

Mao proposed 'exporting' millions of women to US

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MAO Zedong proposed sending 10 million Chinese women to the United States, in talks with top envoy Henry Kissinger in 1973, according to documents released by the US State Department.

The Chinese dictator said he believed such emigration could kick-start bilateral trade but could also "harm" the US with a population explosion similar to China's, according to documents covering US-China ties between 1973 and 1976.

In a long conversation that stretched past midnight at Mao's residence on February 17, 1973, a cigar-smoking Mao referred to the dismal trade between the two countries, saying China was a "very poor country" and "what we have in excess is women".

He first suggested sending "thousands" of women but as an afterthought proposed "10 million", drawing laughter at the meeting, also attended by Chinese prime minister Zhou Enlai.

Dr Kissinger, who was president Richard Nixon's national security adviser at that time, told Mao that the US had no quotas or tariffs for Chinese women, drawing more laughter.

He then tried to highlight the threat posed by the Soviet Union and other global concerns as he moved to lay the groundwork for restoring diplomatic ties a year after Nixon's historic visit to China.

But Mao dragged the talks back to Chinese women.

"Let them go to your place. They will create disasters. That way you can lessen our burdens," Mao said.

"Do you want our Chinese women? We can give you 10 million."

Dr Kissinger noted that Mao was "improving his offer".

Mao continued: "By doing so we can let them flood your country with disaster and therefore impair your interests. In our country we have too many women, and they have a way of doing things.

"They give birth to children and our children are too many."

Dr Kissinger replied: "It is such a novel proposition, we will have to study it."

The leaders then spoke briefly about the threat posed by the Soviet Union, with Mao saying he hoped Moscow would attack China and be defeated.

But Mao said: "We have so many women in our country that don't know how to fight." The assistant Chinese foreign minister, Wang Haijung, then cautioned Mao that if the minutes of the conversation were made public "it would incur the public wrath".

Dr Kissinger agreed with Mao that the minutes be scrapped.

But when Dr Kissinger joked he would raise the issue at his next press conference, Mao said he was "not afraid of anything".

"Anyway, God has sent me an invitation," said the Chinese leader, who coughed badly during the talks.

Mao died in September 1976. US-China diplomatic relations were restored in 1979.

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