

“A TOLERABLE STATE OF ORDER”: THE UNITED STATES,
TAIWAN, AND THE RECOGNITION OF THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC
OF CHINA, 1949-1979

A Dissertation

by

BRIAN PAUL HILTON

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Approved by:

Chair of Committee, Terry H. Anderson

Committee Members, Jeffrey Engel
Randy Kluver

Jason Parker

Di Wang

Head of Department, David Vaught

December 2012

Major Subject: History

Copyright 2012 Brian Paul Hilton

ABSTRACT

American policy toward the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China from 1949-1979 was geared primarily toward the accomplishment of one objective: to achieve a reorientation of Chinese Communist revolutionary foreign policy that would contribute to the establishment of a "tolerable state of order" in the international community based on the principles of respect for each nations' territorial integrity and political sovereignty. China's revolutionary approach to its foreign relations constituted a threat to this objective. During the 1960s and '70s, however, Beijing gradually began accepting views conducive to the achievement of the "tolerable state of order" that Washington hoped to create, thus contributing significantly to the relaxation of Sino-American tensions and the normalization of relations in 1979.

From this basic thesis four subsidiary arguments emerge. First, the seven presidential administrations from Harry Truman to Jimmy Carter pursued a common set of objectives toward which their respective China policies conformed, thus granting American China policy a degree of consistency that historians of Sino-American relations have not previously recognized. Second, the most significant dilemma American officials faced was striking an effective balance between containment (to punish aggression) and engagement (to emphasize the benefits of cooperation). Third, American policy toward the ROC throughout virtually the entire period in question remained a function of Washington's effort to reorient Beijing's foreign policy approach.

Fourth, domestic American opinion was of secondary importance in determining the nature and implementation of American China policy.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the late Dr. Russell J. Linnemann, dear friend and mentor, who showed a young scholar what it really means to be passionate about history.

PREFACE

When I first began researching Sino-American relations, I began by asking what I assumed was a relatively straightforward question: Why did the United States government, from 1949 through 1979, refuse to recognize the communist government of the People's Republic of China, and why and how did that policy change? Primary research on the administrations of Harry Truman and Jimmy Carter, the presidents who initially refused and ultimately granted recognition, respectively, revealed striking similarities in terms of their fundamental goals and in the place they envisioned for China in the global order. Both Truman and Carter presided during times of revolutionary change in China, and both hoped that the changes would allow the emergence of a Chinese regime that favored a cooperative, constructive approach to international affairs. Truman was disappointed; Carter was not. From this comparison, my analysis broadened beyond the policy of recognition, attempting to discern whether the intervening presidential administrations also shared these objectives, and to what extent these shaped the course of American policy toward China. I do not intend to validate the American approach to China, but rather to understand how American officials validated themselves.

This dissertation's focus on the underlying internationalist principles guiding American foreign policy, as opposed to offering a more complex multi-causal framework, is justified on a number of grounds. First, the chronological scope of this project – spanning three decades – does not provide space to analyze in sufficient detail

the array of forces acting on policymaking. Second, this project views these principles as the most significant factors affecting the formulation and implementation of China policy. And finally, for this reason, these principles deserve far greater attention than the historical literature has yet provided.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Throughout the years of researching and writing this dissertation, I have relied upon the generosity of numerous individuals to whom I owe a considerable debt. While conducting my master's and doctoral studies in College Station, the faculty and my fellow graduate students provided hours of much needed camaraderie and intellectual stimulation, most particularly my good friends and colleagues Brittany Bounds, Bill Collopy, Matt Irwin, and my fellow China policy enthusiast Jeff Crean, who graciously took time out of his busy schedule to read and comment on portions of this dissertation. I am also indebted to Jeffrey Engel, Randy Kluver, Jason Parker, and Di Wang, four outstanding scholars who generously agreed to serve on my dissertation committee, and whose insightful comments and suggestions contributed to the overall quality of this work.

I am also deeply indebted to Terry H. Anderson who provided invaluable advice and guidance on a range of issues as this project grew from a humble seminar paper to an expansive dissertation. For years he put up with my hard-headedness and verbose e-mails, responding with an open door, an ever-ready supply of jokes and anecdotes, and some of the best gumbo I have ever had the pleasure to eat, courtesy of his equally accommodating wife, Rose.

A significant part of any historians' success derives from the opportunities that are made available to him. Professionally, I have benefitted from research funding provided by the Department of History and the Glasscock Center for Humanities

Research at Texas A&M University, as well as a generous grant from the family of Charles Keeble. I have also had the opportunity to present and refine my ideas at conferences hosted by the U.S. Department of State, the Elliott School of International Relations at the George Washington University, the London School of Economics, the University of California at Santa Barbara, and the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations. Their acceptance of my proposals and the warm reception my ideas received on those occasions continue to impel me forward in my academic pursuits.

The keepers of primary sources – the lifeblood of the historian’s craft – deserve special mention. The archivists of both the Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter Presidential Libraries provided invaluable assistance in identifying and obtaining relevant source material for the pages that follow. Carter archivist Keith Shuler stands out in this regard for his able assistance, professional courtesies, and his ability to inject droll archival research with a healthy dose of good-humored conversation.

Completing this dissertation would not have been possible without my close friends and family members who provided constant support and encouragement over the years. Special thanks go to my long-time friend, James Arthur McKanna, and to Katherine and Micah Wright, whose kindheartedness and companionship helped carry me through two particularly difficult years of scholarship. In addition, I have been the recipient of the overwhelming kindness and hospitality of Wu Ming-fang, Yang Tian-Huang, and the entire Wu family that welcomed me with open arms into their ranks. Because of their efforts, my sojourns in Taiwan feel as though I’ve returned home again.

Sincere thanks also go to my parents, Jan and Paul Hilton, whose loving support and generosity for their children know no bounds.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Hui-Ling. Together we have passed through the fires of two dissertations, and have emerged unscathed only because of the strength we gave each other. I am forever grateful.

NOTE ON SOURCES

Historians of 20th century American foreign relations benefit from the increasing and unprecedented availability of relevant internet-based primary source material. With this in mind, and for the sake of convenience for the reader, the footnotes do not include full citation information for the document collections consulted if those collections are readily available online. These collections and access information are as follows:

The Department of State's *Foreign Relations of the United States* series contains documents considered necessary for the reader to obtain an overall understanding of the development of American foreign policy. The University of Wisconsin Digital Collections (<http://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/FRUS>) include all volumes through 1960, and are searchable by both keyword and page number. The Department of State's Office of the Historian (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/ebooks>) has complete holdings from 1955 through the most recent volumes, and is designed to be browsed by date and document number.

The annual *Yearbook of the United Nations* provides a detailed overview of U.N. discussions and activities, including all major General Assembly, Security Council, and Economic and Social Council resolutions. The entire collection from 1946 to the present can be accessed at <http://unyearbook.un.org/>. The collection is keyword searchable, and can be browsed by sections dealing with specific topics.

The *Public Papers of the Presidents* is a database of public statements and messages made by the Presidents of the United States since Herbert Hoover. The

American Presidency Project at the University of California, Santa Barbara, has supplemented that collection with other similar items and made them all available to search by date at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/>.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iv
PREFACE	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	vii
NOTE ON SOURCES	x
TABLE OF CONTENTS	xii
 CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION	1
International Obligations.....	2
The Communist Challenge to the Post-War International System: The View From Washington.....	12
Capitalist or Communist Imperialism?: A Comment on Mutual Misperception.....	19
The Case for Consistency in American China Policy	23
Competing Imperatives: Containment vs. Engagement.....	26
The Role of Taiwan in American China Policy	30
The Secondary Importance of Domestic Opinion in the Making of China Policy.....	32
The Structure of this Dissertation.....	36
 II HARRY TRUMAN AND THE CHINESE COMMUNIST THREAT TO INTERNATIONAL ORDER, 1948-1952	 40
The Soviet Pattern in the Chinese Dust: American China Policy Prior to the Korean War, 1948-1950.....	41
The Korean War and the Creation of the American Hard-Line Against China, 1950-1953.....	65
To Tame the Dragon: Alternative Strategies, 1950-1953	93
 III HOLDING THE LINE, HOPING FOR CHANGE: EISENHOWER’S CHINA POLICY, 1953-1960.....	 111

The Problem of Chinese Communist Militancy.....	112
The Problem of Chinese Nationalist Militancy.....	128
Pressures for Peace: Perpetuating the Alternative Strategies.....	138
IV UNCHANGED IMPERATIVES: CHINA POLICY DURING THE KENNEDY AND JOHNSON ADMINISTRATIONS, 1961-1968.....	153
The Sino-Soviet Split and Growing PRC Radicalism.....	156
(Mis)managing the U.S.-ROC Relationship	181
The Slow but Steady Death of the Alternative Strategies.....	204
V “THE GREAT LYNCHPIN OF PEACE IN THE WORLD”: CHINA POLICY IN THE NIXON-FORD ERA, 1969-1976.....	224
New Approaches, New Contacts, 1969-1971	225
Kissinger’s Re-Education Campaign: The 1971-1972 Sino-American Talks.....	245
International Order and the Normalization Process, 1972-1976.....	266
VI THE SETTLING DUST: NORMALIZATION AND INTERNATIONAL ORDER UNDER CARTER, 1976-1979	296
Transitions: Taipei, Beijing, and Washington on the Eve of the Carter Presidency	298
The Carter Administration and Normalization.....	318
VII CONCLUSION	336
SOURCES CITED	353

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

American policy toward the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC) from 1949-1979 was geared primarily toward the accomplishment of one objective: compelling the Chinese Communists to abandon the revolutionary basis of their foreign policy, thus contributing to the establishment of a “tolerable state of order” in the international community.¹ Non-interference in the affairs of other states, either through internal subversion or external aggression, constituted the fundamental prerequisites to the achievement of this goal. Indeed, the formation of the United Nations had elevated non-interference and non-aggression to the status of international obligations to which all countries must adhere. American officials often viewed the People’s Republic of China as actively resisting these ideals, fueling Cold War tensions and helping to perpetuate that conflict through subsequent decades.

From this basic argument in the chapters that follow, four basic themes emerge. First, American China policy from Truman to Carter demonstrated considerable overall consistency in terms of the overall objectives each administration sought to achieve. Second, domestic opinion, in the form of pressures from either Congress or the broader American population, proved of secondary importance in the formulation of China policy. Third, most of the variation that existed across the seven presidential administrations studied here resulted from efforts to achieve an appropriate balance

¹ This phrase is taken from NSC 68.

between two competing imperatives: demonstrating resolve against aggression and demonstrating a willingness to engage constructively with Beijing. And fourth, the United States formulated its policies toward the Republic of China in accordance with the same principles and imperatives that dictated its policies toward Beijing. Thus, Washington consistently struggled to prevent Nationalist aggression and convince Taipei to act in a manner conducive to the maintenance of regional and global order. Simultaneously, however, it also utilized the ROC as a tool to achieve its broader objective of reorienting China's foreign policy – a precarious, and not always successful, balancing act.

International Obligations

A key American objective during the twentieth century, and especially during the Cold War, was to nurture an international environment in which nations could resolve disputes through constructive negotiations held in good faith. In the absence of this ideal scenario, American officials struggled to create means of enforcing the proper standards of conduct that most nations acknowledged but often nonetheless violated. The economic and political differences between the communist and non-communist states during the Cold War colors traditional perspectives of the post-1945 era, but these international standards had deep roots in the American – and, indeed, global – past. Although disdain for socialism and the lack of political liberties in the communist world pervaded both domestic and official American thought in the late-1940s, the foremost concern among those officials responsible for formulating foreign policy was not

necessarily defeating communism as an economic or political system.² Rather, they endeavored to create, in Secretary of State Dean Acheson's words, "an environment in which our national life and individual freedom can survive and prosper," or in other words, assuring that no nation would seek to undermine American values on American territory. Yet Acheson also wished this freedom for other nations as well, and to develop an international order that would allow them to maintain their "freedom to develop along their chosen paths, however diverse."³ These conditions would only emerge, however, once nations ceased efforts to extend political or physical control over or to engage in aggressive force against other nations. By the end of World War II, these two conditions had emerged as the most important obligations the members of the international community were expected to uphold, lest the world once more devolve into a state of global war.

This trend began in the 1890s when Americans denounced traditional European colonial domination and sought to replace it with a system that would offer developmental advice and guidance while retaining indigenous political self-rule. In deciding to remain in the Philippines, for instance, President William McKinley expressed that an American withdrawal would allow Europe to carve up the archipelago and oppress the native population. Similarly, following the Spanish-American War, the United States issued the Platt Amendment that prohibited Cuba from entering into any

² As the following chapters suggest, the Korean War and subsequent regional tensions convinced many high-ranking officials that aggressive expansionism was, in fact, an inherent component of the communist outlook.

³ Dean Acheson, *This Vast External Realm* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1973), 19; Robert J. McMahon, *Dean Acheson and the Creation of an American World Order* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2009), 49.

foreign treaty that would infringe upon its political independence. Theodore Roosevelt's Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine in 1904 expressed a similar sentiment; though Roosevelt sought to compel stability and responsibility in Latin American economies – which, indeed, did constitute a form of intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign nations – the subtext of his approach was that such guidance under the benevolent hand of the United States was preferable to the exploitative domination of the European powers. World War I strengthened the American abhorrence of foreign political control, as that conflict resulted from anti-imperial violence among a repressed ethnic population. When Wilson promulgated his Fourteen Points, therefore, he included calls for the self-determination of colonial peoples and for the preservation of the political and territorial integrity of states. Despite the failure to achieve universal acceptance of this position at Versailles, these ideas persisted. In 1922 they found expression in the Nine-Power Treaty that called upon nations to cease interference in China's development and grant the Chinese the "fullest" opportunity to "develop and maintain for herself an effective and stable government."⁴

The American determination to prevent external interference in the internal politics of other countries gained additional import as a result of the Bolshevik Revolution. Socialism had always been somewhat taboo to the pre-WWI American elite despite frequent socialist political candidates during the Progressive Era. After 1919, however, Lenin's creation of the Comintern and strident revolutionary rhetoric dramatically affected the American perception of that ideology, converting a relatively

⁴ Nine Power Treaty, 6 February 1922, http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/pre-war/9_power.html, accessed on 6 September 2012.

benign progressive movement into a dangerous harbinger of violence and tyranny.

Anticipating Acheson's concerns, Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby explained in 1920 that the Bolsheviks were "determined and bound to conspire against our institutions," and their diplomats "will be the agitators of dangerous revolt."⁵ Moscow's apparent influence over the communist parties of the world through its chairmanship of the Comintern led Americans to fear that the "despotic disfranchisement" of the Russian people under Lenin would become the global norm if left unchecked.⁶ The tide of communist revolution appeared to have already swept through Mexico, and a series of bombings in the United States suggested the imminence of violent communist revolt at home. Americans responded by supporting, at least initially, Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer's crackdown of American leftists and President Calvin Coolidge's 1926 decision to intervene in Nicaragua in response to the "serious threat to stability and constitutional government" there to which he accused "outside influences," particularly Bolshevism, of contributing.⁷

Franklin Roosevelt applied a different strategy to American relations with the Soviet Union, believing that a more accommodating approach would reap greater benefits than the standoffish, interventionist policies of his predecessors. Upon achieving the presidency, FDR moved immediately to recognize the Soviet Union, accepting at face value Stalin's pledges to end the Comintern's interference in the

⁵ Quoted in John Richman, *The United States and the Soviet Union: The Decision to Recognize* (Raleigh: Camberleigh & Hall, 1980), 35.

⁶ Quoted in Daniela Spenser, *The Impossible Triangle: Mexico, Soviet Russia, and the United States in the 1920s* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 15.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 3. These forces helped maintain social order and the validity of the 1928 elections. They were withdrawn in 1933.

internal affairs of other nations. The State Department vigorously disagreed with this move. Foreign policy officials remained concerned about the Soviet practice of “systematic interference” in the “domestic affairs of a country” and argued that recognition would not result in any change in Soviet behavior.⁸ Stalin’s failure to end the activities of the Comintern, or at the very least to sever Moscow’s direct control over that organization, seemed to confirm their fears, and tensions mounted during the latter half of the decade.⁹ The practice of “appeasement” had yet to gain the notoriety it later earned after the 1938 Munich Conference, but the failure of U.S. recognition to bring about any appreciable alteration in Soviet behavior offered an important lesson for future American policymakers.¹⁰

Stalin’s policies constituted only one of many cases during the 1930s of dictatorial regimes intent on violating the independence of other peoples through military or diplomatic conquest or coercion. Following its 1931 attack on China, Japan created the Manchukuo puppet state in Manchuria and gave the new nation a semblance of legitimacy by appointing as its nominal ruler the deposed Manchu Emperor Puyi; in reality, control remained in the hands of Japanese military officials. Mussolini adopted a similarly aggressive expansionist agenda in the Mediterranean. Tensions resulting from a series of encroachments on Ethiopian territory erupted in warfare in 1935, after which

⁸ Quoted in Richman, *The United States and the Soviet Union*, 38; One official explained the objectives of the Bolsheviks as “forming, subsidizing and actively directing and controlling from Moscow a small strongly disciplined group of communists in each country whose purpose is to ‘win over the majority of the working class’ and bring about the development of conditions within each country which will be favorable to a revolutionary, armed *coup d’etat* under communist leadership and the resultant establishment of a communist government.” Ibid, 56.

⁹ Ibid, 231-232.

¹⁰ For American recognition of the Soviet Union and its consequences, see Thomas R. Maddux, *Years of Estrangement: American Relations with the Soviet Union, 1933-1941* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1980).

Italy incorporated the African country into its empire. In March 1938, the Austrian Nazi Party staged a successful *coup d'état* in order to incorporate Austria into Adolf Hitler's new German Empire and attempted to legitimize the move with a plebiscite in which the Nazis received over ninety-nine percent of the votes. Simultaneously, Germany orchestrated the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia into a series of protectorates, occupied areas, and puppet regimes. The Soviet Union followed suit in 1940 when it forcefully incorporated the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the USSR. The violent conquest of several other nations during the course of World War II perpetuated this trend. In all of these cases, parts or the whole of nations were illegally reduced to subservience beneath totalitarian regimes seeking enhanced national power at the expense of local self-rule.

After the war, the United States joined with the other nations of the world in elevating Wilsonian principles once more to the level of an international creed that all nations had an obligation to uphold. Indeed, one of the most basic criteria that the Truman administration used to determine eligibility for diplomatic recognition was that a nation must have both the ability and willingness to discharge its international obligations, a concept that assumes a set of justifiable and unjustifiable behaviors and responsibilities that a country has when conducting its foreign relations.

The term "international obligations" covers a wide array of items. In the traditional sense, the most basic obligations that a nation has toward its neighbors are those it agrees to in treaties – legal contracts that form the foundation for all international diplomacy. Trust is among the most important currency in this regard; for the orderly

conduct of international relations nations must believe that the signatories of an agreement have negotiated and entered into the contract in good faith with full willingness to carry out its provisions.¹¹ Faithful adherence to treaty provisions has always presented problems to international order, however, given vague phraseology that allows nations to observe the letter if not the spirit of an agreement.

The frequent lack of enforcement measures also confounds such schemes. In a December 1904 message to Congress in which he first announced his Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, Theodore Roosevelt demonstrated his keen awareness of this problem. He began by noting the goal of “all enlightened nations” as “to strive to bring ever nearer the day when there shall prevail throughout the world the peace of justice,” which could only come “when each nation is not merely safe-guarded in its own rights, but scrupulously recognizes and performs its duty toward others.” While societies had created domestic governmental structures to ensure rights of their citizens, however, the international community had not created similar structures to protect the rights of nations:

There is as yet no judicial way of enforcing a right in international law.

When one nation wrongs another or wrongs many others, there is no tribunal before which the wrongdoer can be brought....Until some method is devised by which there shall be a degree of international control over offending nations, it would be a wicked thing for the most civilized powers, for those with the most sense of international obligations and with

¹¹ Of course, carrying out treaty provisions could also cause much trouble, as was the case with the secret military alliances that contributed to the expansion of World War I.

keenest and most generous appreciation of the difference between right and wrong, to disarm.¹²

In making this assertion, Roosevelt evoked a common set of ideals shared by all “civilized” nations, and provided an intellectual basis for his “Big Stick” diplomacy that, as a great power, the United States was obligated to wield in defense of international order.

The failure of the great powers to act responsibly in the manner that Roosevelt had articulated in 1904 catalyzed the movement for greater enforcement measures in international agreements. Woodrow Wilson offered the blueprint for this effort in the form of a League of Nations that would either police or mediate international disputes, and would codify a set of standards intended to ensure the long-term peace and stability of the international community. The League Convention began by emphasizing the “acceptance of obligations not to resort to war,” the centrality of “international law as the actual rule of conduct among Governments,” and “a scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations.”¹³ Indeed, according to Article I the decisions to permit entry to and force withdrawal from the League were both based on whether a nation had fulfilled its international obligations. When a party brought a dispute to the League for arbitration or judgment, the League’s ruling, according to the Covenant, became yet another obligation that nations must fulfill lest they forfeit their membership.

¹² Theodore Roosevelt’s State of the Union address, 6 December 1904, *Public Papers of the Presidents*, hereafter cited as *PPP*.

¹³ Convention of the League of Nations, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp, accessed on 7 August 2012.

For his vision of a new international organization designed to preserve order, Wilson stood out to an entire generation of American officials as an admirable figure. “We had been thrilled to the depths of our emotional being,” Sumner Welles once commented, “by the vision that Woodrow Wilson had held out to us of a world order founded on justice and on democracy.”¹⁴ As a columnist during the 1920s, Franklin Roosevelt wrote on the need for the United States to take a leading role in the world toward “the lessening, not only of the horrors of war, but of the chances of war itself.”¹⁵ Harry Truman, who had seen the ravages of the European war firsthand, advocated American adherence to the World Court and proclaimed the League of Nations “a great thing and another step in the right direction.”¹⁶ Even Richard Nixon admired Wilson, expressing that “we had made a serious mistake in not joining the League of Nations” and that “the UN offered the world’s best chance to build a lasting peace.”¹⁷

The State Department at the time shared much of this enthusiasm, despite Congress’ refusal to allow American entry into the League. To further the goal of ending aggressive war, Secretary of State Frank Kellogg entered into dozens of bilateral treaties calling for peaceful arbitration of disputes, struggled to prevent a naval arms race among the great powers, and orchestrated the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 that pledged the signatories to “condemn recourse to war for the solution of international

¹⁴ Quoted in Christopher O’Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Post-War Planning, and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 3.

¹⁵ Franklin Roosevelt, 2 May 1925, in Donald Scott Carmichael, *F.D.R., Columnist: The Uncollected Columns of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (Chicago: Cuneo Press, 1947), 65; John Allphin Moore, Jr., and Jerry Pubantz, *To Create a New World? American Presidents and the United Nations* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 28.

¹⁶ Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs, Vol. I: 1945, Year of Decisions* (New York: Signet, 1955), 172.

¹⁷ Richard Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1978), 45.

controversies, and renounce it as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another.”¹⁸ Subsequent violations of these agreements during the 1930s and ‘40s, however, did much to destroy the notion that the United States could blindly trust any nation’s professions of good faith when accepting an international obligation. Hence, the U.N. framework included strengthened enforcement measures that the responsible powers, having recognized the value of upholding the Charter’s principles, would utilize as needed.

The Charter of the United Nations in essence is a treaty, the signatories of which agree to adhere to its articles.¹⁹ Article II laid out its various guiding principles: sovereign equality of its members, fulfilling in good faith Charter obligations, settling disputes by peaceful means, refraining from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, supporting U.N. action and refraining from assisting violators, ensuring that non-members act in accordance with U.N. principles so far as may be necessary for the maintenance of international peace and security, and non-intervention in strictly domestic affairs. With the exception of self-determination as applied to colonial peoples, the founding members of the United Nations at the time did not dispute the validity or importance of these Charter principles. The problem, thus, was not a lack of principles, but rather ensuring that the U.N. bureaucratic machinery would work effectively, and that the members would abide by its

¹⁸ Quoted in Robert Ferrell, *The American Secretaries of State and their Diplomacy, Vol. XI: Frank B. Kellogg-Henry L. Stimson* (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1963), 122-123.

¹⁹ Even Beijing apparently perceived the U.N. Charter as a treaty, and, both before and after it joined that organization, frequently pointed out various nations’ violations of their “international obligations” as member nations. See Jerome Alan Cohen and Hungdah Chiu, *People’s China and International Law: A Documentary Study*, Vols. 1 and 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), especially 57-58 and 74-75.

terms, especially their obligation to act collectively against violators and to exert influence and power in a responsible manner.²⁰ This constituted the most fundamental dilemma of the Cold War as the State Department struggled to convince the communist nations to behave in a manner Washington considered appropriate, and to convince U.S. allies and, indeed, even the American people to stand firm in the face of violations that might spark another global conflagration.

The Communist Challenge to the Post-War International System: The View from Washington

As events unfolded in the latter half of 1945, the Truman administration increasingly believed that Stalin would not fulfill the promises he had made at the Yalta Conference for Eastern European elections, but would rather seek to control those governments and to establish repressive internal security systems that would destroy political dissent. This was, in fact, the case; in 1945, Stalin explicitly commented to one of his communist associates that “It cannot be otherwise” that “whoever occupies a territory also imposes his own social system.”²¹ To Truman and Churchill he offered the similarly blunt argument that “the Soviet Union was entitled to insist that the future government should be made up of men who would be actively promoting friendly relations between the two countries.” He rejected as insufficient Churchill’s compromise solution that only those individuals who were “extremely unfriendly toward

²⁰ “the imperfections of the charter were not so big a problem as the failure of its members to adhere to its provisions.” Max Harrelson, *Fires All Around the Horizon: The U.N.’s Uphill Battle to Preserve the Peace* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 2.

²¹ Quoted in John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 14.

Russia” should be excluded.²² He also prevented Western representatives to enter the countries in the Soviet occupation zone for the purpose of observing the elections, arguing that such “foreign interference” was unnecessary.²³

Unwilling to go to war to prevent this trend, Truman watched in trepidation as events unfolded. He frowned upon the situation that had developed in Yugoslavia, where “concessions made in Belgrade to the members of the government-in-exile were to the extent of six only, against twenty-five of Tito’s own nominees.”²⁴ In Rumania, reports indicated that the communist-backed government represented less than ten per cent of the population and that the vast majority “did not want either the government they had or any other form of communism.” In Bulgaria, the communists had firm control of the police and army and “had succeeded in suppressing all opposition sentiment in the press by labeling it ‘Fascist.’” Similar conditions existed in Poland where immediately prior to the formation of the new Polish Provisional Government Moscow began the trials of sixteen Polish democratic leaders who had previously been arrested under what Truman described as “outrageous circumstances.”²⁵ Stalin’s adamant refusal to alter his position at Potsdam in July 1945 led directly to Truman’s decision not to allow the Soviet Union into post-war Japan, lest the Japanese also fall under the heavy hand of Soviet-style dictatorship. In subsequent months, the administration witnessed new Soviet moves to gain strategic advantages in Iran and Turkey at the expense of those nations’ sovereignty. In September, Truman received

²² Truman, *Memoirs*, I, 283-285.

²³ *Ibid*, 64.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 127.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 355.

reports that Soviet forces in Iran were preventing Iranian officials from operating in the northern provinces and had encouraged the development of a radical separatist movement which moved to form a new Soviet-backed government in December.

All of this contributed to the hardening of the American position that occurred in January 1946. In a letter to Secretary of State Jim Byrnes, Truman laid out the pattern he perceived in Soviet behavior up to that point. A State Department mission to the Balkans, he wrote, revealed that rather than exaggerating or overstating the case, American observers had actually understated the repressive conditions that existed there.²⁶ Truman refused to grant recognition to those Soviet-dominated “police states” unless radical changes occurred. He also found no justification for Soviet “undue interference in Iran’s internal affairs,” which paralleled previous Soviet efforts in the Baltic States and Poland.²⁷ Stalin also seemed intent on violating Turkish sovereignty by forcing it to hand over control of the Dardanelles. But even more than the strategic issues regarding the control of Iran’s oil or the Turkish straits, what bothered Truman most “was Russia’s callous disregard of the rights of a small nation and of her own solemn promises. International co-operation was impossible if national obligations could be ignored and the U.N. bypassed as if it did not exist.”²⁸

Soviet behavior continued to cause concern in 1946, beginning with Stalin’s February speech in which he emphasized the incompatibility of capitalism and communism, the inevitability of warfare between the two camps, and the need to rearm

²⁶ Oral History Interview with Mark F. Ethridge, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/ethridge.htm>, accessed on 7 August 2012.

²⁷ Truman, *Memoirs*, I, 574; On 3 December, following an increase in Soviet troop levels, Moscow radio announced the formation of a new revolutionary government in Northern Iran.

²⁸ Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs, Vol. II: 1946-1952, Years of Trial and Hope* (New York: Signet, 1956), 117.

in order to ensure Soviet security.²⁹ The deadline for Stalin to remove his forces from Manchuria and Iran came and went with no withdrawal. The Soviet approach to the United Nations reflected this increasingly uncooperative Soviet posture. At the first meeting of the U.N. General Assembly (UNGA), the French agreed to withdraw their troops from Syria and Lebanon in an arrangement that the latter nations found completely acceptable. The Soviet representative, Gromyko, nonetheless vetoed it on the grounds that the language of the agreement describing French actions was insufficiently harsh. In March when the Security Council met for the first time, Gromyko walked out because the Council had failed to approve the Soviet resolution to remove the Iranian question from the agenda. The United States continued to hope that the Council could reach an agreement on the formation of an international military force that the U.N. could utilize as needed against aggressors, but Moscow remained cautious to any such plans. During only the first half of the first session, the Soviet representative issued nine vetoes, which U.N. Secretary General Trygve Lie considered a “chill forewarning of the Cold War to come.”³⁰ During the second half of the session, many nations complained of Moscow’s abuse of its veto power while the representatives of the Soviet bloc accused the West of promoting another war.

By that point, cooperation had broken down in other parts of the world. The Soviets renewed their proposal to the Turkish government for joint control of the Dardanelles and the exclusion from their use of any non-Black Sea power. The

²⁹ Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War: from Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 35.

³⁰ Quoted in Harrelson, *Fires All Around the Horizon*, 8.

following month, U.S.-Soviet talks on the reunification of Korea collapsed because of disputes over the formation of a nationwide provisional government. When the United States submitted the problem of Korea for U.N. consideration, the Soviets refused to assist in the holding of free elections and instead solidified the division of the peninsula through its support of the North Korean regime. In December, the Security Council completed its investigation of the Greek civil war and condemned the neighboring communist nations of Yugoslavia, Albania, and Bulgaria for supporting the rebels in violation of Greece's rights.

Interpreting the situation in Greece as a Soviet effort to extend its dominion, and perhaps also in response to the fraudulent elections held in Poland in January 1947, Truman decided that his administration would not allow the Soviet Union or its proxies forcibly to deprive any additional nations of their independence and sovereignty. When the United Kingdom announced that it could no longer support the faltering Greek government, Truman addressed a joint session of Congress on March 12, 1947, insisting that the United States step in to help. While remembered chiefly as the beginning of the American policy of containing communist expansion in general, the speech focused specifically on the preservation of the democratically-elected government of Greece. Nearly 700 American observers had verified the elections that produced the Greek Parliament the previous year as "a fair expression of the views of the Greek people." Truman stressed that the allied nations during World War II had fought against countries "which sought to impose their will, and their way of life, upon other nations" and argued

that “we cannot allow changes in the status quo in violation of the Charter of the United Nations by such methods as coercion, or by such subterfuges as political infiltration.”³¹

Moscow’s actions throughout the rest of 1947 and 1948 merely confirmed that the Soviet Union would continue to deprive other nations of the right to make their own decisions free from external coercion. When representatives from Czechoslovakia and Poland considered accepting American Marshall Plan aid, Stalin ordered them to reject such offers. The Soviets followed this action by throwing off even the pretense of democracy in Eastern Europe. When the non-communist parties in Hungary seemed on the verge of making enormous electoral gains in August 1947, Stalin instituted more stringent repressive measures to subdue political independence. Similar repression occurred in Bulgaria and Poland, and the USSR, under the threat of force, invited Finland to sign a treaty of friendship. By the end of February 1948 the last bastion of democracy in Eastern Europe fell when communists, supported by the threat of Soviet military intervention, instigated a coup against the Czech government.

In response, on March 17, 1948, Truman addressed a joint session of Congress emphasizing the grave dangers the world now confronted. The Soviet Union actively sought to prevent an honorable peace, had “persistently obstructed the work of the United Nations by constant abuse of the veto,” and had “destroyed the independence and democratic character of a whole series of nations in Eastern and Central Europe” with the intention to “extend it to the remaining free nations of Europe.” In making this argument, Truman emphasized the ongoing plight of Greece in its battle against the

³¹ Harry Truman’s Special Message to Congress, 12 March 1947, *PPP*.

communist rebels, and how in Italy “a determined and aggressive effort is being made by a Communist minority to take control of the country.” In contrast to this pattern of communist aggression, five European nations were just then signing an agreement “for economic cooperation and common defense against aggression.” In explaining the “great significance” of this event, Truman noted that “this agreement was not imposed by the decree of a powerful neighbor. It was the free choice of independent governments representing the will of their people, and acting within the terms of the Charter of the United Nations.”³²

The only Eastern European government to escape from this pattern of Soviet domination was that of Josep Broz Tito’s Yugoslavia. By virtue of the fact that he had not relied on outside help to defeat the Axis forces in his country, Tito had avoided the repression and coercion that had resulted from Soviet occupation of the other Eastern European nations. Tito refused to blindly follow Moscow’s orders, and exclaimed in May 1945:

We are not going to pay the balance on others' accounts, we are not going to serve as pocket money in anyone's currency exchange, we are not going to allow ourselves to become entangled in political spheres of interest.

Why should it be held against our peoples that they want to be completely independent? And why should autonomy be restricted, or the subject of dispute? We will not be dependent on anyone ever again!³³

³² Quoted in Truman, *Memoirs*, II, 278-279.

³³ Quoted in Sabrina P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-building and Legitimation, 1918–2005* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2006), 176.

Mounting tensions over the next three years culminated in Stalin's denunciation of Tito, and Yugoslavia's expulsion from the Cominform on June 28, 1948.

The State Department offered a mixed response. It praised the "awakening of national independence and self-interest" that Tito's move represented, but at the same time American officials acknowledged that he remained the dictator of a police state. The increasing belligerency of the Soviet Union that summer certainly contributed to the decision to support Tito economically and politically, but the underlying principles remained intact; national independence constituted the necessary prerequisite for a people to determine their own political fate. As such, the new American ambassador to Yugoslavia expressed to Tito Truman's view that "our support of the sovereign integrity of independent states applied as fully to Yugoslavia as to any other state."³⁴ Yugoslavia's successful bid for independence from Moscow suggested that a communist China, especially one that had achieved success largely on its own, might also choose to join with the rest of the world in preserving international peace and order. Many observers wondered which course the emerging Chinese Communist regime would adopt.

Capitalist or Communist Imperialism?: A Comment on Mutual Misperception

Although the argument this dissertation advances focuses on American policy toward China, a brief examination of how China perceived American motivations, the post-war international order, and the nature of international law is in order. Historian

³⁴ Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1969), 332-333.

Chen Jian, in his work on CCP Chairman Mao Zedong and the Cold War, argues that Chinese foreign policy always served the interests of Mao's domestic revolutionary agenda. Yet Chen's analysis does not do justice to the breadth and depth of China's intellectual consideration of international relations and the laws that govern them. By the 1960s, Communist China had existed long enough and engaged in a sufficient number of international agreements to allow analyses of its record of both fulfilling treaty obligations and the extent to which it had (or had not) adopted the commonly-accepted standards of the international community.³⁵ Throughout those decades, Beijing produced a steady stream of propaganda, editorials, official documents, and scholarly essays on virtually every facet of international relations, thus allowing for some tentative conclusions regarding its own perception of itself and the United States in relation to the international order.

The first and most pertinent fact of significance to the current study is the considerable extent to which China had by 1949 adopted a Western-style of diplomacy. Over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the series of Western intrusions and injustices against China compelled Chinese leaders to abandon their traditional, imperial style of international relations in favor of a distinctly Western mode. In acknowledging the validity of this diplomatic system, China's intellectuals could not help but notice how frequently the European nations violated their own standards of conduct, or, worse, how they twisted "legal" norms in a manner that justified their unjust and exploitative policies. In this regard, communism's ideological portrayal of capitalist

³⁵ See, for instance, Luke T. Lee, "Treaty Relations of the People's Republic of China: A Study of Compliance," *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, Vol. 116, No. 2 (Dec., 1967).

nations as inherently imperialistic fit rather well into the matrix of Chinese nationalistic thought. As such, by the time the Chinese Communists came to power, many of them appear to have concluded that a balance of power was necessary in order to force the Western nations to adhere faithfully to the precepts of their own international legal system.³⁶ Beijing's view suggested the necessity of increasing its power for largely defensive reasons, namely, the capacity to prevent other nations from infringing on China's sovereignty. Yet this also constituted an implicit admission that Beijing sought to compel appropriate behavior on the part of the Western world – though less from the external application of power than by maintaining the security of its territory against the incursions of aggressing or exploitative nations.

Thus, the international order that Beijing hoped to achieve in many ways reflected the one Washington also pursued. In both cases, the United States and the People's Republic feared for their security against external threats, and viewed those same threats as also endangering the security and independence of other nations. Far from seeking to overturn the post-war international order, evidence suggests that Beijing welcomed the United Nations as a valuable contribution to global peace and stability – so long as it operated in genuine accordance with the Charter principles. Yet China perceived in the U.N. the subtle hand of the imperialistic domination that Beijing had already condemned the United States and its allies of seeking. So long as this remained the case, according to the Chinese Communists, neither China nor the international community could ever find true security.

³⁶ Cohen and Chiu, *People's China and International Law*, 3-13.

The similarities between American and Chinese objectives extend also to the realm of social and economic systems, though this dissertation views the internationalist dimensions as of more immediate importance to American policymakers during the three decades in question. On the most fundamental level, both China and the United States believed that their respective systems provided a degree of liberty that the other lacked. Americans praised capitalism and representative democracy over socialist dictatorships that stole from the people a say in their government and the just fruits of their labor. The Chinese Communists praised people's socialist dictatorships that strove to ensure the welfare of every individual equally and in which the true interests of the common man found expression free from the exploitative and corrupting hand of capitalist greed.

From this brief discussion, one can conclude that what truly occurred during the first few decades of the Cold War between China and the United States was two nations striving for similar objectives yet unable to comprehend this essential fact. The social and economic differences between the two countries may very well have proved irreconcilable at the domestic level, yet the internationalist objectives required only that the two countries trust the intentions of the other. However, with each side apparently implacable, both China and the United States persevered, firm in their devotion to stop the other from achieving their apparent imperial goals.

The perceived stakes of defeat in this contest drove both sides toward actions that occasionally contradicted their stated principles, and, in turn, to justify their actions based on the perceived efforts of the other – a double standard to which every powerful nation is prone. Thus, just as the United States endeavored to subvert the leftist

governments of Guatemala, Iran, Cuba, and even China during the 1950s and '60s despite its professions of non-interference as a core international principle, so too did China, contravening its own principle of non-interference, actively support the revolutionary movements in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia, and several African nations. This does not, however, mean that these two countries adopted these principles as mere pretexts or that the principles mattered little to those making policy – far from it. Both sides apparently remained in a sort of crisis mentality during the 1950s and early 1960s, but gradually freed themselves from some – though not all – of the more dire assumptions that drove their earlier policies. The following chapters will illustrate the American experience.

The Case for Consistency in American China Policy

Can a case be made for consistency in American policy? Could the seven presidential administrations from Harry Truman to Jimmy Carter have pursued a common set of objectives toward which their respective China policies conformed? Many historians note specific instances in which China policies survived political transitions. William Stueck, for instance, sees notions of credibility as creating a “measure of continuity to American policy before and after” the outbreak of war in Korea.³⁷ Fred Greene sees broader continuity, arguing that American actions from the late-1940s through the mid-1960s centered on the avoidance of “domination by any one

³⁷ William Stueck, Jr., *The Road to Confrontation: American Policy toward China and Korea, 1947-1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 7.

power or political system by means other than voluntary association.”³⁸ Noam Kochavi points out the “considerable convergence in the China perspectives” of the Republican Eisenhower and Democratic Kennedy administrations.³⁹ Steven Goldstein and James Thomson both reject the common division of Sino-American relations into pre- and post-Kissinger eras, and note a variety of diplomatic efforts during the 1960s that set the stage for Nixon’s initiatives.⁴⁰ Arthur Waldron takes this a step further, contending that “Nixon’s China policy differed scarcely if at all from those of his predecessors.”⁴¹ Rosemary Foot, in an argument that resembles in important ways the one presented here, notes that the China policies of each administration after 1949 all stemmed in part from “China’s challenge to world order goals.”⁴²

The broad continuity of policy objectives identified in this dissertation resulted from the American acceptance of the responsibility for upholding the standards and principles of the post-WWII international order against any perceived or actual threat to them. Historians have not wholeheartedly incorporated the American defense of U.N. principles into the narrative of U.S. Cold War policy. Conversely, historians of the U.N. cannot help but discuss how the rivalry spilled over into the councils of that organization.

³⁸ Fred Greene, *U.S. Policy and the Security of Asia* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), 36.

³⁹ Noam Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated: China Policy During the Kennedy Years* (Westport: Praeger, 2006), 25.

⁴⁰ Steven Goldstein, “Dialogue of the Deaf? The Sino-American Ambassadorial-level talks, 1955-1970,” in *Re-Examining the Cold War: U.S.-China Diplomacy, 1954-1973*, ed. Robert S. Ross and Changbin Jiang (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 233-234; James C. Thomson, “On the Making of U.S. China Policy, 1961-1969: A Study in Bureaucratic Politics,” *China Quarterly* 50 (April-June 1972), 220-243.

⁴¹ Arthur Waldron, “From Nonexistent to Almost Normal: U.S.-China Relations in the 1960s,” in Diane Kunz, ed., *The Diplomacy of the Crucial Decade: American Foreign Relations During the 1960s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 243.

⁴² Rosemary Foot, *The Practice of Power: U.S. Relations with China since 1949* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 16.

Max Harrelson, for instance, notes that the USSR used the veto twenty-one times prior to 1948, and “seemed to be bent on preventing the Security Council from performing its peace-preserving functions.” In contrast, Truman in his welcoming address characterized the United Nations “not as a temporary expedient but as a permanent partnership – a partnership among the peoples of the world for their common peace and well-being. It must be the determined purpose for all of us to see that the United Nations lives and grows in the minds and hearts of the people.”⁴³ John Alphin Moore and Jerry Pubantz similarly note that from Woodrow Wilson to the late-1990s, “American presidents have been at the forefront in twentieth-century developments to create and maintain a universal and workable world political association” and to “sustain that vision on the basis of American principles.”⁴⁴

This dissertation takes seriously the enduring American commitment to the principles of the United Nations, even as it recognizes that the American commitment to the organization itself wavered. The fact that the Soviet Union and its proxies continued to block progress and that many Americans and American allies were often either too weak or too irresolute to stand steadfastly in defense of the Charter’s principles meant that the U.S. government placed upon itself the moral responsibility to fight even harder and exert ever more pressure in order to keep the hope and promise of these principles alive. Washington found this mission increasingly difficult, however, as both domestic

⁴³ Harrelson, *Fires All Around the Horizon*, 10.

⁴⁴ Moore and Pubantz, *To Create a New World?*, 1.

opposition and the specific interests and perspectives of other nations undermined the government's effort to hold the line.⁴⁵

Competing Imperatives: Containment vs. Engagement

From attempts to determine how to bring about communist adherence to proper international standards of conduct emerged American policy toward China. American officials adopted a two-part strategy to accomplish this ambitious goal. The first part derived from anti-appeasement thought and formed the core of the doctrine of containment. Namely, American officials believed that the determined and effective application of counterforce against communist aggressions, if maintained long enough, would gradually convince the aggressing nations that the international community would not tolerate and the violating states would obtain no benefit from such actions. Should the violators obtain rewards – such as increased trade, territorial gain, or even diplomatic recognition – this would only encourage a continuation or intensification of undesirable behaviors.⁴⁶ Eventually, this theory went, a rigid non-appeasement policy would compel the violating states to accept the inevitability of their policies' failure and convince them to adjust their policies appropriately.

This effort remained effective only to the extent that the United States maintained its credibility – the perception among foreign nations of Washington's ability

⁴⁵ Foot, *The Practice of Power*, 16; Greene, *U.S. Policy and the Security of Asia*, 24.

⁴⁶ Rosemary Foot examines this aspect of American policy in "The Eisenhower Administration's Fear of Empowering the Chinese," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 111, No. 3 (Autumn 1996), 505-521. Kochavi argues that "The notion that China would have to learn to behave before it could be rewarded reflected the premise that Washington was entitled to set the norms and rules associated with the relationship." Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated*, 249.

and willingness to prevent violations from occurring, or to counter them once begun. Successive administrations had to uphold the validity of all U.S. treaties and commitments lest their allies view such pledges as unreliable and choose to accommodate the aggressing nations. Similarly, having decided to counter an aggressive action, these administrations believed they could not afford to retreat from that stance or allow the effort to fail lest the aggressing nations perceive weakness and launch additional moves – in essence, appeasement through weakness or lack of resolve.

The evolving American perception of the Soviet Union and PRC as aggressive, expansionistic, and power hungry led to direct comparisons with the totalitarian dictatorships that had caused World War II. Such comparisons abound throughout the documentary record. In the early months of the Korean War, Truman commented that “If the history of the 1930’s teaches us anything, it is that appeasement of dictators is the sure road to world war. If aggression were allowed to succeed in Korea, it would be an open invitation to new acts of aggression elsewhere.”⁴⁷ In June 1954, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles referenced the American denunciation of Japan’s 1931 attack on China and the failure of the international community to heed Washington’s call for action. This prefaced his remarks on developments in Korea and Indochina, thus suggesting that “history is repeating itself.”⁴⁸ In 1960, Chester Bowles “propounded that China craved lebensraum in Southeast Asia, likening Beijing to Nazi Germany and

⁴⁷ Truman’s radio and television report to the American people on the situation in Korea, 1 September 1950, *PPP*.

⁴⁸ Dulles’ speech to the Los Angeles World Affairs Council, 11 June 1954, Department of State *Bulletin*, Vol. XXX, No. 783, 28 June 1954, pg. 971; Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and ROC Ambassador Wellington Koo, 1 July 1954, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954*, Vol. XIV: China and Japan, Part 1, 486, hereafter cited as *FRUS, 1952-1954*, XIV, Part I.

Imperial Japan, and said that the United States needed to make ‘crystal clear’ its determination to intervene in the eventuality of a Chinese drive into the region.”⁴⁹

Richard Nixon’s direct experience with the emerging Cold War in the 1950s instilled in him this same fear of appeasing the aggressive appetites of the communist nations. Thus, for American officials, avoiding a repeat of the catastrophes of the past required a refusal to make the same mistakes in the present.

The second component of the American approach was to display to violators a willingness to negotiate with them in good faith and to engage with them cooperatively if and when they had abandoned their revolutionary challenge to the international order. This component of the strategy was crucial in order to give communist leaders a vision of the benefits they might derive from a cooperative, rather than adversarial approach – a difference that containment was meant to emphasize by increasing the costs of deviation. Yet one administration after another confronted the dilemma that the imperative of confronting and deterring communist aggression required that they refuse to grant concessions lest this signify that aggressive acts would reap benefits. But this very effort to make the costs of a revolutionary foreign policy prohibitive placed limits on the extent to which these administrations could demonstrate their genuine willingness to cooperate. Indeed, the most significant difference among the China policies of these administrations lay in their assessment of what concessions they could offer without signaling weakness or a lack of resolve to counter further violations.

⁴⁹ Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated*, 29.

In the early years of the Cold War, the Eisenhower administration ruled out virtually all concessions, from the relaxation of trade and travel restrictions to diplomatic recognition and membership in the United Nations. In this regard, the administration even viewed the establishment of higher-level contacts as a gesture that might enhance rather than reduce Chinese militancy and undermine the international united front it struggled to maintain against further concessions. By the 1960s, some American officials began to recalculate the costs of making small gestures, seeing these as a means of facilitating a relaxation of tensions that would demonstrate more concretely than before the genuine American desire for constructive relations. Many academics and mid-level officials criticized Ike's approach as too narrowly focused on containment, and called for a more balanced policy that gave equal weight to demonstrating American friendliness and willingness to engage in constructive diplomacy.

With the ascendance of Richard Nixon to the presidency in 1969 the scales tipped decisively in favor of accommodation, a shift that, in part, occurred as a result of a general consensus that China did not seek domination of other nations, but rather was concerned primarily with its own security. As such, China did not require containment. Nixon nonetheless clearly believed that containment of aggression and "hegemony" remained a valid pursuit in the 1970s, particularly as regards the Soviet Union. Nixon and Ford utilized this as a method of bridging the gap between China and the United States, but although they enjoyed a certain amount of success they still failed to achieve the more fundamental reorientation that would convert the temporary ideological truce between the countries into a more enduring and stable method of engagement.

Ultimately, the reorientation that Washington sought did not result from American policies. Rather, this change occurred following the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, the subsequent purges of his radical followers, and the development of a more pragmatic, less ideological foreign policy under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping.

Ironically, each administration had tentatively concluded that events would end in this way: that China's revolutionary foreign policy would not change until such time as Mao died. This did not, however, stop the United States from endeavoring to end the conflict earlier through a variety of alternative strategies, many of which required the United States to militarily defend, economically develop, and politically support the Republic of China.

The Role of Taiwan in American China Policy

American policy toward the Republic of China remained primarily an outgrowth of American policy toward China, rather than the other way around. Virtually every decision regarding Taiwan served any one of a number of purposes in the ideological and military struggle against PRC-backed communist aggression or subversion in East Asia. Protecting the island from military attack and developing the capabilities of the island's armed forces served the broader goal of deterring regional aggression and countering it when it occurred. Economic assistance and development helped maintain internal stability and turned Taiwan into a model that might win the approval of Chinese officials and citizens alike. Maintaining recognition of the ROC as the sole legitimate government of the Chinese people and fighting to preserve Taipei's seat in the United

Nations would strengthen the hope and resolve of other threatened allies by demonstrating the extent of the American commitment. Furthermore, maintaining the ROC's diplomatic and political status would deny Beijing an important symbolic victory for its domestic consumption and would prevent the regime from achieving the international legitimacy it so desired and that might encourage undesirable behaviors. Washington thus perceived ample benefits to its international imperatives from its support of Taipei, and required little prodding from domestic American opinion to perpetuate the partnership.

But this did not immunize the ROC from American pressure to conform to the same standards that Washington insisted China adopt. These administrations exerted considerable effort to ensure that the ROC did not become a threat to the very global peace and stability that the United States sought to maintain. As the following chapters will demonstrate, the ROC under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek did, in fact, pose a threat to peace in East Asia during the 1950s and '60s, but one that the United States proved capable of moderating. The continuation of the partnership in such circumstances makes sense only in light of the existence of the even larger threat of Chinese Communist aggression.

By the 1970s, China ceased its overtly threatening posture, a fact that removed whatever value the ROC had as an instrument of containment. Despite this, it still retained its value as a symbol of the American commitment to uphold the crucial principles of peaceful resolution of disputes and the inviolability of pledges. The United States had entered into a Mutual Defense Treaty with the ROC in 1954, and, for better or

worse, Washington had both a moral and legal commitment to the island's defense. To break that commitment would undermine the principles of the international order at a time when the Soviet Union continued to cause trouble, and when doubts of Washington's credibility might yet prompt considerable disruptions. As Kissinger noted in his memoirs, for "a great power to abandon a small country to tyranny simply to obtain a respite from our own travail" was "profoundly immoral and destructive of our efforts to build a new and ultimately more peaceful pattern of international relations."⁵⁰

Thus, during the Nixon, Ford, and Carter eras, Washington primarily sought to conjure some method whereby the fate of Taiwan would rest with the Taiwanese people themselves, rather than with an imposed solution on the part of either the United States or China. Ultimately, they achieved this goal. Thus the so-called "abandonment" of Taiwan accorded well, and continues to do so, with the principles and standards that these administrations sought to uphold. Indeed, in 2005 Kissinger explicitly rejected the notion that the United States had "cut loose" the Nationalists, saying "Here we are, thirty-four years later. We have navigated a tricky situation for a generation, maintaining friendly relations with China while Taiwan has remained, with our help, strong and democratic – all this based on documents negotiated in 1971 and 1972."⁵¹

The Secondary Importance of Domestic Opinion in the Making of China Policy

In arguing for consistency in American objectives over such a long period of time, this dissertation views domestic opinion as of secondary importance and of having

⁵⁰ Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), 228.

⁵¹ Alistair Horne, *Kissinger: 1973, The Crucial Year* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2009), 82.

a direct and significant influence on China policy in only a handful of instances. Many historians view irrational anti-communist sentiments among American officials, the American people, or both, as contributing to the lack of friendly relations between the United States and Communist China. Warren Cohen, for instance, sees such views as causing the “Great Aberration” in the traditional friendship and respect of the United States toward the Chinese and Chinese nationalism.⁵² The work of Nancy Tucker and others also attributes much importance to domestic anti-communism enflamed by the propaganda efforts of the Republic of China. The outbreak of war in Korea represents the key event for these historians; it effectively closed the door on any possible accommodation by making the political costs of recognition too high for subsequent administrations to pay.

In contrast, many historians of Sino-American relations have challenged what Fredrik Logevall proclaimed the “intimate” relationship between domestic politics and foreign relations.⁵³ Leonard Kusnitz notes, for instance, that Truman and Acheson expected public opinion to accept the wisdom of their considered policies.⁵⁴ Stueck argues that domestic calls against recognition “merely reinforced Acheson’s inclinations,” while Robert Accinelli agrees that foreign policymaking during the early-1950s “was affected intermittently and secondarily by domestic considerations and by pressures

⁵² Warren I. Cohen, *America’s Response to China: A History of Sino-American Relations*, 3rd edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); Stueck might argue that Cohen, like the American diplomats of the 1940s, is “susceptible to the myth of a special Sino-American relationship.” Stueck, *The Road to Confrontation*, 74.

⁵³ Fredrik Logevall, “Politics and Foreign Relations,” *Journal of American History* 95, no. 4 (March 2009), 1076.

⁵⁴ Leonard Kusnitz, *Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: America’s China Policy, 1949-1979* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984), 25; see also Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Patterns in the Dust: Chinese-American Relations and the Recognition Controversy, 1949-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 159; and June Grasso, *Truman’s Two-China Policy, 1948-1950* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1987), vii.

from concerned friendly nations.”⁵⁵ Robert Ross sees strategic considerations as dominant, arguing that “When domestic politics did influence policy, policy makers considered it an obstacle to implementing their preferred, internationally derived foreign policies.”⁵⁶ Even Tucker has recently admitted the secondary importance of domestic opinion; citing examples from Truman to Johnson, she wrote in 2009 that

the siren call of parochial constituent interests and the hostility of many executive branch officials more often eliminated Congress from important China-related decision making. Public opinion at times provided a more effective constraint, given the power of retributive voting. But ultimately, high-level officials and foreign policy affairs specialists determined the direction of US relations with Beijing and Taipei.⁵⁷

Historians who emphasize the power of domestic politics and the China Lobby frequently cite the various ways in which these interests forced accommodations from the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations. They argue, for instance, that domestic forces compelled Eisenhower to appoint several pro-Chiang individuals to key State Department positions. Scholars of the Kennedy administration similarly point to Kennedy’s narrow electoral victory and lingering fears of the China Lobby as factors

⁵⁵ Robert Accinelli, *Crisis and Commitment: United States Policy toward Taiwan, 1950-1955* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Stueck, *The Road to Confrontation*, 6.

⁵⁶ Robert S. Ross, *Negotiating Cooperation: The United States and China, 1969-1989* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 255.

⁵⁷ Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Strait Talk: United States-Taiwan Relations and the Crisis with China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 10. Many other studies point out the limitations on the influence that domestic opinion can have on the Executive Branch’s initiatives. See Philip J. Briggs, “Congress and the Cold War: U.S.-China Policy, 1955,” *The China Quarterly*, No. 85 (March 1981); Benjamin O. Fordham, “Domestic Politics, International Pressure, and the Allocation of American Cold War Military Spending,” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 64, No. 1 (February 2002), 63-65; Foot, *The Practice of Power*, 82-84.

preventing movement toward a rapprochement during the 1960s. While these limiting domestic factors did exist, attributing to their influence a lack of movement in the Sino-American relationship is misleading since historians ultimately fail to demonstrate a clear connection between these factors and policymaking. For instance, Ike excluded from his inner circle those officials supposedly appointed to placate the China Lobby, such as Walter Robertson, Karl Rankin, and Arthur Radford. As Kochavi points out, the assertion that the purge of the “China Hands” prevented the introduction of alternative policies into the official discourse ultimately remains speculation rather than demonstrable fact.⁵⁸

These interpretations also fail to take into account the fact that those responsible for foreign policy frequently considered that task as having a degree of importance and responsibility that often transcended the domestic concerns of their constituents. Early in 1956, Ike wondered that if the PRC “should finally get out of North Korea, release our prisoners, and act decently, how in the world could the United States continue to avoid recognizing Communist China?”⁵⁹ Two years later, his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, publicly stated that “Certainly you cannot allow your foreign policy to be dictated by public opinion.”⁶⁰ Kennedy, too, in the early months of his presidency expressed his willingness to defy public opinion if China provided any indication of a

⁵⁸ Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated*, 6.

⁵⁹ NSC meeting, 9 February 1956, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957*, Vol. III: China, 305, hereafter cited as *FRUS, 1955-1957*, III.

⁶⁰ Dulles’ News Conference, 30 September 1958, Department of State *Bulletin*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 1008, 20 October 1958, 598.

change in attitude.⁶¹ Even as domestic pressures became unbearable during the post-Tet era, Nixon and Kissinger expressed contempt for irresponsible Congressional interference in foreign policy and moved toward a covert form of diplomacy that preserved their ability to pursue a policy they considered more conducive to achieving a peaceful world order. Jimmy Carter eventually adopted a similar approach toward China for much the same reason.

Acceptance of this assessment leads, then, to the tentative conclusion that had China indicated that it would engage constructively with other nations rather than pursuing a more bellicose approach, then it is at least plausible that prior to Nixon an American president may have taken greater initiative to improve relations.⁶² Under such circumstances, a president may well have faced considerable political difficulties at home. But because Chinese radicalism rarely provided opportunities for rapprochement that would have been acceptable from the standpoint of American foreign policy objectives, assessments of the true power of the domestic factor must remain speculative and inconclusive.

The Structure of this Dissertation

The five chapters in this dissertation are arranged chronologically and are generally divided by presidential administrations. Chapter One begins with an

⁶¹ In his analysis of Kennedy's China policy, Noam Kochavi goes to great lengths to identify the shortcomings of Kennedy's approach particularly its hesitancy to do more to improve relations. Yet Kochavi repeatedly concludes his chapters with brief admissions that such overtures would have proven useless given Beijing's intransigence. Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated*.

⁶² Waldron, "From Nonexistent to Almost Normal," in Kunz, ed., *The Diplomacy of the Crucial Decade*, 243-244.

examination of the initial decision not to recognize the nascent Chinese Communist government prior to the Korean War because of Beijing's persistent and escalating violations of the commonly-accepted standards and principles of the international order. It then discusses the hardening of China policy during the Korean War, and concludes with an examination of the administration's effort to either moderate Beijing's communist leaders or to overthrow the government during this period of economic and social turmoil.

Chapter Two covers the China policy of Dwight Eisenhower's administration. During the mid- and late-1950s, the United States struggled to prevent aggressive actions on the part of both the PRC and ROC from erupting into a larger conflict. While it sought to hold the line against communist expansion, the administration simultaneously implemented a long-term strategy of exacerbating mainland social and economic conditions in order to facilitate the emergence of an indigenous resistance movement. Like Truman, Eisenhower hoped that this would result in either the moderation or replacement of the existing regime.

Chapter Three recounts the efforts of the Kennedy and Johnson administration to perpetuate the military containment of communism in East Asia. Yet in so doing, these Democratic administrations also accepted the permanency of the communist regime and, thus, gradually abandoned the alternative strategies for reorienting Beijing's policies that their predecessors had adopted. As a result, Taiwan lost much of its previous political and diplomatic value during the 1960s, even as it played an increasingly important role as a strategic outpost that facilitated American military operations in the region.

Chapter Four analyzes the development of the Sino-American rapprochement during the Nixon and Ford administrations as they struggled to create conditions conducive to achieving a greater degree of international stability. This did not mean that these administrations had abandoned efforts to compel Beijing to abandon its revolutionary line, however. During the high-level talks of 1971-1972, Kissinger implemented a new strategy designed to guide PRC leaders toward a more legitimate form of international relations. This produced real, though limited, success, but by the end of 1975 the persistence of revolutionary thought among Beijing's leaders produced a diplomatic context in which compromise on several key issues proved impossible.

This all changed over the course of the next several years as a more pragmatic leadership emerged under Deng Xiaoping, a trend discussed in Chapter Five. Taiwan had also undergone a change during the 1970s. Under the new leadership of Chiang Ching-kuo, the ROC generally reconciled itself to the abandonment of its ambitions to rule the mainland. Instead, it now focused more on enhancing the island's military security and ensuring a separate existence free from PRC control. Yet it did so in a way that cast Taipei in the eyes of American officials as a destabilizing influence. The incoming Carter administration lamented Taipei's approach, even as it responded favorably to Beijing's new moderation. Yet the imperative of peaceful change compelled the Carter administration to seek a pledge that the PRC would strive for reunification by peaceful means. The compromise the two sides reached did not resolve the issue, yet with China's abandonment of its revolutionary line and its constructive cooperation in world affairs, Washington believed that it had finally achieved its long-

sought objective. The result, on January 1, 1979, was American diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic of China.

CHAPTER II

HARRY TRUMAN AND THE CHINESE COMMUNIST THREAT TO INTERNATIONAL ORDER, 1948-1952

In the late-1940s, with the Cold War begun and the communist revolution in China reaching fruition, the administration of Harry S. Truman struggled to determine the extent to which Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) would conduct their foreign relations in accordance with the principles and standards of the post-war international order. Had they concluded, as had the United States and its allies, that nations should not seek to control other nations? Did they understand the dangers of such international instability as had produced the tragedies of the 1930s and '40s? Or would they join with the Soviet Union in carrying out a disruptive, revolutionary program to unsettle the nascent international order in favor of one that prioritized communist ideological unity over the freedom of indigenous peoples to choose their own political systems free from outside interference?

The Truman administration soon concluded that the leaders of the newly-formed People's Republic of China would adopt the latter course, following in the footsteps of their comrades in Moscow. Under such circumstances Washington sought to convince Beijing that cooperation remained possible, that the international order in no way threatened China's decision to pursue communism domestically, and that the principles of the United Nations would guarantee, rather than endanger, the territorial integrity of

its borders.¹ Washington determined, however, to refrain from granting Beijing diplomatic recognition until such time as the CCP accepted the norms of the international order and its own responsibilities as a member of it. Indeed, this constituted one of the three basic criteria that Secretary of State Dean Acheson advanced for any nation – communist or otherwise – to receive recognition: it must have control of the territory over which it claims sovereignty, it must enjoy the general acquiescence of its people, and it must demonstrate both ability and willingness to carry out its international obligations.² Though the administration initially perceived the PRC as failing to meet any of these criteria, it considered the third by far the most important. Thus, long before the outbreak of war in Korea the United States, responding to Beijing's uncooperative attitude, had set the general tone of the approach Washington would pursue throughout the next three decades.

The Soviet Pattern in the Chinese Dust: American China Policy Prior to the Korean War, 1948-1950

Throughout 1948 and the early part of 1949, the Truman administration came to accept that, at best, the government of China would soon include representatives of both the Nationalist and Communist Chinese. As 1949 progressed, however, the administration realized that Mao Zedong and the CCP would completely dominate the

¹ “The American attitude was less that of expecting to impose a system than one of puzzlement as to why its merits were not universally self-evident.” Gaddis, *We Now Know*, 36

² Telegram, Acheson to J. Leighton Stuart, 13 May 1949, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1949*, Vol. IX: The Far East: China, 21-23, hereafter cited as *FRUS, 1949*, IX; these criteria were not new in the late-1940s, but rather represented a culmination of recognition policy and practice dating back to the American Revolution. See Mikulas Fabry, *Recognizing States: International Society and the Establishment of New States since 1776* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

new China and exclude representatives of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Kuomintang Party (KMT). This realization may have disheartened many Truman administration officials due to their previous experiences with communist regimes, but such feelings did not prevent the administration from giving the Chinese Communists the benefit of the doubt. Armed with the example of the independence-minded Marshall Tito in Yugoslavia, the administration waited patiently to determine the extent to which the CCP wished to engage with the rest of the world in accordance with the ideals of the U.N. Charter and the norms of international diplomacy.

Even as Chinese Communist forces began gaining ground in the civil war, Washington did not end its ties with the Republic of China. U.S. support of the KMT during and immediately after World War II stemmed from wartime agreements that identified Chiang's government as the legitimate representative of the Allied powers in East Asia. Continued U.S. support through 1948 also accorded with the fact that the Republic of China remained the sole recognized government of the country, a fact unaltered by the existence of a civil conflict. As Chiang's rule deteriorated, however, the Truman administration realized the extent to which the KMT had lost popular support. Mass Nationalist army defections compounded the economic and social problems facing Chiang and contributed to the overwhelming success of the communist military campaign in 1948-49. Under such circumstances, the Truman administration chose to withdraw its support from the Nationalists; if the Chinese people and Chiang's own armies would not support the regime, why should the United States?

This did not mean that the administration would automatically throw its support behind the communists, though Truman and Acheson did take steps to signify that they did not oppose the rise of a Chinese Communist government. After all, constructing a post-war order conducive to peaceful relations required integrating into it even those nations and peoples once considered enemies, as the cases of Japan, Germany, and even the Soviet Union attest. In early 1949 Acheson rejected a proposal by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to station limited naval forces on Taiwan, hoping to signal a friendly attitude toward the PRC through a hands-off approach to the fate of the island.³ When the Chinese Communists conquered the Nationalist capital of Nanjing in April 1949, Truman ordered Ambassador J. Leighton Stuart to remain there in case opportunities arose for constructive contact with the CCP. That summer, the administration published the China White Paper, laying out the facts of its previous dealings with Chiang Kai-shek, and suggesting that it would have nothing more to do with the Nationalist regime. The administration hesitated to make further gestures, however, in the absence of “deeds capable of convincing people of US that continued American support of Chinese objectives is in mutual interest of both countries.”⁴

CCP leaders refused to accept such gestures at face value. On January 8 the CCP politburo passed a resolution criticizing the administration’s continuing support of the Chinese Nationalists, and suggested that even if Washington chose to recognize the PRC

³ NSC 37/5, “Supplementary Measures with Respect to Formosa,” 1 March 1949, *FRUS, 1949*, IX, 290-292.

⁴ Telegram, Stuart to Acheson, 7 June 1949, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1949*, Vol. VIII: The Far East: China, 372-373, hereafter cited as *FRUS, 1949*, VIII. When the CCP later that month invited Stuart to Beijing, he similarly cautioned that accepting the invitation “would be second step on our part,” and might “break united front policy” regarding recognition. Letter, Stuart to Acheson, 30 June 1949, *ibid*, 766-767.

government this would merely allow the United States to “conduct subversive activities from within.”⁵ From this view sprang an intense propaganda campaign. Mao characterized Acheson as an agent of Wall Street and Ambassador Stuart as “a loyal agent of U.S. cultural aggression” who only pretended to love China and “was able to deceive quite a number of Chinese.” The United States supported Chiang during the civil war in order to turn China “into a U.S. colony,” which constituted “an important component of the U.S. imperialist policy of world-wide aggression since World War II.”⁶ That same week, Mao penned an editorial for the New China News Agency expressing his firm belief that the American imperialists “will never lay down their butcher knives” and would continuously “make trouble” in the world.⁷

CCP actions matched this rhetoric. In November 1948 the Chinese Communists surrounded and cut off water and electricity to the American Consulate in Mukden, keeping the staff incommunicado for months.⁸ Chinese officials in other cities barred not just American but also French and British officials from carrying out their diplomatic functions, thereby demonstrating that “they were not going to play the diplomatic game by the international rules practiced in the West if it did not suit them.”⁹ In July 1949, the Chinese arrested, imprisoned, and beat American Vice Consul William Olive, apparently

⁵ Quoted in Shu Guang Zhang, *Economic Cold War: America's Embargo against China and the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1949-1963* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001), 69.

⁶ Mao Zedong, “Farewell, Leighton Stuart!” 18 August 1949, http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-4/mswv4_67.htm, accessed on 7 August 2012.

⁷ Quoted in Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 53.

⁸ Chen Jian demonstrates how this event originated as a suggestion from Moscow, and signified the beginning of the CCP's revolutionary style of diplomacy. See Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

⁹ Edwin W. Martin, *Divided Counsel: The Anglo-American Response to Communist Victory in China* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986), 8-14, quote is on 8.

on trumped-up charges. That summer, American businessmen in China, disillusioned with the “future under Communist rule,” began “packing up and leaving Shanghai rather than submit to humiliations and insecurities of present situation.”¹⁰ All of this suggested a dangerous Chinese antipathy to normal, constructive international discourse.

Washington also perceived an apparent lack of concern among CCP officials for international law. The Chinese Communists announced as early as February 1947 their intention to abrogate China’s existing “disgraceful” and “treasonous” international treaties that they believed infringed on Chinese sovereignty, a threat that Mao continued to make for the next several years.¹¹ In part, this stemmed from the Marxist-Leninist view that while nations must uphold the provisions of treaties they enter into – which Chinese intellectuals characterized as “a fundamental principle of the whole body of international law – this did not apply to treaty provisions “concerning aggression and slavery.” Such treaties, this argument went, emerged from a lack of “genuine sovereign equality between all parties concerned.”¹² Beyond this ideological argument, however, the Chinese Communists did, in fact, develop sophisticated legal arguments regarding the illegality of treaties signed under KMT rule. They pointed out, for instance, that the KMT bypassed China’s Political Consultative Conference, a body that “comprised all major political parties, groups, and prominent social figures” in China and without

¹⁰ Telegram, Cabot to Acheson, 26 June 1949, *FRUS, 1949*, VIII, 1184-1186.

¹¹ Quoted in King C. Chen, *Vietnam and China, 1938-1954* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 197 note 98.

¹² Wang Yaotian, *International Trade Treaties and Agreements* (1958), quoted in Cohen and Chiu, *People’s China and International Law*, Vol. 2, 1118-1119. In his earlier writings on the same subject, Lenin used the words “robbery and violence,” rather than “aggression and slavery.” *Ibid.*

whose blessing no treaty could be considered valid.¹³ They further argued that China enjoyed the right to reconsider or abrogate treaties on the basis of changed circumstances – that the conditions existing at the time the parties signed the treaty no longer prevailed, thus justifying alterations.

The administration could understand this Chinese antagonism up to a certain point; officials clearly understood the nationalistic fervor sweeping Asia in the wake of over a century of Western imperialism.¹⁴ In the chaos of the immediate post-war years, Truman lamented the “pent-up fanatical nationalisms” that gave rise to “little Caesars” who “invoked national honor, national dignity, and every demagogic appeal, even if the quarrel might lead to their own destruction.”¹⁵ Indeed, much of the Chinese Communist attitude and behavior of late-1948 and early-1949 likely had as much to do with the long history of Western intervention in China as it did with any ideological misgivings about capitalist nations. Yet from Washington’s perspective, the repudiation of China’s treaty commitments, however minor, suggested the possibility that Beijing might yet repudiate other, more important obligations in the future.¹⁶ Historian Nancy Tucker adequately sums up Washington’s view on this matter, writing that a state “could not simply pick

¹³ “Statement by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on Agreements and Negotiations between the Kuomintang and Foreign Governments,” 1 February 1947, quoted in *ibid*, 1120-1121.

¹⁴ See, for instance, Acheson’s speech to the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., 12 January 1950, Department of State *Bulletin*, 23 January 1950, 111-118.

¹⁵ Truman, *Memoirs*, I, 264-265.

