

November 15, 1973

**Cablegram from Australian Embassy Peking, 'PM's
Visit - Discussions with Chou En-Lai'**

Citation:

"Cablegram from Australian Embassy Peking, 'PM's Visit - Discussions with Chou En-Lai'", November 15, 1973, Wilson Center Digital Archive, National Archives of Australia (NAA), A1838, 3107/38 PART 14. <https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/175872>

Summary:

Cable from Australian Embassy in Beijing to Australian Foreign Ministry reporting the meeting with Zhou regarding Zhou's concern on overseas Chinese and relations with Southeast nations.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

INWARD CABLEGRAM

MDR I

L. 131989

FROM

TOD 15.11.73...1215 LT

AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY
PEKING

TOR 15.11.73...1531 LT

1263 CONFIDENTIAL

ADDRESSED KUALA LUMPUR OP398, REPEATED CANBERRA 1263, SINGAPORE
OP399, BANGKOK OP400, JAKARTA OP401, MANILA OP402.

PM'S VISIT - DISCUSSIONS WITH CHOU EN-LAI

KUALA LUMPUR'S OP192.

IN DISCUSSIONS WITH PRIME MINISTER, CHOU EN-LAI SPOKE AT SOME LENGTH ON THE PROBLEM OF OVERSEAS CHINESE AND HIS DISCUSSION OF SOUTH EAST ASIAN MATTERS WAS MORE POSITIVE THAN IS IMPLIED IN CANBERRA'S 1443 TO PEKING (3890 TO KUALA LUMPUR). IT WAS, IN FACT, THE MOST POSITIVE CHINESE TREATMENT OF SOUTH EAST ASIA OF WHICH WE ARE AWARE SINCE MID-1950'S. BEFORE THE PM'S VISIT WE HAD THE CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT CHINA WAS CONTENT TO LET ITS POLICIES STAND, UNELABORATED AND UNMODIFIED, UNTIL SOUTH EAST ASIANS CAME ROUND TO ACCEPTING THAT THEY WERE "CORRECT". DURING THE VISIT CHOU DISPLAYED A WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER, AND MEET, SOUTH EAST ASIAN OBJECTIONS, BOTH IN THE GENERAL TENOR OF HIS RESPONSES AND ON SPECIFIC POINTS OF OVERSEAS CHINESE AND DUAL NATIONALITY. HIS REFERENCE TO CHINA'S HOPE THAT SINGAPORE COULD BE THE FIRST RATHER THAN THE LAST COUNTRY TO ESTABLISH RELATIONS WITH CHINA REFLECTS A NEW DEPARTURE. ON TALKS WITH MALAYSIA HE SAID CHINA HOPED TO ACHIEVE A "BREAKTHROUGH". WE BELIEVE THE PRIME MINISTER'S ARGUMENTS HELPED TO CONVINCE CHOU THAT SOUTH EAST ASIA IS IMPORTANT, THAT BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH ASEAN STATES ARE DESIRABLE, AND THAT TO ACHIEVE A BREAKTHROUGH CHINA WILL HAVE TO BE MORE ACCOMMODATING.

2. IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT CHOU SHOULD HAVE REITERATED CHINA'S SUPPORT FOR REVOLUTION AND IT WOULD BE MISTAKEN FOR US TO SUGGEST TO ASEAN STATES THAT CHINA WILL ABANDON THIS GENERAL STANCE, EVEN AFTER RELATIONS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED. THE CONTEXT IN WHICH HE PLACED THIS REMARK, HOWEVER, WAS IN ITSELF SIGNIFICANT. HE RELATED THIS STANCE TO HIS RESPONSE TO THE PRIME MINISTER THAT CHINA REMAINED OPPOSED TO UNITED STATES IMPERIALISM AND JAPANESE MILITARISM, BOTH MATTERS ON WHICH THERE HAS BEEN VERY CONSIDERABLE PRACTICAL ACCOMMODATION FROM THE CHINESE SIDE. IT IS NOT THAT CHOU WAS HINTING AT CONCESSIONS, BUT HIS COMMENTS AT NO STAGE EXCLUDED THE POSSIBILITY. THE QUESTION OF BROADCASTS BY STATIONS PURPORTING TO BE THE VOICE OF REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS IN SOUTH EAST ASIA REMAINS AN ISSUE AND ONE WHICH SHOULD BE PRESSED. IN DISCUSSION WITH RENOUF, LING PING (DIRECTOR, AMERICAS AND OCEANIA DEPARTMENT, MFA) WHEN PRESSED CLAIMED THAT THESE STATIONS WERE NOT IN CHINA. (WE SHOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION ON THEIR CURRENT LOCATION).

