

The original documents are located in Box 39, folder “Vietnamese War - Secret Peace Talks (Mr. S. File), (8), 1/1/71 - 6/30/71” of the National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger and Brent Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, 1969 - 1977 at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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Sainteny 1a

SECRET/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY

ACTION

January 18, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: HENRY A. KISSINGER

FROM: W. RICHARD SMYSER

SUBJECT: Message from Sainteny

I have received a letter from Jean Sainteny (Tab B) which says the following:

- " Acting upon your letter of November 9, I had a conversation with my friend on December 23 during which I was able to set forth our project.
- " Although he received the idea with a certain reserve, my interlocutor transmitted it to his board of directors.
- " This board has so far apparently not made its response known.
- " I shall not fail of course to keep you informed."

Strictly speaking, there is no reply warranted. In fact, it might be better not to make one so as not to betray anxiety or to generate too much paper and suspicion. The only purpose in doing so would be to express appreciation and be courteous.

I do not know how many lines you have out at this time on this project, so I cannot advise you. I would propose to send the attached reply (Tab A) if you want to send anything at all.

RECOMMENDATION

That I send the attached reply.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____



SECRET/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY

WRS:jlj 1/18/71

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 E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5
 NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines
 By ut, NARA, Date 12/20/99

16

Dear Sir:

It was a pleasure to hear from you. We send you our best wishes for the New Year, and will await further word. (This sounds somewhat funny in English, but it sounds quite natural in French.)



12 Janvier 1971

Cher Monsieur,

Faisant suite à votre lettre du 9 Novembre, j'ai eu le 23 Décembre avec mon ami une conversation au cours de laquelle il m'a été possible de lui exposer notre projet.

Bien qu'ayant accueilli l'idée avec une certaine réserve, mon interlocuteur l'a transmise à son Conseil d'Administration.

Celui-ci ne semble pas avoir encore fait connaître sa réponse.

Je ne manquerai pas bien entendu de vous tenir au courant.

Je vous prie de croire, Cher Monsieur, à tous mes sentiments les meilleurs.



MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 29, 1971

INFORMATION

~~SECRET~~/SENSITIVE
EYES ONLY

MEMORANDUM FOR HENRY A. KISSINGER

FROM: W. Richard Smyser *WRS*
SUBJECT: Message from Sainteny

In accordance with your notations on my previous memorandum, I have written a personal and warmer note to Sainteny. It says the following:

"It was a great pleasure for us to hear that you are making progress.

"We wish you and your family a very Happy New Year, and we look forward to hearing from you again."

I believe this will let him know what we want and how we feel about his efforts, without being too obvious to all who read the international mails.

Attachment - Previous correspondence



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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5
NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines
By let, NARA, Date 12/20/99

MEMORANDUM

Sealed
By [Signature]
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
[Signature]

26
Darn it. This
should have been
handcarried to me.
ACTION
January 18, 1971
is as
important as anything
we might
not do.

~~SECRET~~/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY

MEMORANDUM FOR:

HENRY A. KISSINGER

FROM:

W. RICHARD SMYSER

SUBJECT:

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- " Although he received the idea with a certain reserve, my interlocutor transmitted it to his board of directors.
- " This board has so far apparently not made its response known.
- " I shall not fail of course to keep you informed."

Dick
little more
personally
S. is a good
friend.

Strictly speaking, there is no reply warranted. In fact, it might be better not to make one so as not to betray anxiety or to generate too much paper and suspicion. The only purpose in doing so would be to express appreciation and be courteous.

I do not know how many lines you have out at this time on this project, so I cannot advise you. I would propose to send the attached reply (Tab A) if you want to send anything at all.

RECOMMENDATION

That I send the attached reply.

Approve _____

Disapprove _____



~~SECRET~~/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5
NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines
By *let*, NARA, Date *12/22/99*

20



2d

Dear Sir:

It was a pleasure to hear from you. We send you our best wishes for the New Year, and will await further word. (This sounds somewhat funny in English, but it sounds quite natural in French.)



22



28

12 Janvier 1971

Cher Monsieur,

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Celui-ci ne semble pas avoir encore fait connaître sa réponse?

Je ne manquerai pas bien entendu de vous tenir au courant.

Je vous prie de croire, Cher Monsieur, à tous mes sentiments les meilleurs.

J.



