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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

DECLASSIFIED  
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SCS 11/8/11

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Former Chinese Foreign Minister  
Huang Hua (Ø)

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs  
Douglas Paal, NSC, Notetaker  
James Brown, Interpreter

Huang Hua, Former Foreign Minister; Member,  
Standing Committee of the Central Advisory  
Committee, CCP  
Zhu Qizhen, Chinese Ambassador to the U.S.  
Zhang Yijun, Director, Department of American  
Affairs, MFA  
Shao Wenguang, MFA, Interpreter

DATE, TIME January 23, 1991, 3:09 p.m.- 4:05 p.m. EST  
AND PLACE: West Wing and Oval Office

(The Chinese visited General Scowcroft in his office 3:09 p.m.-  
3:25 p.m., then joined the President in the Oval Office, 3:25  
p.m.-3:45 p.m., then returned to General Scowcroft's office until  
4:05 p.m.)

Gen. Scowcroft: I am very glad to see you again. (U)

Mr. Huang: I am very grateful that you take the time to see me  
when you are so busy. (U)

Gen. Scowcroft: Just before you came in, we received word of six  
Scud missiles. They are just coming in. (Ø)

Mr. Huang: This goes to show all the more that it is not easy  
for you, General Scowcroft, to take time to see us. (U)

Gen. Scowcroft: I always take time for old friends. We go back  
a long time. It is always good to see you. (U)

Mr. Huang: I was originally scheduled this morning to see Deputy  
Secretary Eagleburger. But since he is not back from Israel, we  
understand. (U)

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Gen. Scowcroft: We had hoped he would be back today. He had to stay a couple of days to deal with the Israelis. How long will you be in Washington? (e)

Mr. Huang: We came on the nineteenth. We will fly to New Orleans on Friday. We are on this trip at the invitation of the America-China Society. They are the kindly arrangements of Dr. Kissinger and his friends. On this delegation, in addition to the several of us here, are also Mr. He Kang, formerly Minister of Agriculture, also Mr. Pu Shouchang, former Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs. They asked to convey to you their best wishes. (U)

Gen. Scowcroft: Please give them my regards. I was a director of the America-China Society before I came back into government. (U)

Mr. Huang: Since this is a rare opportunity to discuss important issues, I would like to raise questions, if that is allowed, about the war situation and prospects in the Gulf. (e)

Gen. Scowcroft: (After excusing himself for a few minutes to take a call) You had a question about the Gulf. (U)

Mr. Huang: Of course, I would like to begin by conveying the best wishes and greetings from old friends in Beijing. China's leaders always attach great importance to Chinese-U.S. relations. Relations between China and the U.S. since the secret visit in 1971 and the official visit by President Nixon, were relatively smooth over a period of time. These visits broke the estrangement between the two countries over 22 years. With the establishment of formal diplomatic relations, U.S. China policy became bipartisan. The relations between us became smooth and expansive. The two countries had sound cooperation over important international issues, such as Cambodia and the Persian Gulf. They were effective international relations. (e)

These relations have suffered setbacks, especially since the summer of 1989. In the past few months, they have improved somewhat. But they are still not regular. For example, the visit of Foreign Minister Qian Qichen was somewhat ad hoc, not regular and normal. In times like this, it is important to have regular consultations. This is important in the affairs of the world. Also, problems in the economic and trade fields need to be resolved through consultations. We, on our part, attach great importance to our relations and hope for a response from the U.S. side. (e)

Regarding the Gulf, China's position is consistent. We are categorically opposed to the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait. China gave active support to more than ten resolutions

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to strengthen the hand of the U.N. This was also conducive to peaceful resolution of the situation. We made efforts toward a peaceful settlement. They disappointed us. We feel anxiety and concern about the situation in the war. We know the situation in the region is very complicated. I served in Cairo, and I know the situation can become very complicated very quickly. Should the war be prolonged, expanded, escalated in any way, we are concerned it will produce grave consequences. (S)

Gen. Scowcroft: Someone wants to see you. (Gen. Scowcroft then led the guests to the Oval Office.) (S)

The President: Look who's here. I am glad to see you. You look well. Weren't you sick? My old friend... (U)

Mr. Huang: I will try to express my greetings, especially on behalf of my wife. (U)

The President: I called Barbara and told her you are here. She asked me to send you her greetings. She acted like a little girl the other day, got on a sled, ran into a tree, broke her leg. How are things at home? (U)

Mr. Huang: I can say the government is doing well. Since the last part of last year, the economy is turning up. (U)

The President: We are still down here. (U)

Mr. Huang: And it is fairly successful curbing inflation, from 17.9 percent to 7 percent. The political situation is also stable. The Chinese people feel that at a time the world is going through turbulent change, this is conducive to the Chinese people and the people of the world. We are here at the invitation of the America-China Society. We are former government officials. We sincerely hope that this visit can help restore the relations of our two countries since the setbacks. (S)

The President: That is very important. I am very pleased. (Pointing to Ambassador Zhu) You have a very good emissary in the ambassador, my friend. This ambassador came here at a very difficult time. He is doing great. We are going to -- through visits like yours -- put our relations together. I know it is good for China, and it is darned well good for the U.S. What good advice have you got for an old friend? Give me some free advice. (S)

Mr. Huang: The Chinese leaders are your old friends. They asked me to convey their greetings to you. They know you attach great importance to our relations, the relations of two important countries with strategic concerns. We need close consultations when the world is in great change. Since Dr. Kissinger's secret trip in 1971 and President Nixon's official visit in 1972, the

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relations of estrangement of 22 years were behind us. This ushered in a new period of growth. In 1979, under President Carter, relations were normalized and relations began to grow smoothly. There was an important reason for this. Both sides tried to transcend differences and find a common goal. We handled differences through a long term interest, not judging from a single event or a single time. In my personal view, we should avoid being swayed by the differences of values and of systems of our two countries. Mr. President has made a personal contribution to promotion of our relations over a long period of time. A lot of Chinese friends are familiar to you. (S)

The President: I am afraid the time... (U)

Mr. Huang: For instance, in 1989, when our relations suffered setbacks, you made important, wise decisions for our relations. This includes the decision for Most Favored Nation status. At the time, it was very difficult decision. We admire your efforts. At present, the world situation is turbulent. It is undergoing profound changes. You should make efforts to restore relations as early as possible.

