UNITED STATES DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY RELATIONS
WITH THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN THE ERA OF THE
VIETNAM WAR, 1961-1969

By

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In the 1950s, the Republic of China (ROC) on the island of Taiwan was a Cold War ally of the United States. Led by President Chiang Kai-shek and his ruling Kuomintang Party, the ROC received military, financial, and humanitarian assistance from the U.S., and enjoyed support in the White House, from the Departments of State and Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the Democratic and Republican Parties. President Chiang even employed public relations firms and political pressure groups to help generate public support and to sway American policymakers to favor his cause. By the end of the 1970s, however, the ROC had lost its seat in the United Nations and no longer maintained formal diplomatic relations with the United States. Why would the United States abandon a long-standing World War II ally, recipient of American aid, and fellow anti-communist?
The 1960s proved to be a pivotal decade in the diplomatic and military relationship between the United States and the ROC. Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, both Democrats, publicly promised support for Chiang and the Chinese Nationalists on Taiwan. Chiang hoped to secure continued military aid and diplomatic support by relying upon allies in the State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency, and in the U.S. Congress, and even occasionally making threats to take actions detrimental to American policy. Throughout the 1960s, the U.S.-ROC relationship was tested by events in the United Nations, the Taiwan Strait, and Southeast Asia. By the end of the decade, the ROC had lost millions in American aid and the United States had publicly started to consider normalizing relations with the People’s Republic of China.

This dissertation will show that U.S.-ROC relations in the 1960s deteriorated due to a combination of factors. The Vietnam War was one of several factors that helped bring an end to formal American relations with the Republic of China. The Vietnam War caused a conflict of interest, whereby American containment of communism in Southeast Asia clashed with ROC plans to maintain its international legitimacy and to restore its rule over all China. Additionally, bureaucratic changes within the State Department, the demise and ineffectiveness of the China Lobby, and the changing make-up of the United Nations resulting from decolonization also contributed to the decline of U.S.-ROC relations.
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research to my wife, Ronnette Chouest-Pellegrin, whose love, patience, and sacrifice strengthened me throughout the research and completion of this project.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people to thank who have contributed significantly to this project and to my Ph.D. program in general. First, I would like to thank Dr. Richard V. Damms, my dissertation director and mentor, for his endless patience and professional guidance during the course of this project. His suggestions, along with those made by Dr. Lorenzo Crowell, Dr. William Anthony Hay, Dr. Johnpeter Grill, Dr. Shu-hui Wu, and Dr. Peter Messer have made me a better historian and writer. Dr. Christoph Giebel of the University of Washington, Dr. Emily Hill of Queen’s University, and Dr. Shu-hui Wu deserve special mention for cementing my interest in the history of modern China.

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This project would not have been possible without generous research grants from the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library and Museum, and the Department of History at Mississippi State University.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACPA – American China Policy Association
AJE – Allen J. Ellender Collection, Allen J. Ellender Library, Nicholls State University, Thibodaux, LA
ARVN – Army of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam)

CAT – China Air Transport
CCK – Ching Chuan Kang Airbase, Kungkwan, Taiwan, Republic of China
CCP – Chinese Communist Party
ChiComs – Chinese Communists
Chirep – Chinese representation in the United Nations
CIA – Central Intelligence Agency
CINCPAC – Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Forces
COOM – Committee of One Million Against the Admission of Red China into the United Nations

D – Democratic Party

ECOSOC – United Nations Economic and Social Council

FAJ – Files of Alfred Jenkins, Lyndon B. Johnson Library and Museum, Austin, TX
FRUS – Foreign Relations of the United States

GNP – Gross National Product
GRC – Government of the Republic of China

HSCF – Head of State Correspondence File, Lyndon B. Johnson Library and Museum, Austin, TX

IBMND – Intelligence Bureau of the Ministry of National Defense (Republic of China)

JCS – Joint Chiefs of Staff
JFKL – John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, MA
JSM – John C. Stennis Collection, Congressional and Political Research Center, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Setting</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historiography</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Sources</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. PROLOGUE: U.S. RELATIONS WITH THE ROC, 1949-61</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Coming of the ROC in Taiwan and the Role of the U.S. During The Transition</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The China Lobby and the “Who Lost China” Debate</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ROC and the Truman Administration</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Korean War: Korea, China, Taiwan, and the United States.</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ROC and the Eisenhower Administration</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam and U.S.-ROC Relations</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Committee of One Million</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Presidential Election of 1960 and the Future of U.S.-ROC Relations</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER III. THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION
AND CHINA POLICY IN 1961

Kennedy Administration Bureaucracy and China Policy .......................... 60
ROC Irregulars in Burma ........................................................................ 67
Chinese Representation in the United Nations ....................................... 70
Chiang, the Taiwan Strait, Return to the Mainland, and Vietnam .............. 86
The Committee of One Million and Congressional and Public Opinion .......... 94
Conclusion ...................................................................................... 103

CHAPTER IV. THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION
AND CHINA POLICY, 1962-63

Keeping Chiang on a “Tight Leash,” 1962-63 ......................................... 105
Walt W. Rostow’s “Basic National Security Policy” ............................... 128
The Hilsman Speech .......................................................................... 135
Conclusion ...................................................................................... 140

CHAPTER V. THE JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION
AND CHINA POLICY, 1964-65

Johnson Administration and the ROC in Indochina, 1964-65 ..................... 143
Operation Vanguard and Chinese Representation ................................. 171
Madame Chiang’s 1965 Trip to the United States ................................... 179
Conclusion ...................................................................................... 184

CHAPTER VI. THE JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION
AND CHINA POLICY, 1966-68

Chinese Representation at the United Nations, 1966 .............................. 187
Congressional Investigations of China Policy, 1966 ............................... 203
The ROC and the Vietnam War ............................................................... 209
Conflicting Ideas Concerning China Policy, 1967-68 ............................... 237
Conclusion ...................................................................................... 240
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VII. EPILOGUE: U.S. RELATIONS WITH THE ROC</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SINCE 1969</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard M. Nixon and China Policy</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demise of the Committee of One Million and the</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROC Ouster from the UN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.-ROC Relations in Decline, 1972-76</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James E. Carter and the End of Formal United States Relations with the ROC</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the late 1990s, actors Robert DeNiro and Dustin Hoffman starred in a major motion picture entitled *Wag the Dog*. In this fictional account of Washington policymaking and advising, a political advisor and a Hollywood producer conspired and manufactured a war in Southeastern Europe to generate public support for an unpopular President of the United States. Despite the film’s sensationalized tone, this account of policy manipulation incidentally questioned whether or not foreign policy is driven by elected officials or special interests. In other words, does the “dog wag the tail” or does the “tail wag the dog?” These questions can similarly be applied to an analysis of relations between the United States and the Republic of China during the most confrontational years of the Cold War Era.

The Setting

The Republic of China (ROC) was an ally of the United States within the free world coalition during the Cold War with the Soviet Union. After the Kuomintang (KMT) government, led by President Chiang Kai-shek, fled Mainland China in 1949 and established its governing authority on the island of Taiwan, ROC officials sought and received military, financial and humanitarian assistance from the United States to
strengthen their island bastion. As an American client state in the 1950s, the ROC received moral, political, military and economic support from the White House, from the Departments of State and Defense, the Democratic and Republican Parties, and both houses of Congress.

Chiang Kai-shek had long-standing credentials as a world leader, having been a military commander and President of the Republic of China since the late 1920s. Under his leadership, the Chinese Nationalists had fought Japanese invaders during World War II and had fought, and lost, a civil war with Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party. After the Korean War broke out in 1950 both Presidents Truman and Eisenhower considered Chiang and the Nationalist regime on Taiwan vital to American security as part of the free world coalition. The United States relied on Taiwan as a Cold War partner against international communism. Chiang could also count on numerous personal connections inside the United States, in particular members of Nationalist China’s politically and financially powerful Soong family, former missionaries, and rabid anti-communists, to lobby on behalf of the Nationalist cause to swing American policy and American public opinion to the advantage of his government and island nation. By the end of the 1950s, Chiang Kai-shek had become an enormously powerful leader with near dictatorial power on Taiwan with influential supporters and family members overseas willing to do his bidding.

In the 1960s, however, the American presidency passed to two former United States Senators, John F. Kennedy and then Lyndon B. Johnson. Kennedy and Johnson were outspoken anti-communists who supported rigorous American measures to contain
communism’s spread. While both were knowledgeable about American policy in the Far East, neither brought to the White House much experience in creating foreign policy. Consequently, Chiang probably believed that he could exploit their lack of executive experience to manipulate American policy in his favor. In other words, it seemed that the Taiwanese tail might wag the American dog.

Despite Chiang’s apparent reasons for optimism, in 1971 the United Nations removed the Republic of China from membership and, in 1979, the ROC lost its formal diplomatic status with the United States and other countries. Why would the United States abandon a long-standing World War II ally, recipient of American aid, and fellow anti-communist?

**Thesis**

Although Kennedy and Johnson publicly promised support for Chiang and the Chinese Nationalists on Taiwan, by the 1960s some career diplomats and policymakers doubted that the American relationship with the ROC could continue as it was. Some feared that Chiang would manipulate American policy and draw the United States into a war with Communist China. Chiang certainly did have allies within the White House, the State and Defense Departments, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and in the public relations profession that he could count on to lobby for his interests. Nonetheless, U.S.-ROC relations declined in the 1960s due to a combination of factors. These included the Vietnam War, Chiang’s incessant requests for American assistance to invade and recapture Mainland China to overthrow Mao Zedong and the Communists, the rivalry
within, and reorganization of, the United States diplomatic, military and intelligence bureaucracy, the declining effectiveness of the China Lobby, and the changing make-up of the United Nations (UN) due to decolonization.

The Vietnam War was an important factor that helped bring an end to formal American relations with the ROC. Between 1961 and 1969, it dominated United States diplomatic and military relations with the Republic of China and highlighted a conflict of interest between the two Cold War allies. American containment of communism in Southeast Asia clashed with ROC plans to maintain international diplomatic legitimacy and to retake the Mainland. Chiang repeatedly requested assistance from Kennedy and Johnson to help overthrow Communism on the Mainland, and hoped the war in Vietnam would provide the impetus for change. The United States, though, feared that an expanded Southeast Asian war would further destabilize the region and make an already bad situation worse in Vietnam. The Vietnam War, likewise, undercut American public and congressional support for the ROC. Due to wartime price inflation, pro-Nationalist pressure groups, such as the Committee of One Million, could not raise sufficient funds to get their message across and lobby members of Congress.

Rivalries within the executive branch bureaucracy, especially within the White House and State Department, also contributed to the end of formal relations between the United States and the ROC. Between 1961 and 1969, both Kennedy and Johnson publicly promised to continue support for Chiang Kai-shek’s regime. But behind the public veneer of the presidency, there existed a cadre of State Department and White House officials who believed that China policy was unrealistic. They proposed measures
that sought to avoid war and create a diplomatic rapprochement with the Communist Chinese, and promote a “two Chinas” policy. Their proposals conflicted with Defense Department and CIA interests, who believed Taiwan’s strategic location was essential to containing communism’s spread. As a result, the Johnson administration established a dual policy of containment in Southeast Asia – containing communism in Southeast Asia militarily while containing the ROC’s desire to overthrow and replace the PRC diplomatically.

Meanwhile, the China Lobby failed to keep the Republic of China high on Kennedy and Johnson’s priority list. This informal group of American diplomats, legislators, businessmen, former missionaries, and powerful members of Chiang’s extended family sought to influence American policymakers to support increased military and economic aid for the ROC. The China Lobby also pressed for the continued isolation, and eventual overthrow, of the communist People’s Republic of China (PRC), a government they believed was illegitimate. Through its fund raising and public awareness arm, the Committee of One Million, the China Lobby had succeeded in the 1950s in maintaining public support for the ROC. But by the 1960s, as the China Lobby’s chief legislative supporters left Congress and as policy priorities shifted in Southeast Asia to the war in Vietnam, and as the China Lobby failed to change its strategies as it “preached to the converted,” American interest in the Republic of China had begun to decline.

The changing make-up of the United Nations throughout the 1960s also contributed to the decline in U.S.-ROC relations. In the 1950s, the United States
successfully blocked numerous attempts from the eastern bloc to allow the PRC into the United Nations. The Kennedy and Johnson administrations, though, found it increasingly difficult to keep the ROC in the UN and to keep the PRC out and isolated. A large number of newly independent nations from Africa, which had benefitted from PRC humanitarian aid, joined the United Nations during the 1960s and refused to support American and ROC interests. By mid-decade, as support for PRC membership increased, the United States found itself at odds with some of its own Cold War allies over the Chinese representation issue. In 1966, both the Canadian and Italian delegations proposed that the PRC enter the UN. As a result, Chiang threatened to leave the UN if the PRC were granted membership. Although the United States thwarted this and later attempts to bring the PRC into the UN, by the end of the 1960s, support for the ROC had dropped off so substantially that the ROC lost its seat in 1971 and the PRC subsequently joined the UN.

**Historiography**

This dissertation fills a significant gap in the historiography of United States-Republic of China relations. Although there exist several significant works concerning American foreign relations with Taiwan, few analyze the bureaucratic dimensions of United States China policy and none seriously address the important roles the Vietnam War, decolonization, and pressure groups played in weakening relations with the ROC. Works written in the last twenty years have analyzed United States-ROC relations in terms of the adversarial American-Soviet-Communist Chinese great power framework.
Such projects have considered American relations with the ROC as a side show, with the much more tangible and obvious conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union on center stage.

One of the first works written by an American historian on United States-China relations was *The United States and China* by John King Fairbank (1948). Originally published in 1948, and subsequently revised in 1958, 1971, and 1980, Fairbank’s book reveals more about the West’s effect on China, and Chinese immigration to the American West, than on diplomatic relations. After describing how the Nationalist regime was pushed off the Mainland to Taiwan, Fairbank proceeds to a consideration of relations between the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the United States. He ignores American relations with the Republic of China after 1949, mentioning only that Taiwan had “two faces” during the Cold War – one looking backward and one looking forward. While ROC officials continually pressed their claim as the legitimate government of China, American and Japanese technology, trade, and investment created a skilled leadership class and raised living standards above those of the Mainland.¹ Fairbank, though, provides little data to support these claims.

It was not until 1990 that the first serious analysis of United States-China relations in the Cold War era was published. Gordon H. Chang, in *Friends and Enemies: The United States, China, and the Soviet Union, 1948-1972* (1990), places the American relationship with China within the Cold War “great power” framework. Chang

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concentrates on the Sino-Soviet split and the triangular relationship between the United States, the Soviet Union and the PRC. According to Chang, American diplomats in the 1950s sought to create barriers to decelerate and control any developing friendship between the USSR and the PRC, with the ultimate goal of American recognition and friendship with Mainland China. As with Fairbank, Chang only considers Taiwan peripherally. Chang regards the U.S.-ROC relationship as a Cold War sideshow. He does not consider how the Vietnam War affected the American relationship with the PRC and only discusses the Vietnam War in the context of the adversarial relationship among the three regional powers.

Michael Schaller, in *The United States and China in the Twentieth Century* (1990), also provides an excellent survey of United States-China relations. Like Fairbank and Chang, however, Schaller concentrates on U.S.-PRC relations and gives little attention to Taiwan. Although the book includes an excellent chapter on the Vietnam War, little is mentioned about Chiang Kai-shek and the ROC’s reaction to the war. Schaller, instead, contends that Kennedy and Johnson were more concerned with the PRC and its potential for creating havoc.

Fairbank, Chang and Schaller make no mention of Taiwan’s role in the Cold War. But according to Warren I. Cohen, in *America’s Response to China: A History of Sino-

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3Ibid., 262-69.

American Relations (Fourth Edition, 2000), Taiwan played a significant role in the Cold War. Spanning the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Cohen’s book presents a cogent survey of American-Chinese relations. He suggests that, beginning with President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s administration, Taiwan played a key role in the Cold War as an economically and militarily powerful counter to the Mainland regime. John F. Kennedy, like Eisenhower, considered Mainland China more of a threat to American interests than the Soviet Union. A strong Taiwan, therefore, became a strategic necessity to contain the Mainland Communists. Nonetheless, Cohen’s survey is heavily centered on the U.S.-PRC conflict, makes no mention of the Taiwanese role in the Vietnam War, and presents little analysis as to why the United States abandoned formal relations with the ROC in the 1970s.

The work of Nancy Bernkopf Tucker has been among the first to highlight American relations with the ROC on Taiwan. In Uncertain Friendships: Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945-1992 (1994), Tucker analyzes U.S.-ROC relations in the Cold War era. Ultimately, however, Tucker also views U.S.-ROC relations in terms of the American-Soviet-Communist Chinese competition. Taiwan’s geographical location and significance not only determined its role in the Cold War, but also influenced how American policymakers believed the ROC should be used in the struggle against the PRC and the Soviet Union. According to Tucker, “shifts in relations between China and the Soviet Union and between China and the United States would, by 1972,

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undermine the close collaboration with Washington that had sustained Taiwan for two decades.” Although Tucker discusses the ROC’s role in the Vietnam War, she only does so in relation to the larger Cold War picture. The Vietnam War’s role relative to American relations with the Republic of China is mostly ignored.

Tucker has also edited a compilation of oral histories in the history of American-Chinese relations in *China Confidential: American Diplomats and Sino-American Relations, 1945-1996* (2001). Freely admitting that her book is unbalanced and lacks a “Chinese voice,” *China Confidential* spans the nearly fifty years of the Cold War. Like its predecessor, though, Tucker’s compilation of oral histories sees U.S.-ROC relations as a small part of the overall picture. Very little is mentioned about the Vietnam War’s influence on American-Taiwanese relations.

John Garver’s *The Sino-American Alliance: Nationalist China and American Cold War Strategy in Asia* (1997), like Tucker’s work, attempts a synthesis of American-Nationalist Chinese relations in the Cold War era. Limiting his scope to the years between 1950 and 1971, Garver argues that “Nationalist China played a central role in the political war waged by the United States” in East Asia. This is certainly true, given the abundant evidence the author presents about the obvious. Garver, though, based his work

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mostly on secondary sources and failed to analyze seriously diplomatic dispatches and evidence of public opinion concerning United States relations with the Republic of China. In his recent book on United States-China policy, *A Conflict Perpetuated: China Policy During the Kennedy Years* (2002), Noam Kochavi argues that actions of the Kennedy administration and the Communist Chinese government caused the continuance of their antagonistic relationship through the early 1960s. Blaming the China Lobby and Cold War hardliners, such as Walt W. Rostow, Ray Cline, and Curtis E. LeMay, for poor American relations with the PRC, Kochavi writes that “the opportunity for Sino-American reconciliation did not exist during the Kennedy years.” Very little mention is made of Chiang Kai-shek and the ROC’s relationship with the United States outside of the U.S.-PRC impasse.

Chiao Chiao Hsieh’s 1985 work, *Strategy for Survival: The Foreign Policy and External Relations of the Republic of China on Taiwan, 1949-79*, analyzes the U.S.-ROC relationship from the Taiwanese perspective. Using mostly interviews and Chinese Nationalist government document, Chiao argues that the ROC leadership utilized diplomatic and economic strategies “that were essential for the political survival of the ROC.” The Nationalists, in order to survive as a separate governing entity from the communists on the Mainland, banked on worldwide anti-communist sentiment in the 1950s to obtain widespread support for attacking and overthrowing the Mainland communist regime. After the United States refused to commit itself directly to Chiang’s

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plan to attack and overthrow the Mainland regime, the ROC shifted to a less aggressive “political counter-attack” strategy through the 1960s. Hsieh makes little mention of the Vietnam War and its effect on Taiwan.

In sum, the most recent works on American-Chinese relations have emphasized the adversarial relationship between the United States and the People’s Republic of China. In highlighting United States relations with Communist China, these authors have effectively rendered Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Chinese secondary historical actors. While this dissertation does not reject the Cold War great power framework, it seeks to use this framework as a backdrop, allowing the reader to focus on the U.S.-ROC relationship for itself, not as a small part of something larger. The Soviets and the Communist Chinese are not ignored here - they cannot be ignored. Rather, the roles of these communist Cold War powers are of secondary concern.

This study also places heavy emphasis on the alliance relationship between the United States and the Republic of China. While both countries mutually agreed to contain communism, U.S. and ROC interests and their divergent needs for security collided in Southeast Asia. Similar relationships between countries have occurred in modern history. Historians and political scientists have written widely on relationships between nations within alliances. Historian Paul W. Schroeder and political scientists Marc Trachtenberg and G. John Ikenberry demonstrate how member nations operate out of self-interest despite joining alliances for reasons of collective security. Austria, for

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example, used the balance of power created after the Napoleonic wars in 1814 at the Congress of Vienna to secure its own interests, despite its wish to maintain order in Europe with the British, French, Russians and Prussians. In his 1962 work entitled *Metternich’s Diplomacy at Its Zenith, 1820-1823*, Schroeder states that Austria had to use skillful diplomacy to keep its dominant position in Central Europe and maintain its interests in Italy.\(^{11}\) Schroeder further explores Austrian diplomacy in terms of balance of power in *Austria, Great Britain, and the Crimean War: The Destruction of the European Concert* (1972). In this work, Schroeder argues that Austria hampered Britain’s efforts to block the Russians’ drive for access to the Mediterranean Sea. Britain and France, to maintain their concept of balance of power, sought Austria’s help against Russian expansion. But Austria refused to fight and tried to maintain their control over Central Europe, checking Russian interests in the Balkans, checking growing Prussian influence in the Germanic Confederation, and thereby maintaining its concept of balance of power.\(^{12}\)

Like Schroeder, Trachtenberg and Ikenberry also argue that relations between junior and senior partners in an alliance can be problematic. Trachtenberg and Ikenberry, though, explain how junior partners have caused senior partners to act outside of their immediate interests. In *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945-1963* (1999), Trachtenberg claims that Britain and France used their fears of Soviet


aggression and a unified Germany as leverage on the United States to provide for their general security against the Communist Bloc. As a result, by 1948, the United States changed its policy to support a militarily strengthened and politically organized West Germany and, by 1949, initiated an anti-Soviet security alliance of western nations called the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.\textsuperscript{13} On the other hand, Ikenberry, in \textit{After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars} (2001), contends that since 1815, major powers have engaged in “strategic restraint” with lesser powers within alliances. “Strategic restraint” allowed for Britain and the United States, after the Napoleonic wars and World Wars I and II, respectively, to create alliances that bound nations together and “institutionalized their relations after the war.” These formalized alliances, though, “allowed the leading state [at least to some extent] to lock other states into a favorable set of postwar relations and establish some measure of restraint on its exercise of power, thereby mitigating the fears of domination and abandonment.”\textsuperscript{14} In other words, both Britain and the United States established international coalitions, such as the Congress System and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, to reassure junior partners of their friendship and support. At the same time, the senior partner in the coalition limited the activities of junior partners so they did not instigate large conflicts and disrupt the peace.


Ikenberry’s definition of “strategic restraint” certainly applies to the United States’ relationship with the Republic of China in the post-World War II years. The ROC, a junior partner in the free world coalition, wished to become more active in the larger conflict against communism in East Asia. The United States, as the senior power, held the Nationalists back from instigating a larger war against the People’s Republic of China, but continued to reassure Chiang of its friendship through ensuring its seat in the United Nations and through increased military and economic aid.

According to Ikenberry, the United States is much different from any other nation in world history that has had any type of hegemonic power. At the height of their world power, tradition and law constrained the establishment of British and French foreign policy as their political institutions were closed to outside influence on foreign policymaking. As per tradition, debate ended when their governments adopted, and rival factions united, over foreign policy. Since the end of World War II, American foreign policy has been created in a much different way. Unlike Britain and France, the United States has an open political system based on the rule of law. In debating American foreign policy, members of Congress faced pressure from constituents and political action committees reflecting economic, political or ethnic concerns. Additionally, the open


17 Small, 171-74.
political system has allowed opportunities for allies to lobby and engage elected officials and influence the political process.\textsuperscript{18}

But while the open nature of American politics provides for discussion, stability, and influence for some, the American political system also has a bureaucratic nature that highlights divisions and agendas among executive policymaking departments. Political scientists Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, in \textit{Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} Edition (1999), explore the influence of bureaucracy on foreign policy development. Because policymakers’ “preferences and beliefs are related to the different organizations they represent, their analyses yield conflicting recommendations.”\textsuperscript{19} Organizations within the executive branch compete and advance their own agendas and influence decision-making from within. Final decisions on foreign policy were the result of compromise, conflict and confusion among officials with differing interests.\textsuperscript{20}

This dissertation will also analyze the competing interests within executive branch departments, namely the Departments of State and Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency, and show how these competing organizations within the bureaucracy attempted to shape U.S.-ROC relations and, thereby, “wag the dog.” Each of these bureaucratic

\textsuperscript{18}Ikenberry, \textit{After Victory}, 214.


organizations perform opposing executive tasks and attempt to influence policy. With this in mind, each of these organizations acts to justify their large budgets and requests for budget increases. While State is responsible for keeping relations with other nations in the world in a state of peace, Defense operates in a state of perpetual planning for military action. On the other hand, the Central Intelligence Agency subtly works to create instability and opportunities for the United States to act in its own security interests, as well as to obtain information vital to maintaining international peace and stability. These factors come up repeatedly in discussions within the executive branch over U.S. relations with Taiwan in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.

**Primary Sources**

In addition to shifting the focus on U.S.-China relations toward U.S. relations with the ROC and the influence of different groups on policymaking, this dissertation also exploits many primary sources that were unavailable to the previously-mentioned authors. For example, the China volumes of *Foreign Relations of the United States* (*FRUS*) for the Kennedy and Johnson administrations were only published in 1996 and 1998, respectively. The *FRUS* series made available the most important declassified diplomatic dispatches and reports concerning American-Chinese relations in the 1960s. Likewise, the National Security Files at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston, Massachusetts, and at the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library and Museum in Austin, Texas, are of tremendous value and contain documents declassified after the 1990s. These repositories are replete with data that have not been sufficiently utilized in
this type of study. Although Tucker made some use of these collections in *Uncertain Friendships*, she relied mostly on secondary sources. Both Kochavi and Garver failed to utilize Kennedy’s and Johnson’s National Security Files. Similarly, the Department of State Records (Record Group 59) at National Archives II in College Park, Maryland, has also been under-utilized by scholars of United States-China relations.

Other little-used manuscript collections were also utilized for this study. George H. W. Bush’s collection at his presidential library in College Station, Texas, provided documents from his term as United States Ambassador to the United Nations. Likewise, this study uses the collections of a number of significant legislators of the 1960s, especially those of John C. Stennis, Albert Gore, Sr., Richard B. Russell, Jr., John G. Tower, J. William Fulbright, and Allen J. Ellender, to gauge congressional and public opinion regarding U.S. policy toward the ROC. The manuscript collection of Marvin Liebman at Stanford University provided insight into the ineffectiveness of the China Lobby in the 1960s.
CHAPTER II

PROLOGUE: U.S. RELATIONS WITH THE ROC, 1949-61

In the years immediately following World War II, the United States became more heavily involved in East Asia than ever before in its history. Before helping Japan rebuild from its wartime destruction, the U.S. worked to establish China as a center for peace and stability in Asia. But a civil war in China after World War II resulted in two governments that claimed to represent all Chinese – the People’s Republic of China (PRC) headed by Mao Zedong on the Mainland and the Republic of China (ROC) headed by Chiang Kai-shek on the island of Taiwan. In 1950, warfare on the Korean Peninsula brought the United States face-to-face with communist expansion in Asia; later that year, American and Communist Chinese forces clashed in the former Japanese colony. In the meantime, the growing conflict in Vietnam highlighted both Chiang and Mao’s security vulnerabilities. By the end of the 1950s, the Korean War and the Vietnam War had tremendously influenced American policy in Asia. Believing Mao would forcibly attempt to unify Taiwan with the Mainland, the administrations of Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower made the ROC a significant American client state and delivered to Chiang large amounts of military and economic aid.
The Coming of the ROC in Taiwan and the Role of the U.S. During The Transition

By 1931, Japan, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and the Republic of China government dominated by Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang (KMT) Party sought control of China. In September 1931, the Japanese invaded and captured Manchuria, China’s richest region in the Northeast, and turned it into a Japanese protectorate. Rather than resist the Japanese, Chiang hoped the League of Nations would intervene.¹ On the other hand, some CCP leaders believed that fighting the Japanese was paramount to Chinese independence. One CCP leader, Zhou Enlai, contended that his party should create volunteer armies of workers and peasants not only to oppose the Japanese, but also to oppose the Nationalists, who were also creating their own volunteer armies. Zhou argued that Chiang and the Nationalists would sell out the peasants to the capitalists.² By November 1931, the CCP declared the Chinese Soviet Republic in Jiangxi Province in southeastern China and had gathered tremendous strength.³ Chiang, though, decided that the CCP was far more dangerous a threat to his leadership than the Japanese.⁴ As a result, the KMT military entered Jiangxi in October 1934, destroyed the Chinese Soviet Republic, and forced the CCP 6,000 miles to Shaanxi in the Northwest. There, the CCP

²Coogan, 286.
reorganized and advocated a national united front against Japanese aggression in China.\(^5\)

Even with the CCP nearly destroyed, Chiang still believed that he could work out a deal with the Japanese and stop them from an all-out assault on the Chinese Mainland. In fact, by mid-year of 1935, Chiang had approved a plan whereby Japan would cancel all its unequal treaties with China in return for Chinese recognition of Japan’s position in Manchuria.\(^6\) Chiang, though, faced tremendous pressure from his subordinates to change his policy toward the Japanese. In December 1936, two of Chiang’s military advisors kidnapped the Nationalist leader at Xi’an and convinced him to end his war against the CCP and to fight the Japanese. In 1937, the CCP and the KMT created a United Front against the Japanese invasion.\(^7\)

The United Front, though, was short lived. In addition to numerous clashes between KMT and CCP units,\(^8\) Nationalist forces destroyed Mao’s New Fourth Army in January 1941. While the Nationalists claimed that the New Fourth Army had expanded CCP influence at the expense of the war with Japan, Communists claimed that Chiang had formally broken the United Front and resumed his policy of destroying communism.\(^9\)

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\(^7\)Chen, 20-21.

\(^8\)Selden, 132.

By 1942, CCP forces lost nearly half their strength due to Japan’s Three-All Policy (burn all, kill all, destroy all). Meanwhile, the Nationalists blockaded CCP supply lines. Although the United States and the Soviet Union intervened to ensure that war did not break out within the United Front, Nationalists and Communists strengthened their respective positions.

The United States had a vested interest in a peaceful and stable post-war China. President Franklin D. Roosevelt hoped that China could become a center for stability in East Asia in the years after World War II – this meant ensuring that the CCP and the KMT would work together. In November 1944, President Roosevelt sent Patrick Hurley to China to negotiate a post-war government. Mao agreed to a coalition government with the KMT, but Chiang convinced Hurley to accept a proposal whereby the Chinese Communists would have to turn over command of their military to Chiang. Then at the Yalta Conference in February 1945, President Roosevelt encouraged the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin to enter the war against Japan and to sign a friendship treaty with Chiang Kai-shek in exchange for a concession in northeast China. After President Roosevelt’s death, the administration of Harry S. Truman vocally supported the Nationalists over the CCP. Mao and the CCP felt betrayed by the United States, especially after the failure of

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10Selden, 145.  
11Chen, 21-22.  
George C. Marshall’s mission to stave off civil war with the Nationalists. As a result, Mao came to see the U.S. as his chief threat. By 1947, the Nationalists and Communists were at war.

American policymakers watched anxiously as Chiang’s military suffered numerous defeats. With the Soviet army increasing its support to the CCP in the Northeast, American military officials proposed, and Truman agreed, to send U.S. forces to transport KMT troops to the Northeast. Mao saw the U.S. maneuver as active support for the KMT. In 1948, Truman approved $450 million in economic aid to the KMT. Chiang may have believed this aid had set a precedent and probably explains why Chiang’s government adamantly pursued further American aid in the 1950s and 1960s. But believing Chiang could not survive, the Truman administration slowly withdrew support.

As Mao Zedong and his Communists rapidly spread their control over the Mainland from the Northeast, Chiang and the Nationalists began a slow retreat to the island of Taiwan, where they established their authority over the island with an administration of Nationalist mainlanders. Taiwan’s economy, though, had been

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16 Chen, 31.

17 Chang, 12.

18 Ibid.
“Japanized” during the first half of the twentieth century. A colony of Japan between 1895 and the end of World War II, Taiwanese agriculture had been developed by the Japanese into a major source of food. As a result, Taiwan’s economy expanded and its market for goods widened.\textsuperscript{19} Japanese technicians and bureaucrats created on Taiwan a stable and ordered society favorable to business as levels of education and life expectancy increased.\textsuperscript{20} Additionally, improved transportation and communication made it easier for Taiwan’s economy to industrialize in the post-World War II years.\textsuperscript{21}

Some native Taiwanese, however, did not welcome the Nationalists.\textsuperscript{22} Some complained that the Nationalists had confiscated land from the Japanese for their own personal use.\textsuperscript{23} On February 27, 1947, native islanders rose against Nationalist rule over Taiwan and demanded greater governing authority over their own island. Within a week, Nationalist troops from the Mainland arrived on Taiwan, killed thousands, and re-established their authority. But by the end of 1948, Chiang gradually lost control of the Mainland and resigned the ROC Presidency while the Nationalist regime continued its retreat to Taiwan. The Soviets then broke their treaty with the ROC, openly assisted


\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., 437.

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., 439.


Mao’s army in the Northeast, and in October 1949, the CCP entered Beijing and declared the People’s Republic of China (PRC).  

The Kuomintang formalized its rule in Taiwan and planned to turn the island into an anti-communist bastion. On February 25, 1950, the Legislative Yuan formally asked Chiang Kai-shek to resume the presidency. Chiang and the KMT monopolized political power on Taiwan. To ensure that Taiwan remained secure from alleged communist subversion, Chiang established a police state where political criticism was equated with subversive, pro-communist behavior. Chiang later announced that his government would create a redoubt on Taiwan and form a regional anti-communist alliance with neighboring democratic countries. Chiang had already met with the leaders of the Philippines and South Korea in the summer of 1949 and won their support for an East Asian anti-communist alliance. The proposal failed, though, because the countries were militarily weak and the United States dominated their foreign policies and was in no mood for any anti-communist alliance. 

Taiwan was not the only place to which retreating Nationalist troops fled. Some 1,500 Nationalist troops escaped into Burma in late 1949 and early 1950 and made their

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24 Phillips, 277.  
base fifteen miles from the Thai border. The Burmese army was too weak to move against them. Meanwhile, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) planned to make this group of refugees a border army for the ROC and supplied them via air drops made by China Air Transport (CAT). The officers of this CIA-supplied army commuted between Taiwan and Burma via a secluded landing strip across the border in Thailand. This new army recruited more troops from the surrounding hills, financed themselves by controlling the local opium trade, and forced local residents to pay taxes and ferry fees.28

Throughout the 1950s, the Burmese government asked the United States to pressure the ROC to remove their troops. China Air Transport planned to fly them to Taiwan from the Thai border, but the soldiers refused to surrender themselves and their weapons. When the United States pressured Chiang to urge his soldiers to bring out their weapons, Chiang threatened to expose CIA involvement in supporting his troops in Burma. By the mid-1950s, only half the group had been evacuated, mostly women, children and other non-combatants.29

**The China Lobby and the “Who Lost China” Debate**

Meanwhile, in the United States, an informal group originally labeled by journalists and conspiracy theorists as the China Lobby attempted to sway congressional and public opinion in favor of the ROC. Beginning in the early 1940s, the China Lobby originated when members of Chiang Kai-shek’s family, specifically T. V. Soong and H. 

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29Ibid.
H. Kung, publicly sought financial and military assistance from the United States. Even May-lin Soong (Madame Chiang Kai-shek) on her frequent visits to Soong’s and Kung’s homes in New York, reportedly held “strategy meetings” with wealthy Chinese and former Nationalist officials living in the United States, as well as American businessmen and former missionaries. The China Lobby included a number of American political figures, former missionaries, prominent anti-communists, businessmen and journalists interested in ensuring and promoting the Republic of China’s survival.

Among the most prominent Americans identified with this China Lobby in the 1940s were businessman Alfred Kohlberg and publisher Henry Luce. Kohlberg, an importer of Chinese textiles and director of a pressure group named the American China Policy Association (ACPA), had been the China Lobby’s chief financial agent. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Kohlberg both fought and embraced charges that he had received millions of dollars from Chiang Kai-shek with which to fund his lobbying efforts on Capitol Hill. While denying these charges before Congress, Kohlberg repeatedly told the press that “he was the China Lobby.” In 1951, Senator Wayne Morse (R-Oregon) accused Kohlberg of accepting nearly $654,000,000 from Chiang for

30 Ross Y. Koen, The China Lobby in American Politics (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 28-30, 35. Soong and Kung were May-lin Soong’s (Madame Chiang Kai-shek’s) brother and brother-in-law, respectively. Soong served in the ROC government in a number of capacities from the late 1920s, eventually serving as Foreign Minister until 1947. As Foreign Minister, Soong made numerous trips to the United States to seek U.S. assistance for the war effort against the Japanese. Kung, Soong’s brother-in-law, served in the ROC government as Finance Minister from 1937 to 1944, when he left China for the United States to seek medical treatment.

distribution to congressmen for their support. Kohlberg responded to Morse’s charges by stating that he had never bribed anyone in Washington.\textsuperscript{32}

Meanwhile, publisher Henry Luce, the son of Presbyterian missionaries stationed in China in the 1890s, promoted pro-Nationalist and anti-Communist Chinese sentiment through his magazines. \textit{Time} and \textit{Life} magazines printed articles that highlighted Chiang’s plight and the Nationalists’ need for American aid. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, many Republican congressmen depended on Luce for news on the most recent international developments, in particular news on China.\textsuperscript{33} Republicans, having grown suspicious about intelligence gathered by the Truman administration, believed they had a good reason rely on Henry Luce for their general news and foreign intelligence. Comprising a majority in both houses of Congress between 1947 and 1949, Republicans also believed rumors of Soviet intelligence activity in the United States. The House Un-American Activities Committee launched an investigation into Soviet espionage activity in the federal government in the late 1940s. Former communist and \textit{Time} journalist Whittaker Chambers testified that former State Department official Alger Hiss had provided the Soviets with various sensitive documents. Although Hiss denied the charges, Chambers produced documents from his farm with Hiss’s handwriting. Later, a federal court convicted Hiss of perjury.\textsuperscript{34} The Venona Project, which decoded Soviet

\textsuperscript{32}Keely, 10, 122; Koen, 51.


cables during and immediately after World War II, proved that the Soviets had recruited a network of spies within every important military and diplomatic agency of the federal government. At least twenty people had acted as sources of information for the Soviets in various U.S. foreign affairs agencies.\footnote{John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, \textit{Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 8-9, 201, 336.}

Subsequently, Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-Wisconsin) parlayed a growing national anti-communist hysteria into a bureaucratic “witch hunt” for communists operating within the federal government. Senator McCarthy claimed there was a vast conspiracy within the State Department to allow the communists to take Mainland China. He accused high-ranking State Department diplomats of communist leanings and of “losing” China.\footnote{Robert P. Newman, “Clandestine Chinese Nationalist Efforts to Punish Their American Detractors,” \textit{Diplomatic History} 7 (1983): 205-06.} McCarthy’s hearings essentially gutted the State Department, in particular the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, of China experts and career diplomats.\footnote{James C. Thomson, Jr., “On the Making of U.S. China Policy, 1961-9: A Study in Bureaucratic Politics,” \textit{The China Quarterly} 50 (April-June 1972): 222.} The “loss of China” became a rallying cry for grass-roots conservative lobbying groups, the press, and the radio media. As the Truman administration changed course on China policy by 1951 because of the Korean War, grass-roots conservative activists may have come to believe they could manipulate American foreign policy.\footnote{David W. Reinhard, \textit{The Republican Right Since 1945} (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1983), 68; Sara Diamond, \textit{Roads to Dominion: Right-Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States} (New York: The Guildford Press, 1995), 38, 40-41.}
Other conservative Republican legislators also openly criticized the Truman administration for a weak foreign policy that had lost China to the communists. By the beginning of the 1950s, these representatives and senators, some of whom had been associated with the China Lobby, created an informal China Bloc on Capitol Hill. In the wake of the Korean War, this China Bloc banded together to support pro-Nationalist Chinese legislation and to investigate State Department activities and policy prior to the “loss of China” to the communists in 1949. Among those originally associated with the China Bloc were Representatives Walter F. Judd (R-Minnesota) and John M. Vorys (R-Ohio) and Senators Styles H. Bridges (R-New Hampshire), Alexander Smith (R-New Jersey) and William F. Knowland (R-California). 39 Throughout the 1950s, these legislators kept the Taiwan issue alive on Capitol Hill by frequently speaking out for increased American support, and ensured passage of pro-Nationalist legislation, such as the United States-China Mutual Defense Treaty of 1954 and the Formosa Resolution of 1955.

Chiang also tried to use the “who lost China” debate as leverage to garner increased American support for his cause. In September 1957, the ROC government entered into a contract with Hamilton Wright Organization, a public relations firm, for the purpose of leading a pro-Nationalist media campaign in the United States. According to the contract, the Hamilton Wright Organization, for the calendar year October 1, 1957 to

September 30, 1958, would “publicize the natural resources, industrial opportunities, agricultural development, tourist attractions, public works projects, cultural advancement, and the work of Government to help build a vigorous, healthy economy in Taiwan” and to “bring to the attention of the people of the United States and the free world the tremendous difficulties under which the people of Free China are working toward the ultimate goal of returning to the mainland of Asia.” This campaign was planned to “inform and enlighten American public opinion as to the efforts made by Free China to establish and uphold democratic processes and the democratic way of life.”

**The ROC and the Truman Administration**

In the years immediately following World War II, the United States provided financial assistance to save China’s economy from collapse. The Truman administration hoped this aid would protect American interests in China and turn China into force for

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40Testimony of Hamilton Wright, Jr., Before Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, March 25, 1963, in *The Dynamics of World Power: A Documentary History of United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1973*, Volume IV, ed. Russell Buhite (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), 205. In 1962, the Republic of China severed contractual relations with the Hamilton Wright Organization. Marvin Liebman of the Committee of One Million (Against the Admission of Communist China to the United Nations) wrote Don Frifield of the Asian People’s Anti-Communist League that the ROC government had grown increasingly dissatisfied with the services provided by the Hamilton Wright Organization. Their services were too expensive and “no longer useful.” Letter from Marvin Liebman to Don Frifield, October 16, 1962, Correspondence Series, Box 11, Asian People’s Anti-Communist League, Marvin Liebman Collection, Hoover Institution of War, Peace, and Revolution Library and Archives, Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA.

41Ibid.

42Ibid.
peace and stability in East Asia. According to C. X. George Wei, American economic liberalism clashed with the Nationalists’ planned economy. But when Chiang’s government fled to Taiwan, American policymakers might have had second thoughts about supporting a government they thought would not support American interests.

