

Behind the Bamboo Curtain: US Ambassadors to China, 1945-1957

by

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Abstract

John Leighton Stuart and Karl Lott Rankin were ambassadors to China during the years 1945 until 1957. Stuart, who was assigned to mainland China for the entire four years of his ambassadorship (1945-1949), was primarily concerned with forming a coalition government between the Guomindang or Chinese Nationalists Party (GMD) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). His successor, Karl Lott Rankin, was assigned briefly to the mainland, but was moved to the island of Taiwan after the Communist takeover on October 1, 1949. For the duration of his ambassadorship (1949-1957) Rankin was primarily responsible for keeping the peace between the CCP and the GMD. Both men not only reported about events in their respective regions, but also gave their opinions about US strategy in the region.

Through the examination of telegrams, letters, and memoirs, the author examines how the opinions of Ambassadors Rankin and Stuart differed from those State Department officials as well as the Presidents of the United States in the time period examined. The author will attempt to conclude whether or not Rankin's and Stuart's opinions were taken into consideration when forming foreign policy in the region. If their opinions were not taken into consideration the author will examine why.

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Finally, thanks go to my mother Julie Pavalko. Most authors have a person for who they write for, and it is the person they usually try to impress. In my case, I hoped to write something that she would be proud of, as well as to give her an insight into what I do.

Note to Chinese Romanization System.

The Chinese language is an intriguing and beautiful language. It is based on a four tone system meaning the same word pronounced with four different tones means four different things. Its Romanized translation is often times infuriatingly confusing. There are two generally-accepted forms of Romanized Chinese. The first, called Wade-Giles, was used extensively throughout the 19th and into the 20th century. The second, called Pin Yin, was developed and implemented by the People's Republic of China in the 1950s and is largely the standard today. Depending upon the year a particular book was written, one will encounter either Wade-Giles or Pin Yin, and in some cases both in the same source.

In an effort to maintain clarity for the reader, as well as the integrity of pronunciation, I have opted to use PinYin throughout the text for Chinese proper names and locations. Additionally, I have maintained the tone marks in each Chinese name or location which explains to the reader how to pronounce the particular word.

Upon the first mention of a name or location I have placed the Wade-Giles spelling parenthetically without tone marks as some of the names or locations are more well-known by their Wade-Giles spelling. So, for example, the reader will encounter Máo Zédōng (Mao Tse-tung) the first time his name is mentioned and Máo in all instances thereafter.

The exception to this rule is in quotations from primary or secondary sources, and in footnotes. In these cases spellings, Wade-Giles or otherwise, are maintained as they were in the original source. Many thanks go to my Chinese language instructor Zhu Shiaoli for helping me in translating some of the names and locations.

Preface

Meet the new boss, same as the old boss.¹

The President and State Department did not have a clue about what to do in China. For the better part of twelve years (1945-1957) US policy in China was unfocused. During this period the Chinese Nationalist Party (Nationalists or GMD) battled the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) for control of mainland China. What the President and the State Department were confused about was the very nature of their conflict. They believed that the communist insurgency was the result of Soviet influence and not popular revolt. Indeed, the primary reason the US was paying any attention to China was because many believed that it was the latest battleground in the Cold War. US policy in the region was also unfocused as the State Department and the President rhetorically supported the efforts of the GMD to maintain its hold on the mainland, but at the same time the US was unwilling to commit troops or war material to aid the GMD. Despite changes in Presidential administrations and State Department staff, the two US ambassadors to China in this period were given very little voice in the formation of policy in the region.

The United States' policy toward China had many contributing factors, and several figures within US government contributed to its formation and implementation. Those figures included Presidents Harry S. Truman (1945-1952) and Dwight D. Eisenhower (1952-1960), Secretaries of State Dean Acheson (1949-53) and John Foster Dulles (1953-1960), as well as State Department official George F. Kennan, and US ambassadors to China John Leighton Stuart (1945-1949) and Karl Lott Rankin (1949-1957). The most visible manifestation of US foreign policy during the Cold War was the

¹ Peter Townshend, "Won't Get Fooled Again," on *Who's Next*, Polydor compact disc, 2005, 95021.

President. Both Presidents Truman and Eisenhower helped set the tone for US China policy. Truman saw China as part of the larger monolith of world communism, believing that China, with its communist government, was directed from and controlled by leaders in the Soviet Union. He believed that China had no independence from the USSR or the ability to make decisions on its own. Most importantly, Truman's concept of the communist monolith included his belief that the Communist government of China was not formed as a result of popular support, but from subversive actions on the part of the Soviet Union to spread communism throughout the world.

Because of his belief in the communist monolith, Truman supported the Guómíndǎng (GMD) during the second half of the Chinese Civil War (1945-1949). The GMD party was mostly democratic in its governing style, and opposed the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The United States supported the GMD against the Chinese Communists, which was part of the "Truman Doctrine." In 1947 President Truman announced the implementation of his new doctrine saying that: "I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by . . . outside pressures."² Indeed, this is how the President and the State Department justified support for non-communist countries. They reasoned that should the US not guard against the spread of communism, liberty and democracy would be destroyed. The other half of the walnut, as Truman put it, to his doctrine was the Marshall Plan. Developed by Secretary of State George Marshall, this was the economic portion of the US's one-two punch which was designed to aid recovering European governments

² Ernst R. May ed, *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC-68* (New York: Bedford St. Martin's Press, 1993), 2.

after the Second World War with the hope that those countries would have a favorable view of the United States and democratic governments.

Intertwined with the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan was the policy of Containment advocated by diplomatic envoy George F. Kennan. Kennan's Containment policy was the foundation for the next twenty-five years of the United States' policy toward China. Kennan, in his famous "Long Telegram" of 1946, outlined the threat which he believed the Soviet Union posed to the US. He argued that the Soviet Union was "committed fanatically to the belief that with the US there can be no *modus Vivendi*, that it is desirable and necessary that the internal harmony of our society be disrupted, [and] our traditional way of life be destroyed . . ."³ Kennan's Containment policy proposed that the US support democratic governments surrounding the USSR with the intent of eliminating any potential allies in the region. China, too, would become part of this Containment policy. Once Máo Zédōng (Mao Tse-tung) and the Chinese Communists took control of China in 1949 the US sought to contain the spread of Communism beyond China as well as expedite – in their minds – the eventual collapse of Communist control in China. The State Department believed that if the People's Republic of China (PRC) was surrounded by pro-western governments that it would burn itself out, like a candle in a jar.

The so-called "loss of China" to the communists haunted the Truman administration throughout its second term. Indeed, the Republican Party used Truman's supposed soft stance on communism as a rallying point in the 1948 and 1952 elections. The Republican Party directly and indirectly claimed that their opponents were connected

³ George F. Kennan quoted in, Ernest R. May ed., *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC-68*, (New York; Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 1993), 5.

to the communist party in some fashion. This style of campaigning political rhetoric led to a takeover of both houses of Congress in the 1946 election and the Presidency in 1952.

The conservative nature of politics in the US at this time facilitated Republican victories and also helped to shape US foreign policy throughout the 1950s. Dwight Eisenhower's victory in the 1952 elections was due in part to the conservative nature of US politics, as well as Eisenhower's own rhetorically tough stance against communism. Similar to Truman, he opposed the communist regime in China and continued US policy of Containment. Privately, however, he viewed China in a more nuanced fashion than Truman. Eisenhower publicly espoused the belief that the PRC and the Soviet Union were hostile to the US. Additionally, he emphasized a strong military component with regard to Containment, known as the New Look, which emphasized atomic and nuclear weaponry and fewer traditional weapons or troops. The reduction of the United States' traditional military was a contributing factor to Eisenhower's hesitancy to commit US forces to a prolonged war in Asia. The conservative atmosphere within US politics, especially within his own party, however, did not allow for much deviation from the conservative anti-communist line of thinking. As a result, much of Eisenhower's rhetoric about fighting communism was only empty rhetoric.

The State Department, much like the Presidents, had a hand in shaping US policy toward China. During the tenure of Secretary of State Dean Acheson (1949-1952), China was perceived as part of the larger threat of international Communism. Some historians, such as Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, believed that Acheson initially favored recognition of the Communist government in China, but that Máo Zédōng's involvement in the Korea

War confirmed his suspicions that the PRC was an extension of the Kremlin.⁴ Acheson's January 12, 1950 speech at the National Press Club did not include Korea in the United States' strategic defense perimeter in the Far East. This non-inclusion of Korea had a great impact on the Korean War by effectively saying that the US was unwilling to aid in the defense of South Korea. Acheson's impact on the Korean conflict, as well as the historiographic debate surrounding it, will be discussed later on. Ultimately, however, Acheson was labeled by the Republican Party as being soft on communism, and faced questioning in 1950 by the Congress about his involvement in the loss of China. Under the stewardship of Secretary John Foster Dulles (1953-59), the US continued its policy of Containment in China. Dulles fully supported the Guomindang's struggle against the Chinese Communists as well as Eisenhower's New Look policy and strongly advocated the use of atomic or nuclear weapons against the Chinese. If anything, he took a much harder line against communism than did Eisenhower.

The final influencing factors on US policy regarding China were the US ambassadors to China John Leighton Stuart (1945-49) and Karl Lott Rankin (1949-57). Stuart served as ambassador to China from 1945 until 1949 and was stationed in Běijīng. Rankin served from 1949 until 1957, but he was stationed in Běijīng for a matter of months. When the People's Liberation Army (PLA) pushed the GMD off the mainland in 1949 the embassy followed. Rankin was reassigned as the *chargés d'affaires* to the Republic of China posted at Taipei in late 1949, and made a full ambassador in 1953. These two men reported to the United States government about what was happening in Taiwan and mainland China during twelve tumultuous years. They gave their points of

⁴ Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Patterns in the Dust: Chinese-American Relations and the Recognition Controversy, 1949-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 195.

view concerning the Communist government of Máo Zédōng, as well as how the United States should support the Nationalist government.

Despite being the official representatives of the US, both men did not always agree with the official US policy regarding China. For example, Stuart recommended early on in his tenure as ambassador that the US should leave open all avenues of negotiation between the US and China to include recognition of the Communist government.⁵ Overall, both Stuart and Rankin emphasized a more balanced view of China than the President or the State Department. Their views, however, were discounted or ignored at home. One would assume that the ambassadors, being intimately involved with the politics and people of China, would have had the most influence on China policy. Due to influences in the State Department and the White House, however, they were largely ignored and marginalized.

The following work consists of five chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter sets the scene of the immediate post-World War Two period. It is divided into two smaller subsections. The first subsection deals with China and the political atmosphere that fostered the growth of the Chinese Communist and Nationalist parties. Topics within this section include the fall of the Qing Dynasty in China at the beginning of the twentieth century, and the resulting Chinese Civil War from 1921-49. Specifically I will look at the rise of the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party and the Nationalist Guomindang Party. The second subsection looks at renewed tensions between the US and the Soviet Union after the Second World War. This will include a discussion of the

⁵ John Leighton Stuart, Ambassador's Report to Secretary of State, 18 December 1946, *The Forgotten Ambassador: The Reports of John Leighton Stuart, 1946-1949*, ed. Kenneth W. Rea and John C. Brewer (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981), 53.

breakdown of the Grand Alliance between the US and the USSR, as well as the development of Cold War tensions between the US and Soviets. A brief overview of the Korean War will also be discussed including Communist China's role in that war.

The second chapter is divided into two sections and looks at Presidents Truman (1945-1952) and Eisenhower (1952-1960). Their views about Soviet Communism and China set the tone for US foreign policy. This chapter will examine how the two administrations differed in their foreign policy with regard to China. Specific foreign policy topics include the Truman Doctrine and Eisenhower's New Look policy. Chapter three is divided into three sections, and examines the US State Department. It focuses on Dean Acheson (1949-53) and John Foster Dulles (1953-59) who were the Secretaries of State in the early Cold War period. It will examine their own views about Communism and China, what sort of policy that they advocated and implemented, and what influence they had on the President. While he was not a Secretary of State, George F. Kennan, the man widely regarded as the architect of US Containment policy, will also be examined in this chapter.

Chapters four and five are the main focus of this work, and look at ambassadors John Leighton Stuart (1945-49) and Karl Lott Rankin (1949-57). They were the most nuanced of any of the four figures who helped to shape US policy during the early Cold War and offered, at times, the most insight concerning China. Chapters four and five will discuss what events the two ambassadors observed and what recommendations they had concerning events in China. In addition, the chapters will analyze similarities and differences between the two ambassadors. .

It is my goal, in the conclusion, not to determine which of the many contributing factors that developed United States' China policy was right or wrong. Instead, I hope to look at what the two ambassadors to China were advising that the US do regarding China. Moreover, I will examine whether the ambassadors' recommendations ran counter to State Department or Presidential policy, and how that affected the ambassador's standing within the Foreign Service.

Chapter I – East and West: The World War Grows Cold

Wind and clouds suddenly rip the sky,
And warlords clash.
War again.¹

The Far East: End of Dynasties

Máo Zédōng wrote these words in late 1929. At the time he was fighting a war against Jiǎng Jièshí's Chinese Nationalist Guomindang Party (GMD, Chinese Nationalists, or Nationalists) for control of mainland China. Their civil war was an on and off struggle for control of mainland China.

Both the Nationalist and the Communist movements have their roots in the May Fourth Movement in China, which began in 1919. The May Fourth Movement targeted the reactionary and out of touch government of the Chinese Republic founded after the abdication of the last emperor of the Qing dynasty, Pǔyí (Pu Yi), in 1911.² Soon after the abdication the military leader Sūn Yìxiān (Sun Yat-sen) was appointed the Provisional President of the newly-formed republic. At that same time the Chinese Republic convened its first session of Parliament with the GMD holding the majority of seats.³ With nation-wide elections coming in 1913, Sūn Yìxiān offered to resign as President and give the position to a former aide of the imperial court named Yuán Shìkǎi (Yüan Shih-k'ai). Sūn reasoned that by offering a former member of the Qing government the position of president, China could avoid future conflict between the remnants of the

¹ Mao Zedong, "Warlords," in *The Poems of Mao Tse-tung*, ed. Trans. Willis Barnstone and Ko Ching-Po (New York: Harper and Row, 1972) 40.

² J.A.G Roberts, *A Concise History of China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 214.

³ Dick Wilson, *China's Revolutionary War*, Wars of the Modern Era, ed. Justin Wintel (London: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 2.

ousted imperial government and the new republican government.⁴ In 1913, elections were held for the parliament, and the GMD won 360 of the roughly 500 seats.

With a victory in the Parliament also came a victory for the Prime Minister's position, with GMD politician Sòng Jiàorén (Sung Chiao-jen) appointed to the office.⁵ Before he could be sworn in, however, agents believed to be hired by Yuán Shìkǎi gunned down Sòng on his way to his swearing-in ceremony.⁶ During the uproar that resulted, Yuán outlawed the Nationalist Party and forced Sūn Yìxiān into the countryside. Sūn considered a military revolt against Yuán, but Japanese intervention altered his plans.

With the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 Japan aligned itself with the Allied Powers against the Central Powers of Germany, Austro-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. Japan managed to capture the German colony of Qīngdǎo (Tsingtao) in China, and issued what came to be known as the Twenty-One Demands.⁷ The Demands were divided into five groups, the last of which placed Japanese officials in key positions of the Chinese government essentially giving control of China to Japan.⁸ Yuán accepted the first four groups of Demands, but not the fifth. Japan accepted this change, and Yuán's supporters claimed a victory for the Chinese republic. Yuán's opponents, the most vocal of which was Sūn Yìxiān, claimed he had betrayed China.⁹ Yuán's handling of the Twenty-One Demands reinforced the idea in the minds of many Chinese that he was not interested the will of the people, and that he was simply trying to hold on to his position

⁴ Edward L. Dreyer, *China at War, 1909-1949*, Modern Wars in Perspective (London: Longman, 1995), 41-2.

⁵ Ibid., 43.

⁶ Rana Mitter, *A Bitter Revolution: China's Struggle with the Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 35-6.

⁷ Dreyer, *China at War*, 46-7.

⁸ Ibid., 47.

⁹ Ibid.

as the leader of the Chinese Republic, as well as return the government to a form of dynastic rule.

Indeed, Yuán did seem to be making an attempt to revive the dynasty. Several explanations have been given for his decision to recreate the imperial system from a purely political reason (Yuán's belief that China needed a unified and strong government) to his own self-interest and greed, or Yuán's naïve belief that the Chinese public would be more receptive, and better able to understand an imperial-style of government rather than a republican one.¹⁰ Regardless of motivation, on December 12, 1915 Yuán accepted the position as the new emperor of China.¹¹

Reaction to this declaration was overwhelmingly negative, and Yuán attempted to make amends in March of 1916 when he dissolved the monarchy and renamed himself president.¹² Yuán died in June of 1916, and did not have the opportunity to see if his newly created presidency would bring to China the stability it so desperately needed. With Yuán's death came the death of the only stable albeit monarchical influence in China. Without a strong central governing figure the country devolved into an almost feudal system of local military rulers. These leaders, referred to by historians as warlords, fought amongst one another, and as a result China had no central government for the next decade.¹³

¹⁰ Li Chien-nung, *The Political History of China* (Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand, 1956) falls under the political analysis perception of Yuán. James E. Sheridan, *China in Disintegration: The Republican Era in Chinese History* (New York: Free Press, 1975) viewed Yuán as only out for himself, and Ernest P. Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1977) believed Yuán was naïve about the Chinese public. Likely, all three were correct to the extent that Yuán believed that the Chinese public . All three accounts portrayed Yuán as assuming that his countrymen would be more accepting of a monarchy than a republic.

¹¹ Dreyer, *China at War*, 48.

¹² Sheridan, *China in Disintegration*, 51.

¹³ Mitter, *Bitter Revolution*, 36.

The May Fourth Movement, which encouraged the formation of the CCP and reinvigorated the GMD, was partially influenced by the government of Yuán Shìkǎi. On May 4, 1919 students from several universities in Běijīng (Peking) organized a protest against the peace treaty at Versailles as well as the encroachment of Japan on mainland China as a result of the policies of Yuán. The Versailles Treaty, among its other misdeeds, allowed Japan to keep portions of land in China it seized from Germany during the war. It was for this reason that students organized their protest.¹⁴ The student protest in Běijīng grew into a much larger nation-wide movement which called for the rejection of Confucianism, the rejection of the traditional literary and writing method and the encouragement of new and diverse political organizations.¹⁵

The rejection of Confucianism in particular was important to the rise of the GMD and its initial appeal to many in China. Confucian thought, as it existed in the early twentieth century, was based on three main tenets. The first dealt with social standing, and was entirely patriarchal. Chinese society valued men over women, old over young, and the preceding generation over the current generation. The second tenet dealt with economics and emphasized the importance of agriculture. Commerce, meaning industrial or profit-based production, was deemed parasitic and undesirable. The final tenet related to social standing, but dealt with government. Confucian thought advocated a strong, central monarchical government in which its leader based his rule on Confucian thought.¹⁶ Confucianism in the early twentieth-century was a very strict and conservative belief system, and many in the May Fourth Movement rejected it as out-dated. They

¹⁴ Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 271.

¹⁵ Roberts, *Concise History of China*, 220.

¹⁶ Sheridan, *China in Disintegration*, 16.

wanted a form of societal thought that was based on Western ideals of capitalism and equality. Sūn Yixiān, as well as his protégé Jiǎng Jièshí, embraced the liberal movement, and for many of the May Fourth Generation represented a new and modernizing party in Chinese politics.

What should be noted, however, was that much of the rhetoric of reform surrounding May Fourth appealed to the intellectual population of China. Indeed, historian James Sheridan noted, when referring to liberal elements in the May Fourth Movement, that “[they] remained in the intellectual and professional worlds rather than enter the realm of political activism.”¹⁷ Author Vera Schwarcz agreed, saying:

Far from having set China on the irreversible, glorious path of enlightenment, the events of 1919 marked the first of a series of incomplete efforts to uproot feudalism while pursuing the cause of nationalist revolution. Intellectuals were at the forefront of the effort then, as they are now.¹⁸

Many of those involved in the May Fourth Movement were not representative of the whole of China. This is especially true of the Guomindang. Máo Zédōng and the Chinese Communist Party, however, appealed to the rural and undereducated in China.

The Chinese Communists, like the Guomindang, fed off the liberal-mindedness of the May Fourth Movement. The intellectual atmosphere, specifically in Běijīng, coupled with a sense that the Chinese nation could be changed in new and exciting ways, helped to peak interest in not only Communist, but also Socialist forms of government. Indeed, according to historian Rana Mitter, “The socialist background in China meant that by the time that the Bolsheviks took power in Russia, there was already a strong Chinese

¹⁷ Sheridan, *China in Disintegration*, 280.

¹⁸ Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 7.

intellectual understanding of [Socialism as well as Communism].”¹⁹ China’s intellectual understanding of both Communism and Socialism grew from so-called research societies that were quite popular in big cities such as Běijīng, and was where the CCP had its origin. In 1921 interest in a Communist political group rose to the point that the Chinese Communist Party held its first Party Congress in Shànghǎi in that same year.

At the same time a major shift in power occurred in the GMD. In 1925 Sūn Yixiān died of cancer, but no one leader came to replace him.²⁰ Coupled with this power shift within the GMD, after Sun’s death, there was another populist uprising similar to that of May 4, 1919. This time, it originated in Shànghǎi. Workers, protesting a lockout at Japanese-owned factories, clashed with British police on May 30, 1925. The police, hoping to quell the rioters, shot into the crowd, killing twelve and sparking larger country-wide protests against Japanese imperialist encroachment in China.²¹ During these protests one of the warlord factions, known as the Gǔāngzhōu (Guanzhou), declared itself the leader of the national government in China. This declaration led, in part, to the formation of the United Front which consisted of the CCP and the GMD. The United Front launched a campaign, known as the Northern Expedition, in 1926 against various warlord forces in northern China including the Gǔāngzhōu.²² By late 1926 the Northern Expedition was a success, and the GMD – now under the leadership of Jiǎng Jièshí– declared itself to be the new national government of China.

Once in power, the GMD outlawed all Communist and Socialist political parties, and consolidated its own power in Nánjīng (Nanking). Throughout 1926 Jiǎng

¹⁹ Mitter, *Bitter Revolution*, 136.

²⁰ Mitter, *Bitter Revolution*, 123-24.

²¹ Bailey, *China in Twentieth Century*, 103.

²² Bailey, *China in Twentieth Century*, 105.

established several anti-Communist organizations throughout China, and in 1927 executed his plan to purge China of all Communist elements. On April 12, 1927 Jiǎng ordered troops to attack several areas of Shànghǎi, where the CCP headquartered itself after the Northern Expedition. Jiǎng's troops arrested and executed many of the working-class inhabitants of Shànghǎi. The following day many more citizens were killed in Shànghǎi, and the violence spread to other smaller cities under Jiǎng's control. One woman described the events saying that the GMD soldiers killed every person they met, and that

Sometimes they halted them, then shot them dead; or they had them captured, forced to their knees, and beheaded or sliced into bits. Every girl with bobbed hair who was caught was striped naked, raped. . . then her body slit in two. . . Often the girls were no more than fifteen or sixteen.²³

By April 18 Jiang's purge was complete, and he formally established the Nationalist government in Nánjīng.

It was this juncture that set the stage for the Chinese civil war. On one side was Guomindang, which was seen by many as prone to violence – as evidenced by the Shànghǎi massacre – and elitist – as evidenced by the belief by many in the peasant class that the GMD was somehow allied with the Japanese. On the other side were the forces of the Chinese Communists lead by Máo Zédōng. Máo saw the GMD as not representing the true interests of the Chinese people, that they were no better than the imperial Qing dynasty. The GMD sought to suppress Máo's CCP and made an attempt to arrest him

²³ Agnes Smedley, *Chinese Destinies* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1933), 85, quoted in Roger Howard, *Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese People* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977), 80.

shortly after the 1927 purge. Máo escaped and fled to the mountains of Jiāngsū (Jiangsu) Province on the eastern coast of China.²⁴

Máo, as well as many of the other prominent leaders of the CCP, went underground and attempted to foment rebellion against the GMD in large urban centers such as Shànghǎi. By 1930, however, the CCP gave up its effort to bring revolution to the cities, and turned to revolution in the countryside.²⁵

Máo, along with the Communist military leader Zhōu Dé, organized the Red Army which was the forerunner to the People's Liberation Army. Máo and Zhōu worked well together. Zhōu appreciated Máo's sense of Chinese politics, and Máo appreciated Zhōu's sense of army tactics.²⁶ In addition, both had a similar view of how a war of resistance against the GMD should be fought. Máo admonished his soldiers to: "Oppose fixed battle lines and positional warfare; and favor fluid battle lines and mobile warfare. Oppose fighting merely to rout the enemy, and uphold fighting to annihilate the enemy."²⁷ Similarly, Zhōu advocated that "When the enemy advances, we retreat. When the enemy halts and encamps, we harass them. When the enemy seeks to avoid battle, we attack. When the enemy retreats we pursue."²⁸ Both Máo and Zhōu essentially called for a form of guerilla warfare against the Nationalists, and their strategy was a contributing factor to the Communist's victory over the Nationalists.

²⁴ Barstone, *Poems of Mao*, 10-11.

²⁵ Sheridan, *China in Disintegration*, 246.

²⁶ Dick Wilson, *The Long March 1935: The Epic of Chinese Communism's Survival* (New York: The Viking Press, 1971), 42.

²⁷ Mao Zedong, "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War," in *Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-tung*, 97.

²⁸ Sheridan, *China in Disintegration*, 247.

In addition to honing his blade, Máo also widened his message by appealing for help from peasants in various regions of China.²⁹ He introduced the concept of local soviets as a form of government in rural parts of the country. Soviets, based on the Russian variety, were small community organizations that voted on all aspects related to the community from what crops to plant in the fields to who should become the leader of the soviet. Máo, with the assistance of the Red Army, established several soviets in rural cities, the largest of which was called the Zhōnghuá Gònghéguó (Jiangxi Soviet) and was the nominal headquarters for the Red Army and the CCP.³⁰ What is critical to note in the relationship between the CCP and the GMD was that in the period 1927 to 1937 Máo developed a relationship with the rural and peasant population of China. He built a relationship with the peasantry that went beyond the promises and rhetoric of a political leader. Máo was a leader who was connected to the people he advocated for. His reputation as a leader for the common people, however, was not firmly cemented until events of the Long March.

The Long March was not one single march, but rather several interconnected retreats of the Red Army in 1934 away from increased pressure by Jiǎng to finally push the CCP out of China.³¹ Máo had nearly all the odds against him; Jiǎng wielded the forces of a mighty army augmented by German military tactics,³² whereas Máo had a small force of barely 100,000.³³ The March lasted over a year with fighting nearly every day of the trip, and Red Army soldiers forced to march up to sixteen miles a day.³⁴ Despite the

²⁹ Stanley Karnow, *Mao and China: From Revolution to Revolution*, (New York: Viking Press, 1971), 43.

³⁰ Jonathan D. Spence, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace: The Chinese and Their Revolution, 1895-1980* (New York: The Viking Press, 1981), 228.

³¹ Mitter, *Bitter Revolution*, 159.

³² Spence, *Gate of Heavenly Peace*, 252.

³³ Sheridan, *China in Disintegration*, 251.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

hardships and lack of manpower, Máo and his remaining soldiers prevailed in their retreat to the northwest province of Shǎnxī (Shan-his).³⁵ Many survivors of the Long March recalled not just Máo's ability as a leader, but his personality and temperament. Jian Xianfo, a woman involved in fighting against the Nationalists, recalled her first impression of Mao, saying that "He greeted me warmly and asked about the situation at the front. I told him everything I knew." She continued by saying that Máo commented on the fact that she had brought a baby along with her, and "[he] called his [wife] He Zizhen, and told her to bring their [new] baby out for me to see. . . He really impressed me."³⁶ Máo did indeed impress many on the Long March especially because during the retreat he constantly encountered supporters in the rural regions of China. These peasants knew of Máo and the Communists and were willing to support him and his cause.

