

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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

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

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador Ch'en Ch'u, Deputy Permanent
 Representative of the PRC to the UN
 Mrs. Shih
 Commander Jonathan T. Howe

DATE & TIME: Sunday, June 11, 1972, 4:30 - 5:15 p.m.

PLACE: New York City

After serving tea and brief amenities, Ambassador Ch'en indicated that the reason for asking Commander Howe to come up was the same as on the previous day. U. S. aircraft had intruded again into Chinese air space and each time it was more serious. The Ambassador, using prepared talking points, then presented the latest Chinese note (Tab A).

In presenting the protest, the Ambassador said that on June 4 and 9 U. S. military aircraft had on many occasions intruded into the air space of Kwangsi Province. He said that the Chinese side had lodged protests with the U. S. side on these occasions. They had also asked the U. S. side to take effective measures to stop a recurrence of U. S. aircraft intruding into Chinese air space. Messages had been delivered through Mr. Lord and Commander Howe on the last two occasions.

He then said that yesterday, June 10, from 056 to 058 hours, two sorties of U. S. military aircraft had again intruded into Chinese air space. The second sortie of U. S. military aircraft had even dropped bombs on the Pinghsiang area of Kwangshi Province. Prior to that incident, on June 9, U. S. military aircraft bombed around a Chinese merchant ship near Hon La Island of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam at 2112 hours. The name of the ship was HONGQI 150. Bomb splinters had seriously menaced Chinese personnel there.

The Ambassador continued that while carrying out repeated bombing of the northern part of Vietnam the U. S. side has been pressing up toward China. In addition to intrusions into Chinese air space, U. S. planes had bombed civilian structures and Chinese merchant ships, menacing Chinese people.

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Against this the Chinese side lodged a strong protest to the U. S. side. The U. S. side should understand that the Chinese side to date had exercised restraint. This restraint could not possibly be unlimited. If the U. S. side still failed to take effective measures it would inevitably affect measures for normalization of the relations between the U. S. and China. This was the message the Chinese side wished to convey to the U. S. Government.

The Ambassador then handed a note to Commander Howe (Tab A). After reading the note, Commander Howe first clarified that the merchant ship in the second paragraph of the note was the same merchant ship referred to in the first paragraph and then responded by making the following points:

-- On the previous day when Commander Howe returned to Washington the proper persons on the U. S. side, including Dr. Kissinger, had been informed of the Chinese note and an immediate and intensive investigation was instigated on an urgent basis into the allegations contained in the note. Naturally it took some time for the instigation of this investigation to have an effect but the U. S. side was investigating not only the actual incidents referred to in the note but the entire system of procedures used to guard against inadvertent violations of Chinese air space. In light of these new and serious allegations the U. S. side would intensify its investigation and would have a response within 48 hours.

-- The U. S. side regretted any damage that might have occurred to a Chinese ship or Chinese personnel. As had been stressed on the previous day, it was certainly not the intention of the U. S. side to violate Chinese air space or cause damage to Chinese people or property. The U. S. side views the situation with the utmost seriousness and will certainly investigate these allegations thoroughly on a most urgent basis.

The Ambassador replied that the question was that U. S. military aircraft had repeatedly violated Chinese air space and now had dropped bombs on civilian structures and a merchant ship. This time it was more serious. They earnestly hoped the U. S. would take effective measures to prevent a recurrence so as not to affect the normalizing of relations between the two sides.

Commander Howe indicated that he recognized that these developments were much more serious although the U. S. side also viewed the charges of intrusions into PRC air space with great seriousness. He specifically regretted that there had been a report of damage to civilian structures and wanted to reiterate

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that such an occurrence would be a grave violation of established practices and procedures. He reiterated that these measures were being intensively reviewed and that these new allegations would also be taken into account. The Ambassador could expect a response within 48 hours.

Commander Howe then asked the Ambassador a question to clarify the time of the intrusions referred to in the note, pointing out that the note indicated they had occurred shortly after noon Washington time on June 9. This would be only a short period after the incidents referred to in the note given to Commander Howe on the previous day; the incidents referred to in the latest note would have occurred before the U. S. side had been made aware of the other allegations of intrusions on June 9. In any case, the U. S. side would examine all of these allegations in the intensive investigation which had begun. The Ambassador agreed that the incidents had occurred close to 1:00 p. m. Washington time on June 9 since there was now a 12 hour time difference between Washington and Peking. The Ambassador stated that he hoped the U. S. side would really take measures to stop recurrences and then indicated that that was all he wished to say on that subject.

The conversation then turned to a more cordial conversation on noncontroversial subjects such as differences and similarities in geography and the American reaction to the Pandas. During this exchange the Ambassador referred to the fact that Commander Howe would visit more of China and see many other places that he had not yet seen in China as relations normalized. During the discussion of geography, the Ambassador noted that the Chinese think of the U. S. and China as the two arms of the world because they are on opposite sides of the globe.

In answer to the Ambassador's question of the previous day concerning when the U. S. might make a statement at Stockholm, Commander Howe indicated that a mild U. S. statement would probably be made at the meeting on Monday. Mrs. Shih noted she had seen something to this effect in the New York Times.

Commander Howe then took his leave indicating he wanted to ensure that the proper persons on the U. S. side were immediately aware of what was in the Chinese note. The Ambassador apologized for the personal inconvenience to Commander Howe and that he could not have a rest on Sunday but remarked that these matters were serious. Commander Howe responded that the U. S. side regarded them with equal seriousness, wanted to deal with them immediately, and it was not an inconvenience. These matters would be brought immediately to the attention of the proper persons. Although Commander Howe regretted the unhappy circumstances that necessitated this meeting, he was personally always glad to see the Ambassador and Mrs. Shih and he had enjoyed talking to them. The Ambassador thanked Commander Howe for the sentiment and escorted him to the elevator.

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On June 4 and 9, 1972, U.S. military aircraft successively intruded into China's airspace over the area of Kwangsi Province, against which the Chinese side has already lodged protests with the U.S. side. However, from 0056 to 0058 hours, June 10 (Peking time), U.S. military aircraft again flagrantly intruded into China's airspace on two occasions in two sorties, and in the second sortie, the area of Pinghsiang, Kwangsi Province, China, was bombed. Earlier at 2112 hours, June 9 (Peking time), U.S. military aircraft carried out bombing around a Chinese merchant ship "Hongqi No. 150" anchored near the Hon La Island of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. The ship was harmed by bomb splinters, and the life and safety of our personnel seriously menaced.

Recently while successively bombing north Viet Nam, the U.S. side has been pressing up to China's borders, intruding into China's airspace, and even going to the extent of bombing Chinese civilian structures and a Chinese merchant ship. This has obviously menaced the security and freedom of navigation of our country. The Chinese side hereby lodges a strong protest with the U.S. side against this. The U.S. side should understand that the Chinese side has to date exercised restraint, but such restraint cannot possibly be unlimited. If the U.S. side does not take effective measures to stop such actions, efforts towards the normalization of relations between China and the United States will inevitably be affected.