The re-establishment of the Nationalist government on Taiwan with Chiang as its head, therefore, placed the Truman administration in a quandary. Despite their public pledges to support the KMT, American military assistance had failed to preserve KMT rule on the Mainland and economic assistance had failed to prevent China’s economy from collapse. By December 1949, neither President Truman, Secretary of State Dean Acheson, nor Deputy Undersecretary of State Dean Rusk believed that Chiang could be saved. Acheson’s “White Paper,” a collection of diplomatic dispatches and reports, sought to prove that the Nationalists’ collapse was not the fault of American policy. Rather, the ROC’s “leaders had proved incapable of meeting the crisis confronting them,

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44 Ibid., 37-38, 207.


its troops had lost the will to fight, and its [g]overnment had lost popular support.” On December 23, 1949, the State Department issued a policy paper regarding American relations with the ROC government on Taiwan. The policy paper stipulated that “politically and militarily,” Taiwan was “a strictly Chinese responsibility,” that Taiwan had no military significance, and that the Chinese would not benefit from the U.S. sending American troops to help defend the Nationalists.

Unlike the State Department, officials in the Department of Defense pushed for greater American intervention to keep Taiwan safe from the Communist Chinese. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) contended that Taiwan was of great strategic value because Taiwan, the JCS claimed, guarded western Pacific sea lanes necessary to Japan’s postwar reconstruction. While the chiefs argued that Taiwan was essential to halting communist expansion into Southeast Asia, Acheson contended that the biggest threat to the ROC came from within and that it would eventually collapse upon itself.49

By early 1950, even some State Department officials began to back away from the White Paper. Although Dean Rusk publicly consented to Acheson’s neutral policy


toward the ROC, the Deputy Undersecretary did not believe that the U.S. should withdraw from East Asia. Nonetheless, both Rusk and John Foster Dulles, a State Department consultant, knew that Chiang had been a difficult partner in the past and would probably be a roadblock to any peace efforts in the future. In May 1950, Rusk and Dulles proposed that Taiwan be placed under a United Nations trusteeship. Rusk even went so far as to support covert operations to strengthen ROC defenses and to help plan a coup d’état against Chiang Kai-shek. In June 1950, according to Bruce Cummings’ interview with Dean Rusk, the Deputy Secretary of State met with several key Chinese figures in the Plaza Hotel in New York City and discussed toppling Chiang and forming a new government on Taiwan. In fact, the Nationalist military had prepared to overthrow Chiang in June 1950, but the Korean War halted any plans to end Chiang’s rule.

50 Cohen, Dean Rusk, 46; Thomas J. Schoenbaum, Waging Peace and War: Dean Rusk in the Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson Years (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 205-06


52 Bruce Cummings, Korea’s Place in the Sun: A Modern History (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1997), 259.

53 Ibid.
The Korean War: Korea, China, Taiwan, and the United States

The Korean War (1950-53) played a significant role in the development of U.S.-ROC relations. A colony of Japan from 1905 to the end of World War II, the Korean Peninsula had been partitioned at the Thirty-Eighth Parallel in 1945. Soon after the partition, the Soviets and the Communist Chinese encouraged creation of a communist-backed government in North Korea and provided their ally copious support. On June 25, 1950, the North Korean military invaded the southern half of the peninsula. While the PRC shored up support for its Communist North Korean ally, the United States, under the aegis of the United Nations, sent troops to defend the South Korean government.

It became clear to American policymakers that Taiwan was also vulnerable to attack from the Mainland and required defense from Communist encroachment. After the outbreak of war in Korea, Secretary of State Acheson accepted a policy of militarily protecting Taiwan. If the island succumbed to the Mainland regime, Acheson contended that the communists would then be able to interfere with American assistance to South Korea and would allow the Soviets to establish a base. American support of the Nationalists, therefore, provided a possible alternative to communist rule should Mao’s regime lose support on the Mainland. Interestingly, this was the very view that Acheson previously opposed. Truman ordered the U.S. Seventh Fleet to patrol the Taiwan Strait to deter the Chinese Communists from using American involvement in Korea as an excuse to attack the Nationalists. On the other hand, the American naval presence

\[54\] Leffler, 376.

\[55\] Chang, 60.
between the ROC and the PRC also prevented Chiang from seizing the opportunity to attack the Mainland. The United States also resumed economic aid to the Republic of China through the newly-created U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG). Between 1951 and 1964, the United States delivered $1.5 billion in non-military aid to the ROC at a rate of roughly $100 million per year. In addition, the United States assisted Chinese farmers through the Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction (JCRR), an effort by the ROC and the United States to monitor rural farming projects, increase China’s food supply, and raise farmers’ standard of living. The Korean War, therefore, provided the context for the U.S. to defend and support Taiwan actively.

Meanwhile, Mao Zedong grew increasingly concerned about American involvement in Korea. He believed that the United States would invade the Chinese Mainland from South Korea, but did not think his military could successfully stop the Americans. On the other hand, if Mao did nothing, opposition to CCP rule in regions he did not fully control would gain the upper hand and threaten his control over the

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58 Ibid.; Fairbank, 356.
Mainland. In November 1950, PRC forces crossed the Yalu River and entered the Korean War.

As the Chinese Communists entered the fray in Korea, Chiang Kai-shek also sought an active role in the Korean War. When United Nations Secretary General Trygve Lie asked the United Nations to volunteer troops to assist the South Koreans in fending off the North Koreans, Chiang Kai-shek offered 33,000 Nationalist troops. Both Acheson and Rusk opposed Nationalist involvement because they feared Chiang would use the conflict in Korea as an excuse to attack China and that Mao could use the ROC’s involvement in the Korean War as a pretext to attack Taiwan. Truman, on the other hand, did not believe the United States could spend money to defend an island while its own military was elsewhere. In fact, the remnants of the Nationalist army did not amount to much. According to Ralph Kartosh, who was part of the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group, Chiang:

“couldn’t put together two divisions that would go anywhere. They had no uniforms, a minimum amount of ammunition, no artillery, no transport. They just

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59Di, 149-50.

60Leffler, 378.


had rifles, and some of the troops didn’t even have that.\textsuperscript{63}

Truman also feared that the Mainland regime would use the conflict in Korea as an excuse to attack and invade Taiwan. Truman, therefore, refused to base American fighter squadrons on Taiwan and would not deploy American ground forces on Taiwan. He also declined to extend the United States’ commitment to the Nationalist-held offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu. Nonetheless, between July 1950 and January 1951, the Truman administration sent to the ROC some $29 million in military hardware.\textsuperscript{64} By January 1951, Taiwan had received so much assistance that General Douglas MacArthur referred to Taiwan as “an unsinkable aircraft carrier.”\textsuperscript{65}

\textbf{The ROC and the Eisenhower Administration}

By 1952, the Korean War stalemated and became increasingly unpopular. As a result, President Truman declined to run for re-election. In November 1952, General Dwight D. Eisenhower won the presidential election. Eisenhower publicly pledged to take a more effective stance against communism’s spread. He even appointed vehement anti-communists to high-ranking positions in the government and military, like Admiral Arthur Radford as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Charles E. Wilson as Secretary of Defense, and John Foster Dulles as Secretary of State.


\textsuperscript{64}Lin, 43.

\textsuperscript{65}Peter P. C. Cheng, 312.
Eisenhower’s plan to contain communism, nicknamed the “New Look,” called for “massive retaliation,” which emphasized nuclear deterrence and a broad system of alliances. Meanwhile, he hoped to reduce the size of conventional military forces and provide peace and security at a minimum cost. On February 2, 1953, Eisenhower announced that the Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Strait would no longer shield the PRC from Chiang Kai-shek. Western allies of the United States viewed this change of policy with trepidation, fearing this might start a war between the United States and Communist China.

Meanwhile, Chiang used American military assistance to enlarge and strengthen his armed forces on Taiwan. Over the next couple of years, Chiang moved to secure the islands of Quemoy and Matsu. Located off the coast of the Mainland, Quemoy and Matsu were mere stepping stones from which Chiang could launch an invasion; by 1954, Chiang had 50,000 troops stationed on these islands. Mao came to believe that the

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68 Gordon H. Chang, 117.
United States would launch an attack on the Mainland from bases on Taiwan.⁶⁹ In September 1954, the Communist Chinese shelled Quemoy. Mao Zedong wanted to test the American pledge to defend Taiwan and cause the United States to have second thoughts about bringing Taiwan into any defense arrangement on a regional level.⁷⁰

There was great debate within the Eisenhower administration whether or not to send troops to support the Nationalist defense of Quemoy and Matsu.⁷¹ Ultimately, the administration utilized what Dulles called a “fuzzy policy,” in which the U.S. would not publicly support Chiang’s defense or discuss the administration’s decision. This policy would keep the Mainland regime guessing as to whether or not the United States would enter the conflict.⁷² On Taiwan, though, Chiang insisted that Quemoy could not be abandoned and that Everett F. Drumright, U.S. Consul General in Hong Kong, cable Eisenhower for American weapons and assistance. Chiang had to convince Eisenhower that the ROC was a strong regional ally, but that it would collapse if Quemoy were to fall.⁷³

Taiwan, therefore, needed the United States as a protector. The 1954 Taiwan Strait crisis led indirectly to the United States-China Mutual Defense Treaty. Signed in

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⁶⁹Di, 151.

⁷⁰Christensen, 195.

⁷¹Gordon H. Chang, 120.

⁷²Garver, 125.

December 1954, the treaty stated that the United States and the ROC government on Taiwan, “by self-help and mutual aid will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack and communist subversive activities directed from without against their territorial integrity and political stability.” The treaty also gave the right to the United States to place “land, air and sea forces in and about Taiwan and the Pescadores as may be required for their defense.” As the United States increased its commitment to helping defend the island from the Chinese Communists, there emerged a difference in interpretation of the treaty. While the Eisenhower administration concerned itself with the defense of Taiwan island, Chiang and the ROC government concerned itself with returning to the Mainland and overthrowing the Communist regime. The United States, though, would not commit to such a move. Congress also passed the Formosa Resolution in January 1955, which authorized Eisenhower to use the U.S. military to protect Taiwan, the Pescadores, and “related positions and territories in that area.” Invoking the resolution, though, was left up to the President.


75 Ibid.


Nonetheless, the White House publicly pleaded for caution in the Taiwan Strait. Eisenhower urged Chiang to leave only 5,000 of his soldiers on Quemoy, which would conserve Nationalist troop strength for the defense of Taiwan and make the Offshore Islands expendable outposts.\footnote{Garver, 131.} Chiang, however, did not agree. As long as a large number of Nationalist troops remained on Quemoy and Matzu, Chiang believed he held the initiative over the American president. A month later, Chiang increased the total military personnel deployed to Quemoy to 60,000 troops as Mao continued to withdraw military divisions from North Korea.\footnote{Crozier, 366.} In October 1955, Eisenhower once again pleaded with Taipei to remove their troops, stating that the United States was under no treaty obligation to defend the offshore islands, but once again Chiang demurred.\footnote{Garver, 133.}

Meanwhile, Mao Zedong had become increasingly concerned about U.S. involvement in the Taiwan Strait. Mao feared that the Mutual Defense Treaty was part of a U.S. plan to separate Taiwan from the Mainland.\footnote{Di, 44.} Almost simultaneously, the Soviets terminated loans to the PRC used for industrialization. As a result, Mao initiated the Great Leap Forward and urged Mainland Chinese to make their country self-sufficient through increasing industrial and agricultural production.\footnote{Kang Chao, “Economic Aftermath of the Great Leap in Communist China,” \textit{Asian Survey} 4 (May 1964): 851.} Probably fearing that the
Great Leap would also involve stepped up military activity, Chiang expected the PRC to assault his positions on the Offshore Islands and shored up his defenses. By the end of 1957, Chiang increased the number of troops on the islands to nearly 100,000 men and refused to take American advice and withdraw.\(^83\)

In August 1958, the PRC once again bombarded the Offshore Islands, which caused great concern in Washington. Chiang had so many of his troops exposed that American policymakers feared that if the Chinese Communists overran Quemoy, Chiang’s regime on Taiwan would be in danger of collapse.\(^84\) Admiral Arthur Radford argued that the West desperately needed a victory in Asia in the wake of the stalemate in Korea and the French loss at Dien Bien Phu in Indochina. Quemoy and Matsu, in reality, were of no military or strategic value, but their loss to the Communist Chinese would send a message to American allies that the United States did not stand by its friends.\(^85\) Eisenhower and Dulles, though, did not believe Chiang could back down, and the United States had to offer support. They believed that any retreat would show weakness to other countries around China, and lead them to believe that the United States would not protect them.

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\(^{84}\) Ibid.

Unlike 1954, the United States made a clear commitment to Chiang’s government and his island redoubts. Assisting Chiang in the resupply of his garrisons on Quemoy and Matsu, the U.S. Navy escorted Nationalist vessels to a point just outside Quemoy and Matsu’s territorial waters. But in October 1958, the PRC announced a cease fire. Eisenhower again attempted to convince Chiang to reduce his troops on the islands. Eisenhower also refused to give in to notions from the Pentagon to use nuclear weapons. Chiang wanted his Nationalist air force to attack Mainland artillery units, but American commanders worried that American planes would have to be called in for assistance. If American planes bombed the Chinese Mainland, then the United States would effectively be at war with the Communist regime.

Meanwhile, high-ranking American policymakers in the Departments of State and Defense worried that Chiang was luring the United States into a war against the PRC to “retake the mainland.” Eisenhower, growing increasingly frustrated with Chiang’s stubbornness, remarked to Undersecretary of State Christian Herter that he was about ready to tell Chiang where to get off. Even Secretary of Defense Neil McElroy wondered whether there might be someone the U.S. could work with to replace Chiang

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86Christensen, 145.

87Green, 47.


89Eisenhower, Waging Peace, 293; Garver, 137-38.

90Gordon H. Chang, 198.
Kai-shek as leader of the ROC and then remove Nationalist troops from the islands.

Eisenhower, though, was not receptive to a coup attempt.\textsuperscript{91} Even Secretary of State Dulles came to believe that Chiang was using the crisis as a means to draw Washington into a larger war with the PRC. Dulles privately considered that the United States would, in the future, have to contend with two Chinas; but as both the Nationalists and the Communists disdained the idea of “two Chinas,” it would not openly be made American policy.\textsuperscript{92} But neither the PRC nor the ROC were willing to accept “two Chinas.” Both Chiang and Mao claimed to govern each other’s territory, and both the PRC and the ROC sought to liberate the other by force as a matter of policy.

Some members of the U.S. Congress also considered a “two Chinas” solution. In the 1950s, there was a growing sentiment in Congress that a “two Chinas” policy was necessary because the PRC had established control over the Mainland while Chiang and his ROC government ruled Taiwan. Even the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Theodore F. Green (D-Rhode Island) stated in February 1957 that the PRC would soon have to be recognized by the United States, despite the fact that the Eisenhower administration did not like its form of government.\textsuperscript{93} But two vocal supporters of Chiang’s regime on Capitol Hill in the 1950s, Senator William F. Knowland (R-California) and Representative Walter F. Judd (R-Minnesota), expressed

\textsuperscript{91}Ibid., 194.

\textsuperscript{92}Tucker, “John Foster Dulles,” 253, 260-62.

their disagreement. Known as the “Senator from Formosa,” Knowland led a bipartisan amendment to the 1954 Mutual Security Act which opposed the seating of the PRC in the United Nations. It passed by a vote of 91-0 in July 1954. Judd, a physician and former Congregationalist missionary stationed in China, spent most of his legislative career speaking out on behalf of Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist government and had developed ties to those, like businessman Alfred Kohlberg, who were reputed to be associated with the China Lobby.

Knowland and Judd’s support for the Taipei regime by the mid-1950s reflects the Republican Party’s long-standing interest in China policy. Since the administration of President William McKinley, Republicans had taken a strong interest in East Asian affairs as a potential market of trade and as a Christian frontier for missionary work. Business and religious organizations had traditionally been powerful interest groups within the Grand Old Party. Senator Knowland represented a district including Oakland, California, one of the largest ports on the west coast. Judd represented a rural Republican district in Minnesota. It should come as no surprise that both Knowland and Judd would become two of the most vocal supporters of American foreign policy supporting Chiang Kai-shek and the ROC.

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94 Bachrack, 97.
95 Ibid., 12-13.
96 Reinhard, 67-69.
Vietnam and U.S.-ROC Relations

Meanwhile, another Cold War conflict broke out in French Indochina and likewise affected U.S. Asian policy. France had restored its colonial dominion over Indochina after World War II, but a recently returned and popularly supported Vietnamese anti-colonial leader, Ho Chi Minh, declared the colony’s independence from France. This led to a war between the Chinese Communist-supported Viet Minh and the French army from 1945 until 1954, when the Viet Minh surrounded and defeated the French in a valley called Dien Bien Phu. The United States provided France with over $2 million in aid in its war against Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh because it would not tolerate another defeat by communist expansion in Southeast Asia.  

In addition to the Korean War, the fall of Dien Bien Phu to the Viet Minh might have prompted the United States to forge a stronger military alliance with the Republic of China. President Eisenhower saw some connection between the ROC and the growing conflict in Vietnam. In a February 1955 letter to British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Eisenhower argued that because the French had been driven out of Indochina, the free world “can not afford the loss of Chiang unless all of us are to get completely out of that corner of the globe.” As a result of the Geneva Peace Accords of 1954, Vietnam was divided at the Seventeenth Parallel and the United States took a vested interest in the development of South Vietnam. South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem, like

97Cohen, America’s Response to China, 185.

Chiang, was a Christian ruling a majority non-Christian country. Like Chiang, Diem ruled autocratically and placed family members, especially his brother, in high governing places. Unlike Chiang, Diem’s authority did not stretch past his capital’s city limits.  

Eisenhower, though, did not initially pay much attention to events in Vietnam. The president’s advisors did not believe Vietnam to be a serious problem, but agreed that the United States could help build a democratic nation in South Vietnam. It would cost less to send aid to South Vietnam than to have a large direct American military and governing presence there. But by 1959, as Diem began to lose control, the U.S. was involved so deeply in South Vietnam that Eisenhower could not withdraw advisors, end aid, or seek alternative leaders without jeopardizing South Vietnam’s supposedly democratic government. Throughout January 1960, popular uprisings against Diem’s government in former Viet Minh strongholds led to numerous assassinations of local political leaders by the National Liberation Front (NLF), or Viet Cong. The NLF also led military assaults on government and military establishments to generate chaos and pressure the Diem regime to the point of collapse. Meanwhile, the PRC provided substantial military assistance to the North Vietnamese.  

These events reflecting instability in South Vietnam and PRC support for Ho Chi Minh may have influenced Chiang Kai-shek in the 1960s to become more interested and involved in events taking

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101 Jian Chen, 207.
place in Southeast Asia.

Meanwhile, Mao Zedong had become very interested in assisting North Vietnam. Mao had contended throughout the 1950s that Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam were points from which the United States could possibly launch invasions of China. Mao also saw opportunity to press his own foreign policies of spreading China’s revolution worldwide and national liberation. The North Vietnamese were willing to accept aid and advisors from the PRC, despite the cultural friction between the Vietnamese and Han Chinese.

The Committee of One Million

While incidents in Korea, the Taiwan Strait, and Vietnam highlighted the urgency for American support of the ROC and created concerns for policymakers and legislators, lobbyists and pressure groups created various “grass-roots” organizations to generate public anti-communist sentiment. Established in 1953, the Committee of One Million Against the Admission of Red China to the United Nations (the Committee, or COOM) had been associated with the China Lobby and members of the China Bloc. Represented by Marvin Liebman, a New York City public relations agent, the COOM rallied public and legislative support against the admission of the PRC into the United Nations (UN). It also put pressure on the White House not to extend diplomatic recognition to the mainland Communist regime. Liebman tried to obtain support from influential


\[\text{[103] Ibid., 64.}\]
politicians and financial donations to fund the Committee’s anti-communist activities.\textsuperscript{104}

The Committee of One Million grew out of a 1953 petition to President Eisenhower by Marvin Liebman, Walter Judd, and others. They listed eight reasons for opposing the admission of the PRC into the United Nations and circulated the petition to other key anti-communist representatives and senators. The Committee argued that the mainland regime was not qualified to join the United Nations because it claimed to be a dictatorship and disregarded human rights and freedom.\textsuperscript{105} Also, the Committee contended that PRC admission would mean expelling Nationalist China from the UN, which it considered an “unthinkable outrage against human decency and international justice”\textsuperscript{106} and would “destroy the prestige and the position of the United States and of the Free World in Asia.”\textsuperscript{107} The Committee also claimed that the PRC was unqualified for membership because its leadership took orders directly from the Kremlin. Liebman requested that President Eisenhower “defend the freedom and decency of the Free World by continuing to oppose the admission” of the PRC into the United Nations.\textsuperscript{108}

Liebman had been involved in the conservative movement as a fund-raiser and public relations agent for Harold L. Oram, Inc., of New York City. Through his firm, Liebman planned to deliver his 1953 petition to as many Americans as possible through

\textsuperscript{104}Bachrack, 62-63.

\textsuperscript{105}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{106}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{107}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{108}Ibid.
its congressional sponsors and other supporters. This process generated a list of over one million names and addresses from whom Liebman could solicit more signatures for his petition and expand the Committee’s mailing list. Liebman also exchanged mailing lists with other conservative and anti-communist organizations to get the Committee’s message to as large a cross-section of the American public as possible and to cover the COOM’s initial expenses. Liebman hoped his organization would build a bipartisan consensus to pressure the White House into isolating the PRC from world affairs.109

Despite his public association with the China Lobby, there was little direct connection between Marvin Liebman and the China Lobby apparatus. Although an examination of Committee of One Million financial statements in Liebman’s personal papers at Stanford University uncovered no direct funding from the ROC government, his papers revealed indirect connections to Chiang Kai-shek and a few personal meetings. Liebman visited Taipei on at least two occasions. One visit in early 1961 resulted in an interview with Chiang for the National Review, published in June 1961.110 He visited Taipei a second time in the fall of 1967, where he attended a birthday party for Walter Judd, hosted by Madame Chiang at her home.111

109Ibid., 106.


111Letter from Marvin Liebman to Madame Chiang Kai-shek, October 9, 1967, Correspondence Series, Box 16, Folder C, Marvin Liebman Collection, Hoover Institution of War, Peace and Revolution Library and Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, hereafter cited as MLC.
Although the Committee claimed to possess the signatures of over one million Americans, it actually operated through only a handful of individuals. Under the direction of a Steering Committee, the COOM was a relatively informal organization that attempted to mobilize Americans “to take citizens’ action in opposing American concessions to Communist China.” The Steering Committee included a bipartisan collection of six to twelve U.S. representatives, senators and China “watchers,” who met to hear reports from Executive Secretary Liebman and Treasurer B. A. Garside, who actually minded the COOM’s day-to-day operations. Liebman also acted as fund-raising and public relations counsel to “manage, staff and execute the Committee’s program in consultation with the Steering Committee.”

In 1958, Liebman and the Committee experienced problems with Harold L. Oram, Inc., which prompted the executive secretary to go out on his own and take the Committee with him. In that year, a pro-UN group pressured Oram to suspend its representation of the COOM. In protest, Liebman resigned from Oram’s firm and established Marvin Liebman, Associates. Until 1969, Liebman’s new firm represented the Committee of One Million as well as twenty-four other anti-communist organizations, such as the Student Committee for a Free China, the American Conservative Union, the

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112 Letter from Marvin Liebman to Josephine M. Brown, September 25, 1965, Correspondence Series, Box 16, Folder B, MLC.

113 Bachrack, 278-79.

114 Letter from Marvin Liebman to B. A. Garside, January 23, 1967, Correspondence Series, Box 16, Folder C, MLC.

115 Liebman, 131.
Businessman’s Committee on China, Young Americans for Freedom, and the Draft
Goldwater Movement, among others.\footnote{Bachrack, 61.}

Liebman and his cause initially won important political allies. Senators Paul
Douglas (D-Illinois), Thomas Dodd (D-Connecticut) and Jacob K. Javits (R-New York)
were among the Committee’s earliest supporters. Each of these senators represented
states that were rural, suburban and staunchly anti-communist. Walter Judd and William
Knowland promised to push the Committee’s agenda in the form of bills and resolutions
in Congress. Each of these men, at one time or another, served on the COOM’s Steering
Committee. These political allies found no difficulty organizing anti-communist support
against the PRC in the 1950s. The Korean War and the Taiwan Strait crises of 1954-55
and 1958 left a bitter legacy of conflict between the United States and the People’s
Republic of China. Investigations of communist infiltration into American society by
Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-Wisconsin) and the House Un-American Activities
Committee also whipped up anti-communist sentiment across the United States.
Americans reacted by organizing and joining local and national anti-communist
organizations. Depending heavily on membership dues, these organizations published
newsletters, recruited membership and support, and pressured legislators to support anti-
communist measures.\footnote{Mary C. Brennan, \textit{Turning Right in the Sixties: The Conservative Capture of the}
The Committee of One Million operated within a larger national milieu of conservative “grass-roots” activism. The 1950s proved fertile ground for such activism, as professionals and managers and their families, the heart of middle class America, moved to the suburbs just outside the large cities. They benefitted from new technological industries, were religious and church-going, well-read, and knowledgeable about foreign policy. Equating communism to slavery, these suburban residents saw the world in terms of good and evil, and blamed liberal Democrats for allowing the Soviet Union to establish communism in as much of the world as they did. Within their businesses, churches and homes, these new conservative activists circulated anti-communist books, films, pamphlets and petitions. These new activists also worked hard to elect like-minded officials to school boards, to state legislatures, and to Congress.118

U.S. Presidential Election of 1960 and the Future of U.S.-ROC Relations

In early 1960, United States Senator John F. Kennedy (D-Massachusetts) announced his candidacy for President of the United States. Kennedy believed that he was well prepared for the foreign policy challenges that were to come if he were elected.119 In particular, the senator had grown increasingly concerned about American policy toward East Asia. In a 1957 Foreign Affairs article, Kennedy argued that American policy toward China had become too rigid and “exaggeratedly military,”


especially the strict travel restrictions to the Mainland. Kennedy stated that American policy could not be allowed to become strait-jacketed “as a result of ignorance and fail to detect a change in the objective situation when it comes.” It was important, therefore, to relax the travel regulations so that journalists and scholars, who had been forbidden to travel to the Mainland, could bring back useful intelligence that could allow for American policymakers to work with the Communist Chinese.

Chiang vehemently disagreed with Kennedy’s view on China policy. In his book, *Soviet Russia in China* (1957), Chiang argued that peaceful coexistence with communism would amount to handing the Soviet and Chinese Communists a weapon, because their aggression would only end when they achieved world conquest. Therefore, the only effective strategy against the spread of communism, according to Chiang, was total war. With the advent of nuclear weapons, however, no statesman in the free world would want to lead his country to certain destruction. The question, according to Chiang, was whether or not avoiding such a war meant surrendering freedom. Chiang answered that the United States, as the world leader in the global struggle against communism, should play an indirect role by supplying arms and aid to those at war against the

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121 Ibid.


Communists. “So long as the Russian Communists abstain from active war,” according to Chiang, “it will not be advantageous to have the United States participate in direct warfare, nor will it be advantageous for the free nations to engage in war outside the Iron Curtain.” The war against communism, stated Chiang, should begin against Mainland China.

In the summer of 1960, Kennedy won the Democratic Party’s nomination for president and chose U.S. Senate Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson (D-Texas) as his vice presidential running mate. Johnson, like Kennedy, had taken an interest in American relations with East Asia while in the U.S. Senate. As a senator, he had opposed American air strikes to support the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. Like his friend and mentor, Senator Richard B. Russell, Jr. (D-Georgia), he believed that the United States needed the support of its European allies before risking military action against the Viet Minh.

Like Kennedy, Johnson had learned a most important lesson from the World War II years – the United States had to stand up to aggression. Both Kennedy and Johnson arrived at their political maturity amid the international chaos of the late 1930s and early 1940s, when Adolf Hitler and his armies set out to conquer Europe. Several months after Hitler promised British and French delegates at the Munich Conference in 1938 that he

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124 Ibid., 347-48.
125 Diggins, 340-41.
would take no more territory if he were given the Sudetenland, the Germans devoured the remainder of Czechoslovakia, signed a non-aggression pact with the Soviets, and invaded Poland in 1939, effectively beginning World War II. Kennedy and Johnson learned, as most of their generation did, that aggression had to be challenged with force.\textsuperscript{127}

The Taiwan issue came up toward the end of the campaign through press questions directed at Senator Kennedy. During the second televised debate on October 7, 1960, Senator Kennedy, commenting on the Eisenhower administration’s handling of the Quemoy-Matsu crisis, stated that if Chiang and the Nationalists were to draw their line of defense solely around Taiwan and the Pescadores, the chances of the United States being drawn into an unnecessary war would decrease. Quemoy and Matsu were indefensible. Nixon, in response, declared he would not give up “one inch of free territory,” specifically meaning the Offshore Islands. If the Nationalists were to give up the Offshore Islands, according to Nixon, it would start a chain reaction that would lead to war. Both Vice President Nixon and Chiang Kai-shek publicly declared Kennedy “soft” on the Offshore Islands and on communism in general.\textsuperscript{128}

\textsuperscript{127}Kearns, 252; Garry Wills, \textit{The Kennedy Imprisonment: A Meditation on Power} (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1981), 279.

Kennedy won the presidential election in 1960 by the narrowest of margins, less than two-thirds of one percent of the popular vote. Almost at that same time, president-elect Kennedy received a report from Adlai E. Stevenson III, former Governor of Illinois and Kennedy’s nominee as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. Stevenson warned Kennedy about Chiang Kai-shek. According to Stevenson, Chiang was “an ethnocentric patriot” who maintains “personal power by manipulating his followers and enemies alike.” Stevenson further contended that the Chinese Nationalists’ “pride is intensified by a modern century of humiliation, which leads to resentment of the United States’ helping hand.” As a result, Chiang and the Nationalists would be difficult to handle.

Conclusion

The Korean War and the Vietnam War tremendously affected U.S. relations with the Republic of China in the 1950s. American policymakers had believed that the Communists were actively expanding their sphere of influence in East Asia at the expense of regional instability. It was vital, therefore, that the U.S. during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations support the ROC as a bulwark against Soviet and Chinese Communist aggression. With Taiwan located between Korea and Vietnam, Chiang might have felt vulnerable to attack from the PRC, which perhaps became his impetus for

\footnote{Diggins, 343.}


\footnote{Ibid.}
requesting American aid in defending his island bastion. Likewise, Mao Zedong also felt vulnerable to attack from the U.S. and the Nationalists. The Offshore Islands crises in 1954 and 1958 only exacerbated Chiang’s fears, Washington’s hesitations, and Mao’s actions. In the meantime, the China Lobby helped convince legislators that it was essential to secure the ROC as part of the free world coalition.
On January 20, 1961, John F. Kennedy became the thirty-fifth President of the United States. Having won the election by an extremely slim margin, he hesitated to make drastic changes in foreign and domestic policy. Nonetheless, Kennedy appointed a number of political allies to the National Security Council staff and to the State Department. These appointees initiated a series of changes that would begin to modify U.S. policy toward China. Arguing that the United States should abandon the Eisenhower-Dulles policy of containment and isolation of the People’s Republic of China, these appointees left the future of U.S. relations with the Republic of China in doubt. In 1961, while Kennedy’s appointees tested their ideas, Chiang Kai-shek used his contacts within the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Department to maintain the status quo.

**Kennedy Administration Bureaucracy and China Policy**

In 1961, President Kennedy initiated a series of appointments, office reassignments and bureaucratic reorganizations within the White House and the Department of State that would affect China policy. Among the first of these
appointments was that of Robert W. Komer, whom Kennedy appointed to the National Security Council Staff early in 1961. After graduating from Harvard University magna cum laude in 1942 and earning a Masters of Business Administration in 1947, Komer joined the Central Intelligence Agency. In the CIA, Komer worked in the Office of National Estimates until 1956, when he was reassigned to the Directorate of Intelligence. Between 1961 and 1967, operating in various capacities in the White House, Komer played an important role in the development of policy toward the Republic of China in both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.1

Only a month after beginning his new job, Komer recommended to National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy that the State Department reconsider its China policy. He suggested that the United States “disengage, as skillfully as we can, from unproductive aspects of our China policy, e.g., UN membership . . . .”2 In his report titled “Strategic Framework for Rethinking China Policy,” Komer argued that the “sole determinant of our FE [Far Eastern] policy cannot be that of keeping Chiang happy or even of preserving Taiwan. There are bigger issues at stake.” Komer did not accept the idea that the American position in the Far East “hinged” on Taiwan because relationships with Japan, India, and South Vietnam were far more important. Chiang, however, could not be allowed to lose power. Komer, therefore, proposed that policy toward the ROC


allow for greater flexibility to show Chiang Kai-shek that the ROC would remain an important ally of the United States (even as the United States softened its attitude toward the PRC). The Kennedy administration had to convince Chiang that the U.S. would continue to defend Taiwan and to maintain its international presence in the UN. Such a program would be expensive, but much less expensive than a war with the PRC. Komer, therefore, suggested that the U.S. delegation to the UN agree to a debate on the ROC’s membership, rather than maintaining the moratorium on discussing it. This plan would keep the ROC in the United Nations for several more years, rather than allow it to be removed on a straight credentials vote.³

Kennedy also appointed a group of foreign policy experts and scholars, including Adlai E. Stevenson III, W. Averell Harriman, and Chester Bowles, who had each been vocal critics of Eisenhower’s containment and isolation of the PRC. They all shared the idea that the United States should work toward a policy of accommodation with the PRC.⁴ As a reward for their support, Kennedy appointed Stevenson as Ambassador to the United Nations, Harriman (originally) as a “roving” ambassador, and Bowles as Assistant Secretary of State. In effect, those who had criticized Republican policy now had been rewarded with top diplomatic posts with a chance to change policy.

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Although Kennedy appointed these critics of Eisenhower’s China policy to positions in the National Security Council and the State Department, he did not espouse significant changes in China policy upon becoming president. In May 1961, Secretary of State Dean Rusk met privately with President Kennedy, to explore possible changes in China policy and to discuss the ramifications. Rusk stated that the United States could recognize both the PRC and the ROC, could work privately to bring reconciliation between the two Chinas, or could sit tight and do nothing. Kennedy, though, refused to initiate changes in China policy because he believed he had no such mandate for change due to his narrow electoral victory. In addition, the PRC did not seem enthused about improving relations with the United States. Any changes in China policy, Kennedy warned, would divide Congress and the American people and would hand the Republicans a political weapon to use in 1964. Rusk agreed with Kennedy, and as the Secretary left the Oval Office, Kennedy warned, “And what’s more, Mr. Secretary, I don’t want to read in the Washington Post or the New York Times that the State Department is thinking about a change in our China policy!”

Rusk, though, had long been a supporter of a “two Chinas” policy. While he had no general plan for China policy upon becoming Secretary of State in 1961, Rusk believed that U.S. policy toward Taiwan had been “unavoidably locked in . . . for both historical and policy reasons.” According to Rusk, the United States recognized the government of the Republic of China on Taiwan, not as the government of all China. By default, the ROC’s government was “the only Chinese government we [the U.S.]

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recognized.” Rusk, therefore, submerged his views about China policy with Kennedy’s and did not directly initiate any new studies of China policy.⁶

Meanwhile, the Kennedy administration inherited a foreign policy apparatus that did not encourage innovation. The State Department, especially the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, had been emptied of experts after investigations by Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-Wisconsin) targeted suspected communists. By 1961, the bureau had been staffed with stern anti-communists who favored containment and isolation of the PRC. In November 1961, Kennedy reassigned Harriman as Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs. Harriman then appointed Edward Rice to the bureau from his position on the Policy Planning Council. Rice, a long-serving State Department analyst who had survived the McCarthy “witch-hunt,” had long championed abandoning the containment policy toward the PRC in favor of accommodation.⁷

While on the Policy Planning Council, Rice had authored a paper that included a list of possible U.S. initiatives toward the Beijing regime. These included lifting the passport ban, opening arms control and disarmament talks, possible PRC representation in the United Nations, and ROC evacuation of the Offshore Islands. In short, Rice’s paper proposed a policy that was flexible, moderate and accommodating toward the Communist Chinese. Apparently, he greatly influenced several young staffers at the Far East office, such as James C. Thomson, Jr., and Roger Hilsman, to advocate a more

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⁶Ibid., 284

⁷Thomson, 222-23.
relaxed policy toward the PRC.  

Like Komer and Rice, Undersecretary of State Chester Bowles also questioned the direction of China policy. In July 1961, he circulated a confidential report entitled “Some Requirements of American Foreign Policy,” recommending various changes in American foreign policy toward Europe, Africa and Asia. Some of Bowles’s most significant comments concerned China policy. Bowles argued that the central focus of American foreign policy in Asia was Communist China. Attributing its aggression to the famine and the government’s failure to meet food requirements, Bowles claimed that the PRC was a “paramount threat to all the nations on its periphery” and had to be excluded from the United Nations. But, he argued, Nationalist China represented just as much of a problem in East Asia as the PRC. If the United States intended to remove itself from its responsibilities toward Taiwan, as Komer suggested, “explosive pressures will be generated in Taipei which [may] take any one of several forms.” Instability could cause a war between the ROC and the PRC, or a coup d’état that could result in Chiang’s overthrow and an attempt to turn Taiwan over to the Communist Chinese. Bowles concluded that any future China policy would have to consider and balance these potentially dangerous possibilities.  

While some of Kennedy’s State Department and White House appointees privately considered a more accommodationist China policy, Eisenhower administration

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8Ibid., 223-24.

stalwarts, like Everett F. Drumright and Ray Cline, opposed any such changes. President Eisenhower had appointed Everett F. Drumright as U.S. Ambassador to the ROC in 1958 after nearly thirty years of government service in China and in the State Department’s Office of Chinese Affairs. A career U.S. diplomat, he had been associated with the Nationalist Chinese government in various capacities between 1931 and 1946. Drumright returned to the Foreign Service in the Office of Chinese Affairs when Eisenhower became President in 1953. As ambassador, Drumright met often with Chiang and members of the ROC government. He firmly believed that the security of Nationalist China was of vital importance to the United States. 10 His hardline anti-communist opinions concerning China policy angered many of his colleagues in the Taipei embassy. 11

Ray Cline similarly opposed significant changes in China policy. Since the Eisenhower administration, Cline had been CIA Station Chief in Taipei. Taking advantage of his position, Cline had become close friends with General Chiang Ching-kuo, President Chiang’s son and Director of the Political Department of the Ministry of National Defense. 12 He also enjoyed easy access to high-ranking ROC officials. In this


11Interview with James Leonard, in China Confidential: American Diplomats and Sino-American Relations, 1945-1996, ed. Nancy Bernkopf Tucker (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 170-71. Leonard, Chinese Language Training and Political Officer at the Taipei embassy between 1957 and 1963, claimed that Drumright was “captive of this right-wing ideology on the China question.” His difficult personality and his conservative politics angered the embassy staff, many of whom rejoiced at Kennedy’s 1960 victory and disagreed with the way Taiwan had been governed.

12Taylor, 239.
capacity, Cline regularly conveyed Chiang’s personal messages to the State Department and the White House. Cline believed that Chiang was fearful of the Democrats. Only the United States stood between the ROC and disaster. For Chiang, Cline stated, “the faintest indication of a change in U.S. attitudes can seem like a matter of life and death.”

By the end of 1961, divisions on China policy existed between White House advisors, State Department experts, American diplomats, and intelligence agents stationed in the ROC. White House and State Department officials, such as Komer, Rice and Bowles, focused on the creation of a policy that would allow the United States to contain the PRC while keeping the ROC in the United Nations. But neither Komer, Bowles, nor Rice had first-hand experience with the government of the Republic of China. Reports by Everett F. Drumright and Ray Cline reflected concerns that the Chiang government, fearing that the United States was about to abandon them in favor of the PRC, might attempt to subvert American policy and take matters into their own hands.

**ROC Irregulars in Burma**

One of the first China policy crises the Kennedy administration faced concerned irregular ROC forces which had been operating in the Burma-Thailand-Laos border region since the 1950s. In 1949, 11,000 to 15,000 Chinese Nationalist troops had fled China into this border region as the Nationalist government and most of the military retreated to the island of Taiwan. By 1961, despite two previous attempts to evacuate

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these irregular soldiers, some 10,000, including women and children, remained.14 While
the Burmese government demanded that these irregulars be evacuated, Chiang continued
to supply these troops.

In February, 1961, the Burmese shot down two ROC aircraft: a B-24 supply plane
bound for northern Burma and a PB-4Y, supplied to the Nationalists through the U.S.
Military Assistance Program (MAP). The Burmese government justified their actions on
the grounds that irregular ROC troops, armed with American equipment supplied through
such airdrops, had instigated trouble within their borders. Understanding Burma’s
problem, President Kennedy wanted these irregular troops to be withdrawn from Burma
to Taiwan or broken into small groups for resettlement in Thailand and Laos.15

Secretary of State Dean Rusk subsequently requested that Ambassador Drumright
meet with President Chiang at the earliest opportunity to discuss American policy
regarding ROC irregulars in Burma and Laos. He urged Drumright to convince Chiang to
evacuate all ROC military personnel who wished to return to Taiwan. Any irregulars
who did not wish to return to Taiwan should be disarmed and resettled as civilians in any
country other than Burma or Laos. Rusk further instructed Drumright to remind Chiang

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14“Chinese Nationalist Irregulars in Southeast Asia,” May 4, 1967, Box 245,
China Visit of C. K. Yen-Briefing Book 5/9-10/67, Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson,
Johnson Presidential Library, Austin, TX, hereafter cited as NSF, LBJL.

15Memorandum from John F. Kennedy to Dean Rusk, February 17, 1961, Box 87,
Department of State, 2/16/61-2/28/61, Papers of John F. Kennedy, Presidential Papers,
President’s Office Files, Departments and Agencies, John F. Kennedy Presidential
Library, Boston, MA, hereafter cited as POF, DA, JFKL; Special Report No. 7, February
21, 1961, Box 87, Department of State, 2/16/61-2/28/61, POF, DA, JFKL.
that further support to these irregular troops using American supplies would exceed American obligations to the ROC and would strain relations.\textsuperscript{16}

Chiang, during a February 25, 1961, meeting with Drumright, denied harming American interests. When asked to evacuate the irregulars, Chiang stated that while doing so would meet with great resistance because of their deep hatred for the Chinese Communists, he also recognized the inconvenience and embarrassment the situation caused to the United States. Chiang promised to end the airdrops and to evacuate those irregulars who wanted to be evacuated. In the case of those irregulars who were no longer responsive to his orders, the ROC President promised to disassociate himself from them and terminate their resupply.\textsuperscript{17}

Meanwhile, Secretary Rusk ordered staffers in the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs to write a report on these ROC irregulars for President Kennedy. The report concluded that since the 1950s President Chiang had disregarded American requests to evacuate his irregular troops from Burma. The irregulars, moreover, threatened the internal stability of Thailand, Burma and Laos, and their positions along the border with Mainland China jeopardized peace in the region. Some were also suspected of trafficking in narcotics. Hence, in the view of the State Department, the irregulars had to be evacuated or dispersed. Fearing that President Chiang would not cooperate voluntarily, the report suggested that Chiang could be manipulated by the United States selectively limiting or


\textsuperscript{17}Telegram from Embassy in the Republic of China to Department of State, February 25, 1961, \textit{FRUS 1961-63}, 16-17.
ceasing military aid, refusing to train Taiwanese special forces, and not participating in planning operations against the Mainland.  

