churchill was willing to cooperate with Stalin in order to cope with the greater danger of Hitler Germany. We feel that the United States and the People's Republic must concert at this critical juncture. We are prepared to use our resources as we did during the crisis between India and Pakistan to attempt to neutralize Soviet threats and to deter threats against the People's Republic.

In sum, this is an overly generalized and soldier's blunt elucidation of Dr. Kissinger's and the President's views. It suffers from brevity and hence the oversimplification which a more careful exposition would avoid. We have considered some of the implications of this assessment and we have asked ourselves in the short term what the United States could do within the context of this assessment to deal with some of the events which we think could occur in the future. One of the steps we are prepared to do unilaterally and without any reciprocity on the part of the People's Republic -- is to provide you with our assessments of the Soviet threat which exists against the People's Republic to the degree that our own technical resources are able to do so. I would emphasize that these would be steps taken without condition and without reciprocity and Dr. Kissinger has asked me to inform you that when he arrives with the President he would be ready to discuss the modalities of furnishing this information, perhaps through a third country or through whatever other means you might prefer.

An additional implication of the assessment I have just provided is the fact that we have a major problem developing within the United States which your Ambassador to the United States, Ambassador Huang Hua can confirm, and Miss Tang has observed first hand also. This is a strange merger of forces within the United States -- all dedicated to either preventing the President's visit to Peking or to contributing to its

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failure. The forces which have converged are composed of first the American Left which is essentially pro-Soviet and if it is not truly dominated by Moscow in that sense of the word, it is at least strongly attracted toward Moscow and future U.S. alignment with Moscow. In this instance, the Left has been joined in a strange wedding with those conservative elements who are strong supporters of Taiwan. A third area of difficulty for us in the United States is a degree of bureaucratic haggling concerning the wisdom of the initiative to visit Peking.

All of these factors have converged in a way which poses a very serious threat to the success of the visit. In the short run, these forces would hope to prevent the visit at all -- in the longer run, they would hope to prevent or deter the normalization of relations between the People's Republic and the United States. For this reason, President Nixon and Dr. Kissinger are all the more concerned about making President Nixon's visit a success not only in reality but also in the appearance of the visit itself. Thus, we feel it must succeed in both fact and in appearance.

Unfortunately, most American journalists are shallow idiots. They draw their editorial line from the immediate atmospherics of the situation and from what is essentially the instantaneous reporting of a set of circumstances rather than from a careful analysis of the realities and implications of these realities. For this reason, it is crucial that there be no public embarrassment to the President as a result of his visit to Peking. It is in our mutual interest that the visit reenforce President Nixon's image as a world leader. I have brought several journalistic efforts of recent weeks from some of our more important newspapers, such as the New York Times, which I would like to leave with the Prime Minister so that he can see how these forces have been working in

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the United States against both the normalization of relations and the President's visit. In the light of these trends, we would hope that between now and Dr. Kissinger's visit that perhaps certain steps could be taken -- one might be some strengthening of the positive aspects of the Joint Communiqué which was worked out so satisfactorily during Dr. Kissinger's visit. We are thinking along the lines of a possible reference to trade or something that would give an immediate sense of accomplishment as a result of the visit, such as increased scientific or cultural exchanges.

Finally, the most crucial issue in the Public Communiqué which would be released at the time of the President's visit is the unresolved issue of the status of Taiwan. You will recall that Dr. Kissinger left without this language being agreed upon. We have looked at this problem from two perspectives. The first is what we will actually do about Taiwan in the future and second, is what we will say about Taiwan in conjunction with the President's visit. In order for us to be, very bluntly, anti-Soviet and pro-People's Republic, we must have the support of the American conservatives. As I pointed out, this support is intimately linked today to the issue of Taiwan. At this point, I would like to categorically reaffirm what Dr. Kissinger told you about our future policies towards Taiwan:

First, we will do nothing to encourage or support the movement towards an independent Taiwan. Second, we will do nothing to encourage or to support Japanese efforts to manipulate the future of Taiwan either through the independence movement or a Japanese presence in Taiwan.

And third, we will withdraw war-related U.S. forces from Taiwan as soon as the war has been

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concluded. Also, over the longer period we will gradually reduce our presence there.

In summary, the United States finds itself caught between the dilemma of a Left Wing which is dominated by forces friendly to the Soviet and by the Right Wing which is dominated by pro-Taiwan forces. For this reason, and in the light of all the considerations I have mentioned tonight, we would urge you to reconsider very carefully the language in the Joint Communique that pertains to Taiwan and, hopefully, to agree to a formulation that is somewhat less truthful and somewhat less precise than the language which Dr. Kissinger carried away with him during his last visit. I have brought another version of the paragraphs pertaining to Taiwan which I would like very much to leave with you, on an ad referendum basis. Perhaps when Dr. Kissinger arrives there can be further discussion on this subject. In the interim, Dr. Kissinger felt that you should have our assessment of what we consider to be the overriding strategic implications of Soviet actions and strategy. We have made some very careful soundings since Dr. Kissinger's return and we know that the language that was considered during his visit would cause an uproar in the United States. This, we feel, would only strengthen the very forces that are working against the visit itself and the implications of that visit for the future of both of our countries.

