

THE TAIWAN STRAIT CRISES, 1954-1958: CHINA, THE
UNITED STATES AND TAIWAN

PANG YANG HUEI

(B.A. Dip Ed. (Hons), NTU)
(M.A., NTU)

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Summary

This thesis re-examines the Taiwan Strait Crises and offers new perspectives to understanding the crises through the use of newly available primary sources, the simultaneous presentations of the perspectives of the PRC, US and ROC, the re-evaluation of some of the major arguments in existing scholarship, and the incorporation of analyses relating to “culture,” “tacit communication-tacit accommodation” and “ritualization.” Hitherto, most accounts have depicted the PRC-ROC-US relations in the 1950s as mired in hostilities and nuclear threats. However, this thesis contends that the situation was more complicated: tacit communication that was discernible during the Geneva Conference of 1954 had allowed for tacit accommodation to take root by 1958. Such developments in the PRC-ROC-US relations were contested and negotiated at every stage of the Crises. Facilitating this process was the ritualization of discourses, embodied in signaling and symbolic gestures. Such a ritualization of foreign policy often happened in a “symbiotic” manner, consisting of “soft” and “hard” elements, as an *untidy* confluence of nationalistic discourse, symbols, cultural images, military posturing, canvassing for international support, and diplomatic negotiations. The emphasis on “untidy” underscored that the process of tacit accommodation was not an inexorable process destined to succeed, but one influenced by a plethora of factors – international relations, domestic developments and issues of national identity of Beijing, Taipei and Washington. Such an analytical lens has enabled this thesis to appreciate the complexity of adversarial and alliance diplomacy, so aptly captured in the many nuances of the PRC-ROC-US relations, as revealed in the unfolding of the many turbid diplomatic episodes of the Taiwan Strait Crises from 1954 to 1958: the “silent poetry” of diplomacy, the tacit allowances for withdrawals, the muted back-channel negotiations, the paradoxically loud denunciations, and the sound and fury of artillery bombardments.

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List of Abbreviations

AFPFL	Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League
AH	Academia Historica (Taipei, ROC)
AID	Agency of International Development
AMFA	Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Beijing, PRC)
ANZAM	Australia, New Zealand, Malayan area (defence pact)
AOBD	Asia: Official British Documents
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CMC	Central Military Commission [PRC]
CFEP	US Council on Foreign Economic Policy
CINCPAC	Commanders, U.S. Pacific Command
CKS	Chiang Kai-shek
CMC	Central Military Commission
CPB	Communist Party of Burma
CPPCC	Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
CPR	<i>China Political Reports 1911-1960</i>
CWM	<i>Collected Works of Mao Tse-tung</i>
DLF	Development Loan Fund
D.P.R.K.	Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)
ECC	East China Command
EDC	European Defence Community
FCDA	Federal Civil Defence Administration
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FO	Foreign Office
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
GLF	Great Leap Forward
GDR	German Democratic Republic (East Germany)
GRC	Government of the Republic of China
HM	Her Majesty (Government)
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JCRR	Joint Sino-American Commission on Rural Construction
JGMWG	<i>Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao</i>
KIA	Killed-in-action
KMT	Kuomintang
MJN	<i>Mao Zedong junshi nianpu</i>
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PRC
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OCB	Operations Coordinating Board
ROC	The Republic of China (Taiwan)
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SW	<i>Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung</i>

TPER	Taiwan Political and Economic Reports
PCKSMC	Proceedings of Conference on Chiang Kai-shek and Modern China
PDDE	The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower
PPUS	Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States
PRC	The People's Republic of China (Mainland China)
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander, Europe
SWJN	<i>Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series</i>
UAR	United Arab Republic
USIA	United States Information Agency
WPV	Workers' Party of Vietnam (Laodong)
ZEJW	<i>Zhou Enlai junshi wenxuan</i>
ZEWW	<i>Zhou Enlai Waijiao Wenxuan</i>
ZENP	<i>Zhou Enlai Nianpu</i>
ZJDCC	<i>Zongtong Jianggong dashi changbian chugao</i>
ZJSYZ	<i>Zongtong Jianggong Sixiang Yanlun Zongji</i>

List of Dramatis Personae

Ali, Mohammed, Prime Minister of Pakistan to August 1955

Ali Sastroamidjojo, Prime Minister of Indonesia to July 1955, and again March 1956- March 1957

Allison, John M., Ambassador to Japan to February 1957; thereafter Ambassador to Indonesia

Bao Dai, Chief of State of Vietnam

Beam, Jacob D., Ambassador to Poland; U.S. Representative in the Ambassadorial talks with the People's Republic of China from September 1958

Bohlen, CHARLES U., Ambassador in the Soviet Union

Bowie, ROBERT R., Director of the Policy Planning Staff, Department of State; Special Adviser to the United States Delegation at the Geneva Conference.

Bundy, William P., Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs for President Lyndon B. Johnson

Burke, Admiral Arleigh A., USN, Chief of Naval Operations from August 1955

Buu Loc, Prince, Prime Minister of the State of Vietnam until June 16, 1954.

Cabot, John M. Ambassador; to Pakistan (1952-1953); to Colombia (1957-1959); to Brazil (1959-1961); and to Poland (1962-1965)

Caccia, Sir Harold A., Deputy Under Secretary for Administration in the British Foreign Office; British Ambassador to the United States

Cao Juren, Chinese writer & journalist based in Hong Kong.

Carney, Admiral Robert B., USN, Chief of Naval Operations to August 1955

Casey, Richard G. Australian Minister for External Affairs

Chase, Major General William C., USA, Chief, Military Assistance Advisory Group, Formosa, to July 1955

Chen Cheng, Vice President of the Republic of China; President of Executive Yuan (Premier) from July 1958

Chen Yi, Vice Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China; Foreign Minister from February 1958

Chiang Ching-kuo, Lieutenant General, Deputy Secretary General, National Defense Council, Republic of China; Minister without Portfolio from July 1958

Chiang Kai-shek. Generalissimo. President of the Republic of China

Chou Chih-jou. ROC Chief of Staff General

Churchill, Sir Winston L. S. Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

Cutler, Robert. Special Assistant for National Security Affairs to President Eisenhower

DE LATTRE BE TASSIGNY, JEAN, General, French High Commissioner and Commander in Chief. French Forces in Indochina. 1950-1951.

Dillon, C. Douglas, Deputy Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs through June 1958; Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, July 1958-June 1959; thereafter Under Secretary of State

Doan, Major General L.L., Chief, Military Assistance Advisory Group, Taiwan, July 1958-July 1960

Douglas, Lewis W. US ambassador to Britain (1947-1959)

Drumright, Everett F., Consul General in Hong Kong through February 1958; Ambassador to the Republic of China from March 1958

Dulles, Allen W., Director of Central Intelligence

Dulles, John Foster, Secretary of State until April 1959

Eden, Sir Anthony, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister to April 1955; Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury, April 1955-January 1957

Eisenhower, Dwight D., President of the United States

ELY, PAUL, General, French High Commissioner and Commander in Chief, French Forces In Indochina after June 3, 1954.

Goodpaster, Brigadier General Andrew J., Staff Secretary to President Eisenhower

George, Senator Walter F., Democratic Senator from Georgia and Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to January 1957

Gray, Gordon, Director of the Office of Defense Mobilization until July 1958; thereafter President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs

Green, Marshall, Regional Planning Adviser, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Department of State, until July 1959; Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, July-October 1959; Counselor of Embassy in Korea from November 1959

Gromyko, Andrei Andreevich, Soviet Foreign Minister

Hagerty, James C., Press Secretary to the President

Hammarskjold, Dag, Secretary-General of the United Nations

Herter, Christian A., Under Secretary of State until April 1959; thereafter Secretary of State

Hilsman, Roger. Assistant Secretary of State for President JF Kennedy

Ho CHI MINH, President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Hoang Van Hoan, DRV Ambassador to China

Hoover, Herbert J., Under Secretary of State to February 1957

Hsiao Po. ROC diplomat

Huan Xiang, Director of the Department of West European and African Affairs, People's Republic of China Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Adviser to the P.R.C. Delegation at the Geneva Conference; Chinese chargé d'affaires

Huang Hua, Counselor in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of China; Adviser and Spokesman for the P.R.C. Delegation at the Geneva Conference

Humphrey, George E., US Secretary of Treasury

Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, Indonesian Ambassador to France

Johnson, U. Alexis, Ambassador to Czechoslovakia to December 1957; United States representative in ambassadorial talks with the People's Republic of China, August 1955-December 1957

Khrushchev, Nikita S., First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; Chairman of the Council of Ministers from March 1958

Knowland, Senator William F., Republican Senator from California; Minority Leader and Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Koo, V.K. Wellington, Ambassador of the Republic of China to the United States to May 1956; judge, International Court of Justice, from 1957

Laniel, Joseph. Prime Minister of France 28 June 1953 – 18 June 1954

Liu Tzu-jan. ROC government employee; murder victim.

Lloyd, Selwyn, British Foreign Minister until July 1960; thereafter Chancellor of the Exchequer

LODGE, HENRY CABOT, JR., United States Representative at the United Nations.

Malcolm MacDonald, British Labour MP

Macmillan, Harold, British Prime Minister

Makins, Sir Roger M., British Ambassador to the United States to October 1956; thereafter Joint Permanent Secretary of the Treasury

Mao Zedong, Chairman of the People's Republic of China through April 1959; Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party

McCloy, John J. Chairman of the Chase Manhattan Bank,

McConaughy, Walter P., Ambassador to the Republic of Korea from December 1959

McElroy, Neil H., Secretary of Defense until December 1959

Mendes-France, Pierre, French Prime Minister and Foreign Minister to February 1955

Menon, V.K. Krishna, Chairman of the Indian Delegation to the 10th, 11th, and 12th Sessions of the United Nations General Assembly, 1955-1957; Indian Minister of Defense from April 1957

MENZIES, ROBERT G. Prime Minister of Australia.

Merchant, Livingston T., Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, November 1958-August 1959; Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, August-December 1959; thereafter Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

Metha, G.L. Indian Ambassador to the US

Mir Khan, Pakistani diplomat.

Molotov, Vyacheslav Mikhailovich, First Vice-Chairman of the Soviet Council of Ministers and Member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party to July 1957; Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs to June 1956; Minister of State Control, November 1956-July 1957; Ambassador to Mongolia from August 1957

Mundt, Karl E. Senator Republican (1948 to 1973)

NAM IL. Lieutenant General, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Head of the DP.R.K. Delegation at the Geneva Conference on Korea.

NAVARRE. HENRI, General. Commander in Chief, French Forces in Indochina until June 3, 1954.

Nehru, Brij Kumar (B.K.) Indian Secretary of Economic Affairs ; Ambassador to the US

Nehru, Pandit Jawaharlal, Prime Minister of India and Minister for External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations

Nixon, Richard M., Vice President of the United States

Norodom SIHANOUK, King of Cambodia.

Novikov, K. V., Head of the Southeast Asia Department, Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Member of the Soviet Delegation at the Geneva Conference.

PEARSON, LESTER B., Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs; Head of the Canadian Delegation at the Geneva Conference.

Peng Meng-chi, General, Acting Chief of the General Staff of the Republic of China to June 1955; Chief of the General Staff, June 1955-July 1957; thereafter Commander in Chief of the Army and Taiwan Defense Commander

PHAM VAN Dong, Vice President of the Council of Ministers and Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam; Head of the Delegation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam at the Geneva Conference

Phoui Sananikone. Laotian Foreign Minister

Radford, Admiral Arthur W., USN, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to August 1957

Rankin, Karl Lott, Ambassador in the Republic of China to December 1957

Reynolds, M/Sgt. Robert G. Implicated in the murder of Liu Tzu-jan in 1957.

Rhee, Syngman. President of the Republic of Korea

Ridgway, General Matthew B., USA, Chief of Staff of the Army to June 1955

Robertson, Walter S., Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs through June 1959

Smith, Gerard C., Assistant Secretary of State for Policy Planning; also Department of State Representative on the National Security Council Planning Board

Smith, WALTER BEDELL. Under Secretary of State; Head of the United States Delegation at the Geneva Conference, May 3-June 20, and July 17-21, 1954.

Smoot, Vice Admiral Roland N., Commander, United States Taiwan Defense Command / Military Assistance Advisory Group, Taiwan, from August 1958

SPAACK, PAUL-HENRI. Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs after April 1954; Head of the Belgian Delegation at the Geneva Conference.

Stilwell, General Joseph. Deputy Commander of the South East Asia Command.

Stump, Admiral Felix B., USN, Commander in Chief, Pacific Command and Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet

Taylor, General Maxwell D., Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, through June 1959

Tep Phan, the Cambodian Foreign Minister

Tong, Hollington K., Ambassador of the Republic of China to the United States through July 1958

TREVELYAN, HUMPHREY, British Charge in the People's Republic of China; Member of the United Kingdom Delegation at the Geneva Conference.

Twining, General Nathan F., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff until September 1960

VAN FLEET, JAMES A., General (ret.), former Commander of the United States 8th Army in Korea: appointed Special Representative of President Eisenhower to conduct a military survey in the Far East, April 1954.

Vo NGUYEN GIAP, Minister of Defense and Vice Premier of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam; Commander in Chief of the People's Army of Vietnam.

U Nu. Prime Minister of Burma to June 1956; Prime Minister and Minister of National Planning from March 1957

Wang Bingnan, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Poland, 1958-1960; Representative of the People's Republic of China in Ambassadorial talks with the United States from September 1958

Wang Shu-ming ("Tiger" Wang), General, CAF, Chief of the General Staff of the Republic of China through June 1959; Vice Chairman, Military Strategy Advisory Committee, from June 1959

Wilson, Charles E., Secretary of Defense of October 1957

Yeh, George K.C. (Yeh Kung-ch'ao), Foreign Minister of the Republic of China through July 1958; Ambassador to the United States from September 1958

Young, Kenneth T. Head of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs; Ambassador

Yu Ta-wei, Defense Minister of the Republic of China

Zhang Hanfu, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China

Zhou Enlai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China; Premier of the State Council.

Zhang Wentien. Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs. People's Republic of China; P.R.C. Ambassador in the Soviet Union: P.R.C. Delegate at the Geneva Conference.

Chronology of Major Developments, 1947-1960

28 Feb 1947	2-28 Massacre in Taiwan
1949	CCP leaders visited the Soviet Union in June & December
June 1949	Mao announced “leaning to one side” policy
Aug 1949	US State Secretary Dean Acheson revealed the China White Paper
1 Oct 1949	Official establishment of the People’s Republic of China
10 Dec 1949	Chiang Kai-shek escaped to Taiwan
1949-1955	KMT’s “White Terror” on Taiwan
5 Jan 1950	President Truman announced non-interference in the Chinese Civil War
14 Feb 1950	Sino-Soviet Treaty of Alliance
25 June 1950	Eruption of the Korean War
27 June 1950	US Seventh Fleet patrolled the Taiwan Strait
5 August 1950	Formation of KMT Central Reform Committee
Oct 1950	Chinese People’s Volunteers participated in the Korean War
1 Feb 1951	UN condemned the PRC as the aggressor in Korea
18 May 1951	UN economic sanctions against the PRC
Oct 1952	Chinese Anticommunist National Salvation Youth Corps formed in Taiwan
Nov 1952	Chiang Kai-shek’s major speech at KMT Seventh National Convention
1 Jan 1953	PRC’s launched the First Five Year Plan
27 July 1953	Armistice in Korea
25 Jan 1954	Berlin Conference
29 March 1954	Dulles warned of “United Action” in the Indochina Conflict
5 April 1954	2 nd warning by Dulles
25 April 1954	Churchill and Eden officially rejected United Action.
26 April 1954	Geneva Conference kicked off [Korea Phase]
7 May 1954	Dien Bian Phu taken by N. Vietnamese
8 May 1954	Geneva Conference on Indochina opened
13 May 1954 - 4 July 1954	General James Van Fleet mission to Asia
12 June 1954	France - Laniel Government fell,
18 June 1954	France - New Mendès-France government formed
25-29 June 1954	Churchill in Washington → Joint Seven-Point memorandum
3-5 July 1954	Liuzhou conference: CCP & Lao Dong
21 July 1954	Geneva Accords
3 Sept 1954	PRC shelled Quemoy & Matsu
6-8 Sept 1954	Manila Conference [SEATO]
12 Sept 1954	NSC mtg: introduce resolution in UN Security Council for ceasefire
22 Sept 1954	PLA’s heavy barrage at Quemoy again
7 Oct 1954	Eisenhower decided on ROC-US treaty; CKS waived veto in UN
2 Nov 1954	US Mid term elections results
2 Dec 1954	ROC-US Mutual Defence Treaty
10 Jan 1955	PRC 100 Planes raided Dachens
18 Jan 1955	PLA stormed Yijiangshan
24 Jan 1955	Eisenhower called for Formosa Resolution
28 Jan 1955	Trevelyan - Zhou meeting : PRC rejected UN offer
31 Jan 1955	NZ invited PRC to attend Security Council meeting [Oracle]
31 Jan-8 Feb	Commonwealth Prime Minister’s Conference

1955	
5 Feb 1955	KMT officially asked for US evacuation of Dachens
11 Feb 1955	NY Times revealed US secret pledge to ROC
13 Feb 1955	PLA took Dachen
16 Feb 1955	Washington Post, Joseph Alsop accused the US of not publicizing the "Private assurances."
23-25 Feb 1955	Bangkok Conference
28 Feb 1955	Trevelyan - Zhou meeting : Zhou denounced "dirty deal"
6 Mar 1955	Dulles convinced by Threat posed by PRC : Atomic solution
16 Mar 1955	Eisenhower's news conference: Bullet = Atomic bomb
5 April 1955	Eisenhower "outpost" idea
6 April 1955	Eden became Prime Minister
18-24 April 1955	Bandung Conference
23 April 1955	Zhou Enlai's Bandung surprise
25 April 1955	Radford and Robertson went to Taiwan
26 April 1955	Dulles indicated possibility of bilateral talks
18-23 July 1955	Geneva Summit [Arms talks]
1 Aug 1955	PRC-US Geneva Negotiations
Feb 1956	Khrushchev denounces Stalin at 20 th Party Congress
2 May 1956	Mao's major speech on the Hundred Flowers Policy
1 July 1956	Journalist Cao Juren's visited the PRC
Mid-April 1957	KMT secret emissary Sung Yi-shan's visited Beijing
24 May 1957	Taiwan Riots
8 June 1957	Anti-Rightist Movement
4 Oct 1957	Soviet Union launched Sputnik the first artificial satellite
17 Nov 1957	Mao declared "East wind over West wind" in Moscow
2-25 May 1958	CCP Eight Party Congress launched the Great Leap Forward
15 July 1958	US troops entered Lebanon
31 July 1958	Khrushchev in PRC
6 Aug 1958	Eisenhower received intel on Taiwan Straits
23 Aug 1958	PRC shelled Quemoy & Matsu (23-27 Aug only 5 days intensive)
29 Aug 1958	6 aircraft carriers arrived at the Taiwan Straits
4 Sept 1958	Dulles's Newport speech: warning & Offer
6 Sept 1958	Zhou accepted offer
	Khrushchev's 1 st letter:
7 Sept 1958	"An attack on the CPR which is a great Ally, friend, and neighbour of our country, is an attack on the SU."
11 Sept 1958	Eisenhower did not think there would be war
14-21 Sept 1958	USN protect KMT resupplies of Quemoy
15 Sept 1958	Warsaw negotiations started
	Khrushchev's 2 nd letter:
19 Sept 1958	"Should such an attack be delivered on the CPR, than the aggressor will receive a fitting rebuff by the same means."
20 Sept 1958	Offshore Islands Blockade broken
21 Sept 1958	Eisenhower rejected Khrushchev's 2 nd letter.
5 Oct 1958	PRC suspended bombardment for 1 week
6 Oct 1958	Peng Dehuai's announcement
	PRC suspended bombardment for 2 weeks:
12 Oct 1958	American nation is a "great nation" and that its people "do not want war." They welcome peace." Suspension of shelling is "to enable our compatriots on Quemoy, both military and civilian, to get sufficient

supplies, including food and military equipment, to strengthen their entrenchment." [DSB, 3 Nov 1958]

13 Oct 1958 Sec. McElroy in Taipei: failed to convince Chiang

21 Oct 1958 Dulles in Taipei

23 Oct 1958 Joint US-ROC communiqué: "recovery of mainland through peaceful means"

25 Oct 1958 PRC alternate-day bombardment

1 Jan 1959 Chiang Kai-shek announced "Making Sanmin Zhuyi as vanguard and keeping armed force as the reserve."

10 Nov 1960 'US Policy in Far East' – "reduction of growth & power & prestige of China."

Chapter 1 Introduction

On 3 September 1954, the People's Republic of China (PRC or China), under the leadership of Chairman Mao Zedong, launched a massive artillery bombardment on Nationalist-controlled Quemoy and Matsu islands off the provincial coast of Fujian, triggering the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. This attack prompted the United States (US) to sign the Mutual Defence Treaty with the Republic of China (ROC or Taiwan) on 2 December 1954. On 18 January 1955, the PRC recovered the obscure Nationalist-controlled Yijiangshan islands, two hundred miles north of Taiwan, as a prelude to occupying the neighbouring Dachen islands. Recognizing the hopelessness of defending Dachen, US President Dwight D. Eisenhower persuaded Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek to give them up in return for a clear commitment from the US. On 28 January 1955, the US Congress responded by passing the Formosa Resolution which stated that the US President would aid in Taiwan's defence (including Penghu and "related positions) against any aggression. The 40,000 Nationalist troops on Dachen then evacuated on 8-11 February.¹ To reinforce the commitment of the US to the defence of Taiwan, the president in a news conference on 16 March publicly threatened the use of nuclear weapons.²

The first Afro-Asian Conference was held on 18-24 April 1955 in Bandung, Indonesia, for the purpose of forming a body of non-aligned Third-World nations. PRC premier Zhou Enlai announced on 23 April, to the surprise of the delegates, that China was not averse to negotiating with the US over the Taiwan Strait Crisis. Zhou's conciliatory gesture was quickly accepted by the US over virulent protests by the ROC. The Sino-US Ambassadorial Talks began in Geneva on 1 August 1955. However, the talks did not offer any immediate solution and were suspended indefinitely by December 1957.³

On 23 August 1958, the PRC again targeted artillery barrages on Quemoy and Matsu, igniting the

¹ Robert Garson, *The United States and China Since 1949* (London: Pinter Publishing, 1994), 58-59.

² Bevin Alexander, *The Strange Connection: US Intervention in China* (NY: Greenwood Press, 1992), 160.

³ Roger Buckley, *The United States in the Asia-Pacific Since 1945* (Cam. CUP, 2002), 100-101.

Second Taiwan Strait Crisis.⁴ This resulted in a swift resolution, unlike the First Crisis.⁵

On 6 September, Zhou and Dulles publicly announced possible peaceful measures and this led to the convening of the Sino-US negotiations in Warsaw from 15 September onwards. Both sides claimed credit for the resolution, but on different grounds. The Chinese expressed their satisfaction with the “lesson,” the artillery bombardment of Quemoy and Matsu. Washington reaffirmed its faith in nuclear deterrence. Chiang Kai-shek proclaimed peaceably that the wisdom of Sun Yat-sen's *Sanminzhuyi* (Three Principles of the People) would henceforth guide the ROC's effort in reclaiming China and launched the next phase of Taiwan's economic policy. The speed of the conflict resolution and the different explanations offered beg more questions than answers.

The Taiwan Strait Crises were critical flash points for PRC-ROC-US relations. Eisenhower singled out these crises and the continuing hostilities with China as causing him the utmost frustration in the Cold War. Mao declared that without a resolution of the Taiwan question, “[w]e do not want conciliation with the USA,” and the PRC moved on to develop its own atomic bomb in January 1955.⁶ Chiang saw the crises as a threat to the political survival of the ROC and resorted to various stratagems and tactics in its relations with the US and the PRC.

This thesis will re-examine the Taiwan Strait Crises by providing an in-depth study of the actions and interactions of the PRC, US and ROC from 1954 to 1958. How this thesis will be structured will be explained in this chapter. A literature review will first be presented: it will begin by briefly introducing the major monographs on the Taiwan Strait Crises, followed by a discussion of two main themes that emerge from existing scholarship – the causes of the Taiwan Strait Crises and the

⁴ Warren I. Cohen, *American Response to China: A History of Sino-American Relations* 4th ed. (NY: Columbia University Press, 2000), 186.

⁵ Akira Iriye is among the earliest to note a particular aspect of the 1950s Sino-US relations: “So long as they [PRC] were sure that the US would not resort to force, they could remain content with the existing tension and meanwhile cultivate the friendship of Afro-Asian nations.” Elsewhere, Iriye commented on the state of Soviet-US relations: “... so long as both sides tacitly acknowledged the policy of co-existence, there was unlikely to develop any military confrontation.” Turning Iriye's two arguments around, I would argue that in the 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis, *both* the US and China were contented with the status quo delineated by the crisis, with tacit acknowledgement also *extended* to the PRC. Both factors account for the speed of the conflict resolution. See *Across the Pacific: An Inner History of American-East Asian Relations* (NY: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1967), 296, 305.

⁶ Cited in Gordon H. Chang, “Eisenhower and Mao's China,” in *Eisenhower: A Centenary Assessment*, ed. Gunter Bischof & Stephen E. Ambrose (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1995): 191; Mao Tse-tung, interview with Eduardo Mora Valverde, March 3, 1959, *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 16, no. 25 (July 15, 1964): 5-6; John Wilson Lewis & Xue Litai *China Builds the Bomb* (Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1988), 37-38.

mode of communication between the US and China.

1. Literature Review

1.1 Monographs on the Taiwan Strait Crises

There are at least six monographs on the Taiwan Strait Crises. M.H. Halperin's 1966 report on the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis, commissioned by the US Department of Defense, was among the earliest research undertaken that had access to US primary documents. Halperin looked at the 1958 Crisis for lessons to be drawn for "decision-making in crises" and argued for the need to deliver decisive warnings to the PRC. Based mainly from the perspectives of Washington and US commanders in the field, large parts of Halperin's study remain classified.⁷

Thomas E. Stolper focused on political issues in discussing the two Taiwan Strait Crises in his 1985 monograph. To Stolper, Mao was more interested in preventing the formation of "two Chinas." As Mao feared that the US-ROC Mutual Defense Treaty of 1955 would provide the momentum for a *de jure* separation of Taiwan from China, he began the 1958 crisis incrementally to keep the US entangled, but not enough for them to declare separation.⁸ Stolper also debunked contentions that the crisis represented an impending "military" occupation of the islands. He further argued that both China and the US wanted negotiations to resolve the conflict. Hindered by the scarcity of sources, Stolper treated the 1958 crisis only briefly.⁹

An updated account of ROC-US relations from 1950 to 1955 was presented masterfully by Robert Accinelli in his 1996 monograph. Accinelli's most important contribution was detailing the role of the ROC in the First Taiwan Strait Crisis and arguing that Chiang Kai-shek proved to be no mere supplicant malleable to Washington's wishes.¹⁰ In a shorter 2001 article on the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, Accinelli stressed how the White House's concern for Taiwan's security had also

⁷ M.H. Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis: A Documented History," Memorandum, RM-4900-ISA, December 1966, Rand Cooperation.

⁸ Thomas E. Stolper, *China, Taiwan, and the Offshore Islands* (NY: ME Sharpe, 1985), 115, 119, 125.

⁹ John Garver, review of *China, Taiwan, and the Offshore Islands* by Stolper, *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46, no. 4 (Nov 1987): 916.

¹⁰ Robert Accinelli, *Crisis and Commitment: United States Policy toward Taiwan, 1950-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of N. Caroline Press, 1996), 157-183

“strained relationship with Congress . . . almost to the breaking point.”¹¹

John W. Garver examines the ROC-US relations over a longer period from the 1950s to the 1970s in his 1997 monograph. Garver argues that the “bi-polar” rivalry pitting the US against communism explained the inability of the US and the PRC to come to an accommodation over the Taiwan issue in the 1950s. While Washington enjoyed Taiwan’s strategic position in containing communism, it despaired over Chiang’s independent tactics. Yet, as the overall benefits outweighed the cost and the Taiwan issue served to strain Sino-Soviet relations, Washington endured Chiang. Garver further contended that Eisenhower recognized the futility of nuclear threats and hence turned to negotiations. The works of both Accinelli and Garver depended heavily on US sources.¹²

Among Taiwanese scholars, the works of Lin Cheng-yi and Chang Su-ya stood out. While Lin’s 1995 monograph on the US policy toward China during the 1958 crisis was based on his Master’s thesis, Chang has examined various episodes in the ROC-US relations in fifteen articles. Both scholars have exhaustively used US archival sources and offered important insights in highlighting the nuances of Taipei’s responses. However, they did not have access to Chiang Kai-shek’s Papers as Taipei’s archival materials on the post-1949 period were largely closed in the 1990s.¹³

Two mainland Chinese scholars were prominent in their studies of the Taiwan Strait issue. The works of Su Ge and Dai Chaowu represented a new wave of Chinese scholarship that integrated extensive US published materials, especially the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series,

¹¹ The GOP was a minority party in the Congress then. Robert Accinelli, “‘A Thorn in the Side of Peace’ The Eisenhower Administration and the 1958 Offshore Islands Crisis,” in *Reexamining the Cold War US China Diplomacy 1954-1972*, ed. Robert S. Ross & Jiang Changbin, (Cam., MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2001), 106-140.

¹² But when the interests of the US and PRC merged in the 1970s, the “Taiwan issue was easily set aside.” John W. Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance: Nationalist China and American Cold War Strategy in Asia* (Armonk: ME Sharpe, 1997), 112-133.

¹³ Lin Cheng-yi 林正義, *Yi jiu wu ba nian Tai hai wei ji qi jian Meiguo dui hua zheng ce* 一九五八年臺海危機期間美國對華政策 [1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis: US Policy] (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu, 1985); Chang Su-ya 張淑雅, “The Taiwan Strait Crises and U.S. Attitude toward ‘Reconquering the Mainland in the 1950s’” 台海危機與美國對「反攻大陸」政策的轉變, *Bulletin of the Institute of Modern History* 中央研究院近代史研究所集刊中央研究院近代史研究所集刊, 36 (December 1991): 231-295; “Ambassador Karl L. Rankin and U.S. Policy toward Taiwan in the 1950s” 藍欽大使與一九五〇年代的美國對台政策, *European-American Studies* 歐美研究, 28:1 (March 1998): 193-262; “Patterns of U.S. Policymaking with Respect to Taiwan in the 1950s” 一九五〇年代美國對臺決策模式分析 *Bulletin of the Institute of Modern History* 40 (June 2003): 1-54.

with published Chinese materials. While Su's 1998 textbook treatment on Sino-US relations and the Taiwan issue detailed Mao's "fighting while negotiating" style of crisis management, Dai examined perceptively the 1954-1958 period and underscored the Soviet factor. However, both works were hindered by the lack of access to archival sources in the PRC.¹⁴

1.2 Causes of the Taiwan Strait Crises

Apart from monographs, the Taiwan Strait Crises have been analyzed in articles and chapters in books as case studies for theories in international relations and strategic studies, as a development in military history, and as part of the larger historical pattern of Sino-American relations.¹⁵ In this scholarship, a major theme focuses on the causes of the Taiwan Strait Crises, explained in such terms as Sino-US misperceptions and miscalculations and China's domestic imperatives.

In a 1990 article on China's policy on the Taiwan Strait Crises, a PRC scholar, He Di, contended that misperceptions plagued Sino-US relations.¹⁶ He argued that the US could not differentiate the military attacks on Yijiangshan-Dachen from the political shelling on Quemoy-Matsu during the 1954-55 crisis. He also saw the 1958 crisis as a logical outcome of the first, with Mao miscalculating the intensity of the US resolve, seen in the considerable increase of the US naval presence in the Taiwan Strait by September 1958.¹⁷ He Di noted that there were gains as well since the ensuing 1958 Sino-US diplomatic talks in Warsaw gave China a channel of communication with the US, at the same time demonstrating to the world its firm stand on the "One-China" policy. However, there were incongruities in He Di's arguments. Despite his earlier contention of

¹⁴ Su Ge 苏格, *Mei guo dui hua zheng ce yu tai wan wen ti* 美国对华政策与台湾问题 [American China policy and the Taiwan issue] (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 1998); Dai Chaowu 戴超武, *Di dui yu wei ji de nian dai: 1954-1958 nian de zhong mei guan xi* 敵對與危機的年代：1954-1958 年的中美關係 (Beijing: Shehui Kexue Wenxian chubanshe, 2003).

¹⁵ For a sample of textbooks by scholars of different persuasions, see: Judith F. Kornberg & John R. Faust, *China in World Politics: Policies, Processes, Prospects* 2nd ed. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Pub, 2005), 132-135; Michael Yahuda, *The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific, 1945-1995* (London: Routledge, 1996), 56-57; Warren I. Cohen, *American Response to China*, 184-185.

¹⁶ The Chinese viewed the subsequent Formosa Resolution and US nuclear threats as unexpected negative outcomes. See He Di, "The Evolution of the People's Republic of China's Policy toward the Offshore Islands," in *The Great Powers in East Asia*, ed. Warren I. Cohen & Akira Iriye (NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 1990), 222-245.

¹⁷ He Di also discussed the impact of such international events as Sino-Soviet relations, the stalemate in Sino-US negotiations and the provocative Middle East Crisis, where US Marines landed in Lebanon in July 1958. He argued that the PRC intended to recover Quemoy and Matsu only through an artillery blockade, hoping for a similar outcome as the ROC's voluntary evacuation of Dachen in 1955. He Di, "The Most Respected Enemy: Mao Zedong's Perception of the United States," *The China Quarterly* 137 (Mar 1994), 144-158.

misperceptions, He Di then reverted to the official PRC's tagline that the 1958 Quemoy operation was a "well-orchestrated, integrated strategy."¹⁸

On the US side, Gordon H. Chang had similarly stressed misperceptions, arguing in a 1988 article that Eisenhower, far from restrained, brought the US to the "nuclear brink" in 1955; disaster was averted only because Chiang refused to give up the islands and China did not occupy them.¹⁹

However, there are troubling areas to Chang's arguments. The possibility of the PRC's military actions in March-April 1955 triggering a nuclear war seemed a straw man. Was the issue of Eisenhower going over the brink all about the seemingly impending Chinese invasion of Quemoy and Matsu? More importantly, would Mao, a battle-hardened revolutionary, give up crucial strategic surprise by engaging in incremental annexation that stretched for nine months from September 1954 to May 1955?

Chang and He Di subsequently co-authored in 1993 an article on the 1955 crisis which reiterated their arguments. But one contradiction remained. Beijing supposedly "did not understand the serious effect its activity and statements would have in the United States... [and believed that] the political reaction of the US should be ignored." Yet, Chang and He Di later stated that the "[US] nuclear threats against the mainland not only stiffened Communist resolve, they also helped convince Beijing to launch its own nuclear weapons program."²⁰ Did Beijing genuinely scoff at the US nuclear threat or did Mao understand well the nature of the threat? Chang and He Di could not have it both ways. Their efforts in this respect raised more questions than answers: did the misperception of 1955 extend to the 1958 crisis?

Zhang Shu Guang also highlighted the importance of misperceptions during the Taiwan Strait

¹⁸ He Di used only memoirs, published documents and official accounts, with no access to Chinese archives. Only in two places, military plans for the 1955 crisis and territorial aims for the second, where He Di cited anonymous interviews were there novel findings. He Di, "The Evolution," 241.

¹⁹ Gordon H. Chang, "To the Nuclear Brink: Eisenhower, Dulles, and the Quemoy-Matsu Crisis." *International Security* 12, no.4 (Spring 1988): 96-123.

²⁰ He Di used *Zhonggong Zhongyang Wenjian Huibian* (A Compilation of CCP Central Documents) to buttress his arguments. This is a significant departure from his previous two articles. Unfortunately these documents remain to this day restricted. See Gordon H. Chang and He Di, "The Absence of War in the US-China Confrontation over Quemoy and Matsu in 1954-1955: Contingency, Luck, Deterrence?" *The American Historical Review* 98, no. 5 (Dec 1993): 1500-1524.

Crises. In his 1992 book on Sino-US relations from 1949 to 1958, Zhang blamed the US for its ham-fisted threat of nuclear retaliation and China for “overestimat [ing] the opportunity for success and miscalculat [ing] the role of belligerency” in the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis. Sino-US misperceptions, Zhang argued, arose from the different strategic cultures of the antagonists and this led to the outbreak of various Sino-US hostilities.²¹ However, if the misperceptions were so deep, why did another Korean War not break out again? Zhang’s analysis appeared to downplay the degree of tacit understanding reached by both nations.

Qiang Zhai, too, agreed that misperceptions lay at the root of most Sino-US crises. In his 1994 book on Sino-British-US relations from 1949 to 1958, Zhai uncritically interpreted the PRC’s role in the First Taiwan Strait Crisis as benign, asserting that the CCP’s intentions were limited to “secur[ing] the tranquil external environment necessary for China’s domestic development.”²² Zhai preferred to blame the blighted perceptions of the Eisenhower administration for escalating the conflict.²³ Despite acknowledging the overall strategic flexibility of the US administrations, at important junctures, Zhai chose to depict the US as hindered by excessive moralism, emotional politics and “volatile” domestic politics, as opposed to “rational” Britain.²⁴ The corollary implication would be a “realistic” and “cautious” Mao not given to flights of fancy.²⁵

Another explanation for the outbreak of the Taiwan Strait Crises stresses the domestic imperatives of the PRC. In a 1972 article, Allen Whiting posited that China’s actions could be explained as “reactive, defensive and for deterrence purposes only.” Whiting did not think that China’s

²¹ Apparently, “neither side had the aggressive intentions that the other feared.” Zhang Shu Guang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture: Chinese-American Confrontation, 1949-1958* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 268, 282.

²² Together with “domestic politics,” Zhai uses such approaches as “rational choice, organizational and bureaucratic models.” Qiang Zhai, *The Dragon, the Lion & the Eagle: Chinese/ British/ American Relations, 1949-1958* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State Univ. Press, 1994), 4; James T. H. Tang, review of *The Dragon, the Lion & the Eagle*, by Qiang Zhai, *The China Journal* 35, (Jan 1996), 227-229; William O. Walker III, review of *The Dragon, the Lion & the Eagle*, by Qiang Zhai, *The Historian* 57, no.3 (Spring 1995): 628-629.

²³ Zhai, 154; Marc Gallicchio, review of *The Dragon, the Lion & the Eagle*, by Qiang Zhai, *The Journal of American History* 82, no.1 (Jun 1995):350.

²⁴ See Steve Tsang, review of *The Dragon, the Lion & the Eagle*, by Qiang Zhai, *China Review International* 2, No. 1 (Spring 1995): 289-291; Rosemary Foot, review of *The Dragon, the Lion & the Eagle*, by Qiang Zhai, *The International History Review* 17, no. 3 (Aug 1995): 632-633.

²⁵ Su-Ya Chang, review of *The Dragon, the Lion & the Eagle*, by Qiang Zhai, *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 4, no.3 (Fall 1995): 287-288; Schaller, review of *The Dragon, the Lion & the Eagle*, 620.

revolutionary ideology predisposed it to act belligerently,²⁶ citing that in all the nine forays beyond her borders, China had always reacted defensively and preferred to signal strongly and retain “options for cutting her losses.”²⁷ During the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, Whiting argued that although Mao had the bombardment under control, the intense response from the US caught him off-guard; however, Mao surmised that China was in no imminent danger of being attacked as the US only had a “few troops to send back and forth.” Whiting proceeded to contend that shoring up Chinese domestic needs, such as increasing agricultural and industrial output, were more important factors in Mao’s calculations.²⁸

In their 1980 book on China’s politics of strategy and diplomacy, Melvin Gurtov and Byong-Moo Hwang further argued that China’s urgent domestic economic reforms needed a sound national security policy.²⁹ While Gurtov and Hwang assumed the rationality of China’s foreign policymaking despite its heavy doses of Maoism,³⁰ they stressed more fundamentally the preeminence of “domestic objectives over international ones.” Viewing domestic developmental issues as a determining factor in all of Chinese foreign policy deliberations,³¹ they argued that the world situation in 1958, with the US invasion of Lebanon, unrest in Tibet and the installation of

²⁶ See Allen S. Whiting, “The Use of Force in Foreign Policy by the People’s Republic of China,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 402 (Jul. 1972): 55-66.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 55, 57.

²⁸ Buttressing his interpretation of a pragmatic Mao not given to idiosyncrasy in foreign policy, Whiting utilized four speeches given by Mao during the Quemoy Crisis. The new texts were collected in a bootlegged Cultural Revolution collection, *Mao Zedong Sixiang Wansui*. From the texts, Mao emerged as extremely well informed and sensitive to the security treaty Taiwan had with the US. Mao was also candid about the level of escalation he was prepared to raise. Echoing George & Smoke’s interpretation of Chinese limits, Mao sought to force the Nationalists off the island through “slow strangulation by blockade.” In the 1960s, with the increasing availability of published works of Mao’s speeches and groundbreaking declassified People’s Liberation Army’s (PLA) *Gongzuo Tongxun* (work bulletins), scholars displayed creative interpretations of Chinese foreign policies. See J. Chester Cheng, ed., *Gongzuo Tongxun. The Politics of the Chinese Red Army: A translation of the Bulletin of Activities of the PLA* (Cal.: Stanford University, 1966); *Mao Zedong Sixiang Wansui* (n.p., Aug 1969); *Miscellany of Mao Tse-tung Thought* (Arlington, Virginia: JPRS, 1974); J. Chester Cheng, ed., *Gongzuo Tongxun. The Politics of the Chinese Red Army: A translation of the Bulletin of Activities of the PLA* (Cal.: Stanford University, 1966). Whiting, “New Light on Mao: Quemoy 1958: Mao’s Miscalculations,” *CQ* 62 (Jun 1975): 263-270; Whiting, “Mao China and the Cold War,” in *The Origins of the Cold War in Asia*, ed. Yonosuke Nagai & Akira Iriye (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1977): 252-276.

²⁹ Melvin Gurtov and Byong-Moo Hwang, *China under Threat: The Politics of Strategy and Diplomacy* (Bal.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980); Melvin Gurtov, “The Taiwan Strait Crisis Revisited: Politics and Foreign Policy in Chinese Motives,” *Modern China* 2, no. 1 (Jan 1976): 49-103.

³⁰ Ronald C. Keith, review of *China Under Threat*, by Gurtov & Hwang, *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 14, no.4 (Dec 1981): 870-872.

³¹ Gurtov and Hwang also propose a Chinese Marxist-Maoist explanatory grid to cast light onto the perceptions of the Chinese. Wang Gungwu, in *China and the World Since 1949* (1977), has advocated interpreting China’s foreign policy on its own terms, along three themes: “The desire to assert independence, the problems of modernity, and the determination to make revolution.” For Gurtov and Hwang, Chinese foreign policy can be similarly categorized by three impulses: an Asian nationalistic impulse, a Marxist revolutionary impulse, and a socialist developmental impulse. See Gurtov and Hwang, 17.

nuclear missiles in South Korea, looked very threatening to Mao, who then decided on the limited bombardment of Quemoy as it was cheap, safe and “deflect[ed] an immediate threat.”³² China’s need to deflect threats in 1958 was also a position supported by John W. Lewis and Xue Litai who, in their 1988 book, *China Builds the Bomb*, examined the PRC’s domestic development from the perspective of its burgeoning nuclear programme. According to Lewis and Xue, Beijing embarked on its nuclear course in January 1955 in response to perceived American threats;³³ in addition, the Great Leap Forward was intended to complement China’s nuclear programme. From this perspective, Lewis and Xue argued that Mao had every reason in 1958 to deflect possible threats from the US to safeguard China’s crucial multi-faceted domestic programmes.³⁴

Along the same vein, Thomas J. Christensen persuasively argued in his 1996 work on Sino-American relations from 1947 to 1958 that leaders often had to use scare tactics in their foreign policy rhetoric in order to garner support for unpopular domestic strategies. According to Christensen, Mao in 1958 wanted to cultivate domestic support for his radical Great Leap Forward,³⁵ which he envisioned to be an economic enterprise that combined industrial expansion, formation of communes, and atomic research and development.³⁶ Since sacrifices were needed if China was to surpass the US and become a force respected within the socialist fraternity,³⁷ Mao sought neither a strategic probe into the US-KMT defense nor a takeover of Formosa itself, but a reinstatement of the civil war mentality using tensions generated by the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis.³⁸

³² Complicating the matters were the actions of the US and Taiwan. Warsaw negotiations were going nowhere and harassments from Taiwan were increasing; the crisis “manufacturing” methods of the Nationalists include 32 secret raids on the PRC’s coastal areas within six months. Gurtov and Hwang, 75, 80, 84, 91.

³³ Leon V. Sigal combined an acknowledgment of the PRC’s security needs with a scathing critique of US foreign policy for its many threats made against the PRC. Sigal thus interpreted the PRC’s bombardments as “reprisals,” meant only as a “severe punishment” to Taiwan, with no danger of an expansion of conflict. See Leon V. Sigal, “The ‘Rational Policy’ Model and the Formosa Straits Crises,” *International Studies Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (Jun 1970): 121-156.

³⁴ By carefully scrutinizing all US intelligence briefings, Lewis & Xue found that, contrary to Chang’s thesis, the US was very clear about the limitations of the 1955 Chinese bombardment and China’s “military weakness.” Lewis & Xue, *China Builds the Bomb*, 37-38.

³⁵ Christensen proposes approaching Sino-US relations through a “two-level mobilization model,” combining the analysis of domestic with foreign policies. Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958*.

³⁶ Jean-Marc E. Blanchard, review of *Useful Adversaries*, by Thomas J. Christensen, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 557, (May 1998): 180-181.

³⁷ Christensen, 214.

³⁸ Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, review of *Useful Adversaries*, by Thomas J. Christensen, *Political Science Quarterly* 113, no.1 (Spring 1998): 139-140.

In more recent scholarship, Chen Jian contended that an ideology of “continuous revolution” underscored both Mao’s domestic economic policies and China’s foreign policy orientation. In his 2001 book, *Mao’s China and the Cold War*, Chen found domestic concerns and foreign policy mutually reinforcing throughout China’s developments from the 1940s to the early 1970s, and his analysis included a chapter on the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis.³⁹ “China’s external behaviour,” Chen wrote, “was primarily shaped by domestic concerns.”⁴⁰ Chen maintained that time and again Mao was able to exploit China’s “victim mentality” to garner domestic support for his domestic and foreign policies. For example, when the Soviet Union proved tardy in giving economic aid to China, the same specter of foreign encroachment was zealously used as a rationalization to embark on such economic policies as the Great Leap Forward, all in the name of societal transformation towards socialism.⁴¹ Hence, to Chen, the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis can be interpreted as yet another instance to illustrate how Mao’s contests with the Soviet Union and the US had transformed into a “struggle for true Communism” as well as “a struggle for China’s integrity.”⁴²

1.3 Mode of Communication

While the causes of the Taiwan Strait Crises explained in such terms as Sino-US misperceptions and miscalculations and China’s domestic imperatives represents one major theme in existing scholarship, the mode of communication between the US and China constitutes a second major theme. Here, the interpretations focus on such issues as probing and deterrence, tacit communication, management of crises, and negotiations and tenuous peace.

Emphasizing the PRC’s purposeful probing and the US responses, Halperin and Tang Tsou asserted that China’s revolutionary ideology was belligerent and China’s action in the Taiwan

³⁹ In this book, Chen Jian combines his four previously published articles (on the Chinese Civil War, American’s “Lost Chance,” the Korean War, and China’s involvement in the Vietnam War) with four new areas of inquiry (the first Indochina War, the Polish and Hungarian Crises, the 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis, and Nixon’s rapprochement with China). Each of the chapters can be read as stand-alone pieces, with a few central themes running through the entire analysis. See Chen Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

⁴⁰ Chen, 82, 279.

⁴¹ Daniel S. Markey, review of *Mao’s China and the Cold War*, by Chen Jian, *Political Science Quarterly* 117, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 328-329.

⁴² Chen Jian 陈兼, “Geming yu weiji de niandai” 革命与危机年代 [Revolution and Crisis], *Lengzhan guojishi yanjiu* 冷战国际史研究 [Cold War International Studies], no. 7 (Dec 2008), 46-96.

Strait was the logical outcome. For the 1958 crisis, they argued in 1967 in a chapter in an edited volume, *Sino-Soviet Relations and Arms Control*, that Mao and Khrushchev only wanted a probe “but in a way that would not risk a major attack by the United States.”⁴³ The conjecture of Morton H. Halperin and Tang visualized a near-monolithic communist bloc in the classic traditional Cold War interpretation of the 1950s where the Soviet Union played a large part in the affairs of the “Chinese Communist movement.”⁴⁴ To Halperin and Tang, the main purpose of the Communist Chinese was limited: the Chinese would tightly control the probe and force the Nationalists off the offshore islands should the US commitment be weak.⁴⁵ There was never any danger of the Chinese provoking a nuclear war.⁴⁶

Against the communist probe, Alexander George and Richard Smoke lamented the “vulnerability” of the US deterrence strategy in their 1974 book on the theory and practice of deterrence in American foreign policy,⁴⁷ and viewed the 1958 crisis as a “depressing replay of the earlier [1955 crisis].” George and Smoke criticized the White House for lacking the “classical statesmanship in supplementing deterrence with conciliation and flexibility” as they concurred that the US did not have effective counter-measures to China’s low-level threats. George and Smoke conceded that Beijing was well aware of the extent it was allowed to probe. Beijing’s main aim was to kick-start deadlocked Sino-US negotiations called off by the US, and it would be all the better if the Nationalists could be forced off Quemoy with advanced artillery. Washington weighed accurately the cautiousness of China’s bombardment and responded in kind. To George and Smoke, the key to resolve this “gap” between “action policy and declaratory policy” was to have a “dependable channel of direct communication.”⁴⁸

In contrast, in his 1987 work, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance*, Richard Betts discerned in

⁴³ Morton H. Halperin & Tang Tsou, “The 1958 Quemoy Crisis,” in *Sino-Soviet Relations and Arms Control*, ed. Morton H. Halperin (Mass.: MIT, 1967), 265-303.

⁴⁴ Mark Selden, “Yan’an Communism Reconsidered,” *Modern China* 21, no. 1 (Jan 1995), 16.

⁴⁵ See Morton H. Halperin, *China and the Bomb* (NY: Prager, 1965), 15, 55-62

⁴⁶ Analyzing the data of the communist shells fired on Quemoy, Jonathan T. Howe’s study also followed Halperin and Tang’s interpretation that the Chinese Communists were only interested in a limited probe. See *Multicrisis: Seapower & Global Politics in the Missile Age* (Cam., Mass.: MIT, 1971), 242.

⁴⁷ Alexander L. George & Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1974).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 370, 376, 381, 384.

Washington a tendency for a “risk-maximizer” approach. To Betts, Eisenhower’s confidence in brandishing nuclear threats underscored a position of strength and China had the dubious distinction of being the target of most of the US nuclear threats. Betts argued that Eisenhower’s nuclear threats in the 1958 crisis came about as “he saw little danger that war would occur and force the issue.” Hence, the White House was definitely not “pussy-footing” over nuclear attacks, but responding pragmatically.⁴⁹

Other studies, however, have pointed out the tenuous communication maintained by the belligerents. Charles A. McClelland offered *the* counter-intuitive perspective. Analyzing the 1958 crisis in a 1962 article, McClelland noted that the antagonists were highly “restrain[ed]” and the US and China reached out for each other through “tacit communication.” In addition, McClelland observed that the real intentions were conveyed through actions in the Taiwan Strait rather than in the 1958 Warsaw negotiations. Although McClelland was the earliest scholar who pointed out the tenuous communication taking place in Sino-US relations during the 1958 crisis, he did not elaborate on the sinews of “tacit communication” or place the Sino-US “restraint” in the larger context of “tacit communication” since he speculated that the restraint was due to “bureaucratized line of minimum action.”⁵⁰

J. H. Kalicki’s 1975 study of Sino-US political and military relations in the 1950s went a step further by claiming that both countries improved their management of crises over time and a “Sino-American crisis system” emerged in 1955. The 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis proved Kalicki’s argument that both China and the US “demonstrated impressive flexibility of action as well as appreciation of desirable, self-imposed limits on their crisis behaviour.”⁵¹ Although Kalicki viewed revolutionary fervor as having prompted China’s boldness in confronting the US over the Taiwan

⁴⁹ Through the lens of nuclear deterrence, Richard Betts examined the saliency of two theories in international crises: the balance of interest and the balance of power. The crises were divided into two types: high risk (involving direct superpowers) and low risk (through proxies). Betts postulated that both theories while useful have their limitations in describing the Americans and the Soviets. Richard Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1987), 22, 70, 76 & 78.

⁵⁰ Charles A. McClelland, “Decisional Opportunity and Political Controversy: the Quemoy Case,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 6, no. 3 (Sept 1962): 201-213.

⁵¹ J. H. Kalicki, *The Pattern of Sino-American Crises: Political-Military Interactions in the 1950s* (Cam.: CUP, 1975).

Strait in 1958, he was quick to identify the realism that pervaded the military action. While Kalicki did not consider fundamental issues being settled during the Taiwan Strait Crises, he did see “the establishment and relative stabilization of a balance of power system in the Far East.”⁵²

For Gordon H. Chang, an overarching realpolitik outlook similarly evolved out of Washington’s China Policy and crisis management seemed to have taken the form of Eisenhower’s nascent US attempts at triangulation politics in the 1950s. In his 1990 book on US-China-Soviet relations from 1948 to 1972, Chang argued that the US had always recognized that tensions existed between the Soviet Union and China and had thus sought to exploit such tensions.⁵³ To Chang, despite all the hot air of “unleashing Chiang,” Eisenhower and Dulles found civility towards the Soviets a more effective and cheaper method in containing China.⁵⁴

From another perspective, Nancy Bernkopf Tucker contended in 1990 in a book chapter on Dulles and US-Taiwan-China relations that despite the overall conservatism of Sino-US relations, Washington did maintain tenuous peace and attempt negotiations with Beijing. Tucker demonstrated that Dulles was actively restraining Chiang through the Mutual Defense Treaty.⁵⁵ In the aftermath of the 1958 Crisis, Tucker also viewed Dulles as having made a conscious choice of resorting to negotiations to ease tension in the Strait as Dulles believed that peace could be achieved through the “two-China” policy, even though both the Communists and the Nationalists would vigorously oppose him.⁵⁶

⁵² Ibid, 218, 172-175, 187, 190.

⁵³ Gordon H. Chang, *Friends and Enemies: The United States, China, and the Soviet Union, 1948-1972* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1990), 3; Marc Gallicchio, review of *Friends and Enemies*, in *Pacific Historical Review* 61, no.4 (Nov 1992): 584-585; Arthur N. Waldon, review of *Friends and Enemies*, in *Orbis* 34, no.2 (Summer 1990): 470-471; Russell D. Buhite, review of *Friends and Enemies*, in *The American Historical Review* 96, no. 3 (Jun 1991): 848-849.

⁵⁴ The ideal situation would be “not when Beijing disabused itself of Moscow, but when Moscow prompted by Washington, abandoned its militant Asian partner.” For an early discussion of triangulation politics, see Gerald Segal, *The Great Power Triangle* (London: Macmillan Press, 1982). However, Chang’s position was odd given that his 1988 and 1993 papers condemned Eisenhower’s inferior handling of the 1955 Taiwan Straits Crisis. How did his papers square with the general assessment in his book? Chang did not seek to enlighten his readers. See Frank Ninkovich, review of *Friends and Enemies: The United States, China, and the Soviet Union, 1948-1972*, by Gordon H. Chang, *The Journal of American History* 78, no. 1 (Jun 1991): 384-385.

⁵⁵ Richard D. Challener agreed with most of Tucker’s observations. See “John Foster Dulles: Theorist/ Practitioner,” in *Centerstage: American Diplomacy since WWII*, ed. Leon Carl Brown (NY: Holmes & Meier Pub., 1990), 346.

⁵⁶ Tucker, “John Foster Dulles and the Taiwan Roots of the ‘Two Chinas’ Policy,” in *John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War*, ed. R. H. Immerman (NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1990), 235-262.

Similarly, Steven M. Goldstein noted Sino-US attempts at negotiations in his 2001 book chapter, highlighting how the Sino-US ambassadorial talks from August 1955 to December 1957 functioned as Washington's tactical posturing for world opinion in the UN. Although Goldstein gave a scathing indictment of the US negotiation efforts led by Dulles, peace was nonetheless preserved.⁵⁷ Goldstein also showed how Jacob Beam, the US ambassador, received explicit instructions from Dulles on 4 October 1958 during the second Taiwan Strait Crisis, with the US hoping that the PRC would use the Warsaw negotiations to end bombardment. Although this was not an exercise in seeking "any bold new initiatives,"⁵⁸ Goldstein maintained that Washington was willing to maintain the status quo in the Taiwan Strait with Beijing's tacit understanding.

2. Scope of Study

There is thus an interesting spectrum of scholarship on the Taiwan Strait Crises. However, the availability of new sources from three archives – Academia Historica (Taipei), Archives of the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Beijing) and the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library (Abilene) – has made possible a re-examination of the crises. These sources will now be introduced, followed by the framework of analysis of this thesis.

2.1 Primary Sources

Scholars of the Chinese Republican era have long consulted Academia Historica. However, it was only in recent years that the post-1953 papers of Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo are released. This liberalization of materials coincided with the tenure of the former Chen Shui-bien Presidency (2000-2008). Although the materials are rich, significant restrictions exist. This accounts for the slow trickle of research based on such sources. One major challenge is the prohibition of electronic reproduction of materials. As photocopying and digital reproduction of the materials are disallowed, researchers can only laboriously copy by hand or type in their computers the relevant materials. Despite this drawback, the bulk of the references and the analysis

⁵⁷ Steven M. Goldstein, "Dialogue of the Deaf? The Sino-American Ambassadorial-Level Talks," in *Reexamining the Cold War US China Diplomacy 1954-1972*, 200-237.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 225.

of the ROC in the Taiwan Strait Crises in this dissertation are drawn from this gold mine of materials, the Chiang Kai-shek Papers and the Chiang Ching-kuo Papers. As existing scholarship have discussed the roles of the ROC during the Taiwan Strait Crises from largely US sources and a US-centric angle, this study will address this shortcoming by using these newly available sources to provide a more balanced analysis.

The second source of materials this dissertation draws from is the newly opened Archives of the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Beijing). Materials start from 1949 but sources from 1955 to 1960 were only made available in May 2006.⁵⁹ Up to 70% to 80% of the archives are declassified. While researchers could print most materials for a fee, they are prohibited from printing materials that either have significant handwritings of Mao Zedong or Zhou Enlai or are memoranda of conversations that are verbatim records of the speeches of Mao and Zhou. These materials are usually the most valuable and researchers have to endure the rigors of manual copying. The discussion of the PRC during the Taiwan Strait Crises in this dissertation have benefited prodigiously from this archival collection. This archive has also published three volumes of documents that contain a significant amount of materials not duplicated in the archives.⁶⁰

American sources on the Taiwan Strait Crises are more easily accessible. Yet, no adequate study of the Taiwan Strait Crises can depend solely on the multiple volumes of the *Foreign Relations of the United States*, however excellent these are. Commercial microfilms of the primary sources pertaining to Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles are available from the mid-1980s onwards. Documents such as the National Security Council Series were either partially or fully declassified at that time. To obtain the latest declassified documents, this thesis has benefited enormously from a research trip to the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library. New materials declassified from 2006

⁵⁹ 12 Nov 2008 marked the release of the third batch of materials (1961-1965). According to Zhang Sulin, an MFA archivist, the fourth batch (1966-1977) may be declassified within the next three years, by 2011.

⁶⁰ Director Zhang Sulin mentioned that only 60% of the archives are released. This represents one of the pitfalls of using such sources and thus I have meticulously cross-referenced with other sources. For additional information see, Zhang Sulin, "The Declassification of Chinese Foreign Ministry Archival Materials: A Brief Introduction," *CWHIPB*, Issue 16 (Fall 2007-Winter 2008), 11.

onwards were consulted on-site.⁶¹ The archival staff had further granted on-the-spot Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Elsewhere, one particular commercial database, *Declassified Documents Reference System*, has enabled the tracking down of obscure materials missed during the field trip to Abilene. The public FOIA website of the Central Intelligence Agency also has many new materials which are useful for this dissertation.

2.2 Framework of Analysis

The availability of the above new sources has made it possible and timely to undertake a re-examination of the Taiwan Strait Crises. This thesis will do so by providing an in-depth study of the actions and interactions of the PRC, US and ROC from 1954 to 1958. It will explore the following three main questions: Why did the Taiwan Strait Crises erupt in September 1954 and August 1958 respectively? How did each crisis unfold, from outbreak to resolution? What can such a development of the Taiwan Strait Crises tell us about the foreign relations of the PRC, US and ROC in the 1950s?

In addressing these questions, this thesis will contribute to existing scholarship in five ways. First, this thesis represents the first work in which the aforementioned newly available sources from the ROC, PRC and US have been used and integrated to present simultaneously the perspectives of the ROC, PRC and US on the Taiwan Strait Crises. While existing scholarship on the US-PRC-ROC relations do exist, most have relied largely on US sources, supplemented by published PRC and ROC materials. In contrast, 75% of the primary sources used in this thesis have not been cited in existing scholarship.⁶² Moreover, at each stage in the making and development of the Taiwan Strait Crises from 1950 to 1958, this thesis will pay almost equal attention to developments in the PRC, US and ROC. This differs again from much of existing scholarship, with their focus primarily on Sino-US relations and in a few instances, on the US-ROC relations.

⁶¹ Colleen Cearley, "Eisenhower Presidential Library releases formerly secret documents," *News Release*, 2 Feb 2006, DDEL.

⁶² This use of new primary documents has enabled and highlighted the need for a simultaneous and detailed presentation of the perspectives of the ROC, PRC and US on the Taiwan Strait Crises.

Second, this thesis will show how some of the main arguments in existing scholarship can be supported by the newly available archival sources and how some other arguments can be more clearly elucidated and elaborated. One example of such analysis will be the reasons for the outbreak of the Taiwan Strait Crises. The nuclear deterrence strategy of the US offers a second example. Another example will be how the PRC and the US went about seeking international support for their respective courses of action and how their alliances with other countries were affected by the developments of the Taiwan Strait Crises. A fourth example will be how the ROC planned for its *fangong dalu* (counter-offensive against the mainland) mission and the stratagems used by Chiang and his emissaries to bind the US to Taipei, as well as how the *fangong dalu* mission and rhetoric changed from 1950 to 1958.

Third, while existing scholarship have rightly noted the importance of such factors as realism, strategy, economics, ideology and domestic concerns in analyzing the Taiwan Strait Crises, what is given inadequate attention is the consideration of cultural contexts. Hence this thesis will highlight as well relevant aspects of “culture” to better understand the intricacies of the Sino-US-ROC relations.⁶³ Historian Martin Stuart-Fox has argued that in examining China’s foreign relations, affective domains, “irrational” factors, “cultural presuppositions” and “historical influences” offer better explanatory powers in assessing strategic matters and military planning, as well as providing insights on “how peaceful intercourse with other states should be conducted.”⁶⁴ Walter Hixson has similarly contended that a nation’s international behavior flows directly from its culture and national identity and that for the foreign relations of the US, its national identity is its locomotive to action and policy.⁶⁵ In more general terms, Frank Costigliola and Thomas Paterson have observed that “culturally-conditioned feelings, such as injured pride, resentment, and a desire for

⁶³ My understanding of “culture,” as used in this thesis, draws from Akira Iriye’s exposition. “Cultural relations,” according to Iriye, “may be defined as interactions, both direct and indirect, among two or more cultures. Direct interactions include physical encounters with people and objects of another culture. Indirect relations are more subtle, involving such things as a person’s ideas and prejudices about another people, or cross-national influences in philosophy, literature, music, art, and fashion.” See Akira Iriye, “Culture and International History”, in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, ed. Michael J Hogan and Thomas G Paterson, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ., 2004), p. 242.

⁶⁴ Martin Stuart-Fox, *A Short History of China and Southeast Asia: Tribute, Trade and Influence* (NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2003), 4.

⁶⁵ Walter L. Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy: National Identity and US Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 1-4.

respect or revenge, can influence supposedly rational perceptions and decisions about foreign relations.”⁶⁶ Seen in such contexts, what appeared to be “irrational” moves to the US, such as Chiang Kai-shek’s refusal to budge from the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu or the odd-day bombardments by the PRC during the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, might well have been accepted as epitome of wisdom or “coded” as “toughness” by the Asians.⁶⁷

Fourth, in investigating the mode of communication in Sino-US relations, some of the existing scholarship have made references to such notions as “tacit communication,” “Sino-US crisis system,” and “negotiations and tenuous peace.” This thesis will go further by demonstrating how conflict resolution in Sino-US relations took place in four main phases. One, how the foundation for a framework of “tacit communication” was laid as early as April-July 1954 during the Geneva Conference which was convened to discuss matters pertaining to the conflicts in Korea and Indochina, prior to the outbreak of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. Two, how further steps in “tacit communication” were constructed during the early months of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, leading to “tacit accommodation” in the later months. Three, how progress in “tacit accommodation” was made but at the same time how its limitations became apparent during the period between the two crises. Four, how “tacit accommodation” was then consolidated, enabling the rapid resolution of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis. In other words, while the Taiwan Strait Crises highlighted conflicts and tensions in Sino-US relations (the predominant stress in existing scholarship), this thesis will proceed further to argue that embedded in the crises were also seedlings that prepared the ground for conflict resolution in Sino-US relations.

Fifth, in explaining the transformation of “tacit communication” to “tacit accommodation,” this thesis will show the significance of “ritualization” in Sino-US relations. It will demonstrate how both parties engaged in ritualized actions that facilitated the process of conflict resolution. That

⁶⁶ Frank Costigliola and Thomas G. Paterson, “Defining and Doing History of United States Foreign Relations: A Primer,” in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, ed. Michael J. Hogan & Thomas G. Paterson (NY: CUP, 2004), 16.

⁶⁷ Frank Costigliola discusses the “signaling of masculine-coded ‘toughness’,” see “Reading for Meaning: Theory, Language, and Metaphor,” in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, ed. Michael J. Hogan & Thomas G. Paterson (NY: CUP, 2004), 285.

rituals can be useful in “conflict management” is seen in the cross-cultural work of Philip Gulliver, which showed how ritualization could function in negotiation and mediation in the societies of East Africa and North America.⁶⁸ The conflict resolution scholarship of Lisa Schirch has also placed rituals squarely in “the process of peace building.”⁶⁹ This thesis will demonstrate how the US and China achieved a limited but shared understanding of the *modus operandi* of the other party through their ritualized actions in terms of their use of public symbols, identity issues, cultural images and official discourses on one hand, and military posturing, diplomatic canvassing for international support, and negotiations on the other hand. While the symbolic nature of China’s military maneuvers during the Taiwan Strait Crises is mentioned in some of the existing scholarship, none has analyzed Sino-US interactions in the context of “ritualization.” Yet, “ritualization” is particularly salient in unraveling the turbid diplomatic episodes of the Taiwan Strait Crises: the “silent poetry” of diplomacy, the tacit allowances for withdrawals, the muted back-channel negotiations, the paradoxically loud denunciations, and the sound and fury of artillery bombardments.⁷⁰ In the words of Robert Darnton: “By picking at the document where it is most opaque, we may be able to unravel an alien system of meanings.”⁷¹

In short, through the use of the newly available primary sources, the simultaneous presentations of the perspectives of the PRC, US and ROC, the re-evaluation of some of the major arguments in existing scholarship, and the incorporation of analyses relating to “culture,” “tacit communication-tacit accommodation” and “ritualization,” this thesis will re-examine the Taiwan Strait Crises and offer new perspectives to understanding the crises.

To address all the above issues, this thesis is structured chronologically. The genesis of the Taiwan Straits Crises could be traced to 1950 when President Harry S. Truman positioned the Seventh

⁶⁸ Mark Davidheiser, “Rituals and Conflict Transformation: An Anthropological Analysis of Ceremonial Dimensions of Dispute Processing,” in *Beyond Intractability*, eds. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess (Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder, 2006), http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/rituals_and_ceremonials/ (accessed 17/6/2008).

⁶⁹ Lisa Schirch, *Ritual and Symbol in Peacebuilding* (Bloomfield, Kumarian Press, 2005), 13.

⁷⁰ For an elaboration on the “silent poetry” of negotiations, see Schirch, *Ritual and Symbol in Peacebuilding*, 9.

⁷¹ Robert Darton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 5.

Fleet in the Taiwan Strait to prevent hostilities between the PRC and the ROC. In order to understand the origins and making of the Taiwan Strait Crises, it is thus important to deal with the major developments in the foreign relations of the US, PRC and ROC from 1950 to April 1954, which is the topic of Chapter 2. After a brief account of events from 1945 to 1953, detailed analysis will be given to developments from 1953 to April 1954, which were important to understanding subsequent Sino-US interactions during the Geneva Conference and had implications for the unfolding of the Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1954-55. As the ROC was the most directly affected party right from the start, how the Taiwan Strait issue played out in Taiwan from 1950 to April 1954 will also be examined.

The Geneva Conference is the topic of Chapter 3. Held from 26 April to 21 July 1954, the Conference was significant in providing a major diplomatic platform for the US and China to undertake negotiations and work out differences so as to reach an understanding on outstanding issues regarding the “Korean question” and the “question of restoring peace in Indochina.” How Sino-US relations evolved during this Conference and what implications such developments had for the making of the Taiwan Strait Crises, as well as what actions Taiwan, not a participant in Geneva, took during this period and what impact such actions had in the unfolding of the Taiwan Strait Crises, will be discussed.

On 3 September 1954, China launched a massive artillery bombardment on Quemoy and Matsu islands, triggering the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. This attack prompted the US to sign the Mutual Defence Treaty with Taiwan on 2 December 1954. China also courted neutralist countries in Asia in the immediate aftermath of the crisis. After the Geneva Conference, what developments in July and August 1954 led to the eruption of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis? How did China, the US and Taiwan act following the outbreak of this crisis? These are the two main questions raised in Chapter 4, which will analyze the major events related to the outbreak of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis from July to December 1954.

On 18 January 1955, the PRC upped the ante in the First Taiwan Straits Crisis by recovering the obscure Nationalist-controlled Yijiangshan islands as a prelude to occupying the neighbouring Dachen islands. Eisenhower in a news conference on 16 March publicly threatened the use of nuclear weapons. At the first Afro-Asian Conference held on 18-24 April 1955 in Bandung, Indonesia, PRC premier Zhou Enlai announced that China was not averse to negotiating with the US over the Taiwan Strait Crisis. Zhou's conciliatory gesture was quickly accepted by the US over virulent protests by the ROC. What were the motivations for the actions of China, the US and Taiwan and how did Sino-US relations develop from the eve of the Yijiangshan campaign to the Bandung Conference? Chapter 5, focusing on developments from January to April 1955, will explore these key questions.

Zhou's conciliatory gesture in April 1955 at the Bandung Conference could be seen to mark the end of the First Taiwan Crisis which began in September 1954. Chapter 6 will examine the sustaining linkages in the US-PRC-ROC relations that occurred between May 1955 and December 1957. It will examine four areas: the Sino-US Ambassadorial Talks (August 1955-December 1957), the ROC-PRC secret back-channels (1955-1957), the May 1957 Taiwan Riots, and the ROC and its *fangong* mission (1955-1957). What the major developments in these four areas were and what their significance were for the US-PRC-ROC relations are the leading questions posed in this chapter.

After the Sino-US Ambassadorial Talks ceased in December 1957, further talks were suspended indefinitely. On 23 August 1958, the PRC again targeted artillery barrages on Quemoy and Matsu, igniting the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis. However, on 6 September, both Zhou and Dulles publicly announced possible peaceful measures and this led to the convening of the Sino-US negotiations in Warsaw from 15 September onwards. What were the positions of the ROC, US and PRC just prior to the outbreak of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis and what developments led to the eruption of this crisis? How did China, the US and Taiwan act following the outbreak of this crisis and why was Sino-US tacit accommodation reached almost immediately in the wake of the Crisis? In what

ways did China and the US seek to justify their actions to their domestic public and in the international arena and how did they attempt to court domestic and international support? These are the main questions raised in Chapter 7, which will examine developments from January to September 1958, culminating in the outbreak of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis.

Once Zhou Enlai accepted Washington's offer of restarting the negotiations in Warsaw, the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis retreated in urgency. Chapter 8, exploring developments from late-September to December 1958, wraps up the discussion of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis. How did the PRC, the US and the ROC relate to each other and in the international arena in the final months of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis? In what ways did the PRC respond to third-party proposals from Britain, the Soviets and neutralist Asian countries? How did Beijing and Washington consolidate their tacit accommodation and how did the ROC respond? Why did the PRC and the ROC again engage in secret back-channels? What were the positions of the three protagonists in the aftermath of the Crisis? These are the main questions posed in this chapter.

As this thesis is structured and analyzed chronologically thus far, the Conclusion will collate and present the analysis thematically, spanning the period 1954-58 and the 1950s in general. It will address the 3 main questions that this thesis sets out to explore: Why did the Taiwan Strait Crises erupt in September 1954 and August 1958 respectively? How did each crisis unfold, from outbreak to resolution? What can such a development of the Taiwan Strait Crises tell us about the foreign relations of the PRC, US and ROC in the 1950s?

On this note, it is now appropriate to examine the origins and making of the Taiwan Strait Crises from 1950 to April 1954, the topic of the next chapter.

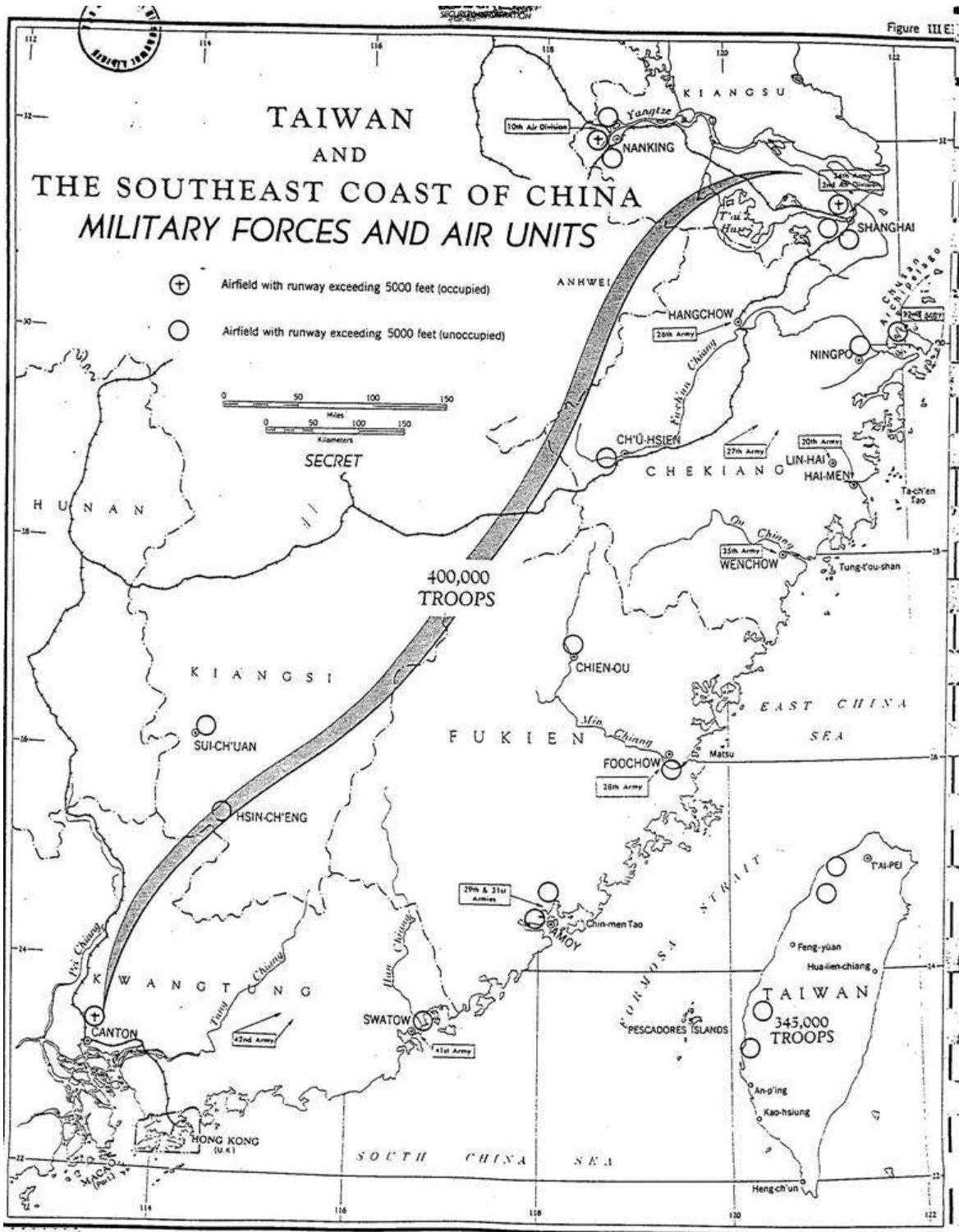


Figure 1 Taiwan & the Southeast Coast of China (DDEL)

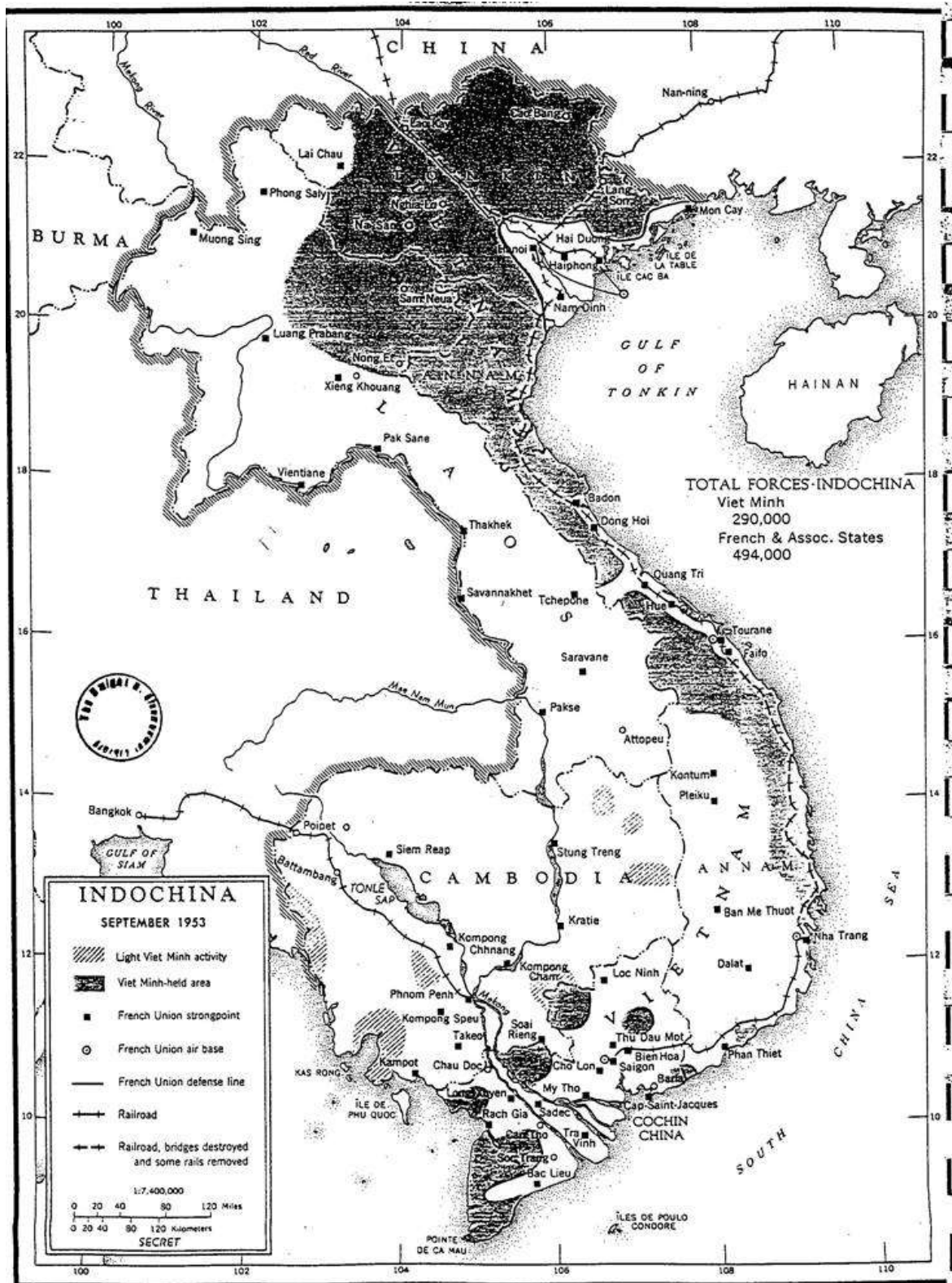


Figure 2 Indochina – September 1953 (DDEL)

Chapter Two: The Making of the Taiwan Strait Crises, 1950-April 1954

The genesis of the two Taiwan Strait Crises could be traced to 1950 when President Harry S. Truman positioned the Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Strait to prevent hostilities between the PRC and the ROC. How did such a situation emerge? How did it unfold to April 1954, just before the convening of the Geneva Conference? What were the main developments in the foreign relations of the US, China and Taiwan from 1950 to April 1954 and how did the Taiwan Strait feature in these relations? In what ways would these developments be linked to the future unfolding of the Taiwan Strait Crises?

This chapter will explore the above issues in three main sections. The first section will analyze US policy toward China, Taiwan and Asia. After a short account of the genesis of the Taiwan Strait Crisis from 1945 to 1953, it will proceed to an in-depth study of four major developments from 1953 to April 1954, which were important to understanding subsequent Sino-US interactions during the Geneva Conference and had implications for the unfolding of the Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1954-55: the views of the CIA and Nixon; US domestic conservatism; the debate on US economic sanctions against China; and the formulation of “United Action,” a US proposal to stem the communists’ high tide in Indochina that would lead to the formation of the regional defence organization, Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), in September 1954. The second section will investigate the foreign relations of China, beginning with a brief narrative of events from 1945 to 1953, and then focusing on four main issues from 1953 to April 1954: Taiwan; the US and “United Action”; Asian neutralism; and Vietnam. Taiwan was the most directly affected party right from the start and how the Taiwan Strait issue played out in Taiwan from 1950 to April 1954 will be closely examined in the third section, with the analysis centering on two major themes: political survival and cultural revival; and *fangong dalu* (counter-offensive against the mainland).

This chapter, through the use of newly available sources, stresses the entwining of the Taiwan Strait issue with events in Southeast Asia. Due to this entwining, it is thus important to analyze the positions of the US and the PRC relating to Southeast Asia. This chapter supports existing scholarship that highlighted the general reluctance of the US in directly intervening in the Indochina conflict; it also agrees with more recent scholarship that emphasized the PRC's extensive aid to North Vietnam. This chapter further contributes to existing scholarship on Eisenhower's China policy by showing the significant extent to which Eisenhower discussed with his cabinet on ways of liberalizing trade with communist China. In addition, this chapter enriches existing scholarship on the foreign relations of China by illustrating the creativity by which the PRC plotted its re-emergence onto the world scene. All these developments were important to understanding subsequent Sino-US interactions during the Geneva Conference and had implications for the unfolding of the Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1954-55. While existing scholarship on the US-ROC relations rightly noted the role of US economic aid in boosting Taiwan's developmental model, this chapter will demonstrate as well how the ethos of *fangong dalu* played significant roles in propelling military and foreign policy concerns, together with economic concerns, thereby underscoring how the Taiwan Strait issue delved hand-in-glove with the US larger concerns in the Cold War.

1. The US

1.1 1945-1953: *The Genesis of the Taiwan Strait Crisis*

The Cold War provided the global context to understand international developments in Asia from 1945 to 1953. With the fall of Nazi Germany, Washington became increasingly distressed by the number of Eastern European countries that were absorbed into the Soviet Union sphere of control. The US elucidated the Truman Doctrine in 1947, vowing to support democracy against communism. In the same year, the Marshall Plan, a US monetary bailout of European countries was also announced.¹ The US set up the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a mutual defence military alliance of Western European countries, in 1949 as a third step to stem the perceived communist high tide. With the Soviet Union's successful testing of the atomic bomb in

¹ Melvyn P. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 37-79.

August 1949, the Cold War arms race was off to a flying start.²

Post-1945 developments in Asia gradually became entangled with the Cold War. Following Japan's defeat in World War II, a civil war erupted between the CCP and the KMT from 1945 to 1949 in a struggle for national supremacy. The US initially supported the KMT government by providing it with military and economic aid. However, by late 1948, when the ineffectiveness and corruption of the KMT regime became obvious, the US became unwilling to intervene further to support the tottering regime. With the emergence of the PRC in October 1949 and the establishment of the tottering KMT government on Taiwan, President Truman and his Secretary of State Dean Acheson decided to await the inevitable conquest of Taiwan by Communist China.³

From late 1949 to early 1950, the Truman administration appeared prepared for an accommodative policy toward China, seeing Mao as a "potential Chinese Tito." It hoped to create a wedge between China and the Soviet Union and used trade to divert China from the Soviet Union. It considered Taiwan and Korea to be outside of the US defence perimeter and seemed willing to accept China's planned invasion of Taiwan in mid-1951 and to offer diplomatic recognition of China.⁴ As the US was building up Japan to be the regional stabilizing power, China was not considered of vital interest.⁵ However, the eruption of the Korean War in June 1950 resulted in a "lost chance" for improved Sino-US relations. Already the perceived "loss of China" to Communism had led to a "conservative backlash" in US domestic politics and strengthened the virulent anti-communist specter of McCarthyism.⁶ The strength of the China Lobby (a group of pro-Taiwan Congressional

² For a succinct account of the early arms race, see Keith Robbins, *The World Since 1945: A concise History* (Oxford: OUP, 1998), 34-38.

³ Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Strait Talk: United States-Taiwan Relations and the Crisis with China* (Cambridge: HUP, 2009), 11-13.

⁴ Cohen, *American's Response to China*, 165-168.

⁵ A. Doak Barnett described Japan's role in Asia as the keystone in Washington's Asia policy, see "US Role in East and Southeast Asia," in *The US at 200: A Symposium*, compiled by Sharifah Abdullah (Singapore: NUS Press, 1978), 14.

⁶ Warren I. Cohen, "Introduction: Was there a 'Lost Chance' in China?" *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 21 No. 1 (Winter 1997): 71-75; Thomas J. Christensen, "A 'Lost Chance' for What? Rethinking the Origins of US-PRC Confrontation," *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 4, no. 3 (Fall 1995), 250.

members) and the escalating Cold War in Europe were also obstacles to any attempt to accommodate China, even prior to the outbreak of the Korean War.⁷

The Korean War led to a rapid deterioration of relations between the US and China. When the US disregarded China's warning not to cross the Yalu River, Chinese troops stormed into Korea and fought the US troops, before both sides reached a stalemate along the 38th parallel.

Subsequent negotiations between the US and China to resolve issues associated with the Korean War were plagued by mutual suspicions and distrust. While the Korean War armistice agreements were eventually signed on 27 July 1953, Sino-US relations remained at low ebb.⁸

On the public front, President Eisenhower and his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, assumed a mantle of being tough on communism. Eisenhower allowed the State Department to be cleansed of any personnel associated with communism (real or imagined).⁹ Certain important posts in the administration were given to pro-Taiwan supporters. While Truman's orders of placing the Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Strait were in force throughout the Korean War, Eisenhower rescinded that restraint in 1953 and declared that the ROC would henceforth be "unleashed." According to the rhetoric, the leader of the ROC, Chiang Kai-shek, could launch a counter attack against mainland China. Such actions appeased the China Lobby.¹⁰ Moreover, the US also undertook covert operations against China, with the aid of Taiwan. Such operations began during the Korean War: the US wanted to harass the communists in the southern parts of China while the Chinese People's Volunteers were held up in the Korea War. According to James Lilley, a former CIA operative, Taiwan "became the principal base for launching [US/ ROC] clandestine military operations against mainland China."¹¹ After the Korean War, the US restricted covert operations to intelligence, the recruitment of local guerillas and the enhancing of US embargo against the PRC. But the insertion of covert agents into mainland China continued.

⁷ Nancy B. Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong and the United States: Uncertain Friendship* (NY: Twayne Publisher, 1994), 30-31.

⁸ For a highly accessible account, see Steven Hugh Lee, *The Korean War* (London: Longman, 2001)

⁹ Robert Justin Goldstein, *Political Repression in Modern America from 1870 to 1976*, rev. ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 335.

¹⁰ Richard C. Bush, *At Cross Purposes: US-Taiwan Relations Since 1942* (NY: ME Sharpe, 2004), 96-98.

¹¹ James Lilley, *China Hands* (NY: Public Affairs, 2004), 79.

Underlying Washington's aggressive foreign policy was also a belief that Communist China would dominate the power vacuum in the wake of a massive decolonization in Asia.¹² As the PRC was regarded to be at the forefront of the international communist wave, it stood to reason that opposing communist China would be part and parcel of the US international anti-communist crusade. A rash of communist insurgencies in Burma and Malaya strengthened American perception that Beijing was exporting its revolution to Asia. By May 1950, Truman promised the French aid in their consolidation of Indochina. That commitment was sealed with the outbreak of the Korean War a month later. Despite some early successes by the French forces of General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny in 1951, Indochina was bleeding Paris white. Washington effectively funded two-thirds of the French war effort by the end of 1953.¹³

Hence, the US involvements in the Taiwan Strait began in 1950, continued throughout the Korean War, and seemed to take on an increased significance in the aftermath of the Korean War. Maintaining Chiang's Taiwan became one of the main goals of US policy toward Asia, together with keeping Japan firmly in the US security umbrella, and preventing communism from spreading in Southeast Asia. However, the US was not prepared to go to war with China to achieve these goals. Instead Eisenhower's China Policy consisted of three major components: covert operations, non-recognition of the PRC in the United Nations and economic embargo.¹⁴

Yet contradictions were readily apparent in the White House's China Policy. Economic embargoes against the PRC were hurting US allies as seen in the contention between Britain and the US. Southeast Asian nationalisms also became suspect in US eyes and were deemed to be communist-inspired, triggering the launch of questionable US covert activities against such Southeast Asian countries as Vietnam.¹⁵ Despite the rhetoric of "unleashing" Taiwan, Eisenhower and Dulles kept

¹² NSC 148, April 6, 1953, *Foreign Relations of the United States (1952-1954)*: 12 (pt. 1): 288-89.

¹³ Mark Atwood Lawrence & Fredrik Logevall, "Introduction," in *The First Vietnam War: Colonial Conflict & Cold War Crisis*, ed. Lawrence & Logevall (Cam: Harvard University Press, 2007), 9-10.

¹⁴ Michael Schaller, *The United States and China: Into the Twenty-First Century* 3rd ed. (NY: OUP, 2002), 140-143.

¹⁵ Robert J. McMahon, *The Limits of Empire: The United States and Southeast Asia Since World War II* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1999), 88.

Chiang at arm's length in reality. Both recognized that Chiang would only be too willing to involve the US in a larger war with communist China.¹⁶ To maintain a tight rein on US-ROC covert operations, "American and [ROC] staffs closely cooperated in planning." These hamstrung operations were not lost on Taiwan who played along with US needs.¹⁷ There thus emerged the need for the US to re-assess its policies toward China, Taiwan and Southeast Asia, and this would play a part in the making of the Taiwan Strait Crisis.

1.2 1953-April 1954: Re-assessing China, Taiwan and Southeast Asia: Entwining the Taiwan Strait with Southeast Asia

Following the signing of the Korean War armistice agreements, the US perceived China to be experiencing "a period of relative quiescence," reinforced by a seemingly severe US-led economic embargo.¹⁸ But Article IV of the armistice agreements provided for a political conference three months after the signing of the armistice to peacefully resolve the outstanding political questions of the Korean conflict.¹⁹ The Four Nations Berlin Conference (25 Jan-18 Feb 1954) settled on 26 April 1954 for a Geneva Conference to discuss both the "Korean question" and the "question of restoring peace in Indochina."²⁰ Eisenhower's awareness of the importance of engaging Asia and the need to clearly state the US position at the Geneva Conference led him to re-assess US policies toward China, Taiwan and Southeast Asia. Four developments stood out in this re-assessment: the views of the CIA and Nixon; US domestic conservatism; the debate on US economic sanctions against China; and the formulation of "United Action," a US proposal to stem the communists' high tide in Indochina that would lead to the formation of the regional defence organization, Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), in September 1954. These developments

¹⁶ Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States*, 3-4.

¹⁷ Tu Lan-yi to CKS, "中美联合行动月报" [Zhongmei lianhe xindong yuebao] (secret), February 1953, serial no.002080106080014, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁸ Progress report on NSC 146/2 "United States Objectives and Courses of Action With Respect to Formosa and The Nationalist Government (22 June 1954-31 Dec 1954)," OCB, White House, 25 Jan 1955, DDRS; on the ineffectiveness of the embargo, see Zhang Shu Guang, *Economic Cold War: America's Embargo against China and the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1949-1963* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 117.

¹⁹ Lee, *The Korean War*, 112.

²⁰ Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee (CPSU CC) to Chinese Communist Party Central Committee (CCP CC), telegram, 26 February 1954, serial no. 109-00396-01, AMFA, reprinted in CWIHPB 16 (Fall 2007/ Winter 2008), 12.

demonstrated that events in the Taiwan Strait continued to be entwined with events in Southeast Asia in the US policy toward Asia from 1953 to April 1954 and constituted a part in the making of the Taiwan Strait Crises. In particular, all these actions would later be perceived by the PRC to constitute a US strategy of encircling China and provided a pretext for China's bombing of the Quemoy and Matsu islands, which triggered the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. A close analysis of such developments is thus important.

a. The CIA and Nixon

As part of his effort to re-assess US policies in Asia, Eisenhower dispatched Vice-President Richard Nixon on a crucial official "Goodwill" Asia trip at the end of 1953. An analysis of this development will shed interesting insights on the different views of US officials regarding Asia. Indeed, as Nixon remarked in his memoirs: "None of these nations had ever received an official visit from a President or Vice-President."²¹ Before his trip, Nixon was briefed by the CIA, whose views will first be presented here, followed by Nixon's observations.

The CIA reported that "widespread sentiment" against "Western imperialism" and the desire for "national independence" and improved economic status among Asians were critical factors that could be effectively exploited by the communists in the Far East. Compounding these was the leadership deficiency of the non-communist governments and their "meager military resources." As subversion was easier, armed communist conquest of "additional territory" was unlikely.²² The CIA asserted that the communists' immediate *modus operandi* would be to strengthen "their organization in non-Communist countries, weakening ties with the West and exploiting neutralism." At the same time, the "communist bloc will increase its use of economic inducements to influence the governments and peoples of the Far East." For the long term, the CIA saw the Communists' goal as "intensification of 'armed liberation' movements at a *later* date." However, prevailing Cold War ideological assumptions suffused the CIA's assessments. As the earliest

²¹ Richard Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (London: Arrow Books, 1978), 119-137.

²² Beijing would prefer the status quo in Korea and "will probably continue to provide increasing matériel and advisory assistance to the Viet Minh" without activating their "regular forces." Its secondary concern was the "resurgence of an armed and non-Communist Japan." "Briefing for the Vice President," Memo, no. 50314, Central Intelligence Agency, Sep 28, 1953, DDRS. (*Declassified Documents Reference System*).

exposition of Eisenhower's domino theory, the CIA warned dramatically that: "The security of Southeast Asia is closely interrelated. The fall of one, or even part of one, to Communism would seriously jeopardize the rest or bring about their collapse one by one."²³

In its evaluation of China, the CIA noted with chagrin that China remained stable and Beijing's relationship with Moscow remained firm. The Soviets had provided loans, advisory and technical aid and "industrial equipment" to the Chinese for their five-year economic plan. The PRC military were also following the Soviet model in organization and equipment with the aid of "several thousand Soviet military advisors." For the moment, Beijing "is still faithfully following the Soviet lead in both foreign and domestic affairs." Developmental concerns meant neither "Moscow [nor] Peiping is contemplating another Korean-type venture in the near future." The CIA viewed the CCP as exercising unassailable domestic control and grudgingly found that the Chinese economy "still appears to be sound." To its dismay, the CIA found no lack of enthusiastic "Western trade missions" who were willing to negotiate "large contracts" with Beijing. The PLA was also depicted as "the most effective indigenous ground combat force in Asia."²⁴

In sharp contrast, the CIA considered Taipei's suppliant status troubling. The likelihood for the eventual "military neutralization of Formosa was also growing day by day." It was only due to US obduracy in the UN against the PRC's entry that "this issue would not blow up." However, the CIA noted that Chiang Kai-shek's KMT had "firm control" of the ROC's internal security. Although the mainlanders were the minority, "discontent among Formosans is *not* now a major problem." Internal Communist subversions had been taken care of and "has been reduced to negligible proportions." US aid of \$100 million per year had also yielded positive results in Taiwan's industrial and agriculture growth. Strict internal audit checks and non-corrupt governance by

²³ It was further noted that Southeast Asia was particularly vulnerable. If the communist controlled Southeast Asia's "rich resources," Japan and India would be held hostage. Ibid.

²⁴ The jaundiced depiction of the massive strength of the PLA downplayed its huge losses in the Korean War. The PLA had the dubious honor of having the "capability of undertaking military operation elsewhere in Asia concurrently with operations in Korea." "Briefing for the Vice President," Memo, no. 50314, Central Intelligence Agency, September 28, 1953, DDRS.

“following sounder practices” had by 1953 made Taiwan a model of US foreign aid. Only its external security and economic development depended on continued US support.²⁵

At the same time, the CIA expressed growing skepticism of US-ROC covert operations against China:

Those of us working clandestinely in Asia recognized that covert operations, including missions ... into China, were not revealing much about the closed-off Middle Kingdom ... our missions were unable to locate or exploit the kind of discontent among the Chinese population that could be used to establish intelligence bases in China ... The missions were also costing a lot of money.²⁶

Nonetheless, covert training centers were well established by 1953. One raid from Dachen on 25 February recruited 124 “young men interested in volunteering for guerrilla service.” Ironically, the CIA seemed more enthusiastic about training guerilla officers than Taipei as “support by the Chinese [ROC] has not been forthcoming.”²⁷ The CIA also viewed “[their] Taiwan partners more as refugees, dependent on the US for work and pay.” Lilley recalled that “our intelligence partners on the Taiwan side were a defeated and demoralized group who... lacked the motivation to work clandestinely against a formidable enemy on the mainland.”²⁸ In fact, few Chinese officers with higher qualifications were willing to embark on these suicidal intelligence missions for the US.²⁹

Upon his return from his official “Goodwill” Asia trip at the end of 1953, Nixon expounded on the mass appeal of communism and his views differed from the CIA’s in some aspects. To Nixon, Communist appeals stemmed from the effects of moribund colonialism. “Asians want independence and economic progress,” indicated Nixon, “and not communism as such.” The solution was to listen to the Asians themselves as these “people were hungry to be listened to.”³⁰ Nixon observed that racism and colonialism were the main bane of US efforts in the Far East, especially among the Chinese. He added that “the Asians generally resent the Western world

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ James Lilley, *China Hands*, 81-82.

²⁷ Tu Lan-yi to CKS, “中美联合行动月报” [Zhongmei lianhe xindong yuebao] (secret), January 1953, serial no.002080106080014, CKS papers, AH.

²⁸ James Lilley, *China Hands*, 82.

²⁹ Most willing recruits were lowly educated or orphans motivated by nationalist slogan of *fangong*. See Alexander Chou, “Retired covert operatives teach kung fu to the next generation,” *Taiwan Journal*, 06/15/2007, <http://taiwanjournal.nat.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=24331&CtNode=118> [accessed 8 July 2008].

³⁰ “Meeting with the Vice President,” 8 Jan 1954 (Friday), State Department, DDRS.

because people from the West look *down* on them.”³¹ It was this eddy of racial resentment that propelled the PRC forth among Third-World opinion in the aftermath of the Korean War. “They went into the war a third-rate power,” reported Nixon about the Overseas Chinese perceptions of the PRC, “and came out a first-rate power.”³² As a remedy, Nixon suggested soft power: “We must guard against internal subversion in almost every area in the Far East ... The US must increase its propaganda in this area.”³³ The US must reassure Asians “that we were not a colonial power, nor did we approve of the lingering colonialism of our European allies.”³⁴

Nixon’s insights, though significant and succinctly delivered on 23 December 1953 to the NSC, did not make an immediate impact.³⁵ Nonetheless Eisenhower had gained an important ally in Nixon for his Asia policies. Nixon displayed a remarkable broadmindedness in major foreign policy issues which belied his personal politics. As Nixon was firmly aligned with his conservative Republican constituents, he did not advocate recognition for the PRC and he believed that the US must support the KMT. However, Nixon was a realist and came out strongly on the issue of trade with Communist China. Nixon recommended “containment but with trade” and this should take place “gradually over a long range period based upon the assumption that trade is inevitable and will aid the US in getting intelligence out of China.”³⁶

b. Currents of Domestic Conservatism

While having Nixon’s internationalist outlook significantly eased the Eisenhower’s administration’s dealings with the GOP Old Guard, Eisenhower still had to gingerly navigate the

³¹ Nixon, *Memoirs*, 134. Asians’ negativity towards the US was also noted by Congressman Walter Judd, who cautioned about the “Asian’s inherent suspicion of the motives and objectives of the white man.” Whitman’s Diary, 25 June 1954, ACW Diary Series, box 2, ACW Diary June 1954 (1), Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

³² “Meeting with the Vice President,” 8 Jan 1954 (Friday), State Department, DDRS.

³³ *Ibid*

³⁴ Nixon noted how the US was depicted as being “an immensely powerful nation that both Communist propaganda and European snobbery had painted as crass and rapacious.” He thought that his “personal diplomacy” with the attending “little gestures” such as chatting with the man in the “village coffee shop” disabused the Asians of much negative images about the US. See Nixon, *Memoirs*, 135.

³⁵ Nor did his tactics at “personal diplomacy” score any marks with the overseas US ambassadors. John Allison, the US ambassador to Japan, caustically enquired if “Mr Nixon was running for an office in Japan.” See, John M. Allison, *Ambassador from the Prairie or Allison Wonderland* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973), 252; 177th NSC Meeting, 23 Dec 1953, FRUS (1952-1954), vol. XIV, 346-349; for Nixon’s trip to Ceylon see, Elliott L. Watson, “America in Asia: Vice President Nixon’s Forgotten Trip to Ceylon,” *Foreign Policy Journal* (May 1, 2009).

³⁶ The political reputation of Nixon rested on his domestic red baiting tactics against his liberal enemies. “Meeting with the Vice President,” 8 Jan 1954 (Friday), State Department, DDRS.

shoals of Republican conservatism. How such conservatism impeded Eisenhower's efforts to re-formulate US policies toward China, Taiwan and Southeast Asia will now be briefly discussed.

Richard O. Davies painted a vivid picture of the composition of the conservatives during the post-war period. By the time the 80th Congress started in 1947, it was a Republican Congress, which was determined to overturn the New Deal. This "class of 1946" conservative Republicans both in the Senate and the House were also named the "Old Guard."³⁷ Eisenhower's tenure as a Republican president was difficult and most of his problems were from his party. Philip Grant showed that when Senator John Bricker introduced S.J. Res. 1 on January 1953 to curb the imperial presidency by bringing the Congress back into the federal government, he struck a chord in the 83rd Congress, gaining conservative support for his amendment.³⁸ Bricker's supporters were strongly isolationist and agreed with Senator Joseph McCarthy's anti-communist rhetoric.³⁹ In fact, Bricker himself was a steadfast supporter of McCarthy.⁴⁰

Although the Bricker Amendment eventually failed, Cathal J. Nolan emphasized that it left a deep impression upon the manner which the White House conducted foreign policy. Eisenhower pledged not to sign any agreement that would bypass the Senate.⁴¹ Even Eisenhower's subsequent saber-rattling antics against Soviet proxies were conducted with full consultations with Congressional leaders.⁴² Two trends emerged. One, Eisenhower's proclivity for covert actions was an indirect result of the intensity of the Bricker Amendment.⁴³ Two, the tendency to associate Third-World nationalism with communist conspiracy ensued. Both actions could be understood as the lack of viable rationalizations or alternative instruments available to the White House,

³⁷ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nixon: The Education of a Politician* Vol.1 (NY: Touchstone Book, 1987), 141; Richard O. Davies, *Defender of the Old Guard: John Bricker and American Politics* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1993), 168.

³⁸ Philip Grant, "The Bricker Amendment Controversy," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 15 (Summer 1985): 577.

³⁹ Davies, 153; David Halberstam, *The Fifties* (NY: Fawcett Columbine, 1993), 56.

⁴⁰ Davies, Richard O. "John W. Bricker and the Slow Death of the Old Guard Republicanism," in *Builders of Ohio: A Biographical History*, edited by Warren Van Tine & Michael Pierce, 269-283. Columbus: Ohio State University, 2003), 279; Garrett, Stephen A. "Foreign Policy and the American Constitution: The Bricker Amendment in Contemporary Perspective," *International Studies Quarterly* 16, no.2 (Jun 1972), 205.

