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THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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November 23, 1993
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MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
THROUGH: UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY
FROM: Assistant Secretary of Defense for Regional Security Affairs
SUBJECT: Seattle APEC Meeting: China, etc. -- INFORMATION MEMORANDUM (U)

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(U) At your direction, last Thursday I traveled on short notice to Seattle to participate with LTG Barry McCaffrey in activities connected with the historic, Presidentially-hosted APEC meeting. I arrived too late for the China prebrief but was included in the President's meeting with President Jiang Zemin.

(S) President Clinton was highly effective in presenting a strategic case for hard work by both sides to advance US-China relations. This message registered. As Chinese Ambassador Li Daoyu said to me later in the day, "the President clearly signaled that he was willing to meet China halfway." President Jiang's performance, by contrast, was wooden and formalistic. Judging by the body language and later remarks of members of his entourage, they considered their leader's presentation disappointing and not the best face China could have put forward. Jiang gave no ground while reading out a formal presentation consisting entirely of Chinese boilerplate. He was not effective in give-and-take. His remarks were directed more to his own entourage than to us.

(S) I have seen this sort of behavior by Chinese leaders before. I judge that Jiang is constrained by contending factions in Beijing, among whom the military must figure prominently. The succession to Deng Xiaoping is clearly in full flux and, as might be expected, leads to extreme

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caution by Chinese leaders, tinged with nationalistic solipsism. In this context, Jiang could not respond directly to President Clinton's overtures, even if he had the vision and negotiating skills to do so. I am left in doubt, in fact, whether he has what it takes to emerge from this succession as anything other than a figurehead.

(S) Despite the absence of "give-and-take" I believe the meeting was nevertheless worthwhile; it will yet give us important opportunities to pursue a positive agenda with China. The President's respectfully strategic approach will be welcome not just to those Chinese officials who attended the meeting but also to the broader leadership and political elite in Beijing. I am optimistic that, with continued effort on our part, we will see progress on key issues before long.

(S) On substance, Jiang was supportive of our stance on the North Korea issue. There was no discussion of the M-11 by the two Presidents. (Efforts in side meetings to produce an agreed approach fell just short of doing so.)

(S) I am told that, in the prebrief, the President was very strongly supportive of military exchanges with China. He argued that there was no need for China to become an enemy and that the US could not afford to let it become one, given the Defense budget and force structure implications that would follow from such a development.

(S) In sum, I believe we should be pleased by this meeting and encouraged about the extent to which DoD's agenda has now been integrated into the President's strategy for China. We should all take some pride in this development, which few would have dared predict last spring. The way is clear for Dr. Perry to visit Beijing early next year.

(S) More broadly, the Seattle APEC meeting was a rare instance of highly favorable Press coverage not amounting to hyperbole. A meeting at which over fifty percent of global GNP was represented in a single room and which included Beijing, Hong Kong, Taipei and Jakarta, inter alia, is an extraordinary achievement for the President and a major plus for US international leadership. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss this event directly with you when time permits.

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