The final event, or series of events that worked in Máo's favor, and finally turned most of China against the GMD, was the invasion of Guāndōng (Manchuria) by Japan in 1931 and the ensuing Sino- (Chinese) Japanese conflict (1937-1945). Guāndōng was a geographic region in northeast China bordered on the south by North Korea. The Japanese invaded Manchuria in 1931, and declared the region to be independent of China. The next day the state of Manshūkoku (Manchoukuo) was established. It was a puppet-government set up by Japan with the formerly deposed emperor Pǔyí as the figurehead leader.³⁷ Japan's invasion of Manchuria was part of its larger colonial and expansionist aspirations into greater Asia. Japan established the Manchoukuo government

³⁵ Mitter, *Bitter Revolution*, 159.

³⁶ Helen Praeger Young, *Choosing Revolution: Chinese Women Soldiers on the Long March* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 56.

³⁷ Haruo Tohmatsu and H. P. Willmott, *A Gathering Darkness: The Coming of War to the Far East and Pacific, 1921-1942* (New York: SR Books, 2004), 30.

in order to take advantage of the wealth of natural resources, and to establish the region as a center of industry for imperial Japan.³⁸

Resentment of Japan grew for the next six years, until the two sides came into conflict again on July 7, 1937. On that date Japanese troops, practicing military drills near the Lúgōu (Lugou) Bridge (known in the west as the Marco Polo Bridge) in an area south of Běijīng, heard gunfire in the nearby town of Wǎnpíng (Wanping), and went to investigate. A Chinese garrison in the town refused to let the Japanese investigate, and a skirmish broke out between the two.³⁹ Fighting continued off and on for the next day and a half. Violence spread across the eastern coast of China, and shortly thereafter Japan declared war against China.

Through 1937 Japanese troops pushed farther into China and eventually captured the GMD capital of Nánjīng in December. Despite the previous six years of Japanese occupation of China, the events that occurred in Nánjīng between December of 1937 and January of 1938 truly galvanized the Chinese people against Japan, and gave rise to a partnership between the GMD and the CCP. No longer were the communists and Nationalists fighting each other. Now they were united against the Japanese. On December 13, 1937 the Japanese 66th Battalion of the Imperial Army invaded Nánjīng with orders to take the city and execute all POWs. The reasoning behind the order was quite practical; the Japanese wanted to take the city, but did not want the added burden of housing and feeding a large number of prisoners.⁴⁰ The order, essentially to take no

³⁸ Ian Nish, *Japanese Foreign Policy in the interwar Period* Praeger Studies of Foreign Policies of the Great Powers (Westport, Connecticut, Praeger, 2002), 178.

³⁹ Marjorie Dryburg, *North China and Japanese Expansion: 1933-1937, Regional Power and the National Interest*, Curzon Studies in East Asia (London: Curzon Press, 2000), 147.

⁴⁰ Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 41.

prisoners, was followed with extreme intensity. The events of the 1937 through 1938 are known as the Rape of Nánjīng, and even that title can not fully describe what happened. For a period of seven weeks Japanese troops occupied the city of Nánjīng and raped its citizens, pillaged its businesses and thoroughly decimated the community. One incident, recounted by German businessman John Rabe, told of Japanese soldiers entering a refugee camp in a portion on Nánjīng city, and that they

demanded that any former Chinese soldiers in the crowd step forward . . . They were given promises of protection. They [the Chinese soldiers] were merely to be put into labor crews. At that, a good number of refugees stepped forward. In one case, about 50 people. They were led off at once. As we learned from one of the survivors, they were taken to a vacant house, robbed of all valuables and clothes, and when completely naked, tied up together in groups of five. Then the Japanese built a large bonfire in the courtyard, led the groups out one by one, bayoneted the men and tossed them still alive on the fire.⁴¹

While the Rape of Nánjīng united the Chinese against the Japanese, it also pushed the Chinese people further away from their declared leader Jiǎng Jièshí.

Between 1938 and 1941 Jiǎng hoped for military aid from one or another of the European powers involved in the war with Germany. Monetary aid came from the Soviets, Britain and the US throughout 1938, but Jiǎng hoped for some kind of military commitment.⁴² Jiǎng's support from the Soviets ended when Stalin signed the Nazi-Soviet Pact in August of 1939 and increasingly the GMD looked to the US for support. Militarily, Jiǎng partnered with the CCP in a patriotic effort to defend the Chinese homeland from the Japanese. In reality, however, the two rarely fought together. Jiǎng was unable to command any real control over the Red Army, and the Communists were

⁴¹ *The Good Man of Nanking: The Diaries of John Rabe*, John E. Woods trans. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 101.

⁴² Youli Sun, *China and the Origins of the Pacific War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 107.

unwilling to truly partner with a government that tried to suppress them.⁴³ Strategically, Jiǎng could not match up to the technologically advanced Japanese army, and opted for a defensive strategy in which he allowed the Japanese to take land farther into central China, reasoning that the Japanese could not affectively administer a country as large as China. In addition, Jiǎng hoped for quick intervention on the part of the US.⁴⁴ Quick intervention did not come to China, but the US did enter the war in 1941, and effectively distracted Japanese attention (albeit not entirely) from China. From 1941 until V-J Day in 1945 the GMD took a defensive position against the Japanese partially because it could not mount a successful offensive against Japan, and partially because Jiǎng hoped to resume his war with the CCP at the conclusion of the world war.⁴⁵

Máo intended to launch an assault against Jiǎng Jièshí and the Nationalists sometime in 1936 or 1937, but a third party intervened. In 1937 Japan invaded China as a part of what became the Second World War. The Second World War did in China what it also did in the West; it made allies out of adversaries. The GMD and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) once again joined in a United Front (called the Second United Front), this time to oust the Japanese from China. From 1937 until 1945 Máo and Jiǎng fought together against the Japanese, though Jiǎng was not initially willing to fight along side Máo. Jiǎng was forced into the United Front, however because of public outcry against the perception that he was appeasing Japan while continually fighting Máo. During the Second United Front period Jiǎng gave Máo and the CCP jurisdiction over certain parts of mainland China. While it was meant as a defensive measure against the

⁴³ Sheridan, *China in Disintegration*, 256.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 256-257.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 259.

invading Japanese, it gave the Communist Chinese Party a strong physical foothold in the mainland once the war ended.⁴⁶

What should be noted about the events in Nánjīng as well as Jiǎng's handling of the war with Japan was his loss of support of the Chinese people. Indeed, not only did he not react against Japan after the Rape of Nanking, but in the minds of most Chinese he took a weak stance militarily in the war. Compounding this perceived inaction was the rise to prominence of Máo Zédōng and the Chinese Communists. The Long March and Máo's connection with the peasantry in China gave him more appeal to the general populace than Jiǎng.

With the end of the Second World War came a rush by both the Nationalists and the Communists to gain control of strategic areas formerly held by Japan. Minor clashes occurred between the GMD and CCP immediately after the war, and US officials, including US General George C. Marshal, intervened hoping to avoid an all-out war and establish a coalition government between the Nationalists and the Communists.⁴⁷ By early 1946 a tentative agreement between the two Chinese factions was in place, but actions on the part of the Soviets – though unintentional – shattered the peace and reignited the civil war. In February and March of 1946 Stalin removed troops from northern China. Many historians argued that Stalin did this as part of a Sino-Soviet alliance against the Nationalists. Others, like Odd Arne Westad, argued that Stalin withdrew so as to allow the CCP to recapture Manchuria and destroy the US-led peace effort in China. It would also leave China a divided state that the US would be unwilling

⁴⁶ Paul J. Bailey, *China and the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed. (New York: Blackwell Publishers 2001), 127-29.

⁴⁷ Sheridan, *Disintegration in China*, 269-70.

to ally with.⁴⁸ The US-led peace did collapse, however, when both the CCP and the GMD attempted to retake Manchuria. The Chinese civil war was, once again, in full force.

The CCP made easy gains in some of the larger cities in Manchuria in the early days of the war, and maintained a solid base of support in the northeast of China.⁴⁹ Jiǎng was angered at the losses in northern China, and demanded an offensive that could rout the CCP. One of Jiang's generals, Hu Zongnan, put forward a plan to attack Yan'an province, which was the political stronghold of the CCP. Hu's hope was to scatter Máo's forces to the north. Jiǎng agreed, and the attack was set into motion on March 12, 1947.⁵⁰ By the 19th, the GMD had captured the town, but Máo and the CCP leadership had fled. While regrouping, Máo knew that he needed a big offensive designed to devastate the morale of the GMD and prove that the CCP was a real and aggressive threat to the Nationalist government.⁵¹ The plan was to sweep through central China starting in the north, through the central plains. The area was vast, well-populated, and diverse economically. The offensive began in June and ended in July, and dealt decisive blows to the GMD. The goals of the operation, Máo admitted, were not strictly political or militarily based, but were designed to strike a decisive blow to the morale of the Nationalists.⁵² Throughout 1948, however, Máo continued to make gains against the Nationalists effectively controlling central and southern China. The Nationalists, on the other hand, had been reduced to a few minor cities in Manchuria.⁵³ By the middle of 1949 the Nationalists were on the ropes. In May Shànghǎi fell to the Communists, and on

⁴⁸ Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 35.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 121.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 150-51.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 170-71.

⁵³ Roberts, *Concise History of China*, 250.

October 1 Máo declared the formation of the People's Republic of China. By December the remnants of the GMD fled to the island of Taiwan, and vowed a return to the mainland.

The West: End of Alliances

At the conclusion of the Second World War the GMD and CCP continued to fight their civil war. At the same time the “Big Three” countries of the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union were hammering out details of war treaties with Germany and Japan, as well as the territorial gains made by Germany and Japan. Both the Third Reich and Imperial Japan were stripped of most of their territory acquired during the war, and had their standing armies greatly reduced.

“War again” was the last thought on the mind of the Roosevelt administration in the beginning of 1945. In February, US President Franklin Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin met in Yalta in the Crimea to discuss plans for peace not only in Germany and Japan, but between the “Big Three” countries themselves.⁵⁴ The major issue which President Roosevelt hoped to promote was the idea of the “Four Policemen.” FDR wanted to do what his predecessor Woodrow Wilson could not do by forming a kind of team of world powers who would settle international disputes. Roosevelt specifically included China as one of the policemen because he wanted an Asian representative who could work with Japan and other Asian nations in rebuilding the region after the war.⁵⁵ Unfortunately, Roosevelt would not live to see his Four Policemen concept to fruition. He died shortly after the Yalta conference

⁵⁴ Daniel Yergin, *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 3-4.

⁵⁵ Yergin, *Shattered Peace*, 45.

on April 12, 1945. The man who succeeded him, Harry Truman, had a less inclusionary view of China.

Truman distrusted Soviet Communism as well as the Chinese variant. He said in his memoir *Where the Buck Stops* that all Communist governments were: “anxious to control the whole world all by themselves. And they’re willing to control the world by conquest.”⁵⁶ It was this distrust that motivated Truman to support the GMD in the Chinese Civil War. There were, however, other reasons for Truman’s decision beyond his own personal feelings. First, the GMD supported a capitalist economy. The US, also being capitalist, supported other capitalist systems, and was diametrically opposed to any communist form of government or economy. Second, many in the State Department believed that Jiǎng Jièshí could in fact mount a successful attack against Máo’s Communists and retake the mainland. Finally, and similar to President Woodrow Wilson’s view of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the US believed that the PRC would eventually collapse under the weight of its own unsuccessful form of government. As the Truman and Eisenhower administrations would find out, however, the People’s Republic of China was not the Soviet Union, and needed to be addressed in a different way.

In addition to Presidential opposition to the Chinese Communists, general opposition to Communism was also present in the late 1940s and nearly the whole decade of the 1950s. Opposition to communism in general first appeared in the 1920s after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. The United States did not recognize the Communist government of the Soviet Union because it was viewed as a radically different

⁵⁶ Harry S. Truman, *Where the Buck Stops: The Personal and Private Writings of Harry S. Truman*, ed. Margaret Truman (New York: Warner Books, 1989), 194.

government than that which the US had. President Wilson believed that the US should proceed with caution regarding the new Communist government in Russia, but that the US should avoid any action that might encourage the new régime.⁵⁷ In addition to Wilson, much of the American public opposed the Bolshevik régime in Russia.

Non-recognition of the Soviet Union was the United States' policy until 1933 when President Roosevelt officially opened diplomatic relations with the USSR.⁵⁸ FDR had in fact been considering such a move prior to his election, and deemed it the utmost importance once in office. Indeed, author Edward Bennett argued that Roosevelt pushed for recognition of the Soviet Union because he wanted to have an ally against the rising threat of imperial Japan and Nazi Germany. Bennett continued, saying “The resumption of a friendly relationship [with the Soviets] would bring this large and potentially powerful nation, with its vast human and natural resources, into the balance in preserving peace.”⁵⁹ Bennett argued that FDR chose to recognize the Soviets as a means to preserve the balance of power, and thus peace in world politics. Other authors, such as Hugh De Santis, argued a more pragmatic approach on the part of the President. Santis reasoned that Roosevelt did not have a grand vision for world peace in mind, but that most Americans, including Roosevelt, saw the Soviets as having toned down their rhetoric against that US. In addition, it seemed strange to Roosevelt that one of the largest countries in the world, the US, should continue to not recognize the USSR especially

⁵⁷ Translation of a telegram from Jean Jules Jusserand [French Ambassador to the US] to Stephen Jean Marie Pichon [French Ambassador to Běijīng], received December 6, 1917, *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson Vol. 45 – 1917-1918*, eds. Arthur S. Link et. al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 220.

⁵⁸ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 6.

⁵⁹ Edward M. Bennett, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Search for Security: American Soviet Relations, 1933-1939* (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1985), 51.

when nearly every other world power had.⁶⁰ Most likely, Roosevelt weighed both options, as well as his concept that the ends justified the means. As historian John Lewis Gaddis put it “In an all-out war, he [Roosevelt] believed, the ultimate end – victory – justified a certain broad-mindedness regarding means, nowhere more so than in reliance on Stalin’s Soviet Union to help defeat Germany and Japan.”⁶¹

In addition to recognizing the Soviet Union, Roosevelt also aided Stalin during the early years of the Second World War. By the fall of 1941 the war was already two years old and Nazi Germany seemed on the brink of occupying the whole of the Soviet Union. Roosevelt needed to find some way to counteract German advances and aid the Soviets without committing US troops to the war. As part of his Lend-Lease program, Roosevelt proposed lending supplies and war materiel to the Soviets with the hope that they would return what was not used and replace what was destroyed at the end of the war.

Roosevelt’s generally friendly and cooperative Grand Alliance with the USSR (as well as Great Britain) was born out of the necessity of war. The alliance with the Soviets, however, disintegrated during the post-war peace settlements in Tehran (1943), Yalta (February 1945) and Potsdam (July-August 1945). The Tehran Conference went relatively smoothly for all three members of the Grand Alliance; the only sticking point was the issue of Poland. Soviet troops had advanced into Poland in mid-1943 ostensibly to liberate it from Nazi control, but the Poles worried that the USSR planned to occupy the country and establish a communist government. In addition, Stalin suggested at the Tehran Conference that the borders of Poland be redrawn so that a portion of its eastern

⁶⁰ Hugh De Santis, *The Diplomacy of Silence: The American Foreign Service, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War, 1933-1947* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 28.

⁶¹ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 3.

boundary become part of the Soviet Union.⁶² Churchill and Roosevelt both agreed to push the Polish question to their next conference, and urged Stalin to remove his troops. The Polish question at the Tehran Conference was the first of several examples, in the minds of many in Washington, of Soviet aggression in Europe. At the next conference in Yalta, and especially at the third in Potsdam, US opinion regarding the Soviets became less and less friendly.

The conference at Yalta, aside from having wholly inadequate housing for the delegates, was yet another example of the deteriorating relations between the US and the Soviets. At the meeting, Roosevelt tried to secure Stalin's agreement to allow for the creation of an independent Polish government free from Soviet control.⁶³ At issue was the conflict between the exiled Polish government residing in London (known as the London Poles) and the recently elected Lublin Poles who were selected in an election largely controlled by the Soviets and believed to not represent the true will of the people.⁶⁴ Stalin held firm that the Lublin Poles did in fact represent the will of the people, and ultimately all three of the Great Powers (the US, Great Britain, and USSR) agreed to a coalition-style government in Poland. The issue of the Polish borders was left for their third conference at Potsdam.

Between Yalta and Potsdam, one of the three Great Powers – Franklin Roosevelt – died. His successor – Harry Truman – took a much harder line against the Soviets, and changed the dynamic between the US and the Soviets. The Potsdam Conference was established to hammer out any lingering details from previous conferences (such as

⁶² Robert Dallek, *Franklin Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 436.

⁶³ Dallek, *FDR and American Foreign Policy*, 513.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 503-4.

Soviet involvement in Poland), but the focal point of the meeting was to draft a proclamation calling for Japan to end the war in the Pacific. Drafting the Potsdam declaration went smoothly, but the Polish issue continued to be a sticking point at the meeting. The US and Great Britain agreed to a coalition government in Poland between the Lublin Poles and the London Poles, but insisted on the assurance that Poles would have the same basic rights as any other citizen.⁶⁵ Stalin agreed that Poles would have these specific freedoms, but he held firm that Poland should remain under Soviet control, via the Lublin Polish government, in order to have a Soviet-friendly country at the USSR's border.⁶⁶ This insistence on a buffer state by the Soviets was evidence to Truman that Stalin's post-war policy was expansionistic. While his actions could be interpreted that way, Stalin was not the only instigating factor in the dissolution of the US-Soviet alliance.

Truman believed that the Soviets were innately expansionistic and difficult to work with. Because of this, he was determined to stand up to the Soviets and to put up a brave front. Indeed, according to John Lewis Gaddis, Moscow saw the Truman administration, unlike Roosevelt, as a sort of wild cannon, and that "Truman's belligerent attitude probably shocked the Russian foreign minister, convincing him that if only F.D.R. had lived no conflict over Eastern Europe would have taken place." Gaddis noted however, that Roosevelt also had reservations about Soviet violations of the Yalta agreement.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ To include, freedom of religion, freedom of a fair trial and freedom of speech.

⁶⁶ John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* Contemporary American History Series (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 235.

⁶⁷ Gaddis, *Origins of the Cold War*, 205.

What is critical to note about Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam was the shift away from the friendly – or at least civil – relationship the US had with the Soviet Union. Starting in 1933 with diplomatic recognition of the USSR, Washington inched toward friendly relations with Moscow. The Second World War necessitated all-out cooperation with the Soviets in order to defeat the more threatening Nazis. With the end of the war in sight, and more importantly the change in US administration, US policy toward the Soviets returned to an era of distrust and suspicion on both sides.

Despite its hope for peace at the end of the Second World War, the US did become involved in another conflict shortly after the Second World War, this time in Korea. During the early twentieth-century Japan controlled Korea first as a protectorate, then through outright annexation in 1910.⁶⁸ Similar to events in China there developed in Korea several debate societies that advocated for Korean independence from Japan, and the establishment of a Korean monarchy like those of Japan and China.⁶⁹ One of the most vocal of the Korean independence advocates was a young man named Syngman Rhee (Yi Sung-man). Rhee was born on March 26, 1875 to an ancestry of upper-class lineage, but to parents of poor financial means.⁷⁰ In 1894 Rhee entered Paejae School to study English. He was loosely associated with the Independence Club, a debate society at the school that advocated Korean independence, and was arrested and incarcerated until 1904. After his release, Rhee moved to the US and eventually received his PhD from Princeton in 1910.⁷¹ After completing his education Rhee remained in the US until 1945,

⁶⁸ Allan R. Miller, “The Korean People: Missing in Action in the Misunderstood War, 1945-1954, in *The Korean War in World History*, ed. William Stueck (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 15.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Robert Oliver, *Syngman Rhee: The Man Behind the Myth* (Westport: Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1975), 1-3.

⁷¹ Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Régimes, 1945-1947* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981), 189.

staying active in Korean politics by petitioning and lobbying the US State Department to help Koreans reclaim their country from Japanese rule.⁷²

Nearly forty years after Syngman Rhee was born the future leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea) was born. Kim song-ju (1912-1994) was born to peasant parents in Pyongyang. He moved with his family to Manchuria, and attended school in China. While in Manchuria he joined the Korean Youth League, and became involved in anti-Japanese protests during their invasion of Manchuria. In 1929 he was expelled from school, and arrested for attempting to organize a Korean Communist Youth League.⁷³ Kim was imprisoned for a matter of months, and once released it is believed he earned a living teaching school.⁷⁴ What is known was that in either 1931 or 1932 he changed his name to Kim Il-Song and joined a military group called the Korean Revolutionary Army (KRA).⁷⁵ After joining the KRA, Kim fought with the Chinese against Japanese forces in Manchuria until the Japanese surrender to Allied forces in 1945.⁷⁶

At the end of the Second World War the paths of Syngman Rhee and Kim Il-Sung crossed though not entirely by their own choosing. In the closing days of the war, after the US dropped atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan. Soviet troops invaded the northern portion of Korea to liberate it

⁷² Ibid, 190.

⁷³ Kongdan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig, *North Korea: Through the Looking Glass* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution Press, 2000), 81-2

⁷⁴ While a good deal is known about Kim Il-Sung's activities prior to the Second World War, parts of his early life are sketchy. According to author Dae-Sook Suh official DPRK biographies of Kim depict him as organizing a Korean Youth Communist group during the period after he was expelled from school (in 1929) until he joined a guerilla military organization (in either 1931 or 1932). Due to the restricted nature of information coming into and out of North Korea, western sources still are unsure as to his exact activities.

⁷⁵ Dae-Sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung North Korean Leader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 12.

⁷⁶ Oh and Hassig, *Through the Looking Glass*, 82.

from Japan, and in reaction the US sent troops to the south to defend against a possible invasion by the USSR. As a result, Korea was divided at the 38th line of latitude commonly known as the 38th parallel. Rhee returned to Korea in 1945 with the US troop contingent, and Kim returned with the Soviet invasion forces. During the next four months governmental groups in both northern and southern Korea jockeyed for control within their respective leadership groups. In the north and south, People's Committees were formed in order to take over from the Japanese occupational government, and to redistribute both public and private land. Political power was eventually consolidated under the People's Committee of Pyongyang with Cho Man-sik as its leader.⁷⁷

In the south the left-leaning Korean People's Republic (KPR) was formed shortly before US forces arrived, and US General John R. Hodge refused to recognize it as a legitimate government. Hodge was in charge of negotiations with the Japanese, and was put in charge of the reunification of Korea.⁷⁸ Moreover, Hodge distrusted Korean government officials, believing them all to be communist-leaning. As a result, he relied heavily on Japanese leadership to administrate the temporary government in South Korea until, in his words, more qualified Koreans could take their place.⁷⁹ The retention of Japanese officials in key government positions sparked protest and rioting in September of 1945, and Hodge, in another failed attempt at bringing order to the south, maintained the same bureaucratic system that the Japanese had in place during the war. In order to quell the riots however, he replaced the Japanese officials with Americans.

⁷⁷ Cho was a member of the Korea independence movements of the 1890s, Miller, *The Korean People*, 23.

⁷⁸ William Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War: A New Diplomatic and Strategic History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 25-7.

⁷⁹ William Stueck, *The Korean War An International History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), 20.

In December of 1945 an agreement was signed that called for Korea to be placed in a joint trusteeship between the US, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and China who would act as administrator of Korea until national elections could be held.⁸⁰ All that remained in early 1946 was to develop a way to hold national elections. At this time, however, a shift occurred in the Soviet-controlled North Korea when the Russians and Koreans convened a meeting of the People's Assembly and formed the Provincial People's Committee of North Korea (PPCNK) with Kim Il-Sung as its chairman. The Russian authorities in Korea further dashed hopes of a unified Korea by having the provisional leader of the Pyongyang People's Committee, Cho Man-sik, arrested. The choice of Kim Il-sung as the leader of the PPCNK was greatly influenced by leadership in the Soviet Union. Indeed, in *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao and the Korean War* authors Sergi Goncharov, John Lewis, and Xue Litai noted that the Soviet ship *Pugachev* physically carried Kim Il-Sung and many of his fellow Communists to north Korea. Moreover, they argued that Stalin agreed with the choice of Kim Il-Sung as leader of the Korean Communists because Kim's military training in the USSR in the 1930s made him a much more trustworthy leader than any of the other possible choices.⁸¹ Regardless of motivation on the part of Stalin, Kim was the most prominent of the Korean Communists in the north, and was the most outspoken supporter of a Communist government for the whole of Korea.

All was not well in the south as well. By May of 1946 several names came to the fore as possible leaders of a provisional government in South Korea to include the ultra-nationalist Syngman Rhee. Rhee was ignored by the US government in the 1920s and

⁸⁰ Ibid, 22.

⁸¹ Sergei N. Goncharov et al, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao and the Korean War* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993), 132.

1930s when he lobbied for Korean independence from Japan. The US State Department urged Hodge to develop a coalition government in the south made of moderate political parties in an effort to undermine not only communist's efforts to nominate a candidate in the upcoming election, but also to undercut his attempts at creating an independent South Korea.⁸²

In the beginning of 1947 both North and South Korea seemed deadlocked in terms of a negotiations, rejecting any kind of trusteeship or reunification of Korea. By September negotiations ended and the US turned to the UN to intervene.⁸³ The UN facilitated US withdrawal from Korea as well as administered national elections. The Soviets, wanting to maintain influence in the North, did not allow United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTOCK) officials into the north in order to organize for national elections in the spring. As a result, and through US backing in the UN, UNTOCK administered "national elections" only in the south. The resulting election created a one-hundred seat national assembly that in turn drafted and approved a constitution for the Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea).⁸⁴ On August 15 the assembly also elected Syngman Rhee as the first president of the ROK. In response, the Soviets and Koreans in the north organized their own "national" elections to choose members of the Supreme People's Assembly. By mid-September the Assembly drafted and approved a constitution and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea) was founded.

Explanations of the origins of the Korean conflict in the 1950s are numerous and varied. The traditional approach to the Korean War, as argued by most historians until the

⁸² Stueck, *Korea: International History*, 23.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 26-7.

1970s, was that it was nothing more than an example of Soviet expansion in southeast Asia. Moreover, historical writing in this period focused either on the war itself or on the relationship between President Truman and General George MacArthur.⁸⁵ With the 1970s came new ways of thinking about history in general and the Cold War in particular. Revisionism swept through Cold War writing and with it the accepted ideas of previous scholarship. US involvement in the Korean conflict was questioned, as well as the Korean people's role in their own conflict. Bruce Cumming's massive two-volume work *The Origins of the Korean War* was an example of revisionist 1970s history of Korea. He put emphasis on the Korea people's role in the war, and treated the conflict as a civil war into which the US intervened.

Other historians, such as Kathryn Weathersby, looked at Korean's role in the conflict, but also how the Soviets influenced the Koreans. In her article entitled "The Soviet Role in the Korean War" Weathersby examined the role the Soviet Union played in the DPRK's invasion of the South (Stalin initially refused to allow an invasion), arguing that he finally acquiesced to Kim because Stalin believed that Japan would soon rearm itself and attack Russia. Stalin wanted a buffer state between the USSR and himself which he believed would be Korea.⁸⁶ Moreover, Weathersby further argued that Stalin allowed North Korea to invade the south because he was, in essence, aggressively defensive. Stalin's insecurity was, "of such depth and nature that no action by the United States could have persuaded him that the Soviet Union was tolerably secure. Believing that he must defend against future attacks by constantly expanding the territory under his

⁸⁵ William Stueck ed., *The Korean War in World History* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2004), 2.

