

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
722 JACKSON PLACE, N. W.  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006

JAN 4 1972

MEMORANDUM TO DR. HENRY KISSINGER

Subject: President's Visit to China: Opportunities  
for Environmental Cooperation with China

While it is obviously premature to consider US-China government-to-government environmental cooperation, opportunities may now exist to promote informal cooperative projects between scientific groups or universities. While there have been no direct or indirect signals of Chinese interest in developing environmental cooperation, we feel certain avenues should be explored.

We do not know the extent to which the Chinese face serious environmental problems, but there seems to be a growing awareness of them. Leo Orleans and Richard Suttmeier pointed out in the December 11, 1970, issue of Science that due to both the Maoist ethic of frugality and to considerations of public health, the Chinese have done more to combat pollution than their relative early stage of industrialization would lead one to believe. More recently, in September 1971, Peking's leading political journal, Red Flag, identified widespread failures in the disposal and recycling of industrial wastes, and called for major improvements in this field.

The Chinese have emphasized a "do-it-yourself" pollution clean-up. This approach, combined with continued secrecy about national problems and with propaganda efforts asserting that industrial pollution can only be solved in a planned economy, does not easily lend itself to cooperation with foreign governments or institutions. Despite this problem, however, we believe there may be opportunities for technical cooperation in two or three

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority NNP969051  
By I

areas that are not intrusive into Chinese society, and where both we and the Chinese would benefit. These limited areas include:

### Earthquake Prediction Programs

The Institute of Geophysics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences is reported to have an intensive and diverse earthquake prediction program as a result of the personal interest of Chairman Mao. The Institute maintains fourteen standard observatories in some of the 150 provincial stations built and operated by the provinces with assistance of the Institute. While much of the Chinese work in this area has been developed in isolation from other countries, Chinese scientists are reportedly proud of their progress and eager to learn more about related work in other countries. Meager reports would indicate the Chinese are working towards an operational system. Their work is apparently more advanced than ours.

### 2. Recycling of Industrial Wastes

For reasons of scarcity as much as for environmental reasons, the Chinese have shown deep interest in the maximum use of industrial wastes, particularly of gas, liquids, slag, and heat. The government has promoted full-scale campaigns for the productive use of these wastes.

### 3. Arid Land Use and Water Management

Because of their large arid areas, the Chinese might be interested in exchanging information on salinity control, soil stabilization, and water conservation measures for arid land use.

### 4. Conservation

The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) lists nearly 30 mammal species from China in its Red Data Book of rare and endangered

species. China's fauna includes some of the rarest and least known wildlife species in the world. International cooperation of some form in this area might be possible, since it would not point up Chinese industrial backwardness and could provide them with favorable publicity.

Environment is a relatively nonpolitical issue on which cooperation at an early stage through private channels might open up contacts. In the first three areas mentioned above, a number of universities have active programs, while a number of private conservation groups would be interested in Item 4. The President's visit would provide the opportunity for a sounding out of any interest. If they are at all interested, we might ask them to designate institutions to work with private institutions in the U.S.

  
Russell E. Train  
Chairman

cc: John Ehrlichman

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority NND969051  
By I