⁴¹ Cathal J. Nolan, "The Hurrah of Conservative Isolationism: Eisenhower, Congress, and the Bricker Amendment," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 22 (Spring 1992): 346.

⁴² Thomas E. Woods, "Globalism and Sovereignty: A Short History of the Bricker Amendment," *The Freeman* 46, no. 4 (April 1996): 4.

⁴³ Challener, "John Foster Dulles," 346.

constrained by the tumult of the Bricker Amendment. Opposing communism became a convenient excuse, which a patriotic Congress readily accepted.⁴⁴

In addition, Eisenhower suffered some drubbing at the hands of McCarthy.⁴⁵ McCarthy, as the chairman of the Senate Committee on Government Operations, objected to the White House appointments of General Walter Bedell Smith and Charles Bolen. Subsequent investigations into the Voice of America spewed forth a renewal of McCarthyism in the new administration.⁴⁶ The long shadow cast by McCarthy also accounted for the obsequiousness of Dulles towards Congress.⁴⁷ Foreign trade briefings were given personally by Dulles in April 1953. To pass muster, Dulles dutifully reported that the Eisenhower administration had complied religiously in administrating the “embargo on the shipment of strategic materials to the countries of the Soviet Bloc.” But Dulles did warn McCarthy of the “dangers that would result if Congressional Committees entered into the field of foreign relations, which is in the exclusive jurisdiction of the Chief Executive.”⁴⁸ On 4 May, Dulles also argued that the US risked being isolated by allies with its overly strict enforcement of the embargo.⁴⁹

c. US Economic Sanctions against the PRC

Even with the ponderous rightwing GOP oversight, Eisenhower was increasingly impatient with the US rigid embargo on China.⁵⁰ How Eisenhower and other US officials viewed this issue will now be addressed.

⁴⁴ Gregory F. Treverton, “Covert Action and American Democracy,” in *ibid*, 387.

⁴⁵ In May 1953, former Assistant State Secretary Dean Rusk commended the Eisenhower administration for having “made almost super-human efforts to get along with the various elements in the Congress and that the principal difficulty had come within the Republican Party itself.” See Dean Rusk to Dulles, 6 May 1953, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 3, Strictly Confidential - Q -S (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁴⁶ Halberstam, 250

⁴⁷ The ongoing purge of the State Department also distressed Rusk who put it down to “finding posts for more Republicans.” See Dean Rusk to Dulles, 18 Dec 1953, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 3, Strictly Confidential - Q -S (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁴⁸ Department of the State for the Press, no. 168, 1 April 1953, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 3, strictly confidential - M (3), JFD papers, DDEL

⁴⁹ The State Department warned that outright blunt blacklisting of foreign shipping would backfire: “Tactics of this sort will hurt our security interest by reducing the degree of cooperation which other countries would be willing to provide in the general field of shipping controls.” See Department of the State for the Press, no. 234, 4 May 1953, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 3, strictly confidential - M (3); Dulles to McCarthy, 6 May 1953, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 3, strictly confidential - M (3); Dulles to McCarthy, 7 May 1953, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 3, strictly confidential - M (3), JFD papers, DDEL

⁵⁰ In March 1954, the President used the proposal for building up Japan as an industrial nation as a foil for his arguments. See 187th Meeting of NSC, 4 March, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

Eisenhower learnt just how ineffective the embargo was against the PRC. Beijing was willing to offer exorbitant rates to Ceylon for its rubber. Although the PRC was hurting from the US-led embargo as there were reports of a “definite shortage on the mainland of industrial raw materials, capital goods and replacement parts,” materials surreptitiously managed to find its way into the PRC. Around 5,000 tons of goods flowed through the porous borders of Hong Kong and Macao into the PRC each month.⁵¹

However, Eisenhower’s cabinet strenuously opposed any relaxation of the embargo. Various reasons were cited ranging from crippling the Soviet bloc to preserving US negotiation leverages in Geneva. “With a show of great impatience and exasperation,” the President struggled on the 11 March 1954 NSC meeting to make his associates see the folly of trading the alliance with Britain for an ossified embargo. Eisenhower urged the NSC to take the long view:

How could we rationally insist that neither we nor our allies can sell any of these materials to the Soviets when we in the United States find ourselves weighed down with vast agricultural surpluses and when our allies are told that we are not in a position to buy from them the materials and products which we don’t wish them to sell to the Soviet bloc? The question boils down, therefore, to what we are going to do to our allies over the long term.⁵²

Washington was thus at an impasse. On one hand, it wished to cripple the PRC, but on the other hand, the US had to boost its allies’ long-term trade prospects. Treasury Secretary George E. Humphrey underscored the need to adjust a key assumption about the PRC. Ostracizing the PRC was only a short-term measure. “If we estimated that the Chinese Communist régime was there to stay,” stated Humphrey perceptively, “we would be well advised to give up the effort to destroy this régime and concentrate instead on trying to separate it from the Soviet Union.”⁵³

⁵¹ “Sixth Progress Report on (NSC104/2): U.S. Policies and Programs in the Economic Field Which May Affect the War Potential of the Soviet Bloc,” Report, National Security Council, Jan 19, 1953, DDRS.

⁵² CIA Director Allen Dulles warned that easing of “key strategic items” would allow the Soviets to break “certain bottlenecks in the development of Soviet war potential.” Undersecretary of State Bedell Smith argued “that the economic lever was the most powerful weapon the free world possessed in the Cold War.” Chairman of JCS Admiral Arthur Radford and Defense Secretary Charles E. Wilson strongly supported Smith’s contention. However, Eisenhower remained “convinced that over the longer period we must move to shorten the list of items subject to export control to the maximum possible extent” as “people were going to sell their products wherever they could and wherever they could get the best prices.” 188th Meeting of NSC, 11 March, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

⁵³ 193th Meeting of NSC, 13 April, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

Agreeing, Eisenhower tried another track. Eisenhower proposed using trade “as a means of straining the existing relationship between Communist China and the Soviet Union.” Displaying a sophisticated understanding about human psychology and the weakness of communist régimes way ahead of his associates, Eisenhower argued with “some impatience” and with “considerable heat” that consumerism would undermine Communist China more effectively than any of US advanced weapon systems. Nixon agreed, arguing that “it was necessary to be calculating and hard-boiled” and he “could see no reason not to expand trade with Communist China as a negotiating point.” Nixon even believed that “the time had come to sit down and determine under what conditions, what level of trade, would best serve the *interests* of the United States vis-à-vis Communist China.”⁵⁴

However, Eisenhower moved too fast for his cabinet. The embargo debates were symptomatic of Washington’s difficulties in developing a comprehensive Far East policy. Eisenhower felt that if the JCS were to argue for relaxing the embargo, Congress reception would be less hostile. But other obstacles compounded this issue. One, the US recognized that not all countries desired to join in a US-sponsored defense organization. Two, Japan, which was the primary concern of the US, “had not yet been received back into the Asian community” due to its wartime atrocities in Asia. Three, there was the perennial problem of China.⁵⁵ Eisenhower recognized that “so many members of Congress want to crucify anyone who argues in favour of permitting any kind of trade between the free nations and Communist China.”⁵⁶

d. The “United Action”

The turmoil in Indochina further ossified Washington’s stubbornness not to move away from its prevailing policy toward China. Why the US decided to formulate a new course of “United Action,” a US proposal to stem the communists’ high tide in Indochina that would lead to the

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

formation of SEATO, which will have implications for the making of the Taiwan Strait Crises, will now be examined.

In January 1954, the NSC learnt that “attempts to mop up Vietminh centers in the southern part of Vietnam were proving only partially successful.”⁵⁷ The CIA assessment was bleak. Despite being driven gradually to the delta area of Tonkin, the French made no political concessions to the locals.⁵⁸ There was “increasing popular support” for the Viet Minh and it was becoming “apparent” that “the French are losing.”⁵⁹ Moreover, the French appeared to be merely maneuvering to negotiate a way out of the cesspool.⁶⁰ To check the PRC in Indochina, the US resolved to have a “plan for defensive arrangements in Southeast Asia.”⁶¹ Smith reported that such a plan would involve “Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and such parts of Vietnam as could be saved from Communist control.” As the US “could be subjected to every kind of pressure to agree to some kind of compromise” at Geneva, it hoped to counter this with a security arrangement.⁶²

In essence, the White House wanted to confront the communists with a united front at Geneva.⁶³ One, the US-led coalition would “go into that Conference strong and United, with a good hope that we would come out of the conference with the Communists backing down.” Two, the need to boost the French confidence in Geneva was paramount. Should the French be backed by the cohesiveness of the regional organization, “there would be a settlement reflecting Communist

⁵⁷ It was noted that “the Vietminh always seemed to have advanced warning of French plans, and in many instances were therefore able to elude capture.” 182nd Meeting of the NSC, 28 January 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

⁵⁸ “Briefing for the Vice President,” Memo, no. 50314, Central Intelligence Agency, September 28, 1953, DDRS.

⁵⁹ In the face of the French weakness, the domino ideology reared its head again. “The US will be forced to decide whether to intervene directly in Indochina,” proposed the CIA, “or risk eventual loss of Southeast Asia to Communist control.” 187th Meeting of NSC, 4 March, 1954, NSC Series, box 5; 183rd Meeting of NSC, 4 February 4, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

⁶⁰ Washington believed that the French “themselves exaggerate the successes of the enemy for a variety of reasons, not least of which was to prepare the ground for negotiations.” 183rd Meeting of NSC, 4 February 4, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

⁶¹ 187th Meeting of NSC, 4 March, 1954, NSC Series, box 5; 187th Meeting of NSC, 4 March, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

⁶² 188th Meeting of NSC, 11 March, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

⁶³ Eisenhower enthused: “If we can secure this regional grouping for the defense of Indochina, the battle is two-thirds won . . . This grouping would give us the needed popular support of domestic opinion and of allied governments, and we might thereafter not be required to contemplate a unilateral American intervention in Indochina.” Dulles ambitiously saw the organization as a means of “compelling some of our allies, notably the British, to agree to join with us in creating a really effective Far Eastern policy.” See 192th Meeting of NSC, 6 April, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

willingness to abandon the attempt to seize control of Indochina.” Finally, with a united front, “military intervention might prove to be unnecessary.”⁶⁴

Washington feared above all the lack of any leverage and the ceding of concessions to the communists in Geneva.⁶⁵ One strategy was to provoke Communist intransigence with regard to a settlement in Korea. This would deflect demands for a negotiated settlement in Indochina.⁶⁶ In addition, on 13 April 1954, Smith reported that Eden was agreeable to a communiqué to explore the “possibilities for united action.”⁶⁷ But Washington misread London.⁶⁸ One Foreign Office official noted that “AE [Eden] did indicate that we should be willing to start talks at once, *provided* we were not committed to any action in Indochina.”⁶⁹ Reportedly, the British feared Dulles’ “united action” would “give the impression that we had closed the door on any results from the Geneva Conference.”⁷⁰ Despite these warning signs, Dulles dismissed them as mere “pressure from Nehru.”⁷¹

On the whole, developments from 1953 to April 1954 thus highlighted the entwining of the Taiwan Strait issue with events in Southeast Asia and contributed to the making of the Taiwan Strait Crises, as they would later be perceived by the PRC to constitute a US strategy of encircling China and provided a pretext for China’s bombing of the Quemoy and Matsu islands, which triggered the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. How the Taiwan Strait featured in the foreign relations of China would be the focus of the next section.

⁶⁴ 192th Meeting of NSC, 6 April, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

⁶⁵ One State Department staff, Charles H. Taquey, strongly condemned any movement towards negotiations with the communists, arguing that “the concept of negotiation is utterly at variance with the concept of independence for the Vietnam.” Memo, Charles H. Taquey to Roy McNair, 19 Apr 1954, OCB, Department of State, DDRS.

⁶⁶ 193th Meeting of NSC, 13 April, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

⁶⁷ This was a “considerable achievement” as the British was leery of any rumored action by the United States “to induce its allies to issue an ultimatum to the Communists with respect to Indochina.” 193th Meeting of NSC, 13 April, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

⁶⁸ US hubris chilled Britain: what if there was a regional grouping and the US still decided to go for armed intervention? It seemed to the British, the lack of a regional grouping before the Geneva Conference was a major factor holding back US intervention in Indochina, whereas an easy passage of a regional organization was a blank cheque for US actions. 192th Meeting of NSC, 6 April, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

⁶⁹ David Dutton, *Anthony Eden: A Life and Reputation* (London: Arnold, 1997), 344.

⁷⁰ The British Chiefs of Staff were reportedly “worried that united action would bring Chinese interferences” and the US may force the British once committed to provide troops “additional to those already in Indochina.” 193th Meeting of NSC, 13 April, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

⁷¹ “Memorandum of conference with President Eisenhower,” 19 Apr 1954, Department of State, DDRS.

2. China

2.1 1945-1953: *The Genesis of the Taiwan Strait Crisis*

The collapse of Japan in 1945 heralded the end of the Second United Front, established in 1937 by the CCP and KMT forces. Whereas the erstwhile enemies had cooperated against the invading Japanese, now they competed for the mastery of China. Despite the efforts of US General George C. Marshall to mediate in late 1946, neither the Nationalists nor the Communists were in any mood to compromise. In fact, the Communist propaganda went into overdrive, accusing the US of abetting the civil war.⁷² Ultimately, the ability of the CCP to pose as the sterling contrast to the degenerate KMT and the better quality of the communist generalship sealed the downfall of the Nationalists.⁷³

With Mao Zedong's strident announcement at the First Plenary Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference on 21 September 1949 that "We have stood up," the Chairman was signaling that the mandate of China was given to the CCP because it was effective in eliminating the proverbial "Century of Shame."⁷⁴ Mao became deeply cognizant of the PRC's role as the revolutionary beacon. After all, it was Stalin who hoisted the PRC to be the "leader of the east" in mid-1949.⁷⁵ Mao's subsequent pro-Soviet "leaning to one side" policy (June 1949) could be interpreted as "the logical outcome of the policies – national revival and alliance with the Communist bloc – that Mao had been developing in stages." In Mao's calculations, Stalin was the only viable option in terms of "economic and security assistance."⁷⁶

Nevertheless, the tortuous bargaining behind the Sino-Soviet Treaty of February 1950 left Mao with an increasing distaste for its Soviet ally. In several secret protocols, Beijing reluctantly

⁷² Xu Guang Qiu, "US Air Raid and the CCP's anti America Campaign, 1945-1949," *Air Power History*, Vol. 47, no.1 (April 2000), 35-37; Odd Arne Westad, *Cold War & Revolution: Soviet-American Rivalry & the Origins of the Chinese Civil War, 1944-1946* (NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 1993), 80 & 128; Immanuel C.Y. Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China* 5th ed. (NY: OUP, 1995), 624.

⁷³ Rana Mitter, *Modern China : A very short introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

⁷⁴ Denny Roy, *China's Foreign Relations* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998), 13.

⁷⁵ Michael H. Hunt, *The Genesis of the Chinese Communist Foreign Policy* (NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 1996), 220.

⁷⁶ Goncharov, Sergei N., Lewis, John W. & Xue, Litai, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao and the Korean War*. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1993), 55.

permitted Soviet territorial and legal concessions in Xinjiang and Manchuria. Stalin's aversion to Mao's ideology and actions during the war also prompted him to view Mao with deep suspicion.⁷⁷ Yet, as China appeared to bring great geopolitical opportunities for the Soviet Union, Stalin considered it more profitable to treat Mao as an equal. Herein lay the rationale for the odious nature of the Sino-Soviet treaty: China gained status as Soviet Union's strategic partner, but it came at a price.⁷⁸

The PRC's participation in the Korean War in late November 1950 was the outcome of the muddy confluence of realpolitik, nationalism and upholding of international communism. Kim Il Sung, armed with wild promises of success in taking South Korea, managed to wrangle permission from Stalin and Mao's tacit consent. For Stalin, Kim's proposal presented a decisive opportunity for China to be firmly tucked into the Soviet Union's fold and to regain the strategic initiative in Asia. For Mao, he could not deny Kim his unification while seeking Soviet aid for the subjugation of Taiwan. Moreover, there was no better mobilizing force for Mao's domestic revolution than having a war at hand.⁷⁹ Finally, the US reaction to the North Korean invasion, such as the imposition of the US Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Strait on 27 June 1950, seemed to Mao that Washington might use the Korean conflict to resolve the Chinese civil war.⁸⁰ To counter the US in Korea presented a better chance of success than in Indochina or the Taiwan Strait.⁸¹

By simply fighting the Americans to a stalemate, the PRC gained tremendous international prestige among Third-World nations. The Vietnamese revolution was given an additional moral impetus as Ho Chi Minh's forces battled the French in Indochina.⁸² While the stalemate continued in Korea along the 38th Parallel, the communist Chinese Advisory Group (CMAG) prevailed upon

⁷⁷ Dieter Heinzig, *The Soviet Union and Communist China: The Arduous Road to the Alliance* (NY: ME Sharpe, 2004), 285-325, 385-400; Goncharov, Lewis & Xue, 27.

⁷⁸ Subjecting China to a satellite status would be unrealistic given the independent nature of the Chinese revolution. Goncharov, Lewis & Xue, 25.

⁷⁹ Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1994), 146-149, 182-3; .

⁸⁰ Arnold Xiangze Jiang, *The United States and China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 139.

⁸¹ John W. Garver, *Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China* (NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993), 288.

⁸² Roy, 20.

their Vietnamese allies to consolidate north-western Vietnam in early 1952.⁸³ Nevertheless, the PRC suffered 900,000 to 1.5 million in casualties in the Korean War, a grim testament to the effectiveness of US firepower, the PLA's futile human-wave assaults, and the corresponding lack of modern weapons supplied by the Soviets to the Chinese Communists.⁸⁴ As the PRC fought against a US-led UN coalition, it was punished with UN economic sanctions in May 1951. More importantly, the issue of the PRC's entry into the UN was permanently put on hold.⁸⁵ The PRC was effectively an international pariah.

2.2 1953-April 1954: Re-assessing Taiwan, the US and Southeast Asia

In the aftermath of the Korean War armistice agreements, Beijing was anxious to emerge from diplomatic isolation. There was thus a need for China to re-assess its policies toward the US, Southeast Asia and Taiwan. This would also better prepare China for its participation in the Geneva Conference. Four developments stood out in this re-assessment: Taiwan; the US and "United Action"; Asian neutralism; and Vietnam. They represented China's responses and initiatives in dealing with the US actions and played a part in the making of the Taiwan Strait Crises for, had these actions elicited what China considered to be acceptable US responses, China would most likely not have proceeded with the 1954 bombardments of Quemoy and Matsu. However, as events would subsequently show, this was not to be the case, and these features would continue to be displayed in the subsequent unfolding of the Taiwan Strait Crises.

a. Taiwan

While the Taiwan Strait issue remained, it took a backseat for the moment. This was seen in China's caution with regard to military plans to counter the US-ROC covert operations. To the PLA commanders at the East China Command (ECC), their concern was wholly to interdict the ROC harassments. Chiang's control of the offshore islands off the coast of Zhejiang (Dachen) and Fujian (Quemoy) formed a twin threat to China's eastern seaboard trade. General Zhang Aiping,

⁸³ This turn in Vietnamese strategy set the stage for the subsequent siege of Dien Bien Phu. Chen Jian, "China and the Vietnam Wars," in *The Vietnam War*, ed. Peter Lowe (London: Macmillan Press, 1998), 156.

⁸⁴ Michael M. Sheng, "Mao and the Korean War: A personality Account," *The New England Journal of History*, vol. 60, no. 1-3 (Fall, 2003-Spring 2004), 222; Callum A. MacDonald, *Korea: The War Before Vietnam* (NY: Free Press, 1986), 261

⁸⁵ Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 34.

Chief of ECC General Staff, recalled that the defence of eastern China was caught between these “horns of a bull.” But the ECC lacked the necessary air and naval power to stop Chiang’s raids and the Korean War had absorbed most of the war matériel. Zhang Aiping had to settle for a modest strategy of reclaiming remote offshore islands nearest the mainland one at a time, and retaking islands around the main KMT island redoubts.⁸⁶

One plan which called for taking Dachen first and to make preparations for taking Quemoy after one to two years was submitted by General Zhang Zhen with the aid of Soviet advisors on 11 June 1952. The Central Military Commission (CMC) granted permission for reclaiming Dachen in September or October. However, General Peng Dehuai, back from the Korean War, stopped the plan, criticizing its lack of consideration of the reactions of the US. Agreeing with Peng, Mao scrapped the plan on 27 July, cautiously citing that resolution of the Korean War was not firmed up.

The second plan which called for attacking the Quemoy complexes directly was submitted on 7 September 1953 by the ECC. Mao tentatively agreed with the plan and ordered preparation to be completed by January 1955. On 15 October, the PLA General Staff code-named the exercise “Operation United Military Action.” However, Zhang revealed that “Fujian’s infrastructure could not support a major combined arms military operation.” Moreover, reinforcements from Zhejiang were obstructed by KMT military complexes in the Dachen area. The PLA General Staff came to similar conclusions. On 21 December, Peng again scrapped the plan for taking Quemoy. The following day, Mao weighed in: “I agree with Peng, this operation needs 5 trillion dollars (五万亿元), and we cannot afford it. At least in 1954, we should not expedite such a colossal sum of money.”⁸⁷

⁸⁶ But permission for taking down the main KMT island military complexes was long in coming, as revealed in an extensive interview by Zhang Aiping’s son Zhang Sheng 张胜; see *Cong zhanzhen zhong zhoulai: Liangdai junren de duihua (Zhang Aiping rensheng jilu)* 从战争中走来: 两代军人的对话 (张爱萍人生纪录) [Walking through the warpath: Conversations between two Generals (A record of Zhang Aiping’s life)] (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 2007), 158-159.

⁸⁷ Zhang Sheng, 162-164

Demands on the PRC's state budget were indeed tight. With the signing of the Sino-Soviet Alliance in 1950, the Chinese borrowed wholesale the Soviet model of industrial development and other forms of development. In the first Five-Year Plan (1953-1957), the PRC set aside \$20 billion for development and up to 58% went into heavy industries. The Soviets' contributions were mainly in terms of technical knowledge and advisors. Not only did the Chinese have to provide most of the \$20 billion with only a small amount of Soviet aid, the Chinese also had to pay for all the industries set up by the Soviets.⁸⁸ Still, Mao looked on favourably on Soviet aid and declared a thoroughly Soviet version of a "general line for socialist transition" for China on Oct 1953.⁸⁹

b. The US and "United Action"

While the Taiwan Strait issue took a backseat for the moment, China was constantly vigilant and wary of US actions. It had an intense fear of "United Action" and was worried that Indochina would become another Korea. How such concerns developed will now be examined.

Beijing was bitterly aware that Washington shunned compromises.⁹⁰ During the Berlin Conference, the US insisted that the forthcoming Geneva Conference would not constitute a *de facto* recognition of the PRC.⁹¹ China was also aware that the US domestic opinion was up in arms. Beijing noted that Congressman Walter Judd publicly warned Eisenhower in the *US News and World Report* on 15 January 1954 against any rapprochement with the PRC: "Accepting Communist China into the UN will weaken our national security and the security of the world ...

⁸⁸ James C. F. Wong, *Contemporary Chinese Politics* 4th ed. (NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995), 22.

⁸⁹ In a bipolar world in the grip of the Cold War, there simply was no other viable alternative. Modest Soviet loans in the sum of \$430 million were secured by the Chinese at not more than two percent interest per year. As China could only pay by barter, its foreign currencies reserves were in dire straits, and the Soviet Union was the only buyer. See William C. Kirby, "The Two Chinas in the Global Setting: Sino-Soviet and Sino-American Cooperation in the 1950s," in *Reexamining the Cold War US China Diplomacy 1954-1972*, 32-35; Jürgen Domes, *The internal politics of China, 1949-1972* (London : C. Hurst, 1973), 74; RB Smith, *Changing Visions of East Asia 1943-1993* (London: Routledge, 2007), 62.

⁹⁰ Beijing's concerns were on the mark. For instance, Rusk, the former Assistant State Secretary, was wary about US domestic opposition to any compromise and that the ROC would raise hell. Dean Rusk to Dulles, 16 June 1953, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 3, Strictly Confidential - Q -S (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁹¹ See "Communiqué issued at the Conclusion of the Quadripartite meeting of the four foreign ministers at Berlin," 18 February 1954, Department of State Press Release No. 84, in FRUS (1952-54) vol. 16 *Geneva*, 415.

Such an act will legitimize the CCP government, increase its international prestige and power.”

The UN as a function of “righteousness, freedom and peace” would be made a “laughing stock.”⁹²

For Beijing, a rough road lay ahead for Geneva. Chinese diplomats in Bern reported that the US was shoring up the French in Indochina even though war weariness had eaten away French public support.⁹³ One, the US opposed any division of Vietnam or giving up of the valuable Hanoi delta area. Two, it also objected to any form of coalition government with the communists, lest Ho seize power through parliamentary means. Three, free elections in Vietnam were anathema to the Americans as they were not confident that Bao Dai would prevail. Finally, they were extremely reluctant to involve the PRC as this might implicate a host of other problems vis-à-vis recognition of the PRC and its position in the UN.⁹⁴

The Chinese background guidance stated explicitly that the PRC faced formidable and adverse Western opinions.⁹⁵ The impact of such adverse opinions on the PRC was multifold. One, the danger of such negative publicity generated by the West had the effect of shoring up support for a US-led “United Action” put forth by Dulles on 29 March 1954. Two, the French emphasis on Chinese aid to the Vietnamese deflected French public attention from the failure of the Navarre plan.⁹⁶ Three, by highlighting the Red scare, the US was able to dispense aid to Southeast Asian countries easily. The real issue of independence for Indochina was submerged and there was a real

⁹² Other politicians stridently forbade any concession to Communist China. Senator Herman Welker lectured “American soldiers have paid in blood on the icy hills of Korea.” Majority Leader Senator William Knowland lambasted the administration in February for even participating in the Geneva Conference, likening it to a “Far Eastern Munich.” “英美对承认中国的政策的分歧” [Yingmei dui chengren zhongguo de zhengche de fenqi], 13 March 1954, serial no. 110-00248-01, AMFA; David Allan Mayers, *Cracking the Monolith: US Policy Against the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1949-1955* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1987), 128-9; PDDE (*The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*) (XV), 952, 1180.

⁹³ Arthur J. Dommen, *The Indochinese Experience of the French and the Americans: Nationalism and Communism in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam* (Indiana University Press, 2001), 221.

⁹⁴ Chinese Embassy at Switzerland to MFA, telegram, no. 460, 18 March 1954, serial no. 110-00258-04, AMFA.

⁹⁵ For instance, the influential socialist French newspaper *L'Aurore* claimed that: “After the recent Korea armistice, the Communist Party shifted all its troops to Indochina to fight against us ... We have the right to request our allies to decide and to form up a bloc against this aberrant aggressor of Korea.”

⁹⁶ General Henri Navarre drew up a plan which called for a decisive military defeat of the North Vietnamese in the Red River delta. In tandem with this plan, Navarre also advocated the training of Vietnamese forces to aid the French forces in rooting out the Vietnamese communists.

danger that the upcoming peace talks on Indochina would be held hostage to the issue of Chinese aid to the Viet Minh.⁹⁷

To China, complicating the entire situation was the specter of a successful French Union. Fortunately for China, the ongoing political tussle between France and South Vietnam proved unrelenting. South Vietnamese Prime Minister Buu Loc's 8 March negotiations with French Prime Minister Joseph Laniel in Paris were mired over the question of what kind of independence the French would grant. Beijing noted that Buu Loc patriotically wanted "total independence" first before joining the French Union. But the French were leery of giving up anything *even* to the South Vietnamese without losing them the battlefield.⁹⁸ Paris threw up various ingenious objections to Buu Loc's demands.⁹⁹

Beijing's trump card lay with French reluctance to internationalize the war. Such a move would dilute French control of Indochina affairs; no French government would survive in the pursuance of war without retaining control. On the other hand, further US aid came with strings attached. The US pushed for more American control in the conduct of the Indochina war and true independence for the Vietnamese. Paris lamely responded with vague promises of Vietnamese independence and its emphasis on the moribund Navarre Plan. The French public was genuinely struck by war-weariness; this accounted for the contradictory French move towards the Geneva conference while fighting the Viet Minh.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ “法美当局及法国反动舆论对中越关系诬蔑论调的驳斥要点” [Famei dangju ji faguo fandong yulun dui zhongyue guangxi lundiao de boche yaodian], Top Secret, draft, 7 April 1954, serial no. 206-00057-16, AMFA.

⁹⁸ Chinese Embassy at Switzerland to MFA, telegram, no. 460, 18 March 1954, serial no. 110-00258-04, AMFA.

⁹⁹ When the South Vietnamese shunned the French velvet persuasions, Laniel threatened to leave the South Vietnamese to the communist hordes. See Dommen, *The Indochinese Experience*, 223-224; Robert D. Schulzinger, *A Time for War: The United States and Vietnam 1941-1975* (Oxford: OUP, 1997), 60.

¹⁰⁰ See, “对美国‘联合行动’的一些反应” [Dui meiguo lianhe xingdong de yixie fanying], MFA Intelligence division, no. 82, 24 April 1954, serial no. 102-00159-05, AMFA; George C. Herring, & Richard H. Immerman. “Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu: ‘The Day We Didn’t Go to War’ Revisited.” *The Journal of American History*, Vol 71, no. 2 (Sep 1984), 345; Gary R. Hess, “The American Search for Stability in Southeast Asia: The SEATO Structure of Containment,” in *The Great Powers in East Asia*, 274.

Historian George Herring speculated that the specter of possible “military involvement [via United Action]... may have helped bring about a settlement.”¹⁰¹ Richard Immerman argued that actual troop deployment was not on the cards. But Dulles’ “menacing tone [on 29 March] effectively masked his intent.”¹⁰² Beijing was certainly disturbed. Various editorials of the PRC’s influential journal *Shijie zhishi* reflected a deep concern. Dulles’ “United Action” was even compared to the odious wartime Japan’s “Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere.”¹⁰³

The CCP politburo was focused on the possibility of US intervention. Overall, it received two pieces of good news. One, the French was unsettled by Dulles’ “ominous” plans. The Chinese intelligence noted that the Laniel government was lukewarm towards the US plan. To thwart US pressure, the French cabinet decided on 6 April that no decision would be made vis-à-vis the EDC ratification and “united action” before the Geneva conference. Two, Britain was also reluctant to endorse “united action.” In fact, during Dulles’ trip to London on 12 April, Eden argued for no US action in Indochina before the Geneva conference.¹⁰⁴

c. Asian Neutralism

While vigilant and wary of the US and “United Action,” China hoped to tap the anti-colonial rhetoric to win over Asian neutralist third world countries. How it managed to exploit this rich vein of post-colonial condition and positioned its actions as a reaction to imperialism will now be explored.

Beijing perceptively observed a groundswell of favorable attitudes from neutralist countries towards China. Nehru was in the forefront and stated to the press that: “The Vietnamese had

¹⁰¹ George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: US Foreign Relations since 1776* (Oxford, OUP, 2008), 662.

¹⁰² Dulles had wanted United Action simply as a deterrent to any Chinese communist intervention in Indochina while at the same “bolster” the French actions in Indochina. Such an organization would also present “a powerful bargaining chip at the Geneva Conference.” The British feared that “united action” might dangerously develop into a black cheque for US intervention in Indochina. Richard H. Immerman, *John Foster Dulles: Piety, Pragmatism, and Power in US Foreign Policy* (Delaware: SR Books, 1999), 91.

¹⁰³ Zhai, *The Dragon, the Lion & the Eagle*, 141.

¹⁰⁴ The British foreign office cautiously indicated on 7 April that “A Declaration of Intention” must be further discussed if only to “prevent any great risk and unforeseen results.” French public opinion was also negative towards Dulles’ call for action, with one French editorial accusing the US of belligerent intentions. “法、英对美国‘联合行动’叫嚣的反映” [Fa ying dui meiguo ‘lianhe xingdong’ jiaoxiao de fanying], MFA Intelligence division, no. 81, 16 April 1954, serial no. 102-00159-04, AMFA.

already during the time of the Chiang government started their anti-colonialism struggle; subsequently this movement was gradually influenced by communism.” Nehru further claimed that “China had no territorial ambitions; if they had, they would have used the Nationalist armies at the Burmese border to invade Burma, but to date it had not.” Even the English-language Burmese press noted that the “PRC increased military aid to the Vietnamese only very recently, perhaps a response to US aid to the French in Indochina.”¹⁰⁵

Beijing diligently worked on these “friends.” To Indian Ambassador Nedyam Raghavan, Zhou evoked loaded anti-imperialist rhetoric. Lambasting the US public pronouncements that the Geneva Conference “would not beget any result on the Korean issue,” Zhou told Raghavan on 19 April 1954 that, “[o]bviously, the US wished to create a deadlock so that it could continue to occupy Taiwan, arm Japan and maintain tensions in the Far East.” Zhou then singled out the role of Nehru for praise and proceeded to underscore the larger imperialist designs of the US: “The US main target is the Middle East and Far East, ... it needed the Indochina imbroglio to prop up its larger conspiracy.” Zhou then rubbished the proposed SEATO as a “NATO duplicate, NATO enlarged,” and stressed that these were plain designs at a hostile invasive grouping that sought to do the biddings of the US, in effect a “colonial empire.”¹⁰⁶

The PRC adopted a dual-track approach. Beijing’s advisory to the PRC’s Geneva delegates scripted that the PRC stood on the side of indigenous attempts in Indochina to “gain independence from colonialism” and the “righteous war of liberation.” As such Beijing would give the appropriate “sympathy, aid and encouragement.” However, for practical state-to-state relations, the PRC would use “international laws and practices.” National interest behooved Beijing “not to

¹⁰⁵ “法美当局及法国反动舆论对中越关系诬蔑论调的驳斥要点” [Famei dangju ji faguo fandong yulun dui zhongyue guangxi lundiao de boche yaodian], Top Secret, draft, 7 April 1954, serial no. 206-00057-16, AMFA.

¹⁰⁶ Zhou with Indian ambassador Nedyam Raghavan, record of conversation (excerpt), 19 April 1954, serial no. 105-Y062, *Rineiwa Dangan*, 17; Zhonghua renmin gongheguo waijiaobu waijiaoshi yanjiushi 中华人民共和国外交部外交史研究室编, *Zhou Enlai Waijiao huodong dashiji 1949-1975 周恩来外交活动大事记* [A Chronology of Major Diplomatic Events of Zhou Enlai] (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe 1993), 38.

abandon relations with the imperialists and just depend on their political discourse of liberation.”¹⁰⁷

One scholar perceptively noted that “Beijing showed that vocal encouragement for revolutionary movements did not necessarily translate into material support [for the Burmese communists].” In sum, “the Chinese leaders were prepared to make a distinction between state-to-state and party-to-party relations in their pursuit of China’s national interest.”¹⁰⁸

The advisory continued that at Geneva, Beijing would project itself as an impartial and influential “third party.” This would deny the Americans the legal excuse to back out from the negotiations, enlarge the war and would regain the PRC the initiative. As for the PRC’s aid to the North Vietnamese, the advisory instructed the delegates to avoid being wrangled into a debate over the amount of aid given but to “simply put it down to the existing diplomatic relations the PRC had with the North Vietnamese.” This meant that Beijing’s aid stemmed from natural “historical and geographical” ties and that politically, they shared similar anti-imperialist sentiments, reinforced by their common war against the Japanese imperial army. The advisory further asserted that efforts should be made to steer the French to undertake “constructive negotiations towards peaceful resolution of the Indochina problem.”¹⁰⁹

Beijing deftly scripted its reinterpretation of the Indochina war. It plugged into the experiences of the former colonies’ dissatisfaction and the anti-imperialist discourse. This propaganda aligned the Chinese Communist experiences with the larger pan-Asian movement and gave relevance to its rhetoric for Asian nationalists. As the PRC had just emerged from the shadows of its semi-colonial status, the Chinese communists’ words had special significance and authority. In the PRC’s advisory, it was emphasized that “the age of imperialism had passed.” The Chinese Communists

¹⁰⁷ To those acts of rapacious colonialism, Beijing would openly express disgust. This would serve “warnings” to the imperialists and encouragement to the “downtrodden” people. “法美当局及法国反动舆论对中越关系诬蔑论调的驳斥要点” [Famei dangju ji faguo fandong yulun dui zhongyue guangxi lundiao de boche yaodian], Top Secret, draft, 7 April 1954, serial no. 206-00057-16, AMFA.

¹⁰⁸ Stuart-Fox, *A Short History of China & SEA*, 161.

¹⁰⁹ Beijing would downplay its “direct relations” with the North Vietnamese. References to the common communist ideology shared by the Lao Dong party and the CCP were dropped. Thus, Beijing could maintain with equanimity that the independence movement was wholly indigenous and that the Indochina war was the affair between the French and the Vietnamese. “法美当局及法国反动舆论对中越关系诬蔑论调的驳斥要点” [Famei dangju ji faguo fandong yulun dui zhongyue guangxi lundiao de boche yaodian], Top Secret, draft, 7 April 1954, serial no. 206-00057-16, AMFA.

adroitly painted the Asian struggle for independence as a struggle of David-versus-Goliath. Asians were depicted as “friendly and hardworking” and colonialism was cast as “enslavement, exploitation and deception.” The PRC “deeply empathized” with the plight of Asians and its supportive position “is completely understood by the world.”

China argued that, on the other hand, the Americans were the font of imperialist attempts to reassert and interfere with the independence of Indochina. Nonetheless, Beijing noted that US aid to France had not stemmed the tide of “the righteous and total commitment” of the Indochina nationalists.¹¹⁰ The PRC was further encouraged by Asian countries’ hostilities towards “United Action.” Most Asian countries had branded Dulles’ proposal the “biggest threat to peace since the Korean War.” Both Indonesia and Burma declined to join in. Thailand was on the side of the US, but not without grave reservations. It espoused the same qualifications as Britain of “opposing communism, but not Red China.” Even the Philippines, a staunch US ally, made no immediate response to Dulles’ clarion call. The Chinese intelligence report noted with satisfaction that Nehru had categorically stated that “united action” was against the Geneva Conference.

In general, editorials from India, Indonesia and Burma were hostile toward the US initiative. A Burmese editorial tarred “United Action” as a march of folly for hoodwinked allies. Others questioned the motive of the US alarmist warnings, suspecting these to be a conspiracy to edge out and supplant the communists. Moreover, Asian editorials condemned the Navarre Plan’s training of Vietnamese soldiers as “Asians fighting against Asians.” In contrast, sympathy abounded for Ho Chi Minh’s struggle against French colonialism. The 10 April 1954 editorial of *The Hindustan Times* offered commiseration to Vietnamese nationalism: “Most of Asia editorials recognized that Ho Chi Minh is a communist; still he represented the Vietnamese nationalistic impulse of opposing French imperialism. But the Americans persist in propping up French colonialism.” Likewise, a Burmese paper wrote: “We totally sympathize with the Vietnamese struggle for independence.

¹¹⁰ “法美当局及法国反动舆论对中越关系诬蔑论调的驳斥要点” [Famei dangju ji faguo fandong yulun dui zhongyue guangxi lundiao de boche yaodian], Top Secret, draft, 7 April 1954, serial no. 206-00057-16, AMFA.

There is no need to differentiate a communist independence from a non-communist one. All they need is independence.”¹¹¹

d. Vietnam: Talking While Fighting

Besides trying to win over the goodwill of Asian neutralist countries, China was also evaluating how it should act in relation to developments in Vietnam, particularly in terms of how China could bolster its position during the Geneva Conference.

Initially, the PRC urged haste upon the Vietnamese communists. Encountering US intransigence, Dulles’ malevolent “United Action,” and the potential fait accompli via the French Union, Zhou cabled the Chinese military advisory group in Vietnam in early March. “In order to gain the diplomatic initiative [at the impending Geneva Conference],” asked Zhou, “similar to the situation prior to the Korean War armistice, could we have a few decisive battles?” Zhou’s naked reference that actions spoke louder than words could not fail to impress.¹¹² In another cable in mid-March, Zhou again stressed the advantages of expanded territories gained by military actions.¹¹³

Mao was even more ambitious, envisioning the entire Vietnam under the communists before turning to negotiations. Recalling Stalin’s distasteful orders to negotiate with Chiang in 1946 and the Soviet brief flirtation with the idea of a divided China, Mao alluded that Stalin had ordered the CCP not to cross the Yangtze River to take Nanjing in April 1949; now Mao would brook no such ambiguity for the Vietnamese comrades.¹¹⁴ Over-estimating the prowess of the Vietnamese Communists, Mao boldly urged them on 3 April to take Hanoi and Saigon with three artillery divisions and five infantry divisions by the winter of 1954. To facilitate the Vietnamese warpath,

¹¹¹ A number of perceptive commentators familiar with Dulles’ moralistic bombast pointed out that Dulles regularly released periodic sermons about the dangers of communism. This ritualistic practice was targeted at shoring up anti-communist elements in Asia. Incidentally these were the very countries which did not have their independence handed to them on a silver platter. “对美国‘联合行动’的一些反应” [Dui meiguo lianhe xingdong de yixie fanying], MFA Intelligence division, no. 82, 24 April 1954, serial no. 102-00159-05, AMFA.

¹¹² Zhou to CMAG (Vietnam), early March, cable, in Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiu shi, ed. *Zhou Enlai Nianpu 1949-76*, vol 1 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1997), 358. (hereafter cited as ZENP vol 1).

¹¹³ Zhou to CMAG (Vietnam), mid March, cable, in ZENP, 358.

¹¹⁴ On the advice to negotiate in 1946, see Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), 64; on Mao’s prejudiced recollection see, Stuart Schram, *Mao Tse-tung* (London: Penguin Books, 1966), 245; on Mao’s possible misunderstanding and subsequent resentment against the Soviet brief consideration of a divided China, see Dieter Heinzig’s majestic *The Soviet Union and Communist China: The Arduous Road to Alliance* (NY: ME Sharpe, 1998; 2004), 170-174.

Mao argued: “Dien Bien Phu must be decisively conquered, if the timing is right together with ample confidence, one should go for an early conclusion of the campaign.”¹¹⁵

Mao’s belligerent encouragement was subsequently curtailed by grim realities. The North Vietnamese forces were sorely stretched. General Vo Nguyen Giap had internalized the bitter lessons of the Red River debacle in 1951 well: “Our troops lacked experience in attacking fortified entrenched camps ... If we sought to win quickly, success could not be assured.” As direct experience had shown up the poverty of the Chinese MAG Chief General Wei Guoqing’s advice for “human-wave” lightning assaults, Giap chose a more deliberate maneuver and postponed in January 1954 a frontal attack on Dien Bien Phu.¹¹⁶ Nonetheless, Chinese advice was initially followed but these assaults caused brutal attrition rates.¹¹⁷ The Vietnamese decisions in changing the methods of assault meant that Mao’s grand strategy of taking Saigon and Hanoi simultaneously had to be put on the backburner.¹¹⁸

For the PRC, Geneva had immense attractions. Beijing desperately needed a breathing space in the aftermath of the Korean War for its domestic reconstruction. In Khrushchev’s stinging reminiscence, Zhou allegedly said in one of the preparatory sessions for the Geneva Conference in Kremlin (April 1954):

“Comrade Ho has told me that their situation is hopeless. If they don't get a cease-fire in the near future, they won't be able to hold out against the French forces. They have therefore decided to retreat to the Chinese border, so that China can move its troops in, as it did earlier in North Korea, and help the Vietnamese people drive the French out of Vietnam.” Then Zhou added that they [the Chinese] couldn't do it, because in Korea they had lost a lot of people and that war had cost them dearly. They were in no position to become entangled in a new war and therefore could not agree to what Ho was asking.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ Mao to Peng Dehuai, 3 April 1954, in *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao*, Vol. 4, ed. Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi. Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1990), 475. (hereafter cited as JGMWG)

¹¹⁶ Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* rev. ed. (London: Pimlico, 1991), 211-212.

¹¹⁷ Giap disagreed with the Chinese “swift attack, swift victory” (human-wave) method but at that time “he was not in a position nor was there time to present my case to Uncle Ho and the Politburo.” See Giap, “The Most Difficult Decision,” 35th anniversary of Dien Bien Phu, (1989), article, in *Dien Bien Phu: The Most Difficult Decision & Other Writings* (Hanoi: The Gioi Publishers, 1992), 36.

¹¹⁸ William J. Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power in Vietnam*. 2nd ed. (Boulder, Westview Press, 1996), 170.

¹¹⁹ Nikita Khrushchev, *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev: Statesman 1953-1964*, Vol. 3, ed. Sergei Khrushchev (PA, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 500.

As Dien Bien Phu had drained Hanoi, talking while fighting was a better gambit. Chinese historian Yang Kuisong highlighted the Soviet factor. Moscow had pushed for its fraternal allies to use the Geneva Conference to their advantage. Since Moscow had obtained, during the Berlin conference, Laniel's acquiescence for Geneva, it followed that the communist bloc should follow its lead.¹²⁰ Indeed, the PRC had already acknowledged that the discussion "on peacefully resolving the Korean question" would be "difficult." But the Indochina question held more promise as "there are contradictions between France and the United States." To encourage the irrevocable split, the Chinese Communists resolved in "showing the carrot to France while using the stick to deal with the United States." Therefore, the PRC should "concentrate our criticism on America, and should leave France with some hope."¹²¹

On the whole, developments from 1953 to April 1954 therefore represented China's responses and initiatives in dealing with the US actions and played a part in the making of the Taiwan Strait Crises for, had these actions elicited what China considered to be acceptable US responses, China would most likely not have proceeded with the 1954 bombardments of Quemoy and Matsu. However, as events would subsequently show, this was not to be the case, and these developments would continue to be displayed in the subsequent unfolding of the Taiwan Strait Crises. How the Taiwan Strait featured from the perspectives of Taiwan would be the focus of the next section.

3. Taiwan

As the defeated KMT régime made its way to Taiwan in 1949, all had seemed lost. Even the Truman administration officially stated that the KMT régime was beyond all help.¹²² Paradoxically, it was at this nadir of despair that Chiang demonstrated extraordinary leadership. For Taiwan, US patrols of the Taiwan Strait helped to ensure its survival. Taiwan also stationed its troops on the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu to deter China's aggression while hoping to eventually recover the mainland. The Taiwan Strait issue thus assumed crucial significance for Taiwan. How

¹²⁰ Yang argued that two factors were crucial. One, the outright threats by Dulles for a "united action" against the Vietnamese Communists on 29 March and 5 April. The second factor was the Soviet input. Yang, "Mao Zedong and the Indochina Wars," 60.

¹²¹ Zhou Enlai, speech, preparatory meeting by the Chinese delegation attending the Geneva Conference (excerpt), 3 pm, 17 February 1954, reprinted in "The 1954 Geneva Conference and the Cold War in Asia, New Evidences and Perspectives: A CWIHP Document Reader," 58.

¹²² Tucker, *Taiwan*, 24.

the Taiwan Strait issue played out in Taiwan from 1950 to April 1954 can be analyzed from two main angles: political survival and cultural revival; and *fangong dalu* (counter-offensive against the mainland). These aspects contributed significantly to the making of the Taiwan Strait Crises and would continue to feature prominently in the subsequent unfolding of the Taiwan Strait Crises.

3.1 1950-April 1954: Political Survival and Cultural Revival

The Taiwan Strait issue was considered, first and foremost, a matter of political survival and cultural revival. Chiang reassumed the presidency (now of the ROC) officially on March 1950, with a swift admission of responsibility for the mainland debacle and proceeded to restore the embattled ROC government.¹²³ He coupled the admission of failure with the exhortation for renewed efforts to attack the problems which had landed China in this predicament. Chiang used the trope of rejuvenation from the ashes of defeat, that failures were deemed mere lessons for ever greater endeavor for greatness. He wrote on Christmas Day 1949:

All the past had died and everything from now on is newly-born ... These days I have thought over the reform of the Party, government and military affairs and the starting point of its implementation. If we cannot reform the party thoroughly at this moment, it cannot carry out its revolutionary functions smoothly.¹²⁴

In spite of the less than candid rhetoric of “newly born,” in retrospect the KMT régime effected a revolution almost by default.¹²⁵ The 1950s interestingly saw two régimes side by side separated by the Taiwan Strait vying for legitimacy by attempting to reform their country and engineering a new society out of the ashes of war.¹²⁶ The Communists and the Nationalists were locked in a race for their version of a better society and the results would only be visible by the end of the decade.

¹²³ Peter Wang Chen-main, “A Bastion Created, A Regime Reformed, An Economy Reengineered, 1949-1970,” in *Taiwan: A New History* (Expanded Edition), ed. Murray A. Rubinstein (Armonk: ME Sharpe, 2007), 321.

¹²⁴ Chiang Kai-shek, *Zongtong Jianggong dashi changbian chugao* 总统蒋公大事长编初稿 [Chronological events of President Chiang Kai-shek] vol. 7 (pt 2), ed. Qin Xiaoyi (Taipei: Caituan faren zhongzhen wenjiao jijinhui, 1978), 509-510 (hereafter cited as ZJDCC. The initial publication stopped at volume 7. In the year 2000, Qin Xiaoyi, the doyen of Chiang Kai-shek studies, obtained permission from Chiang Chin-kuo’s daughter-in-law, Jiang-Fang Zhiyi, to publish Chiang Kai-shek’s postwar diaries. The latest volume is volume 13 (2008) which covers 1954. According to Qin, there will be one volume a year forthcoming in this celebrated series. However, the entire collection of Chiang’s diaries were later deposited in 2005 in the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

¹²⁵ Ever the practical man, Chiang’s meditation on reform took place against the backdrop where the entire gold reserves of the Central Bank of China was transferred over to Taiwan; see Ralph Clough, “Taiwan Under Nationalist Rule,” in *Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 15, pt. 2 (1991), 820.

¹²⁶ Linda Chao & Ramon H. Myers, *The First Chinese Democracy: Political Life in the Republic of China on Taiwan* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 42.

Chiang's speech at the Seventh National Convention of the KMT in 1952 presented a summary of the state of the Taiwan polity three years after the Nationalists fled from Mainland China. This report was important because the task which Chiang had set out to do, namely reforming the KMT structure, had largely been done.¹²⁷ So thorough was Chiang's coverage that even Henry Luce, of the Time Inc., noted in a letter to Chiang, "it has been a long time since a comprehensive statement by you has been made available to the American public."¹²⁸ In the forty-page report, Chiang devoted seven pages exclusively to developments in Taiwan.¹²⁹

It is worth stating here Chiang's vision of the ROC as this will form a useful yardstick and context to assess the ROC's actions domestically and in the international arena.¹³⁰ Chiang emphasized in his speech that the reform of the KMT required "firm attitude and quick action to regroup the loyal Party members and to re-establish the revolutionary machine in preparation for a military counter-attack as well as for national salvation and regeneration." Chiang set five goals: "economic stabilization, enforcement and army discipline, social stability, internal unity and the establishing of a democratic system." To achieve the goals Chiang devised five approaches:

- (1) Maintenance of confidence in the currency and the repletion of currency reserves,
- (2) the carrying out of government orders and abolition of unnecessary organs,
- (3) protection against enemy espionage and elimination of Communist agents,
- (4) abolition of party cliques and concentration of our will power, and
- (5) cultivation of a law-abiding spirit and introduction of local self government.

Chiang, dictated by practical necessities, ultimately aimed to create from Taiwan "a strong base for the counter-attack, and a model province of the *Sanmin Zhuyi*."¹³¹

¹²⁷ Bruce J. Dickson, *Democratization in China and Taiwan: The Adaptability of Leninist Parties* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 51.

¹²⁸ Henry R. Luce to CKS, 16 January 1953, serial no.002080106039002, CKS papers, AH.

¹²⁹ About 5/6 of the report formed a sort of historical preamble or context to underscore the reforms Chiang undertook on Taiwan. Robert Neville to Henry R Luce, "Chiang Kai-shek's Our Struggle against the Russian Imperialists and their Chinese Communist Agents", 15 January 1953, serial no.002080106039002, CKS papers, AH.

¹³⁰ Especially since negative assessments of Chiang in the US viewed Chiang's outfit as incapable of reforms. See John S.D. Eisenhower, *General Ike: A Personal Reminiscence* (NY: Free Press, 2003), 149-160; Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2009), 295; Lin Weishu 林炜舒, "Shengfu ban you rensuan - Jiang Jieshi de diwei shi you lishi jue ding de" 胜负半由人算- 蒋介石的地位是由历史决定的 [Victory or Defeat as determined by man - Chiang Kai-shek's place in History according to History], *Lishi Yuekan* 历史月刊 [Historical Monthly], no. 5 (May 2003), 99; Theodore H. White ed. *The Stilwell Papers* (NY: William Sloane Associates, 1948), 183; Brian Crozier, *The Man Who Lost China: The First Full Biography of Chiang Kai-shek* (London: Angus & Robertson, 1976), 263.

¹³¹ Chiang then stepped up his speech onto a higher metaphysical level where he introduced "a new movement, a new spirit and a new life." "总裁对七全大会政治报告" [Zhongcai dui qi quan dahui zhengzhi baogao] draft, November 1952, serial no.002080106039002, CKS papers, AH.

Another theme expounded by Chiang was the intense need to remove the humiliation of defeat at the hands of the communists. The urgency and rhetoric of reform tapped into the deep vein of shame of those who followed the KMT régime to Taiwan. This grievous sense of displacement was compounded by betrayal as the central KMT bureaucracy was riddled with communist covert agents.¹³² Chiang accurately pitched his call for *xuechi* (cleanse the shame) on his followers' desires for reform.¹³³ He explicitly stated that their achievements presented a valuable pre-figuration of the future and a solution to their shame:

Our party has experienced the following tribulations: failure in eliminating the communist bandits, ignoble retreat to Taiwan, and suffering exile in extreme uncertainty. It is only with our reforms that we are able to finally hold this Congress ... We will swear to strengthen ourselves, cleanse our shame, and repay our sins in order to comfort our President [Sun Yat-sen] and all other revolutionary martyrs in heaven.¹³⁴

To keep up the pressure and to make *guoci* (national humiliation) work harder as a motivational factor, other episodes from history were also dredged up. Chiang evoked the ancient example of King Guojian (BC 520—465) to urge the Chinese public to *woxin changdan* (sleep on thorns and taste bile).¹³⁵ *Wuwang zaiju* (Forget not the time at Ju) was the other familiar slogan that went hand-in-hand with *woxin changdan* in urging forbearance from the citizens of Taiwan. For the defenders of Taiwan's offshore islands, this military posting presented a certain amount of hardship, loneliness and danger. Chiang used *Wuwang zaiju* to encourage and remind them that their hardship would temper the steel in their endeavor to reclaim the mainland. In 1952, Chiang had those four words carved onto the rock of Mount Taiwu in Quemoy, facing the mainland. In the years that followed, other inscriptions of *Wuwang Zaiju* mushroomed all over the island of

¹³² Diana Lary, *China's Republic* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 181.

¹³³ Chao, *The First Chinese Democracy*, 40.

¹³⁴ Chiang, Kai-shek, speech, "Dui bendang diqici quanguo daibiao dahui kaimu zici" 对本党第七次全国代表大会开幕致词 [Seventh KMT congress opening speech], 10 October 1952, in *Zongtong Jianggong Sixiang Yanlun Zongji* 总统蒋公思想言论总集 [The anthology of President Chiang Kai-shek's thoughts and speeches] vol. 25, ed. Qin Xiaoyi 秦孝义 (Taipei: Zhongguo guomindang zhongyang weiyuanhui dangshi weiyuanhui, 1984), 107. (hereafter cited as ZJSYZ)

¹³⁵ During the Spring Autumn period (722-481 BC), the army of Yue led by King Guojian was destroyed by the kingdom of Wu. Gou Jian was taken captive by Fu Chai the king of Wu. Fu Chai eventually released Gou Jian, in appreciation of his devoted service. However, Gou Jian plotted and eventually orchestrated Wu's downfall, by a daily ritual of tasting bile and sleeping on a bed of thorns to constantly remind himself of the bitterness and humiliation of the previous defeat and enslavement. Thus, the historical proverb *woxin changdan* exhorts enduring humiliation for an eventual comeback, see Grace Huang, "Chiang Kai-shek's uses of Shame and Humiliation: Building Strength from Weakness," Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, August 2008, 14.

Quemoy, carpeting the inhabitants and soldiers of the offshore islands under the eternal admonishments of the generalissimo of their duties, sacrifices and livelihoods.¹³⁶

As evident by Chiang's emphasis on Chinese culture, the ROC in Taiwan was championed as the "bastion of cultural revival."¹³⁷ Coupled with its Leninist organizational structure and its traditional emphasis on Chinese cultural orthodoxy, the ROC achieved what Antonio Gramsci would term a "collective national-popular will."¹³⁸ On this, Article II of the KMT Charter spelled out clearly:

The Kuomintang shall be a revolutionary and democratic political party charged with the mission of completing the national Revolution, carrying out the *Sanmin Zhuyi*, recovering the Chinese mainland, promoting Chinese culture, aligning with other democratic nations, and building the Republic of China into a unified, free, peace loving, and harmonious democracy based on the *Sanmin Zhuyi*.¹³⁹

The only acknowledgement of Taiwanese cultural symbols was grudgingly given to Zheng Chengong or Koxinga (1624-1662), a Ming Dynasty patriot who held out against the Qing conquerors in Taiwan. However, the KMT reworked the image of Zheng Chengong to tie up with Chiang's mission of reclaiming the mainland. Some went as far as to claim that Zheng Chengong was the "pre-incarnation" of Chiang. In school textbooks, Zheng Chengong's domestication of Taiwan through wise policies (implying KMT domestic policies such as land reform) was given additional play.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Taken from the *Records of the Grand Historian*, it was documented that the Kingdom of Ji was attacked in BC 284 and surrounded by four other countries. Ji was reduced to the county of Ju and Ji Mo. Despite the great setback, General Tian Dan overcame tremendous difficulties and recovered the territories of Ji with just his well-trained militia by counter-attacking with ingenious stratagems such as rampaging oxen. Li Xiaofen, et al. 李筱峰, 及其他, "Jiuwei de fu hao – cong 'zhengzhi biao yu' tu kan liang jiang zhengzhi," 久违的符号 – 从 '政治标语' 图像看两蒋政治 [Symbols of ages past – Looking at Jiang politics through political slogans], *Taiwan shiliao yanjiu* 台湾史料研究 [Taiwan Historical Materials studies], no. 27 (Aug 2006), 16.

¹³⁷ Hsu Pei-ken, "The Military Thought & Strategic View of Chiang Kai-shek," in *Proceedings of Conference on Chiang Kai-shek and Modern China* (PCCCKSMC), vol. 1, ed. Chin Hsiao-yi, (Taipei: Committee for PCCCKSMC, 1987), 517.

¹³⁸ Thomas B. Gold, "Taiwan's Quest for Identity in The Shadow of China," in *The Politics of Modern Taiwan*. Vol. 1, ed. Dafydd Fell (London: Routledge, 2008), 84.

¹³⁹ Quoted in Alan M. Wachman, "Competing Identities in Taiwan," in *The Politics of Modern Taiwan*, vol. 1, 134-137.

¹⁴⁰ In 1950 Chiang lent his calligraphy to a plaque which announced *Zhenxing Zhonghua* (revive China) on Zheng Chengong's Tainan temple. Much later in 1961, in a speech to commemorate Zheng Chengong, the Ming patriot's utility was given a Cold War twist. Locals were reminded that exploits of Zheng Chengong were "stimulating the entire nation's faith and dedication for the work of opposing Communism and resisting Russia." Jeremy E. Taylor, "The Production of Chiang Kai-shek Personality Cult, 1929-1975." *CQ*, no. 185 (2006), 104; Ralph C. Croizer, *Koxinga and Chinese Nationalism: Myth, and the Hero* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977), 63-64, 69.

In short, Chiang argued that Taiwan represented a rejuvenated China.¹⁴¹ The failures on mainland China constituted the past and the lessons of the mainland became effectively a series of “self-defining memories” for Chiang and the ROC.¹⁴² Chiang actively used his failures on the mainland to construct a new narrative of the new China in Taiwan, and this narrative became the national discourse of Taiwan.

3.2 1950-April 1954: *Fangong Dalu* (Counter-offensive Against the Mainland)

Together with political survival and cultural revival, the Taiwan Strait issue was used as a clarion call to stage *fangong dalu*, which led to a militarization of Taiwan’s society and constituted a major component of its foreign policy. In numerous English accounts of the Taiwanese economic miracle, a common observation runs as follows: “With the security of Taiwan guaranteed by the US, the ROC government was able to devote more energy and resources to agricultural, economic and political development and transformed Taiwan from a developing society into a modern industrialized country.”¹⁴³ Straightforward and elegant, this supposition won over many followers; yet, what emerges from the primary sources was more complicated. It showed that the early ROC government devoted as much time and energy on the quixotic campaign to *fangong dalu*. That an economic miracle occurred two decades later was a joint-product of this *fangong* (counter-offensive) culture. *Fangong* was the ethos that permeated the higher military command and upper political echelons of Taiwan and the singular systematic economic planning went hand-in-hand with this military planning for *fangong*. How *fangong* militarized Taiwan’s society will first be examined, followed by how *fangong* was manifested in Taiwan’s foreign relations.

a. *Fangong Dalu* and the Militarization of Taiwan’s Society

As the country geared itself up for *fangong*, the net effect was a militarization of Taiwan’s society.

The ROC government ruled by decrees, with martial law declared in 1948. This sped up

¹⁴¹ “总裁对七全大会政治报告” [Zhongcai dui qiquan dahui zhenzhi baogao] draft, November 1952, serial no.002080106039002, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁴² This is a term originally used by psychologist Jefferson Singer to identify incidents that define one’s personality. Jefferson Singer, *Memories that Matter: How to use self-defining memories to understand and change your life* (Oakland, CA: Harbinger, 2005).

¹⁴³ Winberg Chai, “Foreign Relations,” in *Contemporary Republic of China: The Taiwan Experience 1950-1980*, ed. James C. Hsiung (NY: Praeger Publishers, 1981), 384.

suppression of communist elements through the Political Activities Committee (Zhenzhi xingdong weiyuanhui).¹⁴⁴ Citizens were drafted for two years of conscription. Being sent to the frontlines of the Cold War battlefields at the offshore islands was the norm.¹⁴⁵ Draft resisters were executed as “communist spies.”¹⁴⁶ The sense of crisis and violence gave rise to an atmosphere in which political ambiguity was not tolerated or condoned. In the “you are either with us or against us” climate, ideological adherence to the KMT was paramount.¹⁴⁷

The first stage of cowing the population of Taiwan was already accomplished with the 28 February Incident in 1947.¹⁴⁸ When Chiang Ching-kuo and his father arrived in Taiwan, the KMT régime aimed to consolidate power through a two-prong approach. First, Chiang Ching-kuo launched a second wave of persecutions and was given the green light to unify all intelligence and security agencies, the most important being the Bureau of Military Investigation and Statistics and the Bureau of Central Investigation, under his command through the Political Action Committee.¹⁴⁹ The focus was on rooting out communist agents that had joined the exodus to Taiwan.¹⁵⁰ During the period of the “White Terror” from 1949 to 1955, the régime arrested about 90,000 suspects, executing possibly up to half of them.¹⁵¹ Exiled Governor-General Wu Kuo-chen referred specifically to the abuses of the security apparatus in an open letter on 3 April 1954 to the National Assembly:

They interfered with free elections. They made numberless illegal arrests. They tortured and they blackmailed . . . the secret police of our country at present, relying on their special backing, have so abused their powers that they have no regard whatever for law . . . so Formosa has become virtually a police state. The

¹⁴⁴ Wang, “A Bastion Created,” 323.

¹⁴⁵ Lary, *China’s Republic*, 185.

¹⁴⁶ Mao Jiaqi 茅家琦 et al. *Bianian cangsang – zhongguo guomindang shi* 百年沧桑- 中国国民党史 [A hundred years of change – History of the KMT] vol. 2 (Xiamen: Lujiang chubanshe, 2005), 824.

¹⁴⁷ See Gary Klintworth, *New Taiwan, New China: Taiwan’s Changing Role in the Asia-Pacific Region* (NY: St Martin Press, 1995), 85; Paul A. Cohen, *Speaking to History: The Story of King Guojian in Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 110-111; Chao, *First Chinese Democracy*, 53.

¹⁴⁸ Figures varied, but no less than 10,000 local people were killed by KMT troops led by generals such as Peng Meng-chi, “the Butcher of Kaohsiung.” See Thomas B. Gold, *State and Society in the Taiwan Miracle* (NY: ME Sharpe, 1986), 51.

¹⁴⁹ David E. Kaplan, *Fires of the Dragon: Politics, Murder, and the Kuomintang* (NY: Macmillan, 1992), 57.

¹⁵⁰ The Taiwan Garrison Command subsequently assumed the power of curfew over the population. See Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo’s Son: Chiang Ching-kuo and the Revolutions in China and Taiwan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 192; Jiang Nan 江南, *Jiang Jinguo Zhuan* 蒋经国传 [A Biography of Chiang Ching-kuo] (San Francisco: Meiguo luntan baoshe, 1984), 183-185; Denny Roy, *Taiwan: A Political History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 89.

¹⁵¹ Chao, *First Chinese Democracy*, endnote no. 30, 313.

liberties of the people are almost totally suppressed.¹⁵²

Wu's admonishments were to no avail. Chiang Ching-kuo further tightened the security apparatus by heading the newly-created National Security Bureau in 1954.¹⁵³

Next was the total control of the army by the party. In 1950, Chiang Ching-kuo assumed directorship of the General Political Department of the Ministry of Defense.¹⁵⁴ Chiang Kai-shek fully supported his son's adoption of the Soviet apparatus, the Political Commissar system. The Political Warfare Cadres Academy (renamed Political Staff College in 1951) churned out commissars who were inserted into military units.¹⁵⁵ These organizations were the answer to Chiang's demand for discipline and loyalty from the troops. While Chiang admitted that the system encountered some resistance from "a few senior commanders," he intended to push it through: in "a year's time, this system can be sold to the whole armed forces from top to bottom."¹⁵⁶ This was thus an outright attempt to impose *yidang lingjun* (Party leads the military). Party recruitment was also carried out in the military. By 1954, more than one-third of the military were KMT party members.¹⁵⁷

Fangong dalu was spelled out in the ROC's war plans. The Korean War was seen as an opportunity for *fangong*. The ROC's Joint Chiefs planned for an amphibious assault on the south bank of the Yalu River. From the east, the ROC force would "attempt to cut off the North Koreans linkages with Communist China" by controlling the northern reach of the Yalu River as far as Kanggye. Having fulfilled its Allied obligations, the ROC force would then "turn north and drive into Northeast China," counter-attacking the main city of Shenyang in its bid for mainland China. However, this *fangong* fantasy did acknowledge that "to bring the communists to a decisive battle

¹⁵² George H. Kerr, *Formosa Betrayed* 2nd ed. (CA.: Taiwan Publishing Co., 1992), 481-482.

¹⁵³ This centralized intelligence body coordinated the relevant activities of the Sixth Division of the KMT (Intelligence), the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Taiwan Garrison Command, the military police and normal constables. Taylor, *Generalissimo's Son*, 212; Wang, "A Bastion Created," 330.

¹⁵⁴ Thomas B. Gold, *State and Society in the Taiwan Miracle* (NY: ME Sharpe, 1986), 54.

¹⁵⁵ Kaplan, *Fires of the Dragon*, 61.

¹⁵⁶ Record of Eighth Conversation between President Chiang Kai-shek and General James A. Van Fleet, 2 July 1954, serial no. 002-080106-034-013, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁵⁷ All major military appointments were rotated every two to three years to ensure that no one built a support base with any permanent military body. Dickson, *Democratization in China and Taiwan*, 56; Clough, "Taiwan Under nationalist Rule," 828.

might be difficult given the distances in mainland China.” The ROC also had a few caveats. One, should the US agree to utilize ROC forces, it must never “enter into negotiations with the communists.” Two, Allied support was required as “its entry into Northeast China will trigger international condemnation for causing a global conflict.” Finally, naval and air support and all war materiel would come from the Allies.¹⁵⁸

Taipei also wanted to transform the US-ROC covert raids into miniature practice runs for the real *fangong*. A raid from Quemoy on 13 February 1953 involved a commando battalion and an infantry regiment. Supporting this operation were naval elements such as 2 LSTs, 3 junks, 2 frigates, 1 minesweeper, and 3 guerilla gunboats.¹⁵⁹ Another “Operation Pulverize” scheduled for 6 July 1953 targeted the Dongshan Island. Its aims were to capture or eliminate all PLA elements and then leave. The huge 7,000 raiding party involved: 2 marines battalions, 2 commando battalions, 2 infantry regiments, 2 medium airborne battalions, and 9 ships of varying sizes. Both operations involved amphibious capabilities with landing parties. While the intelligence gathered was modest, the experience in amphibious landing was considered priceless.¹⁶⁰ Chiang also saw covert operations as a way to ferment unrest on mainland to facilitate *fangong*. According to a 1953 “counter-offensive” plan, the aim of the ROC-trained guerillas was to “instigate countrywide guerrilla attacks.” These guerillas were “equipped with machine guns, signal equipment and explosives.” Supposedly, these guerrillas would be airdropped into the mainland before the main counter-offensive.¹⁶¹

Despite the strident rhetoric of *fangong dalu*, the ROC military were sober in their assessments. In 1953, the ROC’s Joint Chiefs conducted a military audit of the ROC forces. The report was

¹⁵⁸ Significantly, the ROC’s plan was solely a conventional offensive. Nowhere was there any inkling of the alleged US plans to use atomic bombs on the communists. Chiang and his planners certainly did not sense it. Ministry of Defence to CKS, “国军反攻作战指导方案” [Guojun fangong zuozhan zhidao fangan], January 1953, serial no.002080102008008, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁵⁹ Tu Lan-yi to CKS, “中美联合行动月报” [Zhongmei lianhe xindong yuebao] (secret), February 1953, serial no.002080106080014, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁶⁰ “粉碎行动计划概要” [Fensui xingdong jihua gaiyao] (Top secret), 1953, serial no.002080102008010, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁶¹ Ministry of Defence to CKS, “中国国军反攻大陆作战准备计划概要 - 兵员与装备部份” [Zhongguo guojun fangong dalu zuozhan zhunbei jihua gaiyao - binyuan yu zhuangbei bufen], 6 September 1953, serial no.002080102008008, CKS papers, AH.

submitted at the KMT 7th plenum, the second session of the party central. This report stated that as the communists had “ten times as many soldiers as the ROC,” it was “no longer possible to compete with the communists in terms of numerical strength.” The ROC chiefs could only offer such suggestions as undertaking “propaganda warfare” to weaken the enemy and “planning carefully” for an effective expansion of mobilization of the ROC’s existing population. In terms of actual warfare, it could only hope for momentary “situational advantage” which existed only at the “initial stage of battle.” It hoped to exploit an element of surprise, after which it had to press local inhabitants into ROC’s service as quickly as possible.¹⁶²

The ROC military further remarked on the population size of Taiwan and its implications for *fangong dalu*. In 1953, the population census of Taiwan stood at 7,694,884. Out of this, only 769,659 men were of the premium age between 18 and 35. The “most critical problem” confronting the chiefs was the training to be conducted for the mobilized. According to their estimates, if “every year they could train 90,000 men, to reach the target of 600,000 would take seven years.” By the chiefs’ own admission, “even if the huge amounts of US aid should arrive, the lack of manpower and trained personnel meant that the aid could not be absorbed.” The ROC military was caught by the horns of dilemma. To achieve the targeted mobilization would consume \$247,635,860. This “strain” on the finances of the country was considered “excessive.” Yet, without the money spent on training, little justification could be found for requesting more US aid.¹⁶³

In spite of the limitations faced by the ROC military in staging a *fangong dalu*, it seemed that such a threat was perceived by China. Most accounts have interpreted China’s suppression campaigns throughout the early 1950s as representing a consolidation of power.¹⁶⁴ Only Jack Gray acknowledged the source of such anxieties: “When disaffected elements at home began to spread a

¹⁶² Ministry of Defence to CKS, “参谋总长向中央党部第七届二中全会提案” [Chanmouzhongzhang xiang zhongyang dangbu diqijie erzhong quanhui tian] (Secret), 6 September 1953, serial no.002080102008008, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁶³ Ministry of Defence to CKS, “参谋总长向中央党部第七届二中全会提案” [Chanmouzhongzhang xiang zhongyang dangbu diqijie erzhong quanhui tian] (Secret), 6 September 1953, serial no.002080102008008, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁶⁴ Ruth Rogaski identified the CCP’s “Aiguo wei sheng yun dong” campaign in Tianjin as one but did not address the real source of such fears: the Nationalists on Taiwan. See, Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of health and disease in treaty-port China* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 2004), 286-295.

rumour that ‘Chiang Kai-shek would be back in time to eat his moon cakes’ the communist party swung from generosity to severity.”¹⁶⁵ In the 1953 counter-offensive plans submitted by the Joint Chiefs, inciting unrest on the mainland was one of the major ways to offset the numerical strength of the communists. While the US would view the unrest on mainland China as wishful KMT thinking, the communists were not so sanguine. In retrospect, judging by the severity of the campaigns, it seemed that the communists were well aware of the KMT danger. However, in the later years, with each Taiwan Strait crisis initiated by the communists, the ROC would find itself ironically bound tighter to the US which severely restricted its movements, albeit with enhanced security. The possibility of utilizing unrest on the mainland to launch a counter-offensive subsequently became remote.¹⁶⁶

b. Fangong Dalu and Taiwan’s Foreign Relations

Fangong dalu was also closely tied to and shaped the ROC’s perceptions of the Soviet bloc and the US. The Soviet bloc was perceived as a communist, war-mongering coalition on a rampage to “weaken the democratic world.”¹⁶⁷ A report by the ROC’s Ministry of Defence in January 1953 on ways of joining the Allies with the possible widening of the Korean conflict gave a succinct summary of the Korean quagmire vis-à-vis the world situation: “The Soviet Union ordered Communist China and North Korea to start the Korean War so as to quickly conquer the entire Korean peninsula, threaten Japan and to control entire Asia.” As the communist forces faced severe logistical problems, they had to “enter into negotiations to stem a deteriorating situation.” The Soviet Union, on the other hand, reaped rich rewards in causing the “massive expenditure of US resources, distortion of the economy, creating rifts among the Allies and paralyzing US initiatives in Western Europe and Southeast Asia.” The report thus painted the communist foes as duplicitous and crafty, given to broken promises and tactical retreats.

¹⁶⁵ Gray did not elaborate on how much the KMT would be banking on such unrest on mainland in their counter-offensive plans. Jack Grey, *Rebellions and Revolutions: China From the 1800s to the 1980s* (Oxford: OUP, 1990), 289.

¹⁶⁶ Ministry of Defence to CKS, “中国国军反攻大陆作战准备计划概要 – 兵员与装备部份” [Zhongguo guojun fangong dalu zuozhan zhunbei jihua gaiyao – binyuan yu zhuangbei bufen], 6 September 1953, serial no.002080102008008, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁶⁷ Ministry of Defence to CKS, “国防部反攻军事战略判断 (修正本)” [Guofangbu fangong junshi zhanlue panduan(xiuzhengben)] (secret), 1957, serial no. 002080102009002, CKS papers, AH

In contrast, the US was portrayed in a positive light as the leader of democracy. However, the US was also depicted as a giant tethered by a hostile public opinion and Congress.¹⁶⁸ The Republican victory in the US presidential elections blew a breath of fresh air into the ROC's efforts to cultivate US aid. Chiang hailed the decision by Eisenhower to lift restrictions from the ROC in conducting operations against Communist China as a "moral" one backed by "international justice," implicitly criticizing these restrictions from the Truman Presidency as immoral, short-sighted and lacked military sense.¹⁶⁹

Responding to Eisenhower's 1953 "unleashing" of Chiang, General Peng Meng-chi loyally submitted another study to Chiang. General Peng's study represented the first cut in ROC's policy directions towards the new US administration. In order of priority, the study identified three major areas of action. The ROC was urged to "follow the US as closely as possible," especially the US trade embargo towards the Soviet bloc. It should also support the UN in its mission to increase ROC's "international diplomatic status." Furthermore vigorous preparation for the hallowed mission of a mainland counter-offensive must be established. However, General Peng's main thrust was about preparing for *fangong*. The ROC must "conserve its strength" for such an eventuality. Superficially, it should subject its ambition to "the aegis of the UN in the best possible way." Should the UN call for military aid in hot spots such as Korea, the study indicated that it was "unnecessary [sic]" for the ROC to provide soldiers. Meanwhile, the ROC would eagerly acquire military equipment from the US. By 1955, the ROC would be fully poised for *fangong*. Henceforth, it would be simply to wait for the "right circumstances" in order to launch "an immediate counter-attack." Implicitly, General Peng correctly identified Chiang's hopes for Eisenhower. By being so politically astute, the general availed himself as Chiang's new fighting strategist *sans pareil*.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ With regards to the Korean War, the US dilemma was that it could neither "have peace nor could it retreat" on its terms, while public opinion at home brayed for an end. Ministry of Defence to CKS, "国军反攻作战指导方案" [Guojun fangong zuozhan zhidao fangan], January 1953, serial no.002080102008008, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁶⁹ Draft and Official CKS statements, Released by ROC Government Spokesman's Office, 3 February 1953, serial no. 002080106003005, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁷⁰ This plan purportedly contained solicited opinions of MAAG members on how best to respond to the new presidency. At that time, General Peng was just a director of Military Studies Research Institute. Chiang must have appreciated thrust of General Peng's argument, for in 1954 General Peng first became deputy and subsequently promoted to Chief of

Nonetheless, even at this early stage of the Cold War, the ROC knew that its thematic congruence with US strategic needs was paramount.¹⁷¹ In February 1953, Chiang expounded on the international character of the anti-communist struggle, asserting that “Soviet Russia and the puppet Peiping regime have stepped up their aggressive actions and have thus made themselves the common enemy of the United Nations.” Placing the ROC on the side of justice, Chiang shrewdly positioned his “regaining the mainland” as “an important link in the general plan of the free world to combat world-wide Communist aggression,” a pertinent element in the “solidarity necessary for arresting the aggression of international communism.”¹⁷² In September 1953, the ROC’s Joint Chiefs stressed war material stockpiling in preparation for a counter-offensive. Its report plainly stated that: “This present augmented strength constitutes part of the pre-counter-offensive’s three years of preparation and is also to protect the integrity of Taiwan.” Yet when requests were sent to the Americans, a more pedestrian “defensive” term was used.¹⁷³ Deceptions were weapons of the weak, and subterfuges in aid requests had to be packaged as closely as possible to address US strategic needs.

As the vice-chairman of the ROC-US AID Commission, Harvard-trained Yü Ta-wei also worked intensely in Washington to convince the new Eisenhower administration of ROC’s cause. The nature and range of the ROC’s requests signaled how hopeful Chiang was towards a Republican administration. It requested for the following:

1. Setup of a Joint US-ROC General Staff
2. Military aid for the ROC troops, especially those on the offshore islands
3. Transfer a portion of the US Air Force from nearby bases for the defence

General Staff within the same year. However, in terms of its military request, it was highly unrealistic as its demands were astronomical. See General Peng Mang-chi to CKS, “台湾中立化解除后对军事上之意见” [Taiwan zhonglihua jiechuhou dui junshishang zhi yijian], 13 February 1953, serial no. 002080102049005, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁷¹ Hence, the ROC argued that “the nationalist armies’ entry into Northeast China is not just an internal problem, but a method of destroying international communism in the Far East.” By internationalizing the Chinese civil war, the KMT government was seeking US endorsement and support. Ministry of Defence to CKS, “国军反攻作战指导方案” [Guojun fangong zuozhan zhidao fangan], January 1953, serial no.002080102008008, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁷² Draft and Official CKS statements, Released by ROC Government Spokesman’s Office, 3 February 1953, serial no. 002080106003005, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁷³ Ministry of Defence to CKS, “中国国军反攻大陆作战准备计划概要 - 兵员与装备部份” [Zhongguo guojun fangong dalu zuozhan zhunbei jihua gaiyao - binyuan yu zhuangbei bufen], 6 September 1953, serial no.002080102008008, CKS papers, AH.

of Taiwan

4. Increase training for ROC troops
5. Delivery of 75 F84-G “Thunderjets [nuclear bomb capable]”¹⁷⁴

But the White House used a series of delaying tactics to signal its caution about giving aid to Taiwan.¹⁷⁵ Yu was only told on 6 June that the budget for foreign aid had “long been submitted to the Congress.” Any additional increase would be impossible and aid for the ROC would be “considered in a regional sense: i.e. Asia wide general situation.” One hot spot highlighted by the administration was the volatile situation in Vietnam. This implied that Taiwan’s request would not be exclusively considered and its needs would be part of the US strategic consideration in Asia. To secure more aid meant that the ROC would have to bend its needs to fit US strategic calculations.¹⁷⁶

One reason for the US action was the concern Washington felt about Chiang’s *fangong dalu* vision. Nixon gave a thumbs-up to the reforms in the army and government administration on Formosa and noted in particular the ethos of *fangong* – “austerity” and non-corruption – in Taiwan where “both leaders and the troops carry out every move with the thought of returning to the Chinese mainland.” While Nixon believed that Taiwan “is still a definite symbol to many overseas Chinese communities,” the vice-president noted that “it is unrealistic for Chiang to think that he will eventually be able to conquer the mainland of China.”¹⁷⁷ Moreover, faced with ponderous commitments in Indochina and Congress cuts in appropriations, Eisenhower wanted to cut back on US military presence and projected aid to Formosa. The president thought that the present “force of the size contemplated...ought by itself to be able to resist such an attack [by the Chinese

¹⁷⁴ Yü Ta-wei to CKS, telegram, 27 February 1953, serial no.002080106047014, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁷⁵ When the ROC requested aid had not materialized by April, Yü frantically sought to meet the Director of Foreign Operations Administration Harold E. Stassen. Yu also spoke to Assistant Secretary of State Walter Robertson over the same matter. But Washington intended a strong signal to Chiang that aid was not automatic. Although Eisenhower was a Republican president, he intended to keep Chiang at arms length. Despite persistent meetings with various members of the Eisenhower administration, Yu was not successful in prying any information vis-à-vis aid for ROC. Yü Ta-wei to CKS, telegram, 4 April 1953, serial no.002080106043008, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁷⁶ Yü Ta-wei to CKS, telegrams, 5-6 June 1953, serial no. 002080106043008, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁷⁷ “Meeting with the Vice President,” 8 Jan 1954 (Friday), State Department, DDRS.

Communists].” Secretary Wilson contended that the US should “show some caution with respect to the number of Orientals we proposed to take *responsibility* for.”¹⁷⁸

Director of Foreign Operations Administration Harold E. Stassen recognized that while the US could not tell the KMT to drop its fantastic scheme of counter-offensive, neither should the US promise to build the ROC military up for an eventual takeover of the mainland. The best option was to fudge the issue. Subsequently, Dulles and Eisenhower would use Stassen’s suggestion of allowing Chiang to pine for some hypothetical unrest on the mainland as the basis for the ROC’s counter-offensive but they would limit the ROC military to defensive purposes only.¹⁷⁹

Faced with the dithering of the US, Taipei stepped up its attempts to win over the US. Eventually assiduous efforts by Yu did lead to the securing of a promise by Stassen that ROC request would be “considered first.”¹⁸⁰ Taipei’s indefatigable efforts to seek out sympathetic US office holders gave it an important edge. Friendly officers were quickly sized up and cultivated. From the flow of telegrams to Taipei, Admiral Radford was singled out as one who was an ally of the ROC.¹⁸¹ Mme. Chiang invited Assistant Secretary of State Walter Robertson and his wife to visit the ROC.¹⁸² Nonetheless, there were limits to the ROC’s efforts. Chiang’s request for the US to protect its offshore islands via some form of treaty failed. The limitations of US aid were clearly drawn, with the US using its aid to dampen Chiang’s vaulting ambitions. The ROC, in other words, had learnt to identify its operating boundaries.¹⁸³

Conclusion

This chapter has shown how the genesis of the two Taiwan Strait crises could be traced to 1950 when Truman positioned the Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Strait to prevent hostilities between the

¹⁷⁸ However, Chairman of JCS Admiral Radford staunchly protested that although the KMT’s position on Taiwan had been “strengthened,” additional Seventh Fleet patrols were the only thing that was between Formosa and the Chinese communists. Nonetheless, Secretary Wilson believed that the US had given too much support to the ROC. The US could not tap upon it for Korea and it was increasingly unlikely for Indochina. Supplying the ROC was like a bottomless abyss. 183rd Meeting of NSC, 4 February 4, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

¹⁷⁹ 187rd Meeting of NSC, 4 March, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

¹⁸⁰ YüTa-wei to CKS, telegrams, 13 June 1953, serial no.002080106043008, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁸¹ Chiang’s private conversation with Radford was subsequently closely studied by Yu to identify areas to squeeze for aid. YüTa-wei to CKS, telegrams, 7 July 1953, serial no.002080106043008, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁸² YüTa-wei to CKS, telegrams, 6 & 13 June 1953, serial no.002080106043008, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁸³ YüTa-wei to CKS, telegrams, 22 July 1953, serial no.002080106043008, CKS papers, AH

PRC and the ROC. US involvements in the Taiwan Strait subsequently continued. From 1953 to April 1954, despite attempts by Eisenhower to re-assess US policies toward China, Taiwan and Southeast Asia and in the face of domestic conservative currents, maintaining Chiang's Taiwan remained one of the main goals of US policy toward Asia, together with keeping Japan firmly in the US security umbrella, and preventing communism from spreading in Southeast Asia. US non-recognition of China and economic embargo and covert operations against China also persisted. A new course of "United Action," a US proposal to stem the communists' high tide in Indochina that would lead to the formation of SEATO in September 1954, also emerged as a strategy to counter PRC's involvements in Indochina. All these actions highlighted the entwining of the Taiwan Strait issue with events in Southeast Asia and contributed to the making of the Taiwan Strait Crises as they would later be perceived by the PRC to constitute a US strategy of encircling China and provided a pretext for China's bombing of the Quemoy and Matsu islands, which triggered the First Taiwan Strait Crisis.

In the aftermath of the Korean War armistice agreements, Beijing was anxious to emerge from diplomatic isolation. Together with the need to better prepare China for its participation in the Geneva Conference, China re-assessed its policies toward Taiwan, the US and Southeast Asia. In this re-assessment, China placed the Taiwan Strait issue on the backseat for the moment, expressed its concerns regarding the US and "United Action," sought to win over Asian neutralist countries, and advocated a "talking while fighting" posture with respect to Vietnam. Such features represented China's responses and initiatives in dealing with the US actions and played a part in the making of the Taiwan Strait Crises for, had these actions elicited what China considered to be acceptable US responses, China would most likely not have proceeded with the 1954 bombardments of Quemoy and Matsu. However, as events would subsequently show, this was not to be the case, and these features would continue to be displayed in the subsequent unfolding of the Taiwan Strait Crises.

Taiwan was the most directly affected party right from the start of the Taiwan Strait Crises. US patrols of the Taiwan Strait in 1950 helped to ensure its continued survival. Taiwan also stationed troops on the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu to deter China's aggression while hoping to eventually recover the mainland. The Taiwan Strait issue thus assumed crucial significance for Taiwan. This was seen in how the Taiwan Strait issue played a significant role in the formulation and implementation of policies to uphold Taiwan's political survival and cultural revival. Its importance was further seen in the construction of the clarion call to wage *fangong dalu* (counter-offensive against the mainland), which led to a militarization of Taiwan's society and constituted a major component of its foreign policy. These aspects contributed significantly to the making of the Taiwan Strait Crises and would continue to feature prominently in the subsequent unfolding of the Taiwan Strait Crises.

All these developments portended the limitations of an agreement in the Geneva Conference. To what extent the inclinations towards peace in Washington and Beijing could be further nurtured and what impact this had on the unfolding of the Taiwan Strait Crises will be examined in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: The Geneva Conference

The Geneva Conference was held from 26 April to 21 July 1954 to discuss both the “Korean question” and the “question of restoring peace in Indochina.” It was to pave the way for the departure of foreign troops from Korea and hopefully kick-start political negotiations between North Korea and South Korea. It was also to provide a forum for the French and the Viet Minh to work out the political future of Indochina. The US and China were important players in these two conflicts as US support of France and China’s support of the Viet Minh in Indochina portended the possibility of yet another Sino-US conflagration. The Geneva Conference was thus significant in providing a major diplomatic platform for the US and China to undertake negotiations and work out differences so as to reach an understanding on outstanding issues.

Robert Accinelli has rightly pointed out the looming shadow of the Geneva Conference over the First Taiwan Strait Crisis but has not given sufficient attention to the importance of the contestation for world opinion undertaken there by the US and the PRC. Through the use of newly available sources, this chapter contributes by locating and elucidating the making of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis in the Geneva Conference where many significant issues were not settled, highlighting again the entwining of the Taiwan Strait issue with events in Southeast Asia, and necessitating again an analysis of the positions of the US and the PRC relating to Southeast Asia. This chapter supports existing scholarship on the Geneva Conference that highlighted the disarrayed nature of the US-Britain-France alliance. It also agrees with more recent scholarship that underscored China’s successful international debut in Geneva and the crucial role Beijing played in steering North Vietnam towards territorial integrity.¹ This chapter will further contribute

¹ On Anglo-US differences in Geneva, see Victor S. Kaufman, *Confronting Communism: US & British Policies toward China* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 65-96. On trade embargo and the UN, see Rosemary Foot, *The Practice of Power: US Relations with China since 1949* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 52-66. A short account is presented in George C. Herring, & Richard H. Immerman. “Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu: ‘The Day We Didn’t Go to War’ Revisited.” *The Journal of American History*, Vol 71, no. 2 (Sep 1984): 343-363. For a rigorous treatment from Beijing’s perspective, see Chen Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: The University of N. Carolina Press, 2001), 129-138. On Zhou Enlai’s role, see Shao Kuo-kang, *Zhou Enlai and the Foundations of Chinese Foreign Policy* (NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 179-191. A narrative based on selected Chinese sources but without proper citation is given in Xu Jingli 徐京利, *Jiemi Zhongguo waijiao dangan* 解密中国外交档案 [Declassified: Chinese Foreign Affairs Archives] (Beijing: Zhongguo dangan chubanshe, 2005), 249-289. For an analysis from the French-Vietnamese perspective, see Arthur J. Dommen, *The Indochinese Experience of the French and the Americans: Nationalism and*

by showing how China influenced Cambodia and Laos and how China's successful international debut was facilitated by a strategy of combining cultural blitzkrieg and realpolitik. Moreover it will build upon the limited scholarship on Taiwan with an elaboration of Taiwan's involvements. While existing scholarship rightly noted the belligerent undertones that colored this period, none considered Geneva to have constructed a foundation for Sino-US tacit communication, which is a proposition that this chapter will also make.

In their preparation for this Conference, the US and China had already been re-assessing their foreign policies since 1953, as discussed in the previous chapter. Focusing on developments from April to July 1954, this chapter will explore the above themes in three sections. The first section will analyze the position of the US in Geneva, highlighting the difficulties that the US faced in gaining support from its allies for the "United Action" and the differences in opinions between Eisenhower and his cabinet members regarding US policies toward China. The second section will investigate how China's aim to break out of international isolation led it to take up a position of "reasonableness" in Geneva that disarmed many potential antagonists and improved China's diplomatic standing. It will also examine how China sought to win over Asian countries through a combination of cultural blitzkrieg and realpolitik, followed by an analysis of how China responded to the specter of "united action." The third section will explore how Taiwan, although not a participant in Geneva, exploited the international crisis in Indochina to further its *fangong* mission. It will then analyze how Chiang tried to win over US officials to his cause, through a case study of Chiang's meetings with General James A. Van Fleet.

1. The US in Geneva: A Season for Adjustments

US policies toward China during the Geneva Conference could be seen as a continuation of its earlier policies, highlighting again the entwining of the Taiwan Strait issue with events in Southeast Asia. The US was not prepared for war with China. Maintaining Chiang's Taiwan

Communism in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam (Indiana University Press, 2001), 216-233. Finally, the best work on the ROC vis-à-vis Geneva, based solely on US sources, is Robert Accinelli, *Crisis and Commitment: United States Policy toward Taiwan, 1950-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of N. Carolina Press, 1996).

remained one of the main goals of US policy toward Asia, together with keeping Japan firmly in the US security umbrella, and preventing communism from spreading in Southeast Asia. US non-recognition of China and economic embargo and covert operations against China persisted. The pursuit of “United Action,” a US strategy to counter PRC’s involvements in Indochina that would lead to the formation of SEATO in September 1954, continued. This section will analyze US actions in Geneva, highlighting first the difficulties that the US faced in gaining support from its allies for the “United Action,” and the differences in opinions between Eisenhower and his cabinet members regarding US policies toward China. It will then show how the disarrayed alliance reached a compromise to form a “United Front.” Nonetheless, it was clear that in Geneva, US difficulties in rallying allies to its cause and the negativity of its association with neo-colonialism hampered its efforts in developing a regional counter-measure against China. US dissatisfaction with the outcome of the Geneva Conference would subsequently lead it to undertake actions perceived by China to be threatening to China’s security and led to China’s triggering of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis.

1.1 The Disarrayed Alliance and Differences within Eisenhower’s Cabinet

Eisenhower was wary of getting the US embroiled in another war in Asia and stood firm against intervention in Indochina. He emphasized the unwelcomed historical and cultural baggage that the US inherited from its colonial allies, highlighting that the US actions “in the eyes of many Asiatic peoples merely replace French colonialism with American colonialism.” The US representative in Geneva, Bedell Smith, agreed that the US public would never allow us to “fight with the French alone in Indochina.” The thought that the US might have to insert up to six US divisions in Indochina and elsewhere in the world “frightened [Eisenhower] to death.” Eisenhower again reverted to apocalyptic warnings that US intervention in Indochina would be transformed into a “general war with China and perhaps with the USSR.”² However, should Communist China “move

² This tendency is brilliantly depicted in Campbell Craig’s *Destroying the Village: Eisenhower and Thermonuclear War* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1998), chapter 4.

against Korea,” Eisenhower stated that instead of being “exhausted in piecemeal conflicts,” it would be better to “hit the biggest one with all the power we had.”³

A safer bet was to pursue the course of “United Action.” However, in its effort to persuade Britain and France to support “United Action,” the US encountered various difficulties, reflecting how disarrayed the alliance was. Churchill’s refusal to support “United Action” derailed Washington. Bedell Smith reported that the US alliance had become “unstuck” and possessed “a lesser degree of common understanding” in the Geneva Conference than in any other international conferences.⁴ What was more galling to Dulles’ racial and cultural sensitivities was the influence of the Colombo Powers. Dulles was clearly disdainful of Eden’s concern for “India’s position and of the desirability of inducing Nehru to take a cooperative attitude.” To be thwarted by a neutralist Third-World nation was simply unacceptable. Worst of all, none had defended the US in the face of Communist “vicious attacks” during the Korea phase of the Geneva Conference.⁵

Yet, not wishing to have a complete break with the US, whom the British had a history of “special relationship,” Eden offered a Five-Power Staff Agency meeting that did not contravene the on-goings of the Geneva Conference. So desperate was Washington for regional grouping in any form that both Dulles and Eisenhower expressed satisfaction. One issue that was agreed upon by the US and the British was the importance of the participation of Asian states. As pointed out by Nixon, the participation of Asian states was essential so that the arrangement would not be branded as “sheer colonialism.” Even if Asian states such as Thailand were “too small to carry much weight” their presence, noted Eisenhower, provided the “semblance of Asian participation.”⁶

³ Eisenhower argued that the US would act if the Communists crossed a boundary, but Indochina was different because “the communists had already got into Indochina” before his watch. 194th Meeting of NSC, 29 April, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

⁴ Dulles reported that all of US allies were either “badly frightened” or needed a lot of US encouragement. 194th Meeting of NSC, 29 April, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

⁵ Eisenhower complained to the NSC that the US had a serious international image problem: “Everyone seems to think we’re skunks, saber-rattlers and warmongers, we ought not to miss any chance to make clear our peaceful objectives.” 195th Meeting of NSC, 6 May 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

⁶ 195th Meeting of NSC, 6 May 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

Nonetheless, with the fall of Dien Bien Phu on 7 May, coupled with the start of the Indochina phase of the Geneva Conference, London engaged in deliberate dithering. Dulles reported to the NSC that revived discussions consisted of “lots of scenery but not very much substance.”⁷ Dulles reluctantly adopted a more reconciliatory posture, stating on 20 May, that “when you stir up a thing like this regional grouping, you couldn’t be sure precisely what would come up.” Although Dulles was obliged for most of the way to blindly “feel his way” and “accommodate his views” to other nations, he felt that this might be for the better. Having rejected the US proposal, the British would be at pains to make their alternative a success; India and Pakistan might be roped in. But Dulles was “not optimistic about establishing any very useful regional grouping very quickly” at Geneva.⁸

Dulles was lukewarm to Eden’s proposal for a ceasefire in Indochina. He believed that this was a preliminary to “a *de facto* partition of all three of the Associated States.” Such a respite was futile because according to Dulles, “the communists would certainly infiltrate the areas assigned to the other side, with the result that sooner or later they would obtain complete control of all three States.” Part of Dulles’ pessimism stemmed from intelligence reports that Viet Minh forces were streaming towards the Delta region “more rapidly than originally anticipated.”⁹

Washington belatedly became aware of the influence of Britain’s Asian allies. Dulles reported that Britain “remained heavily influenced by the point of view of India and by their fear of a desire on the part of the United States to provoke general war with Communist China.”¹⁰ Nehru appeared to have an inordinate influence over Whitehall. US fear about the collapse of Southeast Asia was met with British insistence “about their ability to hold Malaya.” Like the rest of Asia, Britain was

⁷ Dulles engaged in some hyperbole that the French would collapse in the same way that it did in 1940. 197th Meeting of NSC, 13 May, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

⁸ “It was quite possible that the end result of our efforts to create a regional grouping would be different from what we had originally planned,” announced Dulles to the NSC, “but the results, nevertheless, might be very useful to us.” 198th Meeting of NSC, 20 May 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

⁹ Added to the US woes, Saigon was in “near chaotic situation.” Dulles also reported that “the Saigon press had now taken a very strong anti-American position.” 199th Meeting of NSC, May 27, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

¹⁰ 201th Meeting of NSC, 10 June 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

“highly sensitive” about US threats to use atomic weapons. The British also adhered closely to its Asian allies’ views of Beijing, as noted in a Department of State memo:

The UK seeks to develop trade with Communist China. The UK is opposed to our [US] recognition of National China, and while it has agreed to maintain the *status quo* of China in the UN, this agreement is on a very short-term basis, and British policy basically favors the ousting of the Nationalist régime and the admission of Red China to the United Nations. The cleavage of our China Policy makes us both ineffectual in Asia.¹¹

When American yearning for strength through unity in the Geneva Conference seemed thwarted by this disparate coalition, the US ambassador to the Soviet Union, Charles Bohlen, urged action: “If the communists obtain the impression from Western disunity that they can proceed to acquire all of Indochina without a serious risk of major hostilities, the USSR would not attempt to restrain Chinese ambitions.”¹² Responding to a flawed intelligence of possible Chinese intervention in June, Dulles similarly argued that China’s aggression was likened to a challenge: “If we did not pick it [the thrown gauntlet] up we might just as well get out of the Pacific.”¹³

However, Eisenhower remained unmoved. Diem Bien Phu showed that US allies were unwilling to join the US. In the Congress, Eisenhower also “doubted whether many of its members would understand what was really at stake.” Eisenhower again raised the specter of global war: to go against China “would be much greater and more significant than the decision merely to bomb airfields.” Such a momentous endeavor would be to “go to all-out war with Communist China and bomb such cities as Peiping.” World opinion would be against such a move.¹⁴ Eisenhower insisted that the US should empathize with Britain. He was fast losing patience with his colleagues over their intransigence against the British. “The best defense against Communism,” stressed Eisenhower, “was a policy of cooperation among free world nations.” If a firm alliance was the US

¹¹ “They oppose the US policy of treating atomic weapons,” the report stated strongly, “and particularly atomic missiles, as conventional weapons usable in case of war.” Memo, “Specific problems with the UK,” 16 May 1954, Department of State, DDRS.

¹² Memo, Operations Coordinating Board (OCB) Daily Intelligence Abstracts, No. 143, 21 May 1954, White House, DDRS, CK3100117710.

¹³ In June, US concerns were exacerbated by French reports there would be overt Chinese threat of “MIG-15 planes over the Delta area” aiding the Viet Minh’s expansion. 200th Meeting of NSC, 3 June, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

¹⁴ Eisenhower was adamant that US would not be shanghaied into countering “such Chinese Communist aggression alone.” 200th Meeting of NSC, 3 June, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

basic security policy, this must girdle US attitude towards East-West trade, “other wise our efforts to defend ourselves would prove sterile.”¹⁵

Eisenhower’s stance was remarkable in view of the lack of British support at Geneva. The NSC minutes recorded that “the President repeated his familiar view” that negotiations with allies over the embargo list must not be rigid. If the US refused to empathize with the British economic “privation,” London may join India’s “neutralist position.”¹⁶ On international trade, Eisenhower cited Japan’s trade with China, asking the NSC: “If you forbid them to trade with Communist China and if you will not admit their products to the United States, or if you do not find some other way out for them, they will slip into Communism.” Dulles admitted that the embargo could not hold the “flood of nations who wish to extend their trade with the Communist nations.” With the Geneva Conference in mind, Dulles proposed a delaying tactic of “a moratorium on the 80 disagreed items” with the British until the “Indochina situation was clarified.”¹⁷

1.2 Toward a “United Front”

By June, the US began preparing for the most likely scenario that “the French would accept a settlement at Geneva which would be quite unsatisfactory to the United States.” Director of Policy Planning Staff Robert R. Bowie posited that Beijing would not be “hopelessly adamant” to the French need for a “kind of partition of Indochina.” “The United States could initially disassociate itself from such French agreement,” Bowie told Nixon, “but from a practical point of view we would have to recognize the boundaries established by the partition agreement if the United States proposed to try to defend the rest of Southeast Asia against Communist control.”¹⁸

¹⁵ In even stronger terms, Eisenhower demanded Radford to justify the continuing strong stance of the JCS against compromising with the British on the embargo list. Radford argued that if the Soviet could buy cargo vessels, that would free up Soviet capacity to build “large cruisers in addition to submarines and destroyers.” 197th Meeting of NSC, 13 May, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL 197th Meeting of NSC, 13 May, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

¹⁶ 198th Meeting of NSC, 20 May 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

¹⁷ 205th Meeting of NSC, July 1, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

¹⁸ 200th Meeting of NSC, 3 June, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

Fortunately for the US, Churchill belatedly came round to the US views for a regional grouping. He wrote to Eisenhower on 21 June: “We should certainly have a SEATO corresponding to NATO in the Atlantic and European sphere.” However, Churchill urged that “it is important to have the support of the Asian nations.”¹⁹ When Churchill arrived in Washington on 25-29 June, it was an occasion “for clearing the air and re-creating good feelings.” The US promised not to sabotage the diplomatic outcome of the Geneva Conference.²⁰ On 29 June, both the US and Britain consented to a joint seven-point memorandum which allowed a partition of Vietnam provided that the non-communist governments of Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam remained. There should also be a provision for the reunification of Vietnam. This new Anglo-US agreement was communicated to the new French Prime Minister Pierre Mendès-France.²¹

Washington was further heartened that the British did not support Beijing’s search for “admittance to the UN.” Churchill had reiterated in Washington that “there has got to be peace first.”

Eisenhower agreed with Churchill, but added that a few steps must be in place so that “they would withdraw to their own borders, release our prisoners, and say they would observe propriety in international relations.” Once these conditions were fulfilled, Eisenhower would “consider using his influence to obtain recognition.”²² Anglo-US alliance quickly recovered. By 1 July, Dulles reported that there had been a “joint US-UK position regarding a settlement in Indochina.”²³

To minimize any loss of prestige, Dulles ventured to “withdraw from the Indochina phase of the Conference inconspicuously.” Dulles drew for the NSC the dilemmas facing the US in Geneva. There was the fear that Geneva would be another Yalta “guaranteeing Soviet conquest.” At the same time, the US could not easily reject the French search for a settlement, as this would provoke

¹⁹ Churchill to Eisenhower, June 21, 1954, in *The Churchill-Eisenhower Correspondence, 1953-1955*, ed. Peter G. Boyle (Chapel Hill: The University of N Carolina Press, 1990), 147.

²⁰ 24 June 1954, in John Colville, *The Fringes of Power: Downing Street Diaries, 1941-April 1955* Vol.2 (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1987), 691; Leszek Buszynski, *SEATO: The Failure of an Alliance Strategy* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1983), 14.

²¹ PDDE (XV), 1134.

²² But later on 5 July, Churchill thought that “a way ought certainly to be found of bringing Red China into the UN on terms tolerable to the USA,” Colville, *The Fringes of Power*, 700; Whitman’s Diary, 26 June 1954 (Saturday), ACW Diary Series, box 2, ACW Diary June 1954 (1), Ann Whitman File, DDEL; Memo of Conversation, 26 June 1954, AWF/I: Churchill Visit, in PDDE (XV), 1173.

