

Beijing anxiously awaits Kissinger trip

by Linda de Hoyos and Mary Burdman

Unconfirmed rumors have been flying around the globe that Henry A. Kissinger might have canceled his trip to the People's Republic of China, originally planned for October. Word of the possible cancellation was leaked by the Japanese News Agency Aug. 24. The Hong Kong press reaffirmed the news Aug. 28, adding that Kissinger was afraid that in the current nervous climate between Washington and Beijing, he might not achieve a "breakthrough."

Another factor in Kissinger's getting cold feet might have been the fact that his Chinese friends have all come under scrutiny, in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square massacre of June 4. The State Council, under the direction of Prime Minister Li Peng, has demanded a full audit of China Everbright Holdings Company Ltd. of Hong Kong. This firm, with attachments directly to Kissinger Associates, Inc., sported on its board the son of Liu Shaoqi, the Chinese leader who was purged by Mao Zedong on charges of being a "capitalist roader." Another close Kissinger friend, Rong Yiren, has also come under attack, along with his Chinese International Trade and Industrial Corp.

However, by the first week in September, the "word" was that Kissinger might end up in Beijing after all. Sources at the American Chamber of Commerce reaffirmed that the former secretary of state has relations with many "high-level people."

There is no question that he will get a warm welcome from the leaders of the People's Liberation Army, which has increasingly asserted its role in the nation's political life since June. On July 15, the *Jiefangjun Bao*, the PLA's newspaper, hailed Kissinger's planned visit, noting that it contrasted with the "anti-China uproar" in the rest of the United States. What makes Henry so different from the rest of America? The newspaper answered itself thusly: "Whether it be the academe, government, or private sector, he has handled them all with extraordinary competence and has attained all his objectives. The reasons lie in that he is not myopic in terms of politics and in fact, is quite far-sighted."

The Army daily then quoted from Kissinger's writings in defense of the Beijing butchers, and added: "As the Chinese people are confronted with a life or death situation, the extraordinary insight exhibited by Kissinger no doubt makes one realize again: Kissinger, after all, is Kissinger!"

The article begs the question: Will Kissinger be helping the PLA and its company Norinco in arms sales? The PLA-related companies, which carried out the arms deliveries to Iran, are exempted from the "crackdown" against other trading companies dealing with the West.

If Kissinger is poised to mediate for the PLA—while taking a hefty cut for himself—he will have little trouble making the right contacts. Sitting in the office of Kissinger Associates in New York City is one Mei Shan, the son-in-law of Yu Qiuli, one of the former heads of the State Planning Commission and the former Political Commissar for the People's Liberation Army. Mei was in Beijing at the end of August. The position that Mei Shan's father-in-law's retired from is an extremely powerful one. His successor is Yang Baibing, the younger brother of China's bloody-handed President Yang Shangkun. In the last weeks, Yang Baibing has been strutting around Beijing and environs like a Roman proconsul, as he and his brother attempt to gain the successorship to aging Communist Party chief Deng Xiaoping.

Bush's emissary

But Kissinger is not the only high-level emissary from Washington to Beijing. On Aug. 18, Chinese-American Anna Lao Chennault arrived in Beijing, where she met with Red Chinese Vice-President Wang Zhen. Chennault is the chairman of the National Republican Heritage Groups Council and ran the Ethnic Heritage Committee for George Bush's 1988 presidential campaign. She reportedly met with Bush before leaving the United States.

Wang Zhen told Chennault that although political leaders of some countries "claimed to have imposed sanctions" on China, "this can only serve to arouse the national indignation of the Chinese people." Chennault's response was everything Deng Xiaoping could have wished. She said that the June 4 "event" is "China's internal affair and no foreign country should intervene," the Chinese news agency Xinhua reported.

Chennault is the widow of U.S. Gen. Claire Chennault, the leader of the World War II Flying Tigers. Her uncle, of the Lao family, was for years the head of the Chinese Communist Party's section on Overseas Chinese affairs. His son now occupies the same post.

Since the "opening up" to China, in which Bush played a key role as the *chargé d'affaires* in Beijing in 1974, Chennault has made the Flying Tigers—which once worked for nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek—into one of the regular cargo carriers for the P.R.C. Chennault has also heavily invested in clubs and hotels in China, including the International Hotel in Beijing. She was last in China about six months ago, promoting the development of Hainan Island off south China. Hainan Island is slated to be a huge "free-market zone," featuring hotels and casinos. Last month, Taiwan police seized over three kilos of heroin that were being smuggled into the Republic of China from Hainan.