

No Objection To Declassification in Full
2010/09/08 : LOC-HAK-114-5-1-8

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Nixon - Chou letters

1972-73

No Objection To Declassification in Full
2010/09/08 : LOC-HAK-114-5-1-8

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 8, 1972

Dear Mr. Premier:

I want to inform you personally of a major decision I have made concerning Southeast Asia which I am announcing tonight.

In recent weeks we have intensified our efforts to find a just peace in Indochina. We have resumed negotiations with the North Vietnamese in public and private forums and have offered to discuss either mutual de-escalation or a settlement of military issues alone or a comprehensive settlement. At the same time we have used all available means to point out the consequences of Hanoi's trying to impose a military solution.

The response to our efforts has been North Vietnam's massive public and private negotiations. In these circumstances, I have ordered certain military actions in order to bring this conflict to a close. Effective immediately, all entrances to North Vietnamese ports are being mined and United States forces have been directed to take appropriate measures to prevent ships from delivering supplies to North Vietnam. Rail and other communications within North Vietnam will be interrupted to the maximum extent possible.

These actions are not directed at any other nation. Special care has been taken that all foreign vessels currently in North Vietnamese ports will be able to depart safely within three daylight periods. After that time any ships attempting to leave or enter these ports will do so at their own risk. It is my hope that there will be no incidents involving third countries.

These operations are designed to bring the conflict to a rapid end on a basis just to both sides. They will stop when American prisoners of war are returned and there is an internationally supervised ceasefire throughout Indochina. When these conditions are met, we will stop all of our military acts of force throughout Indochina and proceed with a complete withdrawal of all American forces from Vietnam within four months.

- 2 -

We understand that the People's Republic of China must take certain formal positions in response to these developments. At the same time, in the spirit of frankness that has characterized our conversations thus far, we would hope that you would understand the imperatives that have forced this decision upon us.

It is easy to employ phrases like "imperialism." Such slogans will not stand the test of the reasonable proposal I am setting forth this evening to end the war. Our terms provide for the United States to withdraw with honor. They would end the suffering and bring prisoners home. They would not require surrender and humiliation on the part of either side. They would allow negotiation on a political settlement that reflects the popular will. They would permit all the nations which have suffered in this long war to turn at last to the urgent works of healing and peace. They deserve immediate acceptance by North Vietnam.

No Objection To Declassification in Full 2010/09/08 : LOC-HAK-114-5-1-8

YOU KNOW OUR POSITION from our exchanges ever since last July. We have assured you -- as we have assured the North Vietnamese -- that we do not seek a victory in any sense. We do not seek territory or bases or a permanent force or an American-sponsored government in South Vietnam. As part of either a military settlement or a comprehensive settlement we remain prepared to withdraw all American forces, without leaving any residual force behind. We have only one objective -- to let the South Vietnamese determine their political future free from outside interference.

On the other hand, we have also told you of the serious consequences that could ensue if North Vietnam were to launch the massive assault which is now taking place and is designed to embarrass the United States.

It should be clear that it is not the United States which represents a long-term threat to the People's Republic of China. It is not the United States which seeks a long term presence in Indochina.

During the past three years the People's Republic of China and the United States have been patiently opening a new relationship


- 3 -

based on the profound interests of both countries. We now face an important decision. We must consider whether the short term perspectives of a smaller nation -- all of whose own reasonable objectives could so clearly be achieved -- can be allowed to threaten all the progress that we have made. I would hope that after the immediate passions have cooled, we will concentrate on longer term interests.

I have no higher goal in my foreign policy than to build upon the positive beginning that together we made in February. It would be a deep disappointment to me if North Vietnamese actions were to jeopardize this beginning. There is no need for this to happen.

This is an opportunity for statesmanship. It is an opportunity for a decisive turn toward peace. We are willing to cooperate with any country to bring about an immediate settlement without the sacrificing of principles. There can be an early peace in ~~reaching that will meet the~~ including ~~the~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~People's~~ ~~Republic~~ ~~of~~ ~~China~~. And such a solution will allow our two countries to make further progress in our bilateral relations, for the sake of our two peoples and the peoples of the world.

Yours sincerely,



Chou En-lai
Premier of the State Council
of the People's Republic of China
Peking, People's Republic of China

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 14, 1972

Dear Mr. Premier,

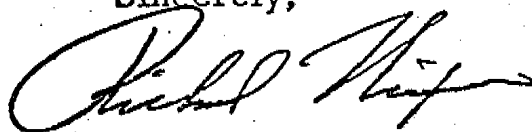
On behalf of Mrs. Nixon, the official party, and all the other Americans who accompanied me on my visit to the People's Republic of China, I would like to express my deep appreciation for the generous courtesy and thoughtfulness of your government, your people, and you personally. For all of us, the week in Peking, Hangchow and Shanghai was a truly memorable and historic occasion. Please extend our gratitude and thanks to the many Chinese officials who treated us with such efficiency and hospitality.

No Objection To Declassification in Full 2010/09/08 : LOC-HAK-114-5-1-8r visit was, of course, my meetings with Chairman Mao and yourself. I believe our discussions, and the joint communique which reflects them, served as a model of candor and comprehensiveness for leaders of nations who seek to bridge a wide gulf of isolation and differences. My understanding of your country's views was greatly enriched, and I found our discussions of the broader aspects of international affairs most rewarding. I hope that our talks also served to define the purposes and direction of American policy.

In your toast at the opening banquet you expressed the "hope that, through a frank exchange of views between our two sides to gain a clearer notion of our differences and make efforts to find common ground, a new start can be made in the relations between our two countries." This was my purpose in travelling to your country. Together, I believe we have served that goal and, in so doing, have advanced the interests not only of our two great peoples but of all the peoples of the world.