⁸⁶ Weathersby, "Soviet Union in Korean War," in Stueck ed., *Korean War in World History*, 67.

control, he adopted what was in essence an offensive position.”⁸⁷ According to Weathersby, Stalin’s ultimate motivation for allowing the southern invasion was due to a fear of being attacked by Japan, and not because of strict communist belief in continuing the world revolution.

Revision of Korean War history also included the People’s Republic of China’s role in the conflict. Chen Jian argued that the PRC’s decision to support Kim Il-Sung by sending troops into North Korea was motivated by Máo Zédōng’s interest in spreading Chinese communism. Chen explained that “Simply put, what Mao and his comrades hoped to achieve was the spreading of the influences of the ‘minds and hearts’ of the Chinese revolution, but not the expansion of China’s political and military control over foreign territories. . .”⁸⁸ Indeed, Máo hoped to spread *Chinese* communism throughout Asia, and was not in fact working to spread Soviet communism as many in the US believed.

Regardless of historic interpretation, the Korean War was one of the first opportunities for the US to implement its Cold War Truman Doctrine - by supporting the democratic forces of the Republic of Korea (ROK) - but it was one of the first conflicts between the US and the PRC. Similar to the Chinese civil war, the Korean War pitted the forces of the Korean nationalist party led by Syngman Rhee against those of the Korean Worker’s Party (KWP) under Kim Il-Sung. Also similar to developments in China, the KWP called for independence from the colonizing forces of Japan and Great Britain.⁸⁹ At the end of the Second World War the Korean peninsula was split at the thirty-eighth line

⁸⁷ Ibid., 67-69.

⁸⁸ Chen Jian, “The Name of Revolution: China’s Road to the Korean War Revisited,” in William Stueck ed., *The Korean War In World History* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 113.

⁸⁹ Peter Lowe, *The Korean War*, Twentieth Century War series, ed. Jeremy Black (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 14-15

of latitude also known as the thirty-eighth parallel. The division of the country was intended, initially, to be a temporary arrangement and that both North and South Korea would hold national elections to reunite the country under one political party. The events of June 25, 1950, however, altered the situation.

On June 25, 1950 – with the encouragement of the Soviet Union - the military forces of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) advanced south across the thirty-eighth parallel.⁹⁰ The DPRK’s initial advance through the south stunned the US and United Nations (UN) forces. By the third day of armed conflict the ROK capital of Seoul fell to DPRK forces. In September 1950, however, the United States Army, under the command of Douglas MacArthur, landed troops on the southern coastal city of Pusan. MacArthur, sure of his ability to roll back the North Korean gains, successfully liberated Seoul by the end of September.⁹¹ By the beginning of October MacArthur and the US forces had to decide what their goals were beyond Seoul. Should, for instance, the US and UN fight beyond the thirty-eighth parallel and overthrow the DPRK government? The actions of China, however, made the decision for the UN and the US.

On October 16 Chinese forces crossed the Yalu River north of Pyongyang, in support of the DPRK. By 1953 the war stalemated back along the thirty-eighth parallel seemingly with no end in sight. With the election of Dwight Eisenhower as President in 1952, important political change occurred in the US that altered its foreign policy regarding Korea as well as China. One of the issues that Eisenhower campaigned on was his opinion of the Truman administration’s policy in regards to China and communism in general. He accused Truman of being soft on Communism and of having “lost China” to

⁹⁰ Lowe, *Korean War*, 21.

⁹¹ Lowe, *Korean War*, 36-37.

the Communists. In contrast, Eisenhower promised to take a hard line against Communist aggression, and to find a swift end to the conflict in Korea. An end to the conflict did come when an armistice was signed on July 27, 1953.⁹²

What is important to note about the Korean War in relation to US-China relations is that the conflict dashed any hopes that the US would reach some kind of understanding with China. With China's entrance into the war, President Truman dropped all hope that the PRC was any different than Moscow. He saw China as supporting the DPRK against the US and, by extension, aiding the expansionist influences of the USSR farther into Asia. Eisenhower, too, perceived China's actions as an extension of Soviet expansion. Thus was the world political situation in which the US and the PRC came into conflict. It was one of an ever-present threat of armed conflict between the democratic ideals of the US and the Communist ideals of the Soviet Union. World events did, however, help to shape policy, and most especially the opinions of the two men who were president between 1945 and 1953.

⁹² Lowe, *Korean War*, 95.

Chapter II– Commander-in-Chief as Policy Maker: Truman and Eisenhower

Truman: The Buck Stops along the 38th

We have sought no territory. We have imposed our will on none. We have asked for no privileges we would not extend to others.¹

These words spoken by President Harry S. Truman on January 20, 1949, his first formal inauguration as President, were ironic considering the events which followed in the next four years. The Truman administration, while it did not seek territory or ask for special privileges, did support democratic governments in China and Korea against their respective Communist aggressors. The reason for Truman’s opposition to Communist governments in Korea and China stemmed in part from his own personal distrust of Communist governments as well as his own sense of inadequacy as President.

When Truman said that the US “imposed its will on none,” he referred to the reconstruction efforts after the Second World War, but also drew a stark contrast between the forces of democracy and those of communism. He labeled communism as a “false philosophy” and that it was “based on the belief that man is so weak and inadequate that he is unable to govern himself, and therefore requires the rule of strong masters.”²

Truman believed that communist governments “start with the wrong premise – that lies are justified and that the old, disproven . . . formula, the ends justify the means, is right and necessary to maintain the power of government.”³ He viewed Communist

¹ Harry S. Truman, “Inaugural Address” January 20, 1949, n.d., <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=13282>> (22 Jun 2009).

² Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs: Volume Two, Years of Trial and Hope* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1956), 226-27

³ Harry S. Truman quoted in Alonzo L. Hamby, *Man of the People: A Life of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 313.

governments as being oppressive and untrusting of their own citizens, and saw governments such as the Soviet Union as manipulative and dishonest.

Truman's belief that Communism was a "false philosophy" continued the policy first implemented by President Woodrow Wilson after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. Both Wilson and Truman opposed the Soviet Union because – among other reasons – they perceived it as despotic and totalitarian. The Truman administration's policy toward the Soviet Union, developed by diplomat George F. Kennan, was called Containment. Containment, essentially, was designed to build up democratically-friendly governments in Europe so as to surround the Soviet Union and contain its expansion. Truman noted, however, that Containment was not an entirely accurate term, saying "Our purpose was much broader. We were working for a united, free and prosperous world." He continued, saying that "The Communists, however, have other ideas. They are out to dominate the world. By betrayal, infiltration, and subversion they have taken over millions of helpless people."⁴ Generally speaking, Truman distrusted the Soviet government, believing it to be despotic and that it ruled its people with an iron fist. Therefore, it was the job of the United States to defend against the spread of Communism and aid other freedom-seeking countries. This was his personal view of the Soviet Union, and it helped influence his foreign policy with regard to the Soviets and Chinese Communists.

Truman's distrust of Soviet motivation also encompassed a belief that Communism was a monolith. He believed that the Soviet Union imposed its form of government on various countries it either occupied or invaded in the final days of the Second World War. Referring to Soviet actions in this period, Truman said in his memoirs that "At Yalta, President Roosevelt had agreed to a policy for the re-

⁴ Truman, *Memoirs Vol. 2*, 290.

establishment of free governments for the liberated countries of Europe under inter-Allied supervision. But in Bulgaria and Rumania, with the advancing Soviet armies, Communist governments were imposed by then Russian military commanders.”⁵ Truman continued, saying that the Soviets dominated the Bulgarian government after the USSR occupied the country in September of 1944, and that any opposition to the Communist government was labeled fascist.⁶ Truman saw Soviet action in this period as expansionistic and that any Communist government that came to power was the result of Soviet influence, coercion, or outright force.

In addition to the Communist threat in Europe, Truman also believed that Moscow was exporting Communism throughout Asia. The defeat of Jiǎng Jièshí and the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949 was a blow to the Truman administration, and still more proof to Truman that the Chinese Communism was no different than Soviet Communism. He said that he and General Marshall did not believe many of the assertions that the CCP was merely a political party pushing for land reform in China, and that

The general [Marshall] knew that he was dealing with Communists, and he knew what their aims were. When he was back in Washington in March, he told me that their chief negotiator, Chou En-lai, had very frankly declared that, as a Communist, he believed firmly in the teachings of Marx and Lenin and the eventual victory of the proletariat.⁷

Truman also said that he did not believe Stalin’s assertion that Chinese Communism was not real Communism, and concluded that “I realized that the Communists had been

⁵ Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman: Volume One, Years of Decisions* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1955), 253.

⁶ Truman, *Memoirs: Volume One*, 54.

⁷ Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman Volume Two, Years of Trial and Hope* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1956), 90.

engaged in a struggle for power in China for nearly twenty years.”⁸ Truman’s implication was that not only was the CCP a full-fledged Communist government supported by Stalin, but that it was the result of Communist expansion into Asia.

In addition to Truman’s personal distrust of Communism, his lack of foreign policy experience also influenced his view of Communism. Truman came into the Presidency at a distinct disadvantage. During his term as Vice-President he was not included in many of FDR’s foreign policy meetings. Indeed, author Harold Gosnell said in his *A Political Biography of Harry S. Truman* that “During the first hundred days of the Roosevelt’s first term, Garner [FDR’s Vice-President] was part of the inner circle. But in 1945, President Roosevelt’s preoccupation with the war and international conferences and his failing health ruled out a close working arrangement with [Truman].”⁹ Gosnell continued, saying that during Truman’s term as vice-president he only met with FDR a handful of times for official meetings. In addition, Roosevelt, for any number of reasons, did not brief Truman on his larger foreign policy plans.¹⁰

Historian Bert Cochran too, acknowledged Truman’s lack of foreign policy experience, but also noted that:

Some have sought to reduce Truman’s unpreparedness to . . . the lack of executive experience, or to Roosevelt’s not having briefed him on outstanding topics. This was not the essence of the matter. Truman had been a United States Senator for ten years. He had more experience. . . than Lincoln and many other Presidents before him.¹¹

⁸ Truman, *Memoirs Volume Two*, 91.

⁹ Harold F. Gosnell, *Truman’s Crises: A Political Biography of Harry S. Truman* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980), 209.

¹⁰ Gosnell, *Truman’s Crises*, 209-10

¹¹ Bert Cochran, *Harry Truman and the Crisis Presidency* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1973), 118-19.

Cochran concluded, arguing that no president can be truly prepared to take office, and that his cabinet and other advisors are intended to help the president and advise him or her on matters with which they are unfamiliar.¹²

Regardless of historiographic debate, the fact was that Truman came into the presidency with little knowledge of foreign affairs or what FDR's plans were before he died. It was this lack of experience that fed into Truman's sense of inadequacy. Indeed, Truman's self-doubt was quite evident during the Potsdam Conference in July of 1945. Truman wrote to his wife Bess on July 3 saying that he did not want to make the long trip to Potsdam, but that "I hated to go to [the United Nations Conference in] San Francisco—I didn't want the thing I received in Chicago – so I guess it makes no difference what I want, I'm elected to do a job. Here's hoping I can do it."¹³ Truman expressed apprehension about his ability to be a good President, saying "I am as blue as indigo about going [to Antwerp]. You didn't seem at all happy when we talked. I'm sorry if I've done something to make you unhappy. All I've ever tried to do is make you pleased with me and the world. I'm very much afraid I've failed miserably."¹⁴ Clearly, Truman was unsure of his ability to negotiate a post-war settlement with the Soviets or to execute his duties as President successfully. His inadequacy, in turn, motivated Truman to take a tough stance against the Soviets at the Potsdam Conference. Writing to his wife about the July 19th session, Truman said that he had

reared up on my hind legs and told 'em where to get off and they got off. I have to make it perfectly plain to them [the Soviets and the British] at least once a day that so far as the President is concerned . . . my first

¹² Ibid., 119.

¹³ Harry Truman to Bess Truman, 3 July 1945, *Dear Bess: The Letters from Harry to Bess Truman, 1910-1959*, ed. Robert H. Ferrell (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1983), 516.

¹⁴ Harry Truman to Bess Truman, 6 July 1945, *Dear Bess: The Letters from Harry to Bess Truman, 1910-1959*, ed. Robert H. Ferrell (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1983), 517.

interest is [the] U.S.A., then I want the Jap[anese] War won and I want 'em both in it. . . . They are beginning to awake to the fact that I mean business.¹⁵

Clearly, Truman felt that he needed to tell the Soviets and British exactly what he wanted in terms of a wartime settlement. Likely this was due to his feelings of inadequacy in dealing with foreign affairs. Truman seemed to be puffing out his chest and as he said “telling ‘em where to get off” at the Potsdam conference, in an effort to make up for his lack of experience in foreign affairs.

Only a year after the Communist victory in China, the Red Menace reared its head in Korea. Truman’s administration planned for possible Soviet aggression in Korea since 1948, believing that “[Korea] was one of the places where the Soviet-controlled Communist world might choose to attack.” Indeed, in the spring of 1950 the US was monitoring border skirmishes along the 38th parallel as well as the build-up of North Korean forces.¹⁶ When the North invaded the South on June 25, 1950 Truman acted quickly by convening a meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to discuss possible action.¹⁷ At the same time, the situation in Korea shifted to the international scene when the UN convened an emergency session condemning the invasion of South Korea.¹⁸

Truman’s reaction to the Korean situation contrasted with his Secretary of State’s comments about the situation. In a speech given to the National Press Club in January of 1950, Acheson did not include South Korea as part of the United States’ strategic defense

¹⁵ Harry Truman to Bess Truman, 20 July 1945, *Dear Bess: The Letters from Harry to Bess Truman, 1910-1959*, ed. Robert H. Ferrell (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1983), 520.

¹⁶ Cochran, *the Crisis Presidency*, 331.

¹⁷ Hamby, *Man of the People*, 535.

¹⁸ William E. Pemberton, *Harry S. Truman: Fair Dealer and Cold Warrior* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989), 136.

perimeter in the Far East. It is possible that Truman acted decisively in Korea as a way to counteract the statements Acheson made earlier in the year.

What is known was that Truman's public statements over the next few months were meant to be more decisive and proactive than those made during the closing days of the Chinese Civil War. Indeed, Truman consistently reiterated the idea that the conflict in Korea was part of a larger struggle for freedom against the Soviets. In a message to the American people broadcast on September 1, 1950 Truman outlined the situation in Korea, saying that two months prior "Communist imperialism turned from the familiar tactics of infiltration and subversion to a brutal attack on the small republic of Korea," and that countries of the free world chose to meet force with force.¹⁹ Truman continued, saying that what was at stake in Korea was American liberty and "[our] free way of life – the right to worship as we please, the right to express our opinions, the right to raise our children in our own way, the right to choose our jobs, the right to plan our futures and live without fear."²⁰ Clearly, Truman believed that Korea was a critical battleground in the struggle against Communist expansion. Moreover, he reemphasized that Soviet Communism was inimical to the United States' way of life.

Despite his rhetoric, Truman was cautious about making a military commitment to Korea. As historian Alonzo Hamby noted, Truman met with numerous advisors to examine his options, and only reluctantly agreed to military action.²¹ Seemingly in contradiction, author William Pemberton depicted Truman as leaping into action promising to "let them have it!" and severely limiting his options in Korea by shouting

¹⁹ Harry S. Truman, "Radio and Television Report to the American People on the Situation in Korea," September 1, 1950, in *The Public Papers of the President of the United States: Harry S. Truman, 1950* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1965), 609-10.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 610.

²¹ Hamby, *Man of the People*, 537.

down any suggestion of limited aid.²² What was most likely the case was a combination of these two explanations. Truman was eager to correct the mistakes he made in China by acting decisively in Korea in hopes that he could maintain a democratic government. Regardless of his motivation, the US quickly mobilized military units to be sent to Korea, but they were not quick enough. By Monday June 26 the North Koreans pushed ROK leader Syngman Rhee south to Seoul.²³ In reaction to the disintegrating situation, Truman ordered two additional American divisions mobilized, and authorized Far East commander Douglas MacArthur to coordinate them.²⁴

MacArthur succeeded in rolling back the North Korean gains to the 38th Parallel and on into North Korea.²⁵ In pushing back North Korean gains, MacArthur disobeyed President Truman's orders not to push beyond the 38th parallel,²⁶ and continued to defy Truman's orders in late 1950 and early 1951. With the push beyond the 38th Parallel came a new wrinkle in the Korean conflict when the PLA entered the war on the side of the North Koreans. Chinese involvement in the war was precisely what Truman wanted to avoid. He feared that Chinese Communist involvement in the war could then bring the Soviets into the conflict and expand it into another World War. Indeed, by March of 1951 MacArthur was openly criticizing Truman for not allowing him to conduct the war how he saw fit. He also believed that Asia was the real battleground against communism, saying

²² Pemberton, *Cold Warrior*, 137.

²³ Pemberton, *Cold Warrior*, 137.

²⁴ William H. Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II* 5th edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 244.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 245.

²⁶ Lewis McCarroll Purifoy, *Harry Truman's China Policy; McCarthyism and the Diplomacy of Hysteria, 1947-1951* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1976), 239-41.

in a letter to House minority leader Joseph W. Martin that the communists had chosen to challenge the free world not in Europe but Asia.²⁷

During this time Truman was questioned about MacArthur's actions in Korea. At his February 8, 1951 press conference Truman was asked "Does General MacArthur usually advise in the field of foreign policy decisions, or . . ." Truman cut the reporter off, clearly frustrated at the question, saying "I have no comment. The President is responsible for foreign policy, however. I thought you knew that, if you would read the Constitution."²⁸ Ultimately, Truman relieved MacArthur of his command in Korea on April 11, 1951. This, however, was not Truman's intention. He was weighing whether to outright fire the General or slowly shift him into less prominent positions so that he could eventually retire with dignity, but the firing was leaked to the press. Truman panicked and called a press conference to announce the firing.²⁹ His decision backfired as most Americans supported MacArthur's actions believing that if the US was going to fight in Korea that its military should do everything it could to win. Historian William Pemberton noted that after the PRC's intervention in Korea coupled with McArthur's dismissal "Truman never recovered his popularity and power. As the MacArthur controversy eased, Truman had about a year and a half as president and less than a year until his announcement that he would not run for reelection in 1952." Pemberton continued saying, "His administration never recovered its balance. Crippled, it entered a period of

²⁷ Pemberton, *Fair Dealer and Cold Warrior*, 143.

²⁸ Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project*, "The President's News Conference," February 8, 1951, n.d. < <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=14010&st=Macarthur&st1=dismissal>.> (20 November 2009).

²⁹ Pemberton, *Fair Dealer and Cold Warrior*, 143.

holding action as it tried to cope with McCarthyism, internal scandal, inability to end the Korean War, and continued low popular support.”³⁰

The Chinese commitment of troops and the force with which they were able to push back US and UN gains shocked the Truman administration, and was further confirmation to Truman that the Chinese people were under the thumb of the Soviet Union. Indeed, in his press statement of November 30, 1950 Truman said of Chinese involvement that

We [the US] hope that the Chinese people will not continue to be forced or deceived into serving the ends of Russian colonial policy in Asia. I am certain that, if the Chinese people now under the control of the Communists were free to speak for themselves, they would denounce this aggression against the United Nations.³¹

As this statement illustrates, Truman did not view the Chinese as being independent from Moscow. Indeed, he saw them as being “forced or deceived” into doing the bidding of Soviet colonial intentions. Truman reiterated this belief in Soviet-directed actions in his memoirs. In reference to encouraging European allies to aid the US in Korea, Truman said that if the US met North Korean aggression with force, and successfully beat back the Communists, it would “likely add to the caution of the Soviets in undertaking new efforts [at spreading Communism].”³² Truman was blind to Chinese intentions in Korea, only seeing Máo as a puppet of Stalin. Historian William Pemberton noted that

Despite Chinese intervention, [in Korea] decision making continued to be distorted by a view that the whole operation was Soviet directed. How China saw the war and what its leaders wanted seemed irrelevant. Truman, [Secretary of State] Acheson and others assumed Mao Tse-tung was carrying out Stalin’s orders and [they] focused on Moscow.³³

³⁰ Ibid., 143-4

³¹ “The President’s News Conference,” November 30, 1950, n.d., <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=13673&st=Korea&st1=China>> (21 June 2009).

³² Truman, *Memoirs Volume Two*, 339-40.

³³ Pemberton, *Cold Warrior*, 142.

Truman did in fact focus on Moscow as the driving force behind communist efforts in Korea and China.

By 1952, the last year of Truman's Presidency, the conflict stalemated back along the 38th Parallel, and until the end of his presidency Truman believed the Chinese aggression was part of Moscow's effort to spread Communism into Asia. What should be noted about his handling of the Chinese civil war, as well as the Korean War, was that Truman saw both the CCP and the DPRK as puppets of the Soviet régime. He did not understand the appeal of Communism in former European colonial holdings such as China and Korea. He only saw Moscow reaching out its claws to pull in another victim. Additionally, the commanding general in Korea, Douglas MacArthur advocated for a direct attack on mainland China in an effort to eliminate the PRC from the conflict. Truman did not allow MacArthur to expand the conflict, fearing it would erupt into a world war.

Despite Truman's own views of Communism and his quick response to the Korean crisis, Truman lost much of the support of the American people through the remaining two years of his presidency. Indeed, in the 1950 off-year election the Republican Party gained significant ground in the House and Senate, though the Democrats still held a majority. In 1950, too, the main thrust of most Republican candidates was that President Truman was soft on Communism, and that they would take a harder line if elected.

At the end of his second term as President, Harry Truman decided not to run for a third term, saying that on March 29, 1952 that he did not feel that it was his duty to run

for a third term as President.³⁴ By the summer of 1952 no one candidate had the endorsement of President Truman as the Democratic nominee. Governor of Illinois Adlai Stevenson, however, was nominated as the Democratic candidate at the 1952 convention. Stevenson, however, was soundly defeated by Eisenhower in November by a 10.5% margin.³⁵

Eisenhower: A New Look at the Far East

American freedom is threatened so long as the world Communist conspiracy exists in its present scope, power and hostility. More closely than ever before, American freedom is interlocked with the freedom of other people.³⁶

Similar to Truman, Eisenhower also had his reservations about the Soviet Union and Communist China. Also similar to Truman, Eisenhower sought to continue the US policy of Containment by aiding non-Communist governments to fight Communism. Eisenhower was also not an outspoken opponent of Truman, and had a friendly and active relationship with him until the 1952 Presidential campaign. Truman offered Eisenhower the position of unofficial Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1949, and Eisenhower supported nearly all of Truman's major foreign policy decisions including his response in Korea.³⁷ What changed the dynamic between Truman and Eisenhower, according to historian Stephen Ambrose, was the 1952 campaign during which

³⁴ Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project*, "Address at the Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner," March 29, 1952, <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=14439&st=run&st1=election>> (3 November 2009).

³⁵ Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project*, "1952 Presidential Election," n.d., <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=1952>> (3 November 2009).

³⁶ Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project*, "Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union," January 7, 1954, n.d., <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=10096&st=Mutual&st1=Defense>> (9 November 2009).

³⁷ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President Vol. 2* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1984), 13-14.

Eisenhower accused the Truman administration of being soft on Communism and as having allowed China to fall under Communist control. Indeed, Truman resented the attacks made against his administration, saying in his memoirs that:

He [Eisenhower] permitted a campaign of distortion and vilification that he could not possibly have believed was true. There were mass accusations of subversion and corruption against the Democratic administration. . . Hard as it was for us to understand this side of Eisenhower now revealed to us, it was even more of a jolt to see our foreign policy used as a political football.³⁸

Eisenhower was quite critical of the administration and its stance on Communism, promising to take a harder line against the Red Menace abroad if elected. Eisenhower said he would begin by visiting Korea in an effort to end the conflict there.

What is critical to note about Eisenhower, however, was that while he did not support the CCP, he also had reservations about supporting Jiǎng Jièshí and the GMD. Eisenhower explained during the 1952 campaign in a letter to a close friend that if he became President, he would, “help and support Chiang in every way – but I would not participate, governmentally, in a major attack on the mainland. So, I take *issue* with those who want us to go into full partnership with Chiang in starting a war with China.”³⁹

While Eisenhower rejected the PRC, he was not willing to fully embrace the government of Jiǎng Jièshí or its proposed attack on the mainland. This was a different policy than that of Truman because Eisenhower did not simply embrace a government such as the GMD because it was fighting a Communist government like the PRC. He also had a more inclusive view of Communism in China and briefly considered recognition of the CCP. He did not believe that China was the same as the Soviet Union, but that Máo’s form of Communism was different from that of Joseph Stalin’s form of Communism. While he

³⁸Truman, *Memoirs: Volume Two*, 501.

³⁹Eisenhower, *Papers of Eisenhower Volume XII*, 1185.

was not as direct or quick to speak up about what sort of strategy would be taken against Communist expansion, Eisenhower continually used anti-Communist rhetoric. Indeed, in a February 3, 1954 press conference Eisenhower was asked about his New Look policy and whether or not merely threatening to use force would actually accomplish anything. Eisenhower responded that “I spent some little time at war, and I don't think that big and bombastic talk is the thing that makes other people fear. I think that a calm going about of your own business, pursuing a steady course, that is the thing that makes him begin to tremble and wonder what you are going to do.”⁴⁰ Clearly, Eisenhower did not believe that “big and bombastic” statements against the Soviet Union would accomplish anything, but that actual action would deter the spread of Communism.

Despite his belief that grand threats and rhetoric would not halt the spread of Communism, Eisenhower's use of terminology and the ways in which he referred to Chinese and Soviet Communism gave one the sense that he did not see them as one monolithic entity. Referencing the CCP aggression on the islands of Quemoy and Mǎzǔ, he said that “It was quite possible, of course, that the current threat to Formosa [Taiwan] had long been planned by the *Chinese Communists* with the *support of* the Soviet Union [emphasis added].”⁴¹ He suggested further in a 1954 press conference that every action that Communist elements took in China was deliberate, but qualified the statement saying “I do not mean to say that everything in Russia is completely coordinated with everything that is happening in China. I do say that when one of these governments permits anything to happen or makes any announcement, it does it deliberately and with a deliberate

⁴⁰ Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project*, “The President's News Conference,” February 3, 1954, n.d., <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=10041&st=New+Look&st1=>> (6 November 2009).

⁴¹ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The Whitehouse Years: Waging Peace, 1956-1961* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1965), 294.

purpose.”⁴² Clearly, Eisenhower may not have believed that China was totally independent of Moscow, but it can be said that he did not believe that Communism was a monolithic force.

In addition to his views about a Communist monolith, or lack thereof, he also differed from Truman in his methods to contain Communism. Eisenhower’s main military policy during his presidency was the New Look strategy. The New Look was designed to slim down the US military’s traditional troops on land and sea, and increase strategic air forces as well as nuclear weapons,⁴³ and was envisioned as a defensive measure against Soviet expansion. Eisenhower reasoned that the Soviets would be less likely to attack either the US or its allies in Western Europe if they knew there would be immediate nuclear retaliation.⁴⁴ Eisenhower’s New Look greatly affected his military decisions concerning China. According to some historians, like Richard Immerman and Robert Bowie, Eisenhower was cautious about committing troops to the China region for fear of sparking another world war. Immerman and Bowie also noted that Eisenhower was cautious because “while the Sino-Soviet alliance was currently based on solidly communist ideology and community of interests, there were good reasons to expect that basic differences would eventually strain or break their ties.”⁴⁵ Others, like Campbell Craig, pointed out that there was a definite split between Eisenhower’s and Dulles’s thinking on the matter. According to Craig, Dulles called for an atomic missile attack against the Chinese and a possible war with the Soviets. Eisenhower did not want to risk

⁴² “The President’s News Conference,” December 2, 1954, n.d., <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=10147&st=China&st1=recognition>> (21 June 2009).