²³ 205th Meeting of NSC, July 1, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

the “hostility of French public.” Paradoxically, the US was chary of “stiffen[ing]” the French too much. “They might then turn to us,” contended Dulles, “and ask us to participate unilaterally with them in continuing the war.” Dulles wanted to avoid the shoals of over-commitment and the humiliation from the allies’ capitulation to communism.²⁴ Dulles wrote to Eden on 7 July that the US presence in Geneva “might prove an embarrassment to all concerned.”²⁵

Mendès-France’s urgent requests on 12 July 1954 for the US to stay turned out to be the perfect solution for Washington.²⁶ The Geneva Conference grinded to a “standstill” when Mendès-France left for Paris to consult with Dulles on 13 July. In a hurried meeting between Dulles, Eden and Mendès-France, all parties finally agreed on the US envisioned “united front.”²⁷ The French imploring had the unexpected effect of granting the US a veto over the settlement. Dulles boasted that the US had finally impressed upon Britain and France that “we did not particularly like the idea of partition of Vietnam but would go along with it if they agreed to support the American effort to form promptly in the Far East area a Southeast Asia Treaty Organization.”²⁸ Bedell Smith and Eden further agreed on 19 July to canvass potential Asian members for SEATO.²⁹

On the whole, US policies toward China during the Geneva Conference could thus be seen as a continuation of its earlier policies, highlighting again the entwining of the Taiwan Strait issue with events in Southeast Asia. How China acted in the Geneva Conference will be the focus of the next

²⁴ Gary Hess perceptively argued that Dulles’ ploy forced France and Britain to acknowledge the joint seven-point memorandum agreed upon previously. 206th Meeting of NSC, 15 July, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL; Hess, “The American Search for Stability in Southeast Asia,” in *The Great Powers in East Asia*, 278; PDDE (XV), 1180; Geoffrey Warner, “From Geneva to Manila: British Policy toward Indochina and SEATO, May-Sept 1954,” in *Dien Bien Phu and the Crisis of Franco-American Relations, 1954-1955*, ed. Lawrence S Kaplan, et al. (Delaware SR Books, 1990), 155.

²⁵ Dulles to Eden, 7 July 1954, telegram, in FRUS (1952-1954), vol. 13: 1788.

²⁶ Dulles gleefully recounted that “Chou En-lai and Molotov had cooled their heels during this interval, had punctured the Communist prestige which had been built up so high at Geneva.” See 9 July, 1954, in *The Dairy of James C. Hagerty: Eisenhower in Mid-Course 1954-1955*, ed. Robert H. Ferrell (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 87; 206th Meeting of NSC, 15 July, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL; “French-U.S. position paper on Indochina for the Indochina phase of the Geneva Conference,” Cable, State Department, Jul 14, 1954, DDRS, CK3100269986.

²⁷ Eisenhower to Churchill, 12 July 1954, PDDE (XV), 1179.

²⁸ Dulles triumphantly declared to the NSC that “... the United States is the key nation.” Dulles was praised by some Republican governors for his “shrewd and even a brilliant maneuver.” 206th Meeting of NSC, 15 July, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL; 15 July 1954, in *Dairy of James C. Hagerty*, 91.

²⁹ British ambassador Roger Makins urged Whitehall to see the situation from Washington’s perspective. Churchill felt that Eden should heed this too. Markins to FO, 18 July 1954, D1075/225, FO371/111870, cited in Peter Lowe, “Change and Stability in Eastern Asia: Nationalism, Communism, and British Policy, 1948-1955,” *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 15 (2004), 137; 5 July, 1954, in Colville, *The Fringes of Power*, 700; PDDE (XV), 1181.

section.

2. The PRC in Geneva: Culture and Power

In the aftermath of the Korean War armistice agreements, Beijing was anxious to emerge from diplomatic isolation and re-assessed its policies toward Taiwan, the US and Southeast Asia. In this re-assessment, China placed the Taiwan Strait issue on the backseat for the moment and concentrated on other pressing but inter-related issues. This section will begin by exploring how China's aim to break out of international isolation led it to take up a position of "reasonableness" that disarmed many potential antagonists and improved China's diplomatic standing. It will then examine how China sought to win over Asian countries through a combination of cultural blitzkrieg and realpolitik, followed by an analysis of how China responded to the specter of "united action." China's relative success vis-à-vis the US in Geneva, however, led the US to subsequently undertake actions perceived by China to be threatening to China's security and led to China's triggering of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. Yet, at the same time, the Geneva Conference could be seen to have ushered in the first full-fledged opportunity, after the Korean War armistice, for the belligerents and allies, including China and the US, to take stock of each other and work out a tentative modus operandi. In this sense, the Geneva can be seen to have laid a foundation for Sino-US tacit communication, a framework that would further evolve during the Taiwan Strait Crises. Moreover, what China learnt in Geneva China would apply again throughout the duration of the Taiwan Strait Crises. Hence, China's actions in Geneva were important in understanding the subsequent unfolding of the Taiwan Strait Crises.

2.1 Positioning and Unexpected Paths

In March 1954, Premier Zhou Enlai spelled out clearly the broad aims that the PRC should achieve in Geneva:

We should adopt a policy of actively participating in the Geneva Conference, of enhancing diplomatic and international activities, in order to undermine the policy of blockade, embargo, and expanding armaments and war preparations by the US imperialists, and of promoting the relaxation of the tense international situation. Even though the United States will try everything possible to sabotage reaching all

kinds of agreements favourable to the cause of peace, we should still go all out at Geneva Conference to strive for some agreements, even agreements only temporary [in nature] and limited [in scope], so as to open the *path* to resolving international disputes through discussion and negotiations by the big powers.

The Geneva Conference was *the* international debut for the PRC and Zhou stressed the need to establish a “path” for resolving international disputes. The Premier ordered China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs to “prepare other materials and opinions concerning China, the Far East, and peace and security in Asia.” Zhou also wanted the PRC to reach out to other countries. Ironically, Beijing set very low expectations for other communist gains. Beijing did not expect much progress beyond the Korean armistice. Beijing also calculated that Hanoi might have to pursue “negotiating while fighting” for the long haul, a policy that China had earlier advocated. Should conditions allow, the PRC much preferred a more stable “division along a demarcation line between south and north, such as the 16th parallel” rather than “an on-site ceasefire.”³⁰

Reflecting on the Geneva Conference thirty years later, Wang Bingnan, one of the PRC’s negotiators in Geneva, found out just how “unexpected” the way “paths” were forged:

Formally, the Geneva Conference was an arena of conflict where delegations from various nations read their prepared statements and enunciated their official positions. Privately, the conference served as a channel of communication and understanding which helped bring about a tacit agreement on many an issue (*moqi de qudao* 默契的渠道). Much inside information was revealed during chats in the bar. The comrades of our delegation actively circulated among, and made friends with, a large group of people. ...Before the Geneva Conference, we had no idea that it was to open the door to China-US negotiations.³¹

Beijing’s newfound reasonableness disarmed the West. One Chinese delegate, Shi Zhe, noted that the Canadians privately approved Zhou’s reasonable position.³² Canadian delegate Chester Ronning, in his memoirs, supported this view and noted that the US had adamantly refused to

³⁰ “Outside the conference, the mutual relations between China and Britain, China and France, and China and Canada will be touched upon, and we should make some preparations in this respect.” Zhou Enlai, “Preliminary Opinions on the assessment of and preparation for the Geneva Conference,” 2 March 1954, PRC MFA, serial no. 206-Y0054, AMFA, reprinted in CWIHPB 16 (Fall 2007/ Winter 2008), 12.

³¹ Wang Bingnan 王炳南, *Zhong Mei huitan jiu nian huigu* 中美会谈九年回顾 [Nine years of Sino-US talks] (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 1985), , 17-18; English translations could be found in JPRS-CPS-079 (7 August 1985).

³² Shi Zhe 师哲, *Feng Yu Gu: Shi Zhe Huiyilu* 峰与谷: 师哲回忆录 [Peaks and Gorges: A Memoir of Shi Zhe]. (Beijing: Hongqi chubanshe, 1997), 175-176.

compromise.³³ Privately, the Canadians blamed the “rigidity” of the US for the failure to even gain a “compromise” statement on the talks over Korea. The Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Paul-Henri Spaak, was also tired of US intransigence. “Spaak, who had been indignant over the treatment given to the Soviet proposal,” reported the Canadian delegation to Ottawa, “exploded over the [US refusal to entertain the] Chinese suggestion.”³⁴

Even Bedell Smith, the US representative in Geneva, was not immune to the Chinese. Prior to the conference, he privately revealed to Molotov that the US position (Dulles) was “unrealistic.”³⁵ Molotov swiftly passed this message to Zhou.³⁶ On 16 June, in an off-the-cuff comment, Smith indicated that Zhou’s six-point comprehensive peace plan (mainly regarding the situations in Laos and Cambodian) “contain a basis for discussion.” Cabling Washington, Smith added that “at first glance there appeared to be certain points in Chinese proposal which might be agreed to.”³⁷ When Assistant Secretary of State Walter Robertson denigrated the six-point proposal on 18 June, Zhou criticized the contradictions of the US position.³⁸ Wang concluded “that US officials were not a monolithic bloc; Smith, for instance, had his own views. The premier was alert to this kind of things and adept at turning it to his advantage when the opportunity presented itself.”³⁹

Zhou was “alerted” that Smith might be signaling Washington’s bottom line. Smith had reported to Washington:

Yesterday [16 June] at recess Molotov asked me what I thought of the Chinese proposals on Laos and Cambodia. I said they seemed reasonable but they did not

³³ Chester Ronning, *A Memoir of China In Revolution: From the Boxer Rebellion to the People’s Republic* (NY: Pantheon Books, 1974), 220-225.

³⁴ Delegation to Geneva Conference on Korea to Secretary of State for External Affairs, telegram 174, 16 June 1954, DEA/50069-A-40, *Documents on Canadian External Relations* Vol 20 (1954), doc no. 87.

³⁵ Wang, *Zhong Mei huitan*, 19.

³⁶ The hints of rifts within the Western camp likely educated Moscow and Beijing on how much to push. On the role of Bedell Smith, see D.K. R Crosswell, “Anglo-American Strategy and Command in Northwest Europe, 1944-1945,” in *WWII in Europe, Africa and the Americans with General Sources*, ed. Lloyd E. Lee (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997), 212; Nixon, *Memoirs*, 198; Wang, *Zhong Mei huitan*, 19.

³⁷ Smith indicated that “he listened with interest to Chinese statement which seemed to him restrained and reasonable.” The United States Delegation to the Department of State, Fourteenth Restricted Session on Indochina, Geneva (June 16, 3 p. m.), telegram, June 17, 1954-1 a. m., in FRUS (1952-54), vol XVI, 1160.

³⁸ “[Zhou] stated Mr. Robertson’s statement was obviously different from General Smith’s ... [Zhou] would put emphasis on conciliation and attempt to reach agreement in principle.” The United States Delegation to the Department of State, Fifteenth Restricted Session on Indochina, Geneva, (June 18, 3 p. m.), Telegram, June 18, 1954-midnight, in FRUS (1952-54), vol XVI, 1181; for the same speech see Zhou’s speech in document, serial no. 206-Y0043, *Rineiwa Dangan*, 172-173.

³⁹ Wang, *Zhong Mei huitan*, 20.

provide for withdrawal of Viet Minh troops. If this was provided for, and satisfactory control commission agreed upon, they would deserve careful consideration.... I said that I would not speak against the Chinese proposals at this time and that if China's principal preoccupation, as I had heard, was that United States not establish military bases in Laos or Cambodia, there should be no concern about that, as the United States had no desire or intention to do so as long as these two states were adequately equipped to defend themselves and their security guaranteed.⁴⁰

Subsequently, Beijing pressured Hanoi, during the Liuzhou conference on 3-5 July, precisely along these lines indicated by Smith. Beijing was determined that concessions be given to Cambodia and Laos.

Smith disagreed with Dulles' Geneva direction. He also frowned upon the petty stunts Dulles seemed to favour vis-à-vis withdrawing the US team from Geneva.⁴¹ "Presumably US Del would be kept informed by French and Associated States," argued Dulles on 17 June, "but we would avoid official participation in day-by-day Committee discussions which would mold decisions from which we might find it awkward subsequently to disassociate ourselves."⁴² Eisenhower did not agree and the idea dissipated.⁴³ Ever the practical man, Bedell Smith undertook his "personal diplomacy" toward the end of the conference by engaging Zhou's translator, Pu Shouchang, in small talk about "China's ancient civilization" and Pu's "beautiful" spoken English. The Chinese Communists "were impressed with Smith's extraordinary gesture, given the adversarial relations between the two nations." Smith continued along the same vein about Chinese "civilization" and "Chinese porcelain" with Premier Zhou subsequently.⁴⁴ Finally, Bedell Smith took the initiative on the last day of the Geneva Conference to "shake the sleeve of the Premier [Zhou]." That the veteran diplomat Wang Bingnan should so vividly recount this little episode thirty years later underscored the significance that the PRC placed on sincere gestures, however rendered.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ The United States Delegation to the Department of State, Fourteenth Restricted Session on Indochina, Geneva, (June 16, 3 p.m), Telegram, June 17, 1954-1 p. m., in FRUS (1952-54), vol XVI, 1165.

⁴¹ Years later, Eden lauded Smith who "did everything a man could do and more to align himself with the French and British representatives at Geneva. Even he had to heed his government's instructions for the final session." See, Anthony Eden, *Towards Peace in Indo-China* (London: OUP, 1966), 3.

⁴² Dulles to US Delegation in Geneva, 17 June 1954, telegram, in FRUS (1952-54), vol XVI, 1171-1172.

⁴³ Eisenhower would only agree to "reduce our delegation in stature rather than completely withdraw it." See Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953-1956* (London: Heinemann, 1963), 365.

⁴⁴ Wang, *Zhong Mei huitan*, 20-21.

⁴⁵ Smith got around State Department stipulations of not being too friendly to any PRC official, but managed to reach out to the Chinese Communists in his artful way. Shi Zhe, Feng Yu Gu, 175-176; Wang, *Zhong Mei huitan*, 21.

2.2 Cultural Blitzkrieg

Zhou highlighted the ritualistic symbolism of the PRC's role in Geneva: "This is akin to Mei Lanfang's operatic performance, ... every role must be complete, and the entire endeavor has to be flawless." Roles were rehearsed and press conferences were play-acted out. Huang Hua, the spokesman for the PRC, had to endure three rounds of grilling in China.⁴⁶ Sparing no effort in managing its international image, the PRC rented one of the grandest châteaux available, the "Grand Mont-Fleuri." The chateau was transformed into a museum as antiques were shipped from China to decorate its rooms and corridors.⁴⁷ Zhou calculated that the international and media curiosity regarding the PRC would make the chateau a beehive of activities and elicited informal visits from foreigners. PRC press attaché Xiong Xianghui later estimated that 505 international groups and 3,800 people had visited the PRC's premises.⁴⁸

To demonstrate China's progress, Zhou screened to a full house a documentary of the PRC's 1952 National Day celebration. The choreography, the mass movements and the weapons parade impressed many. "The Chinese sense of theatre" was in overdrive.⁴⁹ Xiong recalled with pride that some foreign reporters opined that "it is no longer possible to view the PRC through the pre-1949 lens." Nevertheless, some US correspondents claimed that the military parades were a sign of the PRC's growing militarism.⁵⁰ Zhou was unfazed, again referring to the PRC's flexibility in responses: "We are like Mei Lanfang's opera; we can deliver whatever roles demanded."⁵¹

To combat negative views, Zhou also held the overseas screening of PRC's first color feature film, *Liang Shanbo yu Zhu Yintai* 梁山泊与祝英台 [The Butterfly Lovers], during the Geneva Conference. The film belied negative perceptions of Communist China as a faceless totalitarian

⁴⁶ Mei Lanfang was a top Peking opera performer who specialized in women's roles. According to the US sources, Zhou was "a Chinese opera actor as a student." See Li Yueran 李越然, *Waijiao wutaishang de xin zhongguo lingxiu* 外交舞台上的新中国领袖 [PRC leaders on the World's diplomatic stage] (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1989), 55; Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, ed., *China Confidential: American Diplomats and Sino-American Relations, 1945-1996* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2001), 89.

⁴⁷ Ronald C. Keith, *The Diplomacy of Zhou Enlai* (London: Macmillan Press, 1989), 62.

⁴⁸ Xiong Xianghui 熊向晖, *Wo de qingbao yu waijiao shengya* 我的情报与外交生涯 [My Career in Intelligence and Diplomacy] (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2008), 74.

⁴⁹ Humphrey Trevelyan's recount of the National Day spectacle. See *World Apart* (London: MacMillan, 1971), 112.

⁵⁰ Xiong, *Wo de qingbao*, 90.

⁵¹ Li, *Waijiao wutaishang*, 68.

régime, and showcased such “Asian” values as the importance of education and filial piety. More importantly, the film transmitted such universal tropes as unrequited love and fidelity beyond death.⁵² It was hardly possible to demonize the PRC when the first feature movie they showed overseas ruminated weepy love. The audience was enthralled by this version of “Eastern Romeo and Juliet.” Molotov was moved to comment: “I finally understand Chinese concept of proprieties and its standard of morality: to see one’s love, but to be restrained from a touch, a kiss and a hug!”⁵³ One Indian reporter further noted that “China could shoot this movie in the midst of the Korean War and Land Reform signaled in spades just how stable the régime was.”⁵⁴ In addition, Zhou made use of the screening of the movie as a neutral meeting space for the Laotian, Cambodian and North Vietnamese representatives.⁵⁵

Zhou turned news conferences into gastronomic events as well. The conventional Question-and-Answer session was regarded as too “boring.” Xiong recalled that “we treated them to Chinese cigarettes, liquor and food, so that we could talk while eating.” Zhou had a five-point brief for the PRC negotiation team:

1. Do not reject any correspondent; adopt a case-by-case approach.
2. Be alert, but do not be overcautious. Be conscious of security, but not overly secretive. Take initiative, but do not be rash.
3. When taking questions from foreign press, do not overly use “No comments.” Anything that has been cleared or information that has been authorized, share it publicly, comprehensively and succinctly. Difficult questions must be noted down, studied and answered.
4. In responding to challenges, rationally reply. Do not adopt a hectoring attitude.
5. In entertaining guests, adopt a give-and-take attitude; sincerely try to understand the others’ point of view. Make an effort to secure friends based on common grounds.⁵⁶

Acquiring friends was the diplomatic mantra of the PRC. When Laotian Foreign Minister Phoui Sananikone openly denounced the PRC for harboring “imperialistic” intentions,⁵⁷ Zhou instructed

⁵² Ibid, 69.

⁵³ Shi Zhe, *Feng Yu Gu*, 178.

⁵⁴ Xiong, *Wo de qingbao*, 91.

⁵⁵ Zhou to CCP CC, telegram, 24 June 1954, serial no. 206-Y0050, in *Rineiwa Dangan*, 330.

⁵⁶ Zhou even permitted ROC reporters, waving aside concerns that allowing them would encourage the undesirable Two-China movement. “Chiang Kai-shek’s basic position is to maintain one China,” pointed out Zhou, “albeit the China which he supports is a Republican one.” Xiong, *Wo de qingbao*, 87- 89.

⁵⁷ The Viet Minh were depicted as lap dogs of Beijing. Tong Xiaopeng 童小鹏, *Fengyu Sishinian* 风雨四十年 [Forty Years of Trials and Hardships], Vol. 2 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1996), 86.

Wang Bingnan and Shi Zhe to wine and dine the Laotians. First, the Chinese diplomats had a tête-à-tête with the Laotians in a beautiful garden, impressing upon the guests the “reasonableness” of the Chinese Communists.⁵⁸ Later on 21 June, Zhou had dinner with them. Zhou reported to the CCP that the posture of the Cambodians and the Laotians showed “significant improvement” from 22 June onwards.⁵⁹

The biggest target was India. India’s special envoy in Geneva, Krishnan Menon, was impressed with Zhou. Nehru invited Zhou to visit India. “[E]ven if it was for a day,” Menon said that “the impact on the world would be great.”⁶⁰ Mao immediately cabled Zhou that “the opportunity should not be passed up.”⁶¹ As Eden was attentive to Nehru, there was no better conduit to Britain. Moreover, India took the initiative to sound the PRC out; Beijing could hardly miss this golden opportunity. When Zhou and Nehru issued a joint statement based on the Panch Sheel (Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence) on 28 June 1955, Nehru had decided he could do business with the Chinese communists.⁶²

Zhou waved aside all cultural references that the PRC was a dominant power. Tep Phan, the Cambodian Foreign Minister, stated in the first meeting on 20 June with Zhou that “China is a big country, we hope that China can continue to help our small nation to peacefully co-exist.” Zhou graciously dismissed such hierarchies and insisted that the “blood” relationship between China, Vietnam and Cambodia was akin to that of *xiongdì xiāngchū* 兄弟相处 [brotherly relationship].⁶³ Similarly, Zhou used the “blood ties” gambit in his meeting on 23 June with Phoui Sananikone: “I have said that eastern nationalities have some blood ties, hence we should be more respectful of

⁵⁸ Shi Zhe, *Feng Yu Gu*, 172.

⁵⁹ Shi Zhe noted too that the Laotians did not cause the PRC any grief for the rest of the conference. Shi Zhe, *Feng Yu Gu*, 172; Zhou to CCP CC, telegram, 24 June 1954, serial no. 206-Y0050, in *Rineiwa Dangan*, 330.

⁶⁰ Zhou with Menon, Minutes of Conversation, 13 June 1954 (11:15am – 1pm), serial no. 206-Y0010, in *Rineiwa Dangan*, 352.

⁶¹ Wang, *Zhong Mei huitan*, 15.

⁶² Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, *Twenty Years Indonesian Foreign Policy, 1945-65* (Hague: Mouton, 1972), 209.

⁶³ Zhou with Cambodian Foreign Minister Tep Phan, Minutes of Conversation, 20 June 1954 (1:30pm – 2:40pm), serial no. 206-Y0008, in *Rineiwa Dangan*, 316-319.

each other's independent sovereignty and unification."⁶⁴ Zhou reassured the Laotians on the eve of the Geneva Accords that the PRC had no designs on Laos. "Perhaps you will think that China is a big country and will be anxious [about us]. However, after the peace agreement has been reached, the Kingdom of Laos will be a unified country through elections," promised Zhou and he continued, "...The Five Principles [of Peaceful Coexistence] we referred to before can also apply to the relationship between us."⁶⁵ The PRC's charm offensive thus pervaded all quarters of the Geneva Conference.

Interestingly, appeals to cultural and affective ties were often raised first by the Cambodians and Laotians, suggesting attempts by the weaker party to also stress commonalities with the stronger party. Tep Phan informed Zhou that his Chinese grandfather's ancestral worship artifacts were still with him and averred that: "We are very close to China ... three out of four Cambodians have Chinese blood in them."⁶⁶ Phoui Sananikone talked about how he had visited China and that the ethnic roots of Laotians could be traced to the Tibetan highlands. Given this implicit understanding, Beijing did not have to assert its position too strongly.⁶⁷

2.3 *Foundation of Realpolitik*

Underlying China's cultural approach was a solid foundation of realpolitik. Mao's moves were rooted deeply in domestic considerations and fears of containment by the US. In the aftermath of the Korean War, the PRC considered economic development of paramount importance and used the Soviet model of centralized planning. The Chinese state was then in the midst of consolidating its administrative apparatus nation-wide, a ponderous task that saw the final drafting of the First Five-year Plan starting as late as February 1955.⁶⁸ In terms of China's fears of containment by the US, although North Vietnam was a fraternal ally, Beijing did not hesitate to press Ho Chi Minh for

⁶⁴ Zhou to PRC CC, Memo of Conversation with Laotian Foreign Minister Phoui Sananikone, 23 June 1954, serial no. 206-Y0050, in *Rineiwa Dangan*, 329.

⁶⁵ Zhou with Laotian Foreign Minister Phoui Sananikone, Minutes of Conversation, 18 July 1954 (11:30am–12:45pm), serial no. 206-Y0008, in CWIHPB 16 (Fall 2007/ Winter 2008), 71.

⁶⁶ Zhou with Cambodian Foreign Minister Tep Phan, Minutes of Conversation, 20 June 1954 (1:30pm–2:40pm), serial no. 206-Y0008, in *Rineiwa Dangan*, 319.

⁶⁷ Zhou to PRC CC, Memo of Conversation with Laotian Foreign Minister Phoui Sananikone, 23 June 1954, serial no. 206-Y0050, in *Rineiwa Dangan*, 329.

⁶⁸ Franz Schurmann, "Politics and Economics in Russia and China," in *Soviet and Chinese Communism: Similarities and Differences*, ed. Donald W. Treadgold (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967), 303.

concessions to safeguard the PRC's borders. China was also concerned of the potential threat of the US presence in Cambodia and Laos.

In the first meeting with the Cambodians, Zhou raised the concerns of the PRC vis-à-vis US military bases in Cambodia and proposed that the PRC and the Cambodians build a “close relationship.”⁶⁹ On 20 July, Zhou readily met the Cambodian requests for restraining the North Vietnamese. Zhou promised Tep Phan that Ho Chi Minh was not interested in invading Cambodia “because an invasion is destined to fail.” When Tep Phan complained that the North Vietnamese chief delegate was overly legalistic in defining Cambodia's “domestic defense” [*defense a l'interieur*] requirements, Zhou proved immensely agreeable, responding that “this is ridiculous. Of course [one] should not make strict rules [restricting Cambodian armed forces] like these.” Zhou also promised to push the North Vietnamese harder to withdraw from Cambodia and asked the Cambodians in return not to be blindly “pro-America,” to allow the North Vietnamese more time to withdraw, and treat former Cambodian communists fairly without persecuting and discriminating them.⁷⁰

To the Laotians on 21 June, Zhou advised Phoui Sananikone to be “extremely wary of US disruptive attempts.”⁷¹ In response to the argument by North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong for a legalistic version of “an independent administration unit” of “eleven” places, Zhou promised that the “delimitation of concentration areas is simply a temporary one” restricted to “two provinces in northeast Laos.” Moreover, Zhou declared that the PRC only recognized “one Royal government” of Laos.⁷² When it was time to apply pressure, the Soviets and the Chinese Communists did not veer away. By June, the North Vietnamese stubbornly resisted giving any concession. Head of Soviet MFA Southeast Asia Department, K. V. Novikov, harshly humiliated

⁶⁹ Zhou with Cambodian Foreign Minister Tep Phan, Minutes of Conversation, 20 June 1954 (1:30pm –2:40pm), serial no. 206-Y0008, in *Rineiva Dangan*, 318.

⁷⁰ The North Vietnamese had objected to Cambodia's retention of foreign advisors and consolidation of military bases. Zhou with Cambodian Foreign Minister Tep Phan, Minutes of Conversation, 20 July 1954, serial no. 206-Y0008, in CWIHPB 16 (Fall 2007/ Winter 2008), 80-83.

⁷¹ Zhou to PRC CC, Memo of Conversation with Laotian Foreign Minister Phoui Sananikone, 23 June 1954, serial no. 206-Y0050, in *Rineiva Dangan*, 329.

⁷² Zhou with Laotian Foreign Minister Phoui Sananikone, Minutes of Conversation, 18 July 1954 (11:30am –12:45pm), serial no. 206-Y0008, in CWIHPB 16 (Fall 2007/ Winter 2008), 71.

Dong for having “no clear ideas on the plan for division of zones [in Laos].” That a mere departmental head was allowed to publicly castigate a foreign premier signaled the exasperation of the Soviets.⁷³

On the Vietnam problem, Li Kenong concluded that Dong had finally come round to the idea that “the minimum goal is the 16th parallel.” Wang Bingnan recalled the burning issue: “At that time, some people in Vietnam hoped that they would unify Vietnam at one go. However, judging from the relative strength of both sides, we realized that this was impossible.”⁷⁴ Shielding the Vietnamese from further humiliation, the PRC moved this critical issue to the remote Liuzhou Conference (3-5 July), away from prying eyes. No less than eight strenuous rounds of negotiations were needed to secure the deal. Zhou stressed to Chairman Ho Chi Minh, Ambassador Hoang Van Hoan and General Giap that the danger of the Indochina situation was that the conflict had been “internationalized.” Zhou elaborated:

In Vietnam, the imperialists feared the expansion of China; therefore it would not allow the Democratic Republic of Vietnam a big-scale victory. If we insisted on too much, Indochina would not gain peace, the US will intervene, the conflict will be internationalized, and this will be detrimental to us. The problem of Indochina is not restricted to three nations, but it affects the entire Southeast Asia, it will have impact on Europe and the world situation. We now have only one mission, to fight for peace.

Zhou promised that the barest minimum for the division line would be “Route Nine [close to 17th parallel].” But for Laos, the PRC believed that realistically only the northern provinces would be under communist control. In Cambodia, there was not much chance for any separate administration.⁷⁵

⁷³ On 26 June, Pham Van Dong criticized K. V. Novikov for not having “mature ideas” about the Laotian situation. When Pham presented his overly ambitious plan of occupying and expanding communist areas in Laos, Novikov lectured Pham on the importance to “have further studies [on this topic] and then come up with concrete ideas.” See, Li Kenong to PRC CC, Telegram, 26 June 1954, serial no. 206-00046-34, in CWIHPB 16 (Fall 2007/ Winter 2008), 57.

⁷⁴ Wang, *Zhong Mei huitan*, 12.

⁷⁵ To date, the PRC has not released the transcripts of these sensitive meetings. Liu Wusheng, Du Hongqi (eds.) 刘武生, 杜宏奇, *Zhou Enlai junshi huodong jishi : 1918-1975*, vol 2. 周恩来军事活动纪事[Military activities of Zhou Enlai] (Beijing : Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2000), 337.

Strong-armed by the Chinese, Ho observed that the West “would at most concede territory to the 17th parallel.”⁷⁶ Ho conceded: “We must help Mendès-France, ensure that he does not fall, this is the best bet for us.”⁷⁷ But it was only on 20 July that Pham Van Dong reluctantly accepted the inevitable. “The French had already revealed their bottom line; they just want a face-saving and honorable exit from Vietnam,” counseled Zhou, “whereas Vietnam will still belong to the Vietnamese.”⁷⁸

Just how contentious the Liuzhou decision was could be gleaned from Mao’s personal intervention. Mao stamped his approval on the PRC’s Geneva policy in the enlarged Politburo on 7 July 1954.⁷⁹ He commended Zhou’s efforts: “Our activities for the last two months are very good ... We, the Soviets, Korea and Vietnam have cooperated well, our policy is correct and our activities have gained results.”⁸⁰ Mao elaborated that the “peace slogan” had isolated the US: “In negotiations, things which can be compromised, we should compromise, things which we should insist upon, we must be firm.” In sum, the act of forcing concessions out of the Vietnamese Communists was justified in view of world developments and subsumed under the greater interests of China.⁸¹

Mao highlighted the strategic dangers posed by the US: “Look at this Far East, it [the US] occupied Japan, took over South Korea, controlled Taiwan, and the Philippines, Thailand and Pakistan too. In addition, there is Turkey, Australia and New Zealand.” As Mao considered the Geneva Conference a done deal from this point onwards, his attention turned next to the “long-term problem” of Taiwan: “We need to destroy any possibility of a ROC-US defence treaty, we

⁷⁶ Wang, *Zhong Mei huitan*, 13.

⁷⁷ Quoted in Jin Chongji 金冲及 (ed), *Zhou Enlai Zhuan* 2nd ed. 周恩来传 [The Biography of Zhou Enlai] (Beijing:Zhongyang Wenxian chubanshe, 2008),1022.

⁷⁸ Tong, *Fengyu*, 88.

⁷⁹ Since his return from Hangzhou on 17 March, Mao chaired at least five Politburo meetings to discuss the PRC’s approaches to the Geneva Conference. Throughout the Geneva Conference, Zhou (or Li Kenong) sent almost daily reports to Mao. Pang Xianzhi & Jin Chongji 逢先知 与 金冲及(ed.), *Mao Zedong Zhuan (1949-1976)* 毛泽东传 [The Biography of Mao Zedong] (Beijing:Zhongyang Wenxian chubanshe, 2003), 555.

⁸⁰ Mao, “Tong yiqie yuanyi heping de guojia tuanjie hezuo” 同一切愿意和平的国家团结和作 [Unite and work together with all peace loving countries], speech, Meeting of the Politburo of the CC CCP, 7 July 1954, Mao Zedong wenji 毛泽东文集, vol. 6 (Oct 1949-Dec 1955), ed. Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi 中共中央文献研究室编 (Beijing: Remin chubanshe, 1999), 332-337.

⁸¹ Mao, “Tong yiqie yuanyi heping,” 333.

need to think of some solutions, and more propaganda is necessary.”⁸² Yet, the international situation was so positive that “to shut the door is no longer possible.” This ideal situation beseeched the PRC to “venture out.”⁸³ Mao advocated an intense diplomatic effort to win over countries like India and Burma. Finally, Mao reminded his colleagues that the PRC’s desire to uphold peace was solely for the purpose of “protecting our country, protecting socialism and to strive for building up a great socialist country.”⁸⁴

2.4 The Specter of “United Action”

Like the earlier period, China remained concerned with “united action.” Beijing’s actions in Liuzhou premised upon alarming reports of “United Action” *redux*. The Chinese communists noted glaring examples of high-level consultations between Britain and the US and harbored a deep sense of foreboding.⁸⁵ Britain was the linchpin as the French were safely entangled by their obduracy.⁸⁶ Beijing surmised accurately that the fear of Sino-Soviet opposition and the resistance of the Asian nations played important roles in British equivocation. Subsequently, the British had further claimed, much to the annoyance of the Americans, that the forthcoming Five-Power Military Conference in Washington (3-11 June 1954) had nothing to do with the Southeast Asian Defence treaty. Gary Hess noted that “British influence in the former European colonies, US officials believed, was instrumental for enlisting wider Asian support.” Hence, by playing the

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ “Obviously, the international situation is such that even reactionary figures like Churchill,” Mao pointed out on 5 July, “are beginning to acknowledge Marxist-Leninist principles [peaceful co-existence] in foreign policy.” V.V. Vaskov, Soviet Charge d’Affaires, recorded Mao’s enthusiasm, see V.V. Vaskov with Mao, Memorandum of conversation, 5 July 1954, *Journal of V.V. Vaskov*, 27 August 1954, AVPRF, f.0100, o.p. 47, papka 379, d.7, ll.69-70, in CWIHPB 16 (Fall 2007/ Winter 2008), 88; Declaration by President Eisenhower and Prime Minister Churchill, 29 June 1954, FRUS (1952-1954), *Western Europe and Canada*, vol. VI, (1986), 1130.

⁸⁴ Mao commended the Soviet policy of relieving international tensions and coexisting with countries with different social systems. He repeated the same message the next day in a session of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), highlighting that “[t]o protect our economic development and industrialization, we cannot do without improvements to our diplomatic camp.”⁵⁷ session of the 1st National committee of the CPPCC, quoted in Pang & Jin, *Mao Zedong Zhuan*, 563; Mao, “Tong yiqie yuanyi heping,” 334-5.

⁸⁵ Washington had been canvassing members, including British Malaya, for a “Southeast Asia Defence treaty.” Eisenhower wrote to Churchill that “a greater show of unity is essential.” Eisenhower to Churchill, cable, 12 May 1954, in PDDE (XV), 1069; Immerman, *John Foster Dulles*, 94; “奠边府解放后美国在东南亚的做法及与英、法的矛盾” [Dianbianfu jiefanghou meiguozai dongnanya de zuofa ji yu ying 、 fa de maodun], MFA Intelligence division, no. 87, 28 May 1954, serial no. 102-00159-10, AMFA.

⁸⁶ In the aftermath of Dien Bien Phu, Beijing observed that the US had asserted more pressure on the French but had encountered French intransigence. Eisenhower to Gruenther, 8 June 1954, in PDDE (XV), 1119; PDDE (XV), 1132; “奠边府解放后美国在东南亚的做法及与英、法的矛盾” [Dianbianfu jiefanghou meiguozai dongnanya de zuofa ji yu ying 、 fa de maodun], MFA Intelligence division, no. 87, 28 May 1954, serial no. 102-00159-10, AMFA.

Asian card, the British tried stalling the US programme of a Southeast Asian Defence treaty, to at least after the Geneva Conference.⁸⁷

To Beijing's relief, the renewed US push for a regional security pact met with similar disdain from Asian "neutralists." Beijing observed that Indonesian attention was on securing a mutual non-aggression treaty with the PRC. In mid-May, Indonesian Ambassador to France, Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, had reassured Zhou Indonesia wanted no part in the US defense arrangement.⁸⁸ The Indonesian assembly vice-chairman and the foreign minister also publicly announced their support of a treaty with the PRC, deflecting any US attempt to entice Indonesia.⁸⁹ Instead of a US security pact, Burma proposed an opposite idea: an agreement among India, Indonesia and Burma for non-aggression. India's editorials renewed accusations that the regional defence treaty was a deliberate US ploy to sabotage the Geneva Conference.⁹⁰

At the end of June, Beijing concluded that for the moment, the revival of "united action" was unlikely. The crucial key was Britain's unwillingness to commit. It noted that Churchill had declared in the House of Commons on 27 April that any "Southeast Asian Security pact" would have to consider the "opinions of Asian countries."⁹¹ If the British proved obdurate, the Asian countries were stridently so. The Chinese communists observed that India, Indonesia and Burma were against such a security pact, opting instead for neutralism. But the US was working on other more pliable Asian countries such as Japan, Thailand, the Philippines, South Korean and Taiwan.⁹²

⁸⁷ The PRC intelligence speculated that should the Americans make no headway with the British, it might resort to "bilateral treaties" with individual friendly Asian countries. Hess, "The American Search," 282; Geneva Conference to FO, 22 May 1954, D1074/46, FO 371/111863, cited in Lowe, "Change and Stability in Eastern Asia," 145; "奠边府解放后美国在东南亚的做法及与英、法的矛盾" [Dianbianfu jiefanghou meiguo zai dongnanya de zuofa ji yu ying、fa de maodun], MFA Intelligence division, no. 87, 28 May 1954, serial no. 102-00159-10, AMFA.

⁸⁸ Zhou with Indonesian Ambassador Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, Minutes of Conversation, 15 May 1954, serial no. 206-Y0009, *Rineiwa Dangan*, 363-365.

⁸⁹ "印度、印尼、缅甸以及英国对美国积极筹组'东南亚联防'的反应" [Yindu、yinni、miandian yiji yinguo dui meiguo jiji chouzhu 'dongnanya lianfang' de fanying], MFA Intelligence division, no. 88, 5 June 1954, serial no. 102-00159-11, AMFA.

⁹⁰ As the senior partner among the neutralist countries, India exercised considerable influence. "印度、印尼、缅甸以及英国对美国积极筹组'东南亚联防'的反应" [Yindu、yinni、miandian yiji yinguo dui meiguo jiji chouzhu 'dongnanya lianfang' de fanying], MFA Intelligence division, no. 88, 5 June 1954, serial no. 102-00159-11, AMFA.

⁹¹ The Chinese Communists further speculated that it was also partly due to British resentment with the US over the relative loss of English influence in Southeast Asia. Hess, "The American Search," 281.

⁹² "美国拼凑'东南亚防卫集团'的情况" [Meiguo pincou 'dongnanya fangwei jituan' de qinkuang], 30 June 1954, serial no. 105-00626-01, AMFA.

However, the Chinese detected that British resolve was gradually crumbling. Beijing noted that Anglo-US differences were over means not aims. Attempts were also made by Britain to draw India into Eden's "Asia Locarno pact."⁹³ For the Indochina case, a British Foreign Office spokesman revealed: "A Locarno-type guarantee was, in fact, in our minds throughout the first half of the Geneva Conference. Our hope was that the Colombo powers might be induced to assume the role of guarantor that had been played by Great Britain and Italy in the original Locarno Agreement."⁹⁴ But Beijing feared that Eden's Locarno plan might be a fig leaf for "United Action." Indeed, the Five-Power Military Conference had gradually eroded the British opposition against a regional defensive pact. Beijing's fears were heightened by Churchill's Washington visit. On both counts, the PRC was correct in casting suspicion on Whitehall's habitual inclinations.⁹⁵ Zhou complained to Eden that London "was trying to counter a Southeast Asian defense pact with Locarno. If the two were to exist at the same time, it would be unthinkable." Eden admitted that "I have run into some trouble. I used the word 'Locarno,' not knowing that the US did not like it."⁹⁶ The meeting was inconclusive; Eden did not manage to persuade Zhou. But it was clear that Zhou, Nehru and U Nu were misled by Eden's Locarno proposal and now they would have to accept the *fait accompli* of the impending development of SEATO.⁹⁷

⁹³ The French news on 23 May also reported that there was a "major rethink" in the British government vis-à-vis the Southeast Asia problem. "印度、印尼、缅甸以及英国对美国积极筹组 '东南亚联防' 的反应" [Yindu、yinni、miandian yiji yinguo dui meiguo jiji chouzhu 'dongnanya lianfang' de fanying], MFA Intelligence division, no. 88, 5 June 1954, serial no. 102-00159-11, AMFA.

⁹⁴ Eden's initiative referred to the 1925 treaties of Locarno proposed by German Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann, who advanced a scheme to delineate the boundaries of European countries, with Britain and Italy as guarantors. On Eden's proposal, see Anthony Short, "British Policy in Southeast Asia: the Eisenhower Era," in *The Great Powers in East Asia*, 257.

⁹⁵ The Chinese intelligence concluded that the US had not given up on a security pact, although it faced "innumerable obstacles." "美国拼凑 '东南亚防卫集团' 的情况" [Meiguo pincou 'dongnanya fangwei jituan' de qinkuang], 30 June 1954, serial no. 105-00626-01, AMFA.

⁹⁶ Eden with Zhou, Record of conversation, 17 July 1954 (11:30am-12:40pm), serial no. 206-Y0006, AMFA, in CWIHPB 16 (Fall 2007/ Winter 2008), 66-67. Judd had also reported to Eisenhower that the Congress was against Eden's "Locarno type treaty in South [east] Asia" as "he did not think the American people would be willing to guarantee any communist territory acquired by force or internal subversion." Memo for the record, Eisenhower with Walter H. Judd, 25 June 1954, ACW Diary Series, box 2, ACW Diary June 1954 (1), Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

⁹⁷ Eden wrote that the "Asian powers had no ill feelings towards our action [SEATO]." Eden's memorandum of his conversation with Zhou on 17 July downplayed the concerns of Zhou about SEATO. Anthony Eden, *The Memoirs of Sir Anthony Eden: Full Circle* (London: Cassell, 1960), 144; Eden with Zhou, memorandum of conversation, 17 July 1954, no. 956, PREM 11/646, in *Asia: Official British Documents 1945-65* (London: Routledge, 1999). (hereafter cited as AOBDD)

On the whole, like the US policies in Geneva, China's actions during the Geneva Conference could be seen as a continuation of its earlier policies. While China seemed momentarily successful in countering the specter of "united action," later developments would derail China's expectations and led it toward the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. How Taiwan acted during the period of the Geneva Conference will be the focus of the next section.

3. Taiwan and Geneva

From 1950 to April 1954, the Taiwan Strait issue played a significant role in the formulation and implementation of policies to uphold Taiwan's political survival and cultural revival, and in the construction of the clarion call to wage *fangong dalu*, which led to a militarization of Taiwan's society and constituted a major component of its foreign policy. Although Taiwan was not a participant in Geneva, this section will first demonstrate how it exploited the international crisis in Indochina to further its *fangong* mission. It will then examine how Chiang tried to win over US officials to his cause, through a case study of Chiang's meetings with General James A. Van Fleet. Taiwan's search for security succeeded because it learnt to situate itself firmly in the US Cold War strategic interests. Through Taiwan's unceasing efforts to win over the US, Washington also began to grasp the symbiotic ties between Chiang's *fangong* mission with the *raison d'être* of the KMT government. Nonetheless, despite Chiang's repeated offers to aid the US to counter the PRC, the US kept Chiang at arm's length. These aspects constituted important parts of the making of the Taiwan Strait Crises and would continue to feature prominently in the subsequent unfolding of the Taiwan Strait Crises.

3.1 Exploiting the International Crisis in Indochina

The ROC government perceived the international crisis in Indochina as a boon to its counter-offensive ambition. In April 1954, Assistant Secretary of Defense Wilfred J. McNeil revealed to ROC diplomat Hsiao Po that the US and its allies were in disarray. The remaining option was "anti-communist troops of the Far East nations and other nations sending troops to aid Vietnam." Hsiao enthusiastically appraised McNeil of the ROC's plans to "set up base camps" once the

counter-attack of the mainland started. McNeil proved agreeable to plans to set up an “anti-communist government on the remote boundaries [Burma or Tibet]” of Communist China.⁹⁸ Hsiao even speculated that General James Van Fleet’s forthcoming trip to the Far East as a presidential emissary might be a fig leaf to disguise his eventual “appointment as commander-in-chief of the Allied Forces in Indochina.”⁹⁹

Taipei assiduously prepared for a potential ROC involvement in an Indochina war. General Peng Meng-chi submitted war plans in May 1954. Peng explicitly called for an invasion of the Lei Zhou peninsula and Hainan Island, pending the expansion of war in Indochina. One of its aims was to cut off “Zhu-Mao’s connections with the Vietnamese Communists.” The plan stated that the ROC’s counter-offensive “must obtain aid from the US navy and its coastal landing abilities” and that with US aid, the first stage of the counter-attack “would not be difficult.” In this ambitious invasion which would involve four army groups (about twelve divisions), it postulated that the US would have 700 LSTs available for the ROC. In terms of airpower, it assumed that the “US naval airforce would provide the necessary cover for the ground troops.” The plan also presupposed that there would a large-scale military units’ defection from the communist ranks once the ROC propaganda machinery kicked into operation.¹⁰⁰

However, Peng’s plans had two glaring shortcomings. If the US invaded Vietnam, ROC Southern China operations would be a sideshow or at best a feint. As the Vietnam operation would monopolize all resources, it was unlikely that the US would divert a large amount of LSTs to the ROC. Moreover, in a bid to dovetail with US needs, Peng exaggerated how the Lei Zhou-Hainan operation would sever China-Vietnam communication. Yet, the oldest major railway line that

⁹⁸ Hsiao Po to CKS, telegram, 26 April 1954, serial no.00208020035032, CKS papers, AH. In September 1954, CIA Director Allen Dulles sanguinely assured the NSC council that “in the last year there had been no such raids because experience had shown that they were not very profitable.” 213th Meeting of NSC, September 9, 1954, NSC Series, box 6, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

⁹⁹ Hsiao reported that the Americans were wary of British and French tendencies to “privately compromise with the Communists in Geneva.” McNeil’s conversation with Hsiao also demonstrated the contradictions in the US policy in Asia: “The US cannot afford to retreat from the situation in Vietnam” so it continued to assist the French and Indochina troops in war material. Hsiao Po to CKS, telegram, 26 April 1954, serial no.00208020035032, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁰⁰ General Pang Mang-chi to CKS, “复与作战计划” [Fu yu zuozhan jihua] (secret), 22 May 1954, serial no.002080102008011, CKS papers, AH.

stretched from Yunnan (China) into Vietnam was the Kunming-Hanoi line and the newer line, the Nanning-Hanoi line, began in Guangxi. None of the lines was thus remotely near the proposed ROC's Lei Zhou-Hainan operation and given that the common border of Guangxi and Yunnan with North Vietnam ran hundreds of miles, the ROC's proposed military objective was clearly unattainable.¹⁰¹

This optimistic study did indicate an awareness of the potential problems. For example, it concluded that the "urgency" in determining or "improving" US aid and supplies remained a priority. Without US aid, there would be no counter-attack. Finally, after estimating the huge amount of equipment needed for the counter-attack, the study conceded that finding trained personnel for the US equipment "remained a major obstacle."¹⁰² Indeed even in January 1955, Admiral Radford complained to Foreign Minister Yeh that the ROC still did not have sufficient trained personnel for the US military hardware.¹⁰³

A separate study by ROC Chief of Staff General Chou Chih-jou offered an alternative Plan B of counter-attacking Nanning (Guangxi). Chou's report stated even more explicitly that Taipei's role was to study how it could best "coordinate" with American efforts in the two geopolitical Cold War flashpoints of Korea and Vietnam. The study envisioned its Nanning counter-attack as an arm of the US-led coalition against Communist Vietnam. One of its stipulated aims was to "disrupt China-Vietnam communication."¹⁰⁴ Plan B was a slightly more realistic scenario and had the potential of meeting US needs but it had major drawbacks for the ROC. Plan B presented immense difficulties for a simultaneous engagement of multiple targets [at least 5 important towns] over a wide area upon establishing three beachheads. The carefully harbored strength of the ROC forces

¹⁰¹ Ibid..

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Record of conversation, George Yeh K. C. and Admiral Radford, 18 January 1955, serial no. 002080106035005, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁰⁴ Chou's report was an attachment to General Pang's main report but its Lei Zhou-Hainan campaign was presented as a ROC counter-offensive into Guangdong. Chou Chih-jou to CKS, "复与计划纲要 - 附件二" [Fu yu jihua gangyao - fujian er] (secret), 22 May 1954, serial no.002080102008011, CKS papers, AH.

would be squandered away. In other words, what was good for the US coalition would be injurious to the counter-offensive ambition of the ROC.¹⁰⁵

The general staff of the ROC were thus alert to potential Cold War hotspots in East Asia that they could capitalize. However, the ROC's strong sense of autonomy and preservation meant that none of the plans had any chance of being accepted by Washington. Despite the urgency of "winning American aid," Chou postulated a few conditions before the ROC should plunge into any coordinated US-ROC Indochina offensive. One, the ROC forces must be part of the SEATO forces, presumably to heighten the legitimacy of the military effort. Two, it would be good if the "US request for our assistance first" as this would be a diplomatic victory for the ROC. Three, "there would be a joint consultation and planning between ROC and US general staff modeled on the ROC military and MAAG Taiwan cooperation in the past three years." The last condition signaled Chiang's main fear of the ROC forces becoming cannon fodder. Maintaining a tight grip on the military was the only way of guaranteeing Chiang's titular position as president of the ROC.¹⁰⁶

3.2 Chiang's Meetings with James Van Fleet

Besides attempting to exploit the international crisis in Indochina to further its *fangong* mission, the ROC also made use of personal diplomacy to try to win over US officials to its cause. A fine example was seen in Chiang's meetings with General James A. Van Fleet.

With the fall of Dien Bien Phu on 7 May 1954, the security of the rest of Free Asia was cast into sharp relief. To understand the security demands on US resources, Eisenhower sent General James A. Van Fleet (retired) on a fact-finding mission to Asia from 13 May to 4 July. Van Fleet's sterling record with allies in Greece and South Korea made him the best man for the job. Ostensibly, Van Fleet's mission was to promote democracy and independence as opposed to moribund colonialism.

¹⁰⁵ In contrast, in Chou's Lei-Hainan campaign (Plan A), the geographical bottleneck of the Lei Zhou peninsula meant that the battlefield would be self-contained and offer fewer opportunities for a communist overland flanking movement. Chou Chih-jou to CKS, "复与计划纲要 – 附件二" [Fu yu jihua gangyao – fujian er] (secret), 22 May 1954, serial no.002080102008011, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁰⁶ Chou Chih-jou to CKS, "对《复与计划纲要》之研究意见 – 附件一" [Dui "Fu yu jihua gangyao" zhi yanjiu yijian – fujian yi] (secret), 22 May 1954, serial no.002080102008011, CKS papers, AH.

He was also to ascertain the “strength of the anti-communist forces” in Asia. More specifically, Van Fleet would report on the amount of aid and troops to be stationed in South Korea and Taiwan, and investigate and recommend ways to train the indigenous Vietnamese forces with US aid.¹⁰⁷ However, ROC Ambassador Wellington Koo rightly reported Van Fleet’s real mission was “how to cut down on the yearly military expenditure and to increase the role of indigenous people in their own defense.”¹⁰⁸ But Chiang was not disconcerted; instead, he approached Van Fleet’s mission carefully, deploying his knowledge of Van Fleet’s record to change the emissary’s mind.

Chiang’s experiences with the US formed a firm schema in his approach to American representatives. Having learnt from his corrosive encounters with General Joseph Stilwell, Chiang used flattery and demonstrated finesse in his first meeting with General Van Fleet and Assistant Secretary of Defense McNeil.¹⁰⁹ Chiang complimented Van Fleet for his cultural sensitivity in dealing with foreign nations: “If ten years ago, when you went to Greece, you could have come to the Far East and helped us fight against Communists, China might long have been saved from the Communist scourge.”¹¹⁰ Chiang then stressed the importance of the offshore Islands-Formosa complex within the larger rubric of the Cold War. All the US had to do was to “settle on an overall plan” which would involve “the three battle lines of Korea, Formosa and Indochina.” Chiang then adroitly welcomed Van Fleet to visit the offshore islands which “are very important to the defense of Formosa.” Van Fleet was further told that the “islands are spring-boards” for the recovery of Mainland China.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Hsiao Po to CKS, telegram, 26 April 1954, serial no.00208020035032, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁰⁸ Koo to CKS, telegram, 29 April 1954, serial no.00208020035035, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁰⁹ In 1948 Stilwell had famously described “Peanut” [Chiang] as “illogical, ungrateful, grasping,” “crabbed little bastard,” and someone who had “never one word of gratitude to the US.” In a revisionist account, one Chinese scholar stated that the US had conveniently ignored the fact that no self-respecting nationalistic Chinese political leader could give up the command of his army, which was doing most of the fighting against the Japanese, without suffering from a backlash. See Lin Weishu, “Shengfu ban you rensuan,” 99; Diary entries, 29 Jan 1943; before 14 July 1943; 28 Sept 1943, in *Stilwell Papers*, 189, 206, & 217.

¹¹⁰ Record of First Conversation between President Chiang Kai-shek and General James A. Van Fleet, 13 May 1954, serial no. 002080106034006, CKS papers, AH.

¹¹¹ Chiang asserted that “a visit to the offshore islands will give you [Van Fleet] the idea that the recovery of the mainland from Formosa is far easier than that of the European continent from London in the last war.” Record of First Conversation between President Chiang Kai-shek and General James A. Van Fleet, 13 May 1954, serial no. 002080106034006, CKS papers, AH.

In the second meeting, Chiang expressed that US methods of countering anti-communism were penurious. Dulles' United Action was a signature example of US stop-gap measures which limped from crisis to crisis. Washington should cease courting the neutralists. How would friends of the US not feel "skeptical" when uncooperative neutralist India continued to receive US aid, but the faithful like Chiang "can scarcely obtain a quarter of a million dollars to build an airstrip or wharf on one of the off-shore islands"?¹¹² In the third meeting, Chiang situated his counter-attack in coordination with US forces attacking Indochina. Chiang was prepared to have an amphibious landing on the Leizhou Peninsula "to undertake this mission on our own...to help to relieve the situation in Vietnam... All we need is some support in the way of transportation and supplies."¹¹³ Chiang effected total agreement with Van Fleet in the fourth meeting and even declared, "I shall be glad to place our troops under your command."¹¹⁴

In the fifth meeting, Chiang pointed out US contradictions in Southeast Asia. Washington aided Western colonial powers in Southeast Asia in the fight against communism. But at the same time, mused Chiang, "the US wants Britain and France to give up entirely their colonial interests in that area." This could scarcely succeed.¹¹⁵ But the rest of Free East Asia was a sterling alternative to the quagmire in Southeast Asia. Chiang was the perennial salesman of his China-first strategy: "The completion of military plans in East Asia will ... create strength not only against the Communists in that region but also reduce the threat of Communism in Southeast Asia."¹¹⁶

The generalissimo was also anxious to obtain a mutual security treaty and expressed this through cultural allusions. In the fifth meeting, Chiang emphasized that he would not "involve the US in a

¹¹² Chiang viewed "neutralism [as] nothing but the vanguard of Communism." Record of Second Conversation between President Chiang Kai-shek and General James A. Van Fleet, 13 May 1954, serial no. 002080106034007, CKS papers, AH.

¹¹³ Record of Third Conversation between President Chiang Kai-shek and General James A. Van Fleet, 16 May 1954, serial no. 002-080106-034-008, CKS papers, AH.

¹¹⁴ Record of Fourth Conversation between President Chiang Kai-shek and General James A. Van Fleet, 24 May 1954, serial no. 002-080106-034-009, CKS papers, AH.

¹¹⁵ Nixon would agree with Chiang's analysis as Nixon believed that while colonial polices were bad, to have a French colonial pullout in Vietnam would be disastrous. Historian Stephen E. Ambrose also noted how "America's leaders simply ignored the logical fallacy inherent in their position [toward Vietnam]." See Nixon, *Memoirs*, 125; Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nixon*, Vol.1, 322; Record of Fifth Conversation between President Chiang Kai-shek and General James A. Van Fleet, 28 May 1954, serial no. 002080106034010, CKS papers, AH.

¹¹⁶ Record of Fifth Conversation between President Chiang Kai-shek and General James A. Van Fleet, 28 May 1954, serial no. 002080106034010, CKS papers, AH.

war against the mainland” and made his promise in a specific cultural context, the integrity of his word. Chiang repeated: “I would be betraying your friendship if I tried to induce you to send ground forces to help us recover the mainland.”¹¹⁷ Unfortunately for Chiang, the cultural import of his words was lost in translation. Other instances of cultural divergence abounded. Chiang illustrated the steadfastness and righteousness of his cause with a Chinese aphorism: “I would rather be a broken piece of jade than be preserved as one piece of tile.” Van Fleet did not respond to Chiang’s allusions but it was not hard to imagine the degree of cultural dissonance involved. For officers trained in the Western tradition of Clausewitz’s military thought where war is an instrument of policy, hunkering down to fight for another day is perfectly acceptable; being a “tile” might not sound too bad. In fact, Chiang could come across as being fatalistically stubborn, oblivious to the advantages of a strategic compromise. Hence, Chiang’s schemes might be cast as impractical and given to flights of fancy.¹¹⁸

In the same meeting, Chiang highlighted three historical themes to Van Fleet. One, the KMT and the army were riddled with spies and fifth columnists. Two, China was overwhelmed by Communist propaganda. “Today the Chinese people have awakened to the danger of Communist deception,” Chiang claimed, “they have now placed all their confidence in my leadership to carry out the mission of liberating the people of the mainland from their present misery.” The third theme was how the US had let China down and how concluding a Sino-US treaty would wipe the slate clean.¹¹⁹

Van Fleet and McNeil responded with ambiguous statements. Van Fleet ended up with unwarranted encouragement, saying: “However, my personal view is that your plan is *excellent*

¹¹⁷ In addition, Chiang saw the treaty as an endorsement both for the ROC’s preparation for “an invasion against the mainland” and for “bolstering the confidence of the people of the mainland.” Record of Fifth Conversation between President Chiang Kai-shek and General James A. Van Fleet, 28 May 1954, serial no. 002080106034010, CKS papers, AH.

¹¹⁸ This fifth meeting was especially contentious as it took two Chinese and five English drafts to iron out the transcripts. When Chiang turned down the Japanese offer of a limited sovereignty on the eve of the Pacific War, he said: “I would rather be a broken piece of jade than be preserved as one piece of tile.” He meant by this anecdote and Chinese idiom to cast himself in favorable light where his steadfastness shone in the face of the enticing but craven offers from the Japanese. Record of Fifth Conversation between President Chiang Kai-shek and General James A. Van Fleet, 28 May 1954, serial no. 002080106034010, CKS papers, AH.

¹¹⁹ Record of Fifth Conversation between President Chiang Kai-shek and General James A. Van Fleet, 28 May 1954, serial no. 002080106034010, CKS papers, AH.

from the strategic point of view, although further study will have to be made of the tactics of the battle.”¹²⁰ As did McNeil: “Mr President, assuming that the Chinese Army can maintain a footing on the mainland for a period of from three to six months, as you have just said, apart from the political support, what other kinds of aid would you want from the US?” Such an inquiry possibly gave Taipei the false impression that the US was seriously contemplating its requests. McNeil’s subsequent comment even sounded like a home-run to Chiang: “If [Chiang] will give us more comprehensive statistics concerning the requirements in air and naval support, it would greatly facilitate our present work of investigation.”¹²¹

Eisenhower chose the wrong man for his mission. The President was too sanguine to assume that Van Fleet would lay down Washington’s line. To be fair, Van Fleet did state that “[t]he US certainly does not expect the alliance to deal with Communist threats from outside or to exterminate the Chinese Communists.” But Van Fleet did not empathize with US budgetary constraints, nor was he convinced by America’s strategic concerns.¹²² Instead, Van Fleet agreed with Chiang about the offshore islands’ importance. This was unfortunate because Washington was adamant in reducing the garrison at the offshore islands.¹²³ This episode illustrated the deftness of Chiang in turning US emissaries around to Taipei’s interests. Finally, Van Fleet was completely sold on the “Kai” plan, Chiang’s version of outfitting the ROC army. Van Fleet “thought there should be a third field army consisting of ten under-strength reserve divisions, which should be kept in good training.”¹²⁴ His recommendations went against Washington’s

¹²⁰ Record of Third Conversation between President Chiang Kai-shek and General James A. Van Fleet, 16 May 1954, serial no. 002-080106-034-008, CKS papers, AH.

¹²¹ Record of Fifth Conversation between President Chiang Kai-shek and General James A. Van Fleet, 28 May 1954, serial no. 002080106034010, CKS papers, AH.

¹²² Van Fleet fundamentally disagreed with the ongoing reduction of US troops stationed overseas and the reorganization of the US army. Record of Seventh Conversation between President Chiang Kai-shek and General James A. Van Fleet, 1 July 1954, serial no. 002-080106-034-012, CKS papers, AH.

¹²³ Record of Fourth Conversation between President Chiang Kai-shek and General James A. Van Fleet, 24 May 1954, serial no. 002-080106-034-009, CKS papers, AH.

¹²⁴ Record of Tenth Conversation between President Chiang Kai-shek and General James A. Van Fleet, 3 July 1954, serial no. 002-080106-034-015, CKS papers, AH.

austerity plan. Eisenhower complained that Van Fleet was “a good field commander but not a planner.”¹²⁵

It was thus clear that visiting US officials were drilled with Chiang’s mantra that the US “was wasting its time and money in Indochina.” Chiang also told Defense Secretary Wilson that Indochina was a sideshow. Chiang further complained that the US had mutual defense treaties with the Philippines, the ROK and Japan, but not with the ROC. When Chiang boasted that his counter-attack “could be successfully carried out without the need for any American ground forces,” Wilson openly expressed skepticism. Hence, despite Chiang’s offer to aid US against the PRC’s aggression, the US kept Chiang at arm’s length.¹²⁶

Conclusion

US policies toward China during the Geneva Conference could be seen as a continuation of its earlier policies, highlighting again the entwining of the Taiwan Strait issue with events in Southeast Asia. The US was not prepared for war with China. Maintaining Chiang’s Taiwan remained one of the main goals of US policy toward Asia, together with keeping Japan firmly in the US security umbrella, and preventing communism from spreading in Southeast Asia. US non-recognition of China and economic embargo and covert operations against China persisted. The pursuit of “United Action,” a US strategy to counter PRC’s involvements in Indochina that would lead to the formation of SEATO in September 1954, continued. In Geneva, the US initially faced difficulties in gaining support from its allies for the “United Action” and there were differences in opinions between Eisenhower and his cabinet members regarding US policies toward China. The US-Britain-France disarrayed alliance, however, did reach a compromise eventually to form a “United Front.” Nonetheless, it was clear that in Geneva, US difficulties in rallying allies to its cause and the negativity of its association with neo-colonialism hampered its efforts in developing a regional countermeasure against China. US actions in Geneva contributed to the making of the

¹²⁵ PDDE, 1161; “Report of Ambassador James A. Van Fleet (Formosa), 25 August 1954, White House Office, Office of the Sp. Asst. for Nat. Sec. Aff: Records 1952-1961, Special Asst Series, Presidential Subseries, Box 2, President’s Papers 1954 (10), DDEL.

¹²⁶ 201th Meeting of NSC, 10 June 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

Taiwan Strait Crises because US dissatisfaction with the outcome of the Geneva Conference would subsequently lead it to undertake actions perceived by China to be threatening to China's security and led to China's triggering of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis.

Like the US policies in Geneva, China's actions during the Geneva Conference could be seen as a continuation of its earlier policies. In the aftermath of the Korean War armistice agreements, Beijing was anxious to emerge from diplomatic isolation and re-assessed its policies toward Taiwan, the US and Southeast Asia. In this re-assessment, China placed the Taiwan Strait issue on the backseat for the moment, expressed its concerns regarding the US and "United Action," sought to win over Asian neutralist countries, and advocated a "talking while fighting" posture with respect to Vietnam. Such features represented China's responses and initiatives in dealing with the US actions and they were pursued in Geneva. China's aim to break out of international isolation led it to take up a position of "reasonableness" that disarmed many potential antagonists and improved China's diplomatic standing. China's efforts to win over Asian countries through a combination of cultural blitzkrieg and realpolitik also reaped dividends. While China seemed momentarily successful in countering the specter of "united action," later developments would derail China's expectations. Nevertheless, what China learnt in Geneva China would apply again throughout the duration of the Taiwan Strait Crises.

Taiwan was the most directly affected party right from the start of the Taiwan Strait Crises. From 1950 to April 1954, the Taiwan Strait issue played a significant role in the formulation and implementation of policies to uphold Taiwan's political survival and cultural revival. Its importance was further seen in the construction of the clarion call to wage *fangong dalu*, which led to a militarization of Taiwan's society and constituted a major component of its foreign policy. From April to July 1954, *fangong dalu* continued to be the central motif that guided Taiwan's foreign relations. Although Taiwan was not a participant in Geneva, it exploited the international crisis in Indochina to further its *fangong* mission. Taiwan also made various attempts to win over US officials to its cause, a good example being Chiang's meetings with General James A. Van

Fleet. Taiwan's search for security succeeded because it learnt to situate itself firmly in US Cold War strategic interests. Through Taiwan's unceasing efforts, Washington also began to grasp the symbiotic ties between Chiang's *fangong* mission with the *raison d'être* of the KMT government. Nonetheless, despite Chiang's repeated offers to aid the US to counter the PRC, the US kept Chiang at arm's length. These aspects constituted important parts of the making of the Taiwan Strait Crises and would continue to feature prominently in the subsequent unfolding of the Taiwan Strait Crises.

On the whole, during the Geneva Conference, China was relatively more successful than the US in the pursuit of national goals. This, however, would lead the US to subsequently undertake actions perceived by China to be threatening to China's security and resulted in China's triggering of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. Yet, at the same time, the Geneva Conference could be seen to have ushered in the first full-fledged opportunity, after the Korean War armistice, for the belligerents and allies, including China and the US, to take stock of each other and work out a tentative *modus operandi*. A good example was seen in the initiative taken by the US representative in Geneva Bedell Smith, without reprimands from Eisenhower, to establish fleeting personal links with Zhou. Eisenhower himself was intuitively working to shift his colleagues towards the eventual loosening of trade sanctions against the PRC. All parties demonstrated room for readjustment and change of policies, however limited in manner. In this sense, the Geneva Conference can be seen to have laid a foundation for Sino-US tacit communication, a framework that would further evolve during the Taiwan Strait Crises, a tortuous path towards a mutual understanding conditioned by realism and littered with misperceptions. How the First Taiwan Strait Crisis broke out and how it added another step to the framework of tacit communication will be the subject of the next chapter.

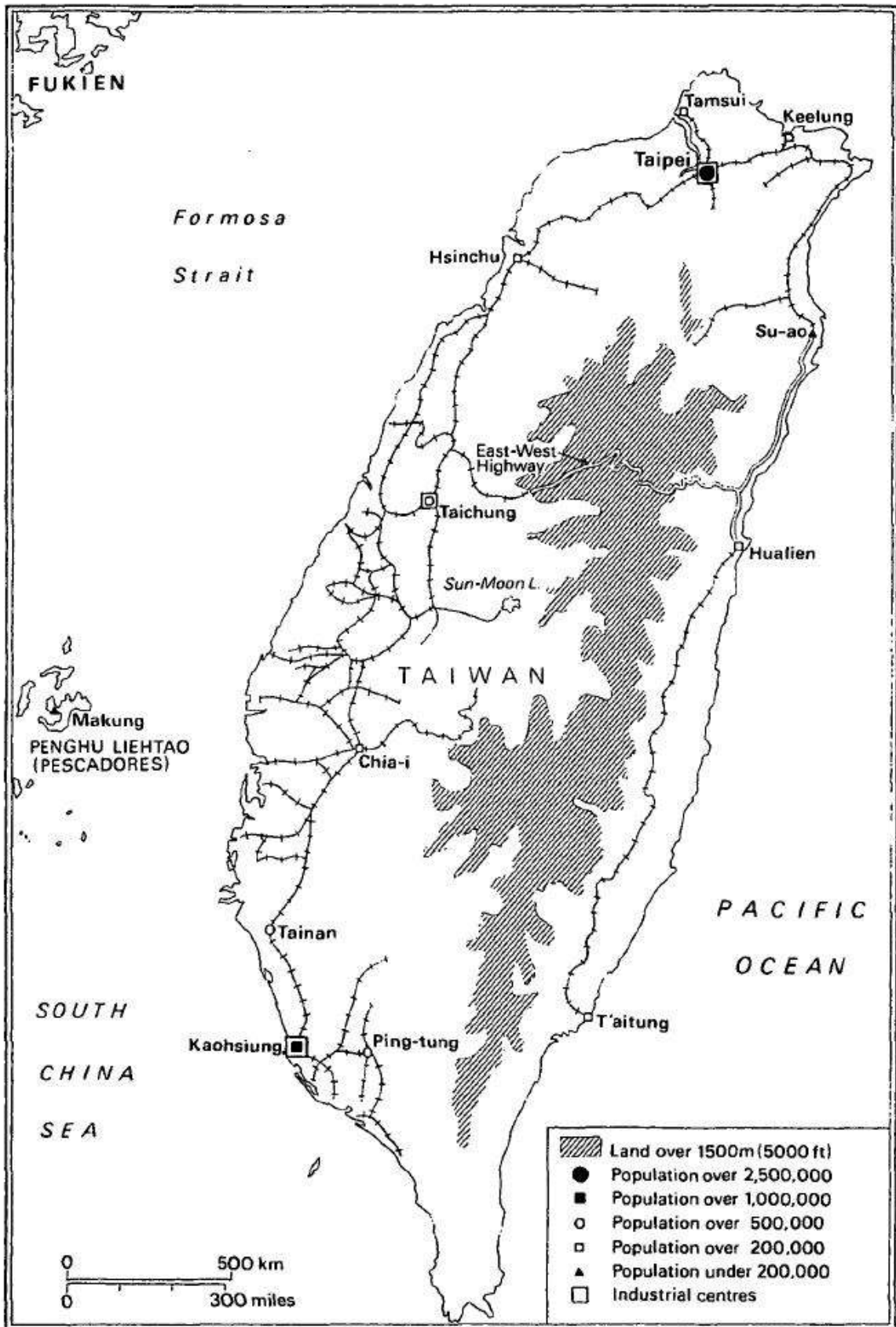


Figure 3 Taiwan & Pescadores (DDEL)

Chapter 4: The Outbreak of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis

The Geneva Accords, signed on 21 July 1954, marked the end of the Geneva Conference. On 3 September 1954, China launched a massive artillery bombardment on Quemoy and Matsu islands, triggering the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. This attack prompted the US to sign the Mutual Defence Treaty with Taiwan on 2 December 1954. What developments in July and August led to the eruption of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis? How did China, the US and Taiwan act following the outbreak of this crisis? These are the two main questions addressed in this chapter.

Existing scholarship concentrated on the major events in Sino-US relations and viewed misconceptions as the primary factor in igniting the hostilities. However, the process of reconciliation of misconceptions to produce a more nuanced appreciation of each other's motives and intentions were not adequately highlighted. Little consideration was also given to Beijing's courting of neutralist elements in Asia in the immediate aftermath of the crisis.¹ In addition, monographs which focused on ROC-US relations did not refer to materials in Taipei. How Taiwan planned its *fangong* and the stratagems used by the ROC to bind the US to Taipei were sorely missed.²

This chapter forms the first part of a reevaluation of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, spanning from the end of the Geneva conference to the end of 1954. Based on new primary sources, it will first highlight how Chiang Kai-shek adroitly used the crisis to secure a treaty and more aid from the US by situating Taiwan firmly in US strategic concerns. Indeed the calculated aggressiveness of Taiwan's *fangong* plans made the ROC-US Mutual Defence Treaty looked like a bargain from Washington's perspective. Second, it will demonstrate that Washington was caught in a dilemma

¹ The standard works are Thomas E. Stolper, *China, Taiwan, and the Offshore Islands* (NY: ME Sharpe, 1985), 34-94; Zhang Shu Guang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture: Chinese-American Confrontation, 1949-1958* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 189-224; Qiang Zhai, *The Dragon, the Lion & the Eagle: Chinese/ British/ American Relations, 1949-1958* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State Univ. Press, 1994); Gordon H. Chang & He Di, "The Absence of War in the US-China Confrontation over Quemoy and Matsu in 1954-1955: Contingency, Luck, Deterrence?" *The American Historical Review* 98, no. 5 (Dec 1993): 1500-1524.

² John W. Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance: Nationalist China and American Cold War Strategy in Asia* (Armonk: ME Sharpe, 1997), 112-133; Robert Accinelli, *Crisis and Commitment: United States Policy toward Taiwan, 1950-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of N. Caroline Press, 1996), 157-183

for three reasons: it knew of Beijing's limited intentions; Beijing firmly secured the majority of Asia's opinion; and Washington had the problem of preserving its prestige while quelling precipitating factors which might worsen its international position. Third, it will examine Beijing's wide-ranging propaganda offensive to placate neighboring countries. By deftly scripting the Taiwan problem into an issue tapping strongly on the discourses of nationalism and sovereignty in the wake of decolonization in Asia, Beijing made it extremely difficult for Washington to marshal world opinion and brand Beijing as the aggressor.

This chapter will explore the above themes in two main sections. The first section will analyze the pre-crisis rumblings, highlighting developments in July and August in relation to the positions taken by the US, Taiwan and China. The second section will investigate the contours of the negotiations for the ROC-US Mutual Defence Treaty and the Asia-wide publicity offensive launched by Beijing in the aftermath of the September bombardments.

1. Pre-Crisis Rumblings

What developments in July and August led to the eruption of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis? This section will first examine the actions of the US, followed by those of Taiwan and China.

1.1 The US

The US was dissatisfied with the Geneva Accords and decided to disregard it. Yet, although Washington viewed the additional prominence that the PRC gained in Geneva with dread, it noted that China's gains in Geneva were limited and the probability of a Communist armed attack low. US budgetary constraints, the limitations of US nuclear deterrence and Eisenhower's firmness against casual belligerency further meant that the US was not about to provoke a war with China. Although "united action" culminated in the formation of SEATO and this would unsettle China, Dulles was aware of the limitations of US sponsorship.

a. Disregarding Geneva

The Geneva Accords was a temporary hiatus in the Indochina conflict. It did not resolve the Korean question; neither was the Indochina imbroglio settled satisfactorily. Ceasefire was established and Vietnam was divided at the 17th parallel. Cambodia and Laos were neutralized. The Viet Minh were supposed to withdraw from the south and the French troops the north. Accordingly, free elections in 1956 would decide on the unification of Vietnam.³

Washington chafed at the restraints of the Geneva Accords. Chairman of JCS Admiral Radford complained that US military materiel and the Military and Assistance Group [MAAG] could not be sent to Laos and Cambodia. But Dulles agreed with the Commander of the French Forces in Indochina General Paul Ely, who suggested that “it would be necessary to ‘get around’ the armistice prohibitions.” The US would fudge the issue of MAAG being stationed in Vietnam.⁴ By August, disregarding the armistice prohibitions became the official US position. This was reflected in the policy review of NSC 5429, “US Policy in the Far East.” Deflecting US Defense Secretary Wilson’s charge that the US was undermining the Geneva agreements, Dulles “pointed out that we did not become a party to these agreements.” Eisenhower largely agreed with Dulles.⁵

Washington viewed the additional prominence that the PRC gained in Geneva with dread. Despite mounting international pressure for the PRC’s entry into the UN, the US was determined to maintain its position of non-recognition of China.⁶ However, Dulles did note that “the communists had settled for less than they could have obtained at Geneva.” To Dulles, this meant the communists respected US firmness in the region and he concluded that “it was unlikely that the

³ R.B. Smith, *An International History of the Vietnam War: Revolution vs Containment*, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan Press, 1983), 22-23.

⁴ 207th Meeting of NSC, July 22, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

⁵ 210th Meeting of NSC, 12 August 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

⁶ Former Special Assistant to the President C. D. Jackson argued in a 3 August letter to Dulles that Geneva was a “harrowing process of withdrawal from the Delta and the raw sight of Free World defeat.” The US must act to shore up Free Asia’s confidence. See, C.D. Jackson to Dulles, 3 August 1954, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 2, Strictly confidential - I- k (1), JFD papers; Dulles to C.D. Jackson, 24 August 1954, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 2, Strictly confidential - I- k (1), JFD papers; 210th Meeting of NSC, 12 August 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL; Burton I. Kaufman, *Trade and Aid: Eisenhower’s Foreign Economic Policy, 1953-1961* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1982), 49-52.

Communists would make a major military move anywhere in the world.” Dulles summarized the possible scenarios for Asia:

In the Far East they would make efforts to undermine Thailand and Japan, and would make Formosa a major diplomatic issue, diversionary attacks on the offshore islands near Formosa were possible. The Communist would probably not violate the armistice in Indochina, but would use subversive means to gain control. The Communists apparently regard Korea as a stable stalemate. They would emphasize Asia for the Asiatics and seek to increase neutralism to prevent the establishment of additional US bases. Throughout the world, the Communist would emphasize expansion of East-West trade.⁷

This led to the assumption that communist “creeping expansion” manifested in such forms as “local aggressions” or “brush fires” were “more likely than Communist armed attack,” a position reflected in NSC 162/2, “Basic National Security Policy.” To counter the communist soft appeal, the US came up with a three-prong approach. Economically, the US would furnish “cooperative programs for economic growth.” For affected countries, the US would provide “political support, *covert* operations, and military assistance.” In low-level insurgencies, the US would turn to “indigenous forces, provided with US military assistance, economic defense support, and logistic support, and aided by mobile US forces.” Despite the allies’ reluctance in “united action” during Geneva, the NSC still resolved to “act unilaterally, if it is to our net advantage.”⁸

US budgetary considerations permeated the review of NSC 162/2. The US must not become “an armed camp.” It supported SEATO based on “the assumption that there would be no build-up of US military power in Southeast Asia sufficient to stop an aggressor.” The dependence of indigenous forces assumed that “if people don’t want to be free and won’t fight for freedom ...there is not much we can do.” However, should affected Asians show pluck and determination in countering communism, “we can send the Marines and the Air Force.” Eisenhower believed that “if we get many more divisions tied down the way we have some tied down in Korea now, we will have to go to general mobilization.”

⁷ 209th Meeting of NSC, 5 August 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

⁸ 209th Meeting of NSC, 5 August 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

NSC 162/2 also highlighted the limitations of US nuclear deterrence. Dulles observed that such a policy was inadequate for “brush fires.” Eisenhower admitted that “the theory of retaliation falls down unless we can identify the aggressor.” In many cases aggression consisted of subversion or civil war in a country rather than an overt attack on that country. But should such countries as Indonesia which Washington considered to be under Beijing’s influence turn Red, the US would support “non-Communist elements in a counter-revolution and impos[e] a naval blockade.”⁹

Finally, Eisenhower remained firmly against casual belligerency. In NSC 5429, “US Policy in the Far East,” Eisenhower repeated his conviction that a “democracy such as the US could not be led into war unless public opinion overwhelming[ly] favored war.” Even when there was “overt armed aggression by Communist China,” Eisenhower firmly stipulated that “decisions as to US action could not be reached instantaneously. There would be time to call a special session of Congress and to ask it to make the decision.” Eisenhower cast disdain at planning staff’s “automatic counter-action” or formulating “interpretations of vital interests.”¹⁰

b. The Limitations of SEATO

Besides the US disregard of Geneva, Dulles decided to counter the “catastrophic” outcome of Geneva by pursuing “united action” and developing it into a regional defense organization, SEATO, which took shape by 8 September as manifested in the Manila Treaty.¹¹ Dulles was blunt about the utility of SEATO: “In the Far East, we are moving ahead trying to build a dike in SEA.” Dulles boasted that there was no reason why this should not work as the US “had some very spectacular successes in Iran, Egypt and Guatemala.” Although the Geneva Agreement had been concluded, Dulles reassured Senator Alexander Smith that “Indochina could have been worse if we had not contributed strength to the situation.”¹²

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ 210th Meeting of NSC, 12 August 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

¹¹ Barbara Barnouin & Yu Changgen, *Zhou Enlai: A Political Life* (HK: The Chinese University Press, 2006), 155.

¹² Telephone call From Senator Smith, 7 August 1954, Telephone Conversation Series, box 2, telephone memos July-Aug 1954 (1)-(4), JFD papers, DDEL.

Although the formation of SEATO would unsettle China, Dulles was aware of the limitations of US sponsorship. He pointed out that SEATO was not a “treaty commitment for local defence.” While the US wished to include internal subversions within the provisions of SEATO, Dulles acknowledged that the final product “would probably provide for no action stronger than consultation among signatories.” Agreeing, Stassen highlighted that the treaty was more about preparing the “local government to defeat Communist subversion.” As for US intervention, it would be a decision “taken at the time rather than in advance.” Still Dulles insisted that despite the limitations of the treaty, the US had to have “military forces in combat readiness and be willing to send them to the scene of the subversion.” SEATO also had the advantages of indicating clearly to the communists not to breach the line, with “public warnings” on US counter-action.

Eisenhower was of two minds about SEATO. On one hand, Eisenhower was uncomfortable about the provision of US armed forces to defeat local subversions; he saw the inevitability of turning the US into an armed camp. On the other hand, Eisenhower indicated he still wanted a treaty as “we can’t go on losing areas of the free world forever.” Using the zero-sum game metaphor in which a Soviet gain represented a US loss, Eisenhower responded instinctively as a Cold War warrior, despite some concerns.¹³

Allied vocal reservations soured Dulles’ taste for SEATO. Dulles mentioned to US Ambassador to Canada Livingston T. Merchant how the US allies had thwarted US designs. One, the allies “are more concerned with trying not to annoy the Communists.” Two, Dulles was disgusted with the British and the French who were “blocking everything we want to do.” Merchant was sympathetic but rightly pointed out that the British “are anxious to avoid anything that can be publicly exploited as contrary to the Geneva Agreement.”¹⁴ SEATO was pared down to the bare minimum to appease the British. Ironically, Washington had trouble convincing others who expected more.

¹³ 210th Meeting of NSC, 12 August 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

¹⁴ Dulles continued harping about how US had to “tie oneself up with people who are not willing to fight.” He even contemplated not going to the Manila Conference to sign the SEATO treaty. Telephone call to Mr Merchant, 30 August 1954, Telephone Conversation Series, box 2, telephone memos July-Aug 1954 (1)-(4), JFD papers, DDEL.

Australian Ambassador Sir Percy Spender complained that Canberra was expecting specific detailing of “obligation of each in terms of concerted planning and joint contributions.”¹⁵

Returning from the Manila Conference (6-8 Sept 1954), Dulles claimed that the US had successfully veered away from another NATO with its “elaborate military organization.” Dulles referred to the “Monroe Doctrine” as the basis of SEATO, deeming its moral sanction as sufficient to make up for the deficiencies. Dulles admitted that “there is no commitment as to action” against indirect aggression as “he did not feel he could press this further than that.”¹⁶ Hence, SEATO was so diluted by the US allies that it did not possess any bite.

1.2 Taiwan: Security Arrangements

Taiwan was upbeat regarding US actions in Asia. Although Taiwan faced the threat of increasing international isolation, it was assured by the US adamant position in not recognizing China. While Taiwan was concerned that its interests might be neglected in SEATO talks, it was assured by the increasing willingness of the US to consider a mutual defense treaty.

The US push for the international recognition of the ROC encountered “growing difficulty and ... an accretion of resentment against the United State,” with the US finding its position increasingly isolated in international bodies. “There appears to be a slow ground swell of opinion against acceptance of the Chinese Government as the Government of all China,” reported the OCB, “on the grounds that it is unrealistic and not in accordance with the facts of the situation.”¹⁷

Nonetheless, the OCB urged the administration to press the British and French not to admit the PRC into the UN. Otherwise, there would a diplomatic tsunami of US allies rushing to recognize

¹⁵ Telephone call from Sir Percy Spender, 31 August 1954, Telephone Conversation Series, box 2, telephone memos July-aug 1954 (1)-(4), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹⁶ Lacking any real gain to show, Dulles characteristically tried to read some long-term meaning into the formation of SEATO. See 214th Meeting of NSC, September 12, 1954 NSC Series, box 6, Ann Whitman

¹⁷ During the International Labour Organization (ILO) meeting, the US had to make extraordinary appeals to member countries not to throw the ROC out. Progress report on NSC 146/2, “United States Objectives and Courses of Action with Respect to Formosa and the Chinese National Government,” 14 Jul 1954, OCB, White House, DDRS.

the PRC and US delaying tactics in the UN through the “moratorium” on the PRC admission into the UN would crumble.¹⁸

Taiwan was keen to elicit more support from the US actions. Chiang flew his son, Ching-kuo, to Washington for a visit and he was presented as the new face of the ROC. Chiang also demonstrated deep appreciation for such individuals as Robertson, who was responsible for US affairs in Taiwan. This was seen in Mme. Chiang’s invitation to Robertson and his wife to visit the ROC.¹⁹ At the same time, George Yeh happily observed in July 1954 that Washington was “stepping up its anti-communist efforts in Asia and Europe.” He asserted that “[o]ur official position in the face of US defeat in Southeast Asia was not to point fingers and blame, but to concentrate our diplomatic efforts upon the US on our two requests”: obtaining a mutual defense treaty and an expansion of the ROC military.²⁰

In May 1954, Washington lauded the ROC as an “efficient fighting force” for “limited combat operations” and deemed that the ROC Combined Service Force depots had the sufficient amount for the projected 350,000-strong ROC army. The US viewed offensive operations as being restricted to “limited raids where resupply is not a major factor.” Exercising control over war materiel would give the US the ultimate veto over Chiang’s *fangong*.²¹ As Washington’s strategic aim was the “furtherance of over-all US military strategy in the Far East,” the ROC “will not engage in offensive operations considered by the United States to be inimical to the best interest of the United States.” The ROC’s role was to absorb the PRC’s attention while adding to the Far East

¹⁸ Progress report on NSC 146/2, “United States Objectives and Courses of Action with Respect to Formosa and the Chinese National Government,” 14 Jul 1954, OCB, White House, DDRS.

¹⁹ Later Chiang expressed alarm that Robertson was not involved in the Manila talks on the formation of SEATO. As the ROC was not a party to SEATO, Chiang was concerned that Robertson might be left out in the formulation of SEATO, with the possibility that the ROC would then be permanently sidelined. CKS to Wellington Koo, telegram, 29 August 1954, serial no.002080200350078, CKS papers, AH; Y üTa-wei to CKS, telegrams, 6 & 13 June 1953, serial no.002080106043008, CKS papers, AH.

²⁰ George Yeh to CKS, “越南停战后中国外交及涉外事项所应考虑态度及办理事务” [Yuenan tingzhan hou zhongguo waijiao ji shewai shixiang suoying kaol ütaidu ji banli shiwu], 27 July 1954, serial no.002080106003009, CKS papers, AH.

²¹ The US ensured that the ROC navy was similarly tethered as it was only retrofitted as “a small navy capable of conducting limited coastal patrol, anti-shipping, and *commando* operations.” Likewise, the ROC air force was only “designed to provide limited air defense, troop support and interdiction capabilities.” Progress report on NSC 146/2, “United States Objectives and Courses of Action with Respect to Formosa and the Chinese National Government,” May 6, 1954, Draft, OCB, White House, DDRS.

Free World's "strategic reserves." At the national level, Taiwan would simply present a "significant deterrent to any Chinese Communist intention to invade Taiwan." This narrow perception would restrict the ROC army to defending Taiwan, Pescadores and the offshore islands and when the circumstances were right "to raid Chinese Communist territory and commerce."

As for Chiang's *fangong*, Washington reaffirmed the aim of "avoiding implication of US obligation to underwrite the Government or to guarantee its return to power on the mainland." Washington was aware of Taipei's disgruntlement. The OCB stated that the "GRC [Taiwan] will become progressively more dissatisfied with the absence of US agreement to support" its national objectives. The shackles imposed by the US might also embolden the communists, especially in the midst of the Geneva Conference. As such, by early May 1954, the US was finally coming around to "actively considering the negotiation of a *bilateral security pact* with the GRC."²²

Taipei was in a favorable position to gain from Washington's change of heart. In July 1954, the OCB despaired in finding a suitable counter-weight in Asia against the PRC. Only the forces of the ROC were available. The OCB suggested "raising force levels" beyond 350,000 or "enhancing the offensive potential of the GRC forces." Its second suggestion was to "consider extending direct US military defense to the offshore islands." By July, a defence treaty with Taipei was deemed as strategically essential. The OCB report revealed that Washington's excuse of not wanting to "tie the hands of the GRC" no longer rang true as a security treaty would ideally strike a balance between providing confidence to Taipei, while not encouraging any *fangong* adventure.²³ Thus, ironically, the US saw the treaty as a way to further restrict the ROC.

To secure more reassurances from Taipei, Washington had earlier feigned disinterest in any security treaty with Taiwan. First, Dulles explained to Ambassador Koo on 19 May that the mutual

²² Progress report on NSC 146/2, "United States Objectives and Courses of Action with Respect to Formosa and the Chinese National Government," May 6, 1954, Draft, OCB, White House, DDRS.

²³ The OCB envisioned that the "Free World capabilities in Southeast Asia may be severely curtailed while those of Communist China are expanding." Added to the US woes was the "slow progress" which Japan was building its military potential. Progress report on NSC 146/2, "United States Objectives and Courses of Action with Respect to Formosa and the Chinese National Government," 14 Jul 1954, OCB, White House, DDRS.

security with Korea was really “to restrain Syngman Rhee from engaging in hostilities.” Second, Dulles claimed that “the United States Government does not want to hamper the operations of the Chinese Government against the Chinese Communists.” Third, Dulles professed that should the US assist ROC raids into the PRC, it did not want to be “hampered by formal treaty obligations or restrictions.”²⁴ Yet, Dulles unwittingly handed to Taipei the perfect solution. As Washington had used the security treaty to control the impulsive Rhee, it stood to reason that an inspired recklessness by Taipei would force the US to bind Taiwan with another defensive treaty. There thus existed a strong incentive for the ROC to tacitly allow the Taiwan Strait to be heated up to its advantage. The real action in the First Taiwan Strait Crisis was hence not the communist bombardment of the offshore islands, but how Chiang positioned the ROC into receiving a defensive treaty and more US aid. Either Chiang could show the Communists to be aggressors perennially poised to invade Taiwan or Chiang could do a Rhee with constant exhortations for “counter-offensive” in public campaigns and actual military planning and maneuvers. In retrospect, Chiang used both ways since 1950 (as discussed in the previous two chapters) to ensnare the Americans. Nevertheless, changing US perceptions of international developments and their relation to US national interests were equally significant. Moreover, while Dulles aspired towards trouble-free treaties with minimal heartburn,²⁵ he could not ignore increasingly strident voices in Washington. For instance, Dulles reluctantly promised Walter Judd, a pro-ROC congressman, that he would visit the ROC to personally appraise the situation.²⁶

1.3 China

Although Mao Zedong’s pivotal change of China’s international orientation towards “peaceful co-existence” and Zhou Enlai’s whirlwind diplomacy clearly caught the US flatfooted at the Geneva

²⁴ Excerpts from Minutes of Meeting, Wellington Koo with Foster Dulles, 19 May 1954, serial no.002080106034003, CKS papers, AH.

²⁵ Dulles’s practical attitude towards international treaties and the way he presented them in the Congress was revealed in a letter to Arthur Krock, “Dean of Washington newsmen,” in 1956. See Dulles to Arthur Krock, 21 May 1956, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 1, Memos of Conversation - General - A through D (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

²⁶ Judd had forcefully contended that the US “[sh]ould clarify our position” as “[w]e are losing in Asia.” The reluctance of the White House was immediately apparent. Eisenhower came up with the tired “Acheson-Bradley argument” that the ROC forces were unreliable. Dulles came up with the “constitutional situation,” argument that the treaty with South Korea was covered by the UN Charter, but a treaty with the ROC would benefit from no such coverage. Telephone call from Mr Judd, 20 August 1954, Telephone Conversation Series, box 2, telephone memos July-Aug 1954 (1)-(4), JFD papers, DDEL.

Conference, Washington's disregard for the Geneva Accords dulled Beijing's diplomatic achievements. Beijing was unhappy with the continued insistence of the US on non-recognition for China but was encouraged by the support of Asian neutralist countries as well as China's relatively successful international debut in Geneva. However, China was frustrated with the formation of SEATO and the likelihood of a potential ROC-US defence treaty which it viewed to be targeting directly at China. Coupled with the continuation of ROC commando raids and the danger of "two Chinas" looming ahead, the PRC launched massive bombardments on the islands of Quemoy and Matsu on 3 September, thereby setting off the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. However, Beijing's overriding international concerns diluted the ambitious plans of its military commanders.

a. Non-Recognition and China's International Debut in Geneva

The Chinese communists were unhappy with the continued insistence of the US on non-recognition for China and glumly noted the tumult in Congress over the rumored admission of the PRC into the UN.²⁷ Eisenhower placated the nation by firmly squashing the rumor on 7 July and wrote to Churchill the following day: "... American opinion is so firmly fixed that in the absence of a series of deeds that would evidence a complete reversal of Red China's attitude, the introduction of this question for debate in the United Nations would create real difficulty in this country"²⁸ Stung by US criticisms, Churchill told the House of Commons on 12 July that "the time was not ripe for the admission of Communist China to the UN."²⁹

Nevertheless, Beijing was gratified with its neutralist Asian friends. Nehru fully supported the admission of the PRC into the UN, asserting on 12 July: "The international unrest for the past four years from the Korea conflict to the chaos in Southeast Asia boils down to not letting the PRC into the UN." Burmese dailies termed the US actions a "conspiracy." The *Mandalay People's Daily* editorial speculated that the US was trying to "salvage a modicum of victory from the failure of its position in the Geneva Conference." The *Yangon Daily* scoffed at the threat of the American

²⁷ "东南亚国家对美国反对我国加入联合国的反应" [Dongnanya guojia dui meiguo fandui woguo jialu lianheguo de fanyin], MFA Intelligence division, no. 90, 24 July 1954, serial no. 102-00159-13, AMFA.

²⁸ Eisenhower to Churchill, 8 July 1954, PDDE (XV), 1171.

²⁹ Memo of Conversation, McConaughy with ROC ambassador Wellington Koo, 16 July 1954, in FRUS (1952-54), Vol. XIV, pt. 1, 494.

Congress to withdraw the US from the UN. Indonesian editorials were also of the general opinion that the PRC's presence in the UN would have a "definite effect on world peace," spelling the end of the troublesome "international embargoes."³⁰

The PRC's grand international debut at the Geneva Conference was a checkered success.³¹ Zhou's diplomacy had successfully ensured the passage of the Geneva Accords. That Hanoi was strong-armed by its fraternal allies into accepting the 17th parallel was downplayed.³² The only blight on the Accords was the non-participation of the US.³³ Nevertheless, Zhou noted jubilantly: "The agreements that we have achieved ... will enable the people of the three states of Indo-China to engage in the construction of their respective countries in a peaceful environment."³⁴ Zhou distilled the wisdom of his success in a five-point summary and specifically emphasized the value of compromises.³⁵ Nevertheless, compromises could not alleviate China's frustrations with the formation of SEATO and the likelihood of a potential ROC-US defence treaty which it viewed to be targeting directly at China.

b. SEATO and US-ROC Security Negotiations

Washington's decision to counter China by pursuing "united action" and developing it into SEATO unsettled China. The protocol of the Manila Treaty unilaterally included Cambodia and Laos under the treaty's "protection" and from September onwards, the US also pumped in aid to

³⁰ Even editorials from Sweden opined that US action was "impractical," seeing this as a Republican ploy for the upcoming election. Most Indian editorials felt that the US position was "unreasonable." Nevertheless, Chinese Communists reported that India's rhetorical support did not translate into action. An India foreign ministry spokesman affirmed on 8 July that while India was prepared to support admitting the PRC into the UN, India had no plan to submit such a proposal to the UN. "东南亚国家对美国反对我国加入联合国的反应" [Dongnanya guojia dui meiguo fandui woguo jialu lianheguo de fanyin], MFA Intelligence division, no. 90, 24 July 1954, serial no. 102-00159-13, AMFA.

³¹ While Zhou performed well under the glare of international attention and Dulles displayed the "pinched distaste of a puritan in a house of ill repute," the Korea phase of negotiations in Geneva was a galling experience for China as China handed the US a ready excuse for rejection when China insisted that the UN should not administer any future Korean election for reunification. Since none of the other countries relished subverting the prestige of the UN, the PRC scored no point for the first round. Henry W. Brands, Jr., "The Dwight D. Eisenhower Administration, Syngman Rhee, and the 'Other' Geneva Conference of 1954," *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol 56, no. 1 (Feb 1987), 80; Herring. *From Colony to Superpower*, 662.

³² Yang Kuisong, "Mao Zedong and the Indochina Wars," in *Behind the Bamboo Curtain: China, Vietnam and the World Beyond Asia*, ed. Priscilla Roberts (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 62.

³³ Keith, *Diplomacy of Zhou*, 78-79.

³⁴ Quoted in Shao Kuo-kang, "Zhou Enlai's Diplomacy and the Neutralization of Indo-China, 1954-1955," CQ, no. 107 (Sep 1986), 499.

³⁵ Zhang Shu Guang, "In the Shadow of Mao: Zhou Enlai and New China's Diplomacy," in *The Diplomats, 1939-1979*, ed. Gordon A. Craig and Francis L. Loewenheim (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 361.

Cambodia and Laos.³⁶ The new US ambassador to South Vietnam, General J. Lawton Collins, stated in a news conference on 17 November that his mission was to “ensure that the Diem government received aid in all possible areas from the US.”³⁷ Beijing projected a stoic outlook publicly, but privately, it was upset with this turn of events and saw it as an enormous loss of face. China’s unhappiness with SEATO was abundantly seen in later reflections.³⁸ On 30 July 1955, Zhou regretfully reported during the National People’s Congress:

The Military Assistance Agreement signed between the Royal Government of Cambodia and the United States Government on 16 May 1955 is incompatible with the neutrality of Cambodia under Geneva agreements. In Laos, there is the danger of similar developments. Moreover the SEATO, which is totally incompatible with the Geneva agreements, is attempting to interfere in the internal affairs of Laos by making use of the armed attacks by the Royal Government of Laos against the regrouping areas of the Pathet Lao combat units.³⁹

Besides SEATO, Beijing anticipated that Washington’s dissatisfaction with Geneva would prompt it to attempt other hostile policies towards the PRC. In particular, Beijing viewed the ominous US-ROC negotiations over a security treaty as extremely provocative. The Central Committee of the CCP, in a 27 July telegram to Zhou’s delegation in Moscow, warned that the expansion in the containment of China from Guangdong to the Gulf of Tonkin was a distinct possibility.⁴⁰ In exasperation, Zhou complained to Soviet Politburo member G. M. Malenkov that “this act [ROC-US defence treaty] will provoke still stronger anti-American feelings in China and might hinder the settling of differences with China in the future.” Zhou outlined to Malenkov the PRC’s counter-moves against the US and ROC:

1. To again raise the question of the liberation of Taiwan and take steps to disrupt the conclusion of the pact between the US government and the Jiang Jieshi regime ...

³⁶ An unnamed US diplomat in Cambodia was quoted approving a Joe Alsop’s column that the US “intends to turn Cambodia into an American citadel. The US further plans to build a 300-mile highway along the Cambodian and Laotian borders to deliver war materials.” “美法破坏印度支那停战协定的情况” [Meifa pohuai yinduzhina tinghuo xieding de qinkuang], 19 March-8 April 1955, serial no. 106-00058-04, AMFA; Frances FitzGerald, *Fire in The Lake: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam* (NY: Vintage Books, 1972), 85.

³⁷ On 12 February 1955, the US MAAG in Vietnam under General John W. O’Brien took over the responsibility of “training and outfitting” the South Vietnamese army. “美法破坏印度支那停战协定的情况” [Meifa pohuai yinduzhina tinghuo xieding de qinkuang], 19 March-8 April 1955, serial no. 106-00058-04, AMFA.

³⁸ Zhou confessed to journalist Harrison E. Salisbury in June 1972 that the US actions made the Geneva Accords a virtual “sellout of North Vietnam.” Even Mao “in later years repeatedly criticized himself to Vietnamese party representatives for having urged them to make concessions at Geneva.” Harrison E. Salisbury, *To Peking and Beyond: A Report on the New Asia* (London: Arrow Book, 1973), 225; Keith, *Diplomacy of Zhou*, 79; Yang, “Mao Zedong and the Indochina Wars,” 63.

³⁹ Shao, “Zhou Enlai’s Diplomacy,” 502.

⁴⁰ Central Ccommittee of CCP to Zhou (Moscow), telegram, 27 July 1954, in ZENP vol 1, 405.

- A declaration of the PRC government would be published ... pointing out that ... with US government aid, the Jiang Jieshi clique is committing outrages at sea, raiding Chinese territory, and committing hostile acts against China;
2. To strengthen the defense of the Chinese coastline. The navy and air force will need to be strengthened. The Chinese Armed Forces must be ready at any moment to halt a violation of the maritime or air boundaries of China;
 3. To ensure the failure of the organization of an aggressive bloc in Southeast Asia. To do this means tearing their allies away from the US and exacerbating the differences between the US and other capitalist countries.

Zhou's outline underscored the main contours of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. Malenkov approved Zhou's plan, even adding that the "inclusion of Indonesia in the American bloc [SEATO] being forged in Southeast Asia cannot be permitted."⁴¹ Verbal warnings coded in historical and cultural allusions from Beijing were aplenty. In the conference of the Central People's Government Committee on 11 August, Zhou especially singled out the Taiwan issue as a "historical mission" of the PRC.⁴² On the following day, Zhou told a group of Foreign Ministry cadres: "If we do not raise the issue of liberating Taiwan and disregard protecting our motherland, we would be dishonorable to our ancestors."⁴³ To the visiting British Labour Party delegation led by Clement Attlee, Zhou stressed the historical fear of China being carved, pointing out that even Chiang Kai-shek recognized that Taiwan was an integral part of China, and that this issue was likely to evoke passionate feelings among all Chinese.⁴⁴

In addition Mao emphasized the economic developmental needs of China, telling a British delegation that the PRC needed "several decades" and a "peaceful environment" to industrialize itself: "It is difficult to get things done if you have to fight frequent wars, and the maintenance of a large number of troops would hamper economic development." He elucidated that "links and trade were sorely needed and "isolation is not what we want." Mao obliquely noted toward the end of

⁴¹ It is safe to say that Malenkov represented the view of Kremlin as he still retained his Politburo seat, even though he was in a bitter power struggle with Khrushchev. G.M. Malenkov with Zhou, Memorandum of conversation, 29 July 1954, AVPRF f.06, o. 13a, d.25, ll.8, in in CWIHPB 16 (Fall 2007/ Winter 2008), 102-103.

⁴² Zhou coupled the liberation of Taiwan with maintaining the five principles of co-existence, friendship with foreign countries and preserving the peace in Southeast Asia. Zhou, "Foreign Relations Report," 11 August 1954, 33rd session of the Central People's Government Committee Conference, in ZENP vol 1, 406.

⁴³ Zhou, "Tuijin Zhongying guangxi, zhenqui heping hezuo," 推进中英关系 争取和平合作 [Improve Anglo-Sino Relations, Strive for Peaceful Cooperation] 12 August 1954, speech, Foreign Ministry cadres meeting, in *Zhou Enlai Waijiao Wenxuan* 周恩来外交文选 [Zhou Enlai on Diplomacy], ed. Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi 中共中央文献研究室编(Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1990), 84. (hereafter cited as ZEWV)

⁴⁴ Zhou with British Labour Party delegation, record of conversation, 15 August 1954, in ZENP, 408.

his speech that the harassing tactics of the ROC on China's coastline were reaching a critical point and explicitly warned the US: "Do not go in for SEATO, which runs counter to the trend of history. Rather, if a pact is to be concluded, let it be a pact of collective peace."⁴⁵

c. China's Military Moves and Its International Concerns

As Taiwan's control of the offshore islands off the coast of Zhejiang (Dachen) and Fujian (Quemoy) posed a twin threat to China's eastern seaboard trade, the primary concern of the PLA commanders at the East China Command (ECC) was to interdict the ROC's harassments. Since the ECC lacked the necessary air and naval power to stop Chiang's raids, Chief of ECC General Staff Zhang Aiping had to settle for a modest strategy of reclaiming remote offshore islands nearest the mainland one at a time.⁴⁶ In June 1952, a plan to seize Dachen first followed by Quemoy one to two years later was submitted by General Zhang Zhen but was aborted. A second plan that proposed attacking the Quemoy complexes directly was submitted in September 1953 by the ECC but it was again aborted.⁴⁷

In the aftermath of Geneva, the Taiwan problem loomed larger and the 1952 Dachen plan was revived. Compared to Quemoy, the advantages of making an example of Dachen were obvious. The KMT Dachen military installations were weaker and Dachen's significant distance from Taiwan meant that reinforcements would be slow. Zhang Zhen's original plan was approved by General Peng Dehuai on 2 August 1954. On 13 August, the Central Military Commission (CMC) issued "On military strategy against Chiang's Taiwanese bandits" and adopted Zhang Aiping's plan of taking vulnerable KMT islands first, the first being the Dachen islands followed by other KMT island bastions.⁴⁸ On 24 August, the CMC officially approved the ECC's plans on attacking

⁴⁵ "On the Intermediate Zone, Peaceful Coexistence, Sino-British and Sino-US relations," memorandum of conversation with the British Labour Party, 24 August 1954, in *Mao Zedong on Diplomacy*, ed. PRC MFA & Party Literature Research Center (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1998), 124. (hereafter cited as MD)

⁴⁶ But the permission for taking down the main KMT island military complexes was long in coming. As revealed in an extensive interview by Zhang Aiping's son Zhang Sheng, *Cong zhanzhen zhong zhoulai*, 158-159.

