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MINUTES OF THE CLASSIFIED PORTION
 NINETEENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
 ON
 "FOREIGN RELATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES"

November 14, 1975

[The discussion of classified matters under this agenda item took place in both the morning and afternoon sessions. The discussion of other agenda items and the list of participants are covered in separate unclassified minutes.]

AGENDA ITEM 6: PROBLEMS OF DECLASSIFICATION AND CLEARANCE

Mr. Aandahl asked Mr. Trask to absent himself temporarily while discussion of certain classified materials took place. Copies of documents concerning the Chou En-lai approach of 1949 were then distributed to the Committee.

Mr. Aandahl explained that the question facing the Historical Office (HO) was whether to publish the 1949 China volume without these documents, or to wait longer in the hope that we might obtain declassification. Mr. Dougall stated that, in the opinion of HO, the omission of these documents would constitute a serious distortion of the record. Mr. Varg, Mr. Snyder, and Mr. Oliver agreed that this would be the case. Mr. Varg inquired as to the nature of the Department's objections. Mr. Dougall replied that officers in EA believed that release would constitute a possible danger to Chou and his colleagues, and that officials in the Department had expressed concern about possible adverse affects on the delicate nature of United States relations with the People's Republic of China. Mr. Aandahl added that EA had indicated that it would take the matter straight to Secretary Kissinger if PA raised the issue in the Department's Council on Classification Policy (CCP). EA was likely to maintain its opposition for a long time, and this forced HO to decide whether to hold the otherwise-cleared volume, perhaps indefinitely, or to release it with indications that some documentation had not been available for publication.

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Mr. Aandahl distributed to the Committee copies of a memorandum he had submitted to Ambassador Reinhardt on June 26 setting forth the options available to HO. In view of EA's strong opposition, which PA did not feel it could overcome under present conditions, it had been tentatively decided to publish the volume without the contested documents, which would be replaced by short editorial notes indicating omissions. The question was how informative these notes could be. The members of the Committee agreed that it was important to call attention to the omission of significant documents, and Mr. Blair said that an effort should be made to obtain CCP support for reasonably explicit editorial notes. Mr. Aandahl thanked the Committee for its advice on this matter and said that HO will prepare explicit notes and seek to get them cleared.

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