Some evidence suggests that Chiang feared such repercussions and ordered ROC irregular troops to disarm and return to Taiwan or settle as civilians. Nationalist Chinese General Lai Ming-tang, after meeting with Ambassador Drumright in April 1961, reported that some of the six hundred to seven hundred irregulars living near the Burma-Laos-Thailand border and nearly one thousand in Thailand “appear to have gone into civilian life.” Drumright believed that the ROC had honestly and diligently carried out the American request. By the end of the month, he regarded the evacuation as complete.  

**Chinese Representation in the United Nations**

Meanwhile, the Kennedy administration also worked to keep the ROC in the United Nations. Throughout the 1950s, there had been little challenge to Taiwan’s status in the United Nations, but opposition increased in the sixties. Despite the Albanian delegation’s recurring resolution to have the ROC removed and replaced with representatives of Communist China, between 1951 and 1961, a majority of UN members in the General Assembly supported an American resolution “not to support” or discuss  

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19 Department of State Staff Summary,” April 17, 1961, Box 88, Department of State, 4/61-5/61, POF, DA, JFKL.
any changes in Chinese representation. President Kennedy, after his inauguration in January 1961, also pledged his opposition to membership for the People’s Republic of China in the United Nations. Meanwhile, support for Taiwan slowly eroded as newly independent nations from Africa, some of whom were sympathetic to the PRC, joined the United Nations. Given this development, several members of Kennedy’s foreign policy staff believed it was necessary to derive new ideas and tactics to ensure the ROC’s continued presence in the UN. Throughout the early part of 1961, Secretary of State Dean Rusk and National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy received several reports concerning possible changes in American tactics at the UN. These reports proposed both flexible strategies and fundamental changes in Sino-American relations.

In July 1961, Roger Hilsman of the State Department’s Office of Intelligence and Research addressed the Chinese representation crisis. He warned that, in the near future, the UN representation issue might be settled in a way that damaged American and Taiwanese interests. It was important that the United States firmly establish the ROC’s claim on the China seat for the sake of American-Taiwanese relations and American relations with the United Nations General Assembly. According to Hilsman, Taiwanese membership in the UN symbolized that the ROC was the only legitimate government of

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China. If the UN admitted or offered admission to the PRC, ROC membership and influence in the UN would wane. While the Nationalist Chinese wished to maintain their membership, the United States wanted not only to keep them in but also to keep the PRC out. But while other UN members interpreted the Chinese representation issue as merely procedural, the U.S. delegation interpreted the issue as a security matter. If the United States lost control of the issue, “then doubts and tensions over United States relations to the United Nations will probably increase in the public attitude and in the legislative attitude.” Hilsman concluded that the most prudent course of action for the Kennedy administration would be to set up a commission “of highly respected individuals to review and report on all relevant facets – including what is to be expected henceforth of our relations with the UN and what lies ahead in China policy.”

Meanwhile, Drumright and Cline argued that the United States should ensure the ROC’s seat in the United Nations. Ambassador Drumright expressed his concern that high-ranking ROC officials believed that the Kennedy administration was “looking for some way out of [the] China impasse at their [ROC] expense.” Chiang, according to Drumright, believed that since Kennedy and his foreign policy advisors had not openly stated their support to preserve the ROC’s seat, that “. . . USG [United States Government] is prepared to plump for ‘two Chinas.’” The ROC, though, would not favor any “two Chinas” solution or discuss any other alternatives. If a “two Chinas” solution were adopted, concluded Drumright, “other pressures would be applied by powers intent

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23 Memorandum from Roger Hilsman to Secretary of State, n.d., Box 22, China, General, 7/25/61-7/27/61, NSF, JFKL.
on ChiCom [Chinese Communist] admission which would force GRC [Government of the Republic of China] to leave UN.”

Cline also worried that Taiwanese officials might not accept changes in American policy toward the ROC. He recommended that in order to show Chiang and his government exactly how strong an ally the U.S. was, the United States should open the debate on Taiwan’s membership in the United Nations. Even if the debate were lost, the Taiwanese might consider the loss an honest defeat based on principle. But Cline also concluded that the Nationalists, fearful of the new Democratic administration and the possible loss of their seat in the UN, planned to take their future into their own hands by invading the Mainland. Cline argued that it was important, therefore, that Kennedy keep promises made to Taiwan by previous administrations to preserve the ROC’s United Nations seat.

In summary, each of these reports agreed that Taiwanese government officials had to be convinced that the Kennedy administration would continue to protect Taiwan’s interests. On the other hand, the U.S. could not allow the ROC to take action to guarantee their own interests independently of the United States. President Kennedy echoed these sentiments during a July White House meeting concerning Chinese representation. He stated that the United States and the ROC should have one common objective – to keep the PRC out of the United Nations. Taiwan needed to realize if its

24Telegram from Everett F. Drumright to Department of State, March 20, 1961, FRUS 1961-63, 37.

25Memorandum from McGeorge Bundy to John F. Kennedy, July 7, 1961, Box 22, China, General, 6/28/61-7/7/61, NSF, JFKL.
seat were lost in the United Nations, it would be as bad for the U.S. as it would be for the Republic of China. In keeping Taiwan in the UN, Kennedy hoped that the ROC would not have to give up very much.²⁶

The Chinese representation issue became more complicated when the Soviet-dominated government of Outer Mongolia became independent and applied for admission into the UN. The ROC insisted that Outer Mongolia was part of China and so could not be admitted to the UN. Kennedy feared that a ROC veto of Outer Mongolia’s membership could warrant a Communist Bloc push for Taiwan’s ouster from the UN. He therefore contended that the Taiwanese should not veto Outer Mongolia’s application for admission into the UN, but the U.S. should not extend diplomatic relations to Outer Mongolia.²⁷

At the end of July 1961, Secretary of State Rusk proposed a parliamentary ploy that would ensure the continued membership of the ROC in, and the exclusion of the PRC from, the United Nations. He suggested appointing a representative group from the General Assembly to study the “desirability and feasibility of developing a majority around the proposition that the question of Chinese representation in the United Nations is an ‘important question’ under the [United Nations] Charter, thereby requiring a two-thirds vote.” Rusk also stated that this study group would “examine the broader problems of criteria for United Nations membership and the composition of the Security


²⁷Ibid.
Council . . . of which the question of Chinese representation is only one though an extremely important aspect,” and thereby delay any credentials vote regarding the ROC’s membership.28

Meanwhile, the Soviets threatened to veto Mauritania’s proposed UN membership if Outer Mongolia’s application were vetoed. Mauritania, a former French African colony, had also recently become independent. Kennedy and Rusk had to convince the ROC not to veto Outer Mongolia’s application and to go along with the “important question” proposal. The Taiwanese had recently initiated an aid program called “Operation Vanguard” to assist newly independent African countries. This aid program had the ulterior motive of securing future support from newly independent African nations for Taiwan’s China seat in the UN. A Soviet veto of Mauritania’s UN membership, therefore, would threaten both Taiwan’s aid program and its ability to secure future support among newly independent African countries to maintain its China seat.29

Kennedy and Rusk discussed the “important question” proposal and the Soviet’s reaction with ROC Vice President Ch’en Ch’eng, ROC Ambassador to the United States George K. C. Yeh, and Chinese Permanent Representative to the United Nations T. F.

28 Memorandum from Dean Rusk to John F. Kennedy, July 31, 1961, Box 113a, China, Security, 1961, NSF, JFKL.

Tsiang in a meeting on August 1, 1961. Kennedy and Rusk pleaded with the ROC officials not to veto Outer Mongolia’s application and to go along with the “important question” proposal. But Outer Mongolia, insisted Vice President Ch’en, was a creation of the Soviet Union. Ch’en warned that any American move toward recognition of Outer Mongolia would threaten Taiwan and “would greatly add to Soviet and Communist world prestige.” Ambassador Yeh added that the ROC should use all means at its disposal to block Outer Mongolia’s entry into the United Nations. As an alternative to using their veto, Rusk suggested that the ROC step up its attempts to generate close relations with new African states to strengthen its position in the United Nations. Vice President Ch’en replied that the ROC, in fighting communism, did not want to help the Communist Bloc by accepting Outer Mongolia. Kennedy then pledged to the ROC delegation that his administration would try to keep the ROC in the UN and Outer Mongolia out, but warned Yeh, Tsiang and Ch’en that they would probably not be able to get everything they wanted.\(^{30}\)

Later that day, several of Kennedy’s closest advisors warned that Chiang had to be restrained if the ROC was to retain the China seat in the UN. Kennedy met with UN Ambassador Adlai E. Stevenson III, Special Assistant to the President Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., and Assistant Secretary of State Harlan Cleveland, and expressed his concern that Chiang Kai-shek was “ready to pull the house down on himself – and on us in the process.” Kennedy believed that the State Department had to keep trying to

persuade Chiang that “some tactical adjustments would be required” to keep the ROC in the UN. Chiang could not be allowed to use the ROC’s veto to keep Outer Mongolia out of the United Nations.31

Kennedy tried to convince Chiang not to become too involved in the UN representation issue. On August 15, 1961, Kennedy warned Chiang that he might not be able to rally majority support for continued ROC representation in the UN if the ROC vetoed Outer Mongolia’s admission to the UN. “If Mauritania is denied entry into the UN” as a result of the ROC’s veto of Outer Mongolia’s application for membership, “most if not all of the French African states will, however illogically and unjustly, retaliate by voting against the [ROC] on the Chinese representation issue.” As a result, the Nationalists would be unseated and replaced by the Chinese Communists. Kennedy claimed that the U.S. and the ROC had to choose “the lesser of two evils” to prevent Communist China’s admission to the UN. It was necessary to “exercise tactical flexibility” on Outer Mongolia’s application and allow them in. Kennedy warned that if the ROC lost its seat in the UN, the U.S. would not be able to generate support for military action to defend the ROC if the Mainland regime chose to attack Taiwan.32

In his August 26, 1961, response, Chiang declared that Outer Mongolia’s application for membership in the UN was clearly an example of “Soviet blackmail.” Thus, the United States “should lead the free nations to reject it resolutely under the

31 Memorandum of Conversation, August 5, 1961, FRUS 1961-63, 113.

32 Letter from President Kennedy to Chiang Kai-shek, August 15, 1961, Box 26, China, Subjects, Chiang Kai-shek, Correspondence 4/61-9/63, NSF, JFKL.
clarion call of justice.” Taiwan, according to Chiang, could not support Outer Mongolia’s admission to the UN. If the United States would take a firm stand against recognition of Outer Mongolia and its application for UN membership, the U.S. would earn the goodwill and support of these African states. According to Chiang, a much stronger statement had to be made by the U.S. Arguing from the perspective of his regional security, rather than the global security interests of the United States, Chiang essentially refused to change his plans to veto Outer Mongolia’s application.

By late August 1961, Kennedy became quite worried about the Chinese representation issue at the UN. In a memorandum to McGeorge Bundy, Kennedy asked: “What is the latest word from Stevenson? Do we have a strategy? Is it going to be successful? We can’t permit ourselves to get beaten. If we are not going to be able to win on this basis[,] we better think of another one.” The next day, Bundy settled Kennedy’s anxiety by assuring him that the U.S. would “seek a majority for the ‘important question’ position and then expect to have a blocking one-third against any resolution that would admit representation” for Communist China. Additionally, Bundy proposed that a commission examine UN membership criteria and the composition of both the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

33Letter from Chiang Kai-shek to President Kennedy, August 26, 1961, Box 26, China, Subjects, Chiang Kai-shek, Correspondence 4/61-9/63, NSF, JFKL.

34Memorandum from John F. Kennedy to McGeorge Bundy, August 21, 1961, Box 62, Bundy, McGeorge, 8/61, President’s Office Files, Staff Memoranda, JFKL.

35Memorandum from McGeorge Bundy to President Kennedy, August 22, 1961, FRUS 1961-63, 127.
On September 2, Ambassador Drumright also learned that the ROC would not change its position. Ambassador Yeh had told Drumright that the ROC “cannot and will not change position on Outer Mongolia set forth in President Chiang’s last letter to President Kennedy.” Drumright later commented to Secretary Rusk that the ROC had “burned bridges” with its supporters in the UN on the Outer Mongolian issue and any further appeals to modify their position would not be productive, but he also privately relayed Ambassador Yeh’s suggestion that the United States try to defeat Outer Mongolian membership by the abstention method.36

Kennedy, though, did not receive news of Yeh’s private suggestion through Drumright to Rusk. Kennedy expressed his disappointment to Chiang that the ROC would utilize its veto to prevent the admission of Outer Mongolia and Mauritania to the United Nations. The President also warned Chiang that, because this issue was of such vital importance to American security interests, “I am sure you will understand that we must reserve our freedom to pursue whichever avenue we consider best calculated to advance the objective which we both seek,” namely, keeping the ROC in the UN.37

With only a month to go before the beginning of the seventeenth UN General Assembly, Secretary of State Rusk instructed Ambassador Stevenson to “attempt to get the General Assembly to declare that any change in the representation of China is an ‘important question’ within the meaning of Article 18 of the Charter” and “persuade the

36Telegram from Drumright to Dean Rusk, September 2, 1961, Box 25, China, Cables, 9/2/61-10/15/61, NSF, JFKL.

37Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the Republic of China, September 6, 1961, FRUS 1961-63, 134-35.
Assembly to appoint a committee to consider criteria for UN membership . . . and the composition of the Security Council and ECOSOC” which would report to the General Assembly the next year. Rusk stated that the objective was to “head off any consideration of the representation of China as a credentials question requiring a simple majority vote.” When the applications of Outer Mongolia and Mauritania came before the General Assembly, Stevenson was instructed to “abstain or vote for the admission of Outer Mongolia,” which would assist in the admission of Mauritania. This would ensure the support of the French African states for Taiwan on the Chinese representation issue.38

Rusk also sent instructions to the American embassy in Taipei that, if Chiang planned to “go down with ship” rather than compromise on Outer Mongolia, the U.S. would share no responsibility for his decision “and we shall make it quite clear if necessary that [the] GRC elected to commit political suicide in UN despite our best efforts.” Despite President Kennedy’s effort to generate international support to keep the ROC in the United Nations, Rusk further commented:

It is a sign of increasing isolation [of the] GRC from reality that they persist in disregarding [the] best advice of their own representatives and best friends abroad. It is patent absurdity for [the] GRC to conclude that inability [of the] USG to persuade [an] enlarged and changed membership UN is due to lack of US effort. If we cannot persuade GRC . . . to meet us on any of several significant matters whom can we persuade?39

Rusk then urged Drumright to assure ROC officials that, because of their common

38Memorandum from Dean Rusk to Adlai Stevenson, September 13, 1961, Box 22, China, General, 9/61, NSF, JFKL.

39Telegram from Department of State to U.S. Embassy Taipei, September 17, 1961, Box 25, China, Cables, 9/2/61-10/15/61, NSF, JFKL.
interests, the United States would provide them the strongest support possible.\textsuperscript{40}

On September 29, 1961, Secretary of State Rusk met with Foreign Minister Shen Chang-huan and Ambassador Yeh in New York City to review the Chinese representation issue. Rusk wanted to make sure Shen and Yeh understood that if the ROC vetoed Outer Mongolia’s application, they would be voted out of the UN. Shen, while understanding the situation, stated that if the ROC did not veto Outer Mongolia’s application, it would pose a domestic problem for Chiang and the KMT and undermine morale and public support for their government at home.\textsuperscript{41}

To head off any attempt by the ROC to veto Outer Mongolia’s application, Rusk sent further instructions to Ambassador Drumright in Taipei. Rusk ordered Drumright to do everything possible to convince Chiang that his policy on Outer Mongolia influenced his own relations with other countries, which affected the ability of the U.S. to defend Taiwan in the UN.\textsuperscript{42} After meeting with Chiang on October 4, 1961, Drumright cabled the State Department, declaring that “Chiang now realizes precariousness of GRC position if Outer Mongolia is vetoed.”\textsuperscript{43} Chiang was prepared to waive the ROC veto of Outer Mongolia’s application “if a graceful, ‘face-saving’ method can be found . . . But

\textsuperscript{40}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{41}Telegram from Dean Rusk to Department of State, September 29, 1961, \textit{FRUS 1961-63}, 140-41.

\textsuperscript{42}Telegram from Department of State to Embassy in Republic of China, October 2, 1961, \textit{FRUS 1961-63}, 142-43.

\textsuperscript{43}Telegram from U.S. Embassy Taipei to Secretary of State, October 4, 1961, Box 25, China, Cables, 9/2/61-10/15/61, NSF, JFKL. The “Brazzaville states” were twelve French-speaking African colonies that achieved independence in 1960.
initiative must appear to come from Chiang and not from overt pressure." The U.S., according to Drumright, should appeal to Chiang in terms of free world interests and the common interests of the ROC and the United States, and make clear that the United States government had no plans to recognize Outer Mongolia. Drumright recommended these points be brought out in a warmly worded letter to Chiang, along with a joint appeal from the group of African countries called the “Brazzaville states” urging Chiang to waive his veto of Outer Mongolia’s application.

A memorandum from McGeorge Bundy to President Kennedy suggests the reason why Chiang changed his mind. According to Bundy, the ROC’s policy of persuading the “Brazzaville states” to support the admission of Mauritania and deny the admission of Outer Mongolia failed because, as George Yeh stated, “The Africans were interested in Mauritania and not at all in our problem” of keeping the ROC in the United Nations. Also, a week earlier, Dean Rusk had a stern conversation with Ambassador Tsiang in New York. This conversation apparently “deeply shook the Generalissimo,” because Rusk bluntly told Tsiang that the ROC’s potential veto of Outer Mongolia’s application might affect the “basic relationship” between the United States and the ROC.

But on October 10, 1961, Vice President Ch’eng requested Kennedy to include a reference in his upcoming press conference to the fact that the United States would, if

\[44\] Ibid.

\[45\] Ibid.

\[46\] Memorandum from McGeorge Bundy to John F. Kennedy, October 4, 1961, FRUS 1961-63, 145.
necessary, use its veto power in the Security Council to prevent admission of the PRC to the United Nations and “save the [Nationalist] Chinese Government’s situation.” If Kennedy did not include such a statement, then the ROC delegation to the UN would veto Outer Mongolia’s application. It seemed as though the ROC Vice President was telling Kennedy what to say. Secretary of State Rusk recommended that Kennedy not comply with Ch’eng’s request because it would undermine the United States plan to establish the Chinese representation issue as an “important question.”

In response, Kennedy sent a message through Bundy to Ray Cline. Kennedy offered to give private assurances that if an American veto would be effective in preventing Chinese Communist entry into the UN, then the United States would use its veto. This assurance would have to remain secret because any public disclosure would be “deeply damaging to the common cause at the UN.” Bundy continued to state to Cline that Kennedy would use whatever would work, including the veto. Interestingly, Bundy confessed that Ambassador Drumright was not being kept fully informed of events, and urged that Drumright not be informed unless Cline believed the Ambassador needed to be included.

On October 14, 1961, Chiang Ching-kuo and Cline drafted a proposed understanding between Presidents Chiang and Kennedy. The United States would vote for Outer Mongolia’s admission to the UN and President Kennedy would reassure Chiang

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47 Memorandum from Dean Rusk to John F. Kennedy, October 10, 1961, FRUS 1961-63, 152-53.

48 Memorandum from McGeorge Bundy to Ray Cline, October 11, 1961, FRUS 1961-63, 154-55.
that his government was “the only rightful government representing China” with all the rights to represent China in the UN and that the United States firmly opposed Communist China’s entry into the United Nations. Meanwhile, Kennedy would privately assure Chiang “that if at any time a US veto is necessary” to prevent Chinese Communist entry into the UN, the U.S. would exercise that veto. Finally, the ROC would not veto Outer Mongolia’s application to join the United Nations. If these terms were acceptable to Kennedy, then Cline would arrange a meeting with President Chiang “where he will definitely commit himself to this reversal of position on Outer Mongolia . . . .”49 Upon receiving Chiang’s response from Cline, President Kennedy instructed Ambassador Drumright to assure Chiang that the U.S. would use the veto to prevent Chinese Communist entry into the UN, that the U.S. had always considered the ROC as the only rightful government representing China in the United Nations, and that the U.S. firmly opposed Chinese Communist entry into the United Nations.50 On December 15, 1961, the “important question” resolution passed the General Assembly 61-34 with seven abstentions.51

49 Message from Ray Cline to McGeorge Bundy, October 14, 1961, FRUS 1961-63, 156-57.


Despite the diplomatic progress made between the United States and the ROC on the Chinese representation issue in the UN, Komer still had his doubts as to its ultimate success. He argued that the ROC’s position on the world stage had already been “seriously eroded” and would become weaker with each succeeding session of the UN. Komer suggested that the Kennedy administration distance itself from Chiang’s regime without allowing the Nationalists to commit diplomatic suicide. The United States should gradually change its China policy to allow Communist China to enter the United Nations. Komer contended that “we can’t avoid the fact that a Two Chinas policy is fundamentally in our interest [and the GRC’s], not that of Peiping.” As long as the inevitable were postponed, Komer claimed, the harder it would be to get “two Chinas” accepted. The “important question/study committee” approach was a step in the right direction, but making private assurances and concessions to Chiang would “rob us of the necessary flexibility” to handle future problems.  

For the moment, though, the ROC’s seat in the UN was safe.

Through 1962 and 1963, the sense of crisis over the representation issue subsided. The Republic of China maintained its seat in the United Nations despite attempts by Communist Bloc nations, especially Albania, to replace it with the People’s Republic of China. The paucity of official correspondence in *Foreign Relations of the United States* and in John F. Kennedy’s Presidential Papers concerning the issue in 1962 and 1963 suggests that the membership debate was temporarily shelved, probably because of the

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52 Memorandum from Robert W. Komer to McGeorge Bundy, October 19, 1961, Box 22a, China, General, 10/61, NSF, JFKL.
“important question” tactic’s success.

Chiang, the Taiwan Strait, Return to the Mainland, and Vietnam

With the UN representation issue temporarily resolved, American policymakers became increasingly preoccupied with Chiang’s oft-repeated statements and schemes to “retake the mainland.” Chiang insisted on a Mainland return policy because his Nationalist government could not abandon its raison d’être. The Nationalists considered themselves the legitimate government of all China. Chiang never gave up on returning to the Mainland, and he still held two major islands in the Taiwan Strait, Quemoy and Matsu, both of which had been subjected to periodic shelling by the PRC throughout the 1950s.

Chiang’s moment of opportunity to attack and retake the Mainland seemed to arise in the early 1960s as the Mainland suffered through one of the worst famines in recorded history caused by Mao’s Great Leap Forward. Mao’s program promised to put China on an equal footing with the Americans and the Soviets through rapid industrialization and agricultural collectivization. Chinese peasants constructed homemade furnaces to make steel, experimented with close planting, deep ploughing and heavy fertilization to increase the food supply, constructed reservoirs and dams for irrigation, and birthed more children. But while farmers melted their metal tools in a pathetic attempt to increase the nation’s steel supply, most of 1958’s crop rotted in the

53 Chiao Chiao Hsieh, 140.

fields or was harvested and exported to repay loans from the Soviets. Meanwhile, nature wreaked havoc on the Mainland as typhoons flooded southern China while droughts and pests blighted the Chinese countryside. Between 1958 and 1961, the national famine caused forty to eighty million deaths.\(^{55}\)

In the wake of the Great Leap Forward’s failure, relations between the PRC and the Soviet Union deteriorated. Mao criticized Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev for not assisting the Communist Chinese during the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis and the 1959 border dispute with India. In April 1960, Mao declared the Chinese independent of the Soviet Union. As a result, Khrushchev recalled 1,400 scientists and engineers from the PRC that summer. The Soviet recall led to a drastic reduction in Mainland industrial production, disruptions in the national transportation system, and the transfer of workers to famine-affected areas.\(^{56}\) By 1961, the Mainland Communist regime was in trouble as the effects of famine spread throughout the country. Chiang saw his chance to return home in triumph.\(^{57}\)

Chiang’s dream of invading the Mainland from the Offshore Islands, however, was completely unrealistic. First, the United States had only committed to defend Taiwan and the Pescadore Islands, not the Offshore Islands of Quemoy and Matsu, in the Mutual


Defense Treaty of 1954. Second, the Offshore Islands were too close to the Mainland and too small from which to launch an invasion, although they could be used to dispatch small raiding parties and conduct intelligence operations. Chiang’s intentions toward the Mainland generated much concern and discussion in Washington, however, because many in the White House and State Department believed that he was a “loose cannon” who had to be reined in. Any attempt to oust him might only create a more unstable situation than already existed in East Asia.

Throughout 1961, some Kennedy administration officials grew concerned that Chiang would, indeed, attack Mainland China. George C. McGhee, Chairman of the State Department’s Policy Planning Committee, warned Secretary of State Dean Rusk that continued American support of the ROC’s Mainland ambitions “would endanger both . . . Taiwan and the U.S. itself.” Likewise, in May 1961, Deputy Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, U. Alexis Johnson, cautioned Assistant Secretary of State Chester Bowles that the crisis in the Taiwan Strait continued to be a “real danger to peace in the area” and “could well involve us in hostilities not of our own choosing and making.” Johnson privately suggested that the most practical means of bringing peace in the Taiwan Strait was to get the Nationalists to evacuate the Offshore Islands, but noted that this idea was unrealistic because it would force the Taiwanese to renounce their

58Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of China, Box 2, Folder 4, Series I, Dean Rusk Manuscript Collection, Richard B. Russell, Jr., Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia, Athens, GA.

59Draft Memorandum from McGhee to Dean Rusk, March 10, 1961, FRUS 1961-63, 27.
claim on the Mainland. Bowles strongly opposed a Taiwanese invasion of the Mainland. In his view, the idea that Chiang was the legitimate ruler of all China was only a myth and his plans to invade the Mainland would provoke the PRC to take defensive actions. The United States, Bowles argued, should discourage the ROC from launching a Mainland attack while pledging to defend Taiwan in the case of an attack from the PRC. This policy would allow American military assistance to Taiwan to decrease, and the savings could be invested in the ROC economy to stimulate growth.

Like McGhee and Johnson, Robert W. Komer of the National Security Council criticized ROC intentions to attack Mainland China. In late July 1961, Komer concluded that as Taiwan’s international position eroded, Chiang would take “an unyielding attitude” to guarantee his government’s claim as the sole government of the Mainland, the Offshore Islands and Taiwan. If Chiang were “painted into a corner,” he would take advantage of the economic crisis facing the People’s Republic of China “as a last chance to ‘return to the mainland.’” To rein in Chiang, Komer suggested that Kennedy encourage Chiang to evacuate the Offshore Islands. If Chiang persisted in his saber-rattling, Komer concluded that the U.S. could agree, “as a safety valve,” to small-scale drops of Taiwanese soldiers for purposes of intelligence gathering because the ROC could not conduct these missions without American logistical support. If Chiang were to

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ask the United States formally to assist a full-scale invasion of the Mainland, however, Komer suggested that Kennedy not approve “unless the situation there deteriorates to the point where we mutually agree it has good prospect of success.”

Komer probably used a June 1961 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE 43-61) entitled “Prospects for the GRC [Government of the Republic of China]” as the basis of his analysis. It predicted that Chiang would continue to “agitrate the question of taking probing actions against the mainland in order to capitalize on the economic distress and other sources of discontent” in the People’s Republic of China. The United States, therefore, should respond with caution because any major change in policy toward Taiwan, like forcing the evacuation of the Offshore Islands, would create profound bitterness and inflict a psychological shock on the Nationalists. The analysis warned that Chiang’s government could split into two factions, one willing to accept accommodation with the Chinese Communists and another favoring war with the Mainland regime.

As predicted in NIE 43-61, in July 1961, Chiang Kai-shek suggested to President Kennedy that the time was ripe for the ROC to launch an invasion of Mainland China. Chiang contended that, due to famine and natural disasters there, anti-communist groups were forming across the Mainland. In Chiang’s view, the PRC had become “the most vulnerable link in International Communism.” Chiang then suggested to Kennedy that both the United States and the ROC “give positive support to the Chinese people,” and to

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62 Memorandum from Robert W. Komer to John F. Kennedy, July 27, 1961, Box 22, China, General, 7/25/61-7/27/61, NSF, JFKL.

63 National Intelligence Estimate 43-61, June 20, 1961, FRUS 1961-63, 74-75.
contribute to the cause of human freedom, the United States and Taiwan “should together work out a coordinated plan to remove the Communist menace in East Asia and mainland China.”

The deteriorating situation in Southeast Asia complicated American efforts to check Chiang’s military ambitions. In 1961, the conflict in Vietnam was not high on the Kennedy administration’s priority list. It became readily apparent, though, that the United States would have to increase its involvement to preserve the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) and keep the regime of President Ngo Dinh Diem in power. For his part, Chiang hoped to use the Vietnam War as a means to become more involved in Southeast Asia and, in the long run, as another front in his civil war against Mao and the Mainland communist regime. Differing views within the Kennedy administration added to the complications. While high-ranking American policymakers in the State Department hoped to thwart Chiang’s desires to mobilize irregular troops in Southeast Asia, officials in the Department of Defense sought to use the ROC in the ever widening crisis in South Vietnam.

In October 1961, William P. Bundy, Assistant Secretary of Defense, indicated that President Diem of the Republic of Vietnam favored utilizing ROC troops in combat roles in South Vietnam against the National Liberation Front, or the Viet Cong. Diem, according to Bundy’s memorandum, believed that Chinese Nationalist troops could be brought into South Vietnam, naturalized as Vietnamese citizens, “and used profitably in

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64Letter from Chiang Kai-shek to John F. Kennedy, July 28, 1961, Box 26a, China, Subjects, Miscellaneous & Extra, 4/61-10/63, NSF, JFKL.
the Delta area, where there is already a large number of ethnic Chinese.” Even though Diem understood that the State Department had turned this idea down, he continued to press the issue. By December 1961, President Kennedy’s chief military advisor, retired General Maxwell Taylor, also suggested using Chinese Nationalist special forces in Vietnam. According to Taylor, Diem wanted to obtain between 3,000 and 5,000 ROC soldiers “for the purpose of assisting in training of the Civil Defense Force.”

Some State Department officials viewed the role of ROC troops in Vietnam differently and dismissed the idea that ROC troops should play any role in South Vietnam. Deputy Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs U. Alexis Johnson warned that the presence of Nationalist Chinese troops on the Asian mainland would open a “Pandora’s Box” because anti-Chinese prejudice was strong throughout Southeast Asia. Moreover, introducing ROC combat troops in Vietnam would draw Chinese Communist intervention and substantially change the Vietnamese situation and American policy objectives.

Meanwhile, the Nationalist Chinese had suggested the creation of a regional anti-communist alliance against the PRC. President Kennedy met with ROC Vice President

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Ch’en Ch’eng on July 31, 1961 to discuss organizing a common intelligence and military pool for the United States and its Asian allies. Ch’en wished to create greater unity between American and Asian forces, arguing that the Communists planned to attack the weakest link in the region and eventually create a bloc of countries opposed to United States interests in Southeast Asia. After a discussion of problems in Laos and Vietnam, Ch’en proposed that the ROC and the United States create a plan to share responsibility in Asia. According to Ch’en, free world “unity and organization is the way to counter Communist organization and unity.”

Incidentally, an October State Department Policy Planning Council report on Asian policy recommended that the United States recognize that the general conflict underway in Southeast Asia, instigated by the Communist Bloc, threatened the national independence of states in the region. The report called on the United States to take the appropriate international action to ensure the independence of the states on Communist China’s periphery. Such action, though, would cost millions. Two months later, the Military Assistance Steering Group in the State Department concurred with the Policy Planning Council and insisted that the United States “maximize western and pro-western strength in and around Vietnam and the U.S. position on the China issue.” The group estimated that ensuring Taiwan’s security would cost the United States around one billion

68 Memorandum of Conversation, July 31, 1961, Box 22, China, General, 8/1/61-8/10/61, NSF, JFKL.

dollars per year between 1962 and 1967. By the end of 1961, it became apparent that defending Taiwan, building the island’s economic security, and increasing American military involvement in South Vietnam was becoming an expensive proposition.

**The Committee of One Million and Congressional and Public Opinion**

In 1961, the Committee of One Million (COOM) grew increasingly concerned over changes in United States-China policy. Marvin Liebman and his supporters believed that the Kennedy administration had sent mixed signals concerning the American relationship with Communist China. As a result, they continued to pressure the federal government to keep the PRC out of the United Nations and to maintain recognition of the ROC as the sole government of China. The COOM hoped the upsurge of support they experienced in the 1950s would continue into the 1960s, but changes in the China Bloc’s leadership and the Committee’s difficulty in securing financial support began to weigh heavy on the COOM’s mission.

The Kennedy administration’s early appointments caused tremendous anxiety for the Committee of One Million. While Kennedy planned to continue President Eisenhower’s containment policy toward the PRC and support for the Republic of China, he also contemplated a closer working relationship with the PRC because of its imminent

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construction of a nuclear bomb.\textsuperscript{71} His appointment of advocates of a “two Chinas” policy to high ranking diplomatic posts led Liebman and other anti-communists to interpret Kennedy’s actions as moving toward a “two Chinas” policy, possibly resulting in Communist China’s entry into the UN and eventual American diplomatic recognition.\textsuperscript{72} In their view, Kennedy seemed to be threatening the status quo. The COOM’s Steering Committee therefore embarked on a new petition drive and letter-writing campaign, and exerted pressure on legislators to express the will of Congress against American and UN recognition of the Mainland regime.

By the beginning of 1961, though, some of the most vocal supporters of the COOM had left Congress. The retirements of William Knowland, Alexander Smith and John Vorys in 1958, and later of Walter Judd in 1962, left a gigantic void that the Committee of One Million had to fill. But no single member of Congress took the lead to advocate for the ROC in the 1960s. Nevertheless, Liebman still had a few congressional allies who served on the COOM’s Steering Committee, such as Senator Thomas Dodd (D-Connecticut) and Senator Jacob Javits (R-New York), and congressional opinion had


\textsuperscript{72}Leonard A. Kusnitz, \textit{Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: America’s China Policy, 1949-1979} (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), 95-96; Bachrack, 180-82. Chester Bowles, Adlai Stevenson, and Dean Rusk, at one time in their careers, each advocated a “two Chinas” policy, whereby the United States would continue to recognize the Republic of China on Taiwan diplomatically and co-exist with (but not recognize) the People’s Republic of China.
not yet changed significantly. On July 28, 1961, the Senate unanimously (76-0) adopted Senate Concurrent Resolution 34, opposing the admission of the People’s Republic of China into the United Nations and opposing American recognition of Communist China. On August 31, the House of Representatives also passed the resolution by a 395-0 roll-call vote. Even though this resolution was a tremendous success for the COOM, no congressman would attempt this type of resolution again.

Financial problems also hampered the Committee’s lobbying efforts. The Committee of One Million needed a steady income to remain in business and influence policy toward China. The Steering Committee hoped that sufficient donations would cover the costs of copying and mailing letters and petitions, publishing pamphlets and booklets, producing short filmstrips, meeting office expenses, and covering Liebman’s representation fees. Realizing that current donations would not cover these expenses, Liebman had to find new sources of income. The Committee raised funds through sales of its mailing list of 11,000 contributors to other organizations. Other income came from sales of pamphlets, booklets, and filmstrips. The Committee’s largest source of income, however, came from individual donations. On average, the Committee raised $55-60,000 per year from nearly 10,000 contributors across the country. Each year between 1959 and 1969, the Committee sponsored a letter and petition campaign that

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73 Congressional Quarterly Almanac 17 (1961), 351

74 Letter from Marvin Liebman to Mrs. William Petersen, December 15, 1965, Correspondence Series, Box 18, Folder P, Committee of One Million, Marvin Liebman Collection, Hoover Institution of War, Peace, and Revolution, Library and Archives, Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA, hereafter cited as MLC. The Committee sold its list to other organizations for $25 per one thousand names.
solicited names, addresses, and money. In this same period, however, public contributions to the Committee of One Million actually fell from $69,688.54 to $46,515.00, a 33.25 percent decrease.\(^7^5\) While some campaigns did produce higher-than-average income, the costs of fund-raising increased from 33.0 percent to 78.8 percent of the total funds raised.\(^7^6\) Liebman encountered great difficulty both raising and saving money. For example, in the fiscal year ending March 31, 1962, the Committee reported $85,502.17 in public contributions and film royalties, but spent $81,653.99 on committee projects and administrative expenses. This left the Committee with $3,848.18 in the bank.\(^7^7\) In some years, Liebman had only hundreds of dollars in the bank.

Some of Liebman’s supporters accused the COOM of being more anti-communist Chinese than being pro-Taiwan. In an August 1961 letter, Gilbert Jonas made several recommendations as to how to approach the “two Chinas” problem. He recommended that Liebman should focus on the ROC’s economic and social achievements, because “the American public rarely supports political alternatives for negative reasons over an extended period of time.” If the Committee would take a more positive approach in promoting the ROC’s successes rather than the PRC’s failures, “Free China can develop

\(^7^5\)Statement of Cash Receipts and Disbursements, Year Ended March 31, 1960, China File, Box 177, Folder 2, Walter Judd Manuscript Collection, Hoover Institution of War, Peace and Revolution Library and Archives, Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA, hereafter cited as WJC; Bachrack, 160.

\(^7^6\)Statement of Cash Receipts and Disbursements for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1962, China File, Box 177, Folder 2, WJC; Bachrack, 160.

\(^7^7\)Statement of Cash Receipts and Disbursements for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1962, Subject File Series, Box 70, Folder 183, MLC.
an even more effective body of American support representing a fuller cross-section of American opinion and power. Such an undertaking would seek to develop and support an image of Free China as a strong, reliable ally.  

In fact, the Committee of One Million could not successfully relay its anti-communist Chinese message to the country as it planned. The individuals recruited to work on petition drives and solicit potential donors faced problems. Some lacked the background knowledge to explain the situation in China. Others who wished to participate simply lacked the funds to donate. One individual who passed around petitions for the Committee explained to Walter Judd that, “I find that more than three people out of four are unwilling to sign it [the petition] because they tell me I can’t explain to their satisfaction why Red China as a world power should be kept out of the United Nations.” This example helps to explain the limits of the COOM’s pamphleteering campaigns.

The Committee of One Million also faced criticism from the press. The magazine Nation noted the tremendous gap between the Committee of One Million’s claimed and actual support. Urban Whitaker, a professor of international relations at San Francisco State College, wrote an article that questioned the organization’s membership numbers. Whitaker commented that in 1961 the COOM had only 6,000 contributing members, but

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78Letter from Gilbert Jonas to Marvin Liebman, August 8, 1961, Correspondence Series, Box 19, Folder S (Misc.), MLC.

79Letter from Ellsworth H. Augustus to Judd, June 7, 1961, China File, Box 179, Folder 5, WJC.
printed some 25,000 to 35,000 copies of its literature and brochures for distribution.\(^{80}\)

While Whitaker doubted the COOM’s membership figures, Harry W. Ernst, a staff writer for the \textit{Charleston Gazette} of West Virginia, exposed discrepancies among members of Congress listed as supporting the COOM. On one handout concerning American abandonment of the United Nations should Communist China join, the COOM claimed support from fifty-five Senators and 295 Representatives. But when Ernst’s publisher, W. E. Chilton III, wrote to fifty of the Congressional endorsers listed, only twenty-five responded. Among the twenty-five respondents, only three claimed the United States should leave the United Nations, while the “overwhelming majority of the Congressional endorsers who replied to \textit{The Gazette}’s inquiry revealed that they disagreed with the radical statement which the Committee of One Million had circulated across the country” in their name.\(^{81}\)

Despite the lack of a clearly defined China Bloc, the most ardent supporters of the status quo in United States-Taiwan policy were some of the most senior representatives and senators on Capitol Hill. Their collective argument was that the island of Taiwan was a strategic base of operations against the spread of international communism during the Cold War. The United States, therefore, was obligated to send as much financial and military support to the ROC as necessary to prevent Taiwan from falling into the hands of Communist China. Others, recognizing the millions of dollars the United States had


already pumped into the Taiwanese economy since the 1950s, viewed the island and its government as friendly and open to American business interests. Although some criticized the amount of aid the island received, there was no groundswell of public support behind significant changes in China policy.

Among congressional leaders who expressed their support for Taiwan in terms of its strategic value, Senator Albert Gore, Sr., (D-Tennessee), was one of the earliest and most ardent supporters of Chiang Kai-shek’s regime. Senator Gore’s correspondence reflected his support for the status quo. In a 1962 letter to a Knoxville businessman, Gore argued that the United States should keep its commitment to Chiang Kai-shek and assist in the defense of Quemoy and Matsu in the event of an attack by the PRC.  

While some legislators chose to support the status quo in terms of containing the spread of Chinese communism, other legislators focused on the promotion of American business interests. One such legislator interested in business ties with the Republic of China was Senator John G. Tower (R-Texas). He believed that American businessmen could make great profits through strong ties with the ROC. With the help of Senator Tower, Dallas-based Hunt Oil Company negotiated with the Nationalist Chinese government for permission to drill for oil off the Taiwanese coast. To ensure the negotiations’ success, Senator Tower wrote several ROC leaders (Ch’en Ch’eng, C. T.

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82Letter to Albert Gore, Sr., from Thomas G. Shea, July 10, 1962, Box B22, Folder 5, Albert Gore, Sr., Manuscript Collection, Albert Gore, Sr., Research Center, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN; Letter to Thomas G. Shea from Albert Gore, Sr., July 12, 1962, Box B22, Folder 5, Albert Gore, Sr., Manuscript Collection, Albert Gore, Sr., Research Center, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN.
Yang, C. T. Yen and George Yeh), advising them “that the Hunt family . . . are well and favorably known to me as among the outstanding business families in our country. . . . I can, likewise, advise you that the Hunt Oil Company . . . are successful and experienced, financially sound, and have a reputation for complete integrity.” In response, C. K. Yen commented to Senator Tower that “your advice will add to our knowledge of [the company’s] status and reputation.”

Congressional support for Chiang and the ROC, however, was by no means unanimous. Senator Allen J. Ellender (D-Louisiana) criticized the ROC and the amount of American aid given to the controversial Taiwanese government. Ellender traveled to Taiwan in 1961, and later in 1968, as part of various “fact-finding” missions. A fiscal conservative, he distrusted the State Department and used these trips to check upon the State Department. On these trips, Ellender received first-hand information as to the successes and failures of the American aid program in the ROC. The senator planned to investigate how American money, in the form of military and non-military aid, was being spent and how this aid improved the Taiwanese economy.

