



**May 27, 1954**

**Minutes of the Talk between Huan Xiang and Trevelyan on  
the Return of Chinese and US Nationals to their  
Respective Countries (Excerpt)**

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<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114706>

**Summary:**

Huan Xiang reaffirmed that Beijing did not deny exit permits for Americans while the US prevented many Chinese nationals from leaving the US. He agreed to talk to the US either directly or through Trevelyan's introduction. Trevelyan said that he did not know the US attitude on this issue and would contact Huan Xian in a few days.

**Credits:**

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**Original Language:**

Chinese

**Contents:**

- English Translation

[...]

**Huan Xiang:** Last time, Mr. Trevelyan indicated that he was willing to mediate as a private individual in settling the issues of US nationals in China and Chinese nationals in the US. We appreciate your good intentions. This issue, as I said in our previous meeting, consists of two fundamentally different aspects:

1. The Chinese government neither detains nor denies exit permits of US nationals. The number of US nationals in China has dropped from about 1500-1600 in 1949 to 80-90 at present. In the last four years, 95 percent of US nationals have left China. This demonstrates that the Chinese government does not prevent US nationals from leaving China. It is true that a very small number—about 30 Americans—are imprisoned. These detained Americans constitute two categories: 1) US nationals who committed crimes in China; 2) Spies who sneaked into China from either sea or air, engaging in espionage. We must treat these people as our law stipulates. All sovereign nations would do the same.

2. The US government denies the right of Chinese nationals, especially students, to return to their home country. About 5000 to 6000 Chinese students have been prevented from returning to China, although they have not broken any US laws. In the last several years, the Associated Press, the United Press and many other foreign presses and newspapers, have covered the stories of Chinese students detained in the US. Mr. Trevelyan might have read some of them. The Chinese people are very indignant about this utterly unjustifiable act of the US government.

Although these are two fundamentally different issues, if the US is willing to talk, we do not reject negotiations. Since the Chinese delegation and the US delegation are all here [in Geneva], the US delegation could contact our delegation directly, or through Mr. Trevelyan, if they want to.

**[Humphrey] Trevelyan:** I completely agree that the United States and China ought to talk to each other directly. I may not be present. But if necessary, I stay ready to serve as a broker. At present, I don't know the US attitude toward this issue. I may make an appointment with you within a matter of days.

[...]