20

Dear Jean:

Once again, the President and I would like to impose on your invaluable good offices to assist us in a matter of the greatest sensitivity. The bearer of this message, Major General Vernon Walters (our Defense Attache in Paris), will explain to you our specific need for your intercession. The project is one requiring the kind of skill and delicacy which have characterized your earlier efforts in our behalf and no one, other than the President, myself and General Walters is aware of it. Therefore, it is important that after talking to General Walters you inform no one of the nature of your conversation with him, with the exception of President Pompidou.

Both the President and I hope you will find it possible to help. It would increase our already large debt of gratitude to you.

Warm personal regards,

Mr. Jean Sainteny
204, Rue de Rivoli
Paris, France

HAK:AMH:feg:typed:4/26/71



Not used

36

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

Dear Jean:

Once again, the President and I would like to impose on your invaluable good offices to assist us in a matter of the greatest sensitivity. We would be most grateful if you would contact the U. S. Defense Attache in Paris, Major General Vernon Walters, at your earliest convenience. General Walters will, in turn, explain to you our specific need for your intercession. The project is one requiring the kind of skill and delicacy which have characterized your earlier efforts in our behalf and no one, other than the President, myself and General Walters is aware of it. Therefore, it is important that after talking to General Walters you inform no one of the nature of your conversation with him, with the exception of President Pompidou.

General Walters anticipates that you will be contacting him in the near future and stands ready to meet with you privately to divulge the full nature of the project. He can be reached at: 265-7400 or 265-7460 (office) or 637-4374 (home).

Both the President and I have the greatest confidence in your skill and discretion and I hope you will find it possible to again contribute your services in our behalf.

Warm personal regards,



HAK

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 By lt, NARA, Date 12/20/99

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

Not used 3c

~~TOP SECRET~~ / SENSITIVE / EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

Dear Jean,

We would like your help in getting a message to the Chinese Ambassador in Paris.

I have given this message to Major General Vernon Walters, the U. S. Defense Attache in our Embassy and the only ^{official} person, in addition to the President and myself, who is aware of this communication. I would very much appreciate your arranging for General Walters to meet with a senior official in the Chinese Embassy so that he can hand the message over. Please inform no one of this initiative except President Pompidou.

Thank you in advance for your customary discreet assistance.

Warm regards,

HAK

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By lt, NARA, Date 12/20/99

~~TOP SECRET~~ / SENSITIVE / EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY



~~TOP SECRET/NODIS~~
SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY

April 26, 1971

Henry:

Walters confirms that he cannot gracefully contact Peking's Ambassador in Paris and would welcome assist from third party.

We are prepared to send Situation Room courier to Walters with attached today.

Send now _____

Wait _____

AI

~~TOP SECRET/NODIS~~
SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY



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NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines
By lit, NARA, Date 12/20/99

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~~TOP SECRET~~/NODIS/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY

MESSAGE TO BE DELIVERED BY
MAJOR GENERAL VERNON A. WALTERS
TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

In the light of recent events, it seems important to have a reliable channel for communication between our two Governments.

If the Government of the People's Republic of China desires talks that are strictly confidential, the President is ready to establish such a channel directly to him for matters of the most extreme sensitivity. Its purpose would be to bring about an improvement in US-Chinese relations fully recognizing differences in ideology. On the United States side, such a channel would be known only to the President and his Assistant for National Security Affairs, and would not be revealed to any other foreign country.

If you are interested in pursuing this proposal, initial contact should be made with the bearer of this communication, Major General Vernon A. Walters, the U.S. Defense Attache in Paris. Dr. Henry Kissinger, the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs, would be prepared to come to Paris for direct talks on US-Chinese relations with whomever might be designated by the People's Republic of China to explore the subject further.

~~TOP SECRET~~/NODIS/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY



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NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidel'
By ut, NARA, Date 12/20/99

56

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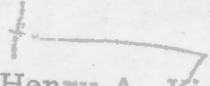
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Dear Jean:

Once again, the President and I would like to impose on your invaluable good offices to assist us in a matter of the greatest sensitivity. The bearer of this message, Major General Vernon Walters (our Defense Attache in Paris), will explain to you our specific need for your intercession. The project is one requiring the kind of skill and delicacy which have characterized your earlier efforts in our behalf and no one, other than the President, myself and General Walters is aware of it. Therefore, it is important that after talking to General Walters you inform no one of the nature of your conversation with him, with the exception of President Pompidou.

