



MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford  
Senator Carl Curtis  
Senator Birch Bayh  
Senator Bennett Johnston  
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs  
Max Friedersdorf, Assistant to the President  
for Congressional Relations  
Robert Wolthuis, White House Staff

DATE AND TIME: Friday, December 17, 1976  
10:41 - 11:10 a.m.

PLACE: ~~The Oval Office~~

SUBJECT: Delegation's Visit to the PRC

[The meeting was in progress when General Scowcroft arrived.]

Curtis: It is my feeling it is not necessary to break a treaty. It is a serious step which will raise questions around the world. Second, the PRC is a closed society, a thoroughly Communist society, with none of the freedoms which are enjoyed in Taiwan. And here is our report with the records of our talks. Birch, do you want to add anything?

Bayh: I have very little to add. Our delegation had very little difference of substance. My impression is that Hua Kuo-feng is firmly in the saddle. There are some differences between the Army and party newspapers, but we are kidding ourselves if we don't think he is there to stay.

The President: Was there any word of Teng? When we were there, he had replaced Chou and looked firmly in control.

Bayh: His name was scarcely mentioned.

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Bennett: There was some mention of him, and some hints that he would be rehabilitated, but nothing specific.

Bayh: We got the impression that they weren't pushing the Communist line too much. They went through the motions but didn't emphasize it to the extent we had thought they would, based on Hugh Scott's comment.

The President: I think Hugh pushed them on that point and they reacted.

Curtis: They were not belligerent on Korea either. We asked on Korea if the presence of our troops was inconsistent with the Shanghai Communique. They said Korea should solve its own problems, but said it in such a way as to make clear they didn't mind the troops there.

I support what Carl said about Taiwan. They didn't mention Taiwan except after we raised it and their answer was more or less low key and pro forma.

I would like to add a comment on their civil defense efforts. They have extensive civil defense facilities and I think they don't look on nuclear war as the holocaust we think it is. The Soviet Union also, I understand, has extensive civil defense facilities.

The President: That's true. They are doing a lot. I am something less than enthused about civil defense.

Bayh: I can't help being just a little cynical. The part of the shelters near the opening was very sophisticated but it got more and more rudimentary as we went deeper and they just pointed to tunnels which they said went more than three miles. Given time and their needs for makework, they can do it certainly, but I am skeptical right now.

The President: Did you see a commune?

Curtis: We sure did. A very intensive operation, but they use masses of people. They also use human fertilizer which is why the drinking water is so bad.

Drew Middleton was the first one to get to see the Chinese military. He has written a series of articles about it. We heard there were disturbances even in Peking, so all is not the sweetness and light they claim.



The President:

Union?

What do you think they felt about the Soviet

Bayh: I think they are a bit paranoid. They were really quite belligerent -- and said if the Soviets attacked they would meet with a united Chinese people.

The President: I think they are getting even more strident than they used to be.

How about the U.S. mission?

Curtis: They are doing a fine job. They are a little too concerned over the need to move fast on Taiwan. That is natural, but a good number of the problems are here, not there.



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Curtis, Bayh, and Johnston  
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