⁴⁷ Zhang Sheng, 162-164

⁴⁸ Li Xiaobing, *A History of the Modern Chinese Army* (Louisville: University of Kentucky Press, 2007), 137; Zhang Sheng, 169, 173.

Dachen⁴⁹ and three days later, the forward command was set up for the Dachen operation with Zhang Aiping as commander. Meanwhile, General Ye Fei, the military commander of Fujian, received instructions on 25 August to plan for a “punishing blow” against the Quemoy area.⁵⁰ Ye Fei’s bombardment would be a feint designed to distract and tie down any reinforcement sent to the Dachen area.⁵¹

However, the PLA generals’ direct aim of eradicating KMT harassments conflicted with Beijing’s international concerns.⁵² The extreme caution Mao showed in the military instructions was instructive.⁵³ Mao explained: “As this is a period of peace, there will not be any attack and no defensive problems are foreseen; all other foreign naval aircraft must not be attacked.” Mao firmly added that any infraction of his orders would be severely dealt with.⁵⁴ Even when the ECC had submitted a combined arms plan to attack Dachen’s KMT warships, Mao wanted a full review.⁵⁵ After aerial military intelligence on Dachen was submitted to the PLA General Staff, Mao instructed on 21 August: “... we must *ensure that there are no US ships and planes* before we attack Dachen. Otherwise, do not attack.”⁵⁶ The twin concerns over caution and sovereignty were also underscored in Zhou’s private conversations with North Korea Foreign Minister Nam Il on 27 August. Zhou confided that the official slogan of the PRC would be “Liberate Taiwan”; however,

⁴⁹ Within the Dachen military complex, the most vulnerable forward position was the Yijiangshan garrisons. Zhang thus decided to take the smaller Yijiangshan first before moving on to Dachen. See “Shi Yiceng jiangjun qinli sanchi *Taihai weiji*” 石一宸将军亲历三次台海 [General Shi Yiceng in three Taiwan Strait crises], in Li Li 李立, *Muji Taihai fengyun* 目击台海风云 [Eyewitness in the Taiwan Strait crises] (Beijing: Huayi chubanshe, 2005), 97-100.

⁵⁰ Ye Fei 叶飞, *Zhengzhan Jishi* 征战纪事 [A Record of military Campaigns] (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1988), 342.

⁵¹ Although the CIA surmised this correctly, Allen Dulles and Stassen did not consider further the significance of this finding during the NSC meeting on 24 Sept as they were overwhelmed by the ROC’s incessant demands for a treaty. See 215th Meeting of NSC, September 24, 1954 NSC Series, box 6, Ann Whitman File, DDEL; Li, *Chinese Army*, 140.

⁵² Li, *Chinese Army*, 137.

⁵³ PLA Deputy Chief of Staff Su Yu gave orders, endorsed by Mao, for strict rules of engagement: “Unless the enemies bombard us, we cannot open fire, this is to avoid an armed clash ... but if Chiang’s Dachen islands targeted our islands troops, we may return fire.” Addendum, General Su Yu’s instructions to Eastern Military Area, 2 June 1954, in *Mao Zedong junshi nianpu, 1927-1958* 毛泽东军事年谱 [A Chronology of Mao Zedong Military activities], ed. Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun junshi shike xueyuan 中国人民解放军军事科学院 (Guangxi remin chuban she, 1990), 853. (hereafter cited as MJN)

⁵⁴ Mao reiterated his caution in the CMC’s orders on 23 July. “When our Air force deploy their patrols or convoy protection duties, they must not attack any foreign airplane or ship.” Mao to CCP Military Commission, 23 July 1954, in JGMWG Vol. 4, 516.

⁵⁵ Mao requested military representatives from Fujian, Zhejiang and Shanghai military areas to proceed to Beijing for consultation. Mao to Military Commission Vice Chairman Peng Dehuai & PLA Deputy Chief of Staff Huang Kecheng, 24 July 1954, in JGMWG Vol. 4., 520.

⁵⁶ Mao to Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Chen Yun, Deng Xiaoping, Peng Dehuai & Huang Kecheng, 21 August 1954, in JGMWG Vol. 4., 533.

he stressed that the process would be protracted.⁵⁷ “Because our navy is not adequately trained and all other aspects needed extra time, we initiate this struggle to place the central question in front of the Americans: all-out intervention or limited intervention. According to our estimates, the US will intervene, but it would not dare to engage in full intervention.”⁵⁸

The political import of the PRC’s bombardment hence clearly outweighed military acquisitions of the offshore islands. The PRC Foreign Ministry’s “Directive on CCP Propaganda Policy on the Liberation of Taiwan” stressed that the struggle would be a “prolonged” affair. The national priorities of the directive were: “strengthen our national defence, reinforce navy and air force capabilities, increase production, complete overwhelmingly our country’s developmental plans, enlarge international peaceful forces, and isolate the US hostile clique.” The liberation of Taiwan was ranked last.⁵⁹

Three days before the bombardment of the offshore islands, a special assessment was made regarding the likelihood of a ROC-US Mutual Defence Treaty and the formation of SEATO. The implicit finding was that a sustained artillery attack on the offshore island would probably cause no huge international outcry. Beijing assumed Washington knew that China had no short-term design on Taiwan and calculated that a limited bombardment would signal its displeasure but would not provoke alarm. The report stated that most US papers felt that the US was in a dilemma over the offshore islands and averred that a significant number of US officials were ambivalent about the offshore islands.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Significantly, Zhou highlighted precisely the very same factors on the PRC’s military limitations that were pointed out in the CIA report submitted by Allen Dulles to the NSC on 9 September. NIE 100-4-54, “The Chinese Offshore Islands,” CIA no. 50318, Formosa, 1952-1957 (1), box 9, International Series, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

⁵⁸ Zhou with Nam Il, record of conversation, 27 August 1954, in *Zhou Enlai junshi huodong jishi : 1918-1975*, vol 2. 周恩来军事活动纪事 [Military activities of Zhou Enlai], ed. Liu, Wusheng & Du Hongqi 刘武生, 杜宏奇 (Beijing : Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2000), 345.

⁵⁹ It pointed out the deficiencies of the PRC’s military and emphasized that this “complicated” struggle involved domestic and international facets. Zhou with Lu Dingyi, Liao Chengzhi, Deng Ta, Wu Lengxi, Zhu Muzhi (Xinhua News Agency Deputy editor), record of meeting, 1 September 1954, in ZENP, 412.

⁶⁰ This is a survey of foreign news agencies on the Taiwan problem dated 31 August 1954, annotated and read by Zhou. The sections were seemingly structured as answers to the questions posed by the Chinese leadership concerning their impending military action. One section was devoted to the world opinion on the PRC’s reconnaissance artillery barrage at Quemoy on 23 August. It concluded from information gleaned from news wires that the US and Britain did not express undue alarm with the Chinese Communists’ actions. “外电对台湾问题的报道” [Waidian dui Taiwan wenti de baodao] (Confidential), MFA Intelligence Division, 31 August 1954, serial no. 102-00171-01, AMFA.

Taiwan was clear on the implicit message in any PRC military movement. One analyst, Liu Yü-chang, reported to the ROC Chief of General Staff in May 1954 that a real invasion would not have “small-scale probing movements.” Should there be an invasion of Quemoy they would have to launch a “decisive” and large-scale “land-sea-air operation.” The main invasion approach would be by parachutists as the land of Quemoy is “flat without obstructions.” By the second day, the outcome of the battle would be determined. Hence, Taipei understood clearly the difference between a major invasion and a probing exercise. When Mao launched an artillery bombardment on Quemoy with no attending military build-up around the Xiamen area, it was clear to the ROC this was anything but a major invasion. The number of men-at-arms in Quemoy also gave a good indication of its higher relative importance compared to the Dachen islands. That Chiang should kick up a big fuss over the abandonment of Dachen stemmed clearly from nationalistic pride and a calculated move to squeeze more US aid, rather than any strategic value of Dachen.⁶¹

2. The Outbreak of Crisis

Following the outbreak of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, what actions did the US, Taiwan and China take? This section will first examine the actions of the US and Taiwan in four phases from September to December, and then the actions of China.

2.1 The US and Taiwan

In the first week of the crisis, while the US assessed that Beijing’s intentions were limited and was thus not prepared to escalate the crisis by militarily engaging Beijing, Taiwan worked hard toward securing a defence treaty and procuring more US aid. From 10 September to October, the US decided to pursue Operation Oracle, which aimed at introducing a UN resolution to the Security Council calling for ceasefire in the Taiwan Strait and hopefully a “neutralization of these offshore

⁶¹ Liu’s report gave a good snapshot of the ROC military’s mindset and state of Quemoy’s preparation. Liu stated the communists had learnt their lesson in their abortive 1949 invasion of Quemoy, stressing that no “probing” of Quemoy defense would precede the main invasion. Quemoy defenders should “not expect a break in the battle momentum” and “no reinforcement would be in time to relieve them.” Based on such a bleak prognosis, it became easier to understand why Quemoy was so heavily fortified with about 60,100 soldiers. Liu Yü-chang to ROC Chief of General Staff, “金門防务观察报告书” [Jinmen fangwu guancha baogaoshu], 2 May 1954, serial no.002080102100006, CKS papers, AH.

islands,” but Taiwan resisted this stiffly so as to wrangle even more concessions from the US. By November, the US agreed to a defence treaty and this was signed on 2 December, much to Taiwan’s satisfaction.

a. The First Week: Treaty and Aid

Allen Dulles gave the CIA’s assessment of the PRC’s intentions six days after the 3 September bombardment of Quemoy. He reported the lack of Chinese amphibious presence and ruled out the possibility of an amphibious assault.⁶² Similarly, there was an absence of air power projection. Logistically, the Chinese Communists were not ready for any prolonged conflict. The PRC poured 6,000 rounds of 120mm and 150mm artillery rounds onto Quemoy for five hours in the initial barrage but for the next six days, artillery attacks were only “sporadically” reported. Beijing’s signaling was obvious: “The Communists have chosen to proceed cautiously. They have taken no action against US forces and have not indicated that they are readying their forces for an attempted invasion of Quemoy”⁶³

However, Beijing’s 2 September telegram to Moscow stuck to formulaic boilerplate rhetoric: “The Chinese people staunchly oppose this aggressive war policy of the US clique; we must liberate Taiwan and protect China’s sovereignty and territories in order to safeguard the peace in the Far East and the world.” This indicated the two issues central to Beijing’s unhappiness: SEATO and US security pact with Taiwan.⁶⁴

The 9 September NSC session was bathed in an uncanny half-light of pessimistic foreboding mixed with raring expectations of fighting the Chinese. However, the loss of the offshore islands appeared a moot point. Should the PRC really want Quemoy, according to Bedell Smith, no amount of US commitment would prevent Beijing. Moreover, Washington doubted that Quemoy

⁶² The PRC navy “was of negligible strength, consisting of six small patrol boats and 400 or 500 junks.” 213th Meeting of NSC, September 9, 1954, NSC Series, box 6, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

⁶³ The Chinese Communists’ air force units “were not close enough to provide effective fighter close for operations in the Quemoy area.” Even if the local 160,000-strong PRC force was activated, it could only truck 1,000 tons a day to Xiamen (Amoy). NIE 100-4-54, “The Chinese Offshore Islands,” CIA no. 50318, Formosa, 1952-1957 (1), box 9, International Series, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

⁶⁴ This was published in the *People’s Daily* the following day. Mao & Zhou to Malenkov & Molotov, telegram, 2 September 1954, in JGMWG, 539-540.

was “so vitally important to the defense of Formosa.” Smith perceptively outlined a plan without US intervention. One, the US would reinforce the ROC’s defenders with additional war matériel. Two, the US “could keep the US fleet nearby.” Three, “we could keep open the lines of communication and tell the world what we were proposing to do.” Finally, “we could agree to take part in a “rescue operation” of the ROC. US subsequent actions followed closely Smith’s sensible recommendations. Smith reported that Dulles would cautiously qualify US commitment to the offshore islands provided they were “militarily defensible and after talking with Congressional leaders.” Dulles wished to avoid a “Dien Bien Phu” at all cost. For this, Dulles traveled to Taipei for a personal assessment.⁶⁵

Chiang sought hard to understand the US strategic needs.⁶⁶ When Chiang and Dulles finally met on 9 September, the five-hour meeting concentrated on the prospective ROC-US mutual defense treaty.⁶⁷ Chiang’s “great plea” for a mutual security treaty worked. Dulles reportedly found Chiang “beginning to get tired and had aged considerably.” The projection of such world weariness persuaded Dulles that Chiang lacked the “previous conviction” for the counter-offensive and thus would not surreptitiously drag the US into a Chinese civil war. Chiang reassured Dulles that “they wished to do that [counter-offensive] themselves, with only US logistic support.”⁶⁸ Chiang even promised that no counter-offensive action would be taken, “not until US approved.”⁶⁹ “He put Free China’s case in such reasonable terms,” noted Rankin, “that no fair-minded man could have seriously objected.”⁷⁰ Dulles’ criticisms of Taiwan’s security circumstances were dutifully noted

⁶⁵ 213th Meeting of NSC, September 9, 1954, NSC Series, box 6, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

⁶⁶ Reports on the inner working of the NSC were prepared by ROC Chief of General Staff General Chou Chih-jou and sent to Chiang. Chiang requested a transcript of Ambassador Hollington Tong’s conversation with Dulles in Japan and paid close attention to nuances in the utterances of the American leaders to assess how he could obtain the best leverage. CKS to Hollington Tong, telegram, 3 September 1954, serial no.002080200350079, CKS papers, AH

⁶⁷ But Chiang chose to inform his wife on the personality of Dulles rather than the details of the discussion, revealing his *modus operandi* with foreign dignitaries where he paid special “attention to Dulles’ attitude.” Chiang intuitively concluded the deal was in the works. CKS to Soong Mei-lin, telegram, 10 September 1954, serial no.002080200350085, CKS papers, AH

⁶⁸ 214th Meeting of NSC, September 12, 1954 NSC Series, box 6, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

⁶⁹ As early as 28 June, George Yeh had informed Rankin that “if a mutual defense treaty could be concluded, President Chiang would agree to seek the prior agreement of the United States before undertaking any important military action.” Rankin, 197 Rankin to Department of State, telegram, 9 Sept 1954 (8pm), in FRUS (1952-54) vol. XIV, 582.

⁷⁰ Karl L. Rankin, *China Assignment* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964), 206.

and he was pleased that Chiang lavishly praised the Manila Pact and made “no criticism” of US deployment in the Far East.⁷¹

Nevertheless, in a telegram to his wife, Soong May-ling, Chiang complained bitterly that the “US completely neglect the crisis at hand at Dachen and Quemoy.” Worse still, the ROC’s request for aid had been “absolutely unattended.” “Such an attitude toward one’s allies is unexpected,” criticized Chiang, “and it constitutes an insult to China.” But the sum requested was a staggering 100 million dollars and Admiral Radford chided Chiang for his request. “This [ROC’s] request is no different from last year’s,” Radford remonstrated MAAG Taiwan Chief, General Chase, and “[g]iven the new US government’s austerity policy, there could be no possibility in fulfilling it.”⁷²

b. 10 September to October: Operation Oracle

The Taiwan Strait Crisis was “a horrible dilemma” for the US. The only path available was to “take the offshore island situation to the UN Security Council to obtain an injunction to maintain the status quo.” Dulles warned the NSC on 12 September that the ROC “might not be too happy.” But going to war was equally unpalatable: “It will be important to find out if the UK will go along with this plan. If so, it might mark the beginning of our coming together on the Far East.”⁷³

Ironically, the luxury of a circuitous UN route was opened because there was no immediate danger in the Taiwan Strait.⁷⁴ Dulles’ UN gambit was an inceptive but feeble gesture at resolving longstanding problems. Eisenhower fully backed Dulles as the US farm areas were urging him not to “send our boys to war.” Eisenhower decided that no armed forces would be sent “to defend these islands against Chinese Communist attacks.”⁷⁵ “Moreover, if we shuck the UN and say we are going to be the world’s policemen,” reiterated Eisenhower, “we had better get ready to go to

⁷¹ 214th Meeting of NSC, September 12, 1954 NSC Series, box 6, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

⁷² CKS to Soong May-ling, telegram, 21 September 1954, serial no.002080200350087, CKS papers, AH.

⁷³ Dulles lamented the NSC “never have to make a more difficult decision” than this Taiwan Strait quagmire. See 214th Meeting of NSC (Denver), September 12, 1954, NSC Series, box 6, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

⁷⁴ The lack of “emergency” was also noted by Accinelli, *Crisis and Commitment*, 165.

⁷⁵ 221st Meeting of NSC, November 2, 1954 NSC Series, box 6, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

war.” Eisenhower came down strongly on “enlist[ing] world support and the approval of the American people.”⁷⁶

By early October, Dulles and Eden had finalized the UN plan as Operation Oracle.⁷⁷ New Zealand would introduce a UN resolution to the Security Council calling for ceasefire in the Taiwan Strait and hopefully a “neutralization of these offshore islands.” Should Beijing refuse to consider Oracle, it would put “the Chinese Communists in a very bad light before the rest of the world.”⁷⁸ However, Oracle faced two major obstacles. Eden gave only grudging acceptance as he had the impression that this UN initiative could not resolve the China problem.⁷⁹ Chiang was equally opposed to Oracle. Dulles admitted that the Oracle meant ending “Chiang’s only hope of returning to the mainland.”⁸⁰

Assistant State Secretary Robertson was given the unenviable task of persuading Chiang. Chiang, in meetings on 12-14 October, recounted no less than four times “if that assistance were withdrawn, his people were fully resolved to carry on the struggle regardless.” Chiang revealed a host of negative assumptions about the Americans: “The US is again trying to prevent us from fighting the Communists”; “US policy toward China may change any time”; following US leadership entailed “a sacrifice.” These points formed the ROC’s “bitterness” trope that was used to evoke pangs of guilt from such “old friends” as Robertson.

Chiang was only slightly mollified when Robertson coaxed him with a mutual security treaty. Robertson reported to the State Department that Chiang was “deeply suspicious” but understood that the US only wanted to offer a defensive treaty.⁸¹ More importantly, Chiang managed to wrangle from Robertson an agreement that the treaty “be signed before the adoption of the New

⁷⁶ 214th Meeting of NSC (Denver), September 12, 1954, NSC Series, box 6, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

⁷⁷ Scott Kaufman, “Operation Oracle: The United States, Great Britain, New Zealand, and the Offshore Islands Crisis of 1954-55,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 32, no. 3 (Sept 2004): 113.

⁷⁸ 216th Meeting of NSC, October 6, 1954, NSC Series, box 6, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

⁷⁹ Accinelli, *Crisis and Commitment*, 167.

⁸⁰ 216th Meeting of NSC, October 6, 1954, NSC Series, box 6, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

⁸¹ Walter Robertson to Dulles, telegram, 14 Oct 1954, Formosa, 1952-1957 (5), Box 10, International Series, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

Zealand resolution.”⁸² Taipei politely maintained the fiction that the NZ resolution came from Britain. Chiang claimed on 18 October that such a resolution “could only place the US in a more difficult position” and he waylaid the US with the counter-proposal of an additional “mutual assistance programme,” which appeared to be the price the US had to pay to save face.⁸³

The generalissimo also leant heavily upon friends in Congress. US Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge had warned Dulles that “it would be politically very dangerous to have a collision with the Chinese Nationalists now.”⁸⁴ On 19 October, Lodge reported to Dulles that Chiang “was in a bad state of mind.” There was the specter of the “China Lobby [getting] started” by Chiang. Dulles indicated that the administration was aware of Chiang’s demands and that the ROC “wants it badly.” The White House was “working” on it and would pull in Senator George to rally the Congress.⁸⁵ To quicken the pace in the treaty negotiation, Taipei orchestrated a chorus of protests in Washington. On 20 October, the ROC emissaries George Yeh and the ROC representative to the United Nations Tsiang Ting-fu adamantly denounced the NZ resolution. Robertson laboriously insisted that the NZ resolution would only “protect and improve the defenses of the offshore islands controlled by the ROC government and enhance the international reputation of the ROC government.” Robertson further promised that the PRC’s entry into the UN was not on the agenda and Taipei stood to gain a ROC-US Mutual Security Treaty.

The ROC emissaries highlighted Taiwan’s deteriorating morale and sovereignty. Tsiang branded the NZ resolution a “two-China” policy in disguise and reacted “viscerally” to Robertson’s blunt view that “two Chinas” had “already been in existence”:

... retaining the hope of returning to Mainland China is ... more important. I would not be a party to any maneuver or rationalization that conspires to deal a blow to our hopes or deride them as absurd fantasies. The question is not whether it is really a dream, but how it shines forth as a beacon of hope for all the Chinese

⁸² Chiang was no fool; American fingerprints were all over the NZ resolution. “But if the [NZ] proposal was intended to lay a foundation for a defence pact,” commented Chiang, “it would be viewed differently.” Chiang with Robertson, Memo of conversation, 13 Oct 1954 (8am-11:15pm) in FRUS (1952-54) vol. XIV, 733-749.

⁸³ CKS to Wellington V. K. Koo, telegram, 18 October 1954, serial no.002010400023032, CKS papers, AH.

⁸⁴ Telephone call from Amb. Lodge, 5 Oct 1954, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone memos Sept 1, 1954-Oct 30 1954 (1), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

people⁸⁶

Robertson's headlong rush into reassurances was seized upon by Taipei. "Should the communists reject the resolution," Robertson had imprudently offered, "the US government would be better prepared to offer even *more* aid to the ROC."⁸⁷ The intensity of the ROC officials' protests obviously threw Robertson off. When the NZ resolution was presented in the UN, the US hoped that the ROC would not officially register its protest. But with Robertson's slip-up, Taipei had even less incentive to be malleable. Obstructing the resolution seemed to be a wiser option since the US was predisposed to offer aid.⁸⁸

c. November: Plugging the Gap in the Western Pacific

By the end of October, the last inhibition against a treaty with Taipei was removed. Dulles reminded Yeh that the treaty would "apply only to Formosa and the Pescadores." Yeh agreed that the ROC would be "flexible." In getting Taiwan to "plug the gap in the strategic defensive line in the West Pacific," US geo-strategic concerns predominated; ROC's interest was only incidental.⁸⁹ Yeh heartily rejoined that the ROC government would never dream of "using the treaty for the purpose of a 'counter-offensive' and had no intention of embroiling the US in the civil war."⁹⁰ However, Taipei had *every* intention of entangling the US, having insisted on maintaining its sacred rights to the *fangong* mission.⁹¹ It was no small feat that the ROC negotiators had worked its way into acceptance by the US.

⁸⁶ In addition, Ambassador Koo raised the specter of Communist China using the NZ resolution as a Trojan gaining entry into the UN. The ROC's record of conversation conveyed a fuller favour of the heat of the argument. The ROC emissaries' visceral reactions could hardly be detected from the memo by McConaughy, see Memorandum of conversation, 20 October 1954 (9pm), in FRUS (1952-54) vol. XIV, 781-782.

⁸⁷ The US version was vague: "If the Communists turned down the proposal, a climate much more helpful to Nationalist China would be established." The ROC's version pinpointed exactly what the US was offering. See Memorandum of conversation, 20 October 1954 (9pm), in FRUS (1952-54) vol. XIV, 785.

⁸⁸ Robertson then dangled the prospective Mutual Security Treaty which he stressed "was raised extemporaneously" in his meeting with Chiang a week ago. Minutes of meeting, George Yeh and Wellington Koo with Walter Robertson, Walter P. McConaughy and Adm. Arthur W. Radford, 20 October 1954, serial no. 002080106034004, CKS papers, AH.

⁸⁹ On 2 November, Dulles posited grandly a treaty with the ROC that would "complete the defensive line which stretches from Alaska to the Aleutian Islands, Japan, Ryukyu Islands, Taiwan, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand." "This defensive chain is a necessity for the security of the Western Pacific," justified Dulles, "and for loyal allies such as the ROC." See Minutes of meeting, George Yeh and Wellington Koo with Foster Dulles and Walter Robertson, 2 November 1954, serial no.002080106034003, CKS papers, AH.

⁹⁰ Memo of Conversation, 27 Oct 1954 (10:30am), in FRUS (1952-54) vol. XIV, 797-801.

⁹¹ For the moment, Yeh promised that even if the ROC wished to launch any large-scale operation, "*it would seek permission from the US government.*" Minutes of meeting, George Yeh, Wellington Koo with Foster Dulles, 27 October 1954, serial no.002080106034003, CKS papers, AH.

The US sense of compunction in dealing with its Asian allies, coloured by its cultural assumptions, alternated uneasily with its Cold War hard-nosed realism. When Ambassador Koo appealed that the ROC retained the right to counter-offensive, Dulles denied crushing the ROC's martial spirit and advocated "patience and to await the right opportunity" in view of the PRC's superior military strength. Dulles then delved into a vapid lecture on the imminent implosion of communist régimes: "The window of opportunity may come within one or five years, but I have the confidence that the day of reckoning for the communists will soon arrive."⁹² Nevertheless, Washington insisted on Oracle as that was the US public *raison d'être* for the security treaty with the ROC. Without the Oracle to guarantee the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, a security treaty would be considered too risky. Although Yeh had declared that Chiang had "completely agreed to the NZ resolution and its conditions," Washington believed Oracle would doubly maintain the peace.⁹³

Dulles presented Oracle as a preemptive peace initiative, forestalling attempts by neutralist states from introducing rival resolutions which the US could not control. Dulles also stressed that the US "could not engage in any step that may provoke the Soviet Union or Communist China into war."⁹⁴ With Taipei, Dulles assumed that the US held all the cards. He reassured the NSC that the US could force the ROC towards the NZ resolution. He also dismissed Chiang's *fangong* mission.⁹⁵ For Eisenhower, should the UN award the islands to the PRC, "it was better to accept some loss of face in the world than to go to general war in defenses of these small islands."⁹⁶ Dulles thus firmly instructed Radford that while it was important for a firm show of resolve, "he didn't want it to be something that might involve a major war."⁹⁷

⁹² Dulles observed: "As Communism goes against human behaviour, the Chinese people would not tolerate it for long." Minutes of meeting, George Yeh, Wellington Koo with Foster Dulles, 27 October 1954, serial no.002080106034003, CKS papers, AH.

⁹³ Yeh insisted that the resolution should state that "communist China is the aggressor." Robertson responded that could be difficult, not least the fact that "the ROC government had been engaging in hostile air raids and illegal seizures of merchant shipping [off south China coast] for sometime." Minutes of meeting, Wellington Koo with Foster Dulles, 2 November 1954, serial no.002080106034003, CKS papers, AH.

⁹⁴ The US source lists the missing context: "The US military experts believe that it would not be possible to defend the offshore islands without taking measures against the mainland which would entail the risk of general war with Communist China." Yet such an important message is missing in the ROC sources. See Memo of Conversation, 2 November 1954, in FRUS (1952-54) vol. XIV, 845-846; Minutes of meeting, George Yeh and Wellington Koo with Walter Robertson, Walter P. McConaughy, 2 November 1954, serial no. 002080106034004, CKS papers, AH.

⁹⁵ 220th Meeting of NSC, October 28, 1954, NSC Series, box 6, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

⁹⁶ 221st Meeting of NSC, November 2, 1954 NSC Series, box 6, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

⁹⁷ Telephone call to Adm. Radford, 1 Nov 1954, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general Nov 1, 1954-Dec 31 1954 (5), JFD papers, DDEL.

However, Chiang calculated that the NZ resolution was moot once the US decided to sign a defensive treaty with the ROC. Chiang ordered Yeh to ignore the issue and correctly guessed that Dulles would later quietly drop the NZ resolution. Chiang focused his attention on more minute matters such as stretching as much latitude from the prospective treaty as possible. “The US must mention explicitly in the treaty terms such as ‘Taiwan, the Pescadores and the surrounding areas’ ... ,” advised Chiang, “only then would we allow ambiguous terminologies for the coverage of the offshore islands.” If the US wanted Chiang to give these islands up, they would have to promise something more.⁹⁸

Once committed to a ROC-US Mutual Defense Treaty, Washington objected to most covert Nationalist activities. On 22 November, Robertson raised concerns about ROC’s “blockade of Mainland China’s ports.”⁹⁹ These actions might “provoke retaliatory actions from the communists.” In addition, the ROC should desist from “detaining and searching foreign ships.” Other covert militant activities must also be curbed.¹⁰⁰ However, Dulles was less perturbed, asserting that the treaty “will not enable the Chinese Nationalists to involve us in a war with Communist China.”¹⁰¹

d. December: ROC-US Special Relationship

The ROC-US Mutual Defence Treaty was signed on 2 December 1954 and Chiang thanked Eisenhower effusively in a 10 December 1954 telegram. Three main themes stood out as the *leit motif* of Chiang’s perception of ROC-US relations. One, Chiang evoked the pseudo-“special relationship” between China and the US: “What was broken in the past [Truman’s noxious White Paper] could be said to have been restored to a new page, worthy to be treasured by both parties.”

⁹⁸ CKS to George Yeh, telegram, 5 November 1954, serial no.002080200350078, CKS papers, AH.

⁹⁹ The ROC promised that further blockades or “larger operations” plans would be done jointly or “in consultations with” the MAAG. Minutes of meeting, George Yeh and Wellington Koo with Foster Dulles and Walter Robertson, 23 Nov 1954, serial no.002080106034003, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁰⁰ Yeh protested that for years the ROC navy had been blockading coastal China without endangering US international standing. For the ROC, the blockade was a defensive action that did not amount to the level of “offensive military actions.” Robertson advised Yeh to further consult this matter with Dulles and reiterated that further blockade activities should be “cautiously administered.” See Minutes of meeting, George Yeh and Wellington Koo with Walter Robertson, 22 November 1954, serial no.002080106034003, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁰¹ Dulles to Eisenhower, Memorandum for the President, 22 Nov 1954, Formosa, 1952-1957 (5), box 10, International Series, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

Two, Chiang understood the necessity of pitching the ROC-US Mutual Defense Treaty as a function of anti-communism as such discourse struck a powerful chord in the US domestic circle. Finally, Chiang went on give credit to the leader of the free world, Eisenhower: “But for the wisdom and spirit possessed by Eisenhower, the determination to sign [the treaty] would not have come to pass.”¹⁰²

Nevertheless, Yeh badgered Washington on how the offshore islands would be provisioned by the US, worried that with no firm promise of aid, the offshore islands would slide into obscurity. Ambassador Koo advocated a memorandum to cover Taipei’s concerns. Robertson retorted that with the ratification of the treaty there would be time for the wrapping up of miscellaneous items and Yeh should “stop insisting on this matter.”¹⁰³ Chiang petitioned Eisenhower “to nip in the bud any tendency [toward ‘two Chinas’]” and insisted on “some form of assurances that the US would provide logistic support for Chinese forces engaged in their [offshore islands] defence.”¹⁰⁴ Eisenhower deftly deflected Chiang’s requests, advising Yeh that “developments in China must be viewed in terms of long periods of time.”

The advice of Dulles and Eisenhower had unintended consequences at times. One, such advice possessed interpretative elasticity for different cultural audiences. Washington meant that changes were not forthcoming in the near future, so Taipei must drop all *fangong* plans. But to Chiang, it probably meant that once changes were detected, be prepared to counter-attack. Two, pseudo-encouragements were latched on by a desperate Chiang. Phrases like “there are signs that the

¹⁰² “The treaty reaffirmed henceforth the traditional friendship for hundreds of years of two great people across the Pacific,” proclaimed Chiang. CKS to George Yeh, telegram, 10 December 1954, serial no.002080200350115, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁰³ Robertson wryly commented that the treaty was of such significance that news of it was met with a “vehement storm of violent protests launched by the communists.” See Minutes of meeting, George Yeh and Wellington Koo with Walter Robertson, 13 December 1954, serial no.002080106034003, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁰⁴ Chiang’s concern was based on a ROC Ministry of Defense study of US military aid which noted that the offshore islands did not qualify for aid as it was out of the purview of the treaty. See Lai Ming-tang to CKS, “中美共同防禦條約簽訂後: 重要軍事政策之檢討及意見” [Zhongmei gongtong fangwei tiaoyue qianting hou: zhongyao junshi zhenche ji yijian] (Top Secret) serial no. 002080102049006, 21 December 1954, CKS papers, AH.

Soviets and the Chinese Communists are having some difficulties” were enough for Chiang to constantly harp about an impending counter-offensive against the mainland.¹⁰⁵

In January 1955 the PRC finally launched a military campaign to recover the distant ROC-controlled Dachen islands. Chiang exploited Beijing’s actions to orchestrate for additional US military aid, demanding “24 full strength divisions” on 3 January 1955. ROC Minister of Defence Yu Ta-wei also requested for “4 more destroyers, 15 LSTs, more expeditious deliveries of F86’s and reconnaissance planes.” However, the US regarded the Taiwanese requests as outrageous since the ROC lacked qualified pilots and sailors to benefit from US largesse. Radford substituted Chiang’s demands for 24 divisions with 9 divisions of reserve but admitted that Chiang drove a hard bargain, as the ROC army was not far behind South Korea’s ten reserve divisions.¹⁰⁶

2.2 PRC Public Relations Offensive

In the wake of the First Taiwan Crisis, Beijing launched a battery of domestic and international propaganda efforts to justify its actions. Besides appealing to its domestic audience, China worked hard to present its case to the Communist bloc, Japan, neutralist countries (especially India and Burma) and Britain. Such efforts in the international arena were facilitated by the success of China’s earlier attempts to break out of diplomatic isolation following the Korean War and could be seen as China’s continuing quest for international recognition and participation.

After the second artillery barrage on 22 September, Zhou rationalized the Quemoy bombardment to the National People’s Congress, describing how the US had tried to contain China on three fronts: Korea, Indochina and the Taiwan Strait. With the stabilization of the two other fronts, Beijing turned toward the Taiwan problem. Zhou stated that “placing Taiwan in the UN or a neutralist third party trusteeship, a ‘neutralized’ Taiwan, and the so-called independent Taiwan are all attempts at quartering China’s territory.” Moreover, he condemned the hostility of SEATO:

¹⁰⁵ Memo of (George Yeh) Conversation with President, 20 Dec 1954, 10:30am, ACW Diary Series, box 3, ACW Diary Dec 1954 (2), Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

¹⁰⁶ Record of conversation, George Yeh K. C. and Admiral Radford, 18 January 1955, serial no. 002080106035005, CKS papers, AH.

“Colonialist attempts to manipulate the Asian countries are incongruent with Asian aspirations towards independence and sovereignty ... this is also against the Geneva spirit.”¹⁰⁷

Significantly, Mao underscored Beijing’s cautious actions by referring to the danger of nuclear warfare. In a speech to the Central Military Commission, Mao highlighted how the PRC was “totally ignorant” in that area but he characteristically turned the technological backwardness of the PRC into a national asset:

Now our industrial, agricultural, cultural and military developments are less than desirable. Hence the imperialists ... are at liberty to bully us. They ask, “How many atomic bombs do you have?” But they have underestimated us at least in one area, China’s hidden potential strength which would be astounding once revealed in the future.

Mao also hinted at historical precedents of the Quemoy bombardment. He stressed the CCP’s experiences in dealing with the KMT in the 1945 Chongqing negotiations: “The more we soundly thrashed Chiang Kai-shek, the better progress we made in negotiations.”¹⁰⁸ Mao was at once asserting the political nature of his Quemoy bombardment which aimed at thwarting the ROC-US Mutual defence treaty, at the same time forcing the powerful US to negotiate with its weaker adversary.¹⁰⁹

To the Communist bloc, Mao scripted the Taiwan Strait actions in the mien of Chinese cultural tradition of “punishing” the ROC’s “arrogance.” First, Mao highlighted the baneful potential of a ROC-US treaty to the visiting Bulgarian representatives on 27 September 1954. Second, Mao complained about the irritants posed by ROC’s covert operations: “In the Taiwan Strait, surrounding the mainland, are lots of little islands still under the control of CKS; this creates a lot of problems ... They obstruct the passage of shipping, attack commercial shipping, e.g. British,

¹⁰⁷ “Zhongguo renmin yiding yao jiefang Taiwan,” 中国人民一定要解放台湾 [The Chinese People must liberate Taiwan], Zhou speech to the National People’s Congress, 23 September 1954, *Zhou Enlai junshi wenxuan* 周恩来军事文选 [A selection of Zhou Enlai’s military writings], ed. Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi 中共中央文献研究室 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1997), 350-355. (hereafter cited as ZEJW); MJN, 854.

¹⁰⁸ Mao’s stratagem of “fighting while negotiating” originally stemmed from the need for a momentary respite from Chiang’s armies. Here, against the powerful US, selected military engagements could underscore the PRC’s international demands and offset its military disadvantages. See Yang Kuisong 杨奎松, “Mao Zedong yu liangchi taihai weiji,” 毛泽东与两次台海危机 [Mao Zedong and the two Taiwan Strait Crisis] *Shixue yuekan* 史学月刊, no. 11 (2003): 57.

¹⁰⁹ Mao’s speech to the Military Commission, 18 Oct 1954, in *Mao Zedong Junshi wenji* 毛泽东军事文集 [Mao Zedong selected military writings], vol 6, ed. Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi 中共中央文献研究室编 (Beijing: Junshi kexue chubanshe, 1993), 357-361.

Polish and Soviet ships.” Finally, Mao established his Taiwan Strait actions as the PRC’s contribution to world communism, comparing the world-wide US covert activities launched against Soviet-bloc countries with China having its fair share of “airdrop saboteurs” and “scatter[ing] of propaganda materials.” Since sovereign communist states had the means, it stood to reason that they must respond firmly against US provocations.¹¹⁰

To the Japanese who were US allies, Zhou dug hard into the shared cultural and affective domains establishing Beijing’s sincerity. Would the PRC threaten Japan? Zhou declared: “I can guarantee to everyone, we are definitely on the side of world peace ... this is ... our fundamental policy.” Zhou further stated: “Compared to our several thousand years of shared history, sixty years [of Japanese aggression] is nothing.” The Japanese and the Chinese had historically mutually beneficial relations 共存共榮 and mutually shared common cultural roots 同文同种. Turning to Japan’s non-recognition of the PRC, Zhou pointed out that the PRC’s “feelings were very hurt.” But he quickly quoted legislator Yamaguchi Kikuichirō (1897-1981) who had claimed that the “fault lay not with China.” Zhou attacked Washington instead: “I also know that basic difficulties reside not with the Japanese government because on top of the Japanese government’s head is another overlord, the Americans.”¹¹¹

The Chinese Communists assiduously courted neutralist countries. Nehru received an unprecedented welcome in Beijing. In Mao’s conversation with Nehru on 19 October 1954, Mao praised India because “India had the courage to stay away [from SEATO].”¹¹² Nevertheless, only

¹¹⁰ Record of conversation between Mao Zedong with the Bulgarian representatives, 27 September 1954 (2100hrs, serial no. 109-00411-02, AMFA).

¹¹¹ Zhou pointed out how scores of Chinese scholars and revolutionaries such as himself had studied in Japan and they were “grateful” for this intellectual debt. Zhou also announced that Beijing was prepared to work with any Japanese: “If the Japanese elect Yoshida Shigeru, we will recognize Yoshida. If the Japanese elect Suzuki Mosaburo, we will also recognize Suzuki.” Zhou also quoted Yamaguchi Kikuichirō 山口喜久一郎 (1897-1981) in “Zhongri guanxi de guanjian shi heping gongchu,” 中日关系的关键是和平共处 [The Key to Sino-Japanese Relations is Peaceful Co-existence], Zhou’s speech to Japanese delegation, 11 Oct 1954, in ZEW, 87-93; Zhou’s reassurances presented a stark contrast to US seemingly indifference in the Lucky Dragon incident. Japanese fishermen were affected by US hydrogen bomb test on Bikini atoll in March 1954. See, John Swenson-Wright, *Unequal allies?: United States security and alliance policy toward Japan, 1945-1960* (Stanford, California : Stanford University Press, 2005), 150.

¹¹² Mao stressed the huge economic development tasks which China and India faced, and intoned: “China wants peace ... application of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence should be extended to state relations among all countries.” See Summary of talks with Mao Tse-tung, Beijing, 19 October 1954, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second*

in the Indian sources could one detect the rare glimpses of Mao's impatience with Nehru's judicious comments about Washington's "fear complex." Mao's staccato comments included: "What of communism?"; "But US cannot be afraid? "What are they afraid of?"; "America had so much of strength and wealth."¹¹³ In response, Nehru even-handedly highlighted the perceived threat China posed. One, adjacent smaller Asian nations were frightened and Nehru advised Mao to "remove this fear from the minds of smaller countries." Two, Nehru explained SEATO was "American reaction against the Geneva Conference. The Americans ... wanted to show that their views still counted and that their strength and influence in Asia had not become less." Three, most European nations avoided the PRC. Their fear of being isolated "in the event of any armed conflict with Russia" meant at most they would try to influence America's opinion "without leaving the American camp." Against Nehru's multi-faceted response, Mao insisted that the US "is frightening others through its activities. We cannot have even good sleep, you know."¹¹⁴

In the next meeting on 23 October, Mao went quickly to the root of his concerns: "Do you think that US wants war and would use war to achieve its interests?" Nehru pointed out that "many in the civilian administration do not [think in terms of war]."¹¹⁵ Mao was clearly daunted by atomic weapons, but he made a show of philosophizing away the threat. But Nehru pointed out that if China's population were killed off in large numbers, China "cannot easily start again." Mao conceded to Nehru's logic: "We have just started our Five-Year Plan. Should there be a war, all our plans will be destroyed."¹¹⁶ Thus, Beijing wanted Nehru's sponsorship in the PRC's search for peace. In a critical section missing in the Chinese sources, Mao asked Nehru's advice for "convening a World Peace Congress." Zhou had raised this issue in an earlier meeting: "We support the ... Afro-Asian Conference ... because this conference is for Afro-Asia peace in the context of a larger world peace; not only would this conference expand the peace process, it would

Series Vol. 27(Oct 1 1954-Jan 31 1955), ed. Sarvepalli Gopal (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002) (hereafter cited as SWJN)

¹¹³ Mao with Nehru, record of conversation, 19 Oct 1954, in MD, 128.

¹¹⁴ Nehru with Mao, 19 October 1954, SWJN vol. 27.

¹¹⁵ Nehru acknowledged that the military were hawks. See Minutes of talks with Mao Tse-tung, Beijing, 23 October 1954, in SWJN.

¹¹⁶ Mao proceeded: "We have spent all our money on construction. If war should come we will have to gather everything to wage the war and all construction will be stopped. War plans will have to be drawn up and this would postpone the industrialization of China." For an alternative record, see "We should work together to prevent War and Win a lasting peace," Mao with Nehru, record of conversation, 23 Oct 1954, in MD, 131-133.

also ease international tensions.”¹¹⁷ Mao also reaffirmed PRC’s interest: “Over a hundred nations all over the world can participate, and there should be a sort of treaty for peace and non-aggression.”¹¹⁸

Beijing quickly acted to placate its neighbour’s fears. In the first meeting with U Nu on 1 December 1954, Mao freely endorsed Sino-Burmese trade agreements and even invited the Burmese to inspect Yunnan.¹¹⁹ Mao endorsed the Burmese role in organizing the Bandung Conference. In a subtle quid pro quo, Mao requested: “We hope to attend this conference, if that is agreeable to the other countries.” Presented with such generous hospitality, U Nu formally extended the Bandung invitation to the PRC the next day. Zhou “heartily” accepted, echoing that: “This meeting will facilitate a common meeting place for countries with hitherto no relations with each other. This will build up mutual appreciation and remove misunderstandings and estrangements.”¹²⁰

Mao intuitively understood that Beijing’s reassurances to Yangôn were a clear statement about the reality of the PRC’s burgeoning hegemonic status in Asia. To U Nu’s verbal posturing that “I shall listen to their suggestions with the humbleness of a younger brother toward his elder brothers,” Mao waved aside and insisted that the PRC and Burma were “brothers born in the same year.” Mao pressed home the anti-imperialist rhetoric: “Countries in Asia and Africa have for many years been bullied by imperialist powers, mainly Britain, the US, France, Germany and Japan ... The day will come when we shall have genuine independence ...”¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Nehru merely summarized the activities of the Colombo powers but Zhou moved in to express interest. Xiong Huayuan, *Zhou Enlai Wanlong zhi Xing* 周恩来万隆之行 [Zhou Enlai in Bandung] (Beijing: Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, 2002), 1-7.

¹¹⁸ Mao also subtly beseeched Nehru to make a case to Eisenhower that the PRC had no desire to “go to war.” This was in stark contrast to the bombastic assumptions about China’s survivability in a nuclear war. Minutes of talks with Mao Tse-tung, Beijing, 23 October 1954, in SWJN.

¹¹⁹ Concerned that the Burmese were “afraid our Yunnan Province will be harmful to you,” Mao went to reassure U Nu that he could “take a look at Yunan, to observe what is going on there.” Mao further stated that “we have issued strict orders to our people in the border areas to confine themselves to defensive measures and never take even one step across the boundary.” See “We should Promote Understanding in the course of Cooperation,” Mao with U Nu, record of conversation, 1 Dec 1954, in MD, 136-142.

¹²⁰ Xiong Huayuan, 7; *Zhou Enlai Dashi Benmo* 周恩来大事本末 [A complete account of Zhou Enlai’s activities], ed. Wen Yan 闻岩 (Jiangsu Jiaoyu chubanshe, 1998), 609.

¹²¹ Mao with U Nu, record of conversation, 11 Dec 1954, in MD, 143-150.

Mao further reassured U Nu that “revolution cannot be exported” and “we do not organize a Communist Party among overseas Chinese.” Citing the CIA coup in Guatemala, Mao promised that the PRC ambassador, Yao Zhongming, would never instigate such a dastardly act. Even when U Nu extended an invitation for the CCP to send a delegation to Burma, Mao refused as it might upset other political parties in Burma.¹²² However, Beijing’s overtures via India and Burma were rejected by the US. In January 1955, Dulles dismissed U Nu’s appeals for direct Sino-US talks.¹²³

Nonetheless, Beijing maintained an informal back-channel linkage with London. Chinese sources demonstrated that this linkage provided Beijing with a credible assessment of US intentions. Foreign Office Deputy Undersecretary Harold A. Caccia selectively highlighted intimate debates in the Eisenhower administration to Chinese chargé d’affaires Huan Xiang on 6 November 1954. Huan Xiang concluded from Caccia’s information that Eisenhower was against armed intervention with China and the US “would not be launching any big-scale war any time soon.”¹²⁴ The Chinese chargé perceived two possible motives for Caccia’s sharing. One, this might be a British search for a territorial quid pro quo: the offshore islands in exchange for leaving Taiwan alone. This would not lead to a setback for the West, and more importantly the international position of the British would rise with its new-found reputation as peace maker.¹²⁵ Two, this was a ploy towards neutralizing Taiwan. One way was for the US to replace Chiang Kai-shek and Taiwan be given to the UN in trusteeship. A less drastic solution would be to make both the US and Chiang forswear counter-attacking mainland China. Britain would facilitate as a guarantor, in exchange for the PRC’s tacit renunciation of force toward Taiwan.¹²⁶

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Kenneth T. Young, *Negotiating with the Chinese Communist: The United States Experience, 1953-1967* (NY: McGraw-Hill, 1968), 43-44.

¹²⁴ Beijing also learnt that the Republicans’ loss in the recent mid-term elections had dampened any bellicosity of the White House, in view of American anti-war sentiments. Moreover, with the success of Soviet hydrogen bombs, the US no longer held the monopoly on nuclear weapons and any action in the Far East would have to “take that into consideration.” See Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no. 384, 10 November 1954, serial no. 110-00035-05, AMFA.

¹²⁵ Nehru had reportedly told the British that the recovery of Taiwan was not on the cards of the PRC, but the offshore islands were another matter. Nehru felt that the West had no business in preventing the inevitable. Apparently, the British agreed with the Indian leader. Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no. 384, 10 November 1954, serial no. 110-00035-05, AMFA.

¹²⁶ See Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no. 384, 10 November 1954, serial no. 110-00035-05, AMFA.

Conclusion

The US, Taiwan and China pursued their own courses of action in the aftermath of the Geneva Conference in late-July and August 1954. The US was dissatisfied with the Geneva Accords and decided to disregard it. Yet, although Washington viewed the additional prominence that the PRC gained in Geneva with dread, it noted that China's gains in Geneva were limited and the probability of a Communist armed attack low. US budgetary constraints, the limitations of US nuclear deterrence and Eisenhower's firmness against casual belligerency further meant that the US was not about to provoke a war with China. Although "united action" culminated in the formation of SEATO and this would unsettle China, Dulles was aware of the limitations of US sponsorship. Taiwan was upbeat regarding US actions in Asia. Although Taiwan faced the threat of increasing international isolation, it was assured by the US adamant position in not recognizing China. While Taiwan was concerned that its interests might be neglected in SEATO talks, it was assured by the increasing willingness of the US to consider a mutual defense treaty. As for China, although Mao Zedong's pivotal change of China's international orientation towards "peaceful co-existence" and Zhou Enlai's whirlwind diplomacy clearly caught the US flatfooted at the Geneva Conference, Washington's disregard for the Geneva Accords dulled Beijing's diplomatic achievements. Beijing was unhappy with the continued insistence of the US on non-recognition for China but was encouraged by the support of Asian neutralist countries as well as China's relatively successful international debut in Geneva. However, China was frustrated with the formation of SEATO and the likelihood of a potential ROC-US defence treaty which it viewed to be targeting directly at China. Coupled with the continuation of ROC commando raids and the danger of "two Chinas" looming ahead, the PRC launched massive bombardments on the islands of Quemoy and Matsu on 3 September, thereby setting off the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. However, Beijing's overriding international concerns diluted the ambitious plans of its military commanders.

In the first week of the crisis, while the US assessed that Beijing's intentions were limited and was thus not prepared to escalate the crisis by militarily engaging Beijing, Taiwan worked hard toward securing a defence treaty and procuring more US aid. From 10 September to October, the US

decided to pursue Operation Oracle, which aimed at introducing a UN resolution to the Security Council calling for ceasefire in the Taiwan Strait and hopefully a “neutralization of these offshore islands,” but Taiwan resisted this stiffly so as to wrangle even more concessions from the US. By November, the US agreed to a defence treaty and this was signed on 2 December, much to Taiwan’s satisfaction. In the wake of the First Taiwan Crisis, Beijing launched a battery of domestic and international propaganda efforts to justify its actions. Besides appealing to its domestic audience, China worked hard to present its case to the Communist bloc, Japan, neutralist countries (especially India and Burma) and Britain. Such efforts in the international arena were facilitated by the success of China’s earlier attempts to break out of diplomatic isolation following the Korean War and could be seen as China’s continuing quest for international recognition and participation.

Ironically, China’s bombardment presented Taiwan the opportunity to turn the crisis to its advantage, offering it the perfect excuse to obtain a defence treaty and procure more US aid. Notwithstanding the Quemoy bombardment, the PRC also pressed home its advantage as the injured party in a successful public relations blitzkrieg domestically and internationally. In contrast, the US fought a rearguard battle against worsening world opinion and deteriorating domestic sentiments. Nevertheless, the records showed that Eisenhower’s decision on 12 September 1954 against any military action regarding the offshore islands proved to be consistent with the view that he had of China since 1953. In retrospect and paradoxically, the First Taiwan Strait Crisis could also be seen to have presented the context for both Beijing and Washington to take another step in the framework of tacit communication, which was first discernible during the negotiations at the Geneva Conference. This was so because Washington’s UN approach to the First Taiwan Strait Crisis was made possible mainly due to Beijing’s limited belligerency. Through a wide array of international contacts, Beijing had conveyed its political concerns about the Taiwan problem and its peaceful intention. At this stage, while Washington had not found an adequate way to respond to Beijing’s peace feelers directly, its attempt to use the UN Security Council to engage Beijing could be viewed as a move in tacit communication. What actions the US, China and

Taiwan took and how Sino-US relations developed from January to April 1955 will be the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 5: The First Taiwan Strait Crisis: From Yijiangshan to Bandung

On 18 January 1955, the PRC upped the ante in the First Taiwan Strait Crisis by recovering the obscure Nationalist-controlled Yijiangshan islands, two hundred miles north of Taiwan, as a prelude to occupying the neighbouring Dachen islands. Recognizing the hopelessness of defending Dachen, Eisenhower persuaded Chiang to give them up in return for a clear commitment from the US. On 28 January 1955, the US Congress responded by passing the Formosa Resolution which stated that the US President would aid in Taiwan's defence (including Penghu and "related positions) against any aggression. The 40,000 Nationalist troops on Dachen then evacuated on 8-11 February. To reinforce the commitment of the US to the defence of Taiwan, Eisenhower in a news conference on 16 March threatened the use of nuclear weapons. PRC premier Zhou Enlai announced on 23 April, at the first Afro-Asian Conference (18-24 April 1955) in Bandung, Indonesia, that China was not averse to negotiating with the US over the Taiwan Strait Crisis. Zhou's conciliatory gesture was quickly accepted by the US over virulent protests by the ROC.

Existing scholarship stressed this later phase of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis as one of escalation of conflicts in Sino-US relations, marked by the Yijiangshan campaign, the Formosa Resolution and Eisenhower's nuclear threat.¹ However, the process of reconciliation was not adequately highlighted. With the deployment of *incremental signaling*, the US was prepared to negotiate; the only problem was how to do so without a loss of prestige. Existing scholarship also paid insufficient attention to Beijing's courting of neutralist elements in Asia. Moreover, how the PRC's overseas emissaries analyzed the crisis was not given due recognition. In addition, the availability of new Taiwanese sources gave an invaluable perspective to the hitherto US-centric perspective of the making of the Formosa Resolution.

¹ On existing scholarship, see Footnote 1 of Chapter 4. For shorter accounts, see Li Xiaobing, "PLA Attacks and the Amphibious Operations During the Taiwan Strait Crises of 1954-55 and the 1958," in *Chinese War Fighting*, ed. Mark A. Ryan, et. al. (NY: ME Sharpe, 2003), 143-172; Michael M. Sheng, "Mao and China's Relations with Superpowers in the 1950s: A New Look at the Taiwan Strait Crises and the Sino Soviet Split," *Modern China* vol. 34, no. 4 (Oct 2008), 477-507.

This chapter continues the reexamination of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, from January to April 1955. It argues that a ritualized pattern of diplomacy emerged in spite of the belligerent rhetoric hurled around. This built upon the framework of tacit communication that was discernible between the US and the PRC since the Geneva Conference and continued despite the outbreak of the Crisis from July to December 1954. From January to April 1955, good intelligence possessed by Beijing and Washington made sure no undue escalation resulted. Ample signaling by the US and the PRC ensured that each moved towards the Bandung Conference as a way to tacitly resolve the Crisis. While Washington learnt just how deeply Beijing was averse toward any notion of “two Chinas,” Beijing appreciated the effectiveness of third-party negotiators in plodding Washington toward direct negotiations. The Bandung Conference became a choice forum for signaling the formal winding down of the Crisis: while Washington finally accepted the PRC’s “right to liberate Formosa” in principle, Beijing obliquely reassured the world it preferred peaceful means for that end.

This chapter will explore the above themes in three main sections. The first section, focusing on developments in January and February, will analyze why China launched the Yijiangshan campaign, how the US and ROC responded, and what attempts were made by the US and China in their search for mediators to resolve the crisis. The second section, focusing on developments from February to March, will examine how the relationship between public posturing of rhetoric belligerency and tacit understanding and agreement evolved in Sino-US relations. It will also explore the emergence of America’s New Look nuclear deterrence doctrine and how this was viewed by the PRC. The third section, focusing on developments from March to April, will investigate how Washington and Beijing demonstrated flexibility as they inched toward Bandung with the intention to tacitly resolve the Taiwan Strait Crisis, thereby paving the way for Sino-US negotiations to be held in Geneva in August.

1. January to February: Casting about for Solutions

Although China initially vacillated on capturing the Yijiangshan and Dachen islands, its concern with the looming specter of “two Chinas” led it to proceed with its military actions. Such a concern also resulted in China strongly rejecting the proposed NZ UN resolution and disregarding the US nuclear threat. In the wake of the Yijiangshan campaign, the US was cautious, persuading Taiwan to evacuate Dachen and pushing Britain to press ahead with Oracle (NZ UN resolution). At the same time, Eisenhower sought to placate potential unhappiness from Congress and the American public concerned about American military entanglement in the Taiwan Strait by presenting the Formosa Resolution as a “virtuous” American act in accordance with American “tradition.” The US also tacitly accepted the PRC’s international standing, recognized the inevitability of another diplomatic engagement with China, and hoped that by proposing Oracle, this would not only salvage the US international standing and support the ROC’s UN position, but would also signal to China the US willingness to talk. In their search for mediators to resolve the crisis, the US continued to press for Oracle while Beijing preferred prodding the US with third-party emissaries with calls for direct negotiations.

1.1 The PRC & Yijiangshan

Following the bombardment of Quemoy, Mao attempted to balance the chortling for action by his belligerent military commanders with the PRC’s new reasonable image on the international scene. He postponed the military actions time and again, leading General Zhang Aiping to sarcastically recommend to Beijing on 16 December to abandon the entire operation.² Even the final permission for capturing Yijiangshan was the result of a personal appeal by Zhang to the Politburo on 18 January 1955. Zhang did not disappoint Mao; Yijiangshan was swiftly captured. The US subsequently aided the KMT to evacuate Dachen on 8-11 February. According to Admiral Xiao Jinguang, commander of the Chinese communist navy, the entire Zhejiang sea coast was then

² Ye Fei’s 3 September 1954 bombardment of Quemoy signaled the start of the Dachen campaign. Mao subsequently appeared uncertain whether to proceed with the original plan to seize the Yijiangshan and Dachen islands, much to the frustration of Zhejiang front commanders. Li, *Chinese Army*, 141; Mao to Peng, Su Yu, 11 December 1954, in JGMWG, 627; Zhang Sheng, 189.

secured, with KMT-controlled islands reduced from twenty-two to fourteen.³ However, Mao noted: “This is undoubtedly a military victory, but from the political angle, we still need to further observe and consider.”⁴

What finally prompted the PRC to recover the Yijiangshan and Dachen islands was its increasing concern over the specter of “two Chinas.” On 5 January 1955, British chargé d'affaires Humphrey Trevelyan conveyed two messages to Beijing: first, the ROC-US Mutual Defence Treaty would constrain Chiang’s counter-offensive activities; second, the PRC must “consider the facts of reality” especially since “there can be no hope that the US would lift the protection they had extended over Taiwan.”⁵ This potential territorial quid pro quo leading to “two Chinas” alarmed Beijing. Similar to Washington, Beijing had by late-1954 discounted Chiang’s improbable *fangong*. The concern was on how the ROC-US Defence Treaty might “legalize the occupation of Taiwan and Pescadores.” However, Zhou did extend an olive branch: “Countries which are willing to build normal relations with us, willing to peacefully co-exist with us, and give up hostile intentions, we will reciprocate by extending our hands. This does not exclude the US.”⁶ However, Zhou’s message was lost amid the hot rhetoric of accusing Whitehall of perpetuating an “Eastern Munich” and how the faithless Eden had backtracked on his Asian Locarno Treaty.⁷

Mao’s suspicions were further fanned by a 15 January warning from China’s London chargé It seemed that Caccia’s November 1954 hint of a quid pro quo had begun to take shape. First, Britain might venture to recognize the “independence of Taiwan.” Next, the loose alliance of SEATO might be made firmer. PRC’s diplomats speculated that Korea, Japan and Taiwan would be pulled into this security arrangement. To gain Beijing’s acquiescence, the US “would not object the entry

³ Xiao Jinguang 肖劲光, *Xiao Jinguang Huiyilu* 肖劲光回忆录 [Memoirs of Xiao Jinguang](Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1988),126.

⁴ Zhang Sheng, 188-194.

⁵ Trevelyan had an earful from Zhou on 5 January 1955, although he characterized it as a “good tempered quarrel.” Trevelyan, *Worlds Apart*, 137.

⁶ The Chinese records showed that the usually debonair premier displayed considerable ire with the British lack of trustworthiness. “Jianjue fandui zhizhao liange zhongguo de yingmou,”坚决反对制造‘两个中国’的阴谋 [Resolutely opposed to the ‘Two Chinas’ conspiracy] Zhou with Trevelyan, Record of conversation, 5 Jan 1955, in ZEW, 94-105.

⁷ “Munich” represented how Britain’s appeasement of Hitler served to whet Germany’s appetite for territorial expansion, culminating in the outbreak of World War II. Winston Churchill viewed this episode as “a total and unmitigated disaster.” See Eric Hobsbaw, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991* (London: Michael Joseph Ltd, 1994), 153-156.

of the PRC into the UN.”⁸ Therefore, Beijing might be confronted with having to choose between admission into the UN and the realization of “Two Chinas.” Eden reinforced Beijing’s fear by publicly stating in late-January the “differences in status of the offshore islands and Taiwan.” The British appeared to be persuading “the ROC-US to give up the offshore islands in exchange for PRC’s acquiescence in some sort of independent status for Taiwan.” This scheme would maintain the “prestige” of the US while Washington disentangled from the Taiwan Strait morass. Britain would advocate a “temporary ceasefire” for “Chiang’s troops to evacuate from Dachen” and then highlight the successful evacuation of Dachen as a solution to Quemoy and Matsu. But to Beijing, this act would disastrously finalize the “ceasefire line.”⁹

Meanwhile, Beijing had learnt about the configurations behind the proposed NZ UN resolution. Beijing’s back-channels to London extended beyond informal Whitehall sources as two left-wing Labour politicians, Harold Davies and William N. Warbey, allegedly fed “insider” information to the Chinese chargé on 26 January. According to Davies and Warbey, the UN gambit was depicted as a desperate but win-win measure to resolve the US dilemma. If Beijing bit the bait, the US would seize the initiative and present the PRC’s acceptance of the UN resolution as a success. Should Beijing balk at the NZ resolution, the US could push the responsibility to the PRC and reclaim the moral high ground. Having been thus warned, Beijing was even more adamant not to be jockeyed into accepting the NZ resolution.¹⁰ Eisenhower’s 24 January calls for a Formosa Resolution were interpreted by Beijing as a threat: “You must either accept our occupation of your territory or fight.”¹¹ When Trevelyan approached Zhou on 28 January regarding the NZ Resolution, it became the “bleakest interview I ever had with Chou.” Zhou, in “his most emotional and bitter mood,” denounced the US maneuver as getting “the UN’s cover for aggression against

⁸ The reported concerned a “secret attachment” to the ROC-US Mutual Defence Treaty. Beijing’s attention was not on Washington’s protection over the offshore islands which was a given; it feared a much bigger conspiracy – the realization of “two Chinas and the long-term occupation of Taiwan.” Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no.510, 15 January 1955, serial no. 110-00276-06, AMFA.

⁹ This insight was presented a month ahead of Eden’s 28 February approach. Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no. 879, 27 January 1955, serial no. 110-00276-06, AMFA.

¹⁰ The Chinese report did not question the credibility of Davies and Warbey. Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no. 961, 29 January 1955, serial no. 110-00276-06, AMFA.

¹¹ “Mr. Trevelyan’s conversation with Chou Enlai on Jan 28, 1955,” Memo, Department of State, Declassified: Dec 27, 1995, DDRS.

China.” Privately, Trevelyan admitted that the US motives were just that: “To put the Chinese government in the dock.”¹²

To warn the hawks in the US, Mao boldly disregarded the US nuclear threat. Mao told the new Finnish Ambassador Carl-Johan Sundstrom: “We have two principles: first, we don’t want war; second, we will strike back resolutely if anyone invades us.” When Sundstrom cautioned that several hydrogen bombs would annihilate China, Mao retorted: “The United States cannot annihilate the Chinese nation with its small stack of atom bombs.”¹³ Three days later, Zhou publicly thanked the Soviet Union for passing atomic energy knowledge to the PRC and he accused the US of using atomic warfare to threaten the PRC over the Taiwan issue: “On the one hand we must oppose atomic weapons, but on the other hand, we should master atomic energy. If the imperialists dare to provoke us, they will only destroy themselves.”¹⁴

1.2 The US and Taiwan: The Formosa Resolution

The US accepted the loss of Yijiangshan and Dachen. Despite the harping of the ROC and Radford about Dachen’s military value, Dulles “thinks that is a lot of hooey and bunk.”¹⁵ The administration wanted to avoid transforming Dachen into another Dien Bien Phu. Instead, Washington was more concerned that the ROC force might be carried away with retaliation. The relevant policy statement in the newly amended NSC 5441 stated: “Do not agree to GRC [Taiwan] offensive actions against Mainland Communist China, except under circumstances approved by the President.”¹⁶ Despite desperate pleas by the ROC Foreign Minister George Yeh, Eisenhower

¹² The NZ resolution died in its crib in the face of Beijing’s resolution objection. Zhou claimed that the resolution seemed to suggest that Chinese territories guaranteed under “the Cairo Declaration and Potsdam Agreement and other international documents were waste paper.” See Trevelyan, *Worlds Apart*, 141-144; “Mr. Trevelyan’s conversation with Chou Enlai on Jan 28, 1955,” Memo, Department of State, DDRS; Dutton, *Anthony Eden*, 353.

¹³ “The Atomic Bomb cannot scare the Chinese people,” Mao with Finnish Ambassador Carl-Johan Sundstrom, summary of conversation, 28 January 1955, in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. 5 (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1977), 152-153. (hereafter cited as SW)

¹⁴ “Guanyu heping liyong yuanzineng de wenti,”关于和平利用原子能的问题 [Regarding the problems of peaceful usage of atomic energy] Zhou’s speech to the State Council, 31 Jan 1954, in ZEJW, 357-363.

¹⁵ Allen Dulles reported to Dulles on 12 January that the Nationalists were handling the impending loss of Yijiangshan very “badly.” But both the Dulles brothers viewed the loss as “not of great value.” Telephone call from Allen Dulles, 12 Jan 1955, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general Jan 3 1955 - Feb 18 1955 (4), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹⁶ On 13 January, Radford’s recommendation for additional F-86 planes for the KMT to run an “an effective air patrol over the Dachen Islands” was dismissed. 231st Meeting of NSC, 13 January 1955, NSC Series, box 6, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

only cautiously decided “to draw the line” with a Congressional resolution after the fall of Yijiangshan.¹⁷ Dulles explained to key policy makers that the President had decided on a more “positive action and eliminate the fuzziness as to what the US would or would not do in the area.”¹⁸

Caution in the Taiwan Strait was the watchword in Washington. The US limitations were exposed when the Seventh Fleet avoided its usual patrol route through the contentious area once the communist bombardment started.¹⁹ To convince Taipei to evacuate Dachen, Dulles chose to emphasize the possibility of “war with China” as a selling point. Dulles’ bold talk about attacking the mainland sounded soothingly like Chiang’s “counter-offensive.”²⁰ Moreover, Dulles played loosely with the term the “security of Quemoy area.” “Security” was explained as “either US forces or *Chinese forces* would be empowered to attack a build-up on the mainland which seemed to be aimed at Quemoy, or Formosa and the Pescadores.” The addition of “Chinese forces” appeared to give more agency to the ROC.²¹

Yet upon close scrutiny, this episode was a classic case of the asymmetry in concerns between a patron and its client. While Taipei’s main concern was the loss of its dwindling territories, the US was piqued by the strategic dilemma caused by the offshore islands to its New Look nuclear deterrence doctrine that emphasized “massive retaliatory power.” For example, US attacks became restricted to “points on the mainland behind Quemoy in order to destroy any Communist build-up for invading Formosa and Pescadores” and Dulles had to clarify that Matsu would not be protected.

¹⁷ On 18 January, Yeh tried unsuccessfully to inveigle Washington along three lines: international prestige, psychological defeat and communist tide. Record of conversation, George Yeh K. C. and Admiral Radford, 18 January 1955, serial no. 002080106035005, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁸ Dulles elaborated to Eisenhower: “... we should assist in the evacuation of the Tachens, but ... declare that we will assist in holding Quemoy and possibly the Matsus ...” Eisenhower, *Mandate*, 466; Conference with Dulles, 19 Jan 1955 (4:45-7pm), Memo, White House, DDRS.

¹⁹ Yeh’s plea for the Seventh Fleet “to continue patrolling the Dachen area” to “forestall Communist attacks” was rejected by Dulles. Notes of conversation, George Yeh K. C. and John Foster Dulles, 12:30 pm, 19 January 1955, serial no.002080106035005, CKS papers, AH.

²⁰ Notes of conversation, George Yeh K. C. and John Foster Dulles, 3:45 pm, 19 January 1955, serial no.002080106035005, CKS papers, AH.

²¹ Memorandum of conversation, George Yeh K. C. and John Foster Dulles, 19 January 1955, serial no.002080106035005, CKS papers, AH.

Quemoy's guarantee was given, "*pending* some kind of action by the United Nations."²² To further encourage Chiang to withdraw from Dachen, Robertson emphasized the secret reassurances in the ROC-US Mutual Security Treaty: "When Communist China attacked Quemoy and Matsu, the US would be involved in war, assisting in the defence of Taiwan and the Pescadores." Discernibly pleased, Yeh and Koo praised that "Dulles possesses an extraordinary degree of empathy and perception, as does Robertson."²³

However, to ensure the British would still push Oracle through, the US obfuscated the extent of their assurances to the ROC. On 21 January, Dulles stated carefully to British Ambassador Makins that "it was agreed that there would be no statement publicly made regarding the intentions of the US with respect to Quemoy and the Matsu Islands." Nothing was said about US private assurances to Taipei.²⁴ But an hour later, Dulles reassured Yeh "that the US would be prepared to assist in the defence of Matsu as well as Quemoy. However, no public declaration would be made at present in this respect."²⁵ It is small wonder then that the British ambassador would overreach himself by concluding erroneously to Eden that there was "no additional private or public commitment to the Chinese Nationalists."²⁶

Besides winning over the ROC and Britain to US intentions, Eisenhower had to actively manage potential rumblings from Congress. He allowed occasional strident protests from Senator Knowland so long as Knowland was not urging "specific drastic action, which in fact, the administration would not be disposed to take."²⁷ In this hour of need, the White House skillfully

²² Gordon H. Chang made a similar case about the fuzziness of US promises. Dulles had declared bleakly: "Even if the United States were at war with Communist China, it would not try to defend these islands under the same circumstances." See *Friends and Enemies*, 124; Memorandum of conversation, George Yeh K. C. and John Foster Dulles, 19 January 1955, serial no.002080106035005, CKS papers, AH; "The Evolution of Foreign Policy," 12 Jan 1954, in *Department of State Bulletin*, no. 761 (25 Jan 1954), 108; "Annual Budget Message to the Congress: Fiscal Year 1955", January 21, 1954, in PPPUS (*Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight David Eisenhower, 1953-1960*), vol.2 (1954), 117.

²³ Minutes of meeting, George Yeh and Wellington Koo with Walter Robertson, 21 January 1955, serial no. 002080106034004, CKS papers, AH.

²⁴ Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, 21 January 1955 (1030hrs) in FRUS, Vol.2 (1955-1957), 97.

²⁵ Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, 21 January 1955 (1145hrs) in FRUS, Vol.2 (1955-1957), 100.

²⁶ My interpretation departs from Rosemary Foot. See "The Search for a Modus Vivendi: Anglo-American Relations and China Policy in the Eisenhower Era," in *The Great Powers in East Asia, 1953-1960*, 155.

²⁷ Issues revolving "recognition, UN seat, trade or like subjects" dissatisfied Knowland, but "he did not press for any drastic action." "Memo of conversation with Knowland," 17 Jan 1955, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 1, Memos of conversation - General J through K (2), JFD papers, DDEL; Eisenhower's adroit handling of the Senate

tapped onto friendly senators, dutifully informing them the advantages of “regrouping” of Chiang’s forces to defensible positions and reinforcing it with a Congressional resolution.²⁸

The attention which Eisenhower gave to courting America for the Formosa Resolution was instructive. Robert Cutler, White House Special Assistant, indicated how Eisenhower was eager to tap upon the “psychological effect upon world opinion of a Congressional authorization.”²⁹ The Formosa Resolution was an attempt to reaffirm basic American values and educate the public about US global responsibilities. Eisenhower dropped any reference about protecting Quemoy and Matsu, and Cutler noted that the ringing request for endorsement of the President’s actions in the Taiwan Strait was crafted because “[Congress] don’t want to admit that in a Cold War there are many situations that are neither war nor peace.”³⁰

First, Eisenhower established that the Resolution was for a “just and honorable peace,” a theme frequently repeated in the nation’s history. Eisenhower stressed the “purely defensive character” of the US actions, reinforcing the myth of US non-aggression toward other nations. In keeping with the tradition of US wariness of a large standing army, Eisenhower added that the authority given by Congress would be “temporary” and in no way was this “a new policy” nor an enlargement of “its defensive obligations.” Second, Eisenhower drew upon the time-honored “unity and determination” of America in confronting “provocative political” and “aggressive” actions. Formosa became an emblem of the US duty “to preserve the vital stake of the free world.” The trope of wanton communist aggression was contrasted with the “gallant few who fought bravely for days against overwhelming odds.” Hence, the brave but weak ROC needed the “assistance” of the US. Third, the Resolution was presented as a lesson in US constitutional history, especially Presidential prerogatives. In the aftermath of the Bricker Amendment which was introduced in

and House leaders was highlighted in Fred Greenstein, *The Hidden Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 57-99.

²⁸ Anna Kasten Nelson, “John Foster Dulles and the Bipartisan Congress,” *Political Science Quarterly* 102, no. 1 (Spring 1987), 53.

²⁹ Cutler recounted how Eisenhower made the State Department go through ten drafts of the special message to Congress. Even for the tenth draft, thirty-seven corrections were made on the twelve-page document. Robert Cutler, *No Time for Rest* (Boson: Little Brown and Company, 1965), 323.

³⁰ Telephone call to the President, 24 January 1955, Telephone Conversation Series, box 10, Telephone Conv - White House Nov 1 1954–Feb 18 1955 (1), JFD papers, DDEL.

January 1953 to curb the US presidency's latitude in signing international treaties but was not passed eventually, Eisenhower was reasserting the boundaries of his "constitutional powers."³¹ While he had the powers to act, Eisenhower flattered Congress by extending the mandate of authority to them. Finally, in this brave new world of US leadership, Eisenhower stressed that armed force had to be used "promptly and effectively" to "make clear the unified and serious intentions of our Government." This need for speed was also extended to the issue of the ratification of the Sino-US Mutual Defence Treaty.³²

Although the Formosa Resolution was passed with a good majority, the demands of the senators were more circumscribed.³³ Senators were worried about the US being militarily entangled in the Taiwan Strait and numerous concerns were raised about how "action might be interpreted in the Far East that we will attack the mainland." Dulles reassured the Senate that "action would be taken in Washington, not in the field, unless there were an emergency."³⁴ Dulles also ensured that the US military would be reined in as tightly as possible.³⁵ Allen Dulles too felt that the situation in the Strait was no cause for alarm.³⁶

Chiang, however, was incensed with Eisenhower for not stating the defence of the offshore islands. He refused to budge from Dachen "until [US] position regarding Quemoy and Matsu had been clarified."³⁷ White House was piqued as the "fellow over there was asking too much."³⁸ But Eisenhower remained firmly against making public US protection of the offshore islands. First,

³¹ Grant, "The Bricker Amendment Controversy," 577.

³² Special Message to the Congress by President Eisenhower on United States Policy for the Defence of Formosa, 24 January 1955, in *The Eisenhower Administration, 1953-1961: A Documentary History*, ed. Robert L. Branyan & Lawrence H. Larsen (NY: Random House, 1971), 748-751.

³³ With the censure of Senator McCarthy confirmed by 2 December 1954, the ugly specter of McCarthyism and anti-communism had run its full destructive course. Gary W. Reichard, *Politics as Usual: The Age of Truman and Eisenhower* (Illinois: Harlan Davison, 1988), 107; Jeff Broadwater, *Eisenhower & the Anti-Communist Crusade* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 192.

³⁴ Telephone call to Senator George, 26 Jan 1955, 1:12 pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general Jan 3 1955 - Feb 18 1955 (2); Telephone call to Mr Wilcox, 26 Jan 1955, 12:53 pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general Jan 3 1955 - Feb 18 1955 (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

³⁵ Secretary of Air Force Harold Talbott was instructed to "get hold" of Radford about the "resumption of the kind of activities which had been conducted in 1952," essentially Seventh Fleet routine patrols of the Taiwan Strait. Telephone call from Secretary Talbott, 26 Jan 1955, 2:26 pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general Jan 3 1955 - Feb 18 1955 (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

³⁶ Telephone call to Allen Dulles at AWD request, 7 Feb 1955, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general Jan 3 1955 - Feb 18 1955 (1), JFD papers, DDEL.

³⁷ Memorandum of a Conversation, 30 Jan 1955 (6:30pm), in FRUS (1955-57) vol. 2, 174.

³⁸ Memo, Department of State, 30 Jan 1955, DDRS.

Washington did not wish to embarrass London. Second, Eisenhower acknowledged that the US played Chiang out but reasoned that “we should not tie ourselves down in what was only one incident of the great over-all struggle of freedom against Communist expansion.”³⁹ This pattern of reasoning formed the leitmotiv of Eisenhower’s method of staunchly guarding the US against over-reaction when confronted with communist provocations.⁴⁰

With the Formosa Resolution at hand, Taipei was puzzled by the enduring persistence of the US in following through with Oracle. Taipei demanded reassurances that Washington was “opposed to admitting Communist China into the UN and the realization of a ‘two-China’ situation.”⁴¹ In truth, the US had grudgingly acknowledged that another diplomatic engagement with Communist China was inevitable. Robertson clarified: “We have to accord Communist China similar treatment as we gave them over the UN-sponsored Korean War armistice negotiations.” This explained the doggedness of the US to engage China via Oracle. Robertson accepted the communist rejection of Oracle as a “foregone conclusion” but hoped that this would send a strong signal to Beijing of the US willingness to talk.⁴²

This tacit acceptance of the PRC’s standing was reflected in an OCB report, despite the discomfort shown by Washington toward the PRC’s world position.⁴³ Yet, at stake for all parties was how to extricate from the crisis with their “national prestige” intact. The OCB astutely perceived the dilemma Beijing confronted in the ROC-US defence treaty, the “difficult choice of backing down on their “liberation” of Formosa campaign or running serious risk of war with the US.” The political intention of the bombardment of the offshore islands appeared to be manufacturing a

³⁹ 194th Meeting of NSC, 29 April, 1954, NSC Series, box 5, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

⁴⁰ “We must be the judge of the military situation that draws us in,” stressed the President, “whether in Quemoy or elsewhere.” Memorandum of a Conversation, 30 Jan 1955 (6:30pm), in FRUS (1955-57) vol. 2, 175.

⁴¹ Yeh asserted that the US “must explicitly state [this] in the Security Council meetings.” Minutes of meeting, George Yeh and Wellington Koo with Walter Robertson, 27 January 1955, serial no. 002080106034004, CKS papers, AH; Conference with Dulles, 19 Jan 1955 (4:45pm), Memo, White House, DDRS.

⁴² Minutes of meeting, George Yeh and Wellington Koo with Walter Robertson, 27 January 1955, serial no. 002080106034004, CKS papers, AH.

⁴³ “The Geneva Conference signalized Communist China’s emergence, after a period of relative quiescence, into the arena of international affairs. This was followed by a marked effort to acquire prestige and internal acceptance, which had been pursued with vigor, persistence, flexibility, and considerable success.” Progress report on NSC 146/2 “United States Objectives and Courses of Action With Respect to Formosa and The Nationalist Government (22 June 1954-31 Dec 1954),” OCB, White House, 25 Jan 1955, DDRS.

“*success* which can be presented to the public as victories, thus saving face for the régime and compensating somewhat for the régime’s inability to deliver on its promises to ‘liberate’ Formosa.”⁴⁴ On the other hand, the OCB perceived Taipei’s international standing as increasingly undermined by Beijing’s charm offensive. The ROC’s position in the UN was becoming untenable and pressure seemed likely to come from “our allies and from certain sectors of American public.” Moreover, the PRC’s “campaign of attrition” via attacks on Dachen targeted the KMT’s lack of “moral capacity to resist.”⁴⁵ Hence, the evacuation from Dachen was addressed as a chance for the ROC to “regroup and reform.” Washington’s recourse to the UN was also a gambit to salvage its international standing and to buttress the ROC’s UN position.⁴⁶

1.3 *The US and the PRC: The Search for Mediators*

a. UN Secretary-General Hammarskjöld

UN Secretary-General Hammarskjöld was the first candidate in the search for mediators by the US and the PRC to resolve the crisis in the Taiwan Strait. To counter the NZ Resolution advocated by the US, Beijing flagged the US airmen who were detained in China prior to the launch of the Yijiangshan campaign. They were US military personnel captured on the charge of spying for the US, although Washington denied these allegations. Hammarskjöld’s visit to the PRC on 5-10 January provided a good opening for negotiations. However, to the chagrin of the US, Hammarskjöld reported that “Chou is relating the question of the flyers to the whole complex of questions which he guesses is *regularization* of the whole situation.”⁴⁷ Indeed, Zhou talked about “harmonizing the tense situation” in the Taiwan Strait on 6 January. The next day Zhou stressed the “Geneva spirit of 1954” and pointed out that the US was “only interested in making hay out of the spy case [airmen POWs] in order to distract the world’s attention from the hostile and invasive

⁴⁴ The OCB observed that the danger for the ROC was “repeating the pattern of defeat on mainland” and for the US the potential loss of its “national prestige.” For the Chinese Communists, gaining a few remote offshore islands meant improving “their military position with respect to Formosa and gain in national prestige.” Progress report on NSC 146/2 “United States Objectives and Courses of Action With Respect to Formosa and The Nationalist Government (22 June 1954-31 Dec 1954),” OCB, White House, 25 Jan 1955, DDRS.

⁴⁵ Progress report on NSC 146/2 “United States Objectives and Courses of Action With Respect to Formosa and The Nationalist Government (22 June 1954-31 Dec 1954),” OCB, White House, 25 Jan 1955, DDRS.

⁴⁶ Conference with Dulles, 19 Jan 1955 (4:45pm), Memo, White House, DDRS.

⁴⁷ Telephone call from Amb Lodge, 7 Jan 1955, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general Jan 3 1955 - Feb 18 1955 (4), JFD papers, DDEL.

intentions of the Sino-US Mutual Defence Treaty.”⁴⁸ Indeed, vilifying the PRC was the foremost objective, according to Lodge:

Assuming the mission fails ... a resolution in the UN might be a good thing. It would be one of disgust and contempt that these people [PRC] should have acted this way in view of the request of 47 countries ... Then it could be whispered in the corridors we would be willing to have a bilateral talk and then if things go through, we would have the resolution stricken.⁴⁹

Hence, the purpose of evoking the UN via Oracle and roping in Hammarskjold on the airmen issue was for the US to gain a fig leaf in casting the Chinese Communists in bad light.⁵⁰ This was achieved when Zhou Enlai openly denounced the Formosa Resolution and inevitably assumed “the burden of preventing a peaceful settlement,” much to the delight of Dulles.⁵¹

However, the US found Hammarskjold to have taken his job too seriously.⁵² He urged for the coordination of actions aimed at providing “momentum” for the negotiations over the prisoners and defended that it was only “natural” that his talks with the Chinese further discussed “this whole issue to peace.”⁵³ Washington was frustrated that Hammarskjold had ranged beyond “the simple issue” of the detained prisoners.⁵⁴ Hammarskjold’s initiatives paradoxically caused the US to be hoisted with its own petard. Now the US appeared to be the obdurate party and Dulles bemoaned to a subordinate that “we are in a mess.”⁵⁵ Dulles was so “mad” that “he does not know what to say to H.”⁵⁶

⁴⁸ 5 Jan – 10 Jan, ZENP, Vol 1., 438-439.

⁴⁹ Telephone call from Amb Lodge, 7 Jan 1955, 3:58pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general Jan 3 1955 - Feb 18 1955 (4), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁵⁰ Trevelyan. *Worlds Apart*, 141-142.

⁵¹ Telephone Call to Mr Robertson, 24 Jan 1954, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general Jan 3 1955 - Feb 18 1955 (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁵² For an overview of Hammarskjold’s method, see Peter Wallenstein, “Dag Hammarskjold and the Psychology of Conflict Diplomacy,” in *Diplomacy and Psychology: Prevention of Armed Conflicts after the Cold War*, ed. Tommy Garling, et al. (Marshall Cavendish, 2006), 15-42.

⁵³ But Washington did not leave the Secretary-General any bargaining chip as issues were “handled and settled without any consultation with the negotiator himself.” Hammarskjold to Dulles, 27 Jan 1955, in FRUS, Vol.2 (1955-1957), 149-151.

⁵⁴ Dulles to Hammarskjold, 28 Jan 1955, in FRUS, Vol.2 (1955-1957), 160.

⁵⁵ Telephone call from M.C. Cardle, 28 Jan 1955, 12:31pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general Jan 3 1955 - Feb 18 1955 (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁵⁶ Lodge agreed, saying that he “thinks he [Hammarskjold] is way over his head. He has delusions of grandeur.” Telephone call to Amb Lodge, 28 Jan 1955, 2: 29pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general Jan 3 1955 - Feb 18 1955 (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

In contrast, Zhou adroitly used Hammarskjold to air the PRC's grievances. Apart from restating that the Taiwan Strait Crisis was an internal affair and the PRC did not have a seat in the UN, the main thrust in Beijing's first official letter to the UN on 3 February was peace: "*All genuine international efforts to ease and to eliminate the tension created by the US in this area and other areas of the Far East will receive the support of the PRC.*"⁵⁷ Zhou elaborated on the "easing of tension" to Hammarskjold in another 5 February letter. Zhou's offer in this follow-up letter was strikingly similar to the one Zhou would announce in Bandung three months later: "China would not refuse to negotiate with the USA on this question. If the USA has the slightest wish to negotiate they should accept direct negotiations and give up their war threats."⁵⁸

"Genuine international efforts" also emerged. London was no longer rooting for Oracle. An emergency British cabinet meeting came down in favour of mediation by Nehru. Others in Britain were clamoring for a "Geneva type of conference where the Soviet Union, India, Britain and France would invite the PRC, the US and the ROC to attend."⁵⁹ The Soviet calls for a ten-nation conference attracted interest. News that the Colombo powers (India, Ceylon, Indonesia and Pakistan) were offering to mediate also surfaced. Even the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference to be held on 31 January-8 February had on its agenda the resolution of the Taiwan Strait Crisis.⁶⁰ Zhou reinforced the momentum by stating in another meeting with Swedish Ambassador Hugo Wistrand on 9 February: "If the US wishes to ease the tensions in the Taiwan Strait, the US needs to negotiate with China face-to-face But if the US refuses to talk to us directly and continue in making war threats, what can we do?"⁶¹

The PRC's conciliatory message was, however, lost on the US. Eisenhower reacted sharply in private: "It is awfully difficult to remain calm under these situations. Sometimes I think that it

⁵⁷ See Zhou Enlai to Dag Hammarskjold, letter, 3 February 1955, serial no. 113-00224-01, AMFA.

⁵⁸ Swedish Ambassador Hugo Wistrand relayed this message. Lodge to State Department, telegram, 6 February 1955 (2300hrs), FRUS, Vol.2 (1955-1957), 232.

⁵⁹ In the immediate pandemonium which ensued, almost no one paid attention to Zhou's elaboration. Britain reportedly panicked and expected the communists to swamp across the Taiwan Strait any time. Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no. 205, 4 February 1955, serial no. 110-00276-06, AMFA.

⁶⁰ The Colombo powers indicated that they wished to work toward installing the PRC in the UN. They proposed that Taiwan be placed under trusteeship guaranteed by a group of willing nations. Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no. 205, 4 February 1955, serial no. 110-00276-06, AMFA.

⁶¹ *Zhou Enlai Dashi Benmo*, 620-621.

would be best all around to go after them right now without letting them pick their time and place of their own choosing.”⁶² Dulles, on the other hand, resented Eden for wanting “to back out of the whole business.”⁶³ Washington was also worried that Hammarskjold “would make a report” in the UN.⁶⁴ The US made it clear to Hammarskjold that he was not to take “personal excursions with Chou” but Hammarskjold ignored it completely.⁶⁵ Dulles was increasingly exasperated with Hammarskjold’s forbearance with the Chinese Communists and considered most troubling Hammarskjold’s “belief that Chou is a reasonable human being.”⁶⁶

b. The Commonwealth Prime Ministers’ Conference (31 January-8 February)

Following the failure of Hammarskjold’s efforts at mediation, the Commonwealth Prime Ministers’ Conference became a major proxy for the debates on the Taiwan issue. Both Beijing and Washington jockeyed behind the scenes to make their presence felt. Lester Pearson, the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, reassured Dulles that “they hope they may be able to remove some of the exaggerated fears.”⁶⁷ On the other hand, Ceylon and India provided Beijing critical information about developments in the Commonwealth Conference. One Indian source confided that Britain urgently requested India to “pull its chestnuts out from the fire.” Nehru carefully remained non-committal toward the British request, citing “he had not conjured up a plan yet.”⁶⁸

For Washington, one unhappy outcome at the Conference was the unanimous agreement that Oracle was dead and “no further UN action” was contemplated. Dulles noted that there was “a lot

⁶² James Hagerty’s Diary, 3 February 1955, in Editorial Note 77, FRUS, Vol.2 (1955-1957), 202.

⁶³ Telephone call to Amb Lodge, 7 Feb 1955, 1:11pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general Jan 3 1955 - Feb 18 1955 (1), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁶⁴ Telephone call from Amb Lodge, 7 Feb 1955, 5:48pm Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general Jan 3 1955 - Feb 18 1955 (1), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁶⁵ Telephone call from Amb Lodge, 7 Feb 1955, 6:08 pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general Jan 3 1955 - Feb 18 1955 (1), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁶⁶ Telephone Conversation with Ambassador Lodge, 16 Feb 1955, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general Jan 3 1955 - Feb 18 1955 (1), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁶⁷ Dulles was grateful for the Canadian’s intercession. The main purpose of the Formosa Resolution,” reminded Dulles, “was simply “to boost the morale of Nationalist China and to show the probing made us stronger.” Telephone call to Lester Pearson (Ottawa), 28 Jan 1955, 11:14am, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general Jan 3 1955 - Feb 18 1955 (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁶⁸ One India source noted that the Taiwan Strait Crisis was “vigorously debated” in the conference. Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no. 205, 4 February 1955; Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no. 239, 5 February 1955, serial no. 110-00276-06, AMFA.

of anti-American feeling” over in London on the China issue.⁶⁹ Churchill wrote to Eisenhower on 15 February that by giving up the offshore islands, the US would avoid “the occasion of an incident which would place the US before the dilemma of either standing by while their allies were butchered or becoming embroiled in a war for no strategic or political purpose.”⁷⁰ On the other hand, Beijing observed that the Commonwealth Conference avoided giving affront to the Americans. The main obstacle was that the US was leery of any scheme which required a withdrawal from the offshore islands, without reinforcing the ROC military forces in Taiwan. The US was also hoping to avoid diplomatic negotiation with the Chinese Communists, while “maintaining the current standoff status for another five to ten years.”⁷¹

Trevelyan elaborated to Huan Xiang the stalemate proposal: “If the present conditions for a temporal peace could be achieved [or even extended], in another fifty years time, the PRC would become stronger.” He declared that the US was agreeable to such an idea.⁷² Indeed Dulles repeated in analogous terms to Eden on 22 July during the Geneva Summit:

Already in Formosa the army was changing character. It being more and more composed of young Formosans who did not want to return to the mainland and if that developed the offshore islands would matter less and in another two or three years something might happen to make that position soluble.⁷³

However, Beijing reinforced its foothold on Asia’s anti-colonial nationalism. The Indians saw the PRC’s action in the Taiwan Strait as striking a blow against the West for the East. The post-colonial reaction against Western “bullying and threatening tactics” was strong in India. Just as Nehru scored points for Asia in a wholly “white” conference, the PRC was perceived as demonstrating similar verve militarily. One unnamed Indian defence attaché spoke glowingly of the PRC’s actions in the Taiwan Strait as “filling the Asia people with pride and elation.” This outspoken Indian defence attaché even boldly suggested that the PRC should “fully prepare to

⁶⁹ Telephone Conversation with Ambassador Lodge, 16 Feb 1955, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general Jan 3 1955 - Feb 18 1955 (1), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁷⁰ Churchill to Eisenhower, 15 Feb 1955, in *Churchill-Eisenhower Correspondence*, 194.

⁷¹ Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no. 205, 4 February 1955; Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no. 239, 5 February 1955, serial no. 110-00276-06, AMFA.

⁷² Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no. 407, 9 February 1955, serial no. 110-00276-06, AMFA.

⁷³ Record of conversation, 22 July 1955, PREM 11/879, AOBDD.

finish it once and for all.”⁷⁴ Beijing also became aware of how much the Americans “dislike Nehru thoroughly and did not wish to let him be their front man.”⁷⁵ Eisenhower had also explicitly told Eden how much he detested Krishna Menon and “had no use for his methods.”⁷⁶ Initially Beijing hesitated over Nehru’s “weak character” based on some wild rumours but then reasoned that it could also pressure the malleable Nehru.⁷⁷ To spite the US, it also made good sense for the PRC to use India.⁷⁸

Nehru was a genuine voice of Asian interests during the Commonwealth Conference. Macmillan recalled that Nehru’s opening speech was “very anti-American and pro-Chinese in sentiment.”⁷⁹ Lester Pearson was less charitable.⁸⁰ When Nehru made known his sympathy for China, Pearson depicted that as a purblind posture:

Nehru was quite bitter about American policy, and resented, as an Asian, their bullying and threatening tactics. He obviously doesn't feel the same resentment when Chou bullies and blusters, because Chou is not so much a Communist as an Asian!⁸¹

While no immediate solution to the Taiwan Strait Crisis emerged, the Commonwealth Conference provided a platform to moderate a common ground for Washington and Beijing. In contrast, the Soviet proposal for a Ten-Nation Conference was rejected and proposals to send UN observers to the offshore islands were rejected by India and Ceylon, with Canada and Britain not showing support too.⁸²

⁷⁴ Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no. 407, 9 February 1955, serial no. 110-00276-06, AMFA.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Record of conversation, 17 July 1955, PREM 11/879, AOBDD.

⁷⁷ According to Huan Xiang: “It said that Nehru is Countess Mountbatten’s old lover ... Many major political decisions were decisively influenced by the Countess.” But scholar Shashi Tharoor rubbished these rumours. For the Chinese, Nehru’s alleged adulterous affair amplified the Indian leader to be a “weak character” and explain the vacillating nature of Nehru’s diplomacy. See Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no. 701, 17 February 1955, serial no. 110-00276-06, AMFA; 17 February 1955, *The Macmillan Diaries: The Cabinet Years 1950-1957*, ed. Peter Catterall (London: Pan Books, 2003), 395; Paul Thomas Welty, *The Asians: Their Evolving Heritage* 6th ed. (NY: Harper & Row, 1984), 168-9; Shashi Tharoor, *Nehru: The Invention of India* (NY: Arcade Publishing, 2003), 150 & 201; Stuart-Fox, *A Short History of China and Southeast Asia*, 13.

⁷⁸ Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no. 789, 19 February 1955, serial no. 110-00276-06, AMFA.

⁷⁹ 31 January 1955, *The Macmillan Diaries*, 388.

⁸⁰ Pearson noted conceitedly that “except the Asians,” the rest of the Commonwealth countries could report about “the magnitude of our own defence efforts [against the Soviet bloc].” 1 February 1955, Diary of Secretary of State for External Affairs, no. 241, L.B.P./Vol. 19, DCER Vol. 21 (1955); 4 February 1955, Diary of Secretary of State for External Affairs, no. 241, L.B.P./Vol. 19, DCER Vol. 21 (1955).

⁸¹ 5 February 1955, Diary of Secretary of State for External Affairs, no. 241, L.B.P./Vol. 19, DCER Vol. 21 (1955).

⁸² Reinforced by the appearance of a tacit Communist allowance in the Dachen area, the British thought that the offshore islands could be given to the PRC, if the Chinese communists could guarantee peaceful recovery of Taiwan. See Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no. 205, 4 February 1955; Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no. 239, 5 February 1955, serial no. 110-00276-06, AMFA.

2. February to March: Burgeoning Stabilization of the Taiwan Strait Crisis

Although efforts at mediation between the US and the PRC did not produce immediate results, there did emerge a burgeoning stabilization of the Taiwan Strait Crisis. This came about as the PRC and the US gradually came to establish a relationship of public posturing of rhetoric belligerency on one hand and tacit understanding and agreement on the other. Nonetheless, the aggressive rhetoric projected by Washington backed by America's New Look nuclear deterrence doctrine that emphasized "massive retaliatory power" and "more bang for buck" did raise concerns among America's allies and also led to scholarship interpreting Eisenhower's issuance of nuclear threat on 16 March as an act that escalated the Crisis. However, in retrospect, as the Eisenhower administration was extremely cautious in reality, such US actions can be better interpreted as attempts to justify to American officials and the public the "conventional" nature of America's New Look nuclear deterrence doctrine. In this regard, the PRC had good intelligence and was unruffled by the US atomic threat; instead it was more concerned about an Australian proposal for a Commonwealth "guarantee" of Taiwan.⁸³

2.1 The PRC and the US: Staging a Theatrical Impasse

Significantly, Beijing had grasped the utility of staging intricate public posturing while issuing private reassurances in international relations. The PRC's public denunciation of "two Chinas" would be coupled with a tacit understanding for peace in the Taiwan Strait. Such a position would be similarly presented by the US: an orchestrated demonstration of overt US belligerence and a covert US acknowledgement of a stalemate. This diplomatic ritual was understood by the Chinese Communists in explicitly theatrical terms as a ruse to avoid "losing the Free World's face." On one hand, the US "red face" would declare openly that they would not retreat in the face of communist threats. On the other hand, the "white face" of Britain and India would secretly represent the US interests by seeking a tacit agreement with the Chinese communists for a resolution of the Taiwan Strait Crisis. Through this staging of a crisis impasse, the standing of the US and the PRC with their corresponding constituents and fraternal countries would be reinforced. Therefore, while both

⁸³ For the Australian perspective, see Garry Woodard, "Australian Foreign Policy on the Offshore Islands and Crisis of 1954-5 and Recognition of China." *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 45, no. 2 (Nov 1991): 242-263.

the US and China could go on to openly denounce each other in the context of the bipolar world, they would ensure that their rhetoric remained as just that.⁸⁴

For instance, various statements of Dulles and the released communiqué of the first SEATO Council meeting held in Bangkok on 23-25 February 1955 explicitly expressed the need to “combat the subversive activities of international Communism.”⁸⁵ Dulles had also cabled Eisenhower that the “existence of an anti-Communist potential north [Korea] and on Formosa deters possible Chinese aggression against Southeast Asia.”⁸⁶ However, as Eden was loath for SEATO to be a platform purely for the purpose of lambasting the Chinese over the Taiwan Strait Crisis,⁸⁷ Washington reluctantly relented.⁸⁸ “If the Chinese Communists,” Dulles stated, “while retaining their claims to Formosa, would give *assurances* that they would not seek a verdict by force, then the situation would be different.”⁸⁹ That being the case, Eden felt they should sound out the Chinese Communists. At least the effort would stand the US and Britain “in better public and moral position” even if the chances were nil.⁹⁰

For the record, Zhou fumed against the “hostile military alliance” of the SEATO, casting dissent at the Western alliance by declaring that: “It seems that the British will only agree to whatever wrongs the US commits; this is scarcely a commendable act in Asia.” Against London’s tergiversation over the “legally undefined status” of the offshore islands and Taiwan, Zhou condemned it as “a dagger plunged into the heart of the Chinese.”⁹¹ Zhou further derided Eden’s idea of a “PRC private assurance” on 28 February, branding the proposal a “dirty deal” –

⁸⁴ Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no. 701, 17 February 1955, serial no. 110-00276-06, AMFA.

⁸⁵ Communiqué of SEATO Council Meeting, Bangkok, 25 February 1955, *Department of State Bulletin* (7 March 1955): 372.

⁸⁶ Telegram from the Delegation at the SEATO council Meeting to the Dept of State, 23 Feb 1955, (1800hrs) in FRUS, Vol. 21 (1955-1957), 39-40.

⁸⁷ Dulles sourly noted: “Eden’s presentation was somewhat listless and contributed little.” See Telegram from Sec of State to Dept of State, Feb 24 1955 (1000hrs) in FRUS, Vol. 21 (1955-1957), 45.

⁸⁸ Telegram from Sec of State to Dept of State, Dulte 8, Feb 25 1955 (1700hrs) in FRUS, Vol.2 (1955-1957), 309.

⁸⁹ Telegram from Sec of State to Dept of State, Dulte 9, Feb 25 1955 (1500hrs) in FRUS, Vol.2 (1955-1957), 311.

⁹⁰ See Telegram from Sec of State to Dept of State, Dulte 8, Feb 25 1955 (1700hrs) in FRUS, Vol.2 (1955-1957), 309; Telegram from Sec of State to Dept of State, Dulte 10, Feb 25 1955 (1400hrs) in FRUS, Vol.2 (1955-1957), 312; 240th Meeting of NSC, 10 March, 1955, NSC Series, box 6, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

⁹¹ Trevelyan conceded in his memoirs that the Chinese had a better case: “... it was difficult in common sense to contest Chou’s view that these [Cairo and Potsdam] declarations meant that Taiwan was at that time considered to be Chinese territory.” Record of conversation between Premier Zhou with the British chargé d’affaires Humphrey Trevelyan, 25 February 1955 (2000hrs); “Aide-Memoire From Foreign Minister Chou Enlai of the PRC to Sir Anthony Eden, Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom,” 25 February 1955, serial no. 110-0034-01, AMFA; Trevelyan, *Worlds Apart*, 140.

requesting Beijing “to give up Taiwan for the coastal islands.”⁹² Clearly, the PRC must protect the “sovereign rights” it possessed. Eden’s compromise plan was thus entirely inimical to the leitmotif of sovereignty and nationalism coursing through the entire rhetoric of the Taiwan crisis.⁹³

While Beijing vehemently rejected the notion of a “PRC private assurance,” what Zhou had done from January to February was to delineate clearly the boundaries of discussion. One, through proxies such as Britain and Hammarskjöld, the PRC communicated its fear of “Two Chinas.” Hence, any quid pro quo leading to that would be out of the question. Two, the PRC also directly ventilated its displeasure over SEATO. Three, Beijing had reluctantly recognized the constraints of the ROC-US Defence Treaty on Chiang.

The repetitious ritualistic accusations of Dulles and Zhou had by February reached the liminal stage where each party was socialized to the other’s actions. Despite Dulles’ hot rhetoric, Washington now sought “reassurances.” In turn, Beijing responded with requests for direct negotiations. This demonstrated that the advantages of “tacit” maneuvers so highly regarded by the British and belatedly acknowledged by the US were accepted by Beijing. Moreover, the effectiveness of badgering Washington with prominent third-party proxies such as Hammarskjöld was duly noted by Beijing.

2.2 The US and Atomic Weapons: Theatrical Belligerency, Incremental Signaling

The aggressive rhetoric projected by Washington during the Taiwan Strait Crisis raised apprehension among America’s allies over its Taiwan policy. The US diplomats were instructed that “the United States intends to keep Formosa and the Pescadores in friendly hands, even at the risk of war.” The ROC forces were described as “capable of offensive action on their own” and hence the ROC “presents a challenge to Communist domination of the Asian mainland and to

⁹² Eden responded that Britain was a “good friend” exhorting the PRC that “unless certain precautions were not taken, there would be an uncontrollable conflagration.” British chargé d’affaires Humphrey Trevelyan to Premier Zhou, letter & explanation, 28 February (1300hrs), serial no. 110-00276-09, AMFA; Trevelyan, *Worlds Apart*, 145.

⁹³ Zhou Enlai to Anthony Eden, Letter, 21 March 1955, serial no. 110-00034-05, AMFA.

