

## THE WHITE HOUSE

February 21, 1972

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVE EYES ONLY

## MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Chairman Mao Zedong; Prime Minister Zhou Enlai;

Wang Hairong, Deputy Chief of Protocol of the Foreign Ministry;

Tang Wensheng, Interpreter; President Nixon; Henry A. Kissinger,

Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs; Winston

Lord, National Security Council Staff (Notetaker)

DATE AND TIME: Monday, February 21, 1972 — 2:50–3:55 P.M.

PLACE: Chairman Mao's Residence, Beijing<sup>D</sup>

(There were opening greetings during which the Chairman welcomed President Nixon, and the President expressed his great pleasure at meeting the Chairman.)

*President Nixon:* You read a great deal. The Prime Minister said that you read more than he does.

*Chairman Mao:* Yesterday in the airplane you put forward a very difficult problem for us. You said that what it is required to talk about are philosophic problems.

*President Nixon:* I said that because I have read the Chairman's poems and speeches, and I knew he was a professional philosopher. (Chinese laugh.)

*Chairman Mao:* (Looking at Dr. Kissinger) He is a doctor of philosophy?

*President Nixon:* He is a doctor of brains.

*Chairman Mao:* What about asking him to be the main speaker today?

*President Nixon:* He is an expert in philosophy.

*Dr. Kissinger:* I used to assign the Chairman's collective writings to my classes at Harvard.

*Chairman Mao:* Those writings of mine aren't anything. There is nothing instructive in what I wrote. (Looking toward photographers) Now they are trying to interrupt our meeting, our order here.

*President Nixon:* The Chairman's writings moved a nation and have changed the world.

*Chairman Mao:* I haven't been able to change it. I've only been able to change a few places in the vicinity of Beijing.

Our common old friend, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, doesn't approve of this. He calls us communist bandits. He recently issued a speech. Have you seen it?

*President Nixon:* Chiang Kai-shek calls the Chairman a bandit. What does the Chairman call Chiang Kai-shek?

*Prime Minister Zhou:* Generally speaking we call them Chiang Kai-shek's clique. In the newspapers sometimes we call him a bandit; we are also called bandits in turn. Anyway, we abuse each other.

*Chairman Mao:* Actually, the history of our friendship with him is much longer than the history of your friendship with him.

*President Nixon:* Yes, I know.

*Chairman Mao:* We two must not monopolize the whole show. It won't do if we don't let Dr. Kissinger have a say. You have been famous about your trips to China.

*Dr. Kissinger:* It was the President who set the direction and worked out the plan.<sup>54</sup>

*President Nixon:* He is a very wise assistant to say it that way. (Mao and Zhou laugh.)

*Chairman Mao:* He is praising you, saying you are clever in doing so.

*President Nixon:* He doesn't look like a secret agent. He is the only man in captivity who could go to Paris 12 times and Peking once and no one knew it, except possibly a couple of pretty girls. (Zhou laughs.)<sup>55</sup>

*Dr. Kissinger:* They didn't know it; I used it as a cover.

*Chairman Mao:* In Paris?

*President Nixon:* Anyone who uses pretty girls as a cover must be the greatest diplomat of all time.

*Chairman Mao:* So your girls are very often made use of?<sup>56</sup>

*President Nixon:* His girls, not mine. It would get me into great trouble if I used girls as a cover.