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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
Jonathan T. Howe, NSC Staff

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
One Notetaker

DATE & TIME: Sunday, February 27, 1972 -- 11:30 a.m. - 1:55 p.m.

PLACE: Guest House (Hotel), Shanghai

VM Ch'iao: Is there any new question your side would like to raise?

Dr. Kissinger: Just one really trivial point which was suggested by one of my colleagues. Where you say, "the U.S. stated that the peoples of Indochina . . .", instead of "stated" say "stressed." That's all.

VM Ch'iao: No more?

Dr. Kissinger: No more.

VM Ch'iao: We too have a small change of wording, that is, concerning your suggested wording for something about the talks between the Secretary of State and the Foreign Minister. The word suggested by you yesterday was "useful" talks.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

VM Ch'iao: The word for useful in Chinese is yu li; that is the same as "beneficial." But in the immediately following paragraph we say the leaders " . . . found it beneficial . . ."

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Dr. Kissinger: I see.

VM Ch'iao: So in order to avoid repetition, we would delete the word "useful."

Dr. Kissinger: Could Mr. Chang from his infinite vocabulary come up with a word?

VM Ch'iao: Another reason is that when we describe discussions between the President and the Chairman we use "serious and frank" in describing the attitude, and also in describing talks between the President and the Prime Minister we use "extensive, earnest and frank."

Dr. Kissinger: I understand. I am not concerned. An adjective will do, but if we have it without an adjective it just will sound critical in English. So I am not quarreling with you.

VM Ch'iao: Yes, because to just follow "extensive, earnest and frank . . ."

Dr. Kissinger: In addition, we should also say that Secretary of State William Rogers and Foreign Minister Chi Peng-fei held talks "in the same spirit." I have always wanted to put in a phrase, "although voices were raised, it is not true that they came to blows."

VM Ch'iao: All right. No more.

Dr. Kissinger: I guess it's rejected.

VM Ch'iao: Now I will suggest that I would read out the Chinese, sentence by sentence and . . .

Interpreter: The Vice Minister suggests this procedure. He reads out a sentence of Chinese; I read it in English; and you check it.

Dr. Kissinger: All right. The only thing I request is a copy of it in Chinese -- we have an interpreter here -- before we make it absolutely official.

VM Ch'iao: Only when there is no question we will go on to the next sentence.

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Dr. Kissinger: What should we call it? We have never said what we will call it.

VM Ch'iao: Do you have any suggestions?

Dr. Kissinger: No.

VM Ch'iao: Not an important matter. But I would think that it might be better for you to give more thought to this because of your press.

Dr. Kissinger: We had tentatively thought "Joint Communique", but it doesn't make any difference.

VM Ch'iao: We agree to "Joint Communique."

Dr. Kissinger: All right, and I will check with our State Department experts whether there is some legal significance to the word "communique" which I don't understand. And the date is today?

VM Ch'iao: Today.

Mr. Chang: Same date in Washington now.

Dr. Kissinger: I have a slight suggestion; could we drop the words "accompanying the President" because we have already said "he visited." It's obvious.

VM Ch'iao: I accept that.

Dr. Kissinger: I have a slight change which is stylistic. After "the Chinese side stated", could we add a colon to make sure that the whole paragraph is what the Chinese side says?

VM Ch'iao: Yes, I agree. You have a comma after South Vietnam in your paragraph on Vietnam. Can that be deleted?

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

VM Ch'iao: I have one question. It was our impression that when the President announced the proposals of January 25 he announced only on

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behalf of the United States Government, and the South Vietnamese Government expressed its support for that.

Dr. Kissinger: No, the formal proposal was made at the plenary session, which was on the 27th, and the speech of January 25 said it was done with the full concurrence and on behalf of the South Vietnamese Government.

Mr. Chang: But wasn't the original date of the proposal then on January 27th?

Dr. Kissinger: We will probably make it the 27th. It's a good point. I think you are quite right -- I think it was formally submitted on the 27th. Let's say the 27th.

VM Ch'iao: "to seek a relaxation of the tension."

Dr. Kissinger: I think we should drop 'the' -- don't you think? (Ch'iao nods)

Interpreter: "The cease-fire line in Jammu and Kashmir"-- we add to yours too. And then also purely stylistic for our side -- we add 'to their own sides of the cease-fire line.' How about having that in yours too?

Dr. Kissinger: "to their own sides."

VM Ch'iao: "And the withdrawal of all military forces to within their own territories, and to their own sides of the cease-fire line in Jammu and Kashmir."

(There then followed a reading of the communique, including punctuation, to confirm the final version.)