⁴³ Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 171.

⁴⁴ William B. Pickett, *Dwight David Eisenhower and American Power*, American Biographical History Series, ed. Alan M. Kraut et al (Wheeking, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, 1995), 108-09.

⁴⁵ Robert R. Bowie and Richard H. Immerman, *Waging Peace: How Eisenhower Shaped an Enduring Cold War Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 166.

such a conflict. He did plan for it however, believing that any conflict with the Soviets would inevitable escalate into an all-out nuclear exchange.⁴⁶ Likely, Eisenhower considered both options. At the beginning of his term as President, in an effort to take a harder line against the Communists than did Truman, he was in favor of doing whatever needed to be done to combat the spread of Communism. Once he examined the threat that nuclear war posed to all involved, he drew back from the brink. His rhetoric, however, continued to hint at the use of nuclear or atomic weapons in an effort to dissuade the Soviets from making any rash move against the US.

The major event during the Eisenhower administration that was a potential testing ground for the President's New Look policy involved two small islands off the coast of Taiwan called Quemoy and Mǎzǔ (Matsu). In 1949, after Máo forced Jiǎng off the mainland, Jiǎng retained the islands of Quemoy and Mǎzǔ in hopes of using them as stepping stones to retake the mainland. Through September of 1954 the GMD built up its garrison of troops on both Quemoy and Mǎzǔ in anticipation of invading the mainland. In response, the PRC began shelling the islands.⁴⁷ Eisenhower, needing a response to this situation, proposed a mutual assistance agreement between the Nationalist Chinese and the US with both sides agreeing to defend the other in the event of an attack. Indeed, in Eisenhower's announcement about the mutual assistance agreement, he stated that

The Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of China is defensive and mutual in character, designed to deter any attempt by the Chinese Communist regime to bring its aggressive military ambitions to bear against the treaty area.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Campbell Craig, *Destroying the Village: Eisenhower and Thermonuclear War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 79, 111.

⁴⁷ Ambrose, *Eisenhower Vol. 2*, 212-13.

⁴⁸ Gerard Peters, *The American Presidency Project*, "Special Message to the Senate Transmitting the Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of China," January 6, 1955, n.d., <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=10427&st=Mutual+Defense+Treaty&st1=Formosa>> (13 November 2009).

In addition, the GMD agreed not to attack China unilaterally.⁴⁹ It is interesting to note, that Eisenhower promised to “unleash Chiang” while campaigning, but when it came to the policy he actually enacted, he was not willing to “unleash Chiang.” Likely, this was because Eisenhower, like Truman, did not want to spark a war in the region which could expand into another world war.

In January 1955 hostilities between the PRC and the ROC flared up once more when the PRC began to raid the island group known as the Dàchén (Tachens) Islands. On January 17 the PLA captured Ichiang Island situated seven miles north of the Dàchéns. This encroachment, according to the mutual assistance agreement signed a year earlier, necessitated that Eisenhower take action.⁵⁰ Indeed he did by requesting that Congress pass a resolution to give him the authority to commit troops to Taiwan in an effort to defend the Dàchéns. The resolution passed both the House and the Senate and at the end of January Eisenhower had a blank check to do what he deemed necessary to defend Taiwan. On February 4 Eisenhower ordered the US Navy’s Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Straits to evacuate the Dàchén Islands.

Despite evacuating the Dàchéns, Eisenhower did not address the primary conflict in the region which was the between the PRC and ROC. His opinion of the situation was that if the US allowed the two islands to fall to the Communists, it would crush the morale of the GMD, Jiǎng Jièshí’s troops would defect to the Communists, and that the PRC would have an easier path to invade Taiwan. Moreover, Eisenhower was convinced that the security of all of Asia hinged on keeping the PRC out of Taiwan.⁵¹ He could not

⁴⁹ Ambrose, *Eisenhower Vol. 2*, 214.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 231.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 236.

however, send a large military support force to Taiwan because his New Look policy reduced standing troop levels of the US Army. It was for this reason that Eisenhower was hesitant to make a specific commitment of troops to either Quemoy or Mǎzǔ.

One option he did consider was the use of strategic nuclear weapons. Under the New Look policy, nuclear weapons were considered vital to the US military, and could be utilized the same way as traditional artillery or troops. In the case of Quemoy and Mǎzǔ, nuclear weapons were preferable to ground troops because the two islands were logistically difficult to defend.⁵² Additionally, Eisenhower seemed to have doubts about how critical Quemoy and Mǎzǔ were to the defense of Formosa. In a memorandum to Secretary of State Dulles Eisenhower emphasized that the islands were not critical to US interests, saying that “Without abandoning the offshore islands, make clear that neither Chiang nor ourselves is committed to *full-out* defense of Quemoy and Matsu, so that no matter what the outcome of an attack upon them, there would be no danger of a collapse of the free world position in the region. . .”⁵³ Eisenhower seemed hesitant to commit to a full out defense of the islands, but did not want to appear to be abandoning Taiwan. This dynamic was prevalent throughout his administration. He was not willing to fully commit to defense of Taiwan, but also did not want to lose face within the international community.

Part of Eisenhower’s approach to appearing strong in the international community was his threat to use nuclear weapons. At a press conference in 1955 when Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) reporter Charles S. von Fremd asked the President whether

⁵² John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War*, Revised and Expanded Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 168.

⁵³ “Excerpts from a Memorandum to the Secretary of State Dulles,” April 5, 1955, in Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953-1956* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1963), 611.

or not he would consider the use of “small atomic weapons” Eisenhower replied that “in any combat where these things [nuclear weapons] can be used on strictly military targets and for strictly military purposes, I see no reason why they shouldn't be used just exactly as you would use a bullet or anything else.”⁵⁴ This answer was in response to a speech given by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles four days earlier in which he announced that the US had tactical nuclear weapons precise enough to destroy military targets, but not harm civilian centers. Dulles also confirmed that the US was willing to use atomic weapons should a war in the Taiwan Straits develop.⁵⁵ Eisenhower strongly believed that the advent of the nuclear age allowed the US to fight wars more quickly saying in his memoirs that:

The most dramatic action in this field [of weapons systems] during the early years of my administration was, for all practical purposes, the beginning of research and development on ballistic missiles of intermediate and intercontinental ranges. These vehicles, with their nuclear warheads, were destined to make previous concepts of warfare obsolete and could possibly reduce the duration of a modern war to a matter of hours.⁵⁶

Eisenhower's belief in a modern US military relied heavily on the use of nuclear armaments. He saw them as a form of weapon that could, as he said, reduce the duration of war to mere hours, but it is clear that Eisenhower was ill-informed about the destructive nature of nuclear weapons believing that there was such a thing as a “clean bomb” free of nuclear fallout.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ “The President's News Conference,” March 16, 1955, n.d., <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=10434&st=China&st1=nuclear>> (22 June 2009).

⁵⁵ Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 239.

⁵⁶ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The Whitehouse Years: Mandate for Change, 1953-1956* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1963), 456.

⁵⁷ Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 398.

What should be noted about Eisenhower's strategy in China and the use of nuclear weapons is the very fact that he considered using them. Unlike Truman, Eisenhower was willing to consider the use of nuclear weapons should a war in China develop. This policy was part of his New Look at the military, and his overall desire to slim down spending. Unlike Truman, Eisenhower was not entirely willing to embrace the government of Jiǎng Jièshí. He was an ardent Cold Warrior like Truman – insomuch as he opposed Communism – but unlike Truman Eisenhower was unwilling to ally himself with a leader whom he did not trust.

Both Eisenhower and Truman set the tone for US policy in China and Taiwan. They had the same basic policy regarding Communism, however, Eisenhower sought to take a much harder line against Communism. Ultimately, neither Eisenhower nor Truman were willing to commit to the use of military force in the China region. They were not, the only influence on US foreign policy. Their Secretaries of State Dean Acheson (under Truman) and John Foster Dulles (under Eisenhower) had the ears of the President, and could influence, to an extent, what sort of policy the US took concerning China.

Chapter III:

The Fundamental Design of the Kremlin: Kennan, Acheson and Dulles

George F Kennan: Laying the Foundation

My reputation was made. My voice now carried.¹

George F. Kennan's reputation was indeed made in 1946 when he wrote his Long Telegram early that year. Previous to writing the Telegram, Kennan was assistant to the US envoy to Moscow from 1944 until 1946. This period of time was, as Kennan put it, an educational experience for him. He learned how the Soviet government operated and what Soviet society was like. Once Kennan returned to the US he became a major player in the world of American foreign policy in relation to not only the Soviet Union, but also the People's Republic of China.

Kennan was born February 16, 1904 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.² He graduated from Princeton in 1925 and began a career in the Foreign Service soon after. In 1927 he was posted to a minor position in Germany, and for the next six years he traveled around Europe until he was recalled to Washington, DC.³ It was in this period of six years that he developed his opinions about world politics, and specifically about the Soviet Union. He understood the USSR better than most other Americans in the 1920s and 1930s. For many in Europe and the US, Communist forms of government were viewed as a viable alternative to capitalism which, during the Great Depression, failed its citizens. Kennan,

¹ George F. Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1950*, (Boston: Atlantic, Little Brown, 1967), 295

² David Mayers, *George Kennan: and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), xiii.

³ John Lukacs, *George Kennan: A Study of Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 27-30.

however, did not agree. He was anti-Communist, but not in the fanatical sense of many of his fellow Americans. He believed that differences in nationality were the true source of conflict in the world, not class.⁴

When he returned to the US in 1933 President Roosevelt had officially established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. On this agreement, Kennan said “I myself, was skeptical. Never – neither then nor at any later date – did I consider the Soviet Union a fit ally or associate . . . for the country.”⁵ Indeed, Kennan said in his *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin* that the American perception of Soviet propaganda against the West was shallow at best. According to Kennan Soviet leaders were not just making propaganda in order to espouse their own points of view, nor were they endeavoring to change a population’s point of view about their social or political situation. Soviet leaders were, in fact, “endeavoring to manipulate in a systematic way the political process within other countries.” Moreover, Soviet leaders were “organizing groups. . . indoctrinating them with an attitude of disloyalty to their own governments. . . . [and] teaching them how to overthrow governments and how to seize dictatorial power.”⁶ Kennan’s view of the Soviet Union was more balanced than most at this time, but this is not to suggest that he was sympathetic to the Communist cause.

In November of 1933 President Roosevelt appointed William Bullit as the first ambassador to the USSR with Kennan as the Secretary of the Mission.⁷ Kennan served in Moscow for the next four years.⁸ This time was, according to Kennan, another learning

⁴ Ibid., 31-2.

⁵ George F. Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1950* (Boston: Little, Brosn and Company, 1967, 57.

⁶ George F. Kennan, *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1961), 198.

⁷ Lukacs, *Kennan*, 34.

⁸ Ibid., 36.

experience. Much of the first year and a half that Bullit and Kennan spent in Moscow revolved around the logistics of establishing an embassy and organizing the staff. In the winter of 1934-1935, however, events in Moscow helped to form his view of the Soviet government, and its true aims in world politics. Sergei Kirov, the leader of the Communist Party in Leningrad and Stalin's most prominent political rival, was murdered on December 1, 1934. Shortly after Kirov's murder Stalin proclaimed that there were enemies throughout the Soviet Union, allowing for the arrest of numerous leaders within the Soviet government including Lev Kamenev (one of the top officials of the Politburo, the executive committee of the Soviet Communist Party) and Grigorii Zinoviev (a rehabilitated member of the United Opposition, a group that opposed Stalin's repressive policies).⁹

After their arrests, show trials were held wherein the defendants were found guilty usually on trumped-up charges. Beyond the elimination of political rivals, the Great Terror in the Soviet Union lasted the majority of the 1930s and spread paranoia and violence throughout the USSR. Indeed, Stalin was not the sole instigator of the violence. A sense that there were in fact enemies of the state throughout Russia led to local escalation of violence, and the emergence of "little Stalins" throughout Russia. These local officials saw the government purges as a means by which to eliminate their own rivals, and they helped to spread the Terror throughout the USSR.¹⁰ It was in this setting of terror and mass arrests that Kennan had his first glimpse of the workings of the Soviet Union, which colored his perception of Stalin's Russia. Of the Soviet Union, Kennan said

⁹ Robert W. Thurston, *Life and Terror in Stalin's Russia, 1934-1941* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 20-1.

¹⁰ Christopher Read, *The Stalin Years: A Reader* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 102-3.

that there were many facets of Soviet society that he enjoyed and admired, but that he had no admiration for the ideology itself. He further said that

I saw it as a pseudo-science, replete with artificial heroes and villains; and much as I admired the Soviet leaders for their courage, their determination, and their political personality; their professed hatred at rejection of large portions of humanity, their abundant cruelties. . . and especially their love of power. . .¹¹

Kennan's description of Stalin fit his view of Soviet leadership. Kennan described Stalin's personality in his *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin* as being motivated by a need to maintain his own status in the Soviet Union. Occasionally, his interests coincided with the interests of the USSR, but often they did not. In addition – and most related to foreign policy – was Kennan's belief that Stalin did not necessarily want to spread communism to other countries, but to make those countries weak. Kennan said that “From the bourgeois world . . . Stalin wanted only one thing; weakness. This is not at all identical with revolution. Unless other states were very small, and contiguous to Russia's borders . . . Stalin did not want other states to be communist.”¹²

Kennan's view of Stalin in particular, and the Soviet Union especially, was fairly complex. He believed that Stalin was motivated only by his own self-interest, and not that of the Soviet Union. Moreover, he did not believe that Stalin was interested in spreading communism, but that he was interested in making other countries weak and subservient to the Soviet Union. In this sense, Kennan saw Stalin as a dominating force in world politics, and as being on par with any other dictatorship. What should be noted was that Kennan saw Stalin as a separate personality from the Soviet Union. According to

¹¹ Kennan, *Memoirs 1925-1950*, 69-70.

¹² Kennan, *Russia and the West*, 252-3.

Kennan, both Stalin and other Soviet leaders wanted power, but Stalin wanted it to better himself, and not to better his country.

Kennan's opinion of the Soviet Union was further reinforced by his experiences in the final days of World War Two, and its immediate aftermath. His assignments after leaving Moscow in 1934 until the end of the war sent Kennan throughout Europe and will be discussed briefly.¹³ In January of 1935 while stationed in Moscow, Kennan became sick, and was taken to a Vienna hospital. He remained there until November of that year.¹⁴ He returned to Moscow in late November and continued his service at the embassy until he returned to the US in May of 1937 for the birth of his daughter. By late August Kennan, his wife Annelise, and their daughter arrived in Leningrad so that Kennan could resume his assignment.¹⁵ Due to financial constraints (namely, the inability to live off the meager salary that his post in Moscow provided) Kennan resigned and took a position in Prague until the Nazi invasion in 1939.¹⁶

Shortly after Hitler's invasion, the US State Department closed its embassy in Prague and Kennan was reassigned to Berlin where he remained until December of 1941. After the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, and Hitler's declaration of war against the US on December 11, Kennan and the full contingent of the Berlin embassy were forced out of Germany.¹⁷ After serving a stint in both Portugal and London, Kennan was again assigned to Moscow as Minister-Counselor to Ambassador Averell Harriman. While in Moscow, Kennan reacquainted himself with Russia and what

¹³ While Kennan did not have much contact with the Soviet Union between 1934 and 1945, I have included a brief description of his travels for the sake of continuity. If anything, his formative years in the Foreign Service served as an education upon which he based his later policy papers.

¹⁴ Kennan, *Memoirs 1925-1950*, 65-6.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 76-9.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 87, 89, 92

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 105, 134.

had changed in the nearly ten years since he had left. Much to his dismay, Kennan found that the Soviet Union was just as inhospitable to US diplomats as when he first arrived in 1933. Indeed, in his memoirs, Kennan remarked that

The wartime association between Russia and the United States had changed nothing. I soon learned, in the isolation of American diplomats from the population. It was obvious that in the eyes of the secret police we, though nominally allies, were still dangerous enemies, to be viewed with suspicion and held at arm's length from Soviet citizens.¹⁸

Kennan saw, during his second assignment in Moscow, a Russia which still did not trust its wartime ally the United States. Indeed, he observed that

What I saw during that time [while assigned to Moscow in 1944] was enough to convince me that not only our policy toward Russia, but our plans and commitments generally for the shaping of the postwar world, were based on a dangerous misreading of the personality, the intentions, and the political situation of the Soviet leadership.¹⁹

Similar to his views of the wartime alliance with the Soviets, Kennan did not believe that Moscow had changed, and that Stalin was just as dictatorial as he ever was.

Beyond personal experiences as a diplomat in Moscow, Kennan also observed the actions of the Soviet Union, via Stalin, on the international level. In 1944, at the Tehran Conference, Stalin refused to recognize the Polish government in exile. Instead, he claimed that the so-called Lublin Poles, who were selected in elections widely believed to be Soviet-run, were the true government of Poland. Kennan wrote in a diary entry, which he included in his memoirs, about Stalin's inflexible attitude toward Poland, saying that

the Russian police system would inevitably seep into Polish life unless sharp measures were taken on the Polish side to counteract it, and that such countermeasures would inevitably be deemed provocative and anti-Russian in Moscow.²⁰

¹⁸ Kennan, *Memoirs 1925-1950*, 190.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 224-5.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 209.

As was evident in this observation, Kennan believed that the Soviet system of police repression, as he observed first hand in the 1930s, would be imposed upon the Polish government, and that any attempt to stop this would provoke the Soviet government.

All of his observations of the USSR led Kennan to write perhaps the most influential foreign policy document of the early Cold War. His message to the State Department, known as the Long Telegram, was written in reaction to what Kennan perceived as the ineffectiveness of US policy regarding the Soviets, as well as the relationship of the Soviet government to its people. Concerning US policy, Kennan pointed out that the US assumed that Soviet decision making was based on objective and reasonable decision making. According to Kennan however, the Soviet leadership, and more specifically Stalin's leadership, based decisions on the good of Soviet interests only. Kennan reasoned that the USSR could and should not be included in the foundation of international organizations such as the UN because, as he described earlier in his career, the Stalin régime was only interested in what profited him, and what kept him in a position of power.

The Long Telegram gave voice to the thoughts and observations Kennan developed in his first decade in the Foreign Service. The Telegram consisted of five sections each of which dealt with a different aspect of Soviet foreign policy.

The first section dealt with the outlook of the Soviet Union after the Second World War as influenced by Soviet propaganda. Specifically, Kennan believed that the Soviet Union saw itself as surrounded by capitalist countries who were hostile toward the Soviet Union, and that a Soviet-style government could not coexist with a capitalist government. Moreover, according to Soviet propaganda, those capitalist governments

were constantly in conflict with each other. That conflict could be used as a means by which to advance the communist cause, and if allowed, competing capitalist governments could work against each other. This would weaken their own standing in world politics and enhance the standing of the Soviets.²¹

Section two addressed the background behind the beliefs described in section one. Kennan emphasized here that they were indeed based on propaganda, and were part of the “party line” as put forth by the communist government. In addition, Kennan emphasized that many of the suppositions advanced by the Soviets were indeed false, saying “please note that the premises on which [the] party line is based are for [the] most part simply not true. Experience has shown that peaceful and mutually profitable coexistence of capitalist and socialist states is entirely possible. . .”²² Kennan pointed out that despite what Soviet propaganda espoused, capitalist states (such as the US) and socialist states (like the Soviet Union) could coexist. This portion of his message, as will be evident later, was lost on the subsequent Secretaries of State, Dean Acheson and John Foster Dulles.

Section three, titled “Projection of Soviet Outlook in Practical Policy on Unofficial Level” dealt with Soviet foreign policy, but more especially how it would be executed. Similar to his view of the Soviets in *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin*, Kennan explained that the domestic policy of the USSR was to increase in any way possible the prestige of the Soviet state through military buildup and the weakening

²¹ George Kennan, “Telegram to Secretary of State George Marshall from George Kennan, February 22, 1946 [The Long Telegram],” in *A History of Our Times: Readings on Postwar America*, sixth edition, William H. Chafe et al, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 14-5.

²² Kennan, “Long Telegram,” in *A History of Our Times*, 15.

of “colonial and backward or dependant people’s” contact with Western countries in an effort to create a power vacuum which would favor communist intervention.²³

Section three was perhaps the most hard-hitting of Kennan’s telegram, and the most damning of any of his accusations about the Soviet government. In this section, Kennan wrote of Soviet plans at the unofficial level, such as the infiltration of labor and social groups in order to spread communist influence. Most importantly, Kennan highlighted his belief that the inner leadership of international communist movements were populated by officials from Moscow who were under Soviet control. Kennan also pointed out how this communist infiltration could be used. He highlighted the possibility of the use of violence to weaken the power and influence of western states. The Soviet regime would also do everything possible to set the western powers against one another. Moreover, “In foreign countries Communists will, as a rule, work toward [the] destruction of all forms of personal independence. . .” Kennan concluded this section, saying

In general, all Soviet efforts on [the] unofficial international plane will be negative and destructive in character, designed to tear down sources of strength beyond [the] reach of Soviet control. . . . The Soviet regime is a police regime par excellence, reared in the dim half world of Tsarist police intrigue, accustomed to think primarily in terms of police power. This should never be lost sight of in gauging Soviet motives. . .²⁴

Kennan believed that Soviet foreign policy was based on intimidation and, when needed, violence designed to create a new Russian empire to rival those of the Tsars. What is critical to understand about Kennan was that he did not perceive the Soviet Union as motivated strictly by communist dogma, nor even as a cohesive unit. Indeed, he consistently referred to “Russian Soviets” and “Russian communism” and not the Soviet

²³ Ibid., 16.

²⁴ Ibid., 16-7.

Union. He believed that the Russian communists saw themselves as Russians before they were communists, and that this national identity and national character far outweighed political ideology. Author David Mayers agreed, saying “[Kennan’s] telegram posited that behind the ideological pose and inflated rhetoric the Soviets viewed the world in a traditionally suspicious Russian fashion. . .” Mayers also noted that in his telegram, Kennan “explained that the [Communist] party, although a successful instrument of Stalin’s despotism, was no longer a source of intellectual or emotional stimulation in the USSR.”²⁵ Kennan painted a picture of a Soviet government interested in expanding its control over any number of countries around it, and in keeping its leadership (namely Stalin) in power. It was not, however, entirely interested in spreading communism. Communism, to Kennan, was something to be acknowledged and occasionally referenced, but the main goal was domination and subjugation of other countries.

While Kennan outlined the overall objective of the Soviet Union in his Long Telegram, he did not include a strategy with which to handle its supposed expansionist designs. His strategy came in an issue of the journal *Foreign Affairs* in late 1946. The article, titled “The Source of Soviet Conduct,” was meant to be an anonymous work. Authored by a person identified as “X” the article outlined what became the United States’ Containment Policy. Kennan recommended that the US implement: “a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies.”²⁶ He also noted that it was possible for the US to influence both Russian Communist policy as well as international Communist policy (which was influenced mostly from Moscow), but that it would ultimately come down not to US attempts to undermine the Soviet Union, but its

²⁵ David Mayers, *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 99.

²⁶ George F. Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs*, <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/19470701faessay25403-p20/x/the-sources-of-soviet-conduct.html>.

collapse would be due to its own flawed system of government.²⁷ Despite its relatively specific recommendations Kennan admitted that the X Article was vague in several critical areas.²⁸ In particular, Kennan said that his definition of Containment “was not the containment by military means of a military threat, but the political containment of a political threat.”²⁹

Regardless of its deficiencies (in Kennan’s mind or otherwise) Containment became the accepted policy of the United States concerning communist aggression abroad. This policy, by 1949, also became the framework for the United States’ policy regarding the People’s Republic of China. The Chinese Communist movement, as many in the State Department argued, was nothing more than a puppet of the Soviet government. Interestingly, however, many State Department officials, including George Kennan, did not take much interest in China from the period immediately after the Second World War until Máo Zédōng took power in 1949. Kennan, as well as the State Department, saw China as having no real value to the US. China was not a strong industrial power, would not become one in the near future, and posed no military threat to the US. In addition, Kennan said that he:

doubted at that time, [from 1945 until 1949] and very wrongly so, the ability of the Chinese Communists to establish and maintain their rule over *all* of China, I also recognized . . . that even if they should succeed . . . in fact, *in the event* that they should succeed. . . it was unlikely that they themselves would remain under Russian control.³⁰

²⁷ Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/19470701faessay25403-p40/x/the-sources-of-soviet-conduct.html>.

²⁸ Kennan had, after all, intended the *Foreign Affairs* article to give the State Department some kind of path with which to follow in order to combat Soviet expansion.

²⁹ Kennan, *Memoirs 1925-1950*, 358.

³⁰ Kennan, *Memoirs*, 373-74 [emphasis present in original].

Kennan and the State Department did not much concern themselves with the Chinese Communists immediately after the war because China, as a whole, was not strategically, militarily, or economically important to the US.

In addition, Kennan believed that Běijīng was not merely a puppet of Moscow, and that the two could never truly be allies. In his *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin* Kennan gave his reason as to why the alliance could not happen, saying “From this time on, Moscow had, in Mao . . . an ally, *but not a satellite* [emphasis added].” Kennan continued, referring to Jiang’s purge of communist leadership in Shànghǎi in 1927, saying “Chiang’s massacre of the Shanghai workers in 1927 had demonstrated that Chinese Communism could survive and prosper only as an independent force, making its own decisions in the light of its own understanding of Chinese realities, not as a puppet of far-off Moscow.”³¹

As is evident, Kennan did not focus on China as a major threat to the US, believing that China did not possess the industrial or military capabilities to become a major player on the world scene. Much of Kennan’s foreign service training as well as much of his writing throughout his career dealt with the Soviet Union. During his early years in the Foreign Service he observed a Russian government that was power hungry and above all wanted to keep itself in power. Kennan did not, however, completely ignore the Chinese Communist Party. His own writing shows that he believed that the Russians and the Chinese were allies, but that Moscow did not control Běijīng. His Containment policy advocated isolation of the Soviet Union, but obviously had nothing to say about China; its revolution did not occur until 1949. What is critical to note about Kennan in relation to the larger foreign policy picture is that three of Kennan’s

³¹ Kennan, *Russia and the West*, 277.

convictions – that the Soviet government was power hungry, that China was an ally of Russia, and that Containment was an acceptable way to combat Soviet influence – were greatly altered or misinterpreted by subsequent US policy-makers. Kennan's comments were very much of the time period, and not intended to apply to a variety of countries or over an extended period of time.

To be sure, while Kennan believed that the Soviets were power hungry, he was referring specifically to the Stalin régime. This stereotype was, however, extended beyond Stalin to other Soviet régimes with the eventual belief that all communists were power hungry. Kennan's assertion that the Chinese were an ally of the Soviet Union was simplified to mean Chinese Communism was an extension of the USSR. Kennan's Containment policy, similar to his view of the Soviet Union, was also specific to Stalin's Russia, and could not or should not be applied to other communist governments. How and why these changes and misinterpretations occurred can be attributed to changes in US foreign policy as a whole, the embodiment of which were the US Secretaries of State in the period studied, Dean Acheson and John Foster Dulles.