.../2

Reply Sent.

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

INWARD CABLEGRAM

-2-

1.131989

3. IN DISCUSSIONS WITH RENOUF AND GRANT MFA OFFICIALS CARRIED THROUGH STRONGLY THE LINE ESTABLISHED BY CHOU DURING THE PM'S VISIT. LING PING AND HIS DEPUTY WU FAN-WU BOTH SAID SEPARATELY CHINA WISHES TO ADOPT A "POSITIVE ATTITUDE" TOWARDS ESTABLISHING BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH ASEAN GOVERNMENTS AND ASKED FOR FURTHER THOUGHTS ON HOW THIS MIGHT BE "DONE WELL". WU INVITED GRANT TO GO OVER WITH HIM PROBLEMS FOR SOUTH EAST ASIANS IN APPROACHING CHINA, OTHER THAN OVERSEAS CHINESE. BOTH LIN AND WU SEEMED TO ACCEPT THAT AUSTRALIA'S REPEATED PRESENTATION OF SOUTH EAST ASIAN OBJECTIONS TO THE BROADCASTS AND CHINA'S SUPPORT FOR REVOLUTION INDICATED THAT AUSTRALIA ALSO BELIEVES THESE CHARGES MUST BE TREATED SERIOUSLY. IN RESPONSE, WU FAN-WU SAID THAT AUSTRALIA'S RELATIONS WITH CHINA WERE A "GOOD EXAMPLE" FOR OTHER ASIAN NATIONS. (THIS COMMENT HAS A WIDER SIGNIFICANCE IN THAT BY TAKING UP THE PRIME MINISTER'S OWN FORMULATION THE CHINESE SEEM TO BE INDICATING CONCURRENCE., AND THE WAY IN WHICH WU EXPRESSED HIMSELF WAS NOT UNLIKE THE WAY IN WHICH THE CHINESE TALK OF THE IMPORTANCE OF BRITAIN AND TO SOME EXTENT FRANCE IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH EUROPE).

4. IF IT HAS NOT ALREADY BEEN DONE, THE RELEVANT SECTIONS OF PAGES ONE AND TWO OF THE SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS COULD BE PASSED TO INTERESTED POSTS, TOGETHER WITH EXTRACTS FROM THE DRAFT RECORD WHICH SHOULD NOW HAVE BEEN RECEIVED IN CANBERRA.

5. IF WE ARE TO ACT AS "HONEST BROKERS", IT WOULD SEEM ADVISABLE TO COMMUNICATE CHINESE VIEWS WITHOUT THE KIND OF DISTORTION WHICH CAN RESULT FROM TAKING THE MOST NEGATIVE OF CHOU'S RESPONSES (ON HOSTILE BROADCASTING) OUT OF ITS CONTEXT OF SYMPATHETIC DISCUSSIONS OF AT VERY LEAST THE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE OVERSEAS CHINESE IN SOUTH EAST ASIA, AND THE QUESTION OF DUAL NATIONALITY.

PRIME MINISTER
FOREIGN MINISTER
FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MIN AND DEPT DEFENCE
JIO
PM'S

ACTION: NA

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

LONDON NEW YORK(UN) RANGOON SEOUL TOKYO WASHINGTON