

Meeting with PRC Foreign Minister Huang Hua on 2 July 1977

On June 30, 1977 Mr. Huang had invited us to an informal dinner at his guest house on 2 July 1977. Present were the five in my party, Mr. Huang, his wife Ho Li Liang, Mr. K'O', Mrs. Kang, Mrs. Ho, Mr. Ni, plus two interpreters.

After commenting on his pleasure that Mrs. Zumwalt had made it this time (a humorous reference to the fact that she had missed a luncheon in New York in 1975), Mr. Huang launched into the discussion.

H: How does the Committee on Present Danger play a role in policy-making and decision in the US Government?

Z: The Committee itself is for the purpose of public education. We do studies and analyses of Soviet strategy, objectives, force level assessments, etc. Because the Committee is composed of individuals who formerly occupied senior positions in the government, business and academic leaders, etc., these individuals are consulted by various officials in the Congress and in the Administration as well as by the press. Their views, their speeches, their counsel has an impact.

As a specific example of the individual influences, one member of our Committee has analyzed the two recent US SALT II proposals, has concluded that there is reason to be concerned about US security if these proposals became an agreement, and has had some impact on those in the two branches of government who must deal with these proposals.

H: ~~In the US and Western Europe there is a trend of thought that is prevalent that detente, disarmament negotiations, and the selling of equipment to the USSR have relaxed the contradictions between the US and USSR.~~ What are the influences of this trend of thought within the US Government on the policy of the present Administration -- and what is the degree of countervailing influence from the Committee on the Present Danger? Which of these two schools are in the majority?

Z: As you know from what you said to me in New York, I am in opposition to the policy of the previous Administration of letting detente become essentially a unilateral process. I think it is fair to say that the officials of the last Administration left office publicly insisting that detente policies were working but privately admitting that they had failed measurably. The success of detente was an issue in both political parties. Reagan nearly unhorsed an incumbent Republican President and won revision at Kansas City in the foreign and defense planks of the Republican platform. Carter made open and honest foreign policy-making an issue and it helped in his victory. However, some of the people that Carter appointed after election were not of the view that we need be greatly concerned about Soviet excesses in military buildup or foreign policy. The Committee on the Present Danger is doing a job of public education which we think will help the President focus public opinion on the facts of Soviet military capability and foreign policy adventurism. I believe that Dr. Brzezynski is more nearly of the school represented in the Committee. In that regard,

He has asked me to make clear that the recent New York Times report about a study reflecting a decision not to provide arms technology cooperation to PRC is an inaccurate report. An early working level draft contained such a thought. The present version does not. No decision one way or another has been made. As a separate matter, Dr. Brzezynski points out that the Carter Administration does not share the pessimistic view of history of the previous Administration. Rather theirs is an optimistic view of history. They are prepared to compete with the Soviet Union if they make it necessary.

My own view of Soviet strategy is that they intend, if we will let them do so, to have an immense strategic nuclear and conventional military superiority, but to use it carefully and rationally to force others to accommodate to their initiatives. An important one of these is their interest in control over Middle East oil or of the price levels. The military capabilities of the PRC and of the US are important elements in the credible deterrence of Soviet initiatives. But another element could well be forms of economic cooperation between the PRC and US business such as in development of PRC offshore oil. The technology of US oil companies is capable, in my judgment, of producing one million barrels of oil per day in five years from the time of signing a contract, if adequate advance preparations are made. I am aware of the PRC policy to avoid the impact of permanent foreign influence in your society and of your desire to avoid foreign debt. Both of these could be avoided in an off-shore development and such a program would provide an additional increment of oil and dollars for PRC and additional oil for the US. More importantly, this alternative source of oil would further checkmate Soviet strategy. Also, you would have more dollars for arms technology if needed.

H: Our policy on arms like our policy on the economy is to base ourselves on our own strength -- to rely only on our own efforts. If Russia should attack China, we would launch a people's war to defeat the Soviets. In the past we engaged in a long war with the Kuomintang--we relied on the peoples' spirit and desire to overthrow the KMT. Weapons were secondary. Similarly, in a war with the Soviet Union, weapons would be secondary. Human spirit comes first. In our war with the KMT their cumulative strength was 8 million and at the outset they greatly outnumbered us but we put them down. They were equipped with US equipment. But in the superior strength of our people, we overthrew the KMT in three years -- sooner than we expected. In presenting these facts to you, I want you to know that I do not think that arms are unimportant, but rather that we will rely primarily on people's war which has proved very effective. We are fully prepared for war. Our Chairman Mao told us to be prepared. The entire Chinese people are therefore not afraid and will fight to the end. The enemy might get into China but he will find it very difficult to get out. The Soviet Union has stationed one million troops on the Chinese border. But these troops are primarily directed at the US and Japan, not China. Should the Soviet Union launch an attack on China, these one million troops are not enough. If the Soviet Union should attack China, it is impossible for them to achieve the quick victory they expect. Though the war will be a prolonged one, the Soviet weaknesses will become more manifest in the end and in a trial of strength we will