Dean Acheson: Containment and NSC-68

One cannot argue with a river.³²

Dean Acheson was the Secretary of State from 1949 until 1953, and is generally considered the man responsible for the implementation of many of Kennan's ideas concerning the Soviet Union and China. He was also the person responsible for altering many of Kennan's assertions about the Soviet Union.

Dean Acheson was born April, 11 1893 in a small town in Massachusetts to Edward and Eleanor Acheson, who were both British subjects.³³ Acheson graduated from Yale in 1916 and enrolled at Harvard law school where he graduated fifth in his class. Upon graduation, he was recommended for, and received a spot as, a law clerk for Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis.³⁴ He worked under Brandeis until the end of the First World War, after which he joined the Covington and Burlington law firm in Washington, D.C. In 1933 Acheson was appointed, under President Roosevelt, as Undersecretary of the Treasury, but resigned due to his personal conflict with President Roosevelt's gold purchase plan.³⁵ Acheson returned to the realm of private law until he was once again tapped by the Roosevelt administration, this time to be Assistant Secretary of State. At the conclusion of the Second World War he resigned his position, and immediately took the spot as Under Secretary of State for President Truman.³⁶ It was

³² Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation My Years in the State Department* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1969), 379.

³³ John T. McNay, *Acheson and Empire: The British Accent in American Foreign Policy* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 13.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 23, 24.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 25-6.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

at this point, in 1945, that Acheson took his first steps into the arena of US foreign policy, and which were the formative years for his views about the Soviet Union.

Acheson, unlike Kennan, had a fairly simplistic opinion of the Soviet Union. He saw it as imperialist (seeking to control other states via colonization or outright oppression), expansionistic (seeking to grab up parts of land surrounding it), and that it was the driving force behind Communist movements throughout the world (through infiltration of a country's government). In fact, Acheson equated Soviet actions between 1945 and 1950 to a war-like offensive against the west, saying that the Soviet offensive began in Poland in 1945, and ended in Korea in 1950.³⁷ He described the Soviet strategy as being “mounted on territory thought most favorable to the interior lines of the Soviets, where their military power was superior . . . Geographically, therefore, the attack was concentrated along Russia's borders in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, where the Soviets' physical position was strongest. . .”³⁸

Acheson's overarching view of US foreign policy was also much less nuanced than that of Kennan's. He believed foremost in the concept of a balance of power in world politics. The balance of power concept developed from the altered political situation in Europe immediately after the Second World War. According to many in the State Department (including Acheson), Germany's defeat in the war could lead to a power vacuum in Europe that would easily be filled by the Soviet Union.³⁹ The US, being the only other superpower able to combat Soviet influence in Europe, needed to determine by what means it would combat the Soviet threat. The basis for US strategy came in the

³⁷ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 194.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Long Peace Inquiries into the History of the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 49.

form of George Kennan's "Long Telegram" and "X-Article." Acheson embraced Kennan's Containment strategy as outlined in the X Article. He reflected on the impact of the telegram in his memoirs, saying "It had a deep effect on thinking within the Government." Acheson continued, saying "Kennan predicted that Soviet policy would be to use every means to infiltrate, divide and weaken the West."⁴⁰ What is important to note is the language that Acheson used concerning Kennan's message. He said that Kennan *predicted* what Soviet policy would be, and not what it definitely was. Acheson's implication was that Kennan predicted future actions and policies of the Soviet Union. Acheson clearly applied his own interpretation of the intent of the Long Telegram – that it was a statement of future policy of the Soviet régime – without consideration for its actual intent – that it was a statement of *current* policy of the *Stalin* régime. Moreover, in the same section of his memoirs, Acheson criticized Kennan's solution to Soviet expansion, saying "His recommendations – to be of good heart, to look to our own social and economic health, to present a good face to the world, all of which the government was trying to do – were of no help. . ."⁴¹

Indeed, Acheson favored a more direct and aggressive method in order to implement Containment. Not satisfied with Kennan's vision of Containment – thinking it too weak – Acheson ordered that a policy statement be drafted by Paul Nitze, head of the Policy Planning Staff in the State Department.⁴² The policy document, known as National Security Council directive 68 (NSC-68) contained nine sections and ended with a conclusion and recommendations.

⁴⁰ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 151.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² May, *NSC-68*, 4, 7-8.

The first section placed the US-Soviet conflict in the larger historical framework of the post-Second World War period. Referring to the post-war situation, the document portrayed a situation in which “. . . the defeat of Germany and Japan and the decline of the British and French Empires have interacted with the development of the United States and the Soviet Union in such a way that power has increasingly gravitated to these two centers. Second, the Soviet Union, unlike previous aspirants to hegemony, is animated by a new fanatic faith, antithetical to our own, and seeks to impose its absolute authority over the rest of the world.”⁴³ Section one established the concept that the US-Soviet conflict was one of an ultimate good against an ultimate bad. Moreover, because there was such a basic difference between the two sides “Conflict has . . . become endemic,” and that “With the development of increasingly terrifying weapons of mass destruction, every individual faces the ever present possibility of annihilation should the conflict enter the phase of total war.”⁴⁴ Truly, the conflict portrayed in NSC-68 was one of epic proportions. One in which the nuclear sword of Damocles could drop at any moment.

This theme of a near apocalyptic struggle between the US and the Soviet Union ran throughout the document. The Soviet government was portrayed in domestic policy as despotic, totalitarian, and oppressive. In foreign policy it was portrayed as seeking to keep its leadership in power, and to eliminate any resistance to its regime. More importantly, according to NSC-68, the Soviet Union’s aim was to destroy the governments and societies of non-communist countries, to include the US, on the path to its ultimate goal of world domination.⁴⁵ What is important to note about NSC-68 in relation to Kennan’s Long telegram, was that NSC-68 included one aspect of Kennan’s

⁴³ May, *NSC-68*, 25.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 26, 27.

document, that the Soviet leadership wanted to stay in power, but went far beyond that reasonable conclusion. NSC-68 portrayed the Soviet government as some sort of political steamroller that crushes everything in its path.

The conclusions reached by NSC-68 were just as grand and apocalyptic. NSC-68 concluded that in the near future the Soviet Union would likely have the capability to produce a fission bomb as well as a thermonuclear bomb. The US should, therefore, “have substantially increased general air, ground, and sea strength, atomic capabilities, and air and civilian defenses to deter war and to provide reasonable assurance. . . that it could survive the initial blow [from a nuclear attack].”⁴⁶ On the whole, NSC-68 portrayed the US-Soviet conflict as one of an absolute good against an absolute evil. The good was, of course, the US, and the evil was the Soviet Union.

Most important to US-China relations, however was its portrayal of other communist countries. NSC-68 only referred to the Soviet Union and its “satellites,” or what could be described as minion-states that did the bidding of their Soviet masters. According to the document, there were no independent communist movements. The Soviet Union was such an all-encompassing force that directed all other communist governments, and there was no distinction between Chinese Communism and Soviet Communism. There was only the Soviet Union with its satellites.

NSC-68 had a sizeable impact on US foreign policy as was its intention. Beyond its grandiose language and broad scope, NSC-68 was intended to be what Kennan’s Long Telegram was not; a roadmap for US policy regarding the USSR. Indeed, Acheson said of NSC-68 that “The purpose of NSC-68 was to so bludgeon the mass mind of “top government” that not only could the President make a decision but that the decision could

⁴⁶ Ibid., 76.

be carried out.”⁴⁷ More often than not those decisions as dictated by NSC-68 involved the use of either the US military or strategic missiles.

Acheson seemed to have favored NSC-68’s approach to containing the Soviet Union, noting in his memoirs – as was pointed out earlier – that peaceful approaches to dealing with the Soviet threat (such as the deliberate and formal diplomatic meetings of Yalta, Tehran and Potsdam) produced few results. In addition, Acheson seemed to believe that there was no other method of reasoning with the Soviet Union than by military force. He observed four years worth of negotiations and talks between the US and the Soviets, and was convinced that peaceful agreement and coexistence was not possible. He continued, saying that “Certain obstacles stood in the way that had to be removed. Among them was the existence in the non-Communist world of large areas of weakness, which by its very nature the Soviet system had to exploit.”⁴⁸ Acheson’s perception of the Soviet Union was that it was akin to an animal whose only instinct was to exploit weaker non-communist countries. He continued, saying that those weak countries “presented an irresistible invitation to fish in troubled waters. To urge them not to fish, to try to agree not to fish, was as futile as talking to a force of nature. One cannot argue with a river.”⁴⁹ Conversely, according to Acheson, the role of the US was to dam the Soviet river, and to “create strength where there had been weakness, to turn our former enemies into allies.” Moreover, Acheson did not believe that it was on the US to resolve its conflict with the Soviet Union, but that it was the Soviet’s responsibility to take a live and let live approach to the world.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 374.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 379.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 379-80.

The first opportunity to implement the recommendations of NSC-68 came when Acheson was appointed as Secretary of State under President Truman in 1949. That same year Máo Zédōng and the Chinese Communist Party successfully drove Jiǎng Jièshí off mainland China to the near-by island of Taiwan. Consideration was given to extending diplomatic recognition to the CCP as the official government of mainland China however, the idea was ultimately jettisoned. Acheson defended his choice not to recognize the CCP, saying:

caught between the bungling incompetence of [Jiǎng Jièshí's Guomindang] and the intransigence of Mao [Zedong's] Communists, our choices for policy decisions were small indeed. The Chinese clearly found the United States far more useful as an enemy than in any other relationship, and went out of their way to insure that an enemy we remained. Those who tried to establish diplomatic and friendly relations with [Běijīng] found it a useless formality. The most deluded of them all, Nehru's India, received a military attack for her pains. Our European friends found their [diplomatic] missions contemptuously isolated and neglected.⁵¹

Acheson believed that on the whole recognition of the CCP was not worth the effort. He observed other countries, such as India, who did recognize the government, and were treated with great hostility. Moreover, he noted that the choice between Máo's uncompromising Communist government and Jiang's incompetent Nationalist government was a choice of the better of two evils.

It should be noted, however, that Acheson and the State Department were not fully opposed to the CCP or even to recognizing it. Indeed, it was thought by many in the State Department that a working relationship with the CCP should be considered as a way to augment US Containment policy. Specifically, that the CCP was a different entity than the Soviet Union, and that perhaps recognition of the régime could give the US an ally in

⁵¹ Ibid., 369.

China. At a meeting in September of 1949 – when Jiǎng and the Nationalists seemed at the brink of collapse – Acheson, along with his counterparts in France (Robert Schumann) and Britain (Ernest Bevin), discussed what was to be done in China. Kennan recalled in his memoirs that “[Britain and the United States’] interests in China, [Bevin] thought, were divergent; the task was to reconcile our policies so far as possible. The United States Government was withdrawing; the United Kingdom, trying to hold on, to keep a foot in the door and see what happens.” Acheson continued, saying Bevin “feared that if the United States was too obdurate we would drive China into the arms of Russia. To which I added that they were already there.”⁵² Acheson seemed to be resigned to the idea that a Communist government was in control on mainland China, but he was unwilling to formally recognize the government.

Essentially, Acheson, as well as the President, wanted to wipe their hands of the whole affair in China. Indeed, even in its present situation (the CCP having control of the mainland and the Nationalists being pushed to Taiwan) the US was not interested in supporting either the Nationalists or the Communists. In January of 1950 President Truman released a press statement stating that the US had no intentions of establishing military bases in Taiwan or in intervening militarily between the CCP or the GMD. In addition, Truman said the US “will not provide military aid or advice to Chinese forces on Formosa,” but that it would continue to provide economic aid.⁵³

As has been demonstrated in previous chapters, President Truman initially considered recognition of the CCP, but that its intervention in the Korean War dashed all hopes of rapprochement. Similarly, Acheson’s view of China also changed once it

⁵² Ibid., 328.

⁵³ “The President’s News Conference,” January 5, 1950, n.d., <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=13678&st=Formosa&st1=>> (6 July 2009).

became involved in Korea. He said of Chinese involvement in Korea that the US was close to starting a much larger world conflict. In addition, he noted that “There had always been a Chinese involvement in Korea,” and that behind the Chinese offensive in 1950 “was the somber possibility of Soviet support in any manner of forms.” He concluded, saying “We should consider Korea not in isolation but in its worldwide setting of our confrontation with our Soviet antagonist.”⁵⁴

Acheson’s concept of a Soviet antagonist was different from many within the State Department inasmuch that he believed that influence of the Soviet Union in China was different than the influence of the Chinese Communist Party in China. In other words, Acheson saw the two as separate entities. Acheson’s opinion of China in relation to the Soviets was stated clearly in his letter of transmittal that accompanied the China White Paper (CWP) in 1949. The CWP, published shortly before Jiǎng Jièshí’s defeat, was an account of US support of China prior to 1949. Its ulterior motive was to simultaneously take credit for supporting the GMD (in the event that Jiǎng successfully defeated the Communists) as well as to point out that the US had done all that it could to hold off the Communist advance in China (should Jiǎng not succeed in defeating the Communists).

In Acheson’s letter of transmittal he seemed to recognize a difference between the Chinese and the Soviet Communists. In the section of his letter dealing with the Chinese civil war that resumed after the Second World War Acheson said that “The Nationalists had been unable to destroy the Communists in the 10 years before the [Second World War]. Now after the war the Nationalists were . . . weakened, demoralized and unpopular.” Acheson continued, saying “The Communists on the other hand were much

⁵⁴ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 471.

stronger than they had ever been.”⁵⁵ Acheson believed that the assumed failure of the Nationalist government was not due to a lack of US aid, but due to, as Acheson put it in his memoirs, the ineptitude of the GMD. Indeed farther in his letter of transmittal, Acheson concluded that the Nationalist forces lost the civil war primarily because their army lost the will to fight, and the military leadership lost the trust of its army. Indeed, Acheson noted that:

Our military observers on the spot have reported that the Nationalist armies did not lose a single battle in the crucial year of 1948 through lack of arms or ammunition. The fact is that the decay which our observers detected in [Chongqing] earlier in the year had fatally sapped the powers of resistance of the [Guomindang]. . . its troops had lost the will to fight and its leaders had lost popular support. The Communists, on the other hand, through a ruthless discipline and fanatical zeal, attempted to sell themselves as guardians and liberators of the people. The Nationalists armies did not have to be defeated; they disintegrated.⁵⁶

What is critical to note about Acheson’s opinion of China was that he believed that the Nationalists’ failure against the Communists was due in part to the leadership, which presumably included Jiang, losing the faith and support of its military. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, Acheson believed that the Communists tried to *sell* themselves as liberators. The implication here being that the Communists did not have the support of the commoners and had to convince the populace that they should be supported. It is evident that Acheson’s knowledge of recent Chinese history was seen through the prism of western thought. According to Acheson’s interpretation, the Communists did not have the support of the Chinese people and seemingly had to convince the populace to support it. Moreover, the only reason the Nationalists were pushed off the mainland was because their military “lost the will to fight.”

⁵⁵ *The China White Paper August 1949*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1967), x.

⁵⁶ *China White Paper*, xiv.

While Acheson's sizing up of the situation in China clearly had its biases, his concept of the relationship between Moscow and Běijīng was relatively complex. As has been shown, he had a fairly simplistic view of the Soviet Union, believing in the tenets of NSC-68 that the Soviet Union was a grave threat to the United States and interested only in self-advancement. Concerning China, Acheson believed that while the CCP may have cooperated with Moscow, it was not directed from Moscow. Acheson's successor, John Foster Dulles, was much less nuanced than he, and helped to further cement US policy against the Soviet Union.

John Foster Dulles: At the Brink.

Today, one-third of the human race is subject to the despotic terrorism of a new Dark Age. It is morally impossible for us to reconcile ourselves to that. . .⁵⁷

There were three major figures who were key to the formation of US-Soviet policy during the early days of the Cold War; those men were George F. Kennan, Dean Acheson, and John Foster Dulles. Of the three, Dulles was perhaps the most controversial and influential concerning US foreign policy. Dulles ramped up oppositional rhetoric against the Soviet Union. He also argued that the threat of nuclear retaliation was enough to prevent future Communist expansion.

John Foster Dulles was born in New York on February 25, 1888. In 1909 he enrolled at the George Washington Law School and passed the bar exam in 1911. Upon graduation, Dulles found work, through his grandfather's recommendation, at the

⁵⁷ John Foster Dulles, "Dulles Reviews Our Foreign Policy," in *The National Publisher*, July 1952, box 286, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, 20.

prestigious New York law firm of Sullivan and Cromwell. In 1917 Dulles was given a very minor position in the administration of Woodrow Wilson. This job, like his position at Sullivan and Cromwell, was through a family connection – his uncle and Secretary of State, Robert Lansing.⁵⁸ During the Great War Dulles was appointed to the War Trade Board, which was an organization charged with overseeing US trade during that war and ensuring that it did not benefit the enemy. In 1919, with the war over, Dulles was assigned as part of the US delegation to the Versailles peace talks, and was involved in drafting the initial statement of goals for the US delegation. In 1919 Dulles resigned his position in the US delegation due to a commitment back at the New York law firm.

Throughout the 1920s Dulles practiced private law, though still observing the world of international politics. During the Second World War Dulles maintained his position at Sullivan and Cromwell, but also became involved in an organization known as the Federal Council of Churches (FCOC). The FCOC was one of the major Protestant study groups in the US.⁵⁹ Dulles was appointed as chairman of the FCOC Commission on Durable Peace, whose goal was to get Americans to think about international relations, and to educate the public about the difficulty in establishing a just peace after the war.⁶⁰

The Commission on Durable Peace released studies that integrated religious doctrine with foreign policy recommendations such as the informational pamphlet entitled “Statements on World Order.” The pamphlet began by outlining the core principles and convictions of the FCOC in a twelve point Statement of Guiding Principles that included the belief that “moral law. . . undergirds our world [,]” and that “There is a

⁵⁸ Ronald W. Pruessen, *John Foster Dulles The Road to Power*, New York: The Free Press, 1982), 2, 12, 15, 20.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 205.

⁶⁰ Pruessen, *John Foster Dulles The Road to Power*, 189-90.

moral order which is fundamental and eternal, and which is relevant to the corporate life of men and the ordering of human society.”⁶¹ Additional principles included the belief that “the government which derives its just power from the consent of the governed is the truest expression of the rights and dignity of man[,]” and that “in bringing international relations into conformity with the moral law, a very heavy responsibility, devolves upon the United States.”⁶² Finally, that “as Christian citizens, we must seek to translate our beliefs into practical realities and to create a public opinion which will insure that the United States shall play its full and essential part in the creation of a moral way of international living.”⁶³ Clearly, the self-titled “Guiding Principles” of the FCOC, as well as John Foster Dulles, were pro-Christian and pro-United States. They envisioned the world as good against evil where “moral order” helps to arrange and organize human society.

Moreover, according to FCOC principles, the will of the people to choose their own government was the best expression of the fundamental rights of man, and it was the role of the United States to preserve morality within international law. As a consequence, it was the role of “Christian citizens” to urge their government – meaning the United States – to defend international morality and justice. Christian dogma aside, the FCOC, and by extension John Foster Dulles, clearly saw the US as a major player on the world stage. To Dulles, the US needed to defend against what he saw as evil elements in international politics. His was a world view that only saw black and white or good and

⁶¹ “Statements on World Order,” c. 1943, John Foster Dulles Papers, box 283, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, 5.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 7, 8.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 8.

evil with the US being the force for good. This good against evil principle was one of the guiding forces in the development of Dulles' foreign policy as Secretary of State.

During the Second World War Dulles' connection with the FCOC gained him notoriety in the public sphere. He had numerous speaking engagements often to audiences of one hundred or more, and in 1944 was appointed as Presidential candidate Thomas Dewey's Foreign Relations advisor. In that same year Dulles drafted a foreign policy agenda for Dewey. The policy document, written more like a campaign speech than a list of objectives, rang throughout with echoes of the FCOC "Statement of Principles." Dulles began the document by arguing that the US, contrary to popular belief, had a sustained history of foreign interaction. Dulles advanced the idea that:

The American people, from the beginning, charted for themselves a clear-cut course. They dedicated themselves to finding as a nation economic, intellectual and spiritual institutions which would advance the welfare of their own people. By that conduct and example, they felt, they could best aid mankind and as a by-product of that endeavor assure for themselves the good-will of people everywhere.⁶⁴

After discussion at length of the accomplishments of past Presidents – all Republican – and their respective Secretaries of State, Dulles stated outright that "The Republican Party can be relied upon to carry forward the fundamental American policy I have described." Moreover, according to Dulles, the Roosevelt administration attempted various means of manipulating the economy from "Monetary manipulations, deficit financing, virtual confiscation of much of our accumulated wealth, taxation to destroy incentive, bureaucratic regimentation – these are the schemes imported from the

⁶⁴ Untitled Draft of Foreign Policy Paper submitted to Thomas E. Dewey, January 26, 1944, John Foster Dulles Papers, box 283, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, 3.

communists, fascists and professors of Europe.”⁶⁵ Dulles continued, arguing that the US had lost much of its moral prestige in the past fifteen years of the FDR administration. Dulles promised that the US would regain its moral power under a Republican administration through a development of greater military power.⁶⁶ Dulles’s 1944 foreign policy statement was clearly a statement of Republican principles and foreign policy strategy.

More importantly, however, one can see that Dulles again applied his black versus white philosophy to foreign policy. He believed that the Roosevelt administration threw out the past 180 years of foreign policy history. As a result, the US faltered as a world leader, and needed to regain its “moral power” in order to combat evil throughout the world. Dulles continually emphasized the theme that the US was the ultimate force for good throughout his diplomatic career including his term as Secretary of State. While his involvement with the FCOC and the Dewey campaign did not place him in a position of great power or influence in the government, it did increase his visibility in the public eye.⁶⁷

After WWII Dulles continued work with the FCOC and at Sullivan and Cromwell, but he increasingly became involved in national and international politics. He was appointed by President Truman as a delegate to the 1946 UN General Assembly in London, to a second Assembly meeting in New York in 1947, to a third in Paris in 1948, and a fourth in New York in 1950.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Ibid., 9.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 10.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 205-6.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 261.

During this period Dulles published numerous articles about such topics as atomic diplomacy and the possibility of war with the Soviets. In a January 1946 article published in the “Christian News-Letter,” Dulles expounded on the morality of using the atomic bomb. He pointed out in his article that there have been numerous attempts to create some kind of world council for peace to include The Hague Peace Conference in 1899 and 1907 as well as the League of Nations after the First World War.⁶⁹ With the creation of the United Nations after the Second World War, Dulles pointed out that many felt that it did not go far enough, saying that “Others. . . propose that we should, in effect, abolish national governments, at least as bodies having the right to maintain military establishments.”⁷⁰ Dulles countered this argument, saying that there was still general distrust between countries in the world community. He also argued that any international organization such as the United Nations could not succeed unless “there is greater trust and confidence between the peoples of the world; until there is more widespread acceptance and practice of democratic methods; and until there is more nearly a common moral judgment of what is right and wrong.”⁷¹ Again, one sees Dulles’ belief in clear-cut right and wrong; in this case he referred to right and wrong in the sphere of moral law. He believed that there could not be trust between countries unless there was a wide-spread practice of “democratic methods” of government. Additionally, one sees Dulles’ belief that the democratic system was the “correct” system of government.

Dulles continued to emphasize the concept that the current world political situation pitted the US against the Soviets throughout the late 1940s. In January of 1948

⁶⁹ John Foster Dulles, “The Atomic Bomb and Moral Law,” in *Christian News-Letter*, January 9, 1946, John Foster Dulles Papers, box 284, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, 9.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

he gave a speech before the Foreign Policy Association of New York entitled “Not War, Not Peace.” He began the speech by pointing out that initially the US did not have problems negotiating a peaceful post-WWII settlement. Problems arose, according to Dulles, because “the Communist Party believe[s] fanatically that capitalistic nations are inherently imperialistic, aggressive and unfriendly.”⁷² Additionally, Dulles pointed out that the leadership in the Soviet Union needed an enemy to struggle against in order to stay in power, and that the US was the only adequately frightening enemy to pose a serious threat to the USSR.⁷³

Dulles continued in his speech, making a differentiation between the Soviet state and the Soviet party, saying that the state was nationalistic by nature and reflected the values of the Czars of Russia. Additionally, he pointed out that the Soviet state did not have an army or navy with international reach. The Soviet party, however, did have this reach. According to Dulles, the Soviet party was the vanguard of the great proletarian revolution, and its goal was to undermine all non-communist governments. Interestingly, Dulles noted that the Soviets did not favor traditional war. According to Dulles, the USSR used “the techniques of propaganda and penetration, of smear and strike and sabotage. Its schools turn out agitators trained as specialists to operate in each capitalist society. In this field they are supreme.”⁷⁴

Dulles pointed out that the policy of the US, converse to the Soviet Union, was to create peace, and that “Peace requires that the free societies be so healthy that they will repel communist penetration just as a healthy body repels malignant germs. That is the

⁷² Speech before the Foreign Policy Association of New York, “Not War, Not Peace,” January 17, 1948, John Foster Dulles Papers, box 295, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, 2.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 4.

only way to prevent communist dictatorships from so spreading that they will isolate us and eventually strangle us.”⁷⁵ Dulles concluded his speech, saying that he did not know if the US would be able to push beyond the current US-Soviet conflict to an era of peace, but that “the known obstacle to peace is the confident belief of the Soviet Communist Party that their weapons of propaganda, penetrations and sabotage will prevail.”⁷⁶ Clearly, Dulles favored a policy of aggressively combating the Soviet threat, though not entirely on the part of the US. He believed that support of non-Communist countries to repel Soviet aggression was a key part of the US plan to combat the spread of Communism.

Despite Dulles’s efforts to formulate a strong foreign policy, candidate Dewey did not win the 1948 election. Dulles’ career was not, however, ended because of Dewey’s loss. In 1950 Dulles was appointed by President Truman as an ambassador-at-large. He went on to help negotiate the post-WWII Japanese peace treaty.⁷⁷ By 1952 most of the wrinkles had been ironed out of the Japanese treaty, and Dulles was eager to leave the State Department.⁷⁸ He became increasingly critical of the Truman administration’s implementation of Containment, and what he saw as weakness against the very real threat of Soviet Communism.

In fact, his point of view about the Truman administration had grown increasingly negative since the end of the Second World War. He expressed his dissatisfaction with the administration in several articles and speeches between 1945 and 1952 in *Life*

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 10.

⁷⁷ Mark G., Toulouse, *The Transformation of John Foster Dulles From Prophet of Realism to Priest of Nationalism* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1985), 158.

⁷⁸ Townsend Hoopes, *The Devil and John Foster Dulles* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1973), 124.

magazine and the scholarly journal *Foreign Affairs*.⁷⁹ As early as 1946, Dulles expressed his displeasure with the Truman administration as well as his opinion of Soviet foreign policy. In the June 10th issue of *Life* Dulles published a two part article entitled “Thoughts on Soviet Foreign Policy and What to do About It.” In the article, he described Soviet leaders as believing that peace and security for their own country depended on worldwide acceptance of Soviet political philosophy.⁸⁰ Moreover, according to Dulles, the Soviets viewed the world as divided into three parts; the Inner Zone, the Middle Zone and the Outer Zone. The Inner Zone, according to Dulles, comprised the nations incorporated into the USSR, the Middle Zone comprised the countries immediately surrounding the USSR, such as Greece and Turkey, and the Outer Zone comprised the bulk of the rest of the world, and were all potential targets for Soviet expansion.⁸¹

The second portion of Dulles’ article dealt with his recommendations about how best to combat Soviet expansion. He recommended that a policy be developed that not only opposed the Soviet Union, but one which “[demonstrates] that our society of freedom still has the qualities needed for survival. We must show that our free land is not spiritual lowland, easily submerged, but highland that, most of all, provides the spiritual, intellectual and economic conditions which all men want.”⁸² Examples of American’s strength, according to Dulles, were in the strength of its religious beliefs, the strength of its government to care for its citizens, and the strength of its military. The most important demonstration of American strength, however, was through its ability to have de facto

⁷⁹ 1952 was the year he accepted General Dwight Eisenhower’s offer to become his Secretary of State.