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83Letter from John G. Tower to Chen Cheng, C. T. Yang, C. T. Yen and George Yeh, June 29, 1962, V.I.P. Correspondence Series, Box 255, Folder 6, John G. Tower Manuscript Collection, Special Collections, A. Frank Smith, Jr., Library Center, Southwestern University, Georgetown, TX; Letter from C. K. Yen to John G. Tower, July 7, 1962, V.I.P. Correspondence Series, Box 255, Folder 6, John G. Tower Manuscript Collection, Special Collections, A. Frank Smith, Jr., Library Center, Southwestern University, Georgetown, TX.

In 1961, Ellender criticized American spending on Taiwan. He noted in his November 1961 trip journal that the United States provided $30 million in grants to open several fertilizer plants and $40 million to improve Taiwan’s railroad system. He particularly objected to the latter, stating that “Under no circumstances should we put up another cent, either by way of grants or loans, unless the railroad becomes self-sustaining and the rates are high enough to amortize the cost over a long period.” Ellender’s call for efficiency also stretched to American control over Taiwanese civilian air operations, where the senator found out that the United States financed such operations. Noting that one particular airport was self-sustaining, Ellender wondered “why we should continue to pay any of the expenses incident to its operation. If someone is needed, then I say let the local government pay for technicians.” Ellender concluded that “with all the technical assistance given by us to the people of the Island, individual initiative should be fostered to the end that a prosperous middle class can be created.”

Letters to the editor of the *New York Times* throughout the 1960s also questioned the nature of the American-Taiwanese relationship. One letter, published on the day of President Kennedy’s inauguration, criticized American isolation of the PRC. James P. Warburg, a well-published critic of American Cold War policy, argued that because “Chiang Kai-shek stands no chance of reconquering the mainland” and because both

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85 Notes from Senator Ellender’s 1961 Trip to Taiwan, Book XXIII, 344-49, 351, Box 1567, Folder 6, Allen J. Ellender Manuscript Collection, Manuscripts Division, Allen J. Ellender Library, Nicholls State University, Thibodaux, LA, hereafter cited as AJE.

86 For an Independent Taiwan: Suggestion Made that We Sponsor the Creation of Republic,” Letters to The Times, *New York Times*, January 20, 1961, 28:5; William C.
Mainland China and the ROC on Taiwan reject the “two Chinas solution,” self-determination for the Taiwanese people would be the only recourse to maintain the peace. If the United States supported this solution, then “the United States would no longer be in danger of isolation and humiliating diplomatic defeat.” ¹⁸⁷

A May 1961 letter by Ernest T. Nash of Woodland, CA, also called for the United States to drop its support of Chiang Kai-shek in favor of self-determination for Taiwan. The author criticized American policy, because it put Chiang in a situation of either drawing the United States into a war with the PRC or turning his guns on the United States for not supporting his regime. According to the author, it was possible for the Taiwanese to be rid of the Kuomintang’s rule, deny Taiwan to the Communists, and abandon militancy in favor of neutrality for Taiwan. ¹⁸⁸

**Conclusion**

President John F. Kennedy did not publicly support changes in China policy. But by the end of 1961, Kennedy had appointed a staff of China experts to important foreign policy advisory positions in both the National Security Council Staff and the State Department who believed that the Eisenhower-Dulles policy of containing and isolating Communist China was unrealistic. They quietly promoted a new policy whereby the

¹⁸⁷Ibid.

United States could work toward improving relations with the PRC while maintaining its alliance with the ROC. Chiang Kai-shek, though, believed that the United States had begun to abandon his island bastion. He sought out his friends and supporters within the U.S. governmental bureaucracy, especially within the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense, to present his views and to encourage the Kennedy administration to preserve the status quo. The Committee of One Million, despite its financial problems, also relayed Chiang’s sentiments and pressured Congress and the administration for continued support. Taiwan thus retained its seat in the United Nations, but forced Kennedy to acknowledge privately that the U.S. would use its veto to prevent Chinese Communist entry into the UN. A nearly unanimous vote by Congress opposing admission of Communist China into the UN also did not make matters easy for the Kennedy administration. But while Chiang hoped to use this momentum to persuade the United States to support his quest to retake the Mainland and to increase his involvement in Southeast Asia, Kennedy’s staffers proposed ideas that would check Chiang’s ambitions.
CHAPTER IV
THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION
AND CHINA POLICY, 1962-63

In 1962 and 1963, United States policy toward the Republic of China (ROC) faced tough challenges. Throughout 1962, the Kennedy administration received requests to increase military assistance from ROC President Chiang Kai-shek. Meanwhile, discussion of a proposed “two Chinas” policy emerged within the State Department and Congress. Policymakers, legislators and the American public split along lines similar to the Chinese UN representation crisis of 1961. While Chiang’s supporters in Congress attempted to convince Kennedy to provide assistance and support an invasion, others favored delaying and restraining Chiang. Meanwhile, some State Department officials supported a more accommodating relationship with the People’s Republic of China (PRC) by the end of 1963.

Keeping Chiang on a “Tight Leash,” 1962-63

Some American analysts predicted that Chiang would use the deteriorating situation on the mainland as a reason to launch an attack. Robert W. Komer believed that the Taiwan Strait crisis would pose a problem for the United States in 1962. Komer based his views on Chiang’s New Year’s Day address of 1962 in which he publicly
proclaimed that the ROC was ready to launch a major assault on the mainland to assist uprisings against the PRC and that the United States would support his actions.¹

In January 1962, Robert Komer predicted that Chiang Kai-shek would take advantage of the instability on the Mainland and send his army into southeastern China to overthrow the Communists. After all, the Mainland continued to suffer from the effects of famine caused by Mao’s Great Leap Forward, and the rift between the PRC and the Soviet Union deepened by early 1962. This could very well be Chiang’s best opportunity. But since the ROC lacked the necessary resources for a full-scale attack, Chiang would demand American assistance and, thus, draw the United States into a war with Communist China and, possibly, the Soviet Union as well. Such a war, Komer warned, would require “substantial US air cover, air and sea lift, and logistical support.”² Even small scale probing operations, intended to determine the true strength of PRC forces and support in southern China, would lead to further escalation.³ Since a Taiwanese offensive threatened war between the U.S. and the PRC, Komer suggested that the United States stall any proposed ROC invasion of the Mainland. To keep the peace, Komer argued, Chiang had to be kept on a “tight leash” and the U.S. had to dissuade him from attacking


³Ibid.
Chiang outlined his plan of invasion during a February 1962 meeting in Taipei with CIA official Ray Cline and National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy, in which he insisted that this action would have a tremendous effect on the free world. He further pressed President Kennedy to take immediate action to rescue the Mainland from Chinese Communist enslavement. Chiang later asserted to U.S. Ambassador Everett F. Drumright that “any delay may allow Communists to retrieve [the] situation.” Drumright urged Chiang to take into consideration world opinion and American responsibilities, because Americans would be cautious about opening a new front in the Cold War. After his talk with Chiang, Drumright warned the State Department that Chiang was determined to order a mainland invasion that year. To prevent a war, the United States had to channel Chiang’s actions “in directions we deem appropriate.”

Chiang Ching-kuo, Minister without Portfolio and Deputy Secretary General of the National Defense Council, also attempted to persuade American policymakers on the pertinency of invading the PRC. In a March 1962 meeting with Roger Hilsman, Director

4Ibid.


7Ibid.
of Intelligence and Research in the State Department, Chiang Ching-kuo declared that the Chinese Communists were responsible for all the Americans’ problems in Vietnam, South Korea, and Laos. As the PRC threatened both ROC and American interests, Defense Minister Chiang proposed the United States provide Taiwan airplanes to drop several two hundred-man Taiwanese teams of paratroopers onto the Mainland. These paratroopers, according to the general, could overcome larger local defense forces and successfully resist PRC forces in southern China. A hesitant Hilsman compared the Defense Minister’s proposal with earlier American problems in Cuba, noting that the Mainland Chinese were discontented, but would not risk their lives unless they were very sure of success.⁸

Kennedy, concerned that a Taiwanese invasion of the mainland would force a major shift in American policy, sent Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs W. Averell Harriman to Taiwan to clarify the American position. Fearing a Bay of Pigs type fiasco in Asia, Kennedy asked Harriman to learn as much as he could from President Chiang about his precise plans and estimates. Kennedy also asked Harriman to warn Chiang that his request for dropping teams of two hundred soldiers into southern China with American air support “would be a major shift in policy for us and would have to be supported by compelling evidence.”⁹

⁸Memorandum for the Record, March 19, 1962, Box 1, Folder 3, Papers of John F. Kennedy, Presidential Papers, White House Staff Files, Roger Hilsman Papers, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, Boston, MA, hereafter cited as Hilsman Papers, JFKL.

Harriman and Ralph Clough, Deputy Chief of Mission in the American Embassy in Taipei, reminded President Chiang that, if he intended to invade the PRC, he had to consult the United States according to the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1954. Chiang insisted that “he would not do anything behind [Kennedy’s] back nor anything detrimental or harmful to US.” The Taiwanese president then asked for direct American intervention in the first stage of his plan, American air drops of ROC paratroopers into southern China. Chiang pleaded with Harriman and Clough that his plan would definitely succeed, but Clough asked Chiang to remain patient and continue consultations with American officials. Chiang argued he was not personally impatient, but his people and his armed forces were impatient; he then ominously warned that if actions were not taken against the PRC soon, “things might begin to happen not according to plan.”

Cline believed that President Kennedy had few available options to calm the situation between the ROC and the PRC. He argued that it was important to delay Chiang’s plan, meanwhile Kennedy had only two courses of action and both would result in disruption and war. First, he could flatly refuse Chiang’s request, which would lead to a destabilization of the Taiwanese government, military, bureaucracy and society, and could possibly lead to “desperation” attacks by the ROC against the PRC’s southern coast. Chiang might even resign as President of the ROC, causing tremendous disruptions on Taiwan and in United States-ROC relations. Alternatively, Kennedy

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11 Memorandum from Edward Rice to W. Averell Harriman, March 28, 1962, *FRUS 1961-63*, 198-99. The six to twelve month preparation time could also have been a
could agree to provide aircraft to support one ROC operation of fifty to one hundred men against the PRC. The six to twelve months of preparation time could then be used to keep in close contact with the ROC regarding the project’s preparation and, “if deemed necessary, to make plans for dealing with successors to Chiang Kai-shek if we subsequently were to decide that we should discontinue our support of his plans.”

Although American options were limited, a March 1962 intelligence estimate predicted that any ROC invasion of the Mainland would lead to disaster. Special National Intelligence Estimate (SNIE) 13-3-62, entitled “Probable Consequences of Chinese Nationalist Military Operations on the Chinese Mainland,” concluded that the Communists would retain control of the Mainland in the wake of a ROC invasion. The intelligence analysts concluded that if the ROC deployed special forces on the Mainland, they would receive little or no support from the Chinese and “they would almost certainly be destroyed in a short time.” The report predicted that such an invasion could only be successful with American assistance. An American refusal to assist the ROC would strain U.S.-ROC relations, and Taiwanese leaders would probably invade the Mainland anyway. Regardless of American support, the estimate predicted that both Communist China and the Soviet Union “would launch major propaganda and political campaigns

\[12\] Ibid.

against the GRC and the US,”14 and that the PRC would retaliate with military action in
the Taiwan Strait.

Chairman Mao Zedong and the key leaders of the Communist party reacted firmly
to Chiang’s invasion overtures. Taking Chiang’s rhetoric seriously, Mao ordered
increased combat readiness in the southeastern coastal provinces.15 In addition to
increasing military preparedness, the PRC used its Warsaw channel to express its strong
indignation at Chiang’s plans to the United States government. American and Mainland
Chinese diplomats had met unofficially in Warsaw on an irregular basis to discuss
matters of mutual concern since the late 1950s. After hearing their concerns, U.S.
delegates privately reassured the Chinese Communists that the United States would not
support Chiang’s invasion plans.16

As Chiang continued his verbal threats of a Mainland invasion and the Taiwanese
press declared military action against the PRC imminent, Ralph Clough warned Averell
Harriman that the movement to retake the Mainland was gaining momentum. He
recommended that American officials stop encouraging ROC military preparations
without overtly opposing Taiwan’s unilateral proposals and objectives. This, according
to Clough, would be a very difficult balancing act. The United States had to satisfy

14Ibid.

15Li Jie, “Changes in China’s Domestic Situation in the 1960s and Sino-U.S.
Robert S. Ross and Jiang Changbin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001),
273.

Chiang that it fully supported his cause without allowing him to launch a Mainland assault.¹⁷

In March 1962, Kennedy decided to send American aircraft to Taiwan, but refused to participate directly in Chiang’s plans. The President wanted to show Chiang his support, but did not want to promote active participation, thereby maintaining American flexibility. Despite Komer’s advice to McGeorge Bundy, President Kennedy proposed that the U.S. send Taiwan two C-123 aircraft to be flown by Chinese crews trained in the United States. The C-123s could be used to haul cargo and as many as sixty-one fully-equipped troops. These planes had previously been used in Vietnam to airlift South Vietnamese units around the country and to launch Vietnamese combat parachute assaults.¹⁸ Kennedy then asked Ray Cline to make it clear to Chiang “that no commitment was being made other than to prepare the planes and be willing to consider their use in the light of the intelligence available in October.”¹⁹ Kennedy also asked Cline to persuade ROC government officials to drop public discussion of plans for invading the mainland.²⁰ Kennedy spelled out American policy in a separate memo to Cline and expressed his hope that events on the Mainland would assist a PRC turn toward freedom.

¹⁷Telegram from Ralph Clough to W. Averell Harriman, March 30, 1962, FRUS 1961-63, 202-03.


¹⁹Memorandum for the Record, March 31, 1962, FRUS 1961-63, 204-05.

²⁰Ibid.
Kennedy warned President Chiang against an immediate invasion. Rather, the United States and Taiwan should continue to “conduct jointly further investigation of conditions on the Mainland [to determine the feasibility of any military actions, specifically using probing teams jointly trained, equipped and supervised by the U.S. and the ROC].”

Although the United States had prepared two C-123s for Chinese use and pledged to train Chinese crews to drop teams of two hundred paratroopers onto the mainland, the United States had made no final decision to proceed with preparing this capability. In addition, the United States would publicly deny any such joint consultation, and the ROC should cease official public discourse and publication of news articles concerning mainland invasion plans.

Throughout early April 1962, Cline met regularly with President Chiang and Chiang Ching-kuo. In those meetings, Cline convinced Chiang and his son to postpone the target date for an initial air drop from June until October 1, 1962, but President Chiang wanted Kennedy’s reassurance that he would fully support the ROC’s plans, especially regarding the drop date and mutual study of plans for military operations. On hearing of Chiang’s position, McGeorge Bundy warned Cline that the U.S. position “must be that it stands on what is outlined . . . We cannot safely get ourselves in the

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21 Memorandum to Ray Cline, March 31, 1962, Box 22a, China, General, CIA Cables, 3/62-4/62, NSF, JFKL.

22 Ibid.

23 Telegram from Ralph Clough to John McCone, April 14, 1962, FRUS 1961-63 Microfiche, Document 40.
Meanwhile, Ralph Clough discussed with ROC Foreign Minister Shen Changhai a Taiwanese press report playing up an imminent Taiwanese invasion of the Mainland. Clough complained to Shen that the U.S. government was aware of an independent press story by Taiwanese journalist Lien Ho-pao, quoting Ambassador Tsiang Ting-fu, that Presidents Kennedy and Chiang were seriously considering attacking Mainland China. Shen reassured Clough that his government had nothing to do with the story, and noted that the government press had been much more careful in discussing any possible invasion. He also claimed he had taken steps earlier to make sure that the press did not sensationalize the invasion issue, and thereby stir up public opinion. But even in Taiwan, claimed Shen, such a story could not be ignored by the press.  

On returning from his meetings with President Chiang, Ray Cline delivered Chiang’s response to President Kennedy’s position. According to Chiang, Communist Chinese internal stability was beginning to break down, as evidenced by the large number of starving Mainland refugees fleeing into Hong Kong. This exodus was proof that the Mainland Communists had lost support and were ripe to be overthrown. Cline further commented that “it is essential for it [ROC] to plan and prepare for both clandestine and military actions to support anti-Communist resistance forces on the Mainland.”

\[\text{24}^{24}\text{Message from McGeorge Bundy to Ray Cline, April 17, 1962, FRUS 1961-63, 218-19.}\]

\[\text{25}^{25}\text{Telegram from Ralph Clough to Department of State, April 10, 1962, FRUS 1961-63, 214-15.}\]

\[\text{26}^{26}\text{Memorandum for the Record, May 17, 1962, FRUS 1961-63, 227-29.}\]
was willing to take sole responsibility for any attack, but he proposed that operations should be decided upon jointly between the United States and Taiwan. On Chiang’s behalf, Cline further stated that Taiwan was “obliged to take certain prudent military preparedness measures to be ready to intervene in case the situation deteriorates to the point where the U.S. agrees that action is in the Free World interest.”

Cline also conveyed that Chiang was under intense pressure from top ranks in the ROC military to take action against the mainland in the near future. Chiang had promised not to take action until after October 1, 1962, when, as he hoped to explain to his generals, the U.S. would deliver more equipment. Chiang, therefore, asked for sixteen B-57 bombers and twenty to twenty-five landing ship tanks (LSTs) for amphibious forces. Provision of these items, Cline relayed, “would convince people actual preparations were being made and would permit further delays to be weathered more gracefully.”

While Cline relayed Chiang’s initial invasion plans, Averell Harriman debated Taiwanese military finances with Kiang Yi-seng, Minister of the ROC to the United States. Harriman complained that large increases in military spending had caused inflation and might result in a harmful diversion of investment resources from Taiwan’s economy. While Kiang stated that he had received no official news on this spending for war preparation, he promised to get back to Harriman with his findings. Harriman demanded an end to such high military spending through immediate discussions between

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27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.
American and ROC officials. The CIA later determined that Taiwan had built facilities to store 65,000 tons of petroleum products. Nearly NT$650,000,000 had been spent on war preparations since July 1960. But between then and April 27, 1962, the ROC had spent a total of NT$800,000,000 on war preparations.

In May 1962, as tensions mounted between the United States and Taiwan over Chiang’s preparations to attack the mainland, President Kennedy appointed a new ambassador to the ROC, retired U.S. Admiral Alan G. Kirk. A long-time friend of the Kennedy family, Kirk had been Ambassador Joseph P. Kennedy’s naval attaché at the U.S. embassy in London in the late 1930s. Upon his appointment, Kirk commented that Chiang intended to drag the United States into his invasion plans. Kennedy agreed, but the President wanted more intelligence on the mainland situation before sending Taiwan’s requested materials. Kennedy then dispatched Kirk to Taipei to speak candidly to Chiang and warn him not to attack the PRC.

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30 CIA Information Telegram, May 10, 1962, Box 25, China, Cables, 5/62, NSF, JFKL.


While Kennedy and Kirk sought more intelligence on which to base a decision, Roger Hilsman worried that the mainland regime had already mobilized its forces across from the Offshore Islands. In June 1962, he reported to Secretary Rusk that the Communist Chinese had “probably” moved their forces to deter a ROC attack and were positioning themselves “for a sudden, all-out military effort to take either or both Quemoy and Matsu.” If the Chinese Communists attacked, Hilsman concluded that “a direct confrontation of U.S. and Chinese Nationalist interests seems very likely.”\textsuperscript{34} The U.S. would face tremendous pressure from Chiang, his friends in Southeast Asia, and from within the United States to assist in defending the islands.\textsuperscript{35}

By the summer of 1962, therefore, the Kennedy administration was somewhat divided over the wisdom of U.S. military support for Chiang. Some analysts questioned whether the defense of Taiwan and the Offshore Islands was worth risking American lives. Averell Harriman requested a report determining whether or not the United States should continue to restrain Chiang and how far the U.S. should go to defend Taiwan.\textsuperscript{36} The next day, Roger Hilsman warned that a decision not to defend Taiwan might risk increased pressure from the PRC to seize Quemoy and Matsu, which would cause a major

\textsuperscript{34}Memorandum from Roger Hilsman to Dean Rusk, n.d., Box 1, Folder 4, Hilsman Papers, JFKL; Memorandum from Roger Hilsman to Dean Rusk, June 18, 1962, \textit{FRUS 1961-63}, 247-49.

\textsuperscript{35}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{36}“Meeting: The White House,” June 20, 1962, Box 1, Folder 4, Hilsman Papers, JFKL.
rift in U.S.-ROC relations. The Offshore Islands Working Group in the State Department’s Office of East Asian Affairs agreed with Hilsman. The group, composed of delegates from the departments of State and Defense, the CIA and the White House, proposed that the United States take a much larger role in assisting the ROC in the event of a Chinese Communist attack, which could be done by obtaining intelligence, consulting with American allies, and providing “appropriate logistic material support to Taiwan only.” In addition, deploying air and naval units to Taiwan would assist the ROC in repelling any attack, including launching non-nuclear attacks against the Mainland.\textsuperscript{38}

When Ambassador Kirk arrived in Taipei in early July 1962 to meet with President Chiang Kai-shek and Minister without Portfolio Chiang Ching-kuo, he cautioned them about how important it was for it to seem that aggression was coming from the Chinese Communists. President Chiang assured Kirk that the ROC would not initiate Chinese hostilities for the sake of Quemoy and Matsu, but he warned that the Communists might attack one of the smaller islands to see if and how the U.S. would react. Kirk reiterated President Kennedy’s position that the U.S. would not send more military assistance for offensive operations until it could obtain more complete intelligence about the situation in the PRC. However, he did indicate that the two C-123s


\textsuperscript{38}Draft Outline, “Contingency Planning-Taiwan Straits,” June 25, 1962, Box 23, China, General, 6/62, NSF, JFKL; Meeting of Offshore Islands Working Group, June 25, 1962, Box 23, China, General, 6/62, NSF, JFKL. Some members of the Offshore Islands Working Group included W. Averell Harriman, Roger Hilsman, Paul Nitze, Ray Cline, and Michael V. Forrestal.
would be ready in October for the ROC to use.39 Chiang inquired about American press reports that the United States had assured the PRC in informal talks at Warsaw that the U.S. would not assist the ROC in its quest to retake the Mainland. Kirk misleadingly replied that this was not correct. After receiving this reassurance, Chiang expressed his confidence in full U.S. compliance with its commitments to the ROC, and stated that he would not take any unilateral action without consulting with the United States.40

Ambassador Kirk concluded from his meeting that President Chiang and his son were attempting to determine the real intentions of the United States. In a report to the State Department, Kirk questioned whether the United States should provide bombers and landing craft to the ROC, or whether granting them to Chiang’s government would display American trust in the ROC and indicate the U.S. desire to help Chiang recover the Mainland. Kirk stated that the cool American response to the ROC request for such weapons was being taken by ROC officials as an indication of unwillingness to help. Nevertheless, Kirk advised the State Department to delay such deliveries because the types of material requested were obviously of an offensive nature and “its release to the [ROC] cannot be concealed.”41

Ambassador Kirk understood that the United States had to walk a fine line between refusing to commit itself to an ROC Mainland invasion and foreclosing any


40Ibid.

41Telegram from Alan G. Kirk to Department of State, July 27, 1962, FRUS 1961-63, 294-95.
future possibility of a ROC role on the Mainland. Therefore, in August 1962, Kirk proposed that the United States provide Chiang material on the condition that the U.S. oversee Taiwanese military planning. Kirk also thought that ROC officials needed to increase their intelligence-gathering and undertake, with American support, a contingency study of their ability to attack the Mainland in the event of a Communist attack on the Offshore Islands or in support of an uprising on the Mainland. If the ROC agreed to these terms, Kirk recommended that the U.S. could move two C-123s to Taiwan for use with reduced crews. This minimal military aid would allow the Kennedy administration to back away from the previously approved 200-man drops because of the limited capacity of the C-123s. Harriman agreed with Kirk’s proposal, which essentially ensured that Chiang Kai-shek would not be able to launch an assault against Communist China with a large number of paratroopers.42

Meanwhile, some ROC officials sought to plan an amphibious assault across the Taiwan Strait.43 In late August, ROC officials requested an export license for two hundred rubber rafts from the United States. Upon learning this, Ambassador Kirk determined that they “doubtless” intended these boats, along with other equipment supplied under the American Military Assistance Program (MAP), for an “eventual attack

42 Memorandum from W. Averell Harriman to John F. Kennedy, August 8, 1962, Box 88, Department of State, 8/62-12/62, Papers of John F. Kennedy, Presidential Papers, President’s Office Files, Departments and Agencies, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, Boston, MA, hereafter cited as POF, JFKL; Memorandum from W. Averell Harriman to Alan G. Kirk, August 8, 1962, Box 23, China, General, 7/62-8/62, NSF, JFKL.

43 Telegram from Alan G. Kirk to W. Averell Harriman, August 23, 1962, FRUS 1961-63, 305-06.
on mainland.” As the boats would not significantly affect ROC capabilities for unilateral action, and as they could easily be obtained from Japan or elsewhere, Kirk saw no point in refusing the export license. Rather than antagonizing ROC officials and creating the impression that the United States did not trust the ROC to keep its word, the Ambassador recommended granting the license request.

Ambassador Kirk hoped that his September 6, 1962 meeting with Chiang Kai-shek would settle issues concerning airborne and amphibious assaults against the Mainland. Kirk notified Chiang that the U.S. would send two C-123s to Taiwan when they were ready and the crews trained. However, after Chiang thanked Kirk for the aircraft, the Ambassador further informed Chiang that President Kennedy refused to provide Chiang with the bombers and landing craft because “they would certainly appear aggressive in character.” Through the discussion, Kirk learned that Chiang wanted to go further and airdrop larger teams to seize cities and rally the people to the Nationalist cause. When Chiang asked what the American response would be if large-scale rebellion broke out on the Mainland, Kirk remained non-committal, but assured him that President Kennedy and his advisors would have to examine the situation closely before making any decisions. Chiang then warned Kirk that if the Kennedy administration prevented the ROC from going ahead with these airdrop plans, he would have great difficulty

\[\text{\footnotesize 44Ibid.}\]

\[\text{\footnotesize 45Ibid.}\]

\[\text{\footnotesize 46Memorandum of Conversation, September 6, 1962, FRUS 1961-63, 306-11.}\]

\[\text{\footnotesize 47Ibid.}\]
Ibid. Delivery of the C-123s remained in dispute until February 1963. United States and ROC officials argued over control and ownership of the aircraft and how the aircraft were to be used. President Kennedy proposed to send the aircraft to Taiwan but keep them under U.S. control and ownership with ROC crews. The aircraft were to be used in South Vietnam and in mainland operations only with agreement of both ROC and U.S. officials. According to Ralph Clough, Kennedy’s proposal appeared to have been well-received by President Chiang and his son. See note, Letter from John F. Kennedy to Chiang Kai-shek, February 15, 1963, FRUS 1961-63, 347; Memorandum from Ralph Clough to W. Averell Harriman, March 2, 1963, FRUS 1961-63, 352.

The efforts of Kirk, Harriman, and others seemed to pay dividends. By the beginning of October, American officials in Taiwan noted a decrease in invasion rhetoric coming from the Taiwanese government and press. Ralph Clough observed that the ROC drive to attack the Mainland, though not abandoned, had been forced into “low gear.” Conversations between U.S. and Taiwanese officials concerning a possible “counterattack” no longer expressed urgency. There were also no new reports of “forced-draft” activities, which indicated that military training was returning to normal. Nevertheless, the ROC continued to launch small-scale intelligence gathering operations against the Mainland. These operations, which had begun during the Korean War, had sunk a number of PRC vessels and had attempted to land Nationalist soldiers to obtain and relay intelligence. A December 1962 report by the Central Intelligence Agency noted that the ROC was using fishing boats as “motherships” to land infiltration

48Ibid. Delivery of the C-123s remained in dispute until February 1963. United States and ROC officials argued over control and ownership of the aircraft and how the aircraft were to be used. President Kennedy proposed to send the aircraft to Taiwan but keep them under U.S. control and ownership with ROC crews. The aircraft were to be used in South Vietnam and in mainland operations only with agreement of both ROC and U.S. officials. According to Ralph Clough, Kennedy’s proposal appeared to have been well-received by President Chiang and his son. See note, Letter from John F. Kennedy to Chiang Kai-shek, February 15, 1963, FRUS 1961-63, 347; Memorandum from Ralph Clough to W. Averell Harriman, March 2, 1963, FRUS 1961-63, 352.

49Airgram from Ralph Clough to Department of State, October 12, 1962, Box 25a, China, Cables, 9/5/62-10/15/62, NSF, JFKL.

teams on the Mainland. According to the report, the ROC’s Intelligence Bureau of the Ministry of National Defense (IBMND) stated that Chinese Communist forces had intercepted and sunk one such fishing boat and captured its crew. The report suggested that the PRC had increased its vigilance against infiltration along its coast.

The adverse press reaction from Mainland China and elsewhere led Ambassador Kirk to complain to Taiwan’s Foreign Minister Shen that the United States was being criticized in the world press because of Chinese Nationalist activity in the Taiwan Strait. Shen admitted that “with some regret Chinats [Chinese Nationalists] had fallen into trap.” Kirk stated emphatically that the U.S. would not do anything that might lead to accusations of aggression against the mainland, and accused the ROC of “penetrating the mainland with guerrillas, agents, etc. in preparation for ‘counter offensive.’”

One analyst grew concerned that these continued attempts by the ROC to launch small-scale operations would result in drawing the United States further into its plans for a full-scale invasion. Thomas L. Hughes of the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research reported that a total of nine small ROC intelligence-gathering teams had been captured by the Chinese Communists throughout 1962. As a result, Hughes concluded that the ROC would seek greater American assistance for larger operations,

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51 Telegram Information Report, Central Intelligence Agency, December 28, 1962, Box 26, China, Cables, 12/62-2/63, NSF, JFKL.
52 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
perhaps with a view to landing one or more 200-man teams on the Mainland. He predicted that the ROC would probably also request additional American equipment, including aircraft.55

As Chiang Kai-shek continued his unilateral intelligence-gathering operations, Ambassador Kirk returned to the United States in early February 1963 to consult with President Kennedy and McGeorge Bundy. Kirk observed that Chiang and other ROC officials were once again exhibiting symptoms of “spring fever,” publicly stating that the time to retake the Mainland “was ripe, now or never.”56 Kirk further reported that Chiang was building landing craft, training soldiers in a new airborne division, and, while professing he would never violate the terms of the Mutual Defense Treaty, his military preparations continued.57 In his final, March 29, memorandum to President Kennedy, Kirk stated that the United States faced great decisions concerning Taiwan, especially whether or not “the retention of the island of Taiwan in friendly hands is vital to the interests of the United States,” and “how and when are we going to make it clear to President Chiang that a feeble attempt to assault the Mainland . . . cannot and will not be tolerated.”58 American military and economic assistance had been designed for defense purposes only. The ROC Air Force and Navy did not have the power to conduct a large-

55 Memorandum from Thomas L. Hughes to W. Averell Harriman, January 11, 1963, Box 24, China, General, 1/63-3/63, NSF, JFKL.


57 Ibid.

scale invasion. Kirk warned that Chiang Kai-shek could not be given any opportunity to
“circumvent his Treaty with the United States.” He also suggested that public
statements be made to Chiang and the ROC government “that we will defend Taiwan but
we will not countenance aggression initiated by the Chinese Government now on
Taiwan.” These proved to be Kirk’s final words on China policy. Due to illness, Kirk
stepped down as Ambassador to the ROC, returned to the United States, and died several
months later.

The Kennedy administration continued to urge restraint on Chiang Kai-shek. In
an April 11 letter, President Kennedy reminded him that the U.S. did not have “sufficient
information to make firm judgements on vital questions such as the will and ability of the
Chinese people to rise up successfully against their Communist masters.” Additionally,
Kennedy contended that there was no way the United States could be absolved of any
involvement if and when the ROC invaded the Mainland unilaterally. The United States
Government, concluded the president, had to exercise caution with regard to the ROC
program of action against the PRC while continuing to work closely with members of the
ROC’s government to check Communist expansion in Asia. The United States, Kennedy
concluded, “cannot acquiesce in military action against the China mainland.”

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59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

61 Letter from John F. Kennedy to Chiang Kai-shek, April 11, 1963, Box 113a,
China, Security, 1962-1963, POF, JFKL.
The following month, after meeting with Foreign Minister Shen, Ralph Clough cabled the State Department that the mainland recovery program of the ROC seemed to be stagnant. President Chiang had not yet raised the question of invasion with the new ambassador, retired Admiral Jerauld Wright. Although the ROC was better prepared for amphibious operations than a year ago, there were no reports of Chiang setting readiness deadlines. Similarly, the Taiwanese press had not commented on a possible invasion for months. Paramilitary operations had been limited to small-scale probes, and, according to Clough, each of these ventures had been unsuccessful, despite Taiwanese press claims to the contrary. According to Clough, the failure of the ROC’s guerrilla probes, the difficulties associated with amphibious operations, and the failure to convince American policy makers that the time was right for mainland operations had effectively slowed the ROC’s drive to launch a large-scale invasion of the Mainland.  

By September, however, evidence of continuing invasion preparations began to trickle in. In that month, the ROC sent President Kennedy an aide-mémoire concerning the on-going small-scale intelligence raids designed to convince Kennedy to “render positive support to our [ROC] infiltration operations.” The memo proposed infiltration operations against the mainland to turn the anti-communist sentiments of the people into a “raging fire of anti-Communist actions and to merge these actions into a unified

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62 Airgram from Ralph Clough to Department of State, September 3, 1963, FRUS 1961-63 Microfiche, Document 63.

resistance revolutionary movement.”\textsuperscript{64} Following the creation of such a movement, the ROC proposed either to open a military assault against the mainland or infiltrate the PRC’s southern provinces to coordinate resistance and instigate a counter-offensive against the PRC. According to the memo, “the proper thing . . . to do is, of course, to adopt the first course of action at once,”\textsuperscript{65} but the ROC was prepared to follow the second option in consultation with the United States. The memo warned that if the ROC postponed actions and if the U.S. did not assist, the ROC government would lose its citizens’ allegiance and the island would fall to the communists, irreparably harming American security and interests.\textsuperscript{66}

On September 11, 1963, President Kennedy met with Chiang Ching-kuo in the White House. In what was probably a heated exchange, Chiang, on behalf of his father, stated that “the United States and the [ROC] should get together and take advantage of the present situation.”\textsuperscript{67} He requested five C-130 aircraft, in addition to the C-123’s requested earlier, and landing craft to conduct raids against the mainland coast and hoped this support would create greater disruption on the mainland and would provide the assistance needed “to seize one or more of the provinces south of the Yangtze [River] when the time is ripe.” Kennedy, mindful of the Bay of Pigs disaster, concluded that the United States “did not wish to become involved in military operations where our role

\textsuperscript{64}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{65}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{66}Ibid.

would inevitably become known and which would end in failure.”\textsuperscript{68} There was just not enough hard intelligence to commit American resources to Chiang’s dream. The President concluded that U.S. “policy should be determined by reality and not by our hopes or optimism.”\textsuperscript{69} Nonetheless, the U.S. would continue to study ROC proposals for additional assistance and “would work closely with [ROC] officials to develop detailed intelligence so that any action would fit the actual situation.”\textsuperscript{70}

**Walt W. Rostow’s “Basic National Security Policy”**

While the Kennedy administration attempted to prevent the crisis in the Taiwan Strait from becoming an all-out war between the PRC and the ROC, State Department staffers in the Policy Planning Council initiated a plan to moderate the American policy toward the communist world, including the PRC. Walt W. Rostow, the newly appointed Director of the State Department’s Policy Planning Council, authored this report entitled “Basic National Security Policy.” Rostow had long been a supporter of President Kennedy and had played an active role in his presidential campaign as a foreign policy consultant and as a speech writer.

The report suggested that the United States and the Soviet Union could negotiate agreements over areas of mutual interest. The Soviet Union would not “deliberately take actions which would bring about a general nuclear war,” a war that no one could win.

\textsuperscript{68}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{69}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{70}Ibid.
Both the United States and the Soviet Union would be destroyed. The United States and its allies, therefore, would have “to develop a fuller range of military capabilities, capable of covering as much as feasible of the free community, if they are to create a stable overall military environment.”

Rostow and the Policy Planning Council also hoped that this threat of mutual destruction from a nuclear war would modify U.S. relations with Communist China. The report proposed to use both the “carrot” and the “stick” toward the Chinese Communists. While the United States would use force to deter Chinese Communist aggression, the United States would not initiate such aggression itself. The report also stated:

Concurrently, we should leave ajar possibilities for expanding commercial, cultural and other contacts with Communist China, by making clear that the bar to the entrance of Communist China into more normal relations with the U.S. is its basic unwillingness to modify its present aggressive policies.

But while the United States worked toward normalization of relations with the PRC, Rostow stated that the U.S. should continue to work with the ROC. The United States should “make plain our enduring commitment to sustain and defend a free government on Taiwan,” but the ROC’s insistence on defense of the Offshore Islands threatened long-term U.S. interests. Therefore, the United States should use its leverage to encourage

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73 Ibid.
Taiwan either to “withdraw its forces from the [Offshore] islands or to regard the islands as outposts to be garrisoned . . . if and when this can be done without damage to our position in the Far East.”

Although Rostow did not specifically call for a “two Chinas” policy, the report very clearly stated that the United States should maintain relations with both the PRC and the ROC. Rostow could not openly advocate “two Chinas,” but he could certainly test the waters of public opinion.

Rostow hoped that a national publicity campaign would promote this newly proposed policy to the rest of the country, but the report was “leaked” to the conservative Chicago Tribune and several other newspapers and news magazines before its official approval.

Rostow and others might even have hoped to use this “leak” to test the waters of public opinion toward possible changes in China policy. Criticizing Rostow’s initiative on the floor of the House of Representatives, Paul B. Dague (R-Pennsylvania) argued that “two Chinas” was “unrealistic and illogical.”

Later, on June 26, 1962, Rostow and Undersecretary of State George Ball testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. When asked specific questions about “Basic National Security Policy,” Ball instructed Rostow to claim “executive privilege” and not answer the questions. According to Ball, the controversial paper was a working draft and had not yet

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74 Ibid.; Editorial Note, FRUS 1961-63, 271. Rostow provided neither a time line nor a procedure for establishing and maintaining a “two Chinas” policy.

75 “Rostow Backs ‘Education’ on Soft Red Line,” Chicago Tribune, June 18, 1962, Section 1, 4:3.

been approved by President Kennedy.

Committee reaction to Rostow’s and Ball’s testimony split along party lines. Senate Minority Leader Everett Dirksen (R-Illinois) asked Ball, “When do we see the document?” Ball replied that the President would consider sending the document to Capitol Hill if the committee made a formal request. Leaving the hearing, Senator Dirksen commented that this hearing was only “round one.” “All we got were views and opinions . . . There are spaces still to be filled . . . I still have concern about our foreign policy.” Dirksen also demanded that the committee take up the issue with Secretary of State Dean Rusk. On the other hand, committee chairman J. William Fulbright (D-Arkansas) said the hearing was “one of the most interesting and informative hearings we’ve ever had.” Fulbright had no objection to calling Rusk to testify on the report, but he insisted that the committee did not have the right to demand access to a working paper from the president.

Understandably, Rostow’s initiative provoked grave concern in the ROC. When T. F. Tsiang, ROC Ambassador to the United States, met with Dean Rusk in early July 1962 to discuss the Chinese Communist military buildup, he noted that opinion in Taiwan had become alarmed by Rostow’s report and his “two Chinas” suggestion. This would inevitably mean, according to Tsiang, U.S. recognition of the PRC, the PRC’s admittance

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77 “Rostow Balks Senate Policy Quiz,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 27, 1962, Section 1, 1:2, 2:7.

78 Ibid.

to the UN, and American neutralization of Taiwan. All of this was deemed unacceptable. Rusk replied that he hoped the report would not be misleading or confusing and he would consider Tsiang’s concerns, but he reassured him that “he did not want to give [the] impression, however, that there would be any major change in our publicly stated position.”

At the same time, some congressional voices registered their dissent regarding current U.S. policy toward Chiang and the ROC. Some argued that American financial and military support for Taiwan was ineffective, others criticized Taiwan’s domestic repression, and others supported the proposed “two Chinas” policy as a logical long-term solution in the region. One of the most vocal of these critics of American policy toward Taiwan was Senator Wayne L. Morse (D-Oregon). Morse and a coterie of Democratic senators believed that the Kennedy administration should alter its foreign policy to support reform-oriented leaders overseas, even if this meant losing control of some strategic places on the globe. In July 1963, Morse argued for reducing American aid to Taiwan. He stated that the Taiwanese Army had “more generals, who are receiving big, fat pay, than the total number of generals in all of our Military Establishment. Talk about featherbedding.” Morse contended that the large amount of money spent on Taiwan had been wasted and further aid should be stopped because the island was already protected by the Taiwan Strait and the United States’ Seventh Fleet. Morse also questioned the

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\footnote{Ibid.}

legitimacy of the Kuomintang’s rule in Taiwan. He argued that the people of Taiwan “did not ask Chiang Kai-shek to take over; he was not their choice.”\(^{82}\) In his view, the Taiwanese should have the chance “to decide whether they want to continue to be governed by the Chiang Kai-shek regime.”\(^{83}\) Morse later raised questions concerning the effectiveness of American aid, arguing that Taiwan already had an 80 percent literacy rate and a high rate of industrial capacity before Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang established their authority there.\(^{84}\)

Meanwhile, other legislators continued to toe the well-established anti-communist line in favor of maintaining the status quo in U.S.-ROC relations and opposing any form of “two Chinas” policy out of distaste for Communist China. Representative Frank J. Horton (R-New York) typified this view. In August 1963, Horton spoke out against the PRC’s entry into the United Nations and any United States trade relations with Communist China. “In the interest of national security and national honor,” stated Horton, “we cannot abandon Quemoy and Matsu and sacrifice the lives of thousands of free Chinese soldiers and the civilian population of these islands.”\(^{85}\)

\(^{82}\)Congress, Senate, Senator Morse of Oregon speaking on Foreign Aid, 88\(^{th}\) Congress, 1\(^{st}\) Session, Congressional Record 109, pt. 10 (July 25, 1963): 13425-26.

\(^{83}\)Ibid. Morse, a former Republican, changed his party affiliation to the Democrats in 1958.

\(^{84}\)Congress, Senate, Senator Morse of Oregon speaking on Conditions on Taiwan, 88\(^{th}\) Congress 1\(^{st}\) Session, Congressional Record 109, pt. 12 (September 4, 1963): 16350.