¹⁶ Senator H. Alexander Smith, in a letter to Acheson on 18 September 1951, confirmed that these events “foreclosed any immediate recognition by us.” U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Nominations, 82d Congress, 1st Session, *Nomination of Philip C. Jessup: Hearings* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1951), 648.

and choose which agreements it would honor if any equitable system of global relations were to survive.”¹⁷

Beyond awareness of Chinese nationalistic sentiment, the administration also noted disturbing signs that Moscow’s influence extended to Beijing. Believing that the Soviet Union had initiated an aggressive policy of expansion, the administration looked with concern upon any nation that demonstrated it might – or had – come under the influence of the Soviet Union, whether through the manipulation of nationalistic sentiment or through open acceptance of Moscow’s leadership.¹⁸ British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin did not believe that that influence had yet extended to the CCP and insisted that recognition of the Chinese Communists would help keep them out of the Soviet orbit. Excessive obduracy, he argued, would only confirm in Chinese eyes the validity of Soviet propaganda, and would “drive the Chinese into Russia’s hands.”¹⁹

Acheson disagreed, emphasizing the mounting evidence of Sino-Soviet economic, diplomatic, and ideological ties, and the fact that the CCP had already begun following “the Kremlin line.” Indeed, for an entire year prior to the establishment of the People’s Republic the CCP behaved in a manner consistent with previous American experiences with Soviet proxy governments: the appearance of Soviet “advisors” that signified an end to legitimate indigenous political control, the excessively poor treatment of American diplomatic officials and staff, the refusal to accept the legitimacy of treaties

¹⁷ Tucker, *Patterns in the Dust*, 49.

¹⁸ For a description of what American officials considered a “typical Soviet puppet state” see Telegram, Emmons to Rusk, 10 October 1950, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950*, Vol. VII: Korea, 923, hereafter cited as *FRUS, 1950*, VII.

¹⁹ Memorandum of Conversation between Bevin and Acheson, et al., 13 September 1949, *FRUS, 1949*, IX, 83.

that had been signed prior to World War II, even the active support of revolutionary movements in neighboring countries (as in the case of Greece and its communist neighbors). All of these factors, prominent in Europe in 1945-46, re-emerged in China in 1948-49. Acheson thus believed that no possibility currently existed for Chinese Titoism, and asserted that “To encourage the influences that, over time, might detach China from subservience to Moscow, by a cautious application of our attitude toward Tito would require first that the Chinese Communists follow Tito in stopping active abuse of us.”²⁰ Truman reiterated this theme when he insisted on the State Department “judging their intentions by their actions.”²¹

Yet CCP actions had already cast them as complicit in the effort to expand communism globally – by fair means or foul. The pattern of Chinese Communist interference among other countries began as early as 1946 when the CCP sent cadres into French Indochina to obtain the support of Chinese living there. For the next three years, the Chinese Communists and Viet-Minh established a variety of cultural and military ties related to the latter’s effort to overthrow French colonial rule. The Chinese provided training, equipment, and a safe haven within China.²² In 1948, and again in 1950, the Viet Minh founded organizations to mobilize overseas Chinese support in its war efforts.²³ When Vietnamese communist leader Ho Chi Minh formed his own communist government, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), in January 1950, the PRC was the first nation to recognize it. Ho soon thereafter visited Beijing and

²⁰ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 344.

²¹ Stueck, *The Road to Confrontation*, 122.

²² Chen, *Vietnam and China*, 187-196.

²³ E. S. Ungar, “The Struggle Over the Chinese Communist in Vietnam, 1946-1986,” *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 60, no. 4 (Winter, 1987-1988), 598-599; Chen, *Vietnam and China*, 198-199.

received Mao's assurances of continued assistance.²⁴ By that time, revolutions had also erupted in Burma, Malaya, and Indonesia. Though the administration viewed Moscow rather than Beijing as inciting these revolutions, the CCP nonetheless seemed increasingly to encourage and support them.²⁵

Under such circumstances, recognizing the PRC might have an undesirable effect in terms of the millions of Chinese residing elsewhere in the region. If China ultimately revealed itself as an active partner in the Soviet quest for world domination then Beijing might take advantage of the legitimacy that American recognition would confer as a tool to convert the overseas Chinese into a willing, able, and loyal army of subversives. Far from theoretical, American officials based this view on a series of events and developments that suggested such a process had actually begun. Indeed, even Beijing's official pronouncements stressed "the task of winning over the Chinese residing abroad," rhetoric that did "nothing to dispel mistrust in Southeast Asia."²⁶

The communist world had no such reluctance to confer international legitimacy upon its newest member. Offers of recognition from the Soviet Union, Mongolia, and several Eastern Bloc countries quickly followed the establishment of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949. Reluctant to follow suit yet mindful of its interests in Hong Kong, the United Kingdom announced what American officials considered a curious policy of *de facto* relations without *de facto* recognition "for the

²⁴ Qiang Zhai, *China and the Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 13-16.

²⁵ Ironically, an internal party directive of 14 March 1950, referred to the assistance of communist liberation movements as "an international obligation that the CCP and the Chinese people cannot shirk." Ibid, 21.

²⁶ G. William Skinner, "Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 321: Contemporary China and the Chinese (January 1959), 144.

greater convenience of both governments and promotion of trade between the two countries.”²⁷ Stung by this British failure to consult with the United States regarding relations with the new Chinese government, the Truman administration emphasized that non-Communist nations should avoid appeasement by first awaiting signs of PRC willingness to accept its international obligations.²⁸ The administration placed high on the list of these obligations the proper treatment of foreign diplomats, an issue highlighted by the CCP’s refusal to release the American diplomatic staff in Mukden which by that point had lasted over ten months.²⁹ Furthermore, Acheson wrote to Bevin, independent action by any one of the Western Powers would “be exploited to full by Chi Commies” and would “inevitably have adverse effect on resolution and cooperation of independent Asiatic countries.”³⁰

Several American allies nonetheless pressed for closer relations with Beijing. In early October, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru sent a friendly note to the PRC and informed Truman and Acheson that “there was now no alternative to the Communists in China.”³¹ A week later, the Netherlands also sent a note that went far beyond what Washington “considered desirable under present circumstances” by

²⁷ Document transmitted by the French Embassy in Washington to the Department of State, consisting of the text of the British reply to the PRC’s bid for recognition, conveyed on 6 October 1949, *FRUS, 1949*, IX, 103.

²⁸ In response to the suspicious circumstances in which the British announced their new policy, Truman commented that they “had not played very squarely with us on this matter.” Memorandum of Conversation between Truman and Acheson, 17 October 1949, *ibid*, 132.

²⁹ Near the end of October, the PRC arrested the consular staff on charges of assault, and then tried and sentenced them, though in November the PRC commuted their sentences to deportation and released them. Martin, *Divided Counsel*, 78-86.

³⁰ Telegram, Acheson to Douglas conveying a message to Bevin, 14 October 1949, *FRUS, 1949*, IX, 129; According to Stueck, domestic calls against recognition “merely reinforced Acheson’s inclinations” because such PRC violations “genuinely disturbed him.” Stueck, *Road to Confrontation*, 132-133.

³¹ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 335-336.

encouraging informal contacts with Chinese authorities at the local level and promoting mutual trade.³² Two days later, the Netherlands expanded their contacts with PRC officials, arguing that the British decision to establish contact had forced them to follow suit. Canada also sent a note to Beijing requesting that the PRC allow Canadian officials in China to continue their normal duties, though the note avoided language suggesting official recognition. Some members of the diplomatic community predicted that most European and Asian nations would recognize the PRC by mid-December, and reports revealed that house hunting on the part of several diplomatic missions had stimulated the Beijing real estate market.³³

The slow but steady breakdown of the American non-recognition campaign reached a critical point in November when London informed Washington that it now favored recognition of the Chinese Communist government. Formally abandoning the American rationale for non-recognition, the British now noted how “the disadvantages of nonrecognition were so great as to outweigh any possible advantages to be obtained from securing Chinese Communist assurance of respect for international obligations.” Though hoping for international consensus on this important issue, the British nonetheless implicitly threatened unilateral action, stating “it is accepted that every government has, in the final analysis, the right to take such action as it considers appropriate.”³⁴ Having just returned from a visit to East Asia, New Jersey Senator H. Alexander Smith expressed that the British had adopted this line in order to protect both

³² Memorandum of Conversation between Sprouse and Reuchlin, 17 October 1949, *FRUS, 1949*, IX, 131.

³³ Telegram, McConaughy to Acheson, 21 October 1949, *ibid*, 138.

³⁴ Memorandum of Conversation between Graves, Butterworth, and Sprouse, 1 November 1949, *ibid*, 150.

Hong Kong and British trading privileges in China rather than out of some loftier goal in the international struggle against communism.³⁵ Madame Chiang concurred, likening the decision to “Munich” and asserting that the British were “motivated by the search for the almighty dollar.”³⁶

The new British policy contributed further to the deterioration of the American wait-and-see approach. Portugal now expressed concern that it would be “extremely difficult for the Portuguese Government not to follow suit, particularly in view of the position of Macao.”³⁷ On November 14 Canada approved the British view that “the advantages outweighed the disadvantages” and that “recognition should come sooner rather than later.” In response, American officials pleaded their case for “all the friendly Western powers to take a common stand” in delaying recognition of the PRC, emphasizing “the desirability of at least obtaining some indication from the Chinese Communists that they were prepared to live up to normal standards of international conduct.” To bolster its argument, the administration drew upon the recent PRC “barbarisms,” referring to the “general treatment of U.S. officials in China” which “should be of concern to all the friendly Western powers.”³⁸ In addition, recognition

³⁵ Letter, Smith to Acheson, 5 November 1949, *ibid*, 173.

³⁶ Memorandum of Conversation between Jessup and Chiang Kai-shek, et al., 16 January 1950, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950*, Vol. VI: East Asia and the Pacific, 283, hereafter cited as *FRUS, 1950*, VI.

³⁷ Memorandum of Conversation between Pereira and Butterworth, et al., 10 November 1949, *FRUS, 1949*, IX, 188.

³⁸ Memorandum of Conversation between Collins, Merchant, and Sprouse, 14 November 1949, *ibid*, 191-192; by early 1950, mounting incidents perpetrated by the PRC against American officials and property led to the American decision to remove all remaining official personnel from China. The following month, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Tom Connally of Texas, agreed with the administration’s approach to recognition, stressing that “the Communists must first demonstrate that they were in control of the country and would respect international law and international obligations.” William

would contribute “little or nothing” to the hoped-for Sino-Soviet split, as the British suggested might occur.³⁹

These efforts failed. The administration could only watch with apprehension the steady deterioration of the united front strategy to what it perceived as the ultimate benefit of the communist movement. Britain, Canada, India, and the Netherlands all began establishing general timetables for recognition, with the Indians arguing that China had met all three of the American preconditions for recognition.⁴⁰ The staunchly anti-communist South Korean President Syngman Rhee threatened to break relations with the United Kingdom if the latter should follow through. The CCP continued its military advance against the remnants of Chiang Kai-shek’s shattered armies on the mainland, sent a message to U.N. Secretary General Trygve Lie noting that Chiang’s government “has lost all *de jure* and *de facto* grounds for representing the Chinese people,” and demanded that the U.N. deprive the ROC of its seat.⁴¹ Lie sympathized, commenting that “the work of the UN should not be made to suffer because of this ‘political struggle.’”⁴² Indications emerged that Burma and Indonesia also desired swift recognition and that Thailand, the Philippines, Denmark, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, and Italy, all noting the prevailing global trend, might now favor that policy as well.

S. White, “Connally Urges All Factions to Retain Bipartisan Policy,” *New York Times*, 30 December 1949, 3.

³⁹ Telegram, Bacon to Acheson, 15 November 1949, *FRUS, 1949*, IX, 193.

⁴⁰ India based its decision on its belief that “The Communist Government controlled practically the whole of the country; there was no evidence that the mass of the Chinese people opposed the Communist regime; the new Communist Government had agreed to abide by China’s international obligations.” “Indians Recognize Communist China,” *New York Times*, 30 December 1949, 6.

⁴¹ Telegram, Austin to Acheson, 20 November 1949, *FRUS, 1949*, IX, 195; the ROC government was finally forced to relocate to Taiwan on 6 December 1949, though Chiang had been preparing for that eventuality since August.

⁴² Quoted in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950*, Vol. II: The United Nations; the Western Hemisphere, 200 note 1, hereafter cited as *FRUS, 1950*, II.

Even the Vatican began to encourage France to recognize Beijing because the former lacked adequate resources to protect Catholic interests in China.

Discussions regarding recognition affected debates about the China seat in the United Nations. Though in military disarray, the Nationalist regime remained intact on Taiwan, and the fledgling U.N. had not previously faced the problem of two competing governments claiming the same seat.⁴³ Switzerland offered one of the earliest solutions to this dilemma by refusing to recognize Communist China until such time as a majority of nations had done so. In January 1950, Britain advocated applying this approach to the U.N. representation issue, namely, when a majority of member nations recognized the PRC the U.N. should then grant that nation the China seat.⁴⁴ The representative from India suggested that the International Court of Justice take up the question and hand down a binding decision based not on politics, but rather on the merits of the case.⁴⁵ Not satisfied with any of these approaches, the representative of the Soviet Union demanded Beijing's unconditional and immediate seating.⁴⁶ For its part, the Truman administration remained opposed to seating the PRC but had committed to accepting the will of the majority of U.N. members even if they should choose to admit the Chinese Communists.

While attempting to hold the line against the diplomatic generosity of allied and neutral countries, the State Department also struggled against the bellicose proposals of

⁴³ Precedents predating the U.N. did exist, especially regarding the governments-in-exile during World War II. The U.N. only later attempted to determine exactly how or by what criteria a government could be considered legitimate.

⁴⁴ Telegram, Austin to Acheson, 9 January 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, II, 188-189.

⁴⁵ Telegram, Austin to Acheson, 11 January 1950, *ibid*, 192-193.

⁴⁶ Telegram, Acheson to Austin, 12 January 1950, *ibid*, 194-195; Acheson rejected these proposals on the basis of uncertainties surrounding the complex legal and procedural issues these proposals would raise rather than on any ideological or political grounds. See Telegram, Acheson to Austin, 21 January 1950, *ibid*, 202-204.

American military officials. In December 1949, almost three weeks after the final ROC withdrawal from the mainland, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) argued that “military aid to the anti-communist government in Taiwan would be in the security interest of the United States” and emphasized that Taiwan “is a part of the overall problem of resisting the spread of Communist domination in East Asia.”⁴⁷ Although admitting that for the nations of Southeast Asia “the risk was one of infiltration and subversion rather than invasion by armed forces from China,” the JCS nonetheless believed that “Chinese communist expansion to the south might be deflected so long as they had Formosa to contend with or subdue.” Again, Acheson vetoed such plans, pointing out the lines along which he believed the Sino-Soviet relationship would eventually fracture and emphasizing that “it would have to be for a very important strategic purpose that we would take an action which would substitute ourselves for the Soviets as the imperialist menace to China.” Furthermore, he continued, “there does not appear to be demonstrated a claim that the loss of Formosa really breaches our defense.”⁴⁸ The CCP had proven troublesome, but the major threats in the region simply did not seem to require depriving the PRC of control over Taiwan.

Certain members of Congress had other ideas about the island, however, and the administration could do nothing to curb the free expression of their opinions. In November Senator Smith suggested that the United States had the authority as the occupying power of Japan to establish a protectorate over Taiwan, a former Japanese

⁴⁷ Memorandum, Joint Chiefs of Staff to Secretary of Defense Johnson, 23 December 1949, *FRUS, 1949*, IX, 460-4611.

⁴⁸ Memorandum of Conversation between Acheson and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, et al., 29 December 1949, *ibid*, 463-466.

colony.⁴⁹ Subsequently, Senators William Knowland of California and Robert Taft of Ohio, as well as former President Herbert Hoover, all publicly urged the State Department to extend naval protection to the island. Citing these proposals, and thus demonstrating their ignorance of the American governmental process, the Chinese Communists charged the United States with intention to occupy Formosa.

In response, Truman “decided that he must speak at once, and speak in so crisp and brutally frank a manner as to end further propaganda and speculation.”⁵⁰ On January 5, 1950, the White House released to the press a Presidential statement on the Formosan situation that laid out the process by which the island had reverted to Chinese control and asserted the U.S. lack of territorial or military ambitions there. The administration would no longer provide military aid to the ROC, nor would it “pursue a course which will lead to involvement in the civil conflict in China.”⁵¹ Later that same day, “to make the policy clear to the most perverse intelligence,” Acheson held his own press conference that same day to provide detailed background information placing Truman’s statement in appropriate context. Chiang’s forces lacked adequate will to resist the communists militarily, he said, and either had or could obtain from other nations whatever armaments their continued defensive needs might require. Settlement of the situation did not require the formalities of a peace treaty with Japan. American economic aid would continue – specifically, providing fertilizer for crops and oil for power plants – but aid would not extend to the military sphere. In conclusion, Acheson

⁴⁹ 96 *Congressional Record*, 81st Congress, 2nd Session, 150-151; William S. White, “Senator Urges U.S. to take Formosa,” *New York Times*, 2 December 1949, 15.

⁵⁰ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 350-351.

⁵¹ Department of State *Bulletin*, 16 January 1950, 79.

noted Truman's statement that the United States "has no desire to obtain special rights or privileges or to establish military bases on Formosa at this time." This concluding phrase, he expressed, merely recognized the fact that "in the unlikely and unhappy event that our forces might be attacked in the Far East, the United States must be completely free to take whatever action in whatever area is necessary for its own security."⁵²

This had no effect on the Chinese Communists. The following day, the same day the British officially recognized it, the PRC announced its intention to requisition the portions of the American, French, and Dutch consulates that China had previously allowed those governments, by treaty, to utilize for official purposes.⁵³ The State Department urged the affected nations not to acquiesce in this illegal seizure of property, warning that capitulation to the Chinese demand "would invite similar and progressive actions by the Chinese Communists against our people and other official property."⁵⁴ When PRC officials and police entered the American Consulate on January 14 – "a flagrant violation of our treaty rights and of the most elementary standards of international usage and conduct" – the State Department ordered the withdrawal of all of its personnel from Communist China and the closure of its four remaining consular posts in the country.⁵⁵ Soon thereafter, the administration concluded that the PRC intended the requisition threat as a means to force foreign governments in general, and the United

⁵² Ibid, 79-81.

⁵³ This agreement originated with the Protocol of 7 September 1901, and was later reaffirmed in the Sino-American treaty of 1943. The requisition threat reflected an intense Chinese nationalism within the PRC, heightened by the fact that foreign control of these buildings had been forced upon China by the victorious foreign expeditionary armies after the Boxer Rebellion.

⁵⁴ Memorandum, Webb to Truman, 10 January 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VI, 271.

⁵⁵ State Department press release, 14 January 1950, Department of State *Bulletin*, 23 January 1950, 119; Nancy Tucker argues that Acheson chose to withdraw these personnel in order to reduce conflict with the Chinese Communists rather than out of any effort to sever contact. Tucker, *Patterns in the Dust*, 88.

States in particular, to recognize the Beijing government.⁵⁶ If true, CCP officials could not have been more mistaken; as one observer noted, this “sudden turn of events had checked the growth of the movement in favour of recognition” within the American government.⁵⁷

Beijing’s behavior quickly began undermining the support it enjoyed from other countries. Granting recognition, many nations discovered, had “not made any difference whatever,” failing to ameliorate the CCP’s distrust of even the most accommodating of American allies.⁵⁸ Some U.K. officials lamented that Beijing’s reply to Britain’s generous recognition policy appeared “the beginning of an attempt to make recognition ‘conditional.’” Such fears proved accurate, as Washington had feared. One Chinese newspaper confidently asserted that the U.K. had recognized China merely out of economic necessity and that the Chinese people should not expect the British to deviate from the imperialist behavior that they had followed for centuries. Such articles confirmed British concerns that PRC leaders remained locked in an antagonistic view of the West. Burma, too, had recognized the PRC, but one Burmese newspaper characterized the Chinese response as “an unmerited piece of studied coldshouldering.”⁵⁹ In a move that contributed to these international concerns, the PRC moved even closer to the Soviet Union by signing a Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance on

⁵⁶ Telegram, Clubb to Acheson, 20 January 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VI, 286.

⁵⁷ Quoted in Martin, *Divided Counsel*, 111.

⁵⁸ Quoted in *ibid*, 103.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 102-104.

February 14. Such trends may also have compelled India to consider increasing its military assistance to Tibet.⁶⁰

As the administration labored to reach an understanding with Beijing, it also grew concerned that within a few years the Soviet Union would have the capability and willingness to launch a military campaign against Western Europe and, perhaps, other parts of the world as well. This view emerged primarily from the Soviet development of an atomic bomb in late-1949 that signaled the end to the American nuclear monopoly. With the fear of Soviet nuclear retaliation, according to this argument, the USSR could take full advantage of its conventional superiority on the Eurasian landmass against America's weakened allies. As a result, in January 1950 Truman ordered a "reexamination of our objectives in peace and war and of the effect of these objectives on our strategic plans."⁶¹ The ensuing discussions produced in April the first draft of NSC 68, a document that expanded upon the ideas set forth in George Kennan's "Long Telegram" and laid out the general framework for how the United States should wage the Cold War. Though the motivation for this review of American policy remained the fear of Soviet behavior, the administration later utilized these same analyses to interpret the actions and intentions of the PRC and to develop strategies for dealing with them.

NSC 68 begins by lamenting the breakdown of the international order since 1915, a process that had undermined the system of "sovereign and independent states" in which "no state was able to achieve hegemony." In the post-war era, however, the

⁶⁰ Telegram, Acheson to Embassy in India, 1 March 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VI, 314.

⁶¹ Letter, Truman to Acheson, 31 January 1950, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950*, Vol. I: National Security Affairs; Foreign Economic Policy, 141-142, hereafter cited as *FRUS, 1950*, I.

Soviet Union sought “to impose its absolute authority over the rest of the world.” The Kremlin’s success in this effort would imperil both the United States and “civilization itself,” and “the development of increasingly terrifying weapons of mass destruction” would present to every nation the “possibility of annihilation should the conflict enter the phase of total war.”⁶² From this apocalyptic analysis, the paper called for a massive military build-up that would enable the United States and its allies to deter or resist the Soviet offensive if and when it finally occurred. Such is the standard interpretation of NSC 68.⁶³

More fundamentally, however, NSC 68 offers a penetrating look into the American self-image, the kind of international order the United States sought to create, and the characteristics of the international communist movement that officials believed would undermine such an effort. As suggested in the document’s opening paragraph, the basic American goal was to create an international order in which no state could gain hegemony or domination over another. The Soviet system constituted a direct threat to this goal by seeking “the complete subversion or forcible destruction of the machinery of government and structure of society in the countries of the non-Soviet world and their replacement by an apparatus and structure subservient to and controlled from the Kremlin.” In contrast, a “free” society relies on the “strength and appeal of its idea, and it feels no compulsion sooner or later to bring all societies into conformity with it.” Indeed, the free society’s protection of the rights of its individual citizens reflects the

⁶² NSC 68, *ibid.*, 237.

⁶³ For a variety of analyses of NSC 68 and its influence throughout the Cold War, see Ernest May, ed., *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1993).

international community's broader protection of the rights of individual nations. NSC 68 explicitly identifies the protection of these rights as an inherent obligation of the international community. This doctrine of "freedom with responsibility" requires of the nations of the world

only that measure of self discipline and self restraint which makes the rights of each individual compatible with the rights of every other individual. The freedom of the individual has as its counterpart, therefore, the negative responsibility of the individual not to exercise his freedom in ways inconsistent with the freedom of other individuals and the positive responsibility to make constructive use of his freedom in the building of a just society.⁶⁴

To win the Cold War, the document continued, the United States must ultimately "foster a fundamental change in the nature of the Soviet system." But such a change would not occur as a result of American demands that Moscow alter its domestic policies. Rather, the United States "should limit our requirement of the Soviet Union to its participation with other nations on the basis of equality and respect for the rights of others."⁶⁵ To achieve this result required "developing the moral and material strength of the free world" so that "the Soviet regime will become convinced of the falsity of its assumptions and that the pre-conditions for workable agreements can be created."⁶⁶

Indeed, NSC 68 explicitly characterizes containment – the consistent and firm

⁶⁴ NSC 68, *FRUS, 1950*, I, 239.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 241; Truman "did not see totalitarianism in itself as precluding normal relations." John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 16.

⁶⁶ NSC 68, *FRUS, 1950*, I, 242.

application of counterforce – as “a policy of calculated and gradual coercion” for the purpose of convincing the Kremlin to “conform to generally accepted international standards.”⁶⁷ Because of the perceived duplicity of communist rulers, however, “the absence of good faith on the part of the USSR must be assumed until there is concrete evidence that there has been a decisive change in Soviet policies.”⁶⁸ This did not constitute a dramatic departure from existing official thought, but rather a continuation and refinement of ideas that had percolated over the previous five years.

Even before Truman approved NSC 68 as official U.S. policy, both the United States and the United Kingdom began to set in place military and economic assistance programs and mutual security pacts in Asia in an effort to counter the presumed expansionistic tendencies of the Soviet Union and its proxies. In April, upon his return from visiting fourteen Asian nations, American Ambassador Philip Jessup confirmed fears of aggressive communist expansionism by reporting that “a situation of actual war” existed between the government forces and radicals in Korea, Indochina, Malaya, and Burma.⁶⁹ The previous month, India, at the urging of the British government and with American expressions of support, began to provide military materiel and training to Tibet in an effort to bolster that country’s defensive capabilities. Simultaneously, American military officials in Asia once more advocated that the administration reverse its policy toward the Nationalist Chinese. Noting that the PRC had amassed the bulk of their forces in preparation for the “liberation” of Taiwan, they argued that providing

⁶⁷ Ibid, 252-253.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 271. The policy of containment that Kennan originally envisioned was, indeed, intended to bring about this change. Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 71.

⁶⁹ Memorandum of Conversation, Jessup’s oral report to various State Department officials, 3 April 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VI, 69.

more military assistance to the remnants of the KMT would keep the Chinese Communist People's Liberation Army (PLA) occupied, prevent the PRC from exerting "full pressure" along its periphery, and grant the United States and its allies "time for strengthening the defences of Southeast Asia."⁷⁰

By this time, events along the China coast had moved inexorably toward a PRC conquest of Taiwan and the destruction of the last vestiges of the Kuomintang. In mid-April, PLA forces invaded Hainan Island, compelling the Nationalist Chinese defenders to evacuate. In response to a threatened PRC attack on the Chusan Islands, Chiang withdrew from there as well. With Nationalist morale at an all time low, American officials made preparations to remove unnecessary personnel from Taiwan, and on May 19, anticipating a PRC aerial bombardment or other assault, the State Department sent notices to all Americans on the island urging them to leave.

In contrast, military officials continued to urge the administration not to stand idle. In May, intelligence reports warned that Korean elements of the Chinese Communist army had moved to positions along the 38th Parallel, thus linking the PRC to the rising tensions on the peninsula. Less than two weeks before the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers in Japan and Commander in Chief of American forces in the Far East, warned of the dire consequences for American security should the United States complacently allow Taiwan "to fall into the hands of a potential hostile power or of a regime which would grant military utilization of Formosa to a power potentially hostile to the United

⁷⁰ Memorandum, Rusk to Acheson, 26 April 1950, *ibid.*, 333.

States.” Preventing a Chinese Communist takeover of Taiwan would maintain the Pacific island chain, “reduce the ability of the USSR to exploit the natural resources of East and Southeast Asia,” retain in friendly hands the island’s “concentration of operational air and naval bases,” and deny the communists the use of Taiwan “as a springboard for military aggression directed against areas to the south.”⁷¹

John Foster Dulles, who Acheson had appointed special consultant for purposes of the Japanese peace treaty, offered similarly dire warnings. The formation of NATO, he argued, had sent a powerful message to communist and non-communist nations alike that the United States would defend the nations of Europe against communist aggression. However, no such guarantee existed outside of Europe and the Western Hemisphere. “If our conduct indicates a continuing disposition to fall back and allow doubtful areas to fall under Soviet Communist control,” Dulles argued, “then we can expect an accelerated deterioration of our influence in the Mediterranean, Near East, Asia and the Pacific.” Under such conditions, the situation in Japan and the Philippines “may become untenable,” and the “vast natural resources” of Indonesia and the Middle East “will be in jeopardy.” The United States could only prevent such disasters “if at some doubtful point we quickly take a dramatic and strong stand that shows our confidence and resolution.” Taiwan offered a solution:

It is not subject to the immediate influence of Soviet land power. It is close to our naval and air power. It is occupied by the remnants of the non-Communists who have traditionally been our friends and allies. Its

⁷¹ Memorandum on Formosa written by MacArthur, 14 June 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VII, 161-165.

status internationally is undetermined by any international act and we have at least some moral responsibility for the native inhabitants. It is gravely menaced by a joint Chinese-Russian expedition in formation. The eyes of the world are focused upon it.⁷²

As part of his recommendations, Dulles advocated using American air and naval power to “neutralize” Taiwan, “not permitting it either to be taken by Communists or to be used as a base of military operations against the mainland.” Committing American forces for this policy, and the resulting possibility of military losses or even war, Dulles considered secondary to the more important outcome. He concluded, “sometimes such a risk has to be taken in order to preserve peace in the world and to keep the national prestige required if we are to play our indispensable part in sustaining a free world.” Acheson continued to reject such proposals.

The Korean War and the Creation of the American Hard-Line Against China, 1950-1953

On June 25, 1950, the military forces of the communist Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK) moved south across the 38th parallel, launching an unprovoked war against the U.S.-backed government of the Republic of Korea (ROK) in violation of the long-standing U.N. effort to reunify the peninsula peacefully. Administration officials quickly concluded that the Soviet Union lay behind the North Korean attack and, with the lessons of the 1930s forefront in their minds, decided to counter this act of aggression even if this required unilateral action. Many allied and neutral countries

⁷² Memorandum written by John Foster Dulles, 18 May 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, I, 314-316.

endorsed strong counteraction, however. Nations around the world, from the U.K. and India to Brazil, supported the U.S. decision to avoid “another Munich,” and a U.N. resolution condemning Pyongyang’s aggression easily passed.⁷³ For Truman and Acheson, the passage of this resolution conferred upon every U.N. member nation the obligation to support efforts to defend the ROK. Thus armed both morally and legally, the Truman administration readied the United States for a war it had feared might happen, but for which it had not prepared.

In corroborating earlier predictions of the communists’ aggressive expansionistic intentions, the Korean War led many American officials to alter their view of the broader ideological conflict. As Truman noted in his speech to Congress on June 27, “The attack upon Korea makes it plain beyond all doubt that communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war.”⁷⁴ Indeed, many officials concluded that the “Deliberate and carefully planned attack of Communist force” in Korea suggested that “Communists throughout Asia might be preparing commit series of aggressive acts.”⁷⁵ Moscow, some officials speculated, might have set in motion a coordinated “continental policy” of using Asian nationalistic and anti-Western sentiment to achieve its own imperial ambitions – a situation facilitated by the fact that the “rank and file of Viet Minh, Chinese-Malayan guerillas, North Koreans and Chinese do not appreciate that Moscow directs their nationalist movement.” The Vietnamese also perceived events in Korea as “gravely

⁷³ Circular Telegram, Acheson to Certain Diplomatic Missions, 30 June 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VII, 256.

⁷⁴ Harry Truman, Statement by the President on the Situation in Korea, 27 June 1950, *PPP*.

⁷⁵ Telegram, Henderson to Acheson, 29 June 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VII, 235.

disquieting” and feared that “if Soviet-inspired forces are attacking without regard to UN and US in order ‘unify’ Korea, then Soviets and Chinese may do same in aid of Viet Minh.”⁷⁶ American Soviet specialist George Kennan shared this view, expressing that Taiwan “would be the next likely spot for a Communist move.”⁷⁷

Uncertainty regarding the broader communist strategy in the region and in the world compelled the Truman administration to take precautionary measures to prevent hostilities from spiraling into a broader conflict and to insure that further communist moves would not jeopardize the U.N. effort to repel the North Korean invasion. On June 25, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Omar Bradley supported MacArthur’s June 14 argument that the United States, as a strategic imperative, must prevent the island from falling into hostile hands. At that same meeting, Acheson also came out in favor of the plan, and presented Dulles’ neutralization concept as an acceptable solution.⁷⁸ The following day, Truman accepted these proposals. In his speech to Congress announcing this policy, the president emphasized that “the occupation of Formosa by Communist forces” would threaten the U.N. coalition in the performance of “their lawful and necessary functions in that area.” The administration’s sense of obligation to the U.N. required not merely preserving the territorial integrity of South Korea against external attack, but also preventing the hostilities from spreading into a broader conflict. For these reasons, Truman ordered the Seventh Fleet to “prevent any

⁷⁶ Telegram, Gullion to Acheson, 27 June 1950, *ibid*, 194-195.

⁷⁷ Memorandum of Conversation between Truman and representatives of the State and Defense Departments, 26 June 1950, *ibid*, 181.

⁷⁸ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 405-406.

attack on Formosa,” and called upon “the Chinese Government on Formosa to cease all air and sea operations against the mainland.”⁷⁹

The decision to neutralize the Taiwan Strait thus can only be understood when placed in the broader context of perceived communist aggressions and violations during the preceding two years. As already mentioned, Americans feared a direct linkage between Moscow and the wave of communist revolutions that swept through Southeast Asia in 1948, and had already accumulated evidence of Chinese Communist support of both North Korea and the Viet Minh. Indeed, the administration coupled the neutralization policy with a dramatic increase in aid to Indochina and the Philippines, a fact that some historians often overlook in their portrayal of neutralization as a rushed, ill-considered, and unfortunate policy.⁸⁰ As historian William Stueck notes, although neutralization did constitute a reversal of the hands-off policy toward Taiwan, it was nonetheless “consistent in the new circumstances with Truman administration statements of the previous January, and predictable in the context of an increasingly alarmist climate in Washington.”⁸¹ Even if one argues that the administration maintained a faulty perception of PRC motives, given the circumstances and the available evidence the administration could hardly have considered alternative policies prudent.

In this regard, Acheson perceived a direct connection between the current situation and the “tragic history of the 1930s.” In a July 10 letter to Bevin, the Secretary of State expressed that “we have no intention of retreating from the position taken by the

⁷⁹ Harry Truman, Statement by the President on the Situation in Korea, 27 June 1950, *PPP*.

⁸⁰ Harry Truman, Special Message to the Congress Reporting on the Situation in Korea, 19 July 1950, *PPP*.

⁸¹ Stueck, *The Road to Confrontation*, 173.

Pres in his statement of June 27,” and asserted that “any sign of retreat from these positions would have disastrous consequences that might easily place in jeopardy the entire venture to resist aggression.” While the administration felt it could not simply rely on communist good intentions, its rigid posture did not preclude accommodation. Once conditions in the region had stabilized – a situation characterized primarily by the “absence of coercion” – the United States would remove its forces from the Taiwan Strait and “the UN could set about the matter of seating in a normal fashion, perhaps seating no Chi representative pending full consideration of the unprecedented problem of competing claimant Govts.”⁸² Indeed, Truman noted in August that with the conclusion of hostilities on the peninsula the presence of the Seventh Fleet would no longer be required.⁸³ The unspoken qualification of that statement, however, remained the expectation that an end to the hostilities in Korea would signify an end to the broader problem of communist aggression.

The decision to neutralize the Taiwan Straits in no way indicated that the administration’s view of the ROC had improved. Fed up with the corruption within the KMT, Truman refused to support Chiang’s requests for financial assistance, noting that all the money the United States had previously given Chiang “is now invested in United States real estate.” Acheson concurred, arguing that despite both neutralization and continued American recognition of Chiang’s government, the United States should not “make any commitment” to the Chinese Nationalists “as to how long this relationship

⁸² Telegram, Acheson to Embassy in the United Kingdom, 10 July 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VII, 347.

⁸³ Truman’s Press Conference, 31 August 1950, *PPP*.

will extend into the future.”⁸⁴ Rather, the administration identified either a U.N. trusteeship or settlement through the Japanese Peace Treaty as “the only two methods that were lawful and valid.”⁸⁵

This constituted a dramatic reversal of the administration’s previous apathy toward the fate of the island. Only a month before, Truman and Acheson seemed content to allow the island to fall to the invading Chinese Communist armies, but now asserted the expectation of a peaceful resolution. The administration’s insistence on a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan issue most likely constituted an attempt to give legal weight to a decision made for more practical military reasons. Many U.S. allies supported the U.N. resolution condemning the North Korean invasion and willingly provided supplies and men to defeat it. But they did not wholeheartedly support neutralization, considering it an unnecessary provocation that could only exacerbate Sino-American tensions. As such, for the sake of allied unity, the administration felt it had to provide some legal justification for its decision. This position was not entirely hypocritical, however, for many administration officials had long sought to include the desires of the indigenous Taiwanese when determining the island’s status. When Chiang Kai-shek withdrew to Taiwan, his repressive rule over the local population and the strength of his military apparatus limited the administration’s ability to take steps toward Taiwanese self-determination, as did the impending invasion of Mao’s armies. With Chiang now dependent on American protection and support, however, new opportunities arose to grant the Taiwanese a greater voice in their government. Although this

⁸⁴ Telegram, Acheson to Strong, 14 August 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VI, 437.

⁸⁵ Telegram, Douglas to Acheson, 14 July 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VII, 383.

remained a genuine concern for several administration officials, particularly John Foster Dulles, the onrush of events and Chiang's opposition to such schemes made achievement of this goal impossible.

The American defense of Taiwan also had broader implications in that it constituted a demonstrable test case of American credibility. Most of the non-communist nations of East Asia feared China in the same manner as the nations of Western Europe feared the Soviet Union. As such, these nations welcomed signs of American resolve in its dealings with the Chinese Communists. In reference to the announcement of the neutralization policy, Kennan expressed that a "Communist conquest of Formosa, either by political or military means or both, coming in the wake of the President's statement, would be gravely damaging to our political position not only in Asia but possibly throughout the world." He believed such an event would demonstrate American inability or unwillingness to counter communist moves, and "would be comparable in its effect to a complete military defeat in Korea."⁸⁶ This proved to be a particularly sensitive point given the parallel interests of Chiang Kai-shek and Syngman Rhee, both of whom presided over non-communist portions of divided nations and faced the direct threat of Chinese Communist military attack. Indeed, Rhee, mirroring the JCS position of the previous December, expressed hope that the United States would take steps to prevent a communist takeover of Taiwan since he wanted "to see the Chinese Communists kept occupied for a while."⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Memorandum, Kennan to Acheson, 17 July 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VI, 380.

⁸⁷ Telegram, Muccio to Acheson, 25 June 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VII, 131.

Uncertainties regarding communist intentions also upset plans to seat the PRC in the United Nations. The U.N. Secretariat had hoped to accomplish this as early as July 3, but expressed that the outbreak of hostilities had “completely upset all UN plans” and made seating the PRC representatives “out of the question.”⁸⁸ This reluctance emerged from the belief that the Soviet Union could bring about a North Korean withdrawal, but would only do so if the U.N. granted membership to the Chinese Communists; the international community generally frowned upon such coerced arrangements. Attempting to carve out a middle course, India continued to advocate seating the Chinese Communists. Although agreeing that “anything we do should not appear as appeasement,” India hoped that the opportunity for discussion in the U.N. “could convince Russians and Communist Chinese that it was a mistake to resort to armed force.”⁸⁹ Truman vehemently disagreed, characterizing such a proposal as “sheer unadulterated blackmail” which “has no support in the Charter or in reason or conscience.”⁹⁰

Evidence of PRC complicity in the North Korean attack mounted during the initial weeks of the war. Reporting on front line conditions on July 9, General MacArthur expressed that the North Korean offensive “more and more assumes the aspect of a combination of Soviet leadership and technical guidance with Chinese Communist ground elements” and “can no longer be considered as an indigenous North

⁸⁸ Telegram, Austin to Acheson, 26 June 1950, *ibid*, 193.

⁸⁹ Telegram, Henderson to Acheson, 3 July 1950, *ibid*, 283.

⁹⁰ Telegram, Kirk to Acheson, 10 July 1950, *ibid*, 340; Telegram, Acheson to the Embassy in the United Kingdom, 10 July 1950, *ibid*, 348.

Korean mil effort.”⁹¹ Equally disturbing, intelligence confirmed that the PRC had previously released tens of thousands of ethnic Koreans from their service in China’s armies, thus contributing a “vast pool” of manpower to the North Korean military offensive.⁹² The movement of large Chinese forces to Manchuria, training of Vietminh soldiers at camps in southern China, and the appearance of small numbers of Chinese soldiers in Korea painted a disturbing picture of China’s overall intentions.

Armed with such evidence, the State Department renewed its efforts to convince both American allies and neutral nations of the wisdom of pursuing a tough stance toward China. When India criticized the neutralization policy, Acheson argued that the United States “could not afford permit Communist planes and ships to swarm over Formosa and use the island for base for attack on US in Japan and elsewhere.”⁹³ Preventing strategically valuable goods from reaching China, especially through Hong Kong, placed U.S. policy at odds with British economic interests in the region. The State Department retorted, “it seemed the height of foolishness to permit any oil supplies to move into Mainland China during this period of uncertainty.” Furthermore, American public approval of the U.K. would suffer “if Chinese communist troops appeared in battle against American troops in Korea and it could be said that they rode into battle on oil supplied by a British company.”⁹⁴

⁹¹ Telegram, MacArthur to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 9 July 1950, *ibid*, 336.

⁹² Fourth Report of the U.N. Command, covering the period 16-31 August 1950, quoted in *ibid*, 734; Memorandum of Teletype Conference prepared by the Department of the Army, 30 August 1950, *ibid*, 659.

⁹³ Telegram, Henderson to Acheson, 29 June 1950, *ibid*, 235.

⁹⁴ Memorandum of Conversation between Merchant and Graves, 4 July 1950, *ibid*, 298.

At this time, in a detailed letter to Bevin, Acheson laid out the “basic attitudes” that underlay the U.S. refusal to recognize the PRC. Among these reasons he included the apparent lack of desire within the PRC leadership for normalized relations and its singling out of American citizens and interests for “specially hostile treatment.” The PRC showed no interest in accepting and carrying out the obligations expected of a member of the international community, and in fact endangered international order through its support and encouragement of communist insurgents in Indochina, the Philippines, Malaya, and Burma. Acheson also cited the CCP’s still incomplete control over the mainland and lack of popular Chinese support. In addition, the PRC apparently accepted Soviet control of its affairs, which threatened Beijing’s political independence and could only lead to China’s “de facto dismemberment.” Acheson further noted Beijing’s open defiance of the United Nations in Korea and its mobilization of Asian political support “on behalf of the aggressors.” He concluded, “There can be little doubt but that Communism, with Chi as one spearhead, has now embarked upon an assault against Asia with immediate objectives in Korea, Indo-China, Burma, the Philippines and Malaya and with medium-range objectives in Hong Kong, Indonesia, Siam, India and Japan.”⁹⁵

For some American officials, the non-appeasement mentality coupled with their adherence to the values of the U.N. produced an extreme response toward the communist aggression in Korea, particularly regarding the question of whether U.N. forces should attempt to unify the peninsula by force. On September 15, General MacArthur initiated

⁹⁵ Telegram, Acheson to the Embassy in the United Kingdom, 10 July 1950, *ibid*, 347.

an amphibious landing at Inchon, throwing the North Korean military into disarray and initiating an offensive drive that rapidly approached the 38th parallel. As the moment for making a decision regarding crossing that line approached, Truman and Acheson faced a dilemma. Preventing all military actions north of the parallel would create a safe haven for the North Korean forces, granting them the initiative and allowing them free rein to reinforce their military in preparation for a future assault. This would send the wrong message to the communists – that they could engage in aggression without gain, but also without loss. This policy would teach them nothing and encourage no change in their pattern of behavior. Furthermore, Washington believed it had a responsibility to uphold the U.N. resolution calling for the reunification of the peninsula under a single government. The original intention was for this reunification to proceed from peaceful negotiations, but, so the argument went, the North Korean attack now legitimized a more militant approach. Thus, despite acknowledging the possibility that such a step might lead to a global war, Assistant Secretary of State John Allison expressed the increasingly common view that “When all legal and moral right is on our side why should we hesitate?”⁹⁶

Despite the powerful arguments that like-minded officials offered throughout August and September, the administration ultimately adopted a policy of caution designed to gauge the situation as it developed and to minimize any actions that might provoke Chinese Communist or Soviet intervention. In August, Truman disavowed Secretary of the Navy Francis Matthews’ advocacy of preventive war “to compel

⁹⁶ Memorandum, Allison to Nitze, 24 July 1950, *ibid*, 460.

cooperation for peace.”⁹⁷ That same month, the administration chastised General MacArthur for his unauthorized visit to Taiwan and his subsequent decision to transfer three squadrons of jet fighters to the island.⁹⁸ Acheson later forced the general to retract his message to the Veterans of Foreign Wars that contained an inflammatory and distorted presentation of official American views.⁹⁹ When PRC Foreign Minister Zhou En-lai demanded that the U.N. Security Council “take immediate measures to bring about the complete withdrawal of all United States armed invading forces” from Taiwan, the State Department responded by “welcoming United Nations consideration of the Formosa problem,” a move that “would contribute to a peaceful rather than a forcible solution.”¹⁰⁰ The administration also resisted making an early decision regarding whether to cross the 38th Parallel because the most appropriate course of action “must be determined in light of the action or inaction of the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communists.”¹⁰¹ Truman publicly reiterated the administration’s pledge to avoid both appeasement and preventive war.¹⁰² The initiative remained with the communists, and the United States would respond appropriately.

⁹⁷ Anthony Leviero, “Policy Clash Seen,” *New York Times*, 29 August 1950, 17.

⁹⁸ MacArthur, for his part, insisted that his trip had been “formally arranged and coordinated beforehand with all branches of the American and Chinese Governments.” Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 422.

⁹⁹ For the text of MacArthur’s message, see Leviero, “Policy Clash Seen,” *New York Times*, 29 August 1950, 16. Despite the administration’s best efforts, the VFW message heightened tensions, with Chinese Communist radio broadcasts immediately labeling MacArthur the “chief agent of American imperialist aggression against Taiwan.” Ibid, 17. As Kennan lamented, “we are tolerating a state of affairs in which we do not really have full control over the statements that are being made – and the actions taken – in our name.” Memorandum, Kennan to Acheson, 21 August 1950, http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/korea/large/documents/pdfs/ki-14-7.pdf#zoom=100, accessed on 7 August 2012.

¹⁰⁰ *New York Times*, 27 August 1950, E2.

¹⁰¹ Draft Memorandum prepared in the Department of State, 31 August 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VII, 672.

¹⁰² Truman’s radio and television report to the American people on the situation in Korea, 1 September 1950, *PPP*.

In September, with North Korean armies in the South decisively defeated, the administration now shifted attention to the second goal of the U.N. resolution of June 27: to “restore international peace and security in the area.” The administration concluded that the communist powers would not intervene militarily to save the North Korean regime, though officials clearly did not attribute this to U.S. and U.N. efforts to reassure communist leaders. Rather, they accepted that the U.N. had demonstrated sufficient determination and military power to convince communist leaders that they could not achieve their goals by means of overt aggression. One official noted that the “moment for armed intervention was logically when UN forces were desperately defending small area Taegu-Pusan, when influx overwhelming numbers Chinese ground forces would have proved decisive factor.”¹⁰³ John P. Davies of the Policy Planning Staff similarly concluded that the PRC had “declined to snatch the chestnut from the fire” and that the Soviets would remain uncommitted.¹⁰⁴ Assistant Secretary of State Dean Rusk noted that the PRC had “made no preparations for civilian precautions in their cities,” while American Consul General in Hong Kong James Wilkinson reported that the Chinese Communists “do not intend invade Taiwan this year” and that “they may limit further aid to North Korea to token support.”¹⁰⁵ Undersecretary of State James Webb similarly dismissed Chinese threats of intervention as diplomatic bluffs designed to dissuade India “and perhaps indirectly other members from support of firm UN action at this critical

¹⁰³ Telegram, Kirk to Acheson, 29 September 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VII, 821-822.

¹⁰⁴ Draft Memorandum prepared by John Davies, 22 September 1950, *ibid*, 753.

¹⁰⁵ Telegram, Wilkinson to Acheson, 22 September 1950, *ibid*, 765; Wilkinson interpreted the PRC statement that it would not “supinely tolerate seeing their neighbors being savagely invaded by imperialists” as a pledge of diplomatic and material support, rather than a promise of direct intervention. Telegram, Wilkinson to Acheson, 5 October 1950, *ibid*, 852 note 2; Many American allies similarly rejected the notion that China or the Soviet Union would intervene.

stage.”¹⁰⁶ Secure in the belief that Beijing would forego militant intervention and that World War III would not begin over the issue of Korean unification, Truman approved a plan to use primarily South Korean forces to establish north of the parallel a “strong defensive line against a renewal of the attack” that would allow a “move toward the UN goal of a united, free, and independent Korea.”¹⁰⁷

Simultaneously, the administration continued its efforts to reassure Chinese officials regarding American intentions.¹⁰⁸ The lack of diplomatic relations and the absence of any official channel of communication between the two countries made such efforts problematic. The administration had previously relied upon India or various European countries to act as intermediaries, but lamented that these foreign diplomats often conveyed a distorted message.¹⁰⁹ Recognizing the importance of direct communication, administration officials now made numerous attempts to establish direct contact with PRC representatives. In October, the American Ambassador in India, Loy Henderson, inquired of the Indians regarding the possibility of making contact with the PRC ambassador there, hoping that he “might be willing to talk with me or at least accept message from me if Peiping had sincere desire to prevent still further widening of breach.”¹¹⁰ The Chinese ambassador refused such overtures, however, citing the absence of formal relations and the U.S. “attitude” toward Formosa and Chiang Kai-shek.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Telegram, Webb to Henderson, 4 October 1950, *ibid*, 874.

¹⁰⁷ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 453.

¹⁰⁸ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 115.

¹⁰⁹ Memorandum, Clubb to Rusk, 26 October 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VII, 1000.

¹¹⁰ Telegram, Henderson to Acheson, 6 October 1950, *ibid*, 889.

¹¹¹ Telegram, Henderson to Acheson, 10 October 1950, *ibid*, 921.

The United Nations also made efforts to reassure the PRC. On September 29 the Security Council invited Beijing to send a representative to attend the November 15 meeting to discuss the charge that the United States had committed an armed invasion of Taiwan. Anxious to demonstrate its good intentions and the international character of the U.S. position, the administration welcomed the invitation in accordance with its policy of accepting for discussion in the U.N. any grievance, no matter how false or outrageous American officials considered it to be. In this way, Acheson hoped, “a hearing might reassure them with respect to our intentions in Korea.”¹¹² Perhaps hearing this from the assembled U.N. member nations would “constitute solid guarantee” that a Korean peace “along UN lines” would not threaten the PRC.¹¹³ Furthermore, O. Edmund Clubb, the Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs, suggested that the presence in New York of the PRC U.N. delegation provided an opportunity to develop “an unofficial channel for bringing, where desirable, our views to the attention of the Chinese Communist authorities with minimum distortion.”¹¹⁴ The administration subsequently entered into discussions with its allies regarding the exact wording of a proposed resolution on Formosa that might help resolve that issue in a peaceful and mutually satisfactory way.

The participants in these discussions all shared a common understanding and acceptance of Taiwan’s status. In the aftermath of the first Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, China gave up all rights to Formosa, allowing Japan to incorporate the island into its

¹¹² Minutes of the Ninth Meeting of the U.S. Delegation to the U.N. General Assembly, 28 September 1950, *ibid*, 805.

¹¹³ Telegram, Webb to Henderson, 16 September 1950, *ibid*, 733.

¹¹⁴ Memorandum, Clubb to Rusk, 26 October 1950, *ibid*, 1000.

empire. At the Cairo Conference on November 27, 1943, Chiang met with President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill to discuss their general policies toward the Japanese Empire. The resulting Cairo Declaration stated that “all the territories Japan has stolen from the Chinese,” including Formosa, “shall be restored to the Republic of China.”¹¹⁵ In 1945, Japanese forces on Formosa surrendered to the Nationalist military, giving effective control over the island to the ROC. When the Chinese Communists took control of the mainland, the British argued that the spirit, if not the letter, of the Cairo Declaration demanded an acknowledgment that Taiwan belonged to the new People’s Republic.

The Truman administration did not disagree with the basic premise that Formosa rightfully belonged to the PRC. Acheson refused to make long-term commitments regarding ROC recognition or Nationalist membership in the U.N. precisely because he accepted that the PRC should eventually take control of the island, and even future Secretary of State Dulles, currently tasked with obtaining support for the Japanese peace treaty, agreed that China should acquire Formosa “in due course.”¹¹⁶ The key factors determining the American position on the resolution, however, remained the Chinese Communist refusal to act appropriately toward other countries and the administration’s refusal to predetermine the fate of Taiwan in the absence of clear indications that the PRC would not use the island in a manner that would endanger regional stability.

¹¹⁵ Cairo Declaration, 1 December 1943,

http://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/shiryō/01/002_46/002_46_0011.html, accessed on 7 August 2012.

¹¹⁶ Memorandum of Conversation between Acheson and Dulles, et al., 23 October 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VI, 534-535; Telegram, Acheson to the Embassy in China, 14 August 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VI, 436.

Acheson responded positively toward the initial British draft resolution, which called for a U.N. committee to investigate the Taiwan situation and make recommendations.¹¹⁷ In subsequent negotiations, however, the American representatives concluded that “there was not agreement as to the final ends which it was hoped would be achieved.” The Canadian and British delegations apparently assumed that the proposed commission could arrive at only one possible solution, namely, “the handing over of Formosa unconditionally to Communist China.”¹¹⁸ The American Chargé in Taipei, Karl Rankin, warned against stepping into this trap, stating that “any morning people in Formosa may wake up to learn that they have been turned over to some international authority, with reasonable certainty that in resulting confusion Chinese Communists will actually be ones to take over.”¹¹⁹ The JCS again warned against allowing Formosa to fall into enemy hands, and urged that the proposed commission include American representatives so as to avoid that outcome.¹²⁰ Similarly, Dulles, though accepting the validity of the Cairo Declaration, emphasized that the commission must attempt to discern the wishes of the Formosan people and ensure that settling the Formosan issue would not jeopardize peace and stability in the Pacific. Acheson generally concurred with these assessments.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Telegram, Acheson to the U.S. Mission at the U.N., 14 October 1950, *ibid*, 532.

¹¹⁸ Memorandum of Conversation between Acheson and Dulles, et al., 23 October 1950, *ibid*, 535.

¹¹⁹ Telegram, Rankin to Acheson, 4 September 1950, *ibid*, 484; see also his concerns about morale in light of Truman’s 31 August statement, in Telegram, Rankin to Acheson, 2 September 1950, *ibid*, 481.

¹²⁰ Memorandum, Joint Chiefs of Staff to Secretary Johnson, 8 September 1950, *ibid*, 491.

¹²¹ Memorandum of Conversation between Acheson and Dulles, et al., 23 October 1950, *ibid*, 534-535; despite his support for including in the resolution the wishes of the Formosan people, Dulles noted that, “we simply could not do this and get the British to go along. They would not consider a resolution which appeared to suggest that the independence of the people of Formosa should take priority over the Cairo Declaration.” Minutes of the 39th Meeting of the U.S. Delegation to the U.N. General Assembly, 14

The Chinese invasion of Tibet in early October further undermined the international community's support for China, and heightened American sensitivity to any proposal that would enhance Beijing's strategic position. Previously, India had vigorously defended China in international forums, assuring the U.S. and its allies of China's peaceful intentions. With this new military action, however, Indian representatives now grew dismayed over how the PRC had misled it.¹²² Acheson took full advantage of this opportunity to point out the fallacy of India's neutralism, arguing that "Tibetan developments so soon after Chinese Commie duplicity in dealing with GOI re Korea and in assisting Ho in Indochina shld leave no doubt re absence moral principles Peiping regime and its cynicism in conducting internatl relations."¹²³ Henderson characterized as "deplorable" the Chinese decision to invade while a Tibetan delegation was en route to Beijing to negotiate, an act that served neither "the interest of China or of world peace."¹²⁴ India's Minister of External Affairs Girja Bajpai now expressed his personal view that "Peiping was mere puppet of Moscow and represented grave danger Asian peace."¹²⁵

But these international denunciations paled in comparison to those leveled against the Chinese Communists after they initiated a limited intervention in Korea in October and November. Viewing American actions as a lawful and valid extension of the will of the international community, MacArthur characterized the PRC involvement

November 1950, *ibid*, 559; despite this, the joint communiqué between Truman and Attlee of 8 December 1950, did include reference to safeguarding "the interests of the people of Formosa." *Ibid*, 588.

¹²² Telegram, Henderson to Acheson, 21 October 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VII, 986-987; see also Telegram, Henderson to Acheson, 13 October 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VI, 531-532.

¹²³ Telegram, Acheson to the Embassy in India, 27 October 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VI, 545.

¹²⁴ Telegram, Henderson to Acheson, 31 October 1950, *ibid*, 546.

¹²⁵ Telegram, Henderson to Acheson, 31 October 1950, *ibid*, 549.

as an act of “outrageous international lawlessness.”¹²⁶ Yugoslav U.N. Ambassador Ales Bebler, the November president of the Security Council, condemned China as “infantile,” lacking in political judgment, and viewing things in black and white terms.¹²⁷ Fearing a connection between the intervention and the occupation of Tibet, Davies worried that “the Chinese Communists may be on the rampage” and noted how Beijing “has reconciled itself to foregoing membership in the U.N., that it is not adverse to being regarded as an international outlaw.”¹²⁸ That week, the British Cabinet met to “reconsider their attitude toward the Chinese Communist Government,” and among the American people even those “who had previously favored the admission of the Peiping regime to the UN in the cause of peace had become disillusioned and were now against the idea.”¹²⁹

PRC resistance to dialogue in conjunction with this series of aggressions – all of which American officials perceived as against the better interests of China – led many administration officials to conclude that the Soviet Union, whether through cooperation with or manipulation of Mao and the CCP, retained significant influence, if not effective control, over Beijing’s foreign policies. Clubb believed that the “USSR has assuredly played on the Chinese Communist hopes and fears as a master-violinist on a fiddle.”¹³⁰

A National Intelligence Estimate on “Chinese Communist Intervention in Korea” asserted that the intervention would not have occurred “without Soviet sanction or

¹²⁶ Telegram, Joint Chiefs of Staff to MacArthur, 6 November 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VII, 1058 note 1.

¹²⁷ Telegram, Austin to Acheson, 6 November 1950, *ibid*, 1074.

¹²⁸ Draft Memorandum prepared by John Davies, “Chinese Communist Intervention in Korea,” 7 November 1950, *ibid*, 1079.

¹²⁹ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 463; Memorandum of Conversation between Austin and Victor Belaunde, 11 November 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VII, 1131.

¹³⁰ Memorandum, Clubb to Rusk, 7 November 1950, *ibid*, 1088.

possibly direction,” while U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Warren Austin warned that “anything which appeared to be appeasement or yielding would simply stimulate the enemy behind the Red Chinese to press its puppets onward to ever-expanding aggression.”¹³¹

However, while concerned about Beijing’s motives and intentions and perhaps because it considered the Chinese as victims of Soviet manipulation, the administration continued to hope that China might have only limited objectives, namely “to halt the advance of U.N. forces in Korea and to keep a Communist regime in being on Korea soil.”¹³² Rusk wondered about China’s “legitimate anxieties,” and even Truman and Acheson, though accepting evidence that the intervention “is not merely a local action,” acknowledged the importance of determining whether China had intervened “out of any real fear that U.N. forces have any designs against China” or that the U.N. may not adequately safeguard “China’s legitimate interests in frontier matters.”¹³³ On November 16, Truman publicly expressed his determination to “take every honorable step to prevent any extension of the hostilities in the Far East.” “If the Chinese Communist authorities or people think otherwise,” he stated, “it can only be because they are being deceived by those whose advantage it is to prolong and extend hostilities in the Far East against the interests of all Far Eastern peoples.”¹³⁴

¹³¹ NIE-2, “Chinese Communist Intervention in Korea,” 8 November 1950, *ibid.*, 1101; Memorandum of Conversation between Austin and Victor Belaunde, 11 November 1950, *ibid.*, 1131.

¹³² NIE-2, “Chinese Communist Intervention in Korea,” 8 November 1950, *ibid.*, 1101

¹³³ Memorandum of Conversation between Rusk and Erik Boheman, and attached annex, 13 November 1950, *ibid.*, 1141.

¹³⁴ Truman’s News Conference, 16 November 1950, *PPP*.

On November 11, Zhou En-lai officially rejected the U.N. invitation to discuss the Taiwan situation on the grounds that it would deprive the Chinese representative of the right to engage in discussions regarding Korea. The “so-called UN command,” Zhou argued, “was engendered illegally by the SC under manipulation of the US, during the absence of the two permanent members, the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China,” and its report of the Korean situation “is therefore not only one-sided and malicious, but also unlawful.” Rather, the Security Council should discuss together the issues of “armed aggression on Taiwan” and “armed intervention in Korea” on the part of the U.S. government.¹³⁵

When the PRC delegation arrived in New York on November 24, the Chinese representatives repeated Zhou’s hard line. The head of the delegation, General Wu Hsiu-chuan, argued that “the civil war in Korea was created by the United States, and was designed solely to furnish a pretext” to tighten control over Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, and the Philippines.¹³⁶ Wu’s public pronouncements mirrored the delegation’s relations with other U.N. diplomats. Acheson expressed how the delegation “has been completely intransigent and non-conciliatory,” and that it had isolated itself from all other delegations save that of the Soviet Union.¹³⁷ At a dinner meeting with ambassadors from a variety of countries, the Chinese representatives again rejected the rationale for U.N. involvement in Korea. When other ambassadors noted that the presence of the

¹³⁵ Zhou En-Lai’s letter to U.N. Secretary General Lie, quoted in Telegram, Austin to Acheson, 11 November 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VII, 1133-1134.

¹³⁶ 526th meeting of the U.N. Security Council, 28 November 1950, *The Yearbook of the United Nations: 1950*, 242.

¹³⁷ Circular Telegram, Acheson to Certain Diplomatic and Consular Offices, 1 December 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VII, 1298.

Seventh Fleet “was as much a protection for the mainland as it was for Formosa,” one Chinese delegate replied that “this was simply to repeat the lies of the American ruling clique.”¹³⁸ Such encounters led the Swedish ambassador to conclude that “Wu was only a megaphone for Moscow” and that it was “futile to expect anything to come out of such talks.”¹³⁹ Secretary General Lie similarly lamented that the “Chinese Communists do not intend to cooperate in any way” in achieving a cease-fire agreement.¹⁴⁰

Administration officials in part attributed this intransigence to the enormous success of the massive Chinese intervention that occurred in late-November. The same day that the PRC delegation arrived in New York, General MacArthur initiated a major offensive campaign that he claimed, if successful, would “end the war, restore peace and unity to Korea, enable the prompt withdrawal of United Nations military forces, and permit the complete assumption by the Korean people and nation of full sovereignty and international equality.”¹⁴¹ The result of that effort, as Acheson later described, “is that two offensives ran into each other.”¹⁴² MacArthur reported that the new Chinese military effort dwarfed the previous intervention efforts, and that “All hope of localization of the Korean conflict to enemy forces composed of North Korean troops

¹³⁸ Telegram, Austin to Acheson, 5 December 1950, *ibid*, 1416.

¹³⁹ Memorandum of Conversation between Henry Villard and Sven Grafstrom, 8 December 1950, *ibid*, 1467.

¹⁴⁰ Telegram, Austin to Acheson, 16 December 1950, *ibid*, 1561; The following day, the Chinese delegation made known its refusal to allow the U.N. cease fire commission to enter China. Telegram, Henderson to Acheson, 18 December 1950, *ibid*, 1567.

¹⁴¹ Telegram, Collins to MacArthur, 24 November 1950, *ibid*, 1223 note 2; Acheson very candidly explains how his own and the administration’s indecision during the first half of November allowed MacArthur to pursue an imprudent course of action in North Korea based on a distorted interpretation of his orders. Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 466-468.

¹⁴² Telegram, Acheson to the Embassy in the United Kingdom, 28 November 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VII, 1249-1250.

with alien token elements can now be completely abandoned.”¹⁴³ Once more, the administration detected premeditation. The size and scope of the campaign, Acheson reported to Bevin, suggested that it “must, for military reasons, have been in motion for several days,” which removed “any question that the Chi were merely reacting to the U.N. offensive.”¹⁴⁴

In the wake of the Chinese intervention, many American officials began questioning the desirability of any U.N. resolution regarding the fate of Formosa while fighting continued in Korea. Certain members of the American U.N. delegation rejected the resolution because it would make the administration vulnerable to domestic political attacks and would highlight disagreements with allies that the communists might then exploit. The delegation also agreed with the JCS view that placing restrictions on the use of Formosa as a base from which to attack the Chinese mainland would restrict military flexibility at a time when Beijing had aggressed and may continue to do so. Should the U.N. call for additional measures in the event of further Chinese aggressions, they argued, Taiwan could prove valuable as a base from which to take action.¹⁴⁵ Citing such uncertainties regarding Chinese intentions, Acheson commented that “Formosa is too dangerous a thing for them to have to play with.”¹⁴⁶

The primary concern for both the United States and the international community now centered on whether the Chinese and North Korean armies would stop at the 38th

¹⁴³ Telegram, MacArthur to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 28 November 1950, *ibid*, 1237.

¹⁴⁴ Telegram, Acheson to the Embassy in the United Kingdom, 28 November 1950, *ibid*, 1249-1250.

¹⁴⁵ Letter, Lovett to Acheson, 24 November 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VI, 579-580; Acheson was struck by this “substantial modification” of JCS views on neutralization. Letter, Acheson to Marshall, 4 December 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VI, 587-588.

¹⁴⁶ Memorandum of Conversation between Truman and Attlee, et al., 7 December 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VII, 1437.

parallel or invade South Korea. On December 5, thirteen Asian nations, in an effort to resolve the crisis, issued a joint appeal for the communist forces not to cross the parallel and, thus, open the way for a negotiated settlement. Acheson viewed this favorably, noting that in light of this demonstration of solidarity the U.N. should treat Beijing's crossing of the 38th parallel as a "new and flagrant demonstration of aggression and evil design of reprehensible Chi Commie leaders." This would constitute irrefutable evidence of PRC unwillingness to settle the dispute peacefully and would remove the "reasons for treading softly and maintaining mild and conciliatory tone in UN."¹⁴⁷ Indeed, many U.N. member nations reached that conclusion; the Chinese delegation had consistently rejected all efforts on the part of the special U.N. cease fire group either to meet with Wu or to obtain permission to enter China. Citing a lack of reasons for remaining in New York, the Chinese delegation announced its departure on December 16.

When North Korean and Chinese Communist forces subsequently crossed the 38th parallel both Truman and Acheson called for a strong and united response. They asserted that

failure of the UN to recognize the present Chinese communist action in Korea as aggression and to name it as such will be the beginning of the end of the UN just as the end of the League of Nations started with their failure to take any action against Japan and Italy in similar circumstances.

¹⁴⁷ Circular Telegram, Acheson to Certain Diplomatic and Consular Offices, 9 December 1950, *ibid*, 1487.

We believe that this is of utmost importance to the UN and the free world and to the establishment of an orderly international society.¹⁴⁸

Other nations continued to resist this move, however, and insisted upon one last effort to secure a cease-fire. On January 13, the United Kingdom, Canada, and India submitted a new proposal comprised of five principles for a peaceful settlement in Korea: a cease-fire, a political meeting for restoring peace, a withdrawal by stages of all foreign forces, arrangements for an immediate administration of all Korea, and a post-armistice conference involving the United Kingdom, United States, Soviet Union, and Chinese Communists to discuss outstanding Far Eastern problems, including Formosa and Chinese representation in the U.N. After much consideration, the administration chose to support the resolution “in the fervent hope and belief that the Chinese would reject it (as they did) and that our allies would then return (as they did) to comparative sanity.” Nearly two decades later, Acheson wrote that his recommendation to support the resolution “may well have been, even without hindsight, the wrong alternative.”¹⁴⁹ He undoubtedly agreed with Warren Austin, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., that in Beijing “our forbearance seems to have strengthened the contempt in which this organization is apparently held.”¹⁵⁰

Four days after the U.N. approved the cease-fire proposal by a vote of 50-7, Zhou Enlai rejected it. In his letter of January 17, Zhou argued that “the principle of a cease-

¹⁴⁸ Letter, Acheson to Bevin, quoted in Telegram, Acheson to the Embassy in the United Kingdom, 5 January 1951, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951*, Vol. VII: Korea and China, Part 1, 27-28, hereafter cited as *FRUS, 1951*, VII, Part 1; Truman echoed these sentiments in his State of the Union address on 8 January.

¹⁴⁹ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 513.

¹⁵⁰ Department of State *Bulletin*, 29 January 1951, 167.

fire first and negotiations afterwards would only help the United States to maintain and extend its aggression, and could never lead to genuine peace.” Instead, he proposed that negotiations on Far Eastern problems, including the matter of Taiwan, precede a cease-fire, that prior to the negotiations the U.N. seat the PRC, and that the negotiations be held in China.¹⁵¹ Acheson considered this response “still further evidence of their contemptuous disregard of a world-wide demand for peace.” As such, “There can no longer be any doubt that the United Nations has explored every possibility of finding a peaceful settlement of the Korean question. Now, we must face squarely and soberly the fact that the Chinese Communists have no intention of ceasing their defiance of the United Nations.”¹⁵² Zhou’s rejection surprised many American allies who genuinely believed that the Chinese would see the wisdom and moderation of the proposal. According to the Canadians, the cease-fire committee “had not only leaned over backwards but had practically fallen over backwards in offering cease-fire terms.”¹⁵³ Indian Ambassador Panikkar had been certain the Chinese would accept the proposal, but now concluded that the Chinese, drunk with success, were out of control.¹⁵⁴ Even the British Foreign Office seemed to have abandoned all hope of China’s good intentions.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ Zhou’s reply to the U.N. proposal, 17 January 1951, *FRUS, 1951*, VII, Part 1, 91-92.

¹⁵² Department of State *Bulletin*, 29 January 1951, 164.

¹⁵³ Telegram, Woodward to Acheson, 18 January 1951, *FRUS, 1951*, VII, Part 1, 101.

¹⁵⁴ Telegram, Gifford to Acheson, 22 January 1951, *ibid*, 116; the Indian delegation to the U.N. put forward a view that contradicted Panikkar’s assessment, however, stating that it was not convinced that the intervention was due to “any aggressive intention,” but rather “due to its fears for the territorial integrity of China. With time and patience it might be possible to dispel those fears.” *The Yearbook of the United Nations, 1951*, 221.

¹⁵⁵ Telegram, Gifford to Acheson, 31 January 1951, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951*, Vol. VII: Korea and China, Part 2, 1545-1546, hereafter cited as *FRUS, 1951*, VII, Part 2.

The subsequent initiatives the administration took in the U.N. constitute one of the rare moments in which domestic politics clearly and directly influenced foreign policy. Leading the Free World at this time required the administration to undertake a delicate balancing act. Certain segments of domestic opinion called for more aggressive action in Asia while resisting efforts to bolster European defenses. On the other end of the spectrum, the administration faced resistance and wavering from some of its staunchest allies over the perception that American policies had exacerbated the situation and might yet make things worse. To maintain the integrity and value of the international order, the administration pushed these reluctant allies to adopt more assertive policies than they preferred. But in its determination to maintain international solidarity against the communist menace, the administration had gone as far as the domestic political context allowed.

As a result, although Truman and Acheson had supported the latest effort to secure a cease-fire, they refused to acquiesce in a new British plea that the administration not accompany a finding of aggression against the PRC with additional punitive measures.¹⁵⁶ Citing the discussions already held with 45 delegations, Acheson added that “in order to do everything possible to keep everyone together and in going along on the five principles, we brought ourselves to the verge of destruction

¹⁵⁶ The British doubted “the wisdom of considering further measures” against China “before the intentions of the Peking regime had been fully and exhaustively explored.” Their true concerns, however, appeared to be a matter of the genuine weakness of the non-communist world vis-à-vis the communists. Both the British and Canadian delegations urged careful consideration of “any steps which might carry the Organization much further along a road on which no Member State was yet prepared to proceed in practice.” *Yearbook of the United Nations, 1951*, 217-218.

domestically.”¹⁵⁷ The administration knew of pending Congressional resolutions from both the House and Senate urging the U.N. to take more assertive action, and the House and Senate Foreign Relations Committees had scheduled Acheson to testify the following week on why the administration had supported the cease-fire proposal in the first place.

As a result, despite the absence of support from key allies, the administration insisted upon including within its resolution a request for the U.N.’s Collective Measures Committee to “consider additional measures to be employed to meet this aggression,” and calling for a January 20 vote on the matter.¹⁵⁸ Twenty-two nations from throughout the world immediately supported the “admirably restrained” resolution, and noted that failure to state the fact of China’s aggressive actions “would merely serve to encourage those who had constantly flouted the United Nations and to damage the confidence of millions in the United Nations and in the principles of collective security for which it stood.”¹⁵⁹ Other nations received the resolution less optimistically, noting, for instance, that the resolution contemplated both punishment and conciliation simultaneously, and suggesting that China, once labeled as an aggressor, could not “be expected at the same time to co-operate with those who had condemned it.”¹⁶⁰ Some minor amendments to

¹⁵⁷ Memorandum of Telephone Conversation between Acheson and U.K. Ambassador Franks, 18 January 1951, *FRUS, 1951*, VII, Part 1, 98.

