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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. memo	Samuel Berger to POTUS; re: Goals for & Progress on Your Trip to China (4 pages)	02/20/1998	P1/b(1), P5 KBH 4/12/2022

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
National Security Council
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FOLDER TITLE:

China [1]

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RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
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KBH 5/7/2021INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: SAMUEL BERGER

SUBJECT: Goals for and Progress on Your Trip to China

Prospects and Obstacles

As we plan your June trip to China, our relations with Beijing are more stable and less subject to extreme fluctuations than in recent years. The personal relationship you have developed with Jiang Zemin is an important part of this improvement, and Jiang is playing a leading role in pushing for steps needed to better relations. More generally, while the Chinese leadership remains wary of our intentions - toward the Chinese political system, in our alliance with Japan, and most importantly toward Taiwan - it seems to have accepted that China's interests are better advanced by a cooperative relationship with the United States than an adversarial one. There remain, however, important constraints on how far China can go to satisfy our requirements. The leadership's focus on reforming state-owned enterprises and the banking system will reinforce concerns over social unrest and make it wary of either political liberalization or rapid market liberalization.

The obstacles to improved relations this year, while less daunting than last year, are not insignificant: eleven bills hostile to our policy passed by the House last fall pending before the Senate; the need to assure Congressional acquiescence in implementation of the U.S.-PRC agreement on peaceful nuclear cooperation; the annual skirmishes at the UN Human Rights Commission and on MFN; and a May Legislative Council election in Hong Kong sure to be criticized for being less democratic than the 1995 election under British rule. In managing these issues, we should impress upon the Chinese the importance of steady progress throughout the year in order to prevent any of these from becoming a lightning rod for critics of our policy.

~~SECRET~~Reason: 1.5 (b) (d)
Declassify On: 02/20/08cc: Vice President
Chief of Staff

We have some carrots to deploy to induce positive Chinese steps. If and when China makes a sufficiently attractive offer to gain our support for WTO accession, we can offer to work with the Congress for permanent MFN, although Congressional action this year is not likely. If China takes the necessary steps on human rights, we can end support for a resolution in Geneva. If our relationship improves overall with human rights progress, we can lift or relax post-Tiananmen and other sanctions on TDA (we have sent a separate decision memo to you on this), OPIC, AID, and the sale of helicopter spare parts. If China agrees to post-license checks, we can liberalize exports of high technology products. And if China tightens its controls on missile technology exports, we can explore expanded cooperation in the peaceful aerospace sector.

Our Agenda for 1998 and Your Trip

We have started our dialogue with the Chinese on our bilateral objectives for this year and the kind of achievements we hope to see by the time of your visit. The Chinese reaction to our proposals thus far has been positive in tone but vague on specifics. They appear to be in a waiting posture for three reasons: 1) decisions will be difficult until after the March 5-15 National People's Congress, which will choose a new government expected to be headed by economic czar Zhu Rongji as the new Premier; 2) they want to lock in the date of your visit and will reserve movement on key issues until the run-up to that event; and 3) the Chinese leadership would be content with a summit that incrementally improves relations with the United States and does not require them to take the dramatic steps that could transform our relationship.

Nonetheless, we should push for a summit that is more than incremental, that provides the kind of rekindling of domestic support for U.S.-China relations you have mentioned to Chinese officials as your goal. We should set our goals high, with clear priorities and incentives for PRC action. We should aim for a summit that achieves these goals:

- *A strong economic core* - Agreement on Chinese accession to the WTO depends on Chinese attitudes that may not be clear until late March, but it is worth a push on our part. A more likely outcome would be agreement on the market access portion leaving agreement on WTO rules for the fall. In parallel we should urge steps to reduce the bilateral trade deficit. The Asian financial turmoil makes cooperation between Treasury and

the PRC Finance Ministry on international issues and Chinese banking reform an important objective. Finally, we should vigorously implement the October summit's initiative on energy and the environment.

- *Closer security cooperation* - The top priority, at least for the next several months, is Chinese understanding and acceptance of U.S. policy toward Iraq. PRC membership in the Missile Technology Control Regime (or agreement in principle on that goal) would parallel our achievement at last year's summit on nuclear proliferation. We should use visits by senior NSC, State, and Defense officials before your trip to develop an enhanced strategic dialogue and seek Chinese support for our policies on the Middle East, South Asia, Korea, and Central Asia.
- *Progress on human rights* - PRC decisions to sign the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and release dissidents such as Wang Dan could be decisive in our consideration of whether to sponsor a China resolution at the UN Human Rights Commission in April. Resumption of the PRC dialogue with the Dalai Lama's representatives is a long shot, but we are pressing for it. We should implement rapidly and fully the October summit rule of law initiative. With or without progress on these issues, we see as critical for the success of the visit your direct and broad access to the Chinese people. We have begun to lay the groundwork with the Chinese for such access. Possibilities could include a nationally televised address in China emphasizing democratic values and human rights and a town meeting with Chinese participants in which these themes would feature. These events would be valuable in their own right, but also would inoculate us against criticisms for failure to achieve all the human rights objectives our critics demand.
- *People-to-people initiatives demonstrating the value of U.S.-China relations to the populations of both countries.* We have suggested to the Chinese exchanges of high school students, financial seminars, management training, and expansion of the Peace Corps and Fulbright programs. These would supplement the fruitful and extensive cooperation we already enjoy under the 30 existing Science & Technology protocols, the October summit energy and environment initiative, and the law enforcement and rule of law agreements you reached with Jiang. We are exploring other high-profile initiatives that would build on and cut across these activities and demonstrate the value of U.S.-China relations at the grass-roots level, such

as in children's development, health care, and education. Such initiatives can provide unifying themes for the activities and stops on your trip.

Next Steps

We have proposed and the Chinese have accepted a late June timeframe for your visit. The relatively few weeks remaining before your visit means we will have to accelerate efforts on key issues to gain results. We will do this through frequent exchanges of visits by senior NSC and State officials with their Chinese counterparts between now and June. While your early visit will put pressure on both sides to produce results more rapidly, it also will have a very positive effect on Chinese attitudes, since they have been pushing for you to come in the first half of the year.