

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001a. profile sheet	NSC/RMO Profile Sheet (2 pages)	07/15/1995	P1/b(1) KBH
001b. memcon	Memorandum of Conversation between POTUS and Henry Kissinger [partial] (5 pages) <i>Partial release - KBH 9/21/2015</i> <i>KBH 4/12/2022</i>	07/13/1995	P1/b(1)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
 NSC Records Management
 ([Kissinger and Memcon])
 OA/Box Number: 594

FOLDER TITLE:

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2006-1449-F

rs491

RESTRICTION CODES

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

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

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- 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]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

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- PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).
- RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

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TO: SENS

FROM: SUETTINGER
ROTH

DOC DATE: 15 JUL 95
SOURCE REF:

KEYWORDS: CHINA P R

MEMCON

PERSONS: KISSINGER, HENRY A

HAIG, ALEXANDER

SUBJECT: MEMCON OF PRES MTG W/ KISSINGER & 3 OTHERS 13 JUL

ACTION: DOHSE APPROVED RECOM

DUE DATE: 19 JUL 95 STATUS: C

STAFF OFFICER: SUETTINGER

LOGREF:

FILES: PA

NSCP:

CODES:

DOCUMENT DISTRIBUTION

FOR ACTION

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FOR INFO

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DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 13526, Sec. 3.5 (b)
White House Guidelines, September 11, 2006
By KBH NARA, Date 5/25/2021
2017-0574-17

COMMENTS: _____

DISPATCHED BY _____ DATE _____ BY HAND W/ATTCH

OPENED BY: NSASK CLOSED BY: NSMEC DOC 1 OF 1

ACTION DATA SUMMARY REPORT

DOC ACTION OFFICER

CAO ASSIGNED ACTION REQUIRED

001 SENS

Z 95071711 FOR DECISION

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X 95071917 DOHSE APPROVED RECOM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Three Others re China (C)

PARTICIPANTS:

The President	Henry Kissinger, former
The Vice President	Secretary of State
Warren Christopher, Secretary of State	Alexander Haig, former Secretary of State
Leon Panetta, Chief of Staff	Maurice Greenburg, Chairman, American International Group
Anthony Lake, National Security Advisor	John Whitehead, former Deputy Secretary of State
Samuel R. Berger, Deputy National Security Advisor	
Robert Suettinger, NSC (notetaker)	

DATE, TIME July 13, 1995; 2:35-3:10 p.m.
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

(Greetings and introductions)

The Vice President: The last time I saw Al Haig, we were both out campaigning in the middle of a field in New Hampshire. (C)

Gen. Haig: I think there were two or three people there -- it was like a graveyard. And the coldest night of the year. (C)

The President: When did you get back? (C)

Dr. Kissinger: I got back on Friday. I think John (Whitehead) got back a couple days earlier. We were in China for a meeting of the U.S.-China Society, which meets every year. (C)

The President: Where do you think we are in the relationship? (C)

Dr. Kissinger: Well, as you know, we have never asked for a meeting with you before but decided to do so on this occasion. We are all four of us deeply concerned about the current state of Sino-American relations. I've been to China 25 times or so, beginning back in 1971. And in all that time, I've never seen

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such potential for disintegration of relations. So one evening, when we were sitting around together in Beijing, we decided to request a meeting with you. Since most of us are Republicans, we considered it best to work more formally. (C)

The President: Well, I've just signed the Base Closing report, which will probably end up costing me 54 electoral votes in California. (C)

Dr. Kissinger: If the Administration can move in the direction of improving relations with China, we will do what we can to help with the Republicans in Congress, who I believe are behaving very irresponsibly on this issue these days. I spoke this morning before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and I was very critical of recent Congressional actions toward China, particularly some of the measures before Senator Helms, sponsored by Republicans. (C)