¹⁵⁸ Text of U.S. resolution, 20 January 1950, in Department of State *Bulletin*, 29 January 1951, 167.

¹⁵⁹ *Yearbook of the United Nations, 1951*, 217.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 219.

the American draft ended many of these critiques, and resulted in the final adoption of the resolution on February 1 by a vote of 44-7, with 9 abstentions.¹⁶¹

Summing up the overall experience of U.S. relations with Mao's regime, Acheson noted that from the moment the CCP gained control of China "they had every opportunity explore our position in talks with US officials. Indeed, on numerous occasions when issues arose between us, our officials sought discussion with their authorities and were shunted aside." Since then, Beijing's "consistent imperious aloofness" signified its disinclination for contact. Rather than compromise and negotiation, the PRC sought to perpetuate tension and conflict. The administration was perhaps not prepared to accept Clubb's assertion that the "free world is now in the preliminary stage of World War III."¹⁶² Kennan offered a more representative assessment, viewing the Chinese military campaign as "an affront of the greatest magnitude." This act "is something that we can not forget for years and the Chinese will have the worry of righting themselves with us not us with them....we owe China nothing but a lesson."¹⁶³

To Tame the Dragon: Alternative Strategies, 1950-1953

The Truman administration perceived the unsettled conditions within China in the PRC's first year as offering opportunities to overthrow Mao's regime in its infancy and to replace it with more moderate Chinese leaders – communist or non-communist –

¹⁶¹ On the importance of international support for economic sanctions in early 1951, see Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 34-39.

¹⁶² Memorandum, Clubb to Rusk, 7 December 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VII, 1444.

¹⁶³ Memorandum of Conversation among various State Department officials, 5 December 1950, *ibid*, 1383.

who would conduct China's foreign relations in a manner Washington considered more appropriate. By late-1949, the CCP in the northern and eastern portions of the country had created an organizational presence that allowed them to eliminate resistance and to generate a considerable amount of mass support at the grass roots level. However, the Chinese Communists lacked this organizational structure and presence in other areas that together comprised the vast bulk of the country: much of east and central China, the Northwest, and South China below the Yangtze River. In these regions a diverse array of anti-communist groups continued to operate, including remnant KMT military forces, secret societies, ethnic minorities, autonomous local self-defense organizations, and bandit groups. In addition to these, the CCP also had to contend with local elites who, protective of their political and social influence, resisted both the Party and its reform efforts.¹⁶⁴ This likely prompted Acheson's comment in June 1950 that "there was no evidence satisfactory to US" that the Chinese Communists controlled the mainland.¹⁶⁵

The CCP also faced enormous domestic economic crises hardly less formidable than those that had contributed to the KMT's demise.¹⁶⁶ To combat these crises, Mao relied primarily on assistance from the Soviet Union and, in return, appeared to

¹⁶⁴ Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank, eds., *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 14: The People's Republic, Part 1: The Emergence of Revolutionary China 1949-1965 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987 [1995]), 69-70.

¹⁶⁵ Telegram, Austin to Acheson, 27 June 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VII, 209; this view clearly represents a double-standard given how for many years before the communist takeover Chiang's regime did not control large portions of the country and yet still received recognition from the United States, and continued to receive it during its exile on Taiwan. Likely, Acheson still hoped that opposition to the ruling regime in these areas might yet produce a change of government, much as had happened during the 1946-49 period. By mid-1951, however, the administration could no longer realistically claim that the PRC lacked effective control over the whole of the mainland.

¹⁶⁶ Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 117 note 166; for a description of some of the many dilemmas confronting the CCP at the founding of the People's Republic, see Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 53.

acquiesce in intrusive Soviet control measures in the border areas of Xinjinag, Outer Mongolia, and Manchuria.¹⁶⁷ Mao at one point even went so far as to suggest that he would allow the Soviets to incorporate Manchuria into its Union, a comment that infuriated the non-communist elements of Mao's coalition.¹⁶⁸ The Truman administration believed that this trend would continue, with the Soviets forcing Mao to accept a modern variant of the unequal treaties of the nineteenth century. This, in turn, would place the Chairman in an untenable political position vis-à-vis the Chinese people whose "friendly feeling toward America," the administration believed, "is deep, widespread, most Chinese realizing that America alone has consistently pursued unselfish policy toward China."

Though the administration perhaps exaggerated the extent to which the Chinese people would look to the United States as its savior, the inequitable economic relations between China and the Soviet Union in the early 1950s did, in fact, nurture the CCP's "long-ingrained suspicions that the Soviets were trying to ride roughshod over them."¹⁶⁹ The administration also heard rumors that anti-Kremlin sentiment had begun to grow among certain PRC generals, many of whom had defected from Nationalist ranks. In the opening months of 1950, intelligence reports of internal political strife mounted, indicating "an impending split in the CCP over the issue of relations with the Soviets"

¹⁶⁷ Memorandum of Conversation between Acheson and Senators Knowland and Smith, 5 January 1950, and Telegram, McConaughy to Acheson, 21 January 1950, both in *FRUS, 1950*, VI, 259 and 289-291, respectively.

¹⁶⁸ Douglas J. MacDonald, "Communist Bloc Expansion in the Early Cold War: Challenging Realism, Refuting Revisionism," *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Winter, 1995-1996), 176-177.

¹⁶⁹ Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 60-68, quote is on 65.

and “the desire of certain groups to obtain assistance from the United States in the intraparty struggle to come.”¹⁷⁰

Taking advantage of these conditions, the Truman administration sought to emphasize publicly the ways in which Mao’s relations with the Soviet Union did not serve the interests of China. In part, such pronouncements helped to justify to U.S. allies the American approach to the PRC, but the administration also intended them as a way to exacerbate the domestic discontent among the Chinese people and within the CCP. On January 12, 1950, Acheson publicly asserted that

Communism is the most subtle instrument of Soviet foreign policy that has ever been devised, and it is really the spearhead of Russian imperialism which would, if it could, take from these people what they have won, what we want them to keep and develop, which is their own national independence, their own individual independence, their own development of their own resources for their own good and not as mere tributary states to this great Soviet Union.¹⁷¹

When Mao and Stalin signed the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance on February 14, 1950, Acheson quickly highlighted many facets of the agreement he found troubling. Soviet concessions in Manchuria could not cover the fact that Stalin had already deprived the region of some two billion dollars worth of industrial equipment. The Soviet *loan* of \$300 million over a five-year period seemed

¹⁷⁰ Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, 118.

¹⁷¹ Acheson speech before the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., 12 January 1950, Department of State *Bulletin*, 23 January 1950, 114.

ungenerous compared to the \$400 million *grant* the U.S. Congress had approved for China in 1948. Mao's pledges to send food northward indicated that the Chairman was "heartlessly indifferent" to the famine conditions afflicting millions of Chinese.¹⁷²

Acheson also noted how the new "special rights" the agreement provided the Soviet Union infringed upon China's sovereignty. And, once more, Acheson returned to the notion of the Soviet Union leading the Chinese "into aggressive or subversive adventures beyond their borders." Coming well before the Korean War, this statement evidences the nature and extent of the administration's fears regarding Moscow's intentions. While Acheson's rhetoric clearly demonstrates concern that the Soviet Union sought the subjection of the Chinese state and population, the import of those efforts remained how Moscow's influence would manifest in China's external relations. Such "adventures" that might result, Acheson concluded, would violate the "traditions and interests" of the American and Chinese peoples, the United Nations Charter, and "the peace which the Charter was designed to preserve."¹⁷³

After fighting erupted in Korea, the administration continued to reassert both Mao's submissiveness to Moscow and the genuine American interest in an independent China. In his radio message on September 1, 1950 – prior to the Chinese intervention – Truman lamented Soviet manipulation "which has already started to dismember China" and expressed hope that the people of China would not allow the Soviet Union to

¹⁷² Truman's address in Laramie, Wyoming, 9 May 1950, *PPP*.

¹⁷³ Acheson's address to the Commonwealth Club of California, San Francisco, CA, 15 March 1950, in Department of State *Bulletin*, 27 March 1950, 467-469.

mislead them into war.¹⁷⁴ That same day, Acheson argued that Beijing's bitter hostility against the United States could "hardly be deliberate choice of Chi people as whole."¹⁷⁵ Even after the intervention in November, Truman still expressed hope that "the Chinese people will not continue to be forced or deceived into serving the ends of Russian colonial policy in Asia."¹⁷⁶ The administration's belief that rhetoric alone could catalyze the Chinese people or disaffected CCP factions to active resistance against the Maoists steadily deteriorated in late 1950 and early 1951 as the PRC began cracking down on dissent throughout the country.

Fearing that the United States and United Nations could not muster sufficient military power to compel Beijing to abandon its uncooperative and uncompromising view of the West, the Truman administration began taking more active steps toward inspiring indigenous resistance to CCP control. Although this had been a recurring idea since the "loss" of China in late-1949, not until October 1950 did American officials translate this general idea into a concerted plan of action. That month, Clubb drafted a memorandum describing a plan to organize a "Free China Committee." The memo began by discussing the significant role that the support (or lack thereof) of the overseas Chinese communities, particularly in Southeast Asia, had played in overthrowing the Qing Dynasty, combating the warlords during the 1920s, and ushering in the Communist regime in 1949. The "initial enthusiasm for a Chinese Communism," however, had dissipated. Considerable "disillusionment in overseas communities" had resulted from

¹⁷⁴ Truman's radio and television report to the American people on the situation in Korea, 1 September 1950, *PPP*.

¹⁷⁵ Telegram, Acheson to the Embassy in India, 1 September 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VI, 479.

¹⁷⁶ Truman's news conference, 30 November 1950, *PPP*.

the CCP's "display of themselves in their true colors." From this, Clubb characterized as at least feasible a plan whereby the United States would nurture and guide such sentiments in a way that would result in the emergence of a legitimate and effective indigenous opposition movement on the mainland. He especially made clear that the United States should exclude the Kuomintang from participation, lest the Nationalists attempt to co-opt the operation for their own purposes.¹⁷⁷

On December 12, Robert Strong of the Office of Chinese Affairs, because of "the possibility that consideration will be given to support and increasing the scope of guerilla activities on the mainland," suggested a concerted intelligence-gathering effort to determine the guerilla and bandit groups' "leaders, strength, armament, communications, location, methods of operation, means of supply, liaison between or among groups, relations with nationalists (if any) and any other pertinent data."¹⁷⁸ One week later, Rankin joined the chorus of officials calling for such a policy. Though Rankin had a year earlier considered the support of resistance forces "premature," he confidently asserted "the time is now." However, he continued, victory would occur only "if we exploit to the full every method which promises to help our cause," including "the effective support of resistance movements inside the Iron Curtain, and particularly in Communist China."¹⁷⁹

Although Clubb, Strong, and Rankin all made clear that their plans had little chance of success, the dire situation on the battlefield and PRC unwillingness to

¹⁷⁷ Memorandum, Clubb to Rusk, 26 October 1950, *FRUS, 1950*, VI, 537-540.

¹⁷⁸ Memorandum, Strong to Clubb, 12 December 1950, *ibid*, 598-599.

¹⁷⁹ Letter, Rankin to Merchant, 20 December 1950, *ibid*, 607.

negotiate an end to the hostilities compelled Acheson on December 27 to dispatch to the American embassies and consulates throughout East and Southeast Asia a call for “as full and concrete information as possible concerning groups on the mainland in armed opposition to the Chinese Communist regime.” The letter lamented the lack of any coordinated program for reporting and evaluating such information, and requested specific categories of data that roughly mirrored those offered in Strong’s December 12 memo. Characteristically, Acheson suggested avoiding “sources known to have official relationship with the Chinese Nationalist Government.”¹⁸⁰

As the communist armies reoccupied Seoul, the administration learned that the war had exacerbated the factional tensions within the CCP, and that the moderate elements of the Party might soon take action against Mao.¹⁸¹ In early January 1951, the administration opened a dialogue with a “Chinese national identified with non-communist elements of the Peiping regime,” which the documentary record refers to only as “Third Party.”¹⁸² Through this dialogue, the administration hoped to convey to “sympathetic elements” within the PRC government “the true attitude of the United States toward China,” obtain information regarding internal conditions on the mainland, and receive Third Party’s advice regarding how best to create a rift between China and the Soviet Union.

¹⁸⁰ Circular Airgram, Acheson to Certain Diplomatic and Consular Offices, 27 December 1950, *ibid*, 609-611.

¹⁸¹ The following two paragraphs summarize points from a series of unsigned memoranda of conversations held on 6, 7, 12, and 13 January 1951, *FRUS, 1951*, VII, Part 2, 1476-1503.

¹⁸² The identity of Third Party or his credentials remains unclear. However, at a 30 January 1951, meeting with Brigadier General Frank Roberts, who was among the staff of Special Assistant to the President W. Averell Harriman, Marshall “gave the credentials of Third Party insofar as he understood them.” Roberts then “compared the name of Third Party with a name appearing among several words on a card put away in some of his papers. He seemed reassured.” *Ibid*, 1533.

Through a series of relayed messages, Charles Marshall of the Policy Planning Staff conveyed to Third Party the fundamental views underpinning the American approach to the Communist Chinese regime. He emphasized especially the administration's view that certain PRC leaders advanced the interests of Moscow rather than those of the Chinese people, and that this resulted from deliberate Soviet manipulation of Chinese nationalism to suit the imperial tendencies of the USSR. From this, he explained, stemmed every decision of the American government, from the refusal of recognition and U.N. membership to the temporary defense of Formosa. On this latter point Marshall stated that "We would be willing to see the island go to any Chinese regime not likely to use it against us." Similarly, "the United States would certainly not be rigid on the matter of recognition or continue to hold its channels to the Chiang Government," but would do so only if the communist regime showed "a change in attitude or if the power of those in charge of it should be challenged from within."

Subsequent State Department meetings discussed the idea of sending a government representative to Hong Kong in order to establish contact and prepare the way for negotiations.¹⁸³ Special Assistant to the President W. Averall Harriman "expressed greatest interest" in this general plan, while General Frank N. Roberts, one of Harriman's assistants with much experience in China, commented that this "was the most important opportunity conceivable for the United States in the immediate future" and "should be played to the limit."¹⁸⁴ Unfortunately, although Third Party had warned

¹⁸³ Memorandum of Conversation between Matthews, Rusk, Nitze, Davies, and Marshall, 31 January 1951, *ibid*, 1544-1546.

¹⁸⁴ Memorandum of Conversation between Roberts and Marshall, 30 January 1951, and Memorandum of Conversation between Harriman, Roberts, and Marshall, 1 February 1951, both in *ibid*, 1535 and 1547,

that a U.N. resolution branding the PRC as an aggressor would undermine the position of the moderates within China, events had already moved too far in that direction for the administration to reverse itself.¹⁸⁵

As the war continued with little sign of diminishing Chinese Communist animosity, the administration's debates increasingly included suggestions for the more assertive utilization of Chinese Nationalist forces. In mid-January, the administration produced a National Intelligence Estimate that sought to determine, among other things, "the stability of the Chinese Communist regime." It noted the improbability of a successful counter-revolution within China, arguing that "By themselves and under present conditions" the existing resistance forces on the mainland "do not constitute a major threat" to CCP control. However, the use of such forces in combination with continued U.N. operations in Korea, a naval blockade, selective bombardment, and the landing of Nationalist forces on the mainland "would imperil the Chinese Communist regime."¹⁸⁶ The State Department rejected the JCS' rather cavalier approach as overly provocative and unlikely to succeed. It questioned the advisability of landing Nationalist troops on the mainland, emphasizing a number of important questions that the JCS had failed to address and wondering what long-term effect the unpopular Generalissimo's

respectively; Acheson discusses Harriman's influence in these policy discussions in *Present at the Creation*, 410-411.

¹⁸⁵ Third Party's reports had "reached the United States Government too late to make it possible to call off or defer the pending action on the resolution to pin the aggressor label on the Peiping Government." Memorandum of Conversation between First and Second Party, 30 January 1951, *FRUS, 1951*, VII, Part 2, 1530-1533.

¹⁸⁶ NIE-10, "Communist China," 17 January 1951, *ibid*, 1510-1514.

continued leadership would have “on the forces of resistance and on the emergence of other anti-Communist leaders on the mainland?”¹⁸⁷

When the NSC met on January 17 – the same day that the PRC rejected the U.N.’s cease-fire proposal – the assembled officials noted these uncertainties and called for a paper concerning the “Effect within China and other Eastern countries of United States backing of Chiang Kai-shek.” Similar to prior estimates, the resulting memo reiterated the existence and ineffectiveness of resistance within China, but added that opposition “would be most responsive to the appeal of a ‘third force’ largely independent of both the Kuomintang and the Communists.” Such a plan implied replacing Chiang and his followers, “an exceedingly difficult, perhaps impossible task.” From these basic premises, the paper advocated a rather vague and questionable proposal to support a resistance movement on the mainland that “would be both a potential threat against the Peiping regime and would be a natural influence exercising pressure on the National Government on Formosa to adopt more effective policies.” At the same time, the United States should “use our political influence and the leverage of American aid to strengthen those military and political leaders on Formosa who seem worthy of confidence.”¹⁸⁸

Such unlikely proposals reflected the increasing desperation regarding China among American officials in the opening months of 1951. One manifestation of this was

¹⁸⁷ Memorandum, Rusk to Acheson and attached draft of NSC 101/1, 17 January 1951, Record Group 59: General Records of the Department of State, Records of the Executive Secretariat, Records Relating to NSC Policy Papers, File: “NSC 101,” National Archives.

¹⁸⁸ Department of State memo, “Report on the Effect Within China and Other Eastern Countries of United States Backing of Chiang Kai-shek,” 9 February 1951, *FRUS, 1951*, VII, Part 2, 1574-1578.

Truman's decision to support what became known as "Operation Paper."¹⁸⁹ In the closing months of 1950 some 4,000 Nationalist soldiers retreated into Burma to escape destruction or capture. By February, the CIA had established a supply network and began providing covert assistance to these forces for the purpose of conducting operations in the nearby southwest Chinese province of Yunnan. Historians commonly interpret Operation Paper as an effort to divert Chinese forces from Korea, though in actuality, the planners intended the Nationalist operations to catalyze "resistance to the new Communist regime in a region with a long and strong tradition of independence from China's central government." Indeed, by January 1953, this force had grown to a size of 18,500 by incorporating some of the kinds of resistance groups that earlier intelligence reports had identified.¹⁹⁰

In the meantime, report after report reiterated the tightening controls within the PRC, the improbability of regime change, and the inadvisability of using Chiang or the KMT to achieve these ends. American Consul in Hong Kong, Ralph Clough, reported a growing feeling among the Chinese people that resistance was hopeless and commented that immediate action "is essential to arrest further development defeatism among our

¹⁸⁹ A notable proposal at this time included General MacArthur's assertion that because "the Chinese have in the past shown a susceptibility to rendering service to the highest bidder...the purchase of high Communist civ and mil officials might prove an economical method of assisting in disestablishing the present auth in China." MacArthur to the JCS, 23 February 1951, *ibid*, 1579-1581; the exact date on which Truman approved support for Operation Paper remains unclear, occurring sometime "in late 1950 or early 1951." This general timeline nonetheless coincides with the most precarious months for the U.N. forces in Korea. John W. Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance: Nationalist China and American Cold War Strategy in Asia* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), 149.

¹⁹⁰ CIA Director Walter Bedell Smith, for instance, expressed that China "had more than enough troops and that any activities in Burma would not divert forces otherwise destined for Korea." Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 148-150.

potential supporters on mainland.”¹⁹¹ Representatives from both the State Department and JCS similarly agreed that “if we can’t bring about the downfall of the Peiping regime within a year or two, it will probably last for a long time.”¹⁹² Despite JCS calls that the United States should prepare ROC forces for offensive operations against the mainland, however, the State Department steadfastly refused. Not only would such an invasion fail, State officials argued, but it would also cast the United States, even more than Soviet propagandists had already done, as the enemy of Chinese sovereignty and nationalistic aspirations – the opposite of what Truman and Acheson hoped to accomplish.

When the Korean War stalemated later that year, however, the administration once more began to explore its earlier proposals for instigating indigenous resistance, in part because of the perception that the PRC’s inability to win a decisive victory over the U.N. Command had exacerbated criticism within China of Mao’s regime. In response to Acheson’s request for information on the “attitudes of principal groups in China,” the American Consul General in Hong Kong, Walter P. McConaughy, Jr., replied that feelings among the Chinese people for the ROC ranged widely, from positive to the “lesser of two evils” to complete rejection.¹⁹³ A significant number of PLA military officers were “dissatisfied with party leadership and prepared to defect under proper conditions,” but, he added, “There must be something to defect to.”¹⁹⁴ Rankin agreed, echoing MacArthur’s earlier proposal that despite rising dissatisfaction with Mao’s

¹⁹¹ Analysis of Chinese Communist intentions drafted by Ralph Clough, quoted in Telegram, McConaughy to Acheson, 8 February 1951, *FRUS, 1951*, VII, Part 2, 1571-1573.

¹⁹² Memorandum of Department of State-JCS meeting, 6 February 1951, *ibid*, 1566-1568.

¹⁹³ Circular Telegram, Acheson to various posts, 13 April 1951, *ibid*, 1637 note 1.

¹⁹⁴ Telegram, McConaughy to Acheson, 20 April 1951, *ibid*, 1643-1645.

regime, no opposition force would form without an “alternative” to the communist government which “presents itself with sufficient outside backing to give reasonable promise of success.”¹⁹⁵ U.S. Ambassador in Korea, John J. Muccio, deriving his information primarily from interviews of Chinese Communist POWs, noted wavering morale among communist soldiers and potential for defections in the event of Nationalist landings.¹⁹⁶

As a result of these appraisals, and in an important reversal of its previous views, the administration now began seeing value in utilizing the ROC for the purpose of wooing this new wave of dissatisfied, anti-Stalinist Chinese, though more through effective propaganda than by actually landing ROC troops on the mainland. On April 20, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, Livingston Merchant, expressed the necessity of reforming the ROC; as matters stood the island could not garner the kind of popular support such a policy would require.¹⁹⁷

In line with these ideas, in mid-May Truman approved NSC 48/5, “United States Objectives, Policies, and Courses of Action in Asia,” which brought together the various strands of the administration’s policy discussions that had occurred throughout the past year. Significantly, the first of the document’s immediate objectives was the detachment of China from Moscow and the development of an independent China that had renounced aggression. To accomplish this, the United States should intensify efforts to “influence the leaders and people in China to oppose the present Peiping regime and to

¹⁹⁵ Telegram, Rankin to Acheson, 19 April 1951, *ibid*, 1637-1639.

¹⁹⁶ Telegram, Muccio to Acheson, 21 April 1951, *FRUS, 1951*, VII, Part 1, 374-375.

¹⁹⁷ Memorandum of Conversation between Merchant and Han Lih Wu, 20 April 1951, *FRUS, 1951*, VII, Part 2, 1641-1643.

seek its reorientation or replacement.” As such, the administration planned to continue to foster mainland resistance and to “encourage political changes in the Nationalist regime which would increase its prestige and influence in China proper.”¹⁹⁸

The day after Truman approved NSC 48/5, Rusk immediately began implementing its recommendations. In a speech that Acheson later confirmed “was slanted in part for use in psychological warfare within China,” Rusk began by emphasizing the basic rationale for the non-recognition policy.¹⁹⁹ Referring to the PRC as “a Slavic Manchukuo on a larger scale,” Rusk argued that “It is not the Government of China. It does not pass the first test. It is not Chinese.” In contrast, the ROC “more authentically represents the views of the great body of the people of China, particularly their historic demand for independence from foreign control.” Aid to Nationalist China would not be decisive by itself, however. “The decision and the effort,” Rusk concluded, “are for the Chinese people, pooling their efforts, wherever they are, in behalf of China.”²⁰⁰

Opportunities for the Chinese people to resist diminished considerably by summer 1951. A National Intelligence Estimate that July concluded that the PRC had instituted “increasingly drastic control measures” that enabled that government to

¹⁹⁸ NSC 48/5, “United States Objectives, Policies, and Courses of Action in Asia,” 17 May 1951, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951*, Vol. VI: Asia and the Pacific, Part 1, 36-37, hereafter cited as *FRUS, 1951*, VI, Part 1.

¹⁹⁹ Telegram, Acheson to Gifford, 22 May 1951, *FRUS, 1951*, VII, Part 2, 1673 note 2.

²⁰⁰ Rusk speech of 18 May 1951, Department of State *Bulletin*, 28 May 1951, 843-848; Acheson also desired that the Dalai Lama remain close to Tibet so as to “maintain their moral and spiritual position in eyes of Tibetan people,” and, thus, to maintain resistance to the Chinese Communists within Tibet. Telegram, Acheson to the Embassy in India, 20 June 1951, and Telegram, Steere to Acheson, 22 June 1951, both in *FRUS, 1951*, VII, Part 2, 1712 and 1713, respectively.

“control the population and check the development of an effective opposition.”²⁰¹

McConaughy also noted that guerilla forces in nearby Guangdong province were “lying low” because their activities brought “prompt and heavy retaliation.” He also reported that the completion of the Chinese Communist land program had resulted in rural political controls that would “make it much more difficult for resistance groups to operate.”²⁰² In August, Deputy Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs, Troy L. Perkins, reported “there is no indication that any individual leader has sufficient ability or commands a sufficient number of Chinese to organize an effective Third Force Movement.”²⁰³ Even in Burma and Yunnan, the remnant KMT armies faced increasingly organized and effective PRC countermeasures.

As a result, the administration continued drifting toward reliance on the ROC to provide the support and leadership without which such a movement supposedly could not succeed.²⁰⁴ The administration remained painfully aware that the Chinese people would not receive Chiang warmly, however, and, as such, it determined to convince or force Chiang to initiate a series of reforms that might make the ROC government more attractive to dissatisfied Chinese on the mainland. Indeed, although agreeing that “we should not put all of our eggs in the Formosa basket,” Rankin nonetheless pointed out

²⁰¹ NIE-32, “Effects of Operation in Korea on the Internal Situation in Communist China,” 10 July 1951, *FRUS, 1951*, VII, Part 2, 1737-1743.

²⁰² Telegram, McConaughy to Acheson, 15 August 1951, *ibid*, 1787-1789.

²⁰³ Ironically, Perkins attributed this lack of potential leaders to the machinations of Chiang Kai-shek who “apparently is having increasing success in neutralizing or intimidating potential Third Force leaders.” Memorandum, Perkins to Merchant, 1 August 1951, *ibid*, 1764.

²⁰⁴ Telegram, McConaughy to State, 13 December 1951, *ibid*, 1869-1871; “Guerilla capabilities are unlikely to increase without sizeable outside support and a revitalization of the Chinese Nationalists.” Special Estimate 20, “The Probable Consequences of Certain Possible U.S. Courses of Action with Respect to Communist China and Korea,” 22 December 1951, http://www.foia.cia.gov/docs/DOC_0000270907/DOC_0000270907.pdf, accessed on 7 August 2012.

that “Whatever the shortcomings of the regime on Formosa, it is evolving and, on balance, improving.” Implying that Chiang would not live forever, Rankin suggested the United States should use its aid programs to improve ROC efficiency “while retaining enough individual liberty so that a genuine Chinese democracy can evolve.” Throughout the Korean War, officials continued to advocate this strategy of developing on Taiwan a pattern of successful Chinese leadership that would offer “to the Chinese suffering Communist tyranny on the Mainland” a vision of a Chinese society “free of Russian domination” and “meeting the welfare needs of the people” – a vision that would make the Chinese on the mainland say “I wish I were there.”²⁰⁵

For the most part, however, the Truman administration never wholeheartedly endorsed this scheme, and even the incoming Eisenhower administration wondered whether this strategy could produce results. The prospects for developing a successful organized resistance movement on the mainland continued to deteriorate as the PRC instituted increasingly tighter controls. Efforts to convince Chiang to liberalize his political system continued, but the primary motivation for such calls gradually moved away from courting the mainland Chinese and toward courting other non-communist nations whose support both Chiang and the United States relied upon to hold the line against the PRC. In the summer of 1953, for instance, Admiral Arthur Radford informed Chiang that his “police state tendencies would have to be held in check, if not abated” in order to retain support of both the American people and U.S. allies, sentiments that

²⁰⁵ Memorandum, Barnett to Rusk, 3 October 1951, *FRUS, 1951*, VII, Part 2, 1816-1827.

Secretary of State Dulles echoed later that year in his meeting with Chiang Ching-kuo.²⁰⁶

Nonetheless, in the absence of a viable alternative, the Eisenhower administration clung persistently to the hope that Taiwan might yet demonstrate an “ability to command the respect and support of the Chinese people.”²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶ Radford meeting with Chiang Kai-shek, described in Telegram, Jones to State, 18 June 1953, and Dulles meeting with Chiang Ching-kuo, 13 November 1953, described in Memorandum written by McConaughy, both in *FRUS, 1952-1954*, XIV, Part 1, 205-210 and 251-253, respectively.

²⁰⁷ NSC 146/2, “United States Objectives and courses of action with respect to Formosa and the Chinese National Government,” 6 November 1953, *ibid*, 307-330.

CHAPTER III

HOLDING THE LINE, HOPING FOR CHANGE: EISENHOWER'S CHINA POLICY, 1953-1960

Entering office in the midst of the Korean War, Dwight Eisenhower and his staff could hardly have viewed the PRC differently than its predecessors in the Truman administration. The United States confronted what to all appearances seemed an implacably hostile and militarily powerful foe intent on doing its part in the broader communist effort to achieve global domination. Having commanded the allied forces in Europe during World War II and acted as Supreme Commander of NATO forces, Ike found himself on familiar ground. Once more, he headed an organization on the front lines of a crucial conflict that could determine peace or war, revolutionary breakdown or lawful stability. Further, he, like many American officials, had come to view the PRC's leaders as every bit as hostile, determined, and conniving as their counterparts in Moscow. Eisenhower believed that Beijing would not negotiate in good faith and that Mao would adhere to agreements only so long as he could achieve the expansion of communism by other means.

Pursuing a policy of containment under these circumstances might check the communists' efforts, but Washington no longer believed it would suffice to achieve the kinds of reforms that the United States sought. As the Eisenhower administration endeavored to prevent both the communists and U.S. allies from expanding hostilities, it continued to pursue and expand upon the variety of alternative strategies that the Truman

administration had pioneered. Ike hoped that he could yet persuade the Chinese people to save both themselves and the rest of the world from the radical excesses of Chinese Communism.

The Problem of Chinese Communist Militancy

Upon assuming the presidency, Dwight Eisenhower chose as one of his first acts to change the mission of the Seventh Fleet from preventing attacks from both sides of the Taiwan Strait to only preventing attacks from the mainland against the Republic of China. He did so as one part of an effort to signal Beijing that the United States would not tolerate indefinitely the Korean stalemate, and that failure to achieve progress in the armistice negotiations could have serious, perhaps even nuclear, consequences. These efforts ultimately succeeded; on July 27, 1953, the fighting in Korea officially ceased with the signing of an armistice agreement, and the administration began to ponder how to handle the uneasy peace that followed. It concluded that the end of the fighting in Korea “would not indicate Communist China had abandoned its basic objectives or its willingness seek objectives by armed force.”¹ Rather, the successful defense of South Korea meant only that international communism would await a more advantageous moment and circumstances to aggress.²

This happened much sooner than the administration predicted, for even as the warring sides finalized the Korean armistice, elements of the PLA began a systematic

¹ Circular Telegram, Acheson to Certain Diplomatic and Consular Offices, 29 July 1953, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, XIV, Part 1, 238.

² The British Charge in Hong Kong, Lionel Henry Lamb, also expressed his belief that the armistice “might postpone showdown for a couple of years but not settle anything.” Telegram, Harrington to State, 2 July 1953, *ibid*, 225.

campaign to capture several of the Nationalist-held offshore islands. Moreover, China and the Soviet Union continued to support the Vietnamese Communists in their campaign against the French in Indochina, culminating in the decisive defeat of the latter's forces at Dienbienphu on May 7, 1954. With such developments, the Eisenhower administration felt it must not relax its guard. For the remainder of the decade, spurred on by a series of externally-supported communist insurrections and major international crises in both Asia and Europe, the United States pursued a policy of strengthening the capacity of the Free World, and particularly of the non-communist nations of East Asia, to deter communist aggression and to counter it effectively once begun.

The sizeable military forces of the Republic of China provided many potential benefits in this strategy. Throughout the 1950s, American policymakers regularly discussed war contingencies whereby the Nationalist Chinese military would prove “an important strategic reserve which could be employed when and where the interests of the free world indicated.”³ Taiwan's central location would allow the relatively rapid deployment of Nationalist forces to Korea, Indochina, or along the Southeast China coast – wherever they might have the most beneficial effect depending on whatever aggressive moves the communists might make.⁴ Even in the absence of an overt

³ Memorandum of Conversation between officials of the departments of State and Defense, 1 June 1953, *ibid*, 198-201.

⁴ Many internal policy statements qualified their advocacy for or rejection of various approaches based on the possibility of additional Chinese aggression. NSC 166, for instance, noted several policies that it considered unacceptable “in the absence of further Chinese Communist aggression,” such as the forcible overthrow of the PRC government or the use of Nationalist forces outside of Taiwan, the Pescadores, or the offshore islands. NSC 166/1, “U.S. Policy Towards Communist China,” 6 November 1953, *ibid*, 278-306.

communist-instigated war (for Ike never believed that the United States would initiate such a conflict), the presence of hundreds of thousands of capable soldiers so close to China's coastline would act as a powerful deterrent to any potential PRC aggression in other theaters.⁵ Administration officials occasionally raised concerns regarding the practicality of using ROC forces outside of Taiwan given the Nationalists' own defensive needs as well as the reluctance of other nations to allow the Nationalist military to operate within their borders. But the persistence of the Chinese Communist threat in the region dictated continuation of the general policy.⁶

This fear of communist aggression was hardly Washington's creation. Non-communist countries all along China's periphery from Japan to Thailand shared these concerns and looked to the United States for material and psychological support in their ongoing efforts to defend themselves against either PRC attack or internal subversion they believed Beijing directed and supported. As late as 1957, for instance, Burma and Indonesia expressed concern regarding Beijing's use of its embassies in those countries to provide assistance to local communists, and even neutralist India grew alarmed over PRC efforts to arm the communist forces in neighboring Nepal.⁷ The Eisenhower administration remained extraordinarily sensitive to such concerns, fearing that the

⁵ Though certain members of the administration advocated a pre-emptive war, the more characteristic view, shared by Ike, Dulles, and other high-level members of the administration, was that the United States would only go to war as a defensive response to an attack initiated by another country. Robertson, for instance, told Chiang that "neither Congress, the people of the United States, nor the President will make offensive war anywhere for any purpose." Memorandum of Conversation between Walter Robertson and Chiang Kai-shek, 16 March 1956, *FRUS*, III, 330; Ike followed this up in May with a personal letter to Chiang, stating "We do not consider that to invoke military force is an appropriate means of freeing Communist-dominated peoples and we are opposed to initiating action which might expose the world to a conflagration which could spread beyond control." Letter, Ike to Chiang, 17 May 1956, *ibid*, 361.

⁶ On questions of using Nationalist forces outside of Taiwan, see Memorandum, Lay to the NSC, 9 September 1957, *ibid*, 594.

⁷ NIE 13-57, "Communist China Through 1961," 19 March 1957, *ibid*, 497.

slightest sign of a wavering American commitment to counter communist aggression or to offer unwarranted concessions to an unreformed China would result in the disintegration of these nations' resolve to continue the struggle.⁸

By this time, the administration had added diplomatic and economic pressure to its existing strategy of military containment, especially since the Korean stalemate and economic sanctions had apparently driven the communists, at least temporarily, toward efforts to achieve their ends by means short of large-scale overt aggression.⁹ Indeed, Ike believed that the “existing controls on trade had been one of the main reasons why the Chinese Communists had sought an armistice, and it was vital, therefore, not to relax controls until we had achieved a settlement.”¹⁰ At a tripartite meeting with French and British representatives in July 1953, Secretary of State Jon Foster Dulles echoed the value of sanctions for facilitating a political settlement and for diverting PRC aid from the Indochinese communists. The British and French agreed to maintain the existing sanctions and to re-examine them later “in light Chinese Communist behavior.”¹¹

The administration looked forward to the Geneva conference as an opportunity to draw the Chinese further into the more peaceful diplomatic realm as well as to determine whether Beijing genuinely desired to play a constructive role in settling regional conflicts. Dulles refused to consider a U.S.-ROC defense treaty prior to the Geneva

⁸ Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and various State Department officials, 12 February 1957, *ibid*, 476.

⁹ NIE 10-2-54, “Communist Courses of Action in Asia Through Mid-1955,” 15 March 1954, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, XIV, Part 1, 389.

¹⁰ Quoted in an editorial note describing the 150th meeting of the NSC, 18 June 1953, *ibid*, 204-205.

¹¹ Telegram, Dulles to the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, 20 July 1953, *ibid*, 230.

talks lest such a move relax pressure on the communists to negotiate.¹² Though the conference did produce a tentative agreement on the partition and eventual reunification of Vietnam, it failed to reach a political settlement regarding divided Korea. In addition, the Vietnamese Communists continued to consolidate their position, benefitting considerably from the PRC's ongoing material support that the administration considered a violation of the armistice agreement.¹³ Moreover, the PRC began a massive bombardment of the Nationalist-held offshore island of Jinmen in September 1954. The administration responded by seeking to deter escalation of Beijing's actions by political means, namely by proposing a U.N.-guaranteed neutralization of the Taiwan Strait.¹⁴ China's refusal to discuss this plan, however, undermined the U.N.'s willingness to follow through, leading both Dulles and British Ambassador Roger Makins to agree that "we may have to review our basic assumption" that neither the PRC or Soviet Union "wanted a general war at this time."¹⁵

But the administration believed that the Korean armistice and the Geneva settlement had diminished the PRC's desire for overt military intervention in Korea and Indochina, thus indicating that the force of international opinion could cause Beijing to adopt more peaceful, cooperative behaviors and attitudes.¹⁶ Ike and Dulles now looked

¹² Memorandum prepared by McConaughy, 27 February 1954, *ibid*, 368.

¹³ NIE 10-7-54, "Communist Courses of Action in Asia Through 1957," 23 November 1954, *ibid*, 930.

¹⁴ 214th Meeting of the NSC, 12 September 1954, *ibid*, 613; Dulles suggested submitting the problem to the U.N. "where influence was exerted on nations to conform to the standards of world opinion."

Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and Sir Robert Scott, 25 January 1955, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957*, Vol. II: China, 120, hereafter cited as *FRUS, 1955-1957*, II.

¹⁵ Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and Makins, 28 January 1955, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, II, 161.

¹⁶ In reality, China's decision to adopt a more moderate foreign policy through participation at Geneva and Bandung primarily derived from the necessity of stable foreign relations that would allow the PRC to divert resources to achieving its domestic developmental objectives. Chen Jian, "China and the Bandung Conference: Changing Perceptions and Representations," in See Seng Tan and Amitav Acharya, eds.,

to the political conference of African and Asian nations at Bandung in 1955 to sway Beijing away from aggression in the Taiwan Strait.¹⁷ Believing that Beijing had sent delegates to the conference in order to obtain Third World approval for their militancy in the Taiwan Strait and throughout the region, the administration worked diligently to ensure that the Chinese Communist representatives would achieve no such affirmation, thus keeping the Communist Bloc “psychologically on the defensive.”¹⁸

Perhaps in part because of their efforts, leaders from throughout the Arab-Asian world who attended the conference openly expressed their concerns regarding recent communist activities.¹⁹ The Prime Minister of Pakistan warned against “opening our doors to a new and more insidious form of imperialism that masquerades in the guise of liberation.” Prince Wan of Thailand offered a more blunt statement on the threat of communist “infiltration and subversion,” while the Turkish delegates blamed communist aggression for their country’s decision to join NATO.²⁰ “The Conference leaders,” one observer noted, “have no illusions about communism, be it Chinese or Russian.”²¹ Indeed, although the conference communiqué noted that “membership in the United Nations should be universal” and called for the membership “of all those States which

Bandung Revisited: The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference for International Order (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2008), 134.

¹⁷ Jason Parker, “The Cold War II: The Eisenhower Administration, the Bandung Conference, and the Reperiodization of the Postwar Era,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 30, No. 5 (November 2006), 881.

¹⁸ Memorandum, Staats to OCB, 11 January 1955, quoted in *ibid*, 874; The British agreed that Beijing sought to use the Bandung conference to “win over Asian opinion and lull Asian suspicions by appearing moderate,” and that the U.S. and U.K. should warn the participants “against giving the Chinese the green light and to urge them to press for the renunciation of force.” Memorandum, Makins to Dulles, 16 March 1955, 374 and Message, Eden to Dulles, 28 March 1955, both in *FRUS, 1955-1957*, II, 374 and 416, respectively.

¹⁹ This is not to suggest that the participants feared only communist advances. Indeed, they lumped together both communism and capitalism as “imperial” forces.

²⁰ Homer A. Jack, *Bandung: An on-the-spot description of the Asian-African Conference*, 13.

²¹ *Ibid*, 37.

are qualified for membership in terms of the Charter,” the list of qualified nations in the communiqué excluded the PRC.²²

Though the conference agenda did not include it, the 1954-55 Taiwan Strait crisis nonetheless “loomed large” in the private discussions, as Dulles hoped it would.²³ The Secretary of State believed his efforts succeeded; the conference had “exerted a restraint on the Chinese Communists” because of the conference participants’ expressions “in favor of peace and against direct and indirect aggression.”²⁴ When the PRC delegates emerged from Bandung, Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai called for an end to hostilities in the Strait and a new era of Sino-American relations based on “five principles of peaceful co-existence”: mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.²⁵ More importantly, Zhou also acknowledged Beijing’s willingness “to

²² Among those nations listed were Cambodia, Ceylon, Japan, Jordan, Laos, Libya, Nepal, and “a unified Vietnam.” Ibid, 26; Zhou does seem to have successfully alleviated the concerns that some of the delegations had regarding Chinese Communist intentions. See Ang Cheng Guan, “The Bandung Conference and the Cold War International History of Southeast Asia,” in Tan and Acharya, eds., *Bandung Revisited*, 27-47.

²³ Jack, *Bandung*, 15.

²⁴ Dulles’ Press Conference, 26 April 1955, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, II, 519; He similarly informed the Indians that “the opinions expressed by the delegates there must have had a moderating influence.” Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and Krishna Menon, 14 June 1955, *ibid*, 595. This assessment may not have been entirely accurate. See Guan, “The Bandung Conference.”

²⁵ The five principles predated Bandung. They were first formalized in the Sino-Indian treaty of 1954 on trade and intercourse between India and Tibet, and were subsequently included in various other PRC international treaties. Lee, “Treaty Relations of the People’s Republic of China: A Study of Compliance,” 248; In another telling divergence of views between Beijing and the Asian-African world, the Bandung participants listed ten principles, among which included “Settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means.” The State Department interpreted this difference as indicating that Zhou’s tone of reasonableness would likely not carry over directly into subsequent negotiations. Kweku Ampiah, *The Political and Moral Imperatives of the Bandung Conference of 1955: The Reactions of the US, UK and Japan* (UK: Global Oriental, 2007), 105-107.

strive for the liberation of Taiwan by peaceful means as far as this is possible.”²⁶ Dulles looked favorably upon such indications that “the pistol had been laid down” and that the two sides might now resolve some of the lingering issues between them. He nonetheless reiterated that “the pistol should be permanently discarded, and we hope that the trend of events will bring reassurance on that point.”²⁷

Though fearing that official contact might give Beijing an unhelpful degree of international legitimacy, the administration nonetheless viewed ambassadorial-level talks as serving important functions. The Eisenhower administration genuinely desired negotiations so long as the communist side was prepared to negotiate in good faith – one half of the NSC 68 formula. As an NSC policy paper noted, “The United States must keep open the possibility of negotiating with the USSR and Communist China acceptable and enforceable agreements” and must make clear to those governments that the resumption of normal relations “is dependent on concrete evidence that they have abandoned efforts to expand their control by military force or subversion.”²⁸ As late as September 1958, Ike reiterated that “we must show both firmness and courage in our

²⁶ The administration frequently reiterated the importance of international condemnation of PRC actions. In response to Belgium’s indication that it might soon recognize the PRC, for instance, Robertson commented that “There is no evidence that Communist China has given up her long-term objectives or would change her tactics except through force and pressure of public opinion.” Citing the ongoing PRC military build-up in North Korea, Robertson further noted that “If there seems to be a tranquil situation today, this is due largely to Communist China’s realization of the attitude which the civilized world takes. We feel that any acceptance of Communist China’s past actions would lead to further aggression on its part.” Memorandum of Conversation between Acting Secretary of State Hoover, Robertson, and Belgian Ambassador Silvercruys, et al, 9 September 1955, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, III, 81-83.

²⁷ Dulles’ Press Conference, 2 August 1955, *ibid*, 5; Chen Jian argues that Beijing did not intend the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence to apply to the relations between the socialist and capitalist camps since “crises, revolutions and wars were inevitable in the ‘Age of Imperialism.’” Chen Jian, “China and the Bandung Conference,” in Tan and Acharya, eds., *Bandung Revisited*, 135.

²⁸ NSC 5429/3, “Current U.S. Policy in the Far East,” 19 November 1954, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, XIV, Part 1, 911.

opposition to the use of aggressive force, combined with readiness to negotiate in a spirit of conciliation.”²⁹

Yet administration officials perceived a long history of communists violating their pledges, and regularly insisted that the communists must accompany their words with actual deeds in order for the United States to take their professions of peace seriously.³⁰ In the months following Bandung, Dulles noted “a number of obvious steps” that Beijing could take “to clear the air considerably and give evidence before the world of its good intentions.”³¹ In the meantime, however, the United Nations should continue to reject Beijing’s membership “until they shall have demonstrated good behavior and acceptance of the principles of the United Nations Charter for a reasonable period of time. This time period is not to be judged simply by the calendar but must be adequate to show a basic and sincere change from the Chinese Communists’ present attitude.”³²

By late-1958, however, the State Department could rattle off a long list of Chinese

²⁹ Memorandum of Conversation between Eisenhower and Dulles, 11 September 1958, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960*, Vol. XIX: China, 162, hereafter cited as *FRUS, 1958-1960*, XIX; Robert S. Ross contends that Dulles merely feigned interest in compromise “in an attempt to neutralize criticism from moderate politicians.” Robert S. Ross, “Introduction,” Robert S. Ross and Jiang Changbin, eds., *Re-Examining the Cold War: U.S.-China Diplomacy, 1954-1973* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 17.

³⁰ Memorandum of Conversation between Eisenhower and Dulles, 24 March 1954, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, XIV, Part 1, 396; In the spring of 1953, State Department officials emphasized that “we must grasp our opportunities presented by the ‘peace offensive’ and give the Soviet Union an opportunity to demonstrate its sincerity. The conclusion of an honorable armistice in Korea is but a first step. We *hope* that Soviet words will be followed by deeds but we must be shown. Until then, we cannot relax our guard.” Emphasis included. Memorandum, David Nes to Dulles, 1 May 1953, *ibid*, 194-195; Nancy Tucker also notes how Ike “pragmatically imagined a day when there would be diplomatic relations between Washington and Beijing.” Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, “A House Divided: The United States, the Department of State, and China,” in Warren Cohen and Akira Iriye, eds., *The Great Powers in East Asia, 1953-1960* (1990), 55.

³¹ Dulles specifically mentioned implementing a cease fire, releasing imprisoned American airmen, and accepting the U.N. invitation to participate in the discussions of the Formosan hostilities. State Department Press Release, 23 April 1955, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, II, 507 note 3.

³² Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and British officials, 26 September 1958, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, XIX, 279.

Communist aggressions, assistance to aggressions carried out by others, and violations of its pledges, all of which indicated that no basic change had occurred.³³

The perception of bad faith also affected the ambassadorial talks, particularly as regards the Agreed Announcement on the release of prisoners that both sides announced on September 10, 1955. Significantly, the issue that emerged was not Beijing's refusal to release its prisoners, but rather its refusal to inform the imprisoned Americans of their rights and to provide facilities to British representatives acting for the United States, steps that Beijing had pledged to take.³⁴ The full rationale for China's inaction remains unclear.³⁵ Yet the motivating factors undoubtedly included anger over a dispute regarding the next phase of the ambassadorial talks. Beijing perhaps contented itself that with the prisoner issue tentatively resolved the two sides would now move on to discuss other issues, such as Taiwan and a potential Foreign Ministers' meeting. Yet in part because of the importance it placed on deeds rather than words, Washington insisted that Beijing fulfill the Announcement's terms as a prerequisite to higher-level talks and the discussion of other issues. This infuriated the Chinese; an NCNA essay the following

³³ Memorandum of Conversation between Robertson and Prince Sihanouk, 16 September 1958, *ibid*, 201.

³⁴ "Wang should be severely taxed with PRC non-compliance this obligation." Telegram, Hoover to Johnson, 22 September 1955, *ibid*, 97.

³⁵ Robert B. Ekvall, who regularly served as American translator in dealings with the Chinese, suggests that Beijing's dismay may have stemmed from a misunderstanding over the English terminology in the Agreed Announcement that allowed the United States to permit India to operate in the specified manner within the United States, rather than Beijing permitting India to act on its behalf. This was a fine distinction, to be sure, yet one that allowed Washington to avoid the implication that it had voided Taipei's right to speak for Chinese in the United States. The Chinese "howled in protest" when they belatedly awoke to the significance of this wording. Robert B. Ekvall, *The Faithful Echo* (1960), quoted in Cohen and Chiu, *People's China and International Law*, Vol. 2, 1143-1147.

week lambasted Washington for “inventing new rules,” stating that the refusal to discuss other items “is incompatible with the canons of international conferences.”³⁶

The administration refused to budge. Having experienced an array of communist duplicity in the past, Washington sought tangible signs of compliance that would have gone far toward establishing signs of good faith. Yet the Chinese side subsequently validated the American concerns by frankly admitting that it continued to hold the remaining imprisoned Americans as political hostages whose release was contingent upon the settlement of other issues. The U.S. Ambassador to the talks, U.A. Johnson, noted that this constituted a complete reversal of the “legalities and juridical procedures” that had previously characterized the PRC position.³⁷ Under such circumstances, Dulles refused to move ahead on a renunciation of force agreement in December 1955. “It is entirely unrealistic,” he explained, “to be formulating proposed second public announcement when one already made is being so flagrantly violated.”³⁸ Thus, by late-1956, the Agreed Announcement had moved from a practical settlement of a divisive issue to a contentious propaganda football. McConaughy lamented that “The talks are no longer an effective means of bringing about the release of our imprisoned citizens. They may now have the opposite effect.”³⁹

Beyond the prisoner issue, the key American objective remained achieving a PRC pledge to renounce the use of aggressive force as an instrument of foreign policy. The administration frequently reiterated that it did not expect the Chinese Communists

³⁶ “Geneva Talks Should Proceed to Second Item of Agenda, Says *Jen Min Jih Pao*,” 20 September 1955, quoted in *ibid*, 1148-1150.

³⁷ Telegram, U.A. Johnson to State, 25 August 1955, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, III, 63-65.

³⁸ Telegram, Dulles to Johnson, 6 December 1955, *ibid*, 205.

³⁹ Memorandum, McConaughy to Robertson, 1 October 1956, *ibid*, 432.

“to abandon its claims, however ill-founded we may deem them to be,” but rather to renounce “only the use of force in achieving them.”⁴⁰ This explains why the administration responded so well when Zhou acknowledged the possibility of a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan issue in 1955,

Subsequent efforts to arrive at a mutually-acceptable renunciation of force agreement ultimately faltered over disagreements regarding Taiwan’s status as either a domestic or an international issue.⁴¹ Dulles rejected the Chinese view of Taiwan as an internal affair, arguing that the “same contention could be made as to other divided countries,” such as Korea, Vietnam, and Germany. Furthermore, as “a practical affair conflict between the contending sides in those divided countries would lead to war, and so the issues are international in scope.”⁴² The PRC, in turn, rejected the idea notion that Taiwan was a legitimate international concern. Beijing noted the inherent differences between the Taiwan issue and that of the other divided countries. The division of Germany and Korea resulted from World War II; those governments did not collapse as a result of civil conflict. Furthermore, the German, Korean, and Vietnamese divisions all were subjects of international agreements that would have resulted in unification had not the American “imperialist policy of aggression” interfered. The case of divided China differed, however: the Chinese people overthrew the government themselves and established their own government, and the international community had returned Taiwan

⁴⁰ White House Press Release, 4 September 1958, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, XIX, 134.

⁴¹ The Chinese Ambassador at Warsaw, Wang Bingnan, admitted that because of the Chinese insistence on solving the Taiwan issue first “It was only natural that talks could not get anywhere.” Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011), 159.

⁴² Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and Lloyd, et al, 31 January 1956, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, III, 286.

to Chinese control in the Cairo Declaration of 1943 (and, thus, cannot be considered a lingering issue of World War II). The logical result, the Chinese argued, is that Taiwan's liberation "is purely an internal question which has nothing to do with international agreements and involves no international question."⁴³

Beneath these legalistic arguments, however, lay an ideological view of the United States as aggressive, expansionistic, and fundamentally untrustworthy. Indeed, according to Mao, "Although Britain and the United States also talk about peaceful coexistence, they merely take this as lip service, and if they are asked to take true action on this, they will desist."⁴⁴ This attitude, in turn, conditioned American officials to expect ongoing intransigence and duplicity. As such, the Eisenhower administration chose not to adopt certain initiatives that may have alleviated some of Beijing's wariness. As Ike explained, "some of the department that was once an essential part of international relationships cannot be faithfully and stubbornly maintained by ourselves when the other side insists on practicing the habits of a thug."⁴⁵

Because the administration no longer believed that the ambassadorial talks would produce practical and enforceable agreements, the State Department increasingly viewed them primarily as a means to prevent the Chinese from using overt military force, particularly in the Taiwan Strait. As Dulles noted, "as long as we are talking there is less

⁴³ Shao Chinfu, "The Absurd Theory of 'Two Chinas' and Principles of International Law" (1959), quoted in Cohen and Chiu, *People's China and International Law*, Vol. 1, 235-237.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Chen Jian, "China and the Bandung Conference," in Tan and Acharya, eds., *Bandung Revisited*, 135 note 15; Michael Hunt and Steven Levine, "The Revolutionary Challenge to Early U.S. Cold War Policy in Asia," in Warren Cohen and Akira Iriye, eds., *The Great Powers in East Asia, 1953-1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 22-24.

⁴⁵ Letter, Eisenhower to Lewis Douglas, 29 March 1955, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, II, 422.

risk to Quemoy and Matsu, and Formosa.”⁴⁶ Beijing would pursue peaceful policies, however, only “as long as its objectives are acceptably served by this means.” As such, if the talks broke down or Beijing perceived them as unfruitful, it might re-initiate hostilities. The administration even feared that the PRC might “manufacture” wars or crises elsewhere along its periphery “to provide a pretext for imposing new production and austerity drives at home.”⁴⁷

This possibility haunted the administration, especially following Ike’s September 1954 decision that the United States would not go to war to defend the offshore islands. Dulles explained that the loss of the islands and the garrisons guarding them would prove disastrous for morale among non-communist East Asia, and because the administration would not fight for the islands “the Department had to find diplomatic means through which to prevent a Chinese Communist attack.”⁴⁸ As such, the State Department often prioritized the indefinite extension of the talks, even at the expense of progress in the negotiations. This rationale explains, at least in part, Dulles’ insistence on full PRC compliance of the Agreed Announcement prior to discussing other issues.⁴⁹

The fear that failure of the talks might spark PRC aggression is demonstrated well by Ike’s hospitalization from September 24 through November 11, 1955, after suffering a debilitating heart attack. Under such circumstances, Dulles feared that the

⁴⁶ Letter, Dulles to Eisenhower, 1 September 1955, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, III, 75 note 3.

⁴⁷ NIE 13-56, “Chinese Communist Capabilities and Probable Courses of Action Through 1960,” 5 January 1956, *ibid*, 230; Krishna Menon also believed that “If the talks fail, then that would mean war.” Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and Menon, 14 June 1955, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, II, 595.

⁴⁸ Memorandum of Conversation between Eisenhower and Dulles, 5 August 1955, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, III, 15.

⁴⁹ Johnson expressed hope that this tactic would work, but warned that “it will also be difficult in such circumstances for me to avoid being too obviously in the position of simply stalling.” Letter, U.A. Johnson to McConaughy, 7 September 1955, and Telegram, Hoover to Johnson, 13 September 1955, both in *ibid*, 78 and 87, respectively.

PRC might seize the opportunity of the commander-in-chief's incapacitation to instigate a new crisis. The Secretary thus insisted that Ambassador Johnson set the date of the next ambassadorial meeting "as far in future as possible" and that the talks not break down under any circumstances. Indeed, not until Ike's incapacitation did the State Department decide to discuss additional items at the ambassadorial talks even though Beijing still had failed to comply with the terms of the Agreed Announcement.⁵⁰

As conditions in the Strait stabilized, however, avoiding a break in the talks became less of a concern for the administration so long as the onus for such a break remained with Beijing.⁵¹ In February 1956, Dulles confidently asserted that the Chinese Communists "would not resort to force in the near future, even if the negotiations were broken off," but rather would continue making "threatening noises."⁵² With fear of Chinese aggression dissipating, the State Department's priority shifted to using the talks to regain the moral high ground among its allies, particularly through its demand for a renunciation of force agreement. In response, the Chinese ambassador insisted on linking this agreement with a U.S. pledge to hold a Foreign Ministers meeting with Zhou Enlai. The State Department rejected this, since it would leave the PRC free to set additional "conditions and prerequisites" prior to such a meeting and to resume its militancy in the Strait if the meeting did not result in the concessions it desired.⁵³

By 1957, the talks had devolved into a series of mutually acrimonious exchanges devoid of the possibility for practical results. On the American side, McConaughy

⁵⁰ Telegram, Dulles to Johnson, 26 September 1955, *ibid*, 102.

⁵¹ Telegram, Dulles to Johnson, 30 January 1956, *ibid*, 285.

⁵² NSC meeting of 9 February 1956, quoted in *ibid*, 305.

⁵³ Telegram, Johnson to State, 1 March 1956, and Telegram, Johnson to State, 8 March 1956, both in *ibid*, 317 and 321, respectively.

argued that the United States should not “go on talking with a regime which is brazenly violating the only commitment they have made to us in the course of the talks.”⁵⁴ While agreeing in general with this assessment, Dulles still perceived the talks as having value in preventing the Chinese from engaging in military action against Taiwan because of “the risk they would run of general world condemnation” and the possibility of increased multilateral economic sanctions. Indeed, as McConaughy noted early in 1957, “the talks are precisely fulfilling the primary purpose envisaged by the Secretary” two years before.⁵⁵

The private talks subsequently erupted into a public war of words that may have contributed to Mao’s decision to adopt a hard-line approach later that year.⁵⁶ When a temporary suspension occurred in 1958, Mao took the opportunity to renew attacks on the offshore islands as a way to enhance popular Chinese support for his domestic revolutionary program.⁵⁷ In response, the State Department once again called for the resumption of the talks “with minimum delay” in order to draw Beijing back into the peaceful posture they had maintained during the previous three years.⁵⁸ Washington thereafter once more viewed the renewed Warsaw Talks after September 1958 as a means to achieve a tacit cease-fire in the Strait.⁵⁹ By September, Dulles had reverted to his earlier insistence that Ambassador Johnson “string the talks out as much as

⁵⁴ Memorandum, McConaughy to Robertson, 1 October 1956, *ibid*, 432.

⁵⁵ Letter, McConaughy to Johnson, 30 January 1957, *ibid*, 466.

⁵⁶ See, for instance, Dulles’ San Francisco Speech, “Our Policies Toward Communism in China,” 28 June 1957, *ibid*, 558.

⁵⁷ Hunt and Levine, “The Revolutionary Challenge to Early U.S. Cold War Policy,” Cohen and Iriye, eds., *The Great Powers in East Asia*, 24; Chen Jian argues that Mao always instigated such crises for this purpose, though his critics have pointed out several notable exceptions. Chen Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

⁵⁸ Telegram, State to the Embassy in Poland, 20 August 1958, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, XIX, 61.

⁵⁹ Telegram, State to the Embassy in Poland, 3 October 1958, *ibid*, 323.

possible.”⁶⁰ With neither side prepared to offer concessions the talks once more deadlocked.

The Problem of Chinese Nationalist Militancy

Just as the administration sought to prevent China from engaging in hostilities, so, too, did it seek to rein in the excesses of its more militant Asian allies, particularly Chiang Kai-shek and Syngman Rhee.⁶¹ The administration sympathized with the plight of these two leaders, but could not agree that the approach they advocated – an inflexible hostility toward the communist nations – was appropriate. The administration refused to allow Chiang and Rhee to draw the United States into a broader war and worked to dissuade them from initiating policies that might provoke communist ire unnecessarily and upset American efforts to achieve a lasting peace.

Rhee offered the most immediate problem during the Korean armistice negotiations by actively opposing any agreement that might leave communists in control of North Korea. On June 18, 1953, Rhee unilaterally released some 27,000 North Korean prisoners of war, an act that violated the repatriation provisions of the impending armistice agreement that the Americans had worked so hard to produce. The South Korean president also threatened to withdraw his nation's forces from the UNC, and demanded that Washington agree to a formal defense treaty with Seoul prior to an armistice. Years afterwards, Rhee continued his threats to incorporate forcibly into the

⁶⁰ Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and various State Department officials, 8 September 1958, *ibid.*, 156.

⁶¹ As Nancy Tucker has noted, “Containment in Asia faced both ways, restricting the ‘free’ as much as the Communist Chinese.” Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Uncertain Friendships: Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945-1992* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994), 5.

South certain portions of North Korea, a policy that the administration made clear it would not support.⁶² Communist nations derived considerable propaganda value from these circumstances. Khrushchev, for instance, accused Rhee of again “preparing military provocations.” “Evidently,” he continued, “someone in the US has definite plans once more to turn Korea into a field of bloody battle,” the responsibility for which “lies entirely on the Government of the USA.”⁶³

When Chiang defended Rhee’s call for a defense treaty, Eisenhower made his opposition unmistakably clear. The United States, he wrote, “recognizes the responsibilities implied in its position of moral leadership, and it is our firm resolve to meet these responsibilities to the best of our ability. However, you will understand that there cannot be leadership of those who may be determined to go their separate ways.”⁶⁴ For good measure, Ike sent an additional letter to Chiang the following week in which he expressed that circumstances called for “certain sacrifices and certain limitations on freedom of action on the part of all partners in a common effort.” Further, in regards to Rhee’s call for a defense treaty, he stated that “for such an agreement to be effective it must of necessity be based on mutual understanding, cooperation and shared responsibility in achieving the common objective.” Assuring this cooperation “is therefore prerequisite to the conclusion of such a pact.”⁶⁵ The message was clear: adhere

⁶² Memorandum of Conversation between Eisenhower and Dulles, 5 August 1955, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, III, 15.

⁶³ Letter, Khrushchev to Eisenhower, in Telegram, Embassy in the Soviet Union to State, 7 September 1958, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, XIX, 149.

⁶⁴ Letter, Eisenhower to Chiang, in Telegram, Dulles to the Embassy in the Republic of China, 25 June 1953, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, XIV, Part 1, 214-215.

⁶⁵ Letter, Eisenhower to Chiang, in Telegram, Dulles to the Embassy in the Republic of China, 30 June 1953, *ibid*, 217.

to the American method for waging the Cold War, which meant holding firm against communist aggression but doing nothing to unnecessarily exacerbate tensions; non-communist nations must not become aggressors themselves. The administration reiterated this message often, encouraging the Nationalists to “accord us latitude to play the game as we think best.”⁶⁶ American officials occasionally commented that Chiang behaved tolerably in avoiding major unilateral military actions against the PRC.⁶⁷

Yet the administration nonetheless understood that the Generalissimo sought to exploit Washington’s trust and complacency to suit his own ends.⁶⁸ The earliest example of this occurred on June 16, 1954, when Eisenhower approved informing Taipei of the routes of communist tankers traveling near Taiwan with the understanding that the Nationalists would seize their cargoes. On June 23, the ROC navy intercepted two Polish vessels and the Soviet tanker *Tuapse*. This immediately placed both Beijing and Moscow on alert as leaders in both capitols wondered whether this seizure indicated a more aggressive American posture or perhaps impending Nationalist military action. The State Department, which had belatedly awakened to the dangers of the situation,

⁶⁶ Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and George Yeh, 4 October 1955, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, III, 107.

⁶⁷ For instance, the Commander of the U.S. Taiwan Defense Command reported that “The GRC had proved to be a loyal and steadfast ally. They lived up to every agreement and were careful not to take action that could invalidate the Mutual Defense Treaty.” Report, Smoot to Felt, Undated (August-December 1958), *FRUS, 1958-1960*, XIX, 505; Referring to possible unilateral action on the part of the Nationalists, Eisenhower also noted that Chiang “had been good in observance of his commitments to us in this respect.” Memorandum of Meeting between Eisenhower and Dulles, et al, 25 August 1958, *ibid*, 73.

⁶⁸ Rankin characterized the ROC’s general acquiescence to American leadership in the following way: “Experience has persuaded the Chinese that the United States cannot be expected to take other than a short term view in the practical implementation of Far Eastern Policies. They place considerable reliance, however, on the general principles governing American foreign policy, which usually result in an adequate and effective, if tardy, response when a crisis arises. With this background, the Chinese count on (1) the future mistakes of the Communists, and (2) the force of circumstances in general to bring the United States around in due course to a practical policy of helping them in the liberation of Mainland China.” Telegram, Rankin to State, 8 March 1954, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, XIV, Part 1, 381.

reversed its decision to provide the ROC with additional intelligence information and encouraged the ROC to release the tankers it had seized.⁶⁹

Tensions nonetheless continued to escalate. Stepped-up military operations by both sides led to a series of minor incidents. Throughout July and August, Chiang continued to hold the communist tankers in violation of international law and against the strong urgings of the State Department, and even claimed ignorance of the fate of the ships and their crews. With the recent settlement of the Indochina situation at Geneva, Washington increasingly viewed Chiang as a liability, leading Secretary of Defense Wilson to wonder “whether we should continue supporting Chiang in stirring up hell with Communist China.”⁷⁰ Ike agreed, and on September 26 he ordered a temporary suspension of U.S. encouragement of Nationalist operations against the mainland. This decision came too late, however, to forestall the Chinese Communist bombardment of Jinmen Island that sparked the first Strait crisis.⁷¹ Realizing that it needed to do more to curb Nationalist militancy, the administration signed a Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) with Chiang Kai-shek in late November.⁷² The treaty called for joint consultations and American approval prior to any major ROC military action against the mainland, thus giving Washington considerable leverage over the nature and scope of Taipei’s military

⁶⁹ Memorandum, Robertson to Dulles, 19 August 1954, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, XIV, Part 1, 541-542.

⁷⁰ 214th Meeting of the NSC, 12 September 1954, *ibid*, 613.

⁷¹ The British saw the seizure of the *Tuapse* as “the incident which started the present chain.” Memorandum of Conversation between Merchant and Robert Scott, 3 November 1954, *ibid*, 852.

⁷² For a more detailed account of the internal discussions leading up to the approval of the MDT, see Tucker, “A House Divided,” Cohen and Iriye, eds., *The Great Powers in East Asia*, 45-48. She concludes that Dulles ultimately agreed to the MDT “as a mechanism for insuring Washington’s control over Chiang,” though Tucker fails to note the *Tuapse* incident or the subsequent disturbances prior to the PRC bombardment in September.

operations. Indeed, the administration emphasized the defensive nature of the treaty, asserting that “we are not going to defend our partner while our partner attacks.”⁷³

The MDT did not end the administration’s problems. In an August 1955 article, the Chinese *People’s Daily* pointed out the contradiction between the ongoing, small-scale Nationalist operations and the “U.S.-supported principle of refraining from the use of force.” Reports soon revealed a disproportionately high level of activity among Nationalist forces as compared to PRC operations, much of it occurring without the necessary approval of U.S. military officers.⁷⁴ This, in turn, led the State Department to intensify its efforts to catalogue and hinder incidents of Nationalist harassment of the mainland. These efforts to control Chiang’s aggressiveness did not go unnoticed in Beijing, and may have contributed to ending the crisis.⁷⁵

Washington’s tacit acceptance of its responsibility for Chiang’s provocative actions re-emerged in the internal policy discussions that took place during the second Strait crisis in late-1958. While the central issue of concern remained China’s resort to

⁷³ Memorandum, Dulles to Robertson, 8 October 1954, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, XIV, Part 1, 709; The many steps the administration took to rein in Chiang’s excesses calls into question interpretations offered by Gordon H. Chang, He Di, and H. W. Brands that, in Brands’ words, the administration was “disinclined to look for a peaceful resolution” to the crisis. H.W. Brands, “Testing Massive Retaliation: Credibility and Crisis Management in the Taiwan Strait,” *International Security*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Spring 1988); Gordon H. Chang, “To the Nuclear Brink: Eisenhower, Dulles, and the Quemoy-Matsu Crisis,” *International Security*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Spring 1988), 96-123; Gordon H. Chang and He Di, “The Absence of War in the U.S.-China Confrontation over Quemoy and Matsu in 1954-1955: Contingency, Luck, Deterrence?” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 98, No. 5 (Dec. 1993), 1500-1524. For a counterpoint to such interpretations, see Leonard H. D. Gordon, “United States Opposition to Use of Force in the Taiwan Strait, 1954-1962,” *Journal of American History*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (Dec. 1985), 637-660.

⁷⁴ Memorandum, Bowie to Dulles, 19 August 1955, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, III, 51; McConaughy dismissed these Nationalist activities as “mere pin pricks which are going to have to be lived with in the present situation. We must look to the central issue which is major invocation of force for a general offensive purpose.” Letter, McConaughy to Johnson, 23 September 1955, *ibid*, 80 note 4.

⁷⁵ See Leon V. Sigal, “The ‘Rational Policy’ Model and the Formosa Straits Crises,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (June 1970), 121-156; Thomas E. Stolper, *China, Taiwan, and the Offshore Islands, Together with an Implication for Outer Mongolia and Sino-Soviet Relations* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1985), 98-100.

the use of force, what made the situation of such importance to the administration was the excessively large number of Nationalist soldiers Chiang had stationed on the exposed offshore islands. After the 1954-55 Strait crisis Washington struggled to convince Chiang to withdraw his forces from these islands to more defensible positions. Contemporary journalistic reports as well as later historical studies suggest that the envoys dispatched to convince Chiang to accept this proposal – Robertson and Admiral Radford – intentionally sabotaged the plan by not pressing vigorously for Chiang’s approval.⁷⁶ Robertson later denied this charge, and, in any event, Chiang would likely not have agreed to this plan under the terms the administration had set, regardless of who presented it.

In any event, Beijing’s reversion to a more peaceful posture following the resumption of the ambassadorial talks removed much of the pressure on the administration to take more assertive action against Chiang. This relative complacency allowed the Generalissimo enough freedom of action to build up his forces on the island despite Washington’s protests. Thus, by the outbreak of the second Strait crisis, the administration found itself trapped; the loss of such a large percentage of Chiang’s forces might result not only in the destruction of Taiwan’s morale and military power, but also the weakening of the morale and strategic posture of the broader non-communist world.

⁷⁶ Stewart Alsop, “The Story Behind Quemoy: How We Drifted Close to War,” *Saturday Evening Post*, 19 December 1958, 88; Tucker, “A House Divided,” in Cohen and Iriye, eds., *The Great Powers in East Asia*, 51.

Chiang responded to the PRC bombardment by increasing the tempo of his own military operations. As tensions spiraled upward, CIA Director Allen Dulles reported on August 7 that the Nationalists' "well-advertised attacks on Chinese Communist junks had supplied the Chinese Communists with a precedent for air attacks on shipping." Nationalist air attacks against the PRC similarly grew "heavier and more aggressive" and occurred "in violation of their pledged word to us."⁷⁷ Alarmed at this turn of events, Dulles expressed that "It is one thing to contend that the Chicoms should keep their hands off the present territorial and political status of Taiwan" and "not attempt to change this by violence which might precipitate general war in the area. It is another thing to contend that they should be quiescent while this area is used by the Chinats as an active base for attempting to foment civil strife and to carry out widespread propaganda."⁷⁸ Soon thereafter, Secretary Dulles "on an urgent basis" called for information on the nature and extent of Nationalist activities undertaken from the islands in recent months which could with justification be regarded by the Communists as provocative," even going so far as to express that "we shouldn't really expect the Communists to refrain from attacking the islands if they were being used as bases for hostile activities against the mainland."⁷⁹

After reviewing the situation, the administration concluded it not only must convince the PRC to cease fire, but must also "make Chiang more flexible in his

⁷⁷ 380th meeting of the NSC, 25 September 1958, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, XIX, 270.