Dr. Kissinger: Now may I make a few points, questions, first about the communique? This communique is going to present us with major difficulties in the United States, which we will attempt to meet with energy and in the spirit of our talks. You will have formed your own judgments by now as to where the support for this present China initiative comes from in the United States, and the problems that can arise when it becomes a political issue. We have made this communique on the basis that both sides should benefit and not that it was a victory for one, and

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the other was the loser. It would make the realization of our common objective immeasurably more difficult if Chinese domestic propaganda or Chinese foreign propaganda or Chinese friends were to represent this as a major American defeat, or as any American defeat.

(Ch'iao nods.)

Dr. Kissinger: So I hope we will both practice the spirit of equality in presenting this publicly.

(Ch'iao nods.)

Dr. Kissinger: Secondly, it is important for us that this communique in America not be presented entirely as a Taiwan communique. And therefore, it is important that we do not concern ourselves too much about press speculation in which every fine point that Mr. Chang has so skillfully woven into this communique may not be made.

Interpreter: "It will be important that we . . ."

Dr. Kissinger: Not contradict every speculation that the press may make. Let me give you an example. On the issue of the renunciation of force, if I am asked or if we are asked, we will say this communique speaks for itself. And we will not go into the subtle elaborations of your colleague, Mr. Minister. It would help if you did not explain all the sophisticated analyses in your propaganda. I am giving this only as an example. Also, it would help if it could be avoided that you give precisely the explanation of the meaning of "should" that you gave yesterday. In other words, we are trying to set a direction with this document. We are not going to be able to wave it at each other in the sense of a binding obligation. And we should maintain the spirit that makes it possible, especially over the next few months.

VM Ch'iao: It is only a direction.

Dr. Kissinger: Because if we spend the next few months arguing what it doesn't mean, then it will have defeated its purpose.

VM Ch'iao: What we are doing is opening up a prospect.

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Dr. Kissinger: We can apply the same principles to ourselves of course. We have an obligation not to embarrass you just as we hope you will not embarrass us.

I want to give you our interpretation of our diplomatic contacts.

VM Ch'iao: There is no word 'diplomatic.'

Dr. Kissinger: No, I mean the channels, the means we will use to keep in contact; our understanding, no, our interpretation. Our understanding is that Ambassador Huang Hua will be the secret channel, and we will pass to him or you to us all matters of substantive importance. Secondly, you will notify us fairly soon of an open channel where the State Department can pass messages back and forth about such issues as exchanges, contacts and so forth. You can designate any capital you wish.

VM Ch'iao: Last night I asked for instructions from Premier Chou-En-lai on this matter so we now agree to your first point, that is, Ambassador Huang Hua as the secret channel. As for the second point, which capital will serve as the open channel, we will consider that further but hope you will too.

Dr. Kissinger: Paris has the advantage for us that the Ambassador who is there now and almost any successor will be appointed by the White House, as opposed to coming from the bureaucracy, and therefore will be controllable. So for us, Paris is very convenient.

VM Ch'iao: Well, can we tentatively agree on Paris as an open channel, but subject to further considerations?

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

VM Ch'iao: And also the possibility of more capitals for such contacts?

Dr. Kissinger: More than one would be very confusing for us.

VM Ch'iao: All right, then, we will just keep Paris. Because, honestly speaking, this word was put forward by you so we are not clear on what you mean by various channels. But for one secret and one open, I suggest Paris.

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Dr. Kissinger: I would suggest that within the next two to three weeks you notify us through the secret channel, and then we will make a very low-key announcement that we will be in touch with each other through Paris. I am assuming the secret channel is open now.

VM Ch'iao: Yes. Actually, we have already used it, and so far as we are concerned, we have been keeping it confidential very well.

Dr. Kissinger: And we have also.

VM Ch'iao: And will continue to keep it in strict confidence.

Dr. Kissinger: One other matter. It is conceivable that once the open channel is established, if something is put into it that you consider substantive, just put it back into the secret channel . . . give us the reply in the secret channel. My office has conducted many secret negotiations and there has never been a leak.

VM Ch'iao: I understand.

Dr. Kissinger: All right. Now, for your information, I have told you our position on Bangladesh, so there is no sense repeating it. I think they will announce within the next days the relief formula which I mentioned to you -- 33 and 1/3 percent. And again nothing will be treated as official unless we tell you and we will tell you first. The same about any specifics with respect to Soviet negotiations.

