

May 22, 1973

Cablegram from Australian Embassy, Peking, 'Dr. Cairns' Meeting with Premier Chou En-lai [Zhou Enlai]'

Citation:

"Cablegram from Australian Embassy, Peking, 'Dr. Cairns' Meeting with Premier Chou En-lai [Zhou Enlai]'", May 22, 1973, Wilson Center Digital Archive, National Archives of Australia, A1838, 3107/38, Part 13.

<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/175969>

Summary:

The cable analyzes Chinese Premier Zhou's attitude toward Sino-Australian relation.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

→ 3107/38
~~3107/38/12/11~~ ✓
~~3107/40/5~~ (copy)
143

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

INWARD CABLEGRAM

PLG4

I.56853

FROM

TOD 22.05.73...1222 LT

AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY
PEKING

TOR 22.05.73...1730 LT

389 CONFIDENTIAL PRIORITY

DR CAIRNS' MEETING WITH PREMIER CHOU EN-LAI

WE UNDERSTAND DR CAIRNS HAS REPORTED SUBSTANCE OF DISCUSSION TO ACCOMPANYING JOURNALISTS AND HAS READ TO THEM SELECTED PARTS OF THE UNCORRECTED VERBATIM RECORD.

CORRECTED RECORD WAS NOT AVAILABLE TO HIM BEFORE HE LEFT PEKING, AND HE IS AWARE THAT DRAFT CONTAINED INACCURACIES. FOLLOWING ARE MAIN POINTS.
RECORD BY BAG.

2. SOUTHEAST ASIA AND OVERSEAS CHINESE.

GREATER PART OF PUBLIC SESSION WAS DEVOTED TO A MONOLOGUE BY CHOU ON THE OVERSEAS CHINESE.

HE ARGUED THE CASE IN SOME DETAIL, REHEARSING THE HISTORY OF CHINESE POLICY SINCE 1949, AND EMPHASISING THE PROBLEM OF OVERSEAS CHINESE CONSERVATISM AND CHINA'S OPPOSITION TO DUAL NATIONALITY.

THE ESSENCE OF THE CHINESE POSITION IS THAT CHINESE OVERSEAS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO DO WHATEVER IS NECESSARY TO ASSIMILATE WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES, THAT IT HAS BEEN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR CHINA TO CARRY OUT ITS POLICY, AND THAT THE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED ARE ATTRIBUTABLE TO FACTORS BEYOND CHINA'S CONTROL.

3. CHOU'S REMARKS ON THIS SUBJECT WERE RELATED DIRECTLY TO QUESTIONS I HAVE RAISED IN ALL MEETINGS WITH SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT (INCLUDING CHOU) SINCE MY ARRIVAL IN PEKING, CONCERNING SOUTHEAST ASIAN APPREHENSIONS ABOUT CHINA.

IT WAS CLEAR THAT THIS WAS THE MAIN POINT HE INTENDED TO MAKE. HE EMPHASISED THAT HE HAD RAISED IT "BECAUSE WE FEEL THIS IS A VERY TROUBLED ISSUE.

AND BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CERTAIN COUNTRIES, IT HAS BEEN IMPOSSIBLE TO FULLY IMPLEMENT THIS POLICY".

HE WENT ON TO ARGUE BRIEFLY THAT CHINA HAD NO EXPANSIONIST AMBITIONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND TO SUGGEST THAT DR CAIRNS MIGHT LIKE TO EXPLAIN CHINESE POLICIES TO ADAM MALIK AND LEE KUAN YEW.

"YOU CAN TELL THEM WHEN YOU MEET THEM OF OUR POLICIES AND ASK THEM TO REST ASSURED."

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

142

INWARD CABLEGRAM

PLG4

..2..

I.56853

LATER, IN THE PRIVATE SESSION, CHOU EXPRESSED A MORE POSITIVE CONCERN TO ESTABLISH RELATIONS WITH SOUTHEAST ASIAN GOVERNMENTS THAN WE HAVE HEARD FROM OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT.

'WE KNOW THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENTS IN (AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND) TAKE A FRIENDLY ATTITUDE TOWARDS US AND HAVE EXPRESSED THIS BY RECOGNISING THE PRC AND ESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH US.

WE HOPE TO SEE THE COUNTRIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA ALSO EMBARKING UPON THIS ROLE AND WE BELIEVE THAT FRIENDLY RELATIONS CAN BE ESTABLISHED WITH THESE COUNTRIES, BUT THAT WILL ALSO TAKE TIME.

IT WILL TAKE TIME GRADUALLY TO RESOLVE AND MOVE AWAY VARIOUS OBSTACLES AND BARRIERS.'