Both the President and I hope you will find it possible to help. It would increase our already large debt of gratitude to you.

Warm regards,


Henry A. Kissinger

Mr. Jean Sainteny
204, Rue de Rivoli
Paris, France



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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~TOP SECRET~~

April 27, 1971

Major General Vernon A. Walters
Senior U.S. Military Attache
American Embassy
Paris, France
APO New York 09777

Dear Vernon:

Mr. David McManis of Dr. Kissinger's staff will deliver to you, together with this letter, two documents. The first (at Tab A) is a letter from Dr. Kissinger to Mr. Jean Sainteny and asks him to assist us in a sensitive matter which you will, in turn, explain to him when you deliver the letter. You should, therefore, contact Sainteny, show Henry's letter to him and ask him to arrange a private meeting between you and the Ambassador to France of the Peoples Republic of China or with some other appropriate Senior Chinese Communist representative in Paris. In the meantime, Dr. Kissinger will alert Sainteny by telephone. It is important that Mr. Sainteny merely read Henry's letter to him and that you reclaim it after he has read its contents. Hopefully, Sainteny will then arrange a private meeting between you and a designated representative of the Chinese.

The second document (at Tab B) is a note which you should subsequently deliver to the designated representative of the Peoples Republic. The contents of this note should, under no circumstances, be divulged to Mr. Sainteny and you should merely tell Sainteny that you have been instructed to deliver a note, without further explanation of its nature or content.

In sum, we visualize the scenario as follows:

-- You are to contact Mr. Sainteny who will have been alerted by Henry.

-- Allow him to read Henry's letter to him, being sure to reclaim the letter at the end of the meeting and being sure not to

~~TOP SECRET~~

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By _____, NARA, Date _____



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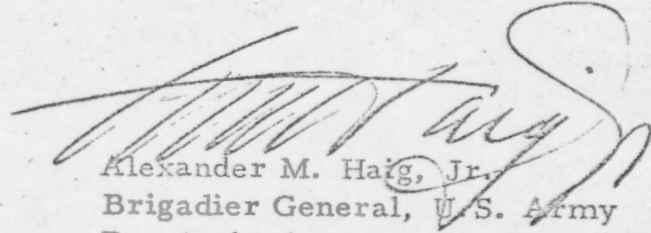
-2-

divulge the content of the second note which is destined for the Chinese representative. At this meeting, flesh out Henry's letter by telling Sainteny that we hope he can arrange a private and secure meeting alone between you and an appropriate representative of the Peoples Republic assigned to France.

-- Mr. Sainteny, in turn, will arrange an appropriate secure rendezvous between you and the Chinese representative. At this private meeting, you would then deliver the note at Tab B.

Please keep us posted on the scenario as it unfolds.

Best regards,



Alexander M. Haig, Jr.
Brigadier General, U.S. Army
Deputy Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

Enclosures

~~TOP SECRET~~



Mr. Kissinger/M. Saintenay

April 27, 1971 4 p.m.

jlj

K: This is Henry Kissinger.

S: I am very glad to hear you.

K: I am glad to hear you. I would like to - If you would be willing - I would like to ask you if you would be willing to do me a favor. I am sending a letter to you through General Walters. He is our Defense Attache.

S: Yes, I know him.

K: I just wanted you to know that he will be calling you on my behalf.

S: When will he call me?

K: Tomorrow or the next day. Wednesday or Thursday.

S: Good.

K: What number should he call you at.

S: The same numbers you have for me.

K: I must have them but do you want to give them to me again.

S: Clairbere (phonetic) 7723 at the office in the morning. And in the evening Opera (phonetic) 7114 at dinner time.

K: He will call tomorrow or the day after. It has to do with the exchange of some letters we had earlier.

S: Yes. I am going to Bermuda in a fortnight but I will still be here for a while.

K: Why don't you come to Washington from there?

S: Yes, it is possible for me to be in Washington on the 15 or 16 of May.

K: Oh. I may be in Europe on the 15 or 16 but I will be back in Washington on the 17th.

S: You will be back on the 17th. It may be possible for me to come. I am sailing from Martinique to Bermuda.

K: That sounds wonderful.



S: I hope it will be wonderful. From there it would be easy to fly to Washington.

K: Yes it would. If you tell me where you will be staying I may be able to arrange a military plane. I don't know for sure.