⁷⁸ Memorandum, Dulles to Herter and Robertson, 23 August 1958, *ibid*, 69.

⁷⁹ Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and various State Department officials, 8 September 1958, *ibid*, 156.

approach.”⁸⁰ Dulles himself took on this responsibility, travelling to Taipei to convince Chiang of the necessity of ceasing his provocations and of adopting a strategy more conducive to achieving the administration’s objectives. In his discussions with the Generalissimo, Dulles laid out the variety of factors undermining both the American stance against China and Washington’s continued support of the ROC. He then called for a “fresh approach” to the mission envisioned for Chiang and his government that would prevent Taipei’s diplomatic isolation while maintaining ROC capabilities. Taipei could help achieve both of these goals by disproving the common perception of the ROC as desiring to perpetuate war and transforming “that unattractive image into one that all free people will welcome and support.” As such, the ROC should end commando raids and overflights of the mainland, reassert that it would not invade China, and reduce the number of soldiers stationed on the offshore islands.⁸¹

The Nationalists vigorously rejected Dulles’ recommendations, asserting Taipei’s “superhuman self-restraint in the face of Communist provocations.” Further, the American proposal suggested the ROC should accept a “Two China” idea, which the ROC could never do. “Any indication by this Government,” the Foreign Minister expressed, “which suggests its contentment with its present status of exile and its willingness to see such a state of affairs perpetuated could only be construed as the abandonment of its ultimate objective on which the Free Chinese have been pinning their

⁸⁰ Memorandum of Conversation between Eisenhower and Generals Twining and Goodpaster, 29 September 1958, and Memorandum prepared by Green, 18 September 1958, both in *ibid*, 296 and 223, respectively; Ike commented that “it was a dismaying thing to him that the orientals – both Nationalists and Communists – were creating a situation built around force.” Memorandum of Conversation between Eisenhower and various British officials, 21 September 1958, *ibid*, 249.

⁸¹ Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and Chiang, et al., 22 October 1958, *ibid*, 424-426.

hopes.”⁸² Remarkably, despite this apparent inflexibility Dulles and Chiang had within two days drafted a joint communiqué that essentially achieved Dulles’ objective. After asserting the “restoration of freedom to its people on the mainland” as its “sacred mission,” the ROC acknowledged that “the foundation of this mission resides in the minds and hearts of the Chinese people and that the principal means of successfully achieving its mission is the implementation of Dr. Sun Yat-sen’s three people’s principles” and “not the use of force.”⁸³ Given the continued fighting in the Strait, Dulles did not expect this to have immediate military ramifications. Nonetheless, Chiang’s pledge to depend primarily on political ideas instead of military force to liberate the mainland, Dulles believed, would have “important applications over the future.”⁸⁴

The administration trumpeted this achievement as a landmark in the struggle for peace in the region. Ike immediately wrote to Chiang congratulating him on renouncing force as a means to achieve his objectives. “This free-world principle, not accepted by the Communists,” he stated, “sets us apart from them and morally above them. Your enunciation of that principle will, I am confident, be welcomed throughout the free world.”⁸⁵ Dulles confidently reported the contents of the communiqué to British Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd, emphasizing that “already the Government is working with our military advisers on plans for a substantial reduction of forces in Quemoy and Matsu,”

⁸² Memorandum of Conversation between Drumright and ROC Foreign Minister Huang, 22 October 1958, *ibid.*, 428-429.

⁸³ Joint U.S.-ROC Communiqué, 23 October 1958, *ibid.*, 442-444.

⁸⁴ Letter, Dulles to Eisenhower, 23 October 1958, *ibid.*, 444.

⁸⁵ Letter, Eisenhower to Chiang, in Telegram, State to the Embassy in the Republic of China, 24 October 1958, *ibid.*, 446; Circular Telegram, State to All Diplomatic Missions, 25 October 1958, *ibid.*, 451-452.

and that “there would be no insuperable obstacles on the Nationalist side to working out a reasonable program for tranquilizing the situation in the Taiwan area.”⁸⁶ The following day, the State Department dispatched a similar message to all diplomatic missions so that they may report on the communiqué to the governments to which they were accredited.⁸⁷ A subsequent State Department analysis noted that despite the “deeply disturbing reports” during the crisis that the ROC might launch independent military action against the mainland, Chiang “accepted calmly all the decisions we took” and might be “more amenable to realism and reason than we have given him credit for.”⁸⁸

Whether coincidental or not, on October 25, the day following the issuance of the joint communiqué, China announced a new policy of shelling the offshore islands only on even-numbered days, thus suggesting to Washington the essentially political, rather than military, significance of the action. The following day, the PRC withdrew the last of its “volunteers” from North Korea, the end of a gradual reduction that began in February 1958. On November 17, the administration reached an agreement with the ROC to augment Nationalist artillery strength on the offshore islands in return for a substantial reduction of troops stationed there, and despite some initial feet-dragging the ROC eventually complied.⁸⁹ Furthermore, the two sides also agreed to an “Accelerated Development Program” designed to increase rapidly the economic potential and self-

⁸⁶ Letter, Dulles to Lloyd, 24 October 1958, *ibid*, 450.

⁸⁷ Circular Telegram, State to All Diplomatic Missions, 25 October 1958, *ibid*, 451-452.

⁸⁸ Draft Statement Prepared in the Department of State, Undated (February 1959), *ibid*, 540.

⁸⁹ Memorandum of Conversation between Robertson and George Yeh, 19 March 1959, *ibid*, 550-551; By the summer of 1960 the ROC had reduced its forces on Quemoy from 86,000 to approximately 70,000. Memorandum, Parsons to Herter, 10 August 1960, *ibid*, 707.

sufficiency of Taiwan in order to enhance its value as a “showcase” of the benefits of a free society.⁹⁰ With Chiang at long last apparently under control and with China once more on the diplomatic defensive, conditions appeared now to be moving in the direction of an uneasy yet peaceful status quo.

Pressures for Peace: Perpetuating the Alternative Strategies

How did these efforts to curb the aggressive tendencies of both the PRC and ROC facilitate the emergence of the “tolerable state of order” envisioned in NSC 68? That document had prophesized that containment itself would suffice to compel communist reform so long as the United States simultaneously asserted its willingness to negotiate in good faith. But neither Truman nor Eisenhower felt they could rely on this alone to achieve the desired results.

In its search for a successful strategy, the Eisenhower administration began where its predecessors had left off: with consideration of ways to inspire an indigenous mainland revolt against Mao. But the basic problems with such an approach remained. Six months after taking office, the administration concluded that “there was no intelligence to indicate the likelihood of dissension in China, and, indeed, that a rising in that country was the most remote of all the current possibilities.”⁹¹ Even the decreasing voluntary support of the regime and rising dissatisfaction within China during the first half of 1954 had failed to result in the creation of any effective or organized resistance to

⁹⁰ Telegram, Embassy in the Republic of China to State, 31 December 1959, *ibid*, 643-645.

⁹¹ Meeting of the NSC, 18 June 1953, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, XIV, Part 1, 204-205.

CCP control.⁹² Within a year after entering office the administration formally abandoned the rollback policy that it had advocated so vigorously during the 1952 presidential campaign. This did not mean, however, that Eisenhower abandoned the idea of toppling Mao's government – indeed, his administration regularly pursued the overthrow of other governments, particularly Iran, Guatemala, and Cuba, through means short of direct American military involvement. Rather, he chose to pursue a policy that would advance this goal in a manner consistent with the acknowledged limits of American economic and military power and with due regard for the imperative of preserving peace in the Asia-Pacific region.

Ike's solution derived from his firm conviction that the "totalitarian" communist regimes "were excessively rigid and have inherent weaknesses on which we should attempt to capitalize."⁹³ Other officials agreed. Vice President Richard Nixon argued that "the Chinese people could not indefinitely allow the freedoms and their contact with the free nations to be cut off by the actions of a totalitarian government," while Dulles believed that "despotisms" such as the PRC "run counter to the nature and aspirations of humanity. They often have a seemingly impregnable exterior but inside they are full of rotteness."⁹⁴ Administration officials based this view not only on ideology, but also on actual historical examples. Unbeknownst to the United States, according to Dulles, Nazi Germany "had already begun to crumble" in the midst of World War II, and dictators "may be liquidated very abruptly, as happened in the case of Beria." "We would want to

⁹² NIE 13-54, "Communist China's Power Potential Through 1957," 3 June 1954, *ibid*, 448-450.

⁹³ 226th meeting of the NSC, 1 December 1954, *ibid*, 968.

⁹⁴ Message, Nixon to Dulles, in Telegram, Briggs to State, 12 November 1953, and Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and George Yeh, et al, 27 October 1954, both in *ibid*, 331-332 and 801, respectively.

be ready,” he continued, “if the opportunity comes, to take immediate advantage of it.”⁹⁵ Administration officials even pointed to more recent changes within the Soviet system, noting that by 1956 Moscow had renewed relations with Yugoslavia and had consigned the writings of Stalin “to the ash can.”⁹⁶

The administration could not predict, however, when China might undergo such a change. As Dulles explained, the United States must await “the processes of evolution, that it might be a five-year matter before we knew whether the Chinese Communists would really maintain their hold on the country or possibly break down; or on the other hand whether they were going to adopt standards of conduct such that they could be received into decent society.”⁹⁷ Washington thus sought to curb Taipei and Beijing’s militancy in order to bide time “until the evolution of Chinese Communist internal policy makes the regime no longer hostile and no longer to be feared.”⁹⁸ Rather than simply await such a development, however, the administration chose instead a more proactive approach whereby the United States would place additional strains and pressures on China beyond mere military containment that would facilitate Beijing’s anticipated breakdown and reorientation. These pressures served to achieve two general purposes: to deny the Chinese Communists success both in conducting their foreign policies and achieving their domestic reforms.

⁹⁵ Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and George Yeh, et al, 27 October 1954, *ibid*, 801.

⁹⁶ Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and Chiang, et al, 16 March 1956, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, III, 330.

⁹⁷ Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and Macmillan, 20 June 1955, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, II, 606.

⁹⁸ Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and Lloyd, et al, 31 January 1956, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, III, 293.

The military containment of the PRC emphasized to the Chinese Communists that they would not gain from unjustified acts of aggression, and that sooner or later they must accommodate themselves to the fact that the international community would not stand for such behavior. The same held true for the continued denial of PRC membership in the U.N. and the refusal of many nations to grant Beijing diplomatic recognition. Indeed, as Dulles noted, “the strongest single motivation of the Chinese in their international conduct was a desire to be treated like everyone else and that our unwillingness to concede to them in this had been the greatest sanction upon them which we held.” No nation “should accede to their desire until they have earned it in the sense of demonstrating a determination to conduct themselves properly and in accord with international law and custom.”⁹⁹ Throughout the 1950s, few nations extended recognition to the PRC, and several nations that considered doing so, such as Belgium, Canada, and New Zealand, ultimately acceded to American persuasion against recognition.¹⁰⁰

But depriving Beijing of these foreign policy victories also served to limit the examples that Mao could point to as signs of his effective leadership. Mao and his comrades “fully understood that if they were able to present a strong case of advancement in the PRC’s international status to China’s ordinary people” this would place them in “a more powerful position to promote the party’s mass mobilization plans at home.” Thus, for the CCP the Geneva and Bandung Conferences constituted a

⁹⁹ Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and various State Department officials, 12 February 1957, *ibid.*, 476.

¹⁰⁰ Eisenhower explained to Canadian Prime Minister Diefenbaker that “if Canada recognized China it would ‘wreck’ us, and he added it would probably also wreck the United Nations.” Conversation between Eisenhower and Diefenbaker, 8 July 1958, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, XIX, 30.

“crucial test case that would have a profound impact upon Mao’s continuous revolution and China’s domestic development.”¹⁰¹ The extent to which the Eisenhower administration understood this motivational factor remains unclear, yet the policy it pursued nonetheless anticipated this dynamic. Maintaining the PRC’s diplomatic isolation and orchestrating the failure of Mao’s foreign policies would serve to discredit and de-legitimize the regime in the eyes of both the Chinese people and the more moderate CCP officials who were anxious for leadership that could achieve China’s rightful place in the world after a century of humiliation and warfare.¹⁰²

The administration also hoped to exacerbate tensions between the CCP and the Chinese people through a consistent program of economic sanctions. The Truman administration implemented these during the Korean War in cooperation with its allies primarily for the purpose of hindering the PRC’s ability to conduct military operations in the region. The Eisenhower administration also viewed sanctions as serving this purpose, and the president himself believed that the economic disruptions the sanctions caused had been among the more significant factors convincing Beijing to participate in the Korean armistice negotiations.¹⁰³ The administration frequently reiterated the benefits of continued economic sanctions in order to convince wavering allies not to relax trade controls.

¹⁰¹ Chen Jian, “China and the Bandung Conference,” in Tan and Amitav, eds., *Bandung Revisited*, 134-135.

¹⁰² Interestingly, Michael Hunt and Steven Levine view these same factors as crucial in inspiring the social revolution in China, Vietnam, and the Philippines during the 1930s and ‘40s, which “arose from a quiet crisis of confidence” regarding the states’ “diminished capacity to meet foreign and domestic responsibilities” that then sparked political action. Hunt and Levine, “The Revolutionary Challenge to Early U.S. Cold War Policy,” in Cohen and Iriye, eds., *The Great Powers in East Asia*, 15.

¹⁰³ For a discussion of the effect the sanctions had on China’s economy in early-1951, see Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 44.

But the extent of the economic sanctions against China suggest that the administration considered this policy as achieving something more than merely hindering Chinese Communist military strength. Aside from war contraband, sanctions also included bans on industrial materials and tools that would facilitate China's development from an underdeveloped state to a modernized, industrial power. Lingering doubts regarding Chinese intentions compelled the Eisenhower administration to perpetuate this policy even after the end of the Korean War, arguing that because the U.N. had condemned China as an aggressor "there existed a legal obligation to treat China differently from the remainder of the Soviet bloc," a difference known as the China Differential.¹⁰⁴ Britain and other American allies rejected arguments that China deserved harsher trade restrictions and criticized the American defense of the Differential for the remainder of the decade.¹⁰⁵

The administration nonetheless fought vigorously against relaxing trade controls, with Ike at one point attributed this rigidity to domestic politics. Indeed, beginning in 1956 Congressional pressure to maintain these sanctions grew intense.¹⁰⁶ Ultimately, however, such domestic pressures proved unnecessary; the continuation of the trade restrictions advanced the strategy for reorienting China that the administration had

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 135. "Economic defense policies toward Communist China differ from those toward the rest of the Soviet bloc since Communist China is a military aggressor." NSC 152/2, "Economic Defense," 31 July 1953, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, XIV, Part 1, 239.

¹⁰⁵ Jeffrey Engel, "Of Fat and Thin Communists: Diplomacy and Philosophy in Western Economic Warfare Strategies toward China (and Tyrants, Broadly)," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (June 2005), 451-453.

¹⁰⁶ Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 180-183.

already adopted.¹⁰⁷ The most significant problem it faced was not changing its approach to suit its domestic constituency, but rather how to reconcile the demands for inflexibility emanating from Congress with the demands for relaxation emanating from U.S. allies abroad.

Washington continued reiterating the effects these sanctions were having in terms of sowing dissatisfaction among the Chinese people.¹⁰⁸ The fundamental dilemma facing every Communist economic system, the administration believed, was that they “could not reduce their commitments” to improving the lives of their people, nor were such systems capable of “increasing their resources fast enough to cover their commitments.” Such circumstances, Dulles argued, had led to widespread discontent in the Soviet Union that had resulted in the ouster of Soviet Premier Georgy Malenkov; similar processes might occur in China.¹⁰⁹ In 1954, for instance, some administration officials anticipated “economic chaos” in China when Beijing, lacking the resources to maintain its industrial development, began exporting grain at a time when the nation faced massive food shortages.¹¹⁰ In subsequent years, a series of obstacles continued to undermine international support for the China Differential, most especially the unilateral British decision to relax its trade restrictions. Disheartened by this development, the

¹⁰⁷ Dulles agreed in December 1955 that “the United States had no intention of changing its own policy of embargoing trade with Communist China.” 271st Meeting of the NSC, 22 December 1955, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, III, 227.

¹⁰⁸ Jeffrey Engel describes the “Lockean” logic of the American policy in the following way: “American thinkers reasoned economic warfare against China might so pain the Chinese people that they would rise up in revolt against their own regime.” Engel, “Of Fat and Thin Communists,” 449.

¹⁰⁹ Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and George Yeh, et al, 10 February 1955, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, II, 257-258.

¹¹⁰ Meeting of the NSC, 12 August 1954, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, XIV, Part 1, 522.

administration could do little but cooperate in a collective reduction of multilateral controls while perpetuating its own more rigid set of unilateral sanctions.

This American persistence may have derived from the 1956 uprisings in Hungary and Tibet that some officials viewed as vindications of a policy of pressures. As such, Dulles hardened the administration's negotiating stance at the Sino-American ambassadorial talks in September 1956, refusing to make any concessions on trade "even if Chinese Communists have made firm decision suspend talks."¹¹¹ When Mao gave his speech on the proper handling of contradictions the following year, administration officials pointed out how "Mao's concern throughout the speech with evidences of popular dissatisfaction with the Communist regime is quite marked," thus amounting to "an admission of considerable lack of support for the collectivization program."¹¹² In the midst of a "second successive year of agricultural disaster" during which unrest was "virtually nationwide," Dulles reported to Ike that the PRC had ordered all foreign journalists to leave the country "apparently to prevent reports of how bad the situation is."¹¹³ Despite such signs, the administration's will to defend the China Differential gradually broke down over the course of 1958, and ended completely when Washington failed to obtain international backing for even a partial resumption during the second Strait crisis later that year.¹¹⁴ This likely did not indicate the abandonment of the administration's hope for a popular revolt, only the absence of one method by which it sought to facilitate that result.

¹¹¹ Telegram, State to Johnson, 5 September 1956, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, III, 427 note 2.

¹¹² Memorandum, Clough to Robertson, 20 June 1957, *ibid*, 549.

¹¹³ Memorandum, Cumming to Dulles, 8 August 1957, *ibid*, 580; Memorandum of Conversation between Eisenhower and Dulles, 11 September 1958, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, XIX, 163.

¹¹⁴ Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 195-202.

The administration also felt that the Republic of China might serve a useful purpose in its strategy of fomenting mainland discord. Ever mindful of Chinese fears of Western exploitation, the administration realized the unique advantage of having a genuinely Chinese alternative to the CCP. As an early policy statement expressed, “The existence of the Chinese Government on Formosa offers an at least symbolic alternative to Communist control of the mainland, and helps to frustrate the Communist objective of gaining international acceptance as the sole representative of the Chinese people.”¹¹⁵ With this in mind, Ike often pointed out what the United States may have accomplished in other situations if alternative governments had existed, such as in the case of Hungary. But despite its value as an indigenous Chinese government, the exact nature of Taipei’s role in Eisenhower’s strategy remained unclear because this depended on how events within China developed. In the absence of any ability to guide internal Chinese developments along a more specific path, the administration could only contemplate a variety of possible contingencies. In the event that popular dissatisfaction sparked a civil war, for instance, Nationalist forces might intervene to bolster the military fortunes of the moderates. If a political collapse occurred, ROC forces might help to preserve stability and return the nation to orderly administration – and more cooperative foreign policies. And if dissent within China reached a critical point short of a mass uprising, a landing of Nationalist troops on the mainland might precipitate such an uprising as the Chinese people flocked to the ROC banner.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ NSC 166/1, “U.S. Policy Toward Communist China,” 6 November 1953, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, XIV, Part 1, 300.

¹¹⁶ The scenarios the paper envisioned that might justify Nationalist intervention included dissention among the PRC leadership, dissension among the Chinese people, and the outbreak of large-scale war.

In the context of the Cold War ideological struggle, this emphasis on offering a political alternative to communist rule made sense. As early as November 1953, the NSC noted that because “the roots of Chinese Communist political power must be attacked by the Chinese themselves, it is essential to foster and support non-communist Chinese political movements.” This would prevent Beijing from “monopolizing the tremendous strength of Chinese nationalism and thus converting the Chinese people into enemies of the free world.” And because the ROC “represents the only effective non-communist Chinese political force in being,” its existence “is sufficient justification for aiding it despite uncertainties as to its future on the mainland.”¹¹⁷

For the ROC to play any of these roles, however, it had to portray itself as an attractive alternative to Mao and the CCP. In July 1952, this idea found public expression in a *Foreign Affairs* article that highlighted the benefits of a “Free China Model” that combined “the positive elements of Chinese civilization with economic development, democracy, and the rule of law.”¹¹⁸ The incoming Eisenhower administration did take steps to accomplish certain political reforms in the ROC. For instance, in November 1953, Dulles noted the “rough” methods that the KMT used to maintain its power on Taiwan, and expressed hope that Taipei would learn “to cope with problems of subversion, disloyalty and security without infringing on basic human rights

Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and George Yeh, et al, 10 February 1955, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, II, 251.

¹¹⁷ NSC staff study on NSC 146, “United States Objectives and Courses of Action with Respect to Formosa and the Chinese National Government,” Undated (November 1953), *FRUS, 1952-1954*, XIV, Part 1, 311-312.

¹¹⁸ Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 230-231. For the article, see Albert Ravenhold, “Formosa Today,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (July 1952), 612-24.

and without denials of due process of law to suspects.”¹¹⁹ However, in large part because it prioritized Nationalist stability and military capability, the Eisenhower administration did not press the issue.¹²⁰

For purposes of winning the hearts and minds of the Chinese people, the administration considered it sufficient to propagandize, casting the ROC in a favorable light as compared to the policies and programs of the PRC. The administration had an early opportunity to practice this psychological warfare when a massive flood caused a humanitarian crisis in China in mid-1954. The State Department hatched a scheme whereby the ROC would make a well-advertised food offer to alleviate the suffering of the Chinese people. Beijing’s expected refusal of this aid “would show that the regime places its political and prestige interests above the welfare of the flood victims” while simultaneously portraying the humane sentiments of the Nationalist government.¹²¹

The extent to which the administration considered such measures successful remains unclear. Reports frequently mentioned the rising dissatisfaction among the Chinese people, and policy statements spoke favorably of the effort to make the ROC more appealing for the mainland Chinese. Yet information remained scarce regarding the influence ROC intervention might have on translating this discontent into effective action. In the absence of such information, the administration remained non-committal to proposals for the use of Nationalist forces. In 1956, for instance, noting recent anti-Communist uprisings in Poland, Hungary, Tibet, and Xinjiang, Chiang encouraged

¹¹⁹ Memorandum written by McConaughy, 13 November 1953, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, XIV, Part 1, 251-253.

¹²⁰ Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 241.

¹²¹ Memorandum, Robertson to Dulles, 16 August 1954, *FRUS, 1952-1954*, XIV, Part 1, 525-526.

Eisenhower to “take advantage of this favorable development by puncturing the Iron Curtain at its most vulnerable spots,” after which the “enslaved peoples behind it will rise in revolt.”¹²² Ike countered by noting that “unrest in China has not yet reached a point comparable to that in Europe.”¹²³ By the end of 1958, Dulles reaffirmed the administration’s belief that conditions in China might yet deteriorate to a point where a Nationalist invasion would prove fruitful.¹²⁴ Indeed, the possibility of China’s social order breaking down may have contributed to Chiang’s rather conciliatory response to Dulles’ presentation during the latter’s October 1958 visit to Taipei; the Americans might finally undertake the course of action they had reiterated so many times, but never actually embraced. Ultimately, however, the Eisenhower administration could never bring itself to take that final step of approving ROC military action.

Aside from the extraordinary risk that such an enterprise might draw the United States into a massive land war on the Asian mainland, this reluctance might also have derived from the fact that the administration envisioned – and may have preferred – one other scenario: that the PRC government might moderate its policies without the need for ROC intervention. Administration officials only implicitly suggested this possibility in their discussions with Chiang, in part to ensure ROC viability and in part because Ike and Dulles did not believe events would likely move in that direction. Yet the fact remained that the administration found tolerable the reunification of Taiwan with the mainland in the event that the PRC cease posing a threat to regional stability and that

¹²² Letter, Chiang to Eisenhower, 11 December 1956, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, III, 446-448.

¹²³ Letter, Eisenhower to Chiang, in Telegram, Dulles to the Embassy in the Republic of China, 26 December 1956, *ibid*, 462-463.

¹²⁴ Dulles’ News Conference, 30 September 1958, Department of State *Bulletin*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 1008, 20 October 1958, 598.

such reunification occur peacefully. Indeed, the president, himself, acknowledged that if Beijing “should finally get out of North Korea, release our prisoners, and act decently” then the United States could not justifiably continue a policy of non-recognition.¹²⁵

As the decade wore on, Taipei grew increasingly nervous about repeated American statements that the United States did not expect China to renounce its claims regarding Taiwan, but rather only that it renounce the use of force to achieve these ends. The Nationalists argued that such statements produced a contradiction in American policy, and seemed to imply a “lurking intention” to pursue either a two-Chinas or, worse, a one (Red) China policy.¹²⁶ However, Beijing’s rejection of a renunciation of force agreement, the repeated assurances of American support for the ROC, and the worsening domestic conditions in China all minimized Taipei’s concerns and provided hope that the Nationalists might yet play an active role in liberating the Chinese people from communist rule.

Ironically, just as the administration hoped for the gradual moderation among the leadership in Beijing, so, too, did it increasingly view evolutionary processes as working toward the moderation of Chiang and the KMT. American estimates had long emphasized that objective circumstances would eventually end Taipei’s “return to the mainland” mentality, but the 1958 Strait crisis once more brought such ideas to the fore. Ike expressed extreme annoyance at Chiang’s continued provocations that served only to undermine the broader Cold War struggle. Both he and Dulles began looking forward to

¹²⁵ Meeting of the NSC, 9 February 1956, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, III, 305.

¹²⁶ Telegram, Rankin to State, 26 January 1956, and Memorandum of Conversation between Robertson and Wellington Koo, 1 February 1956, both in *ibid.*, 279 and 295, respectively.

the “natural force of evolution” – particularly the death of Chiang and the integration of the native Formosans into the government and armed forces – that would result in the Nationalists abandoning their more dangerous ambitions. As Dulles noted that October, “as time passes a large number of the people on Taiwan will be wanting Taiwan to be a separate state,” especially the mainlanders who would “be more interested in the development of the island itself, having become rooted there, than in returning to the mainland.”¹²⁷

Ultimately, the administration pursued a policy that sought, above all, lasting regional stability. Whether the administration could achieve this objective through the use of ROC military intervention on the mainland or through the more peaceful application of political and economic pressures mattered little so long as the military option acted in support of the Chinese people themselves in expressing their discontent against an ineffective regime. Indeed, Eisenhower regularly emphasized the importance of determining “what the people of China wanted,” pointing out that “The Chinese people were not a pawn in the struggle between Mao and Chiang.”¹²⁸ As such, the policy Eisenhower and Dulles chose to pursue reflected neither an unwavering loyalty to Taipei nor an inflexible animosity toward Beijing. The administration’s acknowledgement of the Soviets’ relative moderation is indicative of this desire to seek a *modus vivendi* with the communist world; ideological rivals could pursue their interests

¹²⁷ Memorandum of Conversation between Dulles and Richard Casey, et al, 13 October 1958, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, XIX, 395.

¹²⁸ 419th Meeting of the NSC, 17 September 1959, *ibid*, 589.

in a competitive, yet peaceful manner. Yet by the end of the 1950s the United States had failed to convince either the ROC or PRC that this was, indeed, possible.

CHAPTER IV

UNCHANGED IMPERATIVES: CHINA POLICY DURING THE KENNEDY AND JOHNSON ADMINISTRATIONS, 1961-1968

The Kennedy administration entered office in January 1961 with the same objective as its two predecessors, namely, a genuine desire to achieve normalized relations with the Chinese Communists, but to do so without abandoning the basic principles of non-aggression and respect for the political sovereignty of other peoples. Kennedy looked forward to the day when communist nations would no longer seek to extend their control over their neighbors through subversion or the threat of force, and he envisioned a future world of “independent nations, with a diversity of economic, political and religious systems, united by a common respect for the rights of others.”¹ Soon after taking office, Kennedy asserted his willingness to “tackle the very deepseated and emotional opposition throughout this country” if he discerned any possibility that China would accept these principles. He quickly concluded, however, that the “Chinese Communists were just as hostile to the new administration as they were to the old,” and, thus, his China policy “remained substantially unchanged and certainly there was no question at all of diplomatic recognition.”² In later months, Kennedy expressed considerably less confidence in his ability to expend his domestic political capital on

¹ John F. Kennedy, “Where We Stand,” *Look Magazine*, 15 January 1963, *PPP*.

² Memorandum of Conversation between Kennedy and New Zealand Prime Minister Holyoake, et al, 3 March 1961, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963*, Vol. XXII: Northeast Asia, 21, hereafter cited as *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII.

launching new initiatives toward the PRC. Yet he nonetheless reiterated that Chinese intransigence remained the fundamental hindrance to improved relations.³

Just as Kennedy shared his predecessor's objectives, he also perpetuated their strategy of military containment coupled with a reluctance to grant concessions prior to achieving the desired Chinese Communist reforms.⁴ In 1940, Kennedy penned *Why England Slept*, an examination of British rearmament policy during the late-1930s that fit well with the Truman and Eisenhower administration's view that the United States and its allies must prepare themselves to uphold – with force if necessary – the principles of the international order.⁵ While a member of Congress during the 1950s, Kennedy also developed a particular interest in the favored communist tactic of subversion and guerilla warfare that made him especially sensitive to and concerned about the expansion of these activities during his presidency.⁶

Kennedy's Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, held similar ideas, describing the primary task of American foreign policy as “to help build a decent world order.”⁷ In large part, this perspective grew from his work with the United Nations in Truman's State Department and his participation in the policy deliberations both prior to and during the Korean War.⁸ Out of public office during Eisenhower's two terms, and

³ Dean Rusk, *As I Saw It* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), 196, 282-284; At a press conference on 11 October 1961, Kennedy stated that there were no signs that the Chinese Communists wished to “live in comity with us.” *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 169 note 2; According to Rosemary Foot, the incoming administration did not view “domestic signals” as strong enough to justify a significant policy change. Foot, *The Practice of Power*, 96.

⁴ James Fetzer, “Clinging to Containment: China Policy,” in Thomas G. Paterson, ed., *Kennedy's Quest for Victory: American Foreign Policy, 1961-1963* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 178-180.

⁵ John F. Kennedy, *Why England Slept* (New York: Wilfred Funk, 1940 [1961]).

⁶ Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated*, 39.

⁷ Rusk, *As I Saw It*, 401.

⁸ For Rusk's experiences with and views of the United Nations, see *ibid*, 408-414.

perhaps because of his affiliation with the Democrats, Rusk joined with many other foreign policy specialists during the late-1950s in calling for a more flexible China policy than the one Eisenhower pursued.⁹ This enhanced flexibility did not mean abandoning the basic premises on which Ike had based his China policy, however. As Assistant Secretary of State Roger Hilsman wrote in 1964,

It was obvious that more flexibility was needed, but it was also obvious that firmness, and a willingness to face Chinese threats would also continue to be needed. For before the Chinese Communists would be responsive to policy initiatives from the United States, they had to be convinced that continued hostility had failed and that they had come up against an unyielding wall of resistance. Isolated initiatives, like lifting trade restrictions, would accomplish nothing and might even run counter to the goal.¹⁰

The ascendance of Lyndon Johnson to the Presidency following Kennedy's assassination in November 1963 did little to change this, in part because Johnson retained Rusk as Secretary of State, but also because Johnson could also recall the failures of appeasement during the 1930s. He derived from these personal experiences a firm belief that the United States could – and must – exert its influence in the world for the sake of global peace and order.¹¹ From his seat in Congress during the 1950s and as vice president in the early-1960s, he arrived at a similar interpretation of Chinese

⁹ Roger Hilsman, *To Move a Nation: The Politics of Foreign Policy in the Administration of John F. Kennedy* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1964), 291.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 317.

¹¹ Michael Lumbers, *Piercing the Bamboo Curtain: Tentative Bridge-Building to China During the Johnson Years* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 54.

behavior and of the appropriate means of dealing with it. The fact that Johnson entered office at a time of increasing tensions in Southeast Asia strengthened this conviction, and further undermined his belief in the possibility of a rapprochement with Beijing. Beneath these tensions, however, remained that enduring strand of American thought that looked forward to an era of friendly Sino-American relations once China adopted an attitude that Washington considered more appropriate. By the end of his presidency, Johnson and his team perceived that Beijing had begun a difficult transformational process that he hoped would produce a more cooperative outlook.

The Sino-Soviet Split and Growing PRC Radicalism

Kennedy's views of China hardened prior to his presidency in large part because Beijing's continued militancy compared so unfavorably with Moscow's relative moderation during the late-1950s. Ever since Stalin's death, the Soviet Union had undergone a gradual shift in its Cold War outlook that by 1956 had produced Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign and his subsequent abandonment of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of inevitable war with the capitalist world. Rather, Khrushchev began to preach that the international communist movement could, indeed, achieve its aims by advancing communist doctrine in the context of peaceful coexistence with the West. Though Khrushchev did not explicitly renounce subversion as a means of furthering the communist cause, he nonetheless accepted that nations should settle international disputes peacefully, and that the proletariat within capitalist societies could

achieve “fundamental social changes” through normal parliamentary procedures.¹² Soon after Khrushchev’s 1959 visit to the United States, for instance, reports indicated that Moscow had begun influencing the Indian Communist Party “toward legal methods, away from violence and toward an identification with nationalism rather than with international Communism.”¹³

Beijing rejected Moscow’s new approach. In April 1960, the emerging Sino-Soviet ideological rift exploded into a public war of words in journals and public statements throughout the communist world. The United States identified three specific points of divergence in this public discourse: China’s insistence that war with the capitalist world remained inevitable, that Washington held aggressive intentions, and that the communist nations must reject a policy of peaceful coexistence. Washington interpreted this ideological rigidity to Beijing’s disdain for a status quo that blocked China’s “aggressive desires.”¹⁴ By August, American observers characterized the Sino-Soviet dispute as resembling “in important respects the state of Soviet-Yugoslav relations before their breaks.”¹⁵ After several more months of such heated exchanges, Khrushchev ordered all Soviet advisers working in China to return home.¹⁶ The Soviet abandonment of communist ideological purity and the subsequent criticisms of China’s militancy drove Mao to extraordinary efforts to ensure not only that such “creeping

¹² Jonathan Spence, *Search for Modern China* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), 586; Letter from Khrushchev to Eisenhower, 12 October 1959, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, XIX, 606.

¹³ 428th Meeting of the National Security Council, 10 December 1959, *ibid*, 640.

¹⁴ 442nd Meeting of the National Security Council, 28 April 1960, *ibid*, 663.

¹⁵ Memorandum Prepared in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, 26 August 1960, *ibid*, 715.

¹⁶ For other American analyses of this public war of words, see the 420th and 458th Meetings of the National Security Council, 1 October 1959 and 7 September 1960, both in *ibid*, 602 and 719, respectively.

revisionism” would not occur within China, but also that Khrushchev’s sell-out would not undermine the myriad other communist struggles underway throughout the world.

This is the China that the Kennedy team encountered upon assuming power in January 1961, and they had no illusions regarding the prospects of establishing cordial relations with Mao’s government. Indeed, despite the initial euphoria at achieving the long-sought Sino-Soviet rift, many officials realized that the possibility of Soviet-inspired Chinese aggression had simply been replaced with the possibility of Beijing aggressing of its own accord. Under Secretary of State Chester Bowles, for instance, expressed a “palpable dread” of possible PRC intervention in Southeast Asia, and in March 1961 Ambassador John K. Galbraith testified to Congress that Beijing must abide by the U.N. Charter prior to its gaining admission to the U.N.¹⁷ NSC staff member Robert Komer recommended that the administration disengage “from unproductive aspects of our China policy” primarily in order to “rationalize our posture for long-term struggle” with the PRC hard-liners.¹⁸ Not expecting any change in Beijing’s attitude, however, Komer and most other officials intended their recommendations primarily as a means to solidify allied and neutral support for the American position, rather as a genuine method of achieving a Sino-American rapprochement.¹⁹

The continued exclusion of the PRC from the United Nations proved especially troublesome in this regard. The Korean War and the Strait crises of the 1950s had

¹⁷ Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated*, 41, 58.

¹⁸ Memorandum, Komer to McGeorge Bundy, 1 March 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 19-20.

¹⁹ Henry Kissinger argues that such discussion of overtures to China “were put forward as abstract hopes geared to some undefined change in Chinese attitudes.” This could not have produced any practical conclusion, because of Mao’s resistance to rapprochement. “Attempts at reconciliation with the capitalist archenemy were not conceivable while the blood feud with Moscow revolved around Mao’s adamant rejection of Khrushchev’s commitment to peaceful coexistence.” Kissinger, *On China*, 197-199.

provided the Eisenhower administration with sufficient diplomatic ammunition to hold the line against seating China and excluding Taiwan. Eisenhower continued to believe until the end of his presidency that China's admission to the U.N. would not only ruin that organization, but would also embolden Beijing to conduct additional aggressive acts.²⁰ As such, when Ike met with Kennedy on January 19, 1961, he expressed the hope that he could support the new president in all of his efforts, but should Kennedy decide to support China's admission to the U.N., Ike would end his retirement to oppose that policy.²¹ Kennedy and Rusk do seem initially to favor a two-Chinas approach since, in Rusk's view, "two Chinas had in fact emerged" after World War II. Furthermore, even if one considered the current U.S. recognition of Taipei as artificial, merely transferring recognition from Taipei to Beijing would also create an artificial situation; the United States should recognize both for what they actually represented.²²

Ike need not have worried, however, for two factors made the Kennedy administration's implementation of this approach impossible. On the one hand, neither China nor Taiwan would accept a two-Chinas formula, a fact that Kennedy and Rusk acknowledged during their initial discussion of China policy in early-1961; after this meeting both men considered this "a dead issue."²³ On the other hand, China's posture

²⁰ Foot, "The Eisenhower Administration's Fear of Empowering the Chinese."

²¹ According to Kochavi, Ike's warning "served to propel Kennedy toward extreme caution and continued to influence his behavior well into the presidency." Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated*, 56.

²² Rusk, *As I Saw It*, 284-285; Memorandum of Conversation between Rusk and British Ambassador Caccia, et al, 14 March 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 30.

²³ Rusk, *As I Saw It*, 285; this assertion must be kept in mind when assessing the true motives behind the administration's later efforts to pursue a successor state formula in the United Nations. See below.

precluded the possibility that the administration would look favorably upon such significant diplomatic concession.²⁴

Once again, the major point of contention, at least initially, remained China's refusal to renounce the use of force against Taiwan. As an official of the Truman administration, Rusk had been heavily involved in the work of the United Nations and the deliberations leading up to the decision to neutralize the Taiwan Strait during the Korean War. As a result of these experiences, he believed deeply in the importance of non-aggression and respect for international law in the conduct of foreign relations.²⁵ As Secretary of State, he instructed Ambassador Jacob Beam, American representative at the Warsaw Talks, to once more emphasize that the United States did not intend for Beijing to renounce its claims to Taiwan, only that it renounce the use of force to take the island, a "fundamental ingredient in any constructive and meaningful discussions between us on this issue."²⁶ China's refusal to accept such proposals surprised no one. Indeed, during these first few months of 1961, when the administration sought to solidify its international support, many officials advocated strategies that allies would favor but that China would reject, particularly regarding U.N. representation.²⁷ As Kennedy noted

²⁴ Given the variety of Chinese Communists aggressions and violations during the 1960s, according to Rusk, "any approach other than what was adopted would have been impossible." Ibid, 289.

²⁵ In his recollections of the American role in the Bay of Pigs and his opposition to that operation, for instance, Rusk lamented that American involvement clearly violated international law and constituted aggression as defined by the UNGA. Ibid, 209, 214-215.

²⁶ Telegram, Department of State to the Embassy in Poland, 4 March 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 24.

²⁷ Memorandum, Komer to McGeorge Bundy, 1 March 1961, *ibid*, 19-20.

in April, “we could not support Red China’s admittance to the UN. We needed to find a formula for keeping them from wanting to get in.”²⁸

Events in Southeast Asia throughout the 1960s had a considerable effect on the American view of China. DRV forces in early 1961 had thrown in their lot with the Laotian Pathet Lao in a bid to take over the country from the established government. Rusk identified the central problem as North Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh, who Rusk later characterized as “a nationalist with an appetite” and who had “made clear that he wanted Vietnam to gain control over Laos and Cambodia as well as South Vietnam, even though Laotians and Cambodians sharply resented those ambitions.”²⁹ In a manner similar to the previous American commitment to defend South Korea – or even Western Europe – from an external aggressive force, the Kennedy administration determined that its commitment to the defense of the nations of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), of which the United States was a member, obligated it to intervene. And just as with China’s involvement in Korea, the question of whether Ho acted at the behest of a foreign power largely missed the point; his aggression must fail lest success encourage further aggressions throughout the world.

Because of Laos’ rugged and landlocked geography and the perceived timidity of the Laotian people, Kennedy and Rusk rejected a military response to communist aggression there, and instead sought a political settlement that would ensure that outside forces would not continue to infringe on Laotian territory or political sovereignty. To

²⁸ Memorandum of Conversation between Kennedy and Prime Minister MacMillan, et al, 5 April 1961, *ibid*, 44; the Chinese representation issue is discussed in greater detail below.

²⁹ Rusk, *As I Saw It*, 425.

this end, Washington entered into negotiations with representatives from the U.K., Soviet Union, DRV, PRC, and several other nations in Geneva beginning in May 1961. China's participation in any such effort would prove crucial, and through the ambassadorial talks in Warsaw the administration sought to convey its views to Beijing. At the relatively friendly meetings that summer, Ambassador Beam asserted that the Pathet Lao's receipt of outside communist support undermined its credibility as a neutral regime, and that the United States would not enter an agreement which was only a "thinly veiled screen for eventual commie takeover" of Laos.³⁰

Perceptions of communist duplicity and subversion undermined the progress of the negotiations, however. In October, Edward Rice of the Policy Planning Council prepared a well-received paper on China policy that lamented the "Maoist cycle of infiltration and insurrection" and noted that the "instigation and support of internal violence of the type now underway in Southeast Asia constitutes aggression directed at the national independence of the states involved."³¹ The following month Kennedy expressed concern regarding the routes Beijing might use to move its forces into North Vietnam, while Rusk, noting that the PRC had expressed no desire to lessen tensions in the region, expressed that "Southeast Asia is now exposed to a particularly vigorous penetration effort by the Communist bloc."³² Three days later, an SNIE concluded that not only would Beijing supplement its political warfare with "guerilla and terrorist

³⁰ Telegram, Embassy in Poland to the Department of State, 30 June 1961, and Telegram, Department of State to the Embassy in Poland, 13 August 1961, both in *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 88 and 122 note 1, respectively.

³¹ Draft Paper Prepared in the Policy Planning Council, 26 October 1961, *ibid*, 162-167

³² 493rd Meeting of the National Security Council, 15 November 1961, and Telegram, Department of State to the Embassy in Rangoon, 27 November 1961, both in *ibid*, 168 and 175 note 5, respectively.

action by indigenous forces,” but it also might utilize military force “to extend its control when it can do so with little or no risk.”³³ As a result of these continuing tensions, the Geneva negotiations deadlocked and, in January 1962, were suspended.

Administration officials had mixed reactions to these events, particularly regarding the question of whether Beijing would instigate overt hostilities using its own forces. Writing to National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy following the Geneva deadlock, Komer revealed his fears of PRC militancy by urging the administration to “consider any option that might prolong Peiping’s time of troubles so as to allow Japanese and Indian strength to grow” and “buy time” to strengthen other threatened areas such as Korea and Southeast Asia.³⁴ Deputy Under Secretary of State and former ambassador to the Warsaw Talks U. A. Johnson recommended that the administration temporarily cease making overtures to the Chinese Communists since he saw “little hope of any useful dialogue” until “there is some change in their attitudes.”³⁵ In contrast, other officials early in 1962 emphasized that Beijing’s actual behavior compared favorably to its bellicose rhetoric. Among these officials included China expert Allen Whiting, whose 1960 book *China Crosses the Yalu* emphasized that Beijing had decided to intervene in Korea primarily for defensive reasons.³⁶ Bowles and Deputy National

³³ SNIE 13-3-61, “Chinese Communist Capabilities and Intentions in the Far East,” 30 November 1961, *ibid*, 173.

³⁴ Memorandum, Komer to McGeorge Bundy, 29 January 1962, *ibid*, 183.

³⁵ Memorandum, U. A. Johnson to Rusk, 6 April 1962, *ibid*, 213.

³⁶ Allen Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960). Whiting’s study set the tone for much of the historiographical interpretations of the Chinese intervention until the opening of Chinese sources in the 1990s, at which point historians began to demonstrate that Mao’s decision to intervene occurred even before the Inchon landing, and, as such, could not be considered a defensive response to the U.N. forces’ crossing of the 38th Parallel. See, for instance, Chen Jian, *China’s Road to the Korean War*.

Security Advisor Walt Rostow similarly believed that the severe domestic problems facing China had “undercut both its capacity and propensity for external adventures.”³⁷

While administration officials debated, Beijing apparently continued to support communist militancy in Laos. On May 6, 1962, the Pathet Lao and DRV initiated a devastating attack against the established Laotian government in violation of the May 1961 armistice agreement, thus signifying a change in the “Communist pattern of limited military operations.” Beijing unsurprisingly backed the communists, and attempted to portray the Laotian Communists as victims by characterizing the American plea for a ceasefire as a means to restrict justified Pathet Lao “retaliation.” Increased activity at nearby Chinese airfields and unsubstantiated reports of PLA soldiers in Laos further contributed to Washington’s anxieties. Through a series of carefully planned and limited military deployments, the administration strove to signal American resolve and bring the warring parties back to the negotiating table.³⁸

As part of the Geneva Accords signed on July 23, 1962, the administration conceded to the formation of a Laotian coalition government under the leadership of the Soviets’ preferred candidate, Souvanna Phouma. To supervise the settlement, the conference formed an International Control Commission (ICC) comprised of Canada, Poland, and India. Historian Qiang Zhai casts doubt on Beijing’s desire to uphold the Accords, however, suggesting that PRC leaders perceived tactical advantages in temporary neutrality as a vehicle to gain time for the Pathet Lao to develop its strength

³⁷ Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated*, 108.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 170.

while minimizing Washington's role.³⁹ Whatever China's motivations, from the administration's perspective Hanoi's actions clearly demonstrated its determination to violate the Accords. It prevented the coalition government from operating in communist-controlled areas, refused to allow the ICC to conduct its supervisory functions, and continued to infringe on Laotian territory as a means of infiltrating South Vietnam. By 1965, the administration noted a clear and disturbing trend:

Hanoi sent thousands of trained men, including more than fifty regiments of the North Vietnamese Regular Army, to impose its will upon the South Vietnamese by force. Hanoi had more than forty thousand troops in Laos contrary to the Laos accords of 1962, an estimated twenty thousand troops in Cambodia despite the protests of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, and Hanoi-trained guerillas in northeastern Thailand.⁴⁰

Kennedy was "bitterly disappointed" by this pattern of North Vietnamese aggression, and this, in turn, reinforced the president's reluctance to re-examine China policy.⁴¹ The administration's belief that China could moderate Ho's aggressive tendencies if it so desired mirrored the belief among Truman administration officials of Soviet responsibility for PRC intervention in Korea in the early 1950s. As such, the new ambassador at Warsaw, John Cabot, defended the U.S. decision to give assistance to the South Vietnamese government. Noting the ICC-certified violations of the neutralization agreement, Cabot asserted that the United States would not need to provide aid if Beijing

³⁹ Qiang Zhai, *China and the Vietnam Wars*, 111. Beijing took a similar approach to the 1973 Paris Accords that ended the Vietnam War. See Chapter 4, below.

⁴⁰ Rusk, *As I Saw It*, 460.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 285, 428-429.

“would discourage such intervention.”⁴² Washington’s hopes for relaxing tensions deteriorated further as U.S. officials confronted communist resistance to a proposed neutralization of Vietnam. Beijing cited the unresolved Taiwan issue as a reason for its refusal to participate in such an agreement.⁴³ In subsequent months, the administration perceived some small signs of Chinese Communist flexibility, though this period of apparent cordiality proved brief and unproductive.⁴⁴

Much of the administration’s remaining goodwill toward the PRC evaporated during the Sino-Indian border war in late-1962.⁴⁵ That conflict resulted from a long series of increasing tensions between those two countries, and, indeed, between China and the non-aligned world, since 1958. Neutral nations reportedly approved the strong American response to the Strait crisis in September of that year, a response that had “contributed to their own feeling security and of assurance as to our steadfastness.” The following year, Beijing instituted a crackdown in Tibet that led to India’s decision to provide sanctuary for the Dalai Lama and his followers. The brutal suppression of the Tibetan revolt “shocked all Asia,” and contributed to the “increasing realization” among even the “uncommitted” Asian nations of the “Communist menace.”⁴⁶ By 1961, conditions in Tibet had worsened to the point where the UNGA formally condemned Beijing’s brutality and oppression and called for Tibetan self-determination.⁴⁷ The PRC damaged its reputation further through its poor treatment of foreign diplomats, causing

⁴² Telegram, Embassy in Poland to Department of State, June 23, 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 273-275.

⁴³ Rusk, *As I Saw It*, 434; Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated*, 120, 172.

⁴⁴ Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated*, 119-120; Michael Lumbers, *Piercing the Bamboo Curtain*, 30.

⁴⁵ Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated*, 121.

⁴⁶ Circular Telegram, Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Missions and Consular Offices, 2 September 1959, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, XIX, 586-588.

⁴⁷ The General Assembly adopted this resolution on 20 December 1961, by a vote of 56-11-29.

much bitterness among even the relatively sympathetic Asian neutrals “at the insults and abuses they have encountered at the hands of Communist officials.”⁴⁸ By mid-1960, Sino-Indian relations had deteriorated to the point of inciting border clashes that “shattered the appearance of cordiality between the two states,” setting the stage for more extensive fighting the following year.⁴⁹

In the midst of the border war of October-November 1962 and despite their denunciation of China’s behavior, several neutral nations strongly advocated China’s entry into the U.N., believing that this would provide constructive avenues for engagement and would chain Beijing with the moral responsibility of upholding its obligations under the U.N. Charter.⁵⁰ Significantly, India concurred with this assessment even as its armies faced the prospect of a humiliating defeat and as it made desperate pleas to Britain and the United States for military aid.⁵¹ The British agreed as well, though their position on Chinese representation had undergone a curious developmental process during the preceding two years.⁵² In any event, the UNGA that year rejected

⁴⁸ Circular Telegram, Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Missions and Consular Offices, 2 September 1959, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, XIX, 586-588.

⁴⁹ NIE 100-2-60, “Sino-Indian Relations,” 17 May 1960, *ibid*, 664.

⁵⁰ Arnold H. Lubasch, “Ceylon backs bid of Peking in U.N.,” *New York Times*, 24 October 1962, 4.

⁵¹ Arnold H. Lubasch, “India again asks U.N. admit Peking,” *ibid*, 27 October 1962, 2; *Yearbook of the United Nations: 1962* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 116.

⁵² In January 1960, the British accepted both excluding the PRC from the U.N. and the American leadership role in Asia. The following year, the British reiterated their belief that Beijing retained responsibility for the impasse in Sino-American relations on the grounds that their demands “would be too large to swallow.” This view underwent a dramatic shift, however, during the June 1962 Strait crisis when no less a figure than Prime Minister MacMillan vehemently attacked American China policy as “indefensible by any logic,” and urged both recognition of and U.N. membership for the PRC. The UK continued this approach during the Sino-Indian border war, joining with India and the other neutral states on October 30 in voting in favor of the Soviet resolution to expel the ROC and seat the PRC in its place as a means of moderating Beijing’s militancy. By mid-November, one British observer argued that the Chinese Communists had “learned their lesson, and had become “more practical, more realistic and more patient,” even though he recognized that Beijing would continue supporting subversion abroad. Telegram, Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State, 8 January 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, XIX,

PRC membership by an even larger margin than it had in 1960, in part because of the defection of a particular bloc of African countries that did not believe that the U.N. should admit Beijing at the cost of expelling the ROC.⁵³

The international community had reservations about Beijing's policies, calls for seating China in the U.N. notwithstanding. Britain joined the United States in sending military assistance to India, with London expressing that it would view favorably any Indian request to send soldiers to help fight further Chinese incursions. African nations, too, expressed concern and took positive steps toward assisting India such as holding blood drives, raising money, and, in the case of Nairobi, raising a small force of volunteers to fight for India.⁵⁴ Asian neutrals hesitated to involve themselves in the Sino-Indian conflict, however, given the possibility of reprisals due to their proximity to China.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, despite the two sides having signed a ceasefire, concerns about Beijing's intentions lingered in several capitols. Washington prepared for renewed Sino-Indian fighting.⁵⁶

Indeed, the Sino-Indian war, and especially the second phase of the Chinese campaign that began in mid-November, shocked even the administration's most ardent

646-647; Memorandum of Conversation between Rusk and British Ambassador Caccia, et al, 14 March 1961; Memorandum of Conversation between Rusk and Macmillan, et al, 24 June 1962; and Telegram, Consulate General at Singapore to the Department of State, 13 November 1962, all in *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 29, 276-277, and 322, respectively.

⁵³ Arnold H. Lubasch, "U.N. again bars Peking; Assembly vote is 56 to 42," *New York Times*, 31 October 1962, 1.

⁵⁴ Robert Conley, "Africans assail attack on India," *ibid*, 11 November 1962, 1.

⁵⁵ David Binder, "Neutrals in Asia fail to aid India," *ibid*, 10 December 1962, 1; Paul Grimes, "Fear of China is haunting Nonaligned powers," *ibid*, 17 December 1962, 11.

⁵⁶ A. M. Rosenthal, "China's goals worry Indians," *ibid*, 11 November 1962, 205; David Binder, "U.S. gears policy to peril of a full China-India war," *ibid*, 23 November 1962, 1.

advocates of a flexible approach to Sino-American relations.⁵⁷ According to historian Nancy Tucker, “proponents of better relations with Beijing, like Chester Bowles and John Kenneth Galbraith, identified with New Delhi and once fighting began they disregarded evidence of Indian provocation and ceased speaking out for China.”⁵⁸ Rostow similarly expressed concerns about China’s intentions. In a policy paper he penned in mid-November, he argued that the question of Beijing’s complicity in Southeast Asia did not matter because a DRV victory “will almost certainly do much to revive the dimmed hopes of the Chinese leadership and elite.”⁵⁹ If Hanoi achieved its aims violently and despite American efforts, Beijing might conclude that it, too, could achieve its own ends by similar means.

In contrast, the United States and Soviet Union at this time took yet one more step toward friendlier relations by negotiating a limited ban on testing nuclear weapons. Since entering office, Kennedy had emphasized the importance of arms control, though his efforts to achieve a comprehensive testing ban ultimately failed to persuade the Soviets. Having approached the brink of nuclear war during the Cuban Missile Crisis, however, both Kennedy and Khrushchev reflected on how close the two nations had come to annihilating the human race. In January 1963, Kennedy warned of “the overhanging shadow of nuclear war – a shadow which will not leave mankind until governments recognize the limitations on the use of force in a nuclear age and move in the direction of settling disputes through the rule of law.”⁶⁰ The administration renewed

⁵⁷ Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated*, 149.

⁵⁸ Tucker, *Uncertain Friendships*, 101.

⁵⁹ Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated*, 175.

⁶⁰ Kennedy, “Where We Stand,” *Look Magazine*, 15 January 1963, *PPP*, 20-21.

efforts to draw the Soviets into negotiations on a test ban, and in July 1963 the two sides successfully concluded a Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT) that banned testing in the oceans, atmosphere, and outer space, but that still permitted underground testing.

The problem of China's nuclear development remained. By the end of 1960, the PRC had made considerable progress in its efforts to develop the capability independently to produce atomic weapons, with estimates suggesting that it would achieve its first detonation by mid-decade.⁶¹ The Eisenhower administration feared the ramifications of this development; Beijing's "arrogant self-confidence, revolutionary fervor, and distorted view of the world" would increase the likelihood that the PRC would "create trouble."⁶² Such concerns persisted into the Kennedy years. In January 1963, with the ongoing tensions in Southeast Asia and the Sino-Indian fighting still fresh in his mind, Kennedy expressed that Beijing's nuclear program "was probably the most serious problem facing the world today" and "would so upset the world political scene it would be intolerable to the United States and to the West."⁶³

As a result, Kennedy sought to convince Khrushchev that "relatively small forces in the hands of people like ChiComs could be very dangerous to us all." In July, the president pressed Assistant Secretary of State W. Averell Harriman to encourage Khrushchev "either to take Soviet action or to accept US action" aimed at "limiting or preventing Chinese nuclear development."⁶⁴ Harriman had some reason to believe that

⁶¹ NIE 13-2-60, "The Communist Chinese Atomic Energy Program," 13 December 1960, *FRUS, 1958-1960*, XIX, 744-747.

⁶² NIE 13-60, "Communist China," 6 December 1960, *ibid*, 739-741.

⁶³ Memorandum of Conversation between John McCone and McGeorge Bundy, 10 January 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 339.

⁶⁴ Letter, Kennedy to Harriman, 15 July 1963, *ibid*, 370.

the Soviets might respond favorably to such a proposal. During a discussion with a Soviet official the previous January, he received the impression that with the signing of the LTBT, the Kremlin felt that “together we could compel China to stop nuclear development, threatening to take out the facilities if necessary.”⁶⁵ Whatever such sentiments may have existed among Soviet leaders did not translate into actual practice, for in July Khrushchev steadfastly refused to collude with the administration on this issue.⁶⁶ Five days later, Zhou Enlai formally rejected PRC participation in the LTBT on the grounds that it served only to allow the superpowers to consolidate their nuclear monopoly.

Beijing’s impending nuclear weapons capability contributed enormously to Kennedy’s subsequent actions. Under Eisenhower, Washington had reduced conventional American forces and relied instead on its nuclear arms to deter communist aggression, a strategy known as “massive retaliation.” It had chosen to do so primarily for budgetary reasons – to get “more bang for the buck” – and to assure the long-term financial viability of the U.S. government and economy. Kennedy found this arrangement unacceptable, for in the event of warfare with the communist nations the lack of conventional forces would leave the United States little choice but to respond with nuclear weapons. This, in turn, might escalate into a broader nuclear war that would prove disastrous for all humanity. Early in 1961 Kennedy and his advisors attended a presentation that contributed to such concerns by illustrating the after effects

⁶⁵ Letter, Harriman to Kennedy, 23 January 1963, *ibid*, 341.

⁶⁶ Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated*, 232; Lumbers, *Piercing the Bamboo Curtain*, 36-38.

of a nuclear exchange. Kennedy's shock at learning of these effects strengthened his belief that the United States must take steps to avoid this fate.

The answer was "flexible response" – to increase the conventional military power of the United States in order to broaden the range of means with which the administration could respond to aggression.⁶⁷ Initially, flexible response had been devised with Soviet aggression in Europe in mind, but the Kennedy administration extended this doctrine to East Asia because it began to question whether nuclear deterrence would prove effective once China acquired its own nuclear weapons. In August 1963, Rusk emphasized the importance of creating adequate "conventional capability" so that the "free Asian nations will believe that we can assist in defending them against at least limited Chinese Communist attack without necessarily involving them in nuclear war."⁶⁸

Events during the first half of 1963 provided additional impetus to such efforts. In February, the administration received "reliable reports" that Beijing continued to supply the Pathet Lao with arms and ammunition, and that, in violation of the neutralization agreement, it had deployed armed military engineers to construct a series of roads connecting Laos with the nearby Chinese province of Yunnan.⁶⁹ Tensions flared that spring, and by late-April "the administration once again found itself reaching for military threats to stabilize Laos."⁷⁰ By June, circumstances had deteriorated to the point that Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and the Joint Chiefs of Staff once

⁶⁷ For a discussion of "flexible response" and how it contrasts with Eisenhower's doctrine of "massive retaliation," see Rusk, *As I Saw It*, 247-248.

⁶⁸ Letter, Rusk to McNamara, 1 August 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 375.

⁶⁹ Telegram, Department of State to the Embassy in Poland, 14 February 1963, *ibid*, 349 note 5.

⁷⁰ Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated*, 174.

more revived the notion of deploying Chinese Nationalist forces to Southeast Asia.⁷¹ Rusk rejected this idea since this might restore the faltering Sino-Soviet alliance, but he agreed that Nationalist forces nonetheless constituted a vital strategic reserve that acted “as a deterrent and might help counter aggression if it occurs.”⁷² Indeed, the same day that Zhou rejected the LTBT, Kennedy called a special meeting of the National Security Council out of concern that this rejection, coupled with the “recent military crisis in Korea” and reports of Chinese troop movements along the Indian-Tibetan border, might signify Beijing’s intention to take more assertive initiatives.⁷³ Although a May National Intelligence Estimate had concluded that the PRC would not use force except for defensive reasons, Rusk, Harriman, and Rostow all nonetheless concurred with the graver assessment.⁷⁴

This sense of gloom persisted throughout the remainder of 1963, despite what some historians view as a dramatic shift that occurred following Hilsman’s April appointment as Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs. Though Hilsman brought to his new post the conviction that communism in China was not a “passing phase,” he believed that the United States could not expect Beijing to change its attitude as a result of any American initiative short of the abandonment of its fundamental principles. The Kennedy administration, he wrote, based its policy “on a willingness to

⁷¹ Letter, McNamara to Rusk, 20 June 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 375 note 1.

⁷² Letter, Rusk to McNamara, 1 August 1963, *ibid*, 375-377.

⁷³ 516th Meeting of the National Security Council, 31 July 1963, *ibid*, 371-374; see also Kennedy’s comments regarding China at his 1 August 1963 Press Conference, *PPP*, 612-619.

⁷⁴ NIE 13-63, “Problems and Prospects in Communist China,” 1 May 1963, and 516th Meeting of the National Security Council, 31 July 1963, both in *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 365-367 and 371 notes 1-3, respectively; for the remainder of 1963, the administration continued to note “ample evidence of increased Chinese support to the revolutionary forces” in Vietnam. Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated*, 232 and note 144.

reach an accommodation” with Beijing “provided only that the Chinese Communist regime was willing to modify its hostility in the same direction.”⁷⁵ Thus, whatever its merits as a major public reiteration of the American desire for rapprochement, Hilsman’s San Francisco speech in December constituted no real change in the decade-old search for a reformed China.

Kennedy’s assassination in November 1963 and Johnson’s ascendance to the presidency did little to change this state of affairs and, indeed, placed foreign policy more firmly than before in the hands of Rusk, Bundy, and McNamara, all of whom had drawn “alarming conclusions” regarding Beijing’s ideology, policies, and intentions throughout the Afro-Asian world. Under Johnson, Rusk – a man “deeply hostile to any China policy reform” – tightened his control over the State Department policymaking process, thus ensuring that the administration would not pursue the kinds of initiatives Hilsman and others had advocated.⁷⁶ Significantly, Johnson shared his Secretary of State’s views regarding China’s behavior and the proper way to respond; the president needed little encouragement to maintain a firm stance.

Just as Johnson entered office, Zhou Enlai began a tour of Africa in an attempt to obtain the diplomatic and political support of the increasingly important African bloc. The State Department viewed the trip as a smashing success for Zhou, and lamented that many of these African nations had been attracted to Beijing’s vitriolic anti-imperial position and advocacy of violent “national liberation struggle.”⁷⁷ This also improved the

⁷⁵ Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 349-352.

⁷⁶ Lumbers, *Piercing the Bamboo Curtain*, 61-62.

⁷⁷ Quoted in *ibid*, 63.

likelihood of these nations extending diplomatic recognition to Beijing and voting for PRC membership in the United Nations. With little direct interest in the regional affairs of East Asia, these newly independent nations welcomed China's developmental aid, to which the United States had responded by engineering a joint aid program with the ROC called "Operation Vanguard" and other such "aggressive steps to win good will in Africa."⁷⁸

Efforts to hold the line against further diplomatic concessions to Beijing began to crumble when, on January 7, 1964, the French government of Charles DeGaulle announced that it would soon extend diplomatic recognition to the Chinese Communists. Rusk warned all who would listen that "it would be particularly dangerous for the peace of the world if Peiping were to be rewarded with recognition and admission to the UN at a time when the Chinese Communists are inciting aggression in Asia, encouraging rebellion in Africa and extolling militant revolution in much of the world."⁷⁹ To Rusk, the central concern

is the need to influence a half-dozen key people in China on the question of how China is doing, and whether its present policy is or is not on the right track. Such actions as the recognition of China by France or its future admission into the UN would, of course, be very bad in that it would persuade the Chinese that they were being successful. Unless other things demonstrate to the Chinese that they are not on the right track we

⁷⁸ Circular Telegram, Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Missions and Consular Offices, 2 September 1959; 448th Meeting of the National Security Council, 22 June 1960; and Memorandum, Parsons to Rusk, 28 December 1960, all in *FRUS, 1958-1960*, XIX, 586, 688, and 749-750, respectively.

⁷⁹ Circular Telegram, Dean Rusk to Certain Posts, 5 September 1964, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968*, Vol. XXX: China, 85-86, hereafter cited as *FRUS, 1964-1968*, XXX.

will be faced with much greater danger in the future, not to mention that which we face today.⁸⁰

The French decision coupled with Zhou's vigorous African initiative marked the beginning of the end for the American effort to keep China out of the United Nations. By the end of 1964 Canada also announced that it would no longer oppose PRC membership in the United Nations. Canadian Foreign Minister Paul Martin informed Rusk that "Canada would naturally want to see peace all over the world, but none of us can avoid recognizing that the Chinese will exert increasing influence. This is not in Canada's interest, nor is it in Canada's interest to have a Communist regime in Russia. But there it is." Martin further argued that "Coming into the UN will not alter the aggressive tendencies of any state, but it will provide that much more contact."⁸¹ Rusk's retort – "the UN cannot operate as a reform school" – fell on deaf ears.⁸² In the 1965 U.N. vote, supporters of seating the PRC in the General Assembly achieved parity with their opponents for the first time.⁸³

All of this occurred in the midst of rising violence in Southeast Asia. Soon after Johnson's election in 1964, DRV regulars began appearing in South Vietnam and contributed to Johnson's decision to escalate American involvement. Once again,

⁸⁰ Memorandum of Conversation between representatives of the Departments of State and Defense, 27 August 1965, *ibid*, 201.

⁸¹ Memorandum of Conversation, "Secretary's Delegation to the Nineteenth Session of the United Nations General Assembly," 30 November 1964, *ibid*, 139.

⁸² Memorandum of Conversation between representatives of the Department of State and the British Foreign Ministry, 26 October 1964, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968*, Vol. XXXIII: Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy; United Nations, 664, hereafter cited as *FRUS, 1964-1968*, XXXIII; In November, Johnson responded to the idea of allowing the PRC into the U.N. by saying he "did not pay the foreigners at the UN to advise him on foreign policy, but that he did pay Rusk and that he was inclined to listen to him." *ibid*, 127.

⁸³ The 1965 General Assembly voted 47-47 with 20 abstentions. Because of time constraints, the General Assembly did not address the issue of Chinese Representation at its meeting in 1964.

Beijing appeared complicit in communist activities in the region. As early as January 1964, for example, Rusk reported the discovery of seven tons of Communist Chinese-made arms south of Saigon.⁸⁴ In addition to this material support, Beijing “joined Hanoi in claiming that Vietnam was not a problem for the UN,” and thus blocked efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement.⁸⁵ The increasing American involvement in the region coupled with the Chinese nuclear detonation in October 1964 resulted in an increasingly bitter and inflexible atmosphere in the ongoing Warsaw Talks. The Chinese ambassador refused to budge on the nuclear issue, and vehemently protested American “aggression” in Southeast Asia.⁸⁶ President Johnson refused to back down from this challenge, and even began toying with the idea of using Nationalist forces to counter Hanoi’s activities in South Vietnam.⁸⁷ Rusk later offered a concise assessment of the situation: “war broke out in Southeast Asia because Hanoi and Peking supported and committed acts of aggression beyond their own borders.”⁸⁸

The breakdown of Beijing’s diplomatic isolation in 1964 placed enormous pressure on the administration to alter its hard-line policy lest it find itself at odds with its closest allies. As Komer noted in November, “the real question is no longer whether to disengage from the more rigid aspects of our China policy but *how and when*.”⁸⁹

James C. Thomson, Jr., also of the NSC, noted that U.S. policy towards China would not

⁸⁴ Circular Telegram, Rusk to the Embassy in France, 18 January 1964, *FRUS, 1964-1968*, XXX, 6.

⁸⁵ Rusk, *As I Saw It*, 285-286.

⁸⁶ Yafeng Xia, *Negotiating with the Enemy; U.S.-China Talks during the Cold War, 1949-1972* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 124-128.

⁸⁷ By December 1966, Chiang had changed his mind about involving uniformed soldiers in Vietnam “lest settlement of the Taiwan question become part of the Vietnam denouement. Tucker, *Uncertain Friendships*, 97 note 15.

⁸⁸ Rusk, *As I Saw It*, 460.

⁸⁹ Emphasis in original. Memorandum, Robert Komer to McGeorge Bundy, 23 November 1964, *FRUS, 1964-1968*, XXX, 130.

likely achieve the administration's goal of "domesticating" the Chinese leadership. Arguing that a "strategy of containment plus moral preachment has achieved little success," Thomson suggested that the administration implement a policy of "modified containment" that would include "the careful use of free world goods, people, and ideas – instruments which have proven their long-term corrosive value in our relations with other totalitarian societies." He then listed several policies that might bring about positive results, including involving the PRC in discussions of nuclear arms control, shifting the U.N. debate from PRC exclusion to a "one-China, one-Taiwan" stance, removing restrictions on Americans traveling to China, and increasing the trade of non-strategic goods.⁹⁰

Through 1965, such recommendations became the norm among the administration's mid-level advisers. Those who joined Komer and Thomson in their advocacy for a more liberal China policy included NSC staff member Chester Cooper, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs William Bundy, and his Deputy Assistant Secretary Marshall Green. After returning from a tour of East Asian countries in June, Thomson reported that among American officials both abroad and at home there existed "general agreement that the present climate of U.S. firmness in Asia" presented ideal circumstances "for such moves that might be judged superficially to be 'soft.'"⁹¹ William Bundy agreed with Thomson's assessment, and both men again urged the

⁹⁰ Memorandum, James Thomson, Jr., to McGeorge Bundy, 28 October 1964, *ibid.*, 118-119.

⁹¹ Thomson clearly disliked Rusk's entire approach to China policy, lamenting that various recommendations remained "buried at State," and that "We may shortly face the usual State worry as to whether to try one or the other, both, or neither (with the neither-boys probably destined to prevail unless we can give some encouragement from over here)." Memorandum, James Thomson, Jr., to McGeorge Bundy, 2 June 1965, *ibid.*, 172-173.

administration to take positive steps such as lifting travel restrictions.⁹² The administration also faced pressure from outside the Executive branch, as the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Senator William J. Fulbright, and several prominent China experts all urged a different course toward China. Rusk rejected their recommendations. By the end of 1965 the State Department had allowed only one conciliating proposal – relaxing travel controls in order to permit doctors and scientists in the fields of public health and medicine to travel to China – and only revisited the Chinese representation issue when it realized the inevitability of an unfavorable vote in the UNGA.⁹³

As this suggests, this policy shift above all else reflected *necessity*. Many advisers based their proposals on the fact that the United States continued to deplete its influence and clout on the international scene by holding firm to what appeared an ideological, rather than rational, China policy. For instance, Assistant Secretary of State J. Harlan Cleveland, in reference to U.S. allies' embracing of China, emphasized that "*what is eroding is not the opposition to Communist China's behavior, but the support of our traditional tactics for dealing with it.*"⁹⁴ Thus, the rationale for the change derived not from a desire for a relationship with an unreformed China, but rather from the necessity of regaining the moral high ground and placing the onus for a lack of progress on Mao and the other hard-line Chinese Communists.

⁹² Memorandum, William Bundy to Dean Rusk, 16 June 1965, *ibid*, 174-176. For further criticisms of Rusk's handling of U.S. China policy, see Memorandum, Marshall Green to Chester Cooper and James Thomson, Jr., 9 July 1965, *ibid*, 182-183.

⁹³ Memorandum, Rusk to Kennedy, 14 May 1966, and Memorandum, Walt Rostow to President Johnson, 17 May 1966, both in *ibid*, 301-303 and 303-304, respectively.

⁹⁴ Emphasis in original. Essay, J. Harlan Cleveland, "The Taming of the Shrew: Communist China and the United Nations," 31 October 1964, *ibid*, 122.

