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

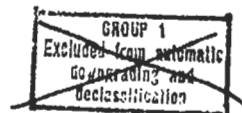
23 March 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: 45th Meeting with the Chinese - Paris, 5 March 1972

1. On the evening of 4 March 1972, Tsao called me and said that the Ambassador had learned that I was leaving shortly and insisted that I must come to dinner on Sunday night -- they could not allow me to leave without dinner together. I agreed to do so.
2. On Sunday evening, the fifth of March, I went to the Chinese Embassy Residence on Boulevard du Chateau in Neuilly -- on foot, leaving the car at a considerable distance. Met at the gate by Wei and at the door by Tsao, I was taken into the Red Room, where the Ambassador waited. After a drink, we repaired to a large dining room I had never seen before and sat down to dinner. On the wall was a tapestry of "Mao with the representatives of the ethnic minorities" covering the entire wall. It must have been more than twenty feet across. The Ambassador said that they had ordered it from a factory in Shanghai to fit that wall.
3. We then started what turned out to be about a fourteen-course meal with Chinese flower wine and French Chateau Haut Brion of an extremely old vintage. Ambassador Huang Chen said, "We could not let you go like this, even though we have completed our task together. You have become old friend, and we wanted to have a meal together before you left. We cannot, unfortunately, give you shark fin soup as that takes a week to prepare and we did not have enough notice. Whatever happens in the future, we at least successfully performed our mission and put our chiefs in contact. The fact that we were both soldiers made it easier for us to work together. Each understood what moved the other. Now you are going to more important functions."
4. I broke in to ask if he knew where I was going, and he grinned and said, "Yes, I know where you are going." He then drank a toast to

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me. I drank one to him, who had always been so helpful and understanding to me, especially during the early days of our contacts when we knew little about one another. I said to him, "You know that in my new job I will always serve my country faithfully, but I will always remember the friendship you showed me and the importance of the friendship between our two countries and peoples (another toast). He replied that he would have thought less of me if I had not expressed the will to serve my country faithfully.

5. The Ambassador then said that he felt a historic mission had been accomplished -- doors closed between our peoples for nearly a quarter of a century had been opened; the President had had a good visit to Peking; almost everyone seemed pleased except the Soviets and Americans who are pro-Chiang Kai-shek or pro-Soviet. I said that some pro-Soviet elements exist everywhere, even in China (he grinned) but that the overwhelming mass of the American people are in favor -- even, as he had noted previously, Senator Goldwater and Governor Reagan. He said he believed that the American press had by and large been satisfied with the treatment that they had received in China. Eighty-seven newsmen might seem like a small figure to us, but to them it was enormous and without precedent. No Chief of State who had ever visited the People's Republic had ever brought more than eight or ten pressmen with him. Besides, the Americans, coming from a highly industrialized and technological society, had requirements which were different from those of the average visitor to the People's Republic.

6. Ambassador Huang asked me whether the Soviets had commented to me about the President's visit to China. I said that none of them had, which made me believe that they had had instructions not to do so. All of them, however, had asked my officers or me what the President would bring up when he went to Moscow. When I told them I did not know, they had asked, "Will he bring up the Middle East?" I had replied cryptically that I thought that depended on what the Soviets did. He laughed and said this must have confused them.

7. Ambassador Huang then said that he felt that the negotiations had been completed successfully because so few people had known about them. In his embassy only Tsao and Wei had known. I agreed, saying

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that in our case only my secretary had known. He wondered how many people in the French government did -- "because they listen to the telephones and watch us." I said that I thought that knowledge of the contacts was very closely held in the French government. He agreed. At this point, a historic event occurred -- I ate my first 100-year egg.

8. Ambassador Huang then went back to the beginning of our contacts, saying that I had shown good judgment in coming to his residence early in the morning before he went to the chancery. I confessed that I had watched the residence for several mornings before my first contact, to see what time he drove to work, and that was why I had come at the time at which I had. He repeated, "Good judgment." He said that he understood that after my departure further arrangements would be made to ensure contact between the two governments but did not elaborate.

9. Ambassador Huang said that, regardless of political or ideological differences, we had become friends -- they regarded me almost as a member of the family -- and he hoped that, either in China or the United States, we would meet again as relations between our two countries normalized. He noted that we had met forty-five times. As he rose from the table, he raised his glass and toasted "our forty-sixth meeting, wherever it may be." He then said that I would always be welcome in China. The President and Dr. Kissinger had taken courageous action to reopen the door between our peoples, and he had told Peking of the part I had played in this. He then presented me with a green Chinese vase on a wooden stand, and I gave him a book of colored photographs of the United States with text in French. This time he himself walked me to the gate of the embassy residence, and we shook hands.



Vernon A. Walters  
Major General, USA

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