One other matter. As you know, I have been pressed by the Japanese to visit Japan for many months. It may be unavoidable in the next six weeks to two months. If I go it will, however, not be an official visit, but I will go there on the invitation of a private group. We simply wanted to let you know. It is not fixed. If it should be fixed, I will let you know in time. But I did not want to have been in Peking without letting you know the possibility.

Now, about the press conference this afternoon. First, let me make a general point, though it will be a painful one, but we have to understand it. We will, without any question, be asked whether our defense commitment to Taiwan remains in force. And we will have to refer to the President's World Report and say what is written there remains in force.

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Any attempt to avoid it would simply create an impossible situation, and the Prime Minister, I believe, understands this. But I want you to know we will do this in as low-key a way as we can. I am not asking you to approve it; I am asking you to understand the necessity of it.

I want to review with you what I intend to do this afternoon. I will first describe the process by which this communique was achieved. I will not bore you with the details. The basic point that I will try to achieve with this is to create a commitment by all the elements of our government to this communique. And I will therefore claim a greater degree of participation for the bureaucracy in the process than you may remember. The intention will be good. Another purpose will be to move most of the discussions into this period rather than to October, since we told everybody that my visit in October was primarily technical.

Secondly, I will describe the substance of the communique, specifically, the answer to the question of what does this communique mean. I will make two points. One, that, of course, there is the text of the communique which everybody can read, and secondly, there is the spirit of our discussions. And that we are talking . . . that after this long interval it has been a very delicate and difficult task for both of us, in which there are many obstacles ahead and in which both sides have had to exercise great restraint on many issues which are quite complex for them, but that it is in this spirit that it should be considered, and not every single word in the communique.

Now, I have had some questions written out of the kind that we expect to be asked, and I want to tell you about them. For example, "were there any secret deals?" "No."

"Were there any topics discussed which are not mentioned in the communique?" I will say "no." I will say the discussions, of course, were somewhat more detailed than in the communique. That will be all right, won't it?

(Ch'iao nods.)

Dr. Kissinger: "What was I doing during the sightseeing?" "I was working on the communique and other matters."

"Did I ever meet the Prime Minister alone?" I will say: "Yes, briefly, to arrange some technical matters." Wherever possible I will try to tell the truth. (laughter) Do you object?

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VM Ch'iao: No.

Dr. Kissinger: They will undoubtedly ask did we mention the prisoners in North Vietnam? I will say "yes, it came up in the general context of Vietnam. But the Chinese position has been explained in the communique."

VM Ch'iao: How do you anticipate the correspondents will raise this question:

Dr. Kissinger: They will say "Was it mentioned?" They probably will also ask me about Downey. I will say we recognize this is a matter of Chinese domestic jurisdiction, but we are of course concerned about it. But it is not an international matter as such.

VM Ch'iao: Yes, and I would hope that when you reply to that question you will reply just in the way you put it now because that will facilitate how we deal with this matter.

Dr. Kissinger: You can be sure.

VM Ch'iao: We don't want to complicate this matter.

Dr. Kissinger: No, but I wanted to be sure. It's an unusual thing to have an American press conference on Chinese soil.

VM Ch'iao: And the fact an American President has flown on a Chinese plane is also unprecedented.

Dr. Kissinger: I similarly will not give details. But if they bring up Andre Malraux's mention of economic aid I think in fairness to you I should say no, you never brought it up or asked for it.

VM Ch'iao: That's a fact.

Dr. Kissinger: It is a fact. I just don't want to breach the confidence of the discussions without mentioning it. If I am asked about anything concerning Chairman Mao, such as his health, I will make no comment. Or you tell me what I should say.

VM Ch'iao: You can say you have all seen the television of that interview, and he is in fine health.

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Dr. Kissinger: He certainly was vigorous. Can I say this?

VM Ch'iao: He was vigorous.

Dr. Kissinger: I am not saying it isn't true, I am saying whether it is proper for me to comment on him at all.

VM Ch'iao: Yes, you can say that. Proceeding from the facts you can say you all saw him on the television and saw he is vigorous.

Dr. Kissinger: I am delighted. It's no problem at all. I just want to be correct. When I am asked, 'what do we mean by normalization of relations?', what do you think we mean?

VM Ch'iao: We mean by 'normalization,' the establishment of normal diplomatic relations.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, and a gradual movement in that direction.

VM Ch'iao: 'Normalization' is aimed at the establishing of normal state relations, and what we are suggesting now is a process toward that goal.

Mr. Chang: As its object.

VM Ch'iao: In our communique establishing diplomatic relations with Mexico and Argentina we didn't use this, the word 'establishment of diplomatic relations', but used the words 'establishment of normal relations.' Establishment of normal relations means establishment of diplomatic relations.

