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Memorandum for Mr. Henry A. Kissinger, the White House, from Theodore L. Eliot, Jr.

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Summary:

Theodore Eliot advises Henry Kissinger that "the United States should avoid becoming involved in an issue which could seriously damage our efforts to improve relations with Peking."

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Transcript - English

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Washington, D.C. 20520

March 12 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. HENRY A. KISSINGER
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Request by Isa Yusuf Alptekin, President of the National Center for Liberation of Eastern Turkestan, for U.S. Assistance - Congressman Murphy's Interest

Mrs. Davis forwarded on February 23 a letter from Congressman John M. Murphy of New York enclosing an appeal to the President by Isa Yusuf Alptekin President of the National Center for Liberation of Eastern Turkestan, asking for U.S. support, both moral and financial, for the East Turkestan people. The area of Eastern Turkestan is made up of the western part of China's Sinkiang Autonomous Region and is populated by several minority peoples as well as Han Chinese.

At Congressman Murphy's request, Mr. Alptekin had interviews on February 4 and 5 with officers in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs who explained to him that we would not be able to support his cause. The enclosed draft letter reiterates this position. The Department feels strongly that the United States should avoid becoming involved in an issue which could seriously damage our efforts to improve relations with Peking and which, in any case, would offer no prospects for success.

[signature]
Theodore L. Eliot, Jr.
Executive Secretary

Enclosures:

1. Suggested reply.
2. Copy of correspondence.

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SUGGESTED REPLY

Dear Mr. Murphy,

I have been asked to reply to your letter of February 6 to the President transmitting an appeal on behalf of the East Turkestan people by Mr. Isa Yusuf Alptekin, President of the National Center for the Liberation of Eastern Turkestan.

Mr. Alptekin's concern for the plight of Turkestan and other minority peoples in mainland China is certainly understandable. However, I regret that the United States Government cannot offer him any support for his cause. We have taken parallel positions, dictated also by legal, historical and current political realities, with regard to ethnic groups in similar circumstances in the Soviet Union.

During Mr. Alptekin's visit to Washington he met with several officers in the Department of State who discussed with him the considerations involved in the United States position on this question. These officers also explained to him why the U.S. Government had no funds to provide refugee scholarship assistance for East Turkestani people in various countries of the Middle East.

I hope that you will convey to Mr. Alptekin our assurance that this matter has been given thorough consideration and our regret that a more positive response is not possible.

Sincerely,

[signature area left blank]

The Honorable
John M. Murphy
House of Representatives