Communist control of the thirteen million overseas Chinese.”⁹⁴ All these served to portray a certain air of unreality when the US vouched for the ROC as “an alternative to the Communist regime.”⁹⁵

Coupled with Dulles’ alarmist report to the NSC on 10 March and Eisenhower’s issuance of nuclear threat on 16 March, conventional accounts have cited this week in March as one that witnessed an escalation of the Crisis. In Dulles’ report, Zhou’s rejection of Eden made the situation “critical and acute.” He further claimed that the “Communists probably will go on, and there will perhaps be no definite answer until the United States decided to ‘shoot off a gun’ in the area.” Dulles then reasoned that the US “may have to demonstrate our position by deeds [atomic weapons] rather than by words.”⁹⁶ However, a close scrutiny of the records belied Dulles’ declared pessimism. One, nowhere did Dulles admit that a war was imminent. Two, Dulles had inflated Beijing’s long-term aim of recovering Taiwan as immediate. Three, Dulles had called for potential US actions to be delayed “until after the ratification of the London-Paris agreements [on rearming Germany and ushering it into NATO].” Four, Dulles had stressed to Chiang “the long-term future of Formosa rather than the prospect of any early return to the mainland,” adding that the “dilemma and the danger of the current situation... however, could conceivably change in, say, a year’s time.”⁹⁷

As such, the theatrical belligerency – playing up a heightened sense of crisis than that warranted by the Taiwan Strait Crisis – could better be interpreted as an attempt to justify to American officials and the public the “conventional” nature of America’s New Look nuclear deterrence doctrine that emphasized “massive retaliatory power” and “more bang for buck.” Eisenhower, in a 16 March press conference, declared that atomic weapons were just common “bullet[s].” Dulles

⁹⁴ “Usefulness of the GRC to the Free World (Draft),” 7 March 1955, Memo, Department of State, DDRS.

⁹⁵ In addition, the US diplomats were told to avoid any “actual compromises” and “public discussion of compromise proposals” of the Formosa issue. “Enlisting support for U.S. policies toward Formosa (Draft),” 7 March 1955, Memo, Department of State, DDRS.

⁹⁶ 240th Meeting of NSC, 10 March, 1955, NSC Series, box 6, Ann Whitman File, DDEL. For conventional accounts, see Zhai, *Dragon, the Lion & the Eagle*, 171; Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 131; Chang, *Friends and Enemies*, 127.

⁹⁷ 240th Meeting of NSC, 10 March, 1955, NSC Series, box 6, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

had, on the day before, also mentioned about the use of “some tactical small atomic weapons” should there be a general war in the Far East.⁹⁸ Following this, Vice-President Nixon announced on television that “tactical atomic weapons are now conventional.”⁹⁹ Dulles’ main thrust seemed to center upon educating the US and creating “a better public climate” for the use of atomic weapons. The military, averred Dulles, had “convinced him that atomic weapons were the only effective weapons which the United States could use against a variety of mainland targets, particularly against Chinese Communist airfields which they would use to attack Formosa” Therefore, it was imperative that “we urgently educate our own and world opinion as to the necessity for the tactical use of atomic weapons.”¹⁰⁰

Dulles further wanted the US actions in the Taiwan Strait to square with the current NSC 5501 (Basic National Security Policy) on US nuclear policy:

... the United States cannot afford to preclude itself from using nuclear weapons even in a local situation, if such use will bring the aggression to a swift and positive cessation, and if, on a balance of political and military consideration, such use will best advance US security interests.

The US should not just talk the talk, but walk the talk. Or else, “we might wake up one day and discover that we were inhibited in the use of these weapons by a negative public opinion.”¹⁰¹ In reality, however, the US was extremely cautious. “We are doing everything possible,”

Undersecretary of State Herbert Hoover, Jr. informed Dulles, “except openly engaging in the operation.” Hoover insisted that there would be “no shooting.”¹⁰²

The lack of danger in the Taiwan Strait allowed Eisenhower to toy with rhetorical belligerency. His personal emissary, Colonel A.J. Goodpaster, reported in mid-March that the risk of a Communist attack on the offshore islands was minimal. Commander of U.S. Pacific Command

⁹⁸ The President's News Conference of March 16, 1955, No. 56, in PPPUS (1955) Vol. 3 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1959), 332. (hereafter cited as)

⁹⁹ Immerman, *Dulles*, 130.

¹⁰⁰ But Dulles admitted that “public opinion in Asia was not at all attuned to such a possibility.” 240th Meeting of NSC, 10 March, 1955, NSC Series, box 6, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

¹⁰¹ Dulles did not answer Radford’s inconvenient queries about the probability of the PRC launching an attack “prior to the Afro-Asian Conference.” See 240th Meeting of NSC, 10 March, 1955, NSC Series, box 6, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

¹⁰² Telephone call to Mr Hoover, 14 March 1955, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general mar 7 - apr 29 1955 (4), JFD papers, DDEL.

Admiral Felix Stump also gave an optimistic assessment, reporting that the artillery threat to Matsu and Quemoy was “harassing but not critical.” The Chinese communists would not be able to cut off the offshore islands’ supplies. As China’s airfields were not fully developed, Stump believed that the PRC would also not be able to deploy their air force efficiently.¹⁰³ So confident was Stump that he even waved off the necessity of striking “Chicom build-up prior to an invasion attempt.”¹⁰⁴

This explains the sanguine diary entry, where Eisenhower wrote that “hostilities are not so imminent as are indicated by the forebodings of a number of my associates.” Eisenhower blamed the jitteriness on “a number of articles in the papers” which wildly predicted that there would be “hostilities within a month.” With good intelligence, the president could afford to wax philosophically about leadership in times of crises: “I have so often been through these periods of strain that I have become accustomed to the fact that most of the calamities that we anticipate really never occur.”¹⁰⁵

At the same time, an internal State Department paper soberly recommended *incremental signaling* to the PRC. The US should make “deployments of US forces to the area to reinforce the deterrent of our verbal warnings.” There were several advantages. One, such signaling would not be “unduly alarming [to] the American people or accentuating the fears of our allies that reckless US actions might result in a general war.” Two, signaling conveyed the image that “moderate and prudent steps [were] taken as the ‘last clear chance’ to restrain Chinese communist attacks.” Three, signaling could stress “the peaceful intentions of the US; reaffirmation of the US intention not to fight unless the Communists attack, and prior, quiet explanation to our allies the purpose and

¹⁰³ Memo for the President, 15 March 1955, ACW Diary Series, box 4, ACW Diary March 1955 (5), Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

¹⁰⁴ Memorandum for the Record, Colonel A.J. Goodpaster, 18 Mar 1955, Formosa Visit to CINPAC [1955] (2), Box 9, International Series, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

¹⁰⁵ Diary 26 March 1955, ACW Diary Series, box 4, ACW Diary March 1955 (2), Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

nature of these US deterrent steps.” Most of these recommendations were used during the Taiwan Strait Crisis.¹⁰⁶

However, in the realm of public opinion, Eisenhower’s calculated belligerency backfired immediately.¹⁰⁷ When Wilson hinted publicly “that he knew something about a bomb that was more horrible than the H-bomb,” this comment alarmed allies and fuelled speculation about the outcome of the Taiwan Strait. To worsen matters, Wilson proclaimed that “the loss or retention of Quemoy and Matsu would make little difference in the long run.” This second comment halved any chance the White House had in convincing Chiang to evacuate the offshore islands.¹⁰⁸ Prominent Americans were loudly critical too. Lewis W. Douglas, former US ambassador to Britain, questioned the claim made by Dulles that the Chinese Communists would invade Taiwan since logistically the Chinese Communists would find it difficult to cross the Strait.¹⁰⁹

The fear of an “Oriental war” also resonated deeply in the American national psyche, not surprising since American GIs had faced off three Asian armies within a decade. This seemingly undistinguishable mass of Asian enemies provoked a variety of contradictory emotional responses.¹¹⁰ Douglas beseeched the president to reconsider the Taiwan Strait Crisis: “[I] hope very deeply and with great urgency that we will not become entangled in either an Oriental war, or something much more horrible and frightfully destructive solely because of two little islands which we have no right to defend.”¹¹¹ However, the fabled fanaticism of the Oriental enemy also

¹⁰⁶ The first set of signals involved: stopping the withdrawal of US divisions in Korea and redeployment of fighter-bomber wings. Additional steps involved: inspired news leak of redeployment of airborne Division to the Far East; movements of nuclear capable B-47 wing to Guam or Okinawa; reactivation of Mothball fleet; publication of violations of Korean Armistice agreements and Geneva Agreements; disregarding NNSC provisions in Korea. More drastic steps included: movements of US 280mm gun batteries to the offshore islands and practice runs by bomber units in the Far East. See “Immediate Actions Re the Formosan Situation,” 19 March 1955, Memo, Department of State, DDRS.

¹⁰⁷ See Bromley K. Smith (National Security Council staff) to Robert Cutler, memorandum, White House, 16 March, 1955, DDRS.

¹⁰⁸ Wilson’s comments had caused “the tangled international situation [to become] completely impossible.” Memo for files, 12 March 1955, ACW Diary Series, box 4, ACW Diary March 1955 (6), Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

¹⁰⁹ Lewis W. Douglas to Dulles, 26 March 1955, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 2, Strictly Confidential - c- d (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹¹⁰ The Chinese Americans bore the blunt of such racial prejudice. Iris Chang wrote: “Several Chinese Americans who worked under these officers [retired naval officers] believed their bosses were deeply suspicious of all Asians because of the legacy of three wars fought in Asia: WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.” See Iris Chang, *The Chinese in America: A Narrative History* (NY: Penguin Books, 2003), 367.

¹¹¹ Lewis W. Douglas to Eisenhower, 21 March 1955, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 2, Strictly Confidential - c- d (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

prompted ready calls for atomic attack. This atomic discourse centered on four themes. One, the “Oriental” enemy seemed to be no more than microbes, as reflected in Admiral Radford’s memo to Dulles on 7 April 1954, stating that “Pentagon has been making an estimate of whether atomic weapons could be used to *clean up* the Viet Minh in the Dien Bien Phu area.”¹¹² Two, the discussion centered on cost efficiency, with Radford arguing that “we could not handle the military situation in the Far East, particularly as regards aircraft, unless we could employ atomic weapons.”¹¹³ Three, usage was dictated by a concern for the continuing relevance of US atomic doctrine. Dulles worried that the US “would have to face up to the question whether its military program was or was not in fact designed to permit the use of atomic weapons.”¹¹⁴ Finally, Former Truman advisor Bernard M. Baruch urged the administration to “stand firm in China,” that “he would not have us hesitate to use atomic weapons if the need arose.”¹¹⁵

Nonetheless, Washington did consider its actions vis-à-vis Asian sensitivities. The enormity of such atomic recommendations was not lost on Eisenhower who complained during Dien Bien Phu: “You boys must be crazy. We can’t use those awful things against Asians for the second time in less than ten years. My God.”¹¹⁶ From another perspective, Senator Alexander Smith stressed the concept of “face” for their Asian enemies:¹¹⁷ “If under these conditions, the UN took over and demilitarized the islands, so far as both sides are concerned, ‘face’ might be saved for both sides, leaving the status quo as it was before.”¹¹⁸ A more prevalent reaction was to leave those heathen masses to boil in their own oil. Wilson flagged the fear of a confrontation with the “other” during a September 1954 meeting: “Wars with China are traditionally hard to stop ... Communist China could accept substantial attrition of their forces and therefore force us to expand the war.”

¹¹² Memorandum by the Counselor (MacArthur) to the Secretary of State, April 7, 1954, in FRUS (1952-1954) vol. XIII Indochina, pt. 1, 1271.

¹¹³ Memo of Discussion at the 240th Meeting of the NSC, 10 March 1955, in FRUS (1955-57) vol. 2 China, 349.

¹¹⁴ Dulles to Macmillan, 4 Sept 1958, in FRUS (1958-60) vol. 19 China, 138.

¹¹⁵ “Memo of Conversation with Baruch,” 6 February 1955, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 1, Memos of Conversation - General - A through D (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹¹⁶ Quoted in Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President 1952-1969* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1984), 184.

¹¹⁷ The concept of ‘face’ is a well-developed niche in communication studies. See Stella Ting-Toomey, “The Matrix of Face: An Updated Face-Negotiation Theory,” in *Theorizing About Intercultural Communication*, ed. William B. Gudykunst (London; Sage Publications, 2005), 71-92.

¹¹⁸ But the concept of “face” paled in view of the stronger Chinese trepidation over perceived national disintegration. The offshore islands had coalesced into a larger issue of national unity. Senator Alexander H. Smith to Dulles, 7 April 1955, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 3, strictly confidential - Q -S (3) , JFD papers, DDEL.

Nevertheless, that “Quemoy is not our ship” but the US was stuck with it bothered Eisenhower to no end. Conservative middlebrow Americans had also constantly urged him to drop the offshore islands on racial ground: “What do we care what happen to those *yellow* people out there?”¹¹⁹

2.3 The PRC and the US Atomic Threat: Full of Sound and Fury

In one of the biggest twists of the 1955 Taiwan Strait Crisis, Eisenhower’s nuclear threats were treated by the PRC almost like an afterthought. Chinese chargé Huan Xiang’s 23 March London report concluded that despite Eisenhower’s public atomic threats, Washington was “extremely uncertain,” and he thus considered the atomic threats as a lot of hot air, “full of sound and fury.” To Huan, its main purpose was to “bluff” the PRC into giving tacit assurances over Taiwan for the offshore islands since the US would not evacuate the offshore islands without a quid pro quo from the Chinese Communists. But Chiang had consistently declared publicly that they would not budge from the offshore islands, undoubtedly to preempt any “deals.”

In addition, Huan noted that the recent SEATO Bangkok conference had only further revealed the division between the US and Britain. Britain’s attention was on the security of Malaya while the US was drawn to the Far East. Eden had dug himself further in opposing the US tactics in the Taiwan Strait.¹²⁰ Huan’s arguments seemed to indicate a preference for diplomatic resolution since the nuclear threat was a masquerade. Huan’s report also gave ample credence to Mao’s assertion that nuclear threats were “paper tigers.”¹²¹ In detailing the contest between the doves and the hawks in Washington, Huan noted that the doves stressed the irreparable damage to the US relationship with its allies should the US unilaterally use atomic weapons. Given that the PRC lacked the means to launch an invasion of Taiwan in the next three to five years, the doves preferred to defuse the powder keg by seeking a diplomatic solution, and even if the PRC refused to entertain diplomatic resolution, the US should “play by the ear.” Eisenhower was persuaded by

¹¹⁹ 214th Meeting of NSC, September 12, 1954 NSC Series, box 6, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

¹²⁰ See Foot, “The Search for a Modus Vivendi,” 157.

¹²¹ Huan pieced together for Beijing the deliberations raging in the White House. This assessment was vital as Eisenhower had openly threatened with atomic weapons on 16 March. Perhaps detecting the danger of sounding too much of a dove, Huan inserted a paragraph of uncharacteristic belligerence, advocating a surgical strike against Quemoy before turning to Matsu. See Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no.931, 23 March 1955, serial no. 110-00276-08, AMFA.

the doves' arguments, concurred Huan.¹²²

Reassured that the US atomic threats were “hot air,” Beijing was instead more alarmed over an Australian proposal for a Commonwealth “guarantee” of Taiwan. Prime Minister Robert G. Menzies had proposed another way of resolving the Taiwan crisis during his visit to the US on 14 March. To ensure that Chiang would retreat from the offshore islands, Menzies suggested a guarantee by Australia, New Zealand and Britain for Taiwan’s safety. The US could then reciprocate by supporting ANZAM’s strategic plan of defending Malaya from potential communist invasion from the south of Thailand.¹²³ With the failure of Eden’s proposal, Huan noted that more of the US allies were pressing the US to compromise by withdrawing from the offshore islands. Bereft of options, they were willing to consider Menzies’ “guarantee” proposal. Huan reported that the “doves” were favourably disposed towards a “guarantee” because they found the policy of “ambiguity” unsatisfactory.¹²⁴ However, the British were adamantly against such a scheme, as it would “put an end to any possibility of negotiations or even tacit agreement with the PRC.”¹²⁵

Similarly for Huan, maintaining room to maneuver was paramount for Beijing.¹²⁶ He surmised that both the doves and hawks in Washington shared the view that Taiwan ought to be firmly under the US protection. While they wished for an evacuation from Quemoy and Matsu, they differed over the means of the ROC retraction.¹²⁷ In other words, the US would never withdraw to the terms demanded by the communists. Huan hence concluded that unless Beijing was willing to force the issue and endure atomic war, it must demonstrate flexibility.¹²⁸

¹²² The doves in the White House pointed out that while pulling out of the offshore islands might lead to the collapse of the ROC’s morale, it was not the end of the world. The hawks believed that surrendering the offshore islands now would only make the PRC’s conquest of Taiwan a matter of time; preempting the Chinese Communist aggression sooner was thus better than later.

¹²³ For details, see David Lee, “Australia and Anglo-American Disagreement over the Quemoy-Matsu Crisis, 1945-55,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Jan 1995): 116.

¹²⁴ The “hawks” were moving to more belligerent threats, with wild rumours abounding that a US atomic attack would take place in mid-April or after the Bandung Conference. Chester J. Patch, Jr. & Elmo Richardson, *The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, rev. ed. (Lawrence, University of Kansas Press, 1991), 102.

¹²⁵ David Lee, “Australia and Anglo-American Disagreement,” 118.

¹²⁶ Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no.1142, 29 March 1955, serial no. 110-00276-07, AMFA.

¹²⁷ Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no.931, 23 March 1955, serial no. 110-00276-08, AMFA.

¹²⁸ Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no.1142, 29 March 1955, serial no. 110-00276-07, AMFA.

3. March to April: The Road to Bandung

Both Washington and Beijing demonstrated flexibility as they inched toward Bandung with the intention to tacitly resolve the Taiwan Strait Crisis. Persuaded by London to give up Oracle and to move toward Bandung, Washington then took measures to court Asian governments so as to safeguard US interests at the Bandung Conference (18-24 April), which ironically was for the purpose of forming a body of non-aligned Third-World Afro-Asian nations. Toward this end, the US also displayed its “moderateness” to its allies. While the US hoped to also win over Taipei by persuading it to consider the offshore islands as “outposts, not citadels,” this was rebuffed by Chiang. At the same time, helped by the “quiet diplomacy” of UN Secretary-General Hammarskjöld, the US and the PRC were making progress on the Taiwan Strait issue. Following the PRC’s conciliatory gesture on 23 April in Bandung, the US proceeded to persuade the ROC and the China Lobby of the desirability of participating in the forthcoming Sino-US negotiations to be held in Geneva in August, while the PRC harbored unrealistically high hopes for the negotiations.

3.1 The US: “To bring our viewpoint to the attention of free Asia”

London refused to back Oracle once Beijing resolutely rejected presenting its case to the Security Council.¹²⁹ Insistence on Oracle, according to Eden, would only “look simply as though we were trying to guarantee Chiang’s position in these islands.” Such a move before the Bandung Conference would only “worsen” the standing of the US and Britain “by alienating the Indians, Burmese and others whose views may not be without influence in Peking.”¹³⁰ Washington initially grumbled at the common racial element shared by the participants in the forthcoming Conference and anticipated that the communists would exploit this.¹³¹ Robertson noted that comparisons would be made between the SEATO Bangkok Conference “with mostly whites and a few Asian people”

¹²⁹ Eden further informed General Alfred M. Gruenther “that not one percent of British people would support the US if the US got involved in hostilities over those islands.” Memorandum of Conversation, Department of State, Washington, 28 March 1955 (1630hrs), in FRUS 1955-57, Vol 2, 410-414; Gen. Alfred M. Gruenther’s to Eisenhower, Apr 3, 1955, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, DDRS.

¹³⁰ Late in March, Dulles wistfully hoped that Britain would back the US desire for Oracle which “might take place before opening of Afro-Asian Conference when ChiComs will doubtless present their case.” Dulles to Eden, telegram, no. 4858, 23 March 1955 (1949hrs), in FRUS 1955-57, Vol 2, 388; Eden to Dulles, 25 March 1955, in FRUS 1955-57, Vol 2, 397-98.

¹³¹ Dulles wanted to use the Security Council for the NZ resolution because the US wanted to circumvent the General Assembly. As Oracle was no longer possible, the US struggled to make its voice heard in the UN. Record of Conversation of Dulles with Roger Makins, 7 April 1955, in FRUS 1955-57, Vol 2, 453-454.

and the Bandung Conference which “would be practically all coloured.”¹³²

However, Eden argued that Washington should make Bandung work for its interests by roping in the Asians. Asian leaders, Eden stated, were “likely to be more effective in deterring the Chinese than anything we can say in the Security Council, which they have discounted already.”¹³³

Similarly, Hammarskjöld claimed Washington should resolve the detained US airmen issue through Bandung as “it is quite possible that U Nu or Nehru would raise this matter with Chou at Bandung.”¹³⁴ Eisenhower concurred by pointing out to the NSC on 31 March that all the talk about “precision atomic weapons” against Chinese cities stemmed from the fact that “we are underestimating the sanity of the Chinese Communists.”¹³⁵ The predominant US strength, observed the President, “should surely give them pause before they undertook a resort to military measures to seize the offshore islands in defiance of the United States.”¹³⁶

The US mission was how to present itself in the best possible light. “We are trying to bring our viewpoint to the attention of free Asian governments since there appears to be little doubt that the Chinese Communists will speak about US aggression on Formosa in the Bandung Conference,” ventured Dulles and “[o]ur Asian friends would be given a good briefing.”¹³⁷ Belatedly, Dulles had come round to Eden’s view of the importance of “appeal[ing] particularly to the Asians.”¹³⁸

Eisenhower ordered that care be taken to put a strict curfew on ROC airstrikes on China’s airfields.¹³⁹ When Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Robert B. Carney wildly speculated to the

¹³² Robertson considered the Bandung Conference a “vehicle of Communist propaganda” and viewed its “five principles [of peaceful coexistence]” as pernicious. Telephone call to Mr Robertson, 31 Dec 1954, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general Nov 1, 1954 - Dec 31 1954 (1)-(5), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹³³ Eden to Dulles, 28 March 1955, in FRUS 1955-57, Vol 2, 417.

¹³⁴ Lodge to Department of State, telegram, no. 602, 24 March 1955, in FRUS 1955-57, Vol 2, 394.

¹³⁵ In October 1954, Eisenhower made a similar observation. See 220th Meeting of NSC, October 28, 1954, NSC Series, box 6, Ann Whitman File, DDEL

¹³⁶ See Record of Conversation of Dulles with Lesile Munro, 25 March 1955 (1734hrs), in FRUS 1955-57, Vol 2, 399; Memorandum of Discussion, 243 meeting of the NSC, 31 March 1955, in FRUS 1955-57, Vol 2, 433.

¹³⁷ Record of Conversation of Dulles with Lesile Munro, 30 March 1955 (1535hrs), in FRUS 1955-57, Vol 2, 430.

¹³⁸ Eden to Dulles, 28 March 1955, in FRUS 1955-57, Vol 2, 417.

¹³⁹ Washington also tightly reined in its commanders. Counselor of the Department of State, Douglas MacArthur II, delivered a message on 25 March that all Pacific military commanders must inform Washington “immediately through me of any request, whether for retaliation or other action against Chinese mainland, which might be made by the Chinese Nationalists.” Memo of Conference with the President (1 April 1955), 4 April 1955, ACW Diary Series, box 5, ACW Diary April 1955 (6), Ann Whitman File, DDEL; Memorandum From the Counselor of the Dept of State (MacArthur) to the Sec of State, 25 March 1955, in FRUS 1955-57, Vol 2, 395; CNO to CINCPAC, telegram, no. 131929Z, 13 April 1955, in FRUS 1955-57, Vol 2, 475.

press that 15 April would be the day of the outbreak of hostilities, Eisenhower “exploded” and demanded Radford and Wilson to “tell Carney to stop talking.”¹⁴⁰

Once set upon the path of Bandung, Dulles maneuvered energetically behind the scenes. He perceived the crushing weight of Third-World opinions as the main obstacle. The Taiwan Strait crisis had the potential to be manipulated by the Chinese Communists into “a pan-Asian movement which would be by its very nature and concept anti-Western.”¹⁴¹ Dulles set an extremely low bar for success. He even gave General Carlos P. Romulo, the Philippines representative, the carrot to entice Beijing: “If the Communists were to refrain from such announcements [of recovering Taiwan by force] and were to announce they had no intention of attacking Taiwan, at the same time agreeing to a cessation of all hostilities, our position with respect to Quemoy and Matsu would be subjected to *change*.”¹⁴² Eisenhower “was in complete agreement” with Dulles’ Bandung gambit and the US pressed its embassies in Cairo, Baghdad, Tehran, Karachi, Bangkok, Jakarta, and Tokyo to pressure the various foreign governments attending the Bandung Conference to clamor for peace.¹⁴³

3.2 The US and the ROC: Persuading the Junior Partner

Washington hoped to win over Taipei by adopting a velvet approach. The OCB urged the US to pay more attention to what its ally was saying. The report recommended “thorough diplomatic exploration of common programs of action, close observation of trends in GRC thinking,” and Chiang’s quixotic *fangong* plans were now defined as “a force of opportunity.” The softer rhetorical line was:

We will impress upon them on our belief that the GRC, at some indeterminate future date, may be able to resume political control over part or all of the mainland, but that this restoration will have to be brought about by: (1) internal developments in Communist China making restoration possible through the GRC’s own efforts; or (2) the outbreak of major hostilities creating a situation favourable to restoration; and through its unilateral military initiative.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ 28 March 1955, James Hagerty Diary, in FRUS 1955-57, Vol 2, 408.

¹⁴¹ Record of Conversation of Dulles with Roger Makins, 7 April 1955, in FRUS 1955-57, Vol 2, 453-454.

¹⁴² Record of Conversation of Dulles with Carlos P Romulo, 8 April 1955, in FRUS 1955-57, Vol 2, 464.

¹⁴³ Record of Conversation of Dulles with Eisenhower, 11 April 1955, in FRUS 1955-57, Vol 2, 476; Dulles to US embassies, Telegram, no. 1297, 8 April 1955, in FRUS 1955-57, Vol 2, 467.

¹⁴⁴ “Outline plan of operations on NSC 5503 with respect to Formosa and the GRC,” 4 April 1955, Memo, OCB, White House, DDRS.

Using kid gloves on Taipei was essential to Eisenhower's proposal of making the offshore islands into "outposts, not citadels." The primary aim was to minimize the US exposure to any fallout should the offshore islands fall to the PRC. The secondary aim was to regain the initiative from the communists as the Bandung Conference might swing either way even as the US allies were being prepared.¹⁴⁵ This major approach was noted by Beijing a week later, that the White House had seemingly leaned on the option of abandoning the offshore islands.¹⁴⁶

Eisenhower indicated that the "desirable solution" would be for Chiang to "voluntarily evacuate Quemoy and Matsu" and "entrench himself on Formosa, await internal developments on the mainland, and provide a constant military and psychological threat to the Chicom régime." The US was willing to make up for Chiang's loss of the offshore islands with material aid or with the inducement of one US division and an air wing to persuade Chiang. Eisenhower wanted someone "who had Chiang's confidence, attempt to convince him of the US sincerity of purpose, and the desirability" of leaving the offshore islands.¹⁴⁷ Thus it was from this understanding that the White House added a little spin to it by naming it as "outposts, not citadels."¹⁴⁸

Another plan was a coastal-wide "maritime zone" proposal [navy blockade] should Chiang decide to embark upon a "voluntary evacuation from the offshore islands or their capture after serving as out-posts." However, all goals and plans hinged upon Chiang. Eisenhower could not force Chiang to do anything as the generalissimo's "greatest asset in his present situation is US public opinion."¹⁴⁹ Although the futile task of convincing was given to Radford and Robertson, Dulles

¹⁴⁵ Apparently, the "danger of defeat, of drawing US into war, of world disapproval of US action" made the "outposts" idea attractive. Memo of Conference with the President (1 April 1955), 4 April 1955, ACW Diary Series, box 5, ACW Diary April 1955 (6), Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

¹⁴⁶ Huan noted that the US had demanded its military commanders to seek approval from Washington before making any belligerent move in the Taiwan Strait, interpreting this as a blow to the hawks in the US administration. Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no.18, 13 April 1955, serial no. 110-00276-10, AMFA.

¹⁴⁷ Even from the military perspective, for a lack of clear objectives and impossible geographical position, the defence of the offshore islands was found to be repugnant. Memorandum from Hoover to Dulles, White House Meeting, 1 April 1955, FRUS 1955-57, Vol 2, 440-41.

¹⁴⁸ Record of Conversation of Dulles with Eisenhower, 4 April 1955, in FRUS 1955-57, Vol 2, 444.

¹⁴⁹ Eisenhower admitted that the US policy paper for Chiang **lacked** "a good enough out for Chiang." Furthermore, "he did not wish to force Chiang into anything for which the US would then be responsible." Telephone call to the President, 8 April 1955, Telephone Conversation Series, box 10, Telephone Conv - White House Mar 7 1954 -- Aug 29 1955 (3), JFD papers, DDEL; Memo of Conference with the President - Hoover & Adm. Carney (22 April 1955), 25 April 1955, ACW Diary Series, box 6, ACW Diary April 1955 (3), Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

admitted that “it is impractical to expect to sit down with the gentleman and have him end where we want him to.” Chiang immediately rebuffed all proposals.¹⁵⁰

3.3 *Hammar skjöld's Quiet Diplomacy and China*

The interactions between the US and the PRC, however bellicose rhetorically, had established a *ritualized* pattern of diplomacy. Hammar skjöld highlighted this as he reflected on his communication with Zhou over the detained US airmen:

As long as Mr Chou En-lai maintains the channel that was established as the result of our Peking conversations, we should continue to use it for exercising the maximum inner pressure, attainable by “quiet” diplomacy, till we are convinced that all the possibilities of achieving our goal have been exhausted.¹⁵¹

Dulles, scornful of Hammar skjöld's naïveté and optimism, had to concede it was the only way forward given the restrictions involved domestically and internationally.¹⁵² Washington was stuck with Hammar skjöld's reports of Zhou's good faith and Dulles admitted to Secretary Humphrey that “he was trying to work out some formula on China business – we are in a dilemma.”¹⁵³

Although Dulles was focused on the plight of the US airmen, events would point toward using a similar kind of diplomacy with the PRC vis-à-vis the Taiwan problem. “Inner pressure” and “quiet diplomacy” thus became features of an emerging pattern of communication in Sino-US relations.

Hammar skjöld explained that a meeting with Chinese Ambassador Geng Biao had the advantage of speed and less “distortion” and claimed that the Chinese had progressed to the “how” stage of releasing the US airmen. But Hammar skjöld's cultural sensitivity toward Geng was not highlighted by the US diplomats. Being more concerned with the release of the US airmen than establishing lasting communication with the Chinese Communists, a US report blandly stated:

“ChiCom Amb asked SYG [Secretary-General] how he, SYG, would handle release of airmen if he were in Chou's position.” Herein lay the difference in the approaches of Hammar skjöld's subtle

¹⁵⁰ Telephone call from the President, 13 April 1955, Telephone Conversation Series, box 10, Telephone Conv - White House Mar 7 1954 -- Aug 29 1955 (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹⁵¹ Dag Hammar skjöld to Cabot Lodge, 28 March 1955, FE files: Lot 56 D 679, in FRUS 1955-57, Vol 2, 442.

¹⁵² Foster Dulles to Cabot Lodge, 1 April 1955, in FRUS 1955-57, Vol 2, 441.

¹⁵³ The US could no longer credibly cast the PRC in negative light when the Sec-Gen had openly certified Beijing's good intentions. Telephone call to Secretary Humphrey, 4 April 1955, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general Mar 7 - Apr 29 1955 (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

“quiet diplomacy” and the US public legalistic denunciation of the PRC in the UN late in January 1955.¹⁵⁴

Hammarškjöld adroitly established empathy by effusively praising the “excellent tradition” of Chinese laws and approved of the “customary” practice of the PRC’s laws where the early release of the airmen would be based on their good conduct. In addition, Hammarškjöld told Geng that he had always put himself in the shoes of his interlocutors and understood why Zhou had to turn down the UN invitation to resolve the Taiwan problem. Hammarškjöld then emphasized the immense international prestige the release of the airmen would garner for the PRC. As the PRC had already experienced this positive aspect during the Bandung Conference and since there was no talk of “appearing weak” or loss of prestige, Hammarškjöld suggested that the PRC could capitalize on this momentum.

Hammarškjöld’s deft approach and “silent diplomacy” overwhelmed the Chinese embassy in Stockholm.¹⁵⁵ “Hammarškjöld’s nonessential digressions were numerous and unceasing,” complained the Chinese embassy, and “Ambassador Geng Biao had to put up with this by listening intently without much comments.” The Chinese diplomats noted the clear intentions of the UN Secretary–General: “If we do not release the US airmen earlier, he would be put in a tight spot.” The release of the airmen was thus transformed into an issue of Hammarškjöld’s personal prestige or “face.”¹⁵⁶ While the PRC had no qualms rejecting the US demands, it had to think carefully about Hammarškjöld’s sensitive efforts. Zhou had told Hammarškjöld in January that “he definitely wanted the possibility of releasing the prisoners but it must be in such a way as not to make him lose face in Asia.”¹⁵⁷ Now Hammarškjöld highlighted the prestige which the PRC would gain from the humanitarian act and turned the “face” issue by placing his in the Chinese lap.

¹⁵⁴ See Aldrich to Department of State, telegram, no. 4724, 25 April 1955 (1100hrs), in FRUS 1955-57, Vol 2, 518; Press Statement by Ambassador Lodge, Security Council, 31 Jan 1950, DSB (14 Feb 1955), 251-253.

¹⁵⁵ Hammarškjöld had also turned his barrage of “inner pressures” on Washington and the US had reluctantly conceded to “have the fliers’ families write supplicant letters to Chou, asking him for release of the men, and kept controversial statements and press comments to a minimum, on the assurance that such measures would facilitate the men’s release.” Hoover to Lodge, telegram, no. 709, 2 June 1955 (1514hrs), in FRUS, 1955-57, Vol 2, 586.

¹⁵⁶ See Chinese Embassy in Sweden to MFA, telegram no. 1017, 24 April 1955, serial no. 113-00196-03, AMFA; see Tsang, Steve. “Target Zhou Enlai: The ‘Kashmir Princess’ Incident of 1955.” *The China Quarterly*, no. 139 (Sep. 1994): 766-782.

¹⁵⁷ Cabot Lodge to State Department, telegram, no. 358, 13 January 1955, in FRUS, 1955-57, Vol 2, 28.

Indeed, Beijing had specifically instructed Geng to be “reasonable” as Hammarskjöld was “not representing the US and the UN.”¹⁵⁸ Hence, releasing the airmen would enhance the PRC’s relationship with Hammarskjöld and put the PRC on a moral high ground. When the PRC released the eleven airmen in August, it stated that “they were being released in order to maintain friendship” with Hammarskjöld, and it also hoped that “contacts with Hammarskjöld would continue.”¹⁵⁹

By April, Beijing was satisfied that it had secured the Zhejiang coastline and the Taiwan issue was prominently featured. However, as the specter of “two Chinas” was still lingering, as seen in Menzies’ “Commonwealth guarantee” proposal despite the death of Oracle,¹⁶⁰ Beijing concurred that it would be better not to press Chiang too much lest the generalissimo threw in the towel.¹⁶¹ A conciliatory approach at the upcoming Bandung Conference would present immense advantages and Zhou thus announced on 23 April to the astonished Asian delegates that:

As to the relations between China and the United States, the Chinese people do not want to have war with the United States. We are willing to settle international disputes by peaceful means. If those of you here would like to *facilitate* the settlement of disputes between the United States and China by peaceful means, it would be most beneficial to the relaxation of tension in the Far East and also to the postponement and prevention of a world war.¹⁶²

3.4 The US and the PRC: Post-Crisis Expectations

Zhou’s dramatic 23 April offer eased the White House out of a horrible dilemma.¹⁶³ Dulles admitted to Senator Walter George that the KMT would “feel bitterly” about the US intentions to go ahead with the talks with the Communists “without the Nationalists.” But Washington had come round to “accept their [PRC] right to liberate Formosa” but “it should not be prosecuted by force.” Senator George insisted that the US reserved every right to “talk with them [PRC].” Since the Communists and the KMT could not “sit down together,” the US just had to function as the

¹⁵⁸ MFA to Chinese Embassy in Sweden, telegram no. 34, 20 April 1955, serial no. 113-00196-03, AMFA.

¹⁵⁹ Johnson to State Department, telegram, no. 75, 2 August 1955, in FRUS, 1955-57, Vol 3, 11-12.

¹⁶⁰ See Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no.18, 13 April 1955, serial no. 110-00276-10, AMFA.

¹⁶¹ For a succinct account, see Zhang Wanyu 张万余, “Diyichi Taihaiweiji yu yige zhongguo de yuanzhe,” 第一次台海危机与一个中国的原则[The First Taiwan Strait Crisis and the One-China Policy] *Xibei shida xuebao* 38, no. 3 (May 2001), 108.

¹⁶² “Speech by Premier Chou En-lai to the Political Committee of the Asian-African Conference, April 23, 1955,” in George McTurnan Kahin, *The Asian-African Conference* (NY: Cornell University Press, 1956), 62.

¹⁶³ But the China lobby was insistent that the administration disregard Zhou’s peace offering. Telephone call from Congressman Judd, 26 April 1955, 10:16am, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general mar 7 - apr 29 1955 (1), JFD papers, DDEL.

“go-between.”¹⁶⁴ On 26 April, Dulles announced to the press the possibility of a bilateral negotiation with the Chinese Communists on the issue of “a cease-fire in the [Taiwan Strait].”¹⁶⁵

To retain favorable Congress support for the Formosa Resolution, Dulles was not above inflating the crisis. Dulles maintained in a conversation with Senator Knowland that “the picture as it is now unfolding is much more disturbing than before.” He claimed that with improved air reconnaissance, “the US was sure of the Chinese Communist belligerent intentions.”¹⁶⁶ However, Dulles’ calculated embellishment produced complications. Senator Hickenlooper thought that the Taiwan Strait Crisis would have the US “blown out of the Orient” and protested to Dulles that “they have not demonstrated good faith and we know their objectives.” Dulles reasoned that “our Asian friends getting the proposal at Bandung out of Chou ... think they did quite a job for us. They felt we ought to at least be willing to discuss a ceasefire.”¹⁶⁷ The White House thus realized that having cajoled the Congress towards the Formosa Resolution, they could not readily turn the Congress around mid-stream.¹⁶⁸

To persuade the GOP, Dulles played up the importance of the Asian opinion – an old British argument. He noted that the image of the US would be irrevocably damaged if it was perceived as launching a “preventive war” as “Asian opinion” would be alienated. At stake was also the support of US allies, especially when they had backed the US and “pitched in and done a job which led Chou to follow a pacific rather than belligerent course.” Dulles also reinterpreted the US-ROC Security Treaty, claiming that it gave Washington the ultimate right to secure a ceasefire so long as

¹⁶⁴ George would even go as far as accepting a “de facto ceasefire and abandonment of military force while we are talking.” Telephone call to Senator George, 25 April 1955, 4:46pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general mar 7 - apr 29 1955 (1), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹⁶⁵ This was a significant climb down from the initial 23 April State Department press release that the Chinese Communists should “clear the air” by releasing all American prisoners first and to accept the “invitation” issued by the Security Council of the UN. News Conference statement by Dulles, 26 April 1958, Department of State Bulletin (May 9 1955), 754-755. (hereafter cited as DSB); “Chinese Communist intentions in the Formosa Area,” press release 226, 23 April 1955, DSB (May 2 1955), 738; DBS (May 2 1955), 756-759.

¹⁶⁶ Telephone call from Senator Knowland, 18 April 1955, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general mar 7 - apr 29 1955 (1), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹⁶⁷ Telephone call from Senator Hickenlooper, 27 April 1955, 10:53am, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general Mar 7 - Apr 29 1955 (1), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹⁶⁸ Senator Knowland dismissed the work of US allies in Bandung as a “pow-wow” sellout. Telephone call from Senator Knowland, 27 April, 2:18pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general Mar 7-Apr 29 1955 (1), JFD papers, DDEL.

the US did not tamper with “those rights behind the backs of the Nationalists.”¹⁶⁹ Congress belatedly realized that the President was given a blank cheque via the Formosa Resolution. Months of waiting had proven the original premise of an impending Chinese Communist attack to be false. Senator Homer E. Capehart was totally befuddled by the lack of Chinese action and demanded: “Then what the **** is it all about?” Capehart’s reaction was consistent with the anti-climactic mood which followed the dire warnings given by Eisenhower on the threat posed by Beijing.¹⁷⁰

Beijing harbored high expectations for the Sino-US negotiations to be held in Geneva in August. A sense of an impending breakthrough was heightened by Zhou’s success in the Bandung Conference. The Chinese Communists were expecting significant moves by the US at the negotiations. Such a mood could be detected in the London chargé’s optimistic forecast of the Geneva negotiations. It expected the Americans to assist Chiang in evacuating the offshore islands or officially announce that the US-ROC Mutual Defence Treaty would not include the islands. It also thought that the US would reassert the Treaty but might hint that *fangong* would be over. The US was also expected not to oppose the entry of the PRC into the UN or oppose France’s recognition of the PRC.¹⁷¹ In reciprocation for such gestures, the London chargé’s report predicted that the US demands would not be paltry. The PRC might have to openly declare that the Taiwan problem be resolved peacefully and a line drawn in the Taiwan Strait separating Taiwan from the PRC. The US might also demand that areas surrounding the Taiwan Strait not be militarized and the release of all American “spies” detained in the PRC.

In retrospect, the Chinese diplomats overestimated the distance which the US would go to accommodate China. Washington was not in the mood for any reciprocation except for a ceasefire. Dulles had no intention of allowing the PRC into the UN, let alone recognizing it. Moreover, with

¹⁶⁹ The modus operandi of Dulles in dealing with difficult Republican senators vis-à-vis Communist China was always to give the worst-case scenario. Dulles also claimed the treaty gave US rights over ROC foreign policy vis-à-vis the PRC. “Memo of conversation with Knowland, Hickenlooper and Alex Smith,” 27 April 1955, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 1, Memos of conversation - General J through K (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹⁷⁰ Telephone call from Senator Capehart, 29 April 1955, Telephone Conversation Series, box 3, telephone conv. - general Mar 7 - Apr 29 1955 (1), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹⁷¹ However, the US would resist giving up the ROC. Britain, in a bid to stall for more time, would push for the Taiwan problem to be handled by the UN.

the China Lobby still a potent force in the Congress, it was unlikely that the US could coerce Chiang to evacuate the offshore islands. In their euphoria, Beijing neglected the limitations of tacit accommodation. The perplexed Chinese Communists found it disquieting that the British were strangely sullen about the eventual outcome of the upcoming negotiations, not realizing that the aforementioned reasons had cast a pall over British expectations. The morose British cited the “lack of common ground” between the PRC and the US as the main stumbling block. The best they could hope for was a de facto ceasefire where the US would strive for “disentanglement” from the offshore islands. Nothing far-reaching was expected from the Geneva negotiations.¹⁷²

Conclusion

January to February 1955 witnessed several developments in the Taiwan Strait Crisis. Although China initially vacillated on capturing the Yijiangshan and Dachen islands, its concern with the looming specter of “two Chinas” led it to proceed with its military actions. Such a concern also resulted in China strongly rejecting the proposed NZ UN resolution and disregarding the US nuclear threat. In the wake of the Yijiangshan campaign, the US was cautious, persuading Taiwan to evacuate Dachen and pushing Britain to press ahead with Oracle (NZ UN resolution). At the same time, Eisenhower sought to placate potential unhappiness from Congress and the American public concerned about American military entanglement in the Taiwan Strait by presenting the Formosa Resolution as a “virtuous” American act in accordance with American “tradition.” The US also tacitly accepted the PRC’s international standing, recognized the inevitability of another diplomatic engagement with China, and hoped that by proposing Oracle, this would not only salvage the US international standing and support the ROC’s UN position, but would also signal to China the US willingness to talk. In their search for mediators to resolve the crisis, the US continued to press for Oracle while Beijing preferred prodding the US with third-party emissaries with calls for direct negotiations. These emissaries included UN Secretary-General Hammarskjold, Nehru and U Nu.

¹⁷² Chinese Embassy in Britain to MFA, telegram, 30 April 1955, serial no. 110-00276-06, AMFA.

Although efforts at mediation between the US and the PRC did not lead to an immediate solution, there did emerge a burgeoning stabilization of the Taiwan Strait Crisis in February and March. This came about as the PRC and the US gradually came to establish a relationship of public posturing of rhetoric belligerency on one hand and tacit understanding and agreement on the other. Nonetheless, the aggressive rhetoric projected by Washington and the emergence of America's New Look nuclear deterrence doctrine that emphasized "massive retaliatory power" and "more bang for buck" did raise concerns among America's allies and also led to scholarship interpreting Eisenhower's issuance of nuclear threat on 16 March as an act that escalated the Crisis. However, in retrospect, as the Eisenhower administration was extremely cautious in reality, such US actions can be better interpreted as attempts to justify to American officials and the public the "conventional" nature of America's New Look nuclear deterrence doctrine. In this regard, the PRC had good intelligence and was unruffled by the US atomic threat; instead it was more concerned about an Australian proposal for a Commonwealth "guarantee" of Taiwan.

In March and April, both Washington and Beijing demonstrated flexibility as they inched toward Bandung with the intention to tacitly resolve the Taiwan Strait Crisis. Persuaded by London to give up Oracle and to move toward Bandung, Washington then took measures to court Asian governments so as to safeguard US interests at the Bandung Conference (18-24 April). Toward this end, the US also displayed its "moderateness" to its allies. While the US hoped to also win over Taipei by persuading it to consider the offshore islands as "outposts, not citadels," this was rebuffed by Chiang. At the same time, helped by the "quiet diplomacy" of UN Secretary-General Hammarskjöld, the US and the PRC were making progress on the Taiwan Strait issue. Following the PRC's conciliatory gesture on 23 April in Bandung, the US proceeded to persuade the ROC and the China Lobby of the desirability of participating in the forthcoming Sino-US negotiations to be held in Geneva in August. In anticipation of the talks, the PRC, however, harbored unrealistically high hopes for the negotiations.

On the whole, January to April 1955 saw interesting developments in the Taiwan Strait Crisis. Despite the hot rhetoric bandied, the crisis presented an opportune opening for the US and the PRC to size each other up. Both countries learnt the extent of one another's limitations and engaged in a ritualized belligerent diplomacy. Eisenhower's theatrical belligerency stemmed from his firm grasp of the Taiwan situation. Despite Washington's hot rhetoric, subtle signaling to Beijing was the preferred mode of communication. Similarly, Beijing understood the value of public posturing coupled with tacit agreements. While there can be no "private compromises," tacit understandings not to overstep boundaries were not rejected. By April 1955, both parties had reached the liminal stage where the belligerents were socialized with each other's maneuvers. Ironically, it took a neutral figure such as Hammarskjold to make explicit the process of tacit accommodation that was emerging in Sino-US relations: he accurately perceived the emergence of a *ritualized* pattern of diplomacy where "inner pressure" and "quiet" diplomacy would define the contours of Sino-US relations from this point onwards. This period further highlighted the cultural commonalities and historical ties shared by the PRC and the ROC on issues of nationalism and sovereignty, which led to their outright rejection of any attempt at "Two Chinas." In addition, the First Taiwan Strait Crisis flagged several future developments, which will be covered in the next few chapters. First, Eisenhower would use similar rhetorical tropes to justify the US policies elsewhere but find that blank cheques would not be issued indiscriminately the second round. Second, the limitations of direct negotiations arising from tacit accommodation would become more obvious. Third, the same historical-cultural baggage shared by the PRC and the ROC would compel the two erstwhile enemies to seek each other out through back-channels. How some of these themes unfolded from May 1955 to December 1957 will be the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 6: The Inter-crises Period (May 1955-1957) – Sustaining Linkages

Zhou's conciliatory gesture on 23 April 1955 at the Bandung Conference marked the end of the First Taiwan Crisis which began on 3 September 1954. While the outbreak of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis on 23 August 1958 will be explored in the next chapter, this chapter will examine the sustaining linkages in the US-PRC-ROC relations that occurred between May 1955 and December 1957. It will examine four areas: the Sino-US Ambassadorial Talks (August 1955-December 1957), the ROC-PRC secret back-channels (1955-1957), the May 1957 Taiwan Riots, and the ROC and its *fangong* mission (1955-1957). What were the major developments in these four areas and their significance for the US-PRC-ROC relations?

Existing scholarship on this inter-crises period emphasized the tensions in the negotiations between the PRC and the US. Xia Yafeng has examined well Beijing's perceptions while Steven M. Goldstein has provided Washington's perspective.¹ This chapter supports their findings, noting the limitations of tacit accommodation, as well as the long-term significance of the Sino-US Ambassadorial Talks. On the PRC-ROC relations, what is lacking is a systematic examination of their secret contacts. Qing Simei's latest attempt is excellent but only discusses this obscure episode from Beijing's perspective at great length.² This chapter will discuss as well the hitherto much neglected Taipei's concerns and reactions towards the Sino-US Ambassadorial Talks, and elaborate on the May 1957 Taiwan Riots and the changing configurations of the ROC's *fangong* mission. Building on existing scholarship and the latest sources available, this chapter will thus offer a structured and coherent treatment of the inter-crises period.

The lull period between the two Taiwan Strait Crises witnessed important developments for the US-PRC-ROC relations. Cultural perceptions and discourses had symbiotic interactions with state

¹ Xia Yafeng, *Negotiating with the Enemy: US-China Talks During the Cold War, 1949-1972* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 105; Steven M. Goldstein, "Dialogue of the Deaf? The Sino-American Ambassadorial-Level Talks, 1955-1970," in *Reexamining the Cold War US China Diplomacy 1954-1972*, ed. Robert S. Ross & Jiang Changbin (Cam., MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2001), 200-237.

² Qing Simei, *From Allies to Enemies: Visions of Modernity, Identity and US-China Diplomacy 1945-1960* (Cam., MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2007), 283- 287.

signaling and diplomatic maneuvers, and over time such ritualized interactions were avenues for Taipei, Beijing and Washington to assess each other. The first section will discuss how the Sino-US Ambassadorial Talks came about, what its limitations were, what the long-term significance of the talks was for Sino-US relations, and how the ROC viewed the talks. Although the results of the Sino-US Ambassadorial Talks were exceedingly modest, this diplomatic “substitute” constituted an important milestone as both parties moved more concretely from tacit communication to tacit accommodation, a trend that would develop further from 1958 onwards.

The second section will examine how the ROC-PRC secret back-channels evolved, how the US failed to recognize the possibility of such secret contacts, and how Taipei carefully maneuvered between alerting Washington and maintaining links with Beijing. The ROC-PRC secret back-channels demonstrated the importance of historical and cultural perceptions between belligerents and allies and would again be featured in the 1958 crisis. The third section, focusing on the 1957 Taiwan Riots and demonstrating the complexities in relations between Taiwanese and Americans, will explore how Americans were prejudiced in their views of the riots, what Taiwanese resentments against Americans were, and what functions ritualistic apologies performed in resolving the issues. The riots demonstrated the complex dimensions of the US-ROC relations in terms of their cultural fault lines and mutual pragmatic concerns, a theme that would constantly emerge in the US-ROC relations. The fourth section, focusing on how the Taiwan Strait Crisis was played out in the rendering of the *fangong* mission in Taiwanese society and politics from 1955 to 1957, will explore the roles played by political indoctrination and popular culture, the total control of the army by the KMT party, the waning of the *fangong* vision as manifested in the ritualistic aspects of military planning and the transformation of the *fangong* mission for domestic goals.

1. The Sino-US Ambassadorial Talks (August 1955-December 1957)

Zhou’s Bandung opening was followed by other initiatives to prompt the US toward bilateral negotiations and Eisenhower decided on 11 July to proceed with the Sino-US ambassadorial talks to be held in Geneva from August 1955 to December 1957. Although the bilateral talks

represented progress from a framework of tacit communication toward Sino-US tacit accommodation, the limitations of such an accommodation became apparent during the negotiations to discuss the issues of US airmen and the Taiwan Strait and different expectations led to inconclusive results by the end of 1957. Nonetheless, even though the 1955-1957 Sino-US ambassadorial talks could not resolve the issues, its long-term consequences were noteworthy as it paved the way for the holding of future Sino-US ambassadorial talks, which became one of the main communication channels in subsequent Sino-US relations. This positive overtone of the Sino-US ambassadorial talks riled the ROC, which further viewed it as the harbinger of a potential disaster that could lead to its declining international standing and deteriorating US-ROC relations. To express its unhappiness and frustration, the KMT blatantly conducted raids on China in the midst of the talks in August 1955.

1.1 The Road to Sino-US Ambassadorial Talks

In the aftermath of the Korean War, a number of US citizens were still detained in China. During the 1954 Geneva Conference, Beijing had signaled that a “new stage” in Sino-US relations was in order. The PRC ambassador Wang Bingnan offered “to strike a deal on normalization, which would involve release of [US] prisoners and meeting of all conditions we [Washington] had set.” Sensitive to hostile domestic conditions, Dulles rejected it. But Undersecretary of State Bedell Smith pragmatically counseled for Sino-US talks if the US wanted its prisoners back. What followed the initial four 1954 meetings in Geneva was a system of intricate signaling. Beijing kick-started the process again by sentencing thirteen US airmen to lengthy prison sentences in November 1954. In response, the US flagged in April 1955 its desire to negotiate by allowing Chinese technicians, who were detained in the US for fear of a leakage of scientific know-how to the communists, to return to the PRC.³

To hasten the process, Beijing applied pressure on the US. Zhou’s dramatic peace announcement

³ See John H. Holdridge (a career officer in the State Department from the Eisenhower to Reagan presidency), “Sino-US Contacts During the Freeze,” in Marshall Green, et al., *War & Peace with China: First-hand Experiences in the Foreign Service of the United States* (Maryland: Dacor Press, 1994), 99; Paul Kreisberg’s interview; Edwin W. Martin’s interview in Tucker, *China Confidential*, 94-95; U. Alexis Johnson, *The Right Hand of Power: The Memoirs of an American Diplomat* (NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1984), 236-237.

in Bandung put Dulles on the defensive. Zhou also flooded Washington with emissaries. Indian Ambassador to the UN, Krishna Menon, approached Washington on 14 March 1955 to be “the go-between.” However, Washington saw this as excessive Indian interference.⁴ To Washington’s chagrin, a Pakistani diplomat, Mir Khan, then suggested that an exchange of “diplomatic notes” could seal the deal and pave the way for a “personal meeting with Chou,” preferably in “Karachi.”⁵ US Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge perceptively recognized that “Chou will use Menon for nuisance value, he is not building up Menon as a go-between ... Chou thinks his interests are best served by direct talks with the United States.”⁶ Dulles viewed such channels as “a *typical* Chinese trick – they will take whoever has the most to offer – which negotiator is most successful.”⁷

Eisenhower was willing to accept the Chinese offer. In a meeting with Menon and Indian Ambassador G.L. Metha, Eisenhower underscored the burden of American public opinion: “... there are certain things that are just making the American public opinion boil, it is very difficult for us to negotiate in the way that we *could* otherwise” Eisenhower thus argued for the PRC to foster a “better atmosphere” and even delineated some pointers for a successful negotiation. The Chinese Communists must not publicly declare that they “are right in holding our people unlawfully”; it would also be ruinous for the US if it was made known that “they are trying to negotiate with what we try pushing [release of POWs which the US had always declared to be non-negotiable].” So taken was Eisenhower with his projection of reasonableness that he alluded to the myth of the special relationship between China and America:

... we’ve got a great record of fixing friendship with the Chinese people. We have established hospitals, tried to help them establish schools ... I lived in the Far East [the Philippines] four-and-a-half years, and I liked the Chinese – I like them tremendously.⁸

⁴ Xiong, *Zhou Enlai Wanlong*, 1-7.

⁵ Lodge to Dulles, Memo, 4 May 1955, Telephone Conversation Series, box 4, Telephone Conv. - General May 2 1955 – Aug 31 1955 (8), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁶ Lodge to Dulles, 9 June 1955, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 2, strictly confidential - L (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁷ Allen Dulles told his brother: “The Chicoms want to talk and negotiate in secret with someone like Cooper and Bohlen ... They want to work out a release and as if they were doing it in a generous way.” Telephone call from Allen Dulles, 1 July 1955, Telephone Conversation Series\box 4\Telephone Conv. - General May 2 1955–Aug 31 1955 (4), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁸ Eisenhower expounded on the “basic principle ... we do not arrogate to ourselves the right to determine the fate of any other people.” “Interview with H. V. Krishna Menon, Indian Representative to the United Nations,” 14 June 1955, ACW Diary Series, box 5, ACW Diary June 1955 (4), Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

Washington's sanguineness also stemmed from its assessment that the communist threat toward Taiwan was ebbing. It hoped that Beijing could "accept *tacitly* if not explicitly a renunciation of the use of force in pressing their claim [on] Taiwan."⁹ The US recognized that engagement with Beijing had its advantages. One, the PRC was feeling the weight of world opinion as its increasing world prominence would work against its militancy. Two, keeping the Chinese Communists at the negotiation table meant keeping the Taiwan Strait free of hostilities. Three, the PRC would not be provoked into perceiving that Washington was embarking on a permanent occupation of the offshore islands.

However, Beijing's initiatives prompted Washington to perceive that the PRC wanted to undermine Taiwan by negotiating with the US based on "the widespread desire for peace in the Far East." The lack of understanding on the nationalist impulse of the PRC's international outlook also led it to speculate erroneously that Beijing might use "the 'two-China' concept." But while the PRC was cautiously edging toward a tacit accommodation with the US, events would show that flagging the "two-China" concept was an anathema to the Communists as much as it was to the Nationalists. Still, the OCB was clear that the US could not back out from negotiating with the PRC as this "would lose us much good will and might allow the Chinese Communists to place the onus for their breach of the peace in the offshore islands on us."¹⁰ With Beijing's additional gesture of releasing four US airmen on 30 May, Washington agreed on 11 July for Sino-US ambassadorial talks in Geneva to proceed.¹¹

1.2 The Limitations of Tacit Accommodation

The issue of the imprisonment of US citizens in China was ensnared by vastly different cultural

⁹ "The current situation," reported the Far Eastern Bureau, "appears to embody little immediate and direct threat to our fundamental strategic objective with respect to Taiwan: that of keeping it from the Chinese Communists." The Bureau even dismissed the possibility of communist subversion, as "these efforts are not likely to succeed in the foreseeable future." Memo, [Paper regarding U.S. policy to defend Taiwan against a possible Chinese Communist takeover], Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Department of State, 23 May 1955. DDRS

¹⁰ This OCB report states that "US involvement is highly unlikely" even if the ROC should request for help in the face of a PRC war of attrition against the offshore islands. "Progress report on NSC 5503, U.S. policy toward Formosa and the government of the Republic of China, including detailed development of major actions (1 Jan 1955-14 July 1955)," Memo (Draft 2), OCB, White House, Jul 26, 1955, DDRS, CK3100114782.

¹¹ Johnson, *Right Hand*, 237; Wang, *Zhong Mei huitan*, 31.

perceptions. Dulles took the high road of moral principles, insisting that if the PRC “wanted to begin to gain respect as decent people, they would let the prisoners go.” He also accused the PRC of using the POWs as collateral for “blackmail purposes.”¹²

Some of the detained US personnel, such as CIA operatives John T. Downey and Richard George Fecteau, were involved in aerial spying operations in China.¹³ In December 1954, Eisenhower admitted that “it seems probable the plane landed in such circumstances they can *say* they are not prisoners of war.” Dulles noted that it would be “a terrible situation” should the PRC marshal more evidence to humiliate the US. For the White House the key was damage control. Dulles then resolved to shove the blame to the Chinese Communists:

The essential thing said the Sec. is they agreed by the Armistice to return all prisoners of war. They have acted in a *deceitful* way. They supposedly gave all names at Geneva but didn't give the names of the civilians. The Pres. can say it was brought out now to make it more difficult with our allies.¹⁴

Only after weeks of laborious negotiation did both parties achieve on 10 September 1955 the “Agreed Announcements.” Detained citizens were allowed to “expeditiously exercise their rights to return” and both parties were to examine “other practical matters at issue.”¹⁵ While Washington expected the remaining 19 detained US citizens to be released, Beijing held them on to advance other issues. Ambassador Kenneth T. Young elucidated US chagrin toward this methodical “ritual” of Beijing: “Chinese imperial practice had used individuals and prisoners for political bargaining and as hostages. It was thus no break with China’s historical method of dealing with ‘barbarian’ nations for Peking to use Americans in China as hostages in its maneuvering with Washington.”¹⁶

However, the use of political hostages could also be seen to indicate Beijing’s weaker position, a finding established by scholar Alfred D. Wilhelm in his interviews with Chinese officials. One

¹² “Memo of conversation with Menon,” 15 June 1955, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 1, Memos of conversation - General L through M (4), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹³ Memo of a Conversation, Department of State, 7 Jan 1955, in FRUS, vol 2 (1955-57), 6-7.

¹⁴ The White House was also displeased that one of the captured airmen, Colonel John K. Arnold, was “doing that and told everything [to the Chinese Communists].” Telephone Call to the President, 1 Dec 1954, Telephone Conversation Series, box 10, Telephone Conv - White House Nov 1 1954–Feb 18 1955 (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹⁵ Holdridge, “Sino-US Contacts,” 100.

¹⁶ Young, *Negotiating with the Chinese*, 63-64.

Chinese interviewee admitted: “We were afraid that if we release all the Americans, the United States would break off the negotiations.” A lack of trust in the powerful “imperialistic” US hence prompted Beijing to use the only leverage it possessed. Another Chinese interviewee alluded to the situation in Geneva as *Wanbi Guizhao* 完璧归赵 [Returning the jade intact to Zhao]. In this Chinese historical anecdote, Zhao emissary Lin Xiangru in 283 BC threatened to shatter Zhao’s “gift” – the treasure jade – at the Duke of Qin’s feet, unless certain conditions were met. Lin used this drastic measure to force the powerful Duke of Qin to honor his word to the weaker Zhao. Similarly, Beijing saw the only way to keep the powerful US talking to the PRC was to hold on to the prisoners.¹⁷

The second issue to flounder in the sea of Chinese nationalism was Taiwan. US negotiator Alexis Johnson speculated in his memoirs that had the problem of Taiwan being postponed temporarily for other “easier issues,” Sino-US negotiations might have been more profitable. Wang Bingnan reflected that the issue boiled down to Chinese nationalism as the negotiations with the Americans were also staged for the domestic Chinese audience:

We had to adopt adversarial tactics in our negotiations. This would boost the Chinese people’s confidence and dampen the Americans’ arrogance. Before liberation, the Chinese people had long endured humiliation from the West. Now the newly independent China must no longer demonstrate any weakness. This is a strong feeling prevalent among Chinese.

Therefore, Wang loudly accused the Americans of creating the “two-China” conspiracy on 8 October 1955 when Johnson proposed renouncing the use of force in the Taiwan Strait.¹⁸ Beijing would only concede to its 27 October 1955 formula: “The PRC and the USA agreed that they should settle disputes between their two countries by peaceful means without resorting to the threat or the use of force.” State Department staff John Holdridge remembered Dulles “personally inserted the phrase ‘including the dispute in the Taiwan Strait’ after Wang’s wording,” but Beijing refused to accept this addition.¹⁹

¹⁷ The account was from the *Shiji* [Records of the Grand Historian]. At the end of 1957, six Americans were still incarcerated in the PRC. Alfred D. Wilhelm, *The Chinese at the Negotiating Table* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1994), 54-56, 193; Young, *Negotiating with the Chinese*, 58.

¹⁸ Johnson, *Right Hand*, 251-54; Wang, *Zhong Mei huitan*, 57-59.

¹⁹ Johnson, *Right Hand*, 254; Holdridge, “Sino-US Contacts,” 100.

If Beijing was driven by nationalistic impulses, the Americans were no less encumbered by domestic considerations. Assistant Secretary for Policy Planning Robert Bowie recalled that as Eisenhower wished to preserve freedom in foreign policy from the congressional rightwing, any open gesture to Beijing “was simply going to bring down a lot of trouble on him and wasn’t worth it.”²⁰ Eisenhower had received “various remarks of certain people saying they would resign, etc, if the President recognized Red China.”²¹ The Eisenhower administration had to convince the Republican National Committee meeting in November 1955 that negotiating with Beijing was not a sellout of the ROC. Lodge stressed that the conduct of Eisenhower’s diplomacy could be summarized as “*Suaviter In Modo, Fortiter In Re*” (Flexible in Method, Strong in Substance).²²

With the issues of the US prisoners and Taiwan making little headway, such other issues as trade embargoes and Zhou-Dulles ministerial talks were stalled. After a year of thrusts and parries, Zhou braced himself for a long haul: “If dragging on serves our interests, we would not mind. If there are disadvantages to dragging on, we can stop it any time. This is our view vis-à-vis the Sino-US negotiations.”²³ Behind the scenes, Zhou instructed the PRC Foreign Ministry “to come up with ideas and methods to seize all opportunities for the advancement of the negotiations.” Wang admitted that the invitation to US journalists in August 1956 and the cultural exchange in October 1956 were stunts to provoke the US to action in the ambassadorial talks.²⁴

Nonetheless, the Taiwan Strait conflict had been comfortably ritualized via the Sino-US negotiations. The physical front of the Taiwan Strait, according to Radford, would “stay the way it is for the time being. It is to the Communists’ advantage not to stir it up ... On the other hand, they

²⁰ Robert Bowie’s interview, in Tucker, *China Confidential*, 149.

²¹ Eisenhower reassured Senator Karl E. Mundt that “there is no feeling on his part that this matter should even be given consideration.” Memo of Conference with the President and Senator Karl E. Mundt (12 May 1955), 18 May 1955, ACW Diary Series, box 5, ACW Diary May 1955 (3), Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

²² Lodge emphasized that: “We not only have sacrificed nothing of substance; we have also not become involved in a Far-eastern war.” Lodge, Speech, Republican National Committee meeting, 30 November 1955, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 2, strictly confidential - L (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

²³ Zhou with BK Nehru, record of conversation, 14 June 1956, ZENP, vol.1, 588.

²⁴ On the issue of journalists being allowed in the PRC, Dulles consulted Senator Knowland, who was surprisingly liberal. Dulles denied the charge by Nehru that the US shared the blame in the standoff between the PRC and the US. “Memo of conversation with Nehru,” 16 December 1956, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 1, Memos of conversation - General N through R (1), JFD papers, DDEL; “Memo of conversation with Knowland,” 1 July 1957, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 1, Memos of conversation - General J through K (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

are going to keep sporadic firings etc. that will make the Nationalists issue press releases and thereby keep it before the world.” Meanwhile, the US continued to press the ROC to reduce the garrison on the offshore islands, which the “Gimo [Chiang] will think it over.”²⁵

By 12 December 1957, at the 73rd meeting, the US attempted to “downgrade” the level of the talks. While Dulles recognized that the talks served “as a slight additional preventive to armed attack by the Chinese Communists,” the only issue that the US wished to discuss was the “renunciation of force and release of Americans.” Hence, he believed that a “considerable recess” in the talks was in order. As the sole purpose was just to “drop messages” to Beijing and ward off the extremes of US public opinion, talks conducted at lower levels would serve US purposes just as well. However, Washington would learn the hard way that for Beijing the ritualistic form and manner of the negotiations were important even when no results were forthcoming.²⁶

1.3 Long-Term Consequences

Although the Johnson-Wang ambassadorial talks could not resolve the issues of US prisoners and Taiwan, its long-term consequences were noteworthy as it paved the way for the holding of future Sino-US ambassadorial contacts. As noted by Ambassador Kenneth T. Young: “If the most powerful country and the most populous country in the world could not have a normal diplomatic relationship, they would have to invent a *substitute*.”²⁷ Being such a *substitute*, the Sino-US ambassadorial talks became one of the main communication channels in subsequent Sino-US relations.²⁸

When Chiang Kai-shek contemplated taking advantage of the domestic discontent in China to stage a comeback in the aftermath of the disastrous Great Leap Forward, Wang Bingnan queried his counterpart, Ambassador John M. Cabot, about Washington’s intentions in view of the ROC’s

²⁵ Telephone call to Adm Radford, 20 Jan 1956, Telephone Conversation Series, box 5, memoranda of tel conv general May 1 1956 to June 29 1956 (3), JFD papers, DDEL; Wang, *Zhong Mei huitan*, 62-65.

²⁶ See Steven M. Goldstein, “Dialogue of the Deaf?” 235; Edwin E. Martin’s interview, in Tucker, *China Confidential*, 99; “Memo of conversation with Professor David N. Rowe,” 18 May 1957, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 1, Memos of conversation - General N through R (2), JFD papers, DDEL;

²⁷ Kenneth T. Young, “American Dealings with Peking,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 45, no. 1, (Oct 1966), 77.

²⁸ Xia, *Negotiating with the Enemy*, 105.

belligerent posturing. President John F. Kennedy communicated unequivocally in 1962 via the Cabot-Wang conduit that the US would not support any of Chiang's *fangong* initiatives.²⁹ At the height of the US involvement in Vietnam, Assistant Secretary of East Asian and Pacific Affairs William P. Bundy also revealed that President Lyndon B. Johnson had assured Beijing through the ambassadorial talks that US "bore no hostility toward China"; Washington even reassured Beijing that the aim was not the destruction of "the Hanoi régime." In December 1963, Assistant Secretary of State Roger Hilsman too wrote that *accommodation* with the PRC was necessary as Communist China was in no way "passing" from the scene and in 1967, Johnson's advisors called for a "posture of quiet reasonableness" towards Beijing.³⁰ Finally, the long-time PRC diplomat Luo Yisu recalled how in 1979 Ambassador Wang had personally invited all three former ambassadors Johnson, Jacob Beam and Cabot to visit the PRC.³¹ Wang rationalized that while in the past the former enemies had adhered to the principle of *geshi qizhu* 各事其主 [each person has his own ruler to follow], now that rapprochement had been achieved, "old friends" could be activated to further advance Sino-US relations.³² Johnson recalled that Wang extended his invitation, stressing "we respect you."³³

²⁹ Appreciative of Washington's candor, Zhou Enlai indicated in October 1962 that Beijing was prepared for such ambassadorial talks to "continue for another seven years." But Gordon H. Chang contends that Kennedy was disturbed by China's new atomic ability and sought Khrushchev's aid in a pre-emptive "surprise attack on China." The main piece of evidence was a 15 July 1963 cable from Kennedy to Ambassador Harriman which read: "You should try to elicit Khrushchev's view of means of limiting or preventing Chinese nuclear development and his willingness either to take Soviet *action* or accept US *action* aimed in this direction." However, historians such as Nancy B. Tucker and Waldo Heinrichs questioned Chang's interpretation. As a member of Kennedy's inner circle, McGeorge Bundy denied this possibility. James C. Thomson, former aide to the Secretary of State (Far Eastern Affairs), even ridiculed Chang's notion of a secret plan hatched by Kennedy to destroy China's nuclear facilities. See Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, "Continuing Controversies in the Literature of US-China Relations Since 1945," in *Pacific Passage*, ed. Warren I. Cohen (NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 1996), 226; Tucker, "No Common Ground: American-Chinese-Soviet Relations, 1948-1972," *Diplomatic History* 16, no.2 (Spring 1992): 319-324; James C. Thomson, "Whose side are we on?" *The New York Review of Books*, (29 July 1990): 25; Chang, *Friends and Enemies*, 224-227 & 247-250; Kenneth T. Young, *Diplomacy and Power and Washington-Peking Dealings: 1953-67* (Chicago: University of Chicago Center for Policy Study, 1967), 17; Wang, *Zhong Mei huitan*, 90; FRUS (1961-1963), Vol. 22, 234, n. 2.

³⁰ Holdridge, "Sino-US Contacts During the Freeze," 103; Cohen, *America's Response to China*, 191; Victor S. Kaufman, *Confronting Communism*, 198.

³¹ American scholar Eugene P. Trani remarked in 1984 that China's "old friends" method was a stark contrast to the Russian approach: "By comparison, departures from China are sad, and often Americans leave with the feeling that new friendships will last many years." See Donald E. Davis and Eugene P. Trani, *Distorted Mirrors: Americans and their relations with Russia and China in the Twentieth Century* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2009), XXV.

³² Taiwanese scholar Shih Chih-yu perceptively underscored the strong linkages between interpersonal relations and international relations of the PRC. See Shih Chih-yu, "Pedagogy of Chinese Diplomacy," in *Reform, Identity & Chinese Foreign Policy* (Taipei: Vanguard Institute for Policy Studies, 2000), 171.

³³ Luo Yisu 骆亦粟, "Wang Bingnan yu Xin Zhongguo waijiao" 王炳南与新中国外交 [Wang Bingnan and new China's Diplomacy], *Ban nian chao* 百年潮, no. 2 (2006), 47; Wilhelm, *Chinese at the Negotiating*, 58; Johnson, *Right Hand of Power*, 265; Wang, *Zhong Mei huitan*, 85.

1.4 The Unhappiness of the ROC

It was precisely this positive overtone of the Sino-US ambassadorial talks that riled the ROC.

Taipei's deep uneasiness with the Geneva ambassadorial talks was noted by Ambassador Karl L. Rankin, who sympathetically reported that to Taipei the alleged "missing ingredient" in the talks was the American firm refusal to openly support the ROC's *fangong* mission; this led to the ROC's profound "sense of frustration."³⁴ Taipei also detested the ambiguous US refrain for patience. "By working together," counseled Washington, "they can survive, to live in freedom, and that the international communist conspiracy is doomed to eventual extinction." The ROC found such reassurances "of little value if the prospective victim lacks confidence in the efficiency of such help or faces the likelihood of annihilation in the process."³⁵

Taipei further viewed the Sino-US ambassadorial talks as the harbinger of a potential disaster that could lead to deteriorating US-ROC relations. Especially worrying would be the US departure from "firm confrontation to tacit accommodation" with Beijing. Taipei stoutly argued against any compromise with the PRC. One, relaxation of trade embargoes against China would accrue to Beijing "political and other advantages," but "with no compensating gain for the supporters of the US strategy." Two, the UN would be weakened if a "powerful and unrepentant aggressor" gained entry. Three, naïve US reporters visiting the PRC could only report Potemkin villages as Beijing would stage-manage "the situation to their own advantage."³⁶

Other than strident haranguing, Taipei also stressed the sentimental notion of the "uniqueness" of Sino-US relations, and from Rankin's despatch the US ambassador seemed to have bought heavily into this rhetoric. By selectively using a few pseudo-historic anecdotes, Rankin posited that

³⁴ Rankin painted a dire picture of the vulnerability of Taiwan compared to China's immense strength. Given the negative prognosis, Taipei saw six negative outcomes which ranged from "GRC disintegration" to outright "nuclear war in Asia." For another copy of the "missing ingredient" thesis, see McConaughy (Office of Chinese Affairs) to Robertson (Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs), memo, 16 April 1957, FRUS (1955-57), vol. 3, 519.

³⁵ According to Rankin, the relations between Taipei and Washington could be further strengthened. Although Rankin also observed that the PRC had no wish to initiate an "unlimited war" or want to have "direct American intervention," Rankin's commitment to the ROC could be seen in various despatches endorsing Taipei's position. See Rankin to State Department, "The Missing Ingredient in US Policy toward China," Foreign Service Despatch no. 423, 28 March 1957, serial no.002080106032003, CKS papers, AH.

³⁶ As "tacit accommodation" implied that Washington might pressure Chiang to accept the "two-China" solution, Rankin warned Washington against such an inclination. Rankin to State Department, "A Review of US Policy Toward China," Foreign Service Despatch no. 461, 25 April 1957, serial no.002080106032004, CKS papers, AH.

Washington had always “supported territorial integrity of China.” The fundamental in Sino-US relations was “essentially simple and unchanging” for there was no question that “the US feels a deep loyalty to Free China,” and vice versa. In contrast, Rankin reported that the “Peiping government” clearly did not fit into this time-honored pattern. The Communist victory in China was only possible with “Soviet support,” and since the Korean War Communist China had shown itself “a loyal member of the international communist conspiracy.” This “ruthless and predatory ... police state” could only have the support of “the usual small fraction of the population.” Beijing’s operative tentacles of subversion “operates throughout Asia.” Therefore, “no rational US policy can be based upon the prospect of such a change in the foreseeable future.”³⁷ In such a manner, Rankin’s report echoed the latent unhappiness and paranoia of Taipei’s leadership.

Even prior to the onset of the Geneva ambassadorial talks, Washington recognized how the ROC’s international stature would take a blow as the US moved towards negotiations with Beijing. The US was aware how every gain that the PRC made in such international meetings as the Geneva Conference and the Bandung Conference would mean a decline in the international prestige of the ROC. As a State Department report noted, “there is a discernible trend towards disregard of the importance of the ROC as a political entity” and a “declining faith” among overseas Chinese about Chiang’s return to Mainland China which added to “the growth of influences making for stagnation of the forces on Taiwan.”³⁸ The US also knew that the ROC had little support internationally. Britain was more interested in the measures that Washington would take to persuade Chiang to be “more flexible.”³⁹ In view of such sentiments, it was thus not surprising that Chiang reacted vehemently in a meeting with Radford and Robertson in April 1955. In his diaries

³⁷ Rankin’s despatch displayed the hold Chiang had on his “trusted” American friends and how effectively he turned these Americans into mouthpieces of his régime. See Rankin to State Department, “A Review of US Policy Toward China,” Foreign Service Despatch no. 461, 25 April 1957, serial no.002080106032004, CKS papers, AH.

³⁸ Memo, [Paper regarding U.S. policy to defend Taiwan against a possible Chinese Communist takeover], Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Department of State, 23 May 1955. DDRS.

³⁹ Eden informed Eisenhower that “the British people as a whole look on the offshore islands as belonging to Red China, and consider that we are foolish to be supporting Chiang even indirectly in possession of those areas.” Eisenhower explained the symbolism of the offshore islands in terms of three levels. One, the fundamental symbolic meaning of the offshore islands to “Chiang’s army on Formosa.” Two, the “importance of Chiang to “other émigré Chinese in the many countries of Southeast Asia.” Three, US steadfastness in the Taiwan Strait to boost the confidence of non-communist countries in Asia. Dulles to Macmillan, telegram, no. 132, 8 July 1955, in FRUS, vol. 2 (1955-57), 641; Eisenhower with Eden (17 July 1955), Memo of conversation, 19 July 1955, ACW Diary Series, box 6, ACW Diary July 1955 (3), Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

Chiang described the erstwhile faithful Robertson as a “son of a bitch.”⁴⁰ He further declared to Radford and Robertson:

He had agreed to evacuate Tachens but he will defend Quemoy-Matsu with or without US help ... He is fully aware of the danger of Chicom buildup but is prepared to take risk of receiving full onslaught of attack rather than give up two positions which would go against the best Chinese *tradition* of patriotism.⁴¹

In the midst of the Geneva negotiation in August 1955, the KMT blatantly conducted raids on China. Allen Dulles thought that “it was timed to coincide with the Geneva business.” The intention of transferring the responsibility for para-military operations to the Defense Department was to stem such unauthorized operations. Allen Dulles informed the Secretary of State that the CIA “would not be informed” of any further operation.⁴² The following year, to keep the US further off guard, the ROC requested for a “violent revolution on the mainland” – Hungarian-style.⁴³ All in all, Taipei’s frustration and paranoia with Washington would be played out in two areas: secret negotiations with Beijing and the 1957 Taiwan Riots.

2. ROC-PRC Secret Back-Channels (1955-1957)

While the CIA had intelligence about possible secret contacts between the ROC and the PRC, it doubted the veracity of such information and was persuaded by Chiang Ching-kuo of the steadfastness of the ROC. Although the ROC participated in the back-channels, it was intensely wary of the PRC and carefully maneuvered between alerting Washington and maintaining links with Beijing. Albeit hostile rhetoric, common historical and cultural ties explained how Taipei and Beijing could maintain the links, however briefly, out of patriotism that warring brothers should unite to thwart a foreigner from allegedly achieving “two Chinas.” Such secret back-channels would feature importantly again during the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1958. However, this was a point which the Eisenhower Administration failed to fathom.

⁴⁰ Chiang Diaries, Hoover, 25-29 April 1955, box 51, folder 11, cited in Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, 682, n.125.

⁴¹ Robertson to Dulles, telegram, no. 4, 25 April 1955, in FRUS, vol. 2 (1955-57), 511.

⁴² Memo of Telephone Conversation with Allen Dulles, 18 August 1955, Telephone Conversation Series, box 4, Telephone Conv. - General May 2 1955–Aug 31 1955 (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁴³ The Americans reacted by bureaucratic inertia in the face of such an outlandish request. They mulled over “changes in their proposed reply” and the answer to Chiang “was buried in the Secretariat for a week.” Telephone call to William J. Sebald (Deputy Asst Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs), 15 May 1956, Telephone Conversation Series, box 5, memoranda of tel conv general May 1 1956 to June 29 1956 (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

2.1 Washington's Hazy Knowledge of Taipei-Beijing Secret Links

Washington was hazily aware of the contacts between the ROC and the PRC. A 2007 declassified CIA intelligence report listed that from the mid-1950s, Beijing had sent numerous secret letters to Taipei requesting for negotiations for an eventual reunification. But the CIA sanguinely concluded that Taipei did not reply: "The GRC ignored these approaches, viewing the proposals as counterfeit and the letters themselves as instruments of psychological warfare." The report found the information given by the head of the ROC intelligence services and Chiang Kai-shek's son, Chiang Ching-kuo (CCK), reliable because "of his personal opposition to any contacts with Peking" and his "sensitivity to possible US suspicions." However, the CIA admitted that its "evidence is tenuous" and "firm only on occasion," and further stated that "Chiang Ching-kuo is the source of all the credible information made available by the GRC about private overtures from the Communist side."⁴⁴

CCK was portrayed as an ingénue open to "enticement" from "disreputable," "self-initiated schemes of pro-Communist 'operators' in Hong Kong." However, when *Time* reported a rumour on 16 January 1956 that Hong Kong journalist Cao Juren was Chiang Ching-kuo's secret emissary to Beijing, the CIA simply rejected this because CCK denied it. While a better case could be made that the alleged emissary Cao Juren only entered the PRC on 1 July 1956, even the weight of rumour did nothing to deter the CIA's dismissal. Although "US diplomatic officers in Taipei and HK were urged periodically to evaluate the possibility that GRC-Peking negotiations were about to occur, or were already in progress," whatever purported evidence presented were dismissed as "preposterous" and the report concluded sympathetically that "GRC sensitivity to the impact of the rumors was real."⁴⁵ Curiously, the CIA accurately established that the CCK-Cao relationship dated

⁴⁴ "Peking-Taipei Contacts: The Question of a Possible 'Chinese Solution'," RSS No. 0055/71, POLO Doc. 34, December 1971 [Declassified May 2007], Intelligence Report, Directorate of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency. <http://www.cia.foia.gov> [accessed 23 November 2008], i-iii, 5, 8.

⁴⁵ On the eve of President Richard Nixon's Sino-US rapprochement, the CIA was tasked to document the extent of covert Chinese communication. The report was purportedly informed by four types of sources, the first being news reports of rumors, the second being what the ROC revealed to the US at the point of KMT-Communist contact. The third type were what Chiang Ching-kuo (CCK) repeated to the analysts of the report in 1971 and the last type were

back to 1938 when Cao worked as the chief editor for CCK's newspaper, *Xingan Nanbao*.

Although Cao left after five years, CCK reportedly commented that “[o]nly Cao understands me.”

The CIA report quoted Zhou Enlai, who said “Chiang Ching-kuo would trust no one representing Peking if he would not trust Tsao Chu-jen.” Cao even flaunted his relationship with CCK by publishing a celebrated biography of CCK in 1948. Despite all these evidence, the CIA appeared blind to the depth of the CCK-Cao relationship.⁴⁶

Indeed, CCK embarked upon an ingenious campaign of misinformation against Washington. The CIA was led to believe that the Communist “peace gestures” were full of “improvisation and a desultory quality” which lacked “urgency” and “planning.” American and Chinese sources revealed that CCK showered the US intelligence with inconsequential letters from the PRC to mask the significant approaches Taipei made to Beijing. The biggest gap in the CIA report was Sung Yi-shan's visit to Beijing in mid-April 1957. As Chiang Kai-shek's representative, Sung had secret talks with Zhou Enlai over the possibility of an autonomous Taiwan under Chiang's rule. Zhou had promised the following terms: negotiations for the reunification of China; high autonomous status for Taiwan; Chiang could send his representatives to Beijing but the PRC would not interfere with Chiang's rule in Taiwan; and the US troops must leave Taiwan. Sung even detailed his visit to Beijing with a 15,000-word glowing report to the “disgusted” Chiang.⁴⁷

On the other hand, CCK used selective release of letters to further establish his *bona fide* anti-communist reputation. According to the CIA report, Cao's first three letters (August-December 1955) were shown to the Americans and CCK sweetened the disclosure with another Cao's alleged March 1957 letter which even showed “six possible conditions for a Peking-GRC accommodation”

“constructive inputs from many offices in the CIA.” See POLO Doc. 34, December 1971, iii, 5, 11-12. For Chiang Ching-kuo's denial, see “Formosa: An End to Rumors,” *Time* (16 Jan 1956).

⁴⁶ See POLO Doc. 34, December 1971, iv, 3-4, 8; Mao Lei and Fang Xiaofang, *Guogong liangdang tanpan tongshi* 国共两党谈判通史 [A complete account of CCP and KMT negotiations](Lanzhou: Lanzhou Daxue chubanshe, 1996), 641-646, 650; Cao Juren 曹聚仁, *Jiang Jinguo lun* 蒋经国论 [Chiang Ching-kuo: A Discourse] (Shanghai: Shanghai Lianhe Huabaoshe, 1948; reprint, Taipei: Yiqiaochubanshe, 1997).

⁴⁷ POLO Doc. 34, December 1971, iii; Tong, *Fengyu Sishinian*, 274; Wang Yongqin 王永钦, *Tongyi zhi lu: Liangan guangxi wushinian da shiji* 统一之路: 两岸关系五十年大事记 [Road to Unification](Guangzhou: Guangdong remin chubanshe, 1999), 49; Zheng Jian 郑剑, *Gudao Canmeng: Guomintang zai Taiwan de rizi li* 孤岛残梦: 国民党在台湾的日子里 [Solidarity and Despair: The KMT on Taiwan] (Beijing: Qunzhong chubanshe, 1997), 370-372.

(which were variations of Sung's conditions).⁴⁸ At the same time, the outline of Mao's offer was publicly revealed in Cao's popular travelogue, *Beixing Xiaoyu* 北行小语, published in June 1957.⁴⁹ What CCK hid from Washington was that Cao's repeated trips to Beijing from May 1957 onwards were requested by Taipei. Covert protocols were established where Cao was handled by a Hong Kong contact, Wang Chi-tzu, who was also a ROC emissary. More importantly, CCK replied at length to Cao on Taiwan's domestic situation, the US-ROC relations and even what the "old man" (Chiang Kai-shek) felt about the communist overtures.⁵⁰

2.2 Taipei's Wariness of Beijing

Chiang Ching-kuo's messages to Cao in the 1950s displayed an intense wariness of Beijing. But Taipei did not seek to close the channel. The heir apparent did not shy away from commenting on the Taiwan Riots (May 1957), reduction of offshore islands garrisons, and economic difficulties. One oral message communicated in the second week of August 1957 reflected the somber mood of CCK in the aftermath of the Taiwan Riots. Rioters had raided the US embassy, burst the safe box and passed the contents to relevant Taiwan authorities; to his dismay, CCK learnt that the US was "trying to prevent power from being passed to CCK hands" and allegedly planned to have CCK "go on a sabbatical in the States for three years" so that a "Hu Shih-led" opposition could take root.⁵¹ Elsewhere, CCK revealed how the US wanted the ROC soldiers off Quemoy and Matsu. His father patriotically opposed this and stated that the "security of Quemoy, Matsu and Taiwan should be considered together." CCK also revealed that the ROC was experiencing serious economic difficulties: "The US only treated the symptoms, and not the root causes." In explaining

⁴⁸ POLO Doc. 34, December 1971, 10-12.

⁴⁹ Cao reported that Mao met him briefly and the consensus in Beijing was that Chiang Kai-shek could retain his *tianxia* 天下 [authority/ power]. Beijing was willing to even "invest" in the development of Taiwan. Elsewhere, Cao added that Beijing recognized the "historical contributions" of Chiang and Mao had "calmed down" to await the time when he could "shake the hands" of his former enemy. Recently, Beijing has released excerpts of Mao's offer and the contents were largely similar to Cao's account. See Cao Juren 曹聚仁, *Beixing xiaoyu* 北行小语 [A brief account of my northern travels] (Jiulong: Sanyu tushu wenju gongsi, 1957), 197, 201-202; See, Mao with Cao Juren, record of conversation, 4 October 1956, in Jin (ed), *Zhou Enlai Zhuan* 2nd ed. vol 2., 1298-1299.

⁵⁰ Cao Jingxing's interview, in Wu Juan 吴娟 et al., "Liangan mishi Cao Juren" 两岸密使曹聚仁 [Cao Juren: the Secret emissary], *ShiDai Zhoubao* 时代周报 [Time Weekly], 28 Sept 2009, C06; Ding Quanlin 丁全昭, *Cao Juren: Weisheng youbi yue ru dao* 曹聚仁: 微生有笔月如刀 [Cao Juren: A literati's life] (Shanghai: Shanghai jiaoyu chubanshe, 1999), 154.

⁵¹ Marshall Green claimed that the scattered papers were "false documents." What were the false documents doing in the US embassy? Were they strategically placed to be discovered by the mob? Green did not elaborate. See Marshall Green's interview, in *China Confidential*, 141.

the slow pace of the ROC's response to the PRC's overtures, CCK rationalized that "the Taiwanese population is uninterested in 'counter-offensive' and suspicious of 'negotiations.' Hence, this created a mood of delay and hesitation."⁵²

CCK adroitly cultivated Beijing's interest with candid details of the problematic ROC-US relations. On the other hand, he signaled that the KMT under Chiang still patriotically adhered to the concept of "One China." Implicit in the message was that Beijing could do worse without the Chiangs around.⁵³ Indeed, Mao had begun to mull over the idea of leaving the Chiangs on Taiwan, telling the Czechs on 22 March 1957:

The United States is trying to bring Chiang Kai-shek down. It has been cultivating a group of people to replace him. Now we need to help Chiang to oppose the US. For the question is: Which is better, Chiang or the pro-American forces fostered by the United States? Which is more desirable, that Taiwan remains under the semi-occupation of the US, as it is now, or come under total US occupation?⁵⁴

However, Taipei balked at any further step. While the PRC launched another nation-wide purge, the Anti-Rightist Movement, and Zhou Enlai pled in Cao's 19 July message, "please do not be swayed by any news or rumors and changed the original agreed upon plans [to negotiate]," CCK knew better. Around 8 August, CCK informed Cao that "there are no changes to the general scheme of plan, but things would have to be pushed to November." He cautioned that one should "wait for the dust to settle." CCK claimed to have his hands full trying to contain the domestic situation in Taiwan and thus "he would find it difficult to come to Hong Kong; all communication would be through brother W (Wang Chi-tzu)." Nevertheless, CCK reassured Cao that the

⁵² Years later, CCK's confidential secretary Jiao Renhe told Cao Jingxing (Cao's third son) that CCK left little written materials. The secret messages via the Cao Juren conduit were no exception. CCK's messages to Cao were delivered orally by Wang Chi-tzu and Cao recorded these in his notebooks. All these materials were given by the younger Cao Yi to Li Wei in the 1990s. See Li Wei 李伟 *Cao Junren Zhuan* 曹聚仁传 [A Biography of Cao Juren] (Zhengzhou: Henan renmin chubanshe, 2004), 295-307; Wu Juan, "Liangan mishi Cao Juren," C06.

⁵³ The US received similar doses of such world weariness from Chiang Ching-kuo: that he was tired of carrying out all the "unpleasant tasks" for his father as a "lackey" and hence, would like to give up his responsibilities. Such complaints were meant to counter US pressure. This bargaining method has been termed the "Chinese wife syndrome" as the stereotyped Chinese wife would threaten her husband with suicide if her demands were not met. See Taipei to Dulles, 23 Mar 1958, RG 59, box 3937, NARA, cited in Laura Tyson Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek: China's Eternal First Lady* (NY: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2006), 366; Richard H. Solomon, *Chinese Negotiating Behaviour: Pursuing Interest through 'Old Friends'* (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 1999), 43.

⁵⁴ Mao to Czech delegation, record of conversation, 22 March 1957, MD, 222.

Generalissimo had no intention of terminating the conduit.⁵⁵ On 23 September, in response to Cao's urging for a faster response, CCK again counseled patience. Cao argued in exasperation that even in China, "no one really expects the Nationalist Army to launch a counter-offensive." CCK retorted: "Truly if negotiations were to be successful, it would be best if the "old man" is still around [whose prestige would dampen any opposition]." The question was not if there would be negotiations, but who to send? Apparently, Chiang Kai-shek was still sore about Sung Yi-shan's alleged "conversion to communism" and was adamant that the ROC should not appear too eager for negotiations. Finally, CCK again stated that decision on all related matters would be further pushed to the KMT party conference.⁵⁶

In retrospect, CCK was carefully maneuvering between alerting Washington and maintaining links with Beijing. All of CCK's messages to Beijing carefully avoided giving a commitment for direct negotiations. The contents of the messages were also not sensational, as much of the information given by CCK was readily available in the newspapers. If they were leaked, they could be easily explained away. More significantly, CCK played up his image of a fierce anti-communist crusader, albeit an obedient junior partner of the Americans.⁵⁷ The paternalistic assertion of CIA that CCK was a loyal vassal was striking. Washington could barely fathom the possibility that common historical and cultural ties could bind the KMT and the CCP. Former US Ambassador to Britain Lewis W. Douglas presciently noted the nature of the Chinese civil war, cautioning Eisenhower:

... there would be a far greater risk that one day we would wake up in the morning

⁵⁵ Even Cheng Siyuan, a close confidant of exiled KMT leader Li Zongren, who visited Beijing in late April 1956 on a fact-finding mission, was alarmed by the Anti-Rightist Movement and advised Li to "put on hold his plans for returning to China." See Cheng Siyuan 程思远, *Wo de huiyi* 我的回忆 [My reminiscences] (Beijing: Huayi chubanshe, 1994), 250-251; Li Li 李立, *Guomintang qianfu Taiwan: Cong Jiangshi fuzi dao lianzhan Ma yinjiu* 国民党沉浮在台湾: 从蒋氏父子到连战马英九 [The KMT fortunes in Taiwan: From the Chiang Family to Lianzhan and Mao Yinjiu] (Beijing: Taihai chubanshe, 2008), 203; Wang Guangyuan 王光远, *Jiang Jieshi zai Taiwan* 蒋介石在台湾 [Chiang Kai-shek in Taiwan] (Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 2008), 178.

⁵⁶ CCK later explained that the domestic Taiwanese opposition cries against "Chiang family authoritarianism" were getting strident. These were propelled by the twin fears of war and the shape of peace to come. CCK divulged that there were plans for a Sino-Korean-Japanese coalition [for counter-attack], but others were unconvinced that China could be defeated. Besides, the Japanese demanded too high a price for their participation. CCK maintained disdainfully that such futile plans were American in origin. "If one cannot even protect Taiwan [let alone a tripartite coalition]," he sighed, "how can one face the people?" see, Chen Dunde 陈敦德, *Mao Zedong yu Jiang Jieshi de zuihou jiaoshou* 毛泽东与蒋介石的最后交手 [The last contest between Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek] (Taipei: Fengyun chubanshe, 2002), 278; Wang, *Jiang Jieshi zai Taiwan*, 179.

⁵⁷ John A. Lacey recalled his impression of CCK as "a thick-necked Gauleiter, a strong armed man, not one that I would particularly like to associate with." Walter Jenkins perceived CCK as "a very, very clever man." Lindsey Grant saw CCK as "nobody's fool." See *China Confidential*, 120, 133 & 137.

and find arrangements had been made between Chiang or his successor in Formosa and the mainland... Would we then try to drive them off on the pure grounds of strategic necessity?⁵⁸

The ROC-PRC secret back-channels demonstrated that Douglas' prediction was partly correct.

This aspect was important and indeed possible because of common history and cultural beliefs that warring brothers should unite, however briefly, out of patriotism to thwart a foreigner from allegedly achieving "two Chinas." Such secret back-channels would feature importantly again during the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1958.

3. The May 1957 Taiwan Riots (Liu Tzu-jan Incident)

The May 1957 Taiwan Riots provided a case study of the latent cultural fault lines between Taipei and Washington. It showed how many Americans were prejudiced against Taipei, leading to shoddy investigative work, purloined justice and sensational reporting. It also presented insights on Taiwanese fractured cultural and nationalistic resentments against Americans. The many identities and "deaths" of the protagonist of the riots, Liu Tzu-jan, further highlighted the complexities in relations between Taiwanese and Americans. In the aftermath of the riots, the nuances and roles of ritualized apologies stood out. Chiang Kai-shek's symbolic public apology and the report of the Executive Yuan tenuously straddled the domestic demands for justice while upholding the international needs of the state. The speed at which Washington accepted Taipei's apologies also signaled the burgeoning maturity and tenacity of the ROC-US relations.

3.1 US Prejudiced Views of the 1957 Taiwan Riots

The facts of the case were seemingly simple. Liu Tzu-jan, a Taiwanese "33 year-old laborer," was caught peeping at Clara, the wife of M/Sgt. Robert G. Reynolds, when she was bathing on 20 March 1957 at Reynolds' home in Yang Ming Shan. The sergeant immediately confronted Liu who then tried to attack Reynolds with "a club." Reynolds killed Liu with two shots "in self-defense." On 23 May 1957 Reynolds was acquitted of voluntary manslaughter of Liu by the eight-man jury of the US military court martial. During this acquittal, it was reported that "American

⁵⁸ Lewis W. Douglas to Dulles, 26 March 1955, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 2, Strictly Confidential - c- d (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

spectators applauded the verdict” while “Chinese shook their heads in disbelief” and “[n]ationalist Chinese cursed American soldiers today in a wave of anti-American sentiment.” On the following day, Chinese mobs wrecked the US embassy and USIS HQ, before order was restored by KMT troops in the evening.⁵⁹

American accounts of the riots were sensational. Some exaggerated the number of rioters. The *New York Times* reported a mob of 1,500 on 24 May; a day after it became 3,000 and later in the same paper it had “grown to 20,000 or 30,000.” The *Los Angeles Times* carried a bold headline that screamed: “Formosa Mob of 5,000 storms US embassy.”⁶⁰ The attempt to paint the riots as a centrally planned Nationalist effort was seen in such comments as “[o]ddly, nothing had been stolen from the shambles of the Embassy” and the shouts of students leaders to “[d]estroy, but don’t steal.”⁶¹ Such US reporting assumed that a Chinese mob would loot; no credit was given to a mob which was possibly aroused by righteous anger at an unfair acquittal.

Other conspiracy theories abounded. Chiang himself was reportedly “composed and calm.” In addition, “Chinese Nationalist officials demanded that President Chiang Kai-shek revoke the present diplomatic immunity bestowed on US soldiers.”⁶² Such circumstantial evidences were held up as proof of Taipei’s role. Keyes Beech of the *Washington Post* pointed out that it was inconceivable that a “tightly controlled island ... a police state” would have riots. He also cited that “several spoke English” and the “police made no determined effort... [despite having] two armoured cars equipped with 37 mm and machine guns.” The *Los Angeles Times* speculated that “the underlying cause might well be the restiveness of the Nationalist Chinese over being virtually imprisoned on the island.”⁶³

⁵⁹ “ACQUITTAL IRKS TAIWAN,” *New York Times*, May 24, 1957, 10; “Acquittal of GI Irks Formosans,” *The Washington Post*, 24 May 1957, A4.

⁶⁰ “U.S. Flag Trampled By Rioters in Taiwan,” *New York Times*, May 24, 1957, 1; “ANTI-U.S. RIOTERS IN TAIPEI CURBED BY CHIANG TROOPS,” *New York Times*, May 25, 1957, 1; “American Flag Torn Down,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 24, 1957, 1.

⁶¹ Robert Trumbull, “Calm is Restored after Taipei Riot,” *NYT*, 26 May 1957, 1.

⁶² “US Flag Ripped in Taiwan Riots,” *New York Times*, May 24, 1957, 10.

⁶³ James Reston of the *New York Times* too believed that the riots were “a protest against the frustrations of an increasingly isolated life.” As such, the “inevitability of trouble” arose “when allies seem to promise more than they deliver and seem to pretend that they are pursuing the same objectives when they are not.” James Reston, “The U.S. and Taiwan,” *NYT*, May 29, 1957, 10; “Shocking Attack,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 25, 1957, B4.

One major theme centered on the imagery of an ungrateful ROC brute. Beech wrote that the Americans “listen with controlled anger at Chinese apologies.” Beech felt that the apologies had a “hollow ring coming from a regime which owes its very existence to American support and would collapse without it.”⁶⁴ Some US commentators were surprised with the extent of “anti-white feelings, [and] xenophobia” displayed. An element of regret surfaced: “We have been assured that this is a gilt-edged investment in the refusal to have anything to do with the mainland government in Peking.”⁶⁵ Most thought that it was money down the drain. The *New York Times* quickly offered the quantitative side of the relationship: “\$770,000,000.”⁶⁶ Drew Pearson crassly put it down as an unwarranted “outburst of anti-Americanism on the island kept going by American Troops and American Dollars.”⁶⁷ Slowly, a few saw the disconnection between the amount of aid dispensed and the quality of friendship gained. The *Wall Street Journal* put it succinctly: “This bitterness is inevitable; the presence of soldiers smacks of occupation.” The aid provided was revealed by the *Washington Post* as “symbolizing the past sins of the white man lording it over the Asians” and depriving them of their “national sovereignty.”⁶⁸

Some urged for a relook at US foreign policy and foreign aid.⁶⁹ Columnist Walter Lippmann underscored the bankruptcy of the China Policy. As Eisenhower in 1955 “made it clear that the US would not permit Chiang to attempt an invasion...it broke the back of our China policy. It deprived the Chinese in Formosa of any hope that they could return to the mainland...” Lippmann also questioned the utility of US intransigence towards China. The policies “are psychological.

⁶⁴ He also reported how one furious American who was attacked said that the Chinese not only “bit the hand that fed them, but they kicked us in the shins and hit us over the head.” Keyes Beech, “Formosan Riot . . .” *The Washington Post*, May 28, 1957, A19.

⁶⁵ “Humpty Dumpty,” *The Washington Post*, May 25, 1957, A12.

⁶⁶ Four days later, the *Wall Street Journal* editorial carefully reasoned that “indefinitely spending some \$3 billion a year on military aid and maintaining troops in 72 nations is an untenable proposition.” “Our Furious Friends,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 28, 1957, 12; “Aid to Date, \$770,000,000,” *New York Times*, May 25, 1957, 3.

⁶⁷ Pearson verged upon hyperbole in declaring that the attacks inflicted one of the “most vicious attacks on Americans in our 178 years of history.” Drew Pearson, “Formosa Rioting Reddens Faces,” *The Washington Post*, May 28, 1957, D13.

⁶⁸ The next day, echoing Dulles’ interview on 29 May, the *Washington Post* noted that despite having “poured some \$2.75 billion in military and economic aid... no one loves an occupation force.” “The Formosa Folly,” *The Washington Post*, May 29, 1957, A12; The *Los Angeles Times* observed similarly: “There is no doubt the presence of foreign armed forces in any country is a source of friction under the best of circumstances and raises questions of the utmost difficulty.” “Close Decision in Sergeant’s Case,” *Los Angeles Times*, Jun 5, 1957, B4.

⁶⁹ Reston observed that “[a]bsolute dependence upon and dedication to Chiang Kai-shek to the complete exclusion of any eventual accommodation and settlement with the Chinese government on the main land is monumental folly.” “The Formosa Folly,” *The Washington Post*, May 29, 1957, A12.

The purpose of the restriction is to make the overseas Chinese feel that the entire world... is the enemy of Red China.”⁷⁰ Others ascribed the resentment of the Chinese to maternal jealousy. Walter Trohan of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* noted that: “Americans live in luxury compared with local peoples ... Americans abroad frequently demand and get special privileges ... They tend to become arrogant.”⁷¹ This hubris of the Americans could be observed from the comments made by Secretary of Defence Wilson, who casually commented that “the Chinese Nationalists will continue to be reliable because they have nowhere else to go”⁷² A former ambassador to India, Chester Bowles, advised that “[r]espect and understanding for other peoples of the world” would have prevented the riots and it was important to provide “a chance for the Taiwanese in Formosa to have a voice in their own future.”⁷³

Overcoming the initial shock, the US commentators began to look for deeper causes such as the clash of cultures. Trohan pointed to the different perceptions of law while leaving his readers with no ambiguity which was superior: “Peeping isn’t anything of a crime in China [sic], and there is thus a conflict in legal concepts at the bottom of the protest.”⁷⁴ Another writer wrote that: “In the Orient a much stronger feeling exists that in a case of litigation a compromise should result, if only for face-saving reasons.”⁷⁵ Behind such reasoned explanations lurked prejudice and racial superiority. African-American writer, Dean G. Hancock, pointed out that the US was suffering from the backlash of its racist foreign policy: “We know of no other parallel where a nation has done so much and is respected so little.” Hancock caustically added that “[o]ur great nation is learning, much to its chagrin, that acquitting a white man in slaying a Chinaman is not the same as acquitting a white man in slaying a defenseless Negro.”⁷⁶ Roger Darling, a former Foreign Service

⁷⁰ Walter Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *The Washington Post*, May 30, 1957, A17.

