

KISSINGER ASSERTS HE DISCUSSED WAR DURING CHINA VISIT

JUN 25 1972

But He Sees No Clear Signs
of a Break in Diplomatic
Impasse on Vietnam

RETURNS FROM PEKING

President's Adviser Hopeful
of Progress on Bilateral
Issues Such as Trade

NYTimes

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 24—

Henry A. Kissinger said today that he had discussed the Vietnam war at length with Chinese leaders but reported no clear signs of a break in the present diplomatic impasse.

President Nixon's national security adviser returned here yesterday after nearly four days of talks with Premier Chou En-lai and other Chinese officials. He gave newsmen a general review of the trip at the White House today.

Mr. Kissinger expressed the hope that a careful rereading of the peace proposals set forth in the President's May 8 address on Vietnam, combined with reflection by Hanoi on its "failure" to achieve a military solution to the war, might in time persuade the North Vietnamese leadership to resume serious negotiations.

Sees Renewal of Talks

But he said he agreed with a judgment expressed earlier today by Secretary of State William P. Rogers that there were no "clear signs" of progress. He said it seemed logical to him that the Paris talks would resume when a major policy review now under way in Hanoi is completed, but that the key question is not whether the enemy is willing to talk but what it is prepared to offer.

Mr. Kissinger seemed hopeful of progress between the United States and China on such bilateral issues as trade and cultural exchanges, and he said that he and his delegation had been received with extraordinary courtesy." But most of the questioning this morning, and most of his comments, dealt with Vietnam.

When he left Washington eight days ago it was widely believed here that Mr. Kissinger was eager to gauge the attitude of the Chinese leaders on two related questions: Peking's willingness to move North Vietnam toward a settlement and its ability to help arrange a settlement.

Doesn't Give Details

On the first point, Mr. Kissinger said that no useful purpose could be served by disclosing details of his private conversations on China's attitude on the war.

"Events" he said, "will be more important than what we may say."

He asserted that not only China but "all countries in the world now have an interest in bringing about a peaceful solution." But he also noted that the Chinese were "men of principle" who were not prepared and had not been asked by the United States "either to betray their principles or to sit in judgment on their allies" that is North Vietnam.

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"We have no information about the relationship of North Vietnam to its two principal allies," Mr. Kissinger said. "We recognize that both the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China are dedicated to their principles. These principles are not identical with ours and, of course, they have a close relationship to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. What fluctuations these relationships may undergo at any particular time we are in no position to judge."

In these and other comments, Mr. Kissinger appeared to be disclaiming any knowledge that Moscow and Peking might be prepared to ask Hanoi to soften its negotiating stance, without foreclosing the possibility that this could happen, however.

Hanoi has demanded that the United States withdraw its forces and help establish a coalition government involving

participation of the National Liberation Front. On May 8, President Nixon asked for an internationally-supervised ceasefire and the return of all prisoners of war in exchange for an American withdrawal four months after an agreement. The political solution would be left to the Vietnamese themselves.

As for Peking's capacities for persuasion—as distinct from its willingness to help—Mr. Kissinger suggested that even if the major Communist powers agreed to urge Hanoi to move towards a solution, the final decision would rest with the North Vietnamese. He said that North Vietnam had fought long and hard for its cause and was not likely to "surrender its destiny or its future" to the wishes or even its friends.

"We expect that when the war is settled," Mr. Kissinger said, "it will be by direct negotiations," that is, between the North Vietnamese and the United States.

"When the North Vietnamese are prepared to talk to us in a serious way on substantive issues," Mr. Kissinger went on, "and prepared to examine our views, together with theirs, we will meet them in the same spirit."

Text of Statement

The official joint statement on the meeting, issued simultaneously here and in Peking this morning, did not mention the Vietnam issue. The statement read:

"Premier Chou En-lai of the People's Republic of China and other Chinese officials held discussions with Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, assistant to the U.S. President for national security affairs, and his party, from June 19 to June 23, 1972. The talks were extensive, earnest and frank. They consisted of concrete consultations to promote the normalization of relations between the two countries and an exchange of views on issues of common interest.

"Both sides agreed on the usefulness of these consultations, which were foreseen in the Sino-U.S. joint communiqué of February, 1972, and on the desirability of continuing them."

On bilateral matters, Mr. Kissinger said he believed that there would be "steady progress, perhaps not of a spectacular nature, but steady progress over the months ahead" in arranging for and conducting cultural, scientific and educational exchanges with China. He indicated that most of the early Chinese visitors would be professionals such as scientists and educators rather than Government officials.

He also predicted "slow but steady progress" in discussions on expanded trade. He did not elaborate. There has been very

little new trade between the two countries since Mr. Nixon's visit to Peking in February.

Mr. Kissinger said he did not confer with any North Vietnamese leaders while he was in Peking and that he had not seen Chairman Mao Tset-ung. But he said he had received no confirmation of recent reports that Chairman Mao was ill. On the contrary, he said, it was his impression that the Chairman had been kept abreast of "important matters" during the visit.

Hours of Talks

Mr. Kissinger said that he had spent about 18 hours in formal discussions with Chinese leaders and six hours more in informal discussions during automobile rides and at dinners. In addition, he said, various members of his staff and of the State Department had engaged in parallel discussions on trade and other specific matters with other Chinese authorities.

Though he was obviously tired after nearly five weeks of diplomatic barnstorming—he had been to Moscow and Tokyo before embarking on the Peking visit—Mr. Kissinger seemed in good spirits. He said his hosts had arranged one banquet, a formal dinner, and a performance of the Shanghai Opera Company, as well as other events, and had permitted table-tennis matches between members of his staff and Chinese players.

"Some of my colleagues disgraced themselves by trying to play Ping Pong with the Chinese," he said. "And by superhuman efforts on the part of the Chinese, our people made one or two points."