

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVEExtract of MEMCON dated May 5, 1971

Ambassador Hilaly called today asking that the following information be passed to the President:

The message which Dr. Kissinger gave him on April 28 was transmitted directly to President Yahya that same evening. President Yahya has cabled Hilaly confirming that Yahya personally conveyed the message to the Ambassador of Communist China on Saturday morning, May 1. It most probably reached Chou-en-lai the same day or the following day.

Ambassador Hilaly said that what he had told President Yahya on behalf of President Nixon on the basis of Dr. Kissinger's talk with him was as follows:

The President asked that the following message be passed to President Yahya:

My warm thanks for the helpful role you have played. I particularly appreciate the delicacy and tact with which you have handled these important exchanges. Please thank Chou-en-lai for his message which I think is positive, constructive and forthcoming. I will soon be replying to it in the same spirit.

Ambassador Hilaly noted further that Dr. Kissinger asked him to convey the following to Chou-en-lai stated as President Yahya's personal views:

I feel that President Nixon is very anxious to handle these negotiations entirely by himself and not to let any politician come into the picture until a government-to-government channel is established. My Ambassador in Washington thinks this is because President Nixon will find it more difficult to move quickly in the matter if American politicians come into it. Therefore, it would be best until President Nixon's reply is received and an American envoy is designated for these discussions if the Chinese government would not discuss the matter with any American politician. This does not mean that there is any objection to continuation of the People-to-People program. In fact, Ambassador Hilaly thinks that President Nixon would be very happy if every other kind of American visitor is encouraged to visit China--students, reporters, scholars, etc.--so this is a temporary thing until the official link is established.

Ambassador Hilaly said that he received a telegram from President Yahya saying that the above was conveyed as suggested.

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