

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

SECRET/EXDIS

March 24, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: GENERAL HAIG  THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN... 

SUBJECT: Summary of Foreign Reaction to Your Trip to China

We have prepared the following summary of the foreign official and media reaction to your trip to China based on various reports received from the State Department and CIA:

EAST ASIA

In general, the states of the area remain publicly approving, and are now less apprehensive as a result of assurances given in high level statements and the Green-Holdridge mission that we will remain true to our commitments and have struck no secret deals. Many capitals, however, believe that they must begin adapting their policies to a changing international context.

-- Republic of China. Taipei has drawn back from its initial shock over the Communique, but it still is highly apprehensive of our long-term intentions. Our high level statements and the Green-Holdridge mission appear to have reassured the ROC that our defense commitment is intact for the present. But the Government and populace seem to be reserving judgment until they see how we proceed in normalizing relations with Peking and whether they in fact now have the full story on the visit. They wonder if the U.S. has agreed to steps that will eventually force it to further compromise on the Taiwan question, and whether the long-run U.S. strategy may not be to preserve the appearance of adherence to its commitment, while backing out through actions that deliberately undermine Taiwan's viability.

-- Japan. The Sato Government was greatly relieved that the Communique did not go further -- to include U.S. - PRC agreements that Sato felt might make his domestic position untenable. Sato is

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now focussing on trying to establish direct official contact with Peking to discuss the normalization of relations, and toward this end has inched forward with a minor modification of Japan's position on the Taiwan question.

-- South Korea. The Park Government has been considerably reassured over the outcome of your visit, and now seems satisfied that the Communique contains the sum and substance of the discussion on the Korean problem. Its underlying apprehensions can be easily stimulated, however, as was shown by Secretary Rogers' March 7 press conference remark that the U.S. had "indications" that North Korea was interested in detente and the U.S. wanted to improve relations with all, including North Korea. The ROKs suspected that these "indications" were given to you by the Chinese in Peking.

-- Southeast Asia. The Indochinese leaders have publicly endorsed your trip, most strongly in Laos and Cambodia, and President Thieu and his advisers appear satisfied that your China visit has not changed U.S. policy toward Vietnam. Thailand remains skeptical that your initiative will give it any immediate respite from Communist insurgency, which has markedly increased in the past year, although its leaders are in general accord with your policy. Indonesian leaders publicly and privately have welcomed your efforts to reduce tensions in Asia, but have told us privately that they do not believe the PRC will moderate its intention to dominate Southeast Asia. In the Philippines, while the Green-Holdridge mission seemed to soothe the worst of the Marcos Government's fears, President Marcos continues anxious over the long-term impact on his country's security should Taiwan be integrated into the China mainland policy.

-- Australia and New Zealand. Both countries have basically been enthusiastic over your visit, but Prime Minister McMahon continues highly concerned over how, in this election year, he can meet the opposition Labor Party's challenge to move ahead quickly and radically to improve Australia's relations with Peking.

-- Other Asian Communist States. The North Vietnamese are bitter and disenchanted, despite Chou En-lai's reported trip to Hanoi immediately after your departure. The North Koreans have accepted the prospect of improving U.S. -PRC relations (though they are not very happy over it), and are engaged in their own diplomatic competition with Seoul to appear more outward-looking and reasonable.

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EUROPE

-- Soviet Union. For nearly three weeks the Soviets withheld official comment, confining themselves to cautious, equivocal media reaction expressing suspicion of possible U.S. - PRC secret arrangements. Brezhnev on March 20 in a speech with the Soviets have emphasized was directed particularly at us, put a carefully positive construction on the trip, saying that U.S. - PRC contacts were natural, to be welcomed, and in conformity with the principles of "peaceful coexistence." He deferred "final assessment" to the near future --by which he probably intended to mean the Moscow Summit, implying that would be the real test of U.S. aims. He did not hide Soviet sensitivity, however, darkly noting the secrecy surrounding the trip and citing sarcastically the President's remark that the Chinese and Americans hold the future of the world in their hands.

-- Eastern Europe. Moscow's East European allies have stressed the anti-Soviet nature of the trip but have aimed their editorial shafts mainly at Peking. Romania, however, applauded the trip as a historic event in international life. Yugoslav reaction too has been favorable and press coverage there is heavy.

-- Western Europe. In Western Europe the trip has whetted interest in improving relations with Peking. Brandt's government has viewed it as an opening for the establishment of diplomatic relations with the PRC. While the President was still in China, London announced the exchange of ambassadors. Schumann, in an official statement, noted that the U.S. had recognized the wisdom of France's earlier normalization of relations with the Chinese. French officials said privately that the Chinese "gave" more than the U.S. in the communique. Media coverage in Western Europe was generally cautiously approving, with some papers calling it "epoch-making."

MIDDLE EAST

The China trip seemed to stir only passing interest in the Arab countries. Most seemed to see it in terms of the U.S. coming to grips with reality, rather than as a direct threat to their interests. For the most part the Israelis seem to view the visit as a significant world event, but they too seem to regard it as being of little direct concern to them. Both the Arabs and the Israelis are in fact already looking ahead to the Moscow summit where they know their vital interests will be directly involved.

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Elsewhere in the Middle East reaction appears to have been generally favorable. The Turks, as you know from Erim, have applauded the trip which many of them see as a possible opening for a detente in the Far East and as confirming their own policy of moving to establish diplomatic relations with Peking. Greek reaction was also not unfavorable. The Shah, for his part, seems to have no problems with the China trip although he most certainly is watching closely how we maintain past commitments.

SOUTH ASIA

Reaction in South Asia has varied considerably. By far the most negative reaction has come from India where there is a tendency to read the worst possible into the trip. Many Indians, including Mrs. Gandhi, are worried that improvement of relations between the U.S. and China will somehow bring about a new balance of forces that will circumscribe India's freedom of action. The depth of their fears and suspicions was revealed by strong criticism of the references to Kashmir in the communique as blatant interference in India's internal affairs.

In sharp contrast, Pakistani reaction to the trip was strongly positive, and the communique was welcomed as holding out possibilities for resolving many world problems, including those of South Asia. The Government of Bangladesh, however, adhered closely to the Indian line. Nepal's reaction centered largely on continuing to walk the narrow line of non-alignment between China and India while the Ceylonese and Afghans appear generally sympathetic with the purposes of the China trip.

LATIN AMERICA

In Latin America, official comment on the trip was cautious but the general reaction was highly favorable. Many countries regard the establishment of U.S. - Chinese communications as a major accomplishment in the effort to achieve world peace. A number of countries have either called for or speculated on a similar shift in U.S. policy toward Cuba, and Brazil has expressed particular concern that this might be a real possibility. There has also been considerable interest in Latin America in the effects of the visit on Formosa and its commercial ties with the region, with a mix of favorable and unfavorable comment on the joint communique.

Cuban coverage of the visit was extensive but moderate and factual in tone. Throughout the visit Havana refrained from any direct criticism of Peking. Cuban criticism of the U.S. role in Vietnam, however, continued to be stressed.

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AFRICA

Official African reaction has been sparse but generally favorable. What official public and private comment there was reflected the Africans' interest in how developments in Sino-American relations would affect them. Left-leaning governments, such as Tanzania, have wondered whether the visit will improve Washington's attitude toward efforts to end white minority rule in southern Africa. More conservative governments, such as the Ivory Coast, have evinced some concern that the U.S. may prove itself an unsteady ally by "abandoning" the Chinese Nationalists.

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