But to get back to our trip to China. The entire time we were there, we were exposed to a litany of complaints. They said that beginning with President Bush's sale of F-16s to Taiwan and moving on through Tiananmen sanctions, other weapons sales and policy changes, to the decision to allow Lee Teng-hui to visit Cornell, the U.S. has proceeded toward a "two Chinas" policy. Reaffirming our "one China" policy, which I did repeatedly, does not reassure them any more. (C)

I told them the decision on Lee Teng-hui was not a strategic shift but was a political decision, trying, among other things, to avoid worse consequences with Congress. They said, even if that's true, once the sequence that leads toward Taiwan independence starts, it can't be controlled. And they won't stand for it. If it comes to a choice between good relations with the United States and Taiwan's independence, they would rather have bad relations with the U.S. This case was put to us so incessantly, and with such conviction, that I take it seriously. And that's why I'm here. (C)

I got a call from Lane Kirkland -- who's no friend of mine -- urging me to take up the Harry Wu case while I was there -- try to intercede with Chinese leaders. The Embassy also encouraged us to raise it, which we did. Recognizing there are lots of practical problems that need to be addressed, I didn't accuse them of illegality or gross immorality in arresting Harry Wu. Rather, I said I was concerned about its impact on Sino-American relations at a very difficult time. Their version of the story was that Wu appears to be a plant, a provocation to disturb relations, which will then provide the U.S. Government with the excuse it needs to continue on its chosen course toward "two Chinas." (C)

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I believe that if we can all just quiet down a little bit, not hammer away at them in the press about how this is an example of their evil system, there is at least a reasonable chance of Wu's being released in two or three weeks. (C)

So that, Mr. President, is the essence of my report. (C)

Gen. Haig: I think they don't really want a confrontation with us. But the constant dripping -- F-16s, post-Tiananmen sanctions, human rights accusations, transparency questions, IPR and now Taiwan -- has really got them. The Foreign Minister was very consistent, very tough on the problem in the Taiwan Straits. It's the first time I've seen them engaging directly

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(C)

If we have a major breach in our relations, and go to sanctions on this or that, I think we have to be prepared for the isolation of the United States on this issue. The Europeans are fully into China and won't go along. The Japanese won't join us in any kind of punitive effort. Furthermore, we'd be forcing the Chinese into the arms of Russia and Iran. That kind of a coalition could be devastating. Looking at it from the perspective of our long-run interests, it's very dangerous for us to go on this way. It's time for both sides to stop, take a deep breath and cool this dispute off. (C)

As Republicans, we have a special responsibility to work on those members of our party who are inflaming the problem -- they are so volatile. I told Gingrich to get off this wicket. And he said that he would. (C)

Mr. President, you have got to get out and make a definitive statement about U.S.-China relations. It's a very difficult thing. I don't know. Can we do it without losing face? We can't promise Beijing that we'll never allow another Lee visit. (C)

Mr. Greenburg: I believe, Mr. President, that it's time for quiet diplomacy. I've been going to China for 20 years, two or three times a year. And I've never seen relations as bad as they are now. We can't tamper with the "one China" policy. They think we've done so by deeds, if not words. They see an erosion in the validity of the "Three Communiqués." Anything that threatens the communiqués, in their view, is bad. I'm particularly concerned at the spreading effect of this dispute in Asia. We can't have an Asia policy unless China is in the midst of it. If our relations with China go awry, we could end up destabilizing all of Asia. (C)

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We've got to bridge this gap. They think we started the problem, so we have to take the initiative. (C)

The Harry Wu case is a red herring. If the United States takes steps to improve the overall relationship, I think the Chinese will work quietly to let Wu out. But the more noisy the case becomes, the more it plays into the hands of the hardliners in China. (C)

Mr. Whitehead: Mr. President, I'm very alarmed about this. I think there's an even scarier outcome possible. The Chinese believe we've violated the "Three Communiqués" by letting Lee Teng-hui come to the United States. They never said this directly, but they may now think they're free to violate the communiqués, too. By taking Taiwan militarily. They may feel that they need to take action to prevent Taiwan from becoming independent. If they invade, or blockade Taiwan, will we come to its defense? I know that's a grim outlook, but that's the road we're heading down, in my view. It's time to take action, to change course. (C)

