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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: President Bush's Meeting with President Yang Shangkun of the People's Republic of China

PARTICIPANTS: U.S.  
The President  
James Baker III, Secretary of State  
Winston Lord, Ambassador to China  
John Sununu, Chief of Staff  
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs  
Andrew Card, Deputy Chief of Staff  
Marlin Fitzwater, Assistant to the  
President for Press Relations  
Gaston J. Sigur, Assistant Secretary of State  
for East Asia and Pacific Affairs  
Robert Zoellick, Counselor-Designate,  
State Department  
Margaret Tutwiler, Assistant Secretary of  
State, Public Affairs (Designate)  
James A. Kelly, Senior Director of Asian  
Affairs, National Security Council  
J. Stapleton Roy, Deputy Assistant Secretary  
of State  
Peter Tomsen, Deputy Chief of Mission,  
Beijing  
Karl Jackson, Senior Director of Asian  
Affairs, National Security Council  
Ray Burghardt, Political Counselor, Embassy  
Beijing  
Mark Mohr, Notetaker  
Vivian Chang, Interpreter

China

President Yang Shangkun  
Vice Premier Wu Xueqian  
Ambassador Han Xu  
Assistant Foreign Minister Zhu Qizhen  
MFA Protocol Director Wu Minglian  
MFA Information Director Li Zhaoxing  
USA Department Deputy Director Zha Peixin  
USA Department Counselor Wang Li  
USA Department Division Chief Ma Zhengang  
MFA Protocol Deputy Division Chief  
Liu Xizheng  
MFA Protocol First Secretary Zhu Luchang  
Other participants (2)  
Notetakers (2)  
Interpreter

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Declassify on: OADR

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PER E.O. 12958,  
AS AMENDED  
2000-0429-F  
(S) 8/21/09

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DATE, TIME February 25, 1989, 7:00 p.m. - 7:40 p.m.  
AND PLACE: Great Hall of the People, Heibei Room,  
Beijing, China

Summary: In a warm and cordial forty-minute meeting, President Yang called President Bush's first trip to China since taking office "very significant" and said that his meetings with China's top leaders would further promote the development of Sino-U.S. relations.

President Bush promised Chairman Wan Li a warm welcome to the U.S. in May. He characterized the Sino-U.S. relationship as very strong.

President Yang fully agreed, noting that high-level visits contribute to this process. Yang expressed satisfaction that relations between China and the U.S. have been developing steadily.

President Bush stated he was not worried about the Gorbachev visit to China. He characterized the U.S.-China relationship as standing on its own merits, rather than being a facet of U.S.-Soviet relations. He assured President Yang that the U.S. would not enter into any agreements with the Soviet Union that would be to the detriment of China or Sino-U.S. relations.

President Yang assured the President that Sino-Soviet normalization would not harm any third country, and that a military alliance or military relationship with the Soviet Union would be "out of the question." On the issue of Cambodia, Yang said the attitude of the Vietnamese and Phnom Penh puppet regime has gone from bad to worse, and it remained to be seen whether the Soviets would make good on their consensus with China that all Vietnamese troops should withdraw from Cambodia by September 30. End summary.

President Yang: How is your health?

President Bush: I've had a cold, but I feel better now.

President Yang: You must be very busy these days.

President Bush: Yes, we had a very busy trip in Japan, and I've been occupied with the economy and the budget.

President Yang: We are very glad to have you in China. You, Mr. President, are familiar to Chinese leaders and even to the Chinese people. Recently, our press has published a picture of you and Mrs. Bush riding bicycles.

President Bush: Yes. Premier Li Peng just gave me a pair of beautiful bicycles.

President Yang: I'm afraid the quality might not be very good.

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President Bush: The bicycles are very fine.

President Yang: All of us were glad to learn of your trip to China. I understand you served here for almost two years as Chief of the U.S. Liaison Office.

President Bush: Yes.

President Yang: And since then you've been here on four occasions, not including this trip.

President Bush: Yes, and Mrs. Bush has been here five times. This is her sixth visit.