eliminate them. Our principle is, we will not attack unless attacked; if attacked, we will counter attack. This will be considered by the people of the world a war of Soviet aggression. All elements of the society and the military will play a full part. In the past some officials of the US Government have averred that the US will save itself by fostering a Soviet war of aggression in China. But time has proved that the focus of Soviet aggression is on Europe, not China. The fact is that the Soviet Union and the US are locked in a war over the Soviet objective of world hegemony. The Soviet Union wants expansion. The US wants to protect its own vested interests; the rivalry of these two will lead to another world war. (We don't believe in detente or disarmament. The conflict between USSR and US is inevitable and cannot be alleviated by the signing of documents by certain statesmen. Their rivalry for world hegemony extends all over the world but the focus is on Europe politically and economically. You mentioned that the Soviet Union wants to grab the oil in the Middle East. I agree. It has an important bearing on the future rivalry. We have noticed that the Soviet Union takes advantage of the weakness of the US policy in the Middle East, in Europe, in Africa. Angola is an example. US weakness in the confrontation encouraged the Soviets to accelerate their efforts. As a separate matter, your forces were doing all right there until Kissinger brought in the South Africans. As soon as he did so, all black support for your side evaporated. The recent Soviet organized invasion of Zaire is another example. It has been defeated but no credit to the US. We wonder how your present Administration could be judged strong when it didn't have the courage to admit that the Soviets and the Cubans were involved with the Katangan mercenaries..

This action in the Middle East and Africa are Soviet efforts to outflank Europe in order ultimately to gain Europe for themselves. Your policy of appeasement as in Angola and Zaire can only inflate their appetites. Further these actions raise the question in the minds of your allies as to whether you are a paper tiger. Your actions serve to numb the will of your own people. They raise questions in the minds of your allies as to whether the US will use nuclear weapons in response to an attack by USSR on Europe or whether US forces will fight for Europe-- these thoughts are not unfounded.

Z: (abbreviated) I would like to respond in some depth. Your ability to knock out the KMT was impressive. Yet the corrupt nature of the regime, at the time, makes it an inappropriate analogy to the Soviet threat. Japan is a better analogy. Japan, with a much smaller population and resource base than the USSR has, was able to make war against you for over 13 years and China was successfully defeated until the US came in with large modern forces, newly created after the defeat at Pearl Harbor. Until that time the US and China had allowed the Japanese to deal with each of them at her own time. After Pearl Harbor, China and the US concerted their efforts in an alliance. Today you face in the Soviet Union a much more effective power than Japan was.

I know of no intelligence to confirm your theory that the Soviet forces in Siberia are designed primarily to deal with the US and Japan. Obviously one could visualize such a scenario. But there is overwhelming evidence

that the Soviet forces are there to deal with the China problem. It is true that while building up their forces on your border, they have added to the forces in the Warsaw Pact facing NATO.

I think it is quite clear that if the Soviets decided to attack the US in a massive strategic nuclear strike that they would also deal with China lest the post strike balance leave them vulnerable.

But let us assume that you are correct that the Soviet Union is going to bypass the PRC in dealing first with Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Can you possibly believe that in a world in which the Soviets have achieved that degree of hegemony, they would continue to tolerate the threat of a burgeoning China. Obviously you will be a prime objective.

These factors suggest to me the wisdom of the PRC concerting those of its policies designed to checkmate Soviet strategy in the world more nearly with those of the US. If you did so, you would greatly improve your chance of deterring the kinds of Soviet actions in Europe, Middle East and Africa which would lead to your future lonely isolation in facing the Soviet threat.

With regard to our NATO allies, I agree that some of the last Administration's tragic view of the future rubbed off on them. But the present Administration does not share that view. The allies are learning this fact. They know that the US public rejected the philosophy in the last election. President Carter's NATO speech and his Notre Dame speech are relevant. President Carter, in my judgment, will not be pushed around.

