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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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 E.O. 12958 as amended
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ACTION

December 31, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: SECRETARY KISSINGER

FROM: RICHARD H. SOLOMON *RHS*

SUBJECT: The Current State of U. S. - PRC Relations:
 Parallelism in International Affairs;
 Shaky Bilateral Ties

25x(1) A number of recent revealing [redacted] reports, and concurrent developments at our Peking Liaison Office, lead me to summarize the current state of U. S. - PRC relations. Basically, while your discussions with the top Chinese leadership over the past two and one-half years have developed a certain conceptual consensus which now imparts a parallelism to our respective foreign policies, our bilateral ties are developing at best slowly and have uncertain stability for the future. Events of the past six months suggest that strong political and bureaucratic forces within China are limiting the institutionalization of a durable relationship between the U. S. and the PRC. Available evidence suggests Chairman Mao and Premier Chou have found it difficult to get their views on U. S. - PRC normalization accepted both ideologically and operationally by the Chinese bureaucracy, thus raising for the U. S. the question of the survivability of our relations with Peking after Mao and Chou have passed from the scene.

In conclusion, this analysis suggests a number of actions you may wish to take in order to strengthen the development of stronger bilateral ties with the Chinese.

Official PRC Fears of U. S. - Soviet "Collusion"

25x(1) A recent [redacted] report confirms your speculation of last summer that the results of the Brezhnev Summit in June (coupled with Congressional action on the Cambodia bombing question) led to a cooling of Peking's attitude toward us. What is surprising and disturbing about the [redacted] report (Tab A) is its revelation that the official in the Foreign Ministry who articulated fears about our dealings with the Soviets was one of Premier Chou's closest advisers, and an official directly involved in your discussions with Mao and Chou -- Chang Wen-chin. 25X1

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 BYAUTH Sec. Kissinger

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Last June, Chang assessed the implications of the just-concluded Brezhnev Summit in Washington in an official Foreign Ministry analysis. He concluded that the U. S. had stepped up its collusion with the Soviets, heightening pressure on the world's revolutionary forces. Chairman Mao himself read Chang's report and denounced its conclusion as "rubbish." Previous [REDACTED] reporting on this document also indicates that Mao at the same time criticized the Foreign Ministry for bogging down the development of China's new contacts with the U. S. in a sea of daily trivia which could sour the relationship. Mao added that if his officials did not keep in mind the major issues which required accommodation with the U. S., then excessive attention to the minor issues would lead to internal squabbling within the Chinese government.

One immediate outcome of Chang Wen-chin's criticized report was his confession of error in "the application of ideology" and his demotion to Ambassador to Canada. Then, in September 1973 -- after the Tenth Party Congress -- an official Foreign Ministry document was circulated which formally criticized Chang's analysis and reaffirmed the correctness of Mao's "revolutionary line in foreign policy," which was admitted to be a matter of "struggle between the two lines" [of revolution versus "revisionism"] within the Party. The document also stressed that the slogan, "We must liberate Taiwan" had been changed deliberately to, "Taiwan must be liberated" in order to emphasize that China should not push the U. S. on troop withdrawals from the island as this would be advantageous to the Soviets.

The one difficult conclusion that must be drawn from the Chang incident is that even officials closely identified with Chou -- and who presumably are privy to your exchanges with both the Chairman and the Premier -- have doubts about the direction of our policy and the wisdom for the PRC of Mao's pro-U. S. policy. One can only speculate about the questions which may exist in the minds of those officials further removed from the Chairman and Premier. The argument which we by implication attribute to the late Lin Piao -- that China can better preserve her security by mitigating its conflict with the Soviets than by balancing the Russian threat with a closer relationship with the U. S. -- may have more appeal than we are aware, and is likely to have continuing attraction for those who do not share Mao's pathological hatred of the Soviets.

The "Sea of Trivia" Which Continues to Impede U. S. - PRC Bilateral Ties

The above information comes at a time when we have a worrisome record for 1973 of petty difficulties in developing smooth working relations with PRC officials via our Peking Liaison Office, together with indications that the Chinese are not prepared to deepen their exchange contacts or other dealings with the U. S. in a way that would begin to build durable ties between the two countries.

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In a recent cable (Tab B) Ambassador Bruce has written of his "deep concern" with "recent picayune incidents such as refusal to issue temporary duty visas for USLO replacements, obviously exaggerated complaints over the Marine Guard, long delays in answering requests for appointments with officials, and various indications of a marked lack of reciprocity here for our sensitive treatment of PRCLO representatives in the United States." To this evaluation must now be added concern about the implications of the recent PRC demand that we withdraw from USLO one of our most effective young FSOs who was involved not long ago in a fatal traffic accident in which he was not evidently at fault.