The PRC facilitated this strategy through the predictable animosity with which it responded to American proposals. Virtually every American official who commented on the matter stressed that no matter what proposals the U.S. government put forward the PRC would reject them. The most extreme example occurred in mid-1965 when Chinese Ambassador Wang Guoquan responded with scorn to American calls for a negotiated peace settlement in Southeast Asia. Wang believed the American overture resulted from the defeats the United States suffered in its “war of aggression,” and that the “plot” to hold peace talks would not fool the people of the world.⁹⁵ Beijing’s suspicion of American motives also extended to less controversial items, however, with U.S. Ambassador John Gronouski reporting that he “was impressed by inflexibility of Chinese position and their refusal to give any indication of willingness to resolve the Viet-Nam crisis or anything else on any terms other than their own.”⁹⁶ Even Thomson was “under no illusion” that the policies he had suggested “would produce a change in Communist China’s behavior or its view of the United States.” Rather, “these moves would give us a greater look of maturity and self-confidence, far greater rapport with our major allies, increased respect from the ‘third world,’ a greater degree of maneuverability, and the basis for long-term leverage with the Chicoms.”⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Telegram, John Cabot to the Department of State, 30 June 1965, *ibid*, 177-179.

⁹⁶ Telegram, John Gronouski to the Department of State, 16 December 1965, *ibid*, 233. See also Telegram, John Gronouski to the Department of State, 25 May 1966, *ibid*, 314-317. Representatives of the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom shared this assessment. Memorandum of Conversation between Anatoliy Dobrynin and McGeorge Bundy, 25 September 1964, and Letter, Dean Rusk to John Gronouski, 5 February 1966, both *ibid*, 104-105 and 254-255, respectively.

⁹⁷ Memorandum, James Thomson, Jr., to McGeorge Bundy, 28 October 1964, *ibid*, 119. Rusk expressed approval of this approach in his letter to Gronouski, 5 February 1966, *ibid*, 254-255.

In the face of the complete collapse of its efforts to maintain Beijing's diplomatic isolation, Washington held the line out of sense of its obligations as a responsible member of the international community to uphold the principles of the international order against communist violations. However, despite all of these distressing signs and with the Vietnam War in full swing, Rusk reiterated in March 1966 that "there was nothing eternal or immovable about American China policy; we had to avoid assuming that current hostility meant unending and inevitable hostility." The United States "must continue to make plain that, if Peiping abandons its belief that force is the best way to resolve disputes and gives up its violent strategy of world revolution, we would welcome an era of good relations." But it must "do nothing which encourages Peiping – or anyone else – to believe that it can reap gains from its aggressive actions and designs."⁹⁸

(Mis)managing the U.S.-ROC Relationship

The Kennedy administration's approach toward Taiwan from the outset differed from its predecessor's in that whatever Eisenhower may have said about the Generalissimo in private his administration always treated the ROC as a partner in the global struggle against communism. Over the course of the 1950s, Ike and Dulles had developed an effective set of practices to ensure broad ROC compliance with American designs. Cognizant of the limits of its ability to force Chiang to follow the American lead, Ike's State Department worked primarily through persuasion, keeping Chiang fully

⁹⁸ Rusk, *As I Saw It*, 289; Rusk's testimony of 16 March 1966, U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Far East and Pacific, Hearings, "U.S. Policy Toward Asia. Part 2." 15-16 February, and 8-10, 16, and 17 March 1966, 89th Cong., 2nd session, 532-533.

informed ahead of time of any proposed action, consulting his government on major decisions, and demonstrating sensitivity to and even sympathy with his desire to free the Chinese people from communist enslavement. Only occasionally had the administration threatened Chiang or withheld material support, and even in these instances the administration carefully avoided implying that the United States and ROC were anything less than teammates working toward a common goal.

The Kennedy team shared Eisenhower's view that Chiang Kai-shek's overzealous ambition to return to the mainland posed a threat to both regional stability and to the accomplishment of its basic objectives toward China. But the new administration maintained an unrealistic view of how to manage U.S.-ROC relations. Prior to entering office, the Kennedy administration noted a variety of ways in which the apparent inflexibility of Eisenhower's China policy had undermined vital American support in the world and had minimized the chances of achieving a relaxation of Sino-American tensions. The Kennedy administration thus sought to liquidate those "unproductive" aspects of China policy that would solidify international support for the continued containment of communist aggression. But the administration's overwhelming concern with this goal blinded them to the reality that it could not simply dictate to Chiang, and that attempting to do so could have disastrous consequences.

Chiang continued efforts to convince Washington that the key to resolving all of the problems in East Asia lay with the removal of the hard-line communist government in Beijing, a feat, he argued, that the Free World could best accomplish through the bold and effective use of Nationalist forces on the mainland. Chiang saw the deprivations of

the Great Leap Forward and the full-blown Tibetan insurrection in 1959 as offering the kind of social discontent that Eisenhower had envisioned in his policy of pressures and that his proposals to Chiang suggested might allow a mainland invasion to succeed. The Generalissimo pressured both the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations not to squander these opportunities, and believed that anti-communist forces in Tibet and Southwest China could consolidate their positions, merge, and then spread the movement into central China.⁹⁹ To this end, in the spring of 1961 he began operational planning for a mainland invasion, an endeavor code-named Operation Guoguang (National Glory).

Such schemes proved unrealistic. Although famine conditions and government repression had provided a steady stream of recruits for the Tibetan insurgency during 1961, the PLA retained effective control over the region. In China proper, the widespread famine and social dislocations from the collectivization program had not converted popular dissatisfaction into active resistance to the government. Furthermore, the several thousand Nationalist irregulars that remained in Burma at this time proved no more effective in the early 1960s than they had in the 1950s.

The Nationalist irregulars had, however, continued to undermine the support the United States received from the international community. Among his first acts as Secretary of State, Rusk essentially ordered Chiang to stop supporting the remaining Nationalist irregulars in Burma and Laos, noting how the ROC was incomprehensibly and recklessly creating a “situation which imposes upon itself formidable international

⁹⁹ Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 181.

political burdens at time when it could least afford them,” and adding that Taipei “would make serious miscalculation if it supposes we would not back it up.”¹⁰⁰ Similarly, when South Vietnamese Premier Ngo Dinh Diem in May, and again in October, requested the use of Nationalist soldiers to help resist the communist insurgents in his country, the State Department turned him down.¹⁰¹ Chiang likely expected such rejections and, indeed, had accepted such limitations on his freedom of action, however grudgingly, for over a decade.

What made Washington’s new approach especially distasteful to the Generalissimo was that it no longer implied a genuine partnership. Rather than persuasion, the Kennedy administration seemed intent on lecturing to and making categorical demands of Taipei. Many administration officials who had served under Eisenhower and had direct experience with handling Chiang warned of the potential dangers of pushing the ROC too hard and too fast. In March 1961, Ambassador to Taipei Everett Drumright expressed that “For the first time since I came to Taiwan three years ago, I sense a feeling among high GRC authorities that USG is looking for some way out of China impasse at their expense.” Any movement toward a two-Chinas framework, he warned, “must be handled with utmost subtlety” in order to prevent unilateral action such as withdrawing from the U.N. of which the “leadership here is

¹⁰⁰ Telegram, Department of State to the Embassy in the Republic of China, 22 February 1961, and Telegram, Embassy in the Republic of China to the Department of State, 25 February 1961, both in *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 12-13 and 16-19, respectively; Tucker, *Uncertain Friendships*, 66-67.

¹⁰¹ Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 202-204.

quite capable” if “pushed too hard or driven into a corner.”¹⁰² In May, McConaughy, now Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, similarly argued that any movement toward two-Chinas, and particularly efforts to convince the ROC to accept such a policy, “would fail and have unfortunate consequences.” Rather, he continued, the administration should perpetuate Eisenhower’s formula of allowing both sides to retain their political claims but insuring “that neither side resorts to large-scale use of force to realize their objectives.”¹⁰³ U.A. Johnson agreed, expressing that the administration should not pressure the ROC to make changes “until we have some reason to believe that Peiping would be responsive.” Only time could solve the political impasse, he argued, and in the meantime the United States should “continue to do all we can to prevent its exploding into hostilities.”¹⁰⁴

Kennedy and the newcomers in his administration either ignored these warnings or remained unaware of their full ramifications. Komer was on well-trod territory when he noted in May that the United States was entitled to insist that Chiang “rationalize his position for the long pull.”¹⁰⁵ An NIE that June, however, diverged considerably from Eisenhower’s approach by predicting that no matter what policy the administration pursued, the ROC would probably resign itself to “making the best of a future on Taiwan” and would “probably continue as a part of the Free World.”¹⁰⁶ That estimate was sorely mistaken, or, at the very least, about fifteen years premature. This ill-considered

¹⁰² Telegram, Embassy in the Republic of China to the Department of State, 20 March 1961, and Memorandum, Steeves to Rusk, 15 April 1961, both in *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 37-38 and 48-49, respectively.

¹⁰³ Memorandum, McConaughy to Bowles, 10 May 1961, *ibid*, 56, note 2.

¹⁰⁴ Memorandum, U.A. Johnson to Bowles, 10 May 1961, *ibid*, 56.

¹⁰⁵ Memorandum, Komer to Bundy, 2 May 1961, *ibid*, 53-54.

¹⁰⁶ NIE 43-61, “Prospects for the Government of the Republic of China,” 20 June 1961, *ibid*, 74-76.

perspective did not go unnoticed in Taipei, and by the fall of 1961 much of Chiang's trust in American leadership had evaporated. This resulted primarily from the administration's handling of three specific issues – Chinese representation, Outer Mongolia, and Thomas Liao (Liao Wen-yi) – all of which developed simultaneously and exploded with great effect in the summer of 1961.

For a decade, the United States had relied on a moratorium agreement in the United Nations to assure the continued inclusion of the ROC and exclusion of the PRC. In February 1961, however, Rusk noted that “support was running out for the moratorium” against seating Communist China.¹⁰⁷ This spurred Komer the following month to suggest that the administration move promptly to convince the international community to “buy enough of a ‘two Chinas’ policy to make Peiping refuse UN membership,” a move that “is going to be painful as hell to us” but that circumstances nonetheless demanded.¹⁰⁸ Rusk concurred, indicating that “we should try to get away from the present deadlock which involved a considerable risk and produce another deadlock but on a more advantageous position.”¹⁰⁹ Likely the combination of the need to assure international support for the American position and Rusk's genuine belief that two Chinas did, in fact, exist compelled him to pursue a successor state formula whereby the ROC would keep its seat and the PRC would have to apply to receive membership in

¹⁰⁷ Memorandum of Conversation between Rusk and ROC Ambassador Yeh, 3 February 1961, *ibid*, 5.

¹⁰⁸ Memorandum, Komer to McGeorge Bundy, 1 March 1961, *ibid*, 19-20.

¹⁰⁹ Memorandum of Conversation between Rusk and ROC Ambassador Yeh, et al, 17 March 1961, *ibid*, 34.

its own right.¹¹⁰ But because this scheme undoubtedly would prove unacceptable to Beijing, “the adversary would save us from its consequences by rejecting it.”¹¹¹

Throughout the spring, however, the Nationalists protested vigorously against this or any other proposal that smacked of a two-Chinas settlement, and accused the administration of not supporting the continuation of the moratorium which, according to Taipei, remained viable.¹¹² The administration persisted in its efforts to advance the successor state option, however, since it remained the only strategy that could have obtained widespread and long-lasting support among the international community for the continued seating of the ROC. Any other approach would inevitably result sooner or later in Taipei’s exclusion, since, if given a choice between China and Taiwan, “a majority of the General Assembly would vote to seat the Chinese Communists.”¹¹³ Rusk understood that any proposal that even hinted at PRC membership would encounter resistance from Congress, and, as such, he suggested that Kennedy emphasize to his domestic audience the necessity of abandoning the moratorium rather than elaborating on the details of alternative courses.¹¹⁴

At this same time, the administration confronted a new diplomatic crisis over Outer Mongolia, a nation that had been the center of much diplomatic maneuvering since the late-1940s. Following the Chinese Communist revolution, the Soviet Union obtained Mao’s acquiescence to Outer Mongolian independence despite the feeling of

¹¹⁰ For a detailed elaboration of this approach, see Memorandum, Rusk to Kennedy, 26 May 1961, *ibid*, 67-68.

¹¹¹ Quoted in Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated*, 63.

¹¹² Telegram, the Embassy in the Republic of China to the Department of State, 20 March 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 37.

¹¹³ Memorandum, Rusk to Kennedy, 26 May 1961, *ibid*, 66.

¹¹⁴ Memorandum of Conversation between Kennedy and Rusk, et al, 24 May 1961, *ibid*, 63-65.

many Chinese that that territory belonged to China. Indeed, Chiang shared this perspective, which led him to view with some concern Ulan Bator's application for U.N. membership in 1961. Washington sympathized with Chiang, but because Outer Mongolia remained a Soviet client state, Moscow threatened to veto the admission of Mauritania if either the United States or ROC should veto Outer Mongolia's admission. Because the newly independent African nations considered Mauritanian admission so important, and because the African bloc was of such vital importance in the effort to exclude Beijing from the U.N., Washington felt it could not afford to allow Chiang to make good on his veto threat. As such, on June 1, with no prior consultation or warning, the Kennedy administration informed the ROC that it would enter into negotiations with Moscow in preparation to establish diplomatic relations with Outer Mongolia, a move that presaged that country's entry into the U.N.¹¹⁵ Four days later, the ROC Foreign Minister responded in strong terms, calling this a "very unfriendly act," and urging reconsideration.¹¹⁶

The breaking point for Chiang regarded the case of Thomas Liao, one of several hundred native Formosan refugees who fled from Taiwan to Japan in the late-1940s following Chiang Kai-shek's brutal suppression of indigenous Formosan political opposition to Nationalist rule. In 1950 Liao helped found the Formosan Democratic Independence Party, and five years later created and became president of the Republic of Formosa in exile. Chiang regularly pressured the Japanese government to maintain strict

¹¹⁵ Tucker, *Uncertain Friendships*, 49-50.

¹¹⁶ Telegram, Embassy in the ROC to the Department of State, 5 June 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 77 note 3.

control over Liao's activities, and covertly dispatched agents to harass Liao and other Formosa Independence advocates.¹¹⁷ Throughout the 1950s Liao sought to obtain a visa to enter the United States, though each time the U.S. government denied his request. In March 1961, however, Senator William Fulbright personally wrote Rusk requesting favorable consideration of Liao's request. Rusk then referred the issue to the administration's legal advisors who concluded in May that no legal grounds existed for denying the visa. The State Department informed the ROC ambassador of its decision on June 13, once again without any prior notification.

The insistence on pursuing the successor state formula despite ROC concerns coupled with the administration's lack of consultation on the Thomas Liao and Outer Mongolian issues placed enormous strain on the U.S.-ROC relationship that undermined much of Chiang's willingness to continue to cooperate with Washington. Chiang's response was swift and sharp. On June 21, "with emphasis and at times in tone of indignation," Chiang characterized the decision to admit Liao as "an unfriendly act taken in utter disregard of interests of friendly ally" that would "promote Liao's scheme for an independent Taiwan."¹¹⁸ Indeed, he continued, the administration seemed to desire a two-Chinas arrangement; Chiang "would have no part of such proposals and would withdraw from UN rather than be a party to them." The admission of Outer Mongolia similarly portended "incalculable consequences," and "would not only be of tremendous

¹¹⁷ Ong Joktik, "A Formosan's View of the Formosan Independence Movement," *The China Quarterly*, No. 15 (July-September, 1963), 111.

¹¹⁸ This is, in fact, what at least some administration officials had in mind. George McGee, the Chairman of the Policy Planning Council, argued in March that the United States should encourage the development of an international consensus that "the people on Taiwan are entitled to a separate existence from the mainland." Draft Memorandum, McGhee to Rusk, 10 March 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 27.

benefit to Communist Bloc but would do irreparable harm to GRC interests.” And finally, Chiang lambasted the administration for its unilateralism, failure to consult, and lecturing which “would not be worthy of a master-satellite relationship, let alone relationship supposed to exist between friendly allies with mutual interests.”¹¹⁹ Two days later, Chiang Ching-kuo reiterated these points, and, specifically citing the Liao case as his rationale, informed Drumright that he would no longer carry out his planned visit to the United States in July.¹²⁰

The administration reacted to this outpouring of discontent by engaging in a massive blame game. Drumright blamed Washington’s failure to grasp the extent of Nationalist sensitivity to the administration’s initiatives, and urged reconsideration.¹²¹ Rusk blamed Chiang for expecting the United States to “act like a satellite.”¹²² Bundy concluded that fault lay with Rusk and the State Department; not only had Drumright failed to convey the administration’s positions effectively, but the Department’s lecturing and lack of consultation had exacerbated Chiang’s anxieties.¹²³ Kennedy also participated in the accusations, though he spread the blame more broadly. He took Bundy to task on the Chinese representation issue, expressed astonishment that the United States could not garner a simple majority against PRC admission, and called for a renewed estimate of U.N. voting. As for Thomas Liao, Kennedy “was startled to see all that flap over one man,” and demanded to know if the decision had been made with

¹¹⁹ Telegram, Embassy in the Republic of China to the Department of State, 21 June 1961, *ibid*, 76-79.

¹²⁰ The document recounting the June 23 conversation with Chiang Ching-kuo remains classified, though a brief description can be found in *ibid*, 78, note 4.

¹²¹ Telegram, Embassy in the Republic of China to the Department of State, 21 June 1961, *ibid*, 79.

¹²² Telephone Conversation between Rusk and Bundy, 21 June 1961, *ibid*, 76 unnumbered footnote.

¹²³ “The fact that the Department is right,” he added, “does not make its pills more palatable.” Memorandum, Bundy to Kennedy, 7 July 1961, *ibid*, 89-90.

Rusk's knowledge. Furthermore, believing that "Drumright is not representing our view effectively," Kennedy decided to recall the ambassador for consultation "preparatory to taking a firm position with Chiang."¹²⁴

Kennedy had reason to worry. In early July the administration received disturbing signals from both CIA and military officials that the ROC had begun "preparing dangerous adventures of its own, up to and including a suicidal landing on the mainland."¹²⁵ By the end of the month, the administration had come to believe that Chiang was "propelled more by a genuine 'act or perish' mentality and distrust of the Kennedy administration than by any scheme to exact concessions from Washington through the 'threat' of wild adventures."¹²⁶ This unilateralism also seemed to extend to initiatives in the United Nations where Chiang seemed "ready to pull the house down on himself – and on us in the process."¹²⁷ Simultaneously, word got out that the administration would pursue the successor state option in the United Nations and that this could, in theory, allow the seating of the Chinese Communists. On July 25, the Senate voted unanimously against any such proposal, and the House of Representatives followed suit on August 31. Various members of Congress added their own individual critiques of the administration's policies, calls that grew more intense when they discovered that Owen Lattimore – a high-profile McCarthyite target of a previous era –

¹²⁴ Memorandum, Bundy to Kennedy, 26 June 1961, and Memorandum, Adlai Stevenson to Rusk, 27 June 1961, both in *ibid*, 83 and 81, respectively; all of this contributed to the "Thanksgiving Day Massacre" of November 1961 in which Kennedy undertook a considerable reorganization of the State Department in an effort to involve himself more directly in the making of foreign policy. Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 53.

¹²⁵ Memorandum, Bundy to Kennedy, 7 July 1961, and Telegram, CINCPAC Felt to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 10 July 1961, both in *ibid*, 89-90 and 92-93, respectively.

¹²⁶ Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated*, 64.

¹²⁷ Memorandum of Conversation between Kennedy and Stevenson, et al, 5 August 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 113.

was at that moment visiting Outer Mongolia.¹²⁸ This prodding was ultimately unnecessary in that the administration did not favor Beijing's entry into the United Nations, but it did emphasize that the method that the administration had chosen to pursue this end was simply unworkable.

In an effort to salvage the situation, the administration took several significant steps. On the diplomatic front, the State Department accepted the reality that whatever the merits of the successor state formula, the costs of championing that approach outweighed the potential benefits. As such, the administration abandoned it in favor of making the Chinese representation issue an "important question" that required a two-thirds vote.¹²⁹ Furthermore, Kennedy personally decided that "for reasons of national policy," the State Department should temporarily deny Thomas Liao a visa, though this decision should remain secret in order to retain flexibility in the future.¹³⁰ Such diplomatic maneuvers did not suffice to remove the threat of unilateral Nationalist military action, however. To resolve this dilemma, Bundy latched onto a recommendation offered by the head of the CIA office in the ROC, Ray Cline. In a discussion of July 6, Cline characterized a return to the mainland as the "great sustaining dream" of the Nationalists, and urged the administration to join with Chiang "in certain reconnaissance probes" that would serve to "recapture" the Generalissimo's support and cooperation.¹³¹ Kennedy apparently accepted this recommendation later that month;

¹²⁸ Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 306-307.

¹²⁹ Memorandum of Conversation between Kennedy and Rusk, et al, 28 July 1961, *ibid*, 99-101; for a slightly different account of these events, see Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated*, 62-64.

¹³⁰ Memorandum, U.A. Johnson to Abram Chayes and McConaughy, 14 July 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 96 note 2.

¹³¹ Memorandum, Bundy to Kennedy, 7 July 1961, *ibid*, 91.

taking up an earlier ROC proposal to airdrop 200-300 teams into China, the administration instead accepted plans for six smaller teams numbering no more than twenty soldiers each.¹³² This would divert Chiang's actions into safer pursuits that would not involve the threat of war and would avoid direct Sino-American conflict.

The problem of Outer Mongolia remained. In September, with the next meeting of the UNGA rapidly approaching, the president personally wrote to Chiang. His relatively brief and straightforward message emphasized the significance of the Mongolian issue, but contained none of the finessed praise and rhetorical flourishes that had characterized Eisenhower's correspondences with the Generalissimo. Even worse, his message concluded with an implied threat, expressing Washington's "freedom to pursue whichever avenue we consider best calculated to advance the objective which we both seek."¹³³ Chiang characteristically responded with his own lecture about the dangers of yielding to the communists' "international blackmail" and implied that he would accept the ROC's exclusion from the organization rather than abandon this "moral position."¹³⁴

Rusk took considerable affront to this response, especially Chiang's notion that the failure to maintain the moratorium resulted from a lack of American effort to persuade other countries.¹³⁵ The Secretary of State pushed back hard against such assertions in meetings with both the Nationalist Foreign Minister and ambassador to the

¹³² Memorandum, Hilsman to Harriman, 30 March 1962, *ibid*, 193 note 1.

¹³³ Telegram, Department of State to the Embassy in the Republic of China, 6 September 1961, *ibid*, 135.

¹³⁴ Letter, Chiang to Kennedy, 10 September 1961, *ibid*, 137 note 1.

¹³⁵ Telegram, Department of State to the Embassy in the Republic of China, 17 September 1961, and Telegram, Department of State to the Embassy in the Republic of China, 2 October 1961, both in *ibid*, 137-138 and 144, respectively.

U.N. that, coupled with the ROC's own investigations into the probable moratorium votes, appear to have driven Chiang to a more accommodating position.¹³⁶ Kennedy facilitated this by writing a more conciliatory letter to Chiang that emphasized the American commitment to defend Taiwan, exclude the PRC from the U.N., consult rather than threaten, and find a mutually-acceptable solution to the problem of Outer Mongolia.¹³⁷ Furthermore, the president instructed Drumright to avoid the impression that the United States was threatening either Chiang or the ROC, and pledged to reaffirm publicly the administration's opposition to Chinese Communist entry into the United Nations.¹³⁸ In the end, Chiang agreed not to veto the admission of Outer Mongolia, but only after Kennedy offered a private pledge to veto China's admission should Beijing ever receive sufficient votes.¹³⁹ On December 15, the UNGA accepted the U.S.-sponsored resolution that deemed the Chinese representation issue an important question by a vote of 61-34 with 7 abstentions. At that same session, both Outer Mongolia and Mauritania became members of the United Nations; the Republic of China abstained.

Within a month, the administration realized that its efforts during the summer and fall of 1961 had done little to moderate Chiang's behavior. The Generalissimo noted the auspiciousness of 1962 as the "Year of the Tiger" and pledged in January that the Nationalists would retake the mainland that year. He asserted that "we can no longer vacillate or hesitate to perform our duty to deliver our people, our nation and the whole

¹³⁶ Telephone Conversation between Rusk and McConaughy, 28 September 1961, and Memorandum from Bundy to Kennedy, 4 October 1961, both in *ibid*, 140 note 3 and 145-146, respectively.

¹³⁷ Telegram, Department of State to the Embassy in the Republic of China, 5 October 1961, *ibid*, 147-148.

¹³⁸ Telegram, Department of State to the Embassy in the Republic of China, 7 October 1961, *ibid*, 150-151.

¹³⁹ For a discussion of the administration's negotiations on this issue, see Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated*, 67-68. After Kennedy's assassination, and perhaps recalling these difficulties, Lyndon Johnson reaffirmed his adherence to this pledge. Tucker, *Uncertain Friendships*, 50.

world from catastrophe.” “There is no doubt,” he continued,” that we can annihilate the Communists, reunify our country, and restore freedom to the people on the mainland in the nearest future.”¹⁴⁰ This prompted new debates among administration officials to determine the likelihood that such an invasion would succeed. The earliest judgment came from Komer, who admitted in late-January that China is “feebler than at any time since it consolidated the 1947-49 revolution” which meant that the Nationalists could possibly foment an uprising. Even if this could occur, however, “*the Soviets won’t let us succeed*” and would inevitably intervene to save the regime under such circumstances.¹⁴¹ An SNIE in March went even further in its conclusion that “few people, and no significant military units, would be likely to join the GRC forces in the absence of clear military success” which the ROC could achieve only through large-scale American support.¹⁴²

Once again, however, Drumright pleaded for the administration not to unduly antagonize Chiang by rejecting his proposals outright. Such “cold shouldering” constituted the “least desirable course of action and could lead to undesirable actions and consequences.” Rather, the administration should engage in a concrete examination and appraisal of Chiang’s invasion plans and explain their viability (or lack thereof) given the state of affairs on the mainland and the capabilities of Nationalist forces.¹⁴³ On March 6, he again warned that “it was utterly clear that Chiang is bent on taking some

¹⁴⁰ Quoted in Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 310.

¹⁴¹ Emphasis in original. Memorandum, Komer to Bundy, 29 January 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 182.

¹⁴² SNIE 13-3-62, “Probable Consequences of Chinese Nationalist Military Operations on the China Mainland,” 28 March 1962, *ibid*, 200-201.

¹⁴³ Telegram, Embassy in the Republic of China to the Department of State, 28 February 1962, *ibid*, 186-187.

kind of action this year against mainland and that it will take skillful, adept responses on our part to channel his actions in directions we deem appropriate to situation.¹⁴⁴ Perhaps in response to this, Kennedy dispatched Harriman on “an emergency visit” to Taiwan to prevent an “imminent thrust.”¹⁴⁵ Kennedy authorized Harriman to convey his approval of additional small-scale airdrops into China for purposes of gathering intelligence information, and by the end of the month had personally proposed providing planes and training for such drops so long as the planes remained in the United States pending “a further decision.”¹⁴⁶ In addition, the administration once more denied a visa to Thomas Liao on the grounds that “his anticipated activities in the United States would be prejudicial to the national interest,” and refused to reopen the issue of Nationalist forces on the offshore islands lest this prompt Chiang to initiate a “suicidal landing.”¹⁴⁷

Far from being mollified by the administration’s actions, Chiang dramatically increased the pace of his military operations and other preparations for an invasion. Taipei increased draft calls, made military service of indefinite duration, instituted a war tax, placed large orders for foreign weapons, and increased coastal surveillance. The Nationalists established a school near Taipei to train cadre to “reestablish GRC institutions in areas of the mainland liberated by invading ROC armies.”¹⁴⁸ Taipei attempted to obtain at the very least the administration’s tacit support for its initiatives, and at most for its active involvement in the joint study of operational plans. The

¹⁴⁴ Telegram, Embassy in the Republic of China to the Department of State, 6 March 1962, *ibid*, 190.

¹⁴⁵ Tucker, *Uncertain Friendships*, 96

¹⁴⁶ Message, Kennedy to Harriman, 9 March 1962, and Memorandum of a meeting between Kennedy and Rusk, et al, 31 March 1962, both in *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 192-193 and 204-205, respectively.

¹⁴⁷ Memorandum, Bundy to Rusk, 27 March 1962, and Memorandum, Harriman to McGhee, 29 May 1962, both in *ibid*, 198 note 1 and 237, respectively.

¹⁴⁸ Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 90

administration's refusal to provide either of these plunged Chiang "into another trough of despair," though he grudgingly accepted this rejection. Although the situation appeared stable, Cline, on whose shoulders rested the responsibility of calming Chiang, expressed that "it was close thing," and that the U.S.-ROC relationship might "come unstuck if not given sympathetic attention this end and tangible signs of active interest from Washington."¹⁴⁹

Nationalist operations continued apace throughout the spring, beginning with stepped-up coastal raiding in April and May. ROC officials asserted repeatedly that the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1954 infringed on ROC sovereignty and freedom of action and, thus, required reconsideration.¹⁵⁰ In violation of its previous pledges, the Nationalists did not keep the administration fully informed of their operations, and continued preparations for large-scale action despite the administration's concerns.¹⁵¹ Just as had occurred in 1954, Nationalist operations and propaganda exacerbated Beijing's insecurities regarding American and ROC intentions, and contributed to the emergence of a crisis in the Taiwan Strait. In response to the appearance of an impending Nationalist invasion, Beijing initiated in June the largest Chinese Communist troop movement since the Korean War, redeploying some 500,000 soldiers to the coastal regions opposite Taiwan in an effort to deter any possible invasion from across the Strait. The administration did its utmost to convey to Beijing via London and Moscow the essentially defensive American posture in the region and to emphasize that Nationalist

¹⁴⁹ Message, Bundy to Cline, 17 April 1962, and Message, Cline to Bundy, 19 April 1962, both in *ibid*, 218-219, and 219 note 2, respectively.

¹⁵⁰ For a description of Chiang Ching-kuo's comments of 22 March 1962, see *ibid*, 200 note 2.

¹⁵¹ Telegram, Department of State to the Embassy in the Republic of China, 29 April 1962, *ibid*, 220.

actions remained subject to the administration's concurrence.¹⁵² On June 23, Cabot expressed to his Chinese counterpart that Washington "had no intention of supporting any GRC attack on Mainland under existing circumstances," a message he repeated twice more. Furthermore, he asserted that if the PRC build-up opposite Taiwan was truly defensive, "it was unobjectionable."¹⁵³ Kennedy reinforced this in his June 27 press conference during which he reiterated the American commitment, consistent with the Mutual Defense Treaty and the Formosa Resolution, to defend both Taiwan and the offshore islands from communist aggression. However, he took pains to emphasize that the ultimate American objective in the Strait had always been to achieve a mutual renunciation of force agreement, and that "the purposes of the United States in this area are peaceful and defensive."¹⁵⁴ The combination of these private and public statements reassured Beijing and effectively ended the crisis.¹⁵⁵

With Beijing reassured, the administration now returned its focus to moderating Chiang's aggressiveness. To accomplish this, Kennedy appointed veteran military officer and diplomat Admiral Alan Kirk as the new ambassador to Taipei. The administration intended the appointment of the "crusty" Kirk as a means to "lay down the law to Chiang Kai-shek"; that is, to utilize the Admiral's reputation as an expert on amphibious warfare in order to moderate and rationalize Chiang's demands for a mainland invasion and to minimize the chances that Chiang's actions would lead to

¹⁵² Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin and Harriman, 22 June 1962, and Telegram, Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom, 22 June 1962, both in *ibid*, 267-269 and 270, respectively.

¹⁵³ Telegram, Embassy in Poland to the Department of State, 23 June 1962, *ibid*, 273-275.

¹⁵⁴ Kennedy's press conference, 27 June 1962, *PPP*.

¹⁵⁵ Tucker, *Uncertain Friendships*, 45.

additional crises.¹⁵⁶ Kirk's first act as ambassador, however – the first day he took up his post in Taipei – was to explain away Cabot's June 22 statements to PRC Ambassador Wang. When Chiang asked if Cabot had, in fact, expressed that the United States would not support a Nationalist return to the mainland, Kirk essentially lied, denying that Cabot had given any such assurance and echoing Kennedy's public statement that the administration's objective remained a mutual renunciation of force.¹⁵⁷ In addition, Harriman instructed Kirk to refuse to provide additional military items to Chiang, but not to portray this refusal as a "final turn-down" even if the administration considered it so.¹⁵⁸

Despite these efforts, Nationalist operations continued and increased. The ROC inserted hundreds of operatives onto the mainland during the latter half of 1962, often dressing them as PLA officers with orders to establish inland bases to facilitate additional covert operations.¹⁵⁹ By September, ROC incursions had culminated in an all-out guerilla war in South China, including what the administration viewed as a disturbing program of "terrorist" activities in the vicinity of Hong Kong and Macau about which the authorities in those cities expressed concern.¹⁶⁰ Though the administration appeared concerned about this renewed violence, the extent of these operations and the fact that it occurred simultaneous with the Sino-Indian border war

¹⁵⁶ Quoted in Tucker, *Uncertain Friendships*, 45 note 52. Ironically, the Chinese Communists interpreted Kirk's appointment as confirmation that the United States and ROC were, indeed, plotting an amphibious landing on the mainland. Ibid, 45.

¹⁵⁷ Telegram, Embassy in the Republic of China to the Department of State, 4 July 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 286-287.

¹⁵⁸ Message, Harriman to Kirk, 8 August 1962, *ibid*, 301.

¹⁵⁹ Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 105.

¹⁶⁰ Telegram, Department of State to the Embassy in the Republic of China, 13 September 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 313.

suggests at least the possibility that the administration may have supported the ROC in these efforts. Indeed, Allen Whiting argues that the CIA both knew of and facilitated Chiang's military build-up during 1962, but that it kept this information from the State Department.¹⁶¹ In any event, the PRC showed considerable success at repelling these Nationalist incursions. In early January, Beijing gained much propaganda value from publicizing its defeat or capture during the previous three months of nine Nationalist teams totaling approximately 180 soldiers, all of whom had been armed with American-made weapons. Kirk grew concerned about Beijing's broadcasts that "pilloried" the United States "as villain of this act with scanty attention to ChiNats" and that cast this activity as an example of American aggression.¹⁶²

Even the general failure of these incursions did not end Nationalist efforts. Instead, the focus of ROC operations shifted early in 1963 from attempted establishment of guerilla bases in the interior to commando raids against installations along the coast. The Nationalists also expanded these operations beyond the Guangdong coast in southern China to encompass Fujian, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, and Shandong.¹⁶³ Remarkably, Chiang coupled these efforts with a renewed plea to Kennedy to support a large-scale Nationalist landing, arguing that the Generalissimo could no longer ignore the "popular sentiments" in Taiwan demanding such action.¹⁶⁴ Chiang subsequently offered a new plan to land two divisions of troops on the mainland and reiterated the Nationalists'

¹⁶¹ Tucker, *Uncertain Friendships*, 45, note 53.

¹⁶² Telegram, Embassy in the Republic of China to the Department of State, 10 January 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 337-338.

¹⁶³ Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 105-106.

¹⁶⁴ Tucker, *Uncertain Friendships*, 96.

sovereign right to invade, even going so far as to refer to such operations as a domestic affair and therefore not subject to the restrictions of the MDT.

The administration rejected these urgings in the strongest terms, insisting that ROC operations against the mainland remained tied to the provisions of the MDT and the October 1958 exchange of notes.¹⁶⁵ Indeed, if the administration accepted the notion that Taiwan's liberation of the mainland was an internal affair, it would also have to accept that such a view also applied to the mainland's liberation of Taiwan. As U.A. Johnson noted in April, "I think that this, of course, was also exactly what I had heard from Wang Ping-nan at Geneva for three years, and was the consistent Peking line. I said that I could not see how Taiwan could take this attitude without also reviewing whether it desired to maintain its treaty relationship with the United States."¹⁶⁶

By February, Kirk's patience with Chiang had reached its end. He reminded Kennedy that Chiang had lost the mainland in the late-1940s due to his own stubbornness and incompetence, and bluntly stated that the United States should not seek Chiang's return to power in China since "if he ever did get back on the Mainland he would be ungrateful to the United States, and be very difficult to handle."¹⁶⁷ He went even further, however, by indicating that Taiwan was not necessarily vital to American interests since the island produced intelligence of questionable value, and since any

¹⁶⁵ Memorandum of Conversation between Bundy and Kirk, 4 February 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 342-344.

¹⁶⁶ Memorandum of Conversation between General "Tiger" Wang and U. A. Johnson, et al, 15 April 1963, *ibid.*, 361-362.

¹⁶⁷ Memorandum of Conversation between Kennedy and Kirk, 4 February 1963, *ibid.*, 345-346.

American-backed return to the mainland would constitute a violation of the MDT and “would impugn our good faith, our honor, and our self-respect”¹⁶⁸

Chiang may have viewed Kennedy’s assassination as an opportunity to once more court Washington’s favor; after all, Lyndon Johnson had been a long-time and avid supporter of the Nationalists. In April 1964, Chiang emphasized the importance of carrying the Southeast Asian hostilities not just into North Vietnam but into China proper as well. During a meeting with Rusk, he presented a proposal whereby the ROC would parachute between 5,000 and 10,000 guerillas into Southwest China. This plan would serve the dual purpose of facilitating anti-communist revolution in Yunnan Province, but also of cutting off the supply lines the North Vietnamese relied upon to receive Chinese Communist aid. The following year, Chiang Ching-kuo brought this message directly to the United States when he visited Washington for five days of discussions. Ultimately, however, the administration believed such schemes might draw the PRC into a Korea-style war, an outcome it desperately hoped to avoid.¹⁶⁹

Yet the massive American war effort in Vietnam required the use of Taiwan as a major logistical center for training and providing recreation for troops, transporting supplies, and repairing equipment, among many other important functions. Even as Washington curtailed economic aid to Taiwan in 1965 it established a variety of other linkages that solidified the partnership. This cooperation did not translate into American support of Nationalist operations against the mainland, however. In an assessment of August 18, 1965, the CIA noted the “repeated failure” of small-scale raids between late-

¹⁶⁸ Memorandum, Kirk to Kennedy, 29 March 1963, 354-355.

¹⁶⁹ Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 212-214.

1962 and mid-1964 that “points up the risks of attempting coastal landings.”¹⁷⁰ For reasons that remain obscure, Nationalist unconventional warfare operations against the mainland ended in 1966, even though joint U.S.-ROC training continued for two more years.¹⁷¹ Even if this resulted from the Washington’s influence, the Johnson administration seemed unable to prevent the remaining Nationalist irregulars in Burma in 1966 from once more engaging PRC forces in Yunnan.¹⁷² ROC operations remained ineffective, however, and ended in 1972 with Nixon’s opening to China.

The necessity of maintaining Taiwan as a strategic reserve and as an important base from which to conduct operations in Vietnam conflicted with the necessity of minimizing hostilities with China. Undoubtedly recalling the hard-won lessons of the Kennedy team regarding the management of U.S.-ROC relations, the Johnson administration set about to walk the thin line between mollifying both Beijing and Taipei. In a manner similar to Kennedy and Hilsman’s earlier statements, Johnson publicly called for reconciliation with China and carefully avoided actions against North Vietnam that might cause Beijing’s intervention. Simultaneously, the Johnson administration approved a variety of measures – facilitating aircraft delivery, exchanging intelligence information and briefings on the ongoing Warsaw Talks, and extending an invitation for the Nationalist Vice President to visit Washington – designed to signal Chiang that the

¹⁷⁰ Quoted in Tucker, *Uncertain Friendships*, 96.

¹⁷¹ Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 102, 108-109; Garver argues that the American government ended these operations out of concern that their continuation might draw China into the escalating Vietnam conflict. Tucker notes, however, that the continued failures of Nationalist raids had depleted their capability for conducting additional operations. Tucker, *Uncertain Friendships*, 64.

¹⁷² Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 161.

American commitment to Taiwan remained firm and to prevent the Generalissimo from engaging in unilateral action.¹⁷³

The Slow but Steady Death of the Alternative Strategies

The Kennedy administration had no clear, united view of how it hoped to achieve the desired reform of PRC's international relations. Kennedy's personal views remain obscure, in part because of the lack of an effective policymaking apparatus for much of his presidency that might have expressed concretely his views and decisions, and also because of Rusk's obsession with secrecy in his dealings with the president that resulted in a lack of memoranda regarding their private discussions.¹⁷⁴ The records of the Kennedy administration do, however, show traces of Eisenhower's policy of pressures and the hope that this would translate into a mainland rebellion.

The breakdown of the multilateral trade embargo that occurred during the late-1950s had alleviated some of the pressures affecting China's domestic programs, but events beyond American control had compensated for this relaxation. Particularly, the rising Sino-Soviet tensions had compelled Moscow to cease providing assistance to China and to recall its advisors. Similarly, Mao's Great Leap Forward had contributed to Beijing's economic problems by producing a massive famine that between 1959 and 1962 led to an estimated twenty million deaths.¹⁷⁵ In April 1961, a Special National Intelligence Estimate reported that Chinese morale "is almost certainly at its lowest point

¹⁷³ Tucker, *Uncertain Friendships*, 102.

¹⁷⁴ Rusk, *As I Saw It*, 197.

¹⁷⁵ Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 244; Spence, *Search for Modern China*, 583.

since the Communist assumed power.” Such estimates led some officials, particularly in the military, to advocate additional probing actions on the mainland since popular Chinese discontent would remain ineffective in the absence of intervention by an “outside force.”¹⁷⁶ McConaughy, one of the carry-overs from the previous administration, similarly argued that “since PRC hostility was an inescapable fact of life,” the administration should maintain pressures on China in order to “exploit current PRC economic difficulties.”¹⁷⁷ Among the more curious instances of this rhetoric occurred in the wake of the Sino-Indian border war in late-1962. Having advocated for nearly two years a policy of relaxing tensions through, among other things, the reconsideration of trade controls and the provision of food aid, Rostow and Bowles now argued for “unrelenting pressure” that might “trigger a gradual erosion of the regime’s grip on the mainland.”¹⁷⁸ Ultimately, however, such calls never found coherent or consistent expression in the administration’s policy decisions.

Did Taiwan then have a role to play? The Bay of Pigs operation in April 1961 offers a starting point to determine the extent to which the administration may have viewed Chiang’s involvement on the mainland as useful for the purpose of inspiring a resistance movement. Circumstances in Cuba mirrored those facing China during this time. The CIA had trained a group of Cuban exiles that it believed enjoyed the support of disaffected politicians and soldiers within the regime of Cuban President Fidel Castro. Upon establishing a foothold on the island, these latter groups would join in the

¹⁷⁶ SNIE 13-61, “The Economic Situation in Communist China,” 4 April 1961, quoted in Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 244; Memorandum, Lansdale to McNamara, 3 April 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 38-39.

¹⁷⁷ Memorandum, U.A. Johnson to Bowles, 10 May 1961, *ibid*, 56 note 2.

¹⁷⁸ Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated*, 121.

movement and trigger a popular uprising that would topple the government. Also similar to the China situation, the administration noted “widespread disillusionment” among the Cuban population that had produced a “steady stream of refugees fleeing the island.” According to Rusk’s later recollections, “This gave us the impression that many Cubans did not like Castro and would do something about him if the opportunity arose.”¹⁷⁹

The complete failure of the operation to achieve its objectives – especially that of inciting the Cuban people to rebellion – must have given Kennedy and his advisers pause when considering similar action against China. Indeed, Rusk later admitted that he had never seen “actual evidence that Cuba was ripe for another revolution,” and believed that the CIA’s commitment to the project distorted their judgment as to its feasibility.¹⁸⁰ To a considerable extent, the subsequent American reluctance to support Nationalist activities on the mainland remained tied to this demand that Chiang first demonstrate that his landing would, indeed, catalyze the Chinese people to rebel against Beijing. As Rusk explained, “we learned quickly, and there was not much chance that we would fall into that kind of trap again.”¹⁸¹ Even before the Bay of Pigs, Kennedy had sent a message to Chiang Kai-shek in which he listed “seven points of agreement

¹⁷⁹ Rusk, *As I Saw It*, 214.

¹⁸⁰ Rusk later claimed he was against the operation from the beginning in large part because an American-supported landing in Cuba “clearly violated international law, as spelled out by the UN General Assembly’s definition of aggression.” Ibid, 214; Thomas Paterson has argued, however, that Kennedy “never revealed moral or legal qualms about violently overthrowing a sovereign government.” Thomas G. Paterson, “Fixation with Cuba: The Bay of Pigs, Missile Crisis, and Covert War Against Fidel Castro,” in Paterson, ed., *Kennedy’s Quest For Victory*, 130.

¹⁸¹ Rusk, *As I Saw It*, 216.

regarding U.S.-ROC cooperation on activities to be carried out on the Chinese mainland,” though the actual contents of the message remain classified.¹⁸²

By July 1961, with Chiang on the verge of dangerous unilateral action, Cline strongly encouraged the administration to cooperate with Chiang “in certain reconnaissance probes on the mainland” for the explicit purpose of regaining the Generalissimo’s trust and support; tellingly, Cline did not mention the value such operations might have on fomenting mainland resistance.¹⁸³ Kennedy’s approval later that month of a series of 20-man drops inside China and his approval of similar drops the following year undoubtedly followed this same rationale.¹⁸⁴ On March 6, 1962, Drumright warned that “Chiang is bent on taking some kind of action this year,” and that “it will take skillful, adept responses on our part to channel his actions in directions we deem appropriate to situation.” Three days later, Kennedy approved consideration of airdropping ROC forces into China, though he placed preference on smaller actions handled entirely by the ROC. Once again, he apparently intended these more as a way to divert Chiang’s energies into less destructive pursuits than as a genuine effort to foment rebellion.

As noted earlier, in the first half of 1962 the administration began moving toward acceptance of the idea that a Nationalist landing would fail to foment a popular uprising, and even if it managed to do so the Soviet Union would never allow the PRC

¹⁸² John Garver suggests that the letter “provided the basis for a resumption of Nationalist offensive operations against the PRC.” However, he sees this primarily as “a way of placing further strains on the Beijing-Moscow relation.” Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 105. The seven points are referenced in Message, McGeorge Bundy to Ray Cline, 17 April 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 218-219.

¹⁸³ Memorandum, Bundy to Kennedy, July 7, 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 91.

¹⁸⁴ Kennedy approved of these drops in the “third week of July 1961.” *Ibid*, 193 note 1.

government to collapse under such circumstances. Yet the hopes for a successful landing did not die off completely, however. The Consulate in Hong Kong reported that Beijing's massive troop transfer during the June 1962 Strait crisis stemmed in part from fear that popular discontent with Chinese Communist rule would, indeed, allow a Nationalist landing to successfully catalyze a rebellion.¹⁸⁵ Further, the drought and floods wracking China at that time may have contributed to PRC Foreign Minister Chen Yi's comment that millions of Chinese might now oppose communist rule and that if "Chiang Kai-shek drops paratroops and lands on the mainland with American support, these elements will come out of hiding."¹⁸⁶ Kennedy, it seems, also had not entirely written off the possibility of a Nationalist-inspired mainland rebellion. In a June 28, 1962, meeting with CIA Director John McCone, for instance, the president expressed that "he saw no useful purpose in changing United States policy until such a time as we had some specific reason for so doing, i.e., the possibility of deterioration on the Mainland to a point where it was felt desirable to support Chiang in a military operation."¹⁸⁷ Even Hilsman, among the most ardent advocates for a more flexible policy toward China, admitted "there was in fact some merit" to Chiang's notion that the Chinese people would respond favorably to a Nationalist landing. Although he rejected the Nationalists' arguments that a landing would succeed, he nonetheless admitted that

¹⁸⁵ Telegram, Consulate General in Hong Kong to the Department of State, 22 June 1962, *ibid*, 272.

¹⁸⁶ Quoted in Tucker, *Uncertain Friendships*, 43.

¹⁸⁷ Kennedy meeting with McCone, 28 June 28 1962, quoted in *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 284. This calls into question Michael Lumbers' assertion that "Haunted by the Bay of Pigs fiasco, Kennedy harbored no thoughts of acquiescing, let alone participating, in any adventure to overthrow the PRC." Lumbers, *Piercing the Bamboo Curtain*, 28-29.

“there was always some possibility that new evidence would support the notion that the mass of the people would revolt and no one wanted to overlook such a possibility.”¹⁸⁸

By mid-year, however, the administration had reached a point where it simply could not rely on Nationalist landings as a reliable basis from which to make policy; it simply lacked the Eisenhower administration’s faith in or patience for the theory of inevitable collapse. Harriman offered a characteristic assessment of ROC landings that “the most optimistic estimate I have heard from any American is ten to one against achievement of its objective.”¹⁸⁹ Indeed, administration officials expected that the acquisition of additional intelligence regarding mainland conditions would only confirm that the Chinese people would not respond to a Nationalist landing by rebelling against Beijing. Thus, when Kennedy instructed the CIA to help the Nationalists engage in additional small-scale operations following the June 1962 Strait crisis, he did so only as a way to secure more intelligence about mainland conditions that would definitively prove this assessment and discredit Chiang’s militant proposals. Harriman confirmed this the following month when he admitted that the administration approved the airdrops not to prepare for an invasion, but rather for the purpose of “anticipating, containing and diverting GRC pressures for larger-scale operations.”¹⁹⁰

Because the administration never wholeheartedly perceived the overthrow of the PRC government as a viable policy option, it increasingly relied on the notion that Mao’s radical excesses might provide opportunities for Washington to woo more

¹⁸⁸ Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 311-315.

¹⁸⁹ Message, Harriman to Kennedy, circa 15 March 1962, quoted in *ibid*, 196 note 3.

¹⁹⁰ Message, Harriman to Kirk, 8 August 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 302.

pragmatic Chinese Communist officials – a strategy that harkened back to Truman’s initial efforts to win over the Chinese Communist leadership in 1949 and 1950. Most officials in the early 1960s perceived the failures of the Great Leap Forward as having created significant rifts among CCP officials that the United States could exploit through the effective use of certain small conciliatory gestures. These gestures, they believed, might allow a “second echelon” of Chinese Communist leaders to assert a moderating influence on Mao’s domestic and foreign policies. Furthermore, many American officials noted Mao’s advanced age and suggested that signs of American flexibility could have a profound influence on those officials who would take power once Mao died.¹⁹¹ In either case, the United States, lacking alternatives, should now adopt policies that would demonstrate a flexible approach to Sino-American relations.

The administration took tentative steps in this direction, beginning with a renewed effort at the March 7, 1961, Warsaw meeting to achieve an agreement on the exchange of newspaper correspondents.¹⁹² Similarly, Bowles and Rostow both believed that famine conditions in China provided an opportunity to offer grain sales to Beijing “in exchange for a curtailment of its subversive activity in Laos and Vietnam.”¹⁹³ These recommendations had some influence on the administration’s approach, for in August Rusk encouraged Cabot to probe his counterpart for “even smallest opportunities to

¹⁹¹ As Rostow expressed in early 1962, “what do we do if Mao dies and there is a crisis within the Chinese leadership? Do we give them a vision of the possibility of better relations with us if they calm down? Or do we buckle them in even more tightly with the Russians?” Memorandum, Thomson to Harriman, 12 January 1962, *ibid*, 178.

¹⁹² Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 304. Beijing rejected this on the grounds that the Taiwan issue remained unresolved.

¹⁹³ Lumbers, *Piercing the Bamboo Curtain*, 30.

improve atmosphere” but without jeopardizing fundamental American principles.¹⁹⁴ Though historian Michael Lumbers attributes the failure of such initiatives to Bowles and Rostow’s lack of influence over the president and his inner circle, in reality these initiatives foundered primarily as a result of Beijing’s ongoing support of communist activities in Southeast Asia and the fact that it refused to consider such proposals until the United States abandoned its commitment to Taiwan.¹⁹⁵ Mao had maintained this stance on Taiwan since 1958 and had “scorned evidence of American flexibility.”¹⁹⁶ As such, the Chinese remained resistant to any such overtures.¹⁹⁷

Yet calls for a flexible approach persisted and gained new life following the distribution of a memorandum drafted by Edward Rice of the Policy Planning Staff in October.¹⁹⁸ Rice’s paper constituted the clearest exposition to date of the NSC 68 formula of balancing a rigid stance against aggression with demonstrations of a willingness to seek mutually satisfactory arrangements for co-existence. Rice’s paper made such an impression that when Harriman became Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs in November 1961 he chose Rice as one of his deputies. Indeed, Harriman became a powerful advocate of a flexible approach, expressing in April 1962 that “our choice seems to be between immobility and steps which are few and small. I

¹⁹⁴ Telegram, Department of State to Embassy in Poland, 13 August 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 119.

¹⁹⁵ Lumbers, *Piercing the Bamboo Curtain*, 31; Telegram, Department of State to the Embassy in Rangoon, 27 November 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 175 note 5.

¹⁹⁶ Tucker, *Uncertain Friendships*, 45.

¹⁹⁷ See, for instance, Telegram, Embassy in Poland to the Department of State, 2 September 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963*, XXII, 132.

¹⁹⁸ Paper Prepared in the Policy Planning Staff, “U.S. Policy Toward China,” 26 October 1961, *ibid*, 162-167.

cannot believe that a policy of immobility can serve us well in a world where change is the rule.”¹⁹⁹

Rice’s search for a balanced approach, however, lacked novelty, and its practical implementation confronted the same obstacles that had confounded Truman and Eisenhower – namely, Beijing’s refusal to reciprocate, and the inherent difficulty in ascertaining which overtures Washington could make without unduly encouraging the Chinese Communists to engage in additional inappropriate behaviors. As such, although Rusk showed some willingness to reconsider the food sales issue in the spring of 1962, his recommendations to Kennedy concluded by suggesting that Australia, Canada, and France – the other grain-exporting countries – convey to Beijing that “there would be a relationship between the direction of any important change in its external behavior and continued availability to it of non-bloc food grains.”²⁰⁰ Later that year, with mass refugees fleeing China and with the PRC about to “exhaust all substantial non-US sources of Free World grain,” the State Department informed Cabot at Warsaw to raise the issue of food sales for humanitarian reasons “as soon as it was possible to do so in a normal and low-key manner.”²⁰¹ But again, this only went so far, for in June Rusk again demanded “some indication from the Chinese communists that they were relaxing their tactics of pressure on India and elsewhere.”²⁰²

Rusk did seek to convey the American attitude through more conventional methods, however. As noted above, during the June Strait crisis the Department

¹⁹⁹ Memorandum, Harriman to Rusk, 13 April 1962, *ibid.*, 216-217.

²⁰⁰ Memorandum, Rusk to Kennedy, 4 April 1962, *ibid.*, 210.

²⁰¹ Paper Prepared in the Department of State, 28 May 1962, and Telegram, Department of State to the Embassy in Poland, 30 May 1962, both in *ibid.*, 231-233 and 233 note 2, respectively.

²⁰² Quoted in Lumbers, *Piercing the Bamboo Curtain*, 33.

explicitly renounced its support of Chiang's military maneuvers, supported the following week by Kennedy's public statement to the effect that the American posture remained defensive and that the United States sought only a mutual renunciation of force. In addition, during the negotiations for the neutralization of Laos in July, Rusk took the important symbolic step of exchanging handshakes and pleasantries with PRC Foreign Minister Chen Yi.²⁰³

Hilsman's appointment as Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs in April 1963 perpetuated the emphasis on achieving a more balanced approach to China policy despite the apparent increase in Beijing's militancy in late-1962 and early-1963. Hilsman was among those officials who believed that the lingering social disruptions from the Great Leap had encouraged Chinese officials to "focus on domestic concerns" and might yet "contribute to the adoption of a more moderate line in foreign policy."²⁰⁴ Because of Hilsman's regular contact with the president during this time, and Kennedy's apparent decision to become more directly involved in foreign policy, one can conclude that the chief executive remained at least sympathetic to such endeavors, even if he and Rusk continued to struggle with how best to implement them. Hilsman's efforts peaked in December when he delivered his San Francisco speech in which he reiterated the view that a policy of containment/deterrence did not necessarily preclude a policy of conciliation. Nonetheless, Hilsman clearly blamed Beijing's refusal to behave appropriately for the lack of progress in Sino-American relations.²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Rusk describes his encounter with Chen in *As I Saw It*, 287.

²⁰⁴ Quoted in Lumbers, *Piercing the Bamboo Curtain*, 29.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 40.

Much as with Rice's October 1961 policy paper, Hilsman's December 1963 speech proved less revolutionary than historians subsequently claimed, since it reiterated the same NSC 68 formula that Ike had attempted, however imperfectly, to implement during the 1950s. Nonetheless, Hilsman's speech did include recognition that American actions had contributed to the perpetuation of Sino-American tension – something Eisenhower would never have admitted, at least not publicly. Indeed, subsequent analyses suggest that Hilsman's superiors might not have agreed with this view either. Historian Noam Kochavi, for instance, points out the array of factors that limited Kennedy and Rusk's ability to devote sufficient attention to the speech, thus allowing it to clear both the State Department and the White House unaltered. In any event, the Chinese Communists did not respond favorably to this most recent overture.

By early 1966, new recommendations reiterated the need to engage with the PRC in a way that would lay the groundwork for a potential rapprochement once the generation of hard-line Chinese Communists passed from the scene. In this new policy of "containment without isolation," the "strategy of flexible initiatives is based *not* on expectation of a favorable Chinese response but rather on several near-term and longer-term objectives," including the desire to "gradually help to break down China's acutely distorted view of the outside world that plots her encirclement and destruction."²⁰⁶ Some officials hoped that by abandoning the demand for reciprocity, the United States might successfully win over some of the "revisionist" Chinese that intelligence sources indicated did, in fact, exist within China. However, the available information portrayed

²⁰⁶ Emphasis in original. Memorandum, James Thomson, Jr., to Jack Valenti, 1 March 1966, *FRUS, 1964-1968*, XXX, 263.

as only superficial whatever discontent existed within CCP ranks. Unable to engender PRC factionalism, Washington might have to wait quite a while longer for a more cooperative CCP leadership to emerge.²⁰⁷

Unbeknownst to the Johnson administration, however, powerful forces within China had already begun to create serious ideological schisms separating Mao from the bulk of his own party. Washington knew very little of the internal disagreements within the CCP leadership that had developed since the late-1950s. American officials had only recently given higher priority to acquiring solid information on the PRC and increasing coordination of American China policies, though by mid-1966 they had not made much progress.²⁰⁸ When the administration learned of these schisms, however, the knowledge forced the administration to reassess its view of the elder generation of CCP leaders and gave it hope for a Sino-American rapprochement *now*, rather than at some ambiguous, indeterminate future time. This shift in the American perception of the PRC occurred during the second half of 1966 as Mao Zedong launched his Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

The Cultural Revolution represented the most significant turning point in the history of the People's Republic, acting as a crossroads between the Maoist era of continuous revolution and the reformist era of Deng Xiaoping. The Cultural Revolution resulted primarily from the domestic setbacks within China that demonstrated the

²⁰⁷ For an excellent appraisal of the situation, see Memorandum, Edward Rice to Walt Rostow, 15 April 1966, *ibid.*, 282-284.

²⁰⁸ See, for example, Memorandum, John Bross to William Raborn, Jr., 20 January 1966, and Letter, William Raborn, Jr., to Bill Moyers, 14 February 1966, both in *FRUS, 1964-1968*, XXXIII, 525-528 and 532-536, respectively; and Memorandum, James Thomson, Jr., to McGeorge Bundy, 4 February 1966, *FRUS, 1964-1968*, XXX, 249-251.

ineffectiveness of Mao's economic policies. By the mid-1960s, certain CCP members had even begun to call for a peaceful approach to foreign relations in order to focus more resources on bringing the socialist experiment within China to fruition. In the midst of such calls for change, the Sino-Soviet split entered a new stage of heightened tensions, driven in part by Khrushchev's less belligerent approach to the United States. With his ideological worldview undiminished since the 1930s, the aging Mao began to see "revisionists" and "counterrevolutionaries" at all levels of China's administrative structure, and went so far as to label his chief rival, Liu Shaoqi, as China's Khrushchev. In late-1965, Mao left Beijing for Shanghai where he laid the foundation for an all-out ideological and political war on his own Party.

The first, or violent, phase of the Cultural Revolution lasted from 1966-1969 during which Mao systematically struck at those Party members who failed to meet his standards of revolutionary purity. His attacks against the CCP hierarchy spawned a semi-independent student movement among the nation's educational institutions that resulted in mass turmoil. Feeling confident that such expressions of the common masses were inherently healthy, Mao ordered the closing of China's schools to allow the nation's youth to devote their time fully to revolutionary activity. These students in turn formed the Red Guards, a national movement the activities of which engendered both disgust and fear throughout the international community.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁹ According to one estimate, "all of the world's Communist Parties have been mystified by the course of events in China, and virtually all have been alienated by the antiparty aspects of Red Guard rampages, the appearances of Maoist megalomania and Chinese chauvinism, and the general turmoil which seems to have swept over China." National Intelligence Estimate, "The Outlook for Sino-Soviet Relations," 1 December 1966, *ibid*, 482.

For Rusk, Mao's revolution could not have come at a better time. In April, Arthur Goldberg, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, believed that because of Canadian and Japanese defections, and because of the U.S. failure to gain support among African countries, the effort to prevent the U.N. from seating the PRC in the General Assembly later that year would fail. However, the breakdown of social order and the almost complete collapse of the Chinese governmental system as one official after another succumbed to Mao's purges provided the Secretary with the leverage he needed to convince the UNGA not to grant the PRC membership.²¹⁰ Indeed, during this period many countries that had recognized Beijing – including Burundi, the Central African Republic, Dahomey, Ghana, Indonesia, and Tunisia – all chose to sever their relations with China. Only in 1973 did these countries begin to restore relations.²¹¹

Through the remainder of the administration's term of office, Rusk sought "ways of stimulating" the global revulsion against the Revolution's excesses and "giving it a push."²¹² Rusk confidently stated that Chinese Communist "hostility to UN and to much of outer world has been highlighted in recent months by turmoil within China symbolized by emergence of 'Red Guards' and related activity. Whatever final outcome of these developments, their present effect is to underscore militancy and unyielding mood of Peking's current leaders."²¹³ In November 1966, the Secretary sought to sway the Canadian government by emphasizing that Mao remained "tenuously on top," and that "at this moment what must appear to be a naked offer of membership will if

²¹⁰ Foot, *The Practice of Power*, 45.

²¹¹ Cohen and Chiu, *People's China and International Law*, 258-259.

²¹² Memorandum of Conversation between representatives of the State Department and the ROC government, 10 May 1967, *ibid*, 260.

²¹³ Circular Telegram, Dean Rusk to Certain Posts, 16 September 1966, *ibid*, 390-392.

anything encourage the hard-liners and work against the possible emergence of different policies out of the present turmoil in China.”²¹⁴

For most administration officials, however, the Cultural Revolution offered no clear answers about how the United States should proceed. Rice, now the American Consul General in Hong Kong, produced the first major assessment of the Revolution in late-June 1966. Of the possible explanations for the disturbances, the report listed three: a succession crisis that, if true, “was triggered by something of no mean importance”; a cultural purge with the “unrealistically big order” of liquidating all old ideas, culture, customs, and traditions “created in the course of thousands of years by the exploiting classes”; and a dispute over policy rooted in ideological differences and exacerbated by the recent foreign and domestic policy failures. Although Rice emphasized that developments remained “clouded in obscurity,” he successfully discerned the general contours of Mao’s efforts, supported by Lin Biao and the PLA, to indoctrinate CCP cadres in Mao’s Thought and use them to attack “the pragmatists and revisionists who had been challenging Maoism as the solution of all China’s problems.”²¹⁵

The fact that the internal CCP differences had led to such a state of affairs revolutionized the American perception of the Chinese Communist Movement and opened new possibilities for U.S. China policy. As early as July 1966, the CIA reported that Mao’s Revolution “is clearly failing,” and expressed doubt that “a dynasty built on the sand of Maoist philosophy will take a century to fall; once begun, a decade would

²¹⁴ Telegram, Dean Rusk to the Embassy in Canada, 9 November 1966, *ibid.*, 421.

²¹⁵ Telegram, Edward Rice to the Department of State, 25 June 1966, *ibid.*, 326-332.

seem too long.”²¹⁶ Later that year as the Revolution deepened, the CIA again reported that the “recurrent trauma of government by exhortation as a substitute for effective policies to deal with real problems, is clearly taking its toll among the Chinese people,” and that Mao’s “desperate effort to reverse the tide may actually hurry his ultimate defeat.”²¹⁷

With this in mind, certain American officials reasserted earlier calls for a flexible policy, although this time they did so because they believed that a more positive approach had a good chance, rather than a vague hope, of wooing the more moderate CCP officials. Once again, Thomson took the lead. Couching his proposals in the now-standard terms of winning over allied support, Thomson nonetheless emphasized the need to “communicate a new and supportive message to elements within mainland China that are pushing for policies of pragmatism and accommodation with the outside world.” He concluded by stressing that “such actions could not take place at a more important moment in Chinese political history: the more we can do to support the mainland pragmatists by our actions and to cause confusion to the theologians in Peking, the better for our national interests and the achievement of stability and peace in Asia.”²¹⁸

Other officials, however, raised concerns about the notion of attempting to strengthen the pragmatists’ position. The most significant of these warnings came from a government panel of China experts, formed in December 1966, which included such prominent figures as John King Fairbank and A. Doak Barnett. The panel argued

²¹⁶ CIA Intelligence Information Cable, 25 July 1966, *ibid*, 364.

²¹⁷ Memorandum, CIA Board of National Estimates, 23 September 1966, *ibid*, 401-402.

²¹⁸ Thomson still feared the “*built-in resistance to any such adjustments on the 7th floor at State.*” Emphasis in original. Memorandum, James Thomson, Jr., to Walt Rostow, 4 August 1966, *ibid*, 364-366.

against any attempt to guide the revolution toward a predetermined course because the United States “probably could not appreciably affect the outcome, and that attempts to do so would be counterproductive at best and dangerously foolhardy at worst.”²¹⁹ Many officials echoed the panel’s recommendation. Rice believed “it is against our interests to speak in public of any benefits to us from Maoist chaos,” and John Roche, the President’s Special Consultant, suggested that “the Secretary of State issue firm instructions to our missions not to dabble in the religious wars of the Communist world.”²²⁰

While the China panel said what the administration should not do, it proved less helpful in terms of offering recommendations about what it should do. After arriving at four possible outcomes of the Cultural Revolution – including Mao’s reconsolidation of power, a compromise arrangement under Zhou Enlai, victory for the Party apparatus backed by the Army, and the dissolution of China into regional, militarily controlled units – the panel could reach no consensus as to which of the four appeared most likely, nor could the panel determine which was most desirable from the standpoint of U.S. interests. Despite this, the China panel’s existence indicated the extent to which the Cultural Revolution affected Washington’s general outlook toward China. The administration’s heightened interest in understanding China had not only led to the inclusion of advice from the academic arena, but had also convinced Johnson to establish a special senior-level position to advise the president on China.²²¹ Johnson

²¹⁹ Memorandum, Alfred Jenkins to Walt Rostow, 3 February 1967, *ibid*, 514.

²²⁰ Memorandum, Walt Rostow to President Johnson, 25 September 1967, and Memorandum, John Roche to President Johnson, 15 February 1967, both in *ibid*, 598-599 and 519, respectively.

²²¹ Memorandum, China Experts Meeting with the President, 2 February 1968, *ibid*, 634-638.

further demonstrated this new attitude in February 1968 when he ordered the Joint Chiefs of Staff “as a matter of high and urgent priority, to undertake steps to eliminate, if possible,” violations of Chinese airspace.²²²

In the meantime, Zhou Enlai’s efforts to rein in the excesses of the Red Guards led many officials to predict that he might supplant Mao and usher in an era of compromise. From Washington’s perspective, Zhou had acted as a moderating influence for decades, beginning with his mediation efforts during the Bandung Conference of 1954. In January 1967, with civil war a “distinct possibility,” Rostow wrote to Johnson that “Premier Chou remains the best hope of achieving a compromise in the interest of preserving the nation and the regime’s hard-won, limited accomplishments.”²²³ Soon thereafter, NSC staffer Alfred Jenkins, in a report tellingly titled “Ascendancy of Premier Chou and His Policies,” noted the premier’s attempts “to reverse the alarming trend toward anarchy in China,” and confidently asserted that “the actions of Chou are currently eclipsing the thought of Mao.”²²⁴ Though Jenkins admitted the difficulty in ascertaining whether “Chou is comfortably in the saddle and likely to remain there,” he nonetheless offered his thoughts on the policies that a more moderate CCP would pursue under Zhou’s leadership.²²⁵

Rumors of Zhou’s ascendancy proved inaccurate, however, and the administration soon accepted that Mao would continue to head the CCP. Despite this,

²²² Editorial Note describing documents dated from 13-15 February 1968, *ibid.*, 642.

²²³ Memorandum, Walt Rostow to President Johnson, 9 January 1967, *ibid.*, 499-500. See also Memorandum, Walt Rostow to President Johnson, 13 January 1967, *ibid.*, 501-502.

²²⁴ Memorandum, Alfred Jenkins to Walt Rostow, 24 February 1967, *ibid.*, 523-524; and Memorandum, Alfred Jenkins to Walt Rostow, 6 March 1967, *ibid.*, 527-530.

²²⁵ Memorandum, Alfred Jenkins to Walt Rostow, 6 March 1967, *ibid.*, 527-530.

several officials believed that radical Maoism as the PRC's guiding ideological framework would not survive. Rostow attributed its demise to a combination of "fragmented and embittered leaders, revisionist and indolent cadre, policy and personal differences in every major element of the society, a long list of failures in domestic and foreign policies, and a populace as a whole which must by now be bone weary of 17 years of incessant ideological floggings."²²⁶ According to some observers, this shift would have the most dramatic effect on China's domestic policy, specifically a return to the post-Great Leap "creeping revisionism" that promoted normal economic development and social stability.²²⁷

Though uncertainty remained as to whether the pragmatist outlook would extend to foreign policy as well, the administration remained hopeful that a new era of improved Sino-American relations was within sight. In May 1967, a National Intelligence Estimate on the Cultural Revolution determined that "many of Mao's dogmas and practices are likely to be set aside."²²⁸ Later that year, Rice asserted that "Mao cannot win and consolidate his power," and by January 1968, Gronouski noted that his meeting that month with Chinese Ambassador Wang was "conspicuously lacking in repeated references to Mao and quotes from Mao" that had dominated previous meetings.²²⁹

Unfortunately, at the very moment when prospects for improved Sino-American relations looked brightest, the Tet Offensive diverted Washington's attention away from

²²⁶ Memorandum, Walt Rostow to President Johnson, 13 January 1967, *ibid.*, 501-502.

²²⁷ Memorandum, Alfred Jenkins to Walt Rostow, 6 March 1967, *ibid.*, 527-530.

²²⁸ National Intelligence Estimate, "The Chinese Cultural Revolution," 25 May 1967, *ibid.*, 573-574.

²²⁹ Memorandum, Walt Rostow to President Johnson, 25 September 1967, and Telegram, John Gronouski to the Department of State, 8 January 1968, both in *ibid.*, 598-599 and 630-632, respectively.

China policy. Within months Johnson, discredited among the American people and unlikely to win reelection, announced that he would not run for a second term. Even had the Vietnam crisis not distracted the administration, the fight between Mao and his opponents remained bitter, thus presenting an ongoing chaotic situation with which few officials wished to interfere. Although accepting the unlikelihood of cooperative relations with Mao, as 1968 came to a close Jenkins nonetheless noted that every day “brings added indication that something like pre-Cultural Revolution ‘normalcy’ is returning.” As the newly-elected Nixon administration prepared to enter office, Jenkins optimistically reported that “the time may be near when we might profitably give another signal (a minor but clear one) to Peking that it has policy alternatives in our regard, when and if it is seriously ready to meet some of the prerequisites.”²³⁰

²³⁰ Memorandum, Alfred Jenkins to Walt Rostow, 5 December 1968, *ibid.*, 725-726.

CHAPTER V

“THE GREAT LYNCHPIN OF PEACE IN THE WORLD”: CHINA POLICY IN THE NIXON-FORD ERA, 1969-1976

The Nixon administration hoped to begin a process of gradual change in the PRC mentality by stressing the geostrategic interests that the two nations had in common, particularly curbing Moscow's hegemonial aspirations. This required the Chinese Communists to maintain both trust and patience toward the United States, and to receive in return positive steps toward normalized relations. Taking advantage of China's return to relative normalcy after the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution and the emergence of actual fighting along the Sino-Soviet border, the administration succeeded in opening a high-level dialogue between Washington and Beijing. With the leaders of both countries willing to set aside their ideological rivalry at least temporarily, movement toward normalization could begin in earnest. As the years progressed, Nixon looked with satisfaction as Beijing appeared to move increasingly closer to accepting the validity of the American international perspective, so much so that in May 1973 the president exuberantly characterized the Sino-American relationship as “the great lynchpin of peace in the world.”¹

Yet if Washington had, in fact, achieved an “ideological armistice” with Mao and Zhou by 1972, as Kissinger later claimed, many of the still zealously ideological Chinese

¹ Conversation between Nixon and David Bruce, 3 May 1973, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976*, Vol. XVIII: China, 1973-1976, 250, hereafter cited as *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVIII.

in the PRC refused to abide by it.² Disdainful of any form of exchanges, distrusting of American motives, and outraged by Mao's courting of Washington, the radical forces within China immediately began efforts to counter these trends, or, at the very least, to utilize the new circumstances to benefit their revolutionary goals. By the spring of 1974, these forces, with Mao's tacit endorsement, had ousted Zhou and threatened to return China once more to a policy of hostility toward the United States and rigid opposition to the kind of broad collaboration with the international community that Washington advocated. For his part, Mao apparently continued until his death in 1976 to walk a middle course that mostly left to his successors the question of China's future approach.