The President: How do you do that? (U)

Mr. Huang: One example would be, in addition to exchanges and contacts at various levels, it is important to have cabinet level contacts and exchanges in a very straightforward, progressive way. (S)

The President: Baker has contacts with the Foreign Minister. That is a good start. But it is very complicated. I am accused by political opponents of not caring about human rights. Yesterday, it was the events of 1989. Today, it is Lithuania. The Congress, in the next few days, will say the President does not care about human rights, that I am not tough on human rights. (S)

Gen. Scowcroft: In China, Wang Dan will be sentenced. That will be used. (S)

The President: There will be differences. In China, you do not like interference in internal affairs. You told me about that in tougher times than these. This spills out into Helsinki and becomes complicated. But we will try, will try very hard. I know how important this is. Very important to our country. I will keep working with the Embassy to find common ground to show how important. Our solidarity on the Gulf situation helped out a great deal. (S)

Incidentally, I hope you will, if you have the occasion, pay my respects to Deng Xiaoping, Yang Shangkun, Jiang Zemin -- I do not know him, and Li Peng, my personal respects and best wishes, and officially, to them. How is the health of Deng Xiaoping? (S)

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Mr. Huang: Very well. I saw him last summer, swimming in Beidaihe. (U)

Ambassador Zhu: There was a photo of him in a recent newspaper, playing bridge. (U)

The President: I am sorry, but I must run. I am so pleased to see you. I think back when you came to the U.N. History will give you proper credit for working for better relations between our two countries. (e)

Mr. Huang: The major concern on our part is to make further efforts, to preserve momentum to improve relations. (e)

The President: Time helps. Time's passage helps. I would like to see something sooner -- something well received over here and well received in China -- to help move our relations forward. Good luck. (e)

Mr. Huang: In recent meetings with young Japanese Diet members, Li Peng stressed China's position on the Gulf, particularly our anxiety about an expanding war, that it not bring on the unexpected. (e)

The President: It is a worry. Send my best to Wan Li, Tiger Yang. I know Bar would love to see Madame He. Gen. Scowcroft will get Doug to work out arrangements with the Ambassador. Good bye. (U)

Gen. Scowcroft: (Returning to Gen. Scowcroft's office) We do not want to escalate the conflict. Saddam wants Israel in. We will try to prevent escalation. I know we have had good solidarity through this crisis, with something of a difference of view about using force rather than sanctions. In our view, it would be bad for the whole international community to let this man defy the community. Our feeling, terrible though it is to use force, we felt it was right, and the only thing is to use force. We have no interest in widening the conflict at all. It would be helpful if he simply said he would withdraw. But we hope it will be over soon. It is really up to Saddam Hussein. We have no interest in doing anything more than enforcing the resolutions of the UN Security Council. (e)

I do think that our solidarity of the past months has helped the situation in the U.S. for improvement of our relations. I am worried that the trials of Wang Dan and other trials will begin stirring things up. If we get these behind us, we can get on to the greatest priority. (e)

Mr. Huang: There are very few people left. I hope they will soon be settled. The Chinese government is consistently lenient, within the limits of the law. (e)

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Gen. Scowcroft: Good. The trade problems, as you mentioned, can be dealt with on a pragmatic basis. Then maybe we can move forward on relations. (S)

Mr. Huang: We are making constant efforts to improve the balance of trade. For example, there are contracts with Boeing worth over \$4 billion. Li Peng said if the contracts were signed not in Beijing, but in Los Angeles or San Francisco, the American people would understand much better. In general, China's trade amounts to a very small percentage of U.S. worldwide trade, about 1 1/2 percent. (S)

Gen. Scowcroft: Yes, it does. But because of the general situation, it has a very high profile. (S)

Mr. Huang: Of course, lots of trade is by joint venture or wholly owned ventures, though Hong Kong, with a total worth about \$8 billion per annum. In Hong Kong, American investment is number one among all foreign investors. American firms are involved in this trade. In many cases, China only earns commissions. (S)

Gen. Scowcroft: I understand. I hope we are now at the beginning of a new phase where we can move forward. Just a moment ago, the President called. If possible, Mrs. Bush will see your wife tomorrow at around 3:00 p.m. Doug will arrange it. (S)

Mr. Huang: Thank you very much for seeing us at a busy time. (U)

Ambassador Zhu: I am glad to hear that we may enter a new phase and that the Gulf crisis is helping relations. Since the war our spokesman has been consistent. (S)

Gen. Scowcroft: I noticed. Very clearly. (S)

(While departing, Ambassador Zhu asked whether he may reveal his meeting with the President. He was told no for the President, but yes for Gen. Scowcroft. This was due to the possibility of harmful and misleading linkage by the media between the meeting with the President and new sentences of dissidents in China. A day later, Amb. Zhu had Political Counsellor Xiao Houde call Doug Paal to say that Amb. and Mrs. Zhu would not reveal the meetings with President and Mrs. Bush, but they could not understand why the U.S. side would link the meetings with trials in China.) (S)

-- End of Conversation --

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