President Yang: She has come once more than you. Every time you come, you discuss major issues with Chinese leaders. So you've made great contributions to the development of Sino-U.S. relations and to cooperation between our two countries. As this is your first trip to China since you've taken your present office, it is very significant. I think this shows that you, Mr. President, pay much attention to our bilateral relationship. This also shows the friendly sentiments you cherish for the Chinese people. Although your stay this time is short, all top Chinese leaders will meet you. This will promote the further development of Sino-U.S. relations. When you lived in China, Chairman Deng was a good friend of yours. Our present General Secretary, Zhao Ziyang, is also an old friend. In addition, present Premier Li Peng paid a visit to the United States and was received by you. He says that he once dined at your home.

President Bush: Yes, that's correct.

President Yang: You also know Chairman Wan Li well. You've played tennis with him. He says he frequently lost to you.

President Bush: Wan Li will be very welcome as the highest ranking Chinese official to come to the U.S. this year. We will give him some good tennis action too.

President Yang: Originally, we would have been pleased to arrange a tennis match between you and Wang, but your visit is too short.

President Bush: I'll be too busy.

President Yang: So we will let him go to the United States to play tennis.

President Bush: There is good weather in May. His visit will be symbolically important. I will tell him tomorrow that we will give him a very warm welcome. Officially, because of protocol, Vice President Quayle will be his host. But, on a personal basis, I want him to know that I will be his host too.

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President Yang: He will be very pleased to hear this. This is the third time I am meeting with you. The first time was in Manila, and the second was in 1987 when I led a Chinese government delegation to the United States as your guest.

President Bush: It was a wonderful visit.

President Yang: On that visit, I was warmly received by U.S. leaders and the arrangements were very considerate. You and I had over a four-hour talk on the Presidential yacht. The talks were warm, friendly and frank.

President Bush: Yes, it was not diplomatic; it was very frank and good.

President Yang: It was just like talks between good friends.

President Bush: From our side we feel the bilateral relationship is very strong. We hope you agree.

President Yang: I fully agree. The reason why I recalled our previous meetings was to illustrate that frequent top-level visits are not only beneficial to our bilateral relations but also to world peace.

President Bush: I think some of our top military leaders are coming to China this year. For example, Chief of Staff of the Air Force Larry Welch, and some others. That's a good thing. With your background, you can understand the importance of such military visits.

President Yang: In recent years, there have been frequent exchanges of visits by military leaders of our two countries. In that sense, your visit is very timely and good for an exchange of views. I think the relationship between our two countries has been developing steadily. There are broad areas for cooperation between our two countries. Naturally, we hope to promote further such cooperation through your visit. This visit comes at a time that is very important for both our countries. The current international situation is developing and undergoing drastic changes. In this light our two countries should step up consultations on many issues. We should carry out in-depth analysis and observations on many developments. And we should take corresponding actions to accord with the current trend toward relaxation of tensions.

President Bush: I agree.

President Yang: Just now I said relations between our two countries have been steadily developing over the past decade. But I think we should sum up past efforts, and look to the future. I think the deepening and expansion of cooperation between our two countries serves the interests of our two peoples. Therefore, the leaders of our two countries should carry out frequent exchanges of views. Now the general

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international situation is moving toward the resolution of problems, but there are still many outstanding issues, so it is necessary to exchange views. Naturally, you are giving consideration to these issues, and we are doing the same. In our own bilateral relationship, I think we should also exchange views on many issues. Therefore, I want to reiterate that we warmly welcome your visit. This is not just an ordinary welcome. We are old friends.

President Bush: I agree.

President Yang: I think international developments in the world today should not weaken, but rather strengthen, the importance of our bilateral relationship. We are two big countries, located on opposite sides of the Pacific Ocean. So the friendly cooperation between our two countries will promote cooperation in the Pacific region and in the world as well. This is most important for the maintenance of world peace, stability and security. All these questions will be discussed in detail in your talks tomorrow with Li Peng, Zhao Ziyang and Deng Xiaoping. Therefore, we are very glad to receive you in Beijing at such a crucial moment. I have one more remark. When you were campaigning for President, we closely followed the elections. Once in talking to former Secretary of Defense Carlucci, Chairman Deng also revealed his desires. Personally, as I have told Ambassador Lord many times, if I could vote, I would vote for Bush.