The New Republic, a liberal editorial magazine, joined this debate over the “two Chinas” issue in September 1963. Printed in the wake of Chiang Ching-kuo’s eleven-day official state visit to the United States, the editorial described America’s policy toward Taiwan as “ambiguous.” While the Kennedy administration supported two Germanies and two Vietnams, it failed to support two Chinas. This was the fault of Chiang’s dictatorial regime, the editorial claimed, ruling an island “police state” with a government bankrolled by United States funding.86

Clearly, Rostow’s initiative did not receive a groundswell of support, nor did it immediately result in a change in China policy, but the report remains significant for several reasons. Although the Kennedy administration never formally approved the report, “Basic National Security Policy” acknowledged a shift in thinking at some levels in the State Department. Possible changes in China policy, including a more accommodating relationship with the PRC, were at least being discussed within the State Department bureaucracy. This report did not bode well for the ROC, which claimed to be the government of all China and continually labeled the Beijing regime illegitimate. Nonetheless, this report would influence future public statements of foreign policy with the communist world and might have influenced other State Department staffers to further challenge the established policies of containment and isolation of the PRC.

The Hilsman Speech

Bureaucratic changes in the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs further contributed to the elevation of Mainland Chinese affairs on its agenda. Until 1962, a single China desk had handled affairs concerning both the Taipei and Beijing regimes. To bring Mainland Chinese affairs to the forefront, the Bureau in mid-1962 established two separate desks, which included a Mainland China affairs desk and a Republic of China affairs desk. This arrangement opened the door for the consideration of new policy ideas toward the PRC and allowed them to filter higher up the State Department bureaucracy. By late November 1963, the new Mainland China desk had been elevated, renamed the Office of Asian Communist Affairs, and was separated from the Office of East Asian Affairs, which handled matters concerning Japan, Korea and Taiwan. The Office of Asian Communist Affairs could now freely access and influence policymaking. Within the new Office of Asian Communist Affairs, staffers now had a degree of freedom to explore new opportunities toward the PRC without running afoul of the more staunchly anti-communist China hands in the Office of East Asian Affairs.

These organizational changes soon began to bear fruit. The Kennedy administration had initially considered Communist China an expansionist state that threatened regional security in East Asia and had to be contained. A small group of State Department staffers, including Roger Hilsman, Assistant Secretary of State for Far

\[87^\text{Thomson, 226; “FE – Office of Asian Communist Affairs,” undated, FRUS 1961-63, 397-99.}\]

\[88^\text{Fetzer, 179, 197.}\]
Eastern Affairs, James C. Thomson, Jr., Special Assistant in the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Lindsey Grant of Mainland China Affairs, and Allen S. Whiting, Director of the Office of Research for Far Eastern Affairs, contended that it was time to propose a more realistic China policy. Believing that the remnants of the ChinaBloc and the China Lobby would not mount much of a counterattack, they wrote a speech that outlined a firm, flexible, and dispassionate policy toward Communist China. While the U.S. would continue to support its allies firmly, in particular the Republic of China, and their determination to halt communist aggression, the U.S. would also be willing to negotiate with the Communist Chinese to analyze and discuss mutual problems and seek solutions in their common interests. Once completed, the speech was sent to the White House and to senior officials at State and Defense for approval. Notably, the speech cleared the White House and the State Department without having been read by new President Lyndon B. Johnson, Assistant Secretary of State Harriman, or Secretary Rusk, who refused to go over the speech despite Hilsman’s request.  

Roger Hilsman delivered the televised speech at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco, California, on December 13, 1963. Hilsman stated that, in the past, “personal betrayal” and “misapprehension of reality” had guided American policy toward China.

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Instead, Hilsman echoed Rostow’s suggestions in “Basic National Security Policy” and called for a China policy that sought to “keep the door open to the possibility of change and not to slam it shut against any developments which might advance our national good, serve the free world, and benefit the people of China.” He believed that the Chinese Communists, like the Soviets, might be amenable toward reaching “limited agreements which can bring some reduction” of danger between the United States and the PRC:

We believe that policies of strength and firmness, accompanied by a constant readiness to negotiate – policies long and effectively pursued with the Soviet Union – will best promote the changes which must take place on the China mainland before we can hope to achieve long-sought conditions of peace, security, and progress in this half of the globe.

Although the ambassadorial-level talks between American and Chinese Communist diplomats in Warsaw, Poland, had helped thaw relations somewhat, Hilsman called for increased communication between the United States and mainland China. He concluded that the United States:

. . . will not sow the dragon’s seed of hate which may bear bitter fruit in future generations of China’s millions. But neither will we betray our interests and those of our allies to appease the ambitions of Communist China’s leaders.

Hilsman’s speech was the first public statement by a high-ranking State Department official, suggesting that the United States wished to reach an accommodation with the PRC if the PRC modified its hostility toward the United States. This did not mean, however, that the U.S. would abandon the ROC. Hilsman clearly stated that the

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91 Ibid., 17.
92 Ibid., 16.
93 Ibid., 17.
U.S. would continue to block Communist Chinese attempts to “commit aggression on its free-world neighbors.”

Public reaction to Hilsman’s speech into early 1964, as gauged by the New York Times, suggested that attitudes toward the PRC might have softened and the time might have been ripe for a reconsideration of China policy, but there was still no general public movement for a change in China policy. A January 1964 Times editorial commented that, despite the PRC’s problems in their domestic and foreign policy (specifically with the Soviet Union), “the West must deal with two Chinas – one whose capital is in Peking and the other on Taiwan.” A month later, Columnist C. L. Sulzberger stated that American China policy needed to “distinguish between the effort to isolate Communist China and the effort to prevent Communism as such, whether sponsored by Peking or by Moscow, from spreading elsewhere in Asia.” Currently, American policy failed to “underscore the distinction between the reality of protection from what was always unreality, the idea that Chiang would overthrow Mao.” By May 1964, another Times editorial claimed that if the ROC held a plebiscite for independence, and, if the ROC’s citizens voted in favor of independence and the Peking regime approved, this “would bring into being a ‘China-Taiwan’ variant of the long-proposed ‘two Chinas’ solution.” Given that the PRC would “ultimately . . . be admitted to the United Nations and accepted generally as the

94Ibid., 15.


government of China,” a Taiwan independent of Beijing would be “the best solution for which the West can hope.”

One editorial column and one magazine article published in the *New York Times* also criticized aspects of American policy toward the Republic of China. A full-length article published in *New York Times Magazine* in March 1964 featured Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang. Written by Tillman Durdin, who had spent three months observing the Kuomintang government in 1963, the article described Chiang and the Kuomintang as Mainland refugees who squelched domestic dissent to maintain their rule and pressured the United States government to expand the Vietnam War into North Vietnam with the ROC’s assistance so that Chiang could retake the Mainland. Durdin stated that, despite Kuomintang claims of economic prosperity and military strength, “the manifestations of equanimity and business-as-usual belie new weakness and uncertainties in the Nationalist position that characteristically are minimized by Nationalist leaders in public and may not even be fully acknowledged in private.” Such weaknesses and uncertainties included American and allied approaches to the PRC and shifting priorities in the White House and State Department.

Despite the *New York Times*’ criticism of U.S. policy toward China, academics supportive of the ROC government lodged their complaints about “two Chinas” in letters to the editor. Li Tieh-tseng, Professor of History and Government at the University of

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Hartford, wrote a letter to the *Times* that condemned any future changes in policy toward the ROC. Li argued that American “recognition of the Nationalist Government in Taiwan as “the only legitimate government of China cannot be reconciled with a two-China position.” Any “two Chinas” solution would only serve to strengthen the American relationship with Western Europe. Rather, the United States needed an “agonizing reappraisal” of its relationship with the ROC and, in the end, should “help the Generalissimo to realize his claim over the mainland China.”  

Another such letter from Stanley K. Hornbeck, formerly director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs and special assistant to the Secretary of State during Dwight D. Eisenhower’s administration, contended that any “two Chinas” policy would eventually cause the ROC to be ethnically, socially, politically, and economically “annexed” by the PRC.

**Conclusion**

By the end of 1963, American officials grew increasingly frustrated with President Chiang Kai-shek and the status of China policy. Despite the Kennedy administration’s military support, Chiang continued to press for American military assistance to secure his dream of retaking the Mainland. Chiang used his American supporters, such as Everett Drumright and Ray Cline, to deliver requests on his behalf. But when administration officials checked Chiang’s proposals and thereby delayed any invasion hopes, the

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100*“Two Chinas Opposed; Taiwan’s Take-Over by Peking Seen if Separation is Effected,”* Letters to The Times, *New York Times*, June 2, 1964, 36:5
embattled ROC President changed tactics, probably believing that launching small-scale intelligence raids against the mainland would prompt U.S. policymakers to change their minds. This action only aggravated Kennedy and possibly forced the hands of several State Department officials, such as Walt Rostow and Roger Hilsman, who had been considering alternatives to China policy. The American public, however, was not yet ready for sweeping changes in China policy, as evidenced by the fact that Rostow’s and Hilsman’s proposals did not receive a broad base of legislative or public support.
CHAPTER V
THE JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION
AND CHINA POLICY, 1964-65

Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson became President of the United States after John F. Kennedy’s tragic assassination in November 1963. The new president, who had limited foreign policy experience prior to occupying the White House, inherited a China policy which seemed to be in transition. Meanwhile, Johnson escalated the Vietnam War and, by the end of 1965, the war became a major American conflagration. Chiang Kai-shek saw an opportunity to use the Vietnam War as a means to further his dream of returning to the Mainland. Once again, Chiang contacted his supporters in the U.S. government to present his views. Even his wife, May-lin Soong (Madame Chiang Kai-shek), visited the United States to rally support. At the same time, the Johnson administration experienced increasing difficulty sustaining international support for maintaining the ROC’s seat in the United Nations. When it became apparent to some U.S. policymakers that Chiang’s dream threatened to draw the United States into a larger war with the PRC, a dual policy of containment emerged which proposed to contain both communist aggression and Chiang’s ambitions.
Johnson Administration and the ROC in Indochina, 1964-65

Chiang Kai-shek soon presented the new American president with a potentially dangerous request regarding Indochina. In early 1964, Chiang requested that the ROC be allowed to assist the United States and South Vietnam in their fight against communism. President Johnson then turned to Robert W. Komer of the National Security Council staff for advice. Komer warned Johnson that Chiang had previously wished to create a defense pact between the ROC, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and South Vietnam, step up action against the Mainland Chinese, and send combat troops to Vietnam. Komer worried that any serious American setbacks in Southeast Asia could cause Chiang and his Nationalist government to be overthrown in two years. Komer shared Secretary of State Dean Rusk’s apprehensions about escalating ROC involvement in the region and doubted that any alliance between South Vietnam and the ROC, or any Nationalist troop commitment to the conflict in Vietnam, would be worth the risk of massive Chinese Communist intervention in Southeast Asia. Therefore, Komer advised Johnson that whenever Chiang requested that ROC troops be allowed to fight in Vietnam, American diplomats should politely tell Chiang that his concerns were serious and were being studied but that they should make no commitment to the ROC president.

For the moment, Johnson followed Komer’s advice. He reminded Chiang that his views were much valued and promised timely consultations, but he replied vaguely to Chiang’s offer to send troops. Johnson tactfully stated:

We recognize that your Government is already making a significant contribution to assist the valiant people of South Vietnam, and we believe that there may be additional areas for cooperation between your Government and the Government of
the Republic of Vietnam.\(^1\)

While Johnson did not give his consent for increased ROC assistance to South Vietnam, he nevertheless left the door open for future activity.

Indeed, Komer fully expected Chiang to try to exploit the war in Vietnam for his own diplomatic and military goals and he began to draft a contingency plan for President Johnson. Noting that the conflict in Vietnam could potentially destabilize Southeast Asia, Komer warned that “almost every leader in Asia . . . is watching clearly how the Johnson team tackles its first major foreign test.” He was especially concerned about Thailand, the Philippines, the ROK, and Nationalist China, whose leaders, Komer claimed, were “all nervous as cats.”\(^2\) Despite Johnson’s efforts to placate Chiang, Komer worried that Chiang would continue publicly to pledge increased involvement in Southeast Asia, especially in Vietnam. In a March 16 memorandum to Johnson, Komer predicted that Chiang would keep calling for a stronger anti-communist posture in Southeast Asia, including a military alliance between the ROC, the ROK and South Vietnam. Komer also predicted that Chiang would encourage sending Nationalist

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\(^2\)Memorandum from Robert W. Komer, March 11, 1964, Box 6, Komer Memos Vol. II, Papers of Lyndon Baines Johnson, President 1963-1969, National Security File, Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library, Austin, TX, hereafter cited as NSF, LBJL.
Chinese and ROK combat troops into Vietnam to help the Americans. Komer warned the president that it was important to continue to “fob off” Chiang because his ideas had serious drawbacks, threatened regional peace and endangered American goals in Vietnam. In summary, Komer concluded that Chiang Kai-shek and the ROC should be “held back” from making substantial contributions to South Vietnam, thereby containing any threat of widening the Vietnam War into a larger Southeast Asian conflict.

Not all administration officials shared Komer’s views. By 1964, Director of Central Intelligence John McCone advocated including ROC combat forces in military operations in South Vietnam. In early 1964, McCone traveled to South Vietnam to learn about and observe the political and military weaknesses within the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) and the South Vietnamese government. McCone concluded that the United States should allow the deployment of “two or three” Chinese Nationalist divisions into the southern tip of the Mekong River Delta to assist American forces. Given that the Viet Cong had increased its strength in the delta region, McCone worried that American efforts were “too little, too late.”

As anticipated, at the end of March 1964, Chiang unveiled his latest ideas for ROC involvement in Vietnam. The ROC president proposed that mutual security arrangements between the ROC, the ROK, and the government of South Vietnam include

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South Korean uniformed forces in South Vietnam. On March 21, 1964, U.S. Ambassador to the ROC Jerauld Wright informed Secretary Rusk that Chiang would approve the use of ROK troops in Vietnam and would later urge the use of ROC troops. Three days later, Chiang insisted that the Republic of China, the ROK, and South Vietnam “should ally [them]selves in political action to utilize [the] opportunity to fight Communists” and cut supply and communication lines to North Vietnam from China’s southern provinces. Chiang further insinuated that if he were a Pentagon staff officer, he would order ROC guerrilla operations along North Vietnam’s border area with southern China. Chiang promised that these irregular troops would not harm American interests and would not precipitate a global war. Three years earlier, Chiang had proposed a guerrilla warfare plan, whereby ROC irregular soldiers based in northern Burma would fight the North Vietnamese, but he had withdrawn the plan under strong pressure from the State Department.

When Ambassador Wright failed to quell Chiang’s plans, Secretary Rusk traveled to Taiwan in mid-April 1964 to meet with Chiang personally. Rusk told Chiang that he had no final opinion concerning Chiang’s proposed alliance of anti-communist Far Eastern nations, but he did not see what the Chinese Nationalists, the South Koreans and the South Vietnamese could do without the United States because they could act together militarily only in the event of war with Communist China and only if the United States

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5 Telegram from Jerauld Wright to Dean Rusk, March 21, 1964, Box 237, China Cables, Vol. I, NSF, LBJL.

6 Telegram from Jerauld Wright to Dean Rusk, March 26, 1964, Box 237, China Cables Vol. I, NSF, LBJL.
provided significant assistance. Additionally, the South Vietnamese could not substantially contribute to such an alliance because of their ongoing war with North Vietnam and the Viet Cong. The chief question, according to Rusk, was how much could this proposed alliance help Vietnam. Chiang insisted that it would strengthen confidence among the people of the three parties. He noted that the South Koreans had already responded enthusiastically to the idea, but he had not yet proposed it to the South Vietnamese. Rusk, heeding Komer’s advice, replied vaguely to Chiang that his suggestions needed further study.\(^7\) Later, on the South Vietnamese leg of his Far Eastern tour, Secretary of State Rusk further clarified his policy toward a Southeast Asian anti-communist alliance and declared in this report that the United States “did not encourage an alliance and believed particularly that the issue of Southeast Asia should not get mixed with the enormous issue of the basic Chinese conflict.”\(^8\)

Meanwhile, the United States became increasingly involved in the war in Vietnam. In August 1964, the Gulf of Tonkin incident and subsequent congressional passage of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution slowly pushed the United States into a major military conflict. The resolution authorized Johnson, without time limit, “to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and

\(^7\)Memorandum of Conversation, April 16, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68*, 49-51.

to prevent further aggression.”

Indeed, the Vietnam War became “the central preoccupation of United States foreign policy after 1964.” As a result, the Johnson administration focused more attention on events related to Vietnam.

Shortly after the Gulf of Tonkin incident, the recurring problem of ROC irregular troops in Burma flared up again. In early September 1964, Rusk cabled Ambassador Wright and stated the United States had probably done enough to make its position clear to the ROC concerning Taiwanese irregular soldiers in the northern Thailand-Burma-Laos border area. The Burmese Foreign Office, however, continued to be concerned over reports of “‘legitimate KMT [Kuomintang Party]’ activities in the border area under direction of GRC [Government of the Republic of China] officials in Thailand.” This issue, warned Rusk, continued to be an issue of concern for the United States and had to be addressed at the highest levels with the ROC. Rusk stated that the United States would “do everything possible [to] assure that [the] GRC does not undertake excessive or indiscreet actions, as they have in [the] past, which could needlessly complicate our problems” in Southeast Asia. Rusk concluded that the ROC “has a natural tendency to go beyond what we consider [the] limits of prudence and to be less candid with us in doing

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In November 1964, President Chiang again suggested to President Johnson that the ROC should play a greater role in Southeast Asia. Komer and National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy believed that Chiang intended both to remind President Johnson of the ROC’s regional concerns and to encourage the new president to re-think China policy.\(^{12}\) Chiang warned Johnson that the Chinese Communists represented the greatest menace to peace in Asia. They had already turned most of Southeast Asia into a battlefield, he claimed, and would fight until all of Southeast Asia, especially Taiwan, came under their domination. Chiang proposed, however, that only Asian people should fight and defeat the Communists, with the United States providing tactical and technical training and logistic support. In the conflict in Vietnam, Chiang warned, the Chinese Communists intended to draw the United States into a protracted war, where Communist guerrillas would “counter American military aid and [. . .] mire the United States in an inconclusive war. . . . Without committing their own armed forces, the Chinese Communists will have won the war.”\(^{13}\) After establishing their puppet regime in Vietnam, the Chinese Communists would act against Laos and Cambodia, then Thailand and Malaysia. Chiang further warned that:

\(^{11}\)Telegram from Dean Rusk to Jerauld Wright, September 4, 1964, *FRUS 1964-68*, 84-85.


\(^{13}\)Letter from Chiang Kai-shek to Lyndon B. Johnson, November 23, 1964, Box 2, China, Chiang Kai-shek Correspondence Vol. I, NSF, HSCF, LBJL.
unless the United States assumes the role of leadership and makes victory its primary goal, the anti-communist forces in Asia . . . will become easy prey to Communist infiltration and subversion, and rapid deterioration ending in the supreme tragedy of defeat and destruction will be inevitable.\footnote{Ibid.}

Ultimately, any American plan to end the Vietnam war quickly, according to Chiang, should include Asians fighting for themselves to overthrow the Chinese Communists.\footnote{Ibid.}

This position encountered some support from certain members of Congress. Senator John C. Stennis (D-Mississippi) received a letter from a constituent suggesting that the United States allow Chiang the opportunity to attack the Communist Chinese. The constituent wrote that “Asians should be permitted to fight for their own freedoms, and Free China should not be stopped from helping Americans fight as was done in Formosa.” Stennis replied that “there is certainly a lot to be said for this course of action, but many seem to feel that his [Chiang’s] value as a potential threat to Red China is far greater than in any success he could accomplish in an outright invasion, unless, of course, the United States fully committed itself to assist him with troops, weapons, ships, and planes.”\footnote{Letter to John C. Stennis from Mrs. W. J. Dalrymple, September 4, 1964, Series 31, Box 5, Red China 1964-65, John C. Stennis Manuscript Collection, Congressional and Political Research Center, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS, hereafter cited as JSM; Letter to Mrs. W. J. Dalrymple from John C. Stennis, October 5, 1964, Series 31, Box 5, Red China 1964-65, JSM.}

Stennis advocated that the ROC’s military forces be used to help stop the spread of Communism in Asia. In the February 20, 1965, edition of the Washington Report, Stennis’s newsletter to his constituents, the Mississippian stated that: “We must
seek new ways to provide South Vietnam with the military capability to defend that
country . . . Why not utilize the manpower of Chiang Kai-shek and other Asians whose
stake in the cause of freedom is at least as great as our own?”

By November 1964, Robert W. Komer suggested that American escalation of the
Vietnam War could be part of a larger “get tough” policy toward the Chinese
Communists. Komer suggested to McGeorge Bundy that “increased [American]
pressure in Vietnam” would permit greater flexibility on the Chinese representation issue.
A tougher American stance in Vietnam and fear that the United States would step up its
activities in Indochina, according to Komer, “can hardly be taken as a sign of undue
weakness to be flexible on Chirep [Chinese UN representation].” The United States
could look as though it were being tough on the Chinese Communists, who were believed
to be behind all the troubles in Vietnam, while it sought a means to include the PRC in
the UN. Komer believed that keeping the PRC out of the UN was not the best way to
protect Taiwan. He suggested that the United States “stem the rapid erosion of Taiwan’s
international position by getting it internationally recognized that China is a divided
country [like Germany, Korea, and Vietnam].” Komer’s memo was significant because it
highlighted the link between American escalation in Vietnam and China policy.

In December 1964, McGeorge Bundy met with ROC Ambassador T. F. Tsiang to
discuss the situation in Vietnam. Bundy informed Tsiang that the United States would


18 Memorandum from Robert W. Komer to McGeorge Bundy, November 23,
1964, Box 238, China Memos Vol. II, NSF, LBJL.
step up military activity in South Vietnam and would probably increase retaliatory pressure against North Vietnam some time in the future. If North Vietnamese support to the Viet Cong were cut off, Bundy believed that the conflict could be controlled within six months to two years. Probably thinking that time was of the essence if the ROC were to involve themselves in Vietnam, Tsiang inquired about regional assistance to the South Vietnamese. Taking as his reference Philippine assistance to South Vietnam, Tsiang questioned whether the United States had changed its policy against ROC combat troops in Vietnam, to which Bundy replied in the negative. But, as Komer and Rusk had recommended earlier, Bundy suggested to Tsiang that American and Nationalist Chinese policymakers might wish to discuss this question further after a thorough review of needs.19

Tsiang probably was not satisfied with Bundy’s response. A month later, he met with Secretary Rusk concerning the American effort in Vietnam. When he asked Rusk about the main problem Americans faced in Vietnam, Rusk replied that the lack of unity

within the South Vietnamese government was “complicating our efforts to get more international support for Viet-Nam.” Not wanting to give Tsiang an opening to request the deployment of ROC ground troops or any increased overt ROC involvement, Rusk quickly stated that some of the South Vietnamese leaders had had second thoughts and were suspending their personal problems for the sake of the unity of their country.\textsuperscript{20}

At the end of 1964, the State Department studied the effects of using ROC forces outside their territorial boundaries. Josiah W. Bennett, a staffer in the Office of East Asian Affairs in the State Department, argued that a proposed deployment of an ROC engineering unit to South Vietnam “would provoke Chinese Communist retaliation.” Even the presence of uniformed ROC troops not involved in combat or military operations “would provide the Chinese Communists with a ready made pretext should they decide to intervene more directly in Viet-Nam themselves.” In addition, sending either uniformed or non-uniformed ROC troops to Vietnam “would detract from the image we have attempted to build of a peaceful Taiwan,” and would considerably harm the Chinese representation issue in the United Nations. Bennett concluded that Taiwan should expand the technical and economic assistance it already provided to Vietnam, but doubted that this would satisfy Chiang’s desire to become more actively involved in the Vietnam conflict.\textsuperscript{21} Meanwhile, Norman W. Getsinger of the ROC Desk in the State

\textsuperscript{20}Memorandum of Conversation, January 6, 1965, Box 238, China Memos Vol. III, NSF, LBJL.

\textsuperscript{21}Memorandum from Josiah W. Bennett to Marshall Green, December 18, 1964, Box 2, Defense Affairs, Armed Forces, 1964, Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Office of East Asian Affairs, Central Files, 1947-1964, National Archives II, College Park, MD, hereafter cited as RG59,
Department also believed that sending this Nationalist Chinese engineering unit to Vietnam would probably “not mean the export of the Chinese civil war to Vietnam, but it could be used as a pretext for some kind of Chicom intervention if they were seeking one.” Getsinger further warned that propaganda from Beijing “against the increased GRC presence [in Vietnam] is bound to make our allies nervous.”

Regardless of Bennett’s and Getsinger’s concerns, a February 1965 State Department report suggested that Republic of China military forces could be successfully utilized outside Taiwan. Only one or two divisions could be spared for South Vietnam or Laos, however, without harming the ROC’s ability to defend itself. Even then, the report envisaged using these troops in non-combat roles. Should the administration decide to use ROC troops in some type of international force in Vietnam:

Chinese Nationalist combat ground troops could be included without undue risk of provoking Chinese Communist military action. Their location would be sufficiently removed from Mainland China so that they could scarcely be regarded as provocative or creating any danger to the security of the Communist regime. Any Nationalist contingent, the report recommended, should be small in number and, presumably, under American command and control “so that there would not be any serious temptation to the GRC to seize the opportunity to mount embarrassing initiatives or involve us in conflicts which do not serve our interests.” The report further recommended that:

Central Files. It can not be determined with certainty who had recommended that the ROC send a detachment of engineers to South Vietnam.

22Memorandum from Norman W. Getsinger to Robert A. Fearey, December 16, 1964, Box 2, Defense Affairs, Equipment and Supplies (Mil. Assistance), 1964, RG59, Central Files.
it might even be worthwhile to use Chinese Nationalist forces in South Vietnam and/or the Laos Panhandle to provoke the entry of Chinese Communist volunteers or open forces in North Vietnam. This would then make it manifest that Hanoi has become increasingly under the control of Peiping. This kind of approach, however, raises the risk level.\textsuperscript{23}

Despite the division of opinion that existed in the State Department concerning ROC policy and the war in Vietnam, President Johnson ultimately became convinced that it would be unwise for the ROC to become directly involved in Vietnam for a variety of reasons. The United States, most of all, did not “want to risk export of the Chinese civil war to Southeast Asia or give Peiping a pretext for stronger military actions” supporting the Hanoi regime.\textsuperscript{24}

Johnson also realized that the PRC might well intervene more openly in Vietnam if the Nationalist Chinese sent combat troops. Journalist and “China-watcher” Edgar Snow, in a report entitled “If China Intervenes in North Vietnam,” argued that the war in Vietnam would “snowball into a regional, large-scale war” involving Communist and Nationalist China, Vietnam, Thailand and Korea. Snow also predicted that President Chiang, without American support, would launch an attack against Mainland China.\textsuperscript{25} Snow’s report foreshadowed a much larger Southeast Asian war if Communist China


\textsuperscript{25}Edgar Snow, “If China Intervenes in North Vietnam,” March 15, 1965, Box 238, China Memos Vol. II, NSF, LBJL.
increased its intervention in North Vietnam. Such thinking persuaded President Johnson that it was imperative to ensure that the ROC did not provoke Communist China into intervening further. In short, as with the Chinese representation debates and both the Taiwan Strait and Mainland invasion crises, Chiang had to be reined in.

As President Johnson ordered the first American combat troops into South Vietnam in 1965, the debate over the war’s cost further complicated United States relations with the ROC. Senator John C. Stennis (D-Mississippi) and Representative Lucius Mendel Rivers (D-South Carolina) predicted that the war in Vietnam would cost nearly $10 billion for the fiscal year ending June 1966. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara later estimated the war would cost between $15 and $21 billion per year out of a $71 billion Pentagon budget. In fact, by the end of 1967, the war’s cost was more than $2 billion per month. Feeling pressured to find money to fund the military venture in Vietnam, some State Department officials suggested that military and non-military aid programs to the ROC and others be reduced, but they met dissent. Norman W. Getsinger of the ROC Desk in the State Department warned that a proposed reduction in the fiscal year 1965 Military Assistance Program “would be a heavy blow in a current series of


blows to GRC confidence in US support”\textsuperscript{28} and “would seriously weaken our ability to influence the actions of the GRC and at the same time contribute to current pressures upon internal stability in Taiwan.”\textsuperscript{29} Getsinger feared Chiang would, as he had in 1962, take resources from the civilian economy and “attempt desperate military and diplomatic initiatives that could precipitate armed conflict with the Chinese Communists.”\textsuperscript{30}

Indeed, in March 1965, President Chiang complained to Ambassador Wright that he was not satisfied with his share of the Military Assistance Program. He could not understand “why items already appropriated for and programmed have not been delivered” and demanded that the ROC “should receive highest priority in military aid next after South Vietnam.” Chiang believed that the U.S. Military Aid Program was critical to his country and the United States Government had not given the ROC “enough priority in delivery of military priority items and urged Wright send this message to Washington.” Wright commented that Chiang had not been kept up to date by his aides on the details of programs and deliveries, despite the fact that the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) had made all pertinent information available to the ROC.\textsuperscript{31}

President Chiang next directed his discontent toward President Johnson’s March 25 statement on Vietnam. Johnson asserted that while “the United States still seeks no

\textsuperscript{28} Memorandum from Norman W. Getsinger to Robert A. Fearey, October 14, 1964, Box 2, Defense Affairs, Military Assistance, 1964, RG59, Central Files.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.

wider war . . . I am ready to go anywhere at any time, and meet with anyone whenever there is promise of progress toward an honorable peace.”

Two weeks later, Chiang complained that Johnson’s statement offered “unconditional discussions” to the North Vietnamese and indicated a weakening of the U.S. position. Ambassador Wright, who met with Chiang later that day, tried to convince Chiang that the speech did not indicate any change in American policy or softening of American attitudes toward the Communist Chinese and the North Vietnamese. After his meeting, Wright believed that Chiang, as he had done many times in the past, had deliberately exaggerated his doubts to stall any possible change in American policy.

On April 23, 1965, the American Ambassador to South Vietnam, Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., and Ambassador Wright met with President Chiang Kai-shek to allay his apparent fears concerning changes in American policy toward the ROC during the course of American fighting in Vietnam. Lodge assured Chiang of American appreciation for ROC assistance to the United States in Vietnam, such as the stationing of American aircraft on Taiwan and ROC aid to Vietnam. Lodge reminded Chiang that the problem in Vietnam was a “problem of vital concern to Southeast Asia” and the world. Chiang retorted that American action in Vietnam had done nothing to halt Chinese Communist involvement in North Vietnam, which included both “volunteers” and trained officers.


33Telegram from Jerauld Wright to Dean Rusk, April 12, 1965, Box 238, China Cables Vol. III, NSF, LBJL.
When Lodge replied that “no Communist Chinese officer had ever been captured nor the body of one found,” Chiang said he knew for a fact that PRC officers were involved in Vietnam and were taking great care not to be captured. As it was difficult to tell the difference between Chinese bodies and those of deceased North Vietnamese soldiers, and as the PRC troops had adopted North Vietnamese names and uniforms, the PRC could invisibly involve itself in South Vietnam. Chiang held to his view that the Chinese Communists were engaged in an indirect, protracted war with the United States through the North Vietnamese proxy. Chiang mistakenly believed that the PRC so controlled the North Vietnamese government that if Ho Chi Minh stopped fighting, it would mean his downfall. According to Chiang, Ho could not stop fighting if he wanted to – he had no “freedom of action.”

Chiang also reminded Lodge that “the terrain, climate, political conditions and psychology of the [Asian] people were such that it might be possible for an inferior force to win in Asia.” Chiang concluded that the American commitment to fight Communism in Asia “would not lead to a satisfactory solution or to a decisive victory in Asia.” Rather, the United States should remain in the background and provide material and moral support as free Asians fought the Communists themselves. He reiterated “that only troops of the Republic of China could rally the people on the Chinese

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34Chiang’s assumption proved to be wrong. According to historian Chen Jian, the North Vietnamese had tremendous “freedom of action.” Ho Chi Minh and his military commanders, refusing to accept a role as an inferior client (tribute) state of the PRC, did not allow the Chinese Communists a role in decision making and limited the PRC’s role to providing only enough support so that the North Vietnamese could send as many troops as possible into the South. Chinese Communist land forces would only be used if American forces invaded the North. See Jian Chen, *Mao’s China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 221, 237.
By May 1965, there was some concern within the State Department that Chinese Nationalists might try to involve themselves in the Vietnam War by attacking either PRC-held Hainan Island or the southwestern provinces of Mainland China. Marshall Green, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, met with ROC Minister of Defense Chiang Ching-kuo on May 7, 1965. In this meeting, Chiang stated that American bombing of North Vietnam was not a long-run solution to ending the conflict in South Vietnam. Rather, returning to an old ROC idea, Defense Minister Chiang suggested that “it would be best to airdrop GRC troops in Southwest China in order to carry on harassing and other diversionary activities.”

Ambassador Jerauld Wright, however, downplayed the State Department’s concerns. He believed the ROC had no capability for taking independent action against Hainan Island except for covert air drop or sea infiltration of small teams, which could not be done without American assistance. Without significant air cover, such an attack on Hainan would be impossible. In addition, no ROC official had approached Wright with such a plan for action. Nonetheless, Wright believed that President Chiang was quite concerned about the situation in Mainland.

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35 Memorandum of Conversation, April 23, 1965, Box 238, China Memos Vol. III, NSF, LBJL.

36 Memorandum of Conversation, May 7, 1965, Box 1, Marshall Green’s Visit to the Far East, May 1965, Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, Subject Files of the Office of Republic of China Affairs, 1951-75, National Archives II, College Park, MD, hereafter cited as ROC Affairs.

37 Telegram from Jerauld Wright to Department of State, May 18, 1965, FRUS 1964-68, 170-71.
Vietnam and also “hopeful it may lead to opportunities for his forces to participate in some way.”

Chiang was frustrated with Nationalist China’s secondary role in Vietnam and with the PRC’s continued development of nuclear weapons. He remained determined to return to the Mainland.

Skepticism about the possible military contribution of ROC forces to the Vietnam conflict was shared by some members of Congress. Senator Wayne Morse (D-Oregon), who earlier had been one of two senators to vote against the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in August 1964, opposed the possible use of Taiwanese troops in the war. Senator Morse argued that it would be unwise to allow such a development. “If they get into war,” stated Morse, “a large number of those American troops will be trampled to death as Chiang Kai-shek’s forces retreat and run for cover.” Morse’s concern was based on the traditional enmity of the Vietnamese and the Chinese. “South Vietnam and the other countries of southeast Asia, but particularly South Vietnam, have fought the Chinese for a thousand years.” Morse concluded by stating that he was “at a loss to understand how it can be seriously proposed that we try to make use of Chiang Kai-shek’s forces to join us in fighting the undeclared war in South Vietnam.”

To assuage President Chiang’s concerns, Lyndon B. Johnson wrote him on July 26, 1965, that the United States would increase its armed forces in South Vietnam to

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38Telegram from Ambassador Wright to Dean Rusk, July 16, 1965, Box 238, China Cables Vol. IV, NSF, LBJL.

nearly 80,000 personnel in the hope that this large force would open the way to a negotiated settlement. Johnson also pledged to Chiang that the United States would do what it could to end “external interference in South Vietnam so that the people of that country can determine their own future.” Johnson acknowledged that the ROC had provided assistance to the South Vietnamese government, then asked that Chiang:

> give most earnest consideration to increasing that assistance in ways which will give a clear signal to the world – and perhaps to Hanoi – of the solidarity of international support for resistance to aggression in Viet-Nam and for a peaceful settlement in Viet-Nam.\(^{40}\)

The next day, Ralph Clough, Deputy Chief of Mission in the U.S. Embassy in Taipei, met with Chiang to follow up on Johnson’s letter. The ROC, stated Chiang, would respond to the American request “by increasing its assistance to Vietnam as much as possible,” but insisted that the “Vietnamese problem can never be resolved within the borders of Vietnam.” Clough also made sure Chiang understood that Johnson’s request for “assistance” meant only “technical and economic aid.”\(^{41}\) Chiang replied that his government was ready “to render every possible support to the United States’ effort to preserve freedom against the Communist menace in Vietnam,” but reiterated that the Chinese Communists had instigated the war “in their pursual [sic] of annexing Indo-China and communizing entire Asia.”\(^{42}\)

\(^{40}\)Letter from Lyndon B. Johnson to Chiang Kai-shek, Box 244, China Visit of C. K. Yen, VP of China, 5/9-10/67, NSF, LBJL.

\(^{41}\)Telegram from Ralph Clough to Dean Rusk, July 27, 1965, Box 238, China Cables Vol. IV, NSF, LBJL.

\(^{42}\)Letter from Chiang Kai-shek to Lyndon B. Johnson, July 29, 1965, Box 244, China Visit of C. K. Yen, VP of China, 5/9-10/67, NSF, LBJL.
Indeed, by 1965, Chiang’s government already made significant non-combat contributions to the war effort in South Vietnam. The Republic of China had furnished small amounts of agricultural aid to South Vietnam since 1958 and had enlarged its assistance program in 1964. By 1965, ROC aid to South Vietnam included an 81-man agricultural demonstration team, nine electric power technicians and a 10,000 kilowatt power substation, a ten-man medical team, technical training for about 400 Vietnamese, twenty-six pre-fabricated aluminum warehouses, 500,000 school books, and various agricultural equipment, seed, fertilizer, and veterinary equipment. In terms of military assistance, by 1965 the ROC had provided South Vietnam a twenty-one-man psychological warfare team, a sixteen-man surgical team and two radio propaganda experts.43

Nevertheless, Chiang still sought an opportunity in Vietnam to expand his ongoing war with Mainland China and called on his friend Ray Cline for advice. On August 3, 1965, Chiang told Cline that the Chinese Communists and the North Vietnamese were about to engage the United States in a long war of attrition the U.S. could not win. In that event, Chiang told Cline that he was ready to provide troops to Vietnam if the United States wanted them and proposed a Nationalist landing on the south China coast “to cut Peking’s supply lines to Vietnam and to begin the reconquest of the mainland.” Such a move, in Chiang’s opinion, had to be made immediately or not at

all and required American assistance and planning. Cline commented to Washington that Chiang was more emotional than the situation warranted, probably because he feared Chiang’s control on Taiwan would weaken if he did not actively counter the Communist Chinese threat.  

Frustrated by the repeated refusal of the Americans to take up his offer of direct ROC military involvement in Vietnam, Chiang appealed directly to Premier Nguyen Cao Ky of South Vietnam. Venturing outside the boundaries of American policy, Chiang invited Ky to Taipei to propose the use of ROC troops against the Viet Cong. The State Department grew concerned. Ralph N. Clough noted that “Washington was not overjoyed at the prospect” of Ky’s visit to Taipei. As a result, the State Department instructed the embassies in Taipei and Saigon to notify both Chiang and Ky that the United States was concerned about the military implications of the visit.

Clough took immediate steps and scheduled a meeting with the new ROC Foreign Minister Shen Chang-huan concerning the forthcoming Chiang-Ky meeting. Clough informed Shen that the U.S. government was concerned that Ky’s visit to Taipei might reopen the prospect of a military contribution to Vietnam or a military alliance. Shen reassured Clough that his government intended to play up the “economic aspect” of the visit. Clough, however, saw one problem. Shen had only been on the job a week and probably did not understand President Chiang’s views on Vietnam and the details of the 

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Ky visit. Clough believed Shen’s statements represented the foreign ministry’s thinking on the handling of the Ky visit. Expecting that a possible ROC military contribution to South Vietnam and closer cooperation among Asian anti-communist countries would be discussed, Clough did not anticipate any formal agreement. Three days later, Clough met with Defense Minister Chiang Ching-kuo and mentioned the United States’ strong desire that the military implications of Premier Ky’s visit not be played up. Chiang assured Clough that his government “would stay in line with US policy during the visit.”

During his August 1965 visit to Taipei, Ky discussed with President Chiang increased ROC economic and technical assistance to South Vietnam’s war effort. Ky and Chiang considered jointly establishing model agricultural villages and expanding ROC assistance in several public works projects. The ROC also proposed increasing its military assistance to South Vietnam by sending additional landing ships to assist the South Vietnamese in maintaining coastal communication. Also, ROC officials indicated they would be willing to send troops to Vietnam if asked, but would not do so without consulting the United States because the introduction of ROC troops into Vietnam might expand the war into a larger Southeast Asian war. At the end of the conference, Ky and

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46 Telegram from Ralph Clough to Dean Rusk, August 6, 1965, Box 238, China Cables Vol. IV, NSF, LBJL.

47 Telegram from Ralph Clough to Dean Rusk, August 9, 1965, Box 238, China Cables Vol. IV, NSF, LBJL.

Chiang released a statement suggesting the ROC would increase its aid to South Vietnam:

The Government of the Republic of China has decided to increase the volume of technical and material assistance which is now being given to the Republic of Viet-Nam for the development of its economy, and is prepared to respond to other requests for assistance from the Vietnamese Government as China’s contribution to the struggle against the common enemy. 49

Meanwhile, a few voices in Congress advocated using ROC troops in Vietnam. On August 19, 1965, Representative Robert N. C. Nix (D-Pennsylvania) argued that the United States should encourage each American ally on the PRC’s periphery to step-up their efforts against international communism. He especially pointed out the Republic of China, whose military, Nix claimed, “could be mobilized quickly and efficiently to counter any threat when and if they are needed.” 50

The following month, ROC Defense Minister Chiang Ching-kuo planned to visit the United States and requested a meeting with President Johnson. So as to ensure that a rift between the United States and the Nationalist Chinese would not exist over the Ky-Chiang meeting, Ralph N. Clough believed it “highly desirable” that President Johnson meet with Defense Minister Chiang because it was the only way that President Chiang could be reassured that his views would receive top level consideration within the United States government. Chiang, according to Clough, had been increasingly concerned about the lack of consultation on American policy toward Vietnam policy. In preparation for

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the Defense Minister’s visit, Clough asked that President Johnson outline possible future operations and policy with respect to Vietnam and express gratification at the amount of technical assistance that Taiwan had provided to South Vietnam. This would help give ROC government officials the feeling of being consulted. But if the Defense Minister recommended ROC combat forces in Vietnam, Johnson should emphatically state “that major GRC assaults could not be successful at [the] present time.”

Meanwhile, the U.S. embassy staff in Taipei reported that Chiang was considering supplying military aid other than combat troops to South Vietnam. On September 14, 1965, Hummel stated that the ROC would agree in principle, if requested by the United States or by South Vietnam, to make available a “limited number [of] military personnel available to work as covert non-uniformed teams.” Additionally, the ROC would make available a small number of non-uniformed aircraft crews to airlift supplies to isolated areas, as had been suggested by Premier Ky. Hummel also stated the ROC government was considering supplying to the South Vietnamese Taiwan-manufactured mechanized landing craft (LCM) to ship supplies along the Vietnamese coast, as well as a limited number of non-uniformed crews to man the vessels.

When Defense Minister Chiang Ching-kuo visited the United States for high-level consultations, he again broached the subject of direct ROC military involvement in Vietnam. He first met with Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, who expressed

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51 Telegram from Ralph Clough to Dean Rusk, September 9, 1965, Box 238, China Cables Vol. IV, NSF, LBJL.

