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Chou's chuckle in an interview loaded with meaning for Nixon?

In Latin America, particularly in Chile and Mexico, the rage is an interview, just published, between a Mexican journalist and Chou En-lai. Julio Scherer Garcia, the editor-manager of *Excelsior* published in Mexico City, spent two and one-half hours with Chou, whose penetrating monologue, obviously delivered to a keen listener, cuts like a blow torch through Western fatuity.

It is rich and long, full of interesting bits and pieces. Chou tells us, for instance, that "the truth of the assassination of President Kennedy has not yet been revealed." The Chinese Communists did not desire to turn China into the center of world revolution, he says. On the other hand, he admits that China would help out national liberation movements. "Why not?" Chou commented, slipping into English vernacular. And then elucidating, in a style that is vintage Oriental Paradox: "The destiny of every nation is the responsibility of its people. We oppose aggression, intervention, subversion, and outrage. But we support national liberation movements."

There is even a flirtatious dalliance with the big lie. "Legal punishment in China is administered through work and re-education. Few are imprisoned, even fewer executed. We do not believe in the effectiveness of execution. We do not restrain power through killing." This datum will unfortunately fail to revive several dozen million Chinese corpses.

Mr. Scherer asked, "Does China see any future for socialism through election?"

Chou. "We do not believe in the struggle by the parliamentary method. We do not conceal our views. We have not seen any cases in which any country has succeeded in expelling the forces of aggression from abroad or in attaining complete national independence and real, authentic democracy through parliamentary practice. The Latin American nations won their national independence through armed struggle. Unfortunately in the twentieth century aggressive forces have again infiltrated these countries."

Chou then garbled something President Nixon said out in Kansas City recently

... "The decline of the British Empire has proved (the inadequacy of parliamentary democracy). Even Nixon recognized on 6 July 1971 in a press conference that 25 years ago it would have been impossible even to imagine that U.S. prestige would have fallen as low as it now is. As he contemplates the 20 years since the end of World War II, the United States has suffered such loss of prestige throughout the world that even the President indicates his surprise. The origin of these problems, the lack of prestige, we know well: It is due to the attempt of the United States to dominate the world."

"The Premier is looking at the clock," Mr. Scherer's notes disclose. "It is clear that the interview is coming to an end. He is almost standing . . ."

Scherer. "How is it possible for the champion of anti-capitalism, Chairman Mao Tse-tung, and the champion of anti-communism, President Richard Nixon, to meet? Why does China accept its mortal enemy in its own home?"

Chou. "Because the United States has imposed a blockade against China and has demonstrated hostility to it for 22 years. The Geneva and Warsaw talks at the ambassadorial level have lasted for 16 years without results. Now Nixon wants to raise the level of the negotiation, and he knocks at our door; why should we not open it?"

Scherer. "Do you believe Nixon would come to China if he felt the trip would not benefit him?"

Chou. "There are two possibilities about his visit to China. If the negotiations succeed, the people of the East and of the entire world will benefit. This is the main thing. Now then, if the trip is not successful, President Nixon will unmask himself. If he arrives in Peking without wanting to resolve problems the entire world will see this and comment on it. We can assert only this: China does not traffic in principles, nor do we sell out our comrade-in-arms, never."

Scherer. "But does the United States?"

Chou. "Draw your own conclusions. I think they are very clear. (Chou chuckles)."