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CI/SO Summary on: Meeting Between Chou en-Lai and the Americans

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26 Nov 1971

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EX-9320

26 Nov 1971

~~CI/SS Internal Use Only~~SUBJECT: Meeting ~~with~~ Between Chou en-Lai and the Americans

Source said on 11 Nov

Leibel BERGMAN's group of RU people, minus BERGMAN who remained in Peking on business, departed Peking by train on the morning of 3 October 1971 for a tour of the countryside. The first stop was some two and one-half hours following the departure. We had planned to be gone for about ten days but at this first stop we were suddenly told to gather our things and leave the train in order to return to Peking at once. No reason was given for this change in our plans and of course speculation was rife. Whether by plan or by accident I do not know, but a train arrived in the station within minutes heading to Peking. We boarded and retraced our steps.

We returned to our ^{former} rooms in the Peking Hotel and more or less just sat around the hotel "waiting". Waiting for what, we did not know. Our luggage was still in the hotel so it was not too uncomfortable but still "waiting" for the unknown - always somewhat frustrating.

It was not until the morning of 5 October 1971 that we were advised of the reception which CHOU planned to hold that same night in the Hall of the People. the Liaison Committee people (part of the Liaison Department of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party) knew in advance what was planned, they did not tell us until that morning. The excitement was considerable during the day as anticipation took hold.

The reception was from about 2030-2300 hours and no food or refreshments were served. The reception was ONLY for Americans and I understand that about seventy attended including a number of "permanent residents". Of course there were many Chinese officials present but no other foreigners. In addition to CHOU, Gum Piu, an old member of the Politburo was present but his age forced him to remain seated throughout. There was TV coverage of course.

And it was a reception in the full formal sense. Each American was
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ated personally and individually by CHOU. Each hand was shaken. Each American was introduced by name. CHOU seemed to be in good health and his handshake was firm and strong. If I had to describe his health I would say that CHOU seemed to be in vigorous good health. As you can imagine it takes some time to "go through the line" in such a meaningful fashion. I did not hear CHOU say anything personal to any of the visitors as they met him but I am sure that he did.

The Hall of the People is large and the lounge chairs had been arranged in a semi-circle around the podium. The heads of the various American delegations sat in the front row of chairs and included: Husy NEWTON, Robert AVAKIAN, Mrs. CARMELITA ("Mother") HINTON, Jack BELDEN, William H. HINTON, Frank COE and ostrich-like Sol ADLER.

CHOU en-Lai spoke through an interpreter. He gave a short introduction of greeting and then reviewed the history of Chinese-American relations. He talked of the Chinese Revolution and of the pending visit of President NIXON. CHOU asked, "Why is China now negotiating?" He then explained that China had always been willing to negotiate with the Americans and had done so regarding Chang Kai Shek in the 40's, regarding the Korean War in the 50's and since then in Poland and in Geneva.

CHOU said that some may ask how China can continue its military preparations while indicating a willingness to negotiate. He explained that negotiations and arms go hand in hand and that, the more meaningful the negotiations, the more military divisions are needed for "defensive" purposes.

CHOU made it totally clear that TAIWAN, Vietnam and support for peoples' wars are non-negotiable items. He indicated that "normalization of relations are stated negotiations". He ~~stressed~~ stated that Taiwan is an integral part of China but did not stress any of the points he made. It was all fairly low-key yet meaningful. He showed that the Chinese "line" has remained constant through the years and that there has never been or will there ever be a compromise on principle. The "line" of 1937 is the "line" of today.

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NIXON took the initiative concerning a visit to China. CHOU said that the overture from NIXON concerned the possibility of Mrs. NIXON visiting China. This did not materialize for some reason, NIXON then asked if his daughter could visit China on her honeymoon. It became obvious to the Chinese that NIXON wished to visit China himself and it was decided to invite him. CHOU turned to John SERVICE at this point with some remark about the invitation and SERVICE seemed to say that CHOU had behaved properly. However, CHOU made the point that it was NIXON who was coming to the Chinese and not the Chinese who were coming to NIXON.

(note: I might add that on the day we returned to Peking by air from our tour of the Chinese countryside, the KISSINGER aircraft was parked at the airport and was seemingly unguarded. This was about 15 October and was KISSINGER's second Peking visit in connection with the NIXON 1972 trip to China.)

CHOU only lightly touched on the possibility that China would be seated in the United Nations. He did stress that China was always willing to support the armed struggle of oppressed peoples.

The only time I recall CHOU speaking in English (I think he understands it fairly well) was when he made a remark to Bill EPTON about the PLP.

CHOU talked about Japan, too. He did not seem too sanguine about a normalization of relations between the two countries if Japan persisted in increasing its trade with Taiwan and persisted in its militaristic policies. CHOU expressed the view that militarism usually follows rapidly on the heels of an increase in trade. He expressed that the Japanese military budget had been increased by 30% and that a military doctrine was evolving which glorified Admiral YAMOMOTO. I think he may also have mentioned the MISHIMO incident of a year ago. His final point on Japan was to show how many former American military bases in Japan had been taken over by the Japanese and were still open.

CHOU made reference to the presence of Huey NEWTON and indicated that NEWTON would soon be sending a delegation to Japan.

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CHOU asked EPTON about the strength of the PLP and the latter said that it seemed to be as strong as ever. CHOU asked if there were some dissidents in the PLP and EPTON said there were not many. CHOU asked if EPTON felt he would be able to draw many people out of the PLP and EPTON said, "No". EPTON's answers seemed to disappoint CHOU and I sensed a chill of sorts enter the hall and affect CHOU and the audience. CHOU simply exhorted EPTON to work harder and promised that if he did so he could accomplish his tasks. The consensus was that EPTON was disgraced even though he probably felt that he was being totally accurate in his replies.

CHOU talked about China's relations with the USSR stressing their common border and the 100,000 troops which the Soviets have massed along it including other large forces in Mongolia. CHOU stated that, even if China was simultaneously attacked by the USSR, by the USA, by India and by Japan, China would survive and deal successfully with each of them.

CHOU said that our visits are among the first of many which will take place. Some 10,000 applications for visas/are currently on file. "The crack has been made and will widen. The door is open."

There was no opportunity to levy any questions on CHOU and, following his remarks, he departed. He did not mention the visits of Bulganin and Brezhnev to Canada-Cuba and to France nor the visit of NIXON to the USSR as I recall.

We have asked ourselves WHY. Why did CHOU have the meeting? What did he wish to accomplish? What message did he wish to give us and the USG? There are many possible answers. Personally, I found the meeting to be of no particular significance.

N/S/S

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