Dr. Kissinger: You don't use words idly. I think I can handle the rest of this. Have you any questions?

VM Ch'iao: From my repeated many contacts with you it is my view that Dr. Kissinger has been very prudent in dealing with these matters.

First of all, I would like to express my deep appreciation for your letting us know about this in advance. The only question here is the question of the so-called "Defense Treaty." Of course, I cannot know exactly how you will raise this question and how you will make your low-key reply in concrete terms.

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Dr. Kissinger: I will answer it once. I will say, 'Gentlemen, we are here on the soil of a country with which we have no diplomatic relations and for which this is the most sensitive issue. Therefore do not keep asking this question. I will answer it once. We stated in the World Report our position on this, and the statement in the World Report remains intact. Then when the President goes back to Congress he will have to answer it again.

VM Ch'iao: Are you certain that this is what will happen?

Dr. Kissinger: It is certain to happen.

VM Ch'iao: And also a fact you describe. It is a fact in existence.

Dr. Kissinger: And I will not mention that. I only mentioned this to you so I will not claim any discussion between us on the subject. All this discussion about the press is between us.

VM Ch'iao: We appreciate very much what Dr. Kissinger has said in telling this to us. We hold this in the spirit of our discussions. Of course, you have a lot of difficulties. You cannot stop the press from raising these questions. We can only express the hope that you will be as prudent as possible.

Dr. Kissinger: Better that the question is asked and answered today. Because the longer it is not answered, the more extreme the answer will have to be when it is raised. But it will certainly be raised, so we will not get into that difficulty. But I will answer it only once.

VM Ch'iao: I only like to state that, first of all, we thank Dr. Kissinger very much for telling us about this. I also would like to say we do believe you will be able to handle this properly. We only hope you will avoid a situation where we would be forced to make a reaction.

Dr. Kissinger: What would be such a situation?

VM Ch'iao: I cannot anticipate all the things which might happen, but from what you have told us so far and if you proceed as you have said, we will need no response.

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Dr. Kissinger: It is highly improbable that I will go beyond this. In fact, I would say that flatly now if it were not for various uncertainties and the fact I have had only three hours sleep. But we both have interest to avoid a controversy, and I will go to great lengths to avoid your difficulty. One way I could handle it, for example, is not to wait for a question but just to state it and say I know you are going to ask me this and rather than wait for your question . . . but that may be a little too provocative.

VM Ch'iao: Keep it flexible.

Dr. Kissinger: It's certain to come.

VM Ch'iao: It might not be so good.

Dr. Kissinger: I agree.

VM Ch'iao: Sometimes you want to . . .

Dr. Kissinger: And I don't have to answer the question they give me anyway. Whatever the question is I will move it in the direction I gave you. All right, so we are finished. Now what happens next?

Mr. Chang: Your date (for the communique) is the 27th, but you say "visited until the 28th."

Dr. Kissinger: Let's date it the 28th. Or we could say "visited the 21st to the 27th and plans to stay another day." Now I have one other point which is a question of indifference to me. I promised Vice Chairman Yeh some information which would take about 15 minutes. When should we do it? It's up to you.

VM Ch'iao: When do you plan your press conference?

Dr. Kissinger: I would think, 5:00.

VM Ch'iao: That's too early, 5:00, because we still have the text in Chinese to give to you.

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Dr. Kissinger: The problem is they have to go to your banquet, don't they? And they have to file their story. So 5:00 is probably the latest they can do it.

VM Ch'iao: What we are concerned about is to be able to give him the Chinese before. But we can go ahead, since we agreed on the English text even if you check on the Chinese text. You won't release it right away, will you?

Dr. Kissinger: No, and then when both our sides retype this communique we should like to recheck it, but that can be done by the staff.

VM Ch'iao: Yes.

Mr. Chang: You hand yours to us, and we hand ours to you.

Dr. Kissinger: Do we know how to find you?

VM Ch'iao: Oh, yes.

Dr. Kissinger: Just make sure we know how to find you. I will have this typed. The question is, when can they release it? I am assuming right after we are finished with the press conference.

VM Ch'iao: No problem with us. I believe there will be no question left, but in the spirit of honesty I will get in touch with the Prime Minister as soon as possible.

Dr. Kissinger: And I with the President. I will have Marshall Green with me at the press conference for reasons which are obvious. I will do most of the talking.

VM Ch'iao: Some of our correspondents will also attend.

Dr. Kissinger: Certainly.

VM Ch'iao: I will not.

Dr. Kissinger: You should.

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