

CONFIDENTIAL

Original filed on China
Germany June 79
PM's meetings with Chancellor
Schmidt in Germany.
Sino Soviet Relations

RECORD OF A DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE
FEDERAL CHANCELLOR IN THE FEDERAL CHANCELLERY, BONN, AT
1115 ON WEDNESDAY 31 OCTOBER 1979

Present:

Prime Minister
Mr. C. A. Whitmore

Chancellor Schmidt
Dr. Jurgen Ruhfus

* * * * *

Premier Hua's Visit to Western Europe

The Prime Minister said that Premier Hua, who was now in the middle of his visit to the United Kingdom, had told her how pleased he had been with his talks with the Chancellor in Bonn. She had herself discussed the international scene with him on Monday and Tuesday and was due to discuss bilateral issues with him the following day. She had first met Premier Hua in Peking three years ago and had been struck then by how very much he was in command. His present visit had served to confirm that impression. Until his present visit to Western Europe he had not previously been to a Western country. Yet he was handling the visit with remarkable self-confidence and ease of manner. He had given her a detailed account of his view of the position in a very wide range of countries: he seemed to have considerable knowledge of what was happening even in relatively obscure states. In talking about the inevitability of war with the Soviet Union, he had tempered slightly the view which he had taken three years earlier when he had told the Prime Minister that he thought that she was too soft on this. But the weakness of his present argument was his assumption that if the Soviet Union attacked China, NATO would attack the Soviet Union.

/ It was not clear

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

It was not clear why he made this assumption since it was clear that China would not automatically come to the help of the West if the Soviet Union attacked us. She had told him that, in her view, the Soviet Union, faced with NATO firm in the West and with China in the East, were probing the soft underbelly which ran through Afghanistan, Iran and other Middle Eastern countries into the African continent.

Chancellor Schmidt said that he agreed with the Prime Minister's assessment of Premier Hua's qualities. He had found him clever and wise, with the outlook of a much bigger man than he had expected. He had been deeply impressed by Premier Hua. China had come a very long way since the death of Mao. It had been noticeable that Premier Hua had not mentioned Mao's name once in his speeches in the Federal Republic. He had given his German hosts an assured and detailed assessment of Sino/Soviet relations, which he had said was not his personal analysis alone, but the joint appreciation of the Chinese leadership as a whole. It was the Chinese view that there would not be a war with the Soviet Union in the 1980s. They were confident in their judgement that the Soviet Union would never dare to initiate a war on two fronts. Premier Hua had said that China could separate Eastern Siberia from the rest of Russia by cutting their railways. The Soviet Union knew that they could not destroy all of China's missile forces and so the prospect of a retaliatory strike against Soviet cities deterred them from attacking China. In making this fresh appraisal of the strategic relationship between China and the Soviet Union the Chinese were in effect abandoning their own propaganda. Premier Hua had also told him that the Chinese had thoroughly analysed the Soviet strategic position before they undertook what they had termed the self-defence operation in Vietnam. They had been confident that the Soviet Union would not intervene in response to China's involvement, and their assessment had been proved right in the event.

CONFIDENTIAL / THE Prime Minister