Dr. Kissinger: It's not just that they think we've broken the "Three Communiqués." When I met with Premier Li Peng, he was much more blunt. He asked me, does the United States see China as our enemy? And I got the same question from the Foreign Minister. For whatever reason, they seem to view the Lee visit as a harbinger of far more difficult relations with the U.S. (C)

The President: What do you think we should do? (C)

Dr. Kissinger: I don't think we need to do anything dramatic. I think there's a sequence of steps that both sides can take. Both seem to agree on what they are. It's just a matter of taking them. I'm confident they will work -- I talked to Warren about them. (C)

Even on the question of missile proliferation to Pakistan, I don't think there's anything new happening. Although I hasten to add that I don't know the basic facts. (C)

But I agree with my colleagues completely. Everything depends on the state of U.S.-China relations. And I don't think they want a confrontation. (C)

Mr. Greenburg: I had a meeting with Xiao Rong (Deng Rong), Deng Xiaoping's daughter. EO 13526 1.4d

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Gen. Haig: Not to make this worse, but whatever the Chinese hear from you, they'll hear something very different from the Republicans. It's a classic challenge: Administration policy, Congressional opposition. (C)

The Vice President: Gingrich just called for withholding money from the delegation to the Women's Conference in Beijing. (C)

The President: He also made it pretty clear he favors "two Chinas." (C)

Well, I concede they are seeing things in their own way. And their domestic problems and succession mean it's the lowest common denominator view. They can't seem to stop asking that the relationship be a one-way street. I didn't sell F-16s, Bush did. And it was pretty clear why he did it. We're-making every effort to understand their domestic political situation and factor it into our policy. Why can't they do the same for us? (C)

I delinked MFN and human rights, and things seemed to be going along pretty well. They were helpful in Korea, working with the North. In fact, I don't think we would have been able to reach an agreement without China's help. They also helped out a little bit on MTCR last year. (C)

But otherwise, things have not gotten better.

EO 13526 1.4d

And they get all the benefits of our market. You know our biggest foreign aid program is buying 30 percent of their exports. (C)

The Vice President: They seem to be so out of touch. Did you sense that in your discussions with them? (C)

Dr. Kissinger: I don't know. I didn't get any of that. (C)

The President: You know, when I brought in their ambassador, I told him that I understand this issue is a very sensitive one for them and that I know we don't view a lot of things about human rights and democracy in the same way. But I told him this is a country where a man can be allowed to visit his alma mater, make

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a speech, be permitted to travel. Lee's not a criminal. And we didn't ask him to come to Washington, it wasn't an official visit. (C)

But I understand where they're coming from. It's OK, a laydown that we purchase 30-40 percent of their exports, they feel they've earned some kind of reward from us. (C)

Dr. Kissinger: There were no economic threats issued in my hearing. Part of the problem is that their perceptions are shaped by their historical experience. On the one hand,

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I remember once I was traveling in China and went to the city of Suzhou, where they have a lot of canals. I said to my hosts that I understood Suzhou was called "the Venice of China." They said that, actually, Venice should be called "the Suzhou of Europe." (C)

On the other hand, when you add in the experience of the 19th century, with colonial domination and division, it's a very painful memory, even today. They don't like hearing Western prescriptions for their problems. (C)

So when problems arise in relations, they blame us first. I'm afraid, under the circumstances, we have to take into account the idiosyncrasies that have built up over 5,000 years. (C)

The President: I tried. (C)

Dr. Kissinger: I think that you had a right to expect more progress on human rights in return for your decision. Maybe they didn't see it that way. But the Taiwan question is too big an issue for them. They don't feel they can compromise. They view it in the context of their history with Japan, too. It was taken away from them 100 years ago. Now they see it happening again -- they can't back away. (C)

You could not back away from a policy decision without political

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damage from your opponents. They said that you have it in your power to prevent another Lee visit. It doesn't have to happen again unless you say so. (C)