4. CHOU'S APPROACH TO THIS QUESTION SUGGESTS THAT THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT TAKES SOME ACCOUNT OF AUSTRALIAN VIEWS AND REGARDS IT AS IMPORTANT THAT WE HAVE A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF CHINESE POLICIES.

I DO NOT BELIEVE HIS REMARKS ABOUT EXPLAINING CHINESE POLICIES TO MALIK AND LEE AMOUNT TO MUCH MORE THAN THAT.

FROM THE CHINESE SIDE THERE IS LITTLE INTEREST IN MEDIATION BY THIRD POWERS.

BUT CHOU'S APPROACH DOES SEEM TO INDICATE CHINESE ACCEPTANCE OF OUR CLOSE RELATIONS WITH SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES AND OUR SPECIAL INTEREST IN SECURING A RESOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF THEIR RELATIONS WITH CHINA, AND CHINESE PROBABLY SEE SOME VALUE IN HAVING US TRY TO DISPEL SOUTHEAST ASIAN FEARS OF CHINA AND PRESENT OUR OWN VIEWS OF CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY.

WHILE IT IS NOT TO OUR ADVANTAGE TO PRESENT OURSELVES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AS APOLOGISTS FOR CHINA, IT WOULD BE MOST VALUABLE IF WE COULD TELL THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT ABOUT SUCH REPRESENTATIONS AS WE HAVE ALREADY MADE ON OUR OWN BEHALF (E.G. THE MINISTER'S DISCUSSIONS IN JAKARTA AND WITH TUN ISMAIL) AND KEEP THEM INFORMED OF ANY FURTHER REPRESENTATIONS WE MIGHT MAKE.

5. BILATERAL RELATIONS.

CHOU REFUSED TO BE DRAWN ON THE QUESTION OF THE POTENTIAL INFLUENCE OF CHINA IN DOMESTIC AUSTRALIAN POLITICS.

('CHINA CANNOT PLAY SUCH A GREAT ROLE').

THE MOST HE WOULD SAY, AND THIS SEEMED DIRECTED TO THE FOREIGN POLICIES OF OUR TWO COUNTRIES, WAS THAT 'WE CAN HELP EACH OTHER'.

6. QANTAS.

APPARENTLY THERE HAVE BEEN PRESS REPORTS STATING THAT CHOU INVITED QANTAS TO BEGIN FLIGHTS TO CHINA.

....3

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

INWARD CABLEGRAM

141

PLG4

.. 3..

1.56853

CHOU DID NOT GO THIS FAR.

HE SAID AN AIR LINK WOULD FACILITATE CONTACTS AND WHEN ASKED IF THAT CONSTITUTED AN INVITATION HE SAID YES, IT COULD BE CONSIDERED.

HE POINTED OUT THAT CHINA HAS PROBLEMS WITH AIRPORT FACILITIES, BUT ADDED THAT NEGOTIATIONS COULD BEGIN FIRST IF WE WERE INTERESTED.

7. PRESS REPRESENTATION.

CHOU EXPRESSED MILD SURPRISE THAT WE DID NOT YET HAVE PERMANENT PRESS REPRESENTATIVES IN PEKING.

HE SEEMED TO THINK THAT WE SHOULD ALREADY HAVE ARRANGED FOR PRESS REPRESENTATION AND INVITED SUGGESTIONS ABOUT RECIPROCAL ARRANGEMENTS.

"SINCE WE HAVE A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HSINHUA NEWS AGENCY IN AUSTRALIA, WHAT CORRESPONDING NEWS AGENCY WOULD BE THE MOST SUITABLE TO BE IN CHINA?"

HE DID NOT SUGGEST HOWEVER THAT THERE SHOULD BE STRICT RECIPROACITY.

PRIME MINISTER
 MINISTER OF STATE
 FOREIGN AFFAIRS
 MIN AND DEPT DEFENCE
 MIN AND DEPT OVERSEAS TRADE
 MIN AND DEPT SECONDARY INDUSTRY
 JIO
 PM AND C
 PMS

ACTION: NA

SEC DEP SEC(A) DEP SEC(B) PR MCO MR BODY FAS(SA)
 FAS(NWA) NA FAS(PW) PC ECSA FAS(DEF) DP IC FAS(DVP)
 ICR FAS(IO) EP UNIA FAS(CL) LT CPI FAS(MS)

BANGKOK HONG KONG JAKARTA KUALA LUMPUR LONDON MANILA
 MOSCOW NEW YORK (UN) PARIS PEKING SINGAPORE TOKYO
 WASHINGTON WELLINGTON

CONFIDENTIAL