H: I think it is difficult to compare the period 1931 to 1945 when our country was largely under the control of Kuomintang forces in the Japanese war with the present situation of China versus the Soviet Union. In that earlier period the KMT policy was one of passive resistance to the Japanese while actively fighting the People's Liberation Army. Even after the US entered the war the KMT continued its policy of passive resistance to the Japanese. China today is a unified country and the people have the will and the equipment to fight aggression. We think the Soviet Union recognizes this changed circumstance. If we concede that the Soviet troops are therefore not directed at China, then we must conclude that the Soviet forces are for the purpose of turning the US flank in the Western Pacific. We think these forces would at the appropriate time be used to seize Japan and wrest her facilities from the US. This does not mean that the Soviet Union has no aggressive ambitions against China. It does - and we are preparing. Nevertheless, Soviet focus is in Europe. With regard to any joint economic efforts or adjustments of our policies based on what we think yours are, we first must watch to see if the US is going to change its policy of appeasement of the Soviet Union. In principle, we are for the uniting of all forces subjected to the aggression of the Soviet Union but we have to know that they have the will to stand up and will not roll over. By pursuing its appeasement policy, the US is playing into Soviet strategy which, in essence, is to make a feint in the East while attacking in the West, attacking Europe through the threat of an attack on China which reduces western readiness and resolve.

(At this point Ho Li Lang insisted we leave the formal reception room and go in to dinner; subsequent notes are, therefore, from memory as opposed to the notes above taken as the conversation proceeded, but they are accurate in substance.)

Z: As I see it, the consequence of China's refusal to seek ways unilaterally to work at purposes which will enhance the posture of both of our countries are as follows: Just as Japan was able to work at purposes disadvantageous both to China and the US, biding her time, choosing her priorities, present PRC policy is permitting the USSR to do the same thing. There are political and economic steps that can be taken to improve the position of both countries for the long struggle to deter Soviet aggressiveness. The new Administration in the US clearly sees the PRC not in regional terms but in global terms. But your persistence in taking a course which is often harmful to US positions, to the extent that your policy contributes to US failure in a given instance, weakens your own deterrence of the Soviet Union.

H: We see the world in three parts. The first world is that of the two superpowers; the second world is NATO, Japan, Australia, New Zealand. The third world is the rest, who are underdeveloped and weaker. The two superpowers do not relate to the problems of the third world. Until the US does so, we will have difficulty in building the bridges you are suggesting.

Z: Why do you include Iran and the rich oil Arab states in the third world?

H: Because money does not of itself bring effective power and these countries have significant weaknesses. We think that the superpower clash makes war between them inevitable. Our destiny is to work with the third world to be ready when that war comes.

Z: This brings me back to my point. If we agree that the US can win the war if it must fight the USSR, and if we agree that China can too, we still have a responsibility for the sake of our respective grandchildren to seek to avoid that war. You call it inevitable and prepare for it. I want to prepare for it to avoid it. Your unilateral policies add to the likelihood of the war. Policies more likely to be helpful to the mutual interests of our countries, strategically, would reduce the likelihood of Soviet initiated war or of Soviet misbehavior in foreign policy.

H: It all comes back to a need to see the US draw back from appeasement, to give us confidence in your future. Let me put a couple of propositions to you. Do you agree that the most significant restraint on Soviet hegemony is the power of the US?

Z: I do.

H: Then do you also agree that the next most significant restraint is the power of China?

Z: I do.

H: (Then is it not self-evident that the readiness for war of these two nations which bar the way to the USSR must be improved?)

Z: It is -- and that is what many of us in the US are dedicating ourselves to accomplish. But readiness is more than military capability. It is enhanced by the extent to which our two key nations, each unilaterally if necessary, take non-zero sum actions in the foreign and economic field.

H: I agree that if strategic war comes, it is impossible for either the PRC or the US to stay out.

Z: I think we have exchanged our views on this matter. I would like to hear your views of the Middle East.

H: The US has gotten itself in a predicament. Zionism has forced you to support Israel to the neglect of the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinians for a national state. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union, aggressively eager for control of oil, has provided assistance to Arab states and won a role for itself that it need not have been given.

Z: If you were Foreign Minister of Israel, would you agree to the return of Arab troops to the West Bank, bringing them within ten miles of the cutting of your nation in two, within artillery range of Tel Aviv, able to shoot down any Israeli airplane by missile as soon as the plane took off.

H: The Israeli nation should never have been brought into existence. It makes the Middle East a constant place of tension.

Z: It exists and no policy which denies its existence is realistic. Would you give me your views on Africa?

H: Just as the USSR desires control of the oil of the Middle East, it desires control of the mineral resources of the Africa continent, and the control of the Indian Ocean oil routes around the Cape. Your country has facilitated Soviet progress. Angola was a disaster for you. The Soviet initiative in Zaire failed because France and Morocco (with the support of others like China) came to their assistance. Your denial that the Soviets and Cubans were involved increased the confidence of the Soviets to try again. The US has failed to align itself in Africa with the third world. You seem to believe that only white minority governments can deal with the Soviets and Cubans. Your Chrome Amendment kept the regime Rhodesia in power too long and turned black liberation movements toward the USSR. You must identify more carefully with the third world if you intend to compete with the Soviets. As I said earlier, your admission of South African forces into Angola turned all black regimes away from you.

(It was noteworthy that Huang at no time made reference to the Taiwan issue in our conversation.)

31 years