52 Telegram from Arthur Hummel to Dean Rusk, September 14, 1965, Box 238, China Cables Vol. IV, NSF, LBJL.
South Vietnam’s gratitude for promised increases in Taiwanese economic and technical aid. Defense Minister Chiang then abruptly changed the subject of their conversation. Arguing that the Chinese Communists would soon take military action against the United States and Taiwan, Defense Minister Chiang pledged that ROC forces were “‘available’ to support free world interests in Asia.”

The next day, the Defense Minister met with President Johnson, who reassured him that the current United States military buildup would allay the present danger and avoid provoking a larger war in the Far East. Chiang claimed that his government also wished to avoid a larger Asian war, but the question was how “to reduce or, if possible, to destroy Chinese Communist power without a general war.” Chiang argued that the Chinese Communists would not intervene “massively” in Vietnam, and would instead create turmoil through “revolutionary warfare” around the world, which would drain American strength and could have more dangerous implications than the large U.S. intervention in Vietnam. Johnson, however, followed his advisors’ recommendations and refused to countenance ROC military involvement in Vietnam.

Despite Johnson’s stated position, Ray Cline endorsed Chiang Kai-shek’s arguments for ROC military participation in the conflict. Cline, who had recently been promoted to Deputy Director for Intelligence in the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), argued in a December 1965 memorandum to CIA Director John McCone that “if the Chinese Communists are forcing us into a war of attrition on the ground in Southeast

Asia, we should feel free to use Chinese Nationalist troops against them.” According to Cline, the Nationalist Chinese military had long argued for an assault on the South China coast that would threaten supply lines to North Vietnam. They were also willing to deploy a considerable number of ground forces in South Vietnam if asked to do so by the United States. He recommended that the Johnson administration seriously consider creating a plan to land Chinese Nationalist forces in South China “when and if Chinese Communist military commitments of troops to North Vietnam pass the 50,000 mark or result in Chinese Communist combat troop contacts with US forces in South Vietnam.” He believed that if such a scheme were leaked to the press, it would alarm and deter the Chinese Communists. Cline said that “this is probably the greatest deterrent [short of US nuclear attack] we can bring to bear to keep Communist China from intervening directly and massively in Vietnam.” Cline also proposed that the U.S. and South Vietnam accept a 10,000 man Special Forces unit from the ROC “to engage in search-and-destroy operations in the highlands area of South Vietnam.”

While Cline advocated increased ROC involvement in South Vietnam to his CIA superiors, President Chiang courted the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In December 1965, General Earle G. Wheeler met with President Chiang in Taipei and disclosed that the United States would not invade North Vietnam for political reasons. Chiang angrily remarked that such a strategy made no military sense. The Chinese

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55Memorandum from Ray Cline to John Mc cone, December 6, 1965, FRUS 1964-68, 231-32. Cline seriously underestimated the total number of Communist Chinese troops in North Vietnam. Between 1965 and 1969, there were approximately 320,000 PRC troops engaged in building and defending North Vietnam’s infrastructure. In 1967, alone, 170,000 PRC troops were stationed in North Vietnam. See Chen, 229.
Communists, Chiang insisted, were the real enemy “and must not be left untouched if there is to be a lasting settlement in Vietnam.” Chiang claimed there were already Chinese forces in Vietnam and that the United States was fighting the Chinese Communists by proxy. Wheeler replied that he knew there were Chinese railroad engineers in North Vietnam and probably some anti-aircraft units, and that electronic intercepts revealed the presence in Vietnam of four PRC infantry regiments. Chiang was convinced that no peace could be achieved in Vietnam unless American problems were settled with Communist China, meaning the military destruction of the PRC. The only way to reach a settlement with the PRC, according to Chiang, was to use regional troops, especially ROC troops, to a much greater extent. He contended that ROC troops should be allowed to seize and hold the five southwest provinces of China and assured Wheeler that no U.S. ground forces would be needed. Chiang concluded that: “If you were to use one-half the power you are using in South Vietnam and help put GRC troops on the mainland, you could solve your Southeast Asian problems.” After their meeting, General Wheeler commented to Rusk that Chiang “probably recognizes that the Vietnamese War provides him with his last opportunity to return to mainland China with any hope of establishing and maintaining himself there.” Wheeler believed it would be in the best interests of the United States to keep Chiang frequently and fully informed on various problems in Asia, as per Johnson’s and Rusk’s policy, but “any invasion [of Mainland China] supported by United States forces is out of the question.”

56 Memorandum of Conversation, December 29, 1965, FRUS 1964-68, 234-37; Telegram from Arthur Hummel to Dean Rusk, December 31, 1965, Box 239, China Cables Vol. V, NSF, LBJL.
Operation Vanguard and Chinese Representation

While Chiang sought to use America’s escalating involvement in the Vietnam War to push for his long-standing ambition of returning to the Mainland, he simultaneously waged a running diplomatic battle to keep the PRC out of the United Nations and to preserve the ROC’s privileged status on the Security Council. In the course of 1964-65, however, the ROC position in the UN became increasingly precarious. In January 1964, French President Charles de Gaulle recognized the People’s Republic of China, immediately raising concerns that newly-independent French African states might follow suit and shift the balance in the UN decisively against the ROC’s exclusive possession of the China seat. George C. Denney, Jr., of the Intelligence and Research Division of the Department of State, reported that both the PRC and the ROC were competing for “all or nothing.” Shortly after, a CIA intelligence memorandum claimed that France’s recognition of Communist China and Chiang’s concern over Taiwan’s internal stability suggested “that he [Chiang] may ignore US tactical suggestions regarding the UN representation problem.” Such unilateral action might lead to French African nations aligning themselves with France in the UN and recognizing the PRC.

Both Taiwan and the PRC engaged in economic diplomacy to further their respective positions in the UN. The ROC focused its energies on Operation Vanguard, a technical assistance program begun in 1961 “to cultivate friendly relations with African

57 Memorandum from George C. Denney, Jr., to Secretary of State, January 29, 1964, Box 237, China Cables Vol. I, NSF, LBJL.

58 Current Intelligence Memorandum, April 16, 1964, Box 237, China Cables Vol. I, NSF, LBJL.
countries and to retain their support for the GRC’s position in the UN.” The State Department’s Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs described the aid program as “generally successful and popular” with those African governments that received this assistance. Meanwhile, the PRC initiated a similar program to compete with the ROC for African support. This development caused some anxiety in the State Department.

By September 1964, State Department officials grew concerned that the Chinese Communists would undermine the ROC’s aid program, and warned that “the Chinese Communists are mounting a subtle, persistent offensive, particularly in Africa, with a view to improving their international position at the expense of the GRC.” David Dean of the Office of Asian Communist Affairs worried that the rival Chinese aid programs in Africa would lead to “a fruitless and potentially dangerous game of aid blackmail.” Dean warned Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs Marshall Green that:

We presumably do not wish to match each and every Chinese Communist aid offer in Africa as a means of blocking recognition. If we, hoping for short-run gains, try to buy off governments which have or have indicated a willingness to accept aid, and then, at a later date, we do not respond again to the ChiCom effort, we will have clearly shown that our hasty initiatives at this time were nothing but


60 Memorandum from John B. Dexter to Westerfield, August 24, 1964, Box 1, GRC Aid to Africa, 1964, RG 59, NARA II.

61 Circular Telegram from the Department of State to Certain Posts, September 5, 1964, 85, FRUS 1964-68.
attempted bribes. The long-range implications of this fact broadly realized and accepted throughout Africa, are obviously extremely damaging.\textsuperscript{62}

Secretary of State Rusk disagreed with Dean. In a memorandum to David E. Bell, Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Rusk stated that PRC gains in Africa were a matter of serious concern and threatened to undermine “our position on Chinese representation in the next General Assembly, where the shift of a few votes may bring about a resolution to seat the Chinese Communists.” Rusk further commented that economic assistance would play a vital role in keeping the ROC in the United Nations. Rusk suggested that policies on economic assistance be reviewed for those African countries, mainly French-speaking, which were the most vulnerable to the Chinese Communists, and to examine other methods to increase or make more effective aid to African countries which supported American policy regarding Chinese representation.\textsuperscript{63}

Other Johnson administration officials also became concerned about African aid and its implications for the Chinese representation issue. William P. Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, warned Rusk that the Chinese Communists were making great inroads in their African relations. Bundy stated that nations such as the Congo, Senegal, the Central African Republic, Dahomey and Cameroon were wavering in support of the ROC and were interested in opening

\textsuperscript{62}Memorandum from David Dean to Marshall Green, October 6, 1964, Box 1, GRC Aid to Africa, 1964, RG 59, NARA II.

\textsuperscript{63}Memorandum from Dean Rusk to David E. Bell, October 16, 1964, Box 1, GRC Assistance Programs-Operation Vanguard, 1965, RG 59, NARA II.
diplomatic relations with the PRC. The PRC’s diplomatic successes in Africa, therefore, required the United States to reassess its plan to keep the ROC in the United Nations either by simple majority vote, or, if that failed, by the “important question” tactic, requiring a two-thirds vote. Agreeing with most of the American ambassadors in Africa, Bundy contended that economic aid would be a vital “element in determining the African attitude toward international policy questions in which we are interested.”

Despite the diplomatic problems created by Operation Vanguard, some State Department officials, in particular Dean Rusk, supported American funding for the ROC’s aid program. ROC officials requested American financial assistance for Operation Vanguard in October 1964. Tsiang Ting-fu, ROC Ambassador to the United States, requested $10 million a year for the next five years for Operation Vanguard from G. Mennen Williams, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. Williams suggested that the details of the ROC’s proposed plan be examined by the State Department, the Agency for International Development and the ROC embassy staff. Later that month, Tsiang met with Rusk and, once again, requested American assistance for Operation Vanguard. Secretary Rusk contended that Operation Vanguard could be expanded with increased American aid. These increases would generate additional local currency to cover the expanded program in Africa. In essence, Rusk proposed that

64Memorandum from G. Mennen Williams and William P. Bundy to Secretary of State, October 19, 1964, Box 1, GRC Assistance Programs-Op. Vanguard, 1965, RG 59, NARA II.

American funding of Operation Vanguard be dramatically increased.\textsuperscript{66}

American confidence in Operation Vanguard, though, was accompanied by continued pleas by the ROC for funding assistance. In a meeting in early January 1965 between United States and ROC diplomats, Secretary Rusk and Marshall Green, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, commented that the erosion of support among African nations for Taiwan’s seat in the United Nations “seems to have been checked” due to the efforts in Africa of the ROC government.\textsuperscript{67} Nonetheless, ROC officials renewed their request for American financial assistance for Operation Vanguard seven months later. Stephen B. Ives of the State Department’s Office of East Asia Affairs reported that he “was pressed very hard by the GRC on U.S. support of Vanguard” during his July 1965 visit to Taipei. Both the Minister of Economic Affairs, K. T. Li, and H. K. Yang, the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, argued that Taiwan needed U.S. funding for Operation Vanguard, including $10 million for commitments in Africa for Fiscal Year 1966. According to Ives, the list was either padded or included projects that could not be funded without increased American aid. Ives recommended that the State Department reassess American commitments to Operation Vanguard with a view to either increasing American funding or urging the Taiwanese to increase their own funding.\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{66}Memorandum from Mr. Green to Josiah W. Bennett, October 28, 1964, Box 1, GRC Assistance Programs-Op. Vanguard, 1965, RG 59, NARA II.

\textsuperscript{67}Memorandum of Conversation, January 6, 1965, Box 238, China Memos Vol. III, NSF, LBJL.

\textsuperscript{68}Memorandum from Stephen B. Ives to Rutherford M. Poats, July 16, 1965, Box 1, GRC Assistance Programs-Op. Vanguard, 1965, RG 59, NARA II.
The Taiwanese request for additional American funds for Operation Vanguard faced tremendous opposition among a number of American officials. Norman W. Getsinger, Officer in Charge of ROC Affairs in the State Department, argued that “the need for funds is not as great as indicated by the GRC . . . since the GRC seems to have plenty funds to meet all present requirements.” In addition, Congress refused to allow additional funds to be programmed into the ROC’s aid budget for Fiscal Year 1965, especially increased funding for Public Law 480 programs, because Taiwan’s economy was not in a state of “serious economic deterioration.” Any further assistance, according to Getsinger, would require strong justification and, probably, cabinet approval.69

Taiwan’s economy, as Getsinger suggested, had expanded in the 1960s. By the mid-1960s, the ROC’s economy had become the fastest growing in the world. The country’s Gross National Product (GNP), the total market value of all goods and services produced in the country, increased annually 9.7 percent between 1960 and 1970. In the same time period, per capita income increased annually 6.6 percent. Taiwan’s economy also became more industrialized, while its standard of living improved dramatically. In the view of Senator Hiram L. Fong (R-Hawaii), “Taiwan stands as a shining example,” having evolved with the help of $1.425 million in aid over sixteen years from the USAID, “from an under-developed island into a thriving agricultural-industrial economy.” As a result, the United States formally withdrew its non-military aid to the ROC in 1965.70


Nevertheless, ROC officials continued to lobby the Johnson administration to fund Operation Vanguard. In August 1965, ROC Ambassador Chow Shu-kai, in a meeting with USAID Administrator Bell and others, reminded everyone that Operation Vanguard’s goals were primarily political, not economic. Chow complained to Bell that Taiwan needed funding to finance sugar mills being constructed in Niger and Upper Volta, but because such funding was not considered “technical cooperation” by USAID, these projects were “not eligible for financing.” Bell recommended that the ROC seek such funds via loans from the Export-Import Bank. Chow countered that because Niger and Upper Volta had balance of payments problems, their governments sought grant aid. Chow, therefore, wanted a less rigid interpretation of “technical cooperation” because all of Taiwan’s African aid recipients had balance of payments problems. According to Chow, Operation Vanguard made friends for both the ROC and the United States. 

At the end of 1965, despite the uncertainty concerning American financial assistance, the ROC advised USAID and State Department officials that it would expand Operation Vanguard in Africa to preserve Nationalist Chinese representation in the United Nations. Yang Hsi-kun, ROC Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated that the ROC would be able to cover the first year or two of the program, but American assistance would eventually be needed to fund the project’s expansion into Latin America and

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71Memorandum of Conversation, August 3, 1965, Box 1, GRC Assistance Programs-Op. Vanguard, 1965, RG 59, NARA II.
Southeast Asia. Rutherford M. Poats, Assistant Director of the USAID, expressed his pleasure that the ROC intended to expand its aid program, especially as some of Taiwan’s plans fit with American aid plans. He also stated that the United States preferred Taiwan to use increased funding for further development of its own country, however, and the cost of expanding Operation Vanguard would have to be met by the Taiwanese economy. Though Poats agreed with Taiwan’s request for increased aid funding, “it would have to make economic sense for AID or Treasury to recommend it.”72

Perhaps one reason why ROC officials pleaded with the United States for assistance in funding was that, by the end of 1965, Operation Vanguard’s initial success began to decline. In September 1965, French President Charles de Gaulle announced that leaders from the Congo, Dahomey, the Central African Republic, and Senegal would support the admission of Communist China to the United Nations. In addition, France pressured Mauritania, Chad and the Cameroon to support the PRC’s admission. The remainder of the French-speaking African states, however, remained opposed to Communist China’s admission.73 Also, as the United States became more militarily and financially involved in Vietnam, the Johnson administration could no longer guarantee international support for the PRC’s continued exclusion from the UN. State Department analyst Joseph J. Sisco warned Secretary Rusk that “Despite their [the PRC’s] derisive statements about the United States, we must anticipate a strong effort to seat the Chinese

72Memorandum of Conversation, December 3, 1965, Box 1, GRC Aid to Africa, 1964, RG 59, NARA II.

73CIA Cable, September 27, 1965, Box 290, United Nations Representation 10/65, NSF, LBJL.
Communists on their own terms at the Twentieth Session of the U.N. General Assembly, convening on September 21.” Supporters of the PRC would need the votes of only several states that had not yet recognized Communist China in order to replace Taiwan in the UN. Sisco was chiefly worried that some variant of a “two Chinas” approach would be introduced, despite the PRC’s rejection of such a solution.74

Madame Chiang’s 1965 Trip to the United States

As American involvement in Vietnam escalated and the position of the Republic of China in the United Nations deteriorated, Madame Chiang Kai-shek attempted to rally conservative congressmen and the China Lobby’s base of popular support. In 1965, Madame Chiang saw an opportunity to reinforce American support for the ROC through an extended informal visit to the U.S. She had visited the United States many times since World War II, but this visit sought to rally the remnants of the China Lobby and other interest groups who had supported her husband’s government in the past. During her tour, which spanned from August to December 1965, she gave a number of talks pleading her country’s case for increased American support in, what she considered, the greater war against communism in Asia.75

Ralph Clough at the U.S. embassy in Taipei became suspicious about the timing of Madame Chiang’s trip. Although Clough had no evidence that Madame Chiang

74 Memorandum from Joseph J. Sisco to Dean Rusk, August 7, 1965, Box 290, United Nations Chinese Representation 10/65, NSF, LBJL.

intended to conduct ROC business, he speculated that her trip planned to test the climate of American opinion regarding the Republic of China and “may in fact be an element in recently heightened efforts by President Chiang to convince US that only solution to Vietnam problem is to support GRC in action against China mainland.” Clough warned that President Chiang probably believed that “a visit by Madame Chiang to US at this time and calls by her on various personalities friendly to GRC will help create favorable atmosphere for proposals which Chiang Ching-kuo will carry to Washington” later in the month.  

Although she claimed her visit was “unofficial,” Madame Chiang made it clear she would speak her mind. During a press conference after her plane landed at LaGuardia Airport in New York, she called for the immediate destruction of Chinese Communist atomic facilities, claiming that the PRC’s possession of the atomic bomb “jeopardizes the position of every nation in the world.”

On September 14, Madame Chiang visited with President and Lady Bird Johnson at the White House. The ROC’s first lady immediately pressed her concerns about the Vietnam War. She explained to President Johnson that her husband strongly supported U.S. policy in Vietnam. Apart from this exchange, however, there was very little discussion of policy during her White House visit. Instead, Madame Chiang and Mrs. Johnson reminisced over tea about their prior meeting in May 1961 when then-Vice President Johnson had pressed her to meet with President Kennedy.

76Telegram from Ralph Clough to Dean Rusk, August 18, 1965, Box 238, China Cables Vol. IV, NSF, LBJL.

President Johnson had led a state visit to Taiwan.\textsuperscript{78}

Madame Chiang also expressed her concerns about American support of the ROC during a September 22 luncheon with a number of U.S. Senators. Without specifically mentioning the ROC or requesting increased aid, she mentioned that she had seen a charcoal drawing of a soldier in a newspaper with a caption below that stated: “Nowhere Does Freedom Come Cheap.” She then asked the senators if there were any exceptions in all history to the statement “Nowhere Does Freedom Come Cheap.” The ROC’s first lady concluded by stating that: “The stark reality is that neither wanting to wish it away, nor resorting to escapism, nor casuistry, nor groveling cowardice can buy freedom cheaply. How poignantly sad, but true, are these words: From nowhere, but nowhere does freedom come cheap.”\textsuperscript{79}

Madame Chiang’s visit, however, probably had little effect on American sentiment toward the ROC. Apart from a few well-publicized visits to New York and Washington, her statements were hardly reported in the American press. Few news items


appeared in either the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*, two of the most important newspapers of record in the United States. Those few entries that did make it into the newspaper were relegated to the society page. She gave most of her talks to groups, like the National Federation of Business and Professional Women and Wellesley College (her alma mater), that were already sympathetic to her views. In other words, Madame Chiang spent most of her time preaching to the converted rather than garnering new supporters who could potentially pressure Congress and the White House to continue the containment and isolation of the PRC and to provide increased aid to the ROC.

Indeed, Senator Stephen M. Young (D-Ohio) seized upon Madame Chiang’s visit to deliver a series of speeches on the Senate floor criticizing the ROC, its leadership, and American policy toward Taiwan. Angered over Madame Chiang Kai-shek’s 1965 tour of the United States and her fund-raising appeal, Young contended that the United States “should long since have stopped pouring American dollars into this rathole.” Such money, the senator claimed, supposedly went to support Chiang’s army of 600,000, but Young had “grave doubts” whether they were well-trained, “top notch” soldiers.

Senator Young was not the only senator publicly to challenge the status of U.S. relations with the ROC. Before Madame Chiang’s visit, in April 1965, Senator George

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McGovern (D-South Dakota) had argued that:

... it would be both in our own national interest and in the interest of international understanding for us to explore carefully the possibility of new initiatives. It seems increasingly clear that there is much to be gained in the long run by at least limited contacts with [Communist] China.  

On the floor of the U.S. Senate in May 1965, McGovern stated that “one day we must undertake the patient – and no doubt frustrating – effort to establish international, economic, and cultural ties with China.”

Not only did Madame Chiang’s visit fail to rally solid congressional support for the ROC, but she also was unable to prevent several senior American policymakers from revisiting the “two Chinas” issue. Arthur J. Goldberg, who had replaced the recently deceased Adlai Stevenson as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, became increasingly concerned that a simple majority vote on the Chinese representation issue could be lost, although the United States could still avert the two-thirds majority needed to settle the “important question.” His fears became reality in the fall of 1965 when the annually-proposed Albanian resolution achieved a tie vote in the General Assembly. Goldberg complained to Rusk that “serious political defeat might be involved in loss of majority support on Chirep” and “could have repercussions in Far East and greatly magnify our difficulties next year.” Goldberg recommended, along the lines of a Canadian and Italian proposal, to send the Chinese representation issue to a study committee “to examine the desirability and means of achieving universality of

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83 *Congressional Record*, Volume 111, 10054.

84 Ibid., 11836.
membership and representation consistent with the purposes and principles of the charter.” Although the resolution was broad in scope, Goldberg intended that the proposed committee focus solely on Chinese representation.  

William Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, also agreed that some change in tactics toward the Chinese representation issue was needed. Rather than a study committee, Bundy favored some form of two China arrangement that would not necessarily exclude the PRC from the UN, but would protect the ROC’s membership. Bundy believed that President Chiang would have to be consulted and persuaded to accept such a new strategy by a high-level emissary, and the United States would also have to consult with the British, the Japanese, and other friendly governments. 

**Conclusion**

By the end of 1965, United States relations with the Republic of China had changed dramatically from the time that John F. Kennedy had taken the Oath of Office in January 1961. As the American war effort in South Vietnam intensified, the ROC’s position in the United Nations eroded. While French African states joined the UN and supported Communist China’s efforts for membership, Operation Vanguard failed to generate the widespread good will and support in Africa that ROC officials sought. This failure led to a tie vote in the UN General Assembly in late 1965 on the Albanian

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85Thomson, 240; Telegram from USUN NY (United States delegation to the United Nations, New York) to Secretary of State, November 2, 1965, Box 290, United Nations Chinese Representation, 10/65, NSF, LBJL.

86Memorandum from James C. Thomson, Jr., to McGeorge Bundy, November 26, 1965, Box 239, China Memos Vol. V, NSF, LBJL.
resolution and to William P. Bundy’s consideration of a “two Chinas” representation formula. Meanwhile, Chiang pressed U.S. policymakers for a larger ROC role in the Vietnam war effort, hoping that he could use the conflict as a means to retake the Mainland. The Johnson administration, fearing a larger conflict involving the Communist Chinese, denied Chiang an increased military role in Vietnam. Even Madame Chiang’s visit failed to exert much pressure on the Johnson administration to bow to Chiang’s wishes. A dual policy of Chinese containment, therefore, began to emerge by the end of 1965, both to contain communism’s spread in Southeast Asia, and to contain Chiang Kai-shek’s ambition to overthrow and replace the PRC. Additionally, some State Department staffers continued to insist on a moderated policy toward the PRC. These factors would prove troublesome for the future of U.S.-ROC relations into the latter years of the Johnson administration.
CHAPTER VI

THE JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION

AND CHINA POLICY, 1966-68

Between 1966 and 1968, it became increasingly difficult for the United States to maintain the status quo regarding relations with the Republic of China (ROC). Although the United States managed to keep the ROC in the United Nations (UN), several American allies continued to promote UN membership for the People’s Republic of China (PRC). Meanwhile, the U.S. Congress initiated investigations into U.S.-China policy and concluded that the establishment of relations with the Communist Chinese was inevitable. But as American involvement in the Vietnam War exploded, Taiwan became an important supply depot, airlift staging area, and rest and relaxation (R&R) destination. The Vietnam War put additional stress on the U.S. relationship with the ROC as President Chiang Kai-shek continually insisted on using the war in Vietnam to advocate a larger military role in Southeast Asia and to overthrow the Mainland regime. By the end of 1968, State Department and National Security Council officials opined that Chiang and the Nationalists had become a barrier to normalizing relations with the People’s Republic of China, therefore setting the stage for President Richard M. Nixon’s initiatives toward the PRC in the early 1970s.
Chinese Representation at the United Nations, 1966

By early 1966, the issue of Chinese representation in the United Nations was again becoming a source of concern for American policymakers. In an April 1966 report, State Department analyst Thomas Hovet, Jr., concluded that “despite the objections of the U.S., there is every likelihood that the PRC may be seated in the U.N.” sometime between 1967 and 1970. Although the Americans had done everything to make sure the ROC remained in the United Nations, a shift of only four votes could negate the two-thirds majority protecting the “important question” vote. If the UN were to admit the PRC, according to Hovet, it would endorse the PRC’s “right to exert control over Taiwan and the Pescadores as an integral part of China,” an action that, according to the 1954 Mutual Defense Treaty between the U.S. and Taiwan, would force the U.S. to protect Taiwan. If the U.S. failed to live up to its treaty obligation to the ROC, “there would be . . . serious implications for U.S. allies in the Pacific and the whole U.S. structure of mutual security treaties.” Hovet recommended that the U.S. agree to seating the PRC and ousting the ROC if the United Nations “would declare [and take steps to implement] the neutralization of Taiwan and the Pescadores for ten years.” Hovet recommended this policy change because it would protect American interests and the security of Taiwan.1

Arthur J. Goldberg, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, was also concerned about Chinese representation in the UN. In April 1966, Goldberg warned President

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Johnson that a majority in the General Assembly might vote going against seating the Republic of China in the upcoming fall, and that the United States would lose a two-thirds vote on the “important question” tactic. To counter this possibility, Goldberg suggested that the United States adopt a “successor state” strategy, whereby the General Assembly could recognize both the ROC and the PRC. The United States, however, could not openly propose such an idea. Goldberg recommended that the Canadians introduce a “successor state” resolution and requested authorization to discuss the issue with Canadian Prime Minister Lester Pearson and Minister for External Affairs (Foreign Minister) Paul Martin, who had gone on record supporting a “two Chinas” solution. If the Canadians decided to propose this resolution, the State Department would inform the ROC that it would defend the Nationalist seat in the UN, but would not oppose a seat for Communist China. The United States would not express immediate opposition to the resolution. Rather, the American delegation would wait and publicly support the Canadian resolution later.²

Two days later, Walter W. Rostow, Senior Policy Advisor to President Johnson, informed the president that Ambassador Goldberg’s plan was premature. Rostow argued that the United States had “a solemn, secret commitment to Taiwan” and should “use our Security Council veto to keep the ChiComs [Chinese Communists] out.” Rostow was also concerned with the possible implications of such a precedent for Vietnam. If the


Telegram from Department of State to U.S. Embassy Taipei, May 4, 1966, Box 239, China Cables Vol. VI, NSF, LBJL. Rusk, after all, had long been an advocate of a “two Chinas” policy, but not outspokenly so under JFK and LBJ, despite knowing that neither the PRC nor the ROC would recognize two distinct and separate Chinese political entities. See Dean Rusk, *As I Saw It* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1990), 282-83.

Nonetheless, some Taiwanese officials suspected the United States would soon change its Chinese representation position. Chow Shu-kai, T. F. Tsiang’s successor as ROC Ambassador to the United States, remarked that many newspapers in Taiwan were growing critical of U.S. policy toward the ROC “and reflected lurking suspicion something dreadful might happen in US-GRC relations.” Chow suggested that the Taiwanese were growing distrustful of American efforts to ensure their national existence. William P. Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, assured Chow that the United States would do what it could “to keep down speculation of policy change and would use every available opportunity to make our real position clear.” Chow complained that the Americans over-emphasized their guarantee to maintain Taiwan’s national integrity, and did not stress the PRC’s belligerency as a disqualifying factor for UN membership.

By mid-May 1966, Secretary Rusk weighed in with his thoughts on Chinese representation. Rusk, in consultation with Ambassador Goldberg, advised President Johnson that the course of action with the fewest risks involved a “two Chinas” approach. This tactic proposed to shift the debate from keeping the ROC in the UN to excluding the

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4Telegram from Department of State to U.S. Embassy Taipei, May 4, 1966, Box 239, China Cables Vol. VI, NSF, LBJL. Rusk, after all, had long been an advocate of a “two Chinas” policy, but not outspokenly so under JFK and LBJ, despite knowing that neither the PRC nor the ROC would recognize two distinct and separate Chinese political entities. See Dean Rusk, *As I Saw It* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1990), 282-83.
PRC from UN membership. A “two Chinas” plan would have to be introduced at the UN by a third party and not be opposed by the United States. While the ROC had a right to representation in the United Nations, the PRC could also be admitted to the UN. Steps, though, would be taken to preserve the ROC’s seat on the Security Council. Should Communist China be admitted and seated alongside the ROC, the question of China’s Security Council seat could be suspended until the PRC took its General Assembly seat and the UN completed a study on permanent membership of the Security Council. The ROC, however, would have to be convinced that the new American tactics would avoid total defeat and “assure them continuing representation in the United Nations.” If Taiwan accepted the proposal, the PRC still might not take its seat in the UN because it objected to a “two Chinas” solution. Walter P. McConaughy, Jr., the newly appointed U.S. Ambassador to Taiwan, would have to convince Taiwanese leaders “that the best way to continue to exclude Red China would be for the Republic of China to hold on to its seat in the Assembly” and not walk out if the PRC were admitted. Meanwhile, Ambassador Goldberg and Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations Joseph J. Sisco would meet with Canadian officials to “unleash” the Canadians on the “two Chinas” solution. The Canadians, though, could not be allowed to make any move, nor could Congress be consulted about this plan, without full discussion with Taipei. After reading Rusk’s memo, Walt Rostow commented to President Johnson that the proposal was “something of a landmark” that “recommends to you [President Johnson] that we begin to

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5 Memorandum from Dean Rusk to Lyndon B. Johnson, May 14, 1966, Box 295, China Addendum, NSF, LBJL.
shift off our present policy toward Communist China in the UN.” Johnson later approved Rusk’s suggestion and authorized him to proceed.  

Meanwhile, Ambassador Goldberg privately discussed the Chinese representation issue with Canadian Prime Minister Pearson, Foreign Minister Martin, and Canadian Ambassador to the United States A. Edgar Ritchie. Pearson and Martin stated that their government was under “strong domestic opinion” to make a change in their China policy. Pearson and Martin, though, assured Goldberg that they would not present a “two Chinas” proposal without consultation with the United States. Goldberg promised he would talk with them later about Chinese representation after American officials discussed their plan with Chiang.

On June 30, 1966, Ambassador McConaughy met with Chiang Kai-shek at the president’s residence in Taipei to discuss the various reasons why current tactics might no longer work to keep the ROC in the United Nations. Chiang quickly scotched the idea of dual representation. If both the ROC and the Chinese Communists were seated in the UN, according to Chiang, it would amount to a coalition situation that would cause the Taiwanese delegates to withdraw from the UN. Chiang further warned McConaughy that “as long as GRC [Government of the Republic of China] exists, it will seek the destruction of Chicoms as a usurper regime: It is better to go down to defeat fighting than to compromise a principle so deeply rooted in basic tradition and morality of Chinese

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6Memorandum from Walt Rostow to President Johnson, May 17, 1966, FRUS 1964-68, 303-04.

7Telegram from Arthur J. Goldberg to Department of State, May 17, 1966, FRUS 1964-68, 304-06.
people.” The ROC’s integrity and honor were at stake. If the General Assembly voted to admit the Chinese Communists, “the GRC would have to walk out.” McConaughy reiterated that the United States hoped that Taiwan would accept these new tactics given the erosion of international support for the ROC in the UN. Chiang ended the conversation by asserting that the UN Charter was clear on ROC membership and that the U.S. should use procedural tactics, like the “important question” issue, to ensure that the PRC was not offered membership. If the U.S. wavered, “then [the] attitude[s] of other countries would weaken, and [the] attitude of GRC would also change.”

After McConaughy’s failure, Rusk and McGeorge Bundy traveled to Taipei to convince President Chiang, his son, and Foreign Minister Wei Tao-ming to accept the American assessment that new tactics would be needed to preserve the ROC’s seat in the United Nations. Foreign Minister Wei maintained that progress was being made wooing African recipients of Taiwanese aid under Operation Vanguard. According to Wei, African support for the ROC position had actually increased since the 1965 vote. Dahomey and the Central African Republic had severed relations with the PRC, while the Congo (Kinshasa) assured the ROC that their UN ambassador would not disobey orders as he had done in 1965. Wei stated that the ROC’s friends in Africa “would not desert them in showdown or make them a scapegoat for dissatisfaction with other US or Western policies.” Also, any Canadian suggestion of a “two Chinas” plan would take votes away from the Nationalists. Rusk then warned Wei that while many countries

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8Telegram from U.S. Embassy Taipei to Department of State, July 1, 1966, FRUS 1964-68, 344-47.
continued to support the ROC’s efforts, it would not be wise to show inflexibility. If the ROC felt it had to withdraw from the UN, Rusk concluded that their action would cause a diplomatic disaster by allowing the Chinese Communists a wide open field in the international forum.⁹

Later that month Secretary Rusk made good on his promise to meet with Canadian officials as soon as the ROC had been apprised of the new American initiative regarding the Chinese representation issue in the UN. The Secretary privately told Foreign Minister Martin that “it would be a disaster if the ChiComs displaced the GRC in the GA [General Assembly].” Additionally, Rusk declared that some Asian leaders favored gathering as many votes as possible to ensure that the PRC would not be admitted into the UN. Martin agreed that it was necessary to review the votes, and that this issue was vitally important to U.S. interests, but the Foreign Minister informed Rusk that over sixty-five percent of Canadians, according to a recent Gallup Poll, favored Chinese Communist admission to the United Nations. Martin further surprised Rusk by contending “there may be a lot” in the Government of Canada who supported Communist China’s admission, although his government would not support the ROC’s expulsion. A shocked Rusk stated that Chinese representation was not a vital interest of Canadians and questioned whether Martin’s government had only attempted to please public opinion in Canada and in Europe. Closing the meeting, Martin stated “that the state of public opinion in Canada and elsewhere was a fact that statesmen must take into account” and

⁹Telegram from U.S. Embassy Taipei to Department of State, July 5, 1966, FRUS 1964-68, 348-50.
that PRC admission to the UN was “bound to happen” anyway.\textsuperscript{10} A month later, at a meeting at Chamcook, New Brunswick, President Johnson clarified the new U.S. policy to Prime Minister Pearson, stating that he wanted to see the Chinese Communists in the UN “to defend their position before the world,” but he did not want to sell out Chiang and the ROC government. Pearson had no response.\textsuperscript{11}

The ROC’s poor reaction to a “two Chinas” representation approach in the UN and the Canadian government’s turnabout on Chinese representation, meant that by September 1966 Secretary Rusk’s “two Chinas” solution was in jeopardy. Alfred Jenkins, Robert Komer’s replacement on the National Security Council staff and protégé of Walt Rostow, warned that the American ability to defeat a resolution to seat the PRC in Taiwan’s stead was now questionable. In his view, there were only two ways to keep the ROC in. First, “have a friendly member introduce a resolution . . . which reaffirms GRC status and also invites the PRC to occupy seats in the General Assembly.” Second, try to defeat any resolution proposing to replace the ROC with the Communist Chinese, the very resolution proposed by the Albanian delegation, without introducing an alternative. Jenkins, however, believed that neither option was attractive or safe. He recommended that the United States continue public opposition to the Albanian resolution. If this tactic should fail, then American diplomats should “shift immediately to a resolution establishing a study group to consider this complex question, and report

\textsuperscript{10}Telegram from Dean Rusk to U.S. Embassy in Ottawa, Canada, July 25, 1966, \textit{FRUS 1964-68}, 358-60.

Jenkins later complained to Walt Rostow that “no paper on Chirep has even now come officially to rest at any meaningful level in the Department,” despite the number of talks between U.S. and ROC officials and discussions between American officials. Jenkins commented that Secretary Rusk now wanted no change, while Ambassador Goldberg continued to favor a “two Chinas” approach.¹³

Just two days after Jenkins’s memo to Rostow, Secretary Rusk declared that there would be “no change in US policy on Chirep at 21st UNGA [United Nations General Assembly]” and promised maximum opposition to any resolution from Albania that would expel Taiwan and replace it with Communist China. In addition, the U.S. would “reaffirm view that any proposal to change representation of China is ‘important question’ requiring two-thirds majority.” Rusk reasoned that Communist China’s entry into the United Nations would disrupt and contradict the UN’s mission of peace. By 1966, Mainland China had descended into violence and chaos stirred by Mao’s Cultural Revolution. Rusk estimated “that a distinct majority would support our position on ‘important question’ formula while prospects for defeating Albanian-type resolution are about same as last year.”¹⁴

¹²Memorandum from Alfred Jenkins to Walt Rostow, September 6, 1966, FRUS 1964-68, 380-82.

¹³Memorandum from Alfred Jenkins to Walt Rostow, September 14, 1966, Box 5, Jenkins Memos, NSF, LBJL.

Despite Rusk’s public stance against any change in Chinese representation, Canadian Ambassador Ritchie privately presented his government’s “two Chinas” proposal to U.S. Undersecretary of State Nicholas Katzenbach. Ritchie said that his proposal would allow countries to express their point of view while still opposing the Albanian resolution to seat the PRC. The Canadian proposal “would call upon the President of the General Assembly to carry out an investigation of the possible basis for an interim solution.” But as Katzenbach read the text, he noted a provision for Chinese Communist representation in the Security Council, a provision he believed was not necessary to fulfill Canada’s plan. Ritchie responded that his proposal was the best possible approach to preserving Taiwan’s seat in the UN and would not be acceptable to other governments if it did not provide for PRC representation on the Security Council.\(^\text{15}\)

After hearing from Katzenbach, Rusk moved to block the Canadian proposal. He asked President Johnson for authorization “to try to persuade the Canadians to alter their present ‘one China one Taiwan’ proposal to one more acceptable to us, involving a UN General Assembly Study Committee.” The Canadian Cabinet, Rusk warned, had consulted with allied governments, such as the Belgians and the Italians, concerning admitting the PRC and retaining the ROC in the UN. If a vote were taken, the Albanian resolution supporting PRC admission would gain a simple majority. A study committee, Rusk told Johnson in a phone conversation the next day, would “complicate” the issue for a year or two. Without the study committee, the U.S. would not be able to defeat the

Albanian resolution. President Johnson concurred and approved Rusk’s plan.16

Secretary Rusk, on November 9, 1966, wrote Prime Minister Pearson to convince him to abandon his draft resolution to admit the PRC into the UN. The Secretary of State criticized the Canadian proposal regarding Chinese representation in the United Nations on the grounds that it would harm American plans for peace in Vietnam. Citing the Johnson administration’s desire for peace in East Asia, Rusk urged the Canadian delegation to the UN to accept the use of previously successful tactics and put aside their “two Chinas” proposal. According to Rusk, the Canadian proposal would “create maximum mischief for minimum result,” ending in chaos at the UN. The United States, concluded Rusk, would have to oppose and defeat the Canadian proposal with the greatest majority possible.17 William Bundy also criticized the Canadian proposal, stating it could “adversely affect peace prospects in Viet Nam and create problems for many allies in Asia.”18

Ambassador Chow was also disturbed by the Canadian proposal. In a meeting with Rusk, he asked that the United States use its power to stop it. To head off any accusations of collusion with the Canadians, Rusk admitted to meeting with Ritchie and Paul Martin, Canadian Ambassador to the UN, several times and discussing Chinese


17Telegram from Department of State to Embassy in Canada, November 9, 1966, FRUS 1964-68, 420-24.

representation tactics with them. Rusk explained to Chou that he had attempted to persuade Martin to defer on his plan but had failed. Chow replied that Taiwan would oppose any study committee proposal, and if the United States continued to support such an idea, the “result would be a deplorable division between allies.” Since Taiwan’s leaders were answerable to history, their national honor and dignity were at stake. As a result, they were opposed to any change. Rusk remained adamant on the study committee proposal because the United States had “too much at stake” to accept defeat on the Albanian resolution in the General Assembly.19

The Italian delegation to the UN further complicated matters. On November 9, Italian Foreign Minister Amintore Fanfani discussed with Ambassador Goldberg a draft resolution which proposed a study committee similar to what Rusk had conceived, but which addressed potential PRC membership.20 After learning of the Italian proposal, ROC Foreign Minister Wei Tao-ming explained to Secretary Rusk that any attempt to bring the Chinese Communists into the UN would give them a credibility that would undermine the ROC’s existence. If any plan were passed that gave the PRC membership in the UN, the ROC would have no choice but to walk out. Any reference to Communist China needed to be removed, especially in the newly proposed Italian plan, in which “China” was mentioned without reference to the ROC or the PRC. Rusk responded that “present events on the mainland,” namely the Cultural Revolution, “make this a


particularly bad time for the international community to appear to encourage Chinese Communist militancy.”

Ambassador McConaughy, after being called to the ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs by Acting Foreign Minister Sampson Shen, was likewise advised that if the Italian resolution were to pass, the ROC would announce its withdrawal from the United Nations. This decision, “taken at the highest level,” had been made because the study committee plan would “question GRC rights as founding members of UN.” McConaughy warned Shen that such a move was “hasty, ill-advised,” and not based on close consultation and cooperation. If the ROC were to walk out of the UN, McConaughy warned Shen, they would abandon the UN to the Chinese Communists.

That same day, Rusk requested McConaughy to meet with President Chiang concerning the study committee proposal. Rusk instructed McConaughy to warn that:

Withdrawal from UN would deprive GRC of international understanding and support on which it must depend in working toward fulfillment of its own basic policies. It would deal a body blow to effectiveness of UN and make position of US and GRC allies in Asia vastly more difficult. It would encourage Peking’s militancy at very time when important decisions with respect to Viet-Nam and future thrust of Peking’s policies may be in balance. GRC withdrawal from the UN would in short only help our enemies.

21 Telegram from Department of State to Embassy in Republic of China, November 15, 1966, FRUS 1964-68, 437-40.

22 Telegram from Embassy in the Republic of China to Department of State, November 21, 1966, FRUS 1964-68, 440-41.

When Ambassador McConaughy met with President Chiang on November 23, 1966, the president stated that “any study committee resolution implies the existence of two Chinas.” While he understood that the United States was doing its best to keep the ROC in the United Nations, American support for a study committee would “shatter the GRC position.” If a study committee resolution were adopted, according to Chiang, the Chinese people would believe that the United States had changed its policy to a “two Chinas” policy and given up on the ROC, something for which the Chinese people would not stand.