That concludes the strategic assessment of the President's and Dr. Kissinger's or rather my interpretation of that assessment. I must apologize for its bluntness but I felt that you would appreciate this kind of candor. Candor was certainly the characteristic of Dr. Kissinger's discussions here and especially those with the Prime Minister.

I do have several minor administrative matters to raise in this very restrictive form and in such a way that the

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rest of our party would not be privy to them. With your approval, I will discuss them now.

Chou En-lai: Yes. Go ahead.

Haig: First, Dr. Kissinger considers that it is essential that he attend all the meetings between the President and yourself and whatever meetings might occur between the President and the Chairman. That is the first item.

Secondly, Dr. Kissinger again asked me to emphasize the essentiality of having concurrent meetings at the level of the Foreign Ministry and the Department of State which would occur whenever the President would meet with you and with the Chairman. It might pose a challenge of some magnitude to have sufficient substantive topics to cover but we are confident that together we can accomplish that constructively.

Next, I would like to reiterate what I have given to your very hospitable representatives today and that is that the composition of our party is made up of many technicians. Some of them are not governmental. They are all great advocates of their particular specialty. They may, during their visit here, be the source of some abrasive demand or requirement which would run counter to our mutual best interests. I want to emphasize if there are any demands of that kind that develop at the technical level you should not feel obliged to accept them but rather bring them to me so that no technical matter can be permitted to act as a source of irritation or detract from the success of this visit.

Each of our representatives who has been to China before now has returned with the greatest respect and admiration for the hospitality and for the professionalism and skill of your representatives. I am

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determined to keep that high level of cooperation and respect alive during this visit and I am prepared to take whatever steps you or your representatives might feel necessary to insure it. Therefore, I would again urge that anything your side feels may be counter-productive is brought directly to my attention.

One last very minor thing, Mr. Prime Minister, is that Dr. Kissinger was concerned because just before I left a female television personality called him and told him she was going to contact your Ambassador in New York and try to get him on her show and to use Dr. Kissinger's name to get him on the show. Dr. Kissinger wanted you to know that he had not given approval for this and felt that this was totally a Chinese matter as to whether the Ambassador appears or not.

Chou En-lai: We have not gotten news of this yet.

Haig: The commentator is a Miss Nancy Dickerson

Chou En-lai: So she approached Ambassador Huang Hua about that?

Haig: If she has not already, she will probably do so soon and she may use Dr. Kissinger's name.

Chou En-lai: That is a small matter.

I thank you for your rather clear notification. Of course, you have said you have not gone into great detail but we understand the general idea. And, of course, we must report this to Chairman Mao Tse-tung and also must consult with other colleagues. Therefore, I am not able to give an official reply. However, I would like to comment on what you have said. The first thing is just as you mentioned that the coming together of our two countries would be beneficial to the promotion of the normalization of relations between our two countries and also to the relaxation of tension in the Far East. We believe this will not only be beneficial to the U.S. but also to the People's

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Republic of China and also to the peoples of our two countries and to the people in the Far East.

The second point is that Soviet meddling in the South Asian subcontinent and in Indochina, in my opinion, is not due to a change in the strategic policies of the Soviet Union but rather a necessary consequence of reaction on the part of the Soviet Union toward the coming closer between China and the United States. And I mentioned this to Dr. Kissinger during his first visit to China -- that we were anticipating to shoulder, to bear the consequences of this coming together of U.S. and China and that we were prepared for this and we do not, therefore, find it to be unexpected. For instance, the question of the subcontinent. It was because the Sino-American Communique of July 15 -- the first announcement of July 15th, your time, was published that the Soviet-Indian Treaty, a so-called treaty which was actually a military alliance, came into being after having been delayed for two years. It was finally signed in Delhi in August and it can be said that Pakistan did not deal with that very earnestly at that time.

Of course, this is not something that either China or the United States could do for them as their friend. And, therefore, when later on in December, the situation had already become rather urgent, when we heard of Dr. Kissinger's information about the policy as adopted by the United States, we considered that although it was rather late at that time already, we considered that that was the only possible policy that could be adopted at that time. Of course, now, the question of the subcontinent has become complicated. And we believe that it will continue to develop. And if the United States Government has any other new further opinion with regard to this situation, we are willing to hear it. Because the obstruction of

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India's advance toward West Pakistan is only a temporary phenomenon. And with the development of the already complex situation on the subcontinent, will undergo still more changes. And, therefore, in the interim period from now until the visit of your President to China, if the U.S. Government has any new information it would like to convey, we are willing to exchange opinions on the situation in the area.