⁸⁰ John Foster Dulles, “Thoughts on Soviet Foreign Policy and what to do About It,” *Life*, May 10, 1946, 113.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 113, 114, 116

⁸² *Ibid.*, 120.

control of an area.⁸³ Dulles did not intend for “de facto control” of a region to mean colonization or taking over of another countries government. Instead he referred to the ability to work with other countries to establish non-Communist governments. .

By 1952 the Presidential election was in full force, and Dulles published more and more opinion pieces about what he believed were the failed policies of the Truman administration. In an article printed in the publication *The National Publisher* Dulles began by saying that something was wrong with US foreign policy and that the Truman administration was to blame. He argued that between 1945 and 1950 the US had demilitarized to the point that when the Korean War broke the US was caught entirely unprepared.⁸⁴ Additionally, Dulles pointed out that the Soviet Union “extended its authority to 600 million more non-Russian peoples, so that it now has effective control over one-third of all the peoples of the world. . .”⁸⁵ Clearly, Dulles saw the US in a position of weakness, militarily, after the Second World War, and the USSR as expanding its control throughout much of Europe. More important, however, was his view of how Communist expansion in the Far East operated.

He said that the geographic strategy of Soviet expansion began with Asia and that “The program was to encircle the West, and Asia, [according to] Stalin, is ‘the road to victory in the West.’ ”⁸⁶ Dulles continued, saying that “Soviet Communism has stuck to this program and pushed its new offensive most vigorously in Asia, using civil war as the principal means of conquest. By civil war, it put its Communist Party into control of

⁸³ Ibid., 124.

⁸⁴ Dulles, “Dulles Reviews Our Foreign Policy,” 12.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

China. . .”⁸⁷ What is critical to note in this passage is Dulles’ concept of how the Communist movement operated in China. He did not believe that the Chinese Communist movement or the ensuing civil war was the result of popular unrest or a true domestic interest in a Communist government. Instead, he saw it as a Soviet-created movement that was part of its attempt to further the world Communist revolution. Indeed, Dulles noted that “Soviet Communism has always announced that its primary methods were to be those of political warfare, civil war, propoganda and the subversion of so-called ‘mass-organizations’ . . .”⁸⁸

In addition to expressing his perception about the Soviet Union’s aggressive tendencies, Dulles laid out his plan as to how the US should address that aggression. In May of 1952 he published an article in *Life* entitled “A Policy of Boldness.” In it he characterized the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan as being short-term fixes to the much larger problem of Soviet expansion, calling them “merely reactions to some of the many Soviet threats,” and that since World War Two ended “Soviet Communists have won control over all or part of 12 countries in Asia and Central Europe with populations of about 600 million.”⁸⁹ His concept of the Communist world was dire indeed, relating to the reader a picture of Soviet society in which a dozen leaders in the Kremlin control the whole population of the USSR; where people die by the hundreds of thousands in labor camps; where satellites of the USSR, to include China, are just as ruthless and bloodthirsty.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ John Foster Dulles, “A Policy of Boldness,” *Life*, May 19, 1952, 146.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 146, 148.

Dulles' solution to the growing Soviet threat was for the free world (presumably including the US) to organize the will and ability to retaliate "by means of our choosing" instantly to any threat posed by the Soviet Union.⁹¹ Indeed, being able to combat the Soviet Union "by means of our choosing" was the main thrust of his argument. Dulles classified Truman's foreign policy as weak and erratic. The sort of policy Dulles proposed was much more forceful, and proactive. He wanted to build up US military strength so that the US could not only react to Soviet aggressive actions, but could proactively seek out Communist elements abroad and undermine them.

Indeed, Dulles did the same thing in 1952, likely in support of Republican Presidential candidate Dwight Eisenhower.⁹² In a September 13 press release, Dulles extolled the virtues of the Republican candidate, saying that Secretary of State Acheson's Containment policy had neither helped to bring peace between the US and the USSR nor had it helped to contain the spread of Communism⁹³ Dulles continually criticized the Truman administration's execution of Containment. In a speech to the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations Dulles said that Containment of the Soviet Union was like "trying to keep a bear in a cage." He continued saying that Soviet Communism "has not just the qualities of the bear, which stand for Russian imperialism, but also the qualities of a slimy octopus, which stands for Soviet Communism." Additionally, according to Dulles, Soviet Communism's "tentacles reach out through any bars that we can build into the vitals of every free government. In each country there is a Communist Party, principally underground, which acts under the directive of Moscow." Dulles concluded that the

⁹¹ Ibid., 151.

⁹² By September of 1952 Dulles was acting as Eisenhower's chief foreign policy advisor with the expectation that should Eisenhower win

⁹³ John Foster Dulles, "Untitled press release," 13 September 1952, in *The Personal Papers of John Foster Dulles [microfilm]*, reel 21, 1.

Soviet Union was able to expand as much as it did “largely due to the political penetration of the Communist Party. It has broken down the stability of governments and touched off civil wars, and in many cases, taken over. That is the principal way by which the Kremlin has come to rule what were 18 independent nations.”⁹⁴

Clearly, Dulles viewed the Truman administration as being weak on Communism. Moreover, he believed that the Soviets spread Communist thought by infiltrating a victim country’s government. As a result, Dulles believed that conventional military measures could not adequately fend off Soviet expansion.

Dulles also addressed US Containment policy under the Truman administration. On February 16, 1952 Dulles gave a speech that outlined the problems facing US Containment policy, saying that the Kremlin had:

all kinds of weapons, ranging from subtle propaganda to massive armed attack; they can, by one method or another, menace each and every part of the free world, and they are not bound to any short or fixed time schedule. In sum, they have a choice of weapons, a choice of places and a choice of timing.⁹⁵

Dulles believed that the Soviets had the means through both political and military offensives to strike wherever it saw fit. The Soviet ability to subvert a country’s government through political action, coupled with the large Russian and Chinese Communist military ruled out a traditional military defense against Communism. Dulles likened it to the French trying to “contain” the Nazis with the Maginot Line.⁹⁶ Dulles also ruled out the possibility of Containment through economic support of other countries

⁹⁴ John Foster Dulles, “Our Foreign Policy – Is Containment Enough?,” 8 October 1952, in *The Public Papers of John Foster Dulles [microfilm]*, reel 21, 1-2.

⁹⁵ John Foster Dulles, “Foreign Policy and the National Welfare,” 16 February 1952, in *The Public Papers of John Foster Dulles [microfilm]*, reel 21, 1.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

saying that the US could not support such a large agricultural or industrial burden.⁹⁷

Dulles proposed that the best method by which to combat the spread of Soviet Communism was by the use of nuclear deterrence.

Dulles believed that the Soviets had not made an open attack against the US since the end of the Second World War for fear of nuclear retaliation. Indeed, he reasoned that “it would be sound policy to maintain atomic supremacy. This, while costly, would not involve anything like the cost of trying to build up a great defensive military barrier all around the Soviet orbit.”⁹⁸ Clearly, Dulles believed in the power of nuclear deterrence to contain the Soviet Union. More important, however, was the belief that the US should maintain “nuclear supremacy” against the Soviet Union. This policy concept, that the US could effectively combat Communism through the threat of nuclear retaliation, became a focal point of Dulles’s foreign policy agenda later in his term as Secretary of State.

With the conservative backlash of the 1952 election Dulles, as well as President Eisenhower, rode in on the wave of other conservative politicians. The political climate of 1952 allowed for a man such as Dulles to rise to prominence in the Republican Party and to be given a position such as Secretary of State. Moreover, Dulles’ strategy of fighting the Soviet Union “by means of our choosing” was very much in line with the Republican argument that the US, under the leadership of Truman, was soft on Communism and had allowed the Soviets to pick the battlegrounds of the Cold War. Dulles’ own impression of the Soviet Union, as expressed in his 1950 book *War or Peace* was that the Soviet government was run by a group of despotic fanatics bent on world domination. Indeed, he emphasized this point in an April 1953 press conference. He said

⁹⁷ Ibid., 2.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 3.

that there were three basic facts about the Soviet government. The first being that “The Soviet Union is a heavily armed totalitarian state, subject to the dictates of a small group. . .” Dulles continued, saying “The second fact is that the leaders of the Soviet Union are basically and deeply hostile to any other state which does not accept Soviet Communist control,” and that “The third fact is that the Soviet Communist leaders do not recognize any moral inhibitions against the use of violence.”⁹⁹ Clearly, Dulles believed that the Soviet Union was a totalitarian régime. Moreover, he believed that the Communist government was deeply hostile toward non-Communist governments, and that it was without moral qualms about using military force in order to spread Communist thought. Again, this reinforced the idea that the Soviet Union was an evil force in the world. Dulles continued in the same press conference saying that he believed that the Eisenhower administration was taking a more active approach than did the Truman administration. Again, one sees Dulles’s concept of world politics, specifically that the Soviet Union was a despotic government and hated non-Communist governments.

Dulles also believed, unlike Kennan or Acheson, that the Soviet Union had direct involvement in the Communist takeover in China. He said that after the Japanese surrender in 1945, that Soviet troops occupied both Manchuria and North Korea, which gave them control over large amounts of war material that they had accumulated during the war. These supplies were then passed to Máo and the Communists in their effort to fight the GMD. Dulles continued, saying that in Jiang’s attempt to retake Manchuria “the military strength of the Chinese Nationalist Army was dissipated, its personnel and

⁹⁹ John Foster Dulles, “Assessment of Soviet Gestures [press conference],” 3 April 1953, in *The Personal Papers of John Foster Dulles [microfilm]*, reel 25, 1.

equipment were largely lost, and its prestige greatly damaged.”¹⁰⁰ Dulles continued his account of the Communist victory in China, saying “The United States then judged the cause of the Nationalists government to be lost, partly because of its loss of military power, and partly because it had lost the confidence of the people.”¹⁰¹ Dulles concluded, saying “Thus the 450,000,000 people in China have fallen under leadership that is violently anti-American, and that takes its inspiration and guidance from Moscow.”¹⁰²

It is important to note that like his predecessor, Dulles did not fully take into account the appeal of Communism in China. His account of the “loss of China” was that the Nationalists were defeated primarily because they lost their military support from the US. Moreover, Dulles included the Truman administration in the loss, saying that the US government judged the GMD to be a lost cause. He did not consider that Máo as a leader appealed to a Chinese populace that had previously been ruled by a three hundred year old dynasty, a series of violent warlords, and finally by an inept leader in the form of Jiǎng Jièshí. Dulles also noted, however, that Soviet Communism had “won” in so many countries around the world because its government “saturates the world with propaganda. . . [it has] perfected a superb organization to conduct indirect aggression throughout the world. . . [and] It has no counteroffensive to fear, either in propaganda or in ‘cold war’.”¹⁰³ Once again, Dulles did not believe that the appeal of Communism came from any sort of genuine interest or mass-appeal of a Communist form of government. He believed that the Soviet Union made gains in China because it could brainwash its

¹⁰⁰ John Foster Dulles, *War or Peace* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), 146.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 146-7.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 147.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 165.

citizens through propaganda, it could infiltrate a victim's government, and – with another jab at the Truman administration – it had no direct opposition from other countries.

Dulles' opinions about China and the Soviet Union were, to say the least, simplistic. He believed that the Soviet Union was evil and bent on the destruction of the west, and that any other international Communism movement was either controlled by Moscow directly, or influenced by Communist propaganda. Dulles' basic idea of how to fight Communism was to build up the US military, and to preemptively fight Communism (both militarily and economically) wherever it may show up. This included the use of nuclear weapons.

Indeed, one of the major battlegrounds against Communism in the early days of the Eisenhower administration was Korea. According to Dulles, the Chinese Communists chose Korea as a target for expansion because “There was in North Korea a thoroughly trained, fanatical and well-equipped satellite army with a hard core of battle-trained veterans drawn from Siberian and Chinese armies.”¹⁰⁴ Again, one sees that Dulles viewed Communists as one single entity. In this case, according to Dulles, the North Korean Communist army was a “satellite army” of the Soviet Union manipulated so as to further the expansion of Communism into Korea.

Still another battleground in the war against Communism was on mainland China. As early as 1950 Dulles wrote extensively about the ties between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. In a message dated May 18, 1950, labeled top secret, Dulles expressed his concern with the Communist takeover in China the previous year. He began his message, saying:

¹⁰⁴ John Foster Dulles, “Korea: The Time and the Place,” Speech to Commonwealth Club, San Francisco, CA, 31 July 1950, in *The Papers of John Foster Dulles [microfilm]*, Reel 17.

The United States faces a new and critical period in its world position. The loss of China to Communists who, it now seems, will work in Asia as junior partner of Soviet Communism has had tremendous repercussions throughout the world. It has marked a shift in the balance of power in favor of Soviet Russia and to the disfavor of the United States.¹⁰⁵

He continued, saying that the loss of China and the resulting power shift in favor of the Soviets could result in a loss of US influence in the Mediterranean and the Near East. That loss, however, could be prevented if at some point the US would “quickly take a dramatic and strong stand that shows our confidence and resolution.”¹⁰⁶ Clearly, one can see that Dulles believed that the Soviet Union wielded much influence over the Chinese Communists. Moreover, he believed that the best hope for the US to regain its standing in the Far East after the loss of China was to stand strong against future Communist advancement in the Far East. Dulles was clearly a Cold Warrior, believing that the US needed to take a firm stance against any future Communist advances.

Dulles also emphasized that the spread of Communism did not always come from the barrel of a gun. Indeed, he believed that the spread of Communism was a constant threat even in times of peace. In a telegram to twenty-six US diplomatic missions, dated July 29, 1953, Dulles warned that though an armistice had been signed in the Korean conflict, and though the CCP had not made any aggressive moves since its involvement in Korea, that those in the Foreign Service should still be wary of potential attack. He emphasized that “[The] [d]anger of aggression would continue, particularly in Southeast Asia, while [the] Communists would attempt [to] exploit [the] armistice as [a] tactical

¹⁰⁵ John Foster Dulles, “untitled document top secret,” 18 May 1950, in *Papers of John Foster Dulles* [microfilm], reel 15, 1.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

device to weaken and divide [the] free world.”¹⁰⁷ Dulles emphasized that the US and its embassies should continue their economic and political pressure against the CCP. These pressures included “Continue[d] US total embargo on trade with Communist China” as well as “intensified efforts [to] persuade our allies to refrain from relaxing their controls on trade with Communist China. . .”¹⁰⁸

Clearly, Dulles believed that one of the tenets of NSC-68 – that the Soviet Union would work to turn the Western powers against one another – also applied to the PRC. He argued that the Chinese Communists were using the armistice in Korea as a sort of diplomatic crowbar to divide the Western powers. How Dulles believed this would happen is not entirely clear, however what is important to note was that he saw the Chinese Communists as acting in a similar fashion to the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, in a June 1957 Department memorandum Dulles attempted to summarize the political situation in the People’s Republic of China, saying that in the past year Běijīng grew in importance as a formulator of Communist doctrine. Dulles continued, saying ‘The Forbidden City has emerged more clearly as the second center of Communist ideology, and the role of the Chinese ideology, and the role of the Chinese in formulating doctrines,

¹⁰⁷ Telegram from Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to Certain Diplomatic and Consular Offices, July 29, 1953, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1949 Volume XIV China and Japan* (GPO: Washington, 1974), 238.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 239.

¹⁰⁹ While Dulles did not explain how the Korean armistice could divide the Western powers, it can be inferred that by supporting Rhee and the South Koreans – and by extension opposing the CCP and the Soviets – that the US was acting in opposition to other Western states. Great Britain, for example, formally recognized the PRC as the legitimate government of mainland China in 1949. Indeed, Churchill said in a speech dated July 1, 1952 that China was of great interest to Britain, but “if you recognize anyone it does not necessarily mean that you like him.” Martin Gilbert, *Never Despair: Winston Churchill, 1945-1965* (London: Heinemann, 1988), 741.

while still clearly secondary, is increasing”¹¹⁰ Dulles believed that the People’s Republic was important in the formation of Communist doctrine in East Asia.

The one battleground in the fight against Communism that continued to pose problems for Dulles and the Eisenhower administration were the two island archipelagos in the Taiwan Strait known as Quemoy and Mǎzǔ. On two occasions during the Eisenhower administration military forces from the People’s Republic of China began to shell Quemoy and Mǎzǔ islands in what was perceived by the US to be preparatory to the invasion of Taiwan. The first instance of PRC encroachment on the islands, known as the First Taiwan Straits Crisis, began in late August of 1954 when forces of the PRC responded to the build-up of Nationalist forces on the two island chains by shelling the islands. Initial reaction by the Eisenhower administration was slow and seemed to say that a decision would not be made immediately. In a September radio and press conference Secretary Dulles, when questioned as to whether the US should help to defend Quemoy, responded that “My position on that remains the same as I expressed, I think, at my last press conference in Washington, when I said that the basic policy decision taken by the prior administration, and accepted by this administration, is to defend Formosa.”¹¹¹ When asked whether an invasion by the PRC was expected, Dulles responded that “I have no opinion about that, one way or another. That is a matter for the military people to judge in light of their intelligence estimates.”¹¹² Seemingly, Dulles skirted the issue of whether the US would commit troops to defend the island.

¹¹⁰ John Foster Dulles, “Memorandum: Situation in China,” in *The Public Papers of John Foster Dulles [microfilm]*, reel 45, 1,7

¹¹¹ John Foster Dulles, “Press and Radio Conference of John Foster Dulles At Lowry Air Force Base Denver, Colorado,” September 12, 1954, in *The Public Papers of John Foster Dulles [microfilm]*, reel 33, 3.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

By January of 1955 the First Taiwan Straits Crisis had not let up and John Foster Dulles continued to hedge his bets when making public statements concerning the crisis. In a January 18, 1955 news conference Dulles was asked whether he had any reports about the PRC making attempts to capture other island groups off the coast of the mainland. Dulles responded that “I have had some reports about the fighting, which is rather severe apparently around the island of I-Chiang, an island which lies. . . about eight miles to the north of the Dàchén islands.”¹¹³ When asked how important the Dàchén Islands were to the US, Dulles replied that “I would not say that the Tachen Islands are in any sense essential to the defense of Formosa. . .”¹¹⁴ Essentially, what Dulles was acknowledging here was that the Chinese Communists were attacking islands surrounding Taiwan. Those islands however, were not critical to the US effort in defending Taiwan. Dulles when asked whether it was accurate to say that the Dàchéns were not essential to the defense of Taiwan replied “I didn’t put it as flatly as that. I put it that [it] was a matter of military judgment. My own information is that the only relation that it [the Tachens] has to the defense of Formosa . . . is that there is a radar station on the island. . . . I would say the relationship [of the Tachens] to the defense of Formosa was at the best marginal.”¹¹⁵ Seemingly, the State Department did not believe that the Tachen Islands were critical to the defense of Taiwan. Implicit in his statements was that the US would not aid in defending the smaller islands surrounding Taiwan.

Presumably to clarify his position, Dulles addressed the Quemoy and Mǎzǔ Crisis vis-à-vis the up-coming State of the Union Address. In a January 24 press conference

¹¹³ John Foster Dulles, “Untitled Press Conference,” January 18, 1955, in *The Public Papers of John Foster Dulles [microfilm]*, reel 37, 1.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

Dulles commented that the President's address and whether or not it made mention of defending islands around Taiwan, saying:

The Message itself does not, of course, specifically draw a line [of defense in the region]. There are, I may say, rather clear suggestions in the Message as to the general position which we expect to take and those suggestions are more precise in action which has been taken by the National Security Council. However, the situation does not lend itself to a very precise geographic definition. We talk in loose terms about Quemoy Island or Tachen Islands or the Matsu Island. Well, actually each one of these islands is part of a complex, the precise limits of which are not definitely determined.¹¹⁶

Dulles continued, saying that the island "complexes" had numerous small islands within the group. He did not believe that such small islands were worth saving in the grand scheme of US policy asking "Well, are you going to nail your flag to this one little bit of rock, this smallest little rock there which in fact could be pretty easily pulverized by artillery fire from the Mainland, and make that into a Dien Bien Phu."¹¹⁷ Clearly, Dulles did not favor committing US troops to defend a small and insignificant group of islands such as the Dàchéns or even Quemoy and Mǎzǔ. Indeed, Dulles seemed to confirm the idea that military intervention was not needed in Taiwan saying "I think there are very few people who believe that the rule by the Republic of China on the Mainland is going to be achieved under present circumstances by an armed invasion of the Mainland by the Nationalist forces."¹¹⁸ Again, one sees that Dulles, along with the Eisenhower administration, were unwilling to commit to a war in the Far East, especially one which could end as badly as the French effort to regain control in Vietnam one year earlier.

¹¹⁶ John Foster Dulles, "Press and Background News Conference," January 24, 1955, in *The Public papers of John Foster Dulles [microfilm]*, reel 37, 4.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

By March of 1955 the First Taiwan Straits Crisis had intensified to the point of including raids by the Nationalists on seaports on the Mainland. On March 3, 1955 Dulles announced the signing of a Mutual Defense Treaty between Taiwan and the US saying that “The [Nationalist] Chinese Foreign Minister and I have today exchanged the instruments of ratification which bring into force our Mutual Defense Treaty with the Republic of China.”¹¹⁹ Dulles noted that while the US signed the Mutual Defense Treaty that “It is not possible at this time to state explicitly how [the] defense will be conducted,” and that “The decision to the use of the armed forces of the United States . . . will be made by the President himself. . .”¹²⁰ Dulles did concede, however, that islands such as Quemoy and Mǎzǔ did have a relationship to the defense of Taiwan, but he stopped short of saying that the US would defend the islands.

Dulles elaborated on the Mutual Defense Treaty in his March 15 news and radio conference. When asked about the possibility of the US defending the islands of Quemoy and Mǎzǔ, Dulles replied that “The Treaty that we have with the Republic of China excludes Quemoy and Matsu from the treaty area.”¹²¹ Dulles continued saying that the President had the last word on whether Quemoy and Mǎzǔ were in fact critical to the defense of Taiwan, and that at issue would be whether an attack on either island would constitute an attack on Taiwan. Like his earlier statement of March 3 Dulles stopped short of committing the US to defending the islands.

While he did not advocate that the US commit troops to the defense of Taiwan, Dulles did advocate More importantly however, was Dulles’ statement concerning the

¹¹⁹ John Foster Dulles, “Statement by the Honorable John Foster Dulles, United States Secretary of State,” March 3, 1955, in *The Personal Papers of John Foster Dulles [microfilm]*, Reel 37, 1.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ John Foster Dulles, “Press and Radio Conference,” March 15, 1955, in *The Personal Papers of John Foster Dulles [microfilm]*, Reel 37, 2.

use of nuclear weapons against the Chinese Communists. In response to the questions about the US possessing atomic weapons and whether or not they would be used in conventional war Dulles replied that:

I think it's generally known that certain types of atomic missiles are becoming conventional in the United States armed services. And those are weapons of relatively small dimensions with considerably more explosive power than is contained in conventional weapons. But they are weapons of precision. I imagine that if the United States became engaged in a major military activity anywhere in the world that those weapons would come into use because, as I say, they are more and more becoming conventional . . .¹²²

Dulles's message here was that atomic weapons were becoming increasingly more common in use and increasingly more precise. In response to questions about the use of tactical nuclear weapons Dulles responded that they were indeed available for use by the US, and that "Such weapons, as you know, are in regular use in our war exercises today that are being carried on out in the West." Dulles continued, saying that nuclear weapons would only be used against military targets in the future and that "the likelihood of the use of weapons for mass destruction may actually go down as these new weapons are increased [in use]."¹²³ Dulles's conclusion to the question was that the use of precision atomic weapons in a war situation would drastically reduce the number of civilian casualties as were present in the Second World War.

Dulles appeared to be saying in this press conference, as well as the March 3rd Mutual Defense Treaty that while the US was unwilling to commit troops to the Taiwan Straits Crisis it was willing to use atomic weaponry to prevent a full-scale war. These policy statements were clear indications of Dulles's view of the situation in the Taiwan Strait as well as how best to execute Containment in China. Dulles and the Eisenhower

¹²² Ibid., 6.

¹²³ Ibid., 7.

administration, on the whole, were unwilling to defend islands such as Quemoy, Mǎzǔ and the Dàchéns with US troops because they were deemed unimportant to the defense of Taiwan. Additionally, should a war break out in the region Dulles seemed more than willing to utilize large-scale weapons, such as atomic bombs. Eisenhower, however, was unwilling to commit to the use of weapons of mass-destruction. Indeed, historians such as Michael Gordon Jackson agree, saying that Eisenhower's New Look policy stressed "making deep cuts in conventional forces, increasing strategic air power, and brandishing the threat of nuclear retaliation."¹²⁴ Jackson's main argument, however, was that when push came to shove, Eisenhower was unwilling to use nuclear weapons.

Earlier historians, too, noted the dichotomy between Dulles and Eisenhower.

Vincent P. DeSantis pointed out that the Eisenhower administration marked a departure from the sixteen years of democratic rule under Roosevelt and Truman, saying:

There were new men in the State Department and in American embassies abroad, and there were public statements giving American foreign policy a different tone and emphasis. But Eisenhower himself acted with caution, and most observers noted a wide margin between Secretary of State Dulles' bold words and the administration's performance. Largely, Eisenhower's foreign policy was built on the lines laid down by Truman and Acheson.¹²⁵

Clearly, there was a difference of opinion between Dulles and Eisenhower, especially over Quemoy and Mǎzǔ. Dulles favored the use of atomic weapons in the conflict, but Eisenhower was more cautious being unwilling to commit to a war in China.

Despite Dulles's favoring the use of atomic weapons, Eisenhower was not forced to make the ultimate decision whether or not to use an atomic weapon. On April 25, 1955

¹²⁴ Michael Gordon Jackson, "Beyond Brinkmanship: Eisenhower, Nuclear War Fighting and Korea, 1953-1968," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, No. 1, (March 2005), 52-3.

¹²⁵ Vincent P. DeSantis, "Eisenhower Revisionism," *The Review of Politics*, Vol 38, No. 2, (Apr. 1976), 190.

the PRC announced that it would be willing to start negotiations concerning Taiwan, and on May 1 they ceased shelling Quemoy and Mǎzǔ.

The crisis rekindled itself, however, on August 23, 1958 when the PRC again began shelling the island of Quemoy. Dulles's reaction, again, was that he was unwilling to commit the US to any action in Taiwan. On September 4, 1958 Dulles made a statement to the press concerning the United States' role in the new crisis in Taiwan, saying that "Neither Taiwan (Formosa) nor the islands of Quemoy and Matsu have ever been under the authority of the Chinese Communists."¹²⁶ He continued, saying that the US was bound to a treaty to defend Taiwan, and that "Any attempt on the part of the Chinese Communists now to seize these positions or any of them would be a . . . violation of the principles upon which world order is based. . ."¹²⁷ According to Dulles' statement, the US was committed to defending Taiwan as per the Mutual Defense Treaty, but not the islands of Quemoy or Mǎzǔ. In the press conference that followed the statement, however, Dulles qualified the official statement. When asked about whether the US would help defend Quemoy or Mǎzǔ, Dulles responded that the US was already helping, logistically, to defend the islands. When pushed about whether the US would commit fighting forces to the islands, Dulles answered that the US would likely not wait until the situation was dire before assistance was given. He noted, however, that:

The Chinese Nationalists would themselves prefer to do this job [of defending Quemoy and Matsu] themselves, and it would greatly redound to their prestige if they are able to do so, and there is no point in our

¹²⁶ John Foster Dulles, "Statement by the Secretary of State," September 4, 1958, in *The Personal Papers of John Foster Dulles [microfilm]*, Reel 50, 1.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

getting in [to the conflict] prematurely. It is primarily their task. They want to make it their task primarily. . .¹²⁸

According to Dulles, the US was unwilling to become involved in defending Quemoy and Mǎzǔ because the Nationalists did not want US aid. This statement flies in the face of previous statements about the use of massive retaliatory force and the United States' ability to choose where and when it would fight Communist aggression. Seemingly, if the US wanted to combat aggression in Quemoy and Mǎzǔ, it could easily have used a nuclear or atomic device to wipe out China or Chinese forces in the region.