Gen. Haig: We're not here to blame you or side with them. There's a sea change going on in terms of our relations with China and Taiwan. And the Republicans are part of the problem. (C)

The President: It's like a funhouse. I got a letter the other day, signed by Helms and Wellstone, D'Amato and Harkin -- polar opposites, politically, but saying the same things about China. I really thought I was in a funhouse. Domestically, you know, we're engaged in some very fundamental debates on issues of great importance. Where our society is going on issues like welfare and health care. Everyone is upset, saying pretty extreme things. I can understand that the Chinese would be in a similar situation. (C)

So what do you think is the best we can do about Jiang Zemin coming to the UN in October? (C)

Dr. Kissinger: The first thing is for Warren to talk to the Foreign Minister. That could lead to a discussion of what each side thinks a "one China" policy really means. Then you can raise your concerns -- on human rights, nonproliferation. They, in turn, can talk "strategically" about Japan and India. (C)

The President: EO 13526 1.4d (C)

Dr. Kissinger: As they see it, our problems with China are less significant than their problems with Japan and India. They love to talk about the big picture, engage in strategic dialogue. And

I really believe that if you consult with them -- not just lecture them -- they will respond. (C)

As far as Jiang Zemin is concerned, they understand fully that it's not in their interest to have him come here for a press disaster. I think we should work to put together a modest set of achievements that could come from such a visit. (C)

The President: I'm very worried that the Harry Wu problem could blow everything off the tracks. That issue has real legs, politically. It is potentially a very bad problem. (C)

Dr. Kissinger: When I met with Deng Rong last November, we got to talking about Fang Lizhi, the dissident who took refuge in the U.S. Embassy after Tiananmen. She was well-briefed. She told me

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we worked for a long time on a package deal to get Fang out -- you take this step, we'll take that. By the time we had worked out the steps and Fang was released, the Berlin Wall was down, the Soviet Union was falling apart, Ceaucescu was dead. The world had changed. Unfortunately, I don't know what a package deal for Harry Wu might include. (C)

I know that whatever we do, we have to include a significant strategic component in our discussions and avoid lecturing them. It will drive them mad if we talk narcotics, human rights and missiles but not Russia, Japan and Southeast Asia. When we talked to them about these issues on our trip, we didn't come to great agreement -- it was just expositions. If you can do this, I'm sure you will have success. (C)

Gen. Haig: On the question of Jiang coming here during the UN anniversary, I know that, at least prior to the current problems, they wanted him to be invited to Washington. This last trip, when I asked the Foreign Minister if Jiang would come if we invited him, he just rolled his eyes. I think that if we do invite him, you need some kind of bipartisan assurance from the Hill that they'll allow the visit to be successful. (C)

The President: We can't have him come here and get rained on. (C)

Dr. Kissinger: I think the invitation should be unconditional. We can work with them so that they do the right things on their part. (C)

The President: I appreciate your being willing to work together with us on this problem. I've been worried sick about it the last several days. I spent two hours on the phone, calling people all over the country to talk about what we can do to turn this around. It's bad for the United States, bad for China, too. Somehow, I hope you can let them know that I want to get this relationship back on track. (C)

The Vice President: Working with the Hill is really important right now. (C)

The President: I don't know. I met with Newt the other night for dinner. We talked for about three or four hours. At the same time as he's making outrageous statements about China, he asked us to help get some of the newer Republican members out there so they understand the problems better. Wants to send 130-140 of 'em out there in a big herd. (C)

Dr. Kissinger: I've talked to Gingrich before. And I'm seeing him later on this afternoon. (C)

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The Vice President: I hope you can straighten him out. (C)

The President: It's not that I think they're stupid; they're just prisoners of their own experience. I can't do much with them. Maybe you can. (C)

Let me just say I appreciate your coming in to talk to us about this. It's a very important problem. I hope you'll continue working with us. (C)

Dr. Kissinger: Thank you for taking the time to see us, Mr. President. (C)

-- End of Conversation --

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