I would like to say also, very frankly, that our opinions differ from yours on Vietnam. We believe that it was not necessary for the U.S. Government to bomb North Vietnam in such a way as President Nixon has never done since he has taken office, as he did around Christmas last year. And, in addition, this action was taken after President Nixon had withdrawn I believe around 400,000 troops from South Vietnam, and, therefore, this action made it even more unacceptable to the people of the world, including the people of the United States and this was also reflected in the press of the United States. And this also occurred at precisely the time when President Nixon declared to the world around Christmas that he wished to move toward relaxation of tension and toward peace in the world. And if we should say that Soviet forces in the Indian Ocean and in the South Asian subcontinent have increased, we should say that they were led into that area by India. But if we should say that the Soviet Union was given an opportunity to increase its influence and its force in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam then we should say that it was assisted by the recent action of the United States. Because as I remember, when Dr. Kissinger was here discussing things with us, he expressed particular admiration and appreciation of the fifth point put forth by Madame Binh of the Republic of Vietnam. The basic spirit of that clause was to change South Vietnam and Indochina into a non-allied area, i. e., an area which would maintain

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peaceful and friendly relations with all sides. And this would be beneficial to the relaxation of tension in Southeast Asia. It would also be beneficial to the improvement of relations between the United States and China. However, now the U.S. bombing has increased the Soviet influence and tension in this area. Of course, this is not of great consequence to us but it is quite bad for the local area. It will make the situation in all of Southeast Asia tense and it will also be a matter of great concern to the people of the U.S. and the world and it will not be favorable toward the ending of the war in that area.

Originally, we were waiting to convey these views to President Nixon and Dr. Kissinger when they come later on but since you have now mentioned these matters, we think this is also another opportunity to advance some of our opinions. Of course, this is also just an initial exchange and I believe we will have another opportunity to exchange opinions. And, of course, as you said, this exchange is limited to us two.

And as for the third factor, we have taken into consideration the fact that you have certain internal problems which we see from the press and also Dr. Kissinger mentioned it during his previous visits and we have also felt the three forces which you mentioned. I would also like to ask something very bluntly and to you as you are a military man. Is it that the Pentagon also has differing opinions?

Haig: Some elements in the Pentagon have differing opinions but those who are the most responsible and strategic thinkers are in full agreement with this initiative and the visit of the President.

Chou En-lai: As for the two questions -- the two issues that Dr. Kissinger raised about the Joint Communique.

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The first is essentially a question of trade. We understand this proposal and we can also see from American opinion that they are also attaching importance to this question and this is also an issue that carries weight.

The second is the suggestion you have brought from Dr. Kissinger about the wording of the part about Taiwan. In our opinion, the paragraph that we have written down -- I am not speaking about the part the Chinese says but the part that the U.S. side says. We believe that in the wording of that part we have fully taken into consideration the present dilemma that you just now mentioned between the United States Government and the forces you mention from the Left and the Right because this is a force of crucial significance to the United States but since you have brought a new opinion, we would be willing to take it into consideration, because as we have mentioned before we are always willing to get the work done as best as possible because you must work with a view toward the future. And also Dr. Kissinger has already given some hints about this question to the press -- five points, isn't that so?

Haig: Five points?

Chou En-lai: You have not seen them? A Minister of Japan -- we found it in the Japanese press. They were representatives of the Democratic Socialist Party -- the leader of that party.

Haig: He did talk to him.

Chou En-lai: And he announced these five points to the Japanese press.

Haig: I don't recall Dr. Kissinger using five points.

Chou En-lai: We have been trying to get a copy.

Haig: I will find out about that. I did not sit in at the meeting.

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Chou En-lai: We will try to get a copy and give you an English translation. Of course, it quoted Dr. Kissinger and these words came from the Japanese. As for the specific questions you later mentioned (administrative questions), we don't think there is any question to that because we believe during his second visit Dr. Kissinger mentioned these points. I believe we can cooperate very well on them. Of course, you can continue discussions with Acting Foreign Minister Fei, either directly or you can have separate group discussions with various other people. Of course, we will not do anything to embarrass you and if anything comes up at lower levels, they will not be settled there. They will be brought to you.

As for your plans for this present visit to China, there are two suggestions. One was that you would spend a greater portion of your time in Peking and then go to Shanghai and Hangchow for a visit. Another would be you would stay here for a short time -- then go to Shanghai and Hangchow and come back here. In my personal opinion, it would be better to have all issues decided in Peking and then go to other places. It would be economizing on the time. But, of course, if you would like to wait for a reply from Washington before you would like to finalize certain details or if you have other political matters to discuss later on, then a return trip would be better. Either question is entirely up to you to decide.

Haig: I think, at first glance, we would favor a longer time here and then the trip to the other two locations and depart from there. I think we will know that better after we have had discussions of the schedule tomorrow morning at the plenary sessions, after which we could decide. But I believe that this would be the best way to proceed.

Chou En-lai: I am sorry to have taken up too much of your sleep.

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Haig: I am honored that you have taken this time to see me.

Chou En-lai: I am also very happy to have been able to meet you. Anyway, if you are going to contact Dr. Kissinger, please send my regards to him.

Haig: I will do so.