New Approaches, New Contacts, 1969-1971

Any study of China policy during the presidency of Richard Nixon must begin with an examination of the philosophical views of both Nixon and his National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, and the manner in which they adapted their views to suit the international realities they confronted while in office. Richard Nixon had first-hand experience with the conditions on the ground in East Asia, the product of two trips to the region he conducted in 1953 and 1967 that culminated in the publishing of his *Foreign Affairs* article "Asia After Vietnam." Nixon asserted that the United States must find new approaches that would minimize the likelihood of local aggressions drawing the nuclear superpowers into direct conflict with one another. To achieve this, the United States must work to create a new international balance of power that would prove more

² Kissinger, *On China*, 284.

stable than one based solely on American power. Nixon confidently asserted that the strength of Western Europe had effectively checked Soviet ambitions in that theater and had, in fact, achieved a long-sought reorientation of Soviet foreign policy. Asia remained unsettled, however, since China had yet to abandon its revolutionary objectives, refused to accept the responsibility of exerting a moderating influence in the region, and continued to encourage and support violent Third World revolutions.

Nixon argued that a more effective Asian balance of power would achieve in Beijing what a strong Western Europe had achieved with respect to Moscow. In a remarkable parroting of the classic containment argument dating back to NSC 68, Nixon argued that the United States must exert “creative counterpressure designed to persuade Peking that its interests can be served only by accepting the basic rules of international civility.” Indeed, far from heralding a new approach to China, Nixon bluntly stated that the “world cannot be safe until China changes,” and that prematurely recognizing the PRC, allowing it into the U.N., or offering expanded trade relations “would serve to confirm its rulers in their present course.”³ Thus, while Nixon acknowledged the importance of ending China’s isolation from the rest of the world, this did not automatically translate into a revolutionized vision of American China policy. As historian former government official William Bundy points out, “there was a great deal more revived and reframed 1950s thinking in the article than any foretaste of communication, let alone a real easing of relations, with China.”⁴

³ Richard Nixon, “Asia After Vietnam,” October 1967, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976*, Vol. I: Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1969-1972, 17, hereafter cited as *FRUS, 1969-1976*, I.

⁴ William Bundy, *A Tangled Web: The Making of Foreign Policy in the Nixon Presidency* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 19.

Nixon chose Henry Kissinger as his National Security Assistant, handing to him an unprecedented amount of power to conduct American foreign relations. The two men had not known each other previously, though Nixon had developed a favorable impression of Kissinger through the latter's academic writings.⁵ In *A World Restored* Kissinger "showed how conservative statesmen, who sought to preserve world order, learned how to deal with a revolutionary nation through artfully tending to balances of power."⁶ In this essential respect, both men agreed that in order to deter communist aggression effectively, the United States must encourage the growth of regional power blocs that would provide a more enduring and stable world order than the United States could provide through the unilateral exertion of its own limited power and influence. The American contribution to the establishment of this equilibrium, Kissinger argued, "will have to consist more of understanding and quiet, behind-the-scenes encouragement than of the propagation of formal institutional structures." In this way, a common community of interest will develop that would ultimately prove more effective in preserving the international order than "the elaboration of formal legal obligations."⁷ For Kissinger, as one of his biographers argues, stability results "when nations accept the legitimacy of the existing world order and when they act based on their national interests."⁸

Like Nixon, Kissinger advanced this view without abandoning the basic tenets of the American Cold War worldview. In a 1968 article, Kissinger identified the "purpose

⁵ Walter Isaacson, *Kissinger: A Biography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 134-135.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 75; Alistair Horne argues that *A World Restored* constituted "a blueprint of how Kissinger would conduct policy once empowered to do so." Horne, *Kissinger*, 20.

⁷ Henry Kissinger, "Central Issues of American Foreign Policy," 1968, in *FRUS, 1969-1976*, I, 34-35.

⁸ Isaacson, *Kissinger*, 75.

of American policy” as the encouragement of “a more benign evolution of Soviet society,” and particularly noted communist interventions in the Third World as among those major issues that threatened peace.⁹ Here, Kissinger faced the same fundamental dilemma that had plagued American officials since 1949 – achieving a balance between containment and engagement, between the necessity of preventing aggression and the necessity of demonstrating a willingness to engage in constructive relations. He criticized both the “apostles of containment” as well as advocates of relaxation for failing to specify a program that the United States should pursue once it had succeeded in convincing the communists to negotiate. Peace, according to Kissinger, would not “result from one grand settlement but from a long diplomatic process.”¹⁰

Yet Kissinger said little about China. One point that he did make – an insight of no small importance, as it turned out – was that China “has been either dominant or subjected,” and thus had “no experience in conducting foreign policy with equals.” This anticipated Kissinger’s later dealings with Beijing by implying the existence of a learning curve for Chinese leaders as they accustomed themselves to the conduct of a normalized mode of diplomacy. In addition, this also constituted an implicit rejection of Dean Rusk’s belief that the United Nations “cannot operate as a reform school.”¹¹ Just as Kissinger emphasized the importance of encouragement rather than dictation as a way to create a community of interests among allies, so too might the United States apply a

⁹ Whereas Nixon argued in 1967 that the Soviet Union had already changed its ways, Kissinger pointed out the cyclical nature of Soviet policy since 1917 between periods of coexistence and hostility, and warned that “we should not again confuse a change of tone with a change of heart.” Kissinger, “Central Issues of American Foreign Policy,” *FRUS, 1969-1976*, I, 43.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Memorandum of Conversation between representatives of the Department of State and the British Foreign Ministry, 26 October 1964, *FRUS, 1964-1968*, XXXIII, 664.

similar program of gentle encouragement to its relations with the PRC. The idea of approaching revolutionary communists in this manner came slowly to Kissinger; in his previous writings he had emphasized the futility of negotiating with revolutionary states that do not accept the legitimacy of the international order.¹² Nevertheless, once in office, Kissinger gradually concluded that altering PRC policy might well lie within his power.

Across the Pacific, Mao Zedong had begun contemplating the troubled conditions facing his own country, and, like Nixon and Kissinger, had decided that his fundamental objectives remained sound, but that the pursuit of them required a new approach. By mid-1968, Mao made initial moves to regain control over his ideologically ravaged nation that remained in the grips of zealous radical forces that the Chairman, himself, had unleashed two years before. When his own Red Guards resisted his efforts to re-establish state control, Mao turned against them. As historian Chen Jian notes, at this moment and with Mao's encouragement, references to China's role as the "center of the world revolution" began to "disappear in Maoist discourse." But although Mao had implicitly acknowledged the failures of his domestic revolution and had demonstrated tacit "willingness to live with the yet-to-be-transformed 'old' world order," he nonetheless retained his ideological principles that railed against capitalist-imperialist nations and encouraged revolutionary movements to overthrow them.¹³ Furthermore, Mao grew increasingly concerned about the precarious strategic situation facing China in the late-1960s, particularly as regards the ongoing Sino-Soviet dispute. Mao's excessive

¹² Isaacson, *Kissinger*, 76.

¹³ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 244.

preoccupation with curbing Soviet aggression and his persistent ideological support of Third World revolutionaries served as a consistent and powerful reminder during the subsequent Sino-American discussions that the United States still had far to go in its efforts to affect a fundamental change in China's approach to the rest of the world.

The American effort to establish contact with Beijing in the early months of Nixon's first term proved difficult. The Vietnam War continued to rage with the PRC supplying large amounts of weapons to the North Vietnamese communists. Indeed, in January 1969 the administration railed against the impending Italian and Canadian recognition of Beijing on the grounds that this would encourage the Chinese "hardliners" and "their friends or sympathizers" in Hanoi."¹⁴ Conditions for a rapprochement seemed so dismal that a few weeks after taking office, Kissinger supposedly expressed to his deputy, Alexander Haig that the president "has taken leave of reality" because he "thinks this is the moment to establish normal relations with Communist China. He has just ordered me to make this flight of fancy come true."¹⁵ Whatever reservations Kissinger may have had, however, the administration's initial round of policy reviews included National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) 14, a sweeping reappraisal of Sino-American relations.¹⁶ That same week, Nixon expressed to Kissinger that "we should

¹⁴ Meeting between McGeorge Bundy and Italian Ambassador Egidio Ortona, 24 January 1969, quoted in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976*, Vol. XVII: China, 1969-1972, 3 note 7, hereafter cited as *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII.

¹⁵ Alexander M. Haig, Jr., *Inner Circles: How America Changed the World, A Memoir* (New York: Warner Books, 1992), 257.

¹⁶ NSSM 14, "U.S. China Policy," 5 February 1969, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 8.

give every encouragement to the attitude that the Administration is exploring possibilities of rapprochement with the Chinese.”¹⁷

Some prospect for renewed contact did, in fact, exist as Nixon assumed the presidency. In November 1968, the United States proposed to renew the Warsaw Talks – suspended since the previous January – to which the PRC responded positively and with “unprecedented speed.”¹⁸ On February 11, Kissinger noted indications that Beijing desired to adopt a “softer foreign policy” that emphasized “state relations rather than being revolution-oriented.” Matters came to a screeching halt, however, when Beijing cancelled the forthcoming Warsaw meeting in response to the American decision to grant asylum to a PRC defector. The following month, intelligence estimates reported that Mao would likely prevent “major changes in China’s international posture,” and that in Beijing “there is little alternative to continuing hostility toward the U.S.”¹⁹

This pessimism permeated the administration throughout that spring. On March 1, Nixon characterized recognition of China as “largely theoretical as it was difficult to have relations with the Chinese.”²⁰ Several weeks later he approved military overflights of South China despite warnings among some of his advisors that such a move might undermine attempts to establish relations.²¹ In late-April, the administration received further confirmation of the enormity of its problem following the CCP’s 9th Party Congress. Despite disagreements among Chinese leaders regarding the course of

¹⁷ Memorandum, Nixon to Kissinger, 1 February 1969, *ibid*, 7.

¹⁸ John Holdridge, *Crossing the Divide: An Insider’s Account of Normalization of U.S.-China Relations* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), 25.

¹⁹ SNIE 13-69, “Communist China and Asia,” 6 March 1969, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 23.

²⁰ Memorandum of Conversation between Nixon and DeGaulle, 1 March 1969, *ibid*, 51.

²¹ Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 22 March 1969, *ibid*, 26 note 2.

domestic policy, the PRC's foreign relations "will continue to be subject to the general Maoist position."²² The Nixon administration consequently arrived at the same conclusion that the Kennedy and Johnson administrations had reached: change would only occur once Mao and the other elder radicals passed from the scene. And also just like its predecessors, the administration now began to view small, non-strategic gestures as a means to convince the post-Mao leadership "to reassess US attitudes and intentions toward China and China's role in international affairs."²³

NSSM 14 assumed that China's large territory and population would inevitably result in the expansion of Beijing's international involvement, thus prompting the question "how we might be able to bring about better Chinese behavior as they emerge from present isolation."²⁴ The final version of the paper in August argued that China's policy will moderate "given an international climate conducive to moderation." "There is little reason to believe," it continued, "that this present level of conflict and antagonism will endure indefinitely," and thus the United States could set its long-term objectives and interests toward "the achievement of an improved and more relaxed relationship with the PRC."²⁵ The administration by this time had essentially accepted the notion of sacrificing short-term gain for the sake of long-term objectives.²⁶ Well

²² Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 29 April 1969, *ibid*, 29; Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 246.

²³ Summary of the CIA Response to NSSM 14, Undated (April/May) 1969, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 30-31.

²⁴ Minutes of the Senior Review Group Meeting, 15 May 1969, *ibid*, 31-33.

²⁵ Response to NSSM 14, 8 August 1969, *ibid*, 56-65.

²⁶ As two members of the NSC pointed out to Kissinger that month, "At this point in history, the Chinese do not seem to harbor any illusions that they could use us effectively against the Soviet threat by seeing a rapprochement, and most other Chinese objectives must be won *against* us rather than *with* us, so we have little reason to expect that present US bids will pay off in the near future." Memorandum, Lindsey Grant and Hal Sounders to Kissinger, 21 August 1969, *ibid*, 70.

before the foreign policy apparatus had produced these conclusions, however, Nixon had already expressed interest in “short-term steps which would not offer real prospect of reciprocity,” leading him in June to order the relaxation of certain trade and travel restrictions.²⁷

These measures occurred at a time of considerable restructuring of American strategic thought, particularly as a product of the new limitations of the post-Tet era.²⁸ By mid-1969, domestic pressures had compelled the Nixon administration to begin to withdraw American military personnel from Vietnam which led the administration to develop new strategies that would enable it to continue efforts to cope with communist aggression and subversion. Even as Nixon announced the first small troop withdrawals in July, he simultaneously announced a new “Nixon Doctrine” by which the United States would transfer the primary responsibility for deterring or countering communist moves to the governments of the threatened nations. However, if a nation proved incapable of defending itself either through its own actions or with the support of its neighbors, and if that country extended a request to Washington for support, then the United States would intervene. In this way, Nixon hoped to preserve the perception that the United States remained both willing and able to defend the political and territorial integrity of nations. However, as Kissinger lamented, the rapid pace of the American drawdown undermined this strategy and likely convinced the communist nations, particularly Hanoi, that American power and endurance did, in fact, have limits that they

²⁷ National Security Decision Memorandum (NSDM) 17, “Relaxation of Economic Controls Against China,” 26 June 1969, and Memorandum, Sneider to Kissinger, 11 June 1969, both in *ibid*, 39-40, and 39 note 3, respectively.

²⁸ “The most difficult task facing Henry Kissinger during his tenure, besides ending the war in Vietnam, was creating a framework for dealing with the post-Vietnam era of limits.” Isaacson, *Kissinger*, 239.

could exploit.²⁹ To offset this disadvantage, the administration sought to engage in triangular diplomacy with the Soviet Union and PRC in a way that might achieve concessions from one or both.

Yet improving relations with the Chinese Communists proved possible only because of Beijing's concerns about its deteriorating security situation. American involvement in Vietnam constituted only one of many disturbing developments along China's periphery. Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan continued to view the PRC as a dangerous enemy, India had maintained its military posture since the 1962 Sino-Indian border war, and now, in the spring of 1969, the Sino-Soviet ideological rift erupted into actual fighting along China's northern border. In March Chinese military units clashed with their Soviet counterparts on the Ussuri River, an event that "immediately brought China and the Soviet Union to the brink of a general war."³⁰ In June the Soviets deployed bombers from Eastern Europe to Central Asia and in August launched large-scale attacks against Chinese positions in Xinjiang. Soon thereafter, the PRC instituted a general mobilization in those provinces bordering the USSR and Outer Mongolia, moved factories further into the interior to make them less vulnerable, and even dispersed its leadership around the country lest the Soviets wipe them out while concentrated in Beijing. The Chinese Communists also began discussing internally the possibility of playing the American Card in the recently-initiated Sino-Soviet negotiations.³¹

²⁹ Ibid, 236-237.

³⁰ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 240.

³¹ Ibid, 246; Robert S. Ross, *Negotiating Cooperation*, 26.

The Nixon administration struggled throughout 1969 to determine how it should respond to the Sino-Soviet fighting, particularly which policies might best contribute to Washington's long-term geostrategic objectives. The administration recognized Soviet concerns about a possible Sino-American rapprochement, and Kissinger hoped to use this to obtain concessions from Moscow, particularly in terms of ending the Vietnam War. This had enormous appeal to both Nixon and Kissinger, since over the course of 1969 Moscow rebuffed no fewer than ten efforts to link Soviet cooperation on Vietnam to American cooperation on arms control.³² But even without the Sino-Soviet conflict, Nixon would still have persisted in efforts to improve relations with both sides; he did not view the Sino-American rapprochement as merely an opportunistic strategy to wrest concessions from Moscow, although the administration hoped it may have that effect.

Similarly, administration officials disagreed over the extent to which the Sino-Soviet border fighting would provide opportunities for contact with or concessions from Beijing. NSC staffer John Holdridge argued that Beijing's "concern over the Soviet problem may make them even more receptive to US overtures than at any time in the past several years."³³ In contrast, Roger Morris, also of the NSC, warned that Sino-Soviet conflict did not necessarily mean improved Sino-American relations. Beijing may "maneuver toward us," he conceded, but "we cannot assume this will be anything more than shrewd short-run tactics."³⁴ Kissinger grew increasingly optimistic, expressing that the recent behavior of PRC diplomats "strongly suggests the existence of

³² For a discussion of the rise and fall of the linkage strategy during 1969, see Isaacson, *Kissinger*, 165-168.

³³ Memorandum, Holdridge to Kissinger, 8 October 1969, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 104.

³⁴ Memorandum, Morris to Kissinger, 18 November 1969, *ibid*, 125-128.

a body of opinion, presently submerged by Mao's doctrinal views, which might put US-Chinese relations on a more rational and less ideological basis."³⁵ Nonetheless, since much of the Sino-Soviet dispute remained "shrouded," he admitted uncertainty regarding the appropriate policy to pursue.³⁶ Ultimately, he decided that irrespective of developments in the conflict, the United States should continue its existing policy of improving relations with both countries for purposes of long-term American interests.

Nixon needed little encouragement, and, indeed, once again had moved ahead of his foreign policy apparatus. During his travels through Europe in August, he held talks with the presidents of Romania and Pakistan, informing both that although the United States would continue to oppose PRC entry into the United Nations, it nonetheless would appreciate them mediating between Beijing and Washington.³⁷ The following month, the president instructed Kissinger to deliver a message personally to PRC representatives if a suitable occasion arose.³⁸ These efforts succeeded in early December when the American ambassador in Poland, Walter Stoessel, confronted a PRC diplomat at a Yugoslav fashion show and informed him of the seriousness of Washington's desire for contact. Mao and Zhou immediately and positively responded to this message, and punctuated their decision by releasing two American sailors captured in February. Kissinger interpreted this gesture as the culmination of "a series of low-key Chinese

³⁵ Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 29 September 1969, *ibid*, 103.

³⁶ Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 23 September 23 1969, *ibid*, 87.

³⁷ Editorial note describing Nixon's conversations with Presidents Nicolae Ceausescu of Romania and Yahya Khan of Pakistan, and Memorandum of Conversation between Harold Saunders and Ambassador Hilaly, 28 August 1969, both in *ibid*, 51-52 and 75, respectively.

³⁸ Memorandum of Conversation between Nixon, Kissinger, and Ambassador Stoessel, 9 September 1969, *ibid*, 80-81.

moves clearly intended to signal us” that “they are interested greater communication.”³⁹ This proved accurate, for later that month, Zhou informed the United States via Pakistan that the PRC welcomed discussions, and on January 8, 1970, Stoessel undertook an informal meeting at the Chinese Embassy in Poland to discuss the resumption of the talks.

On the verge of this breakthrough, the administration now began to contemplate what results it could realistically expect the talks to achieve. A study of the Sino-Soviet split in October had concluded that “until a fundamental and far-reaching change takes place in China or in the USSR, the resolution of critical differences we have with either is unlikely.”⁴⁰ In December, Kissinger and Nixon had both expressed doubt about the practical usefulness of re-opening the Warsaw Talks since “we don’t have anything to talk about anyway.”⁴¹ In January, however, the administration noted increasing pragmatism among Beijing’s “reconstituted power elite” as this group began freezing out the more radical PRC officials from policymaking.⁴² Yet even these signs could prove misleading. Kissinger pointed out that Beijing had likely agreed to the talks “primarily for Soviet consumption,” and that the PRC’s new reasonableness would provide no substantial concessions. Beijing did make one important gesture, however: the administration learned in early January that Beijing would not make American military withdrawals from Vietnam a precondition for improved Sino-American relations.⁴³

³⁹ Kissinger’s Daily Briefing Memorandum for the President, 8 December 1969, *ibid*, 154 note 4.

⁴⁰ Response to NSSM 63, 17 October 1969, *ibid*, 110.

⁴¹ Notes of a Telephone Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, 13 December 1969, *ibid*, 146 note 3.

⁴² Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 10 January 1970, *ibid*, 160.

⁴³ Meeting between Yugoslav and PRC representatives of 11 January 1970, described in Backchannel Message, Ambassador Neumann to Kissinger, 13 January 1970, *ibid*, 163; For Nixon and Kissinger’s

Regardless of the dearth of likely concessions, however, contacts – even if unfruitful in the short-term – constituted an important first step in the PRC’s long-term transformation “into a more responsible and normal member of the world society.”⁴⁴

The two sides convened the first meeting of the resumed Warsaw Talks on January 20, 1970. The Chinese ambassador made a non-polemical presentation that made no demands of the United States, but expressed willingness to negotiate with Washington on the matter of Taiwan. This represented an important, if largely symbolic, departure, since Beijing traditionally had portrayed the American presence on Taiwan as neither legal nor subject to Sino-American negotiation. As Stoessel characterized the meeting, “the Chinese wished it to be considered as a serious opening negotiations session in which direct bilateral issues could be set forth and general ideological issues set aside.”⁴⁵ Such assessments failed to convince Kissinger who pointed out Beijing’s exclusive interest in resolving the Taiwan issue, “an area in which *they* want something from *us*.”⁴⁶

Chinese officials did find one aspect of the American presentation enticing: Washington’s willingness to send a high-level envoy to Beijing. Again, Kissinger lamented the Chinese avoidance of substantial issues and their latching onto the one that would contribute most to the rehabilitation of the PRC’s international image and prestige.⁴⁷ For this reason, Secretary of State William Rogers considered the proposal

thoughts on this meeting, see Telephone Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, 15 January 1970, *ibid*, 163 note 3.

⁴⁴ Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 12 January 1970, *ibid*, 161.

⁴⁵ Telegram, Embassy in Poland to State, 20 January 1970, *ibid*, 168.

⁴⁶ Emphasis in original. Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 21 January 1970, *ibid*, 171.

⁴⁷ Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 20 February 1970, *ibid*, 183-184.

unnecessarily generous and argued that the administration should seek further development of the relationship at the ambassadorial level prior to higher-level talks.⁴⁸ Nixon overruled him, however, and insisted that the State Department accept higher-level meetings in Beijing rather than in Warsaw, an approach that would demonstrate the “positive nature of our approach.”⁴⁹

At this point several events intervened, causing a series of postponements in the Warsaw Talks and demonstrating the array of political, strategic, and ideological impediments to contact. On March 18, the Cambodian government voted to depose its pro-communist leader, Sihanouk, and to replace him with the pro-American Lon Nol. Sihanouk subsequently established a government in exile in Beijing, and the pro-Sihanouk communist forces of the Khmer Rouge, with DRV support, began attacks on the new Cambodian regime. As a result of this turmoil, and also because of Beijing’s suspicion that the United States had had a direct hand in Sihanouk’s downfall, Mao and Zhou decided to postpone the next Warsaw meeting to April. Washington immediately confronted the dilemma, however, that Chiang Ching-kuo would visit the United States that month, a fact that might poison the atmosphere in Warsaw. The administration thus asked for and received an additional postponement of the next meeting until late-May. By that point, however, Nixon had ordered an American military incursion into Cambodia in response to the renewed communist fighting there. This, in turn, allowed Chinese hard-liners to counter moves toward an improvement of Sino-American

⁴⁸ Memorandum, Rogers to Nixon, 10 March 1970, *ibid*, 189.

⁴⁹ Telephone Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, 13 March 1970, and Memorandum, Kissinger to Rogers, 20 March 1970, both in *ibid*, 192 note 3, and 191, respectively.

relations. As a result, Mao cancelled the upcoming meeting and wrote an article condemning the American action.⁵⁰

Nixon now concluded that because of the public nature of the Warsaw Talks and the tendency of both sides to cancel meetings for political purposes the two sides should establish an alternative communications channel that would prove stable, secure, and secret enough for progress to occur. Indeed, Nixon remained sensitive to Beijing's domestic political pressures emanating from the more radical elements within China, and conveyed through the Paris channel his pledge to maintain absolute secrecy "if the PRC found it necessary."⁵¹ The PRC rebuffed Nixon's efforts in June to establish a secure channel via Paris, though once Washington withdrew all its troops from Cambodia Beijing once more began sending positive signals, such as the release of Bishop James Walsh from his decade-long imprisonment.⁵²

The Chinese hesitated to take additional assertive steps due to political tensions between Chairman Mao and his chosen successor and head of the PLA General Lin Biao. Lin and an influential segment of the still ideologically fervent CCP saw Mao's efforts to improve relations with the United States as a violation of communist principle. In early July, a PRC MiG attempted to shoot down an American plane, an event that the administration accurately identified as an effort on the part of radical PLA officers to sabotage the rapprochement. This internal political conflict lasted throughout the

⁵⁰ Ross, *Negotiating Cooperation*, 34.

⁵¹ Message to be Delivered by Major General Vernon A. Walters to the Government of the People's Republic of China, Undated (mid-June) 1970, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 220-221.

⁵² Ross, *Negotiating Cooperation*, 34-35.

summer of 1970, prompting Kissinger to lament that “we have made clear signals, and I think we have no choice but to wait and see if they are willing to respond.”⁵³

Nonetheless, both Nixon and Mao persisted. That fall, American journalist Edgar Snow received a surprising invitation from the Chairman to visit Beijing during the celebrations commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the PRC’s founding. In what Mao intended as a signal to both Washington and the Chinese people, Snow stood next to him on the walls of the Forbidden City as thousands of PRC cadres marched past. Mao supplemented this by granting Snow an interview in which he conveyed an invitation for Nixon to visit China either in his capacity as president or as a private citizen. The administration missed the significance of this gesture, but Nixon had already begun sending his own signals. In September, *Time Magazine* published an interview with the president in which he expressed a desire to visit China someday. In late-October Nixon again asserted to Pakistani President Yahya Khan the necessity of opening negotiations with China, while Kissinger informed Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu of Washington’s preparedness to meet secretly “free from any outside pressures and free from any questions of prestige.”⁵⁴

This back-and-forth signaling finally produced results in December when Zhou Enlai conveyed through Pakistan that the PRC would welcome an American envoy in

⁵³ Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 14 September 1970, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 229; for a discussion of the internal PRC debates regarding an improvement of Sino-American relations in 1970-1972, see Ross, *Negotiating Cooperation*, 26-29. Chen Jian believes that the geostrategic causality in Ross’ argument is incomplete without also contemplating Mao’s important ideological justification for this policy shift. See Chen Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War*.

⁵⁴ Memorandum of Conversation between Nixon and Yahya, 25 October 1970, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976*, Vol. E-7, Document 90; Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Ceausescu, 27 October 1970, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 239.

Beijing for the purpose of resolving the Taiwan issue. Kissinger replied positively, but noted that the envoy would not focus exclusively on Taiwan. Rather he insisted that the discussions range more broadly over a variety of bilateral issues. When Zhou persisted in asserting the primacy of the Taiwan issue, Nixon feared “we may appear too eager. Let’s cool it. Wait for them to respond to our initiative.”⁵⁵ Kissinger agreed, hoping that Beijing’s recognition of the administration’s desire for productive contact would produce “flexibility on their side as well.”⁵⁶

By this time, the administration had undertaken NSSM 106, a new review of China policy that several NSC staffers noted “in effect, poses the issue of how far we want to go” toward Beijing since this “must come, if at all, at some cost in our relations” with Taiwan.⁵⁷ The initial response to NSSM 106 warned of the lingering dangers in giving away too much, pointing out, for instance, that the reduction of American forces in the region “has not produced any change in Chinese deployments directed against Korea, Taiwan or Southeast Asia,” and that the non-communist nations of East Asia continued to view “Chinese-abetted ‘people’s wars’” as a “constant threat.”⁵⁸

With this in mind, Kissinger requested studies from the departments of State and Defense on two specific issues. First, noting the long-standing efforts to achieve a PRC renunciation of force agreement, the National Security Advisor wondered what language should be used in such an agreement. Turning to the question of troop withdrawals, Kissinger inquired what effects the total withdrawal of American forces from Taiwan

⁵⁵ Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 12 January 1971, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 254-255.

⁵⁶ Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 10 February 1971, *ibid*, 258.

⁵⁷ Memorandum, Levin, Sonnenfeldt, and Kennedy to Kissinger, 6 March 1971, *ibid*, 258-259 note 1.

⁵⁸ Draft response to NSSM 106, “China Policy,” 16 February 1971, *ibid*, 259.

would have on the broader American posture in the region.⁵⁹ In response, the State Department suggested a renunciation of force formula “based on language and principles of the UN Charter” that “would be a first step toward improving relations between the US and the PRC without any additional commitment on the part of the US.”⁶⁰ Similarly, the Department of Defense warned that the complete withdrawal of American forces from Taiwan in the absence of a PRC renunciation of force agreement would constitute an unwarranted and dangerous gamble that lacked “reasonable assurances which should be implicit in any agreement consistent with our security interests.” Moreover, such a move would conflict with the basic tenets of the Nixon Doctrine.⁶¹

The extraordinary events in April and May inspired enormous enthusiasm for and momentum toward Sino-American rapprochement. On April 7, 1971, Mao invited the American table tennis team to visit Beijing. The following week, Nixon implemented the first stage of his long-approved relaxation of trade and travel restrictions and ordered a new study of “next steps” toward Beijing. By the end of the month Zhou had conveyed the long-sought *unconditional* invitation for Washington to send a high-level envoy to China. Nixon approved this immediately, chose Kissinger as his envoy, and set about establishing the modalities and procedures for the latter’s trip. But even as the administration celebrated the impending resumption of contact, it continued to doubt that this indicated any significant change in the PRC’s ideological stance. Indeed, NSC staffer John Holdridge suggested that Beijing had invited the American ping-pong team

⁵⁹ Memorandum of a Senior Review Group Meeting, 12 March 1971, *ibid*, 269.

⁶⁰ Memorandum, Holdridge to Kissinger, 18 March 1971, *ibid*, 276.

⁶¹ DOD position paper, Undated (March 1971), *ibid*, 277.

not as a sign of friendliness towards the United States but rather as part of a propaganda campaign to solidify international support for the upcoming United Nations vote on Chinese representation.⁶² The response to NSSM 124 submitted in late-May similarly warned that despite the high-profile drama of “People’s diplomacy” this “does not necessarily mean that the Chinese leaders have changed their hostile view of the US or revised their major foreign policy goals.”⁶³

Now on the verge of direct, high-level talks with the Chinese Communists, administration officials cautiously distinguished between those initiatives that the government could take without interfering with fundamental American imperatives, and which initiatives would require additional justification in the form of PRC concessions. Zhou did not help matters when he backtracked on his previous stance and informed Nixon that he expected the settlement of the Taiwan issue to precede discussion of other questions during Kissinger’s trip. But by this point Nixon, perhaps propelled by the euphoria of recent events, informed Zhou that Kissinger would soon travel to China. The president’s message, however, omitted any reference to Zhou’s demands regarding the primacy of the Taiwan issue.⁶⁴ In a move that confirmed the seriousness with which Nixon viewed Kissinger’s trip and that infuriated the Nationalist Chinese, the president ordered an end to the unilateral trade restrictions against China.⁶⁵

This in no way implied that Nixon had determined simply to capitulate to Beijing’s demands, however. The defense of Taiwan continued to constitute a central

⁶² Memorandum, Holdridge to Kissinger, 9 April 1971, *ibid*, 289.

⁶³ Response to NSSM 124, 27 May 1971, *ibid*, 323-331.

⁶⁴ Message, Zhou to Nixon, 29 May 1971, and Message, Nixon to Zhou, 4 June 1971, both in *ibid*, 332 and 340, respectively.

⁶⁵ Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 3 June 1971, *ibid*, 334-339.

component of the American posture in Asia, not only in the value of the island as a logistical base in support of the ongoing war in Vietnam, but also in its considerable psychological and political value in the ongoing struggle against communist expansion and global disorder. Concerns of American credibility remained alive and well, the extension of the fundamental objective of nurturing an international community guided by respect for one's obligations. Washington considered the commitment to Taiwan as not only moral but also legal, given the existence of the Mutual Defense Treaty. Nixon would move gradually away from that commitment, but only to the extent that he could ensure a peaceful resolution of the issue, or, barring that, alternative arrangements that would perpetuate the island's security. Indeed, on the eve of Kissinger's departure to China, Nixon expressed concern that Kissinger's negotiating position was too forthcoming, and that he should avoid giving up too much of the administration's support for Taiwan unless absolutely necessary. Furthermore, Nixon had some of his own conditions for Beijing, particularly the release of American POWs and progress on ending the Vietnam War.⁶⁶ The task of convincing Beijing that the American perspective had merit fell largely to Kissinger during his two trips to China in 1971.

Kissinger's Re-Education Campaign: The 1971-1972 Sino-American Talks

While Nixon focused on establishing contact as a step toward a global geostrategic realignment, the administration also contemplated utilizing these contacts for the purpose of reorienting Beijing toward an approach to international relations that

⁶⁶ Memorandum of meeting between Nixon, Kissinger, and Haig, 1 July 1971, *ibid*, 354-356.

reflected Washington's own views. Kissinger hoped to utilize geostrategic arguments to convince the PRC that it shared certain interests in common with the United States, believing that the most stable and durable international arrangements resulted from the confluence of national interests. But he nevertheless understood the limits of this strategy given the revolutionary principles to which Mao and his associates continued to adhere – principles that even in the context of a Sino-American alignment against the common Soviet threat might yet cause the two nations to fall once more into a pattern of hostility. But even if the rapprochement could not compel Beijing to abandon its ideological foreign policy views in the short-term, it would at the very least buy time – perhaps decades – during which other factors might precipitate such a change. The administration took for granted that China and not the United States would have to undergo this change; as Kissinger noted, “For us, a rapprochement is a matter of tactics, but for them it involves a profound moral adjustment.”⁶⁷ In this respect, Kissinger's efforts mirrored those of previous administrations that had viewed with equal dismay the potential for achieving such change, and that had striven with equal vigor to create conditions that would maintain the peace until more favorable circumstances emerged.

Kissinger's academic writings had long warned that stability would result only “when nations accept the legitimacy of the existing world order and when they act based on their national interests.” In contrast, stability “is threatened when nations embark on ideological or moral crusades,” a message that applied to China as much as it did to the

⁶⁷ Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 29 October 1971, *ibid.*, 518.

United States.⁶⁸ Thus, Kissinger sought to “coax” Beijing away from its revolutionary aims by granting it a “stake in the legitimacy of the international system.”⁶⁹ Renewed discussions, even if Beijing proved unwilling to discuss matters of substance, thus constituted a necessary first step in transforming China “into a more responsible and normal member of the world society.”⁷⁰ Kissinger’s presentation to the Chinese during his two trips to Beijing in July and October 1971, and Nixon’s discussions with Chinese leaders in February 1972, in essence constituted an introduction to the fundamental principles underlying the American worldview, and an adept effort to characterize – either explicitly or implicitly – the adoption of these principles as in Beijing’s best interests.

From Washington’s perspective, the Sino-American talks proved of such value because they facilitated the geostrategic realignments and stability that the administration intended the Nixon Doctrine to produce. But neither Nixon nor Kissinger felt that this transition should occur quickly; as Kissinger informed Zhou, “Sometimes even correct things must be done gradually, because if done too quickly they have a shocking impact and create an opposite effect from what one intends.”⁷¹ This was as true for the dramatic global drawdown of American military forces in the world as it was for the political circumstances in places like the Korean Peninsula, Southeast Asia, and

⁶⁸ Isaacson, *Kissinger*, 75.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 76.

⁷⁰ Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 12 January 1970, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 161; This comment stands somewhat in contrast to Kissinger’s later characterization of his meetings with Mao and Zhou: “Neither of us had any illusion of changing the basic convictions of the other. It was precisely the absence of any such illusion that facilitated our dialogue.” Kissinger, *On China*, 243.

⁷¹ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Zhou, et al, 9 July 1971, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 390; Nixon had made a similar statement in his 25 February 1971 address to Congress, arguing that the nation should not move too fast in withdrawing troops in implementation of the Nixon Doctrine. “To do otherwise,” he stated, “is to undercut our fundamental goal of creating a stable structure in Asia.” *PPP*.

the Taiwan Strait. The administration did not oppose change, but felt that it should occur at a non-disruptive, gradual pace – that is, peacefully and by means of either negotiation or an electoral process, depending on the issue. Convincing Beijing to accept this notion would go far toward obtaining its assistance in carrying out the development of stable political and military arrangements in East Asia.

This imperative of gradual change heavily influenced the manner in which Kissinger dealt with Chinese leaders during his two trips to China in July and October 1971. For instance, the administration committed itself to a *process* of normalizing Sino-American relations that it hoped to achieve in a step-by-step manner rather than all at once. That this would likely result in eventual formal recognition of the PRC government did not mean that the administration would not demand, or at least expect, reciprocity. As early as January 1970, Kissinger noted that China should cease supporting insurgencies, “participate responsibly in supranational endeavors,” and “take a less hostile view of non-Communist governments.” Kissinger believed that under present conditions the United States could not achieve in the short-term these changes in the Chinese outlook. Rather, the administration would engage Beijing on a variety of what he called transitional issues – including economic and cultural exchanges and “a détente in the Taiwan Strait” without sacrificing the ROC – “in which our purpose is not to arrive at important practical agreements, but rather to continue to shape a climate in which they will evolve in a desirable direction.”⁷²

⁷² Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 21 January 1970, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 170-172.

This gradualist approach resurfaced in more elaborate form in the NSC's April 1971 response to the latest review of China policy, NSSM 124. The paper identified fear of the Soviet threat as a key commonality between the United States and China, and argued that cooperation on this issue might provide a springboard "toward mutual accommodation in areas of disagreement." The administration counted on these forces to bridge the Sino-American gap regarding the fate of the ROC, since Beijing "cannot expect much on the government-to-government front if it requires first that the United States sever its ties with Taiwan." Indeed, the final disposition of Taiwan and the related issues of American credibility and diplomatic recognition constituted important signifiers of U.S. approval for the PRC and the legitimacy of Beijing's foreign policies. As such, the administration divided the array of potential initiatives it could implement into three categories, moving from innocuous unilateral concessions to "steps we should take only as merited by other developments, especially (but not exclusively) PRC reactions to our earlier moves."⁷³

Successfully convincing Beijing of the value of the administration's gradualist strategy depended upon two key, interrelated factors. First, Nixon and Kissinger had to convince Chinese leaders that they could trust the administration's word, for without such trust Beijing would view an American proposal for gradual movement toward normalization as merely another capitalist-imperialist ploy.⁷⁴ As Kissinger later wrote, "The underlying challenge of the secret visit was to establish enough confidence to turn

⁷³ Response to NSSM 124, 27 May 1971, *ibid.*, 323-331. The paper noted that in pursuing a gradualist approach the administration should also take into account the reactions of other important groups, including American domestic opinion, views of American allies, and Soviet responses.

⁷⁴ As Kissinger later explained, "trickery sacrifices structure to temporary benefit. Reliability is the cement of international order even among opponents." Kissinger, *White House Years*, 746-747.

a first meeting into a process.”⁷⁵ Second, the administration understood it must make certain concessions regarding Taiwan that would establish this trust but that would simultaneously conform to American principles. Zhou had made repeated reference to the primacy of the Taiwan issue in his correspondence with the administration prior to Kissinger’s secret trip. When the two men met in July, Zhou expressed that if the United States genuinely desired normal relations, it must “recognize the PRC as the sole legitimate government of China” and acknowledge unreservedly that “Taiwan is a Chinese province, is already restored to China, and is an inalienable part of Chinese territory.” Furthermore, the administration must withdraw all of its troops from Taiwan, end its “illegal” Mutual Defense Treaty, and do nothing to move toward “two-Chinas,” such as supporting the Taiwanese Independence Movement.⁷⁶

The solution to this dilemma emerged not from the mind of Henry Kissinger, but rather from the State Department’s internal discussions during the spring of 1971 regarding the issue of Chinese representation in the United Nations.⁷⁷ Though the administration had succeeded in preventing Beijing’s entry into that organization during the recent UNGA session, estimates showed that the administration would likely face defeat during the next session if it pursued this course. To stave off defeat, the administration advocated a dual representation strategy that emphasized ROC inclusion – broadly popular among the international community – rather than the less popular exclusion of Beijing. When Kissinger sat down with representatives of the State

⁷⁵ Kissinger, *On China*, 247-248.

⁷⁶ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Zhou, et al, 9 July 1971, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 367.

⁷⁷ Xia, *Negotiating with the Enemy*, 187.

Department to discuss specifics on March 9, the latter advocated a position “that merely says there will be two delegations,” and that “the question of who rules China is one for the two governments to work out.” In this way, “both regimes can claim to be the government of China.” Furthermore, this strategy would not prejudice an eventual political settlement that, in theory, might produce either a “one China” or a “one China, one Taiwan” solution.⁷⁸

The supposed concessions Kissinger made to China during his first trip have been subject to much mischaracterization; Kissinger did not simply capitulate to Beijing’s demands. His first “concession” regarded American forces in Taiwan. Noting that the administration had already removed a small number of troops from the island – a good faith indication of the general direction of its policy – Kissinger expressed the administration’s willingness to remove the two thirds of its troops on Taiwan that Washington stationed there in support of its ongoing operations in Vietnam. However, this withdrawal would begin “within a specified brief period of time after ending of the war in Indochina,” with the removal of the remaining one third subject to subsequent general improvements in Sino-American relations. Moreover, in his October discussions with Zhou, Kissinger expressed that the Mutual Defense Treaty would lapse only when the PRC and ROC had achieved unification by peaceful means.⁷⁹ The president agreed;

⁷⁸ Discussion of NSSM 107, March 9, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976*, Vol. V: United Nations, 1969-1972, 614, hereafter cited as *FRUS, 1969-1976*, V; In his discussions with ROC Ambassador Shen on 1 March 1972 Kissinger confirmed this link by asserting that the language adopted in the Shanghai Communiqué “is wholly consistent with the position that we took in the Chinese representation question in the U.N. General Assembly last fall – one China, two governments.” *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 827.

⁷⁹ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Zhou, et al, 21 October 1971, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 511.

on the eve of his February 1972 visit to China, Nixon privately expressed that until Washington and Beijing completed the normalization process the absence of American troops on the island would not affect Washington's commitments under the MDT.⁸⁰

For his next concession, Kissinger pledged that the administration would not actively seek a "two-Chinas" or a "one-China, one-Taiwan" arrangement. Kissinger informed Zhou that the gradual political evolution of PRC-ROC relations would likely produce unification, and that the United States would "not stand in the way" if this should result. But this did not mean that the administration would actively *oppose* a "two-Chinas" solution, either.⁸¹ Fundamentally – and much like the rationale behind the Nixon Doctrine – Kissinger sought to remove primary responsibility from Washington and give it to the peoples most directly involved. As a result, when negotiating the language of the Shanghai Communiqué Kissinger rejected a Chinese formulation by which the United States would "express the wish that a one-China solution be brought about by peaceful means," as this might prejudice the ultimate outcome.⁸² Similarly, even as the administration determined not to provide any official encouragement of the Taiwanese Independence Movement, Kissinger nonetheless expressed to Nixon two weeks *after* the President's February 1972 trip that if the people on Taiwan chose to secede, "that's their business."⁸³

⁸⁰ Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, 14 February 1972, *ibid*, 662.

⁸¹ In the decades following recognition, the official American position on this matter has evolved to the point where the United States does actively seek to prevent Taiwan from seeking *de jure* independence from the mainland.

⁸² Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, November 1971, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 541.

⁸³ Conversation between Nixon, Kissinger, and Haldeman, 13 March 1972, *ibid*, 848.

The inescapable conclusion of this analysis is that the administration did not consider Taiwan “expendable,” to use historian Nancy Tucker’s term.⁸⁴ Nixon and Kissinger both privately affirmed their belief in Taiwanese self-determination and their resolve to defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese Communist attack. The negotiated settlement with Zhou in July preserved these principles. Kissinger phrased his position in such a way that PRC officials could read into it tacit American consent for their demands, but while retaining Washington’s flexibility.⁸⁵ As such, when upon his return from China Kissinger met with ROC Ambassador James Shen, the National Security Advisor technically did not lie when he said that the United States would not “betray old friends, or turn anyone over to communism to ease our problems.”⁸⁶

The extent to which Zhou Enlai recognized the true nature of Kissinger’s proposal remains unclear. Most likely, Zhou understood that given the power disparities and the overwhelming trend toward international diplomatic engagement with Beijing ROC officials would sooner or later find themselves compelled to rejoin the mainland. Historian Jay Taylor suggests that Zhou may even have established a semi-official dialogue with Taipei during the period 1969-1971, perhaps in the hope of enticing ROC officials toward unification.⁸⁷ Regardless of what Zhou may have felt privately, however, he ultimately conceded that the American presentation sufficed for Beijing to

⁸⁴ Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, “Taiwan Expendable? Nixon and Kissinger Go to China,” *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 92, No. 1 (June 2005), 109-135.

⁸⁵ Isaacson’s biography of Kissinger is filled with examples of this, and even Kissinger himself acknowledged that the Shanghai Communiqué was “subject to varying interpretations.” Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, Undated (October/November 1971), *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 559.

⁸⁶ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Shen, 27 July 1971, *ibid*, 468-469.

⁸⁷ Taylor admits that his evidence, while strong, is inconclusive. Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 548-549.

partake in the gradual evolutionary process that Kissinger had described. Zhou affirmed that resolving the Taiwan issue “will need time and we agree,” and that the establishment of diplomatic recognition need not occur prior to, or even during, Nixon’s upcoming visit so long as the two sides had established “the general direction.”⁸⁸ Indeed, during the October discussions to determine the language of the Shanghai Communiqué, Kissinger assessed that “the Chinese are willing to pursue their objectives by banking on the thrust of history. They will continue to be tough, but they essentially accept our arguments that we can often do more than we say, that the process must be gradual, and that some issues must be left to evolutionary pressures.”⁸⁹

Along these lines, Kissinger noted that the administration could complete its troop withdrawals by the end of 1972 “if the war in Southeast Asia is ended,” and that the two sides could achieve the remaining political question – apparently a reference to formal recognition – “within the earlier part of the President’s second term,” which, in practical terms, meant prior to 1975. The fact that the administration could not achieve a ceasefire in Vietnam prior to January 1973 naturally extended this timeline beyond what Nixon and Kissinger had envisioned. Indeed, in March 1972 Kissinger explicitly prohibited the reduction of American forces on Taiwan until the war ended.⁹⁰ Yet in the summer of 1971, the direction of Sino-American relations had been set to the satisfaction of both sides, and Kissinger could now focus on achieving Beijing’s willing

⁸⁸ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Zhou, et al, 9 and 11 July 1971, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 371 and 446, respectively.

⁸⁹ Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, Undated (October/November 1971), *ibid*, 566.

⁹⁰ Kissinger’s handwritten comments on a covering note, Kennedy to Kissinger, 31 March 1972, *ibid*, 860 note 1.

participation in what Washington considered an appropriate and constructive manner of conducting foreign relations.

The crux of the problem lay in the different lenses each side used to interpret the major crises and conflicts that existed throughout the world. The Nixon administration considered irrelevant the reasons why these conflicts had originally occurred. The focus should rest instead with ending them peacefully and ensuring the creation of new conditions in which nations respect the political sovereignty and territorial integrity of other nations. The fact that the United States had spurned the 1954 Geneva Accords, therefore, should not now prejudice efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement in either Korea or Vietnam. Similarly, however Washington became Taiwan's defender, this should not prevent the achievement of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

The PRC rejected this view. For Zhou and Mao, historical blame had a direct bearing on any effort to determine the justice of a given course of action, particularly in those cases where "imperialist" powers had unjustifiably intervened, or continued to do so, in the affairs of smaller states. Capitalist-imperialist interventions and subversions since 1945, according to Zhou, had produced a series of "powder kegs" in the world that aggressive powers like Japan, India, and the Soviet Union, might exploit for their own benefit and to the ultimate detriment of local independence.⁹¹ Because the French and Americans had so clearly violated the sovereignty of the Indochinese states and had rejected previous efforts to achieve political settlements, the United States had the primary responsibility for making amends. Zhou rejected Kissinger's insistence on

⁹¹ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Zhou, et al, 10 July 1971, *ibid*, 404.

preserving American honor and dignity, since this demonstrated a lack of sympathy for the honor and dignity of aggrieved smaller nations. Zhou also considered inappropriate Washington's continued support of its "puppets," such as the governments of South Vietnam and Laos. As a solution, the United States should withdraw unconditionally and immediately from those nations. This would facilitate the removal of dangerous points of conflict between the United States and the peoples of the Third World, hinder the efforts of other imperialist powers to gain influence in those regions, and allow the peoples of those nations to resolve their own differences in their own ways and with their own resources.

Three interrelated factors made these positions irreconcilable. First, the Nixon administration continued to adhere to the principle that allowing aggressions to occur without consequence would set a dangerous precedent that would result in additional aggressions throughout the world; it would enhance, not minimize, militarism and conflict. Second, the administration placed enormous value on its commitments, pledges, and treaties, many of which it would violate by abandoning the governments in question. Just as in the case of unopposed aggressions, the administration believed that failure to uphold its obligations in this regard would set a dangerous precedent. Kissinger made this point explicit in refusing to accept the North Vietnamese demand that the administration overthrow the regime of Nguyen Van Thieu in South Vietnam as part of a peace settlement. The principle of standing loyally by your commitments had implications for American reliability towards its other allies as well, and, indeed, even

for the broader course of Sino-American relations. As Kissinger explained to Zhou, “it is in your interest that we are a reliable country.”⁹²

The third major point of philosophical contention regarded the question of great power “interference” in the affairs of other nations. Among the most fundamental tenets of the communist ideological worldview included the belief in the inherently imperial nature of capitalist systems, an imperialism that, if not overtly militant, might take the form of exploitative economic penetration. China’s own historical experiences bolstered this ideological worldview. By the 1970s, Beijing had come to view Moscow as the primary threat to China’s foreign policy objectives due to its having adopted a socialist form of imperialism. Yet this in no way let Washington off the hook; as a capitalist state, the United States remained a threat to Beijing’s revolutionary agenda. Viewed in this light, ongoing American military and economic assistance threatened the independence of Third World nations.

Beijing also derided other kinds of economic and diplomatic pressures for the purpose of compelling states to adopt policies that they might not otherwise favor. This form of influence constituted the primary point of disagreement during the 1971-72 Sino-American discussions. The United States believed that in certain cases the exertion of such influence could benefit international peace and stability – indeed, the entire notion of collective security was predicated on the notion that such pressures constituted a legitimate means by which the international community could coerce deviant nations to conform to appropriate standards of international conduct. This had also constituted

⁹² Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Zhou, et al, 9 July 1971, *ibid*, 381.

one of the most significant motivating factors in U.S. efforts throughout the world since World War II; that is, the United States, having the power to exert influence for this purpose, had a responsibility to do so. The history of Washington's relations with its East Asian allies clearly demonstrates the centrality of this concept to American Cold War strategy. As previous chapters have shown, the United States struggled constantly to reign in the excesses of its more aggressive Taiwanese and South Korean allies, and to guide them toward peaceful methods of achieving their objectives. By and large, it had striven to do so by means of persuasion and logic rather than through unilateral decree.

Yet what Washington considered the responsible management of world affairs Beijing characterized as superpower "bullying" that unjustifiably interfered with the sovereign affairs of smaller nations.⁹³ Once more attempting to link American principles to Chinese interests, Kissinger emphasized that exerting influence over wayward allies served China's security needs. He pointed out to Zhou that "our defense relationship with Japan keeps Japan from pursuing aggressive policies," that a "heavily rearmed Japan could easily repeat the policies of the 1930s," and that Japanese troops in Korea would undoubtedly concern the PRC more than the ongoing presence there of American troops.⁹⁴ Under Nixon's emphatic urgings, Kissinger continued during his October trip to hammer home the notion that the United States had a legitimate role to play in Asia.⁹⁵

⁹³ Deng Xiaoping later defined a superpower as a nation that "controls others, suppresses others and commits aggression against others." Senator Mike Mansfield's report to Ford regarding his visit to China, 6 January 1975, Papers of the National Security Advisor (hereafter cited as NSA), Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, General Subject File, Box 6, Folder "China – Senator Mansfield's Report to the President, 1/6/75," Gerald Ford Presidential Library (hereafter cited as NLF).

⁹⁴ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Zhou, et al, 9 July 1971, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 394. To China's position that the United States should withdraw all troops from around the world, Nixon

Kissinger asserted that similar efforts on the part of Beijing to encourage its allies toward moderation would also serve world peace and stability. In the case of Korea, for instance, Zhou initially broached the topic by insisting that the United States withdraw all of its forces from the peninsula, arguing that Pyongyang had a right to feel threatened because of the ongoing American presence. Kissinger responded with the same rationale he had used in the case of the removal of forces from Taiwan: the administration had already begun to reduce its forces, but would remove them entirely only “as political relations in the Far East improve.”⁹⁶ Further, Kissinger pointed out that Pyongyang “has been very harsh in its military measures against South Korea,” and emphasized that “it would help maintain Asian peace if you could use your influence with North Korea to not use force.”⁹⁷ Zhou rejected this view in July, resulting in further and less pleasant discussions of this topic during Kissinger’s October trip. Zhou conveyed a message from Pyongyang that included what Kissinger characterized as “a generally abusive series of demands upon us” that he found completely unacceptable. Kissinger rejected Pyongyang’s unilateral demands upon the United States, repeated the American desire to work gradually toward a mutually acceptable solution, and declared the importance of North Korea showing “some of the largeness of spirit of its large ally.”⁹⁸ Kissinger then bluntly explained

responded with incredulity, stating “They don’t believe that. They can’t really believe that.”

Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, 14 February 1972, *ibid*, 662.

⁹⁵ Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, 14 October 1971, *ibid*, 559 note 2.

⁹⁶ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Zhou, et al, 9 July 1971, *ibid*, 391.

⁹⁷ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Zhou, et al, 11 July 1971, *ibid*, 449-450.

⁹⁸ Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, November 1971, *ibid*, 546.

that if their goals were to bring about stability in the peninsula, avert war, and lessen the danger of the expansion of other powers, then Chinese and American interests were quite parallel. If, on the other hand, their goals were to undermine the existing government in South Korea and make it easier for North Korea to attack or bring pressure upon the South, then a different situation existed.⁹⁹

Kissinger nonetheless apparently made some headway in convincing Beijing of the validity of the American position. Under Kissinger's strong rebuttal on the Korean issue, Zhou conceded that "both of us should use our influence with our friends to keep them from military adventures." He cautioned, however, that though China could be patient about Taiwan "it was harder for their smaller friends to be patient."¹⁰⁰ Yet Zhou also seemed forthcoming as regards the American military presence in Japan. Kissinger believed that Zhou "recognized the validity of our arguments, but obviously had difficulty acknowledging the virtues of a U.S.-Japanese defense relationship."¹⁰¹ Indeed, in a rare exclamation from the stoic National Security Advisor, Kissinger reported that Beijing tacitly approved of the American military presence in Taiwan "so as to keep the Japanese forces out!"¹⁰²

Zhou proved less forthcoming on what both sides considered the most important and immediate issue between them: Indochina. Just as with Taiwan and Korea, Kissinger pledged that the United States sought merely to allow events in Indochina to

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 547.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 548.

¹⁰² Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, Undated (October/November 1971), *ibid*, 563.

develop along a peaceful path free from outside intervention. Yet Zhou and Kissinger held differing views on what exactly constituted outside interference in the case of the Indochinese states. The American position remained that the North Vietnamese communists had set themselves on a course of regional domination by illegally venturing into or supporting the insurgencies within the neighboring countries. Kissinger noted, for instance, that “a curious thing about Laos is that most of the Laotian freedom fighters whom we find speak Vietnamese,” and argued that “if North Vietnam withdraws genuinely its forces from Cambodia and then the civil war is fought only by Cambodians, it’s not an international problem.”¹⁰³

Beijing did not consider the issue so clear cut. The struggle in question was one of the Indochinese people in general against the interventions of the Western powers. In this view, the United States had forced them to fight among themselves, and thus the burden for ending the war fell on the United States – that is, by an unconditional withdrawal. In taking this stance, Zhou was almost certainly influenced by an agreement of April 24-25 – over which he presided in Beijing – by which the DRV, National Liberation Front, National United Front of Kampuchea, the deposed leader of Cambodia Prince Sihanouk, and the Laotian communists all pledged to fight against the American intruders. After the war, Zhou explained, “questions of peace will be settled by the people of those countries themselves and territorial limits restored to what they were beforehand.”¹⁰⁴ The DRV’s presence in either Laos or Cambodia thus did not constitute an external act of aggression so long as it served the cause of expelling the Americans

¹⁰³ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Zhou, et al, 9 July 1971, *ibid*, 382.

¹⁰⁴ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Zhou, et al, 10 July 1971, *ibid*, 420.

from South Vietnam. As such, Zhou rejected Kissinger's request that Beijing might "help" influence Hanoi's perspective "so that they understand that some political evolution is necessary."¹⁰⁵

In part, this reluctance also stemmed from concerns that by urging moderation in Hanoi, Beijing might inadvertently facilitate Soviet efforts to gain influence over the DRV, the latter of which appeared independently intent on establishing hegemony in the region after the successful conclusion of the war. Because the Soviet Union had provided the majority of Hanoi's military assistance needs since the late-1960s, Beijing viewed the extension of North Vietnamese influence in Laos and Cambodia as essentially the extension of Soviet influence. Ironically, China now faced virtually the same situation the United States had confronted in 1948-49: the fear that the Soviet Union might use a proxy to extend its influence at the expense of the political sovereignty and territorial integrity of other nations which might then allow it to threaten the security of China. As such, just as Washington had done in the 1940s, Beijing now sought to break Moscow's hold over that proxy. In this regard, the American refusal to withdraw was counterproductive, for it merely provided a pretext for Moscow to deepen its ties to Hanoi, and for Hanoi, in turn, to deepen its interference with its neighbors. In the meantime, Beijing focused its diplomatic efforts on shoring up its ties with the DRV as a means of curbing Soviet influence there, a policy that Beijing intended its vigorous denunciation of the United States to serve.

¹⁰⁵ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Zhou, et al, 9 July 1971, *ibid*, 381.

When discussions resumed in October, Zhou therefore reasserted China's support for North Vietnam and rejected Kissinger's proposal for an Indochina-wide ceasefire. Kissinger responded testily, expressing that "there would not be any need to arrange a ceasefire if North Vietnamese troops would withdraw and let local forces determine their own future." He repeated American good intentions, and pointed out that while "the PRC did not trade in principles" the American proposals "would end the war on a basis that would not require it to do so."¹⁰⁶ The PRC disagreed. When the Paris Talks broke down in January 1972, Beijing sided wholeheartedly with Hanoi, characterizing U.S. proposals as a fraud, and lambasting the American "war of aggression against Vietnam." Furthermore, regardless of what Kissinger had professed to Zhou in October, the United States clearly desired China to "abandon principles and exert pressure on the Vietnamese side on behalf of the United States. This is absolutely impossible."¹⁰⁷

Despite these disagreements, the administration could look upon their efforts during 1971 with much satisfaction. High-level contact and a degree of mutual understanding and respect had been established between the two long-estranged nations. The American and Chinese representatives for the most part had conducted civil and constructive discussions free of the invective that had too often characterized the ambassadorial talks during the two preceding decades. The administration had achieved Beijing's tacit approval of a gradualist approach to global changes and the legitimacy of an ongoing American military presence in East Asia. Zhou had even begun moving toward the view that China should exert a moderating influence on its overzealous North

¹⁰⁶ Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, November 1971, *ibid*, 543.

¹⁰⁷ Memorandum, Walters to Haig, 30 January 1972, *ibid*, 656.

Korean allies. Furthermore, the administration believed that Mao and Zhou had committed their prestige to the successful continuation of the relationship, and that “Any reversal of the direction in which the PRC leadership is moving would at this point probably involve serious domestic repercussions” for Zhou and “the other senior personalities who have joined with him in this endeavor.”¹⁰⁸

The administration perceived China’s entry into the United Nations in October 1971 as facilitating this reorientation. Although Chinese representatives at the U.N. would continue placing “ideology and propaganda ahead of practicality,” nonetheless “the need to achieve results should eventually force the PRC to adopt more pragmatic bargaining positions and become more willing to reach compromise settlements, especially when such settlements are acceptable to the Third World.” The administration thus should encourage Beijing’s involvement in multilateral issues and discourage it “from looking at these institutions from a purely political and propaganda point of view.”¹⁰⁹ By the end of the session in mid-January 1972, administration officials reported hopefully that “In all, the Chinese demonstrated considerable flexibility” in that “they were willing either to vote in favor of or abstain on not-totally-acceptable resolutions, making an explanation of vote to record their reservations.”¹¹⁰ Moreover, the Chinese delegation asserted the importance of U.N. resolutions as international obligations to which member nations must adhere; the U.N.’s decision to

¹⁰⁸ Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 29 October 1971, *ibid*, 523.

¹⁰⁹ Response to NSSM 141, 3 December 1971, *ibid*, 606.

¹¹⁰ Airgram, Mission to the United Nations to State, 18 January 1972, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, V, 902.

seat Beijing had apparently imbued these resolutions with a legality that the Chinese Communists had previously claimed they lacked.¹¹¹

The relative moderation of the Chinese U.N. delegation paralleled indications of a similar shift in China's involvement with the Third World, particularly the African liberation movements. Together, these suggested that a process of socializing Beijing into the international system had already begun. The key aspects of this new approach included an acceptance of the possibility for the peaceful transition to socialist systems, an emphasis on revolutionary efforts of *nations* rather than *peoples*, and an effort to mobilize the collective diplomatic force of the Third World to affect revolutionary change aimed at the economic and political systems of the superpowers. This approach thus remained inherently revolutionary. However, "insofar as the new line implies an acknowledgment by Peking of the need to adopt – even for ultimate revolutionary purposes – the conventional practices and norms of the international system, it also implies an acceptance of the need to conform to the rules of the game of international society." China had accepted membership "in something which in Marxist terms simply does not exist: a social system of states with its own rules, norms, and acceptable patterns of behaviour."¹¹²

¹¹¹ See Cohen and Chiu, *People's China and International Law*, 292-299.

¹¹² J.D. Armstrong, *Revolutionary Diplomacy: Chinese Foreign Policy and the United Front Doctrine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 102-113, 231-235. Quote is from 112-113; Foot, *The Practice of Power*, 51. Armstrong presented a variant of this argument in his *Revolution and World Order: The Revolutionary State in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 176-184. Yet Beijing apparently accepted both the existence and value of such an international system, even as it considered the United States and Soviet Union as utilizing it for their own imperial objectives. See Cohen and Chiu, *People's China and International Law*.

Thus, with immense satisfaction tempered by a cautious pragmatism, Nixon embarked on his own trip to China in February 1972. During five days of meetings both sides covered much the same ground that Kissinger and Zhou had during the former's 1971 visits. At his initial meeting with Mao, Nixon proclaimed that "we can find common ground, despite our differences, to build a world structure in which both can be safe to develop in our own ways on our own roads."¹¹³ But, as subsequent discussions once more revealed, the problem lay not in the threat that China and the United States posed to each other's development, but rather with the broader perspectives of international relations to which the two sides adhered. On this score, Nixon could only express to Zhou that "we tried to find common ground, and as time goes on, we will try to find more common ground."¹¹⁴

International Order and the Normalization Process, 1972-1976

Both Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon characterized the Sino-American relationship of the 1970s as based upon a shared animosity for the Soviet Union and its hegemonial ambitions. Yet Moscow's activities constituted only the most dangerous of many threats to international peace and stability that Washington felt compelled to confront. From 1972 to 1976, the Nixon and Ford administrations sought to engage Beijing's help in resolving these threats, but regularly faced resistance rooted in the Chinese leaders' enduring ideological interpretation of American actions and intentions.

¹¹³ Memorandum of Conversation between Nixon and Mao, 21 February 1972, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 683.

¹¹⁴ Memorandum of Conversation between Nixon and Zhou, 28 February 1972, *ibid*, 819.

The following analyzes several major international crises and issues that collectively demonstrate a gradual meeting of minds between officials in Washington and Beijing despite lingering differences. Discerning the extent to which the Sino-American rapprochement affected each of these will help illustrate the extent of Beijing's acceptance of Washington's perspective. Though lingering differences did not affect the American intention to normalize, they did affect the pace by which normalization occurred.

The most remarkable fact of American diplomacy during these years is the extent to which the Nixon and Ford administrations insisted on carrying out normalization despite the annoyance and frustration that many officials – Kissinger included – frequently felt regarding their dealings with Chinese officials. The reasons for this persistence are crucial to understanding the most fundamental rationale for American China policy under Nixon and Ford: that perhaps the greatest threat to international peace and order lay in allowing an ascendant China to remain isolated and antagonistic to the United States. Nixon set the tone for this in his 1967 article in which he warned against allowing the Chinese people to remain in “angry isolation.” Following his groundbreaking trip to China in 1972, this view continued to define his and Kissinger's assessment of the importance of improved Sino-American relations. In May 1973, Nixon referred to relations with China as the “critical problem of our age,” emphasizing that continuing the policy of “silent confrontation” would ultimately “reap a nuclear war.

No question.”¹¹⁵ Even as Nixon concluded that Watergate might soon force him from office, he confided to Kissinger the necessity of staying the course on China policy in order to ensure global peace and freedom for the next 30 or 300 years.¹¹⁶

The development of the Sino-American relationship during these years – the series of high-level meetings, exchange programs, and tacit, if uneven, cooperation on third country issues and against Soviet expansion – did serve to minimize the possibility of future military conflict between the two nations. And yet, Kissinger explicitly and frequently noted the inherent impermanence of this situation so long as Beijing retained its revolutionary foreign policy outlook. Cooperation against the Soviet Union would produce “tacit cooperation for at least several years,” but as the Soviet danger faded or as China’s strength increased, Kissinger admitted, “the Chinese could follow an antagonistic policy with the same single-mindedness” with which they pursued their conflict with Moscow.¹¹⁷ In 1975, Kissinger again expressed that “we shouldn’t delude ourselves. In five years if they become strong they could just cold-bloodedly push us away. Someday they may treat us like the Soviet Union, like an enemy.”¹¹⁸ Kissinger’s diplomacy thus reflected in remarkable ways the Eisenhower approach of diplomatic engagement for the purpose of postponing conflict and hoping for some eventual fundamental change in the Chinese approach. Judged in this way, this policy succeeded,

¹¹⁵ Conversation between Nixon and David Bruce, 3 May 1973, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVIII, 250; “What Nixon sought throughout the Cold War was a stable international order for a world filled with nuclear weapons.” Kissinger, *On China*, 264.

¹¹⁶ Stanley I. Kutler, *Abuse of Power: The New Nixon Tapes* (New York: Free Press, 1997), 460.

¹¹⁷ Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 27 February 1973, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVIII, 207.

¹¹⁸ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and a Congressional Delegation, 22 July 1975, NSA, Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, General Subject File, Box 5, Folder “China, unnumbered items – (16), 7/6/75-7/23/75,” NLF.

for even if domestic issues constituted the core of Chinese internal political tensions during these years, the rapprochement and progress toward normalization during the mid-1970s provided an alternative international context within which the Chinese Communists could pursue their domestic agenda.

Beyond this longer-term objective of staving off Sino-American conflict lay the more immediate imperative of moderating the revolutionary excesses of Soviet foreign policy by means of a triangular geostrategic structure that would compel Moscow to adopt a more accommodating posture. In March 1973, Kissinger noted that “our opening to Peking has paid us substantial dividends with Moscow.”¹¹⁹ A breakthrough in the negotiations for a strategic arms limitation treaty (SALT) occurred in May 1971 with agreements formally signed one year later. These negotiations also prompted the two sides to agree on a new series of discussions for the reduction of conventional forces and other means of minimizing the possibility for conflict in Europe.

By 1973, however, both the United States and China believed that Soviet actions now more than ever indicated a desire within the Kremlin to pursue a policy of aggressive expansion. Leaders in both Washington and Beijing also shared the belief that they must not allow the Soviets to succeed or to gain undue strategic advantage. For Kissinger, the problem remained the still powerful domestic consensus that the United States must limit its role in the world to those issues of vital interest to American security, and that it must not exacerbate tensions through the unthinking application of American force, such as many members of Congress believed had occurred in Vietnam.

¹¹⁹ Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 2 March 1973, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVIII, 222.

As a result of this attitude, Congress placed significant limitations on the administration's freedom to apply military force as a counter to communist aggressions in Cambodia in 1973 and Angola in 1975. For the next forty years, Kissinger continued to maintain that China's reluctance or outright refusal to cooperate with the United States on a wide range of bilateral and multilateral issues during these years resulted directly from this appearance of American impotence in the face of the Soviet threat.

To minimize Chinese concerns of American geostrategic reliability, Kissinger explained to virtually every Chinese leader with whom he met that entering into negotiations with the Soviet Union provided a way to obviate Congressional interference in the event that future Soviet actions required an assertive response. For instance, he characterized the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) discussions as a way to reduce a certain number of American forces in Europe through negotiation with the communist nations in order to stave off a unilateral Congressional demand for even deeper reductions.¹²⁰ More importantly, Kissinger argued, in order for the United States to maintain an assertive presence in the world it must enter into agreements with the Soviet Union that would provide legal justification for American intervention if and when Moscow violated them. Nixon and Kissinger both insisted that only in such cases of Moscow's clear violation of its treaty commitments could the administration overcome the isolationist tendencies of the American left and mobilize support against violators of the peace.

¹²⁰ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Zhou, 18 February 1973, *ibid*, 139.

The primary vehicle for this strategy was the Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War that the United States and Soviet Union entered into on June 22, 1973, a treaty that, according to Kissinger, provided a legal basis to challenge Soviet aggression even “in areas where we have no formal obligation.”¹²¹ Beijing immediately and vociferously denounced the agreement. On June 26, Zhou emphasized that the United States could not trust the Soviets to live up to such agreements, and that the American decision nonetheless to enter into them served only to appease Soviet aggression while simultaneously lulling Western Europe into a dangerous false sense of security. Zhou also suggested that Washington might desire through such means to involve China in a war against the Soviets, a charge that Mao later repeated.¹²² For the next three years Kissinger continued to rebut such notions with only limited success at convincing Chinese leaders of Washington’s sincerity and determination to stand up to the Soviet military threat.¹²³

In large part, Beijing’s view apparently resulted from the enduring ideological perspective among Chinese officials that cast the United States as an imperialist superpower fully capable – perhaps likely – to collude with Moscow in a bid for shared

¹²¹ Elaborating on this point, Kissinger stated, “There is no question that legal obligations prevent Soviet expansionism. Our problem is how to get into a position to resist, and the strategy we are following is to try to create as many legal obstacles as possible; and, failing that, to use those legal obstacles as American obligations, especially in those areas where we have no formal obligation and therefore would have difficulties domestically.” Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Zhou, 11 November 1973, *ibid*, 338-339.

¹²² Backchannel Message, Bruce to Kissinger, 26 June 1973, *ibid*, 280.

¹²³ This remained an issue as late as October 1976. In his discussions with Qiao that month, a clearly frustrated Kissinger sought again to rebut the “accusation that we are following a Munich-like policy of appeasement,” saying that “I have explained it to you before but let me summarize it again. I do it for you once a year and quite obviously it has never made a lasting impact.” Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Qiao, et al, 8 October 1976, NSA, Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, General Subject File, Box 6, Folder “China, unnumbered items – (35), 10/2/76-10/8/76,” NLF.

global domination (albeit, for the purpose of gaining strategic advantage over each other). Indeed, this constituted an important theme in the Sino-American discussions of the mid-1970s. Chinese officials often implicitly accused Washington of attempting to “set the Soviets and Chinese against each other in a war designed to destroy them both.”¹²⁴ PRC public rhetoric went beyond implications, however, casting explicit accusations. During his September 26, 1975, speech to the United Nations, for instance, Foreign Minister Qiao Guanhua referred to détente as a calculated fraud and the SALT agreement as a pact designed to increase, rather than reduce, the superpowers’ strategic arms stockpiles.