We both recognize that we have only marked a beginning. Before us lies the challenge of developing what we have started. This process will require mutual understanding and restraint as well as continuing candor. The United States will approach this important task in that spirit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard Nixon", written in dark ink.

Chou En-lai

No Objection To Declassification in Full 2010/09/08 : LOC-HAK-114-5-1-8

OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Peking, People's Republic of China

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 14, 1972

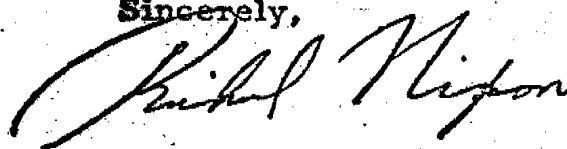
Dear Mr. Chairman,

Please accept my warm thanks, as well as those of Mrs. Nixon and all of the Americans who accompanied us, for the gracious consideration with which we were received in the People's Republic of China. We have come away from your country with a far deeper appreciation of the beauties of its land, the qualities of its people, and the views of its government.

I especially benefitted from, and I will always remember, our conversation on the afternoon of my arrival in Peking. Your frank and wise observations, as well as your warm welcome, set the framework for the entire
No Objection To Declassification in Full 2010/09/08 : LOC-HAK-114-5-1-8of our two great peoples. My conversations with Premier Chou En-lai were marked by the same tone of candor; they enabled both sides to clarify their views, articulate our differences, and explore common ground.

World realities brought us together after a long separation. I believe these realities will continue to shape our future. If, together, we maintain the mutual candor and comprehension that marked our discussions during my visit, we can move further down the road on which we have now embarked. There is no more important goal for our two nations and for our two peoples.

Sincerely,



Chairman Mao Tse-tung
Peking, People's Republic
of China

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 3, 1973

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

As my second term in office begins, I would like to review with you some of the major questions that affect our two countries. I am writing this letter in lieu of Dr. Kissinger's meetings with you which I had hoped would be taking place during this period but which have had to be postponed due to Vietnam developments.

No Objection To Declassification in Full 2010/09/08 : LOC-HAK-114-5-1-8

In looking back over the past four years no international development carries more significance than the reestablishment of relations between the People's Republic of China and the United States. It is with great personal warmth as well as historical sense that I recall my visit to your country and my frank exchanges with Chairman Mao and yourself. Let me take this occasion to reiterate that the further improvement of relations between our two countries remains one of the cardinal principles of American foreign policy.

I believe we can take satisfaction in bilateral developments since February. A good beginning has been made in people-to-people contacts and exchanges in various fields. We should expand and accelerate these efforts which are already making important contributions to mutual understanding and friendship between the Chinese and American peoples. In addition, we should continue to build on the first foundations which have been laid for meaningful Sino-American trade.

On the governmental level, I believe the candid dialogue between Dr. Kissinger and Ambassador Huang in New York has served well to set forth our respective positions on major issues. In my coming term I propose we maintain this

- 2 -

productive channel as the channel for all matters except technical issues which should continue to be discussed in Paris. These exchanges, I believe, should be supplemented by occasional personal visits which allow a more thorough and direct exposition of our policies. To this end I am prepared to accept your kind invitation and to send Dr. Kissinger to Peking as soon as the war in Vietnam has been ended through a negotiated settlement for a full review of Sino-American relations and world developments.

As you know, we have consistently fulfilled our undertaking to keep you apprised of U.S. attitudes and policies on all issues of major concern to the People's Republic of China. I intend to continue this practice which I consider to be in our mutual interest. For example, you have been aware that the United States places no obstacles in the way of improved Sino-Japanese relations which we believe will contribute to peace and stability in the region. Our two governments have been in close contact with respect to South Asia, and we will continue to share with you our policy intentions toward the Subcontinent. In particular I want to assure you that any change in well-established U.S. policy toward the Subcontinent will be first discussed with the People's Republic of China. In our discussions with our allies in Western Europe we have made clear our positive attitude toward their increased communication with you.

As far as direct U.S. -Chinese dealings are concerned, I would like to reaffirm our intention to move energetically in my second Administration toward the normalization of our relations. Everything that has been previously said on this subject is hereby reaffirmed. Dr. Kissinger will be prepared to discuss this fully when he visits Peking.

No Objection

To Declassification in Full 2010/09/08 : LOC-HAK-114-5-1-8

- 3 -

We remain firmly committed to the principles of the Shanghai Communique, including those that deal with aspirations for hegemony and spheres of influence. We believe that a vital and strong China is in the interest of world peace.

In short, a promising framework has been established in the past couple of years. But it is clear that the war in Indochina impedes the kind of further progress that so surely would benefit both our countries. We have kept you fully informed of developments in Paris in recent months, and as Dr. Kissinger will speak to this subject at some length with Ambassador Huang, I will not dwell on it in this letter. No one familiar with the recent record can in good conscience dispute the fact that the United States has made maximum efforts to restore peace in Indochina. We hope at long last to achieve that goal, but this will require from Hanoi a seriousness that was as absent in December as it was evident in

No Objection To Declassification in Full 2010/09/08 : LOC-HAK-114-5-1-8s not in the interest of us all to bring this war to a rapid conclusion and thus remove the major obstacle to many constructive developments in international relations. This is the U.S. attitude. It will shape our approach to the negotiations which resume next week.

Mrs. Nixon joins me in personal greetings to you and Madame Chou and wishes for a healthy and prospering 1973.

Sincerely,



Chou En-lai
Premier of the State Council
of the People's Republic of China
Peking, People's Republic of China