McConaughy insisted that a study group resolution was the most effective way to defeat the Albanian resolution. Although the United States had been unable to stop the Canadian resolution, it had prevented other countries, such as Italy, Belgium and Chile, from going along with the Canadians. He reiterated that the study committee plan before the UN did not threaten any major interests of the ROC and that Chiang’s government had to be prepared to accept some “minor annoyances” in order to protect “vital interests.” Chiang retorted that “passive support” was in fact support.” Chiang further concluded that it was still “in the realm of possibility . . . for USG to maneuver to defeat the study committee and thus to reassure the GRC of the friendship and motives of the US.”

Canadian involvement in Chinese UN representation reflected just how difficult the American struggle to help retain the ROC’s seat had become. In a November 25,

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1966, meeting with Canadian Foreign Minister Paul Martin, Secretary of State Rusk noted that some American allies in the Far East believed that Canada “would never have put forward its proposal without consultation and agreement with the United States,” and that the Canadian ambassadors to Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Australia and Thailand should “make clear to their host governments that this was not the case.” Martin stated he knew the true situation on the matter and would contact Canadian ambassadors of those countries mentioned to clarify the situation. Rusk told Martin to do what he believed necessary, but the Canadian move on Chinese representation had been made without American consultation. As a result, neither the United Kingdom, Australia, Communist China, nor the Soviet Union supported the Canadian plan. Martin, however, insisted that what the Canadians had done “was right and that the US would agree to this in due course.”

A week later, Shen again summoned Ambassador McConaughy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to tell him that the ROC had modified its position in the event of the passage of the Italian resolution. Rather than withdraw from the UN, Shen stated that his delegation would simply walk out and be absent from the General Assembly for a time. Shen believed that if his government did nothing, the Chinese people would think that the ROC was “under the thumb” of the United States. McConaughy stated that the United States was fearful that hostile elements in the UN would seize on any walkout to use

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parliamentary methods to declare the China seat vacant and admit the PRC.\textsuperscript{26}

That same day the vote on Chinese representation took place on the floor of the General Assembly. David H. Popper, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, commented that the vote went “even better than we had anticipated, doubtless in large part to the existence of the study committee alternative to the Albanian resolution.” The important question resolution carried 66 votes in favor, 48 against, and 7 abstentions, while the Albanian resolution was defeated 46-57-17. The Italian resolution calling for the study committee was also defeated 34-62-25.\textsuperscript{27}

After December 1966, American diplomatic records indicate that the Johnson administration did not pay much attention to the Chinese representation issue in the United Nations. Nonetheless, a vote taken in the UN in November 1967 concerning the important question, Albanian resolution, and study committee showed similar results. The U.S. delegation to the United Nations, therefore, had maintained sufficient votes to defeat any “two Chinas” proposal or any motion to remove the ROC from the UN.\textsuperscript{28} It proved increasingly difficult, though, for the Johnson administration to convince its allies to continue publicly to promote isolation of the PRC while State Department and White House policymakers pressed forward with notions of “two Chinas” and a less tense

\textsuperscript{26}Telegram from the Embassy in the Republic of China to the Department of State, November 29, 1966, \textit{FRUS 1964-68}, 467-69.

\textsuperscript{27}Information Memorandum from David H. Popper to Dean Rusk, November 29, 1966, \textit{FRUS 1964-68}, 469-70.

\textsuperscript{28}Information Memorandum from Joseph J. Sisco to Dean Rusk, November 28, 1967, \textit{FRUS 1964-68}, 611.
Congressional Investigations of China Policy, 1966

In early 1966, both houses of Congress initiated investigations of United States policy toward China. These investigations were sparked by increased U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War and the fear of many congressmen and senators that a larger war with Communist China might well develop. The House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations committee summarily called on China specialists to give testimony regarding Communist China, its status with the rest of the world, and potential future relations with the United States.

Witnesses before the House Foreign Affairs Committee between January 25 and March 17, 1966, concluded that Communist China, while still a threat to American interests, seemed to have a stable government that could interact with other countries. Howard L. Boorman of Columbia University testified that despite the PRC’s economic problems and widespread poverty, “the present political system is stable.” A. Doak Barnett, professor of government at Columbia, contended that PRC leaders were determined to work toward major power status, but were “aware of their material and military limitations, and they have generally attempted to minimize the risk of major conflict.” Likewise, Roger Hilsman added that the PRC’s new nationalism was dangerous, but if moved into constructive channels, with U.S. help, “it [the PRC] can be a fantastically powerful force for good in the world.” Finally, Secretary Rusk testified

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that the United States would continue a policy of containment toward the PRC.

Containment, though, did not mean isolation. Rusk further explained that “if Peking abandons its belief that force is the best way to resolve disputes and gives up its violent strategy of world revolution . . . we would welcome an era of good relations.”

In its final report, the House Foreign Affairs Committee recommended that the United States create a realistic foreign policy that would develop peaceful relations with the PRC while preventing it from aggressive and expansive activity. Mainland China was quickly developing into a major power. As its government appeared stable and entrenched, and because “our country’s ability to influence the course of events on the Asian mainland is essentially limited,” it was important to develop a working relationship with the Communist Chinese.

By no means did all congressmen share such a view. While some of his colleagues were contemplating improved relations with the PRC, Representative Robert Lee Fulton Sikes (D-Florida) remained solidly behind the ROC. He even argued for the inclusion of Taiwanese troops in battle against the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong. He claimed that the ROC was the “most fertile source of immediately available troops.” Although he worried that the presence of Taiwanese troops might trigger a larger conflict with the PRC, he was less alarmed than some at such a prospect because the presence of South Korean forces in Vietnam had not yet caused the Chinese Communists to become actively involved in the war. It was important, therefore, that ROC forces “be stepped up

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30Ibid., 425.

31Ibid., 426.
in anticipation that possible continued escalation of the war may bring about a requirement for involvement.”

The Senate Foreign Relations committee began its investigation of U.S. China policy in early March. Committee Chairman Senator J. William Fulbright (D-Arkansas), in his opening remarks, claimed the investigation was intended to be educational in nature. Like its House counterpart, the Senate Foreign Relations committee learned that the current policy toward Mainland China was unworkable and that the U.S. had to accept the PRC as a major power.

The Senate Foreign Relations committee also called some of the foremost American experts on China to testify on the current and future status of U.S.-China relations. John K. Fairbank, director of the East Asian Research Center at Harvard University, claimed that there existed a fundamental misunderstanding of Chinese political behavior. Containment policy created a situation that isolated the PRC. This isolation only intensified their aggressive behavior. Mainland China, like other developing countries, needed cultural and financial exchange. Donald S. Zagoria, professor of government at Columbia University, also called on the United States “to achieve a stable and tolerant relationship with China” by working to change the system from within through open exchange like that mentioned by Fairbank. Hans J. Morgenthau, director of the Center for the Study of American Foreign Policy at the University of Chicago, argued that it was the United States, rather than the Communist

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Chinese, that had been isolated, because the Mainland regime had long enjoyed
diplomatic and commercial relations with other countries. It was simply unrealistic to
think that the United States could contain such a large and culturally dominant country.\footnote{Ibid., 426-28.}

Three witnesses invited by Senator Bourke B. Hickenlooper (R-Iowa) argued that
the “containment without isolation” idea proposed by Fairbank, Zagoria and Morgenthau
was impractical. Former Representative Walter H. Judd (R-Minnesota), a longtime
leader of the China Lobby, stated that the most important problem in East Asia was not
Vietnam but Communist China’s “expansionist movement.” Any change in China policy
would cause the weakening or “loss of Taiwan [and] our Pacific island chain of
defenses.” George E. Taylor, professor of Far Eastern History at the University of
Washington, did not believe there was much hope that the Mainland regime would
change without the United States and its containment policy forcing changes upon it.
David Nelson Rowe, professor of Far Eastern affairs at Yale University, concurred.
Rowe argued that there was “no hope of getting them [PRC] to change” through
accommodation with the United States.\footnote{Ibid., 427.}

As a result of these Senate hearings, Senator Fulbright joined the growing
criticism of U.S.-Taiwan policy and came to support various changes in United States-
China policy. On April 5, 1966, he inserted into the \textit{Congressional Record} a “Statement
on United States China Policy” signed by a number of Asian scholars, among the most
prominent of whom were John K. Fairbank of Harvard University and Mark Selden of

\footnote{Ibid., 426-28.}

\footnote{Ibid., 427.}
Taipei, Taiwan, calling for changes in U.S. policy toward China. These experts recommended that the United States maintain relations with the Republic of China, as the government of Taiwan, while seeking “to convince Peking that . . . the United States . . . is interested in exploring areas of mutual interest and normalizing relations whenever possible.” These academics called for the application of a “two Chinas” solution in order to “move the Chinese [Communists] to a greater acceptance of the principles of coexistence in the emerging world community.”

Fairbank elaborated on his views in a letter to the editor of the *New York Times*. He suggested that “‘Two Chinas’ [was] a loaded word popularized by its opponents,” implying that both the PRC and the ROC had long struggled for unity. A better term to use, according to Fairbank, was “dual representation,” a term which did not handicap a future unification of China on its own terms.

Even some Republicans began to question the existing American-Taiwanese relationship. In April 1966, members of the Ripon Society, a group of liberal Republicans, asked: “What is the extent of our commitment” to Taiwan and “how does this commitment square with our current involvement in Southeast Asia?” The Society recommended “rethinking a position which considers Taiwan the only ‘legitimate’ government of all China.” In particular, the group advocated “a more flexible trade

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policy toward China,” despite an embargo on strategic goods.\textsuperscript{37}

The congressional hearings probably placed some pressure on President Johnson to make a public statement on China policy. On July 12, 1966, in an address delivered by telephone to the American Alumni Council at White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, Johnson stated that the United States and the Peking regime would eventually have to reconcile their differences if peace in Southeast Asia were to become a reality. In his call for cooperation with, rather than hostility toward, the PRC, Johnson stated that only through the free exchange of people and ideas and “through full participation by all nations in an international community under law” could such a peace take place.\textsuperscript{38}

President Johnson’s speech further reflected the bureaucratic squabbling concerning China policy. James C. Thomson, Jr., at this time serving with Walter W. Rostow on the National Security Council, claimed that the speech’s origins, as with the Hilsman speech three years before, “were disorderly and conspiratorial.” Dissatisfied with a “boilerplate” speech prepared the day before with input from State and other agencies, Johnson had asked his trusted speech writer Bill Moyers for a new draft. Moyers, in turn, asked Thomson to write the address for Johnson to deliver the next evening. After President Johnson approved the draft, he requested Secretary Rusk’s comments. Apparently, Rusk made numerous corrections and suggestions on the various

\textsuperscript{37}“China ‘66: Containment and Contact, A Ripon Policy Statement,” April 1966, Series 48, SubSeries 11, Folder 4, J. William Fulbright Manuscript Collection, Special Collections Division, University of Arkansas Libraries, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR.

sections of the draft, but failed to comment on the China policy section of the paper. Thomson later wrote “to this day one does not know if Mr. Rusk suddenly acquiesced, feeling outflanked; or whether instead he merely, in his hurry, turned over two pages at once by mistake.”

The ROC and the Vietnam War

While President Chiang Kai-shek never won American approval for the dispatch of ROC combat troops to South Vietnam, as the United States escalated the war in Vietnam, Taiwan became an increasingly important staging area and rest and relaxation (R&R) site for American forces stationed in South Vietnam. As early as 1965, the Republic of China had begun to allow the United States to use Taiwan as a staging area. In April 1965, George Ball, Undersecretary of State, cabled the U.S. Embassy in Taipei that the United States had deployed five EC-121 early warning aircraft and one squadron of F-104s to an airbase at Tainan in southwestern Taiwan. Ball stated that ROC officials “should be told stationing these units [at] Tainan [was] necessitated by situation in Viet-Nam and requirements for US forces in [the] forward area.” The ROC approved the request and also approved stationing of additional ground support units for these aircraft. But ROC officials, noting an opportunity to become more involved in the war effort, also suggested that their government be allowed to produce small arms ammunition that was


40Telegram from George Ball to U.S. Embassy Taipei, April 5, 1965, Box 238, China Cables Vol. III, NSF, LBJL.
not being made in the United States. In August 1965, a Department of Defense team investigated this suggestion and recommended that the United States “meet its requirements for ammunition from American sources” because gold outflow from Taiwan would harm its economy.\textsuperscript{41}

Ball probably hoped that this increased Taiwanese role would be kept secret. Nonetheless, an article in the January 11, 1966, \textit{New York Times} exposed American actions on Taiwan to public view. The article claimed that United States military forces on Taiwan planned to expand their role to include operational support for the war effort in Vietnam. The United States Air Force 314\textsuperscript{th} Troop Carrier Wing and the 6217\textsuperscript{th} Support Group would be based at Kungkwan, Nationalist China’s largest air base located near Taichung in west-central Taiwan. Included in this deployment were three squadrons of Hercules C-130 aircraft, six support squadrons, and two headquarters units. According to Lt. Col. D. H. Doughty, Commander of the 6217\textsuperscript{th} Group, the deployment “will give us a lot more air lift [sic] in the far east. One of these days this will be one of our most important bases in Asia.” But the base at Kungkwan, according to Doughty, was only to be used as a secondary supply depot for fast cargo deliveries to South Vietnam.\textsuperscript{42}

In early December 1965, the State Department learned that Defense was considering building a base for B-52s in either Taiwan, the Philippines, or Thailand for

\textsuperscript{41}“GRC Assistance to Viet-Nam,” Background Paper, Visit of Chinese Minister of Defense Chiang Ching-kuo, Washington, September 21-28, 1965, Box 238, China Memos Vol. IV, NSF, LBJL.

use against targets in South and North Vietnam. Secretary Rusk recommended that the base not be constructed on Taiwan. Although the ROC government would not object to stationing the B-52s, and such a base would be proof of the American willingness to defend Taiwan, such a move would probably provoke a strong Chinese Communist reaction. The PRC might claim that the base could be used for offensive operations against the Mainland, represented American “imperialism,” and proved that the U.S. was not interested in decreasing tension in the Taiwan Strait.  

Arthur Hummel agreed with Rusk’s initial recommendation not to build an American B-52 base on Taiwan. On January 19, 1966, Hummel warned that increased ROC involvement in Vietnam, the American buildup on Taiwan, Premier Ky’s continued and much publicized visits to Taipei, and the presence of the ROC’s psychological warfare unit in South Vietnam could cause the PRC to take further action against the United States. Hummel particularly worried about the proposed deployment of B-52s to Taiwan because these planes “would not add significantly to present U.S. capabilities for attacking Communist China, but unfortunately they would be accompanied by considerable publicity and press speculation of the kind we have had recently on C-130s.” Given the B-52's offensive nature, Hummel believed the PRC might feel obliged to react.

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43 Telegram from Dean Rusk to American Embassy Taipei, December 7, 1965, Box 239, China Cables Vol. V, NSF, LBJL.

44 Telegram from Arthur Hummel to Dean Rusk, January 19, 1966, Box 239, China Cables Vol. V, NSF, LBJL.
By February 1966, Rusk apparently changed his mind to favor construction of an air base at Kungkwan that would house not only B-52s but other aircraft needed for the war effort in Vietnam. Rusk stated that construction of this base would permit greater flexibility and capability for handling all types of aircraft in the region. Not only did Rusk remind Hummel of the construction project at Kungkwan which would base C-130 aircraft for use in Taiwan, but he also revealed plans for additional facilities that could house either, or both, KC-135 tankers and B-52s, although no plans to utilize these aircraft had yet been made. The funds for construction would come from a Defense supplemental appropriation request, which would allow for construction to be completed in December 1966. Additionally, Rusk stated that “there will of course be no publicity regarding possible contingency use of Kung Kuan by B-52s or KC-135s.”

Hummel maintained his position against the construction of an American airbase on Taiwan and took issue with Secretary Rusk’s new line. While the Kungkwan construction project would fill an urgent need for additional B-52 facilities in the Far East, news stories might speculate about the bombers’ use, and, in turn, raise questions about the ROC’s role in the Vietnam War. Hummel complained that this project would cause the PRC to become more militarily involved, either directly in Vietnam or in the Taiwan Strait. The Chinese Communists, predicted Hummel, might take action against the Offshore Islands to divert American attention from Vietnam. The United States and the ROC might also be linked in the world press as combining forces to provoke the

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45Telegram from Dean Rusk to American Embassy Taipei, February 4, 1966, Box 239, China Cables Vol. V, NSF, LBJL.
Chinese Communists. Hummel later added that the Soviets would probably have to support the PRC by denouncing any American efforts to help the ROC supply the Offshore Islands. Hummel concluded that stationing B-52s in Taiwan “could cause Peiping to choose to act against GRC on offshore islands as substitute for running graver risk of direct confrontation with US in Vietnam.” Despite Hummel’s arguments, the airbase in question was eventually expanded and renamed Ching Chuan Kang (CCK) Airbase.\footnote{Telegram from Arthur Hummel to Dean Rusk, February 8, 1966, Box 239, China Cables Vol. V, NSF, LBJL.}

The Pentagon’s plan to allow Taiwan to become a center for rest and relaxation (R&R) for American soldiers stationed in Vietnam also encountered controversy. American service personnel stationed in Vietnam could qualify for R&R after eight months of service. Eligible personnel, on a “first come, first served” basis, could choose from up to six destinations, including Taiwan, for seven days of R&R.\footnote{Philip Ball, \textit{Ghosts and Shadows: A Marine in Vietnam, 1968-1969} (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., Inc., Publishers, 1998), 153.} Rest and relaxation trips to Taiwan by American soldiers began on November 1, 1965. As more service clubs were constructed at Kungkwan, more servicemen arrived, either for R&R or for deployment at the air base. In April 1966, Admiral William E. Gentner, Commander of the U.S.-Taiwan Defense Command, projected that at least 600 soldiers per month would arrive in Taiwan for R&R, and Lieutenant General James W. Wilson, Commander of the 13th Air Force, predicted the air base at Kungkwan would house an additional 5,000 servicemen. The American Embassy in Taipei, along with the Governor of Taichung,
Kungkwan’s host city, restricted service club establishments within the city, and refused to allow them near schools. In one incident, Arthur Hummel disapproved a military proposal to take over the Central Theater Restaurant in Taichung because the governor contended that “the building’s proximity to several large schools . . . has precluded the issuance of a cabaret license to the present management.”

Upon its completion, the newly-constructed CCK Airbase played a significant role in the Vietnam War. Rather than launching B-52 bombing runs over North Vietnam, the new air base hosted C-130 aircraft used to airlift supplies to Vietnam, as well as KC-135 tanker aircraft used to re-fuel bombers and fighters in mid-flight and to provide a continuous radio link in the area of the Gulf of Tonkin. B-52 bombers were only allowed to land at CCK for emergencies. By 1968, CCK had become an important airlift, re-fueling and communications post. From CCK air base, KC-135 aircraft flew nearly 32,000 sorties and unloaded 1.6 billion pounds of fuel in over 129,000 refuelings.

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49 Charles K. Hopkins, SAC Tanker Operations in the Southeast Asia War (Omaha: Office of the Historian, Headquarters, Strategic Air Command, 1979), 66-67; Ray Bowers, Tactical Airlift: The United States Air Force in Southeast Asia (Washington:
The increasing importance of Taiwan to the American war effort in Vietnam, however, carried a political price. Some White House and State Department staffers grew concerned that Chiang might stonewall on American use of Taiwanese facilities as staging areas for military action in South Vietnam if the United States did not go along with ROC plans to invade the PRC. James C. Thomson, Jr., of the National Security Council Staff commented that “we have long understood that GRC desire for war with Mainland China and U.S. desire to avoid such a collision run at cross purposes; but we have usually been able to mute and disguise these differences.” He urged the Johnson administration to remain firm and united against allowing the ROC to launch a military attack against the Mainland. Thomson concluded that the United States, for exercising its best judgement, could at least experience “some foot-dragging by the GRC on expanded use of Taiwan facilities in connection with the Vietnam war.”

In fact, if anything, Chiang Kai-shek grew increasingly impatient with what he viewed as President Johnson’s approach to the Vietnam War. Concerned that Johnson would seek a negotiated settlement with the communists, Chiang deemed it “essential that a firm and clear-cut policy should be adhered to” to defeat communism in Vietnam. “Further vacillation between the policy of winning the war and the policy of negotiating for peace is not likely to improve the situation.” The Chinese Communists, according to


Chiang, had successfully partitioned Vietnam using this method. Next, the communists had launched an insurrection in South Vietnam and had created the “National Liberation Front” to achieve a political settlement should a military settlement fail. If the free world recognized the “National Liberation Front,” declared Chiang, “all sacrifices in battle and accomplishments in other fields made by South Vietnam and her allies would have been in vain, and the free world would have to continue to pay dearly for its serious political mistakes.”

As expected, Chiang soon renewed his push for a direct military role in Vietnam. In March 1966, when Assistant Secretary of State William P. Bundy visited Taipei, Chiang insisted that the United States could not end the conflict in Vietnam without his government’s partnership and assistance. To emphasize his point, Chiang proclaimed that his military “is the one thing that is holding the Chinese Communists back in the south. Please convey this message. To the Chinese Communists the loss of 100,000 men is nothing if they could destroy our forces.” President Johnson, however, remained firm. He agreed with Chiang’s notion that the best way to preserve security in East Asia was firmness against military aggression coupled with economic, social and political development. But the United States would not permit Chiang to send his military into Vietnam and directly assist the American forces fighting there. Johnson concluded that

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51Letter from Chiang Kai-shek to Lyndon B. Johnson, March 1, 1966, Box 2, China Chiang Kai-shek Correspondence Vol. II, Papers of Lyndon Baines Johnson, President 1963-1969, National Security File, Head of State Correspondence File, Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library, Austin, TX, hereafter cited as NSF, HSCF, LBJL.

52Telegram from Arthur Hummel to Dean Rusk, March 14, 1966, Box 239, China Cables Vol. VI, NSF, LBJL.
the United States “will persist with unshakeable determination in our commitment to
assist the people of South Vietnam in preserving their right to shape their own future
without external interference.”53

Rebuffed once again by the White House, Chiang and other high-ranking ROC
policymakers searched for another way to convince the United States to allow Nationalist
Chinese combat troops to assist the American military and the ARVN. In April 1966, a
CIA Intelligence Information Cable revealed that Defense Minister Chiang Ching-kuo
had ordered a study of the implications for the ROC government of a planned democratic
election held in South Vietnam. The report concluded any such election would result in
an American defeat and its withdrawal from South Vietnam. Filling the void, Chinese
Communists would increase their infiltration into Southeast Asia and take military action
against Taiwan. It was, therefore, imperative that the ROC convince the United States to
permit their military a greater role in Vietnam before any such election took place.

Meeting with high-level officials within the Ministry of National Defense concerning this
report, General Chiang contended that if the United States changed its “policy of
confining land military operations in Vietnam to the area south of the 17th parallel” and
permitted ROC combat troops into the war, their military would be better positioned to
attack Mainland China from Vietnam rather than from across the Taiwan Strait.

Apparently, ROC officials had been working on such a plan to attack the Mainland from
Vietnam, tentatively identified as the “Ching-Wu” Plan. General Chiang concluded that

53Letter from Lyndon B. Johnson to Chiang Kai-shek, April 4, 1966, Box 2, China
Chiang Kai-shek Correspondence Vol. II, NSF, HSCF, LBJL.
the ROC had to attack the Chinese Communists before the United States lost its hold on South Vietnam.54

By spring 1966, South Vietnam’s growing instability threatened Chiang’s hope of expanding the Vietnam War into a larger war against the Communist Chinese. Regional and religious rivalry between the Roman Catholic political and military leadership in Saigon and Buddhists in Hue and Danang in the north escalated into a brief civil war. Buddhists had campaigned nationally to oust the Americans, negotiate a settlement with the North Vietnamese, and remove Ky and the ARVN from power through free elections. President Chiang feared a Buddhist victory against the South Vietnamese government because it might cause the Chinese Communists to step up their infiltration, as predicted by General Chiang Ching-kuo in April. This meant that Chiang’s military might lose its chance to attack the PRC from Vietnam. On May 22, 1966, Chiang met with Ambassador Walter McConaughy and Deputy Chief of Mission Arthur Hummel to discuss the growing instability in South Vietnam. Chiang believed that the Buddhists were under Communist influence and pleaded with McConaughy and Hummel to convince American policy makers to firm up South Vietnamese authority over the Buddhists.55

54CIA Cable, April 16, 1966, Box 239, China Cables Vol. VI, NSF, LBJL.

Defense Minister Chiang Ching-kuo had other concerns about the Vietnam War. He feared that American military assistance to the ROC would cease as the United States became more militarily involved in South Vietnam. In May 1966, General Chiang requested the U.S. to reconsider withdrawing eighteen F-104-As and F-104-Bs previously stationed to assist Taiwan’s defense. Chiang agreed that American redeployment of these aircraft was not crucial to Taiwan’s defense, but their departure would cause morale problems for the Chinese Air Force and add to widespread uncertainty in Taiwan about the future course of American policy. Even some members of the ROC legislature heard rumors that the U.S. Seventh Fleet’s mission in the Taiwan Strait was to be either reduced or eliminated. Arthur Hummel, Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Taipei, suggested that one squadron of F-100s could be deployed to the ROC airbase at Tainan in May or June 1966 to reassure the Taiwanese government, to which Defense Minister Chiang agreed.56

When Walter McConaughy replaced Jerauld Wright as Ambassador to the ROC in mid-1966, President Chiang and his son renewed their efforts to secure American support for an attack on Mainland China. In an audience in May, Chiang and his son agreed that the American priority should be to win the conflict in South Vietnam, but they refused to back down on their hopes to overthrow the communist Mainland regime. Only his regime, claimed President Chiang, could solve the American problem with the Chinese Communists without becoming bogged down as a foreign invader. Chiang

56Telegram from Arthur Hummel to Department of State, May 11, 1966, FRUS 1964-68, 297-98.
further declared that if the ROC army should attack the Mainland, the invasion would actually avoid a direct conflict between the United States and the PRC, whereas such a conflict that would happen anyway if the war in Vietnam dragged on. But McConaughy reminded Chiang that there had been no change in the American policy on using force to overthrow the Chinese Communists. Later, McConaughy privately recommended to Secretary Rusk that the U.S. should “fend off mainland attack pitch without too flat a turndown, without running risk of giving ChiComs [Chinese Communists] wrong signal if they learn of talks, and without lending any unwarranted hopes to GRC leadership that US attitude may change.”

Secretary Rusk agreed with McConaughy’s analysis, assuming that Chiang wanted only to resume consultations and possibly win some form of American approval for military action against the Mainland. Rusk later warned that the United States could not engage in joint contingency military planning for an offensive action against the PRC, but the U.S. could engage in joint planning of Taiwan’s defense under the terms of the 1954 Mutual Defense Treaty.

Meanwhile, the PRC was in the throes of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Between 1966 and 1968, millions of young communists, or Red Guards, attempted to destroy ancient and Western influence in China. Mao Zedong, who had

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57 Telegram from Walter McConaughy to Department of State, September 20, 1966, FRUS 1964-68, 392-94.

58 Telegram from Dean Rusk to Walter McConaughy, September 29, 1966, FRUS 1964-68, 402-03.

grown anxious that the Chinese Communist Party had become complacent and bureaucratic, played a central role in the Cultural Revolution. Additionally, Mao sided with peasant Red Guards who could not compete with children of party officials for jobs. This led to increased radicalism among the Red Guards and bloody street battles throughout the Mainland. Chiang Kai-shek might have feared the situation on the Mainland would generate enough anti-Western sentiment to encourage Mao to order a military attack on the ROC. Taiwan’s leaders, after all, represented the antithesis to the Red Guards’ sentiments.

Chiang also grew concerned over the PRC’s successful test of a guided missile with a nuclear warhead in October 1966. He believed that it meant the PRC “would be in a position within six months either to employ or to threaten use of these weapons specifically in Vietnam.” In a November 1966 meeting with Chiang and his son, Defense Minister Chiang Ching-kuo, Ambassador McConaughy contended that any use of nuclear weapons “would be a madness far beyond any irrationality now discernible on the mainland, since they must be aware of massive power that we could use in this event.” Although the Defense Minister made no attempt to tie the missile test with the conflict in Vietnam, he pleaded with McConaughy and Hummel to allow the ROC to step-up Chinese Mainland intelligence operations. The American diplomats, as usual, remained


61 Meisner, 322.
In December 1966, when Secretary of State Rusk visited Taipei, Chiang reminded him that he and his government were the Chinese Communists’ chief enemies. He claimed that the PRC planned to launch a nuclear strike against Taiwan with “ten or twelve weapons.” Though it can not be determined whether Chiang’s claim was factual, speculation or misinformation, Chiang claimed that the PRC would probably not expect a retaliatory strike from the United States “because world opinion would consider that Peking has a perfect right to bomb a part of its own territory but that, in any event, Peking would expect to survive any such retaliation and its main enemy on Formosa would be gone.” Rusk, thinking Chiang would recommend a first strike against Mainland Chinese nuclear installations, attempted to calm the ROC President and claimed that the situation he described would not occur. “Such developments,” wrote Rusk as part of his post-meeting comments, “lie in the realm of the insane and irrational.”

Rusk’s conversation with Chiang led him to believe that Chiang had now changed focus from launching a Mainland offensive to defending Taiwan. A January 1967 CIA assessment confirmed this, concluding that President Chiang and his son were “tending more toward a defensive-oriented strategy in the face of Red Guard chaos on the mainland.” Furthermore, Chiang had given up on gaining American support for ROC offensive efforts against the Chinese Communist regime. The assessment further claimed


63 Telegram from Dean Rusk to Department of State, December 10, 1966, FRUS 1964-68, 489-90.
that Chiang seemed to believe the U.S. lacked a strong commitment to Taiwan’s defense in the event of a Communist nuclear attack. The CIA, therefore, recommended that the United States continue reassuring Chiang. Events on the Mainland would continue to create instability in ROC planning.\textsuperscript{64}

In January 1967, Arthur Hummel reported no overt signs of ROC preparation for military action against the Mainland. Also, according to Hummel, Nationalist authorities had not recently requested military assistance, and President Chiang had given no new orders that action be taken against the Chinese Communists. Hummel warned, though, that “if the situation on mainland changes markedly, calls for counterattack from certain old guard KMT [Kuomintang Party] elements could become louder and more frequent.”\textsuperscript{65}

One month later, Ambassador McConaughy also detected no signs of imminent ROC military or paramilitary moves against Communist China. The Ambassador concluded that ROC officials might have adopted a “wait-and-see” stance because of their limited capabilities for unilateral action, and because outside pressures might “retard rather than accelerate disintegrative trends on the mainland.”\textsuperscript{66}

The respite proved short lived. In March 1967, President Chiang once again requested American help in retaking the Mainland. In a conversation with UN

\textsuperscript{64}Intelligence Information Cable, January 12, 1967, Box 240, China Cables Vol. VIII, NSF, LBJL.

\textsuperscript{65}Telegram from Arthur Hummel to Department of State, January 23, 1967, \textit{FRUS 1964-68}, 507-08.

\textsuperscript{66}Telegram from Walter McConaughy to Department of State, February 25, 1967, \textit{FRUS 1964-68}, 524-25.
Ambassador Goldberg, Chiang “bluntly and strongly” urged the United States to support ROC military efforts against the PRC. According to Chiang, no settlement in Vietnam could be reached, nor could the Chinese Communist nuclear menace be removed, nor could Asian security be established as long as Mao remained in power on the Mainland. Chiang’s plea, according to Alfred Jenkins of the National Security Council staff, was unexpected because he had recently emphasized political rather than military measures against the Mainland.67

A week later, National Security Advisor Walter W. Rostow recommended that President Johnson reply to Chiang’s demand for support for an invasion of Mainland China. Rostow suggested that while the United States had long sought peace in the Taiwan Strait, it was not in Washington’s best interest to expand the Vietnam War because “the American government and people would oppose action which would give rise to danger of a wider war with incalculable consequences.” Nonetheless, the United States would stand by its commitments stipulated in the 1954 Mutual Defense Treaty with the ROC.68 While the United States appreciated President Chiang’s position, Rostow added: “The course which President Chiang advocated to Ambassador Goldberg [in a meeting on March 1, 1967] would run counter to the policies we are pursuing in

67 Memorandum from Alfred Jenkins to Walt W. Rostow, March 7, 1967, Box 1, GRC-General, Papers of Lyndon Baines Johnson, President, 1963-1969, National Security Files, Files of Alfred Jenkins, hereafter cited as NSF, FAJ, LBJL.

68 Memorandum from Walt W. Rostow to Lyndon B. Johnson, March 15, 1967, Box 1, GRC-General, NSF, FAJ, LBJL.
Despite President Chiang’s protestations, a Country Team Assessment from the U.S. Embassy in Taipei dated May 24, 1967, reported that the disorder on the Mainland caused by the Cultural Revolution had “not stirred the GRC into more militant activities against the mainland.” As far as they knew, there were no plans or preparations for any major military actions against the Mainland, but the ROC continued to launch small-scale intelligence operations against the coast of southern China, one of which had ended in disaster on May 6, 1967. According to the assessment, small-scale intelligence operations had continued sporadically, despite being hazardous and unproductive.

Chiang also renewed his plan to establish a regional anti-communist military alliance in Southeast Asia, with or without the approval of the United States. American intelligence sources confirmed that representatives of the ROC and the government of Thailand had agreed to “formulate a concrete program of military and intelligence cooperation targeted against Communist China.” The program’s objective was for ROC assistance to Thailand to stop “Chinese Communist subversive activities in Southeast Asia.” It was further hoped that “behind-the-scenes activities” would also “promote the establishment of official relations between the GRC and Malaysia in order to strengthen anti-communist forces in Southeast Asia.”

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69 Telegram from Department of State to Walter McConaughy, March 16, 1967, Box 240, China Cables Vol. VIII, NSF, LBJL.

70 Telegram from Arthur Hummel to Department of State, May 24, 1967, FRUS 1964-68, 571-72.

71 CIA Cable, April 18, 1967, Box 241, China Cables Vol. IX, NSF, LBJL.
The Republic of China had been interested in an Asian regional organization of cooperation since the end of World War II. The ROC was not a member of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and had not been asked to contribute combat troops either to the Korean War or the conflict in Vietnam because of “the reluctance of the US and other nations to have collective efforts complicated by the participation of one of the protagonists in the Chinese civil war.” Nonetheless, Nationalist Chinese military leaders kept close relations with their counterparts in Korea, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines. Throughout the 1960s, the ROC’s interest in regional cooperation intensified. As discussed above, the ROC had sent economic and technical assistance to Vietnam and had sent rice culture experts to the Philippines. While American policy makers were encouraged by such Taiwanese initiatives “for political reasons . . . there will continue to be severe limits to GRC regional activities in East Asia.”

Chiang also planned to renew his ties to the remnants of ROC irregular troops still holed up in the jungles of the Laos-Burma-Thailand border area. In late 1966, the United States government learned that the ROC planned to strengthen its control over these troops, but the effort failed because of funding and recruiting difficulties and the inability to persuade irregular leaders to submit to orders coming from Taipei. In February 1967, the U.S. embassy staff in Taipei notified ROC policy makers “that increased GRC involvement with the irregulars would be against our interest and the interests of Thailand, Burma and Laos and the GRC itself.” A May 1967 briefing paper concluded

that the ROC had not been straightforward about the irregulars in the Burma-Laos border
region and the ROC had not “abandoned its hope to strengthen the irregulars and its
control over them.”

Chiang also planned to expand direct aid from the ROC to the South Vietnamese
government. In January 1967, ROC delegates at a Sino-Vietnamese Economic
Cooperation Conference proposed to the South Vietnamese government a five-year rice
development plan, including a two-year crash program for the Mekong River Delta. After
studying the proposal, and, after consultation with the U.S. Agency for International
Development, the South Vietnamese Minister of Agriculture requested that no additional
Chinese technicians be sent. When ROC officials demurred, the South Vietnamese
Agriculture Minister declined to pursue the Chinese proposal.

Meanwhile, William P. Bundy kept pressure on his colleagues at State and
Defense to support a larger military and economic role in Southeast Asia for the ROC. In
a May 1967 memorandum to Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Bundy suggested that the
ROC military could be used covertly in South Vietnam if handled very carefully. The
South Vietnamese were certainly sensitive to the presence of third country nationals
within their borders, especially the Chinese. Bundy believed that the best way to assure
ROC officials of increased participation in Viet-Nam “would be trilateral consultations in
Saigon on the Chinese assistance program,” probably at semi-annual meetings of the

73“Chinese Nationalist Irregulars in Southeast Asia,” May 4, 1967, Box 245,

74“The Republic of China and Viet-Nam,” May 4, 1967, Box 245, China Visit of
C. K. Yen-Briefing Book 5/9-10/67, NSF, LBJL.
Sino-Vietnamese Economic Cooperation Conferences.⁷⁵

Probably hoping the Johnson administration would accede to Nationalist Chinese pressure to expand the Vietnamese conflict to include ROC combat troops, ROC Vice President C. K. Yen met with President Johnson, Assistant Secretary of State William P. Bundy and Secretary of State Dean Rusk in May 1967. Focusing on Chinese Nationalist involvement in the Vietnam War, Yen stated that his country would do nothing harmful to American interests. Concerned about the number of Chinese Communist personnel in North Vietnam, which he estimated at between 60,000 and 80,000, Yen expressed Chiang’s belief that the Chinese Communists were using North Vietnam to fight the Americans by proxy, and that the only way to solve the Vietnamese problem was “through a changed situation on the mainland.”⁷⁶

Meanwhile, as Chiang Ching-kuo had feared, by July 1967, some State Department analysts questioned the wisdom of continued American assistance in the Taiwan Strait. Josiah Bennett, ROC Country Director in the State Department, asked Arthur Hummel in the Taipei Embassy to inventory the American presence on the Offshore Islands. The ensuing report, entitled “U.S. Activities on the Offshore Islands,” highlighted Military Assistance Planning (MAP) support provided to Taiwanese troops stationed there. All of the 64,500 Nationalist troops stationed on Quemoy received help

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⁷⁵Memorandum from William P. Bundy to Dean Rusk, May 6, 1967, Box 241, China Memos Vol. IX, NSF, LBJL.

⁷⁶Memorandum of Conversation, May 9, 1967, FRUS 1964-68, 556-61; Memorandum from Alfred Jenkins to Walt W. Rostow, May 12, 1967, Box 244, China Visit of C. K. Yen, VP of China, 5/9-10/67, NSF, LBJL.
from MAP. Of the 24,800 troops on Matsu, nearly 21,000 received assistance from MAP. “MAP support was originally not given to GRC forces on Quemoy and Matsu, but was gradually extended as a result of MAP supported units on Taiwan being rotated to the islands.” Advising the ROC troops were a Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) team of one enlisted man and five officers on Quemoy and a MAAG team of one enlisted man and three officers on Matsu. The report also noted that the ROC had “actively encouraged a wide range of Americans official and unofficial,” to visit Quemoy “to enliven U.S. interest in the Offshores and create an identification with them which would strengthen the sense of U.S. commitment to their defense.”

When Bennett brought his findings to analysts in the office of the Commander-in-Chief of Pacific Forces (CINCPAC), their “general consensus was that except for one small island held by irregular forces [Wu-ch’iu Hsu], the other large islands would be very difficult and costly for the Communists to take.” They then admitted that the Chinese Communists “would probably be able to establish air superiority over the islands, thus putting themselves in a position to interdict resupply operations.” The ROC defenders would not be able to hold out under such an attack and the ROC would likely pressure the United States for increased military involvement. Thus, any Chinese Communist assault on the Offshore Islands would be costly to both Taiwan and the United States. Analysts advising CINCPAC concluded that any further American

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assistance to Taiwan on the Offshore Islands would prove futile.

In October 1967, Defense Minister Chiang Ching-kuo sought other means of obtaining American military assistance not only to maintain Quemoy and Matsu but also to launch an invasion of the Mainland. Meeting with Ambassador McConaughy, he argued that joint intelligence-gathering missions and political action against the PRC would “stir up changes on mainland and unrest in Communist armed forces which might accelerate collapse of regime.” McConaughy agreed with Chiang that both the United States and the ROC should follow Mainland Chinese developments more closely. But McConaughy went much further and included the Vietnam War in his assessment. The ROC, the American ambassador declared, should not needlessly provoke the Communist Chinese because the U.S. feared that such action would escalate the war in Vietnam. If the PRC intervened directly in Vietnam, the new situation would require a major reassessment. McConaughy concluded that the United States would not agree to any action against the Mainland if the Chinese Communists did not intervene in Vietnam. Defense Minister Chiang responded that he understood this position, which was why he mentioned only political involvement, not military, because the ROC did not wish to contradict American policy.79

Secretary Rusk, upon reading McConaughy’s notes on his meeting with Defense Minister Chiang, agreed that cooperative efforts to gather intelligence on the PRC might pay dividends. Rusk, though, suggested that McConaughy approach Chiang to confirm

the need for closer consultation and meaningful joint intelligence gathering activities to obtain a more complete analysis of the Mainland situation. Rusk also urged caution because he worried that Chiang might have been trying to solicit American support for an expanded ROC program of “political warfare,” including sabotage, guerrilla drops and clandestine political activities.\(^{80}\)

McConaughy believed he could head off the ROC’s intelligence-gathering proposal by applying Blue Lion Committee ground-rules to political warfare. The Blue Lion Committee, made up of staffers from the ROC Ministry of National Defense and U.S. military advisors from the U.S. Taiwan Defense Command, had been first organized in October 1963 to study ROC military proposals, to advise on joint planning for a “return to the mainland” and to approve any invasion plans. In fact, the U.S. had used the committee to delay any ROC attack on the Mainland. In their meeting on November 7, 1967, McConaughy agreed with General Chiang to improve joint intelligence gathering and analysis, but he asked the Defense Minister for a clearer definition of “political warfare.” Chiang defined it as methods designed “to impede Mao’s efforts to form internal ‘alliances’ that include dissident elements . . . to see that the internal struggles on the mainland do not stop.” Defense Minister Chiang believed that contact could be made with new anti-Maoist elements on the southern Chinese coast. From this conversation, McConaughy concluded that:

\[\text{\_{\text{it is conceivable that GRC has indeed made new contacts with dissident elements in the interior of China, but the absence of evidence, and past experience, points}}\]\n
\(^{80}\)Telegram from Dean Rusk to Embassy in the Republic of China, October 27, 1967, \textit{FRUS 1964-68}, 601-02.
against the possibility. In fact it occurs to us here that the embarrassing paucity of GRC contacts may be [an] additional factor in [the] probable overall GRC political disinclination to see us involved in GRC-ChiCom contacts.  

McConaughy believed that President Chiang, through his son, wished to determine the American position on contacting dissident elements on the Mainland. In other words, General Chiang was on a fishing expedition and was not sincere in establishing closer cooperation in intelligence planning and operations.  