⁷¹ Roger Darling, a former Foreign Service officer, further observed that there was an “unleashing of resentment against those who have the things we don’t have.” Roger Darling, “Oriental Riots,” *The Washington Post*, Jun 8, 1957, A 6; Walter Trohan, “Riots in Nationalist China Reveal Flaws in Methods of Selling the American Way,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Jun 2, 1957, A15.

⁷² “The Formosa Folly,” *The Washington Post*, May 29, 1957, A12.

⁷³ “Formosa Riots Point Up U.S. Problem, Says Bowles,” *The Hartford Courant*, May 28, 1957, 10.

⁷⁴ But Trohan was honest enough to admit that “while the US has turned over the trial of American soldiers to so many foreign courts, it has not seen fit to do so in Formosa.” Trohan, “Riots in Nationalist China,” A15.

⁷⁵ William Henry Chamberlin, “Inevitable Friction,” *Wall Street Journal*, Jun 5, 1957, 12

⁷⁶ Dean Gordon B. Hancock, “Between The Lines ...,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, Jun 6, 1957, A6.

officer, reiterated similarly, seeing how Reynolds' acquittal had "aroused the suspicion that most Westerners felt they are better or more valuable than an Oriental."⁷⁷

3.2 The "Many Deaths" of Liu Tzu-jan

None of the US editorials bothered to reexamine the *cause c & dre* of Liu Tzu-jan's death. Why the Chinese were so agitated was simply dismissed. The oral testimony of Reynolds vilifying Liu as a "peeping Tom," "prowler," and "laborer" was held as gospel truth. No news services deviated from this description as their focus was on the horror of the riots.⁷⁸ However, in the official report by the ROC Executive Yuan, it emerged that Liu was an employee of the elite *Geming Shijian Yanjiuyuan* 革命实践研究院 [Institute of Revolutionary Practice], which was located at Yang Ming Shan.⁷⁹ He was a married government employee who happened to stay at the institute's hostel located near Reynolds' home.

However, Reynolds' testimony dominated. The US investigators obtained no testimony from Clara Reynolds, whose modesty was allegedly outraged. The fact that Liu's "club" was not found meant that Clara Reynolds' evidence became all the more important. All that the investigators found was hardly "a club," but a "finger-thick 2-foot long cherry tree branch" which was not even found at the scene but at a bamboo forest quite a distance away. Instead, the defence concentrated on the irrelevant "heroics" of Reynolds in the Korean War to the sympathetic rump jury.⁸⁰ The ballistics of the bullet trajectories indicated that the distance fired was "no more than three centimeters." Liu apparently knew Reynolds well enough to be so close. Finally, the first shot was already fatal; Liu could no longer supposedly swing his cherry stick. Yet Reynolds still fired the second shot, which appeared to be a "finishing off shot." Reynolds' guilt was seen in Dulles' admission that "he does not understand how [Reynolds] got acquitted." That the US military court martial could find

⁷⁷ Roger Darling, "Oriental Riots," *The Washington Post*, Jun 8, 1957, A 6.

⁷⁸ "Formosa Riot Figure Returns to U.S.," *Los Angeles Times*, May 27, 1957, 3.

⁷⁹ *Geming Shijian Yanjiuyuan* was also known as the Academy for the Study of Carrying out Revolution. It was a KMT cadre training school for those who wished to be in the top rungs of the government or the party. See Ramon H. Myers, "Towards an Enlightened Authoritarian Polity: The Kuomintang Central Reform Committee on Taiwan, 1950-1952," *Journal of Contemporary China*, vol. 18, no. 59 (March 2009): 191.

⁸⁰ Only eight members of the twelve-men jury turned up. All were white. Qin Feng 秦风 ed., *Suiyue Taiwan 1900-2000 岁月台湾* [Taiwan through the ages], (Guiling: Guangxi Shifan danxue chubanshe, 2005), 72-75.

Reynolds innocent of voluntary manslaughter within four days of hearing only served to highlight shoddy investigative work and purloined justice.⁸¹

Another identity of Liu was established by Washington. Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs Walter P. McConaughy wrote that Liu was a “clerk at the KMT political school.” McConaughy reported allegations that Liu was dead because of some “black-market operations” gone sour. After the first shot, Reynolds pursued the victim and finished Liu with a second shot. Although the Chinese Procurator’s office had presented evidence that Reynolds killed Liu “with malice and not in self-defence” on 16 April, the MAAG dismissed it.⁸² Other evidence revealed that Liu was “a colonel in the intelligence organization headed by Chiang Ching-kuo.” US Embassy Information Officer James Mocerri revealed that Liu was “shot in the back.” Mocerri also supported the allegations of “illegal activity.” Although there were suggestions of compensation for Liu’s widow, apologies and a guilty verdict, “the military present rejected it in the most vehement terms, draping themselves in the honor of the American flag and the military code of justice.”⁸³

Chiang Kai-shek viewed the riots seriously. According to Chiang’s bodyguard, Weng Yuan, Chiang was “consumed with fury.” Chiang lambasted Taipei Garrison Commander Huang Chen-wu: “How can you allow such a big incident? Why did you not control the emotions of the populace and forbid the crowd from rioting. Now the Americans are offended, how are we going to placate them?”⁸⁴ In Washington, ROC Ambassador Hollington Tong received a call from Foreign Minister George Yeh on 24 May, with strict instructions “not to incite or provoke” public opinion, which meant that Tong was not to express outrage or incredulity at the verdict. Tong was

⁸¹ Dulles with Eisenhower, Memo of telephone conversation, 24 May 1957 (8:35am), FRUS (1955-57), vol. 3, 528; Yü Hung-chün to CKS, “对台北不幸事件处理经过报告” [Dui taibei buxin shijian chuli jinguo baogao], 14 June 1957, serial no. 002080106035008, CKS papers, AH.

⁸² McConaughy to Robertson, Memo, 24 May 1957, FRUS (1955-57), vol. 3, 524-525. According to another source, “Reynolds had for a long time hired Liu to smuggle controlled products like imported tobacco and liquor out of the Army Co-op to sell on the market, pocketing the profit; and later, due to a monetary dispute between the two of them, Reynolds shot Liu to death.” See Chang Shih-lun, “Life in the Mountains – The American Military Housing of Yangmingshan’s Shantzuhou,” *Taiwan Panorama* (Dec 2006).

⁸³ Interview with James Mocerri, in *China Confidential*, 140.

⁸⁴ Weng Yuan 翁元, *Wo Zai Jiangshi fizhi shenbian sishisannian* 我在蒋氏父子身边四十三年 [Forty Three years by the side of the Chiang Family] (Beijing: Hua wen chubanshe, 2003), 72

also instructed to apologize to the Americans immediately and to summarize the reactions of various newspapers across the US for Chiang.⁸⁵

It was highly unlikely that the May riots were planned by Chiang and his entourage. Chiang was not about to jeopardize millions of dollars of US aid for some anonymous officer, even if the case highlighted the “sensitive” extra-judiciary privileges enjoyed by US personnel in Taiwan. Chiang’s only complaint was that “an American court martial should not be held on Chinese soil” as “it reminded everyone of extra-territoriality.”⁸⁶ Although all the US sources fingered the ROC authorities, their evidence were weak, “fragmentary” and contradicting. Rankin accused the ROC police of failure “in restraining the crowd,” but conceded that they protected the US staff.⁸⁷

McConaughy cited Chinese students hanging slogans as evidence that the riots were premeditated.⁸⁸ However, the weight of evidence indicated that the ROC ground officials were simply responding to popular disgust with the American “miscarriage of justice.” When the ROC Youth Corps were accused of inciting the riots, Chiang Ching-kuo retorted that they “just happened to be there.”⁸⁹ Indeed, a ROC source was quoted: “We must only take action we can explain to our people.”⁹⁰ To suggest that Chiang’s dictatorial régime could exercise complete control over popular outrage and induced compliance by frustrated junior officers on the ground was giving too much credit to its omnipresence.⁹¹

The rioting slogans gave insights on Taiwanese fractured cultural and nationalistic resentment against Americans. Resonating with the chants of the mob, dissatisfaction and anger were expressed in such slogans as “Kick out the American Devils,” “We want to see the representative of the barbarous Americans” and “Beat him up! Kill him!” Other observers indicated that the issue of nationalism conflated with personal integrity and honor. Liu’s widow, Ao T’e-hua, wrote to the

⁸⁵ George Yeh to Hollington Tong, telegram, 23 May 1957; Hollington Tong to George Yeh, telegram, 30 May 1957, serial no. 002080106035008, CKS papers, AH; Hollington K. Tong, *Chiang Kai-shek’s Teacher and Ambassador*, ed. Walter C. Mih (Bloomington: Authorhouse, 2005), 214;

⁸⁶ Rankin with Chiang Kai-shek, Memo of conversation, 27 May 1957, FRUS (1955-57), vol. 3, 539.

⁸⁷ Rankin to State Department, telegram, 24 May 1957, FRUS (1955-57), Vol. 3, 527.

⁸⁸ McConaughy to Robertson, memo, 26 May 1957, FRUS (1955-57), Vol. 3, 534.

⁸⁹ Dulles to AmEmbassy (Taipei), 22 Mar 1958, RG 59, Box 3937, NARA, cited in Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek*, 366.

⁹⁰ Army attaché to Department of Army, telegram, 25 May 1957, FRUS (1955-57), Vol. 3, 530.

⁹¹ My interpretation departs from Nancy Tucker, see *Taiwan, Hong Kong and the United States*, 92.

Chinese daily *Lianhe Bao* 联合报 precisely in those terms: “Is it possible that American soldiers could indiscriminately kill people but a Chinese citizen’s life is worth next to nothing?”⁹²

Subsequent slogans adopted Ao’s theme and appealed to Chinese not to accept the racist verdict of the Reynolds’ case. The victim’s cousin, Feng Yün-sheng, carried a placard which summed up the Taiwanese perspective of the case: “The Killer-Reynolds is Innocent? Protest against the US Court Martial. Unfair, Unjust Decision!” Cold War rhetoric was also subverted and recycled, as seen in the slogan, “Don’t act like Russians,” which accused Americans of imperialistic “barbarous” behavior.⁹³

What was the role of Chiang Ching-kuo (CCK)? Mocerri *speculated* that CCK’s “wrecking squad” incited the crowd as a form of “revenge” to “teach a lesson the Americans could neither ignore nor forget.” Given that Liu was a senior member of his institute, this was conceivable. Chou Hung-t’ao, a KMT central committee member, also alluded to CCK’s hand:

CCK’s nationalist feelings and sense of justice are very strong. He is prone to use his influence for didactic ends. But the May 24 incident alerted him that problems had to be examined from all angles.

Chou further reported that when the ROC military police asked CCK’s Security Bureau for instructions during the riots, the Security Bureau curtly stated that the military police had no business with the riots at the embassy. They were instructed not to interfere, lest mistakes were committed. However, Dulles doubted that CCK started the riots “though this charge had been made by a high KMT official”; he thought that CCK was mostly guilty of standing aside and allowing “the riot to run its course.”⁹⁴

⁹² Guo Chuanxi et al. 郭传玺 (ed), *Zhongguo guomindang Taiwan sishinian shigang* 中国国民党台湾四十年史纲 [A history of the KMT 40 years in Taiwan] (Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 1993), 177.

⁹³ While the Americans interpreted the popular slogan, “Don’t take anything,” as evidence that the riots were a coordinated exercise, one could also explain it as a warning that everything in the embassy was so vile and corrupt that it was not worth looting. Information on slogans were obtained from the following reports: “American Flag Torn Down,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 24, 1957, 1; “D.C. Secretary Tells Of Formosa Riots,” *The Washington Post*, Jun 2, 1957, A5; Robert Trumbill, “CALM IS RESTORED AFTER TAIPEI RIOT,” *The New York Times*, May 26, 1957, 1; Keyes Beech, “Formosan Riot . . .” *The Washington Post*, May 28, 1957, A19; Yü Hung-chün to CKS, “对台北不幸事件处理经过报告” [Dui taibei buxin shijian chuli jinguo baogao], 14 June 1957, serial no. 002080106035008, CKS papers, AH.

⁹⁴ Interview of James Mocerri, in *China Confidential*, 140; Zhou Hongtao 周宏涛, *Jiang gong yu wo: jianzhen zhonghua minguo guanjian bianju* 蒋公与我: 见证中华民国关键变局 [With Chiang: witnessing important events in the Republic of China] (Taipei: Tianxia yuanjian chuban gufeng youxian gongsi, 2003), 423 & 432; 325th NSC meeting, 27 May 1957, FRUS (1955-57), Vol. 3, 541; McConaughy to Robertson, memo, 26 May 1957, FRUS (1955-57), Vol. 3, 534.

In the end, the White House officially recognized that the Taiwan riots were spontaneous. Dulles expressed the official position on 29 May 1957, but the message seemed lost amid the handwringing by American public opinion:

... we have no evidence to indicate [the Nationalist government] contributed toward [the riots]. Perhaps they were not as vigilant as they might have been to try to take measures to keep the situation under control. They may have miscalculated the explosive character of the situation⁹⁵

Dulles acknowledged the problems of a large US military presence. Ironically, to reinforce that the riots were spontaneous, Dulles resorted to another stereotype about the Chinese: “Of course we know the Chinese are given to that sort of thing. We have had anti-foreign outbreaks in China for a long time ... the Boxer outbreaks of 50 or 60 years ago ... I regard it as indicating something that is very old—a sentiment which is deeply embedded in all people and particularly embedded in the Chinese people.”⁹⁶

3.3 Ritualized Apologies

The Taiwan riots also presented an interesting case study of the nuances and roles of ritualized apologies. The ROC government cabinet wanted to resign in the aftermath of the riots. George Yeh’s official reply on the same day expressed “profound sense of regret” and “accept full responsibility for the losses.” The following day, Chiang again expressed “profound regret” to Eisenhower and Dulles through Rankin and dismissed three senior officers related to the mismanagement of the riots. Then in a broadcast apology on 1 June, routinely reported by six news agencies and wired services, Chiang shouldered the entire blame: “I must openly admit that my leadership has been at fault.”⁹⁷

⁹⁵ “The State Department’s Record of Dulles’ News Conference,” *New York Times*, May 30, 1957, 4.

⁹⁶ Nothing was said about the fact that US also had a long history of anti-foreign sentiments, particularly when they pertained to “spontaneity”: anti-Chinese riots (1877) and official Chinese Exclusion Acts (1882). Chang Ch’ün to CKS, telegram, 21 July 1957, serial no. 002080106035008, CKS papers, AH; Michael H. Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and China to 1914* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1983), 73-79 & 86-114.

⁹⁷ Chiang sent 33,000 troops to promptly quell the riots. The three senior officers removed were: Maj. Gen. Lo Kan (Commissioner of Provincial Police), Lieut. Gen. Huang Chen-wu (Commander of Taipei Garrison) and Lieut. Gen. Lin Wei (Head of Military Police). See Spencer Moosa, “Chiang’s Troops Quell Anti-U.S. Riots in Taipei,” *The Washington Post*, May 25, 1957, 1; Robert Trumbull, “CALM IS RESTORED AFTER TAIPEI RIOT,” *The New York Times*, May 26, 1957, 1; Robert Trumbull, “CHIANG EXPRESSES REGRET OVER RIOT,” *New York Times*, May 27, 1957, 1; Chang Ch’ün to CKS, telegram, 26 May 1957, serial no. 002080106035008, CKS papers, AH; 外国通讯社及报线记者于六月二日自台北发出有关总统六一文告专电内容” [Waiguo tongxunshe ji paoxian jizhe yu liuyue erri zi taipei fachu youguan zhongtong liuyi wengao zhuandian neirong], 1 June 1957, serial no. 002080106035008, CKS papers, AH.

American public opinion generally missed the symbolism of Chiang's gestures. Chiang classified the riots as condemnable acts and *guochi* (national humiliation) because the Americans had always treated China fairly and were not party to the humiliating Boxer Accords. The sixty-nine-year old patriarch was firm about where the ROC stood:

I must make it clear again to our people that in carrying out our national policy against communism and Russian imperialism we must stand on the same side with the US, which is the leader of the democratic nations and that we cannot permit any opposition to this policy from within or without.

If the reporters missed the nuances of *guochi*, the White House did not. The ROC ambassador to the US swiftly reported to Chiang that Eisenhower noted Chiang's gesture in a news conference with reporters on 5 June, with Eisenhower saying that "Chiang had been very prompt in expressing regret for the incident and has shouldered a great deal of the blame himself."⁹⁸

The ROC Executive Yuan deftly navigated the minefield of nationalism, justice and *guochi*. Its report on 14 June 1957 had to reflect Chiang's apology but at the same time placate the populace. In doing so, the report displayed the tropes of a morality play, used to satisfy disparate audiences.⁹⁹ First it presented exhaustively the facts of the Liu Tze-jan incident, publishing hitherto unavailable information from the ROC investigation and pointing out the weakness of the US court martial's verdict. This rendering immediately established a rapport with the local readers. It then shifted gear to depict the randomness of the riots and stressed that the riots were not planned. Special emphasis was given to the heart-wrenching scene of Liu's faithful widow, Ao T'e-hua, who stood for hours crying in front of the US embassy. These details established the human element in the riots and highlighted the themes of piety, forgone justice and the righteousness of the mob, moved by the wails of Ao.

⁹⁸ Zhou, *Jiang gong yu wo*, 427; Greg MacGregor, "Chiang Says Riots Arose From Fault In His Leadership," *The New York Times*, Jun 2, 1957, 1; Hollington Tong to CKS, telegram, 6 June 1957, serial no. 002080106035008, CKS papers, AH.

⁹⁹ This insight of a morality play came from Reynaldo Clemena Iletto, *Pasyon & Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Manila: Ateneo De Manila University Press, 1979).

Through such nuanced scripting, the Chinese readers were “prepared” to accept the conclusion of the report, that “we” understand why the riots happened and are ready to accept the remedy to repair the damage. The report declared that the “interest of the nation and its honor had suffered a grievous blow,” but stressed the importance of “national education” regarding an “understanding of our national laws, importance of tolerance, rights, and knowledge of international relations.” It then explained the difficulties faced by the nation: “Some questioned the extra-territorial rights of the Americans, but we are accepting US military aid.” It subsequently appealed to the nationalism of the populace, to understand that if the nation was to survive in its anti-communist fight, it had to tolerate the realities and inconveniences of accepting foreign aid. The report thus satisfied the public need to know the facts and established subtly the government’s sympathies, but assuaged at the same time American feelings by rooting the ROC’s stand firmly in its anti-communist crusade.¹⁰⁰

Nevertheless, a state of uneasy tension pervaded the ROC-US relations in the aftermath of the riots. One issue was the rumored US recognition of the PRC reported by the British press on 21 May 1958. Given the intensity of the ill feelings over the riots, this rumour became virulent, and US Ambassador Everett Drumright had to vigorously deny such “groundless speculations.” Although Drumright told Yeh that the reports were wrong, he admitted that he did not explicitly seek to reassure Taipei. The attention which the ROC paid to this faux pas demonstrated how sensitive it was to the possibility of American disgruntlement. Taipei also suspected that the US might want to drive home the point that American friendship should not be taken for granted.¹⁰¹ Yet, at the same time, the speed at which Washington accepted the ROC’s apologies signaled the burgeoning maturity and tenacity of the ROC-US relations. Such multi-faceted dimensions of the ROC-US relations could again be discerned when one explores how the Taiwan Strait Crisis was played out in the rendering of the *fangong* mission in Taiwanese society and politics from 1955 to 1957.

¹⁰⁰ Y ü Hung-ch ün to CKS, “对台北不幸事件处理经过报告” [Dui taibei buxin shijian chuli jinguo baogao], 14 June 1957, serial no. 002080106035008, CKS papers, AH

¹⁰¹ Cheng Chieh-min to CKS, 24 May 1958, serial no. 002080106012004, CKS papers, AH.

4. The ROC and the *Fangong* Mission

Chiang continued preparation for the mission of *fangong dalu* (counter-offensive against the mainland) from 1955 to 1957. The outbreak of the Taiwan Strait Crisis further justified the need for political indoctrination. Such a call was also discernible in the popular culture. In emphasizing *fangong*, Chiang persisted in reinforcing total control of the army by the KMT party and at the same time paid attention to the welfare of the soldiers. Yet, although military planning for *fangong* continued in a ritualistic manner, changing domestic and international developments gradually led to the waning of such a vision. With defensive thinking quietly given precedence over the belligerency of counter-attack, the slogan of “counter-offensive” became subverted into a more pedestrian domestic rallying cliché aimed at boosting morale, stabilizing and militarizing society, and disciplining a credible work force.

4.1 Political, Cultural and Military Indoctrination

In the wake of China’s bombardment during the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, Quemoy came to symbolize the political survival of Taiwan. In this context, the propagation of the Ten Precepts of Chiang Kai-shek’s Military Thought during the bombardment of Quemoy presented an interesting case study of indoctrination, political rationalization and crisis management. The Ten Precepts were formulated for the ROC citizen-soldiers:

1. The whole Army will unreservedly destroy the enemy
2. Carefully tend to the battlefield, seriously train for war
3. Conserve your strength, exalt in warfare
4. Everyone to arms, totally destroy the enemy
5. Be healthy, eat well
6. Have solid, orderly, neat and accessible battlefield processes
7. In battle, be ruthless and warlike
8. Impregnable fortifications are the rule.
9. Thrive and excel in war
10. The Quemoy conflict would be a matter of life and death for all Chinese

An examination of the central themes revealed the primary denominators of “war” and “all Chinese.” If Quemoy was a microcosm of the ROC’s polity, then the precepts gave a fair indicator on the state of the society and the preoccupation of the leadership. According to a Quemoy political tract published in 1956, these military precepts of Chiang embodied the spirit of the

“party, government, military and the people combined.”¹⁰² The author of this short tract, Feng Lun-yi, highlighted that the “impregnable” success of Quemoy and the inability of the PRC to conquer Quemoy stemmed from many factors. “Close cooperation between the military and the population” and “good work put in by the divisions” were important, but the “critical element” was “President’s [Chiang] military thought.” Military effectiveness and soldierly dedication must be guided by the correct political ideology so that “the two [theory and practice] shall be one.”¹⁰³

Besides political exhortation, Paul Cohen noted that the theme of *woxin changdan* (sleeping on thorns and tasting bile) was prevalent in the popular literature as well.¹⁰⁴ In the preface of his book, *Zhongxing Shihua* (Historical accounts of National Resurgence), published during the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, Huang Dashou stated clearly the relevance and importance of his seven historical accounts for the prevailing national crisis:

These were all events of epoch-making significance in Chinese history and ... bear a close correspondence to our present situation ... As long as we are prepared to endure hardship ... how can we not be victorious in our struggle against the Communists and Russians? How can our *guangfu dalu* (recovery of the mainland) not be crowned with success?

Support by the KMT régime was seen in the prefaces as important officials praised Huang’s book as “the best extra-curricular reading material for the youth of China.”¹⁰⁵ Echoing similar sentiments as Huang’s book, Chen Wenquan’s play, *Guojian yu Xi Shi* (King Guojian and the Beauty Xi Shi), which was completed in the midst of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, highlighted the importance of Confucian values for the national mission of *fuguo* (recovery of country). As Paul Cohen noted perceptively: “The use of historical literature to convey political messages was

¹⁰² As the precepts were deemed applicable for both the defence of Quemoy and the larger impending goal of a “Mainland Counter-offensive,” the slogan, “Annihilate the bandits, Protect Quemoy” came to portray the core concerns succinctly. “战争原则与金门作战思想” [Zanzhen yuanze yu jinmen zuozan Sixiang], 金防部干训班编 [Jinfang bugan xunban bian], June 1956, serial no. 002080102100008, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁰³ “战争原则与金门作战思想” [Zanzhen yuanze yu jinmen zuozan Sixiang], 金防部干训班编 [Jinfang bugan xunban bian], June 1956, serial no. 002080102100008, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁰⁴ Cohen, *Speaking to History*, 90.

¹⁰⁵ The identification of Chiang with the central theme of the book was also seen in the book’s cover illustration. Chiang was drawn as a noble giant armed with a bright lantern of “anti-communism” and a sword bestrode across the island of Taiwan, presumably shining his beacon of hope upon the dark continent of Communist China. Cohen, *Speaking to History*, 108.

an age-old Chinese practice – it certainly wasn't invented by the Communists – and Chinese were accustomed to looking for such messages in much of what they read and viewed.”¹⁰⁶

In emphasizing the *fangong* mission, Chiang also exercised total control of the military through Chiang Ching-kuo's directorship of the General Political Department of the Ministry of Defense and the adoption of the Soviet-style Political Commissar system. The KMT's control over the military via the commissar system vexed the US. The MAAG saw this as excessively wasteful, cumbersome and detrimental to command structures.¹⁰⁷ Admiral Radford complained about such practices in the ROC navy to the ROC Foreign Minister George Yeh, noting that “personnel changes in the Navy are controlled more by reports from the political officers than based on merit.” Moreover, since “the political officer's reports are made secretly to the Political Department without reference to or consultations with the officer-in-command,” this would also “create *fear* in all ranks.” Yeh explained that considering past defections in the navy, “we have to take greater caution in preventing any recurrence of defection, communist infiltration being what it is.”¹⁰⁸ The removal and arrest of the ROC Chief of Army, VMI graduate General Sun Li-jen, for alleged US-supported coup intentions further served to reinforce the need for a vigorous political commissar system.¹⁰⁹

Nevertheless, practical soldering issues were not forgotten as the Political Commissars were also tasked to look into the welfare of soldiers. Jay Taylor commented that the KMT regime effected a “revolution in the treatment of the common soldiers in the Chinese Nationalist army.”¹¹⁰ Chiang personally oversaw material benefits and the welfare of his soldiers, and instructed the military top brass to look into designing an officers' retirement pension scheme and a “savings provident fund”

¹⁰⁶ Cohen, *Speaking to History*, 105.

¹⁰⁷ MAAG noted that it was “unnecessary to have such an enormous Political Commissars department . . . It is also a contradiction to have an additional cadre training department over and above the normal military training department.” Cheng Chieh-min to CKS, “补充兵役与预备兵役设计画” [Bucongbingyi yu yubeibingyi jihuashu], 1 June 1956, serial no. 002080106051004, CKS papers, AH.

¹⁰⁸ Yeh pointed out that China's new naval school, the Naval Technological Research Institute and its Navy Command Research Committee, consisted of numerous ex-KMT sailors and commanders. Xinhuanet, “Biography of Comrade Zhang Aiping,” <http://Xinhuanet.cn> (accessed 12 July, 2003).

¹⁰⁹ Record of conversation, George Yeh K. C. and Admiral Radford, 18 January 1955, serial no.002080106035005, CKS papers, AH; Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong and the United State*, 73.

¹¹⁰ Taylor, *The Generalissimo's Son*, 214.

for officers and soldiers to draw in times of “emergencies.” Outstanding and loyal personnel were also encouraged to remain in the military. Well aware of the debilitating impact of military sycophants, Chiang further ordered the practice of “staging military shows for visitors” to be stopped and wanted no more Potemkin villages on the frontline.¹¹¹

4.2 Fangong Military Planning: The Waning of Vision

Despite the pervasiveness of a “counter-offensive culture,” the shaping of the “counter-offensive” military strategy took on subtle aspects of incongruity that belied the total commitment of Chiang’s loyal lieutenants. In June 1956, General Pang Mang-chi complained to Chiang that progress in the counter-offensive planning was “less than ideal and appears to be slow” while with each passing year, the “communists’ power and defenses have become stronger.” What was left unsaid was the lethargy, largely self-inflicted, that had crept up upon the military staff responsible for counter-offensive planning. In all aspects, the counter-offensive spirit had slowly faded in urgency, despite the looming military threat posed by China. This paradox was due to two factors. One, China had established itself firmly politically and economically through the years. Western countries such as Great Britain had openly urged the US to ease trade restrictions with China. Two, as Taiwan embarked upon domestic development to boost counter-offensive efforts, the perpetuation of a war economy was no longer tenable. Being a recipient of American aid also meant that the ROC had to heed the US call to concentrate on economic development, and with such development bearing fruit, Chiang’s vision of an ever-impending counter-offensive further waned.¹¹²

Fading visions aside, another emerging feature of the “counter-offensive” culture was the ritualistic rendering of contradictions in aspirations and means in such military planning reports as

¹¹¹ CKS to Quemoy Defense Department & ROC 8th Army command post, written instructions, 1956, serial no. 002080200352038, CKS papers, AH. Elsewhere, Chiang was concerned about officers-men relations. As the local draftees spoke the Mingnan dialect (common to coastal Fujian province) that was all but incomprehensible to most Northern KMT officers, all instruction booklets were required to be supported by Mandarin [國語] pronunciation guide in order to engender closer officers-men relations. CKS to General Pang Mang-chi, written instructions, 20 February 1956, serial no.002080200352007, CKS papers, AH.

¹¹² This was especially “regrettable” for General Pang as he had submitted a plan, *Guang Zuozhan Jihuaan* “光作战计划案” [Reunification War Plans], as early as 1953. General Pang Mang-chi to CKS, “反攻大陆初期作战大纲之考案” [Fangong dalu chuqi zuozhan dagang zhi kaoan] (Secret), 30 June 1956, serial no. 002080102126009, CKS papers, AH.

General Pang's. First, the report would present a formulaic protest regarding the "originality of the present plan." Then there would be a date set for the "counter-offensive," in Pang's case, "a projection of a future situation around June next year." Such a promising start would then be eroded by increasing hints at the limitations of the ROC. This trope set the reader up for worse predictions, with the conclusion, as seen in Pang's report, that "for an *independent* counter-offensive slated for June next year, based on our present strength, it would be an *extremely* difficult mission." The primary blame for such a conclusion would be pinned upon the intransigence of the US, whose "limited assistance" was considered the bane of all promising ROC counter-offensive plans. In such a manner, Pang thus fulfilled his role as the loyal general dying to fulfill Chiang's vision, but whose plans were handicapped by the US. Blaming the US had long been a credible ploy, the KMT's version of the "stabbed in the back" theory; as an article of faith, Chiang had privately always blamed President Truman for the "loss" of China. In short, political exercises such as "counter-offensive" planning could be seen to have functioned at many levels. By presenting a military strategy, General Pang was pledging personal allegiance to Chiang's vision but by stressing the importance of US aid, he could also fulfill his professional duties as a soldier in softly rubbishing Chiang's vision.¹¹³

By 1957, the continuous exhortation of a "counter-offensive" appeared to wear thin. In the 1957 ROC military report to Chiang, under the section of "Present Defence Policy," there appeared to be a low-key demotion of "mainland counter-offensive" to second place. Taking precedence was a realistic aim, which reflected an appreciation of local conditions, of "preserving the integrity of the Taiwan base." Although there still was the hallowed target of "mainland counter-offensive," the military only aimed at a modest "expansion of mainland activities to create conducive conditions for 'counter-offensive.'" Elsewhere under the section of "General Principles Guiding War Strategies," there were similar indications of a precedence of defensive thinking over the belligerency of counter-attack. "For the preservation of Quemoy, Matsu, Penghu and Taiwan," declared the report, "we must prepare for counter-offensive." However, it continued: "Should the

¹¹³ General Pang Mang-chi to CKS, "反攻大陆初期作战大纲之考案" [Fangong dalu chuqi zuozhan dagang zhi kaoan] (Secret), 30 June 1956, serial no. 002080102126009, CKS papers, AH.

Communist bandits invade Quemoy and Matsu, the Nationalist army would destroy the invading enemies. We would observe closely for opportune international conditions and insurrection conditions on Mainland China. When conditions become ideal, we would invade Fukien, establish a base and launch our counter-offensive.” This cautionary pause for ideal international and local conditions seemed to deflate much wind from the “counter-offensive” drive.¹¹⁴

The *coup de grâçe* was delivered on page twelve. In the sub-section on “An Analysis of Possible Counter-offensive Opportunities,” the report stressed that independent action was out of the question as the ROC had “not yet completed preparation and achieve conditions.” On joint military action with allied armies, it stated that the possibility was low. With the non-military and “diplomatic support” of allied nations, the possibility was higher although it stiffly noted that the ROC had “always depended on itself.” The report tirelessly continued in another sub-section on “The Selection of Military Targets,” where it gave the shortest timeline of one to two years for a counter-attack on northern China, the preconditions being allied military aid and military bases in Japan and Korea. In the last option of an independent southern invasion, with or without allied support, it estimated a long grueling warfare of three to five years. Underscoring all the “counter-offensive” planning, the ROC blithely waved the Formosa Resolution, stating that most of the troops could be mustered for a wholesale counter-attack. This belied the defensive nature and the secret reassurances given to the US that the Resolution ought not to be evoked for a counter-attack on China.¹¹⁵

These planning rituals highlighted the tense negotiation of quixotic expectations, painful realistic appreciation and pure political expediencies. Paying lip service to Chiang’s waning vision, the arm service chiefs echoed the impending “counter-attack” in numerous strategic planning committees involving all levels of the ROC government. However, after a robust outburst of verbal “counter-attack,” there would always be a circumspect retraction on the ground that all had to depend on

¹¹⁴ Ministry of Defence to CKS, “国防部反攻军事战略判断 (修正本)” [Guofangbu fangong junshi zhanlue panduan (xiuzhengben)] (secret), 1957, serial no. 002080102009002, CKS papers, AH

¹¹⁵ Ministry of Defence to CKS, “国防部反攻军事战略判断 (修正本)” [Guofangbu fangong junshi zhanlue panduan (xiuzhengben)] (secret), 1957, serial no. 002080102009002, CKS papers, AH

“international circumstances” and one “must be flexible to the situation.” In reality, the “counter-offensive” slogan had become subverted into a more pedestrian domestic rallying cliché aimed at boosting morale, stabilizing and militarizing society, and disciplining a credible work force.¹¹⁶

Disdainful of the ROC’s approach towards the military and all aspects of *fangong*, the US MAAG in Taiwan exerted considerable pressure on Taipei to reduce the number of divisions (up to ten), lest the maintenance of a standing army weakened the Taiwanese economy. In any case, the ROC treasury could not support the active divisions. The US dangled another carrot of \$48 million in aid to help with the settlement of retired soldiers, before Chiang finally relented and shrewdly shifted the focus to the reserves.¹¹⁷ As a permanent standing army was not practical, a reserves system would ensure that Chiang have at his command the adequate force to launch a counter-attack and at the same time leave the ROC’s economy with enough operational manpower. The importance of the reserves was first highlighted in the “Kai” Plans in 1953 and reinforced in the Chiang-Van Fleet talks in 1954.¹¹⁸ With the availability of funding, the ROC Reservist Command was created on 1 July 1955. A year later, MAAG issued a report on the state of the ROC’s reserves system, criticizing the excessively large number of reserves, various tactical and administrative matters, and the political control imposed from the government. However, it conceded that the reserves system was operating smoothly and “the training syllabi ... were extremely close to the US model.”¹¹⁹

Closely tied to the issue of the reserves was the existence of a huge number of old KMT soldiers.

In confronting the physical and political problems of settling the soldiers, Chiang Ching-kuo re-

¹¹⁶ Wildly predicting the “imminent collapse of the Soviet government,” the report then gleefully envisioned that “the oncoming World War cannot be avoided.” This vertiginous charade detailing soaring maxims of “depending on oneself” and simultaneous unrealistic expectations of allied aid for a possible “counter-offensive” reflected a conflicted political entity. Ministry of Defence to CKS, “国防部反攻军事战略判断 (修正本)” [Guofangbu fangong junshi zhanlue panduan (xiuzhengben)] (secret), 1957, serial no. 002080102009002, CKS papers, AH

¹¹⁷ Wang Bosong 黄柏松, “Tuifuhui rongmin anbu yu lishan diqu nongye fazhang (1956-1987)” 退辅会荣民安置与梨山地区农业发展 [Retired Servicemen Settlement of VAC and Agriculture Development of Lishan Area], (MA thesis, National Central University 国立中央大学, 2007), 55-58.

¹¹⁸ Record of Fourth Conversation between President Chiang Kai-shek and General James A. Van Fleet, 24 May 1954, serial no. 002-080106-034-009, CKS papers, AH.

¹¹⁹ Cheng Chieh-min to CKS, “补充兵役与预备兵役计画” [Bucongbingyi yu yubeibingyi jihuashu], 1 June 1956, serial no. 002080106051004, CKS papers, AH.

used the ethos of *fangong dalu* to appeal to their patriotism. He addressed the ex-soldiers in 1956, stressing that their revolutionary torch would be carried forth by the younger generation:

If we do not embark upon this business of retiring the older soldiers ... we would be left with troops that are forty to fifty years old. How can we fight a war ... ? Today the government is managing the retirement of our older soldiers in order to renew our ranks and strengthen our fighting prowess.¹²⁰

Retired soldiers were encouraged by easy credit to purchase land for farming, and private businesses were strongly encouraged to co-opt former KMT military and security officers into their management teams. Chiang Ching-kuo's Vocational Assistance Commission for Retired Servicemen (VAC) offered re-training and welfare services for retired soldiers and provided small amounts of seed money for those who wished to set up small businesses.¹²¹ Others were employed by state enterprises connected with the VAC, such as Retser Engineering Company, which was tasked to build the East-West Highway in 1956.¹²² The VAC also supported a huge military industrial complex. As the ROC insisted on being self-sufficient in the production of basic munitions, such companies were formed under the VAC, which also soaked up excess manpower from ex-service men. As the military expenditure was 13% of the ROC's GNP in 1960, VAC-related companies were the main beneficiaries and VAC-backed industries constituted the biggest of all government enterprises in Taiwan.¹²³

Americans were quick to note the effect of economic development on the ROC's military drive from as early as 1954. During their visits to Taiwan in 1954, General Van Fleet (special envoy of President Eisenhower) and Assistant Secretary of Defense McNeil made some sharp observations to Yeh about the attitudes of local-born Taiwanese towards the KMT government, remarking that "the locals seemed indifferent and impassive towards Chiang's counter-attack." Yeh candidly quoted from the US ambassador to the Philippines, who had noted that "while the ROC's officers welcomed the developments and improvements made in the armed services, they are doubtful that

¹²⁰Chiang Ching-kuo, speech, 4 Sept 1956, in *Jiang jingguo quanji* 蒋经国先生全集 [The Complete Works of Chiang Ching-kuo], Vol. 5, ed. Edited by Jiangjinguo xiansheng quanji pianji weiyuanhui 蒋经国先生全集编辑委员会 (Taipei: Limin chubanshe, 1991), 306.

¹²¹ Taylor, *The Generalissimo's Son*, 212 & 249.

¹²² Ray S. Cline, *Chiang Ching-kuo Remembered* (Washington, D.C.: US Global Strategy Council, 1989), 76-77.

¹²³ Alice H. Amsden, "The State and Taiwan's Economic Development," in *Bringing the state back in*, ed. Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 99-100.

the mainland Chinese would welcome the return of the KMT.” This ambassador reported that American officers he had spoken to were of the opinion that the locals “were apathetic towards the defense of Taiwan, but most did not dare to oppose the ‘counter-attack’ campaign.” These observations underscored two issues in Taiwan’s polity. One, Chiang’s counter-attack failed to resonate with the population at large. What was surprising was the degree of doubt that existed in 1954 even among the ROC’s officers who were mostly mainlanders. Two, the simmering resentment of the locals who were muted by the 1948 massacres had led to a stolid citizenry no more enthusiastic about Chiang’s KMT than Mao’s communism. “Counter-attack” to the local-born meant a fading project of the mainlanders. Yeh recommended better integration of the local-born and more effective propaganda. However, even Yeh wryly noted that whether local-born Taiwanese could be counted on “to take part in the counter-offensive, and to what degree they would contribute, is another question.”¹²⁴

The ROC was also persuaded by its allies to place more emphasis on economic development than *fangong*. With the Mutual Defence Treaty at hand, observed the Japanese Ambassador Yoshizawa Kenkichi on 18 Feb 1955 in a meeting with Chiang Kai-shek, “the security of the ROC is completely reassured.” However, as the US had no wish to “start another war,” Chiang’s “counter-attack” of the mainland would have to be painfully “put off by a couple of years.” Instead of pining for the impossible, the ROC government should “concentrate its energies on the economy so as to attain self-sufficiency.” Yoshizawa further advised Chiang that “economic health would promote domestic security and fiscal growth.”¹²⁵

Conclusion

Zhou’s conciliatory gesture at the Bandung Conference was followed by other initiatives to prompt the US toward bilateral negotiations and Eisenhower decided to proceed with the Sino-US ambassadorial talks to be held in Geneva. Although the bilateral talks represented progress from a

¹²⁴ George Yeh to CKS, “越南停战后中国外交及涉外事项所应考虑态度及办理事务” [Yuenan tingzhan hou zhongguo waijiao ji shewai shixiang suoying kaol ütaidu ji banli shiwu], 27 July 1954, serial no.002080106003009, CKS papers, AH.

¹²⁵ Minutes of meeting CKS with Japanese Ambassador Yoshizawa Kenkichi, 18 February 1955, serial no.002080106065020, CKS papers, AH.

framework of tacit communication toward Sino-US tacit accommodation, the limitations of such an accommodation became apparent during the negotiations to discuss the issues of US airmen and the Taiwan Strait and different expectations led to inconclusive results by the end of 1957. Nonetheless, even though the 1955-1957 Sino-US ambassadorial talks could not resolve the issues, its long-term consequences were noteworthy as it paved the way for the holding of future Sino-US ambassadorial talks, which became one of the main communication channels in subsequent Sino-US relations. This positive overtone of the Sino-US ambassadorial talks riled the ROC, which further viewed it as the harbinger of a potential disaster that could lead to its declining international standing and deteriorating US-ROC relations. To express its unhappiness and frustration, the KMT blatantly conducted raids on China in the midst of the talks in August 1955. Taipei's uneasiness and paranoia with Washington would also be played out in two areas: secret negotiations with Beijing and the 1957 Taiwan Riots.

While the CIA had intelligence about possible secret contacts between the ROC and the PRC, it doubted the veracity of such information and was persuaded by Chiang Ching-kuo of the steadfastness of the ROC. Although the ROC participated in the back-channels, it was intensely wary of the PRC and carefully maneuvered between alerting Washington and maintaining links with Beijing. Albeit hostile rhetoric, common historical and cultural ties explained how Taipei and Beijing could maintain the links, however briefly, out of patriotism that warring brothers should unite to thwart a foreigner from allegedly achieving "two Chinas." Such secret back-channels would feature importantly again during the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1958. However, this was a point which the Eisenhower Administration failed to fathom.

The 1957 Taiwan Riots provided a case study of the latent cultural fault lines between Taipei and Washington. It showed how many Americans were prejudiced in their views of the riots, leading to shoddy investigative work, purloined justice and sensational reporting. It also presented insights on Taiwanese fractured cultural and nationalistic resentments against Americans. The many identities and "deaths" of the protagonist of the riots, Liu Tzu-jan, further highlighted the complexities in

relations between Taiwanese and Americans. In the aftermath of the riots, the nuances and roles of ritualized apologies stood out. Chiang Kai-shek's symbolic public apology and the report of the Executive Yuan tenuously straddled the domestic demands for justice while upholding the international needs of the state. The speed at which Washington accepted Taipei's apologies also signaled the burgeoning maturity and tenacity of the ROC-US relations. Such multi-faceted dimensions of the ROC-US relations could again be discerned when one explores how the Taiwan Strait Crisis was played out in the rendering of the *fangong* mission in Taiwanese society and politics from 1955 to 1957.

Chiang continued preparation for the mission of *fangong dalu* (counter-offensive against the mainland) from 1955 to 1957. The outbreak of the Taiwan Strait Crisis further justified the need for political indoctrination. Such a call was also discernible in the popular culture. In emphasizing *fangong*, Chiang persisted in reinforcing total control of the army by the KMT party and at the same time paid attention to the welfare of the soldiers. Yet, although military planning for *fangong* continued in a ritualistic manner, changing domestic and international developments gradually led to the waning of such a vision. With defensive thinking quietly given precedence over the belligerency of counter-attack, the slogan of "counter-offensive" became subverted into a more pedestrian domestic rallying cliché aimed at boosting morale, stabilizing and militarizing society, and disciplining a credible work force.

In sum, the inter-crises period of 1955-1957 witnessed important developments for the US-PRC-ROC relations. How all these developments played out in the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis will be explored in the next two chapters.

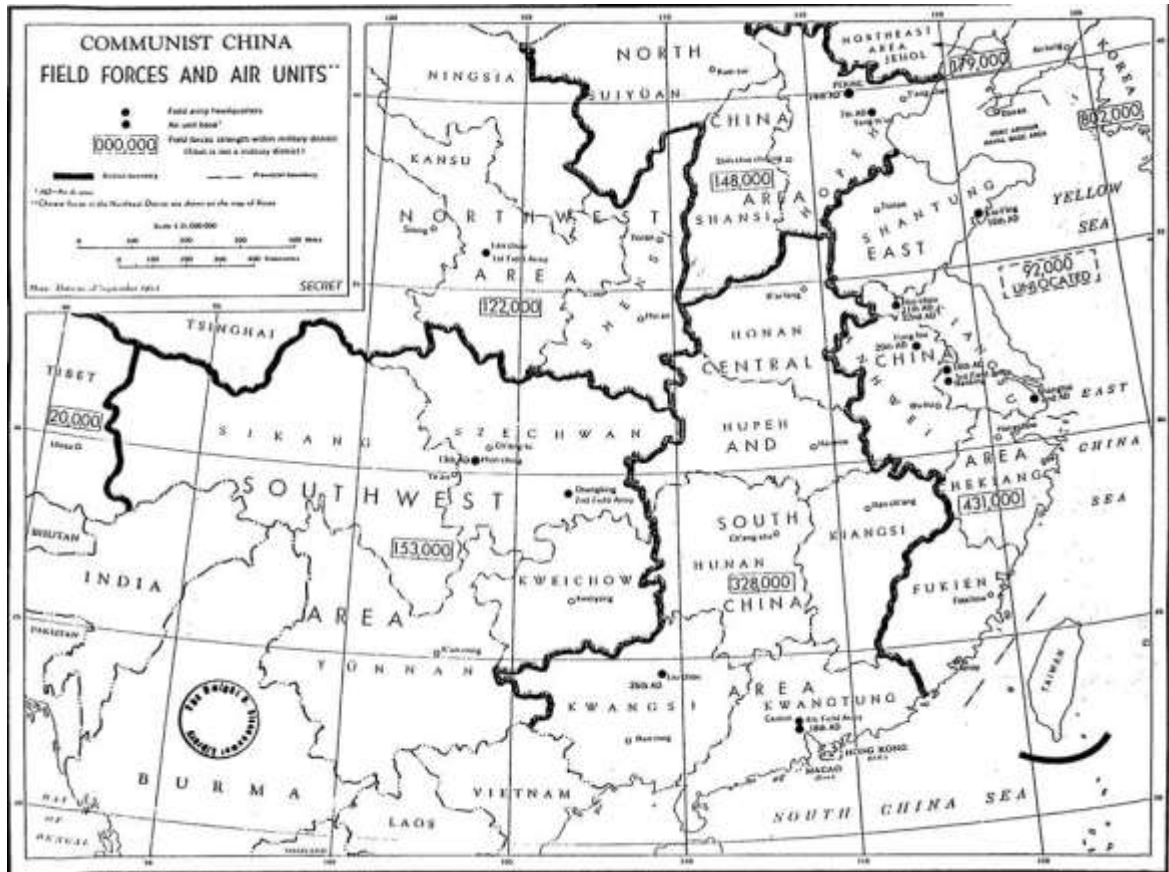


Figure 4 Mainland China Field Forces (DDEL)

Chapter 7: The Outbreak of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis

After the Sino-US Ambassadorial Talks ceased in December 1957, further talks were suspended indefinitely. On 23 August 1958, the PRC again bombarded Quemoy and Matsu, igniting the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis. However, the 1958 Taiwan Strait crisis stood out for its swift resolution compared to the 1954-55 crisis. On 6 September, both Zhou and Dulles publicly announced possible peaceful measures and this led to the convening of the Sino-US negotiations in Warsaw from 15 September onwards. Although US Ambassador Jacob Beam and PRC Ambassador Wang Bingnan would adopt rigid positions for their respective governments, Beam did consider the talks useful as a conflict management “lighting rod” even if it was not a vehicle for real negotiations.¹ Meanwhile, Khrushchev’s warnings via open letters to the US in support of the PRC on 7 September and 19 September were disregarded by Washington and ironically Beijing as mere propaganda.²

Conventional surveys of the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis have painted how the US had succeeded in forcing Beijing to back down with its deterrence strategy or other tactical means.³ Other accounts have depicted the Crisis as a function of Mao’s ideological and domestic imperatives.⁴ In addition, two monographs on Soviet foreign policy have rightly highlighted the sharp political and ideological differences between the PRC and the Soviets.⁵ On these issues, three broad points could be made. One, simplistic assumptions about the effectiveness of US deterrence strategy are overwrought as Eisenhower displayed cautiousness and doubts with nuclear deterrence. Two,

¹ Jacob D. Beam, *Multiple Exposure: An American Ambassador’s Unique Perspective on East-West Issue* (NY: WW Norton & Company, 1978), 131.

² See Oleg Troyanosky, “The Making of the Soviet Foreign Policy,” in *Nikita Khrushchev*, ed. William Taubman et al. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 216; John R. Thomas, “Soviet Behaviour in the Quemoy Crisis of 1958,” *Orbis*, vol 6, no. 1 (Spring 1962), 50-54; Lorenz M. Luthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World*. Princeton: PUP, 2008), 102; “U.S. Rejects Soviet Note on Far East Situation,” DSB (Oct 6, 1958), 530.

³ George C. 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*, Vol 2, no. 4 (Winter 1993), 343-367; Eric Herring, *Danger and Opportunity: Explaining International Crisis Outcomes* (Manchester: MUP, 1995), 121.

⁴ Melvin Gurtov & Byong-Moo Hwang, *China under Threat: The Politics of Strategy and Diplomacy* (Bal.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980); Chen, Jian. *Mao’s China and the Cold War*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

⁵ Lorenz M. Luthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton: PUP, 2008), 95-104; Aleksandr Fursenko & Timothy Naftali, *Khrushchev’s Cold War: The Inside Story of an American Adversary* (NY: WW Norton, 2006), 179-182.

although attention on the PRC's domestic imperatives is a useful corrective to US-centric accounts, over-emphasis on Mao's ideological motivations is inappropriate as Mao also considered state security perspectives and rationalized it in stark realpolitik terms.⁶ Three, reading the literature on Sino-Soviet relations together with memoirs of participants against the grain revealed that cultural differences too played a part in reinforcing the mistrust between these two allies. At the same time, tacit accommodation was again and more quickly reached in the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis. All parties had, over the past few years, gained a better understanding of each other's modus operandi. The ritualized language of crisis resolution while imperfect was good enough to make sure the Crisis never got out of hand. The physical military and diplomatic signaling given by both Beijing and Washington were well heeded and digested. Mao paid particular attention in amply alerting Washington of Beijing's limited aims and Eisenhower was explicit in reciprocating similar gestures. However, cultural divergences were not easily reconciled as even the Soviets, a fraternal ally, could run afoul of the PRC's cultural and nationalistic sensitivities. This chapter, focusing on developments from January to September 1958, will cover the first part in a critical reinterpretation of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis. The second part, in the final months of the Crisis from late-September to December 1958, will be the subject of the next chapter.

This chapter will explore the above themes in four main sections. The first section will analyze the positions of the ROC, US and PRC prior to the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, highlighting as well the main reasons for the PRC's 1958 bombardments on Quemoy and Matsu. The second section will investigate the degree of tacit understanding which governed the actions of Washington and Beijing in the immediate aftermath of the August bombardments by examining the actions of the US, the ROC and the PRC, followed by the tacit accommodation reached in early September. The third section will investigate how in the wake of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, the PRC worked toward gaining international support for its actions. Sino-Soviet relations and China's courting of fraternal communist countries and neutralist nations will be analyzed. The fourth section, focusing on the US, will scrutinize how Washington's tacit accommodation with Beijing was guided by the

⁶ Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 5-6; C. X. George Wei, review of *Mao's China and the Cold War*, by Chen Jian, *Pacific Historical Review* 71, no. 2 (May 2002), 346-347.

goal of diffusing tensions, how the US had to deal with an obdurate Taipei and in doing so how this demonstrated the ritualized maturity of the Sino-US crisis system, and how in the face of worsening international and American public opinion, Washington had to fall back again on the domino theory to rationalize its Taiwan policy.

1. Preliminary Moves and Perceptions

On the eve of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, the ROC's harsh albeit flawed critique of the US was a reflection of its waning *fangong* mission and its complex relations with the US. Despite support to be rendered by the US as demonstrated in the ROC's war plans, the KMT mission had become more defensive than offensive. Inured by the PRC's maneuvers in the Taiwan Strait, Eisenhower decided against the nuclear option even before the outbreak of hostilities. Washington was also explicit about reining in Chiang Kai-shek and considered signaling more clearly to Beijing American intentions in Taiwan. Meanwhile tensions were building up in Sino-Soviet relations over a host of issues and Beijing viewed the Soviet Union's symbolic maneuvers in the Middle East and Soviet attitudes toward the US and the PRC with mounting distrust. China's decision to bombard Quemoy was cast in a mode of defiance against the timidity of the Soviets, together with China's concerns regarding the specter of US encirclement, perceived American intransigence and Taiwan's provocations.

1.1 ROC's Perceptions of US

As Chiang Kai-shek's *fangong* dream became more remote, the ROC's misgivings with the US became shriller. When Eisenhower responded to Khrushchev's call for a test-ban of nuclear weapons on 28 April 1958, the ROC viewed such disarmament negotiations as major threats. Although the ROC knew it was an "intense competition to seize world opinion," it noted that the US might still be taken in with Soviet slogans of "peaceful coexistence" and "constructive competition." Above all, it worried about China. "High-level talks might be an opportunity for Communist China," cautioned Director of the ROC National Security Council Cheng Chieh-min, "to emerge in the international arena," and he recommended that the ROC "obstruct the progress

of such high-level talks.”⁷ Cheng further cataloged for Chiang a list of US inadequacies in the face of Soviet encroachments. The US was seen as wavering in its anti-communist crusade in the various summits in Geneva, foolishly ruining its chances through “myopic vacillations, self-seeking and phlegmatic policies” via deterrence and containment.⁸ Cheng speculated that the “very passive and negative war-making outlook” of the US could be traced ironically to American exceptionalism, supported by the US geographical insularity, the Monroe Doctrine and America’s habitual isolationism. The US “has never embarked upon an invasive strategy, threatening other countries,” and when it did engage in wars it was “always the defensive type of resisting aggression.”⁹ In the present Cold War, the US was depicted as lacking the “aggressiveness” of the Soviets and unable to contain Soviet international communism. The Soviet Sputnik launch in 1957 also shook the ROC’s confidence badly.¹⁰ Cheng’s report ended in an inane but apocalyptic manner: “The final mistake would be for the US to neglect to use its advantages in military bases, bombers and naval power to the best effect in a life-and-death struggle against the Soviets.”¹¹

The alleged US waning attention on Asia reflected the ROC’s dissatisfactions. Cheng’s report highlighted how Taiwan, a junior ally, had become “holier than the pope” by subverting the US rhetoric on the dangers of Soviet encroachments. On one hand, images of inactivity, passiveness and muddle-headedness were used by Cheng to depict the US lack of military spirit and the report duplicated the acrimonious partisan debates of “who lost China” of the early 1950s. On the other hand, the reluctance of the US to be closer to the ROC was attributed to a misguided America,

⁷ Cheng further complained that in the Indochina imbroglio, the Bandung Conference, and the Sino-US negotiations, the communists seemed to hold the upper hand. Ambrose, 447-454; Cheng Chieh-min to CKS, “对召开高层会议之研究” [Dui zhaokai gaojiecheng huiyi zhi yanjiu], 28 May 1958, serial no. 002080106012005, CKS papers, AH.

⁸ Events such as the East Germany uprising, Dien Bien Phu, Polish and Hungarian uprisings, Suez crisis, and Indonesia military unrest were cited as evidence that the US were very good with “observing, but doing nothing.” Cheng Chieh-min to CKS, “对召开高层会议之研究” [Dui zhaokai gaojiecheng huiyi zhi yanjiu], 28 May 1958, serial no. 002080106012005, CKS papers, AH.

⁹ Cheng totally ignored the Manifest Destiny (1845), the Mexican-American War (1846), the annexation of Hawaii (1898), the Spanish-American War (1898), the control of Panama (1903) and the spate of Dollar Diplomacy in the Caribbean (1910s). As for the alleged “passive” war-making outlook, General George Patton’s World War II feats and General Douglas MacArthur’s daring amphibious Inchon landing were not given credit. See Hugh Brogan, *The Penguin History of the USA* 2nd ed (London, Penguin Books, 1999), 441-443.

¹⁰ Cheng’s criticism reflected the hysteria in US public opinion in the aftermath of Sputnik. But there was no missile gap as the US possessed overwhelming strength over the Soviets. The Sputnik affair was a bungled public relations fiasco, in which Eisenhower under-estimated the public hysteria. See Saki Dockrill, *Eisenhower’s New Look National Security Policy, 1953-61* (London, Macmillan Press, 1996), 212; Halberstam, *The Fifties*, 624-625.

¹¹ Cheng Chieh-min to CKS, “美俄战略的研究” [Meie zhanlue de yanjiu], 6 June 1958, serial no. 002080106013008, CKS papers, AH.

rather than a US wary of the ROC's intentions. Cheng also implied that the US should be more appreciative of the ROC's contributions in America's global conflict with communism.

However, evidence from the ROC's war plans demonstrated sustained US support. The "Le-cheng Joint War Plans," a joint ROC-US effort, indicated clearly that the US would protect Quemoy and Matsu. Despite the vagueness in the ROC-US Mutual Defence Treaty, the joint plans were predicated on the "command of the US President." The command structure was wholly American and the Chief of the Pacific Command (CINCPAC) would orchestrate the entire theater. Subordinate commands such as the US Pacific Army, Navy, Air Command, and Taiwan MAAG also had the protection of the Quemoy and Matsu in their mission statements. The ROC had also well established the low probability of a communist assault. Despite the PRC's public hostile proclamations, the ROC was aware of the difference between a determined PRC invasion and a cursory military probe. The *Le-cheng* report considered any communist attempt to launch an airborne or amphibious assault on any of the heavily fortified ROC-controlled offshore islands to be difficult, especially since the offshore islands acted as a trigger line and added "aerial defensive depth to the defense of Taiwan."

The report then presented the ROC's role in the defensive radar of the US Pacific forces. One, the offshore islands represented "immense political and psychological importance for the entire free world," acting as the bulwark to prevent the "spread of communism throughout the East." Two, the ROC condoned the usage of nuclear weapons but stressed that there must be mutual consultations. This also implied that while Chiang's queasiness over nuclear war had evaporated, he was no longer confident of *fangong* by conventional means. Such an observation underscored how Chiang's *fangong* had disappeared as the limited defensive nature of *Le-cheng* dictated "fangwei" which was mentioned no less than four times throughout the plans.¹²

¹² "中美乐成联盟作战计划书修订报告" [Zhongmei lecheng lianmeng zuozhan jihuashu xiuding baogao], 1958, serial no. 002080106048013, CKS papers, AH.

1.2 US Perceptions: No Danger in the Strait

Despite the prodding and misgivings of the ROC, the US had firm intelligence that the situation in the Taiwan Strait was not threatening. One, the PRC was hindered by its economy. In March 1958 Ambassador Everett F. Drumright noted that the PRC needed up to 200 million dollars a year in foreign aid, but they could not look towards the miserly Soviet Union.¹³ Two, in early August, Allen Dulles reported that “no Chinese-Communist ground build-up or movement of naval forces from Shanghai base had been detected.” Three, the tumult in the Strait was ironically caused by the ROC which “overplayed and over-dramatized the situation for their own purposes.” Provocative ROC’s “attacks on Chinese Communist junks” had provided the PRC with the perfect excuse to engage “reprisals in kind.”

In addition, Eisenhower was adamant to rein in the “edgy” Chiang Kai-shek. “Even with the Formosa Resolution,” warned Eisenhower, “there would be no excuse for US intervention in the situation unless we concluded that Chinese Communist air activity was merely the preliminary to an attack on Formosa.”¹⁴ When Dulles pressed the issue on 12 August that the fall of the heavily armed offshore islands would “constitute an attack on Formosa” and at stake was the “morale” of Formosa, Eisenhower rebuffed him by pointing out that the PRC was seriously short of “shipping.” Eisenhower also made it clear that they would have to “call the Congress back at once” for any significant “fight on any scale at all” and strongly proposed giving clear warnings to the Chinese Communists about US commitments to the ROC regarding the offshore islands.¹⁵

Washington had thus displayed much caution vis-à-vis the Taiwan Strait. One recently declassified memorandum (2005) of the 376th NSC meeting demonstrated that two of its three sections offered non-nuclear options. Should the communists blockade the offshore islands, the US would merely

¹³ Drumright stated that the economic policies followed by the Chinese Communists were not gaining additional adherents among the Chinese population. The ROC, on the other hand, was reportedly “itch[ing] to fight,” but was effectively neutered by possessing “no sea or air lift” capabilities. “Observations at the U.S. Southeastern Asia Chiefs of Mission meeting held from 3/14-3/17/58,” Memo, Mar 28, 1958, Gerard Smith Series, box 1, Material from Gerard C. Smith's Files 1958 (4), JFD Papers, DDEL.

¹⁴ 375th Meeting of NSC, 7 Aug 1955, NSC Series, box 10, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

¹⁵ Memorandum of Conference with President (12 August 1958), 14 August 1958, Office of the Staff Secretary, Subject Series, State Dept Sub Series, box 3, State Department - 1958 (May-August) (5), White House Office, DDEL.

provide “logistical support required by the Nationalist forces.” Instead of the existing policy of strategic ambiguity to “keep 'em guessing,” the alternative of a “flat statement” was suggested to better serve “as an additional deterrent to any Communist effort to upset the status quo” and boost the “morale question in Nationalist China.” Even the nuclear option was raised with a question as to “whether the US response to the Communist attack necessarily involved a requirement to use nuclear weapons.”

In contrast to Washington’s cautious tone, the attached extracts of the Joint State-Defence study, “US & Allied Capabilities for Limited Military Operations to 1 July 1961,” were belligerent. Once an attack on the offshore islands was initiated, the US “must include decision on the use of nuclear weapons.” The policy stated that a “selective and meticulously controlled” nuclear attack would be launched on targets “within a radius of 500 miles from the scene of action, plus those targets, wherever located which are being used to stage attacks, including the Shanghai-Hangchow-Nanking and Canton complexes.” However, as Beijing would see the US attack as bent on “destroy[ing] their regime,” instead of deterrence, there would be a “general war.” Similarly, CIA’s intelligence (SNIE 100-7-58) grimly observed that Beijing would most probably “respond in kind... against US bases in the area selected [Japan and South Korea].”¹⁶ Chairman of JCS General Nathan F. Twining strongly vouched for the nuclear option. If there was a major assault on the islands, “the use of small nuclear weapons against nearby airfields in Communist China should be authorized.” Twining presented the JCS views in a closed meeting between Eisenhower and senior officials on 14 August. He also recommended that the policy of “keeping them guessing” be applied equally to the KMT forces since they “may start something on their own” should they know that the US would defend them. Acting Secretary of State Herter recalled that the JCS had recommended that the nuclear bombs would “also go up as far as Shanghai, deep into the Chinese Communist mainland.”

Eisenhower, however, communicated his distaste for nuclear weapons clearly:

¹⁶ “Briefing note for the 376th NSC meeting on 8/14/58,” memo, NSC, 13 August 1958, DDRS.

... we should be very careful, if there were an overt act against the offshore islands on the part of the Chinese Communists, that we do not take instantaneous action which would spread the hostilities. This would be of great concern to the Soviets because Communist China is their greatest ally.

Eisenhower stated that the US would “do what is necessary” if the assault was targeted at Taiwan. However, the offshore islands “are certainly not stepping stones to Taiwan.” Then he turned to his oft-quoted belief, warning the group gathered that “such action, however, would be all-out war and not limited war.” But Eisenhower “did not think such an attack on Taiwan was probable.” Rather, “how to deal with [the] very difficult psychological problem” of persuading Chiang to give up the offshore islands, was the main concern.¹⁷ Eisenhower put the blame solely on Chiang’s “intransigence” and complained at how Chiang had out-maneuvered the US in overturning its 1953 NSC policy against committing to the offshore islands. As early as 1956, Chiang had adroitly circumvented the limitations of the Formosa Resolution by claiming that “he cannot hold out in Taiwan if the offshore islands are lost, and he has put 100,000 people on those islands.”¹⁸

Once the President stood his ground, everyone sought other solutions out of the quagmire. First, it was proposed that the US should abandon the “keeping them guessing” policy as ambiguity had prolonged the duration of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. Paradoxically, George Yeh, now the ROC ambassador, approved of this and suggested that “the US might make a formal statement that a Chinese Communist attack on the offshore islands would be a grave threat to peace in that area.” Second, the meeting turned to the practical issue of breaking any communist blockade of the offshore islands since this could avoid the atrophy of Chiang's offshore island garrison while demonstrating steadfast US commitment. The US would help in this case with “better equipment” as Eisenhower rightly noted that “this was possibly a war of nerves and that the Chinese Communists may be seeing how far they can go if we do not react.”¹⁹

¹⁷ The CIA’s analysis supported Eisenhower’s contention: “There was still no concrete evidence of a Communist Chinese plan to attack the offshore islands.” See 376th Meeting of NSC, 14 Aug 1958, NSC Series, box 10, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

¹⁸ See “Memo for the record,” 26 March 1956, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 1, Memos of conversation - General N through R (1), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹⁹ “Summary of the Principal points made in the discussion of the Taiwan Strait situation at the meeting in the President's office following the [376th] NSC meeting on 14 August 1958,” NSC Series, box 10, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

1.3 Beijing's Mounting Distrust of the Soviets and Developments Leading to the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis

Meanwhile, tensions were building up in the Soviet camp as well. The Soviets spoke of the dangers of nuclear warfare, advocated peaceful co-existence with the US and were generally non-committal about Mao's agricultural collectivization.²⁰ With the launch of the Soviet Sputnik satellite, Mao advocated a communist bloc energetically led by the Soviet Union and in November 1957, Mao spoke in Moscow openly of the "East Wind prevailing over the West Wind." To Mao, US provocations such as constructing B-52 nuclear bomber runways in January 1957 and placing nuclear-tipped Matador missiles on 2 May 1958 in Taiwan had to be firmly dealt with.²¹ Soviet's rhetoric about peaceful co-existence with the US only served to deepen further Mao's ambivalence about Khrushchev.

Beijing was also highly dissatisfied with the Soviets' handling of the Middle East crisis. Under the banner of the Eisenhower Doctrine enunciated in 1957, the US Marines landed in Lebanon on 15 July 1958 in reaction to Lebanese rebellions and the unstable post-coup Iraq.²² It seemed to Mao that the Eisenhower Doctrine, which pledged US aid to any Middle East country threatened by communism, could be duplicated in East Asia. However, to Mao's intense frustration, Khrushchev chose not to arm the Iraqis.²³ Instead, after plodding for a month, Khrushchev decided to revive the summitry idea he had proposed the year before, taking up the softer option of talking in the UN Security Council.²⁴ Moreover, the US appeared infuriatingly tardy in responding to China's demands for the resumption of ambassadorial talks and the ROC continued with its onslaught of commando raids.²⁵ In a show of defiance, the Chinese Politburo on 17 July 1958 agreed to proceed

²⁰ John Gittings, *The Changing Face of China: From Mao to Market* (Oxford, OUP, 2005), 30-34.

²¹ Garson, 71.

²² Iraq had just undergone a revolution following a coup on 14 July 1958. Overnight, the Hashemite monarchy collapsed with the murder of the Iraqi royal family and the prime minister. See Immerman, *John Foster Dulles*, 166

²³ Alexander, *The Strange Connection*, 174.

²⁴ Khrushchev was aware of the advantages of giving Washington a hard time but he could not do much as the Soviets had no real reach in the Middle East. More importantly, his Soviet colleagues in the Presidium were leery of entangling Arab alliances. Notwithstanding Soviet grandstanding, it was Iraq's promise to uphold international oil obligations that resolved the crisis. See Fursenko & Naftali, 166-176, 180-184.

²⁵ On 30 June 1958, Beijing set the deadline of 15 July for Washington to resume talks. Washington responded only on 17 July. Mao explained his actions on 15 April 1959: "We didn't respond because at this point we can't be bothered with that thing [ambassadorial talks], we were going to bombard." See Speech at the 16th Supreme State Conference, 15 April 1959, *Mao Zedong Sixiang Wansui* 毛泽东思想万岁 [Long live Mao Zedong thought] (N. P., 1969), 290.

with further bombardments on Quemoy in the near future.²⁶

The Chinese embassy in Moscow was highly critical of Soviet actions, as noted in its report on 23 July: “They show fear and vacillation in confronting the international storm ... significantly different from our struggle approach.” It added that these unsatisfactory Soviet actions stemmed from a failure to appreciate how the “East Wind has prevailed over the West Wind,” the “power of the people’s will,” and “the gangsterism nature of the US.” Major Soviet officials were also faulted for being too cautious.²⁷ News of Khrushchev’s move to settle the Middle East crisis in the UN Security Council further alarmed the Chinese. “Not only will such an approach not establish peace,” reported the Chinese embassy on 24 July, “it would embolden the enemy to enlarge their conquests.” It warned that Soviet actions were not helping the indigenous people in their anti-imperialist struggle in the Middle East. The Chinese embassy then urged Beijing to “use any means necessary to exchange views with the Soviets, especially before the Soviet leaders head for the UN Security Council.”²⁸

The Middle East farce had further proven Zhou Enlai’s 1957 assessment of the Khrushchev leadership to be “extremely conceited, blinded by lust for gain, lacking farsightedness, and knowing little the ways of the world.” In international affairs, “they appear to lack confidence and suffer from inner fears and thus tend to employ the tactics of dissembling or threats in handling foreign affairs or relations with other brotherly parties.”²⁹ To Beijing’s ire, the Soviets persisted in verbal sparring with the US in the UN.³⁰ Mao conflated Soviet’s timid actions in the Middle East with the Soviet reluctance to support Chinese request on 15 July for help in building up the

²⁶ *Peng Dehuai Nianpu* 彭德怀年谱 [Chronology of Peng Dehuai], Wang Yan 王焰 ed. (Beijing: Remin Chubanshe, 1998), 691.

²⁷ See Chinese Embassy in the Soviet Union to MFA, telegram, no. 758, 23 July 1958, serial no. 107-00297-02, AMFA.

²⁸ During the 1940s, Mao had identified the “vast intermediate zone” between the US and the Soviet Union as the arena for revolutionary struggle. Crucial to this struggle were the indigenous communists in the intermediate zone. By evoking Mao’s “intermediate zone” thesis, the Chinese embassy’s warnings thus had a good chance of getting the Chairman’s attention. See Chinese Embassy in the Soviet Union to MFA, telegram, no. 782, 24 July 1958, serial no. 107-00297-02, AMFA; Chen Jian, “China and the Bandung Conference: Changing Perceptions and Representations,” in *Bandung Revisited: The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference for International Order*, ed. Tan See Seng and Amitav Acharya (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008), 133.

²⁹ Zhou Enlai to Mao Zedong and the Central Leadership, “My observations on the Soviet Union,” 24 January 1957, trans. in *CWIHPB* 6/7 (Winter 1995-96), 154.

³⁰ See Chinese Embassy in the Soviet Union to MFA, telegram, no. 484, 14 August 1958, serial no. 111-00267-01, AMFA.

Chinese Navy.³¹ To compound the misperception, Mao was convinced that the Soviets were trying to impinge on Chinese sovereignty.³²

The main points of contention in Khrushchev's urgent trip to Beijing on 31 July 1958 arose from Soviet suggestions of a joint fleet and the setting up of a Soviet long-wave radio station in China. Mao was reportedly very sensitive to any suggestion impinging on China's sovereignty. Specters of Soviet control over China's waters and communications systems plagued Mao's mind: "We will not go for a joint fleet and even if it means denial to use the atom bomb, submarines, and naval fleet, we will survive for ten thousand years ... you may have all the Chinese coastal areas and we shall give up the navy and go back to the mountains to carry out a guerilla war."³³ Khrushchev was completely stumped by this outburst. It was obvious that Mao's extreme sensitivity, Khrushchev's bad communication skills and personality clashes compounded the misunderstanding.³⁴

With regards to the Taiwan Strait Crisis, Mao's ruminations after Khrushchev's departure were a gold mine of information. Mao told his personal doctor Li Zhisui:

I told him [Khrushchev] that whether or not we attack Taiwan is our own domestic affair ... He wants to improve relations with the United States? Good we'll congratulate him with our guns ... Maybe we can get the United States to drop an atomic bomb on Fujian ... Let's see what Khrushchev says then [about peaceful co-existence]. Some of our comrades don't understand the situation. They want us to cross the sea and take over Taiwan. I don't agree. Let's leave Taiwan alone. Taiwan keeps the pressure on us. It helps maintain our internal unity. Once the pressure is off, internal disputes might break out.³⁵

³¹ See Embassy in Holland to MFA, Telegram, no. 309, 8 August 1958, serial no. 110-00799-02, AMFA.

³² In a heated moment, Mao thundered at the Soviet ambassador Pavel F. Yudin: "Why did you raise the question of half-half ownership [navy]? This is a political issue." Mao with Yudin, record of conversation, 22 July 1958, *MD*, 255; *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*, ed. Strobe Talbott (London: Andre Deutsch, 1974), 258.

³³ Li, *Xin Zhongguo Lingxiu*, 170; Chen Xiaolu, "Chen Yi and China's Diplomacy," in *Toward a History of Chinese Communist Foreign Relations 1920s-1960s: Personalities and Interpretive Approaches*, ed. Michael H. Hunt and Niu Jun (Washington, D.C.: WWICS, 1995), 96.

³⁴ Zhang, Yaoci 张耀祠, *Zhang Yaoci huiyilu: Zai Mao zhuxi shenbian de rizi* 张耀祠回忆录: 在毛主席身边的日子 [The Memoirs of Zhang Yaoci: The Days at Chairman Mao's side] (Beijing: Zhonggong Zhongyang chubanshe, 2008), 161-165; William Taubman, "Khrushchev vs Mao: A preliminary sketch of the role of personality in the Sino-Soviet Split," *CWIHPB* 8/9 (1997), 243-248.

³⁵ Li Zhisui's memoirs elaborated on the clash of personalities and Mao's paranoia at Soviet control. Historians were generally leery of Mao's personal physician's sensationalistic account. But compared with Li Yueran's account, Li Zhisui's description of that meeting corresponds at many levels. See Li Zhisui, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1994), 262.

Khrushchev's anxiety to relax tensions with the US rubbed Mao the wrong way.³⁶ In Mao's suspicious eyes, a joint fleet and a Soviet long-wave station in China could easily become Soviet instruments of control should the PRC provoke the US. Likewise, Soviet interest in the PRC's Taiwan policy was perceived as a manifestation of Soviet dread that the Chinese would jeopardize Soviet-US relations. Even the Soviet disdain for Mao's people's communes was considered to have arisen from fears that China's social innovations would amplify revolutionary tendencies in undeveloped countries, which again would antagonize the West. To Mao, the Soviets were unsupportive of the achievements of China's Great Leap Forward and China's leadership in the Third World.³⁷

Besides Beijing's mounting distrust of the Soviets, other developments in August reinforced Beijing's 17 July decision to bombard Quemoy. Dulles' 28 June 1957 speech about the impending passing of Mao's régime was repeated on 11 August 1958 by the US Department of State. At the same time Chiang Kai-shek had increased the troops holding Matsu and Quemoy to 100,000, twice the number in 1955, and broadcast in August that he would return to Mainland China.³⁸ To head off this specter of US encirclement the PRC again opened up the artillery barrages on Quemoy and Matsu on 23 August, igniting the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis.³⁹

2. From Crisis to Tacit Accommodation

Right from the start of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, both Washington and Beijing exercised remarkable restraint. Eisenhower was calm and Dulles hailed the experiences gained in 1955 as fundamental to the tacit accommodation reached in the immediate aftermath of the Crisis. Taipei, steeped in the nuances of the communist moves, again successfully made use of the Crisis to press

³⁶ At that time, Mao's attempts to stiffen the Soviet resolve in international matters were resented. On hindsight, Khrushchev accurately concluded that such warmongering talk was dished out as Mao "obviously regarded me as a coward." *Khrushchev Remembers, Vol.1*, ed. Strobe Talbott (Boston, Little Brown, 1971; Reprint, London, Penguin Books, 1977), 500.

³⁷ Stanley Karnow argued for a domestic perspective. The constant presence of the Taiwan problem kept Mao in a pre-eminent position in foreign and military affairs, which were translated into domestic political clout. Given Mao's increasing dissatisfaction with the retreat from first line decision-making position since the Eight National Congress (September 1956), Taiwan splendidly supplied him with the additional ammunition to be at the forefront again. For an incisive analysis of the politicking behind the Eight National Congress, see *Mao and China: Inside China's Cultural Revolution* (NY: Penguin Books, 1972), 86.

³⁸ Jiang, *The United States and China*, 150.

³⁹ Cohen, *American Response to China*, 186.

for more US aid, and this benefited the ROC military establishment in particular. The PRC's actions were cautious and deliberate right from the beginning, seeing the bombardments as a "military probe" designed to "give the US a hard time." Dulles' offer of tacit accommodation on 4 September was swiftly accepted by Zhou on 6 September. While Beijing was using the Crisis to amass support for its domestic agenda of the Great Leap Forward, US public opinion missed the nuances of the Sino-US tacit accommodation and Eisenhower had to reach out to the public to "reverse the poll," a development that Taipei met with dour circumspection.

2.1 Eisenhower's Calm and Dulles' Uncertainty

The PRC shelled Quemoy and Matsu intensively for only five days, 23-27 August. The US military maneuvers were cautious. While the US signaled loudly to the PRC of its commitment to Taiwan, it avoided provoking China. The US military command on Taiwan was only ordered to "reinforce US air defense forces on Taiwan" and to "prepare to escort and protect Chinat to resupply ships." Additional defensive military supplies were moved quickly to Taiwan. To strengthen the warnings, the US sent reinforcements to the Seventh Fleet from the Mediterranean and Pearl Harbour.⁴⁰

The ROC was aggrieved by such caution and Chiang vented his frustration on Drumright by launching "into an intense, prolonged discussion of the present situation of Off Shore Islands." Drumright reported that the agitated Generalissimo "was in fact so obsessed with it and so intent on pleading for our help to cope with it that the significance of help we were offering seemed lost on him." Other ROC leaders such as Premier Cheng Cheng implored for public "warnings" from the US against the PRC. The US certainly had its hands full pacifying Chiang who "was most concerned to get our assurances."⁴¹

⁴⁰ JCS to CINPAC and COM Taiwan DEFCOM, JCS 947046, Cable, Department of Defense, Aug 25, 1958, DDRS.

⁴¹ Chiang saw the PRC's tactic as "creeping interdiction of Kinmen ... if Reds could keep up combined shelling, bombing and sea action as at present, Islands would be soon cut off." See Drumright to Dulles, 26 August 1958 (10pm), Telegram 230, Office of the Staff Secretary, Subject Series, State Dept Sub Series, box 3, State Department - 1958 (May-August) (6), White House Office, DDEL.

Neither the agony over the usage of nuclear weapons nor the magnitude of the current crisis plagued Eisenhower. By 1 September, Eisenhower was determined to walk the path of peace. Dulles, on the other hand, enjoyed no such certitude. When Dulles complained that he lacked vital information to make an informed decision, Eisenhower disagreed and asserted that “we had quite a little information” and Eisenhower only expressed “some annoyance over what he considered to be Chiang’s pressure to get us involved.”⁴²

Dulles’ uncertainty stemmed from his rigid determination to square US national security nuclear policy with the crisis at hand. On one hand, Dulles complained to Twining “there was no use of having a lot of stuff and never being able to use it.” Twining agreed, citing that for the Taiwan Strait “it was not the place to use conventional ones.” On the other hand, Dulles quickly backtracked by citing Undersecretary of State Christian Herter who “thought you could knock out [Communists] gun emplacements with conventional weapons.” Twining considered that to be “a slow process.”⁴³ Dulles’ constant mulling over the nuclear option alarmed others.⁴⁴ Gerard Smith, the Assistant Secretary of State, intervened by pointing out just how dangerous the military chiefs’ recommendations were.⁴⁵ One, nuclear strikes would not be “limited to a few airfields” as Smith warned that Twining had recommended that the US “shoot our wad.” Moreover no consideration was given to the possibility of counter-strikes by the communists leading to the “destruction of Formosa.” “If we use nuclear weapons to defend Quemoy and Matsu,” stated Smith, “we would be involved in the most unpopular war with the most unpopular weapons.” In response, Dulles evoked the US loss of prestige should the offshore islands be lost and highlighted the huge

⁴² But Eisenhower allowed Dulles to have more time (three days) to come up with his findings. See Memo of telephone conversation with the President, 1 Sept 1958, 7:30pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 13, memoranda of tel. conv - W H Aug 1, 1958 to Dec 5 1958 (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁴³ Telephone call to General Twining, 2 September 1958, 8:48 am, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (4), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁴⁴ Later, Dulles melodramatically announced to the White House Chief of Staff Sherman Adams that “things looked pretty bad” and that “we might have to make pretty difficult decisions either way.” Telephone call to Mr Hagerty (Newport RI), 2 Sept 1958, 3:18pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 13, memoranda of tel. conv - W H Aug 1, 1958 to Dec 5 1958 (3); Telephone call to Sherman Adams, 2 Sept 1958, 5pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 13, memoranda of tel. conv - W H Aug 1, 1958 to Dec 5 1958 (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁴⁵ Smith noted that in war game planning in May 1958, up to “1 million civilian casualties in Taiwan” would be the result of US nuclear bombing the PRC. Observations on Sierra Briefing, 1 May 1958, Gerard Smith Series, box 1, Material from Gerard C. Smith's Files 1958 (3), JFD Papers 1, DDEL.

problem of augmenting “flexible forces” if nuclear weapons were not used. Dulles was thus embroiled in circular arguments with answers to an almost non-existent problem.

Undersecretary of State Herter disagreed with Dulles’ dire prognosis. He felt “optimistic” and regarded “the situation ... to be improving.”⁴⁶ Herter received support from the Chief of Army General Maxwell D. Taylor and Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, who both “estimated that an amphibious assault on Quemoy, supported by artillery fire from the mainland and even by moderately heavy bombing, could initially, and successfully, be repelled by the Chinese Nationalists, assisted by US forces, with *conventional* weapons.” To them, the real issue for the US was the danger of the US being “labeled the aggressor.” The JCS also cautioned that “we must be careful to shoot only in clear self-defense.”⁴⁷ The 3 September Joint State-JCS-Defence estimation reflected this dilemma. The report was replete with tired warnings about the “serious repercussions” in the best tradition of the domino rhetoric but quickly noted that a firm reassertion of US commitment by warnings “perhaps using nuclear weapons” would quickly deter the communists “as in 1955.” Given the existence of other means whereby the US could easily deter the communists with little cost and risk, such as maintaining naval supplies to the offshore islands which it was accomplishing with good effect, the nuclear option was all but abandoned. The report also warned of creeping momentum where “more extensive use of nuclear weapons and even risk of general war” could result once the nuclear usage taboo was breached.⁴⁸

The fiction of the Communist threat allowed Eisenhower fast access to Congressional support. Dulles told Senator Knowland that the present crisis “was fully as serious as the papers report.” Nothing was said about Dulles’ intended offer to negotiate with the Communists the following day. When Knowland expressed skepticism of the supposed communists’ buildup, Dulles acknowledged that there was “no evidence of an assault being prepared,” but insisted that they

⁴⁶ Dulles and Gerard Smith, Memorandum of conversation, Sep 2, 1958, Gerard Smith Series, box 1, Material from Gerard C. Smith's Files 1958 (2), JFD Papers 1, DDEL.

⁴⁷ “Taiwan Strait: Issues developed in discussion with the JCS,” Memo, Department of State, Sep 2, 1958, DDRS

⁴⁸ The report claimed that without a firm commitment, the ROC might find it expedient to “advocate union with Communist China.” “The estimate of events involved in the Taiwan Strait...,” 3 Sept 1958, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 1, Memos of Conversation - General E through (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

“were seriously determined to try to take the islands which he thought they would stage as soon as they were confident we would lay off.”⁴⁹

2.2 The ROC Military Establishment and the Crisis

The US did respond rapidly to the ROC’s pleas. Chief of Taiwan MAAG Maj. Gen. Leander L. Doan detailed to the ROC Army Chief Gen. Peng Meng-chi the amount of hardware that would flow to the ROC. Such speed was possible due to the Standing Operational Procedures (SOP) established in the aftermath of the previous crisis. As the ROC persisted in maintaining large garrisons on the offshore islands, the US had to rush supplies to “reinforce the offshore islands’ seven divisions of firepower.” Arrangements were made to ship immediately twelve additional 8-inch howitzers from Okinawa and other overseas US bases, besides transferring other howitzers from Taiwan. Even the “NIKE missile battalions could arrive in three days.” The crisis also prompted the quickening of training of the 155-mm howitzer crew and the establishment of permanent bases for the NIKE battalions in Taiwan.⁵⁰

Ironically, the ROC military was confident of maintaining the supply lines to the offshore islands. In a secret report to President Chiang on 3 September, at the height of the communist bombardments, the ROC navy estimated that in a month of uninterrupted shipping of supplies to the offshore islands using a combination of local and US vessels, it could achieve 8, 240 tonnes. In an emergency, with six US vessels, it could deliver 900 tonnes in three days. This optimism flew in the face of the initial dire depictions of limited supplies in the offshore islands cited by ROC diplomats to the White House. Moreover, the ROC knew the Communist bombardments were limited and purposefully off-target. Despite the initial hostilities, only three ROC ships were sunk. In addition, the ROC navy and the US navy had already caught on early that American ships were

⁴⁹ Dulles feigned ignorance about what “the President was thinking.” He evoked the 1948 Berlin Blockade and admitted that “the immediate problem is the breaking of the interdiction.” Dulles ominously claimed that “we may have to invoke the [Formosa] resolution.” See Telephone call From Senator Knowland, 3 September 1958, 3:05 pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (4), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁵⁰ Maj. Gen. Leander L. Doan to Gen. Pang Mang-chi, letter (Secret), 3 September 1958, serial no. 002080106051010, CKS papers, AH.

not targeted by the communists. At the tactical level the US was not obtuse to Mao's signaling via selective targeting of cargo ships.⁵¹

2.3 Mao's Caution and Limited Aims

Mao's moves in the Taiwan Strait were cautious and deliberate. At the Military Commission meeting on 18 July, Mao listed two goals for the attack on Quemoy: punishing the KMT and supporting the Arabs. His method of using artillery bombardments would be limited to three months.⁵² Indeed, Mao delayed the scheduled bombardments with a message on 27 July that he had "lost sleep" over the decision: "Moves made on the impulse may not gain the right results. I am guilty of this, sometimes I inadvertently miscalculate."⁵³ When the moment for the final decision came, Mao summoned Ye Fei, the frontline commander on 20 August, to fly thousands of miles to the Beidaihe resort in the Liaoning-Hebei border for consultations. When Ye Fei finished his presentation, Mao asked: "Is it possible to avoid hitting the Americans?"⁵⁴

Mao micro-managed every aspect of the bombardments. Although Defence Minister Peng Dehuai was perplexed by Mao's vacillations, he dutifully conveyed Mao's instructions during the 6 August Military Commission meeting: PRC planes must not cross the sea line in pursuit of stray enemy planes even when enemy bombers had attacked the mainland, and PRC defensive actions were limited to the coastal waters of twelve miles.⁵⁵ On 18 August, Mao gave more stringent

⁵¹ Nonetheless the ROC navy spared no effort in highlighting the heroic role it undertook. It capitalized on the crisis to eradicate the humiliation incurred from the "re-group" from Dachen in 1955, and brazenly reported that Dachen was ground-zero from which the PRC recognized the mettle of the ROC navy. At stake was the annual military budgetary allocation. Traditionally, the navy had never figured large in Chiang's military experience; with the offshore crisis, the navy's role ballooned disproportionately to its previous neglect. See Liang Chao-hsü to CKS, "海军对金门运输概况报告" [Haijun dui jinmen yunshu gaikuang baogao], September 1958, serial no. 002080102085013, CKS papers, AH.

⁵² Defence Minister Peng Dehuai even noted cryptically: "We might not necessarily start this battle." Peng's military aides annotated well this diary, see Zheng Wenhan 郑文翰, *Mishu rizhi li de Peng Lao Zong* 秘书日记里的彭老总 [General Peng in his secretary's diaries], ed. Wang Yan et al. 王焰(Beijing: Junshi kexue chubanshe, 1998), 311; *Mao Zedong junshi huodong jishi* (1893-1976) 毛泽东军事活动纪事 [Mao Zedong Military activities] Yuan Wei 袁伟 ed. (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1994), 910.

⁵³ Mao to Peng Dehuai, Li Kechen, telegram, 27 July 1958, in *Mao Zedong Junshi wenxuan* 毛泽东军事文选(Beijing: Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun junshi kexueyuan, 1981),364.

⁵⁴ Mao became pensive when Ye Fei replied that it was impossible. He kept Ye Fei and Peng Dehuai by his side in Beidaihe during the initial August bombardments. Lorenz M. Luthi stated that "domestic developments alone determined the timing of the shellings of Jinmen," see, Lorenz M. Luthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton: PUP, 2008), 99; Ye Fei, *Zhengzhan Jishi*, 350.

⁵⁵ Mao turned wrathful when the Fujian frontline propaganda broadcasted on 27 August that "the invasion of the PLA was close at hand." He reprimanded Vice-Defence Minister Huang Kecheng and Peng for this infraction. See Zheng, *Mishu rizhi*, 321, 324, 337.

orders that planes must not even cross the Quemoy-Matsu line should the ROC planes attack.⁵⁶ Subsequent instructions from the Military Commission read: “As the fight against the offshore islands is a highly complex international struggle, its impact is far-reaching. Hence, all actions must adhere to the principle of unity and no initiative will be entertained.”⁵⁷

The Quemoy bombardments were a “military probe” designed to “give the US a hard time.” Mao candidly admitted this to the Politburo colleagues in the evening after the first salvo. Mao alleged that as Admiral Burke had boasted on 6 August that the US troops “are prepared any time to take on the Taiwan Strait,” his bombardments would erase that claim. Contrary to common perceptions, Mao anticipated that his move would “provoke an international upheaval.” On 25 August, Mao further explained that his calculated probe was done to see if the ROC-US Mutual Defence Treaty would sanction actions *a la* US Lebanon landings. By 4 September, Mao concluded in a Politburo meeting that the goals of the “Quemoy military probe had been accomplished.”⁵⁸ Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping also elucidated in early October the tacit accommodation accomplished by the Quemoy actions:

Both parties are deducing each other’s intentions in Warsaw and Quemoy. Now both parties have gained a better understanding of one another’s goals. The Americans know that we do not wish to liberate Taiwan presently, and we do not wish to clash with them ... both sides display considerable caution ... Our military probe is correct as it forces the US to reconsider its role ...⁵⁹

2.4 Dulles’ Newport Offer

The tacit accommodation highlighted by Liu and Deng was reflected also in Dulles’ Newport speech on 4 September, which was *the* olive branch for Beijing. All Dulles was seeking, as told to British representative Lord Samuel Hood, was just some “assurances which seemed reasonably dependable that the Chinese Communists would not attempt to take these islands by force.” Dulles

⁵⁶ Mao to Peng, 18 August 1958 (1pm), JGMWG Vol. 7, 348.

⁵⁷ Military Commission instructions on the struggle against Taiwan and the offshore islands, 3 September 1958, JGMWG Vol. 7, 377.

⁵⁸ Allen S. Whiting, “New Light on Mao: Quemoy 1958: Mao’s Miscalculations,” *CQ* 62 (Jun 1975): 263-270; Lei Yingfu 雷英夫, *Zai zuigao tongshibu dang canmou-Lei Yingfu jiangjun huiyilu* 在最高统帅部当参谋-雷英夫将军回忆录 [Staff officer in the Command General Staff: General Lei Yingfu memoirs] (Nanchang: Baihuazhou wenyi chubanshe, 1997), 175; Wu Lengxi 吴冷西, *Yi Mao Zhuxi: Wo qinshen jingli de ruogan zhongda lishi shijian pianduan* 忆毛主席: 我亲身经历的若干重大历史事件片断 [Remembering Chairman Mao] (Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 1995), 74-78.

⁵⁹ Wu, *Yi Mao Zhuxi*, 78.

noted that with such assurances a de facto “demilitarization” would be accomplished. This episode accounted for the quaint communist maneuver to maintain symbolic shelling of the islands subsequently, signaling that no force was contemplated, but neither was demilitarization a given.⁶⁰

Zhou Enlai swiftly accepted Dulles’ Newport offer on 6 September. Dulles was relieved and pointed out: “We had them to stop a war out there, and we cannot do other than welcome them now.” While the US would take the same position that the US would not “prejudice the position of the Chinats” the reality was, as pointed out by Robertson, “we could not fail to welcome resumption of talks; we would have no support anywhere.”⁶¹ Eisenhower decisively “wanted to add something in the way of a concrete and definite acceptance of Chou En-lai’s offer to negotiate.” At the same time Eisenhower demanded that “US air attack against mainland targets could be ordered only upon his approval” so as to remove any possibility of mishap.⁶² Dulles distinctively acknowledged the process and lessons of peace garnered from the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. It was quickly established, following the hard-won 1955 *formula*, that “such renunciation of force need not involve renouncing claims or the pursuit of policies by peaceful means.”⁶³ In his conversation with Ambassador Douglas MacArthur II, Dulles underscored this important schema for peace and told MacArthur: “It looks like he [Zhou Enlai] was resuming a bit the same position as in 1955.” MacArthur agreed with Dulles’ analysis, indicating that “he remembered after Bandung; this could be a favorable development.”⁶⁴

⁶⁰ See “Memo of conversation with Robert Lovett,” 14 August 1958, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 1, Memos of conversation - General L through M (1); “Memo of conversation with Lord Hood,” 4 Sept 1958, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 1, Memos of Conversation - General E through I (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁶¹ Robertson felt that Zhou’s statement “was very good.” Taiwan hurriedly sent a cable warning that “a resumption of talks with the Chicom at Geneva” was not the best outcome for the ROC. See Telephone call to Mr Robertson, 6 September 1958, 11:45 am, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (4), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁶² While US flights had routinely trespassed Chinese airspace, the US now deemed it unwise to carry on this “violation” especially if it would “come up in the United Nations.” See Memorandum of Conference with President, 6 Sept 1958 (1:30pm), Office of the Staff Secretary\Subject Series\State Dept Sub Series\box 3\State Department - September 1958 - January 1959 (1), White House Office; Memo of conversation,” 21 Sept 1958, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 1, Memos of Conversation - General - A through D (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁶³ Memo (Draft 1 & 2), 6 September 1958, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (4), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁶⁴ Telephone call from Amb. MacArthur, 6 September 1958, 4:25pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (4), JFD papers, DDEL.

This optimism was supported by a body of evidence. First, Beijing seemed more interested in the domestic mobilization value of the crisis to the Great Leap Forward. The British Chargé in Beijing reported that “mammoth demonstrations” were organized against US activities in Lebanon in July and the ROC’s declaration of alert on 25 July added fuel to the “vituperative demonstrations.”⁶⁵ In August Mao visited rural areas in “Shantung province and Tientsin” to encourage progression of the Great Leap Forward.⁶⁶ From the beginning of September, the PRC intensified reporting the Taiwan Strait Crisis to its domestic audience.⁶⁷ Beijing’s mass mobilization on 6 September was aimed at deflecting perceived PRC’s eagerness at negotiation while whipping up support for domestic social change. The British Chargé noted “the press has since been completely taken up with reports of mass demonstrations throughout the country in support of Chou En-lai’s statement.” So concerned was the PRC with any possibility that critics would latch on its capitulation to the enemy that more strident slogans such as “China will certainly liberate Quemoy and Matsu, and will certainly liberate Taiwan” appeared.⁶⁸ In late-September, Vice-Foreign Minister Zhang Wentian revealed that “they are using the situation to mobilize the local militias in an attempt to turn it into a nation-wide campaign.”⁶⁹

Paradoxically, US public opinion missed the nuances of the Sino-US tacit accommodation.⁷⁰ As a result, Dulles had a “pretty tough going” during the 9 September news conference.⁷¹ Eisenhower

⁶⁵ Mass mobilization was emphasized by Chen Jian, *Mao’s China*, 169; A.D. Wislon to FO, Peking telegram no. 425, 30 July 1958, FO371/133350, in *China Political Reports 1911-1960*, ed. Robert L. Jarman (London, Archive Editions Ltd, 2001) (hereafter cited as CPR)

⁶⁶ A.D. Wislon to FO, Peking telegram no. 510, 27 August 1958, FO371/133350, CPR ; Chen Hen 陈汉, *Ba Yue de zuji: Mao Zedong 1958 nian Henan nongchun shicha jishi* 八月的足迹: 毛泽东 1958 年河南农村视察纪实 [Footsteps in August: Mao Zedong’s agriculture investigation in Henan] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2001), 215.

⁶⁷ Telephone call to Mr [Hugh S.] Cummings, 9 Sept 1958, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (4), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁶⁸ A.D. Wislon to FO, Peking telegram no. 592, 10 Sept 1958, FO371/133350, CPR, 230.

⁶⁹ The provocations of the US also had a “very useful function” for “the liberation movements in Latin America, Africa and Asia.” See Record of Conversation between Vice-Foreign Minister Zhang Wentian and the Soviet Chargé d’affaires, Bulgarian, Albanian, Czech, Hungarian and Polish ambassadors, no. 569, 21 Sept 1958, serial no. 109-00822-08, AMFA.

⁷⁰ Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge was similarly confused by the US abrupt turnaround in attitude toward the PRC, demonstrating how ingrained the perception of PRC’s belligerency was. Given all the Joint Chiefs’ hot air about the necessity of atomic bombing, now it seemed that the communists would not be attacking Formosa any time soon and even Quemoy’s conquest could be deflected by a firm US verbal commitment. See “Memo of conversation with Ambassador Lodge,” 19 Sept 1958, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 1, Memos of conversation - General L through M (1), JFD papers, DDEL.

thus had to reach out to the public to “reverse the poll.”⁷² Eisenhower’s 11 September national broadcast speech was a tour de force about duty, honor, and keeping one’s powder keg dry, explicitly flagging the myth of US foreign policy: “Traditionally this country and its government have always been passionately devoted to peace with honor, as they are now. We shall never resort to force in settlement of differences except when compelled to do so to defend against aggression and to protect our vital interests.”⁷³ Having paid rhetoric duty to time-honored values, the President then went on about the desirability of negotiations with the Chinese Communists:

We know by hard experiences that the Chinese Communist leaders are indeed militant and aggressive. But we cannot believe that they would now persist in a course of military aggression which would threaten world peace ... We believe that diplomacy can and should find a way out ... arrangements are urgently required to stop gun fire and to pave the way to a peaceful solution.⁷⁴

Taipei dourly noted the turn toward accommodation in Eisenhower’s speech. “Negotiation” was mentioned no less than six times in the speech. Moreover, Eisenhower made it clear that “negotiations and conciliation should never be abandoned in favor of force and strife.” The ROC promptly pointed out the discrepancy between Eisenhower’s rhetoric and actions. Taipei noted favorably that the US had viewed the Taiwan Strait Crisis as “a premeditated aggression engineered by both the Soviet Union and Chinese Communists.” However, Taipei sternly “question[ed] the wisdom of entering into negotiations with the Communist aggressors.” While noting that the US had reassured the ROC of not being “a party to any arrangements which would prejudice our rights,” the ROC asserted that it had the obligation to “defend its own legitimate rights and interests.”⁷⁵

⁷¹ Empathizing with Dulles’ brush with the “antagonistic” press, Eisenhower claimed that such hysteria was similar to that “from Manchuria in 1931 and from Munich.” See Telephone call to the President at Newport, 9 September 1958, 12:49pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 13, memoranda of tel. conv - W H Aug 1, 1958 to Dec 5 1958 (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁷² The private poll, which Eisenhower had asked for to gauge the US public reaction to the Taiwan Strait crisis, “shook the Pres.” See Telephone call from the President, 10 September 1958, 5:15pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 13, memoranda of tel. conv - W H Aug 1, 1958 to Dec 5 1958 (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁷³ Telephone call to the President, 11 September 1958, 10:57am, Telephone Conversation Series\box 13\memoranda of tel. conv - W H Aug 1, 1958 to Dec 5 1958 (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁷⁴ “Radio and Television Report to the American People Regarding the Situation in the Formosa Strait,” September 11th, 1958, in PPPUS (1959), 694-698.

⁷⁵ Drumright happily reported to Washington that the ROC was comforted by Eisenhower’s speech for its “stabilizing effect.” However, he under-estimated the depth of the ROC’s apprehension. See Drumright to Dulles, telegram 379, 12 September 1958 (8 pm), Dulles-Herter Series, box 10, Dulles - September, 1958 (2), Ann Whitman File, DDEL; ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government Information Office, Press Statement by Foreign Minister Huang Shao-ku, 12 September 1958, serial no. 002080106003012, CKS papers, AH.

3. Evolution of PRC International Posture (I)

In the wake of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, the PRC worked toward gaining international support for its actions. Beijing was eager for Soviet endorsement but chafed at perceived Soviet condescendence. Subterranean cultural and historical currents deeply coloured Mao's approach to the Soviets, who were subsequently taken aback by Mao's actions. In the international arena Beijing had deliberately adopted ambiguity to disguise its limited aims. Mao's actions received resounding symbolic support from fraternal countries, shielding Beijing from Soviet criticisms. Such an approval by fraternal states further raises the question of whether Mao and the PRC represented the *sole* example of "aggressive stance" in this period of international communism, as presented in conventional scholarship. At the same time, Beijing had to compete for neutralist international support as the US had also adopted a reasonable posture. However, Beijing carefully guarded all approaches of its diplomacy and wanted no third-party intervention. Such attention to international diplomacy was possible because of Beijing's confident grasp of US intentions.

3.1 Soviet "Open Support"

Khrushchev's desperation to placate Mao's ruffled sensitivities formed the crucial context to the alleged Soviet support Beijing had for the Taiwan issue.⁷⁶ In a thirty-page report by Mikhail Zimyanin who was a Soviet Foreign Ministry Far Eastern Head, all indications pointed that the Soviets were informed in the strongest terms that the PRC was intending to "bring Taiwan back under China's jurisdiction."⁷⁷ The latest Chinese sources support this interpretation. The most significant revelation is the telegram of the Chinese embassy in Ulan Bator (Mongolia) Beijing on 10 September stating: "The Soviet Chargé and councilors claimed that if the US imperialists attempt to initiate a war with China, the Soviets will not stand aside but will aid the Chinese

⁷⁶ Chen Xiaolu, son of the PRC Foreign Minister Chen Yi, revealed that "the Chinese leadership was satisfied to have the Soviets' open support on the Taiwan Strait Crisis." Chen, "Chen Yi and China's Diplomacy," 96.

⁷⁷ According to Khrushchev, the Soviets promised and delivered more military equipment in early August. However, when they offered fighter units, they were immediately rebuffed by the suspicious Chinese. See *Khrushchev Remembers* vol. 2, 262; Mark Kramer, "The USSR Foreign Ministry's Appraisal of Sino-Soviet Relations on the Eve of the Split, September 1959," *CWIHPB* 6/7 (Winter 95/96): 170-185; Khrushchev, *Memoirs*, Vol. 3, 443.

people to their utmost ability.” More crucially, “the plan to liberate Taiwan had been decided during the Khrushchev-Mao meeting.”⁷⁸

How can one then reconcile this with the subsequent Soviet shock at the Quemoy bombardments?

On 3 October, Soviet chargé d'affaires S. F. Antonov indirectly hinted to Minister Chen Yi that the *timing* of the crisis was a shock to the Soviet leadership. Khrushchev had warned the diplomatic staff to be extra vigilant to prevent unnecessary shocks: “If another unexpected incident crops up, it would be their fault for shoddy work.” Antonov told Chen Yi regretfully that Soviet diplomats would have to “step up their intelligence work.”⁷⁹ Much later, during a hostile July 1963 Sino-Soviet consultation, Soviet Central Committee Member Yuri Andropov repeated the charge that Moscow was presented with a fiat accompli:

In 1958, the Chinese side did not inform us in a *timely* fashion about its intentions to carry out the shelling of the coastal islands in the Taiwan Strait which was carried out soon after Com. NS Khrushchev left Beijing.⁸⁰

Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko’s hasty 6 September visit to Beijing spoke volumes about the alarm felt by Moscow, and Mikhail Kapitsa, who interpreted for Gromyko, repeated similar complaints in his memoirs.⁸¹ In turn Zhou and Mao explicitly reassured Gromyko with three points. One, there would not be an invasion of Taiwan. Two, the Quemoy action was purely

⁷⁸ This evidence demonstrated the extent which the Soviets were told of the PRC position on Taiwan. Soviet support for the PRC was repeated in another official letter on 27 September. Such evidence complemented Shen Zhihua’s contention that “China really had not consulted with nor informed the Soviet Union its intention *before* the Quemoy bombardments.” “解放台湾的计划赫鲁晓夫和毛主席会谈时已经决定。” See Embassy in Mongolia to MFA, Telegram, no. 411, 10 September 1958 (1657hrs), serial no. 106-00122-02, AMFA; CC CPSU to CC CPC, “USSR’s Readiness to Provide Assistance to the PRC in the event of an attack on it from the side of the USA or Japan,” 27 September 1958, Information and Documentation Administration, First Far Eastern Department, USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Sbornik Dokumentov SSSR-KNR* (1949-1983), Documents and Materials, Pt 1 (1949-63) (Moscow: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1985), 231-33, reproduced in *CWIHPB* 6/7 (Winter 1995-96), 225-226; Shen Zhihua 沈志华, “Yijiu wuba nian paoji jinmen qian zhongguo shifou gaozhi sulian,” 一九五八年炮击金门前中国是否告知苏联 [Whether China had informed the Soviet Union before the Quemoy Bombardment in 1958] *中共党史研究* no. 3 (2004), 35-40.