President Bush: When I was behind, I thought of calling you and asking for 30 million votes.

President Yang: I once told Ambassador Lord that it was a pity I could not vote. I would have voted for you.

President Bush: Although China was never an issue in the campaign, the fact that I have some feeling for China may have affected the elections because this relationship is broadly supported in the U.S. There was a subtle feeling from the American people that they wanted someone who could move relations with China and other countries forward, someone who had foreign affairs experience. Let me make one point about our relationship now which I will deal with in depth tomorrow. Some of the press travelling with us say: Mr. President, do you worry about Gorbachev going to Beijing? I say: I don't worry at all about it. When I saw Gorbachev in New York before I became President, and before his visit was announced, I said: I hope you go to China. I feel the relationship we have now is not based on some facet of Soviet relations, but on its own merits. For example, we now have cultural, educational and trade relations. It is not just based on worry about the Soviets, although we still do to a degree. We are undertaking a high-level review now about what steps we should take with the Soviet Union. We welcome the changes in the Soviet Union, such as glasnost and perestroika, although they still have their problems. We have documents which define Sino-U.S. relations. In the three communiques, we have

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the underpinnings that define the U.S.-China relationship. We will build on those three documents, the communiques. And just as in the INF agreement, where we would not enter into an agreement that was bad for China and thus for Sino-U.S. relations, I can assure you that what we do with the Soviets in the future in arms control or other agreements will not be to the detriment of China. This relationship stands on its own and is strong. And I assure you as President that there will not be a deal on arms that will work to the disadvantage of China.

President Yang: We believe this. The Sino-Soviet summit will soon take place, but the idea of the summit was first proposed by Chairman Deng, not by the Soviets. The key issue at the time was Cambodia. It was natural that in trying to solve the Cambodian question there should be consultations. We had talks with the Soviets at the Vice Foreign Minister and Foreign Minister levels. We hope through the summit we can promote a genuine peaceful and just settlement. The last time the Foreign Ministers met, there was a consensus that Vietnamese troops should be withdrawn by September 30 of this year. But now the attitude of the Vietnamese and the Phnom Penh puppet regime has gone from bad to worse and has not improved. So we have to wait and see whether the Soviets can put into practice the consensus reached with China. Also I can assure you that normalization of Sino-Soviet relations will not be like in the 1950s.

President Bush: No.

President Yang: Also any military alliance or military relationship with the Soviet Union is out of the question. So I request that American leaders understand this. We will on no account imperil the interests of any third country in improving relations with the Soviet Union. In a word, we must watch the deeds of Mr. Gorbachev and not just listen to his words. All Sino-Soviet negotiations, beginning with the Khrushchev years, have been led by Deng Xiaoping. All Chinese delegations to international conferences or between parties have been led by Chairman Deng. I also participated in some of the negotiations. Therefore, I think a Chinese saying is applicable to the Soviets: We will not only listen to his words, but watch his deeds. I think when meeting with Chairman Deng, he will give you a systematic elaboration on this.

President Bush: I am eager to hear his views.

President Yang: He has the richest experience in dealing with the Soviets.

President Bush: In the 1950s did Deng deal with the military aspects of Sino-Soviet relations?

President Yang: No. At that time he was Vice Premier. Later, when he became the General Secretary of the Party, he was in charge of Party military affairs. He was elected General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party at the Eighth Party

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Congress. Soon after that, relations with the Soviets began to worsen. There are many old friends of yours here who were glad to hear of your visit. Please take a few minutes for a short cocktail party that we have arranged so that they can meet you.

President Bush: But we were just getting started, like on the boat.

President Yang: We will have more opportunity to talk at dinner. Now we have planned a very short, 15-minute cocktail party. Vice Premier Wu Xueqian and Foreign Minister Qian will accompany you to the cocktail party.

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