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COUNTRY PRC

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SUBJECT National Medical Association Delegation to the PRC, October 1972/Conversations with George Hatem, Medical Doctor, and Frank Coe, Economist, Former US Residents/ Official/Problems With Medical School Curriculum

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SUMMARY - This report describes conversations with George Hatem, medical doctor, Frank Coe, an economist with the Central Government, and Hans Miller, a medical doctor with the Peking Union Medical School, during the visit of a US medical delegation to the PRC in October 1972.

- For 15 days in October 1972, a delegation of US medical doctors visited the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) to survey different aspects of health care delivery. When the group entered China at Shunchun, they were asked to list all the things they wished to see and do while in the PRC. Sixty miles later in Canton, the entire 15 day stay had been programmed to include hotels, transportation and meals. It was an impressive organizational feat. Even though the group had interpreters a member of the Revolutionary Committee accompanied them at all times. He was present to make any decisions of importance. Each member of the group was asked to write his curriculum vitae. One member purposely omitted certain small details about his employment and was immediately questioned by the Revolutionary Committee representative. Photography was permitted with the exception of photographs of bridges and airports.
- While they were visiting in Peking, one member of the group telephoned Dr George Hatem, a former US resident who has lived in China for 39 years and is personally responsible for the eradication of venereal disease in China. Late one evening, Dr Hatem came to the hotel where the group was staying and sat in the lobby talking for several hours. He was very excited about the fact that he was talking to US NATIONALS. Dressed in a sports coat, he has not lost many of his American ways. Probably in his 60's, he looked very well, has abundant energy, is confident and witty. Surprisingly enough, he predicted accurately

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that Elliot Richardson would be the next US Secretary of Defense. He said he has no secrets about remaining in China because he feels he has done something productive with his life. He has worked himself out of several jobs because the various problems with which he has been presented have been solved. Prior to his work on venereal disease, he was engaged in teaching the use of Western drugs in conjunction with Chinese herbs. He has a pharmaceutical background. Dr Hatem is apparently paid at the highest level for scientists in China. His salary is six times the starting salary (56 Chinese Ren Min Bi) for a medical doctor. He is currently looking into the pharmacological aspects of anti-tumor drugs and also at specific drugs for schistosomiasis. The eradication of venereal disease in China was discussed. Proof that venereal disease is actually under control is the fact that Dr Hatem is no longer working on this problem. Another indication is that the chief psychiatrist at a mental hospital visited by the group reported that syphilitic involvement is no longer taught at mental institutions.

- Dr Hatem discussed some of the current political problems. He feels that PRC diplomatic recognition of Japan and the US is probably inevitable. He mentioned, however, that the issue of Taiwan province will have to be resolved before diplomatic recognition of the US is forthcoming. He indicated that the Soviets seriously miscalculated China's ability to recover from the lack of Soviet support, even though this was a very difficult period for China.

4. ^{COE} Twice during their stay in Peking, a member of the US group visited Frank and Ruby Coe, who have lived in China since 1955. Their 17-year-old daughter was born in New York City; the couple also has a daughter about six-years-old. The US member did not ask permission from the Revolutionary Committee representative to visit this couple but called them on the telephone and took a cab to their hotel. He was not conscious of being followed. They were ecstatic about seeing a US national. Frank, an economist, had worked for the US Government during the Roosevelt administration and also taught at the University of Wisconsin. He is currently employed as an economist for the Central Government in Peking. In a recent issue of the magazine China Reconstructs, there is a picture of Frank Coe at an official ceremony. He is in the front row along with Chou En-lai, which would lead one to believe he has an important position in the Central Government. After all these years in China, Frank has not yet learned to speak Chinese. During one of these visits, the telephone rang and Frank conversed briefly in Chinese but finally asked his wife to translate for him. Even so, Coe is sharp and quick. His library is full of books such as Black Like Me and the Assassination of Martin Luther King. He was interested in busing problems in the US and knew of the Jackson State and Kent State incidents. His knowledge of current US domestic problems was amazing. Both Hatem and Coe reminisced about their life in the US. Both feel the US is a fine place but are disturbed by the whole range of domestic problems which the US is facing, particularly in the area of race relations. They are also disturbed about the Vietnam war.

- One of the US members had a long talk on the telephone with Hans Miller, a German medical doctor working at the Peking Union Medical School. In 1968-69, medical schools in China were instructed to cut down and change the curriculum. The problem was how to do this, whether to lean towards Western or traditional Chinese medicine. Apparently the Peking Union Medical School is still struggling with this problem. The Canton Medical School was the first one in China to decide upon a new curriculum. This school is about to graduate its first class and the other medical schools in China are waiting to see the results. Before the curriculum of the Peking Union Medical School is completely changed, the class performance of the Canton Medical School will be

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evaluated. It appears that all of the medical schools in China are in different stages of development as far as the curriculum is concerned.

6. The group learned that research on acupuncture is taking place at Shanghai No 2 hospital. The consensus is that the Chinese know a lot more about how acupuncture works than they are telling Western visitors.
7. The group was also surprised to find that English is the second language in China. Virtually half of the China Medical society people which the group met spoke English, as well as seven of the 13 Ministry of Health officials. The group was told that English is the second language taught in the schools.
8. The delegation pressed for a meeting with Mao Tse-tung or Chou En-lai but were told it was impossible because this was not an official visit. More important, however, the group understood that Mao was not too well. The group speculated after viewing a film of Mao that he might be a diabetic since his face appears to be quite puffy and he is obviously overweight.

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