⁷⁹ Record of Conversation between Minister Chen Yi with the Soviet chargé d'affaires S. F. Antonov, no. 595, 3 Oct, serial no. 109-00833-03, AMFA.

⁸⁰ Andropov’s charge was backed by Chinese records. Mao belatedly admitted to Khrushchev: “At that time, we did not inform you because we had not made up our mind. We did not expect the bombardments to lead to such an upheaval. We had only wished to bombard for a while and had not anticipated that [the US] would project so much troops and sea power.” See Yuri Andropov’s speech, 13 July, in “Stenograph: Meeting of the Delegation of the Communist Party of the SU and the CCP, Moscow, 5-20 July 1963,” *CWIHPB* 10 (1998), 181; Mao with Khrushchev, record of conversation, 30 September 1959, Pang & Jin (ed.), *Mao Zedong Zhuan*, 855.

⁸¹ Czeslaw Tubilewicz, “Taiwan and the Soviet Bloc, 1949-1991,” *Maryland Series in Contemporary Asian Studies*, no. 4 (2005), 22.

a “punishment” of the KMT. Three, Beijing would not involve the Soviets in this quagmire, a proposition that sounded just as startling:

Mao: If the US invades, we will use the method of luring them, letting them deep in. We are prepared to forego the coastal areas. After we let them in, that dog would be hammered once the door is shut. Let them be mired in the ocean of our People’s War. Then they would be destroyed.

Gromyko: I cannot make a judgment about this strategy, but one must consider that we are now in the era of the atomic bomb.

Mao: What’s so frightening about the atomic bomb? We do not have it now, but we’ll have one in the future. We don’t have one, but you have. Our policy is to assume complete responsibility for this war. Unlike the KMT, we will not drag Soviet Union into water. Still, this issue is not the problem at the present moment. Now we will not attack Taiwan, the US, and we will not provoke a world war. Please convey this to Khrushchev⁸²

To Beijing, casual information for the Soviets was an adequate substitute for detailed intentions, strategic aims, and tactical procedures such as timing and objectives.⁸³ Within here lay the crux of the impasse.⁸⁴ As a sovereign country, the days of the PRC obediently informing its Soviet partner every detail as in the Korean War was over. With Khrushchev whom Mao had limited esteem, the PRC’s limited operation was deemed an “internal affair.” The Soviet embassy in Beijing recognized that Chinese pride now stood in the way of fraternal commitments: “Our Chinese friends started to show excessive sensitivity toward the problems of sovereignty and independence of their country, [and] reservations on measures that used to be taken by both our countries.”⁸⁵

⁸² Gromyko’s sensationalized account is also seen in his claim that Mao had allegedly declared: “Only when the Americans are right in the central provinces should you give them everything [nuclear weapons] you’ve got.” Andrei Gromyko, *Memories: From Stalin to Gorbachev* (London: Arrow Books, 1989), 323; Yan Mingfu was an interpreter during the conversations, see 阎明复, “1958 nian paoji jinmen yu Geluomike mimi fanghua,” 1958 年炮击金门与葛罗米柯秘密访华 [1958 bombardment of Quemoy and Gromyko’s secret visit to China], *Bannian Chao* 百年潮 (March 2006), 18.

⁸³ During the third day of the Mao-Khrushchev summit (2 August 1958), Mao declared that “our policy was not to give up one inch of our territory.” Mao admitted publicly on 30 November 1958 that he did not mention to Khrushchev the “problem of the Taiwan situation.” (其实会上没有谈一句台湾局势问题) see, Wu Lengxi 吴冷西, *Shinian Lunzhan: Zhongsu guanxi huiyilu* 十年论战: 中苏关系回忆录 [Ten years of debate: Reminiscence of Sino-Soviet Relations] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1999), 172; Speech at Cooperatives directors general meeting (Wuhan), 30 Nov 1958, *Wansui* (1969), 254.

⁸⁴ In the face of Khrushchev’s protest in October 1959, Mao defended that the PRC had given the Soviet adequate consultation. Khrushchev correctly protested: “You reported not about your policy on this problem, but merely about some measures.” Memorandum of Conversation of N.S. Khrushchev with Mao Zedong, Beijing, 2 October 1959, in *CWIHPB* 12/13 (Fall-Winter 2001), 265; Yan Mingfu, “1958 nian paoji jinmen,” 20.

⁸⁵ Cited in Vladislav Zubok & Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside Kremlin’s Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cam, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1996), 223.

Khrushchev ironically tried to present a united front. Subsequent Soviet warnings to Washington and Tokyo were the result of Khrushchev's communist commitment.⁸⁶ On 16 September, Khrushchev offered Chinese Ambassador Liu Xiaobai bombers and interceptors to gain airpower over the Taiwan Strait.⁸⁷ Given such firm reassurances, Khrushchev was hence puzzled why the Chinese stopped short of their declaratory aim of liberating the offshore islands and Taiwan.⁸⁸ In reality, Mao was more interested in defending the principle of recovering Taiwan and venting his frustrations over the Soviet foreign policy.⁸⁹ Since the Chinese rhetoric was not backed by action, this embarrassed Khrushchev internationally. From that point onwards, Khrushchev advised caution in international matters, to the Chinese chagrin.⁹⁰

3.2 Projection into the International Arena

In the international arena Beijing deliberately adopted ambiguity to disguise its limited aims. On 31 August the CCP Central Committee issued detailed instructions on the Taiwan Strait Crisis to all Chinese diplomats. Whether the PLA would "land and overrun" the offshore islands would remain undefined. However, they must firmly assert three political points. One, the "liberation and unification" was a national "historical mission" as the PRC did not wish anyone to question its "sacred" and "righteous task" nor hazard a deadline on the accomplishment of the mission. Two, the bombardments were a "punishment" for all the ROC's harassments and provocations. Three,

⁸⁶ In an 8 September telegram, the Chinese embassy in the Soviet Union lauded Khrushchev's letter to Eisenhower as a "serious warning to the imperialists and a strong encouragement to the Chinese people." See Chinese embassy in the Soviet Union to MFA, Telegram, 8 September 1958, serial no. 109-01211-03, AMFA; Record of Conversation between Minister Chen Yi and the Soviet Councilor N. G. Sudarikov, no. 560, 15 Sept 1958, serial no. 111-00267-01, AMFA; my interpretation is supported by Vladislav M. Zubok, "Khrushchev's Nuclear Promise to Beijing During the 1958 Crisis," *CWIHPB* 6/7 (Winter 95-96), 218.

⁸⁷ Liu Xiaobai 刘晓, "Chu shi Sulian," 出使苏联 [My ambassadorship in the Soviet Union] in *Wo de Dashi shengyua* 我的大使生涯 [Our ambassadorial careers] (Nanjing: Jiangsu renming chubanshe, 1993), 36-38; John Wilson Lewis & Xue Litai, *China's Strategic Seapower: The Politics of Force Modernization in the Nuclear Age* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 16.

⁸⁸ *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev*, Vol. 3, 442-443; A. Doak Barnett, "The 1958 Quemoy Crisis: The Sino-Soviet Dimension," *Problems of Communism* XXV (Jul-Aug 1976): 38-39.

⁸⁹ My observations corroborate with the conclusions of a Russian historian Viktor Usov, see Czeslaw Tubilewicz, "Taiwan and the Soviet Union During the Cold War: Enemies or Ambiguous Friends?" *Cold War History* Vol 5, no. 1 (Feb 2005), 78; Dai Chaowu, "The Impact of the Bombardment of Jinmen in 1958 upon Sino-Soviet Relations," *Social Sciences in China*, Vol 26, no. 2 (Summer 2005), 138.

⁹⁰ One reporter presciently noted that the Chinese communist "tough policies are making the Kremlin uneasy." Elsewhere, the CIA accurately noted that Soviet actions in the Middle East were condemned by Beijing. See Embassy in Holland to MFA, Telegram, no. 309, 8 August 1958, serial no. 110-00799-02, AMFA; 375th Meeting of NSC, 7 Aug 1955, NSC Series, box 10, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

the master culprit was the US, who should withdraw its troops from Taiwan and the offshore islands to ensure peace in the Taiwan Strait.⁹¹

The PRC communicated directly its political aims to fraternal countries, highlighting four areas where there would be no negotiation: the “One China” policy; stopping aggression from the US; a state of perpetual civil war with the Nationalists; and grounds for a Sino-US “ceasefire.”⁹²

However, Beijing was much muted in rhetoric. To Bulgarian Ambassador General Petar Pavlov Panchevski, Zhou downplayed the Taiwan Strait Crisis as Zhou also perceived the US intense reluctance to fight over the offshore islands: “... the situation is really not so tense. The US is making use of the tense situation to scare people. Although we are willing to relieve the tensions, we are also not afraid of them.” Significantly, Zhou’s statement was the first admission to a foreigner that the PRC was willing to negotiate.⁹³

Beijing did not waste time on US allies such as Britain and Japan. Circumspection governed its instructions to its embassies outside the communist bloc: “... we do not need to overtly request international organizations to support our Taiwan Strait situation but if they voluntarily wish to support the PRC people’s struggle by telegrams, we can agree.”⁹⁴ Although Beijing identified Britain and Japan as co-conspirators in the US “ceasefire,” they were to be spared from the communist rhetorical abuse, lest it weaken their complaints against the US.⁹⁵

For neutralist countries, Beijing had yet another posture. The PRC recognized that the “fear of war” had “prompted in some a blind adherence to peaceful resolution of the Taiwan Strait.”

⁹¹ Chinese diplomats would “only say that so long as the Chiang gang continues to stay in Taiwan and the offshore islands, the PRC’s military action would not stop.” The US bore the primary responsibility for the “tense situation” in the Strait as it had marshaled “armed threats” against China. “关于目前台湾局势对外宣传问题给驻外使馆的指示电” [Guanyu muqian Taiwan jushi duiwai xuanchuan wenti gei zhu waishi de zhishi dian], no. 100, 2 Sept 1958, serial no. 102-0006-03 and MFA to Chinese Embassies, Telegram, no.100, 2 September 1958, serial no. 110-00421-01, AMFA.

⁹² MFA to Chinese Embassies at Czechoslovakia, United Arab Republic, East Germany, Hungary, telegram, no. 1338, 20 September 1958, serial no. 110-0421-01, AMFA.

⁹³ Record of Conversation between Prime Minister Zhou Enlai and the Bulgarian Ambassador Petar Pavlov Panchevski, 3 Sept 1958, serial no. 109-00856-13, AMFA.

⁹⁴ MFA to Chinese Embassies, telegram, no. 1222, N.D., serial no. 110-00421-01, AMFA.

⁹⁵ “If we can win such groups or meetings to pass resolutions supporting our country, we should duly fight for it. But if they are not willing, do not force them.” MFA to Chinese Embassies, telegram, no. 1222, N.D., serial no. 110-00421-01, AMFA.

Toward such countries, the PRC advocated the soft approach: “According to different circumstances one must use suitable persuasions to let them understand that to reduce the tension in the Taiwan Strait, the US must withdraw and stop interfering with the domestic politics of the PRC.”⁹⁶ Beijing’s bottom line was to guard against attempts to bring the conflict settlement to the UN or being pressured internationally for a peaceful settlement.⁹⁷

3.3 Strong Fraternal Support

The PRC received strong communist fraternal support for its Taiwan Strait actions. This critical element is amiss from existing scholarship on the PRC’s foreign relations. On 4 September, the Mongolian Foreign Ministry informed the PRC that its military delegation would like to find out in their coming visit to the PRC “if there is anything the Mongolian People’s Army could do to support China.”⁹⁸ Fraternal countries also pressed Moscow to take a more active role in aiding the PRC. The North Korean ambassador emphasized the importance of the recovery of China’s territory. The Hungarian and Czech ambassadors expressed that the recovery of Taiwan was “a joint enterprise for all fraternal countries.” The 10 September Mongolian official statement said it best: “The US provocative actions against our great fraternal brother China are against the world’s peace-loving people. This also meant that their provocations are against the Mongolian people.” The warning was clear: should you provoke one of us, you would upset a whole nest of hornets.⁹⁹

In the prevailing jingoistic mood, the PRC was ironically put in an onerous position. The Chinese embassy in Hanoi was swamped by “enthusiastic” inquiries. Some bolder Vietnamese comrades even questioned the timing of the bombardments, making it clear that it should have been done *earlier*. Yet, such sound and fury seemed directed more inwardly at the Vietnamese body politic,

⁹⁶ MFA to Chinese Embassies in Czechoslovakia, United Arab Republic, East Germany, Hungary, telegram, no. 1338, 20 September 1958, serial no. 110-0421-01, AMFA.

⁹⁷ MFA to Chinese Embassies, telegram, no. 1222, N.D., serial no. 110-00421-01, AMFA.

⁹⁸ Mongolia’s newspaper, the *Mongolian Pravda*, urged perseverance on 3 September: “Quemoy, Matsu and Taiwan are part of China and cannot be separated ... the Mongolian people staunchly support the Chinese people’s righteous struggle.” Embassy in Mongolia to MFA, Telegram, no. 199, 5 September 1958, serial no. 106-00122-02, AMFA.

⁹⁹ Embassy in Mongolia to MFA, Telegram, no. 411, 10 September 1958, serial no. 106-00122-02, AMFA.

drumming support for its ultimate unification with the South.¹⁰⁰ In a 10 September official statement, Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Van Dong cleverly tied the Taiwan Strait Crisis with the US interference in South Vietnam.¹⁰¹ When the clouds of a Sino-US war passed in mid-September, this prompted even bigger rituals of Sino-Vietnamese fraternity. The Vietnamese organized a 50,000-strong mass rally, which the Chinese embassy enthusiastically reported was the “most popular” rally in living memory. Foreign embassies personnel from Indonesia, North Korea, Soviet Union, Poland, Romania, Hungary, and other countries were also present.¹⁰²

Fraternal support shielded Beijing from Soviet criticisms. Beijing maintained such support for its independent foreign policy through regular briefing sessions conducted by senior PRC officials. Beijing also used a variety of themes to stiffen the resolve of the Soviet bloc. Vice-Foreign Minister Zhang Wentian averred that the crisis was not without its benefits since the US would face the “opposition of the world,” especially “the opposition to US imperialism.” Zhang then repeated Mao’s “noose” analogy: the Taiwan crisis had been transformed into a noose around the US neck from which there would no easy release. Left unsaid was the implication that the crisis would not be allowed to get out of hand. The PRC also tried to show that the US threats were all hollow: “Don’t be alarmed by its bared teeth and sharp claws, ... be steadfast and determined, [the US] really has no other means, hence we call it the paper tiger.”¹⁰³ Elsewhere, Vice-Foreign Minister Ji Pengfei had admitted the US cautious tacit acquiescence, seen in the American calculation of China’s three miles of territorial waters from Quemoy, not from the mainland.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ For the Vietnamese, China’s Taiwan Strait Crisis was like a carnival and a media circus, with the Vietnamese News Division permitting the Chinese Xinhua news agency to interview prominent Vietnamese communists. The PRC had earlier rejected Hanoi’s calls for “Southern Revolution” [reunification with South Vietnam] during the summer of 1958. Hence, the diligence given by the Vietnamese comrades on the importance of the recovery of Quemoy was a back-handed commentary on the partitioning of Vietnam at the 17th parallel on June 1954. See Chinese Embassy in Hanoi to MFA, telegram, no. 129, 2 September 1958, serial no. 106-00443-09, AMFA; Chen Jian, “China and the Vietnam Wars,” 162.

¹⁰¹ Two days earlier, Pham Van Dong had announced total support for Zhou Enlai’s official stand. Dong drew attention to the similar circumstances of South Vietnam and demanded that “the US cease all activities in South Vietnam.” See Chinese Embassy in Hanoi to MFA, telegram, no. 523, 11 September 1958, serial no. 106-00443-09, AMFA.

¹⁰² Some Vietnamese combat veterans even declared in the rally that they were willing to “fight together hand-in-hand with their Chinese comrades.” Important Vietnamese communists were present too. See Chinese Embassy in Hanoi to MFA, telegram, no. 1009, 21 September 1958, serial no. 106-00443-09, AMFA.

¹⁰³ See Record of Conversation between Vice-Foreign Minister Zhang Wentian and the Soviet Chargé d’affaires, Bulgarian, Albanian, Czech, Hungarian and Polish ambassadors, no. 569, 21 Sept 1958, serial no. 109-00822-08, AMFA.

¹⁰⁴ But he quickly established the insincerity of the US by pointing out that the US had “no intention in carrying out meaningful negotiations” in Warsaw and Eisenhower’s rejection of Khrushchev’s 19 September letter was

Conventional scholarship has stressed the belligerency of the PRC in comparison to the cautious moves of the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁵ However, the above analysis has demonstrated that Mao's actions had elicited strong fraternal ritualized support. As such belligerent attitudes of the Communist countries went against Moscow's advocacy of peaceful co-existence, this raises the question whether Mao and the PRC represented the *sole* example of "aggressive stance" in this period of international communism.

3.4 Competition for Neutralist Support

Toward neutralist Asian countries, Beijing adopted adroit rhetoric and pressure. On 30 August, Vice-Foreign Minister Zhang Wentian informed the Indian Ambassador that friendly Asian countries had a role to play, asserting that Asian countries should recognize, "object and oppose the US conspiratorial attempts to create tension in the Far East." Although Zhang was pugnacious in stating the PRC's hallowed mission of recovering the offshore islands and Taiwan, this was presented as more of a matter of "policy and determination" than actual occupation of territory.¹⁰⁶ In response, Afro-Asian countries in the UN were reportedly singing the same tune as Beijing.¹⁰⁷ The PRC's ritualized script of the Taiwan Strait Crisis involved conflating its historical role of being the perennial victim with creative embellishments. Zhang had a sanitized version of events for the Indian Ambassador: "On 23 August, Chiang Kai-shek's clique was sending supplies to Quemoy. To give cover to the supply ships, the Quemoy commander fired upon us. Hence, we returned fire. That is how things developed." Zhang trivialized the trigger event and proceeded to condemn such disproportionate US belligerent reactions as sending two aircraft carrier battle groups to the Taiwan Strait.¹⁰⁸

"unprecedented." Record of Conversation between Vice-Foreign Minister Ji Pengfei and the Romanian, E. Germany, North Korean, Mongolian and North Vietnamese ambassadors, no. 566, 21 Sept 1958, serial no. 109-00822-07, AMFA.

¹⁰⁵ Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside Kremlin's Cold War*, 221.

¹⁰⁶ Beijing unequivocally informed the world that the bombardments were not a prelude to an invasion of Taiwan. Record of Conversation between Vice-Foreign Minister Zhang and the Indian Ambassador, no. 535, 30 August 1958, serial no. 111-00266-01, AMFA.

¹⁰⁷ Chinese Embassy in Soviet Union to MFA, telegram, no. 589, 13 September 1958, serial no. 111-00267-01, AMFA.

¹⁰⁸ Zhang noted the aerial exercises on 29 August off Taiwan's coast and a combined military exercise scheduled in September. He also noted that senior US military leaders had converged in Taiwan for consultation. See Record of Conversation between Vice Foreign Minister Zhang and the Indian Ambassador, no. 535, 30 August 1958, serial no. 111-00266-01, AMFA.

To distant and presumably ignorant allies, Beijing affected a tough posture, as seen in Chen Yi's conversation with the United Arab Republic ambassador: "For the sake of our safety and the freedom of shipping, we must liberate Quemoy and Matsu ... We have already blockaded the Strait, and controlled access to Quemoy and Matsu. We will force the Nationalists' 80,000 army troops to retreat or surrender." However, Chen Yi's verbal overkill was quickly punctured by the ambassador who asked if reports that the US had already broken the blockade were true. Chen Yi then switched to defending the principle of "liberation of Taiwan" and the offshore islands and backpedaled at the end of his conversation: "One cannot just achieve one's goal [liberation of offshore islands or Taiwan] by today or tomorrow."¹⁰⁹

The cynical tailoring of the PRC diplomatic pitch to different countries demonstrated a shrewd realpolitik outlook of international relations. The inflation of the crisis to Middle East allies made for good propaganda at little cost and should distant allies display more astuteness than warranted, the belligerent rhetoric would be dropped.¹¹⁰ For critical Communist-bloc countries and other neutralist Asian allies, Beijing reverted to the "reasonable" stance. Zhou carefully hinted in the letters to Sihanouk and Krishna Menon that the PRC was concerned more with the "sacred and inviolable" principle that the PRC had every right to recover Taiwan and the offshore islands than with physical attempts to do so.¹¹¹

However, to Beijing's rue, the US demonstrated adroit handling of Afro-Asian nations as well. Dulles showed a high degree of flexibility and reasonableness toward the SEATO ambassadors on 4 September, and hoped that Thailand, Pakistan and the Philippines would relay the peace message

¹⁰⁹ Record of Conversation between Vice Premier Chen Yi and the United Arab Republic Ambassador, no. 577, 21 Sept 1958 (1600hrs), serial no. 107-00103-21, AMFA.

¹¹⁰ Subsequent telegrams to the Chinese embassies in the UAR and Iraq avoided mentioning Chen Yi's embarrassing initial position of "we must liberate Quemoy and Matsu". MFA (Asia-Afro Division) to Chinese Embassies in the UAR and Iraq, Telegram, no. 1490, 23 Sept 1958, serial no. 107-00173-12, AMFA

¹¹¹ The central theme was: "China has always suggested that Sino-US talks should be used to resolve peacefully the differences over the Taiwan area without resorting to threats or force." Zhou however rejected the concept of "ceasefire" as the "PRC and the US were not at war." The bombardments of the offshore islands were simply an episode of "armed punishment of the Nationalists' harassing activities" in the "long civil war" between the Communists and the Nationalists, which would not "threaten the Far East and world peace." See Prime Minister Zhou Enlai to Krishna Menon, letter, 21 September 1958, serial no. 105-00375-01; Prime Minister Zhou Enlai to King Norodom Sihanouk, letter, 26 September 1958, serial no. 106-00129-01; AMFA.

to the other countries in the UN. A Ceylonese source reported: “If China’s military maneuvers are restricted to the offshore islands and not towards conquering Taiwan, Dulles hoped to use a peaceful solution to resolve the Taiwan Strait Crisis.” Dulles offered four suggestions. One, the UN would be invited to handle the situation. Two, the PRC and the ROC would hold talks. Three, Sino-US talks should also start. Four, India or the Soviet Union could be the third-party arbitrator. Dulles’ moves succeeded in deflecting negative world opinion of the US temporarily.¹¹²

On 18 September, Dulles publicly requested in the UN that Sino-US talks be continued on the condition that the Chinese communists held a ceasefire in the Taiwan Strait. In turn, the US promised to further *discuss* “cessation of provocations against Mainland China.” Privately, Zhou could hardly mask his anger from the Soviets on just how ludicrous the US demands were.¹¹³ Nevertheless, Beijing’s reacted circumspectly in public. Referring to the Afro-Asian countries, Zhou conceded that as these countries had requested for a ceasefire and for Chiang to withdraw from the offshore islands, the PRC would adopt a three-pronged approach to resolve the conflict: participate in negotiations in Warsaw, gather support among sympathetic UN members in New York and continue barrages upon Quemoy.¹¹⁴ Beijing’s tolerance for a tacit ceasefire was based on a good understanding of US intentions. In an address to the communist ambassadors, Vice-Foreign Minister Zhang Wentian noted that “the US had no desire to provoke a huge war” since the bulk of the US flotilla in the Taiwan Strait operated outside the twelve miles of territorial waters stipulated by Beijing. Zhang also demonstrated remarkable clarity on the constraints faced by the US: “The US was concerned of the consequences of its aid to Chiang, but not aiding the ROC was not a viable option for the US either.” Such “contradictions” thus led the US to reinforce its garrisons in Taiwan but engage in negotiations with the PRC simultaneously.

¹¹² Chinese Embassy in the Soviet Union to MFA, telegram, no. 589, 13 September 1958, serial no. 111-00267-01, AMFA.

¹¹³ Beijing saw his as a case of bad faith as all the Americans could promise was a discussion of the issue without offering an immediate “cessation of provocations.” Zhou explained to Antonov: “Since our first meeting with the US when we presented our draft accord, the American probably unexpectedly came to a wrong perception ... Thinking that we are in a hurry to reach a peace agreement, the US once again demand a ceasefire from us.” Memorandum on the Situation in the Taiwan Strait, no. 1381, 21 Sept 1958, serial no. 109-00822-10, AMFA; Foster Dulles, “Problems of Peace and Progress,” opening session of the 13th UN General Assembly, New York, Sept. 18, 1958), DSB (Oct 6, 1958), 525-530.

¹¹⁴ Record of Conversation between Prime Minister Zhou Enlai and the Soviet Chargé d’affaires S. F. Antonov, no. 563, 18 Sept 1958 (2200hrs), serial no. 109-00833-01, AMFA

Moreover, international opinions on the Taiwan Strait Crisis appeared to be shifting. Initially, the US militant actions had few supporters. But the US peace offensive via Eisenhower's 11 September speech and Dulles' 18 September speech in the UN changed the international dynamics. Zhang acknowledged: "Some are blinded by the peaceful gestures into thinking that it would really resolve the crisis." Therefore, Beijing would prudently support the Warsaw negotiations because "while there would be acts of war, there would also be peaceful processes." The KMT on the offshore islands would also have to be pounded, but the Chinese Communists "would not strike the Americans, if they did not attempt an invasion." Regarding the long term, Zhang concurred that this zone of contest and period of probing would be around for a "considerable time."¹¹⁵

4. The US: Figuring Out a Decent Way

The US was aware of the moderate stance of the PRC and perceived the negotiations in Warsaw with an end to diffusing tensions. Having achieved understanding with Beijing on that score, Washington, however, was still stuck with an obdurate Taipei. Historical and cultural factors again intervened to obstruct any successful persuasion of Chiang. To gain more time to persuade Chiang, the US explored various possibilities to extend talks with the PRC, demonstrating the ritualized maturity of the Sino-US crisis system. Nonetheless, Sino-US tacit accommodation could not provide an antidote to the increasing public relations woes of the US, reflected in the growing criticisms the US drew from international and American public opinion concerned about a potential outbreak of war and nuclear fallout.

4.1 US Perceptions of PRC's Moderation

The symbolism of Taiwan for the PRC was understood by the US. In a British intelligence extract read by both Dulles and Eisenhower, it was made clear that the PRC wanted to reclaim its "great

¹¹⁵ Zhang contended that the military grandstanding, the desire for negotiations and the unstated adherence of the twelve-mile limit were evidence that "superficially the US acts tough, but it is actually very soft." He added that the Americans feared that KMT actions would "drag the US into troubled waters." US militant actions were also unpopular: Japan was hesitant, Britain was leery of showing too much support, and the Philippines' suggestion to include Taiwan in SEATO was dropped. Record of Conversation between Vice-Foreign Minister Zhang Wentian and the Soviet Chargé d'affaires, Bulgarian, Albanian, Czech, Hungarian and Polish ambassadors, no. 569, 21 Sept 1958, serial no. 109-00822-08, AMFA.

power status.” Part of the equation was to have economic development. To gear the population to this formidable task, “stimulus of external crises” had to be used. However, “the Chinese domestic policy requires crises rather than wars.” The bottom line for the Chinese Communists was to at least have a “diplomatic victory to show their people.”¹¹⁶ The moderation of the PRC’s bombardments was duly noted. Dulles gathered that in Quemoy although “civilian casualties are tremendous...the military damage is small.” He observed gratefully that “they could do more against Quemoy from the air than they have.” With the US aiding in resupplying the offshore islands, the danger for the US was “Chiang going off on his own.”¹¹⁷ But the US military, as Herter reported, were still privately “set in their minds if anything is going to happen it will be of a nuclear character.” Herter stated that the US forward observers in Quemoy sent a report that was “a little more moderate” than what the brass in Pentagon composed.¹¹⁸

This time round it was the US that was eager for the negotiations in Warsaw, although Dulles referred to “Mao’s statement and the importance he attaches to the talks” to point out that the PRC was just as anxious.¹¹⁹ Dulles reminded Robertson that Eisenhower had “said he would go anywhere in search of peace.” In terms of the selection of venues or emissaries, the US would bend backward to accommodate the communists.¹²⁰ Dulles “did not want to risk the talks on which so much depended,” and further instructed that Ambassador Jacob D. Beam be updated about the situation.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ “Excerpt of Personal Assessment by British Charge, Peiping (9 Sept 1958),” Dulles to Eisenhower, 12 September 1958, Dulles-Herter Series, box 10, Dulles - September, 1958 (2), Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

¹¹⁷ Telephone call with Gov. Herter, 18 September 1958, 8:47 am, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹¹⁸ Telephone call to Gov. Herter, 19 September 1958, 8:54 am, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹¹⁹ The US hoped that moderate moves would deter Beijing from demanding more nuclear capability from the Soviets. The Soviets also hoped to delay the Chinese Communists for “as long as possible” but it was only a matter of time before the PRC would acquire it on their own efforts. OCB staff Col. Edwin F. Black advocated using the Soviets to restrain the Chinese. See Telephone call to President at Newport, 6 September 1958, 3:41pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 13, memoranda of tel. conv - W H Aug 1, 1958 to Dec 5 1958 (3), JFD papers, DDEL; Col. Edwin F. Black, OCB Staff Representative, to Mr. Marshall Green, State Dept., Memorandum, Department of Defense, Sep 17, 1958. DDRS.

¹²⁰ Dulles further advised: “You have to keep some fragment of public opinion with you. We are in a desperate place in that position.” This change of posture was captured by Kenneth T. Young who at that time was the Director of Southeast Asian Affairs of the State Department. See *Diplomacy and Power*, 19.

¹²¹ Telephone call from Mr Robertson, 13 September 1958, 12:40pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (3), JFD papers, DDEL

4.2 US Package Deal in Exchange for the Fangong Mission?

Once the talks with Beijing started in Warsaw on 15 September, Washington turned to Taipei. Eisenhower was initially buoyant that the US could “figure out a *decent way*” to convince Chiang about a “package deal for a status quo for a few years to give internal forces a chance.”¹²² The US embarked upon several steps to persuade Chiang. One, the JCS was tasked to reconsider the value of the offshore islands to support Eisenhower’s argument to turn them into outposts. Two, Dulles’ formula, the “demilitarization of the islands,” would be pursued.¹²³ Three, physical maneuverings of the US fleets would take into consideration the ROC’s sentiments. To the PRC, the US would “ease up on those activities at least for a few days” but at the same time “this should not be down abruptly so as to alarm the Chinese Nationalist Government.”¹²⁴ Yet another way would be to tempt Chiang with enhanced amphibious capability. Eisenhower would contend that Chiang “must remain mobile to take advantage of any change to reoccupy the mainland” and “amphibious boats would make him really mobile.” This would also keep the generalissimo busy with “activity, and training duties” and Eisenhower was prepared to even include “parachute training.”¹²⁵

However, negotiating the fine line between restraining Chiang and not snubbing *fangong* was trying.¹²⁶ Presidential Special Assistant Gordon Gray argued for pointing to the ROC the absurdity of *fangong* and the negative value of the offshore islands to the US international standing. To his credit, Eisenhower displayed understanding of the utility of *fangong* and told Gray that “as long as the first possibility [disintegration of the CCP on mainland China] existed it was important to

¹²² For the US, it would be an opportunity to “get out of that damn place where we are caught.” Indeed, Eisenhower and Dulles candidly claimed that “they don’t know what they [ROC] have been doing [on the offshore islands].” Telephone call to President at Newport, 6 September 1958, 3:41pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 13, memoranda of tel. conv - W H Aug 1, 1958 to Dec 5 1958 (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹²³ Dulles wondered how he could “get Chiang Kai-shek to disengage with fatal implications on Formosa.” Still the US negotiators were to pursue this line, “short of bringing about the collapse of the government in Formosa.” See Memorandum, 11 Sept 1958, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 1, Memos of conversation - General L through M (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹²⁴ Eisenhower with Dulles, Memo of Conversation, 11 September 1958, Special Assistants Chronological Series, Box 13, Greene - Boster Chronological Sept (2), JFD Papers, DDEL.

¹²⁵ Fiscally, Eisenhower argued, “we could do all that training for less than keeping a reinforced 7th fleet there.” See Telephone call from the President, 16 September 1958, 8 am, Telephone Conversation Series, box 13, memoranda of tel. conv - W H Aug 1, 1958 to Dec 5 1958 (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹²⁶ Various thumbscrews applied on the ROC “to convert Chiang to flexibility” appeared in vain. Dulles complained that “we are working everyday – [George] Yeh is here and they talk everyday.” See Telephone call to the President in Newport, 22 September 1958, 8:59am, Telephone Conversation Series, box 13, memoranda of tel. conv - W H Aug 1, 1958 to Dec 5 1958 (2); Telephone call from the President, 17 September 1958, 9:04am, Telephone Conversation Series, box 13, memoranda of tel. conv – W H Aug 1, 1958 to Dec 5 1958 (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

maintain the morale of Chiang and his people.” Moreover, as a “symbol of the Free world” Taiwan and the offshore islands were linked.¹²⁷ While Eisenhower understood the symbolism of the offshore islands, he increasingly resented it, as seen in his insistence to Dulles “that we have to do something; we have to sell someone something or we shall be accused of desertion of ally or bringing war, neither of which is acceptable.”¹²⁸

Yet, the stark political realities of the ROC’s existence rebelled against Eisenhower’s proposals. As Chiang had invested much in building the *guochi* (national humiliation) symbolism of the offshore islands, evident by all the *wuwang zaiju* (Forget not the time at Ju) granite inscriptions in Quemoy, he could not treat the offshore islands as outposts to be abandoned at will and stop the morale boosting paramilitary raids on China.¹²⁹ For Chiang, the ignominy of being driven to the Formosa redoubt in 1949 as permitted by Truman’s White Paper seemed to be repeated in Eisenhower’s seemingly rational proposals. Chiang’s anger with his American ally resided in the American insensitivity in trampling over the value of *fangong* symbolism in the ROC’s body politic, which Chiang had spent nearly a decade building brick-by-brick.¹³⁰

So desperate was the US that Eisenhower revisited the idea of having a “high-powered negotiator in Taiwan.” Herter quoted the failure of the 1955 Radford-Robertson conversations and warned that “history is repeating itself.”¹³¹ However, Eisenhower saw it as a problem of sending the right emissary and complained that Radford and Robertson “did not hold an open mind on the

¹²⁷ Eisenhower also revealed his disagreements with Dulles’ handling of the Taiwan Strait Crisis before 6 September: “He [Eisenhower] did agree with the view that some honorable way out of the Off-shore Islands dilemma was desirable. In this he indicated that perhaps his views as to methods were somewhat at variance with the Secretary of State’s.” Gordon Gray with Eisenhower, Memorandum, 12 Sep 1958, Off of the Sp Asst for Nat Sec Affairs, Special Asst Series, Presidential Subseries, box 3, Meetings with the President—1958 (3), White House Office, DDEL.

¹²⁸ Dulles warned that the offshore islands “are all that are left of what was China and he [Chiang] hates to give up anything.” Eisenhower found this repeated nationalistic and cultural impasse intolerable. Telephone call from the President, 16 September 1958, 8 am, Telephone Conversation Series, box 13, memoranda of tel. conv - W H Aug 1, 1958 to Dec 5 1958 (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹²⁹ Li Xiaofen, et al. 李筱峰, 及其他, “Jiuwei de fuhao - cong ‘zhenzhi biaoyu’ tu kan liang jiang zhenzhi,” 久违的符号 - 从 ‘政治标语’ 图像看两蒋政治 [Symbols of ages past - Looking at Jiang politics through political slogans], *Taiwan shiliao yanjiu* 台湾史料研究 [Taiwan Historical Materials studies], no. 27 (Aug 2006), 13-16.

¹³⁰ Dulles admitted that the US adamant requests could “jeopardize good relations between us and the Chinats and also undermine the authority and prestige of the Nationalist Government on Taiwan.” See “Memo of conversation with Ambassador Lodge,” 19 Sept 1958, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 1, Memos of conversation - General L through M (1), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹³¹ Telephone call to Gov. Herter, 16 September 1958, 9 am, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

problem.”¹³² He had in mind John McCloy, whom Eisenhower had much admired for his wartime work, to persuade Chiang, but McCloy declined.¹³³ As half-hearted emissaries would not work, the inference was that Dulles might have to do the convincing this time.

4.3 Ritualized Maturity of the Crisis System

To gain more time to persuade Chiang, the US looked to Warsaw. “The big thing,” as Dulles put it, “we hope for is if we keep a strong front it [the present Taiwan Strait Crisis] will subside as *before* and his [Ambassador Beam’s] report indicates there may be a basis for that.” The negotiation was a cog in the process of diffusing tensions. Dulles indicated to Herter that he “would not look at it as a meeting to finalize our position or do anything dramatic but just reaffirm and throw in a few new hookers.” As for the “new hookers” which Dulles recommended, these were some points for the Chinese Communists to debate and prolong the negotiation process.¹³⁴

Another avenue to gain diplomatic breathing space was to pile options upon the PRC. Dulles encouraged Australia’s resurrection of the idea of international guarantees of Taiwan,¹³⁵ as he claimed that proposals submitted by the Soviets and the Americans did not seem “acceptable to the other.”¹³⁶ Dulles also eagerly explored other mediatory efforts. Remembered the effects of a multiple-pronged approach in resolving the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, he approached Hammarskjold with the request that “there might come a time when some ‘cushion’ was desirable and perhaps the United Nations could provide it.” However, the Secretary-General was reluctant. As the Sino-US ambassadorial talks had already started, Hammarskjold did not wish to undercut

¹³² Secretary Ann Whitman wrote in her diary that the implication was that the duo “secretly agreed with Chiang.” See, Diary Notes, 26 September 1958, ACW Diary Series, box 10, September, 1958 ACW DIARY, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

¹³³ McCloy evoked the failure of the Marshall’s mission and refused to budge. See John J. McCloy to Dulles, 27 Sept 1958, Dulles-Herter Series, box 10, Dulles - September, 1958 (1), Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

¹³⁴ These include citing that “the Chinese would not be quarreling about it [Offshore islands] if it were not for us [defeating the Japanese and freeing Formosa]” or “it was our military effort and sacrifice that gives the Chinese something to quarrel about.” The main aim was to “keep it going.” Telephone call to Gov. Herter, 19 September 1958, 12:57pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹³⁵ In the previous attempts, Australia’s proposal was halted by British lack of enthusiasm and Chiang’s rigorous protests. Dulles seemed interested but Chiang again proved obdurate. See “Memo of conversation with Foreign Minister Casey,” 18 Sept 1958, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 1, Memos of Conversation - General - A through D (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹³⁶ See “Memo of conversation with Australian ambassador,” 21 Sept 1958, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 1, Memos of Conversation - General - A through D (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

the effort and would only promise “some sort of a ‘United Nations presence’ in the situation which would not require him to plunge into the matter.”¹³⁷ In sum, the ritualized maturity of a Sino-US crisis system was at hand. Dulles was prepared to “go on forever” with the “Ambassadorial talks [which] could be prolonged.” The US even aired the prospect of “higher-level talks.”¹³⁸

4.4 US Public Relations Nightmare

Although the reasonable posture of the US during the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis had garnered it some international support, trouble soon came from international and American public opinion concerned about a potential outbreak of war and nuclear fallout. The Soviets had publicly lamented in the UN that the US did not “listen to the voice of reason” and had thereby created the possibility of a “real danger of war.”¹³⁹ This influenced the mood in the UN, with Ambassador Lodge telling Dulles that “it was the roughest one we ever had. The Quemoy Thing dominated everything. No one made a speech on our side.”¹⁴⁰ The ritualized negotiations with the PRC, with no immediate “positive outcomes,” gave no succor to US public relations woes either. “Two-thirds of the world, and 60% of US opinion,” lamented Eisenhower, “opposes the course which we have been following.”¹⁴¹ Worst of all, whatever negotiation room the US had in Warsaw had been narrowed.¹⁴²

¹³⁷ While Hammarskjold had previously mediated on humanitarian grounds to aid the return of the US airmen imprisoned in the PRC, the Taiwan Strait issue was political and the PRC and ROC had repeatedly stated that this was an internal affair. See “Memo of Conversation with Hammarskjold,” 26 Sept 1958, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 1, Memos of conversation - General E through I (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹³⁸ However, what this meant was not clear since, when Eisenhower was asked this by the British, he changed the topic to matters of “intelligence cooperation between the UK and the US with reference to the general position in the Far East, the significance of the Chinese communities in different states, etc.” See “Memo of conversation with Ambassador Caccia,” 22 Sept 1958, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 1, Memos of Conversation - General - A through D (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹³⁹ Thomas, “Soviet Policy,” 61.

¹⁴⁰ Telephone call to Amb Lodge, 23 September 1958, 6:39pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

¹⁴¹ Dulles with Eisenhower, Memo of Conversation, 23 Sept 1958, Special Assistants Chronological Series, Box 13, Greene - Boster Chronological Sept (1), JFD Papers, DDEL.

¹⁴² Even Allen Dulles found the crescendo of public opposition to the White House’s posture in the Taiwan Strait alarming. The situation was made worse by public protests by former officials from the Truman administration such as Dean Acheson and Thomas K. Finletter, who claimed “we don’t need it [Formosa] for defence purposes.” See Telephone call to Mr Robertson, 25 September 1958, 8:44 am, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (3); Memo (Allen Dulles), 25 September 1958, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (3), JFD papers, DDEL.

Chiang's antics were complicating matters.¹⁴³ Dulles remonstrated to senior State Department official Arthur H. Dean that additional pressure on the ROC could be counterproductive. Remembering the 1957 Taiwan Riots, Dulles averred that there could be "a violent outbreak of anti-American sentiment" and we "would be forced out of Formosa." Eisenhower thought that the dilemma "from a military viewpoint" was simply "awful." Moreover, tacit understandings with Beijing could not be made public. "Of course we don't want to fight for them [offshore islands]," lamented Dulles to Nixon, "but the problem cannot be simplified in that way." Beijing's staunch refusal to trade the offshore islands to "stop the fighting" aggravated matters. Dulles admitted that these sensitive issues were "hard to say" publicly. Moreover the PRC insisted on harping on the "issue of US aggression against China" in the UN and even the issue of "ceasefire" could not be raised. The only consolation was that the PRC "continue to take that 1955 line." Dulles was trapped between stubborn Taipei and an enemy that was obtuse to horse trading.

Conclusion

On the eve of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, the ROC's harsh albeit flawed critique of the US was a reflection of its waning *fangong* mission and its complex relations with the US. Despite support to be rendered by the US as demonstrated in the ROC's war plans, the KMT mission had become more defensive than offensive. Inured by the PRC's maneuvers in the Taiwan Strait, Eisenhower decided against the nuclear option even before the outbreak of hostilities. Washington was also explicit about reining in Chiang Kai-shek and considered signaling more clearly to Beijing American intentions in Taiwan. Meanwhile tensions were building up in Sino-Soviet relations over a host of issues and Beijing viewed the Soviet Union's symbolic maneuvers in the Middle East and Soviet attitudes toward the US and the PRC with mounting distrust. China's decision to bombard Quemoy was cast in a mode of defiance against the timidity of the Soviets, together with China's concerns regarding the specter of US encirclement, perceived American intransigence and Taiwan's provocations.

¹⁴³ Eisenhower grumbled that "there seemed to be no way to persuade Chiang to redirect the focus of his leadership, in a way which would enable him to re-group his military forces into more sensible positions." Dulles with Eisenhower, Memo of Conversation, 23 Sept 1958, Special Assistants Chronological Series, Box 13, Greene - Boster Chronological Sept (1), JFD Papers, DDEL.

Right from the start of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, both Washington and Beijing exercised remarkable restraint. Eisenhower was calm and Dulles hailed the experiences gained in 1955 as fundamental to the tacit accommodation reached in the immediate aftermath of the Crisis. Taipei, steeped in the nuances of the communist moves, again successfully made use of the Crisis to press for more US aid, and this benefited the ROC military establishment in particular. The PRC's actions were cautious and deliberate right from the beginning, seeing the bombardments as a "military probe" designed to "give the US a hard time." Dulles' offer of tacit accommodation on 4 September was swiftly accepted by Zhou on 6 September. While Beijing was using the Crisis to amass support for its domestic agenda of the Great Leap Forward, US public opinion missed the nuances of the Sino-US tacit accommodation and Eisenhower had to reach out to the public to "reverse the poll," a development that Taipei met with dour circumspection.

In the wake of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, the PRC worked toward gaining international support for its actions. Beijing was eager for Soviet endorsement but chafed at perceived Soviet condescendence. Subterranean cultural and historical currents deeply coloured Mao's approach to the Soviets, who were subsequently taken aback by Mao's actions. In the international arena Beijing had deliberately adopted ambiguity to disguise its limited aims. Mao's actions received resounding symbolic support from fraternal countries, shielding Beijing from Soviet criticisms. Such an approval by fraternal states further raises the question of whether Mao and the PRC represented the *sole* example of "aggressive stance" in this period of international communism, as presented in conventional scholarship. At the same time, Beijing had to compete for neutralist international support as the US had also adopted a reasonable posture. However, Beijing carefully guarded all approaches of its diplomacy and wanted no third-party intervention. Such attention to international diplomacy was possible because of Beijing's confident grasp of US intentions.

The US was aware of the moderate stance of the PRC and perceived the negotiations in Warsaw with an end to diffusing tensions. Having achieved understanding with Beijing on that score,

Washington, however, was still stuck with an obdurate Taipei. Historical and cultural factors again intervened to obstruct any successful persuasion of Chiang. To gain more time to persuade Chiang, the US explored various possibilities to extend talks with the PRC, demonstrating the ritualized maturity of the Sino-US crisis system. Nonetheless, Sino-US tacit accommodation could not provide an antidote to the increasing public relations woes of the US, reflected in the growing criticisms the US drew from international and American public opinion concerned about a potential outbreak of war and nuclear fallout.

This chapter has thus analyzed how and why the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis broke out in late-August 1958 and how and why a much quicker Sino-US tacit accommodation was reached in early September. With regards to strategies employed by each party in the crisis, all fingered the lessons of the previous encounter. How the PRC, the US and the ROC related to each other and in the international arena in the final months of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis from late-September to December 1958 will be the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 8: The Second Taiwan Strait Crisis: Resolution and Aftermath

Following the outbreak of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis on 23 August 1958, Zhou and Dulles publicly announced on 6 September possible peaceful measures and this led to the convening of the Sino-US negotiations in Warsaw from 15 September onwards. Both the US and the PRC claimed credit for the resolution of the quandary, but on different grounds. The Chinese expressed their satisfaction with the “lesson,” the artillery bombardment of Quemoy and Matsu, while Washington reaffirmed its faith in nuclear deterrence. Chiang Kai-shek proclaimed peaceably that the wisdom of Sun Yat-sen's *Sanminzhuyi* (Three Principles of the People) would henceforth guide the ROC's effort in reclaiming Mainland China and launched the next phase of Taiwan's economic policy. The speed of the conflict resolution and the different explanations offered beg more questions than answers.

Once Zhou accepted Washington's offer of restarting the negotiations in Warsaw, the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis seemingly retreated in urgency. Indeed existing scholarship neglected the behind-the-scene maneuvering by *all* three parties to consolidate the peace.¹ Beijing's relations with Asian neutralist countries were also a glaring omission. Three recent studies on Taiwan Strait relations, however, did stress two important aspects: two of the studies highlighted the PRC-ROC back-channels in facilitating the winding down of the crisis, while the third emphasized the domestic imperatives of the crisis for the political dynamics of Quemoy.² This chapter, focusing on developments from late-September to December 1958, wraps up the reinterpretation of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis. Building on recent insights and new sources, it argues that Beijing paradoxically found its friendship and prestige with Asian neutralists a hindrance to its tacit understanding with Washington, as the neutralist countries were overly eager to be Beijing's

¹ Gordon H. Chang, *Friends and Enemies: The United States, China, and the Soviet Union, 1948-1972* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 183-200; Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958* (NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 194-241; Appu K. Soman, *Double-Edged Sword: Nuclear Diplomacy in Unequal Conflict: The United States and China, 1950-1958* (Westport: Praeger, 2000), 165-211.

² Qing Simei, *From Allies to Enemies: Visions of Modernity, Identity and US-China Diplomacy 1945-1960* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 283-285; Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2009), 493; Michael Szonyi, *Cold War Island: Quemoy on the Front Line* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), 64-78.

mediator. In the meantime, Beijing and Washington had consolidated their tacit accommodation, recognizing clearly each other's moderate and ritualized stances. However, unbeknown to the Americans, Taipei and Beijing once again engaged in secret communication. In the aftermath of the Crisis, Taiwan also eagerly tapped the myth of victory in the Taiwan Strait for its nation-building. While Beijing and Washington were satisfied with the tacit peace at hand, both noted that the future battle for the hearts and minds of Asians would not be ebbing.

This chapter will explore the above themes in four main sections. The first section will analyze how and why the PRC closely guarded its tacit accommodation with the Americans and dismissed third-party proposals. The second section will investigate the readiness of the US to wind down the Crisis, the pressure the US exerted on the ROC, the response of the ROC, and the growing Sino-US tacit accommodation as each party demonstrated a clear understanding of the other's moderate and ritualized posture. The third section will investigate why the PRC and the ROC again engaged in secret back-channels from August to October 1958, which could be seen as an expanded follow-up of the first PRC-ROC secret back-channels that took place from 1955 to 1957 (as discussed in Chapter Six). The fourth section will assess the positions of the three protagonists in the aftermath of the Crisis, taking into consideration the meanings that they attached to and the lessons that they drew from the Crisis.

1. Evolution of PRC International Posture (II)

Beijing closely guarded its tacit accommodation with the Americans, considering such an approach to possess many advantages. It dismissed third-party proposals from Britain, the Soviets and neutralist Asian countries, viewing most of them as dangerously close to the detested "two-China" solution. As Chiang had played the nationalist card, Beijing could not do less. Yet the biggest heartburn for China came from such neutralist Asian countries as Indonesia, Burma and India which had showered Beijing with uninvited offers. Paradoxically, this came about from Beijing's earlier successful diplomatic encounters with these nations. Beijing then used the vague "Bandung spirit" to successfully resolve its international dilemmas.

1.1 Uninvited Third-Party Arbitrators

Beijing knew the US actively sought an “honorable exit.” First there was the gagging of Chiang with no more “mainland counter-offensives.” Dulles’ speech on 25 September in New York to prominent American businessmen about the importance of peace in the Taiwan Strait, and British Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd’s speech in the UN on the same day abhorring violence in conflict resolution were good indicators.³ Apart from its own intentions, US actions were also partly due to “immense pressure” from the British. Chinese chargé d’affaires in Britain, Huan Xiang, reported to the Chinese Politburo that Britain “advised the US to retreat from brinkmanship, blocked the US from risking a war over the Offshore islands, requested that Chiang be restrained, and pleaded vigorously for the Warsaw negotiations to be continued.” Under the Anglo-US peace offensive, the pressure of international opinion was effectively diverted onto the PRC. Therefore, Beijing should remain silent instead of making any counter-productive hostile military move, and benefit from the US retreat under British pressure. As the British “wisely believe” that the offshore islands belonged to the PRC, they could be encouraged to “lead other allied countries to pressure the US to change its attitude.”⁴ “Honorable exit” meant accepting the British logic of tacit accommodation and flexibility was the key. Whitehall had argued that: “It was not necessary to have a ceasefire first before negotiations.” A piecemeal approach had the advantage of leaving the unfeasible to another day and this aspect had already been achieved when the US and PRC sat down for the Warsaw negotiations on 15 September.

However, Beijing was troubled by other aspects of the “honorable exit.” One, the British wanted the issue of the offshore islands to be separated from the Taiwan problem. Two, Britain hoped that Chiang could evacuate the offshore islands without the PRC-US hammering “out the terms of agreement during negotiations” as this partial evacuation could demonstrate the good faith of the

³ Foster Dulles, “Challenge to Peace in the Far East,” Speech, Far East-America Council of Commerce and Industry, Inc., New York, Sept 25, 1958, DSB (October 13, 1958), 561-566.

⁴ Britain reportedly planned to be the arbitrator of the hostilities, should the Warsaw negotiations fail. If the British chose instead to “use a third country to arbitrate,” Huan Xiang “boldly” suggested that the PRC could counter-propose for Soviet involvement. Chinese Embassy at Britain to MFA, telegram, no. 1253, 26 September 1958, serial no. 110-00421-05, AMFA.

US. Three, Britain suggested that a legalistic approach to the offshore islands be dropped as it would be better to have a “tacit” understanding from both Chinese parties “not to have troops stationed, not to have defensive measures, to achieve a *de facto* neutralization and demilitarization of the offshore islands.” Since Chiang had patriotically rejected evacuation of the offshore islands and any UN involvement, Beijing could hardly do less. As Chiang had used the “nationalism” card, any move contrary to “one China” would be damning to the PRC’s international standing too. Hence, the PRC’s subsequent approach was a direct refutation of the “negative” aspects of the Anglo-US “honorable exit.” Beijing maintained that the issue of the offshore islands could not be separated from Taiwan. Beijing’s temporal ceasefire announcement on 6 October was made to annul any need for the KMT evacuation, thereby dissipating any US attempt to use evacuation as a bargaining chip. Beijing’s version of “tacit” understanding involved continuing Warsaw negotiations and leaving Chiang the offshore islands, dashing the US hope for “neutralization and demilitarization.”

Beijing was wary that a *de facto* neutralization and demilitarization of the offshore islands would be attempted in other ways. Britain was contemplating a Five-Power summit. This was analogous to the odious Soviet Ten-Power summit as both proposals envisioned a gathering of great powers to resolve the Crisis. The British were also weakening to the US demands of submitting the Crisis to the UN. As Beijing vigorously opposed these alternatives, Mao then urgently contacted Taipei via secret conduits in October: he wanted to prevent the “two-China conspiracy” in all its forms.⁵

1.2 Rebuffing All Soviet Proposals

Since the July 1958 altercation with Khrushchev, Mao perceived all Soviet proposals with jaundiced eyes. Striving to be in the PRC’s good books again, Gromyko rejected Lloyd’s 23 September approach. Lloyd wanted the Soviets to work on Beijing, while he concentrated on Washington. Gromyko stoutly dismissed Lloyd with the official PRC’s position and complained to

⁵ See Chinese Embassy in Britain to MFA, telegram, no. 1274, 27 September 1958, serial no. 110-00421-05, AMFA.

the Chinese that the British were trying hard to probe possible areas of mutual compromise.⁶

Belatedly, the Soviets proposed a world leaders' summit on the Taiwan Strait Crisis. Receiving intelligence that the US was contemplating delivering an ultimatum to the Chinese, the Soviets claimed that the summit would expose the "real culprit for the crisis," reveal the "nature of US imperialism" and "isolate the Americans." Soviet's proposal sounded hollow, as Beijing was already achieving the stipulated aims of the summit by demonstrating the US intransigence in the Warsaw negotiations.⁷

The Chinese rebuffed the Soviets on 28 September, stating that they "need not suggest any specific plan" and should there be countries which had peace requests they should be "directed to the Chinese Government." As for the Soviet Ten-Nation Summit, it was deemed "too early" as it lacked "realistic conditions." Moreover, such a summit was bound to be open to "misperceptions that we are in a rush" to settle. In a swipe at the Soviet unhealthy fixation on settling the Crisis, the Chinese stressed that "we are not in a hurry" and "delays" by the US were beneficial.⁸

Zhou elaborated to Antonov China's approach toward the offshore islands:

There is a big attack, a medium attack, and a small attack, but we do not aim to obliterate them at once. While we would blockade Quemoy, we would not completely seal it. Chiang Kai-shek's LSTs still would be able to dock. At dusk, air dropping aid onto the islands is also possible. Our artilleries fire a bit during the day and at night, at times we hit the east for a while, and then the west. We only wish to create difficulties for them, but not to extinguish their hopes. In this way, the Americans' hand would not be forced, but Chiang could howl loudly. As the time goes by, the world would gradually realize that there would not be a war here.

⁶ This was the first draft of the British four points: one, ceasefire in the Taiwan Strait. Two, evacuation of the Nationalist troops from the offshore islands. Three, ROC's administrative rights over the islands. Four, transformation of the islands into a neutral zone. The Soviet councilor passed the verbatim record of the Gromyko-Lloyd conversation to Beijing, showing the Soviets adopting the "correct" position. See Chinese Embassy in the Soviet Union to MFA, telegram, no. 1242, 26 September 1958, serial no. 111-00267-01; Record of conversation between Division Director Wang Yutian with Soviet Councilor N. G. Sudarikov, no. 594, 29 September (1700 hrs), serial no. 111-00267-01, AMFA

⁷ An alleged US ultimatum would box in the Soviets. Bound by ideological loyalties, the Soviet bloc would expect Moscow to go beyond vitriolic condemnations. A summit would deflect that danger, while buying the Soviets international publicity at little cost. See Memorandum from the Soviet Union to Prime Minister Zhou Enlai, no. 545, 27 Sept 1958, serial no. 109-00833-02, AMFA

⁸ Responding to Khrushchev's offer of a third letter to Eisenhower suggesting a "ten-nation summit," Zhou gently declined the offer. As the US was "desperate for a Soviet solution," it would have pounced onto the idea of a summit and this would be "disadvantageous" to the Chinese. Memorandum from Soviet Chargé d'affaires S. F. Antonov to Minister Chen Yi, 3 Oct 1958, serial no. 109-00833-03, AMFA. See also Memorandum vis-à-vis the Soviet proposal for a Ten-Nation Summit on the Taiwan Problem, no. 548, 28 Sept 1958; Record of conversation between Division Director Wang Yutian with Soviet Councilor N. G. Sudarikov, no. 622, 10 October, serial no. 111-00267-01, AMFA.

Beijing concluded that such tacit communication possessed more advantages. Zhou even highlighted the areas which the Nationalists and the Communists had common grounds, noting favourably that Chiang had rejected handing the Crisis to the UN and neutralizing the islands.⁹

1.3 Disquiet Relations with Neutralist Asian Countries

Beijing had difficulty with neutralist Asian responses to the Taiwan Strait Crisis. One, the PRC was alarmed how neutralist Asians could be susceptible to US propaganda. Beijing had observed that Indonesian President Sukarno was captivated by American attention during his trip to the US in May-June 1956. Sukarno had even “innocently” suggested a “two-China policy in the UN” during his visit to the PRC in September-October 1956.¹⁰ Paradoxically, the US was similarly griping about how easily neutralist countries were susceptible to communist influence.

Two, neutralist Asian nations had sprung upon Beijing uninvited diplomatic initiatives that did not fit the intricacies of the Chinese strategic maneuvering. The Burmese Foreign Minister had told a Romanian diplomat that Chiang should evacuate the offshore islands to “preserve the peace in Asia,” leaving “the Taiwan problem to be discussed later.” When the shocked Chinese ambassador found out on 25 September that the enthusiastic Burmese had decided to inform the US of its position, he could only insist weakly that “the US is making use of the Warsaw negotiations to create a ‘ceasefire’ fallacy to cover up its aggressive intentions.”¹¹

Three, Beijing was very suspicious of any neutralist country leaning toward Washington. All signs in 1958 indicated that India was in the US pocket.¹² Visiting India in January 1958, US Army

⁹ Mao repeated the theme of “common ground with the KMT” in the Politburo meeting on 4 Oct. See Record of Conversation between Prime Minister Zhou Enlai with the Soviet Chargé d’affaires S. F. Antonov, no. 591, 27 Sept 1958 (1700hrs), serial no. 109-00833-02, AMFA; Wu, *Yi Mao Zhuxi*, 78.

¹⁰ “Hence when he [Sukarno] reached the UN [in New York],” complained Zhang to the Soviets, “he became wrongheaded about the ceasefire question.” Record of Conversation between Vice-Minister Zhang and the Soviet Chargé d’affaires S. F. Antonov, no. 568, 21 Sept 1958, serial no. 111-00267-01, AMFA; Ganis Harsono, *Recollections of an Indonesian Diplomat in the Sukarno Era* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland, 1977), 163.

¹¹ Chinese Embassy in Burma to MFA, telegram, no. 1003, 22 Sept 1958 and no.1178, 25 Sept 1958, serial no. 105-00359-03, AMFA

¹² Beijing gave short shrift to India’s huge economic woes and dismissed in May 1958 that India was “seduced by small favors and little advantages” presented by the US. Even when Beijing realized the depth of India’s economic disaster in August, suspicions in Sino-India relations remained. See Memorandum of Conversation, Under Secretary Dillion with BK Nehru, 16 July 1958, in FRUS, *South and Southeast Asia*, Vol. XV (1958-1960), 443; B.K. Nehru, *Nice Guys Finish*

Chief General Maxwell D. Taylor had officially offered to “modernize the Indian Army.” The Chinese embassy reported that the US loan to India in 1958 amounted to US\$225 million and the US was now more flexible on the Kashmir issue whereas it had rendered implicit support to Pakistan. The Indians were reportedly reciprocating by adopting a “hands-off” attitude to Sino-US conflicts and disarmament talks. Wary of “offending the Americans,” they were also reluctant toward having another neutralist conference in Belgrade. India was playing off the great powers against each other and benefiting from the windfall of US and Soviet aid.¹³

By October, the momentum among Western allies to abandon Chiang gathered speed. Lloyd openly proposed that the PRC could have a ceasefire just enough to let the Nationalists evacuate the offshore islands.¹⁴ Rejecting the British initiative, Beijing explicitly instructed Ambassador Wang Bingnan, the PRC representative in the Warsaw negotiations, to keep the negotiations going. Should Warsaw fail, the stakes were high as Britain would intervene as an arbitrator or the US would pull in the UN.¹⁵ The Soviets fully backed Beijing: if Moscow could not have its Ten-Nation Summit, neither would Washington be allowed to court world opinion.¹⁶

More importantly, Beijing was confident that the US understood several major points. One, “we do not wish to fight a war.” Two, “we will not liberate Taiwan immediately.” Three, “the US does not wish to fight with us over Quemoy.” Four, “the US is trying to persuade Chiang to leave the islands so as to extricate itself from this area.” In view of the above considerations, China decided that it would be “more advantageous to leave Chiang on Quemoy.” Zhou ruminated:

Second (New Delhi, 1997), 280; Junqing Tongbao [Military Intelligence Bulletin], no. 97, distribution no. 329, 8 May 1958, serial no. 105-00892-02, AMFA; Junqing Tongbao [Military Intelligence Bulletin], no. 206, distribution no. 765, 11 September 1958, serial no. 105-00892-02, AMFA.

¹³ Junqing Tongbao [Military Intelligence Bulletin], no. 87, distribution no. 297, 8 May 1958, serial no. 105-00892-02; Chinese Embassy at India to MFA, telegram, no. 270, 11 March 1958; no. 178, 31 March 1958, serial no. 105-00892-01, AMFA.

¹⁴ Lloyd’s idea offended both the PRC’s sense of sovereignty and its idealistic and cultural concept of international alliance. One, as Beijing regarded the offshore islands to rightly belong to the PRC, holding the offshore islands in abeyance was abhorrent. Two, although Beijing had no great love for Chiang, to witness such skullduggery targeted at Taipei strained even Zhou’s communist sensibilities. Furthermore, Lloyd’s offer implied that the ungodly Red Chinese would gleefully accept this kind of deals without scruples. MFA to Chinese Embassy at India, telegram, no. 105, 3 October 1958, serial no. 110-00421-01, AMFA.

¹⁵ See MFA to Wang Bingnan in Warsaw, telegram, no. 285, 7 October 1958, serial no. 110-00421-01, AMFA.

¹⁶ The Soviets opposed vigorously any attempt to present the Taiwan problem at the 13th session of the UN. They parroted the Chinese argument that the Taiwan Strait was an “internal affair” and felt that the UN would be an uneven playing field as many countries were on the US side. Memorandum from Soviet Chargé d’affaires S. F. Antonov to Minister Chen Yi, 3 Oct 1958, serial no. 109-00833-03, AMFA.

Even as we demand that the US leave, and have confrontations with them, it is beneficial for Chiang to remain on Quemoy. This can be used to educate everyone in the world, especially our fellow Chinese. The Americans wish to extricate themselves, but we refuse to let them. So when we wish to increase tension, we will pound them. When we wish to relax, we will loosen up ... We can have talking while fighting ... For the moment, we shall not recover these offshore islands. After five to seven years' time, we can recover these offshore islands, Pescadores and Taiwan all at one go.¹⁷

However, it was the friendly Afro-Asian countries that were causing Beijing major heartburn.

Beijing received the stunning news that Indonesia, its strongest ally in Southeast Asia, had proposed in the UN on 2 October, seconded by Ceylon and Burma, for “a need to resolve the Far East crisis peacefully.” The PRC viewed this as a public relations’ disaster as such unwanted help would only lend credence to the US calls for a “ceasefire,” when it was the PRC’s official position that no state of war existed between the US and China.¹⁸

On 4 October, the sponsoring countries for the Indonesian proposal had grown to an alarming eight. This prompted Beijing to act on the Indonesians. On 5 October, Minister Chen Yi turned down the offer by the Afro-Asian community to make an additional UN statement on the Taiwan Strait Crisis. Krishna Menon’s subsequent offer to address the UN was also rejected by Zhou, who suspected US machinations behind Menon’s offer.¹⁹

The perplexity of this unintended situation was reflected in a rare critical directive from the CCP Central Committee: “... the US is concocting another new conspiracy, stating that it is even willing to force Chiang Kai-shek’s army off Quemoy and Matsu as a pre-requisite for any ‘ceasefire’ to take effect, thus establishing the ‘Two-China’ outcome.” As the onus would be on Beijing to accept the offer, the Committee then decided to alert all diplomats that the erstwhile pro-PRC “Afro-Asian countries would be used by the US to push for the issue to be settled in the

¹⁷ Record of Conversation between Prime Minister Zhou Enlai and the Soviet Chargé d’affaires S. F. Antonov, no. 612, 5 October 1958 (2400hrs), serial no. 109-00833-02, AMFA.

¹⁸ MFA Asian-Afro Division’s Report on the Indonesian official statement to the UN, 4 October 1958, serial no. 105-00364-01, AMFA.

¹⁹ To ensure the Cambodians would not partake in the peace frenzy, Beijing abruptly scaled down its belligerency. Even the time-honored Chinese demand for the “withdrawal of US troops” was reduced to “this must be accomplished by negotiations.” See Record of Conversation between Premier Zhou Enlai with the Cambodian Ambassador, no. 600, 5 Oct 1958, serial no. 106-00129-03, AMFA; Record of Conversation between Prime Minister Zhou Enlai and the Soviet Chargé d’affaires S. F. Antonov, no. 612, 5 October 1958 (2400hrs), serial no. 109-00833-02, AMFA.

UN.” All diplomats must hence emphasize two points to thwart all such unwelcome suggestions and attention. One, the UN was not a viable recourse as “the ongoing Warsaw negotiations are precisely undertaken to resolve outstanding Sino-US contentious issues.” Two, as the Taiwan Strait Crisis was an “internal domestic affair,” one of the ten principles of the Bandung Conference, “mutual non-interference in each other’s affairs,” should be invoked.²⁰

Paradoxically then, Beijing became a victim of its own successful diplomatic encounters with neutralist Asian nations. Beijing’s powerful propaganda since the Bandung Conference, that China was a reasonable power, was simply too attractive. Beijing was subsequently swamped by fraternal communist countries and neutral Afro-Asian politicians eager to be its spokesperson to clear up the “ambiguity” of the offshore islands. While Beijing had initially benefited from world opinion at the US expense, it now found itself bound by it, with Washington appearing more “reasonable.”²¹

Beijing subsequently adopted a formula that would both placate the Afro-Asian chorus for peace and assuage any bruised ego resulting from the PRC’s firm rejection of any intermediary. Mao’s 6 October abrupt ceasefire announcement was a pre-emptive strike against any incommensurate unilateral move by friends or foes. The second step consisted of invoking the amorphous “Spirit of Bandung.” Although the PRC was only interested in “mutual non-interference in each other’s affairs,” they soon discovered that Bandung meant different things to different people. Indonesia was effectively neutralized by Beijing’s Bandung move. As the former host of the Bandung Conference, Indonesia was very proud of the ten principles established. When the PRC mentioned respecting the principles of Bandung, it sounded to Jakarta like praises for Indonesia’s foreign policy achievements. According to the Indonesian papers, Foreign Minister Subandrio was reportedly pleased that the Warsaw negotiations were taking place and by virtue of Indonesia’s proximity to the Strait, Subandrio claimed that the Crisis was a “good opportunity” for Jakarta to

²⁰ CCP Central Committee to All PRC Embassies and Representative Offices, 6 October 1958, serial no. 102-00006-06, AMFA.

²¹ Allen Dulles reported the problems Beijing had with “Afro-Asian resolution” on 13 October, but made no effort to exploit it. See 382nd Meeting of NSC, October 13, 1958, NSC Series, Box 10, Ann Whitman File 1, DDEL.

“bring the involved protagonists together.”²² Fulfilling the Indonesian need for a role in world diplomacy, Zhou personally thanked Indonesia for voicing concern at “US armed provocations and war threats” and stating that the PRC should have “its rightful place in the UN.” Zhou also reiterated how important it was that “the Indonesian Government holds that the US should follow the ten principles adopted by the Bandung Conference to settle the international dispute between China and the US in the Taiwan Strait.”²³

2. Winding down the Crisis

With good understanding of Beijing’s moderate and ritualized stance, Washington was ready to wind down the crisis. More interested in reassuring Beijing than coddling Taipei, Washington exerted pressure on the ROC with a stream of rhetorical bombardments. In the face of the US pressure, Taipei sought to shore up the perimeter of the rationale, legitimacy and *morality* of the ROC-US relationship. It also used the Taiwan Strait Crisis as a media event to validate Taiwan’s military prowess. Dulles’ mission to Taipei on 21-23 October demonstrated how the US laid down the line on Taipei. Washington also subsequently understood and reciprocated Beijing’s odd-day bombardment announcement, providing yet another example of Sino-US tacit accommodation. Nonetheless, there was a glaring blind spot in Washington’s perceptions of the ROC-PRC relations as it continued to show its inability to fathom the implications arising from the shared historical and cultural ties of the KMT and the CCP.

2.1 US Rhetorical Bombardments of the ROC

Dulles was determined to soften up Chiang with a series of rhetorical bombardments, if he had to undertake the task of persuading Chiang. In response to a question on Chiang’s *fangong* during a press conference on 30 September, Dulles said that “I don’t think that just by their own steam they

²² An Indonesian spokesperson told the reporters: “The PRC’s offer to negotiate with Taiwan reflects the spirit of the Ten Principles of the Bandung Conference and the UN Charter.” See Chinese Embassy in Indonesia to MFA, Memorandum, no. 616, 8 October 1958, serial no. 105-00864-01, AMFA

²³ Zhou Enlai to Indonesian Ambassador Sukardjo Wirjopranote, letter, 24 October 1958, serial no. 105-00364-03, AMFA.

are going to get there.”²⁴ Dulles even considered “hypothetical and problematical” Chiang’s frequent claim that the Chinese on mainland China would welcome Chiang should there be a revolution. The most explosive was Dulles’ statement on “de facto ceasefire”:²⁵

If there were a cease-fire in the area which seemed to be reasonably dependable, I think it would be foolish to keep these large forces on these islands. We thought that it was rather foolish to put them there, and, as I say, if there were a cease-fire it would be our judgment, military judgment even, that it would not be wise or prudent to keep them there.²⁶

In another news conference two weeks later, Dulles labeled the ROC’s actions as “provocative of war or causes irritations, which would almost inevitably provoke violent reactions.”²⁷ Ambassador Drumright’s 13 October telegram revealed a shaken generalissimo. Chiang explained that “his fears were heightened by the most recent press conferences of the President and the Secretary of State and by persistent news reports that the US is advocating reduction of offshore defences, etc.” Being a junior partner of the US carried an enormous baggage of uncertainty.²⁸

The US pressure on the ROC was ironically based on improved circumstances on the diplomatic and military fronts. In an internal memo, Dulles had come around to the position that “a large area open for negotiation could be envisaged and that it was not just a question of a cease-fire and a return to the *status quo ante*.”²⁹ When the PRC further announced a ceasefire on 6 October for a week, the White House was certain that this marked the formal end of hostilities. Dulles credited this “extraordinarily interesting development” to the Warsaw negotiations, but he reminded Nixon

²⁴ This statement was intended to be a message to the PRC that the US was pushing all the buttons to get the ROC in line. Further questions on US aid vis-à-vis Chiang’s sacred mission met with a definite rebuff: “There is no commitment of any kind to aid in that.” Yet this ran contrary to what Eisenhower had said to Senator Alexander Smith that the ROC could function as a deterrent to any communist attack on Korea or Indochina and “any attack on the mainland would be further north in the plains area.” In fact, all ROC’s counter-attack plans were premised on US aid. See J. N. Greene to Robertson, 2 Oct 1958, Special Assistants Chronological Series, Box 13, Greene - Boster Chronological Oct (3), JFD Papers, DDEL; Senator Alexander H. Smith to Dulles, 7 April 1955, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 3, strictly confidential - Q -S (3) , JFD papers, DDEL.

²⁵ Other statements were equally galling to the ROC. Dulles did not rule out completely meeting Zhou Enlai and he thought that the “slower pace” of the ambassadorial negotiations “will better serve the cause of peace.” See J. N. Greene to Reinhardt, 22 Sept 1958, Special Assistants Chronological Series, Box 13, Greene - Boster Chronological Sept (2), JFD Papers, DDEL.

²⁶ Nixon repeated Dulles’ “dependable ceasefire” in his speech on 2 October. Memo, 2 October 1958, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (2), JFD papers, DDEL; “Secretary Dulles’ News Conference of September 30,” *DSB* (October 20, 1958), 597-602.

²⁷ “Secretary Dulles’ News Conference of October 14,” *DSB* (3 Nov 1958), 684.

²⁸ Drumright to State Department, telegram, no. 587, 13 October 1958, in *FRUS* Vol 19 (1958-60), 389.

²⁹ Memo for the record, J. N. Greene, 2 Oct 1958, Special Assistants Chronological Series, Box 13, Greene - Boster Chronological Oct (3), JFD Papers, DDEL.

that “it is too early to gloat.”³⁰ Still, the Communist curious gestures fueled speculations that the ROC and the PRC might be making backroom deals. One journalist ventured to ask Dulles if “there been any indication that the garrison on Quemoy is possibly making any deal with the mainland?”³¹

Washington, however, ignored the common cultural and historical ties between the CCP and the KMT, with Dulles speculating that Beijing had “decided the better line is to try at the moment to work on internal dissension in Taiwan – use guile for a while rather than brute force.”³² Although he noted correctly that “the emphasis is on the Chinese getting together and driving the Westerners out,” there was no follow-up on this insight.³³ Indeed the perceived US attempts to create “two Chinas” united the “erstwhile enemies.” That both the ROC’s stubbornness and the PRC’s ceasefire were coordinated was denied by the US. Allen Dulles was satisfied with merely analyzing the communist letters sent to prominent KMT members in Taiwan. Although Drumright believed accurately that Beijing’s approaches were “designed to shunt US aside,” he accepted at face value Chiang’s condemnations of “Communist treachery.”³⁴

Dulles recognized that the PRC’s “very good” gestures needed reciprocation but he was frustrated by Pentagon. Air Force Secretary James H. Douglas, Jr. had revealed to the press officially on 27 September 1958 that the USAF was prepared to defend the offshore islands by nuclear weapons once the President gave the green light.³⁵ Dulles told Lodge that “the military have made bad statements and we don’t want to get that atmosphere into it [Warsaw negotiations].” More

³⁰ Telephone call from the Vice president, 7 October 1958, 3:32pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

³¹ “Secretary Dulles’ News Conference of October 14,” *DSB* (3 Nov 1958), 682.

³² Dulles then chose to grandly expound to an attentive Nixon his philosophy of war and peace: “If the Democrats get control domestically we will have socialism and in foreign relations an appeasement that will leave the Soviets in control of practically all of Asia, Africa and the ME. The Sec said it is only by being tough and fighting hard that we have kept it.” Telephone call from the Vice-president, 7 October 1958, 3:32pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

³³ Ambassador Drumright reflected this gap in insight too, stating that “Chiang will of course refuse to enter into any negotiations with Communists. It is clear Communists recognize this fact, but it is apparent from recent Peiping broadcasts that they hope to split Chiang and people through massive propaganda and psychological warfare.” Drumright to State Department, telegram, no. 587, 13 October 1958, in *FRUS* Vol 19 (1958-60), 390.

³⁴ Telephone call to Allen Dulles, 7 October 1958, 2:16pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (2), JFD papers, DDEL; Drumright to State Department, telegram, 6 October 1958, *FRUS* (1958-60), vol. XIX, 331.

³⁵ Thomas, “Soviet Policy,” 63.

importantly, Dulles wanted the PRC to know that the US would not be “interpreting it [ceasefire] as a sign of physical weakness – we hope they are respectful of world opinion which condemns the use of force.”³⁶

Washington was further encouraged on 12 October by another two weeks of the PRC’s ceasefire. One, there was no danger of the offshore islands falling. Two, Beijing’s “serious warnings” had been ritualized to such an extent that those thirty warnings were akin to providing the US a stream of feedback on permissible actions.³⁷ In a significant turn, Dulles even “choked off” any discussion of the use of nuclear weapons in limited war and Gerald Smith was greatly relieved that the White House had repudiated nuclear weapons.³⁸ Allen Dulles noted that “the longer the others keep the ceasefire going the better it is and the harder to start again.”³⁹

2.2 The ROC-US against the “Evil Tide of Communism.”

The ROC desperately sought to shore up the perimeter of the rationale, legitimacy and *morality* of the ROC-US relationship. In a Legislative Yuan’s open letter to the US, Taipei reiterated that the Crisis was not instigated by Chiang, and emphasized the dichotomy between good and evil. The US was embarked on a “sacred mission” against the “evil tide of communism.” The Taiwan Strait Crisis was done “at the instigation of Soviet Russia,” and the communist “force of violence” was fortunately blocked by the “cause of righteousness” of the US. In Taiwan’s “crusade against the Communist tyranny,” the very survival of the ROC depended on the US “positive aid,” “collective defense,” “solidarity and common cause,” and “uphold[ing] the lofty ideal of the UN Charter.”

Taipei adopted such language with the US domestic audience in mind. The President of the Legislative Yuan, Chang Tao-fan, further declared: “We wish to reassure our American friends

³⁶ In addition, whether the UN would be featured in the peace process was secondary to the US. Dulles further offered to try to “eliminate the provocations in the situation and have instructed Ambassador Beam to ask [Beijing] what they [the provocations] are.” See Telephone call to Amb. Lodge, 9 October 1958, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

³⁷ JCS (Office of the Director) to JCS, Memo, Situation Report 90, Department of Defense, Oct 13, 1958; JCS (Office of the Director) to JCS, Memo, Situation Report 92, Department of Defense, Oct 15, 1958, DDRS.

³⁸ Smith promised a study of limited war with conventional weapons based on the experiences of the Taiwan Strait Crises. See Memorandum for the File, 16 October 1958, Gerard Smith Series, box 1, Material from Gerard C. Smith's Files 1958 (1), Dulles John Foster Papers 1, DDEL.

³⁹ Dulles was also convinced that “we will send some of our fleet away from the immediate area” to prolong the ceasefire. Telephone call from Allen Dulles, 14 October 1958, 8:58am, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

that we would never want our friends to go to war for us. We want to use our strength, at an opportune moment, to complete our sacred task of reclaiming the mainland.”⁴⁰

Chiang shrewdly reinforced the rhetoric by placing a huge number of troops on the island, ostensibly as the bulwark against the PRC. This forced the Taiwan MAAG to send observers to explore how the US could increase the number of artillery guns. Washington estimated at least one-third of the total Nationalist troops were deployed. From the ROC records, the combined number of seriously wounded and dead soldiers (941) constituted 1.1% of the 85,545 troops garrisoned on the offshore islands. Chiang had thus nimbly secured a guarantee by locking in US support.

Myth-making also became a top priority for the ROC’s generals, who emphasized the significance of the Crisis. This consisted of first stating the unprecedented “bravery” shown by the troops under artillery fire, followed by crediting this exemplary behavior to the “Nationalist revolutionary military tradition and spirit,” and then hoping that such virtues could be “popularized throughout the military.” Indeed when the ROC General Staff finished their tour of inspection of Quemoy, they wanted to use their reports as case studies for such institutes of higher learning as the National Defense University. In reality, the Nationalists could hold off the communist troops because Taipei had overpowering advanced weaponry. The Quemoy garrison already had a battalion of rocket troops, with their main arsenal consisting of AJAX 1 with a range of 25 miles and HERCULES 2 with a range of 85 miles. AJAX could hit much of Fujian coastal areas while HERCULES 2 could reach deep into Fujian and also carry nuclear warheads. Besides these rocket teams, Eisenhower had also sent the US air defense 2nd Battalion, the 71st Regiment, to reinforce Taiwan. In view of the ROC’s myth-making, the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis was thus not so much a crisis as a media event. This urgency in institutionalizing a “model battle” can be partly explained by the paucity of

⁴⁰ Chiang even paraphrased Churchill’s 1941 February appeal. While Chiang had artlessly put it in 1952, “Give us the tools and we will finish the job of re-conquering Red China”; now Chiang cajoled, “we just need weapons support for supplies, empathy and encouragement.” See “A Policy Repudiated,” *Time*, 09 Feb. 1953, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,889611,00.html> (accessed 27 Sept 2008); “立法院致美国协防台澎台湾地区三军将士慰劳书” [Lifayuan zhi meiguo xiefang taipeng taiwan diqu sanjun jiangshi weilao shu] 10 October 1958, serial no. 002080106048014, CKS papers, AH.

heroic myths for the formation of a ROC identity. One general had admitted that there were few incidents of ROC heroism since World War II.⁴¹

2.3 Dulles' Mission to Taipei (21-23 October)

Eisenhower was adamant that Chiang should not use the offshore islands to hold the US hostage in the future. The ceasefire presented the perfect opportunity to pressure Chiang to reduce the offshore island garrisons in exchange for increased “amphibious capability.” Eisenhower spelled out the conditions: “Of course this would have to be a plan voluntarily adopted by him, during a period when there is no hostility ...”⁴² But encouraged by the PRC’s ceasefire, Dulles was edging towards a modus vivendi that could work for both the ROC and the PRC, and viewed as secondary the need to push Chiang off the offshore islands.⁴³ Aware that Chiang was a tough nut to crack, he was prepared to appeal to Chiang’s higher sense of purpose in the US-ROC alliance, to “explain the political problems we face with our own people and the free world nations and make it clear [Chiang] has to do a few things which won’t be very important but will enable us to carry our share.”⁴⁴

In Taiwan, compromising with the US appeared to be a growing necessity. Chiang faced strong domestic yearnings for peace. “Indications are that GRC officials are taking a realistic view of the future military situation,” reported the CINCPAC, “and they still need assurance of continued US support and cooperation.” Militarily, the US had stepped down the alert level in the Taiwan Strait. US escorts had ceased since 6 October and the ROC learnt that the US Navy had been strictly ordered to cease “any provocative action.” Odious suggestions were swirling in Washington of

⁴¹ Left unsaid, however, was how the KMT’s ignominious military defeats on mainland China could be rationalized. Tsai Ming-yung to CKS, [“总统府四十七年第八次作战会谈纪录” [Zhongtongfu sishiqi nian dibaci zuozhan huitan jilu] (secret), 16 October 1958, serial no. 002080102050009, CKS papers, AH.

⁴² Although Eisenhower suggested that George Yeh might “skillfully present [this plan] to Chiang,” the President really wanted Dulles to handle the job. See Eisenhower to Dulles, Memo, 7 Oct 1958, Dulles-Herter Series, box 10, Dulles - October 1958, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

⁴³ Diary Notes, 6 October 1958, ACW Diary Series, box 10, AWC DIARY - OCT 1958, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

⁴⁴ Given the failure of Secretary Neil H. McElroy’s trip to Taipei on 13 October, Dulles remained “the only one who can do it.” Telephone call from Allen Dulles, 14 October 1958, 8:58am, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (2), JFD papers; Telephone call to Allen Dulles, 17 Oct 1958, 9:08am, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (1), JFD papers, DDEL.

viable alternatives to Chiang. The rhetoric was that “Nationalist China consists of a lot more than Chiang and Mme. Chiang” or “the Nationalist cause will not expire with Chiang.”⁴⁵

Dulles’ mission came at Chiang with an iron fist in a velvet glove. Dulles immediately proposed “some dramatic gestures from time to time to emphasize [Chiang’s] desire for peace rather than for war,” and cast the future role of the ROC in cultural and psychological terms. “GRC counter-attacks against the mainland are not in the armed might of the GRC or in its offshore island positions,” specified Dulles, “but rather of the minds and souls of the 600 million Chinese people on the mainland who hope and pray for delivery from their present bondage.” Dulles then elaborated how the ROC could demonstrate:

Positive acts designed to dramatize the shift of effort to assure the survival of Chinese civilization. It should seek valid yet dramatic ways to cast itself in the role of the custodian of China’s real greatness. There should be increasing emphasis on Chinese education, art and other aspects of Chinese culture.⁴⁶

Chiang was strong-armed into accepting a Dulles-dictated communiqué after three days. Taipei had to foreswear “the use of force” and used only *Sanmin zhuyi* in its *fangong* mission. Chiang reassured Eisenhower that the ROC would “try not to abuse the trust and confidence that [the declaration] signifies.”⁴⁷

Two days later, the US welcomed the PRC’s odd-day bombardment announcement. Dulles concluded that this was “psychological and designed to create the impression they are the masters

⁴⁵ JCS (Office of the Director) to JCS, Memo, Situation Report 94, Department of Defense, Oct 17, 1958; JCS (Office of the Director) to JCS, Memo, Situation Report 95, Department of Defense, Oct 17, 1958; JCS (Office of the Director) to JCS, Memo, Situation Report 97, Department of Defense, Oct 20, 1958. DDRS; Booster to Zurbellen, 20 October 1958, Special Assistants Chronological Series, Box 13, Greene - Boster Chronological Oct (2), JFD Papers, DDEL.

⁴⁶ Dulles to Eisenhower, Telegram Dulte 2, 21 October 1958 (12:53pm), Dulles-Herter Series, box 10, Dulles - October 1958, Ann Whitman File; Dulles’ statement to Chiang, Dulte 4, 22 Oct 1958 (4:17 am), Office of the Staff Secretary, Subject Series, State Dept Sub Series, box 3, State Department - September 1958 - January 1959 (2), White House Office; Dulles to State Department, telegram dulte 4, 22 Oct 1958 (5:51am), Office of the Staff Secretary, Subject Series, State Dept Sub Series, box 3, State Department - September 1958 - January 1959 (2), White House Office, DDEL.

⁴⁷ Dulles admitted that “we had great difficulty in getting them to accept or at least publicly announce this important shift in emphasis.” Canadian Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker was “considerably reassured.” See Lindsey Grant, interview, in *China Confidential: American Diplomats and Sino-American Relations, 1945-1996*, ed. Nancy Bernkopf Tucker (NY: Columbia University Press, 2001), 129; Dulles to Eisenhower, Telegram Dulte 7, 23 October 1958 (3pm), Dulles-Herter Series, box 10, Dulles - October 1958, Ann Whitman File; Dulles to State Department, telegram secto 14, 23 Oct 1958 (4:30am), Office of the Staff Secretary, Subject Series, State Dept Sub Series, box 3, State Department - September 1958 - January 1959 (2), White House Office; “Memo of conversation with Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker (Canada),” 28 Oct 1958, General Correspondence & Memoranda Series, box 1, Memos of Conversation - General - A Through D (4), JFD papers; Chiang Kai-shek to Eisenhower, 24 Oct 1958, Office of the Staff Secretary, international series, box 3, China (rep of) (1) (Sept 58-apr 60), White House Office, DDEL.

etc.” He added that “it will subside but they will use the Island to give vent to their anger – like 50-100 lashes to someone who is unrepentant.” Dulles told General Goodpaster, President Eisenhower’s Staff Secretary, that the PRC’s antics confirmed his theory that the bombardments were a “propaganda *whipping boy*.” Although this reading was imperfect – the PRC also wished to signal the connection Taiwan had with the mainland – it was good enough to preserve peace.⁴⁸ US military intelligence also concluded that the possibility of the PRC “deliberately risking hostilities” with the US was remote. Hence, the US was prepared to tacitly go further by stopping “sea and air patrols within what the Chinese Communists claimed to be their territorial air and sea space” in the long-term.⁴⁹

3. The Chinese Connection

The dramatic Taipei-Beijing back-channel, evident in at least three visits by Cao Juren (Chiang Ching-kuo’s secret emissary) to Beijing from August to October, demonstrated the common historical and cultural ties shared by the erstwhile belligerents. Through this established ritualized mode of communication, Taipei and Beijing tapped on nationalist concerns and maneuvered to thwart Washington and avoid the specter of “two Chinas.” While Beijing also had in mind the planting of discord in the ROC-US relations and the trumpeting of its goodwill in contrast to the alleged neo-imperialism of the US, Taipei adroitly manipulated the channel to pressure the US to accede to its demands and succeeded in procuring more military aid even though it had to go along with the US request to soft-pedal the belligerent rhetoric of its *fangong* mission.

3.1 *The ROC-PRC Secret Back-Channels Enlarged*

Initially, Taipei had no substantive plan beyond preserving back-channel links with the PRC, and Chiang Ching-kuo (CCK) appeared to temporize in his January 1958 message to Cao Juren, his

⁴⁸ Telephone call to Allen Dulles, 24 Oct 1958, 12:28pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (1), JFD papers; Telephone call from Gen. Goodpaster, 25 October 1958, 10:03am, Telephone Conversation Series, box 13, memoranda of tel. conv - W H Aug 1, 1958 to Dec 5 1958 (2), JFD papers, DDEL.

⁴⁹ Eisenhower also ordered that reconnaissance flights, whether by the ROC or the US, must be cleared by him on a flight-by-flight basis. JCS (Office of the Director) to JCS, Memo, Situation Report 105, Department of Defense, Oct 29, 1958. DDRS; Eisenhower with Dulles, Memo of conversation, 30 October 1958, Special Assistants Chronological Series, Box 13, Greene - Boster Chronological Oct (1), JFD Papers, DDEL.

secret emissary to Beijing.⁵⁰ As the momentum for Taipei-Beijing secret negotiations turned glacial, the US was lulled into complacency. Despite strong evidence to the contrary, the CIA concluded that all “Tsao’s approaches” were “flatly rejected by the GRC,” asserting that: “The Nationalists apparently not only rejected the idea of peace talks but resented the notion that they might consider seriously such a course.”⁵¹

However, Chiang Kai-shek activated the secret channel to Beijing at the height of the Taiwan Strait Crisis in September. The Chairman of the PRC National People’s Congress, Qiao Shi, confirmed this in 1994. Chiang’s message was ominous: as the communist barrages would cause the US to pressure Chiang to abandon the offshore islands, this could lead to the realization of the hated “two-China” policy.⁵² In perfect synchrony, Cao responded in September with a message. According to the CIA report, Cao had passed to “Chiang Ching-kuo, Vice Premier Huang Shaoku, and GRC Defense Minister Yu Ta-wei” this message:

In these letters, he mentioned that he recently revisited the mainland and had had conversations with unnamed Chinese Communist leaders. To prove his credentials as Peking’s representative, Tsao said he could “guarantee” for one week, beginning 6 October 1958, the Communists would not shell GRC supply ships to the offshore islands that were unescorted by US warships.⁵³

Chiang was subtly signaling to the US that its inflexibility towards the ROC’s demands could draw undesirable consequences. In this very letter which “Chiang Ching-kuo showed...to US officials,” the PRC again stated very favourable conditions, which were even better than Cao’s March 1957 letter. Quemoy could “become a trading center”; KMT would “remain an independent political party”; Chiang would even retain control of “military affairs on Taiwan.” Ostensibly, CCK swore

⁵⁰ CCK vaguely declared that “the general direction” would remain the same and Beijing “should not worry.” See Wang Guanyuan, 192.

⁵¹ The CIA report displayed a remarkable degree of cognitive dissonance. See POLO Doc. 34, December 1971, iv, 3-4, 8; Mao Lei & Fang Xiaofang, *Guogong liangdang tanpan tongshi 国共两党谈判通史* [A complete account of CCP and KMT negotiations] (兰州: 兰州大学出版社, 1996), 641-646, 650; Cao Juren 曹聚仁, *Jiang Jinguo lun 蒋经国论* [Chiang Ching-kuo: A Discourse] (Shanghai: Shanghai Lianhe Huabaoshe, 1948; reprint, Taipei: Yiqiaochubanshe, 1997).

⁵² Taylor, *The Generalissimo's Son*, 247.

⁵³ Cao even announced the ceasefire on 5 October in *Nanyang Shangbao* (Singapore), a day ahead of the PRC’s official announcement. See Ye Yonglie 叶永烈, *Guogong Fengyun: Mao Zedong and Jiang Jieshi 国共风云毛泽东与蒋介石* [CCP & KMT relations: Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek] (Urumqi: Xinjiang Renmin chubanshe, 2000), 615.

that “the GRC leadership wanted to make certain that the US knew about these approaches lest Peking succeed in creating distrust between Washington and Taipei.”⁵⁴

The Chinese sources listed no fewer than three visits by Cao Juren to Beijing. Luo Qingchang, chief of the PRC Prime Minister’s Office, recalled: “A few days before the 23 August 1958 bombardments, Mao met Cao.” Luo remembered that Cao was supposedly instructed by Mao to “inform Chiang Ching-kuo of the bombardments.” In a comedy of errors, Cao failed to send the message across to Taiwan in time. In desperation, Cao hastily decided to publish the news of the bombardments in a Singapore newspaper *Nanyang Shangbao* under the ill-concealed pseudonym, Guo Zongxi, two hours before the communist bombardments.⁵⁵

Cao’s one week ceasefire “guarantee” and the additional offers to CCK were based on his second series of meetings with Mao and Zhou on 8 and 10 September. Zhou expressed nonchalance on the size of the ROC’s garrison on the offshore islands and even opined that Chiang Kai-shek could use the ROC as “bargaining chips” with the US. Zhou also contended that since “the US could publicly have talks with us, why can’t the KMT and the CCP have negotiations once again?”⁵⁶

The third meeting took place on 13 October. Cao was placed on the backburner for two days, creating a feedback vacuum to make Chiang sweat. Mao spelled out his concern about deterring the US “two-China” conspiracy: “If Chiang and his son can resist the US, we can cooperate with them... We support the policy of letting Chiang keep Quemoy and Matsu ... should Chiang retreat from Quemoy and Matsu, morale may plummet and collapse.” Mao reassured Chiang that Beijing only wished to isolate the US. The Warsaw negotiations would not consider the “Taiwan problem”

⁵⁴ POLO Doc. 34, December 1971, 15-16.

⁵⁵ Liu Zhe 柳哲, “Luo Qingzhang huiyisuo: Zhou Enlai wei Cao Juren qinni beiwen: Aiguo renshi Cao Juren xiansheng zhi mu,” 罗青长回忆说：周恩来为曹聚仁亲拟碑文：爱国人士曹聚仁先生之墓 [Luo Qing Zhang remembers] *Zhonghua dushubao* 中华读书报, 28 July 1999, <http://www.gmw.cn/01ds/1999-07/28/GB/ds%5E260%5E0%5EDS517.htm> (accessed 25 November 2008); elsewhere, Cao Juren revealed his August 1958 Beijing sojourn in the third volume of his travelogue, see *Beihang sanyu* 北行三语 [The third account of my northern travels] (Jiulong: Sanyu tushu wenju gongsi, 1960), 300.

⁵⁶ Zhou with Cao Juren, Record of Conversations, 8 & 10 Sept 1958, in ZENP, vol. 2, 168.

at all and “Chiang does not need to be afraid that we may collaborate with the US to play him out.”

Later Cao conferred with Zhou on 15 and 17 October to iron out the finer details.⁵⁷

Mao sent a reinforcement message to Taiwan in October via Zhang Shizhao, a member of the National People’s Congress who had many KMT contacts. According to Tong Xiaopeng, the Deputy Secretary of the State Council, Mao, in Zhang’s letter, offered the ROC two options. One, there would be no negotiation for the time being; instead, both parties could have limited contacts such as postal services, telecommunications, visits and even commercial flights. Two, Taiwan could retain its government, army, political parties, and all expenditure would be borne by the PRC government; in return, the PRC would only ask for Taiwan to be recognized as part of China. Otherwise, Mao specifically emphasized to Chiang the need to guard against the “two-China” conspiracy of Dulles.⁵⁸ Again, CCK showed the Americans only the portions he wanted them to see. The “settlement terms” were not mentioned in the CIA report. CCK surreptitiously used Zhang Shizhao to verbalize what the ROC’s displeasure with the US was, as seen in the alleged warning by Zhang to the ROC:

The US would betray the Nationalists and [Zhang] alleged that the US had offered secretly in Warsaw to yield the offshore islands to Peking in exchange for a renunciation of Peking’s claim to Taiwan. Chang [Shih-chao] said he had seen the “secret documents” about this in Peking and that Chiang Kai-shek was obviously ignorant of the true situation.⁵⁹

There were other examples of Beijing’s “involvements” in Taipei’s affairs. On 30 September, Zhou waved away the concerns of Indian Ambassador regarding Krishna Menon, who had been frantically maneuvering behind the scenes in the UN to prevent the Taiwan Strait Crisis from escalating. Unbeknown to the Indians, Beijing had decided to allow Chiang to remain on the offshore islands in order to prevent “two Chinas.” Zhou sidestepped the practical issue of Chiang

⁵⁷ Mao to Zhou, telegram, 11 Oct 1958, JGMWG, vol. 7, 449-450; Mao with Cao Juren, Record of conversation, 13 October 1958, in Pang and Jin (ed.), *Mao Zedong Zhuan*, 881; Mao, Zhou with Cao, Record of conversations, 13, 15, 17 Oct 1958, in ZENP, vol. 2, 183-182; Zhang Chunyin 张春英, *Haisia liangan guangxi shi* vol. 3 海峡两岸关系史 [A History of the Relations across the Taiwan Strait] (Fujian: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2004), 680.

⁵⁸ Qing Simei, *From Allies to Enemies: Visions of Modernity, Identity and US-China Diplomacy 1945-1960* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 283-284, 287; Liu Hong & Zhang Qinyong 刘红、郑庆勇, *Guomindang zai Tai 50 Nian* 国民党在 50 台年 [50 years of KMT’s Taiwan] (Beijing: Jiuzhou Chubanshe, 2001), 45; Sheng Lijun, “How the Die was cast against Taiwan,” *The Straits Times*, 9 July 2000; Tong, *Fengyu Sishinian*, 275.

⁵⁹ POLO Doc. 34, December 1971, 17-18.

evacuating the offshore islands to one of principles: the recognition of the PRC by the US. Upon achieving that, “China and the US can sit down to discuss the withdrawal of the [KMT] troops.” While the US could have forced Chiang off the islands, recognizing the PRC at that point was politically impossible. This sleight-of-hand allowed Chiang to stay on the offshore islands indefinitely while allowing the communists to stick to the moral high ground of “principles.”⁶⁰

Zhou also demonstrated first-hand knowledge of the depth of Chiang’s rage and frustration with the US. Engaging in *schadenfreude* at Chiang’s predicament, Zhou explained to Antonov on 5 October Chiang’s various public counter-statements against Dulles’ damaging press conference of 30 September. As Dulles had openly criticized the foolishness of overly arming Quemoy, Chiang felt that the US had thoroughly “let him down.” Chiang’s reported livid sputtering that “all other nations should not believe in the lies of the US” was thus authentic. Finding this turn of events “extremely amusing,” Zhou jocularly told Antonov that Dulles “immediately wrote a letter to Chiang to explain and smoothen his nerves.”

The PRC also seized the opportunity to further provoke “contradictions.” Zhou admitted that the 6 October ceasefire announcement was meant to “sow discord” between the ROC and the US. According to Zhou, surely the Americans would be suspecting: “Why would the communists suddenly release their grip when Quemoy was within their reach? Could it be that Chiang Kai-shek had a tacit agreement with his enemies?” However, all was not lost for the generalissimo. Zhou mused: “While [Chiang] might have a press conference to proclaim that one could not sit down with the communists for negotiations, in his heart he would secretly rejoice that this is one golden opportunity to bargain hard with the Americans ... such is the usual practice of Chiang.”⁶¹

⁶⁰ In an ironic twist, “the premier [Zhou] requested the [Indian] Ambassador to tell Menon not to worry.” Nonplussed, the Indian Ambassador sought to clarify matters: “Based on the PRC’s original policy, when the first step is completed ... Chiang will withdraw from the offshore islands and the PRC will exercise its sovereignty over the islands; how then will the PRC go about in resolving the Taiwan problem?” MFA to Chinese Embassy at India, telegram, no. 105, 3 October 1958, serial no. 110-00421-01, AMFA; the sanitized version concentrated on the US conspiracy of “ceasefire.” See Zhou with Indian Ambassador G. Parthasarathi, record of conversation, 30 September 1958 (Evening), in ZENP, vol. 2, 176.

⁶¹ Foreign Minister Chen Yi pointed to the history of distrust between Chiang and the US: “The US has always suspected Chiang had contacts with the Communists, while Chiang never abandons the fear that the US would eventually sell him out.” Zhou pointed out the contradictions of Eisenhower proclaiming that the US would not back down in the face of aggression, but at the same time offered to give due re-consideration if the communists had a ceasefire. See Record of

Foreign Minister Chen Yi also accurately perceived Dulles' trip to Taiwan as one of coercion.

Chen recounted to Antonov: "During the meeting, they had bitter arguments. Dulles had demanded that Chiang refrain from attacking and harassing mainland China and troops be withdrawn from Quemoy and Matsu." Chen Yi boasted that the bombardments allegedly made "Chiang very happy as he now could point at the bombardments as an excuse that troop levels cannot be reduced."

Another reason for helping Chiang was the concern, mentioned four times in the record, that the US would replace Chiang for some other more "pliant and loyal compradores such as Hu Shih, Sun Li-jen, Wu Kuo-chen, Liao Wen-yi, etc..." According to Chen, Chiang was gripped by paranoia as he "personally felt that the US was looking for ways to get rid of him."⁶² For Chiang, his bedfellows for the moment turned out to be the communists. As Beijing viewed the US to be the "number one Far East enemy," it would "side Chiang against the US." Chen perceived that Chiang would settle for a compromise: "In this way, Chiang might continue to negotiate with us, and on the other hand, continue to request for money from the US."⁶³

In sum, the PRC-ROC back-channel was possible because it was a well established ritualized mode of communication. Despite the dividing political ideologies and a vicious history of trying to annihilate each other for decades, both Beijing and Taipei adhered to the common cultural and historical complex which produced the nationalism that resonated among mainland and overseas Chinese. Three factors facilitated this. One, both sides were culturally and historically bound not to accept a potential separation of China as "two Chinas" reminded them of the abhorrent images of foreign imperialists carving up late-nineteenth-century China. Two, both parties waved the flag of nationalism, each claiming that the recovery of the other's territory was a sacred and imminent

Conversation between Prime Minister Zhou Enlai and the Soviet Chargé d'affaires S. F. Antonov, no. 612, 5 October 1958 (2400hrs), serial no. 109-00833-02, AMFA.

⁶² US Secretary of Defence Neil McElroy had suggested on 15 September 1958 to Eisenhower if "there isn't someone else who could step into the position [of Chiang]." The President paused over the suggestion but rejected it. Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 485.