S: I think it is very easy to get a plane to Washington. At least to New York and then another plane to Washington. However, I would go there only if I am sure to meet you.

K: I may go to London on the 14th and 15th but would you like to have lunch on the 17th?

S: I think it would be better if I call you from Bermuda. I am not sure of my time schedule because it is a yacht.

K: When are you leaving Paris?

S: The 9th of May.

K: We have time before you leave then. You call me when you get to Bermuda. Just call the White House - they are always hooked up with me.

S: I will call and we will arrange a meeting in Washington.

K: Perhaps I can arrange a meeting with my friend. Now that you speak English so perfectly I won't have to translate. Will Claude be with you?

S: Yes.

K: Wonderful.

S: I do not know that she will come. She will not be sailing with me but she may fly direct from Paris to Washington.

K: If you want hotel rooms or anything just let me know.

S: I will write to you or Claude will write to you if she is going to come.

K: If you are coming I might have a dinner and invite a few people.

S: I will be waiting for the Walters call.

K: He will call tomorrow.

S: Good-by.

K: Good=by



5
TELECON

Mme Jean Sainteny ("Claude")

5/13/71 8:15 a.m.

S: Do you know what happened? My house was called at 3:30 in the morning from your office.

K: Oh my god.

S: They must not have realized the change of time. It was 3:30 in the morning and they called to our country place. The gardener was completely amazed.

K: Oh God. That's the problem, not realizing there was a change in time. Were you there?

S: No, I wasn't awakened; I am in Paris.

K: I can do it on the 24th or 25th.

S: I think that could be all right. Jean is leaving Saturday morning early. He is six days on the boat. The wind is always good and is always blowing in the same direction. He is fairly sure to be on the 22nd in Bermuda.

K: For me the best is the 25th.

S: For him the only thing is he must be in Paris on the 26th.

K: He must leave on the 26th?

S: I guess that would be all right.

K: I can do it either on the 24th or the 25th.

S: But he must find a plane from Bermuda.

K: Are you coming too?

S: I might go to Bermuda and wait for him there. But we wouldn't stay long in Washington. He must be in Paris on the 26th.

K: Then you almost have to leave on the evening of the 25th. We could have lunch on the 25th. Why don't we plan that and I might invite one or two of my collaborators. And ~~ya~~ if you are free you come too. How will I find out?

S: First I must ask _____ and be sure I can find a hotel in Bermuda to be sure I have a hotel for me. I have many problems because my mother broke her leg, but I would love to come.

TELECON

Mme Sainteny

3/15/71 8:15 a.m. page 2

K: We would like for you to come. There is only one thing Chip Bohlen and I agree on, that you are the most beautiful woman in France.

S: Perhaps not any more. Maybe what would be best is if you could have a plane in Bermuda.

K: Let me look into it.

S: If someone in your office could be sure we could have a plane . . .

K: We will look into that. I can't tell you for sure right now.

S: I think it is a short flight.

K: About an hour or an hour and a half. We will check into that. I'll call you at this number early next week.

S: Jean will leave anyhow Saturday morning, and if he has no news from you he will try to reach you from Bermuda. Tomorrow night I may be at the other number in the country.

K: I will find you and hope you and Jean can come. I want generally to talk with him. I have no specific problem now, but I always find one after I have talked to him. But I would love to see him, and love to see you again.

S: We would not stay very long. There isn't much to do in Washington except seeing you.

K: We'll give you the grade-A sightseeing tour.

S: If your people could plan the transportation from Bermuda to Washington and if anyone could tell me which is the hotel to go to in Bermuda, that would be fine.

K: We will take care of all of that.

S: There are other things to do I know. You are not a tourist agency.

K: But there must be something I can do well. I'll try being a tourist agent.

S: I had word of you from Bruce.

K: From whom?

S: David Bruce.



TELECON

Mme Sainteny

~~2/1~~ 5/13/71 8:15 a.m. page 3

K: Oh yes. I love him. He's an outstanding man.

S: He is getting bald.

K: I don't blame him. I hope he spoke well of me.

S: Oh yes.

K: He will be here that week while you are here. Perhaps we can have dinner with him. I will try to call you before the end of the day tomorrow to tell you what arrangements have been made.

[At end of conversation Mr. Kissinger said: "Will someone do these things?" He mentioned finding ~~the best~~ a hotel and said "there must be some commercial planes."]



MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 13, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KISSINGER

FROM: Dave Halperin

SUBJECT: Sainteny Arrangements

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS IN BERMUDA

I have made reservations for Mr. and Mrs. Sainteny at the Castle Harbor Hotel in Bermuda for the nights of 22 and 23 May. The hotel is said to be one of the best on the island -- President Eisenhower generally stayed there -- as have a number of other Presidents. Prince Charles was there last month. The room rate (including both breakfast and dinner) is \$69.00 per day (for both), and the manager expects to receive a deposit in the next week or so.

AIR TRANSPORTATION

I have made first class reservations from Bermuda to Washington as follows:

Depart Bermuda	4:30 p. m.	May 24 (Monday)
Arrive Friendship	6:28 p. m.	May 24 "

Flight: Eastern Airlines #808; tickets should be purchased at least one hour before departure (\$91.00 per ticket -- \$20.00 more than tourist).

Flight information for the return trip to Paris is as follows:

Depart Dulles	5:45 p. m.	May 25 (Tuesday)
Arrive Paris	7:55 a. m.	May 26 (Wednesday)

Flight: TWA Airlines #810. I made first class reservations for the return trip to Paris

The tickets are \$434 each and should be purchased at least one hour prior to departure. (There are no Air France flights to Europe on Tuesday.)



HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS IN WASHINGTON

Reservations have been made at the Hay-Adams for the night of May 24 for Mr. and Mrs. Sainteny.

I have assumed that the Saintenys will pay for their plane tickets and hotel accommodations, but there may be some ambiguity about this judging from your phone conversation with Mrs. Sainteny.

For reference, the Sainteny's phone numbers are:

Office: KLE 7723

Home: 073-7114



*Mrs S -
intermed
by phone
PM 4/14/71*

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 14, 1971

Mr. Kissinger:

I have checked and there are no flights on any airlines which leave Bermuda for Washington in the morning. All the flights are late afternoon with the exception of one which goes through New York and leaves at 1:30 (because it is indirect, it does not arrive in Washington until 6:30 p.m., Monday). Because of this, I have let the Monday afternoon arrangements stand as indicated.

Would you like me to convey the flight and reservations information to Mrs. Sainteny.

Yes _____ No _____

I will do _____

DRH





THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 25, 1971

Mr. Kissinger:

Yesterday, Mrs. Sainteny called from Bermuda to say that in checking into the flight reservations, she found she did not have the proper currency to pay for the tickets. She asked if I could pay for them here in Washington which I did (out of pocket). This morning she called to ask some general questions about the reservations this afternoon, and my impression is that she may feel that it is appropriate for us to pay for the plane tickets to Washington from Bermuda and back to Paris. If you would like to do this, the NSC has a fund which can be tapped for this purpose.

How do you wish to leave it? The amount involved will be about \$600-700.

(1) Get NSC funds to pay for
the tickets

(2) Sainteny's should pay
themselves

DRH



~~TOP SECRET~~/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY

May 25, 1971

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger
 M. and Mme. John Paul Sainteny
 Brig. General Alexander M. Haig
 W. Richard Smyser, NSC Staff
 Winston Lord, NSC Staff

PLACE:

Dr. Kissinger's Office

TIME:

Luncheon, May 25, 1971

Substantive portions of the luncheon conversation centered on Vietnam and China. Following are the highlights of M. Sainteny's observations.

Vietnam

M. Sainteny said that:

- Hanoi does not fully believe that the Americans will leave Vietnam. If they were assured of that and of a certain number of seats for the NLF in the Assembly, they would come to terms on POWs, ceasefire, and the separation of the two Vietnams for a number of years. (M. Sainteny actually was somewhat ambiguous about North Vietnamese political demands but appeared to suggest that Assembly representation might satisfy them for the time being anyway.)
- The NLF is really quite independent of North Vietnam and there could be significant differences between them. However, M. Sainteny thought Hanoi would be willing to deal with us without the NLF.
- The North Vietnamese are still determined to pursue their struggle although he sensed a certain degree of uncertainty. Le Duan is in charge, but he clearly does not have the authority of Ho Chi Minh.