Despite both Beijing’s refusal to accept the administration’s protestations at face value and its apparent dismay at Washington’s unreliability as a counterweight to Soviet aggression, Kissinger nonetheless believed that neither of these conditions changed the basic fact that China had no alternative to ongoing cooperation with the United States. Even accepting the validity of this assessment, however, this appears insufficient, or at least incomplete, as an explanation for the extent of China’s non-cooperation with the United States on a variety of issues pertinent to Washington’s goal of maintaining a stable international order. Even as Nixon prepared to go to China, Beijing demonstrated that whatever minor concessions Zhou had made to Kissinger during their 1971 discussions, China’s ideological worldview would continue to limit Beijing’s willingness to cooperate in international endeavors on Washington’s terms. This attitude contributed significantly to the prolongation of the normalization process.

¹²⁴ Kissinger, *On China*, 293.

The ongoing war in Vietnam provided the most immediate issue on which Chinese and American global perspectives collided. One month after Nixon's return from his China visit, the DRV launched a spring offensive. In Paris, the American and North Vietnamese negotiators failed to overcome the impasse between them, a circumstance that resulted in Kissinger once more conveying to Beijing his belief that the powerful nations of the world had a responsibility to exert a "moderating influence" over those nations that chose conflict over peaceful negotiation. Kissinger attempted to explain to Zhou the American bombing and mining campaigns as a justifiable response to ongoing DRV aggression compounded by Hanoi's cancellation of the upcoming negotiating session. Zhou rejected this explanation and denounced the apparent American attempt to sabotage the peace talks.¹²⁵ Under increasing domestic pressure to end the Vietnam War, Nixon grew testy at this lack of cooperation, especially after such a promising beginning to a new era of Sino-American relations. When Kissinger warned Nixon that his upcoming Moscow trip would shake up the PRC, therefore, Nixon responded, "Good, so let them shake."¹²⁶

Despite this underlying bitterness, Nixon nonetheless joined his National Security Advisor in patiently elaborating to Chinese officials throughout the spring and summer the reasons for the ongoing American activity in Southeast Asia. The administration particularly stressed the intention of allowing the emergence by evolutionary processes of a communist government if the Vietnamese people so desired,

¹²⁵ Message, U.S. Government to the PRC, Undated (delivered on 3 April 1972), *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 873.

¹²⁶ Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, 18 April 1972, *ibid*, 888 note 5.

and the inability of the United States to overthrow an allied regime.¹²⁷ Kissinger viewed these efforts as having achieved a measure of success. Despite PRC complaints, Beijing's response to the American position had been "moderate," while an NSC paper prepared in June reported that the Chinese appear quietly sympathetic to and understanding of U.S. efforts in Vietnam.¹²⁸ Beijing apparently believed that Washington genuinely wished to withdraw; China would not allow Vietnam to stand in the way of the rapprochement.¹²⁹

Whatever hope Nixon and Kissinger may have harbored regarding Beijing's willingness to influence Hanoi ended painfully in the closing months of 1972 as the Paris talks came close to achieving a negotiated settlement. Regarding Beijing, the administration had two basic goals. First, Washington insisted that the PRC cease providing Hanoi with military assistance after the conclusion of an armistice agreement.¹³⁰ More immediately, however, Kissinger hoped that Beijing would use its influence to convince Hanoi that the United States genuinely intended to withdraw from Vietnam and allow the Vietnamese people to settle their own affairs free of outside control.¹³¹ In the context of the particularly acrimonious discussions in Paris in October, Chinese officials refused to place such pressure on the DRV. Instead, Beijing accused

¹²⁷ Letter, Nixon to Zhou, 8 May 1972, *ibid.*, 897; Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Zhou, et al, 20 June 1972, *ibid.*, 920.

¹²⁸ Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 16 May 1972, *ibid.*, 901; Memorandum, Solomon to Kissinger, 9 June 1972, *ibid.*, 904.

¹²⁹ Memorandum, Solomon to Kissinger, 9 June 1972, *ibid.*, 904; Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 27 June 1972, *ibid.*, 997.

¹³⁰ Message, U.S. Government to the PRC, 16 October 1972, *ibid.*, 1094 note 2.

¹³¹ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Huang Hua, 24 October 1972, and Message, U.S. Government to the PRC, 27 October 1972, both in *ibid.*, 1093 and 1100, respectively.

the administration of lacking good faith and intensified its public and private condemnation of both the United States and its South Vietnamese puppet.¹³²

Increasingly desperate at this critical moment in the negotiations, Kissinger raised the stakes. During the 1971-72 discussions in Beijing, Nixon and Kissinger had implied a linkage between the end of hostilities in Vietnam and progress toward Sino-American normalization. On November 3, Kissinger made that link explicit.¹³³ When the negotiations again hit a stumbling block in early December, Kissinger once more informed the Chinese that DRV stubbornness will jeopardize normalization, adding that the war's prolongation would also affect Washington's ability to counter Soviet hegemonial aspirations elsewhere in the world.¹³⁴ Even after Hanoi agreed to the American terms later that month, Kissinger kept the pressure on lest the North Vietnamese renege. On January 3, he re-emphasized the need to free up American forces for use against Soviet expansion and supplemented this warning with Nixon's own message to Zhou that same day stating that the president would happily send Kissinger to China to discuss Sino-American relations – after the war ended.¹³⁵ Throughout this process, the administration lived up to its own rhetoric by placing

¹³² Message, PRC to U.S., 25 October 1972, and Message, PRC to U.S., 31 October 1972, both in *ibid*, 1099 and 1101, respectively.

¹³³ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Huang Hua, 3 November 1972, *ibid*, 1109.

¹³⁴ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Huang Chen, 7-8 December 1972, *ibid*, 1121.

¹³⁵ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Huang Hua, and Letter, Nixon to Zhou, both on 3 January 1973, and both in *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVIII, 3 and 7, respectively.

enormous pressure on its difficult South Vietnamese ally to agree to the negotiated settlement, threatening a separate peace if Thieu refused to comply.¹³⁶

The administration perceived that its effort to draw Beijing into a more active role in the Paris Talks had produced results, despite Beijing's strident rhetoric in defense of its North Vietnamese allies. In mid-November 1972, following his statement linking normalization and Vietnam, Kissinger reported that a remarkable change had occurred. Chinese officials now apparently favored a quick settlement. "It's the softest I've ever heard them on Vietnam," Kissinger noted, adding that "They as much as said they would use their influence to keep things quiet in Cambodia."¹³⁷ Recent studies of Sino-DRV relations support the view that Beijing did, in fact, urge Hanoi to accept as genuine the American pledge to withdraw completely from Vietnam, and to drop its insistence on the removal of Thieu from power as a prerequisite to a negotiated settlement.¹³⁸ Zhou even explicitly endorsed Kissinger's plan to achieve a political settlement in Vietnam in the post-armistice period, a three-staged process that moved from the withdrawal of troops to general elections and, finally, to reunification.

Yet, as historian John Garver points out, although Beijing might have urged Hanoi to compromise with the United States, it did not actively apply pressure to achieve that result.¹³⁹ Furthermore, despite Zhou's assurances to Kissinger, Beijing apparently did not consider the Paris Accords as a first step toward the peaceful reunification of

¹³⁶ After the Christmas Day bombings, Nixon informed Thieu that "The time has come, you must decide now whether you desire to continue the alliance or whether you want me to seek a settlement with the enemy which serves U.S. interests alone" Quoted in Horne, *Kissinger*, 56.

¹³⁷ Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, 14 November 1972, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 1110 note 4.

¹³⁸ Qiang Zhai, *China and the Vietnam Wars*, 205-206.

¹³⁹ John W. Garver, "Sino-Vietnamese Conflict and the Sino-American Rapprochement," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 96, No. 3 (Autumn, 1981), 461.

Vietnam, but rather as allowing Hanoi to prepare for the military conquest of the South. Zhou conveyed to Hanoi his assessment that after Washington's withdrawal "it would be difficult for the United States to barge in."¹⁴⁰ Indeed, the successful conclusion of an armistice agreement in late-January did not immediately end tensions between Washington and Beijing over the fate of Vietnam. In March, Kissinger noted that the PRC continued sending the DRV military aid, despite "insulting" claims to the contrary. The administration could understand providing such support during wartime, he admitted, but "to keep pouring in military supplies at a time when there is supposed to be peace cannot be considered a friendly act."¹⁴¹ Further, the administration's reappraisal of U.S. Asian strategy in August still called for "a combined conventional defense against a joint PRC / Communist ally attack in either Northeast or Southeast Asia."¹⁴²

Nonetheless, the end of the war removed the most significant issue hindering the continuation of the normalization process. In accordance with its earlier pledges, the administration now began to discuss the pace at which it would remove the two thirds of the troops on Taiwan that were directly related to military operations in Southeast Asia. Nixon also ordered the administration to conduct a series of NSSMs on establishing cultural, economic, and scientific exchanges with China. Most significantly, during Kissinger's February 1973 trip to China, the two sides agreed to establish liaison offices in each other's capitol – a considerable concession given the PRC's prior refusal to send

¹⁴⁰ Zhou to Hoang Van Hoan, May 1973, quoted in Qiang Zhai, *China and the Vietnam Wars*, 207.

¹⁴¹ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Bruce, 29 March 1973, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVIII, 232.

¹⁴² NSDM 230, "U.S. Strategy and Forces for Asia," 9 August 1973, *ibid*, 315.

high-level representatives to Washington so long as the ROC maintained an official presence there.

The apparent spirit of cooperation in the Sino-American relationship also manifested in the discussions on Korean reunification. In his June 1972 meeting with Zhou Enlai, Kissinger pledged that the administration would “go along with any agreement that the two Koreas make with each other,” and Zhou replied by emphasizing his desire for “conciliatory contacts between the two.”¹⁴³ Yet disagreements soon emerged over how exactly to proceed toward that goal. Beijing had never accepted the legitimacy of the United Nations Committee for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK), the body responsible for encouraging and overseeing steps toward a political settlement on the peninsula, considering it external interference in the internal affairs of the Korean people. For essentially the same reasons, Beijing disliked the United Nations Command (UNC), the multi-national military force tasked with preserving the independence of South Korea against communist aggression.¹⁴⁴ For the sake of moving Seoul and Pyongyang toward peaceful negotiations, the administration demonstrated willingness to dismantle these two structures, so long as this occurred in a gradual, step-by-step manner that would not destabilize conditions on the peninsula. Zhou Enlai also expressed the hope that the American withdraw would occur gradually,

¹⁴³ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Zhou, 22 June 1972, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 988.

¹⁴⁴ Chinese officials frequently pointed out that Beijing had withdrawn all Chinese Communist troops from North Korea in 1958, and that the United States and United Nations should follow suit.

though more as a way to prevent Japan from entering the vacuum than to ensure peaceful reunification.¹⁴⁵

Kissinger's proposal essentially followed the same guidelines that determined his approach to other major issues at this time – that is, to create conditions conducive to a political settlement by the parties directly involved without undermining the geostrategic conditions that preserved regional stability. Thus, in the summer of 1973 Kissinger submitted a proposal for the dissolution of UNCURK at the upcoming UNGA session. As for the fate of the UNC, the administration sought to defer discussion until the following year, perceiving conditions between Seoul and Pyongyang as currently too volatile for the two sides to arrive at a mutually-acceptable alternative security arrangement. In its August letter to the PRC, the administration welcomed “Efforts of the Chinese side in behalf of this objective.”¹⁴⁶ According to one administration official, the PRC “played an important role in managing the Korean issue at the General Assembly session in November in such a manner that UNCURK died a quiet death.” However, Beijing's helpfulness in ending the UNC on American terms remained less certain.¹⁴⁷

With UNCURK dissolved, the administration turned to the more difficult problem of replacing the UNC with an alternative means of preserving peace on the Korean peninsula, since an end to the UNC would remove the legal basis for the Korean armistice and, thus, open the door to possible military conflict. In March 1974, the

¹⁴⁵ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Zhou, 18 February 1973, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVIII, 139.

¹⁴⁶ Note, U.S. to PRC, 22 August 1973, *ibid*, 319.

¹⁴⁷ Memorandum, Solomon to Kissinger, 12 April 1974, *ibid*, 476.

administration produced National Security Decision Memorandum (NSDM) 251 which laid out the administration's intention to pass the duties of the UNC to the United States and South Korea, obtain Pyongyang and Beijing's tacit acceptance of a continued American troop presence pending stabilization of the security situation, orchestrate a non-aggression pact between the two Koreas, and secure Security Council endorsement of these measures. In his April 14 meeting with Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping, Kissinger emphasized the importance of both the United States and China remaining parties to the armistice "in order to influence our friends in this situation." Deng made no comment and quickly changed the subject.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, Beijing had already heightened the stridency of its rhetoric on this issue and declared wholehearted support for Pyongyang's demands that the administration found unacceptable.¹⁴⁹ One month after the administration formally conveyed its proposal to Beijing, Washington had still received no response.¹⁵⁰

On August 16, the chances of achieving a negotiated settlement plummeted as Algeria, Syria, and several other nations friendly to North Korea inscribed an item on the UNGA agenda calling for the removal of all foreign troops in Korea that served under the U.N. flag. To stave off an unhelpful public debate, Kissinger dropped his insistence on a non-aggression pact and communist acceptance of an interim American troop presence, but the damage had been done. Although denying complicity in or advanced knowledge of the Algerian item, Beijing nonetheless chose to join with the Third World nations that supported Pyongyang's firm stance against the UNC. In two separate

¹⁴⁸ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Deng, 14 April 1974, *ibid*, 497-498.

¹⁴⁹ Memorandum, Solomon to Kissinger, 12 April 1974, *ibid*, 476.

¹⁵⁰ The lack of a PRC response to the American proposal, Qiao informed Kissinger, was due to Pyongyang's failure to respond to it when Beijing forwarded it to the North Korean government. Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Qiao, 2 October 1974, *ibid*, 523.

speeches to the U.N. in September and October, PRC officials blasted American “interference and connivance” for the “reign of terror” perpetrated by the “fascist dictator,” South Korean President Park Chung-hee.¹⁵¹ Privately, Qiao gave no ground, insisting that the PRC must respect the views of its Korean allies. In response, Kissinger repeated again what he and Zhou had tentatively agreed in 1971 – that both sides should influence their Korean allies.¹⁵² Two days later, Kissinger lamented “It is possible, but not at all certain that the PRC is somewhat more disposed than is North Korea to seek middle ground.” At the very least, compromise during the current UNGA session remained “doubtful.”¹⁵³

Despite Beijing’s reluctance to help achieve a permanent resolution of these issues, the administration concluded in November that the PRC would “tolerate the U.S. troop presence as a means of preserving stability on the peninsula.”¹⁵⁴ The following year, Beijing’s actions strengthened this assessment. With the governments of South Vietnam and Cambodia falling to communist militancy, North Korean President Kim Il-sung journeyed to Beijing where he publicly called upon the communist world to support his bid to reunify the Korean peninsula, by force if necessary. Chinese leaders rejected

¹⁵¹ Huang’s U.N. speech, 19 September 1974, quoted in Talking Points on Korea, NSA, Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, General Subject File, Box 4, Folder “China, unnumbered items – (4), 10/2/74,” NLF; Qiao’s U.N. speech, 2 October 1974, quoted in *New York Times*, 3 October 1974, 1.

¹⁵² Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Qiao, 2 October 1974, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVIII, 536.

¹⁵³ Telegram, Kissinger to the Embassy in Seoul, 4 October 1974, NSA, Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, General Subject File, Box 4, Folder “China, unnumbered items – (5), 10/4/74-10/31/74,” NLF.

¹⁵⁴ Response to NSSM 211, “Security Assistance to the Republic of Korea,” 16 November 1974, Papers of the U.S. National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 32, Folder “NSSM 211 – Review of U.S. Security Assistance to the Republic of Korea (1),” NLF.

this view, however, and apparently forced Kim upon his return to Pyongyang to once more adopt the language of peaceful reunification.

Yet before the end of April, Beijing issued a joint communiqué with its North Korean allies once more denouncing the UNC and declaring Pyongyang the sole legitimate government of Korea.¹⁵⁵ Tensions over this issue continued to simmer for the next year and a half, with both sides accusing the other of delaying tactics and provocative actions. Administration officials suggested linking progress on the UNC issue with progress toward normalization. Kissinger agreed; in his May 1975 discussions with Beijing's U.N. ambassador, Huang Chen, he "obliquely got across that we were looking for more Chinese cooperation – or at least less unhelpfulness – on third country issues."¹⁵⁶ This had little effect on Beijing, which continued throughout the rest of 1975 to stand steadfast in its support of Pyongyang's demands. Just as with its defense of the DRV, Beijing would not endanger its position of leadership in the Third World or its revolutionary credentials for the sake of encouraging a lasting solution to a critical international problem.

The same held true of the Chinese Communist view of the "oil weapon" in the aftermath of the 1973 Israeli-Arab conflict. Beijing made no secret of its support for the Palestinian people in their "just" cause against the Israeli "aggressors," yet Kissinger found common ground with Chinese officials regarding the necessity of eliminating opportunities for the expansion of Soviet influence in the region. Zhou proved helpful in

¹⁵⁵ "A communiqué like this makes us realize how far we have to go in our work with China." Bush's diary entry, 28 April 1975, in Jeffrey Engel, ed., *The China Diary of George H. W. Bush: The Making of a Global President* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 271.

¹⁵⁶ Telegram, Kissinger to Bush, 11 May 1975, NSA, Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, General Subject File, Box 5, Folder "China, unnumbered items – (13), 5/11/75-5/30/75," NLF.

late-1973 in conveying to the Egyptian government that the United States genuinely sought a negotiated settlement. Kissinger expressed the hope that Beijing would continue such efforts, which “would be very helpful to our common approach.”¹⁵⁷ To Kissinger’s delight, Deng pledged to do so.¹⁵⁸

Yet the Yom Kippur War had profound consequences that extended beyond the Middle East as a result of an oil embargo that the Arab nations of the Oil Producing and Exporting Countries (OPEC) enacted against those nations that had supported Israel. Kissinger later characterized this as one of the 20th century’s most pivotal events, a “colossal blow” to the developed nations’ “balance of payments, economic growth, employment, price stability, and social cohesion.”¹⁵⁹ The embargo also caused considerable economic disruption in the industrialized world. This provided a considerable impetus for the Nixon administration to end that conflict swiftly and on terms that would satisfy the Arab world. By March 1974 Kissinger had succeeded and the embargo ended. As disruptive and disturbing as the oil embargo proved to be, however, the use of a natural resource as a weapon had broader and dangerous implications, coming at a time when the nations of the developing world, egged on by Beijing, had begun to flex their collective diplomatic muscle against what many of them perceived as an exploitative, Western-dominated international political and economic system. As a result, even though the embargo had ended six months before, Qiao addressed the UNGA, praising the use of oil as a political weapon as a “historic

¹⁵⁷ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Zhou, 11 November 1973, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVIII, 342-343.

¹⁵⁸ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Deng, 14 April 1974, *ibid*, 493.

¹⁵⁹ Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1982), 885.

pioneering action.” Independently developing and controlling their natural resources, he argued, would empower the nations of the Third World, facilitating their struggle against “imperialist plunder and exploitation.”¹⁶⁰

The administration viewed this advocacy with alarm, for Beijing’s actions threatened international order in several critical and interrelated ways. As already noted, Kissinger considered the oil shock as a pivotal, transformational event in the world that fundamentally altered the domestic structures of all nations, breeding social unrest and instability. Indeed, Kissinger pointed out the irony of the non-oil producing Third World states who suffered tremendously from the embargo railing against “their fellow victims in the West,” attributing this to either helplessness or “decrepit ideology.”¹⁶¹ Such strident support for the use of oil as a weapon might open the door for other developing nations to conduct the same kind of economic blackmail using other commodities, with the same devastating consequences for international stability and the civil conduct of foreign relations. On a geostrategic level, Kissinger warned Deng in November 1974 that these destabilizing effects on the developed world had undermined the strength of the United States, Japan, and the nations of Western Europe, and their capability to prevent Soviet expansionism. “At some point,” Kissinger pointed out, “a contradiction develops” between Beijing’s ideological solidarity with the Third World and “the

¹⁶⁰ Qiao’s U.N. speech of 2 October 1974, quoted in *New York Times*, 3 October 1974, 1.

¹⁶¹ Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 887.

necessity of achieving a common front against the threats to international security. It is up to the People's Republic to decide where this point is reached.”¹⁶²

Similar disagreements emerged in 1974-75 over how to resolve several problems in southern Africa. Following a communist coup in Portugal, the new government granted all of its remaining African colonies independence. As rival factions in those colonies vied for power, the Soviet Union dispatched considerable aid in support of the Marxist groups. Fearing the broader ramifications of this for the Cold War, Washington began diplomatic efforts to bring the rival factions together in coalition governments that would retain national independence free from Moscow's influence. China needed little encouragement to curb Soviet influence on the continent, having been working toward that goal for years. The communist military intervention in Angola in late-1975, however, raised the stakes considerably. The Ford administration struggled to orchestrate an international response, but faced powerful opposition from Congress in the form of a resolution preventing the government from sending military aid or deploying troops. With the communist forces now operating with impunity, Washington turned to Beijing for assistance.

The discussions over the appropriate response to the Angolan crisis illustrate both the similarities and the differences in the Chinese and American approaches. Because of its inability to apply counterforce, the Ford administration concluded that it must support and rely on other governments in the region, including South Africa and

¹⁶² Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Deng, afternoon session, 27 November 1974, NSA, Kissinger Reports on USSR, China, and Middle East Discussions, Box 2, Folder “November 25-29, 1974 – Kissinger Trip (3),” NLF.

Rhodesia whose white minority governments had earned widespread international condemnation. The United States and China both committed themselves to encouraging the liberalization of those political systems. Yet the United States prioritized curbing the militant communist expansion underway in the region, a goal it believed that the temporary support of the South African and Rhodesian governments would facilitate. Only after the Soviet threat had ended should the United States put pressure on those governments to liberalize their political systems. This view posed considerable problems for Beijing as adoption of this approach would imply approval of the repressive white regimes, cast China as an imperialist accomplice, and undermine its support among the Third World. Indeed, as it turned out, even the administration faced difficulties from Congress and other allies over the notion of muting, even temporarily, its criticism of apartheid.

The one issue that proved most difficult, however, was the question of the methods that China should employ to achieve the reunification of Taiwan with the mainland, an issue that Beijing passionately considered its internal affair and that Washington viewed as intricately linked with the principle of peaceful resolution of disputes and the preservation of American credibility in a volatile world. Credibility in Sino-American relations served primarily to reassure Beijing that the American pledge to move towards normalization was not a trick. But despite the importance he placed on the Sino-American relationship as means of achieving stability in the long-term, Kissinger considered paramount in the short-term, during the tumultuous events of the mid-1970s, for the U.S. to leave no doubt in the minds of friends and enemies alike that

the United States would stand by its commitments, particularly those involving the deterrence of military conflict. Washington felt it could not afford to acquiesce in a militant conquest of Taiwan while it sought to avoid precisely those kinds of solutions in other global conflicts. Indeed, the Nixon administration had envisioned the Sino-American rapprochement as serving precisely this purpose, and had repeatedly urged Chinese officials to exert influence to ameliorate the militancy of its allies. The fact that Beijing and Washington had agreed that the Taiwan issue was secondary to the overriding objective of countering Soviet expansionism in no way ameliorated the basic dilemma that the PRC refused to limit its options for “liberating” Taiwan.

As difficult as this disagreement was in preventing the two sides from moving more quickly toward normalization, the most important underlying problem remained the prism through which the Chinese Communists perceived Washington’s motives. Though rooted in the Chinese experience of foreign exploitation, this perspective must surely have included an element of ideological rigidity in which the United States, from the Chinese perspective, remained an imperialist aggressor that sought a Sino-American partnership as a temporary expedient – much as Mao, himself, had done in order to counter the primary threat from Moscow.¹⁶³ Mao, Zhou, and the other advocates of rapprochement confronted considerable domestic problems from the CCP’s more radical elements during the mid-1970s. The various exchange programs that occurred following Nixon’s 1972 trip introduced a variety of foreign culture and ideas into China, a process

¹⁶³ The line between China’s historical experience with foreign exploitation and its communist ideology overlap in ways that often make it difficult to discern differences in terms of how they affected Chinese foreign policy.

against which many ideologically fervent cadres protested vigorously. These same forces also opposed the effort of Zhou and the moderates to impose order and structure on the Chinese economy, an apparent abandonment of Mao's revolutionary line that had featured so prominently during the Cultural Revolution. Furthermore, the rapprochement had failed to bring the American commitment to Taiwan to an end, thus calling into question both the wisdom of engaging with Washington and the competency of those Chinese officials who chose to do so.

The combination of these factors produced a "sharp leftward movement" in Chinese domestic politics that placed the advocates of moderation in a difficult position.¹⁶⁴ In December 1973, Mao forced Zhou to undergo "struggle sessions" in order to justify to the Politburo his "too accommodating" approach to the United States. Though unaware of this, Kissinger throughout 1974 nonetheless noted the conspicuous absence of both Zhou and even references to the premier during his discussions with Chinese officials; as Kissinger later noted, "No Chinese official referred to him again."¹⁶⁵ That year, Beijing's rhetoric noticeably hardened. Qiao and Kissinger offered competing toasts during the latter's November 1974 visit to Beijing; Qiao emphasized the virtue of "the great turmoil in the world" while Kissinger rejoined that "this change must lead to a new and better order for all the peoples of the world."¹⁶⁶ The following day, Chinese officials explicitly charged the administration with deliberately creating

¹⁶⁴ CIA paper, "The Shift to Harshness in Peking's Policy Toward the US," October 1974, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVIII, 543.

¹⁶⁵ Kissinger, *On China*, 300.

¹⁶⁶ Text of the exchange of toasts in a Department of State press release, 25 November 1974, NSA, Kissinger Reports on USSR, China, and Middle East Discussions, Box 2, Folder "November 25-29, 1974 – Kissinger's Trip (1)," NLF.

barriers to the settlement of the claims and assets issue.¹⁶⁷ More significantly, Deng and Qiao took a rigid line on Taiwan, rejecting both Kissinger's suggestion for retaining a liaison office in Taipei and the possibility of peaceful reunification, as well as suggesting that Chinese patience on this issue had limits. The following month, Beijing extended their efforts into the public realm in what appeared an "orchestrated campaign" against the slow pace of normalization.¹⁶⁸ By June 1975, China had extended invitations "by the dozens" to Senators and Congressmen to visit the PRC liaison office in an apparent effort to heighten the domestic pressure on the administration.¹⁶⁹

At the height of this hardening of Beijing's stance, international events compelled the Ford administration to place even greater emphasis on the necessity of preserving Taiwan's security. In April 1975, a North Vietnamese offensive campaign toppled the South Vietnamese government. Several weeks earlier, the government of Cambodia fell to Hanoi-backed communist rebels. Many observers predicted that Laos would soon follow and the administration grew concerned about heightened bellicose rhetoric emanating from Pyongyang. From his post in the U.S. Liaison Office in Beijing, George H. W. Bush commented that "the domino theory is alive and well."¹⁷⁰ Later that year, the American credibility crisis intensified due to Washington's inability to counter Soviet and Cuban intervention in Angola, a situation that the administration feared would result in all of Africa looking elsewhere for leadership and support. Kissinger

¹⁶⁷ Memorandum of Conversation between Philip Habib and Lin Ping, 26 November 1974, *ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ Telegram, U.S. Liaison Office in Beijing to Kissinger, 24 December 1974, NSA, Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, General Subject File, Box 4, Folder "China, unnumbered items - (7), 12/17/74-12/28/74," NLF.

¹⁶⁹ Bush's diary entry, 22 June 1975, in Engel, ed., *The China Diary of George H. W. Bush*, 333.

¹⁷⁰ Bush's diary entry, 17 March 1975, *ibid.*, 207.

viewed this with alarm; “coupled with Indochina,” he emphasized, “it is not a trivial thing which is happening in Southern Africa.”¹⁷¹

To offset the dangerous effects of these events, Ford publicly reaffirmed on May 6 the American commitments to the threatened nations of Asia, including Taiwan. Although Kissinger later claimed that this comment was inadvertent, the administration clearly sought any opportunity to hold the line against further disruptions. Nothing demonstrated this as much as the administration’s response to the Cambodian seizure of the *Mayaguez*, an American merchant vessel, on May 12. Having attempted and failed to achieve a diplomatic solution – in part because of Beijing’s refusal to become involved – Ford quickly decided forcibly to retake the vessel.¹⁷² This demonstration of American strength and resolve went far toward re-establishing American credibility throughout the world, even as it attracted vehement protests from Beijing and the other communist nations.

The upcoming presidential campaign season and the rising tide of Republican support for Taiwan did clearly provide a domestic political rationale for a hardened position against China and a strengthened defense of Taiwan. Yet, as the foregoing makes clear, compelling reasons for a more assertive stance on Taiwan’s security and peaceful reunification already existed from a geostrategic standpoint. While Sino-American normalization remained important “for the longer term restructuring of great power political and military relationships,” that objective, Kissinger’s advisors informed

¹⁷¹ Quoted in Henry Kissinger, *Years of Renewal* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), 807.

¹⁷² The administration had asked Beijing merely to convey a message to the Cambodian authorities, as the United States lacked official contact with the new government there. Only after Beijing’s refusal to do so did Ford order military action.

him, now conflicted “with the immediate need to reassure key allies (and warn possible adversaries) in the wake of our Indochina setbacks.”¹⁷³ After the spring of 1975, with American capabilities widely discredited, and with Washington desperate to re-establish its credibility, the administration felt it simply could not afford to leave Taiwan in a situation in which its security from aggression was not assured.¹⁷⁴

The events of that spring revived much of the Sino-American tension and mistrust that had subsided during the previous four years. In the waning days of the Vietnam debacle, Washington abandoned hope of convincing Beijing to assist with either an evacuation or political solution, and had turned instead to consultations with Moscow.¹⁷⁵ In the wake of the *Mayaguez* incident, Beijing sided wholeheartedly with Cambodia, describing the American response as “an outright act of piracy” and accusing the ship of conducting espionage.¹⁷⁶ By July, Kissinger’s team had concluded that recent PRC behavior on a range of international issues gave “little prospect that after normalization we might expect to work positively with Peking in coping with a range of third country questions”; they recommended linking these issues with progress toward

¹⁷³ Memorandum, Habib, Gleysteen Lord, and Solomon to Kissinger, 3 July 1975, NSA, Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, General Subject File, Box 5, Folder “China, unnumbered items – (15), 7/3/75-7/4/75,” NLF.

¹⁷⁴ Even Ambassador Bush, a strong supporter of Sino-American rapprochement, argued that “giving away Taiwan, in my opinion would not take care of the problem, because then China would wonder what next, where could we be counted on.” Bush’s diary entry, 26 April 1975, Engel, ed., *The China Diary of George H. W. Bush*, 268.

¹⁷⁵ Talking points and background information for discussions with the Chinese, Undated (8-9 May 1975), NSA, Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, General Subject File, Box 5, Folder “China, unnumbered items – (12), 5/8/75-5/9/75,” NLF.

¹⁷⁶ Telegram, U.S. Liaison Office in Beijing to Kissinger, 16 May 1975, NSA, Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, General Subject File, Box 5, Folder “China, unnumbered items – (13), 5/11/75-5/30/75,” NLF.

normalization.¹⁷⁷ Kissinger went so far as to completely reverse his previous views on the necessity of rapid normalization. Previously, he believed that both countries must institutionalize the relationship lest leadership changes undermine it. That July, however, he explicitly rejected the notion that normalization had to occur prior to Mao and Zhou's death, since "they haven't offered us a better deal."¹⁷⁸

Relations continued to sour in the latter half of 1975. In August, Beijing chose to support Cuba's U.N. initiative decrying American colonialism in Puerto Rico, and soon thereafter rejected a delegation of American mayors on the grounds that it included the mayor of San Juan. Later that month, Beijing also protested the existence of a Tibetan office in New York, insisting that the administration force it to close and prevent it from carrying out its cultural activities. Even more disturbing, Qiao's September 26 speech to the United Nations "pulled no punches when attacking the US generally and specifically," and strongly suggested "that the US and the PRC have few if any common interests."¹⁷⁹ In his subsequent discussions with Qiao and Deng, an exasperated Kissinger emphasized that "we have resisted Soviet pressures whenever necessary while the Chinese do little more than dish out tough rhetoric while carping from the sidelines."¹⁸⁰ The Chinese remained unapologetic. Even worse, Chinese officials spoke broadly to American allies in Europe, noting American appeasement of Moscow and adoption of a "Dunkirk"

¹⁷⁷ Memorandum, Habib, Gleysteen Lord, and Solomon to Kissinger, 3 July 1975, NSA, Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, General Subject File, Box 5, Folder "China, unnumbered items – (15), 7/3/75-7/4/75," NLF.

¹⁷⁸ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and a Congressional Delegation, 22 July 1975, NSA, Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, General Subject File, Box 5, Folder "China, unnumbered items – (16), 7/6/75-7/23/75," NLF.

¹⁷⁹ Telegram, Kissinger to Barbian, 27 September 1975, NSA, Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, General Subject File, Box 5, Folder "China, unnumbered items – (19), 9/26/75-9/27/75," NLF.

¹⁸⁰ Kissinger's report on his talks with Chinese officials in Memorandum, Scowcroft to Ford, 21 October 1975, NSA, Box 2, Folder "October 19-23, 1975 – Kissinger's Trip (2)," NLF.

strategy in Europe. On this latter score, the Chinese referenced the U.S. “departure from Vietnam after losing only 50,000 men” as evidence that Washington would abandon Western Europe in the face of a determined Soviet assault.¹⁸¹

The Chinese also apparently had no interest in arriving at a mutually acceptable communiqué for Ford’s upcoming trip in December. Kissinger found the Chinese draft – which they provided only hours before his scheduled departure from China – as “completely unacceptable, even as a basis for discussion.”¹⁸² Indeed, Kissinger wrote to Ford that the Chinese, “by their insolent behavior and self-righteous lack of responsiveness in discussing international and bilateral issues, seemed to be daring us to postpone your visit,” a dramatic step that the administration chose not to take.¹⁸³ Rather, the administration downgraded the visit from seven days to four in order to convey its displeasure.

During his discussions with Chinese leaders in Beijing that December, Ford repeatedly defended American efforts to combat Soviet expansionism, and expressed puzzlement as to why the PRC found it necessary to criticize the United States.¹⁸⁴ The president highlighted the difference between rhetoric and genuine effort, stressed the need for “parallel actions” throughout the world, and urged the Chinese to clarify “what your country is doing to meet this challenge.” Deng responded that China had made

¹⁸¹ Telegram, Embassy in Paris to Kissinger, 25 November 1975, NSA, Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, General Subject File, Box 5, Folder “China, unnumbered items – (24), 11/7/75-11/29/75,” NLF.

¹⁸² Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Qiao, 23 October 1975, NSA, Box 2, Folder “October 19-23, 1975 – Kissinger’s Trip (5),” NLF.

¹⁸³ Memorandum, Kissinger to Ford, 20 November 1975, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVIII, 837.

¹⁸⁴ Memorandum of Conversation between Ford and Deng, 2 December 1975, NSA, Box 2, Folder “December 1-5, 1975 – President Ford’s Visit to Peking (1),” NLF.

“preparations for ourselves” and had fired “some empty cannons,” which he argued were necessary to maintain influence in the Third World.¹⁸⁵ Ford’s meeting did nothing to resolve the tensions in the Sino-American relationship, however. Nor did resolution of the remaining problems appear likely at the end of 1975. The domestic political conditions in both countries by that time ensured that no progress would occur through at least the end of 1976.

This general review of the Sino-American rapprochement from 1972-1976 reveals that the United States did achieve a degree of Chinese cooperation that indicated that Beijing had adopted certain aspects of Washington’s international perspective. The PRC placed curbs on North Korean aggression, used its relationship with Egypt to facilitate an end to the Middle East war, delivered approximately thirty tanks to Angola in response to Ford’s appeal, and in the summer of 1975, in an “unprecedented assurance to a non-Communist government,” pledged to assist Thailand militarily if Vietnam should attack that country in force.¹⁸⁶ Similarly, even as domestic conditions in China deteriorated in 1976, Beijing re-established ambassadorial-level contact with India and entered into a military assistance agreement with Egypt, moves that indicated a proactive

¹⁸⁵ Memorandum of Conversation between Ford and Mao, 2 December 1975, *ibid*; Memorandum of Conversation between Ford and Deng, 3 December 1975, NSA, Box 2, Folder “December 1-5, 1975 – President Ford’s Visit to Peking (2),” NLF. Ford’s emphasis on the lack of Chinese action mirrored the sentiments of several members of Congress during the preceding year. The various Congressional delegations that travelled to China returned to the United States concerned that “we are being used.” Memorandum, Solomon’s account of discussions with a Chinese official, 28 October 1974, NSA, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Country File, Box 13, Folder “People’s Republic of China (2),” NLF.

¹⁸⁶ For Thailand, see CIA paper, “The Foreign policies of China’s successor leadership,” June 1976, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVIII, 931; for Angola, see Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 893.

approach to curbing Soviet influence.¹⁸⁷ Even in the case of African independence and black majority rule, Beijing and Washington agreed on the necessity of achieving those ends, even though Beijing continued to doubt American sincerity. The remaining disagreements primarily regarded prioritization of goals, the appropriate pace for pursuing them, and the extent to which powerful nations should exert influence over the course of events – points that in some cases Washington considered just as important as commonality of ultimate purpose.

Yet underneath all of this apparent agreement and cooperation lay deep uncertainty. Kissinger surmised that Zhou Enlai may have considered the Sino-American relationship as a permanent feature rather than as a tactical phase, as Mao perceived it.¹⁸⁸ Yet Zhou's dominant role in Chinese foreign policy had long since ended, and no American could predict how long Beijing's cooperative attitude might last. Furthermore, Mao's impending death provided no guarantee that the successor regime would not revert to the level of radicalism prevalent during the Cultural Revolution. Such a reversion did, indeed, appear to occur in 1974-76 as Beijing's public and private rhetoric on a variety of issues grew increasingly militant and uncompromising, particularly on the one issue that Kissinger considered most important: achieving an accurate Chinese understanding of American intentions. This is where matters stood as the eras of Mao, Chiang, and Kissinger all came to an end.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ Memorandum, Solomon to Scowcroft, 10 May 1976, NSA, Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, General Subject File, Box 6, Folder "China, unnumbered items – (29), 5/4/76-5/15/76," NLF.

¹⁸⁸ Kissinger, *On China*, 301.

¹⁸⁹ Kissinger later wrote, "Would the interests of the two sides ever be truly congruent? Could they ever separate them from prevalent ideologies sufficiently to avoid tumults of conflicting emotions? Nixon's visit to China had opened the door to dealing with these challenges; they are with us still." *Ibid*, 274.

CHAPTER VI

THE SETTLING DUST: NORMALIZATION AND INTERNATIONAL ORDER

UNDER CARTER, 1976-1979*

The Carter administration swept into the White House on a wave of domestic American resentment at the apparent lack of integrity that many believed had characterized the *realpolitik* diplomacy of the Nixon-Ford years. In contrast, Carter's team sought to base its foreign policy on a solid moral foundation, believing that upholding American values throughout the world would prove a more potent and effective means of achieving its objectives than the exertion of military power. As part of this approach, the administration became a more powerful advocate for the demands and aspirations of the Third World, and viewed American military interventions as a factor that more often exacerbated rather than resolved global and regional tensions.

This prevailing critique of Carter's predecessors, however, did not prevent the incoming administration from acknowledging the very real benefits that the United States derived from the alterations that Nixon and Ford had made to the international order, and the additional benefits that would result from perpetuating and nurturing certain elements of that approach. On the most fundamental level, the administration, just as its predecessors had done, sought a stable international order characterized by the non-use of force and respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity. It

* Portions of this chapter are reprinted with permission from "Maximum Flexibility for Peaceful Change": Jimmy Carter, Taiwan, and the Recognition of the People's Republic of China," by Brian Hilton, 2009. *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (September 2009), 595-613, Copyright 2009 by John Wiley and Sons.

continued the policy of détente, removing where possible those points of contention that could lead to superpower conflict and working toward mutually-acceptable reductions in conventional and nuclear weapons. It sought to replace the American presence in the world with alternative means of stabilization, particularly through its support of, but not active involvement in regional organizations. It perceived China as a potentially important factor contributing to the achievement of all of these goals.

By 1976, important transitions were underway in both China and Taiwan that affected the administration's view of those countries. In Taiwan, Chiang Ching-kuo recognized the inevitability of normalization and grasped at whatever opportunities came along to ensure the continued security and separate legal existence of the ROC, regardless of the broader international implications of its moves. In China, Deng Xiaoping emerged victorious from a vicious period of political instability prepared to lead the People's Republic on a new course premised on modern economic development rather than continuous ideological struggle and revolution. In pursuing their respective goals, Chiang and Deng set their countries squarely on opposite ends of the well-established American matrix of international order: Taipei became the destabilizing threat while Beijing demonstrated its capacity for cooperative and pragmatic engagement. These shifts in the American perception of these two countries facilitated considerably the normalization process.

Transitions: Taipei, Beijing, and Washington on the Eve of the Carter Presidency

During the mid-1970s, major transitions occurred in the leaderships and policies of all three capitols that played important roles in the normalization drama that unfolded during the first two years of Carter's presidency. Taipei's leadership transition occurred over the course of a decade as the Generalissimo gradually handed over power to his son, Chiang Ching-kuo. In part, this reflected Kai-shek's advanced age and his increasing inability to perform his responsibilities as president. The younger Chiang essentially ran the ROC as early as 1965. He formalized his leadership position over the course of the next decade, becoming Deputy Premier in 1969 and Premier in 1972. By that time a series of health problems had made Kai-shek an invalid, after which he stopped seeing foreign visitors and no longer participated in decision making.

Ching-kuo abandoned the hope of mainland recovery in the 1960s, although he continued dutifully to convey his father's military plans to American officials. He also recognized early on the gradual and inexorable disintegration of both Taiwan's international status in general and the American commitment in particular. In an effort to curry favor among the international community, Ching-kuo joined with other flexible KMT officials in liberalizing the ROC political process, thus increasing native Taiwanese participation in both the military and government.¹ Simultaneously, he

¹ These reforms did have an effect during the early 1970s. American academics found Ching-kuo's reforms and the outlook for democracy on the island "encouraging." Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo's Son: Chiang Ching-kuo and the Revolutions in China and Taiwan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 312.

explicitly rejected as “suicidal” Deng’s overtures for a peaceful, negotiated reunification.²

Yet, by the time Ford entered office in 1974, Ching-kuo had recognized the inevitability of Sino-American normalization. He therefore devised a policy designed to exert Taipei’s remaining influence toward the perpetuation of Taiwan’s separation from the mainland and the preservation of its sovereignty and independence. To accomplish this he implemented a two-track approach to curry favor not just in Washington but also to bolster Taiwan’s ties with other countries whose continued support Chiang would rely on to prevent further slippage in Taipei’s international status. The latter objective proved relatively easy, requiring the utilization of the ROC’s economic vitality – arguably its most important asset – to create a “web of relationships” with other countries interested in mutual investment.³ The United States supported and facilitated these initiatives, producing a “quantum leap” in Taiwan’s global economic ties.⁴ But such a straightforward economic approach proved insufficient to halt Washington’s march toward normalization.

The State Department concluded hopefully that the “leaders and people of Taiwan will try to make the best of situation, and with typical Chinese determination, will probably be able to get along quite well. Our relationship with them will continue, because they have nowhere else to go.”⁵ The Nixon and Ford administrations

² Ibid, 315.

³ Telegram, Embassy in Taipei to Kissinger, 14 August 1974, NSA, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Country File, Box 5, Folder “China, Republic of – State Department Telegrams to SECSTATE – EXDIS (1),” NLF.

⁴ Taylor, *The Generalissimo’s Son*, 315-316.

⁵ Telegram, Holdridge to State, 6 March 1972, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 858 note 4.

understood that the Taiwan issue, just as with other major conflicts in the world, required a gradualist approach that would prevent such destabilizing outcomes as a breakdown of social order on the island, unilateral Nationalist military action, or, worse, an accommodation between Taipei and Moscow.⁶ Normalization therefore required a “conditioning process” for the Nationalists whereby the administration would take small, careful steps away from a formal U.S.-ROC relationship in order to avoid these pitfalls. Early efforts along these lines began in January 1972 when Nixon emphasized to the Generalissimo that normalization “will move us all in the direction of a stable and enduring international order.” “I look forward,” Nixon added, “to your continued understanding of our purpose.”⁷ In the difficult months that followed, Nixon and Kissinger met personally with Ambassador Shen informing him of the ongoing American effort to achieve a renunciation of force agreement, encouraging the ROC to “remain calm and not do anything rash,” and suggesting that Mao and Zhou’s deaths might yet alter circumstances in Taipei’s favor.⁸

Although acknowledging Washington’s inexorable drift toward normalization, Ching-kuo did not remain idle. In discussions with American officials, the Nationalists

⁶ Solomon used this same rationale in his attempts to convince Beijing to accept a gradualist approach, suggesting that “it was in neither of our interests to panic Taipei into some rash action or to create a situation of political chaos on the island.” Memorandum, Solomon’s account of discussions with a Chinese official, 28 October 1974, NSA, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Country File, Box 13, Folder “People’s Republic of China (2),” NLF. The administration’s internal debates reflected its diplomatic rhetoric. An interdepartmental study on security assistance to the ROC in November 1974 noted as one objective the maintenance of ROC confidence in the United States in order to avoid “desperate acts” that might hinder normalization. Interdepartmental study, “U.S. Security Assistance to the ROC,” 12 November 1974, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVIII, 545.

⁷ Letter, Nixon to Chiang Kai-shek in Telegram, Department of State to Embassy in Taipei, 1 January 1972, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 635.

⁸ Conversation between Nixon, Kissinger, and Shen, 6 March 1972, *ibid.*, 832-840; the administration repeated these messages frequently. See Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Shen, 21 February 1973, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVIII, 197.

adopted a new tactic, pointing out their many economic and, increasingly, political accomplishments as reasons why it deserved continued American support.⁹ In his September 1974 letter to Ford, for instance, Ching-kuo compared Taiwan's progressive society favorably to that of the repressive communist regimes, and cast the ROC as an excellent example of economic development that other nations should emulate.¹⁰ ROC officials similarly urged other nations not to de-recognize Taipei. In doing so, they abandoned the juridical claims on which they had previously relied and chose instead to base their pleas on past friendly relations and appeals to both national and regional security. The Nationalists even endorsed the Shanghai Communiqué "largely because of concerns the US will advance beyond it."¹¹

These assessments did little to alleviate Kissinger's concerns; he continued efforts to prevent Taipei from derailing Sino-American relations. The National Security Advisor bent the truth slightly in his February 1973 meeting with Shen regarding his discussions with Beijing on troop withdrawals.¹² He clearly lied to the ambassador several months later, however, when he told him that the United States would not recognize Beijing unless the PRC "recognizes your separate existence."¹³ Kissinger chose to meet with the American ambassador in Taipei, Walter McConaughy, as a way

⁹ Memorandum of Conversation between Nixon and Yen Chia-ken, 5 January 1973, *ibid.*

¹⁰ Letter, Chiang Ching-kuo to Ford, 20 September 1974, NSA, Presidential Correspondence with Foreign Leaders, 1974-1977, Box 1, Folder "China, Republic of – Premier Chiang Ching-kuo," NLF.

¹¹ Telegram, Embassy in Taipei to Kissinger, 14 August 1974, NSA, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Country File, Box 5, Folder "China, Republic of – State Department Telegrams to SECSTATE – EXDIS (1)," NLF.

¹² Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Shen, 21 February 1973, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVIII, 197.

¹³ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Shen, 6 August 1973, *ibid.*, 308. Kissinger had no intention of making this a precondition. Shen later elaborated on his experiences with Kissinger and apparent American duplicity. James Shen, *The U.S. and Free China: How the U.S. Sold Out its Ally* (Washington, D.C.: Acropolis Books, 1983).

to strengthen Chiang Ching-kuo's domestic political position; ignoring Chiang's domestic political problems, the ambassador warned, might "lead Taiwan to pursue a more independent foreign policy." At that meeting, McConaughy, citing Nixon's "repeated statements," identified his role as "hand-holding" and "reassuring" the ROC. Kissinger assured him that, rumors to the contrary, the administration would replace McConaughy following the ambassador's rapidly-approaching retirement.¹⁴ The administration carried out this pledge, appointing the experienced career diplomat Leonard Unger, an official of such reputation that his appointment reassured Taipei as much as it caused consternation in Beijing.¹⁵ The administration allowed the ROC to open a new consulate in New York in 1973, even after Zhou complained that this signified a reversal of the U.S. commitment to normalization.¹⁶ By spring 1974, these moves had resulted in a level of ROC confidence "probably higher than at any time since our China initiative of July 1971."¹⁷ Given this favorable atmosphere, Unger suggested that the administration could now proceed a step further toward disengagement.

Yet Unger also warned that careful attention to internal ROC politics remained necessary. Chiang must be able to demonstrate "his close working relations" with Washington as a means to restrain the extremism of "die-hard KMT elements" and to obtain their cooperation for Chiang's "effort to develop rational and practical response"

¹⁴ Notes on a Conversation between Kissinger and McConaughy, 3 October 1973, *ibid*, 323; Unger also understood his primary function as keeping Taipei "on the reservation." Memorandum of Conversation between Leonard Unger and Brent Scowcroft, et al, 12 April 1974, *ibid*, 472.

¹⁵ Unger also understood his primary function as keeping Taipei "on the reservation." Memorandum of Conversation between Scowcroft and Unger, 12 April 1974, NSA, NSC East Asian and Pacific Staff Files, (1969) 1973-1976, Box 2, Folder "China, Republic of (2)," NLF.

¹⁶ Memorandum of Conversation between Kissinger and Zhou, 11 November 1973, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVIII, 334-335.

¹⁷ Memorandum, Froebe to Scowcroft, 11 April 1974, NSA, NSC East Asian and Pacific Staff Files, (1969) 1973-1976, Box 2, Folder "China, Republic of (2)," NLF.

to Taipei's "creeping international diplomatic isolation."¹⁸ In line with this thinking – to maintain Chiang's domestic position while continuing the conditioning process – the administration sent a presidential message from Ford that affirmed the American commitment to Taiwan's security, but intentionally excluded reference to the Mutual Defense Treaty.¹⁹ Similarly, the administration rejected Chiang's January 1975 request to replace Ambassador Shen, fearing that this might have an adverse reaction in Beijing at a time of cooling Sino-American relations.²⁰ Even in this, Unger urged the administration to portray this decision as one intended to preserve the state of U.S.-ROC relations.²¹

Whatever value the administration attributed to Chiang's leadership, it nonetheless recognized that his overwhelming priority remained ensuring Taiwan's future security. In this the Nationalists apparently rejected the notion, encouraged by American officials, that political deterrents to Chinese military action would suffice as a substitute for an ongoing American troop presence. This difference of opinion had two

¹⁸ Telegram, Embassy in Taipei to Kissinger, 30 November 1974, NSA, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Country File, Box 5, Folder "China, Republic of – State Department Telegrams to SECSTATE – NODIS (1)," NLF.

¹⁹ Memorandum, Solomon and Smyser to Kissinger, 12 December 1974, NSC East Asian and Pacific Staff Files, (1969) 1973-1976, Box 2, Folder "China, Republic of (5)," NLF; Memorandum, Kissinger to Ford, 6 January 1975, and Letter, Ford to Chiang Ching-kuo, 8 January 1975, both in NSA, Presidential Correspondence with Foreign Leaders, 1974-1977, Box 1, Folder "China, Republic of – Premier Chiang Ching-kuo," NLF.

²⁰ Memorandum, Habib to Kissinger, 4 January 1975, NSA, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Country File, Box 4, Folder "China, Republic of (1)," NLF.

²¹ Chiang accepted this decision with puzzlement, but requested that the administration keep the decision secret in order to avoid embarrassment. He received assurances to this effect. However, Shen's subsequent demoralization and the imminence of public knowledge of this affair compelled Kissinger to approve a meeting between Shen and Scowcroft to "boost ROC morale slightly." Telegram, Unger to Kissinger, 7 January 1975, and Telegram, Kissinger to Embassy in Taipei, 13 January 1975, both in NSA, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Country File, Box 5, Folder "China, Republic of – State Department Telegrams to SECSTATE – NODIS (1)," NLF; Memorandum, Solomon and Smyser to Kissinger, 15 January 1975, NSA, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Country File, Box 4, Folder "China, Republic of (1)," NLF.

important ramifications for ROC policy: the effort to obtain an independent nuclear capability and the rejuvenation of intensive ROC lobbying efforts targeting the American public and Congress.

Beginning in 1965, the ROC, on Ching-kuo's authorization, pursued an independent nuclear capability. It did so in response to Beijing's first atomic detonation the year before, and also due to the perceived deterioration in the willingness of the United States to deter communist Chinese aggression. For the rest of that decade, the ROC worked to obtain nuclear facilities, materials, and advice from the United States, Canada, West Germany, France, South Africa, and Israel, with the first reactors becoming operational by 1973, and the construction of other important facilities reaching completion by the beginning of Carter's term.²² The Sino-American rapprochement marked an important moment in this regard, for, having broken relations in favor of recognizing the PRC, many of the nations that had provided this support now lacked the ability officially to negotiate safeguard inspections to insure that the ROC would use its nuclear program only for peaceful purposes. Beijing compounded these problems by insisting in 1972 that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) also break relations with Taiwan, thus removing that organization's ability to monitor Taipei's activities.

²² David Albright and Corey Gay, "Taiwan: Nuclear Nightmare Averted," *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol. 54 (January/February, 1998), 57; the best summary of the new wave of literature and released documentation on the ROC nuclear program is William Burr, ed., "New Archival Evidence on Taiwanese 'Nuclear Intentions', 1966-1976," *National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 19*, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB20/>, accessed on 7 August 2012.

The CIA infiltrated the ROC's nuclear program in its earliest stages and knew of Taipei's desire to weaponize its nuclear program.²³ Yet the administration concluded in 1972 that although the ROC might soon have the capability of producing nuclear weapons, it would refrain from testing or stockpiling them for fear of adverse international repercussions.²⁴ Perhaps because of this assessment, the United States continued to supply Taiwan with nuclear material as late as 1974 under the condition that the ROC use this material for civilian purposes only. That year, however, the CIA concluded that "Taipei conducts its small nuclear program with a weapon option clearly in mind," and predicted that the ROC would develop a nuclear capability within five years.²⁵

In part, the administration intended its efforts to bolster both ROC morale and confidence in the United States as a means of preventing Taipei from intensifying its nuclear program.²⁶ These concerns proved justified, for on March 18, 1975, the Australian Ambassador in Beijing informed Ambassador Bush that the ROC did, in fact, actively seek to obtain nuclear weapons.²⁷ The collapse of non-communist Indochina and the resulting perception of American impotence resulted in Ching-kuo's decision to speed up ROC nuclear weapons development, and to expand research efforts to include missile delivery systems.²⁸ Kissinger subsequently began pressuring Chiang to cease

²³ Taylor, *The Generalissimo's Son*, 275.

²⁴ SNIE 43-1-72, "Taipei's Capabilities and Intentions regarding Nuclear Weapons Development," 16 November 1972, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVII, 1114.

²⁵ Albright and Gay, "Nuclear Nightmare Averted," 57-58.

²⁶ Interdepartmental study, "U.S. Security Assistance to the ROC," 12 November 1974, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVIII, 545.

²⁷ Engel, ed., *The China Diary of George H. W. Bush*, 210 note 29.

²⁸ Taylor, *The Generalissimo's Son*, 317.

such actions. Noting that Taipei had sent fifteen engineers to MIT to learn about missile technology, the State Department convinced the university to cancel the program, and in June Kissinger obtained Chiang's pledge that the ROC would not "take any action to engage in the production of nuclear weapons."²⁹

Yet Nationalist efforts nonetheless persisted into 1976. In May, an intelligence analysis reported that Taipei had achieved "some success in its nuclear, missile, and chemical warfare programs," including the "capability to fabricate nuclear devices."³⁰ A major IAEA inspection of ROC nuclear facilities in July 1976 lent support to these warnings, and prompted fear among U.S. officials concerning Taiwan's intentions.³¹ Once more responding to State Department pressure, Chiang reasserted in September the peaceful nature of Taiwan's nuclear program.³² However, the NSC soon thereafter noted that Taipei might reconsider this position in a post-normalization context.³³

While this nuclear drama unfolded, Chiang explored other opportunities to reverse the deteriorating American commitment to Taiwan's security. On April 5, 1975, Chiang Kai-shek died, prompting much discussion within the American government regarding the proper level of representation the administration should send to the funeral. Ford and Kissinger selected Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz to attend because his

²⁹ Telegram, Embassy in Taipei to Kissinger, 12 June 1975, NSA, NSC East Asian and Pacific Staff Files, (1969) 1973-1976, Box 3, Folder "China, Republic of – Taipei's Nuclear Program," NLF; Taylor, *The Generalissimo's Son*, 323.

³⁰ Interagency Intelligence Memorandum, "Prospects for Arms Production and Development in the Republic of China," May 1976, NSA, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Country File, Box 5, Folder "China, Republic of (10)," NLF.

³¹ Don Oberdorfer, "Atomic Fuel in Taiwan Not Inspected," *The Washington Post*, 5 June 1976.

³² Telegram, Embassy in Taipei to Kissinger, 15 September 1976, NSA, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Country File, Box 5, Folder "China, Republic of – State Department Telegrams to SECSTATE – EXDIS (2)," NLF.

³³ Memorandum, Gleysteen to Scowcroft, 20 September 1976, NSA, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Country File, Box 5, Folder "China, Republic of (11)," NLF.

relatively low rank would not unsettle Beijing. This decision, however, set off a firestorm of dissent. Both Chinese and Americans in Taiwan bombarded Unger with protest letters at this insulting decision. In the United States no less a figure than Reverend Billy Graham urged the administration to send a more prominent official. Protests also poured in from Congress, most notably from Senator Barry Goldwater who intimated that he would derail Sino-American normalization if Ford did not increase the level of the American delegation. Such complaints pointed out that the administration had sent Vice President Nelson Rockefeller as its representative to the funeral of Saudi Arabian King Faisal, the “leader of a country that has shown such contempt for our nation and the principles for which we stand.”³⁴ If such a high-level official could attend that funeral, so too should he attend the funeral of the last of the Big Four leaders of World War II. After a week of such pressure Ford capitulated, sending Rockefeller to Taipei.

Simultaneously, the Ford administration faced the collapse of the non-communist governments in Indochina and Congress’ collective refusal to authorize military assistance or intervention to salvage the situation. As described earlier, Ford and Kissinger sought to counter the image of a paralyzed American foreign policy through such actions as the *Mayaguez* rescue operation and public reaffirmations of Washington’s defense commitments. Though Congress had contributed to the problems plaguing the administration through its restrictive legislation, some legislators began to sympathize with the administration’s predicament, particularly as it affected alliances

³⁴ Letter, Representative John T. Myers to Ford, 9 April 1975, NSA, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Country File, Box 4, Folder “China, Republic of (3),” NLF.

with the more reliable East Asian governments in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. The net result of these events was somewhat paradoxical. Congress clearly did not wish to see the United States militarily involved in East Asia, yet a vocal minority had managed to exert considerable and successful pressure on the administration to alter the makeup of its delegation to the Generalissimo's funeral. Taipei apparently concluded that with sufficient effort, the ROC might yet convert this display of sympathy for Taiwan into a bolstered American commitment to the island's security.

Taipei now intensified its lobbying. These efforts had begun by August 1974, and, indeed, the administration had predicted that the ROC would eventually engage in an intensive lobbying campaign targeting both Congress and the American people.³⁵ From late-1974 through mid-1975 the ROC achieved meager results, having obtained supportive resolutions only from the Georgia state legislature in March. Beginning that summer, however, this changed considerably. Ching-kuo personally approved the assignment of thirty additional intelligence officers to the ROC embassy in Washington and increased the number of consulates throughout the United States.³⁶ By the end of 1975, the state legislatures of Missouri, Michigan, Illinois, and Arizona, as well as the cities of Memphis, Knoxville, and Honolulu had all passed resolutions supporting the ROC.

By the summer of 1976, Taipei had won over the American Chamber of Commerce in Taiwan which submitted a list of technical and legal problems in

³⁵ Telegram, Embassy in Taipei to Kissinger, 14 August 1974, NSA, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Country File, Box 5, Folder "China, Republic of – State Department Telegrams to SECSTATE – EXDIS (1)," NLF.

³⁶ Taylor, *The Generalissimo's Son*, 316-317.

maintaining post-normalization relations with the ROC and argued that only perpetuating the MDT and securing American economic interests in Taiwan would make normalization worthwhile.³⁷ The NSC viewed this as a product of Nationalist lobbying, since Taipei had provided its own “remarkably similar list.”³⁸ The ROC also expanded its connections through sister city programs. In June, Knoxville, TN, sent an official delegation to its new Taiwanese sister city, Kaohsiung, and requested that the administration provide a letter to the mayor of Kaohsiung to commemorate the occasion. Ford refused.³⁹ That summer, Goldwater and other pro-Taiwan politicians placed additional pressure on the administration by including within the 1976 Republican platform a provision calling for the support of Taiwan. Outraged that the Republican Party now officially and explicitly supported Taiwanese independence, Kissinger commented that “it would have been better to have said that Taiwan is the legitimate government of all China,” and concluded that “we will just have to ignore the Republican platform.”⁴⁰

³⁷ Letter, American Chamber of Commerce in the ROC to Ford and accompanying Position Paper, “U.S.-R.O.C. Economic Relationship: A Businessman’s View,” 27 August 1976, White House Central Files (hereafter cited as WHCF), Subject File, Box 13, Folder “CO 34-2 People’s Republic of China – General,” NLF.

³⁸ Memorandum, Gleysteen to Scowcroft, 20 September 1976, NSA, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Country File, Box 5, Folder “China, Republic of (11),” NLF.

³⁹ Letter, Charles Leppert, Jr., to Representative John J. Duncan, 7 May 1976, WHCF, Subject File, Box 13, Folder “CO 34-1 Republic of China (Formosa-Taiwan) 1/1/76-1/20/77,” NLF.

⁴⁰ Memorandum for the Record, Kissinger’s meeting with Thomas Gates, 25 August 1976, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVIII, 952. The relevant portion of the platform read as follows: “Our friendly relations with one great power should not be construed as a challenge to any other nation, large or small. The United States government, while engaged in a normalization of relations with the People’s Republic of China, will continue to support the freedom and independence of our friend and ally, the Republic of China, and its 16 million people. The United States will fulfill and keep its commitments, such as the mutual defense treaty, with the Republic of China.” Republican Party Platform of 1976, 18 August 1976, *PPP*.

At this time, Beijing underwent an even more important transition than that occurring in Taiwan: the succession crisis that swept through China in 1976 and 1977, the culmination of the tumultuous internal debates that had wracked the country since the beginning of the decade. Mao had managed to deflect opposition to his decision to engage with the United States, staving off challenges from Lin Biao and other officials who preferred a hard-line policy. Despite Zhou's fall from grace in early 1974, Deng Xiaoping and other relatively moderate Chinese leaders remained in influential positions. Yet during his last year of life, the Chairman seemed unable or unwilling to set himself squarely in one or the other camp, thus allowing the more radical factions to maintain pressure on the policymaking apparatus.⁴¹

Though Mao purged Deng during the Cultural Revolution, he restored him to his posts in 1973 as a sort of replacement for Zhou and a check on the radicals' excesses. Soon thereafter, Deng publicly admitted China's need for scientific exchanges and learning from the Western world – the first Chinese official to do so.⁴² Far removed from Zhou's philosophical style, Deng's attitude, Kissinger later wrote, “was that we were both there to do our nations' business and adult enough to handle the rough patches without taking them personally.”⁴³ Indeed, Deng's political rebirth prompted a considerable amount of hope among American officials. In the summer of 1975, for instance, American Consul in Hong Kong Charles Cross enthusiastically reported that

⁴¹ “To the end, Mao attempted to manage the contradictions of preserving his legacy of continuous revolution while safeguarding the strategic rapprochement with the United States, which he continued to deem important for China's security. He left the impression that he sympathized with the radicals even as the national interest impelled him to sustain the new relationship with America.” Kissinger, *On China*, 297.

⁴² Ibid, 322.

⁴³ Ibid, 324.

Deng's "era in Chinese politics has arrived," an era in which Beijing would pursue Deng's "line" of domestic stability, world peace, and economic construction.⁴⁴ Such assessments proved premature, however, for as long as the Chairman remained alive and in control Deng continued to face resistance to his program.

Zhou Enlai's death on January 8, 1976, marked the beginning of the end for the Maoist line. Popular mourning for the premier erupted throughout the country, culminating in early April with the gathering of 100,000 people in Tiananmen Square to lay wreaths in honor of his memory. When the crowd turned violent the following day, Mao's radical wife, Jiang Qing, convinced the Chairman that Deng had caused this "counterrevolutionary" turbulence. As a result of her efforts, the CCP held a leadership meeting that same day and once more purged Deng of all his positions. The radicals followed this move several days later with a staged parade in the capitol numbering nearly two million people, many of whom carried signs denouncing Deng and the moderates.⁴⁵ Yet the Tiananmen gathering was not an isolated incident. Similar events occurred in other cities throughout China, signifying broad disapproval of the Maoist revolutionary line and support for the more moderate policies that Zhou and Deng represented.⁴⁶

The Ford administration had mixed assessments of the manner in which these events would affect Sino-American relations. In June, the CIA predicted that based on

⁴⁴ Telegram, Consulate in Hong Kong to Kissinger, 21 May 1975, NSA, Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, General Subject File, Box 5, Folder "China, unnumbered items – (13), 5/11/75-5/30/75," NLF.

⁴⁵ Telegram, U.S. Liaison Office in Beijing to Kissinger, 8 April 1976, NSA, Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, General Subject File, Box 6, "China, unnumbered items – (28), 3/9/76-4/27/76," NLF.

⁴⁶ Telegram, Habib to Kissinger, 27 May 1976, NSA, Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, General Subject File, Box 6, Folder "China, unnumbered items – (30), 5/24/76-6/25/76," NLF.

present evidence, the result of China's domestic political turmoil "probably will be less revolution and more realism."⁴⁷ The following month, however, yet another high-ranking CCP official died – the founder of the PLA, Zhu De – thus further reducing the central leadership and giving "the left a chance to reassert itself against Zhou and Deng's moderation."⁴⁸ Subsequent Sino-American discussions appeared to verify this assessment. During his trip to China in July, Senator Hugh Scott spoke with Vice Premier Zhang Chunqiao, a member of the radical faction known as the Gang of Four, who took an unusually hard line on Taiwan. Zhang noted recent PRC military maneuvers in the Taiwan Strait, asserted the impossibility of peaceful liberation, and characterized Taiwan as a "noose around the neck of the US." He proclaimed that the PLA would "cut it off" if the American people were not prepared to do so.⁴⁹ Scott described this presentation as "rather chilling," and Kissinger later noted how these statements were "quite at odds with what Mao had told us."⁵⁰ Indeed, the new Chinese leadership displayed none of Zhou's willingness to contribute to progress in the relationship, particularly regarding the claims-assets dispute and other lingering issues hindering normalization.⁵¹

⁴⁷ CIA paper, "The Foreign Policies of China's Successor Leadership," June 1976, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVIII, 931.

⁴⁸ Memorandum, Scowcroft to Ford, 17 July 1976, NSA, Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, General Subject File, Box 6, Folder "China, unnumbered items – (32), 7/16/76-7/31/76," NLF.

⁴⁹ Telegram, U.S. Liaison Office to Kissinger, 13 July 1976, NSA, Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, General Subject File, Box 6, Folder "China, unnumbered items – (31), 7/12/76-7/14/76," NLF.

⁵⁰ Memorandum of Conversation between Ford and Senator Scott, 28 July 1976, NSA, Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, General Subject File, Box 6, Folder "China, unnumbered items – (32), 7/16/76-7/31/76," NLF; Kissinger, *On China*, 318.

⁵¹ Memorandum for the Record, Kissinger's meeting with Thomas Gates, 25 August 1976, *FRUS, 1969-1976*, XVIII, 952.

Mao's death in September prompted a new wave of political maneuverings between the moderate and radical factions of the CCP. The Chairman's successor, Hua Guofeng, attempted to walk a middle path between the two groups but ultimately sided with the moderates. This decision culminated the following month with a nationwide campaign to arrest Chinese radicals aligned with the Gang of Four. The Ford administration struggled to gather information – mostly rumors and secondhand stories – about what exactly was occurring in China. By October 18, the situation had clarified to the point where the U.S. Liaison Office in Beijing could report definitively on the arrest of the Gang of Four, an event that cleared the way for Deng's final re-emergence in 1977.

Washington underwent its own transition during the mid-1970s as the American people and Congress lost faith in both their government and its foreign policy. Jimmy Carter believed that he could rectify these problems. He decided to run for president sometime around 1972-73 and declared his candidacy in late-1974. During these years a variety of events, ideas, and personalities had a considerable formative influence on Carter's developing worldview. Two of these influences stand out as particularly important in shaping Carter's views of China and Taiwan, the proper policy to adopt regarding those countries, and their place in the world order: his experiences as a member of the Trilateral Commission and the prevailing critique of American foreign relations during the Kissinger era.

Carter's views on foreign affairs began taking shape as early as 1973 when he was asked to join the Trilateral Commission, an organization that brought together business, political, and intellectual leaders from the world's major developed regions in

order to foster a dialogue on problems of common interest. Carter took the opportunity to immerse himself in the Commission's many discussions and debates to prepare for the task of guiding both the country and the world into an era of enhanced international cooperation. Carter's involvement with this group gave him vital foreign affairs experience and brought him into contact with numerous intellectuals, many of whom later held important positions in his administration, including Vice President, National Security Advisor, and cabinet positions for State, Treasury, and Defense.⁵² The Commission reports from 1973 to 1977 emphasized the need for enhanced international cooperation to resolve a myriad of issues from energy development to nuclear nonproliferation to the law of the seas. One of the earliest reports highlighted a "Crisis of International Cooperation" that demanded "new forms of common management" in a world of increasingly complex relationships.⁵³

Within this overall framework, ideology played a noticeably minimal role. Task Force Report 13, "Collaboration with Communist Countries in Managing Global Problems," for instance, outlined a pragmatic approach that sought Soviet and Chinese assistance in managing the world's problems. The report noted that cooperation with the Soviet Union held greater promise than cooperation with China given the intense political turmoil within the PRC following Mao's death. However, China's capabilities, the report continued, would eventually improve to the point where it would take a more

⁵² Carter included so many members in key administrative posts that the Trilateral Commission became the focus of a widespread conspiracy theory, determined to show that the nineteen Commission members in the administration constituted an effort by a global elite to undermine democracy. Antony C. Sutton and Patrick M. Wood, *Trilaterals Over Washington* (Scottsdale, AZ: The August Corporation, 1978).

⁵³ Trilateral Commission, *Trilateral Commission Task Force Reports, 1-7: A Compilation of Reports from the First Two Years of the Trilateral Commission* (New York: New York University Press, 1977), 35.

active role in world affairs, likely becoming both “a potential nuclear supplier” and “a maritime nation.” Similarly, Task Force Report 14 declared that the international order that emerged in the 1940s “is no longer adequate to new conditions and needs.” Nations must tighten “the web of interdependence” requiring “creative innovation comparable to that after World War II.” The report noted that the deep rift in East-West relations, despite détente, perpetuated an antagonistic rather than cooperative global balance, and suggested that steps taken to improve conditions “often must fall short of the ideal,” but “may still facilitate necessary cooperation now and improve the chances for better working relations in the future.”⁵⁴

Carter’s adherence to this trilateral, interdependent approach to world affairs was reinforced by his early and regular correspondences with Zbigniew Brzezinski, who had presided over the Commission and later served as Carter’s National Security Advisor. Following Carter’s 1974 candidacy announcement, the future president invited Brzezinski to submit to him papers from time to time on a variety of topics; he frequently did so, winning Carter’s appreciation and admiration. As Carter explained in his memoirs, “I would study his position papers on foreign affairs in order to develop answers to those questions all candidates had to face.” Brzezinski frequently visited Carter in his hometown of Plains, GA, and helped prepare the governor for his televised debates with Ford.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Trilateral Commission, *Trilateral Commission Task Force Reports, 9-14: A Compilation of Reports to the Trilateral Commission completed in 1976 and 1977* (New York: New York University Press, 1978), 155-156, 183. Although the Commission published these two reports after Carter had become president, they nonetheless reflect the general tenor of the Commission’s ideals.

⁵⁵ Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President* (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 1995), 54-55.