⁶³ Dulles had even blamed the ROC for successfully deploying the "Sidewinders" air-to-air missiles. The question of stationing troops on the offshore islands also came up as the "communists had stopped the bombardments." To help Chiang win his arguments with the Americans, "we resumed our bombardments early," quipped Chen. Summing up the Chinese communist perspective on the Taiwan Strait Crises, Chen described the US deployment of military muscles as "playing the piano," as the US would never stay at one place for long: "While the US may have avoided war from the brink, there will always be a next time." Record of Conversation between Minister Chen Yi and the Soviet Chargé d'affaires S. F. Antonov, no. 650, 29 Oct 1958 (1800hrs), serial no. 109-00829-16, AMFA.

mission, as neither party could bear the moral responsibility for causing the spiritual break-up of China. Three, there were precedents in CCP-KMT collaborations. On 25 January 1956, Mao had declared at the Supreme State Conference: “The KMT and the CCP had collaborated twice; we are prepared to carry out a third collaboration.”⁶⁴

This explained the near maudlin-like quality of Mao’s three October messages to Taipei. The PRC diplomats were told explicitly to ram up the time-tested rhetoric of nationalism: “Patriotic Chinese would never allow foreigners to be their representatives or retreat behind someone else’s back ... The affairs of the Chinese brook no interference from the Americans.” Beijing was also keen to highlight neo-imperialism, the anathema of the burgeoning Afro-Asian nationalism, arguing that the US-led neo-imperialism had no chance at all against the “beginning new page of history where the surge of anti-imperialism brings an irresistible tide of change.” Situating the Taiwan Strait Crisis firmly in the anti-imperialist code, the PRC attempted to tap into the roiling turbulence of resentment against the US-led coalition, and promised that eventually the US would be “kicked out” from the numerous overseas military bases it occupied, be them in the Taiwan Strait or the Middle East. In contrast, the PRC crowed about its successes in gaining “the world’s approbation for its humanitarian gestures in a temporary ceasefire in the Strait.”⁶⁵

3.2 Chiang’s Paranoia

Washington had to suffer the brunt of Chiang’s paranoia. Madame Chiang was reportedly “upset about the interpretation among the Chinese on the communiqué,” claiming that she had to “make some statements about it as she goes around the country.” Robertson testily told Adm. Stump to inform Mme. Chiang that “she can destroy all support for her government by making statements that would tend to discredit the communiqué.” Robertson pointed out that the joint communiqué was “a great step forward which will strengthen her country and is already in terms of public

⁶⁴ Tong, *Fengyu Sishinian*, 273.

⁶⁵ For Mao’s messages on 6 Oct, 13 Oct and 25 Oct, in JGMWG, vol. 7, 439-441, 457-461, 468-470; 外交部发言人评论要点” [Waijiaobu fayanren pinglun yaodian], draft, n.d. and “中华人民共和国外交部发言人谈话” [Zhonghua renmin gongheguo Waijiaobu fayanren tanhua], 9 Oct 1958, serial no. 111-00152-01, AMFA.

support.” Unfazed, Chiang insisted that the ROC was duty-bound to aid and support the anti-Communist activities on the mainland through “all possible means and by all possible actions.”⁶⁶

Chiang then badgered the US for reassurances. In a highly agitated note to Yeh, Chiang demanded the immediate delivery of the M14 light tanks that were promised by the MAAG Taiwan: “Before Dulles’ visit, the MAAG promised 3 battalions of M14 (156 tanks), but we have only obtained one battalion of tanks, short of 110.” Chiang reminded the ambassador to tell the White House that “the reduction of troops on Quemoy is ultimately linked to the US offer of military aid.” While Chiang was not someone “who will quibble over some minute details [sic],” he stressed that the morale of the ROC troops was at stake, that his soldiers would be affected by the US dalliances.⁶⁷

The offshore islands remained an albatross for the US. Despite a defence agreement to reduce the offshore island garrison, the ROC only made perfunctory gestures. At least one division was supposed to return to Taiwan but this reduction was cosmetic. As the US had increased the number of artillery pieces for the Taiwan garrison on the offshore island, a minimum of twelve pieces of M114 155mm howitzers and another 12 pieces of M1 240mm howitzers were slated for Quemoy. Matsu would receive a minimum of 4 M1 240mm howitzers and a battalion of M114 155mm howitzers. Even Lacrosse rockets were promised. An additional armored battalion and two battalions of infantry would be transformed into motorized armored infantry. Just how there could be a manpower reduction with all the additional equipment given remained a mystery.⁶⁸

US military commanders were critical of Chiang’s stratagem. Commander of Taiwan Defense Command Adm. Ronald N. Smoot proposed that the ROC should have a smaller technologically

⁶⁶ Robertson pressured Ambassador George Yeh to relay the same line to Mdm Chiang. Telephone call to Mr Robertson, 30 Oct 1958, 12:20pm, Telephone Conversation Series, box 9, memoranda of tel conv - Gen Aug 1 1958 to Oct 31 1958 (1), JFD papers; Chiang Kai-shek to Eisenhower, 5 Nov 1958, Office of the Staff Secretary, international series, box 3, china (rep of) (1) (sept 58-apr 60), White House Office, DDEL; Chiang’s paranoia was well documented by his bodyguards, see, Weng Yuan 翁元, *Wo Zai Jiangshi fizhi shenbian sishisannian 我在蒋氏父子身边四十三年* [Forty Three years by the side of the Chiang Family], (Beijing: Hua wen chubanshe, 2003),106-107.

⁶⁷ Chiang fumed that “ironically, we get less military aid after the departure of Dulles.” He queried: “Does this mean that there are changes in the US policy towards the ROC? Hence it is now considered a small matter?” CKS to George Yeh, telegram, 15 November 1958, serial no.002010400030007, CKS papers, AH.

⁶⁸ “王叔铭与杜安签署金门及马祖岛群之军事防御建议书” [Wangshuming yu andu qianshu jinmen ji mazu daoqun zhi junshi fangyu jianyishu], 17 November 1958, serial no. 002080106051011, CKS papers, AH.

advanced standing army. However, Smoot's advice was ill-conceived. As the latest technology was limited to what the US was willing to give, Chiang could only contribute manpower. This explained the ROC's obsession with large standing armies, making it unlikely that Chiang would surrender this leverage to manipulate the US. At the same time, however, Smoot prized good and effective relations with his ROC counterparts. More concerned about the positive publicity of the US aiding Taipei, he chose to underscore the "valuable combined operational experience" which the Crisis gave to the ROC and the US. Undoubtedly, Smoot had the May 1957 Taiwan Riots in mind and he wished to forestall any unwarranted rumor of US neglect of Taiwan.⁶⁹

4. Aftermath of Crisis

In the aftermath of the Crisis, the US reoriented its policy toward communism and promoted more actively "spiritual values of the Free World" to counter the perceived increasing international appeal of communism. The ROC, in a similar manner, utilized the "lessons" of Quemoy for its nation-building, extolling greater sacrifices and social cohesion. The PRC considered the Taiwan Strait Crisis to have been satisfactorily settled for a host of reasons. Having achieved tacit accommodation with the US, the PRC continued to monitor closely American attitudes and policies toward China and communism. While both the US and the PRC recognized the future struggles for the hearts and minds of Asians, Beijing was particularly accurate in foreseeing the proxy wars which would subsequently engulf Indochina.

4.1 The US: Spiritual Values of the Free World

In the aftermath of the Taiwan Strait Crisis, the Eisenhower administration reoriented its policy toward communism. Prominence was given to "spiritual values to which the free world is dedicated and which set them apart from the communist world." Attempts were made to promote

⁶⁹ One of the ways which the ROC monitored the commitment of the US was to innocuously request for "a listing of major actions taken by the US to assist the GRC over the past few months." Smoot responded that the "effort did not commence on August 23rd ... The emergency situation has merely provided an opportunity to demonstrate the high effectiveness of the forces which you have developed and the readiness and mobility of the US forces which were found to be needed in this situation." See Vice-Admiral Ronald N. Smoot to Minister of Defence Yu Ta-wei, letter, 22 November 1958, serial no. 002080106051016, CKS papers, AH.

“more potent” Western ideas and spiritual values. Ironically, the US perceived themselves as on the defensive against the Communists on the economic and military fronts.⁷⁰

The Communist economic model presented a viable development alternative. China’s industrial development had captured the imagination of Third-World countries. As early as August 1955, T. S. Replier, president of the Advertising Council, had elucidated to Eisenhower the dilemmas of promoting Americana: “We cannot be merely against Communism; we suffer from the lack of a *positive* crusade. We need to focus on a moralistic idea with the power to stir men’s imagination.”⁷¹ In July 1958 there was an additional urgency as CIA Director Allen Dulles reported that the “Soviet trade with the world had risen 500 %.” What was worse was that: “The communists are particularly effective in dealing with one crop countries and are willing to do so at great cost to themselves if the political benefits seem large enough. Thus the communists could take actions that the private businesses of a profit economy are not geared to take.” But competing with “Russia in every country on a dollar for dollar basis” simply would not work.⁷²

If the US was unwilling to out-spend the Soviets, it must out-think its adversary. One possibility was to recapture the *cultural* initiative. Replier, in a speech to the Business Editors of America on 27 October 1955, exhorted:

... the word “people’s” has been kidnapped by the Russians. Yet no word is more American. The US constitution begins with “We, the people,” and an immortal and inspired definition of democracy is Abraham Lincoln’s “government of the people, by the people, and for the people.” It is high time we liberated this noun from the Russians. We cannot let the Soviets steal all our good words ...

George Allen, head of the United States Information Agency (USIA), agreed. He lectured the USIA staff in November 1957 on the high road of US cultural offensive: “To encourage

⁷⁰ This marked a renewed interest in combating Communism by stressing “Free World Values,” which were narrowly equated with US cultural values. The main problem was devising a concrete set of action plan. See, D. E. Booster, Memo for the record, 27 October 1958, Special Assistants Chronological Series, Box 13, Greene - Boster Chronological Oct (1), JFD Papers, DDEL.

⁷¹ “Memorandum of the conversation between the President and T. S. Replier (15 mins),” 3 August 1955, ACW Diary Series, box 6, ACW Diary July 1955 (5), Ann Whitman File, DDEL; David C. Engerman, “The Romance of Economic Development and New Histories of the Cold War,” *Diplomatic History* Vol. 28, no. 1 (Jan 2004), 37;

⁷² Undersecretary of State Douglas Dillion elucidated that the US preferred projects that were “useful and visible,” such as a university in Kabul, or easing the way for “commodity trading” [barter trade] with third-world countries. It was only in exceptional cases such as India that “both Russia and the United States are pursuing large programs.” See Minutes of Cabinet Meeting, 25 July 1958 (0900hrs), Cabinet Series, box 11, Ann Whitman File, DDEL.

democratic processes throughout the world, we should give peoples of the world, as openly and frankly as we can, explanations of what we are doing, so that they can, in the democratic process, make up their mind about us.”⁷³

Images of American modernity subsequently buttressed all distribution of US foreign aid. Such informal popular images eased acceptance by foreigners and there were evidence that non-Americans were fascinated with US consumerist culture. Items such as Sears and Roebuck & Company catalogs were either “worn out through use,” or sold in Indonesia. Overseas USIA libraries became a repository of US democracy that were “telling America’s story”; in India, “every single chair in a dozen libraries was filled during every open hour and borrowing was known literally to empty shelves.”⁷⁴ Adroit Cold War warriors thus caught onto the wagon of selling US identity abroad as a means to capture hearts and minds. Not only was it a cheaper and more effective protection of the American way of life, it was, more importantly, a re-affirmation of the “benevolent conception of American national identity.”⁷⁵

4.2 The ROC: National Identity and Nation-Building

Chiang continued to plague the US about the possibility of a spontaneous revolution on the mainland. He noted a “definite and deep split between Khrushchev and Mao which began three years ago [1956].” To Undersecretary of State C. Douglas Dillon, Chiang belaboured: “Mao apparently looks down on Khrushchev and would never accept his leadership.” Together with the failure of the Great Leap Forward, Chiang “further asserted that the current dissatisfaction... made the present time ideal for stirring up defection on the mainland which could lead to overthrow of the regime.” Curiously, despite Chiang's optimism, he advocated only “non-military or quasi-

⁷³ Michael R. Adamson, “‘The Most Important Single Aspect of Our Foreign Policy’?: The Eisenhower Administration, Foreign Aid, and the Third World,” in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War*, ed. Kathryn C. Statler and Andrew L. Johns (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, 2006), 57; Laura Belmonte, “Selling Capitalism: Modernity and US Overseas Propaganda, 1945-1959,” in *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War*, ed. David C. Engerman, et. al. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 118; Richard T. Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings: American Cultural Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century* (Washington, D. C.: Potomac Books, 2005), 292.

⁷⁴ Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings*, 157.

⁷⁵ Belmonte, “Selling Capitalism,” 108-117.

military methods.” But the White House was in no mood to entertain Chiang.⁷⁶

Chiang insisted on additional preparatory political work for *fangong*. The Quemoy crisis after-action 1959 official report, headed by Air Force General Wang Shu-ming, listed the multiple civil concerns of a potential KMT takeover of China. These included the roles of security, refugees, education and even monetary policies. Such extensive serious paperwork by the KMT government seemed incomprehensible. But the ROC’s higher echelons had been inured to Chiang’s political methods. The perpetuation of the seemingly fatuous *fangong* preserved the political *raison d’être* of the ROC through the difficult first two decades. Indeed *fangong* in relation to Taiwan’s geopolitical position as the bulwark against communism ensured its existence and longevity. Hence, Chiang allowed reporters on the offshore islands to “garner international sympathy and support.” The ROC authorities deemed this grandstanding “relatively fruitful,” with the propaganda media value of engaging the communists via the offshore islands overriding any potential military purpose. Having invested in the phony war, the ROC authorities were upset with journalists who were “ill-educated in military matters” when their reports seemed to be overly enamored of China.

More importantly, the myth of the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis was institutionalized in the ROC’s military establishment. The March 1959 official report grandly presented the Crisis as “unprecedented in size and intensity in the ROC’s military history.” The Crisis was transformed into a mythical trial by fire for the young ROC’s military. The report’s hyperbole rendered the conflict beyond its military significance. The defenders possessed virtues: endurance, loyalty, selflessness, invincible revolutionary spirit, martial prowess, and contributed to the revolutionary cause, “guided by the brilliant leadership of President Chiang.” The report added, with a large dose of melodrama, that the communist artillery repeatedly assailed the loyal dead (忠骨) due to a lack of crematoriums. This imagery of loyalty beyond death set the tone, with the Crisis now becoming the “most glorious episode of the ROC’s revolutionary warfare.”

⁷⁶ “Synopsis of state and Intelligence material reported to the President,” 22 Oct – 27 Oct 1959, memo, 27 Oct 1959, Department of State (DOS), DDRS, CK3100503509.

Only by prefacing the report with effusive embellishments did Wang carefully cite the tireless improvements made by the PRC. The enemy was unceasing in their training. “Time,” lamented Wang, “is not on our side.” Wang’s report expressed the specters of Chiang’s fears. The loyalty of troops and generals were of utmost priority. Wholesale defections of dispirited KMT troops on the eve of 1949 must not happen again. Unblemished reports for the sole purpose of improvement, not based on personal agenda, were desired. Factional squabbling in the party must be a thing of the past. Finally, the enemy was acknowledged as tenacious in effort and larcenous in intent. China did not collapse into chaos under the communists. It even fought the United States to a standstill in Korea. Constant vigilance was hence presented as the only solution for the ROC.⁷⁷

For the rest of the Taiwanese society, the offshore crisis metamorphosed conveniently for the state to underscore values and ideals. In a 1959 report by the Ministry of Defence, in which militant slogans approximated traditional adages in frequency, the narrative started with militant imperatives such as “Stabilize the Frontlines,” “Control the Strait,” “Intensify Firepower,” and “Counter-attack Whenever Possible.” This discourse cast a pall of emergency, danger and crisis, coupled with a shock of raw power and a sense of masculinity, extolled against an implacable foe. The Defence Ministry stated that against the communists it adhered to a Spartan-like maxim: “Steadfast at Arms, Constant in Betterment.” It thus raised the phantom of an unappeased communist adversary who was constantly probing for weaknesses at the gate.

Such a surreal standoff was even more apparent after a year. The combatants of the ROC and PRC greeted each other by off-target artillery fire and “propaganda artillery rounds.” Each shell contained propaganda leaflets urging the other to surrender. In 1959, China fired 5,611 such shells at Quemoy and Matsu. The Nationalists responded with 4,397 of similar make. Since Quemoy is

⁷⁷ The report was also candid about various shortcomings, including the “lack of frontline ground intelligence” and the “overt dependence on the defense ministry intelligence,” and the “lack of support for the front elements” and “a lack of urgency” in Taiwan at the height of the crisis. Wang was deemed too “frank” and too close to the Americans, and was subsequently demoted ostensibly for “arrogance and poor personal relations with colleagues and indiscretions.” See “金門炮战作战检讨总讲评” [Jinmen paozhan zuozhan jiantao zong jiangping], Air force General Wang Shu-ming, 25 March 1959, CKS papers, AH; Drumright to State Department, telegram, 13 July 1959, FRUS (1958-60), vol. XIX, 570

less than two miles from Xiamen, both sides broadcast radio programmes and shouted at each with loud speakers. Statistics from the Nationalists indicated that such shouting matches lasted nine hours. Nevertheless, strident slogans rang the loudest at the frontlines of the offshore islands. How else could the state mobilize and control more than 50,000 – 100,000 men on lonely outposts without strident belligerent ideology and rhetoric? How else could the society respond to demands on the economy and mental and material sacrifices without being constantly overwhelmed with news of the offshore islands' bombardments? Thus, the offshore islands presented for the Taiwanese a metaphor of their existence in the Cold War. More importantly, how else would the reluctant ally, the US, be persuaded to part with aid? The 1959 report concluded with the refrain that political education along the lines of “revolutionary spirit” and “revolutionary warfare” was to ensure and provide the guiding light for the combatants in Quemoy.⁷⁸

Another popular rendering was painting the Crisis as a David-versus-Goliath conflict. “Our strength was by far inferior to the Chicom’s,” asserted a 1965 ROC Minister of Defense report. The ROC was described as having responded to communists’ provocations by openly launching a “severe blow” which “has turned completely [China’s invasion ‘plot’] into a dream, thus leading to a peaceful situation.” The ROC’s air force had heroically performed airdrops and airlifts “under the Chicom artillery fire” and the report smugly observed that these were “still accomplished successfully.”⁷⁹ However, factual gaps punctured the entire ROC report. The ROC’s constant provocative over-flights into China were made possible by advanced technology given by US aid. Such possession of US battle technology belied the myth of the “besieged” island. Especially crucial were the air-to-air missiles, Sidewinders. USN telegrams also pointed out that the bulk of the supplies were transported by sea. The US complained too that the ROC was overly concerned

⁷⁸ Michael Szonyi expressed similar ideas in *Cold War Island: Quemoy on the Front Line* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008). But my evidences are from the aforementioned documents and the following, “国军一年来外岛作战及战备之检讨” [Guojun yinianlai waidao zuozhan ji zhanbei zhi jiantao], Ministry of Defence, 31 December 1959, serial no. 002080102100019, CKS papers, AH.

⁷⁹ The Communists were depicted as nefariously intended upon “surprise attacks.” Only belatedly was the mystery of the communist poor performance revealed. One, outdated Korea-era Soviet supplied planes, the MIG-15s, formed the bulk of the communist strength. Two, communist pilots were inadequately trained, with limited flying hours. Three, the ability of the US Sidewinders missiles to track down the enemy despite “low altitudes and with poor visibility” meant the ROC pilots gained considerable safety in distance compared to their enemies. See “空军台海作战经过概要” [kongjun taihai zuozhan jinguo gaiyao] (Secret), 11 Oct 1965, serial no. 0050101000093008, Chiang Ching-kuo Papers, Academia Historica, Taipei.

with the communist artillery, since most of the ROC's airlifts were delivered during the "lull" [odd] days declared by the communists after 6 October 1958.⁸⁰

In addition, the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis facilitated Taiwan's subsequent move to an export-oriented economy. Although Chiang was forced to announce on 23 October that the recovery of the mainland would be through the peaceful means of the *Sanmin Zhuyi*, he did not overturn this direction totally. In his 1959 New Year's Day official speech, Chiang elaborated on his stance of "making the Sanmin Zhuyi the vanguard and keeping the armed forces as the reserve." This gesture set the stage for full consultation with the US on plans for an "accelerated economic development program," while moving further away from the military aims of *fangong*.⁸¹ In part, Chiang was compelled by US stipulations that further aid would only be forthcoming if Taiwan concentrated on economic development instead of a military *fangong*. Well knowing that Taiwan's import substitution economy had run its course, the US promised more aid to the tune of \$20-30 million for Taiwan's export-oriented industries.⁸² To complement this export-oriented thrust, the ROC government also instructed technocrat Li Kuo-ting to seek out foreign investments from overseas Chinese.⁸³ For all intents and purposes, *fangong* was ritualized into an article of faith and Chiang's technocrats went along with it so long as it was used to promote further economic growth. *Fangong dalu* acted as a grim reminder that failure was not an option as the ROC's source of annihilation was just across the Strait, thus motivating the economic planners to channel all their energy into developing the economy.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ M.H. Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis: A documented History," Memorandum RM-4900-ISA (Dec 1966), Rand Corporation, 372; Appu K. Soman, *Double-Edged Sword: Nuclear Diplomacy in Unequal Conflict: The United States and China, 1950-1958* (Westport: Praeger, 2000), 182-183.

⁸¹ She Keli & Zhu Xianlong 余克礼 & 朱显龙, eds., *Zhongguo guomindang quanshu*, 中国国民党全书 [The KMT corpus], vol. 1 (Xian: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 2001), 39; Vol 2, 498.

⁸² Thomas B. Gold, *State and Society in the Taiwan Miracle* (NY: ME Sharpe, 1986), 77.

⁸³ Alan P. L. Liu, *Phoenix and the Lame Lion: Modernization in Taiwan and Mainland China* (Stanford: Hoover International Press, 1987), 58.

⁸⁴ Kahn identified "great external pressures not to make any serious mistakes," see Herman Kahn, *World Economic Development: 1979 and Beyond* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1979), 333; Gold cites "the commitment to succeed," see Gold, *State & Society*, 123; all these were informed by the ethos of *fangong dalu*.

4.3 The PRC: Consolidation and Reassessment

In the process of tacit accommodation, the PRC actively sought intelligence from various sources. One key piece of information obtained was the unabated US fear of the Chinese leviathan. This source came from the Polish Foreign Minister's conversation with Washington insider and chairman of the Chase Manhattan Bank, John J. McCloy.⁸⁵ McCloy ominously forecasted: "In a few years' time, China may become a powerful third force ... Because it advocated an independent path, it may be more frightening than the Soviets." Nevertheless, McCloy confirmed Premier Zhou's perceptions of US strategic needs when he averred: "The US would never go to war with the PRC over the offshore islands ... The US is willing to hand the islands to Communist China." However, McCloy added that this did not mean a weakening of the US mutual security treaty with the ROC: "If however in protecting the ROC as an independent country, the US detects that the PRC is going to conquer Taiwan, that will unequivocally mean war." On the US part, according to McCloy, Dulles' trip to the ROC was to prevent "adventurous moves from the Chiang Kai-shek elements." McCloy was thus blunt on the limitations of the US treaty obligation towards the ROC, but also conveyed the boundaries of the US tolerance.⁸⁶

Having clear perceptions of the US strategic needs remained vital for the PRC as it embarked upon its economic experiments via the Great Leap Forward (GLF). Foreign Minister Chen Yi reasoned to Soviet Chargé Antonov: "If we send bombers [to Taiwan], there is a real danger of causing the eruption of a great war. But we are now in the midst of the Great Leap Forward, so there is no need to provoke that." Thus, even the rare opportunity to "show solidarity [with Lebanon] in the anti-imperialist protest" through the bombardment of Quemoy was emasculated. Chen Yi went on to list other safer ways to create "contradictions" between the ROC and the US, as solidarity with Third-World countries must necessarily take a backstage to China's domestic imperatives.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ The Poles stressed the importance of the McCloy conduit. According to one study, so highly esteemed was McCloy that Eisenhower and Dulles sought advice from this "statesman." See Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made* (NY: Touchstone Book, 1986), 572.

⁸⁶ Record of Conversation between Yu Zhan and the Polish Ambassador, no. 610, 14 Nov 1958 (afternoon), serial no. 109-00833-02, AMFA

⁸⁷ Record of Conversation between Minister Chen Yi and the Soviet Chargé d'affaires S. F. Antonov, no. 650, 29 Oct 1958 (1800hrs), serial no. 109-00829-16, AMFA.

The PRC further noted that the US authorities and press were engaged in a “Hate-China campaign,” targeting especially the people’s communes. A 35-page report on the current Sino-US relations asserted that even the Berlin Crisis did not invite such a chorus of “hyperbolic” newspaper commentaries. With remarkable perception, the report then situated the media frenzy as symptomatic of the US struggles in forging a coherent policy toward Beijing: while the US found it “increasingly difficult” to fathom the PRC, it was deemed “gradually more important” to do so. Underpinning this struggle was the realization that Red China spelled “big trouble.” The PRC’s developmental strategy of the GLF might “seduce” and “bait” the developing countries in Asia and Africa, acting as an “inducement to communism.”⁸⁸

The report added that to the US, the Taiwan Strait Crisis had demonstrated that the stakes were the Chinese nationalistic competitive desire to have a sphere of control in Asia. A “seat in the UN” counted for little to Beijing. Hence, the “paper tiger” label for the US was a genuine disdain for US threats, coupled with an aspiration to challenge US hegemony. As such, the US “posits the PRC as more dangerous than the Soviet Union.” To counter Red China’s “bad example,” the report stated that the US was at pains to provide an alternative economic route through material aid. One such new initiative was Eisenhower’s five-point plan to increase aid to the Colombo Plan countries. The US economic warfare was targeted at China’s GLF and hoped to demonstrate the viability of the US system. Neutralist countries such as India, noted the report, had already sought to benefit from the new economic orientation of the US.⁸⁹

The report also clearly demonstrated that the PRC was aware of the US wedge strategy of provoking Sino-Soviet tensions. It alleged that Vice-President Nixon had said in London, during a World War II commemorative service in late-November 1958, that the prime strategy of the West was to provoke both China and the Soviet Union to oppose each other. It also noted that Eleanor Roosevelt, in her capacity as a *New York Post* columnist, had traveled twice to the Soviet Union

⁸⁸ The report observed that the first US official comment on the Great Leap Forward was made by Dulles in Seattle in November 1958 about Chinese slave labour camps. Thereafter, the 1 December issue of *Newsweek* featured “The World’s Most Terrifying Experiment” and *Time* magazine highlighted “Huge farms of human poultry.”

⁸⁹ “台湾海峡的斗争以后的美国对华政策” [Taiwan haixia de douzheng yihou de meiguo duihua zhenche], no. 289, 4 February 1959, serial no. 109-01913-03, AMFA.

and interviewed Khrushchev.⁹⁰ Mrs. Roosevelt allegedly claimed that the Soviet leader had lamented that “China is the only country interested in nuclear war.” With remarkable candor, the report then referred obliquely to Western rumors that Sino-Soviet tensions started since Mao and Khrushchev met in July 1958. The report simply listed, without confirming or denying, alleged points of contention, such as the Soviet disapproval of the communes, transfer of Soviet nuclear technology to the PRC, and the PRC’s actions in the Taiwan Strait.⁹¹

At the broadest level, however, the report highlighted that the PRC was convinced that the Taiwan Strait Crisis gave the US an opportunity for a realistic reassessment and tacit recognition of China’s place in Asia. The Crisis also forced Khrushchev to openly support the PRC with the Soviet nuclear arsenal and this dealt a significant setback for the potential Soviet *détente* with the Americans. The Taiwan problem was hence considered to have been satisfactorily settled. The report further noted with glee that the US, “for want of a PRC reassurance that it would not conquer Taiwan, was willing to toss Chiang Kai-shek aside.”⁹² However, the PRC had stood on the moral high ground that it would not “cut this deal with the US” and had instead turned to the PRC-ROC back-channel. According to the report: “The Chinese government shall not take these islands, but allow Chiang to keep them ... China and Chiang Kai-shek have reached a tacit agreement to oppose the US together.” Finally, Chiang’s *Sanmin Zhuyi* declaration gave the PRC additional reassurance of peace.

⁹⁰ On Nixon’s London visit (25-28 November 1958), see “The Vice-Presidency: The Double Dare,” *Time*, Monday, Dec. 08, 1958; Eleanor Roosevelt visited Russia on 3-28 September 1957 and late-September 1958. See excerpts of Roosevelt’s 1957 interview with Khrushchev, in Eleanor Roosevelt, *Eleanor Roosevelt’s My Day* (New York : Pharos Books, 1991), 134-141, 177-180.

⁹¹ Flushed with the success of his American tour in mid-1959, Khrushchev lectured the PRC on the merits of co-existence on 1 October 1959. He considered testing “the stability of capitalism by force” in the Taiwan Strait foolhardy and perilous. The US would not be rendered less dangerous, just because Mao branded it a “paper tiger.” What the Chinese comrades needed to do was what Khrushchev had already done: accommodation with the US. To the PRC, nothing was so disruptive to tacit accommodation than a lecture from the Soviets. See Harrison E. Salisbury, *The New Emperors Mao & Deng: A Dual Biography* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992), 191.

⁹² The report considered the most important outcome of the Taiwan Strait Crisis to be the US reticence towards the PRC and its silent willingness to accept the status quo in East Asia. Secretary McElroy’s 13 November 1958 statement about the cutback on troop deployments in Asia was eagerly noted by Beijing, relieved that “the US appetite for war is considerably less.” However, the report was aware that there would be no changes on such issues as the recognition of the PRC, gaining of a UN seat, and US trade embargo. A propaganda blitz against the PRC to placate the US domestic audience would also be on the cards. Nonetheless, the US had sought to “leave itself space for maneuvering,” as seen during the Warsaw negotiations.

With deadly accuracy, the report then speculated that future conflicts would move away from the Taiwan Strait to the neighbouring Asian countries bordering China. To counter this communist wave of the future, the PRC foresaw several options of the US. The pro-US factions in Asian countries would receive material and military aid and military strongmen would be encouraged to eradicate the communist elements in their countries. Thailand and Burma had already positioned themselves with the US and such Asian countries would provide a network of military bases for the US new strategy of “limited war.”⁹³

Conclusion

Beijing closely guarded its tacit accommodation with the Americans, considering such an approach to possess many advantages. It dismissed third-party proposals from Britain, the Soviets and neutralist Asian countries, viewing most of them as dangerously close to the detested “two-China” solution. As Chiang had played the nationalist card, Beijing could not do less. Yet the biggest heartburn for China came from such neutralist Asian countries as Indonesia, Burma and India which had showered Beijing with uninvited offers. Paradoxically, this came about from Beijing’s earlier successful diplomatic encounters with these nations. Beijing then used the vague “Bandung spirit” to successfully resolve its international dilemmas.

The US well understood the PRC’s moderate and ritualized stance and was ready to wind down the crisis. More interested in reassuring Beijing than coddling Taipei, Washington exerted pressure on the ROC with a stream of rhetorical bombardments. In the face of the US pressure, Taipei sought to shore up the perimeter of the rationale, legitimacy and *morality* of the ROC-US relationship. It also used the Taiwan Strait Crisis as a media event to validate Taiwan’s military prowess. Dulles’ mission to Taipei on 21-23 October demonstrated how the US laid down the line on Taipei. Washington also subsequently understood and reciprocated Beijing’s odd-day bombardment announcement, providing yet another example of Sino-US tacit accommodation. Nonetheless, there was a glaring blind spot in Washington’s perceptions of the ROC-PRC relations as it

⁹³ “台湾海峡的斗争以后的美国对华政策” [Taiwan haixia de douzheng yihou de meiguo duihua zhenche], no. 289, 4 February 1959, serial no. 109-01913-03, AMFA.

continued to show its inability to fathom the implications arising from the shared historical and cultural ties of the KMT and the CCP.

The dramatic Taipei-Beijing back-channel, evident in at least three visits by Cao Juren (Chiang Ching-kuo's secret emissary) to Beijing from August to October, demonstrated the common historical and cultural ties shared by the erstwhile belligerents. Through this established ritualized mode of communication, Taipei and Beijing tapped on nationalist concerns and maneuvered to thwart Washington and avoid the specter of "two Chinas." While Beijing also had in mind the planting of discord in the ROC-US relations and the trumpeting of its goodwill in contrast to the alleged neo-imperialism of the US, Taipei adroitly manipulated the channel to pressure the US to accede to its demands and succeeded in procuring more military aid even though it had to go along with the US request to soft-pedal the belligerent rhetoric of its *fangong* mission.

In the aftermath of the Crisis, the US reoriented its policy toward communism and promoted more actively "spiritual values of the Free World" to counter the perceived increasing international appeal of communism. Such a cultural offensive included promoting images of American modernity and the "benevolent conception of American national identity." The ROC, in a similar manner, utilized the "lessons" of Quemoy for its nation-building, extolling greater sacrifices and social cohesion. Mythologizing of the Crisis was particularly evident in its military establishment even as it moved away from the belligerency of the *fangong* mission to a more reassuring upholding of Sun Yat-sen's *Sanminzhuyi* (Three Principles of the People). The PRC considered the Taiwan Strait Crisis to have been satisfactorily settled for a host of reasons. Having achieved tacit accommodation with the US, the PRC continued to monitor closely American attitudes and policies toward China and communism. While both the US and the PRC recognized the future struggles for the hearts and minds of Asians, Beijing was particularly accurate in foreseeing the proxy wars which would subsequently engulf Indochina.

Conclusion

Having analyzed the Taiwan Strait Crises chronologically, this concluding chapter will now return to the three central questions posed in Chapter One:

- a. Why did the Taiwan Strait Crises erupt in September 1954 and August 1958 respectively?
- b. How did each crisis unfold, from outbreak to resolution?
- c. What can such a development of the Taiwan Strait Crises tell us about the foreign relations of the PRC, US and ROC in the 1950s?

These questions will be considered thematically, in the context of existing scholarship.

1. Causes of the Taiwan Strait Crises

Existing scholarship have explained the causes of the Taiwan Strait Crises in such terms as Sino-US misperceptions and miscalculations and China's domestic imperatives.

This thesis has shown how the genesis of the Taiwan Strait Crises could be traced to 1950 when Truman positioned the Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Strait to prevent hostilities between the PRC and the ROC. From 1953 to April 1954, despite attempts by Eisenhower to re-assess US policies toward China, Taiwan and Southeast Asia, maintaining Chiang's Taiwan remained one of the main goals of US policy, together with keeping Japan firmly in the US security umbrella and preventing communism from spreading in Southeast Asia. US non-recognition of China and economic embargo and covert operations against China also persisted. A new course of "United Action," a US proposal to stem the communists' high tide in Indochina that would lead to the formation of SEATO in September 1954, further emerged as a strategy to counter the PRC's involvements in Indochina. All these actions highlighted the entwining of the Taiwan Strait issue with events in Southeast Asia and contributed to the making of the Taiwan Strait Crises, as they would later be perceived by the PRC to constitute a US strategy of encircling China and provided a pretext for China's bombing of the Quemoy and Matsu islands. In the aftermath of the Korean War armistice agreements, Beijing was anxious to emerge from diplomatic isolation. Together with the need to better prepare China for its participation in the Geneva Conference, China re-assessed its policies

toward Taiwan, the US and Southeast Asia. In this re-assessment, China placed the Taiwan Strait issue on the backseat for the moment, expressed its concerns regarding the US and “United Action,” sought to win over Asian neutralist countries, and advocated a “talking while fighting” posture with respect to Vietnam. Such features represented China’s responses and initiatives in dealing with the US actions and played a part in the making of the Taiwan Strait Crises for, had these actions elicited what China considered to be acceptable US responses, China would most likely not have proceeded with the 1954 bombardments.

This thesis has further located the making of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis in the Geneva Conference where many significant issues were not settled, highlighting again the entwining of the Taiwan Strait issue with events in Southeast Asia. In Geneva, China’s aim to break out of international isolation led it to take up a position of “reasonableness,” and its efforts to win over Asian countries seemed momentarily successful in countering the specter of “united action.” In contrast to China’s improved diplomatic standing, the US initially faced difficulties in gaining support from its allies for “United Action.” There were also differences in opinions between Eisenhower and his cabinet members regarding US policies toward China. Although the US-Britain-France disarrayed alliance did reach a compromise eventually to form a “United Front,” it was clear that in Geneva, the association of the US with neo-colonialism hampered its efforts in developing a regional counter-measure against China. US dissatisfaction with the outcome of the Geneva Conference led it to disregard the Geneva Accords and dulled Beijing’s diplomatic achievements. Besides being unhappy with the continued insistence of the US on non-recognition of China, Beijing was also frustrated with the formation of SEATO and the likelihood of a potential ROC-US defence treaty. Coupled with the onslaught of the ROC’s commando raids and the looming danger of “two Chinas,” the PRC bombarded Quemoy and Matsu on 3 September, setting off the First Taiwan Strait Crisis.

To some extent, Sino-US misperceptions and miscalculations played a part in the outbreak of the Crisis. Although the US was dissatisfied with the Geneva Accords and decided to disregard it and

Washington did view the additional prominence that the PRC gained in Geneva with dread, it also noted that China's gains in Geneva were limited and the probability of a Communist armed attack low. US budgetary constraints, the limitations of US nuclear deterrence and Eisenhower's firmness against casual belligerency further meant that the US was not about to provoke a war with China. While "united action" culminated in the formation of SEATO and this would unsettle China, Dulles was aware of the limitations of US sponsorship. As such, the US did not expect that its actions in 1953 and 1954 would frustrate China so much that China would register its unhappiness by bombarding Quemoy and Matsu. At the same time, the energy which Beijing put in late-1954 into convincing its Asian neighbors of its peaceful intentions bespoke of China's anxiety in addressing unexpected tensions in the Strait with remedial actions.

Furthermore, China's domestic imperatives also played a part in the outbreak of the Crisis. Concerned that the specter of encirclement might lead to an unwanted escalation of international conflicts which would derail China from its domestic development, China hoped that its bombardments would deter the US from executing further such perceived encirclement actions. China's desire for a stable international environment to focus on its domestic goals stemmed from the deleterious impact of the Korean War. Rehabilitation of the economy was thus China's top priority. With the signing of the Sino-Soviet Alliance in 1950, the Chinese adopted the Soviet model of development. In the first Five-Year Plan (1953-1957), the PRC set aside \$20 billion for development; the Soviet contributions were mainly in terms of technical knowledge and advisors. In a bipolar world in the grip of the Cold War, there seemed no other viable alternative.

This thesis contends that for the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, China's decision to bombard Quemoy was cast in a mode of defiance against the timidity of the Soviets, together with China's concerns regarding the specter of US encirclement, perceived American intransigence and Taiwan's provocations. In the mid-1950s, tensions were building up in Sino-Soviet relations as the Soviets spoke of the dangers of nuclear warfare, advocated peaceful co-existence with the US and were non-committal about Mao's agricultural collectivization. With the launch of the Soviet

Sputnik satellite in 1957, Mao advocated a communist bloc energetically led by the Soviet Union. To Mao, US provocations such as constructing B-52 nuclear bomber runways in January 1957 and placing nuclear-tipped Matador missiles in May 1958 in Taiwan had to be firmly dealt with. For the Soviets to ask China to have peaceful co-existence with the US only served to deepen Mao's ambivalence about Khrushchev. Beijing was also dissatisfied with the Soviet handling of the Middle East crisis. It seemed to Mao that the Eisenhower Doctrine, which pledged US aid to any Middle East country threatened by communism, could be duplicated in East Asia. Moreover, the US appeared infuriatingly tardy in responding to China's demands for the resumption of ambassadorial talks and the ROC continued with its onslaught of commando raids. In a show of defiance, the Chinese Politburo on 17 July 1958 agreed to proceed with further bombardments on Quemoy in the near future. Other developments in August reinforced Beijing's decision. Dulles' 28 June 1957 speech about the impending passing of Mao's régime was repeated on 11 August 1958 by the US Department of State. At the same time Chiang Kai-shek had increased the troops in Matsu and Quemoy to 100,000, twice the number in 1955, and broadcast in August that he would return to Mainland China. All these concerns led the PRC to launch artillery barrages on Quemoy and Matsu again on 23 August, igniting the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis.

To some extent, Sino-US misperceptions and miscalculations also played a part in the outbreak of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis. While the US did not expect much from the Sino-US ambassadorial talks, the PRC viewed this as an important conduit. The US was also apprehensive of possible Sino-Soviet collusion when Khrushchev made a surprise visit to Beijing in August 1958 and Dulles had mulled over the nuclear option on China before his conciliatory speech on 4 September. Similarly, Mao had declared to the Supreme State Conference on 5 September that "I simply did not calculate that the world would become so disturbed and turbulent."¹ Yet, compared to the First Crisis, Sino-US misperceptions and miscalculations played a smaller role in the outbreak of the Second Crisis, as there were ample evidence that the US, PRC and ROC were acutely aware of each other's intentions. In the First Crisis, Eisenhower's decision on 12

¹ See Allen S. Whiting, "New Light on Mao: Quemoy 1958: Mao's Miscalculations," *CQ* 62 (Jun 1975): 263-270.

September 1954 against any military action regarding the offshore islands proved to be consistent with the view that he had of China since 1953. In the wake of the Yijiangshan campaign in January 1955, the US tacitly accepted the PRC's international standing and recognized the inevitability of another diplomatic engagement with China. Similarly, Beijing understood the value of public posturing coupled with tacit agreements. While there could be no "private compromises," tacit understanding not to overstep boundaries was not rejected. By April 1955, both parties had reached the liminal stage where the belligerents were socialized with each other's maneuvers. The UN Secretary-General Hammarskjold accurately perceived the emergence of a *ritualized* pattern of diplomacy where "inner pressure" and "quiet" diplomacy would define the contours of Sino-US relations from this point onward.

China's domestic imperatives, however, played a larger part in the outbreak of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis than in the First. Besides China's desire for a stable international environment to focus on its domestic goals, China also seemed to have used the Crisis to support its domestic agenda. Throughout the 1950s, the Soviets readily responded with "the largest transfer of technology in the recent era" to the PRC.² However, the Chinese leadership was confronted by unexceptional agricultural gains.³ Problematic allocation of raw materials and infrastructural inadequacies also combined to demonstrate that the path to a great power would be protracted. At the same time, Mao carped about the slipping of revolutionary fervor of the CCP cadres and forced the issue with his speech, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People," on 27 February 1957. Hoping to forestall the same kind of groundswell of unhappiness that had erupted against the communist governments in Poland and Hungary, Mao wanted the CCP to acknowledge that elitist bureaucratism had eroded its revolutionary spirit and he proposed to resolve the issue by mass campaigns.⁴ Although China's intellectuals were subsequently unleashed by the Hundred Flowers

² Bruce Cumings, "The Political Economy of Chinese Foreign Policy," *Modern China*, vol. 5, no. 4 (Oct 1979), 415; Peter Van Ness, "Three Lines in Chinese Foreign Relations, 1950-1983: The Development Imperative," in *Three Visions of Chinese Socialism*, ed. Dorothy J. Solinger (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), 122.

³In 1957, China only achieved a 3.5% increase in the gross value of agriculture production. Worst, food grain production attained an increase of a miserable 1%. Kenneth R. Walker, *Planning in Chinese Agriculture: Socialisation and the Private Sector* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1965), 71.

⁴ Mao was confident that the intellectuals who had been cleansed by the Thought Reform Movement (1951) and the Purge Counter-revolutionaries Movement (1955) would be useful in highlighting the shortcomings of the CCP. As a

Campaign in May 1957 to criticize the CCP,⁵ the plan backfired, reminding the CCP that more work needed to be done in the area of socializing the party and population.⁶ Mao then believed communes that could multiply China's agricultural output and accelerate its industrial development would be the answer to China's economic and political doldrums.⁷ The Great Leap Forward was thus launched in 1958 to ensure the assumption of China's rightful place in the world. In June, Mao announced a timetable of two to three years to surpass Britain; at the height of the frenzy in September, he declared that China would catch up with the capitalist nations the following year.⁸

Evidence existed to show that Beijing was interested in mobilizing the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis to support the Great Leap Forward. The British Chargé in Beijing reported that "mammoth demonstrations" were organized against the US activities in Lebanon in July 1958. In August Mao visited rural areas to encourage progression of the Great Leap Forward. From the beginning of September, the PRC intensified reporting the Taiwan Strait Crisis to its domestic audience. Beijing's mass mobilization on 6 September was aimed at deflecting perceived PRC's eagerness at negotiation while whipping up support for domestic social change. So concerned was the PRC with any possibility that critics would latch on its capitulation to the enemy that more strident slogans such as "China will certainly liberate Quemoy and Matsu, and will certainly liberate Taiwan" appeared. In late September, Vice-Foreign Minister Zhang Wentian revealed that "they are using the situation to mobilize the local militias in an attempt to turn it into a nation-wide campaign."

result, intellectuals who became cadres formed 16 % of the total CCP membership by 1957. Dickson, *Democratization in China and Taiwan*, 81.

⁵ Mao under-estimated the degree of discontentment directed at the CCP. The open publication (6 June 1957) of a heavily edited version of "On Contradictions," which emphasized crushing intellectual dissent, signaled the failure of the Hundred Flowers Campaign and the start of the Anti-Rightist Campaign. Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution: Contradictions among the people* Vol. 1 (London: OUP, 1974), 207-210, 218-269.

⁶ Between 550,000 and 750,000 were persecuted as rightists. Party cadres were at pains to fulfill the quota of 5% stipulated by Beijing. See Fu Zhengyuan, *Autocratic Tradition and Chinese politics* (Cam.: CUP, 1994), 294.

⁷ By returning to the masses, CCP cadres would also receive another dose of revolutionary activism. Wong, *Contemporary*, 23.

⁸ Shapiro, *Mao's War against Nature*, 74.

The Great Leap Forward also had implications for the foreign relations of the PRC in terms of showcasing China's role as the revolutionary beacon, the "leader of the East," with China adopting a euphoric posturing to the world comprising a cocktail of nationalistic pride, exhilaration and an intense eschatological glimpse of the future. Fraternal countries were impressed. The Bulgarians began to collectivize their farms and expand their heavy industries. "Soviet newspapers," complained Khrushchev, "had also raised the question of borrowing from the Chinese experience of building communes," although such speculations were quickly squashed.⁹ India sent two delegations to learn from the Chinese experience and they set about implementing their own version of the Great Leap Forward.¹⁰ The US was extremely wary of the seductiveness of China's crowing and provided more generous foreign aid to India precisely to counter this trend.

This thesis has further highlighted the important roles played by the ROC, the most directly affected party, in accounting for the outbreaks of both Taiwan Strait Crises. In 1950, together with US patrols of the Taiwan Strait, Taiwan had stationed troops in Quemoy and Matsu to deter China's aggression. The Taiwan Strait issue also played a significant role in the formulation and implementation of policies to uphold Taiwan's political survival and cultural revival. Its importance was further seen in the construction of the clarion call to wage *fangong dalu* (counter-offensive against the mainland), which led to a militarization of Taiwan's society and constituted a major component of its foreign policy. Although Taiwan was not a participant in the Geneva Conference, it exploited the international crisis in Indochina to advance its *fangong* mission. After the Conference, Taiwan was upbeat regarding US actions in Asia. Even though Taiwan faced the threat of increasing international isolation, it was assured by the US adamant position in not recognizing China. While Taiwan was concerned that its interests might be neglected in SEATO talks, it was assured by the increasing willingness of the US to consider a mutual defense treaty. Taiwan further provoked China with its intensification of commando raids and impounding of foreign vessels trading with China. The ROC naval forces attacked nearly 76 foreign vessels

⁹ Khrushchev, *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev* Vol. 3, 447-450.

¹⁰ Alexander Eckstein, *Communist China's Economic Growth and Foreign Trade: Implications for U.S. policy* (NY: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 267-74.

bound for China between 1949 and 1954. Chinese fishermen in Zhejiang and Fujian were also at the mercy of the ROC's actions. One PLA general even recalled the 1954 struggle over the control for China's coastal seas to be the "most crucial and the sharpest."¹¹ Ironically, China's triggering of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis offered Taiwan the perfect excuse to secure the US-ROC defence treaty, the Formosa Resolution, and the procurement of more US aid. However, the convening of the Sino-US ambassadorial talks from August 1955 to December 1957 riled the ROC, which it viewed as the harbinger of a potential disaster that could lead to its declining international standing and deteriorating US-ROC relations. To express its unhappiness and frustration, Taipei blatantly conducted raids on China in the midst of the talks, and continued to provoke China with its commando raids through 1958. From January to July 1958, just prior to the outbreak of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, the ROC forces embarked upon no less than 15 incidents of raids, naval attacks and aerial intrusions of the PRC.¹²

2. Mode of Communication

How did each crisis then unfold, from outbreak to resolution? Existing scholarship have explained the mode of communication between the PRC and the US in such terms as probing and deterrence, tacit communication, management of crises, and negotiations and tenuous peace.

This thesis supports contentions in existing scholarship that China's actions against the offshore islands were purposeful, limited probes and did not constitute a prelude to occupying Taiwan. Beijing's signaling, in the form of bombarding Quemoy and Matsu and occupying the Dachen military complex during the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, was readily accepted by Washington as a limited probe. Beijing's signaling of its displeasure was reinforced by its propaganda effort among friendly neutralist countries. Mao also closely monitored and severely limited China's military moves in the Taiwan Strait. Even when approval was given for military action, the aim was restricted to securing the coastal areas of Zhejiang for commercial sea traffic. Similarly, political

¹¹ Xiao Jinguang 肖劲光, *Xiao Jinguang Huiyilu* 肖劲光回忆录 [Memoirs of Xiao Jinguang](Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1988),124-126; John W. Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance: Nationalist China and American Cold War Strategy in Asia* (Armonk: ME Sharpe, 1997), 117-118.

¹² Melvin Gurtov, "The Taiwan Strait Crisis Revisited: Politics and Foreign Policy in Chinese Motives," *Modern China*, vol. 2, no. 1 (Jan 1976), 73.

goals mattered more than military objectives during the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis. The PRC's actions were cautious and deliberate right from the start, seeing the bombardment as a "military probe" to signal China's unhappiness and "give the US a hard time." The danger of "two Chinas," the secret conduit between Taipei and Beijing, annoying interferences from Asian neutralist countries, and the imperative of China's domestic economic development meant that the possibility of the physical occupation of the offshore islands was remote, let alone the recovery of Taiwan. From this perspective, the issue of nuclear deterrence can also be better contextualized and not seen as the overwhelming thrust of Eisenhower's strategy during the Taiwan Strait Crises; this issue will be elaborated in a later section of this chapter.

This thesis expands on the themes of tacit communication, management of crises, and negotiations and tenuous peace. Building upon the efforts of McClelland's "tacit communication," Kalicki's "Sino-American crisis system," and the works of Tucker and Goldstein on negotiations and tenuous peace, this thesis further demonstrates how conflict resolution in Sino-US relations took place in four main phases during the Taiwan Strait Crises. One, how the foundation for a framework of "tacit communication" was laid as early as April-July 1954 during the Geneva Conference, which could be seen to have ushered in the first full-fledged opportunity, after the Korean War armistice, for the belligerents and allies, including China and the US, to take stock of each other and work out a tentative *modus operandi*. A good example was seen in the initiative taken by US representative in Geneva Bedell Smith, without reprimands from Eisenhower, to establish personal links with Zhou. Eisenhower too was trying to persuade his colleagues toward the eventual loosening of trade sanctions against the PRC. All parties demonstrated room for readjustment and change of policies, however limited in manner.

Two, how further steps in "tacit communication" were constructed during the early months of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, leading to "tacit accommodation" in the later months. In the early phase, Beijing conveyed its limited belligerencies and political concerns about the Taiwan problem through a wide array of international contacts. At this stage, while Washington had not found an

adequate way to respond to Beijing's peace feelers directly, its attempt to use the UN Security Council to engage Beijing could be viewed as a move in tacit communication. In the later phase, there did emerge a burgeoning stabilization of the crisis. Both Washington and Beijing demonstrated flexibility as they inched toward Bandung with the intention to tacitly resolve the crisis. Helped by the "quiet diplomacy" of Hammarskjöld, the US and the PRC made progress, with the PRC's conciliatory gesture on 23 April 1955 in Bandung paving the way for the Sino-US ambassadorial talks to be held in Geneva in August 1955.

Three, how progress in "tacit accommodation" was made but at the same time how its limitations became apparent during the period between the two Crises. Although the Sino-US ambassadorial talks held in Geneva from August 1955 to December 1957 represented progress from a framework of tacit communication toward Sino-US tacit accommodation, different expectations on the issues of the US airmen and the Taiwan Strait led to inconclusive results by the end of 1957.

Nonetheless, even though the talks could not resolve the issues, its long-term consequences were noteworthy as it facilitated the way for the holding of future Sino-US ambassadorial talks, which became one of the main communication channels in subsequent Sino-US relations.¹³

Four, how "tacit accommodation" was then consolidated, enabling the rapid resolution of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis. Right from the start of this Crisis, both Washington and Beijing exercised remarkable restraint. Eisenhower was calm and despite Dulles' uncertainty and the different views of the US officials, Dulles did hail the experiences gained in 1955 as significant. Dulles' offer of tacit accommodation on 4 September 1958 was swiftly accepted by Zhou on 6 September. However, Washington could not elaborate too much on the contours of tacit accommodation, thus suffering from public opinion backlash. Indeed, Mao placed each piece deliberately to make sure the Americans were not alarmed. He appeared keener in upsetting the Soviets. Washington also subsequently understood and reciprocated Beijing's odd-day bombardment announcement, providing yet another example of Sino-US tacit accommodation.

¹³ I am acutely aware that the use of concepts from other fields may not be wholly apt and have thus taken extra care to highlight the limitations of "tacit communication" and "tacit accommodation."

In other words, while the Taiwan Strait Crises highlighted conflicts and tensions in Sino-US relations (the predominant stress in existing scholarship), this thesis has demonstrated that embedded in the crises were also seedlings that prepared the ground for conflict resolution in Sino-US relations. “Lessons” learnt from the interactions arising from the episodes of the Geneva Conference, the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, the inter-crisis period, and the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis were digested and internalized. Each episode could be seen to have represented one building block of tacit understanding, constructed in a complex manner intricately linked to the international relations, domestic developments and issues of national identity of Beijing, Taipei and Washington. This tortuous path toward mutual understanding was conditioned by realism and littered with misperceptions, and laid the groundwork for a substantive change in the nature of Sino-American relations – from one of nuclear confrontation in 1954 to one of tacit accommodation in 1958.

The transformation of “tacit communication” to “tacit accommodation” was facilitated by “ritualization” in Sino-US relations. Both parties engaged in ritualized actions that facilitated the process of conflict resolution. These actions included the use of such “soft” elements as public symbols, identity issues, cultural images and official discourses,¹⁴ complemented at times by the “hard” language of “signaling” via military posturing, canvassing for international support, and diplomatic negotiations.¹⁵ This combination of “soft” and “hard” aspects can be seen to constitute a “symbiotic” engagement of ritualization. Although ritualization is more commonly used in anthropological studies of societies and religion than in the studies of international relations or diplomatic history, this thesis contends that it can be a very useful concept in understanding the

¹⁴ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., posits “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than through coercion” as “soft power,” an alternative to political coercion and economic pressures. See “Soft Power,” *Foreign Policy*. (Fall 1990): 153-171. For an elaboration, see *Bound to Lead: the Changing Nature of American Power* (New York : Basic Books , 1990); David Sylvan, et. al., “Theoretical Categories and Data Constructions in Computational Models of Foreign Policy,” in *Artificial Intelligence and International Politics*, ed. Valerie M. Hudson (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 327.

¹⁵ One study explores how naval maneuvers could be constructed as symbolic signaling performed at the state level. Ola Tunander, *Cold Water Politics: The Maritime Strategy and Geopolitics of the Northern Front* (London, Sage, 1989), 169.

Taiwan Strait Crises.¹⁶ This is seen in Catherine Bell's conceptualization of rituals as "a strategic form of cultural practice":

Ritual practices are themselves the very production and negotiation of power relations ... Ritualization as a strategic mode of practice produces nuanced relationships of power, relationships characterized by acceptance and resistance, negotiated appropriation, and redemptive reinterpretation of the hegemonic order.¹⁷

If ritualization holds the promise of re-negotiation of power relations, it stands to reason that inter-state relations such as those of the PRC-US-ROC could profit from such an analytical lens. As ritualization engages with elements of tradition, history, foreign threat and national destiny through such mass exhortations and persuasions as political speeches, campaigns and generally accepted discursive logos, this also makes it a powerful tool in deciphering the intricacies of the Taiwan Strait Crises. Analyzing the "symbiotic" ritualization of the processes and methods of war and peace can lead to several outcomes. It can render comprehensible one's actions to the "other" and vice versa, which results in a muted acceptance of political and cultural differences without coming to blows, albeit displays of "predictable" belligerencies.¹⁸ Ritualization can also show that the underlying culture or national identity which cannot be changed must be silently reconciled with, socializing reluctant nations with their allies and enemies. With the limits and boundaries "ritualized" out, strategic withdrawal can be achieved with no loss of prestige.

China's symbolic bombardments of Taiwan's offshore islands showed how ritualization in war and peace could serve equally as a message about political intentions as well as a diplomatic protest. Mao was particularly insistent in controlling the number and manner the bombardments were to be delivered. Analyzing the data of the communist shells fired upon Quemoy in 1958, Jonathan T. Howe found very little amount of "deep-penetration" bunker-destroying shells used. Even

¹⁶ Ritualization and state power is discussed in John Pemberton, *On the Subject of "Java"* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 4; Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theater State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 13.

¹⁷ Bell, *Ritual Theory*, 196.

¹⁸ David I. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 128.

communist air raids were limited. The bombing almost seemed *perfunctory*.¹⁹ Deliberations in the White House indicated that the US was very clear how far the Chinese would go, with references constantly made to the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. Likewise, intelligence generated by the ROC military demonstrated knowledge of the ritualized bombardments. This “hard” language of signaling was accompanied by the PRC’s frequent “soft” ritualistic refrain of the sacred principle of “One China,” with messages about common cultural roots with the KMT delivered publicly and covertly throughout the duration of the Taiwan Strait Crises. In similar ways, the predictability of the PRC’s belligerency made Eisenhower’s job easier in waving off usage of nuclear devices. Lloyd Etheredge has further argued that the much vaunted US nuclear deterrence can be understood as “dramatic art”: “One creates and manages power as an exercise in applied psychology, shaping a dramatic presence that in the minds of others, become their experience of reality.”²⁰ This observation can be aptly applied to Eisenhower’s administration which had to deal with the Old Guard elements of the GOP. Therefore, the rhetoric of Eisenhower and Dulles often possessed more bite than action.

Ritualization was also seen in the ROC-US relations, in the reconciliation of differences and re-negotiation of power relations between Washington and Taipei and Taipei and its populace. In the aftermath of the May 1957 Taiwan Riots, the nuances and roles of ritualized apologies stood out. Chiang Kai-shek’s symbolic public apology and the report of the Executive Yuan tenuously straddled the domestic demands for justice while upholding the international needs of the state. The manner which the ROC state went about placating its populace with sensitive nods to ritualized expressions of filial piety, honor and justice, delved neatly with appeals to pragmatic appreciation of power realities, that Taiwan needed the US. Washington recognized the symbolism of Chiang’s apologies and quickly accepted them to make up for the initial lapses in justice in the death of Liu Tzu-jan and also as recognition of the stress that Taipei felt about the Sino-US

¹⁹ Howe exhausted all published English-language materials available then and substantiated his study with numerous interviews with US participants. He followed Halperin and Tang’s interpretation that the Chinese Communists was only interested in a limited probe. See *Multicrises: Seapower & Global Politics in the Missile Age* (Cam., Mass.: MIT, 1971), 242.

²⁰ Lloyd Etheredge, “One Being More Rational than Rationality Assumption: Dramatic Requirements, Nuclear Deterrence and the Agenda for Learning,” in *Political Psychology and Foreign Policy*, ed. E. Singer & Valerie M. Hudson (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 62.

ambassadorial talks. Yet another example of an adroit “symbiotic” engagement of ritualization was seen in Taiwan’s *fangong dalu* military planning exercises, whereby Chiang’s generals would begin by first swearing eternal loyalty to Chiang and *fangong*, before proceeding to eventually highlight the difficulties of *fangong*. More importantly, loud ritualistic adherence to the fantasy of *fangong* loosened the tight fist of American financial and military aid. The US was so concerned that Chiang might carry out *fangong* that it was willing to give the ROC a defensive treaty and more *defensive* military aid. Likewise, Eisenhower would speak boldly of unleashing Chiang, but quietly imposed controls on the ROC.

Besides stressing the themes of “tacit communication,” “tacit accommodation” and “ritualization,” this thesis has highlighted as well relevant aspects of “culture” to better understand the intricacies of the PRC-US-ROC relations.²¹ For instance, this thesis underscores the role played by cultural differences in perpetuating the misunderstanding and dissonances among Taipei, Beijing and Washington. By using the cultural prism to re-examine the Taiwan Strait Crises, it also advances the counter-intuitive possibility of a tacit understanding between belligerents, seen here in how Taipei and Beijing could maintain secret back-channels, however briefly and albeit hostile rhetoric, out of patriotism that warring brothers should unite to thwart a foreigner from allegedly achieving “two Chinas.” Informed by the shared memories of China’s humiliation by Western powers in the late-nineteenth century, both Beijing and Taipei considered Dulles’ “two-China” proposal unacceptable. Indeed, political ideologies were put aside when the Chinese concept of *guochi* (national humiliation) was evoked and issues of political legitimacy at stake. Thus while it was incomprehensible to Washington that the belligerents could tacitly band together momentarily, it is indicative of the possible influences of historical and cultural commonalities in the realm of international relations.

²¹ For a succinct discussion on culture and international relations, see Valerie M. Hudson, “Culture and Foreign Policy: Developing a Research Agenda,” in *Culture and Foreign Policy*, ed. Valerie M. Hudson (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1997), 1-26.

This thesis has shown how cultural sensitivities could also connect otherwise disparate nations. One example was how China's successful international debut during the Geneva Conference was facilitated by a strategy of combining cultural blitzkrieg and realpolitik. Accompanying China's negotiations grounded in pragmatic national interests was the ample dishing out of food, wine, movies and cultural exhibitions, to win friends and establish prestige. Thirty years later, Ambassador Wang Bingnan would recount with relish how Undersecretary of State Bedell Smith had reached out to the Chinese in an act of personal diplomacy. In this regard, while agreeing with recent scholarship that underscored the crucial role Beijing played in Geneva in steering the North Vietnamese toward territorial integrity, this thesis has further contributed by showing how China had also influenced Cambodia and Laos. Here the poignant but little discussed incidents were how such nations (including Burma) had positioned themselves as "younger brothers" in their interlocution with the PRC. The US could arrange all kinds of containment defensive treaties around the PRC, but China's Asian neighbors knew instinctively that the US would be far away should trouble break out in the region. In a similar manner, the partition of Vietnam could be interpreted partly as the product of such a hierarchical acknowledgement of the cultural hegemony and political power of the PRC.

3. The Taiwan Strait Crises and the Foreign Relations of the PRC, US and ROC

Finally, what can such a development of the Taiwan Strait Crises tell us about the foreign relations of the PRC, US and ROC in the 1950s? The analysis here will begin with the PRC, followed by the US and the ROC.

3.1 The PRC

This section will discuss how the findings in this thesis fit in existing scholarship on China's foreign relations in the 1950s in terms of the ideology-realism debate, the nature of China's relations with the Soviet Union, and the diplomacy of the PRC's re-emergence onto the world scene in the aftermath of the Korean War.

In the 1950s, the literature on China's foreign relations focused mainly on ideological aspects. Reflecting the Cold War tensions between Washington and Moscow, China's domestic ideology and foreign policies were depicted as *Soviet-inspired*.²² A slight variant of the Soviet-inspired model advocated that the PRC's ideology underwent changes or "Sinification," such as Mao's "People's War" and "United Front," to suit China's situation.²³ In the 1960s scholars turned more toward a *Maoist model*, emphasizing Chinese nationalism and Maoism. Mao's struggle against Wang Ming over Marxist orthodoxy and Soviet authority, the CCP's wartime political isolation from the Comintern, Mao's stress on peasants' nationalist consciousness and other aspects of "Sinification" were all seen as the working of "revolutionary nationalism" in Mao's building up of the CCP away from the Soviet Union.²⁴ Posing an alternative challenge to both the Soviet and Maoist schools of thought at the same time was the *realist model*, which stressed such themes as national security and military concerns. Allen Whiting's *China Crosses the Yalu* (1960) explained China's actions as "reactive, defensive and for deterrence purposes only." Other scholars in the 1960s that used the realist model were I. C. Ojha's *Chinese Foreign Policy in an Age of Transition* (1967) and Samuel B. Griffith's *The Chinese People's Liberation Army* (1968).²⁵

The late 1960s and 1970s saw an outpouring of materials in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution. Scholars such as Melvin Gurtov and Harry Harding focused on factionalism within the PRC's foreign policy making, with China's domestic environment seen as exercising influence on China's foreign policy. The intensification of the Sino-Soviet rift and the rapprochement between China and the US prompted others to look at triangular politics among China, the Soviet Union and the US.²⁶ In the 1980s and 1990s much of the studies expand on the realist model as their central organizing theme. James Reardon-Anderson's *Yenan and the Great Powers* (1980) found the CCP muddling through 1944-46 without an ideologically-inspired "master plan." In *Uncertain*

²² See Chiang Kai Shek's *Soviet Russia in China* (1957); Martin Wilbur & Julie How's *Documents on Communist Nationalism and Soviet Advisers in China* (1959); Charles McLane's *Soviet Policy and the Chinese Communist* (1958).

²³ Benjamin Schwartz's *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao* (1951) and Conrad Brandt's *Stalin's Failure in China* (1958) acknowledged Soviet influences but gave more credit to Mao's "creative adaptations" of Marxist-Leninism.

²⁴ See Stuart Schram's *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-Tung* (1963); Jerome Chen's *Mao and the Chinese Revolution* (1965); Chalmers Johnson's *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power* (1962).

²⁵ Bin Yu, 239-242.

²⁶ See Barbara Tuchman's *Stilwell and the American Experience in China* (1971); Ernest R. May's *The Truman Administration and China* (1975); Michael Schaller's *The US Crusade in China* (1979); Roger Dingman, "Lost Chance in China," *Reviews in American History* 9, no. 2 (Jun 1981), 253.

Partners: Stalin, Mao and the Korean War's (1993), Sergei N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis and Xue Litai contended that: "Ideological declarations could serve power politics but not determine it. Motives found deeply rooted in national traditions far outweighed Marxism-Leninism in practice."²⁷

Yet others considered such *non-realist factors* as historical-culture baggage, communist ideology and human idiosyncrasies to have played a bigger role in China's foreign policy. Efforts to re-examine such factors gained momentum in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989. In *Deterrence and Strategic Culture* (1992), Zhang Shu Guang argued that in analyzing Sino-US relations, distinguishing the cultural differences of the antagonists' perceptions will offer sharper insights than using the conventional deterrence theory of aggressor-versus-defender.²⁸

Michael M. Sheng's *Battling Western Imperialism* (1997) contended that for Mao, the ideology of Marxist-Leninism sustained the identity and integrity of the CCP.²⁹ Chen Jian's *Mao's China and the Cold War* (2001) maintained that the ideology of "continuous revolution" underscored both the domestic economic policies and foreign policy orientation of China.³⁰ While Sheng used the psychological concepts developed by Erik Erikson to argue that the communist ideology gave the CCP its "ego identification,"³¹ Chen highlighted how the cultural context of China's stake in the international proletarian revolution dovetailed with China's traditional ethnocentrism.³²

This study of the Taiwan Strait Crises follows the intellectual mien of Michael H. Hunt's *The Genesis of the Chinese Communist Foreign Policy* (1996), which attempts to bridge the gap between the realist and non-realist schools. Vivienne Shue has similarly argued that the crux for

²⁷ Goncharov, Lewis & Xue, 220.

²⁸ Shu Guang Zhang, *Deterrence and Strategic Culture: Chinese-American Confrontation, 1949-1958* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

²⁹ Michael M Sheng, *Battling Western Imperialism: Mao, Stalin, and the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 196.

³⁰ Cohen, "The United States and China," 142.

³¹ Sheng, *Battling Western Imperialism*, 196, 123; David Mayers, review of *Battling Western Imperialism* by Sheng, *The Journal of American History* 85, no. 4 (Mar 1999), 1658; Shu Guang Zhang, review of *Battling Western Imperialism* by Sheng, *The China Journal* 42, (Jul 1999), 206- 207

³² Allen S. Whiting, review of *Mao's China and the Cold War*, by Chen Jian, *The China Journal* 47, (Jan 2002): 128-130.

Mao was “making its ideological goals and its practical goals interlock.”³³ This thesis recognizes that realist and non-realist factors are not mutually exclusive. While Mao’s numerous hesitations and deliberations regarding the appropriate degree of bombardment during both Taiwan Strait Crises demonstrated a master pragmatist at work, at the same time, the threading of the communist ideology in Mao’s 1957 “East Wind Prevailing over West Wind” speech in Moscow and the launching of the Great Leap Forward in 1958 showed that both spectrums of the debate could be profitably reconciled.

Nevertheless, this thesis further maintains that an over-emphasis on ideology as the primary factor may be inadequate. Andrew G. Walder has pointed out that recognizing the context of Mao’s ideological forays was equally important: “Mao was no detached philosopher, but a shrewd, often ruthless political infighter, and his writings must be approached with this in mind ... Like Stalin, his ideas were also weapons which he used in political combat.”³⁴ Two other Chinese scholars concurred. Gong Li presented the Taiwan Strait Crises in the light of China’s domestic and international pressures, and contended that Mao had multiple political aims, including the restart of negotiations.³⁵ Although the PLA generals were puzzled by Mao’s limited bombardments in the 1958 crisis, Li Xiaobing concluded that Mao was cognizant of US intentions and adopted a “cautious policy.”³⁶ This thesis too believes that Mao’s ideological considerations formed only a part of the picture. Mao’s realpolitik rationalization on the partition of Vietnam in 1954 provided a good example. Likewise, in the 1958 crisis, Chinese economic developments were deemed more important and Vietnam was told firmly that China would not support its Southern Revolution of re-unifying Vietnam. When the North Vietnamese displayed over-enthusiasm on the impending Chinese recovery of the offshore islands, Mao even informed Ho Chi Minh that the crisis should

³³ Vivienne Shue, *Peasant China in Transition: The Dynamics of Development Toward Socialism, 1949-1956* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 334-335.

³⁴ Andrew G. Walder, review of *Continuing the Revolution* by Starr, *Pacific Affairs*: 341.

³⁵ The other aim Gong stressed was “punitive,” for the ROC’s harassments on the Chinese coast. Gong Li, “Tension across the Taiwan Strait in the 1950s Chinese Strategy and Tactics,” in *Reexamining the Cold War US China Diplomacy 1954-1972*, 141-171.

³⁶ Li Xiaobing, “PLA Attacks and the Amphibious Operations During the Taiwan Strait Crises of 1954-55 and the 1958,” in *Chinese War Fighting*, ed. Mark A. Ryan, et. al. (NY: ME Sharpe, 2003), 143-172.

not be blown out of proportion.³⁷ Hence, rather than pigeon-holing Mao into neat compartments, it would be more apt to portray him as having at his disposal a wide variety of stratagems and tactical postures for foreign and domestic consumption. Mao's realism could just as comfortably complement his "military romanticism" and "continuous revolution."³⁸

Closely related to the ideology-realism debate was the discourse on the nature of China's relations with the Soviet Union in the 1950s. Existing scholarship has noted the many complex dimensions of Sino-Soviet relations and traced the subsequent Sino-Soviet split to developments in the 1950s. This thesis contributes by highlighting further the sharp political and ideological differences between the PRC and the Soviets, as well as how cultural differences played a part in reinforcing the mistrust between these two allies. As discussed earlier, in the 1950s tensions had built up in Sino-Soviet relations over a range of issues and Beijing had viewed Soviet attitudes toward the US and the PRC with mounting distrust. As such, China's decision to bombard Quemoy in 1958 was partly cast in a mode of defiance against the timidity of the Soviets.

In the wake of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, as the PRC worked toward gaining international support for its actions, Beijing was eager for Soviet endorsement but chafed at perceived Soviet condescendence. Subterranean cultural and historical currents coloured Mao's approach to the Soviets, who were subsequently taken aback by Mao's actions. Although the issue started with what the PRC saw as Soviet encroachment upon Chinese sovereignty, it became conflated to the larger issue of cultural pride and xenophobia. Mao was not alone in his prejudices, as Khrushchev had responded similarly. At the same time, during the Taiwan Strait Crises, Beijing had deliberately projected a strategy of ambiguity in the international arena to disguise its limited aims. While China's actions did not please the Soviets, they received resounding symbolic support from fraternal countries, shielding Beijing from Soviet criticisms. Such an approval by fraternal states further raises the question of whether Mao and the PRC represented the *sole* example of

³⁷ Mao to Ho Chi Minh, 10 Sept 1958, JGMWG, vol 7, 413.

³⁸ In a masterful analysis of Deng Xiaoping's reforms, Richard Baum posits that ideological labeling for Chinese communists may be counter-effective and prefers a nuanced analysis that provides for changes in policy formulation. This useful insight can be applied to Mao's era in the 1950s. See *Burying Mao: Chinese Politics in the Age of Deng Xiaoping* (NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

“aggressive stance” in this period of international communism, as presented in conventional scholarship. Ironically, the PRC’s cultural pride with Chineseness also translated into similar big power chauvinism towards lesser fraternal communist nations. This explained why Beijing felt perfectly justified in forcing the North Vietnamese to accept Vietnam’s partition but experienced considerable chagrin when the North Vietnamese became “holier than the pope” in urging the Chinese to liberate the offshore islands in 1958, which could be seen as a back-handed Vietnamese response to Chinese refusal to support the Vietnamese “Southern Revolution” for reunification.

Apart from the ideology-realism debate and the discourse on the nature of China’s relations with the Soviet Union in the 1950s, this thesis also agrees with recent scholarship that underscored China’s successful international debut in the 1954 Geneva Conference. It further illustrates the creativity by which the PRC plotted its re-emergence onto the world scene and elaborates on the unexpected outcomes that such diplomacy generated.

In the aftermath of the Korean War, the PRC took every opportunity to showcase its new “public face” to counter the US attempts to make a pariah out of China. One such occasion was the 1954 Geneva Conference where world opinions were receptive of the “reasonableness” of the communist régime. This new reputation was enhanced at the 1955 Bandung Conference. One outcome of the PRC’s public relations campaign was that friendly Afro-Asian leaders voiced their opinions, in quantities considered excessive at times by their Chinese counter-parts, on such issues as Asian security, China’s economic development and the Taiwan problem. During the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, the PRC tried to marshal such non-Soviet bloc opinions to its advantage. Their efforts were successful as there was no lack of volunteers who aired dissent regarding US foreign policy, but these new allies also wished to mediate between the US-ROC and China. Such efforts were perceived by China at times not to be in accord with its domestic and strategic outlooks. The PRC then embarked upon an active “management” of disparate world opinions, which was an entirely new endeavor. Although the PRC tried to provide a sanitized “script” for its new friends, most had their own ideas. The volume of third-party interferences grew during the

Second Taiwan Strait Crisis. Overwhelmed by such international attention, the PRC responded by rejecting the unwelcome mediation efforts and demanded just outright condemnations of the US. Thus, ironically, with its growing prominence in international stature, the PRC found itself unbearably under the burden of world opinions, a position previously suffered by the US. One therefore goes away with the insight that the achievements of the PRC's new international strategy were mixed. This is an important corrective to the emerging triumphalist interpretation by some recent scholars of China's foreign policy.³⁹

3.2 *The US*

This section will discuss how the findings in this thesis fit in existing scholarship on the foreign relations of the US in the 1950s in terms of the performance of the Eisenhower presidency in the management of American foreign policies, the strategy of nuclear deterrence, and the influence of domestic factors.

Traditional accounts by Marquis Childs, Richard Rovere and Richard Neustadt described the Eisenhower presidency negatively.⁴⁰ Most gave the impression of a lethargic administration counseled by "vicious advisors" such as White House Chief of Staff Sherman Adams. Studies by Roscoe Drummond and Gaston Coblenz and Richard Good-Adams emphasized the dominance of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. The genial ex-general turned President was depicted as more interested in golf than the affairs of the state.⁴¹

However, in the 1980s, most accounts credited Eisenhower for his handling of crises. Bennett C. Rushkoff applauded Eisenhower for demonstrating leadership in rallying the Congress to pass the Formosa Resolution. Likewise, Leonard Gordon demonstrated that the White House sought from March 1955 to avoid provoking a Chinese Communist invasion and Eisenhower was able to

³⁹ Tao Wang, "Isolating the Enemy: The Bandung Conference and Sino-American Relations," AHA Conference, (9 Jan, 2010).

⁴⁰ Fred I. Greenstein, "Eisenhower as an Activist President: A Look at New Evidence," *Political Science Quarterly* 94, no.4 (Winter 1979-1980): 575-599.

⁴¹ Even Eisenhower himself was aware of this common perception, see D.D. Eisenhower to Edgar N. Eisenhower, 1 April 1953, in *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The Presidency: The Middle Way*, ed. Louis Galambos (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), Doc 121 (Hereafter cited as PDDE).

deflect the overbearing demands of Chiang Kai-shek.⁴² Similarly, Richard Saunders depicted Eisenhower as exercising restraint and deemed his articulation of strategic ambiguity effective against the PRC.⁴³ To George C. Eliades, excellent US intelligence strengthened Eisenhower's hand in the 1958 crisis, although left unsaid in Eliades' account was the quality of intelligence in the 1954-55 crisis.⁴⁴ Amid the positive portrayals, there were dissenters. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. concluded that apart from nuclear grand-standing and toppling foreign governments, "[m]ost of the time his [Eisenhower's] preference was for doing nothing — not always a bad idea in foreign affairs."⁴⁵ Robert J. McMahon similarly highlighted that the US treated most Third-World nationalist movements shabbily, through CIA-funded coups, as communist conspiracies.⁴⁶

This thesis agrees with positive appraisals of the Eisenhower presidency's foreign policy to a large extent. Among his cabinet members, Eisenhower was so far ahead of his colleagues in proposing that economic sanctions against the PRC was hurting US allies that he met with opposition most of the time. Eisenhower had also adroitly chosen Nixon, a notorious GOP "red-baiter," to lead an informal re-assessment of the PRC and ROC early in the administration in 1953. For the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, good intelligence possessed by Washington made sure that no undue escalation resulted. Washington also acknowledged the Bandung Conference as a choice forum for signaling the formal winding down of the Crisis. During the inter-crisis period, the US further participated in ambassadorial talks with the PRC in Geneva from August 1955 to December 1957. During the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, the White House well understood the PRC's moderate and ritualized stance and was thus ready to rapidly wind down the crisis.

⁴² Bennett C. Rushkoff, "Eisenhower, Dulles and the Quemoy-Matsu Crisis, 1954-1955," *Political Science Quarterly* 96, no.3 (Autumn 1981): 465-480; Leonard H. D. Gordon, "United States Opposition to the Use of Force in the Taiwan Strait, 1954-1962," *The Journal of American History* 72, no. 3 (Dec 1985): 637-660.

⁴³ Richard M. Saunders, "Military Force in the Foreign Policy of the Eisenhower Presidency," *Political Science Quarterly* 100, no.1 (Spring 1985): 97-116.

⁴⁴ Eliades, "Once More unto the Breach: Eisenhower, Dulles, and Public Opinion during the Offshore Islands Crisis of 1958," 343-367.

⁴⁵ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "The Ike Age Revisited," *Reviews in American History*, (March 1983), reproduced in *The Cycles of American History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1986), 394-396.

⁴⁶ Eisenhower's penchant for covert operations extended to China. Seven months after Zhou's Bandung speech, Eisenhower ordered "underground resistance and facilitate covert" actions in China and other countries. See Robert J. McMahon, "Eisenhower and Third World Nationalism: A Critique of the Revisionists," *Political Science Quarterly* 101, no.3 (1986): 453-473.

However, Eisenhower's mastery of the presidency should also not be exaggerated as the Taiwan Strait Crises had proven to be one of the most intractable foreign policy problems the Eisenhower administration faced. On more than one occasion, the president had wished that the "offshore islands would sink." One major problem was the difficulty the US faced in convincing the ROC to abandon the offshore islands as "outposts." In as much as the PRC was a thorn at the side of the US, its ROC ally was no easy walkover either. Another constraint the Eisenhower administration faced was the need to consider world opinion and garner "allied support." By deftly scripting the Taiwan problem into an issue tapping strongly on the discourses of nationalism and sovereignty in the wake of decolonization in Asia, Beijing had made it extremely difficult for Washington to marshal world opinion and brand Beijing as the aggressor. As Beijing had firmly secured the majority of Asia's opinion, Washington had the problem of preserving its prestige while quelling precipitating factors which might worsen its international position. Despite the disarrayed nature of the US-Britain-France alliance, the Eisenhower administration eventually had to count on such support when it found itself increasingly isolated by non-aligned Third-World nations. British support was particularly important in the formation of SEATO and the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference of 31 January-8 February 1955, which represented a potential forum to resolve the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. Persuaded subsequently by London to give up Oracle (NZ UN resolution), Washington then displayed "moderateness" toward its allies and attempted to court Asian governments so as to safeguard US interests at the Bandung Conference (18-24 April 1955). In the wake of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, to counteract the growing criticisms of the Eisenhower administration from international and American public opinion concerned about a potential outbreak of war and nuclear fallout, Washington had to fall back on the obsolete but familiar domino theory to rationalize its Taiwan policy. In the aftermath of the Crisis, the US also had to reorient its policy toward communism and promote more actively "spiritual values of the Free World" to counter the perceived increasing international appeal of communism. Such a cultural offensive included promoting images of American modernity and the "benevolent conception of American national identity," illustrating again the need of the US to address changing tides in world opinion.

Closely related to the issue of the performance of the Eisenhower presidency in managing US foreign relations was the discourse on the strategy of nuclear deterrence in the 1950s. Historians have discussed the extent of Eisenhower's strategic vision and the utility of nuclear deterrence. While Alexander George and Richard Smoke criticized the White House for lacking the "classical statesmanship in supplementing deterrence with conciliation and flexibility,"⁴⁷ Richard Betts discerned in Washington a tendency for a "risk-maximizer" approach and explained Eisenhower's confidence in brandishing nuclear threats as exemplifying the US position of strength.⁴⁸ Others have highlighted the domestic needs of Eisenhower's "New Look" policy and the constraints that accompanied it. Michael S. Sherry maintained that the president had to pacify a conservative Congress and enforce cuts in defense spending.⁴⁹ Eisenhower also had the thankless job, according to Campbell Craig, of working out a plan to avoid a nuclear war.⁵⁰ To this end, Eisenhower paradoxically pursued a thermonuclear war contingency, with all the attending paper planning of targets in the Soviet Union and increased budgets for supposedly cheaper nuclear weapons, instead of a "flexible response" which was an expansion of ground troops to deal with worldwide emergencies. Worse of all, according to H. W. Brands, Eisenhower was hoping that technology would solve his budgetary problems; instead, it fettered the administration's flexibility in responding to the Taiwan Strait Crises, with the New Look (NSC 162/2), a cost-cutting measure, nearly causing a nuclear war in 1955.⁵¹

This thesis contends that nuclear deterrence should not be seen as the overwhelming thrust of Eisenhower's strategy during the Taiwan Strait Crises. Although explicit nuclear threats were publicly made in March 1955, this should be viewed as theatrical belligerency stemming from Eisenhower's firm grasp of the Taiwan situation. Despite Washington's hot rhetoric, subtle

⁴⁷ Alexander L. George & Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1974), 370, 376, 381, 384.

⁴⁸ Richard Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1987), 22, 70, 76, 78.

⁴⁹ Michael S. Sherry, *In the Shadow of War: The United States since the 1930s* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

⁵⁰ Campbell Craig, *Destroying the Village: Eisenhower & the Thermonuclear War* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1998). For an extension of this argument, see H. W. Brands Jr, "Testing Massive Retaliation: Credibility & Crisis Management in the Taiwan Strait." *International Security* 12, no. 4 (Spring 1988), 228-255.

⁵¹ Brands, "Testing Massive Retaliation: Credibility and Crisis Management in the Taiwan Strait," 247, 249.

signaling to Beijing was the preferred mode of communication. Swamped by third-party emissaries and an overly helpful UN Secretary-General, the US further concluded that dealing with the PRC directly was less stressful. Nonetheless, the aggressive rhetoric projected by Washington and the emergence of America's New Look nuclear deterrence doctrine that emphasized "massive retaliatory power" and "more bang for buck" did raise concerns among America's allies and also led to scholarship interpreting Eisenhower's issuance of nuclear threat as an act that escalated the Crisis. However, in retrospect, as the Eisenhower administration was extremely cautious in action, such US moves can be better interpreted as attempts to justify to American officials and the public the "conventional" nature of America's New Look nuclear deterrence doctrine. In this regard, the PRC had good intelligence and was unruffled by the US atomic threat; instead it was more concerned about an Australian proposal for a Commonwealth "guarantee" of Taiwan. Similarly, Eisenhower was even more decisive in downplaying nuclear threats in the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis. Inured by the PRC's maneuvers, Eisenhower decided against the nuclear option even before the outbreak of hostilities. Aided by good intelligence, only implicit nuclear threats were hinted at. Even then, the US interest in negotiations figured more prominently, as seen in Dulles' offer to defuse the crisis on 4 September 1958.

During the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, it was Dulles who, concerned about resolving contradictions in the US strategic debate, constantly mulled over the issue of nuclear bombing China. Indeed there were US military officials who supported the nuclear option, and engaged in nuclear discourse and war plans that posited the Chinese Communists as mere bacteria to be eliminated. Such an endorsement could probably be explained in the context of what David Alan Rosenberg has vividly portrayed as the Kafkaesque "massive retaliation" culture which Eisenhower presided over. By April 1954, the destructiveness of US thermonuclear bombs had reached 15 megatons and in May, four months before the bombardment of Quemoy, the Advance Study Group of the JCS had brazenly suggested "deliberately precipitating war with the USSR" before the latter became a threat. However, in June, Eisenhower cautioned against such heedless

belligerency.⁵² This thesis thus agrees with scholarship that present Eisenhower's reluctance, in sharp contrast to the eagerness of the US military officials, to use nuclear weapons.

Besides the issue of the performance of the Eisenhower presidency in managing US foreign relations and the discourse on the strategy of nuclear deterrence, historians have also highlighted the influence of domestic factors in the foreign relations of the US in the 1950s. Robert Dallek criticized Eisenhower's "global perspective" as just an excuse for branding everything threatening as a "worldwide Communist threat" for popular domestic consumption, as tough talk served to "rationalize domestic unity or mass conformity" against communism.⁵³ The powers of the US Congress was highlighted by Gary W. Reichard, who argued that Eisenhower considered it pertinent to seek Congressional approval for possible deployment of troops in the defence of Formosa.⁵⁴ Likewise, Rosemary Foot contended that rigid posturing by Congress halved the bargaining space for Eisenhower, an example being the unanimous decision of Congress to deny the PRC a seat in the UN in 1956.⁵⁵ Historians have also underscored US public opinion as another important consideration. Marian D. Irish argued that the conduct of Eisenhower's foreign policy was "modif[ied]" by public sentiments and postulated that a negative report in the 27 September 1958 edition of *Time* was the tipping point which forced the White House to adopt what Dulles himself characterized as a more "flexible" policy.⁵⁶ Eliades agreed with Irish that the inclination towards methods other than nuclear threats was strongly propelled by public opinion. The Gallup polls on 5 September 1958 indicated a whopping 82% supporting negotiations in ending the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis.⁵⁷

⁵² David Alan Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill: Nuclear Weapons and American Strategy, 1945-1960," *International Security* 7, no. 4 (Spring 1983): 3-71, 34-35.

⁵³ Robert Dallek, *The American Style of Foreign Policy: Cultural Politics and Foreign Affairs* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), 210.

⁵⁴ Diary, 17 Jan 1955, PDDE, Doc 1255; Reichard, "Eisenhower and the Bricker Amendment," 95, 202.

⁵⁵ Rosemary Foot, *The Practice of Power: U.S. Relations with China since 1949* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 260.

⁵⁶ Marian D. Irish, "Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy: the Quemoy Crisis of 1958," *Political Quarterly* 31 (1960): 151-162.

⁵⁷ US nuclear posturing in the Taiwan Strait invited a barrage of criticisms and opposition. See Ralph L. Powell, "Great Powers and Atomic Bombs are 'Paper Tigers'," *The China Quarterly* 23, (Jul-Sep 1965): 55-63; John Wilson Lewis, "Quemoy and American China Policy," *Asian Survey* 2, no. 1 (Mar 1962): 12-19; Clubb, "Formosa and the Offshore Islands," 531.

Based on how domestic considerations had played a part in US policies toward the Taiwan Strait Crises, this thesis agrees on the importance of domestic factors in influencing the foreign relations of the US in the 1950s. From 1953 to April 1954, despite attempts by Eisenhower to re-assess US policies toward China, Taiwan and Southeast Asia, the dominance of domestic conservative currents partly accounted for US support of Chiang's Taiwan and non-recognition of China. In the aftermath of the Geneva Conference, although the US was dissatisfied with the Geneva Accords, US budgetary constraints, among other factors, meant that the US was not about to provoke a war with China. In the wake of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, domestic conservative currents facilitated the conclusion of the US-ROC Mutual Defence Treaty. With the onset of the Yijiangshan campaign, Eisenhower, however, had to placate potential unhappiness from Congress and the American public concerned about American military entanglement in the Taiwan Strait, by presenting the Formosa Resolution as a "virtuous" American act in accordance with American "tradition." Following the PRC's conciliatory gesture in Bandung, Eisenhower had to persuade the China Lobby of the desirability of participating in Sino-US negotiations. In the wake of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, US public opinion missed the nuances of Sino-US tacit accommodation and Eisenhower had to reach out to the public to "reverse the poll." Moreover, while the president was able to garner bipartisan support for his various foreign policy initiatives previously, Eisenhower faced more hurdles in the 1958 crisis as not only was the GOP a minority party in the Congress, vocal Democrats were voicing opposition to the administration's China policy for political gains during the midterm elections. It was only with great difficulty that Eisenhower was able to subsequently turn the crisis around.

3.3 The ROC

This section will discuss how the findings in this thesis fit in existing scholarship on the foreign relations of the ROC in the 1950s in terms of the nature of the ROC-US relations and the close linkages of foreign relations and domestic policies.

In the debate on the nature of the ROC-US relations, early scholarship by D. F. Fleming, O. Edmund Clubb and Tang Tsou discussed how Chiang Kai-shek held the US hostage through various nefarious stratagems.⁵⁸ Subsequently, Steve Tsang and Robert Accinelli highlighted the domestic political motives of Chiang's *fangong* exhortations and the political cost incurred by Eisenhower in supporting Taiwan.⁵⁹ John W. Garver demonstrated that, having enjoyed Taiwan's strategic position in containing communism, the US then despaired over Chiang's independent tactics; yet, because the overall benefits outweighed the cost, successive US administrations found it expedient to endure Chiang.⁶⁰ Chiu Hungdah and other Taiwanese historians explained why to the ROC the US appeared fickle if not unreliable.⁶¹

This thesis contends that although the ROC was the junior partner in the ROC-US alliance, it did possess and exercise "the leverage of the weak," a term used by Günter Bischof to argue that even small nations were able to exert influence disproportionate to their size on their international patrons.⁶² While acknowledging that such influence should not be exaggerated, this thesis does view Taiwan to have made considerable gains during the Taiwan Strait Crises. From 1950 to 1958, *fangong dalu* was a major component of Taiwan's foreign relations and Taiwan made various attempts to win over US officials to its cause. While the US kept Chiang at arm's length despite Chiang's repeated offers to aid the US to counter the PRC, by situating Taiwan firmly in US strategic concerns, Chiang managed to use the First Taiwan Crisis to secure a treaty and more aid from the US. In the wake of the Yijiangshan campaign, the US did succeed in persuading Taiwan

⁵⁸ D. F. Fleming, "Our Brink-of-War Diplomacy in the Formosa Strait," *The Western Political Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (Sep. 1956): 535-552; O. Edmund Clubb, "Formosa and the Offshore Islands in American Policy, 1950-1955," *Political Science Quarterly* 74, no. 4 (Dec. 1959): 517-531; Tang Tsou, "The Quemoy Imbroglia: Chiang Kai-Shek and the United States," *The Western Political Quarterly* 12, no. 4 (Dec 1959): 1075-1091.

⁵⁹ Steve Tsang, "Chiang Kai-Shek and the Kuomintang's Policy to Reconquer the Chinese Mainland, 1949-1958," *In the Shadow of China*, ed. Steve Tsang (London: Hurst & Co., 1993), 48-72; Robert Accinelli, "'A Thorn in the Side of Peace' The Eisenhower Administration and the 1958 Offshore Islands Crisis," in *Reexamining the Cold War US China Diplomacy 1954-1972*, 106-140.

⁶⁰ John W. Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance: Nationalist China and the American Cold War Strategy in Asia* (NY: ME Sharpe, 1997).

⁶¹ Hungdah Chiu, "The Question of Taiwan in Sino-American Relations," in *China and the Taiwan Issue*, ed. Hungdah Chiu (NY: Praeger, 1979): 147-211; Chao Ching, "A General Review of the Chinese Communist Artillery Shellings on Kinmen and Matsu During the Past Decade," *Issues & Studies* 2, no. 10 (July 1966): 20-24; Lin Cheng-yi, "The 1958 Quemoy Crisis and US Leadership," in *US Leadership in the World*, ed. Kenneth W. Thompson (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985), 71-100; Jonathan R. Adelman & Shih Chih-yu, *Symbolic War: The Chinese Use of Force, 1840-1980* (Taipei: Institute of International Relations, 1993), 198.

⁶² Günter Bischof, *Austria in the First Cold War, 1945-55: The Leverage of the Weak* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

to evacuate Dachen but Taiwan was mollified by the passage of the Formosa Resolution. Chiang also rebuffed the US attempt to consider the offshore islands as “outposts, not citadels.”

Not surprisingly, the Sino-US ambassadorial talks of 1955-1957 riled the ROC. Taipei’s uneasiness and paranoia with Washington then played out in two areas: secret negotiations with Beijing from 1955 to 1957 and the 1957 Taiwan Riots. While the CIA had intelligence about possible secret contacts between the ROC and the PRC, it seemed to have doubted the veracity of such information and was persuaded by Chiang Ching-kuo of the steadfastness of the ROC. Yet, although the ROC participated in the back-channels, it was intensely wary of the PRC and carefully maneuvered between alerting Washington and maintaining links with Beijing. From the ROC’s perspective, secret communication provided an additional security blanket in view of perceived US faithlessness. The May 1957 Taiwan Riots provided a case study of the latent cultural fault lines between Taipei and Washington. It showed how many Americans were prejudiced in their views of the riots, leading to shoddy investigative work, purloined justice and sensational reporting. It also presented insights on Taiwanese fractured cultural and nationalistic resentments against Americans. Nonetheless, the speed at which Washington accepted Taipei’s apologies also signaled the recognition of mutual pragmatic concerns and the burgeoning maturity and tenacity of the ROC-US relations.

More interested in reassuring Beijing than coddling Taipei in the wake of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, Washington exerted pressure on the ROC with a stream of rhetorical bombardments. In the face of the US pressure, Taipei sought to shore up the perimeter of the rationale, legitimacy and *morality* of the ROC-US relationship. Dulles’ mission to Taipei on 21-23 October 1958 demonstrated how the US pressured the ROC with an iron fist in a velvet glove. Nonetheless, the re-activation of the Taipei-Beijing secret back-channel from August to October 1958 again enabled Taipei and Beijing to tap on nationalist concerns and maneuvered to thwart Washington and avoid the specter of “two Chinas.” While Beijing also had in mind the planting of discord in the ROC-US relations and the trumpeting of its goodwill in contrast to the alleged neo-imperialism of the

US, Taipei adroitly manipulated the channel to pressure the US to accede to its demands and succeeded in procuring more military aid, even though it had to go along with the US request to soft-pedal the belligerent rhetoric of its *fangong* mission. One finds scholars lamenting that Taiwan's strategic importance had ballooned disproportionate to its size; Akira Iriye noted that Taiwan had transformed, for better or worse, into a symbol for freedom or part of "free Asia."⁶³

Closely related to the debate on the nature of the ROC-US relations was the discourse on the close linkages between foreign relations and domestic policies. In numerous accounts of Taiwan's economic miracle, a common observation runs that: "With the security of Taiwan guaranteed by the US, the ROC government was able to devote more energy and resources to agricultural, economic and political development and transformed Taiwan from a developing society into a modern industrialized country."⁶⁴ Although this simple and straightforward proposition has won over many followers, what emerges from the primary sources was a more complicated picture. It showed that the early ROC government had devoted just as much time and energy on the quixotic "mainland counter-offensive" and that the economic miracle that occurred two decades later was the joint product of this "counter-offensive" culture. Arguing that previous studies of Taiwan's economic miracle have under-estimated the impact of the *fangong* ideology, this thesis stresses the centrality of *fangong* in Taiwan's polity and society. Applying Paul Cohen's salient study of the concept of *guochi* (national humiliation) in Chinese history, this thesis proposes that *fangong* was an ideology that animated simultaneously the foreign relations and domestic policies of Taiwan, and this was manifested in the changing permutations of *fangong* in the 1950s.

From 1950, the clarion call to wage *fangong dalu* led to a militarization of Taiwan's society and constituted a major component of its foreign policy. The outbreak of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis further justified the need for political indoctrination, as seen in the Ten Precepts of Chiang Kai-shek's Military Thought. Such a call was also discernible in the popular culture, such as the works

⁶³ Akira Iriye, "Dilemmas of American Policy towards Formosa," *The China Quarterly* 15, (Jul-Sep 1963): 51-55.

⁶⁴ Winberg Chai, "Foreign Relations," in *Contemporary Republic of China: The Taiwan Experience 1950-1980*, ed. James C. Hsiung (NY: Praeger Publishers, 1981), 384.

of Huang Dashou and Chen Wenquan. In emphasizing *fangong*, Chiang persisted in reinforcing total control of the army by the KMT party and at the same time paid attention to the welfare of the soldiers. Yet, although military planning for *fangong* continued in a ritualistic manner, changing domestic and international developments gradually led to the waning of such a vision. With defensive thinking quietly given precedence over the belligerency of counter-attack, the slogan of “counter-offensive” also became subverted into a more pedestrian domestic rallying cliché aimed at boosting morale, stabilizing and militarizing society, and disciplining a credible work force. The ROC further used the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis as a propaganda event and media opportunity to enact myths upholding the valor and courage of its military, and extolled greater sacrifices and social cohesion for its nation-building, even as it moved away from the belligerency of *fangong* to a more reassuring upholding of Sun Yat-sen's *Sanminzhuyi* (Three Principles of the People).

While Taipei emerged from the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis more secure than before and its major economic development towards export-oriented industries started from this point onward, the significance of *fangong* lay with not just its saliency in creating a foundation for Taiwan's economic development. Through the annual multiple war planning sessions of *fangong*, the ROC's military elites had used such occasions to proclaim loyalty to Chiang while increasingly noting the difficulties involved in the realization of *fangong*. The other elites of the ROC had employed as a state routine this similar rhetoric of pledging allegiance but then subverted *fangong* to the goal of economic development. In this context, although Chiang's foreswearing the military reunification of China in 1958 was commonly credited to Dulles' effort, this thesis complicates the discourse by illustrating how the increasingly moribund rhetoric of *fangong* had actually initiated a movement towards the normalization of the Taiwanese society, which coincided with the gradual evolution of Sino-US relations from tacit communication to tacit accommodation. What this parallel transformation of Sino-US relations and Taiwan's polity and society meant for Chiang was that: since military reunification of the mainland was no longer possible, it stood to reason that showcasing Taiwan's economic development as a glowing alternative to China's quixotic Great Leap Forward would be a better cause. Hence, although existing scholarship rightly noted the role

of US economic aid in boosting Taiwan's developmental model, this thesis offers an additional perspective by demonstrating as well how the ethos of *fangong dalu* had played significant roles in simultaneously propelling military, foreign policy and economic concerns, underscoring how the close linkages between the foreign relations and domestic policies of Taiwan were manifested in the changing permutations of *fangong* in the 1950s.

Conclusion

In sum, this thesis has re-examined the Taiwan Strait Crises and offered new perspectives to understanding the crises through the use of newly available primary sources, the simultaneous presentations of the perspectives of the PRC, US and ROC, the re-evaluation of some of the major arguments in existing scholarship, and the incorporation of analyses relating to “culture,” “tacit communication-tacit accommodation” and “ritualization.” Hitherto most accounts have depicted the PRC-ROC-US relations in the 1950s as mired in hostilities and nuclear threats. However, this thesis contends that the situation was more complicated: tacit communication that was discernible during the Geneva Conference of 1954 had allowed for tacit accommodation to take root by 1958. Such developments in the PRC-ROC-US relations were contested and negotiated at every stage of the Crises. Facilitating this process was the ritualization of discourses, embodied in signaling and symbolic gestures. Such a ritualization of foreign policy often happened in a “symbiotic” manner, consisting of “soft” and “hard” elements, as an *untidy* confluence of nationalistic discourse, symbols, cultural images, military posturing, canvassing for international support, and diplomatic negotiations. The emphasis on “untidy” underscored that the process of tacit accommodation was not an inexorable process destined to succeed, but one influenced by a plethora of factors – international relations, domestic developments and issues of national identity of Beijing, Taipei and Washington. Such an analytical lens has enabled this thesis to appreciate the complexity of adversarial and alliance diplomacy, so aptly captured in the many nuances of the PRC-ROC-US relations, as revealed in the unfolding of the many turbid diplomatic episodes of the Taiwan Strait Crises from 1954 to 1958: the “silent poetry” of diplomacy, the tacit allowances for withdrawals, the muted back-channel negotiations, the paradoxically loud denunciations, and the sound and fury

of artillery bombardments.

The US rapprochement with China in 1972 was a momentous event. Nixon wasted no time in expounding to the public that his presidency was instrumental in taking steps “toward improved practical relations with Peking.”⁶⁵ However, in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal, this assertion attributing significant credit to the Nixon presidency was downplayed. Recent scholarship that explored Sino-US relations before the Nixon presidency continued this trend. Victor Kaufman demonstrated that the debacle in Vietnam, the Great Cultural Revolution and Sino-Soviet confrontation were important events in shaping a favourable US perception of China. Kaufman further expounded that President Lyndon Johnson’s “containment without isolation” was the real beginning of rapprochement with China. In another prominent study of Nixon’s rapprochement, Evelyn Goh also noted how Nixon used the “prevailing reconciliation discourse” which can be “traced back to 1961” (my emphasis). In other words, such Democratic Presidents as John F Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, in the spirit of President Roosevelt, had laid the necessary discourse groundwork for Nixon’s 1972 rapprochement.⁶⁶

Curiously, both excellent monographs failed to acknowledge Nixon’s role as the Vice-President in Eisenhower’s administration. Even the latest celebratory tome on Nixon’s rapprochement was deficient in this aspect.⁶⁷ Nixon’s experiences and training under Eisenhower were summarily dismissed. Yet studies on Nixon’s resolution of the Vietnam War have indicated Nixon’s reverence for the Eisenhower presidency.⁶⁸ This thesis has further demonstrated that Nixon’s nascent views on the role of the PRC in the world could be discerned as early as 1953. More

⁶⁵ Richard Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (London: Arrow Books, 1979), 545.

⁶⁶ Victor S. Kaufman, *Confronting Communism: US and British Policies toward China* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 191-210; Evelyn Goh, *Constructing the US Rapprochement with China 1961-1974: From “Red Menace” to Tacit Ally* (Cam.: CUP, 2005), 1-14 & 256-268.

⁶⁷ Margaret Macmillan, *Nixon and Mao: The Week that Changed the World* (NY: Random House, 2007), 5.

⁶⁸ Throughout Nixon’s political career, the need to be “tough” was paramount. Nixon wrote: “I had strong opinions, many of them derived from my experiences and observations during the Eisenhower years, about the way a President should work.” On numerous occasions, Nixon wanted to “maintain his world leader position the way that Eisenhower did.” Even Nixon’s 1972 election was run with an “Eisenhower-like posture.” See Richard Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (London: Arrow Books, 1979), 307, 337, 375; March 28, 1969, February 26, 1972, H.R. Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries: Inside the Nixon White House, the Complete Multimedia Edition* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Sony Electronic Publishing, 1994); Alan Brinkley, “Means of Descent,” *The New Republic* (October 1, 1990), 33; Jonathan Aitken, *Nixon: A life* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1993), 446.

importantly, Nixon's views coincided with Eisenhower's private preferences. After his extensive tour in Asia in 1953, Nixon had specifically recommended for the PRC "containment but with trade" and that this should take place "gradually over a long range period based upon the assumption that trade is inevitable and will aid the US in getting intelligence out of China."⁶⁹ Existing scholarship have largely ignored the origins of *this* body of opinions in fostering a tentative tacit accommodation with the PRC. Current scholarship on Sino-US rapprochement epitomized this critical omission. In one of the many ironies of history, President Nixon, who succeeded in the US rapprochement with China, was Eisenhower's "prat-boy."⁷⁰ Eisenhower could only manage, what was possible in his times, a "tacit accommodation" with China; Nixon, a witness to all that, completed the process with an aging Mao.

~ **The End** ~

⁶⁹ "Meeting with the Vice President," 8 Jan 1954 (Friday), State Department, DRS.

⁷⁰ Richard Nixon used this highly debatable phrase "prat-boy." See, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (London: Arrow Books, 1978), 198; Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President*, 442. "Prat-boy" is a colloquial term for "trouble-shooter."

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