At his September 9 press conference Dulles was questioned about a statement made by the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the US should aid the Nationalists in defending Quemoy and Mǎzǔ. Dulles responded that "It [the US] has made the decision reported in the statement which I made at Newport on September 4 with the authority of the President. That is the only such decision taken."¹²⁹ In this same news conference Dulles was questioned about the possibility of war with China, and whether there was an obligation on the part of the State Department to consult with Congress as well as to inform the American people. Dulles responded that efforts had been made to consult with Congress and that he believed that American public was well-informed about the danger in the Taiwan region. He noted, however, that:

the vital point is – I think it is understood. . . what is at stake there [in the Taiwan region] is not just two pieces of real estate [Quemoy and Matsu]. Obviously, if that was all that was involved, there would be no basis for action on the part of the United States. What is involved [there] . . . is the entire position of the United States and that of the free-world allies in the Western Pacific. . .¹³⁰

¹²⁸ John Foster Dulles, "News Conference Held in the Administrative Building, United States Naval Base, Newport, RI," September 4, 1958, in *The Public Papers of John Foster Dulles [microfilm]*, Reel 52, 2.

¹²⁹ John Foster Dulles, "Secretary Dulles News Conference of September 9, 1958," in *The Personal Papers of John Foster Dulles [microfilm]*, Reel 50, 1.

¹³⁰

Clearly, Dulles believed that the seemingly insignificant islands of Quemoy and Mǎzǔ were major battlegrounds in the war against Communism in the Far East. This was a drastic departure from the First Taiwan Straits crisis in which Dulles was unwilling to commit the US to a war in the region and possibly create an American Dien Bien Phu.

Historians are divided about US policy in the region during the First and Second Taiwan Strait Crises. Some, like Leonard H. D. Gordon, argued that the US was unsure about committing military forces to Taiwan because of the 1954 Mutual Defense Treaty, signed by the US and Taiwan, which did not specify the use of troops on the part of the US to defend Taiwan. Gordon concluded that in the First Taiwan Straits Crisis the US was sympathetic toward the Nationalists' goal of retaking the mainland, but that the United States' "policy was designed only to give the Nationalists sufficient military aid for self-defense but not the quantity or quality necessary for a successful counterattack."¹³¹ Gordon further concluded that the reluctance to commit troops to the Second Taiwan Straits Crisis was the result of moderate thinking on the part of both Eisenhower and Dulles, saying that "Both Eisenhower and Dulles had exhibited moderation, vision, and unwavering commitment to settling the Taiwan question without the use of force."¹³²

Other authors, such as Ronald Pruessen, argued that the opposite was in fact true. In his article work *Over the Volcano* he argued that "The president and the secretary of state were sometimes more capable of congratulating themselves for moderation and control than of achieving it, particularly when it came to delineating the specifics of their

¹³¹ Leonadr H. D. Gordon, "United States Opposition to Use of Force in the Taiwan Strait, 1954-1962," *The Journal of American History*, 72, (Dec. 1985): 658-9.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 660.

‘containment’ approach toward Běijīng.”¹³³ Pruessen believed that the administration’s rhetoric about caution was often just that, and that the actual policy in Taiwan was more a bubbling effort to combat Communism than a cautious approach.

Regardless of historiographic context, Dulles’ overall policy toward Taiwan and the surrounding islands must be viewed through the prism of the early Cold War. Many in the State Department, to include Dulles, believed that the Far East was a major battleground in the Cold War. As a result, Containment was applied to the region in an effort to halt Communist expansion. Additionally, according to author Robert Accinelli, there was a fear within the Department that if Taiwan fell to the Communists then Japan, Vietnam, Laos and other countries in the region would fall as well.¹³⁴ Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, was Dulles’s change of attitude between the 1954-55 Straits Crisis and the 1958 Crisis. Accielli argued that in fact there was no change in the ultimate policy of the US. Instead, he contends that “the Eisenhower administration had never endorsed the strategy of counterattack [against Mainland China]. . .”¹³⁵ Indeed, it was likely the case that the US was never willing to commit armed forces to Taiwan. As will be explored later, the US Ambassador to Taiwan – Karl Lott Rankin – continually urged the US to commit troops and economic aid to assist the Nationalists.

Dulles’s public attitude change was likely a result of President Eisenhower’s change in viewpoint. During the 1954-55 Crisis the US had the opportunity to use nuclear or atomic weapons as Dulles recommended throughout his term as Secretary of State,

¹³³ Ronald W. Pruessen, “Over the Volcano: The United States and the Taiwan Strait Crisis, 1954-1955,” in *Re-Examining the Cold War: US-China Diplomacy, 1954-1973*, ed. Robert S. Ross and Jiang Changbin, (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 105.

¹³⁴ Robert Accielli, “A Thorn in the Side of Peace: The Eisenhower Administration and the 1958 Offshore Islands Crisis,” in *Re-Examining the Cold War: US-China Diplomacy, 1954-1973*, ed. Robert S. Ross and Jiang Changbin, (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 139.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 140.

but, similar to President John F. Kennedy and his pre- and post-Cuban Missile Crisis policies, once President Eisenhower was at the brink he seemed unwilling to jump. Indeed, author Richard Immerman noted that Dulles would have preferred that Eisenhower had chosen to make a tactical nuclear strike against the PRC to end the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis.¹³⁶ Additionally, other authors noted that Eisenhower was the true stabilizing force in the State Department. Bennett Ruskoff argued that Eisenhower was responsible for the change in US policy regarding the defense of Taiwan, saying that:

The available evidence supports the conclusion that it was the president who in fact initiated the changes in attitude that came about in late March and early April [of 1955] regarding the desirability of a Nationalists withdrawal from the offshore islands and the probability of American involvement in their defense.¹³⁷

Eisenhower seemed to have more input on US foreign policy than historians initially gave him credit for. Because Eisenhower had the final word on US troop deployment, he was able to negate some of Dulles's more outlandish suggestions about containing Chinese and Soviet Communism.

Eisenhower's role in changing US policy did not, however, change Dulles's own beliefs about Chinese Communism, and what role the State Department played in the Far East. He still believed in the Communist monolith, and that the best method of combating the spread of Communism was through the threat of massive retaliatory force. Indeed, in a December 1958 address to the California State Chamber of Commerce Dulles continued to argue for the use of massive retaliatory force. He explained that US foreign policy was no longer one of isolation and non-involvement saying that "events anywhere

¹³⁶ Richard H. Immerman, *John Foster Dulles: Piety, Pragmatism, and Power in U.S. Foreign Policy*, (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1999), 186.

¹³⁷ Bennett Ruskoff, "Eisenhower, Dulles and the Quemoy-Matsu Crisis, 1954-1955," *Political Science Quarterly*, 96, (Autumn 1981): 477.

impinge on men everywhere.”¹³⁸ He further noted that the policies of the Soviet Union were global in nature, and that they sought a “one world” order under the Communist system. That global Communist threat, according to Dulles, was kept in check by the United States and its “use or threat of force by having retaliatory power, and the will to use it . . .”¹³⁹ Dulles noted, however, that simply having the means of massive retaliatory power was not enough, but that the US also needed the will and desire to use it because “one without the other is useless.” Dulles concluded his thought about retaliatory force saying “It is not pleasant to have to plan in these terms. But in the world as it is, there is no other way to peace and security for ourselves and for other parts of the endangered free world.”¹⁴⁰ At this late date in his term as Secretary of State, Dulles still believed that massive retaliatory force was the key to world peace with the Soviets.

Dulles’ mindset is critical in understanding his relationship to the State Department and members of the Foreign Service. While he acquiesced to Eisenhower about the use of a nuclear attack against China, Dulles continued to emphasize his hard-line stance against the Chinese within his own department. He believed that the best way for his diplomats to negotiate with the Chinese Communists was through the use of strong anti-Communist rhetoric. As a result, it is likely that Dulles influenced the selection of the US diplomatic corps in Taiwan.

All three State Department officials – George Kennan, Dean Acheson and John Foster Dulles – greatly impacted early Cold War policy in the US. All three men also had similar views about the Soviet Union, namely that it was a grave threat to the security of

¹³⁸ John Foster Dulles, “Address by the Honorable John Foster Dulles Secretary of State Before the California State Chamber of Commerce,” December 4, 1954, in *The Personal Papers of John Foster Dulles [microfilm]*, Reel 52, 1.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 2.

the United States. Where the men differed was in their views about Containment and how best to address the Soviet threat. Kennan, as the originator of Containment, believed in a firm and continuous physical containment of Communist expansion, and did not include bluster and rhetorical statements. Kennan called for a military containment of Soviet expansion believing that Acheson, as Secretary of State, continued a policy of Containment of the USSR, but also developed his own plan to implement Containment. NSC-68, drafted under Acheson's watch, was designed to be a more aggressive form of Containment. Moreover, it was designed as a sort of blueprint of responses to Soviet aggression. Kennan's Containment policy, as outlined by his "X Article," did not give specific examples of how the US should respond to the USSR, but Acheson's NSC-68 did.

Concerning China, Acheson was the most moderate of the three. He did believe that the Chinese Communists were subservient to the Soviets, but that they did have a degree of autonomy. Despite this, Acheson's NSC-68 painted an apocalyptic picture of world affairs wherein the US was battling for its very existence against a Soviet government bent on the destruction of the American way of life. This kind of fire and brimstone rhetoric, as used by Acheson, was not necessarily intended to be taken literally. One of the hallmarks of nearly every Cold Warrior in American politics was the use of strong rhetoric to demonize the Soviets and trump up their threat, and Acheson was no exception. Acheson's successor, however, adamantly believed that the Communism was a world-wide threat. Moreover, Dulles believed that all Communist governments, including the CCP, were controlled from Moscow with little or no autonomy, and his concept of Containment included strong rhetorical threats against the Soviets. This

included threats of massive nuclear or atomic retaliation. Unlike Acheson, Dulles consistently threatened to use atomic or nuclear weapons against Soviet expansive threats and Dulles meant what he said. Acheson's threats to use military force, when they were used, were not meant to be an actual suggestion to use military force. They were pure and simple rhetoric used to intimidate the Soviets. Dulles's suggestions, however, were meant to be taken literally. When he advocated the use of massive retaliatory force, he meant that the US should use nuclear weapons against Communist countries. Luckily, Dulles's extreme suggestions were curtailed by President Eisenhower.

These two opposing methods of implementing containment, Dulles's and Acheson's, played an important role in the jobs of the two ambassadors to China during this period. John Leighton Stuart, under Acheson, and Karl Lott Rankin, under Dulles, both had to contend with their superior's views about the Chinese Communists. In addition, they came into conflict over how best to support the Nationalist government in its fight against the CCP.

Chapter IV – The Paradox of Diplomacy: John Leighton Stuart

I had . . . the full advantage of their trust.
But I failed them.¹

At the beginning of 1946 John Leighton Stuart was president of Yānjīng (Yenching) University in China. Born to the parents of Protestant missionaries in 1876 in Hangzhou, China, Stuart was no stranger to travel. In 1904 he left as a missionary to Shànghǎi, and joined the faculty of Nánjīng Theological Seminary shortly after his 1904 arrival. By 1919 he was appointed President of Běijīng University. During the Second World War, Stuart kept the university open until December 7, 1941 when Japanese military forces placed him under house arrest. After the war, Stuart reopened the University and went on a fund raising tour across China. In 1946 when General George C. Marshall was sent to China in order to settle the Chinese civil war, he asked Stuart to be the US ambassador to China. Stuart accepted.²

The reports which Stuart sent to the US in 1946 and 1947 were optimistic and Stuart believed that a settlement could be reached between the Communists and the Nationalists. More importantly, however, is the fact that Stuart believed in the cause which the US was fighting for in China. In one of his earliest reports dated July 21, 1946 Stuart wrote that he wanted to: “express my own deep satisfaction that the policy of my Government toward China is one which I have heartily approved as an individual and can

¹ John Leighton Stuart, *Fifty Years in China: The Memoirs of John Leighton Stuart, Missionary and Ambassador* (New York: Random House, 1954), 211.

² Kenneth W. Rea and John C. Brewer eds., *The Forgotten Ambassador: The Reports of John Leighton Stuart, 1946-1949*, (Boulder: Westview Replica, 1981), xix-xx.

therefore work for without any hesitation in my new function.”³ In addition, Stuart had a reasonably good rapport with Jiǎng Jièshí, and believed that he had nothing but the best intentions for the Chinese people. In that same report dated July 21 Stuart noted that in addition to Jiǎng Jièshí’s leadership, the Chinese people desired: “the very things which we Americans desire for them [a democratic government], and their eagerness for our help, even to the point of wishing us to interfere in their own domestic concerns.”⁴

Despite his obviously pro-West opinion about “what China wanted” Stuart did caution against what could happen in the future. He continued his report saying: “It is, of course, perfectly possible that they may reach a point of frustration at any moment when one faction or another will start an anti-American agitation, which could become dangerous if it should get out of control.”⁵

What is important to note in these quotations is that while he was an optimist about reaching a settlement between the Communists and the Nationalists, he was also a realist. He saw the potential for resentment of US involvement in China, and that an anti-American movement in China could occur. In this regard he did not simply view American involvement as an entirely good and constructive force. The US could, in fact, undermine its own goal in China.

As Stuart’s ambassadorship progressed through 1946 and 1947 his reports were largely optimistic about the progress he made (or potential progress which could be made) between the Communists and the Nationalists. In a report dated September 18, 1946, however, Stuart described the deadlock between the Nationalists and the Communists, saying that neither side truly trusted the other to develop a fair ceasefire

³ Rea and Brewer, *Forgotten Ambassador*, 6.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

agreement. Indeed, the GMD did not make any attempts to include the Communists in a coalition government, but Stuart defended the Nationalists' distrust of the CCP saying that:

the Government leaders cannot be too severely criticized for their own misgivings as to Communist sincerity or the possibility of mutual cooperation in view not only of the conflicting ideologies, but even more the long rankling antagonisms, the deep-seated suspicions, and the lust for power on both sides.⁶

Stuart knew of the long-standing mistrust between the Communists and the Nationalists, and tried to point this out to the Department of State. He did note, however, that the Nationalists were not entirely innocent in the antagonistic situation. In that same report he noted that: “the government intends to . . . hold the National Assembly on November 12 for adopting a democratic constitution with or without Communists participation, can most probably be assumed.”⁷

The year 1947 was neither a particularly good or bad year for negotiations in China. John Leighton Stuart continued his work in China despite the fact that General Marshall had been recalled to the US in early 1947. Not three days later the Nationalists reopened negotiations with the Communists in hopes of reaching a ceasefire agreement. 1947 was a year of attempted reorganization on the part of Jiǎng Jièshí and the Nationalists, but the task became increasingly more difficult with the continued civil war, student protests and faltering economy.⁸ Despite this, Stuart was ever the optimist. In his report of January 23, Stuart gave his opinion on the possibility of a peace settlement. He held firm in his support for President Jiǎng Jièshí saying that: “as long as President Chiang remains in office with his present mental and physical vigor he will continue to

⁶ Rea and Brewer, *Forgotten Ambassador*, 17-18

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Rea and Brewer, *Forgotten Ambassador*, 57-58.

be the determinative force in government policy. He is doubtless correct in his assertion that he can deal with his reactionary associates.” Stuart continued his praise, saying that Jiǎng Jièshí, while at times stubborn and difficult to work with, was not completely inflexible regarding governmental policy. Indeed, Stuart noted that Jiǎng seemed reactionary and even autocratic, but that he ultimately wanted a democratic government for the people of China.⁹

By March of 1947, according to Stuart, the reorganization of the Chinese government was moving quite slowly.¹⁰ Stuart did mention that Truman’s diplomatic aide proposal for Greece and Turkey, made a week earlier, had “a very reassuring influence upon Government leaders and their sympathizers. It is too early yet to ascertain the final effect of this [announcement] upon Communist Party policy, but I incline to the opinion that both of these declarations will help toward their [the Communists] ultimate willingness to renew peace talks.”¹¹

Only a week later, however, Stuart reported on a worsening situation on the mainland, but offered his own suggestions on how best to aide the Nationalists against Communist aggression, the political progress (or lack of) in China, as well as his own thoughts about President Jiǎng. Stuart believed that President Jiǎng was not, as many in the government thought, a dictatorial figure. He said of Jiǎng that: “it is not so much that he is or strives to be a dictator in the accepted sense as he is the only personality whom the others all respect and around whom they can rally With all of his shortcomings he sincerely seeks the welfare of his country according to democratic principles.”¹² Once

⁹ Rea and Brewer, *Forgotten Ambassador*, 61-2.

¹⁰ Rea and Brewer, *Forgotten Ambassador*, 74.

¹¹ Rea and Brewer, *Forgotten Ambassador*, 77.

¹² Rea and Brewer, *Forgotten Ambassador*, 81.

again, Stuart believed that Jiǎng Jièshí did truly have the best intentions for his people, and if he did seem autocratic it was merely his style of governing. Stuart continued with his appraisal of the political situation in China, touching mostly on the economic situation and the lack of oversight in government spending. Stuart pointed out specifically that military spending needed to be curtailed in order for the Nationalist government to be able to improve anything on the mainland. Stuart said of the military budget that “Every other problem in China touches sooner or later on [it]. Without drastic reduction of military expenditure there can be no balanced budget nor any adequate funds released for constructive improvements.”¹³

As the year 1947 progressed Stuart’s reports about China became less and less positive. In one message dated April 22, 1947 Stuart acknowledged the pessimism of authorities in China, as well as the souring situation, saying that the Chancellery (second-in-command of the Nationalist government) cautioned against the settlement in the civil war, and more importantly of the worsening image of the US in the eyes of many Chinese. Stuart pointed out that the US should not count on a reduction of anti-American sentiment in China. Rather, US economic assistance in China could make their economy worse. Should that happen, Stuart said:

the United States will remain the most convenient universal scapegoat; we will be accused simultaneously of giving too much and too little, of interfering too much and too little, of strengthening the moderates and the reactionaries, and of not letting the Chinese settle matters their own way. The Communists will, of course, attack us [rhetorically] whatever we do. An influential and vocal section of the Kuomintang, which is basically anti-foreign, feels that our assistance -- and substantial assistance at that -- will in any case be forthcoming, and it is this section which tends to be most anti-foreign and to utilize foreigners as scapegoats for China’s innumerable ills.¹⁴

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Rea and Brewer, *Forgotten Ambassador*, 96.

What Stuart pointed out in this report, and in many others which followed in the next two years, was that not only were the Communists opposed to the US presence in China, but the Nationalists, too, did not want the US interfering in their government. More important, however, was Stuart's observation that the US was in a bad situation no matter what it did. What the US State Department failed to recognize was that both the Communists and Nationalists were opposed to the US as a foreign entity, not because it was a democratic nation.

Doing simultaneously too much and too little is precisely the situation which the US was in by 1948. Despite all that was done in the first two years of Stuart's ambassadorship the Communists continued to make advances against the Nationalists. In March of 1948 Stuart stated that:

In general the deterioration, military, economic, and psychological, is accelerating [within the Nationalist government]. The last of these is both the cause and effect in the armies and in fiscal matters. It [the worsening situation] is also becoming more apparent even in the higher ranks of government officials . . . The lack of solidarity, except in the central core of the Kuomintang, is a fatal weakness.¹⁵

Increasingly, Stuart saw the GMD as unorganized, ineffective at governing, and having almost no support from the peasant population of China. By the late spring Stuart's reports about the Nationalists became less and less optimistic and the viability of the government less likely. In April of 1948 Stuart pointed out that in previous reports his embassy noted dissatisfaction on the part of the Chinese people concerning Jiǎng Jièshí's leadership, but that this was not the case with the National Assembly. He noted, however, that the Assembly was making matters worse by endorsing the campaign of Li Zongren (a general in the GMD army and rival to Jiǎng) as Nationalist Vice-President. Stuart also

¹⁵ Rea and Brewer, *Forgotten Ambassador*, 182.

noted the possibility of a coalition between Li and the Communists and the possibility of a negotiated settlement.¹⁶ While Jiǎng was not ousted from power by his own party members, the set of reports which Stuart sent in the early spring highlighted the disagreement and dissatisfaction within the leadership of the Guomindang, and the lack of support for Jiǎng as a leader.

In the summer of 1948 Stuart saw a deadlock between the Communists and the Nationalists. He wrote to the State Department on July 30 that: “It seems more apparent than ever that neither side can secure a decisive military victory.”¹⁷ Stuart continued emphasizing the displeasure with the GMD saying that the entire nation of China was anxious for an end to the war, but that neither the Communists nor the Nationalists appealed to them. The GMD, in the eyes of the Chinese, was: “more selfish, corrupt and incompetent” than the Communists. Stuart did note, however, that the negative reaction to the GMD was: “in part the natural dissatisfaction with the party in power,” but that there was “no lack of evidence in support of their contention.”¹⁸ What Stuart was pointing out in this report, and continually stressed until the Communists took power in 1949, was that the Chinese people did not fully support the communists or the Nationalists. This bleak situation, in which the Chinese supported neither side, was likely a motivating factor for the US to not commit troops or increase its military aid to the region.

In his same July report Stuart told the State Department that from all accounts the Communists intended to continue their war against the GMD mostly due to their success in fighting the Nationalists. In addition, Stuart not only pointed to the lack of support for

¹⁶ Rea and Brewer, *Forgotten Ambassador*, 210.

¹⁷ Rea and Brewer, *Forgotten Ambassador*, 258 [emphasis in original].

¹⁸ Rea and Brewer, *Forgotten Ambassador*, 259.

Jiǎng Jièshí's government, but also advocated for some kind of change concerning US policy in China. He said in his report that the current leaders of the Nationalist government were relying almost entirely on the United States for military and economic support against the Communists. He suggested that, due to the possibility of a change of leadership in the next presidential election, the US might want to reconsider its policy toward China. Stuart advised the State Department in his July report that:

We can be quite certain that no amount of military advice or materiel from us will bring unity and peace to China unless indeed there are reforms sufficiently drastic to win back popular confidence and esteem. That these could even be attempted by those now in power or that the improvements could be rapid and radical enough to reverse the prevailing attitude is scarcely to be hoped for. But without this assurance the intention to give increased military aid [sic] ought to be carefully considered in all its implications.¹⁹

In other words, Stuart suggested that the US should only give the Nationalists military and economic aid if drastic and speedy reforms were made, both of which seemed unlikely. Stuart added that whatever the opinion the US might have about a coalition between the Communists and Nationalists that it would be advisable to not just throw money at the problem, but that the US should consider sending aid which would not only help the GMD, but also hinder the goals of the Communists.

Toward the end of 1948 Ambassador Stuart increasingly downplayed aid to the Nationalists, and suggested that the US should cut its losses with them and embrace a positive policy toward the Communists. In his October 26, 1948 report, Stuart commented on the political situation in China. He said that, assuming the US government will not entirely withdraw from affairs in China, it should alter its current strategy toward the Communists. Specifically, he voiced his own opinion that:

¹⁹ Rea and Brewer, *Forgotten Ambassador*, 260.

Any direct military aid to resistance groups on theory that we are fighting communism all over the world would seem to me unwise. It could only delay their [the resistance group's] ultimate liquidation and would meanwhile arouse increased anti-American sentiment and expose our nationals in coalition territory to danger.²⁰

In addition, Stuart recommended a way to address the inevitable question of an about-face concerning US policy toward China. He recommended that it would be advisable for the US to have a more flexible view of a possible Communist government in China.

Regarding the Truman Doctrine Stuart said that:

It is pertinent to remind ourselves that President Truman's statement of December 15, 1945 was drafted by present Secretary of State as were in large part the PCC resolutions which will probably be basis for new coalition and that reversal of our policy is due to events since then outside of China rather than within. We should prevent as far as possible any accusations of inconsistency.²¹

What is important to note is that this report was an attempt by Stuart to influence US policy in China. In a November 1947 report he concluded that "The genius of the Chinese people is naturally democratic rather than communistic. By making our objectives transparently clear we can help toward a resurgent moral awakening at government reform and a better livelihood for all. . ."²² Essentially, what Stuart tried to demonstrate was that the Chinese people were predisposed to a democratic government, and that the US simply needed to keep at the current policy of supporting the Nationalists and eventually the Communist movement would fail. The turning point in Stuart's opinion of US policy in China, as stated earlier, came in late 1948. For almost all of 1949 Stuart's reports simply told about the continual decline of the Nationalist government. In one of his last posts in April of 1949 the situation seemed quite threatening to Stuart as

²⁰ Rea and Brewer, *Forgotten Ambassador*, 274.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Rea and Brewer, *Forgotten Ambassador*, 150-51.

well as the embassy staff. He reported that “This morning embassy personnel attempting to come to work from Ambassador’s and adjacent compound were stopped by armed soldiers and ordered to return to compound. . .”²³

As the prospects for a peace settlement grew more bleak, and the nationalists lost more and more ground to the Communists (both in physical land and support of the general populace) Stuart began to emphasize in his reports that there was a possibility that a Communist government could take power in China. On June 8, 1949 Stuart reported to the State Department that he met with Huang Hua, then envoy in charge of establishing diplomatic relations with the US, who emphasized that “CCP is extremely anxious to have foreign governments, particularly USA, discard a government which as Huang put it has completely lost the support of the Chinese people, is in flight and will be further dispersed whenever Communist troops reach Canton.” In addition, Stuart also reported that the CCP was “[Deeply sensitive] to China’s right to make her own decisions in international field.”²⁴ Stuart noted in this instance, as well as several others, that the Communists were eager not to overthrow the US government, but to work with it both economically and politically.

Throughout his tenure as ambassador, Stuart had a distinct advantage over other Asianists in the State Department back in the US in that he had lived with the Chinese nearly all his life. Stuart wrote at length about the outcome of the Chinese civil war and US involvement. Of US-China relations he said that the Chinese people only wanted unity, peace and economic recovery after the Second World War and the long civil war previous to that. He said that the US, too, wanted this for the Chinese people, and that he,

²³ Rea and Brewer, *Forgotten Ambassador*, 320.

²⁴ Rea and Brewer, *Forgotten Ambassador*, 327-28.

Stuart, was in a unique position as ambassador. He had the US interest in bringing peace to China as well as the Chinese interest of self-determination. Stuart lamented his inability to bring peace to the Chinese, saying:

. . . I failed them. I did not succeed in helping General Marshall to persuade either side to concede the points that might have brought agreement nor to allay the fears and suspicions that I was convinced were then the principle obstacles. After these negotiations had finally broken off, I was unable to influence those who controlled either American or Chinese political action to the point where this might have had some constructive result.²⁵

In addition to feeling that he had failed the Chinese, Stuart noted the US government's change in strategy after General Marshall left in 1947. Stuart said that between the years 1948 and 1949 that "American policy reversed itself completely as to our participation in effecting a coalition [government] which included Communists. . ."

