

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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INFORMATION

November 15, 1972 *[Handwritten checkmark]*

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER *HK*
SUBJECT: Sir Alec Douglas-Home's Recent Conversations with Chou En-lai *HK*

At Tab A are two complementary accounts of conversations with Chou En-lai by Sir Alec Douglas-Home, Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the Heath Cabinet, who visit Peking in late October. Sir Alec sent one to you directly via the British Ambassador; the second was sent to the Secretary of State who requested that we forward a copy to you.

There are no striking departures from known PRC positions revealed in Chou's remarks, although Sir Alec's account does reconfirm Chinese views on a number of issues. The major points covered in the accounts are as follows:

- Chou En-lai and other leaders "are obsessed by their suspicions of Russia." Chou views a unified Europe as a counterweight to the Soviets, as well as to the U.S. The Chinese leaders accept at present the U.S. nuclear umbrella over Europe and Japan. They think the West is naive in thinking that a detente with the USSR is possible given the present Soviet leadership.
- Regarding Vietnam, Chou En-lai said that the agreement that we have worked out with Hanoi (as revealed by the North Vietnamese on October 26) "provided an acceptable basis for a settlement provided it is scrupulously observed." Chou was suspicious of the delay in signing the agreement, and would not commit China to involvement in an international conference which would work out guarantees for the agreement.
- In discussing the Indian subcontinent, Sir Alec urged Chou to re-establish contact with New Delhi. The Chinese seemed unwilling to try this approach, their attitude again being colored by their suspicions of the Soviet Union.

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 13526, Section 3.5
By MLH Review 3/17/11
NARA, Date 4/26/12
NIN 04-59/5091 [p. 1 of 4]

The Chinese are right

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- Regarding Hong Kong, Chou seemed relaxed about the Colony, and indicated that China did not intend to make any sudden move regarding its status as they are content with present arrangements for the foreseeable future.
- In discussing national liberation movements, Sir Alec observed that the Chinese do recognize that establishment of state-to-state relations with other countries on the basis of the "five principles of peaceful coexistence" imposes certain restrictions on their subversive activities. At the same time, they express the view that it is their duty to give moral support to revolutionary movements, and material aid after control is established over part of the national territory the rebels are seeking to win. Sir Alec notes there are contradictions in their views on this issue "which would be interesting to probe as an opportunity offers itself."
- Sir Alec felt that Chou En-lai, despite his quick mind, was a man "beginning to feel his age." He found Foreign Minister Chi P'eng-fei more of a personality than anticipated, being shrewd, knowledgeable and forceful in his presentations. *note*
- China was found to be "even more primitive" economically than expected, although with notable social and political discipline. The country's leaders repeatedly emphasized to Sir Alec the "self-reliance" theme in their national development approach, and their desire to avoid indebtedness to other countries. He notes that while this may impose some limitation on China's development, "I am not sure they are not right in their own interest to limit the pace of economic expansion" because of the labor problems that would come with too much mechanization.

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