In terms of substantive issues, concern should also be expressed about the way the Chinese bureaucracy handled the claims/blocked assets problem. While there was some basis for suspicion of our proposals regarding the mechanics of a settlement of this issue, the ad hominem and uncompromising way in which the ascerbic Lin P'ing (Director of the American Division of the Foreign Ministry) presented the PRC position in the counterpart talks during your November trip to Peking gives little confidence that the Chinese bureaucracy is enthusiastic about promoting U. S. - PRC normalization. Mao and Chou apparently have good reason to be concerned about the Foreign Ministry souring our developing relationship.

In terms of the exchange program, one can only add that available evidence indicates great reluctance on the part of the PRC to develop meaningful, longer term scientific and cultural contacts. They have shown little interest in having additional American cultural groups such as the Philadelphia Orchestra come to China to develop a positive public mood about our new relationship. They have been equally unresponsive to our proposals that they send their scientists or scholars to the U. S. for periods of substantive research. Indeed, one recent [REDACTED] report indicates that a plan to send Chinese physicists to American laboratories to do work on basic nuclear science has been scrapped in favor of closer cooperation with European researchers.

There appear to be two reasons for the reluctant and at times self-righteous posture the Chinese have taken in our bilateral dealings -- both related to the continuing unsettled state of PRC domestic politics: One is a long tradition of the bureaucrats and Party cadre to be cautious about appearing too enthusiastic in support of "rightist" policies. The political struggles of the past two decades have taught them that "the line" always swings back to "the left"; and when it does those who were active supporters of a less revolutionary stand become vulnerable to political attack. The current indications of on-going political factionalism in the wake of the

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Cultural Revolution and the Lin Biao affair -- even though apparently directed against "the left" -- suggest that the political atmosphere within the Chinese bureaucracy would engender caution about actively supporting the policies of aged leaders which eventually may be vulnerable to radical criticism. The second reason is that the current debate in the PRC about Confucius has a strong element of criticism of the intellectual community. U. S. - PRC exchanges involve, above all, China's intellectuals; and it seems likely that exchanges will have to remain at a tenuous level for a considerable period of time, until (if at all) the Chinese sort out a positive role for their scientists and academics that will permit this "bourgeois" element of their society to have greater contact with the "outside."

The one area of our bilateral relations where progress has outpaced expectations is trade. Even here, however, we have received reports of frustration on the part of Chou En-lai about conservative and unimaginative economic policies of the part of the bureaucracy which have hindered the growth of China's export potential. This situation led the Premier last fall to sack his Minister of Foreign Trade and replace him with a man presumed more responsive to official guidance. 25X1

What Is To Be Done?

This analysis has been based on the assumption - [redacted] - that Chairman Mao and Premier Chou continue to encounter difficulties in bringing their bureaucracy fully behind the process of U. S. - PRC normalization. What, if anything, can we do about such a situation? While obviously we are in a position of largely having to follow the lead of the Chairman and the Premier, there are a number of initiatives we could take which might help them to confront bureaucratic foot-dragging in their own house and identify a larger slice of their top leadership with the policy of U. S. - PRC normalization than has been the case thus far;

-- State is now considering a demarche to the Chinese Liaison Office at the Assistant Secretary level raising our concern about the overall trend of developments regarding our Liaison Office in Peking. I suggest that this would be most effective if done in parallel with a personal message from you to the Premier, transmitted via Ambassador Bruce, which indicated in general terms your concern about recent trends and their implication for both the workings of the Liaison Office and more generally for the prospect of normalized dealings between the U. S. and PRC which will stand the test of time.

-- The PRC is planning to send a trade delegation to the U. S. this spring. You might personally invite an important high political official --

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either Vice Premier Li Hsien-nien, or Minister of Foreign Trade Li Ch'iang -- to head up this delegation.

-- During your next trip to China you should seek opportunities to meet with a broader range of PRC officials than has been the case in the past. This might include a trip to several key provincial cities where you could meet with key regional leaders.

Recommendations:

1. That we prepare a draft message from you to Premier Chou expressing your personal concern about prospects for insitutionalizing normalized U. S. - PRC relations (to be coordinated with any State demarche to PRCLO about recent developments regarding the functioning of USLO):

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

2. That we take steps to explore the possibility of inviting a high-level PRC official to head the trade delegation which will visit the U. S. this coming spring:

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

3. That we include in planning for your next trip to the PRC events which would hold the possibility of meeting with a broader range of Chinese officials, perhaps including a tour of several key provincial cities.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

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