Alfred Jenkins weighed in on his concerns on President Chiang’s change in tactics. According to Jenkins, Chiang viewed the Mainland as descending into chaos and the Beijing regime as disintegrating. But up until the Cultural Revolution, most Mainland Chinese had supported the revolution because it had unified the country and stabilized the currency, achieved a strong foreign policy and military with nuclear weapons, and had promised to improve Chinese living standards. Disenchantment with Mao’s regime had become widespread and confidence in the communist system had been shaken. But even if there were to be any change in the Mainland government, concluded Jenkins, it would remain communist.  

Meanwhile, Chiang Ching-kuo publicly reiterated that the ROC would “in the not too distant future . . . overthrow the Communist regime.” Ambassador McConaughy cabled the State Department that “such statements disturb and concern [the] Japanese,

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81 Telegram from Walter McConaughy to Department of State, November 7, 1967, FRUS 1964-68, 604-06.
82 Ibid.
83 Memorandum from Alfred Jenkins to Walt W. Rostow, November 21, 1967, Box 242, China Memos Vol. XI, NSF, LBJL.
ourselves and other governments,” but the ROC had been making these statements for the past eighteen years, during which time it had not undertaken military action against the Mainland. Nonetheless, ROC officials continued to present a national image of “being actively engaged in hastening [the] downfall of [the] Chinese Communists” because the ROC “must maintain [its] claim to be [the] government of all China and keep alive, at least publicly, its goal of mainland recovery, in order to justify its rule on Taiwan and protect its legitimacy.”

As Chiang Ching-kuo announced the impending return of the ROC to the Mainland, the war in Vietnam took a disastrous turn. In February 1968, the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army attacked thirty-six provincial capitals, sixty-four district towns, and several American military bases, including the American embassy in Saigon. The Tet Offensive, albeit a military victory, was a tremendous political and public relations defeat for the United States. Some of the most trusted American journalists, like Walter Cronkite and Frank McGee, now questioned whether defeating communism in Vietnam was worth the price.

The implications of the Tet Offensive soon affected U.S. policy toward the ROC. In March 1968, columnist Jack Anderson of the Washington Post wrote two articles

84Telegram from Walter McConaughy to Department of State, December 1, 1967, FRUS 1964-68, 612.

criticizing Defense Department plans to cut spending on Taiwan’s military, citing “the demands of the Vietnam War.” Anderson suggested that the United States might ask Chiang to abandon his vulnerable Offshore Islands, and warned that these proposed spending cuts “might tempt the Red Chinese to strike” at Taiwan. Reaction from Congress to Anderson’s columns was swift. Hoping Anderson’s March 20, 1968, column was in error, Representative Basil Lee Whitener (D-North Carolina) urged “that the executive branch of our government abandon immediately any discussion of lessening our cooperation with the free people of China.” Quemoy and Matsu, according to Whitener, were too important to the defense of Southeast Asia and their abandonment would be tragic. Likewise, Senator J. Strom Thurmond (R-South Carolina) argued that, due to the unrest on Mainland China and the war in Vietnam, “the last thing the United States should do is to force a trusted ally to withdraw.

In Taiwan, President Chiang expressed great concern over Anderson’s articles. He argued that they would encourage the Chinese Communists to attack Quemoy and Matsu, which were strategically linked to Taiwan’s defense. If Quemoy and Matsu were lost to the Communists, the United States would experience great difficulty defending the


87Congress, House, Representative Whitener of North Carolina speaking on Quemoy and Matsu, 90th Congress, 2nd Session, Congressional Record 114, pt. 6 (March 20, 1968): 7092.

88Congress, Senate, Senator Thurmond of South Carolina speaking on The Offshore Islands, 90th Congress, 2nd Session, Congressional Record 114, pt. 6 (March 22, 1968): 7362.
ROC with its naval and air power. If Anderson’s information was correct, such policies would negatively influence Taiwanese morale, would incite the Chinese Communists to attack the Offshore Islands, and would give the Mainland regime enough momentum to attack Taiwan. Chiang thus demanded that the United States publicly declare the islands to be the undisputed territory of the ROC. Ambassador McConaughy, however, urged President Chiang not to give too much credence to the articles, and reminded him that differences of opinion existed in the United States concerning China policy. The administration and the Congress, however, were “steadfast on basic policy as it stands.”

Dean Rusk, in his reply to Chiang, stated that the Anderson articles did not represent the position of the United States Government and had attracted no significant attention in the United States. Rusk also commented that there were still no indications that the Chinese Communists intended to provoke an incident in the Taiwan Strait or had planned similar maneuvers. Angrily, Rusk concluded that if American sacrifices in lives to keep Taiwan and Southeast Asia free were not enough to satisfy Chiang, then:

I do not see how the achievement of a sense of assurance is possible. Certainly between such close allies as the United States and the Republic of China there should be no doubt on this score. The expression of such doubts, in the face of extraordinary sacrifices we are being called upon to make, would not be received well by the American people and would give a powerful stimulation to those voices among us who are urging isolation and withdrawal from our responsibilities in other parts of the world.

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89 Telegram from Walter McConaughy to the Department of State, June 26, 1968, FRUS 1964-68, 683-85.

90 Draft Cable, n.d., Box 243, China Vol. XIII (c), NSF, LBJL.
The war in Vietnam apparently caused President Chiang to doubt the American commitment to defend Taiwan and the Offshore Islands. Thomas L. Hughes, Director of Intelligence and Research in the Department of State, concluded that the Tet Offensive in South Vietnam confirmed Chiang’s conviction that the U.S. policy of limited warfare in Vietnam could not defeat the Communists. Moreover, the Vietnam War pinched Military Assistance Programming to Taiwan.\(^1\) American military aid to Taiwan decreased from $91.3 million in fiscal year 1966 to a proposed $25 million in fiscal year 1970.\(^2\)

Chiang Kai-shek’s doubts about American reliability possibly led him to pursue unilateral action in Southeast Asia. Ambassador McConaughy warned that the problem of KMT irregulars in the Burma-Laos border region had once again flared up. The Thai and Burmese governments had made offers to the irregular troops to fight against Communist insurgents, which caused the ROC government to take action. McConaughy revealed that he knew of ROC plans to unify the various irregular groups to form a more effective anti-communist fighting unit in Burma under ROC command. Initially, only money and supplies would be sent, but, in time, the ROC would send additional men into the border area to help the irregulars in some operations. ROC officials, according to McConaughy, “feel that this plan would offer least political difficulty for the present and

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\(^1\) Memorandum from Thomas L. Hughes to Dean Rusk, July 10, 1968, Box 1, GRC-General, NSF, FAJ, LBJL.

would be flexible enough for future contingency use of the irregulars."\(^{93}\)

By the end of 1968, Chiang still held to the hope that the United States would permit his military, with American assistance, to launch an attack against the Mainland regime. Chiang continued to believe that the end result of an anti-communist revolt on the Mainland would be a restoration of his rule. At the end of the Johnson presidency, Secretary of State Dean Rusk paid one last visit to President Chiang. In his last communication with Chiang, Rusk warned that 200 million Americans were not willing to fight a conventional war with 800 million Mainland Chinese. Chiang misunderstood Rusk to mean that the Americans might use nuclear weapons rather than fight a conventional war. “You must never, ever think of using nuclear weapons against China,” Chiang angrily replied. Rusk realized that Chiang’s “Chineseness” was more important than being ruler of all China.\(^{94}\)

**Conflicting Ideas Concerning China Policy, 1967-68**

From late 1967 to early 1968, as U.S. military activity in Vietnam increasingly complicated relations with the ROC, several reports on the future of China policy percolated through the foreign policy apparatus. Three of these reports, each addressing how to deal with the PRC-ROC issue in the United Nations, found their way to President Johnson’s desk in late February 1968. These included a report by Secretary of State Rusk entitled “Policy Toward Communist China,” a report by Alfred Jenkins entitled

\(^{93}\)Telegram from Walter P. McConaughy to Department of State, May 14, 1968, *FRUS 1964-68*, 675.

“Thoughts on China,” and an academic specialists’ report entitled “Memorandum on China Policy.” While the academicians’ report stated that the U.S. should support the PRC’s entry into the UN if it did so on the same terms as other countries, Secretary Rusk’s report argued against allowing the PRC into the UN and favored working toward an acknowledgment that the Peking and Taipei regimes were “two separate states.” Rusk concluded that “There is nothing that can presently be done directly to solve the problems of Taiwan. We are committed to its defense but for all practical purposes deal with Peking and Taipei as if they were separate states.” Jenkins agreed with Secretary Rusk, stating that “This is certainly no time to bring China into the UN, but I think there is no danger in it.” Jenkins reasoned, though, that Mao would not accept limited UN membership.95

A month later, Thomas P. Shoesmith of the State Department’s Office of East Asian Affairs specifically addressed the ROC problem in a report entitled “U.S. Policy Toward the Republic of China: A New Perspective.” According to Shoesmith, United States-Taiwan policy “has increasingly become a source of difficulty and internal contradiction, as our policy has moved in the direction of attempting to open avenues of rapprochement between the United States and Communist China.” Taiwan, therefore, “now constitutes a major obstacle to the development of a far-ranging policy toward mainland China.” With regard to the Chinese representation issue in the United Nations,

Shoesmith stated “that it will continue to be in our interests to oppose strongly any decision by the United Nations to admit Communist China and exclude the Republic of China.” But he predicted by 1973, a majority in the UN might endorse representation for both the Communist and Nationalist Chinese and “such a change would be compatible with our long-range interests with respect to Taiwan.” If the United States provided active support for such a change in the UN, though, it “would seriously prejudice our ability to exert an influence on the GRC in directions compatible with our long-range interests and objectives.” Shoesmith also suggested that it might be necessary to amend the UN Charter to allow the ROC to co-exist with the PRC.96

Shoesmith’s report received widespread support within the administration. Alfred Jenkins called it “the most thoughtful paper on the vexing Taiwan problem which I have seen in some time.” Jenkins summarized Shoesmith’s report as an analysis concerning the “Taiwanization” of American policy toward the ROC, that American China policy had become too solely focused on protecting Nationalist Chinese interests. Jenkins noted that Shoesmith advocated that the United States be more tolerant and accepting of attempts to seat the PRC, “although for the foreseeable future our own policy should not change.” While Jenkins believed the report to be quite realistic, he contended that:

the ultimate fate of Taiwan will depend not so much on what we do or do not do . . . although our policy will certainly remain a major factor. Taiwan’s fate will at least as much depend on what happens on the mainland and what course is taken on Taiwan--primarily by Chiang Ching-kuo--after the Gimo’s death. Whether Ching-kuo then opts for a relatively popular base for government or looks to military support for a “tight little island” will in turn have considerable effect

96Thomas P. Shoesmith, “U.S. Policy Toward the Republic of China: A New Perspective,” March 27, 1968, Box 242, China Memos Vol. XII, NSF, LBJL.
upon U.S. policy toward Taiwan.  

In a June 20, 1968, memorandum, Jenkins stated that Chiang Kai-shek believed that “the UN needs the GRC more than the GRC needs the UN.” While the UN could be weakened if the PRC were allowed entry, the United States “should strongly support the GRC’s position and oppose Peking’s entry, at least pending a post-Cultural Revolution reading.” The United States, however, “should not . . . fight the GRC battle as though it were much more our battle than that of the GRC.” “The costs of making it our battle are too high and the penalties of failure, if that should come, too severe.” Carrying the battle for the ROC would leave the U.S. vulnerable to criticism from both world opinion and the ROC, especially if the United States subsequently failed.

Conclusion

The ineffectiveness of the Committee for One Million and the China Lobby had become apparent by the late 1960s. This was evident in Gallup Polls taken between 1961 and 1970, which showed steadily increasing domestic support for admitting the PRC into the United Nations. On ten occasions, between March 24, 1961, and October 18, 1970, the Gallup Poll asked Americans: "Do you think Communist China should or should not be admitted as a member of the United Nations?" In this ten-year period, the percentage of those wishing to keep the Mainland regime out of the UN dropped fifteen points. On

97 Memorandum from Alfred Jenkins to Walt W. Rostow, April 30, 1968, Box 242, China Memos Vol. XII, NSF, LBJL.

98 Memorandum from Alfred Jenkins to Walt W. Rostow, June 20, 1968, Box 242, China Memos Vol. XII, NSF, LBJL.
the other hand, in the same ten-year period, those who wished to see Communist China admitted to the United Nations increased from twenty percent to thirty-five percent of respondents, an increase of fifteen percent. Therefore, increasing numbers of Americans polled favored admission of the People's Republic of China into the UN.99

A similar question asked by Gallup provides more striking results concerning American opinion toward recognition of the PRC and its admission in the United Nations. On six occasions between March 24, 1961, and February 20, 1969, the Gallup Poll asked Americans: "Suppose a majority of the members of the United Nations decide to admit Communist China to the United Nations. Do you think the United States should go along with the UN decision or not." A growing number of Americans, from forty-two percent in 1964 to fifty-six percent in 1969, favored going along with a United Nations decision to admit Communist China.100

These figures from the Gallup Poll, though, do not indicate that a significant segment of the United States favored sweeping changes in policy toward China. In fact, no strong pressure existed among Americans to change China policy radically throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Only a handful of professors, "China watchers” and liberal congressmen advocated significant policy changes toward the PRC in the 1960s. It was not until President Richard M. Nixon’s 1972 trip to China that Americans came to accept


100Gallup, 1711, 1864, 1931-32, 2002, 2033, 2183.
the PRC.\textsuperscript{101}

Throughout the mid-1960s, Chiang Kai-shek’s regime on Taiwan continually insisted on United States help to maintain its legitimacy as the sole government of China. Republic of China (ROC) officials also pressured the U.S. to allow the Chinese Nationalists a larger role in the Vietnam War. But by the end of Lyndon B. Johnson’s presidency in January 1969, the American effort to win over Vietnamese peasants and halt communism’s spread in Southeast Asia showed signs of failure. Televised military action in Vietnam brought home realities of death and destruction. Overspending due to the war in Vietnam and Great Society programs contributed to a national recession that ended the economic boom of the 1960s and led to calls for spending cuts. As the influence of the China Lobby and the China Bloc diminished, congressional opinion shifted somewhat to support changes in China policy. By 1968, American policymakers in the Department of State had already discussed and accepted policy alternatives and proposed to alter the diplomatic landscape in East Asia by normalizing relations with the People’s Republic of China (PRC). When Richard M. Nixon became President of the United States in 1969, the stage had already been set for change.
Richard M. Nixon and China Policy

President Nixon’s pre-presidential opinions and actions concerning communism would not have caused one to predict he would seek closer ties to the PRC. Nixon had earned anti-communist and pro-Nationalist China credentials as a United States Representative and United States Senator from California from 1947 to 1953, and as President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s Vice President from 1953 to 1961. But throughout the 1968 presidential campaign, Nixon shied away from discussion of the Cold War, rarely mentioning the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China. Rather, Nixon stressed the Vietnam War, crime, violence and inflation.¹

Nixon’s views on containing communism in East Asia were dramatically affected by the Vietnam War. His 1967 *Foreign Affairs* article, “Asia After Viet Nam,” provided some insight to his views on China policy. Nixon argued that the Vietnam War had distorted American policy in East Asia and left a legacy of domestic and foreign division and economic chaos. As a result, the United States could no longer afford to act as the “world policeman.” Future American policy in East Asia, therefore, had to recognize not only the threat posed by the PRC, but also had to recognize the limits of American power. Significantly, Nixon no longer favored leaving Communist China outside the diplomatic mainstream, as had been American policy since the 1950s. The future president proposed that the United States subtly and peacefully encourage positive relations with the PRC

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and further stabilize the region.² Although the American commitment to Vietnam would be Nixon’s top priority as president, he made no mention of how these proposed changes would affect future American relations with the ROC.

Nixon’s choice for National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger, had similar ideas on altering American foreign policy toward China. Kissinger believed it was in the United States’ best interest to work with both the Soviet Union and the Communist Chinese. The American relationship with the ROC stemmed from the idea that the communist regime in Beijing was not a legitimate government.³ The PRC government, though, could no longer be ignored on the world stage and had to be respected as a major power representing 800 million people. Essentially, Kissinger privately contended that the U.S. did not need the ROC as a regional military ally. Additionally, American tactical nuclear weapons would offset Soviet and Chinese advantages in military manpower.⁴ This balance of power between the United States, the Soviet Union, and the PRC, would effectively dismiss the ROC government as an important regional power in East Asia.

Through early 1969, Nixon and Kissinger, the architects of “détente,” charted a foreign policy course which proposed to move the United States closer to the Chinese Communists, to thaw American relations with the Soviet Union, and to extricate it from

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³Litwak, 61.

the Vietnam War. In his first presidential news conference seven days after his inauguration, Nixon placated the Nationalist Chinese and stated that the United States would continue its policy of opposing Communist China.\(^5\) Nonetheless, Nixon and Kissinger proposed to reduce tensions with both the Soviet Union and with the PRC through well-publicized talks. Under détente, Nixon and Kissinger hoped to reach accommodation with the two major communist powers, promote peaceful coexistence, and recognize that Soviet and Communist Chinese security interests would not necessarily conflict with American interests.\(^6\) Through this new diplomatic accommodation, Nixon and Kissinger sought “peace with honor” in Vietnam and a lasting peace in Southeast Asia, beginning with a negotiated settlement that would preserve South Vietnam’s independence.\(^7\)

In July 1969, President Nixon met informally with reporters on Guam and outlined his foreign policy vision. Nixon declared that the United States would encourage countries in East Asia to take responsibility for their own defense. The only exception would be in the event of a threat of an attack from a major power with nuclear weapons. The “Nixon Doctrine” both established Nixon’s plan of Vietnamization and


signaled an overt change in military and diplomatic relations with the Republic of China.\textsuperscript{8} Nixon’s changes in American policy toward East Asia directly threatened Nationalist Chinese survival. Throughout the 1960s, the Nationalist Chinese had sought to use the Vietnam War to secure continued American military aid, and, to “return to the mainland” one day through an expanded regional war with the PRC. Détente and efforts to negotiate an end to the Vietnam War directly threatened the regime of Chiang Kai-shek for two reasons. First, détente forced the ROC to accept that their strongest ally, the United States, might extend formal diplomatic relations to their gravest enemy, the PRC. This, in effect, challenged the ROC’s claim to be the sole legitimate government of all China and jeopardized its seat in the United Nations General Assembly and on the UN Security Council. Second, an end to the war in Vietnam would end any hope of Chiang militarily regaining control over all China for the foreseeable future and thus regaining the mandate from heaven that he had lost in 1949.

Nixon and Kissinger brought to the table different methods and ideas regarding China policy. Generally, Nixon and Kissinger formulated foreign policy through the White House and the National Security Council. This action relegated the State Department bureaucracy to a secondary role. But State Department officials since the re-staffing and reorganization of the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs early on in the Kennedy

administration had long considered various changes in China policy. In May 1969, the Policy Planning Council staff issued its opinion on the future of United States-Chinese relations entitled “U.S. Policy Toward Communist China.” The Taiwan problem, according to the report, was the central obstacle to normalizing relations between the United States and the PRC and there were only two possible solutions. First, the Beijing government could back down and allow Taipei to declare its independence. Second, Taiwan and the Mainland could merge through either warfare or peaceful negotiation. Any chance of either scenario taking place, however, was remote. Rather, the report suggested that the Taiwan issue, just like the division of Berlin in Germany between the east and the west, would last for a long time. Finally, the report suggested that the United States should help the ROC to become a separate political entity, but should not publicly proclaim the ROC to be the rightful government of all China. Instead, the United States should describe the Beijing regime as “a firmly established government” with which the United States government would deal on Chinese Mainland matters.  

This report by the Policy Planning Council staff also suggested that the United States government’s ability to keep the ROC in the UN, by 1969, had become much more limited than before. Though the staff was optimistic that improving attitudes among political leaders on Taiwan and on the Mainland would improve the chances of dual representation, they thought it was more likely that the voting balance in the General

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Assembly would tip against the United States and the ROC. Their report further stated that the PRC and the ROC could not simultaneously be represented in the UN because Communist China’s admission would cause the exclusion or withdrawal of the Nationalist Chinese from the entire United Nations system. The staff concluded that, as a result, a scenario where the Nationalist and Communist Chinese shared dual representation in the UN would not be a realistic solution to the problem.

According to Winston Lord, who served on President Nixon’s National Security Council from 1969 to 1973, Nixon and Kissinger wanted to deal openly with Communist China without destroying the American relationship with Taiwan. They hoped to expand dialogue between the United States and the PRC, but knowing that the PRC would demand that the United States recognize Communist China as the sole legitimate government of all China, they hoped that this issue could be delayed sufficiently for the United States to maintain a relationship with the Taipei government, effectively establishing a “two Chinas” policy. Even so, in late 1969, Vice President Spiro Agnew informed President Chiang Kai-shek that, by December, the U.S. Seventh Fleet would cease its patrols in the Taiwan Strait. Embassy staffers thereafter began to prepare the Taiwanese public for possible changes in American policy toward the Republic of China through monthly press briefings. The news was not received well. Several months after Agnew’s announcement, the United States Information Agency office in Tainan, a city on Taiwan’s southwestern coast, was nearly destroyed by a bomb blast. According to Robert

\[10\text{Ibid.}\]

\[11\text{Interview with Winston Lord, in Tucker, ed., China Confidential, 235.}\]
L. Nichols, the embassy’s Public Affairs Officer, the embassy staff strongly suspected that supporters of the Nationalist regime had orchestrated the attack.\(^{12}\)

In an attempt to head off any further diplomatic problems with the Chinese Nationalists, President Nixon sent veteran diplomat Robert Murphy to speak with ROC President Chiang Kai-shek in early 1971. The Chinese representation issue was about to be discussed in the United Nations General Assembly once again, and Nixon wanted to leave little doubt in Chiang’s mind that he supported Nationalist China’s effort to maintain its seat. Nixon also wanted to normalize relations with the Communist Chinese, who sought Nationalist China’s seat in the UN. Nixon, therefore, implored Murphy to talk with Chiang about accepting a “dual representation” formula, whereby both the PRC and the ROC would share membership in the United Nations. Murphy told Chiang that the Nationalists could keep their seat simply by cooperating with the United States and that the Communist Chinese might refuse to accept the deal. Chiang was willing to go along with the American plan, but only if the United States refused to sponsor the Beijing regime’s membership and rallied support for the “Important Question” tactic.\(^{13}\)

The United States inched closer to the Communist Chinese and grew more distant from the Nationalists. In July 1971, Henry Kissinger secretly visited the PRC and returned with a pledge from the Communist leadership to allow Nixon to make an official state visit the next year. In his secret talks with Zhou Enlai, Kissinger promised to reduce


the United States’ military presence on Taiwan by two-thirds as part of its withdrawal from Vietnam.\textsuperscript{14} Nationalist Chinese diplomats became skeptical about Kissinger’s visit to Beijing. Without knowing what had been discussed between Kissinger and Zhou, Secretary of State William Rogers explained to Nationalist Ambassador James C. H. Shen that the visit was only to increase contacts between the United States and the PRC, improve relations and promote world peace. Rogers also reassured Shen that the United States would stand by its treaty obligations with the ROC. Back in Taipei, Deputy Foreign Minister H. K. Yang protested to U.S. Ambassador Walter McConaughy, who was embarrassed and surprised by Kissinger’s visit, and called Nixon’s approach to the PRC “a most unfriendly act.”\textsuperscript{15}

Demise of the Committee of One Million and the 
ROC Ouster from the United Nations

Meanwhile, the Committee of One Million had fallen apart by the late 1960s. In 1969, Marvin Liebman left the group when his firm went out of business. Two years later, the Committee folded, probably because it was no longer needed. At best, the Committee of One Million was a modest, but ultimately unsuccessful, attempt to keep the People’s Republic of China out of the United Nations and prevent American diplomatic recognition. Although its congressional supporters projected bipartisanship, the COOM reached out to anti-communists and “new conservatives” for its core of support.


\textsuperscript{15}Shen, 71.
Ultimately, the Committee failed to raise enough money to pay for new and efficient means of mass communication to generate public support and manipulate policy. Inflation in the United States, exacerbated by high military spending for the Vietnam War, compounded the Committee’s fund-raising problems. With no money to sell their message, Liebman and the remnants of the China Lobby were rendered helpless to reach a larger and more mainstream following. Their failure contributed to the widening of the public debate over the future of American policy toward the Republic of China.

Liebman, whose techniques “preached to the converted,” utilized what methods he could afford, but failed to generate a broad base American public opinion in support of Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Chinese government.

Throughout the 1960s, the American delegation to the United Nations had continually forged deals and utilized various tactics to keep the ROC in the UN. By October 1971, these tactics had worn thin among members of the General Assembly, and many of the new member nations supported the Albanian resolution to accept the PRC and to expel the Nationalists. George H. W. Bush, United States Ambassador to the United Nations, argued before the General Assembly that expelling the ROC delegation was ill advised and would set a dangerous precedent. While he agreed that the Communist Chinese should be granted membership in the United Nations, he argued that expulsion of the ROC was an unacceptable price to pay. Bush also stated that if the ROC were indeed expelled, it was not likely that Chiang and the representatives of the Taipei
government would ever be readmitted.16

On October 25, 1971, the United Nations General Assembly voted on two resolutions concerning Chinese representation in the UN. The first resolution declared that any proposal to change China’s representative status would be an “important question,” requiring a two-thirds majority vote. This resolution was defeated 55 to 59 with 15 abstentions. The second resolution, the Albanian resolution, proposed that all rights of membership be granted to the People’s Republic of China and that the ROC be expelled from the United Nations. This second resolution passed 76 to 35 with 17 abstentions. After the vote on the Albanian resolution, Ambassador Bush stated that expelling the ROC was a serious mistake and hoped that the General Assembly had not established a precedent regarding UN membership. Despite the ROC’s removal from the UN, Bush further stated that “nothing that has happened here today will in any way affect the ties which the United States has with the Republic of China, which remains an honored and valuable member of the international community.”17 Secretary of State William Rogers publicly regretted the United Nations action, declaring this to be an


unfortunate mistake which would adversely affect the UN in the future.\textsuperscript{18} The Republic of China was, therefore, expelled from the United Nations in October 1971 and was replaced in the General Assembly, on the Security Council, and in other UN-related organizations, with representatives from the PRC.\textsuperscript{19}

**U.S.-ROC Relations in Decline, 1972-76**

As the United Nations carried on its business without the Republic of China, American relations with the Nationalists grew increasingly strained when President Nixon announced plans to evacuate American forces from Vietnam. Coined “Vietnamization,” Nixon planned to turn over most of the fighting to the South Vietnamese while American troops withdrew. This meant that the nearly ten thousand American troops stationed on Taiwan to support U.S. military operations in Vietnam would likewise soon depart. Meanwhile, Nixon’s state visit to the People’s Republic of China in early 1972 further contributed to strained relations between the U.S. and the ROC. Some high-ranking Nationalist diplomats feared that American withdrawal from Vietnam and from Taiwan signaled the beginning of the end of their country. James Shen, ROC Ambassador to the United States, saw Nixon’s visit as “an opening wedge to prod the United States military forces to leave Taiwan as a prelude to the termination of


\textsuperscript{19}“Voting on the Question of Chinese Representation: 26th General Assembly,” Box 2, Folder 10, United Nations Files, GBL.
Nationalist diplomats were not the only ones concerned about Nixon’s intentions. Secretary of State William Rogers and other State Department officials, who were excluded from Nixon’s mission to the PRC, were outraged when Nixon and Kissinger failed to discuss with Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong American treaty obligations to the ROC. Under the 1954 Mutual Defense Treaty, the United States pledged to help defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese Communist invasion. Rogers believed the Mutual Defense Treaty acknowledged the separate existence of the ROC as the government of all China. But according to the Shanghai Communique of February 27, 1972, the PRC insisted that the Taiwan question was the one issue in the way of normalized relations with the United States. Opposing any “two Chinas” policy, the PRC considered Taiwan to be one of its provinces. Hence, Chinese Communist officials considered that any invasion and takeover of Taiwan was an internal issue, with which no country had the right to interfere. The United States, therefore, pledged to the PRC that it would slowly withdraw its remaining forces and military installations from Taiwan.

By January 1973, as the United States and the North Vietnamese agreed to a cease-fire and as the South Vietnamese, with continued American military aid, fought for

\[\text{Shen, 88.}\]


\[\text{Joint Communiqué, February 28, 1972, Box 2, Folder 9, United Nations Files, GBL.}\]
their very survival, Nationalist Chinese officials proclaimed that South Vietnam had been betrayed and feared that they would be next. Although the Nixon administration continually reassured ROC officials that their long-standing alliance would not fall apart, the American military and diplomatic presence on Taiwan dramatically decreased between the end of the Vietnam War in 1973 and 1979.23

Meanwhile, in August 1974, the Watergate scandal brought an end to Richard Nixon’s presidency. Gerald R. Ford, a long-time Republican member of the House of Representatives from Michigan who had replaced Spiro Agnew as Vice President, suddenly was thrust into the Oval Office. Ford appointed Henry Kissinger as his Secretary of State and carried on with Nixon’s foreign policy. He tried to placate the ROC government on Taiwan. By 1976, Nationalist officials had become sensitive to any action which would diminish their relationship with the United States. Although Ford sent Vice President Nelson Rockefeller to President Chiang Kai-shek’s funeral in April 1976 and made public statements referring to the Republic of China as the United States’ “old friend,” Ford further reduced the American military presence on Taiwan by seventy percent and held strictly to the tenets of the Shanghai Communique of 1972.24

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24Hou Tsung Chien, “U.S. Policy Toward China, 1912 to Present, Emphasizing Bureaucratic Level Analysis, Particularly Since 1936, of Both Nationalist and Communist Movements” (Ph.D. diss., Northern Arizona University, 1985), 314-16
Outside forces help explain the ROC’s anger toward, and the PRC’s eagerness to work with, the United States. Between 1972 and 1976, Taiwan’s economy grew exponentially due, in part, to the millions given in American military and economic aid throughout the 1950s and 1960s.\(^\text{25}\) As this aid helped stimulate Taiwan’s economy, the island’s manufacturing output increased along with its foreign trade (especially with the United States), creating a period of sustained economic growth in the 1970s.\(^\text{26}\) While Taiwan’s economy boomed, Mainland China’s economy also started to improve in the early 1970s. As the Cultural Revolution tempered its radicalism, and as the United States ended its twenty-one year old trade embargo on Mao’s government, new leadership introduced policies promoting economic growth.\(^\text{27}\) As relations between the PRC and the Soviet Union soured in the late 1950s and deteriorated throughout the 1960s, these new Communist Chinese officials, such as Zhou Enlai, took advantage of the opportunity to improve relations with the United States at the expense of America’s relationship with Taiwan.\(^\text{28}\) With the end of U.S. support to the Nationalists in sight, in the light of the


American pullout of South Vietnam and détente with the Communist Chinese, ROC officials understandably grew concerned for their government’s future.

**James E. Carter and the End of Formal United States Relations with the ROC**

In November 1976, James E. “Jimmy” Carter, former Democratic Governor of Georgia, was elected President of the United States. According to Gaddis Smith, Carter had no overarching foreign policy for Asia, but certainly planned to continue efforts made by Nixon and Kissinger to normalize relations with the PRC. Like Nixon, Ford and Kissinger, President Carter did not want to be accused by the ROC of betraying an ally.\(^\text{29}\)

Like his recent predecessors, Carter made further reductions in the American military presence in the Western Pacific, and ordered a gradual reduction of American forces from South Korea in March 1977. To many it was evident that the United States had severely cut back its military presence in East Asia. Chiang Ching-kuo, President of the Executive Yuan, commented that the American withdrawal from the region would do more damage than the Communist takeover of South Vietnam.\(^\text{30}\)

After months of intense negotiations, on December 15, 1978, President Carter announced that the United States and the People’s Republic of China would establish formal diplomatic relations and exchange ambassadors by March 1, 1979. In January


1979, the United States dropped formal relations with Nationalist China, ended its mutual defense treaty obligations to the ROC, and withdrew its remaining troops from Taiwan. Chiang Ching-kuo, who became ROC President in 1978, declared that because the United States had broken its treaty commitments to the ROC, he would not expect that any free country in the future could have any confidence that the United States government would provide support in their time of need.\textsuperscript{31}

Carter’s plan to extend formal relations to Communist China would not be well received. Because the timing of his announcement was a matter of utmost secrecy, American diplomats in Taipei had only twelve hours warning to prepare a reaction and inform ROC officials. In the United States, members of Congress reacted angrily and demanded Carter maintain some type of relationship with the ROC. In an attempt to work out an understanding, Carter sent a six-member delegation to Taipei led by Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Displeased with Carter’s policy toward the ROC, ten thousand demonstrators in Taipei attacked Christopher’s motorcade with eggs, tomatoes, mud and crowbars.\textsuperscript{32} During the two-day meeting in December 1978, the Nationalist government demanded a return to formal diplomatic relations and insisted that the United States continue to supply the ROC with weapons. President Carter refused to re-establish formal relations, but promised to consider renewed military sales to the

\textsuperscript{31}Smith, 90.

\textsuperscript{32}Tucker, \textit{Uncertain Friendships}, 132.
embattled government. In December 1978, President Carter sent to Capitol Hill a draft of a bill that would establish unofficial relations with Taiwan, but did not provide American military or financial assistance and therefore left Taiwan’s security in doubt. According to Harry E. T. Thayer, Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs in the Department of State, “the administration badly underestimated what the Hill reaction was going to be to this skeleton of a Taiwan Relations Act. It was not broad enough for the Congress.”

Although members of Congress overwhelmingly approved extending diplomatic relations to the Communist Chinese and ending formal relations with the Nationalist Chinese, some legislators on the far right did not. Senator Barry Goldwater (R-Arizona) and twenty-five other members of Congress filed a federal lawsuit in early 1979 challenging presidential authority to terminate a defense treaty without the advice and consent of the United States Senate. Asking that President Carter’s action be declared “unconstitutional and illegal,” Goldwater testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that President Carter had usurped legislative power, a precedent setting act that would allow any future president to pull the U.S. out of almost every treaty. State Department officials countered that President Carter and Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance, named as defendants in the suit, could act alone to terminate the 1954 defense treaty.

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34 Tucker, *Uncertain Friendships*, 134.

treaty with the ROC because the Senate’s duty to give advice and consent was limited to making treaties and not to ending them. On October 17, 1979, U.S. District Judge Oliver Gasch ruled in favor of Senator Goldwater, but his decision was overturned a month later by the U.S. Court of Appeals.\(^36\)

Some members of Congress moved quickly to ensure continued American defense commitments to Taiwan. The Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 established informal relations with the Nationalists on Taiwan and declared that the United States would consider any attempt by the Chinese Communists to take the island by non-peaceful means a threat to the Western Pacific and to the United States. The president, by law, was expected to report any threat to Taiwan to Congress. The act also allowed the United States to continue providing arms to the ROC, but the administration of President Ronald W. Reagan in 1982 promised to reduce these arms sales.\(^37\) Informal diplomatic relations were to be conducted through the newly-created American Institute in Taiwan, a non-profit corporation through which the president or any American government agency could enter into agreements with Taiwan with congressional approval.\(^38\)

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\(^36\) Chow, 333-36; Schaller, 207-08.


Conclusion

While the Taiwan Relations Act maintained a semblance of the former American relationship with the ROC, the United States could not protect Nationalist China from removal from other international organizations. By the end of Carter’s presidency, the Republic of China had been expelled from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and ROC officials could no longer visit U.S. government offices or schedule official visits to the United States. Even goods imported from Taiwan had to be labeled “Made in Taiwan” rather than “Made in ROC.”

The newly-created American Institute on Taiwan took over government-to-government relations. The end of formal relations between the United States and the Republic of China had finally come.

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39 Tucker, Uncertain Friendships, 137.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Between the end of the Chinese Civil War and the administration of President John F. Kennedy, the United States pledged to ensure the security and independence of the Republic of China (ROC). Through close diplomatic relations and with generous amounts of military and humanitarian aid, American officials hoped that the ROC would prove to be a strong counterweight against growing communist influence in East Asia. The Committee of One Million mobilized congressional leadership to support the ROC and influenced American public sentiment in support of the Nationalists’ plight throughout the 1950s. In 1958, the United States and the ROC thwarted Chinese Communist threats to invade and occupy Taiwan through shipments of aid and by sending the U.S. Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait. The Nationalist government on Taiwan, by the end of the 1950s, seemed to be secure.

At the beginning of the 1960s, American policymakers were at a crossroads with the ROC. Both the administrations of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson publicly promised to continue support for Chiang Kai-shek’s regime, but some career diplomats doubted that this relationship could be maintained indefinitely. They proposed measures that sought to avoid war with Communist China, produce a diplomatic rapprochement with the People’s Republic of China (PRC), and seek a “two Chinas” policy. Chiang also
had allies in the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Defense, and the State Department he could count on to press his concerns. They and the Nationalists claimed that the ROC government on Taiwan was the sole, legal government of all China, and maintained that the United States, as the leader of the “free world,” was responsible for assisting the ROC in maintaining its legitimacy and sovereignty.

The Chinese representation issue in the United Nations (UN) was a high priority for American policymakers throughout the 1960s. This issue involved the question of whether the ROC or the PRC would be the legal representative of China in the United Nations and who would exercise its veto power in the Security Council. By 1961, the United States had blocked eastern bloc proposals that sought to remove the ROC in favor of the PRC. But as the Kennedy and Johnson administrations became more heavily involved in Vietnam, and as African nations declared independence and joined the UN, it became increasingly difficult for the United States to assist in directly maintaining the ROC’s seat. After the United States declared Canadian and Italian plans to keep the ROC in the UN unsatisfactory in 1966, the Johnson administration blocked their plans and moved to ensure Chiang would not abandon the seat himself. Ultimately, the United States could not prevent the ouster of the ROC from the United Nations and its replacement with the PRC.

Meanwhile, throughout the 1960s, President Chiang had threatened to launch a military invasion of Mainland China from his bases on Quemoy and Matsu to restore himself and his government as the legitimate rulers of all China. Using the poor situation on the Mainland resulting from Mao Zedong’s Great Leap Forward as his pretext, Chiang
pressed his contacts in the U.S. government for support. But staffers at State and Defense realized that such an invasion would do more harm than good. Additionally, such an invasion was unrealistic because the Offshore Islands were not large enough and were located too close to the Mainland to support an invasion. The Kennedy and Johnson administrations expressed support for the ROC’s objective, but diplomatically subdued Chiang’s hope to “retake the mainland.” As the United States became more involved in South Vietnam, Chiang worried that President Johnson would pull the U.S. Seventh Fleet from the Taiwan Strait and abandon his government and stepped up his demand that the United States help him regain control of the Mainland. Johnson feared that an unchecked Chiang would cause the Vietnam War to spin out of control and prompt the Chinese Communists to enter the conflict overtly. Therefore, the United States provided enough support and advisors to help the ROC in case of an attack coming from the PRC, but not to help launch an attack on the Mainland.

The ROC president also hoped to play a much larger diplomatic and military role in Southeast Asia. In the early 1960s, Chiang intended to attack the PRC using thousands of ROC irregular soldiers, many of whom had retreated into the Burma-Thailand-Laos border area after the communists took over the Mainland in 1949. After American officials warned Chiang that these troops were a threat to regional stability, he grudgingly removed many of them. Meanwhile, as the Vietnam War became more intense, Chiang insisted that his army be afforded a larger role in Southeast Asia. Specifically, Chiang wanted to send ROC combat troops to assist the South Vietnamese and the Americans. After the Johnson administration rebuffed his plan, Chiang met with South Vietnamese
leaders to seek a Southeast Asian anti-communist military alliance and further pressed his case for Nationalist involvement in Vietnam’s war. As more American soldiers were needed in the war effort, the U.S. renovated Taiwanese air bases and used them as an airlift facilities. Taiwan also became a popular rest and relaxation destination for American soldiers in Vietnam. This indirect participation in the Vietnam War failed to assuage Chiang, who insisted that he be allowed to attack the Mainland communists before the war in South Vietnam was lost. Once again, the Johnson administration declined his offer.

The failure of the China Lobby to help Chiang manipulate American policy toward the ROC also resulted partly from the Vietnam War. In the 1950s, Capitol Hill supporters of the ROC pressed for Chiang’s defense needs in case of an attack from the Mainland. Chiang had also hired a public relations firm to garner American public support for his cause against the regime across the Taiwan Strait. But by the 1960s, pressure groups like the Committee of One Million could not raise enough money to pay for new means of generating public support and manipulating policy. This was partly due to inflation caused by overspending on the Vietnam War, which restricted many Americans’ discretionary spending. Even Madame Chiang Kai-shek’s 1965 trip to the United States failed to generate support. Thus, the remnants of the China Lobby had resorted to “preaching to the converted” and the debate over the future of U.S.-ROC relations opened wider.

The American military involvement in Vietnam certainly played a role in influencing American diplomatic, military, congressional, and public opinion toward the
ROC. In addition, the changing make-up of the UN made it increasingly difficult for the United States to protect the ROC’s seat in the United Nations. Meanwhile, American soldiers, funds, and military equipment that could have been sent to Taiwan were needed in Vietnam for use in combat against the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army. The Johnson administration also had to hold Chiang back from creating a larger Southeast Asian war and from putting American servicemen and the United States in greater peril. The Vietnam War also created an economic recession that tightened personal and governmental budgets. Lobby organizations, such as the Committee of One Million, who depended on financial donations to promote the Nationalists’ cause, could no longer attempt to manipulate American policy by the end of the 1960s. Faced with the necessity of budget cuts, legislators, policymakers, and the American public openly sought alternatives to the policies of war and economic stagnation.

Changes in the State Department also contributed to changes in U.S. China policy in the 1960s. In 1961, the Kennedy administration re-staffed and reorganized the State Department, in particular the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, with individuals who believed that the policy of containing and isolating the PRC was unrealistic. As these staffers’ influence increased, policy changed to hold Chiang’s intentions in check and to end PRC isolation. Congressional investigations into China policy in 1966 also concluded that it was in the United States’ best interest to end Communist China’s isolation. President Johnson, in his July 11, 1966, speech, echoed these same sentiments. By 1969, although President Nixon bypassed the State Department in favor of establishing policy through the National Security Council, the stage had been set for
ending the PRC’s isolation and formal United States diplomatic relations with the ROC.

The American relationship with the Republic of China, in the era of the Vietnam War, can best be described as a conflict of interest. American and Nationalist Chinese foreign policy goals clashed when American containment of communism’s spread threatened Nationalist China’s plans to restore its international legitimacy. The United States created, maintained and defended a military and diplomatic perimeter around the Soviet Union and Communist China, which sought to contain communism. The ROC, on the other hand, insisted it was the legitimate government of all China, and, to prove its legitimacy, planned to use military means to “retake the mainland.” But as the United States became more embroiled in Vietnam’s civil war and as the American economy inched closer to recession, the administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson could no longer guarantee its western Pacific ally the assistance it requested. Consequently, by 1969, the Republic of China no longer enjoyed the unquestioned support of the United States government and an overwhelming majority of its citizens. Given significant shifts in public opinion and official thinking in the course of the 1960s, Nixon’s policy of détente and Carter’s normalization of relations with the PRC and abandonment of the ROC should not seem so surprising.
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