The second major influence affecting Carter's approach was the critique of Kissinger-era policy that prevailed throughout the country, particularly from the Democratic members of Congress, but also emanating from the more moderate factions of the Republican Party. As the Democratic presidential candidate, Carter could not help but share many of the concerns of such ranking Democrats as Senators J. William Fulbright and Mike Mansfield who had long wondered what vital interests the American military involvement in East Asia served and lamented how the foreign policies of Nixon and Ford had apparently lacked any principled foundation. The opening of China in the early 1970s and the realization of China's progress in many areas strengthened the views of such individuals that American bellicosity had hindered rather than facilitated desirable international transformations, and, indeed, had proved counterproductive in certain cases, most especially in regards to the questionable practices of the South Vietnamese government and, later, the increasingly repressive policies of South Korean President Park.⁵⁶ As such, while Congress approved a variety of humanitarian and economic aid to afflicted countries during the Nixon-Ford era, it overwhelmingly opposed military assistance or the application of American military force.⁵⁷

Carter shared these views, believing that the United States could no longer afford to continue uncritically coddling its traditional friends, especially when those nations

⁵⁶ Seoul and Taipei shared concerns regarding the American disengagement from East Asia, and they both responded to that development in similar ways. For Park's approach and domestic American criticism of it, see William H. Gleysteen, Jr., *Massive Entanglement, Marginal Influence: Carter and Korea in Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), 12-16, 20-22.

⁵⁷ According to the 1976 Democratic Platform, which Carter's close supporters heavily influenced, "The intensity of interrelated problems is rapidly increasing, and it is likely that in the future, the issues of war and peace will be more a function of economic and social problems than of the military security problems that have dominated international relations since 1945." Democratic Party Platform of 1976, 12 July 1976, *PPP*.

sought to perpetuate regional tensions. For instance, Park's human rights violations that had become such a hot topic of debate in Congress and the view that the American presence in Korea had hindered progress toward reunification likely resulted in Carter's 1975 announcement that if elected president he would withdraw all troops from the peninsula.⁵⁸ The Arab-Israeli conflict prompted similar criticism of American support of Israel, the government of which seemed disinterested in a peaceful settlement of regional issues. Condemnation of Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin for his unbending militancy – especially as compared with the apparent reasonableness and flexibility of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat – constituted a regular feature of Carter's daily presidential diary. When both leaders received the Nobel Peace Prize following the signing of the Camp David Accords, for instance, Carter bluntly wrote "Sadat deserved it. Begin did not."⁵⁹ Similarly, the Carter administration believed that Ford and Kissinger had failed sufficiently to support the aspirations of black Africa against the minority white governments of Rhodesia and South Africa. Carter placed considerable pressure on those governments to liberalize their political systems and end a recurring source of conflict.

The Carter administration applied these same general ideas to Taiwan, a country that consistently refused to enter into negotiations with Beijing to resolve the reunification issue peacefully and conducted a potentially destructive and destabilizing foreign policy. Upon his return from China in July 1976, Senator Scott wrote a lengthy

⁵⁸ Gleysteen, *Massive Entanglement, Marginal Influence*, 17.

⁵⁹ Carter's diary entry, 27 October 1978, Jimmy Carter, *White House Diary* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2010), 256.

memo to Ford stressing that although the PRC should not use force to take Taiwan, the ROC “is not doing its share in contributing towards what it was the intention of the Shanghai Communiqué to achieve.” He then implicitly attributed PRC bellicosity to ROC intransigence by noting that “the Chinese were ready at any time to talk with representatives of Taipei and to trade with Taiwan.” The Ford administration rejected Scott’s recommendation that it do more to push the ROC to accept cross-strait negotiations, since this went beyond the American position in the Shanghai Communiqué – that document had absolved Washington of ultimate responsibility in the matter. Yet Scott’s view remained consistent with the general worldview that Carter and his advisors brought with them to Washington in 1977. Administration China specialist Michel Oksenberg summed up this perspective well in describing the “manipulation of a dependency relationship” as a “classic East Asian ploy.”⁶⁰

The Carter Administration and Normalization

Carter’s campaign rhetoric regarding the desirability of normalized relations with China essentially mirrored the approach that the Nixon and Ford had adopted. In an interview he gave to *Time* magazine in August 1976, Carter described normalization as “an ultimate goal, but the time is undefined.” Also like his predecessors, he identified PRC concessions regarding the ROC as the key factor in allowing the two nations to move forward, calling for assurances that the people of Taiwan “be free of military

⁶⁰ Memorandum, Brzezinski to Carter, undated, Records of the Office of the National Security Advisor (hereafter cited as RONSAs), Country File, Box 11, File “China (Republic of China), 1/77-5/78,” Jimmy Carter Presidential Library (hereafter cited as NLC).

persuasion or domination from mainland China. That may not be a possibility; if it is not, then I would be reluctant to give up our relationship with the Republic of China.”⁶¹ Yet for all of this campaign rhetoric, the Carter administration had already developed an unfavorable view of the ROC government as a destabilizing influence that would take advantage of any opportunity to secure Taiwan’s independence at the expense of Washington’s objectives.

One such opportunity involved Washington’s complicity in the development of Taiwan’s nuclear program, which Taipei hoped would lead to an independent nuclear weapons capability despite the ROC having signed the nuclear nonproliferation treaty. Nuclear nonproliferation – an effort to control the spread of this “most ominous of all threats” – represented one of Carter’s most ardent policies.⁶² The president first targeted the Republic of China; within two months after taking office, Carter demanded that the ROC put an end to its weapons program, and by April 13 the ROC had acquiesced “in principle” to this demand.⁶³ By this time, Carter had already decided to make normalization one of his priorities, but these events weakened the ROC’s already tainted reputation, thus making the administration less ardent in its efforts to defend Taiwan against Beijing’s demands.

Another opportunity for Taipei involved its propaganda experience aimed at manipulating the mass media. ROC news agencies had a notorious reputation for

⁶¹ *Time*, 2 August 1976; Carter repeated these sentiments during his second debate with Ford, 6 October 1976, <http://www.debates.org/index.php?page=october-6-1976-debate-transcript>, accessed on 7 August 2012.

⁶² Carter, *Keeping Faith*, 217-218.

⁶³ NSC Weekly Report #1, 19 February 1977, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection (hereafter cited as ZBC), Subject File 01/1977-01/1981, Box 41, Folder “Weekly Reports to the President, 1-15 (2/77-6/77),” NLC; Memorandum, unsigned, 13 April 1977, RAC Electronic Files, “NLC-1-1-5-21-1,” NLC.

distorted reporting for propaganda purposes. For instance, meetings between ROC and U.S. officials, even if discussing nothing of importance, received front-page news coverage in Taiwan in an effort to exaggerate the U.S. commitment to the ROC.⁶⁴ As noted above, ROC lobbyists had also proved adept at encouraging outpourings of support among the American people, local and state governments, and members of Congress. The Ford administration was the first to encounter this problem, and responded by gradually reducing ROC access to high-level American officials.⁶⁵ Yet in February 1977, Carter's National Security Council recommended a prohibition of all meetings between ROC officials and the highest level of American policymakers, which the administration may have taken to extremes as evidenced by the decision not to meet with the 1977 little league world champions when the administration discovered that Taiwan had fielded the winning team.⁶⁶

ROC propaganda further discredited Taiwan by emphasizing what the Carter administration considered an overly ideological and antagonistic stance against communism. The ongoing Sino-Soviet tensions gave lie to the ROC characterization of

⁶⁴ Memorandum, Brzezinski to Jack Watson, 26 March 1977, WHCF, Country Files, Box CO-15, Folder "CO-34-1, 1/20/77-6/30/77," NLC; Memorandum, Brzezinski to Hamilton Jordan (et al.), 17 September 1977, RONSА, Country File, Box 11, Folder "China (Republic of China), 1/77-5/78," NLC; Memorandum, Oksenberg to Brzezinski, 25 October 1978, RONSА, Country File, Box 11, Folder "China (Republic of China), 6-10/78," NLC.

⁶⁵ During Ford's brief time as Vice President, both the State Department and NSC agreed that ROC Ambassador Shen should not be allowed to visit with him, lest this facilitate Shen's propaganda effort at "arresting and reversing the ROC's declining influence on the American political scene." Memorandum, Jeanne Davis to John Marsh, 28 June 1974, NSA, NSC East Asian and Pacific Staff Files, (1969) 1973-1976, Box 3 Folder "China, Republic of (3)," NLF.

⁶⁶ Memorandum, Michael Hornblow to Denis Clift, 24 February 1977, WHCF, Country Files, Box CO-15, Folder "CO-34-1, 1/20/77-6/30/77," NLC; Letter, John Luebeck to Carter, 12 September 1977, Name File, Folder "Taiwan/Taiwanese," NLC; The policy of not meeting with ROC officials caused concern among U.S. Congressmen who considered as unjustified the refusal to meet with the representatives of a loyal ally. Their pleas fell on deaf ears. Petition, U.S. House of Representatives to Carter, 1 August 1977, WHCF, Country Files, Box CO-15, Folder "CO-34-1, 7/1/77-12/31/77," NLC.

communism as monolithic, and descriptions of communist nations as inherently aggressive and expansionistic lacked credibility when applied toward the PRC of the post-Nixon era.⁶⁷ Yet this did not prevent the ROC from warning its American audience of the dangers of cooperating with communist regimes, especially the PRC. Through such organizations as the World Anti-Communist League (WACL), created by Chiang Kai-shek in 1966 and presided over by Dr. Ku Cheng-kang, a senior KMT official and president of the ROC National Assembly, the ROC warned against both normalization of relations with the PRC and the continuation of détente which benefited the “unchanged Red goal of conquest and enslavement.”⁶⁸ In a 1976 brief he sent to the Carter campaign, ROC Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Fredrick Chien characterized as “morally untenable” the abandonment of the “peace- and freedom-loving people” of the ROC “to their avowed enemy for oppression and annihilation.”⁶⁹ On June 6, 1977, the Asian Peoples’ Anti-Communist League (APACL), also created by Chiang, dispatched a letter to Vice President Walter Mondale urging the United States “to abandon any illusory hope that the Chinese Communists may be won over as a checkmate against the Soviet

⁶⁷ Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., “China, Soviet Strategy, and American Policy,” *International Security*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Autumn, 1980), 32-35, 42-43; about his 1975 visit to China, Senator Robert C. Byrd recalled “We developed a deeper appreciation of the constant tension that existed between China and the Soviet Union. In the desire to decrease vulnerability in case of war with the USSR, tunnels were being built – or so we were told – under all Chinese cities as civil defense measures against air and land attacks; and grain, water, and other necessities were being stored therein.” Robert C. Byrd, *Robert C. Byrd: Child of the Appalachian Coalfields* (Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Press, 2005), 364; Steven I. Levine, “China and the Superpowers: Policies toward the United States and the Soviet Union,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Winter, 1975-1976), 642-643.

⁶⁸ Telegram, Ku Cheng-kang to Carter, November 1976, Files of Susan Clough, Personal Secretary to the President, Congratulatory File, Box 50, Folder “Congratulatory Telegrams From Japan, Korea, and China, 11/3-8/76,” NLC.

⁶⁹ Brief prepared by Fredrick Chien, undated, Records of the 1976 Campaign Committee to Elect Jimmy Carter (hereafter cited as RCC), Stuart Eizenstat’s Subject Files, Box 3, Folder “China, 10/76,” NLC.

Union,” and “to face the reality of the international Communist race for influence in the Asian-Pacific region.”⁷⁰

Whereas Taipei emphasized the irreconcilable conflict between democracy and communism, advocates of normalization chose to focus more on the potentialities of long-term cooperation between China and the United States. The writings of several Chinese-American organizations, such as the National Chinese-American Committee for the Normalization of United States-China Relations, exemplified the accommodation inherent in pro-recognition rhetoric. Unlike the WACL, this organization neither originated with nor was operated by a government, but rather by a group of Chinese-American intellectuals led by the American-educated Nobel Prize-winning physicist Yang Chen Ning.

Yang epitomized those Chinese-Americans who had developed a sense of pride in the rise of China to global prominence, despite the shortcomings of the PRC government. These individuals and organizations produced some of the most convincing and rational arguments in support of normalization. For instance, Yang offered a lengthy, emotional appeal for the United States to develop a China policy that would minimize the risks of war and take into consideration the historical unity of the Chinese people. Stressing the interests of “our friends on Taiwan,” Yang wrote of the need “to end the estrangement of Taiwan from its ancestral and cultural homeland,” and that “every other alternative spells disaster to the people in Taiwan, to the people on the

⁷⁰ The White House neglected to reply on the grounds that “Any response, even a courteous acknowledgement, could be misused or lead to further unproductive correspondence.” Letter, Han Lin-wu to Walter Mondale, 6 June 1977, and Letter, Peter Tarnoff to Brzezinski, 22 June 1977, both in WHCF, Country Files, Box CO-15, Folder “CO-34-1, 1/20/77-6/30/77,” NLC.

mainland, to the people in the U.S.”⁷¹ Yang launched his organization on February 27, 1977, the fifth anniversary of the Shanghai Communiqué, and marked the occasion with “An Open Letter to President Carter” calling on him to complete the task begun by his predecessors. Quoting Mansfield, a consistent advocate of improved Sino-American relations, the letter suggested that “If we act more wisely than in the past, we will act now, not on the basis of emotional catch-phrases, but on the basis of rational contemporary American interest in the Western Pacific.”⁷² The pragmatic tone and reasoning of such arguments accorded well with Carter’s predisposition toward increased international cooperation.

In contrast, the intensive ROC lobbying efforts aimed at Congress and state and local governments could not have been a worse decision given Carter’s intense dislike of special interests. Carter’s disdain for lobbying predated his presidency, and represented an entrenched aspect of his personal outlook. The president’s deep, abiding faith in democracy compelled him to view any effort to subvert or unduly influence such a system as a form of sacrilege, as evidenced by his earlier legal battles against ballot stuffing and corrupt party bosses in the Georgia state senate. These experiences justified Carter’s view of himself as the trustee of the public good, with the result that he often refused to give credence to the advice and suggestions of legislators he felt had been

⁷¹ Essay, Yang Chen Ning, undated, RCC, Joji Konoshima’s Asian Affairs Subject Files, Box 241, Folder “U.S.-China Relations – Yang, Chen Ning – A Personal View,” NLC; Contemporary scholars supported Yang’s assertion that a future Sino-U.S. war over Taiwan was not in either nation’s best interests. Steven I. Levine, “China Policy during Carter’s Year One,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 18, No. 5 (May, 1978), 444.

⁷² National Chinese-American Committee for the Normalization of United States-China Relations, “An Open Letter to President Carter,” *New York Times*, 27 February 1977.

bought off by lobbyists who “seldom represent the average citizen, and often express the most selfish aspect of the character of their clients.”⁷³

A number of events occurred during 1977 that collectively ensured that the administration would greet ROC lobbying efforts with hostility. In the opening months of Carter’s term, details emerged regarding the South Korean influence-peddling scandal of 1976-77 in which the South Korean CIA had offered cash bribes to high-ranking members of Congress who, in return, supported legislation favorable to Korea. By April, the scandal had compelled the Korean government to cease its frequent wine-and-dine events for American dignitaries, but had nonetheless caused significant harm to Congress’ reputation. Another event that soured relations between Carter and Congress resulted from the president’s belief that “the extraordinary influence of the auto companies and oil companies in Washington,” had resulted in the addition of deregulation provisions in Carter’s energy bill that “unnecessarily” gave the auto companies \$86 billion of taxpayer money. Carter riddled his White House diary with references to the “almost unbelievable” influence of these lobbies.⁷⁴

In the context of these events, the ROC struggled to gain political influence among American politicians in order to block any administration attempt to abandon Taiwan. As late as June 1977, the ROC continued to provide members of Congress with expense-paid trips to Taiwan, apparently unconcerned about the controversy surrounding Seoul’s similar activities.⁷⁵ That year, ROC representatives also continued their work

⁷³ Jimmy Carter, *Why Not the Best?* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1975), 92-93.

⁷⁴ Carter’s diary entry, 9 June 1977, Carter, *White House Diary*, 62-63.

⁷⁵ Marquis Childs, “Peking Impatience as a Break With Taiwan,” *The Washington Post*, 14 June 1977.

outside of Congress, working diligently to procure resolutions from state legislatures and city councils declaring support for the continuation of both U.S. diplomatic recognition of the ROC and the Mutual Defense Treaty. To their impressive collection of resolutions that they had obtained in the mid-1970s, ROC lobbyists added dozens more, originating from the legislatures of such diverse states as New York, Arizona, Missouri, Alaska, and Florida. The resolutions obtained from city councils, equally widespread, included Macon, GA, St. Paul, MN, Honolulu, HI, and Las Vegas, NV.

Taipei also undertook an effort to appeal more directly to the president by trying to influence his friends and relatives in his hometown of Plains, Georgia. This began even before Carter had received his nomination as president. After he won a few primaries, the ROC inundated the residents of Plains with all-expense-paid invitations to Taipei. The KMT wined and dined those who accepted, arranging meetings with important officials and presenting the visitors with expensive gifts while urging them to influence Carter to forget about normalizing relations with Beijing. Carter, obviously displeased by this, remarked “I was able to prevent embarrassing favors to my closest family members, but my opposition to the trips and entertainment endangered my relationships with some of my hometown friends.”⁷⁶ All this occurred at a time when Carter had pledged to accept no contributions of any sort, leading him to return all gifts, including dolls for his daughter, Amy.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Carter, *Keeping Faith*, 192.

⁷⁷ Douglas E. Kneeland, “Carter Inspects the Mail As It Piles Up in Plains,” *New York Times*, 24 July 1976; For Carter’s attempts to undermine special interests in government, see Letter, John L. Moore to Carter, “Outline of Information Requested of Nominees” and related documents, 3 December 1976, Records of the Office of the Staff Secretary, Handwriting File, Box 1, Folder “Code of Ethics, 12/76,” NLC.

Yet the ROC persisted. It arranged for a delegation of Georgia city officials to visit Taiwan in April 1977 on the occasion of the second anniversary of Chiang Kai-shek's death. The delegates, including dignitaries from Plains, met with Madame Chiang and her son, the new President Chiang Ching-kuo. The Chiangs had encouraged the delegates to obtain a letter from President Carter prior to their visit. Though no letter was forthcoming, this did not prevent the Georgia delegates and KMT from reaching an agreement whereby both Macon and Plains became sister-cities of Kaohsiung, Taiwan's second largest city.⁷⁸ On October 14, Plains gained yet another Taiwanese sister city, Tamshui, with Americus, GA, a small town near Plains, becoming the sister city of Taipei County in June 1978.

ROC efforts toward Plains occasionally bordered on the ridiculous. In late July, Taipei induced Mayor Warren Blanton to invite to Plains Fan Yuan-Yan, a former PRC MIG pilot who had defected to the ROC earlier in the month, and who subsequently became an honorary citizen of the town. Taipei even remitted \$25,000 to Plains for the construction of an oriental garden, commemorating the event with a monument which stands to this day.⁷⁹ In December 1977, one of the best-selling items in the town was a teacup and saucer set decorated with pictures of Carter, the Plains Baptist Church, and the local antique shop, owned by Carter's Brother, Hugh. These keepsakes were all made in Taiwan.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Memorandum, Brzezinski to Watson, 26 March 1977, WHCF, Country Files, CO-15, Folder "CO-34-1, 1/20/77-6/30/77," NLC.

⁷⁹ At the time of this writing, the city of Plains, GA, has tentative plans to demolish this park, apparently on the grounds that the downtown area requires more parking spaces.

⁸⁰ Bill Curry, "Winning Taiwan Friends," *Washington Post*, 9 June 1977; Don Irwin, "President Tours Downtown Plains," *Los Angeles Times*, 23 December 1977.

When interpreting what, if any, significance these initiatives had on Carter's perception of Taiwan, one should consider the social circumstances of the residents of Plains. One can glean a semblance of the relatively simplistic way of life of these residents in the fact that the office of mayor did not come with a salary, compelling Blanton to seek employment at the airport in Albany to supplement the income he received as a barber.⁸¹ One can easily imagine the president's reaction to the news that a foreign power determined to influence American foreign policy for its own advantage had begun systematically to buy off his hometown. Indeed, on July 29, 1977, Brzezinski informed Carter of these lobbying efforts. Perhaps, then, it was no coincidence that on the following day Carter decided "quite abruptly" to push for immediate normalization with the People's Republic of China, stating that he was "prepared to face the political criticism of those who would claim we were abandoning Taiwan."⁸²

This negative view of the ROC government contrasted sharply with the generally positive view that Carter and his administration developed toward the PRC in 1977-78. In the opening months of his term, Carter sought to create a more cooperative relationship with the Soviet Union. The administration initially did not focus much attention on the PRC, however, likely because of the administration's preoccupation with other foreign policy priorities and the realization that the Soviet Union could

⁸¹ Kandy Stroud, "Mr. Jimmy's' Sleepy Hometown Is Starting to Awake," *New York Times*, 12 June 1976; James T. Wooten, "Plains, Ga., Presents 2 Contrasting Faces Typical of the South," *New York Times*, 20 December 1976.

⁸² NSC Weekly Report #23, 29 July 1977, ZBC, Subject File 01/1977-01/1981, Box 41, Folder "Weekly Reports to the President, 16-30 (6/77-9/77)," NLC; Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser, 1977-1981* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1983), 201; Cyrus Vance, *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America's Foreign Policy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 79.

provide more capable assistance in global management than could the PRC. The era of Mao Zedong had concluded with the Chairman's death in 1976, but the political and social turmoil within China had not yet subsided to the point where the administration could realistically view the PRC as either a reliable or a capable international partner. In contrast, the administration could readily identify areas in which the United States and the Soviet Union might begin immediately to make important contributions to global stability.

The administration hoped to achieve greater stability in the relationship with the USSR primarily through arms control negotiations, specifically, by concluding a second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty. By reducing the destructive capability of the superpowers in both conventional and strategic arms, Carter hoped to instigate a new *détente* in which concrete achievements toward peace replaced what Brzezinski called the "moral indifference" of the Nixon-Ford era.⁸³ The president's carefully crafted and flattering introductory letter to Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev invited the Soviet Union to cooperate with the United States for mutual benefit. Brzezinski characterized the Soviet response as "a bucket of cold water." Brezhnev offered no flexibility on strategic arms, and responded in an aggressive, patronizing manner to the administration's emphasis on human rights, stating that he would not "allow interferences in our internal affairs, whatever pseudo-humanitarian slogans are used to present it." The letter was a turning point. On the evening of February 28, five years to

⁸³ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 148.

the day after the issuance of the Shanghai Communiqué and with the Soviet rebuke fresh in his mind, Carter decided to take more initiatives toward China.⁸⁴

Setting aside the Soviet rebuke, Carter had good reasons for this decision, for his administration shared Nixon and Ford's belief that courting China now would facilitate China's constructive involvement in the world and reduce the chance of future Sino-American conflict. In contrast, the disturbing tendency of the Soviet Union and Cuba to encourage or support militant revolution in Africa undermined the spirit of détente and created much apprehension within the administration. Many advisers urged Carter to recognize the PRC in order to exert leverage against the Soviet Union, thus making the latter more malleable when considering American foreign policy proposals. However, to view normalization merely as playing the "China card" ignores the genuine belief among Carter and certain of his advisers that a normalized relationship with China would reap significant long-term benefits vis-à-vis Beijing's foreign relations. For instance, in sharp contrast to Soviet and Cuban aggression in Africa, the PRC during the 1970s had gradually abandoned "support for revolutionary parties and subversive activities in opposition to established African governments," and instead began to extend influence "through the more conventional trade, military, and aid agreements."⁸⁵ Such a contrast justified Secretary of State Cyrus Vance's assessment that China "had an important role

⁸⁴ Ibid, 153-155; The timing of this decision coincided with the 27 February 1977 publication in the *New York Times* of the "Open Letter to President Carter" by the National Chinese-American Committee for the Normalization of United States-China Relations, described earlier.

⁸⁵ Warren Weinstein, "Chinese Aid and Policy in Central Africa," Warren Weinstein and Thomas Henriksen, eds., *Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations* (New York: Praeger, 1980), 155.

to play in the final quarter of the twentieth century, not simply one that might be a useful counterweight to the Soviet Union.”⁸⁶

Possibilities for cooperation in the developing world remained an important topic in Sino-American discussions through 1977 and 1978; the Carter administration understood that this cooperation could only occur within the context of normalized relations.⁸⁷ Throughout most of 1977, however, Deng had yet to solidify his position in the PRC leadership. Beijing’s sensitivity to Soviet initiatives led Chinese officials to continue asserting a hard-line critique of virtually all facets of U.S. foreign policy. In his discussions with Vance in August 1977, PRC Foreign Minister Huang Hua lamented the U.S. defensive posture in Africa, and claimed that continued support of Israel served only to facilitate Soviet penetration of the disgruntled Arab nations.⁸⁸ Deng, now Vice Premier, similarly avoided Vance’s invitation to discuss possibilities for cooperation, stressing only that the United States should maintain superiority over the Soviet “Polar Bear.”⁸⁹

Despite the PRC’s single-minded focus on the Soviet threat, the Carter administration persisted in its efforts to convince the Chinese leadership to broaden its perspective. Vance wrote to Carter that the “Chinese must be made to understand that we do not perceive our relations with them as one-dimensional (i.e., vis-à-vis the USSR),

⁸⁶ Vance, *Hard Choices*, 79.

⁸⁷ The frequent verbal assaults on the United States in China’s state-run media characterized the extreme sensitivity of PRC officials regarding dealings with the superpowers. Such attacks, as with China’s caution in general, faded only with greater indications from the Carter administration of its commitment to normalization.

⁸⁸ Memoranda of Conversation between Vance and Huang Hua (et al.), 23 and 24 August 1977, Vertical File (hereafter cited as VF), Box 40, Folder “China MR-NLC-98-215 [2],” NLC.

⁸⁹ Memorandum of Conversation between Vance and Deng, 24 August 1977, *ibid.*

but that we also look at our relationship in the context of key bilateral and international issues.”⁹⁰ During his May 1978 trip to Beijing, Brzezinski also emphasized to the Chinese the long-term benefits of cooperation to resolve Third World conflicts, and stressed that “we think our friendship with you is a central part of our foreign policy as we try to shape a world which is truly cooperative, a world organized for the first time in its total history on the basis of independent states and therefore a world in which new political and social relationships have to emerge.”⁹¹

Well before Brzezinski’s trip to China, however, Beijing had already begun adopting a remarkably different approach that signaled its willingness to engage in this new cooperative world. In October 1977, there appeared the “first signs of new warmth” in Sino-American diplomatic contacts. The following month, Huang Chen, who had recently ended his stint as Chief of the PRC Liaison Office in Washington, submitted a report to the Politburo describing the “realities” of U.S. domestic politics. His findings may have convinced Beijing that the administration “was not merely stalling on normalization” but rather “had higher priority concerns that prevented it from taking up the issue at this juncture.” The PRC subsequently adopted a more positive attitude in terms of U.S.-USSR relations. References to American appeasement of the Soviet menace ceased, and Beijing minimized “the significance of the continued inclusion of the US in Chinese anti-superpower rhetoric.”⁹²

⁹⁰ Vance, *Hard Choices*, 76.

⁹¹ Memorandum of Conversation between Brzezinski and Hua Guofeng, 22 May 1978, and Memorandum of Conversation between Brzezinski and Deng, 21 May 1978, both in VF, Box 40, Folder “China MR-NLC-98-215 [2],” NLC.

⁹² CIA memorandum, “Overview of PRC attitudes toward the U.S.,” 5 May 1978, RAC Electronic Files, “NLC-4-38-4-7-5,” NLC.

Beijing also expanded its involvement with other countries in the industrialized world including a significant expansion and liberalization of its official contacts with American military and diplomatic representatives – a remarkable departure given how China had previously linked such an expansion to progress toward normalization. Chinese officials meeting with their American counterparts displayed a notably warmer attitude, and Beijing now allowed certain kinds of contacts that it had previously prohibited. In a burst of activity unseen since before the Cultural Revolution, high-level Chinese officials and delegations visited several nations in Western Europe to improve bilateral relations and obtain access to technology necessary for China’s economic development. The Chinese sent a delegation to the U.N. special session on Disarmament, the first major disarmament conference that the PRC had ever agreed to join. Beijing even increased the “frequency and correctness” of its diplomatic contact with the Soviet Union, thus imbuing its relations with a greater degree of “reasonableness.”⁹³

Similar trends occurred in the case of PRC relations with the Third World. China “sharply curtailed” its support for radical opposition groups in developing countries in favor of “a rapid and more effective expansion of conventional diplomacy.”⁹⁴ Signs of changing PRC policies towards Zaire, Cuba, Somalia, and Cambodia gained added significance from the dispatch of high-level PRC officials to numerous developing nations. In May and October, PRC Premier Hua Guofeng and three Vice Premiers travelled to nations in Africa, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia.

⁹³ CIA Memorandum, “China: A Foreign Policy Overview,” 5 May 1978, RAC Electronic Files, “NLCNLC-4-38-4-6-6,” NLC.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

Contemporary observers noted how Chinese delegations visiting Third World countries “presented China as another developing nation, emphasized friendship, and sometimes served as teachers or participants in small-scale public health or agrotechnical programs.”⁹⁵ They also sought to “change China’s image abroad from revolutionary challenger to fellow victim of Soviet and Vietnamese geopolitical designs.”⁹⁶ Thus, by June 1978 – when serious Sino-American normalization negotiations began – China had demonstrated a “striking” shift in its approach that had created an atmosphere “clearly conducive to forward movement.”⁹⁷ Although this change in policy may have resulted, at least in part, from concerns regarding intensified Soviet efforts in the developing world, China had nonetheless begun to adopt a new approach to international cooperation to which the Carter administration responded favorably.⁹⁸

Nothing in this shift pleased the administration more than indications of Beijing’s sympathy for and understanding of the American position vis-à-vis Taiwan’s post-normalization status. From the beginning of Carter’s term, administration officials, including the president, reiterated the need to move toward normalization in a way that would maintain regional stability and ensure the security of the people of Taiwan. In part, this signified political expediency; whether in internal memos or in discussion with PRC officials, the administration frequently reiterated the domestic political problems

⁹⁵ Joyce K. Kallgren, “China 1978: The New Long March,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 19, No. 1, A Survey of Asia in 1978: Part I (January 1979), 4.

⁹⁶ Kissinger, *On China*, 356.

⁹⁷ David Aaron to Carter, NSC Weekly Report #63, 16 June 1978, ZBC, Subject File 01/1977-01/1981, Box 41, Folder “Weekly Reports to the President, 61-71 (6/78-9/78),” NLC. Brzezinski composed all other NSC Weekly Reports.

⁹⁸ See Weinstein, “Chinese Aid and Policy in Central Africa,” and Eugene K. Lawson, “China’s Policy in Ethiopia and Angola,” both in Weinstein and Henriksen, eds., *Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations*.

surrounding this issue.⁹⁹ A case in point occurred in late-February 1978 when Carter deferred a decision on additional troop withdrawals from Taiwan out of concern that this would cost him Congressional votes that he desperately needed to pass the Panama Canal Treaty.¹⁰⁰ Ensuring that Taiwan would not immediately fall victim to military assault following normalization proved a necessary condition to stave off other, potentially more damaging political challenges.

In its first month in office, the administration concluded that the PRC would not offer an explicit pledge of peaceful intent. But by the beginning of 1978, Beijing noticeably reduced its references to a short-term military solution to the Taiwan problem and began emphasizing Chinese patience. Later that spring, Chinese officials – making “comments they knew could get back to Washington” – suggested that Beijing remained flexible on the method that Washington might adopt to end the MDT. The acting head of the PRC Liaison Office, Han Hsu, even went so far as to indicate that the PRC “might be willing to give private assurances” regarding peaceful liberation.¹⁰¹

The failure to obtain a firm commitment from Beijing that it would not attack Taiwan, thus, does not represent a failure of policy, nor does it suggest that Carter lacked empathy for the Taiwanese. On the contrary, his memoirs refer to preserving “the

⁹⁹ Documents demonstrating this point are numerous. For an adequate summary of the issues, however, see the correspondences between U.S. Ambassador to China Leonard Woodcock and Vance and Brzezinski, 15 December 1978, VF, Box 40, Folder “China MR-NLC-98-215 [3],” NLC.

¹⁰⁰ Memorandum, Brzezinski to Carter, 25 February 1978, RONSAs, Country File, Box 11, Folder “China (Republic of China), 1/77-5/78,” NLC.

¹⁰¹ CIA memorandum, “Overview of PRC attitudes toward the U.S.,” 5 May 1978, RAC Electronic Files, “NLC-4-38-4-7-5,” NLC; The CIA estimated that this new tone suggested Chinese awareness that “their aggressive posturing on Taiwan was counterproductive.” CIA Memorandum, “China: A Foreign Policy Overview,” 5 May 1978, RAC Electronic Files, “NLCNLC-4-38-4-6-6,” NLC.

guarantee of a peaceful life for the Chinese on Taiwan.”¹⁰² In the end, however, Carter chose to give the PRC leadership the benefit of the doubt, trusting that the new approach Beijing had apparently adopted throughout the previous year had created a shared Sino-American desire for peace in the Taiwan Strait. In a press conference following the normalization announcement, one official dodged the question of whether or not the administration had explicitly requested a PRC commitment to the non-use of force. Instead, he noted how the Chinese “have repeatedly stated that they are a patient people, that they approach historical problems with a sense of perspective,” and emphasized that “we are dealing here with a China that wishes to play an active role in international cooperation, that recognizes its own state in a good relationship with the United States.”¹⁰³ If the sensitivity of the two-Chinas dilemma required another vague arrangement similar to that offered in the Shanghai Communiqué, Carter believed, as had the Nixon and Ford administrations, that such an arrangement would nonetheless represent the best opportunity for a peaceful, albeit eventual, settlement of the Taiwan issue that served the interests of regional stability. This view constituted an important component of Carter’s moral justification for Taiwan’s “abandonment.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Carter, *Keeping Faith*, 190.

¹⁰³ Background Briefing, 15 December 1978, James T. McIntyre Collection, Subject File, Box 4, Folder “China: Normalization of Relations, 12/2/54-2/14/79,” NLC.

¹⁰⁴ Carter’s detractors often used the term “abandonment” to describe his actions regarding Taiwan. However, the administration had gone to great lengths to ensure the continuation of the more than sixty existing treaties and agreements with the island. These efforts began quite early, and formed the basis for the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979. Richard C. Bush, *At Cross Purposes: U.S.-Taiwan Relations Since 1942* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 151; for a listing of U.S.-ROC treaties and agreements, and the manner in which the administration hoped to continue them after normalization, see, respectively, RONSA, Country File, Box 11, Folder “China (Republic of China), 1/77-5/78,” NLC; and Records of the White House Office of Counsel to the President, Robert J. Lipshutz Files, Box 7, Folder “China Briefing Book Tabs 1-10, undated [CF, O/A 715],” NLC.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

On January 29, 1979, only a month after Carter officially recognized his government, Deng Xiaoping entered Washington, D.C. No longer did the American capitol accord the Nationalist ambassador official status, nor did it perpetuate the “absurd” notion that the Kuomintang could possibly speak for the 800 million Chinese on the mainland. Deng toured the United States in celebration, donning a ten gallon hat in Texas and mingling with American crowds that welcomed him with open arms. He must have been pleased. Washington had finally accepted the inevitability of communist rule over both the mainland and (at least in theory) Taiwan, and had bestowed upon China’s true leaders the respect and status that they deserved. In so doing, Carter ended thirty years of estrangement for which, many contemporary officials argued, the United States bore considerable blame. Such is the standard view of normalization: The Americans had learned their lesson.

Yet the preceding chapters convey a different tale, namely, that from the standpoint of the American government China had been the student – and had learned well. Beijing’s final exam occurred mere weeks after normalization. In a private discussion with only Carter and his top advisors, Deng informed the president that the PRC would soon initiate a limited military expedition against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam that Deng characterized as punishment for its hegemonial ambitions and its continued violation of its neighbors’ sovereignty and territorial integrity. Deng asserted

to Carter that “it was highly desirable for China that its arrogant neighbors know they could not disturb it and other countries in the area with impunity.”¹ As good as his word, the invasion began on February 17, with Chinese forces withdrawing twenty-eight days later. Although Carter expressed concern that China would once more cast itself as an aggressing state, the brief Sino-Vietnamese conflict nonetheless signaled Beijing’s readiness to take the kind of assertive, responsible leadership role that every administration since Franklin Roosevelt had envisioned for it in the international order.²

In reality, Communist China had always professed the importance of respecting national sovereignty, and its adherence to this idea contributed to the Sino-Soviet split as Moscow manifested its own imperial tendencies vis-à-vis the nations of Eastern Europe. Through the 1960s and ‘70s, Beijing hoped it could wrest control of the communist movement and focus its energies toward the achievement of a more equitable balance among nations, a balance that it believed the superpowers of whatever ideological persuasion threatened. The Chinese invasion of Vietnam generally accorded with this overall objective. Yet it also represented a departure, as China implicitly cast itself, if not as a superpower, then at the very least as a powerful nation intent on compelling obedience to the standards of international order that it considered so important – the same role that Washington envisioned for itself and that it hoped Beijing would also adopt. Indeed, the great irony of the Sino-American Cold War conflict is that Chinese leaders apparently never accepted the fact that Washington genuinely shared its

¹ Carter, *Keeping Faith*, 211

² This military campaign constituted “potent and revealing evidence of the magnitude of the departure from past policies.” Jonathan D. Pollack, “The Implications of Sino-American Normalization,” *International Security*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Spring 1979), 37.

objective of creating a global order founded on respect for the political independence and territorial integrity of nations. Maoist ideology had blinded an entire generation of Chinese officials to this possibility.³

Yet ultimately this dissertation has focused not on China, but rather on the formation and implementation of American policy towards it. As stated in the preface, this analysis did not seek to validate Washington's approach – indeed, the various policies it adopted to achieve its objectives ultimately failed to achieve the desired ends. Rather, this dissertation sought to determine the underlying factors that determined the kinds of policies that these seven administrations adopted. In this effort, this project began by positing four general findings.

The first of these contends that when one examines the thirty years from 1949-1979 in the aggregate, a broad and general consistency appears in terms of the fundamental foreign policy objectives that these administrations. An entire generation of American officials that came of age in the first half of the twentieth century generally shared the view that an anarchic international system provided no security for the United States, especially in the increasingly interconnected and globalized world at mid-century. Most Americans during the 1930s may have viewed the decision to enter World War I as a tragic error, but by 1945 few Americans denied that the second Great War had arrived at America's door uninvited. That stark lesson left a deep impression that has yet to disappear from official American thought: the United States must involve itself in international councils, must work to reduce or eliminate the use of military conflict as a

³ For an elaboration of the Maoist view, see Cohen and Chiu, *People's China and International Law*, Vol. 1, 33-46.

means of resolving international disputes, and must act assertively and decisively when aggression occurs.

Without question, this consideration remained foremost in the considerations of each administration as they formulated policies toward China. For Truman, the Chinese intervention in Korea in support of an acknowledged aggressor clearly constituted a violation of the gravest kind, exceeded only by its decision to invade and attempt the conquest of South Korea. After 1953, Eisenhower lamented that Beijing's militancy, threatening posture toward its neighbors, military assaults on the offshore islands, and support of civil war in Vietnam all cast serious doubt on China's advocacy of "peaceful coexistence." The most pertinent fact of American China policy during that decade is Eisenhower's insistent calls for a Chinese pledge to renounce the use of force. Kennedy and his team entered office prepared to believe that the tensions of the 1950s had been a big misunderstanding propelled by Ike and Dulles' extreme positions. Yet both Kennedy and Johnson concluded that the PRC remained a potential threat to the non-communist nations of the region.

For all their efforts to establish friendly relations with Beijing, Nixon and Kissinger believed that the potential for China's military expansion remained ever-present, a fact that could only be reduced through the establishment of a new balance of power. The only difference with previous policy was the substitution of local forces (which the United States would help to develop) for American ones as the primary factor deterring aggression, a view that had remarkable similarities to Eisenhower's effort to reduce American commitments in the region and have more "Asians fighting Asians."

Some might argue (as Nixon and Kissinger did) that the re-establishment of contact itself had a deterrent effect. Yet even if true, this was hardly a new development since Eisenhower had followed the same rational fairly successfully during the ambassadorial talks. The fact that Eisenhower's approach to the Cold War in Asia had such similarities with the one his vice president later adopted during the 1970s is a fascinating topic that the historical profession has yet to explore.

The rise of the international communist movement presented a new and equally disturbing threat – not to territorial integrity, but to political sovereignty. The loss of American values to such a force had constituted a recurring fear since the Russian Revolution of 1919. Far from simply protecting itself against such a threat, however, Washington elevated non-interference to an international principle and extended its protection to all nations that found themselves in a similar plight. This perspective assumed, however, the complicity of indigenous forces in the expansionist objectives of a foreign power. Indeed, once instilled in power, these indigenous forces had a tendency to then turn their energies toward conducting the same kinds of subversive activities in neighboring countries, thus perpetuating the cycle.

The principle of non-interference – particularly efforts to curb communist subversion – permeated the making of China policy throughout the late-1940s and 1950s. Washington perceived a considerable divergence between the policies that Mao pursued and the “interests” of both the PRC and the Chinese people. This divergence led the Truman and Eisenhower administrations to assume that Moscow exercised an inappropriate amount of influence in Beijing, and that the CCP, despite having firm

control of the country, nonetheless constituted an example of undue foreign interference. Moreover, Beijing also willingly supported the indigenous communist struggles along its periphery and, increasingly, in other Third World nations. Changing circumstances and a more nuanced understanding of global trends during the 1960s and 1970s, however, led American officials to conclude that while Beijing still hoped for the success of the global Marxist revolution, it would likely not actively seek to bring about that result.

Washington considered this an important, if incomplete step toward China's acceptance of the third general principle that guided American views of the international order: the notion that nations had a responsibility to act assertively in defense of these principles. Casting rhetoric about the necessity of law and order in the world had done nothing to curb the excesses of the Axis powers, nor had it saved Eastern Europe from Soviet domination. This is why the United States considered so vital an assertive response – militarily, economically, or politically – to a broad range of communist actions during these decades. The United States had a responsibility not to stand idle in the face of these violations. Indeed, Washington frequently took other countries – allies, communists, and neutrals alike – to task for their relative complacency in the face of such clear dangers to the international order that they had all collectively and so painstakingly constructed during the 1940s. The Nixon administration made this point explicitly to Beijing in April 1972, noting the “responsibility” of powerful nations to exert a moderating influence in the world.

From this analysis proceeds the conclusion that China's relative passivity in the late-1960s and 1970s proved insufficient to satisfy Washington. While doing little to

sabotage American efforts throughout the world, the Chinese Communists simultaneously sought to avoid their inherent responsibility, according to Washington, as a powerful (if only regional) country to exert influence over its wayward neighbors for the sake of the common good. Even when it did exert such pressure, Beijing did so in furtherance of its ideological goals. For instance, when Zhou urged the DRV to accept an armistice in 1973, he did so not to end the fighting, but only to remove American forces from the region and provide an environment more conducive to communist military victory. The view from Washington did not reveal these details, yet the Nixon and Ford administrations nonetheless recognized that the rapprochement had only set in abeyance, rather than eliminated Mao's revolutionary agenda.

Having established which principles Washington sought to uphold and the manner in which China appeared to violate them, the question remains as to what policy the United States should adopt. A dominant theme of the preceding chapters is that Washington strove through a variety of means to affect a change in the PRC approach. Prior to the Korean War, the Truman administration hoped that this situation would not require American action, that Moscow would demonstrate to CCP leaders its true colors, thus convincing them to forsake the Soviet line. When this hope proved illusory during 1950, the administration adopted more assertive methods, courting disaffected CCP officials and attempting to foment an indigenous Chinese uprising utilizing the unsettled conditions in the country. When this strategy failed, the Eisenhower administration, perceiving Beijing as irreversibly hostile and seeing no other alternative, pursued its own variant of the same strategy. The administration applied a variety of economic, political,

and military pressures against the mainland, believing that this would facilitate the breakdown of the Chinese Communist system that Ike and Dulles both considered would naturally occur regardless. Like Truman, they faced disappointment.

The Kennedy and Johnson administrations had no discernible method for achieving the reorientation of Chinese policy that both their predecessors and successors pursued. In part this reflected an unjustifiably positive belief – at least initially – in the potential for Sino-American rapprochement among mid-level officials, but it also resulted from the increasingly common acceptance of the permanency of CCP control over the mainland. Rather than attempting to compel change, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations struggled inconclusively to implement a more traditional containment strategy while striving where possible to achieve peaceful solutions to regional crises. By mid-decade, the frustrations of this approach drove Johnson to deeper and poorly-conceived military commitments in the face of mounting international pressure for disengagement and accommodation.

Yet despite the dominance of the doctrines of anti-appeasement and militant containment in American Cold War thought, the administrations of the 1950s and '60s accepted, to varying degrees, that the American strategy must include efforts to engage with their ideological rivals as a way to entice them toward the adoption of more constructive and cooperative policies. Truman struggled to achieve such a dialogue prior to the Korean War, and returned to negotiations at Panmunjom once the war stalemated. The general lack of civility and the apparent disinterest of the Chinese negotiators for genuine progress set an expectation for the incoming Eisenhower

administration that talks were essentially useless so long as Mao and the radicals remained in charge. Ike altered this view somewhat after the 1954-55 Strait crisis, but the new ambassadorial talks remained of value primarily by offering Beijing an alternative to overt aggression; Ike did not expect the talks to achieve a broader meeting of minds. Kennedy administration officials entered office determined to rectify the imbalance that they perceived in Ike's approach, giving more prominence to conciliatory gestures. By mid-decade, however, many of these advocates had accepted the futility of convincing Beijing by such means to work constructively with the United States.

Nonetheless, when Nixon assumed office in 1969, the balance shifted decisively away from containment and toward engagement, although, to be sure, containment of aggression remained important. Kissinger lamented that that previous administrations had given scant attention to this delicate balancing act and had failed to consider what the United States should strive to achieve vis-à-vis China once it had re-established high-level contact. Praise of Nixon's supposed genius or vision in adopting this approach has perhaps gone too far, since the president's initiatives may have failed to achieve a rapprochement had Mao not had other compelling reasons to respond favorably to Washington's overtures. Yet the fact that Nixon and Mao had restored contact at the highest levels imbued conciliatory engagement with a degree of utility it had not previously had. Politicians and scholars who had for so long criticized the policies of the 1950s and 1960s found themselves – and their advocacy – validated. As a result, the incoming Carter administration perpetuated this same attitude. Indeed, given Beijing's

new foreign policy approach under Deng, maintaining a cautious containment policy over one that stressed conciliatory engagement made little sense.

The third major theme of this dissertation is that the seven administrations from Truman to Carter did not determine their respective China policies based on domestic political considerations. Historians of American foreign relations today take for granted that “domestic opinion matters,” yet the often unspoken caveat of this assertion is that the influence domestic factors might exert over foreign policymaking – even if omnipresent – may prove meager depending on the issue or time period. An intensive examination of the relative merits of U.S. international and domestic imperatives during the period in question is not required to fulfill the basic objective of this dissertation, namely, to demonstrate a broad consistency in American foreign policy objectives toward China from 1949-1979. Indeed, to do so would involve a separate and equally extensive undertaking. Yet this work nonetheless generally reinforces what numerous historians of Sino-American relations over the past thirty years have all found: domestic influences proved of secondary importance in the making of China policy. This does not mean that domestic influences *always* are of secondary importance, only that the particular circumstances that prevailed during these three decades – the issues involved, the personalities and experiences of high-ranking administration officials, the willingness and ability of Congress and other domestic groups to exert influence over policymaking, among other factors – did not allow any significant interference in the implementation of policies that the Executive branch pursued for its own internationalist agenda.

A common phenomenon, according to historian Leonard Kusnitz, is that “officials do not anticipate actual reactions, but only the possibility of them” because of the “very real fear of office-holders that their actions *may* later bring down upon them the electorate’s wrath.”⁴ The problem this raises is the ability of any given presidential administration to determine accurately the domestic reception of any given policy. Truman and Eisenhower apparently did not consider the potential domestic reaction to their policies as significant enough to cause reconsideration of their respective policies. Kennedy and Johnson do seem to have been influenced by a critique of their predecessor’s approach offered primarily by contemporary scholars, some of whom joined the administration. Yet these influences remained subsumed beneath the preferences of the president and his closest advisors. Nixon and Kissinger pursued Sino-American rapprochement for philosophical internationalist reasons, and implemented the policy in secret in part as a means to ensure that domestic pressures would not interfere. Carter believed that presenting an undistorted message to the American people would suffice to secure their approval of his policies. Yet he also viewed Congress as too often obstructing the Executive branch from implementing the policies it considered most conducive to international order.

What of the domestic influences that historians so often cite as influencing China policy? The existence of a lobby in support of the ROC prior to the Korean War could not prevent the Truman administration from its hands-off approach to the island. The McCarthyite hysteria of the 1950s paralleled Eisenhower’s own views rather than

⁴ Kusnitz, *Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*, 8 and 10 note 32.

forcing him to adopt a position that he did not favor; his own experiences had already provided a sort of guidebook for dealing with aggressive violators of the international order, a guidebook he followed closely. Studies of public opinion during the 1958 Taiwan Strait crisis show that anti-appeasement ranked high on Eisenhower's list of priorities; while the public outcry against Washington's hard line convinced the administration to tone down its rhetoric, it had little effect on the substance of policy.⁵ Once they learned through experience that China was as uncooperative as their predecessors had claimed, Kennedy and Johnson perpetuated a rigid China policy that defied the critiques of both contemporary scholars and mid-level administration officials. Johnson altered his approach on only two occasions, neither of them because of domestic pressures: the first resulting from the turning tide in the United Nations in favor of seating China, and the second resulting from indications of the impending demise of radical Maoism. Domestic views during the 1970s tended to approve of ongoing support of Taiwan, though the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations considered this secondary to the more important objective of perpetuating and solidifying the Sino-American rapprochement. During the 1976 presidential campaign domestic pressures produced a Republican political platform that differed markedly from the China policy Ford had pursued. Yet once Ford won the nomination he returned again to his preferred approach, at least until he lost the election several months later.

⁵ George Eliades, "Once More Unto the Breach: Eisenhower, Dulles, and Public Opinion During the Offshore Islands Crisis of 1958," *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, No. 4, Vol. 2 (Winter 1993); Marian D. Irish, "Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy: The Quemoy Crisis of 1958," *Political Quarterly* 31 (April-June 1960), 151-162.

The fourth major theme of this dissertation is that these seven administrations formulated virtually all of their policies toward Taiwan in order to advance their objectives regarding China and the broader international order. In part, this conclusion constitutes an extension of the argument for the secondary importance of domestic opinion. Studies that attribute policies to ROC lobbying and anti-communist domestic pressures take the opposite view, arguing that Washington had as its starting point concern for the well-being and security of Taiwan or sympathy for Chiang Kai-shek's ambitions to return to the mainland. But while many officials may have preferred to have the KMT rather than the CCP ruling the mainland, this consideration was not the point of departure for China policy. Truman clearly attempted to work out an accommodation with Beijing in 1949-50. Within Eisenhower's strategy, a Nationalist return constituted only one unlikely outcome among several possibilities. Taipei lost its utility for purposes of fomenting mainland uprisings during the 1960s, yet gained new value as an important staging point for regional military operations. Following the Paris Peace Accords of 1973, Washington no longer required Taiwan for this reason. After that point, Nixon and Ford traded off adjustments in its ROC policy in return for alterations in PRC behavior during the normalization process. In only a few instances did Washington's approach to Taiwan reflect objectives independent from the struggle to compel Beijing to reorient its foreign policy.

Despite the general failure of Washington's policies through much of the period in question, China had nonetheless undertaken the reorientation of its foreign policy

approach that American officials had long sought. China's leaders after 1979, in the words of historian Rosemary Foot,

eschewed their revolutionary rhetoric. They became active in a United Nations once reviled as being in the grip of the superpowers; they participated in an anti-Soviet containment coalition for as long as it was necessary; they joined keystone economic institutions that espouse the norms of liberal capitalism and that once were seen as oppressive; and they openly accepted that they had much to learn from advanced capitalist states.⁶

At this point, the United States confronted what historian John Gaddis once characterized as the classic dilemma of foreign policymaking: having gotten what you want, what next?

Looking beyond 1979, one can perhaps discern an important shift of emphasis in American China policy. Achieving the "tolerable state of order" with the communist nations freed American officials to focus more attention on an array of important second-tier foreign policy preferences and goals that Washington previously felt it could not safely pursue without jeopardizing its more fundamental objectives and principles. Collectively, this second group of principles falls under the broad heading of "human rights" and includes the expansion of political, religious, and economic freedoms throughout the world. These principles did not suddenly emerge after 1979, but rather constituted traditional American values dating at least to the American Revolution.

⁶ Foot, *The Practice of Power*, 20.

Franklin Roosevelt gave expression to them in his Four Freedoms, and throughout the Cold War a variety of official and private groups and organizations pursued many of these kinds of reforms to the extent that they did not interfere with Washington's Cold War strategy. Both domestic and international developments during the 1960s and '70s placed considerable emphasis on the pursuit of human rights, especially as it pertained to minority groups at home and the emerging nations of the Third World. A rising chorus of criticism in the United States charged the executive branch with undermining the development of these values in the international community.

As regards China, this criticism pointed out the rising standard of living of the Chinese people and the relative security that the CCP had provided to its country after a century of humiliations. Especially after the rapprochement, an increasing number of American visitors to China returned with stories of progress that suggested the promise of further social reforms to come. Indeed, in his 1979 meetings with Carter, Deng pledged to allow a greater degree of religious freedom in China and to permit the publication and distribution of Bibles. He also noted the necessity of legal reforms and stated that Beijing had recently permitted "substantial freedom of speech and expression," although, he added, such liberties "had to be approached very cautiously."⁷ The Carter administration, viewing human rights as a process and prioritizing its own geostrategic objectives, chose to minimize its criticism of China's human rights record.⁸ A decade later, however, the Tiananmen Square incident highlighted – in dramatic fashion – the

⁷ Carter, *Keeping Faith*, 211-212

⁸ Brian Hilton, "'Maximum Flexibility for Peaceful Change': Jimmy Carter, Taiwan, and the Recognition of the People's Republic of China," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (September 2009), 601-603; Gleysteen, *Massive Entanglement, Marginal Influence*, 32.

ongoing lack of political freedom within China and cast Beijing in the American mind as among the world's foremost human rights violators.

Yet Washington continued to believe that it could formulate a policy conducive to the strengthening of human rights and the development of democracy in China. As journalist and historian James Mann argues, since 1979 Washington has premised its China policy on the notion that economic engagement with Beijing will inevitably lead to its political liberalization, an assumption Mann questions.⁹ Historian Jeffrey Engel also notes this element of American policy, pointing out that having chosen to engage with China, American leaders ever since have relied upon “the transformative power of their free-market ideal.”¹⁰ The final page of that particular effort has yet to be written.

While efforts to prevent aggression continue – particularly evidenced in the case of the 1991 Gulf War to liberate Kuwait and measures taken since 2001 to curb state-sponsored terrorism – Washington has increasingly exerted its influence to resolve humanitarian crises and encourage the respect for human rights (as it defines them) in repressive societies. Yet this poses a problem of no small significance, for the pursuit of human rights in many cases interferes in the internal affairs of nations that may not necessarily pose a threat to their neighbors and are not already subject to interference from a foreign country. The United States has thus conducted its affairs in a manner that reflects in certain respects the behaviors that it previously found so unacceptable among its communist rivals. In this regard, China and the Soviet Union, through the use of their

⁹ James Mann, *The China Fantasy: How Our Leaders Explain Away Chinese Repression* (New York: Viking, 2007).

¹⁰ Engel, “Of Fat and Thin Communists,” 473.

U.N. veto power, ironically have stood out as the primary advocates of non-intervention, particularly protesting the various humanitarian interventions of the United States and its allies.

Certainly, however, Washington has not pursued this new approach with the vigor that characterized its Cold War struggle against aggression and subversion. Yet, while Washington may find the current state of affairs in the international community “tolerable,” it apparently continues efforts to create one it finds “preferable.”

SOURCES CITED

Documentary Archives

Gerald Ford Presidential Library, Ann Arbor, MI

Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, Atlanta, GA

Published Document Collections

U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*

1949, Vol. VIII: The Far East: China

1949, Vol. IX: The Far East: China

1950, Vol. I: National Security Affairs; Foreign Economic Policy

1950, Vol. II: The United Nations; the Western Hemisphere

1950, Vol. VI: East Asia and the Pacific

1950, Vol. VII: Korea

1951, Vol. VI: Asia and the Pacific, Part 1

1951, Vol. VII: Korea and China, Part 1

1951, Vol. VII: Korea and China, Part 2

1952-1954, Vol. XIV: China and Japan, Part 1

1955-1957, Vol. II: China

1955-1957, Vol. III: China

1958-1960, Vol. XIX: China

1961-1963, Vol. XXII: Northeast Asia

1964-1968, Vol. XXX: China

1964-1968, Vol. XXXIII: Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy;
United Nations

1969-1976, Vol. I: Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1969-1972

1969-1976, Vol. V: United Nations, 1969-1972

1969-1976, Vol. XVII: China, 1969-1972

1969-1976, Vol. XVIII: China, 1973-1976

U.S. Department of State *Bulletin*

Public Papers of the Presidents

Yearbook of the United Nations

Secondary Sources

Accinelli, Robert. *Crisis and Commitment: United States Policy toward Taiwan, 1950-1955*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.

Acheson, Dean. *This Vast External Realm*. New York: Norton, 1973.

_____. *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1969.

Albright, David and Corey Gay. "Taiwan: Nuclear Nightmare Averted." *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 54 (January/February, 1998): 54-60.

Ampiah, Kweku. *The Political and Moral Imperatives of the Bandung Conference of 1955: The Reactions of the US, UK and Japan*. UK: Global Oriental, 2007.

Armstrong, J. D. *Revolutionary Diplomacy: Chinese Foreign Policy and the United Front Doctrine*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977.

_____. *Revolution and World Order: The Revolutionary State in International Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Brands, H.W., Jr. "Testing Massive Retaliation: Credibility and Crisis Management in the Taiwan Strait." *International Security*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Spring 1988): 124-151.

Briggs, Philip J. "Congress and the Cold War: U.S.-China Policy, 1955." *The China Quarterly*, No. 85 (March 1981): 80-95.

Brzezinski, Zbigniew. *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser, 1977-1981*. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1983.

Bundy, William. *A Tangled Web: The Making of Foreign Policy in the Nixon Presidency*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1998.

Bush, Richard. *At Cross Purposes: U.S.-Taiwan Relations Since 1942*. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2004.

Byrd, Robert C. *Robert C. Byrd: Child of the Appalachian Coalfields*. Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2005.

Carter, Jimmy. *Why Not the Best?* Nashville: Broadman Press, 1975.

- _____. *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President*. Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 1995.
- _____. *White House Diary*. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2010.
- Chang, Gordon H., and He Di. "The Absence of War in the U.S.-China Confrontation over Quemoy and Matsu in 1954-1955: Contingency, Luck, Deterrence?" *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 98, No. 5 (Dec. 1993): 1500-1524.
- Chang, Gordon H. "To the Nuclear Brink: Eisenhower, Dulles, and the Quemoy-Matsu Crisis." *International Security*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Spring 1988): 96-123.
- Chen, Jian. *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- _____. *Mao's China and the Cold War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.
- _____. "China and the Bandung Conference: Changing Perceptions and Representations." Ed. See Seng Tan and Amitav Acharya. *Bandung Revisited: The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference for International Order*. Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2008. 132-159.
- Chen, King C. *Vietnam and China, 1938-1954*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.
- Christensen, Thomas J. *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- Cohen, Jerome A., and Hungdah Chiu. *People's China and International Law: A Documentary Study*. 2 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974.
- Cohen, Warren I. *America's Response to China: A History of Sino-American Relations*. 3rd Edition. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.
- Eliades, George. "Once More Unto the Breach: Eisenhower, Dulles, and Public Opinion During the Offshore Islands Crisis of 1958." *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, No. 4, Vol. 2 (Winter 1993): 343-367.
- Engel, Jeffrey. "Of Fat and Thin Communists" Diplomacy and Philosophy in Western Economic Warfare Strategies toward China (and Tyrants, Broadly)." *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (June 2005): 445-474.

- _____, ed. *The China Diary of George H. W. Bush: The Making of a Global President*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.
- Fabry, Mikulas. *Recognizing States: International Society and the Establishment of New States since 1776*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Ferrell, Robert. *The American Secretaries of State and their Diplomacy*, Vol. XI: Frank B. Kellogg-Henry L. Stimson. New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1963.
- Fetzer, James. "Clinging to Containment: China Policy." Ed. Thomas G. Paterson. *Kennedy's Quest For Victory: American Foreign Policy, 1961-1963*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989. 178-197.
- Foot, Rosemary. *The Practice of Power: U.S. Relations with China since 1949*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.
- _____. "The Eisenhower Administration's Fear of Empowering the Chinese." *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 111, No. 3 (Autumn, 1996): 505-521.
- Fordham, Benjamin O. "Domestic Politics, International Pressure, and the Allocation of American Cold War Military Spending." *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 64, No. 1 (February 2002): 63-88.
- Gaddis, John L. *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- _____. *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.
- Garver, John W. *The Sino-American Alliance: Nationalist China and American Cold War Strategy in Asia*. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1997.
- _____. "Sino-Vietnamese Conflict and the Sino-American Rapprochement." *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 96, No. 3 (Autumn, 1981): 445-464.
- Gleysteen, William H., Jr. *Massive Entanglement, Marginal Influence: Carter and Korea in Crisis*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999.
- Goldstein, Steven M. "Dialogue of the Deaf? The Sino-American Ambassadorial-Level Talks, 1955-1970." Ed. Robert S. Ross and Changbin Jiang. *Re-Examining the Cold War: U.S.-China Diplomacy, 1954-1973*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001. 200-237.

- Gordon, Leonard H. D. "United States Opposition to Use of Force in the Taiwan Strait, 1954-1962." *Journal of American History*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (Dec. 1985): 637-660.
- Grasso, June. *Truman's Two-China Policy, 1948-1950*. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1987.
- Greene, Fred. *U.S. Policy and the Security of Asia*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968.
- Guan, Ang Cheng. "The Bandung Conference and the Cold War International History of Southeast Asia." Ed. See Seng Tan and Amitav Acharya. *Bandung Revisited: The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference for International Order*. Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2008. 27-47.
- Haig, Alexander M., Jr. *Inner Circles: How America Changed the World, A Memoir*. New York: Warner Books, 1992.
- Harrelson, Max. *Fires All Around the Horizon: The U.N.'s Uphill Battle to Preserve the Peace*. New York: Praeger, 1989.
- Hilsman, Roger. *To Move a Nation: The Politics of Foreign Policy in the Administration of John F. Kennedy*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1964.
- Hilton, Brian. "'Maximum Flexibility for Peaceful Change': Jimmy Carter, Taiwan, and the Recognition of the People's Republic of China." *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (September 2009): 595-613.
- Holdridge, John. *Crossing the Divide: An Insider's Account of Normalization of U.S.-China Relations*. Lanham: Rowan and Littlefield, 1997.
- Horne, Alistair. *Kissinger: 1973, The Crucial Year*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2009.
- Hunt, Michael, and Steven Levine. "The Revolutionary Challenge to Early U.S. Cold War Policy in Asia." Eds. Warren Cohen and Akira Iriye. *The Great Powers in East Asia, 1953-1960*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990. 12-34.
- Irish, Marian D. "Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy: The Quemoy Crisis of 1958." *Political Quarterly* 31 (April-June 1960): 151-162.
- Isaacson, Walter. *Kissinger: A Biography*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992.
- Jack, Homer A. *Bandung: An on-the-spot description of the Asian-African Conference, Bandung, Indonesia, April 1955*. Chicago: Tower Freedom, 1955.

- Kallgren, Joyce K. "China 1978: The New Long March." *Asian Survey*, Vol. 19, No. 1, A Survey of Asia in 1978: Part I (January 1979): 1-19.
- Kennedy, John F. *Why England Slept*. New York: Wilfred Funk, 1940 [1961].
- Kissinger, Henry. *White House Years*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1979.
- _____. *Years of Upheaval*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1982.
- _____. *Years of Renewal*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999.
- _____. *On China*. New York: Penguin Press, 2011.
- Kochavi, Noam. *A Conflict Perpetuated: China Policy During the Kennedy Years*. Westport: Praeger, 2006.
- Kusnitz, Leonard. *Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: America's China Policy, 1949-1979*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984.
- Kutler, Stanley I. *Abuse of Power: The New Nixon Tapes*. New York: Free Press, 1997.
- Lawson, Eugene K. "China's Policy in Ethiopia and Angola." Eds. Warren Weinstein and Thomas H. Henriksen. *Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations*. New York: Praeger, 1980. 167-182.
- Lee, Luke T. "Treaty Relations of the People's Republic of China: A Study of Compliance." *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, Vol. 116, No. 2 (Dec., 1967): 244-314.
- Levine, Steven. "China and the Superpowers: Policies toward the United States and the Soviet Union." *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 90, No. 4 (Winter, 1975-1976): 637-658.
- _____. "China Policy during Carter's Year One." in *Asian Survey*, Vol. 18, No. 5 (May, 1978): 437-447.
- Logevall, Fredrik. "Politics and Foreign Relations." *Journal of American History* Vol. 95, No. 4 (March 2009): 1074-1078.
- Lumbers, Michael. *Piercing the Bamboo Curtain: Tentative Bridge-Building to China During the Johnson Years*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008.

- MacDonald, Douglas J. "Communist Bloc Expansion in the Early Cold War: Challenging Realism, Refuting Revisionism." *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Winter, 1995-1996): 152-188.
- Maddux, Thomas R. *Years of Estrangement: American Relations with the Soviet Union, 1933-1941*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1980.
- Mann, James. *The China Fantasy: How Our Leaders Explain Away Chinese Repression*. New York: Viking, 2007.
- Martin, Edwin W. *Divided Counsel: The Anglo-American Response to Communist Victory in China*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986.
- May, Ernest, ed. *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC-68*. Boston: Bedford Books, 1993.
- McMahon, Robert J. *Dean Acheson and the Creation of an American World Order*. Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2009.
- Moore, John Allphin, Jr., and Jerry Pubantz. *To Create a New World? American Presidents and the United Nations*. New York: Peter Lang, 1999.
- Nixon, Richard. *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1978.
- Ong, Joktik. "A Formosan's View of the Formosan Independence Movement." *The China Quarterly*, No. 15 (July-September, 1963): 107-114.
- O'Sullivan, Christopher. *Sumner Welles, Post-War Planning, and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
- Parker, Jason C. "The Cold War II: The Eisenhower Administration, the Bandung Conference, and the Reperiodization of the Postwar Era." *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 30, No. 5 (November 2006): 867-892.
- Paterson, Thomas G. "Fixation with Cuba: The Bay of Pigs, Missile Crisis, and Covert War Against Fidel Castro." Ed. Thomas G. Paterson. *Kennedy's Quest For Victory: American Foreign Policy, 1961-1963*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989. 123-155.
- Pfaltzgraff, Robert L., Jr. "China, Soviet Strategy, and American Policy." *International Security*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Autumn, 1980): 24-48.

- Pollack, Jonathan D. "The Implications of Sino-American Normalization." *International Security*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Spring 1979): 37-57.
- Ramet, Sabrina P. *The Three Yugoslavias: State-building and Legitimation, 1918-2005*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2006.
- Ravenhold, Albert. "Formosa Today." *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (July 1952): 612-624.
- Richman, John. *The United States and the Soviet Union: The Decision to Recognize*. Raleigh: Camberleigh & Hall, 1980.
- Ross, Robert S. *Negotiating Cooperation: The United States and China, 1969-1989*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.
- _____. "Introduction." Eds. Robert S. Ross and Jiang Changbin. *Re-Examining the Cold War: U.S.-China Diplomacy, 1954-1973*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001. 1-24.
- Rusk, Dean. *As I Saw It*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1990.
- Shen, James. *The U.S. and Free China: How the U.S. Sold Out its Ally*. Washington, D.C.: Acropolis Books, 1983.
- Sigal, Leon V. "The 'Rational Policy' Model and the Formosa Straits Crises." *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (June 1970): 121-156.
- Skinner, G. William. "Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 321: Contemporary China and the Chinese (January 1959): 136-147.
- Spence, Jonathan. *Search for Modern China*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1990.
- Spenser, Daniela. *The Impossible Triangle: Mexico, Soviet Russia, and the United States in the 1920s*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999.
- Stolper, Thomas E. *China, Taiwan, and the Offshore Islands*. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1985.
- Stueck, William, Jr. *The Road to Confrontation: American Policy toward China and Korea, 1947-1950*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982.
- Sutton, Antony C., and Patrick M. Wood. *Trilaterals Over Washington*. Scottsdale: The August Corporation, 1978.

- Taylor, Jay. *The Generalissimo's Son: Chiang Ching-kuo and the Revolutions in China and Taiwan*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- _____. *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.
- Thomson, James C. "On the Making of U.S. China Policy, 1961-1969: A Study in Bureaucratic Politics." *China Quarterly* 50 (April-June 1972): 220-243.
- Trilateral Commission. *Trilateral Commission Task Force Reports, 1-7: A Compilation of Reports from the First Two Years of the Trilateral Commission*. New York: New York University Press, 1977.
- _____. *Trilateral Commission Task Force Reports, 9-14: A Compilation of Reports to the Trilateral Commission completed in 1976 and 1977*. New York: New York University Press, 1978.
- Truman, Harry S. *Memoirs, Vol. I: 1945, Year of Decisions*. New York: Signet, 1955.
- _____. *Memoirs, Vol. II: 1946-1952, Years of Trial and Hope*. New York: Signet, 1956.
- Tucker, Nancy Bernkopf. *Patterns in the Dust: Chinese-American Relations and the Recognition Controversy, 1949-1950*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.
- _____. *Uncertain Friendships: Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945-1992*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994.
- _____. *Strait Talk: United States-Taiwan Relations and the Crisis with China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.
- _____. "A House Divided: The United States, the Department of State, and China." Eds. Warren Cohen and Akira Iriye. *The Great Powers in East Asia, 1953-1960*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990. 35-62.
- _____. "Taiwan Expendable? Nixon and Kissinger Go to China." *Journal of American History*, Vol. 92, No. 1 (June 2005): 109-135.
- Twitchett, Denis, and John K. Fairbank, eds. *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 14: The People's Republic, Part 1: The Emergence of Revolutionary China 1949-1965*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987 [1995].

- Ungar, E. S. "The Struggle Over the Chinese Communist in Vietnam, 1946-1986." *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 60, No. 4 (Winter, 1987-1988): 598-599.
- Vance, Cyrus. *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America's Foreign Policy*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983.
- Waldron, Arthur. "From Nonexistent to Almost Normal: U.S.-China Relations in the 1960s." Ed. Diane B. Kunz. *The Diplomacy of the Crucial Decade: American Foreign Relations During the 1960s*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. 219-250.
- Weinstein, Warren. "Chinese Aid and Policy in Central Africa." Eds. Warren Weinstein and Thomas Henriksen. *Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations*. New York: Praeger, 1980. 145-166.
- Whiting, Allen. *China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960.
- Xia, Yafeng. *Negotiating with the Enemy: U.S.-China Talks during the Cold War, 1949-1972*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.
- Zhai, Qiang. *China and the Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
- Zhang, Shu Guang. *Economic Cold War: America's Embargo against China and the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1949-1963*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001.
- Zubok, Vladislav M., and Constantine Pleshakov. *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996.

Other Sources Cited

Various articles from *The New York Times*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and *Time* magazine.

The Nine Power Treaty, 6 February 1922, http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/pre-war/9_power.html

The Convention of the League of Nations, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp

Oral History Interview with Mark F. Ethridge, Truman Presidential Library,
<http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/ethridge.htm>

Mao Zedong, "Farewell, Leighton Stuart!" 18 August 1949,
http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-4/mswv4_67.htm

Memorandum, Kennan to Acheson, 21 August 1950, Truman Presidential Library,
http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/korea/large/documents/pdfs/ki-14-7.pdf#zoom=100

The Cairo Declaration, 1 December 1943,
http://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/shiryo/01/002_46/002_46_0011.html

Memorandum, Rusk to Acheson and attached draft of NSC 101/1, 17 January 1951, Record Group 59: General Records of the Department of State, Records of the Executive Secretariat, Records Relating to NSC Policy Papers, File: "NSC 101," National Archives.

Special Estimate 20, "The Probable Consequences of Certain Possible U.S. Courses of Action with Respect to Communist China and Korea," 22 December 1951,
http://www.foia.cia.gov/docs/DOC_0000270907/DOC_0000270907.pdf

United States. Congress. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. Subcommittee on Far East and Pacific. Hearings. "U.S. Policy Toward Asia. Part 2." 15-16 February, and 8-10, 16, and 17 March 1966. 89th Cong., 2nd sess. ProQuest Congressional, Texas A&M University Libraries, 6 September 2012.

William Burr, ed., "New Archival Evidence on Taiwanese 'Nuclear Intentions', 1966-1976," *National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 19*,
<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB20/>

The 2nd Carter-Ford Presidential Debate, 6 October 1976,
<http://www.debates.org/index.php?page=october-6-1976-debate-transcript>