~~TOP SECRET~~/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5

NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Cr

By lit, NARA, Date 12/22/99

- The extensive corruption in South Vietnam gives the non-corrupt North Vietnamese an advantage with the South Vietnamese people. The GVN is so tarnished that it would be better from our standpoint to see it replaced. There are good people in South Vietnam and Paris; for example, Big Minh, who, while not brilliant, is popular.
- Madame Binh is tough; Xuan Thuy is enigmatic; Mai Van Bo's replacement is not up to his standard.
- In response to Dr. Kissinger's query whether Hanoi might fear its traditional enemies, China and Japan, Mme. Sainteny did not believe this was an important factor. She did not think that the North Vietnamese feared China, and with Japan their concern was only in the economic realm. On the other hand, they believe that the Americans have reasons to stay in Vietnam, including their anticommunism and their position as world leader.

China

Mr. Sainteny said the following:

- The US moves concerning China were good, and we were now on a good path.
- With the Chinese, if you knock on one door they will open another one. Thus, while the Chinese Ambassador in Paris had merely transmitted Dr. Kissinger's note without comment, M. Sainteny believed the approach through him had been very efficacious with respect to recent events.
- Chou En-lai has been clearly in charge since the Cultural Revolution, with Mao now being old.
- The Chinese will blow hot and cold in their dealings with us. We should multiply our gestures toward them to show our good will; he cited as an example that his company wished to sell helicopters to the Chinese, but were prevented by COCOM restrictions because an American license was needed for certain parts.



Dr. Kissinger said that M. Sainteny could tell the Chinese that the US will look positively at these trade questions. We will be freeing some trade items, although we cannot guarantee to free them all and will not release any with military significance.

After Lunch

After lunch, M. Sainteny remained for further private conversation with Dr. Kissinger. During that conversation he asked Dr. Kissinger whether he could tell Ambassador Bruce and Xuan Thuy that he had occasional contact with Dr. Kissinger. Dr. Kissinger said that he could tell those people.

Dr. Kissinger asked M. Sainteny whether we could use him to get a message to the Chinese very fast if we needed to. M. Sainteny said he thought he could get to the Chinese quickly enough to deliver any urgent message, and that he would be pleased to do it.



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador David K. E. Bruce
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger
W. Richard Smyser, NSC Staff

DATE & PLACE: May 26, 1971; Dr. Kissinger's office

The conversation centered around the following topics:

Dealings with China

Dr. Kissinger said that we wanted Ambassador Bruce to go to China on our behalf when we send a special mission to Peking as we are hoping and planning to do later this year. He said we could not think of anybody else who could do this task.

Ambassador Bruce said he had two reservations. First, he was not certain the Chinese would want to deal with him after his association with the Paris talks. When Dr. Kissinger said this was not an overriding problem, Ambassador Bruce said a graver concern was the state of his own health. He felt that he could not commit himself now to undertake any missions because his doctors had prescribed a period of prolonged rest, to get over a severe illness he was suffering. He thought there was at least an even chance he could go to Peking, but he would like to be able to review the matter later.

Dr. Kissinger said that we would therefore keep the Ambassador as our first candidate, and we hoped very much that he could go. He said we would keep in touch.

Bruce's Departure

Dr. Kissinger asked if the Ambassador could remain in his present position and actively functioning until at least the end of June, by which time we hoped to have a clearer idea of North Vietnamese intentions

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5
NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines
By UX, NARA, Date 12/20/99



through other channels. He briefed the Ambassador on these channels. He felt we would have a good idea then whether they were or were not prepared to negotiate, and if they were not the departure of the Ambassador would underline our reaction.

Bruce said that he could stay on until the end of June but that his health would not permit anything longer. He said an alternative might be for him to take leave in mid-June and then perhaps come back later, not leaving the post but merely departing from it on vacation. It was left that he would stay on until we got a clearer idea of North Vietnamese intentions to negotiate.

Paris Talks

The Ambassador said that North Vietnamese performance in Paris had been very negative. They mainly seem interested in making public speeches, not in negotiating. Their principal purpose in keeping the Paris talks going these days seems to be for propaganda, particularly with visiting Americans.

Ambassador Habib's Plans

Ambassador Bruce said he felt it was essential for Ambassador Habib to be given leave as soon as possible. The work of the delegation was now so limited that nothing much could be usefully accomplished by so energetic a person as Habib, and he needed badly to get a change of scenery after long and distinguished service in Paris. Dr. Kissinger said that the President had approved the sequence of Ambassadorial appointments in which Habib was involved and that Habib could leave Paris as soon as he and Ambassador Bruce wished.