In addition, Stuart noted that "during those two unpleasantly eventful years [we learned] a great deal about the global aspects of communism, which doubtless explains our contradictory attitude toward its Chinese variety."²⁶ That "contradictory view" toward Chinese Communism was what the US had before the overthrow of the Nationalists in 1949. Previously, the US was more than happy to try to build a coalition government between the Nationalists and Communists, but after the communist takeover the US did not recognize Máo's government, and went so far as to remove Stuart and the US consulate from the mainland. Stuart wrote in the concluding chapter to his memoir that as a whole Communism, which was the genuine goal of the people in China, was not objectionable. Communism in its current form, as a government which is imposed on a

²⁵ Stuart, *Fifty Years*, 211.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

populace by force, was not desirable.²⁷ Stuart commented further on US recognition of the Communist government, saying that:

The United States can not afford to take any action which would result in the strengthening of the Communist world. . . Recognition by the United States of China's Communist Government would, on the one hand, be very helpful to the Communist world and, on the other hand, very damaging to the free world. . . .

Stuart continued saying that recognition would also “dishearten and demoralize those of the peoples of Asia who are resisting the Communist advance, and causing them and others to doubt the reliability of the United States [sic] support, it would diminish the capacity and weaken the will of many nations to persevere in that resistance.”²⁸ In other words, if the US gave in to the Communists in China, then the whole of Asia would give in to Communism. To a certain degree, this was a similar view to that of President Eisenhower and the “domino theory.”

The difference between Stuart and the President, however, is that Stuart did not entirely oppose Communism. He believed that, in its current form, Communism was akin to a dictatorship. He did not, however, see it as an absolute evil. A truly Communist government could serve its people very well especially if it was elected to office by peaceful means. Despite Stuart's optimism, convictions and four years of negotiations, the People's Liberation Army crossed the Yangtze River on April 21, 1949 and captured the Nationalist capital of Nanjing, and in October the GMD retreated to the island nation of Taiwan. While Stuart was originally brought in to assist General Marshall, he was paid little or no attention when it was clear to the State Department that the Nationalists would likely lose in their struggle against the Communists.

²⁷ Stuart, *Fifty Years*, 303.

²⁸ Stuart, *Fifty Years*, 310

In August of 1949 the US State Department recalled Stuart from his post as ambassador in mainland China. Between August 1949 and August 1950 the United States did not have an ambassador to China however, it did have contact in the mainland through the Consul General in Běijīng and Shànghǎi (Walter P. McConaughy) well as the Ambassador-at-Large in the region.²⁹ Once Stuart left the region, these three men reported to the State Department about China and the establishment of the Communist government on the mainland. Their main focus was on evacuating American citizens and moving government personnel from embassies in China to diplomatic offices in Taiwan. In a telegram dated September 19, 1949 Secretary of State Dean Acheson informed the Consul General in Shànghǎi that the US would evacuate American citizens with the use of the SS *General Gordon*. In addition, the US had the assurance “from the National officials in Canton [province] that the vessel will not be molested on the voyage to and from Shanghai.”³⁰ In addition to the evacuation of mainland China there was thought given to also evacuating diplomatic offices in Taiwan. Acheson concluded in a telegram to the Consul General at Taipei, Taiwan that:

For [the] time being [State Department] plans [to] maintain office [in] Taipei.” Acheson concluded the message saying that “While [the] Department [is] not contemplating [an] order [ing] evacuation [of] dependants of officers and staff, it believes this course [is] desirable.”³¹

²⁹ In the US there are three major classifications for diplomats. An Ambassador posted at an embassy, a Consul General posted at a consulate, and an Ambassador-at-Large posted to a region. The Consul General performs mundane duties such as issuing passports and visas whereas the Ambassador is the representative of the President of the United States and has the ability to negotiate with the head or heads of state of the country in which they are posted. The Ambassador-at-Large is not assigned to a specific country, but is usually headquartered in a specific city. The Ambassador-at-Large can negotiate with several governments at the same time. All three types of diplomat report to the Secretary of State.

³⁰ Telegram from Secretary of State Dean Acheson to Consul General in Shanghai Walter P. McConaughy, September 19, 1949, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1949 Volume IX The Far East: China*, (GPO: Washington, 1974), 1343.

³¹ Telegram from Secretary of State Dean Acheson to Consul General at Taipei John J. Macdonald, December 30, 1949, *Foreign Relations Vol. IX*, 1364.

Ultimately, the State Department did not close its embassy in Taiwan, but maintained it until the US severed relations with Taiwan in the 1970s. The next ambassador to China, Karl Lott Rankin, had to manage issues similar to his predecessor (namely, keeping peace between the Nationalists and Communists). Rankin also had new challenges with respect to the newly founded People's Republic of China (in mainland China) coming into conflict with the Republic of China (on the island of Taiwan). The Taiwan Strait Conflict was the apex of PRC-ROC animosity with the US caught in the middle. US and PRC involvement in the Korean War also increased distrust on both sides.

Chapter V Karl Lott Rankin, Cold Warrior

There is no other apparent solution . . . until . . . the Communists stop acting like Communists and behave like human beings.¹

Karl Lott Rankin arrived in Guǎngzhōu (Guangzhou or Canton), China in 1949 as the replacement for the former US ambassador John Leighton Stuart. From there, he quickly moved to Hong Kong in the closing days of the Chinese Civil War, and then to Taipei once the People's Liberation Army took over the mainland on October 1, 1949. During the next eight years Rankin was the official representative to China posted in Taiwan. Rankin, unlike his predecessor, was not brought in by the State Department to build a Consensus Government between the Nationalists and the Communists. Nor was he brought in to formulate a peace settlement between the Communists and the Nationalists. Rather, his job was to advise the State Department as to the best course of action regarding the increasingly tense situation between the PRC and the ROC.

Throughout his time as ambassador Rankin expressed his opinions about the increasingly tense situation between the Nationalists and the Communists as well as the United States' role in the region. These opinions were influenced, in part, by the conservative nature of US politics in the 1950s. He was, compared to John Leighton Stuart, a hard-line Cold Warrior. Rankin also firmly believed that the Soviet Union was a grave threat to the US and that the Chinese Communists were guided by officials in Moscow. Rankin also believed that Containment was the most effective strategy for combating Communism's spread.

¹ Memo from Karl Lott Rankin to the Department of State, April 2, 1955, box 7, folder 2, Karl L. Rankin Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, 6.

The originator of Containment policy was George F. Kennan. His article “The Source of Soviet Conduct,” published in 1947, recommended that the US build up and support democratic governments in Europe with the intent of containing Soviet expansion. The State Department adopted Kennan’s Containment policy with regard to the Soviet Union, and by extension, the PRC. Their justification for applying Containment policy to the PRC was that the People’s Republic of China was a satellite of Soviet Communism and had no real independence or difference in strategy for expansion.

This sentiment was evident as early as 1945 when the economic attaché to China, Alonzo B. Calder, commented that the Soviets gave assistance to the Chinese Communists in their struggle against the Nationalists. He explained that the Soviets did this in an effort to create another Communist government in the region that would act as buffer between the West and the USSR. He noted that the work to create the buffer state began “some twenty-three or twenty-four years ago, and the present civil war [in China] is nothing less than a ‘flowering’ of their effort.” Calder continued, saying “[Soviet] purposes were open in trying to destroy American and British prestige in China . . . [Mikhail] Borodin, now director of the Moscow Daily News . . . was here in China conducting propaganda. . .” He concluded, saying that after Soviet propagandists were chased out by the GMD in 1927 they went underground, but they “kept their finger on China’s pulse ever since, that they are now guiding and aiding the Chinese Communists and using them as a tool to thwart U.S. objectives in the country.”² According to Calder’s thinking, the Soviet Union placed propaganda agents in China in the early days of its civil war. When the Soviets were forced out of China, several of their agents went

² The Commercial Attaché in China (Calder) to the Charge in China (Robertson) 27 December 1945, in *FRUS: Diplomatic Papers, 1945, The Far East, China, Volume VII*, (GPO: Washington, D.C., 1969), 711.

underground, but continued to manipulate the Chinese Communist Party as a tool for Soviet expansion.

Similarly, the Deputy Director of the Office of Eastern European Affairs Charles Yost commented on the expansion of Soviet influence into countries close to the Soviet Union. He noted that “Those [countries] most recently and seriously threatened include Indo-China and the other states of South East Asia.”³ Clearly, Yost was of the opinion that the Soviet Union was expanding its influence into the Far East in countries such as China. Like Alfonzo Calder, he did not believe that the Chinese Communists had the support of its citizens. Instead, both men believed that the Soviets imposed their Communist government on unsuspecting countries.

Secretary of State Dulles echoed both Yost’s and Calder’s sentiments in a May 18, 1951 speech to the China Institute in New York. Dulles said that the relationship between the Chinese Communists and Soviet Union dated back to the 1920s when Stalin announced that the “road to victory in the West’ would be sought in Asia and particularly China.”⁴ Additionally, Dulles described a meeting between Máo and Stalin after the Communist victory in China in 1949, saying:

[Mao] went to Moscow at the end of 1949 where he spent nearly 3 months in consultation with the Soviet leaders. On his return, [to China] he broadcast to the peoples of Southeast Asia, calling upon them to seek liberation through armed struggle, as part of the “forces headed by the Soviet Union.” There followed Communist armed intervention in Korea, Indochina, Tibet and the Philippines. These interventions conformed exactly with known Soviet wishes. . .⁵

³ Memorandum by the Deputy Director of the Office of Eastern European Affairs (Yost) to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Thompson), February 15, 1950, in *FRUS, 1950, National Security Affairs : Foreign Economic Policy, Volume I*, (GPO: Washington, D.C., 1976), 157.

⁴ John Foster Dulles, “Speech at China Institute Dinner,” 18 May 1951, in *The Personal Papers of John Foster Dulles [microfilm]*, reel 18, 3

⁵ *Ibid.*

According to Dulles's description of events, Máo went to the Soviet Union to receive orders from Stalin. To Dulles, Máo was nothing more than a soldier in the Soviet Red Army who was given orders about how to expand the reach of the USSR.

Clearly, there was wide-spread sentiment in State Department that the Chinese Communists were an extension of the Soviet Union and that they had little or no independence from the Soviets. As a result, the focus of State Department foreign policy was geared more toward the Soviet Union than the PRC. It was this sentiment that Ambassador Karl Lott Rankin struggled with during his tenure in Taiwan. One of his greatest challenges was advocating for sustained support of the Nationalists militarily. Rankin called for the US to commit troops to the Nationalist's effort to retake the mainland. Many in the Department rhetorically supported the Nationalists, but stopped short of calling for an attack on the mainland. The State Department was also unwilling to commit troops and war material to another potential world war. Rankin, however, believed that if the State Department truly supported the Nationalists that a sustained military commitment was needed.

Karl Lott Rankin was born in 1898 in Manitowok, Wisconsin. He graduated from Princeton in 1922 with a degree in civil engineering, and entered the Foreign Service Department of Commerce in 1927.⁶ Rankin received his first foreign assignment in 1939 as commercial attaché to Prague, Athens, Tirana, Brussels, and Luxembourg.⁷ In 1940 he was promoted to the rank of Consul and as a result was given more high-priority posts. Through the Second World War Rankin was posted mainly in Cairo and Manila as a

⁶ Glenn Fowler, "Karl Rankin, 92, U.S. Diplomat In Europe and East for 34 Years," *New York Times*, 9 February 1991.

⁷ Rankin was commercial attaché to all four of those countries at the same time, and not each individually.

commercial attaché.⁸ In 1943 Rankin and his wife were imprisoned by the Japanese in Manila for two years. Once released, Rankin returned to the US to recuperate, but was soon off again, this time to his post in Canton on mainland China. He arrived in China in 1949, but was forced to move to Hong Kong due to the advancing Communist forces in the region. On October 1, 1949 the Chinese Communists declared victory against the Nationalists, and forced Jiǎng Jièshí's armies to the island of Taiwan. Rankin followed, and was formally appointed as Charge d'Affaires and Consul General to Taipei in January of 1950.⁹

From the start, Rankin emphasized that the Nationalists required sustained military support from the US in order to succeed as a viable government. In one of his first reports to the State Department, dated August 18, 1950 Rankin addressed the US government's long term plans in China, saying that the US-backed Nationalist government in Taiwan was weak both militarily and politically. He continued, saying:

NSC [National Security Council] decided sometime ago [that] Formosa [Taiwan] could not be held without use of American ground forces which decision served as basis for [the] adoption [of a] passive military policy. Whether or not that decision [was] entirely justified it recognized [the] necessity of more effective aid than we [are] now prepared to give and implied [a] longer term policy than we have so far adopted.¹⁰

As this passage demonstrates, Rankin emphasized to the State Department that the Republic of China could not support itself alone, and would require military and economic aid from the US in order to survive. In addition, according to Rankin, the survival of the ROC required that the US commit itself to supporting the ROC for the long term.

⁸ Fowler, "Rankin, 92."

⁹ "Rankin is Named Belgrade Envoy," *The New York Times*, 14 December 1957.

¹⁰ Telegram from Karl Lott Rankin to the Secretary of State, August 18, 1950, *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1950 Volume VI East Asia and Pacific*, (GPO: Washington, 1976), 443-44.

Rankin also noted that the Guomindang government was not making any significant effort to retake mainland China. According to him, this was all the more reason for the US to support Taiwan with a sizeable military and financial commitment. In these early telegrams one also sees that Rankin did not fully agree with the US strategy in China. At this point the US supported the GMD in its presumed plan to retake the mainland, but the State Department was unwilling to commit a large troop contingent to support the Taiwanese effort. Rankin felt if the US wanted to support the Nationalists in retaking the mainland, that it would take a significant commitment in both money and time by the US. Additionally, Rankin mentioned “several small islands” that included a string known as the Dàchéns as well as two larger islands known as Quemoy (also referred to as Kinmen) and Mǎzǔ. These islands played a significant role in the triangular relationship between the PRC, the ROC and the US. .

Rankin supported the Nationalists against the Communists during his career as ambassador to China. This was perhaps the most important (but by no means only) difference between Rankin and his predecessor John Leighton Stuart. Stuart did not actively push for one form of government over the other when trying to formulate a coalition government in China. Instead, he advocated for whichever government was chosen by the people of China. Rankin, on the other hand, supported a democratic government in China, and believed that the Chinese Nationalist government should make all efforts to retake mainland China. It should be noted, too, that Rankin and Stuart had different missions in their respective posts. Stuart’s objective was to reach a settlement between the Nationalists and the Communists in their civil war and to create a coalition government between the two factions. Rankin’s mission, however, was to give assistance

to the GMD in their effort to retake the mainland. Rankin and Stuart had different roles as ambassadors, and as a result treated their jobs differently. This difference in mission, however, did not affect their *opinions* about the situations they were in or the policies the US government pursued in China. For the most part, if either Rankin or Stuart did not believe that a particular policy was working well, they told the State Department. It can be said, however, that Rankin was more willing to express his displeasure about a particular policy than was Stuart.

Personal opinion notwithstanding, Rankin identified with the goals of the US. He believed that the US should support the Nationalists against the Communists, but he disagreed with US methods of pursuing their goals. As an example, in Rankin's December 20th telegram, he said that:

if we are to exploit this program [of supporting anti-Communist movements in China] fully, we must be prepared to come out in the open at least to the same extent as the Communists. Clandestine operations are all very well, but they are necessarily restricted in size and therefore ineffective. By all means, let us operate secretly as far as possible, but when occasion requires we must not handicap ourselves. Certainly we cannot afford to overlook the psychological effect of making known our active sympathy with anti-Communist resistance movements.¹¹

Clearly, Rankin favored not only resisting the Communists, but doing so in a more aggressive manner than the previous administration. He felt that under the Truman administration the US had handicapped itself by not formulating a clear strategy to fight Communism in the Far East. As a result, he advocated that the US declare its support of the ROC against Máo and the Communists. This was in stark contrast to John Leighton Stuart who was more sympathetic toward the Communist Chinese. While Stuart did not

¹¹ The Chargè in China (Rankin) to The Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, 20 December 1950, *The Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950, Far East and the Pacific* Volume VI, (GPO: Washington, D.C., 1976), 608.

advocate that the State Department should support Máo's Communist regime, he did not dismiss the possibility of Máo's takeover of mainland China or that the US could have an amiable relationship with the PRC.

Another difference between Rankin and Stuart was the frequency with which Rankin expressed his disapproval of US policy. One topic that he continually returned to was the relationship between the US, the ROC and the PRC. In a September 1950 telegram Rankin wrote to the State Department saying that he believed it was his duty to voice his own opinion about the US's role in the region. Rankin prefaced these opinions by saying that it was unlikely that the PRC would mount an attack against Taiwan any time soon. "Certainly," Rankin wrote "there is plenty of evidence that they [the Communist Chinese] intend to make the attempt eventually; but the date now seems more likely to be postponed until early spring [of 1951]."¹² While Rankin did not believe that the PRC would mount an attack against Taiwan within the next four months, he did believe that the US needed to develop a clear-cut strategy to defend Taiwan. Indeed, immediately after the Second World War the US supported the Nationalist Chinese in their fight against the Communists. The State Department, however, came to realize that Jiǎng would likely not be victorious in the civil war and that mainland China would be controlled by a Communist government.¹³ Kennan himself admitted in 1948 that the situation in China was continuously changing and as a result the US could not develop a definite policy in the region. Moreover, Kennan acknowledged that in contrast to the

¹² Letter from Karl Lott Rankin to Asst. Sec'y State Dean Rusk, September 4, 1950, box 5, folder 1, Karl L. Rankin Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, 1-2.

¹³ Mayers, *Kennan and the Dilemmas*, 172.

corrupt and nepotistic leadership of the GMD, the CCP was energetic, determined and very well organized.¹⁴

Rankin, in an attempt to cut through the disinterest in the State Department and push for US support of the Nationalists to retake the mainland, made his own suggestions about US policy. In a September 1950 letter to the Department he made three recommendations concerning the China-Taiwan situation. The first was that the US should extend enough aid to the GMD to prop it up against the PRC until a settlement could be reached in the Korean conflict. His second suggestion was to “improve our relations with the Chinese Government [the GMD] as a basis for more effective economic and military aid.” Rankin’s third suggestion was that the US remove the Guomindang government, either by a fabricated coup or diplomatic means, and allow those in Jiǎng’s administration to disperse without further repercussions.¹⁵

Likely, Rankin suggested removing Jiǎng as a result of the Truman administration’s hesitance to embrace Jiǎng’s government which was corrupt and generally disliked by the Taiwanese people. Rankin reasoned that the US could overthrow or force the GMD from power and replace it with a less corrupt government. Despite suggesting that the US stage a coup within the nationalist party, Rankin emphasized that he did not believe the US should fully embrace the communist Chinese by extending diplomatic recognition to the PRC, writing “the United States should make it a matter of policy to recognize no additional Soviet satellites. . . .” He continued saying “put in another way, that we should announce our intention to withhold recognition in the

¹⁴ Ibid., 173.

¹⁵ Letter from Rankin to Rusk, September 4, 1950, 2.

absence of demonstrated willingness and ability to support the purposes and principles of the United Nations.”¹⁶

Kennan labeled Soviet expansion as being one that did not take unnecessary risk, saying:

it is highly sensitive to logic of force. For this reason it can easily withdraw--and usually does when strong resistance is encountered at any point. Thus, if the adversary has sufficient force and makes clear his readiness to use it, he rarely has to do so. If situations are properly handled there need be no prestige-engaging showdowns.¹⁷

Kennan believed that the Soviet Union would not act against another country – militarily or otherwise – unless it was assured of victory with little to no resistance. Similarly, Rankin believed that the CCP waited to enter the Korean conflict until it was assured that the potential victory in Korea would “[enhance] Asiatic and Communist prestige in relation to Western imperialism.”¹⁸

In addition to Chinese actions in Korea, Rankin expressed his opinion about US actions in the country, saying that “The sacrifices of our men in Korea . . . has [sic] been a decisive factor in saving, for the time being at least, Japan, Formosa, Indo-China and probably other important parts of Asia.”¹⁹ In this letter Rankin pointed out that while US and UN forces were suffering great losses at the hands of the DPRK and the PRC, it was their presence in East and Southeast Asia that aided in preserving democratic governments in Japan, Indo-China and Formosa. Rankin clearly had a pro-West and pro-US view of the Korean conflict. He believed that the United States’ had a mission to

¹⁶ Ibid., 4.

¹⁷ George F. Kennan, “Telegram from Charge in Russia George F. Kennan to the Secretary of State [The Long Telegram]”, n.d., < <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/coldwar/documents/episode-1/kennan.htm> > 31 August 2009.

¹⁸ Paraphrase of telegram Rankin to [Acheson], Rankin Papers, 2.

¹⁹ Letter from Karl Lott Rankin to a friend, November 1, 1951, box 5, folder 4, Karl L. Rankin Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, 4.

defeat the forces of the Soviet Union by taking a hard line against Communism militarily and ideologically. Being a Cold Warrior, Rankin emphasized that the US needed to take a hard line against the Communist advance in China. Again, one sees that Rankin was in agreement with George Kennan's Long Telegram and one of its methods of combating Communism. The Telegram stated that "If the adversary has sufficient force and makes clear his readiness to use it, he rarely has to do so,"²⁰ meaning that if the US had the force available to combat the Soviet advance it would rarely need to use it as the *threat* of its use would be enough to contain the USSR. Rankin, too, believed that this method of Containment could be applied to China and its expansive tendencies.

There was, however, a difference between Rankin's and Kennan's thinking about Containment. Kennan wanted to support anti-Communist elements in Western Europe, which did not include using military force in Asia or China. Indeed, in an interview in the spring 1987 issue of *Foreign Affairs* Kennan recounted that what he tried to say in his X Article was "simply this: 'Don't make any more unnecessary concessions to these people[.] [The Soviets] are not going to be allowed to establish ☺and dominant influence in Western Europe and in Japan if there is anything we can do to prevent it[']. . . This, to my mind, was what was meant by the thought of 'containing communism' in 1946." Clearly, Kennan's concept of Containment was to stand firm and not make concessions to the Soviet Union. Kennan's was a passive and defensive approach designed to contain the Soviet Union's advance in Europe by building up other countries. Not mentioned was China, Southeast Asia or military intervention. In contrast to Kennan, Rankin believed that China was a critically important region and that the best method of combating

²⁰ George F. Kennan, "Telegram from Charge in Russia George F. Kennan to the Secretary of State [The Long Telegram]", n.d., < <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/coldwar/documents/episode-1/kennan.htm> > 31 August 2009.

Communism was with a proactive approach. Consequently, Rankin's concept of combating the spread of Communism in China came into conflict with State Department policy.

In addition to suggesting that the State Department needed to be more pro-active, Rankin also outlined *how* the US should be more proactive. In a December 1950 telegram to the State Department he related the events of a meeting between himself and Senator H Alexander Smith. During the meeting with Smith, Rankin outlined his views of US involvement in China. The most important point in Rankin's mind was that the US needed to stop further Communist expansion into Southeast Asia. Rankin did say, though, that the US government should not "announce and define such demarcations, with the effect of inviting the Communists to undertake aggression against states which were excluded and at the same time daring aggressors to step over the line."²¹ According to Rankin, the US should not announce to the world what it planned to do because that would undermine any efforts at defending Taiwan and aiding the Nationalists to return to the mainland. Instead, Rankin urged the Department to formulate and "declare" its intentions within the Department. Essentially, he wanted the Department to clearly define its policy in China. He also hoped to encourage Secretary of State Acheson to redraw the defense perimeter in Asia to include Taiwan.

In addition to his talk of drawing lines against the Communists, Rankin believed that the US should consider the use of non-traditional methods of combating communism in China suggesting that "we can win [against the Communists] if we exploit to the full every method which promises to help our cause. One of these is the effective support of

²¹ Rankin to Deputy Asst. Sec. of State Far Eastern Affairs, *FRUS Vol. VI, 1950*, 607.

resistance movements inside the Iron Curtain, and particularly in Communist China.”²² Rankin’s advocated capitalizing on anti-communist sentiment on the mainland, which was similar to Secretary of State Dean Acheson’s plan of action as outlined in the State Department policy paper NSC-68. National Security Council document 68, drafted in 1950, suggested that the US should “by means of a rapid and sustainable build-up of political, economic, and military strength of the free world . . . confront it [the Soviet Union] with convincing evidence of the determination and ability of the free world to frustrate the Kremlin design of a world dominated by its will.”²³ Rankin applied NSC-68 to China by suggesting that the US should frustrate Chinese Communist expansion by encouraging anti-communist sentiment on mainland China.

In addition to making recommendations concerning US strategy, Rankin also expressed his concern about US funding to Taiwan. Through the year 1951 Rankin spent much of his time trying to persuade the State Department that both military and economic aid to Taiwan needed to be maintained or increased. The State Department, however, did not want to commit money and troops to a country which could barely support itself. Indeed the then Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs at the time, Dean Rusk, noted in his memoir *As I Saw It* that the State Department had no intention of landing troops on mainland China during the closing days of the Chinese Civil War. Additionally, Rusk personally did not believe that Jiǎng was capable of maintaining control of the mainland if he was given the chance, saying:

Although I had long supported sending American assistance, [to the Chinese Nationalists] once it became clear that the “mandate of heaven” had passed to the Communists, I lost interest in last-minute efforts to increase this aid. I agreed with [Secretary of State] Dean Acheson that

²² Ibid.

²³ Kennan, “Long Telegram,” in *A History of Our Times*, 27.

more American aid would only prolong the inevitable. If anything, Chiang Kai-shek's inability to govern and the impact of Japanese aggression, not American inaction, "lost" China."²⁴

According to Rusk, the State Department had no intention of significantly increasing military forces in China or Taiwan during the final days of the Chinese civil war. After the Communist takeover in October of 1949, however, the Department gave up any hope that the Nationalists could retake the mainland. On the surface, the Department supported the Nationalists, but below the surface the Department gave very little weight to the belief that the Nationalists could recapture mainland China. It was this below-the-surface disinterest that Rankin had to combat in trying to advocate for support of the GMD.

In April 1951 Rankin addressed the funding of the Guomindang saying that:

[The Chinese Nationalist Government should] not be expected [to] abandon [the] dreams of [a] return to [the] mainland without which it [would] fall apart [politically], yet any MDAP [Mutual Defense and Aid Package from the US] unavoidably fosters such dream. Moreover, perfecting [the] purely defensive power of armed forces on [the] island [of Taiwan] is at [the] same time [an] essential first step toward preparing them [the GMD] for possible offensive operations in [the] future.²⁵

Essentially, what Rankin argued was that US support was not only crucial to the national security of the US, but that it was also critical in order to maintain positive morale among the citizens of Taiwan. Additionally, Rankin felt that if the US wanted to aid the Nationalists that its support could not be done half-heartedly. He felt that the Nationalists needed a firm and sustained commitment from the US.

Rankin returned to the issue of Chinese Communist intentions in Korea in a letter dated November 1, 1951. In the letter he made perhaps his most blunt statement about Communist intentions in Korea and on the international stage. He began by noting that

²⁴ Dean Rusk, *As I Saw It*, Richard Rusk ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), 157.

²⁵ Rankin to Secretary of State Acheson, *Foreign Relations Vol. VI, 1950*, 1622.

while it was impossible to predict what the Chinese Communists would do in any given situation, one could make general observations. One such observation was that the CCP's intentions were to keep the US from engaging in open conflict with the Soviet Union until the Soviets wished to do so.²⁶ Rankin believed that the Chinese had a partnership with the Soviets, and he reasoned that the Chinese intervened in Korea so as to divert US attention – militarily and politically – from Soviet expansion in Europe. He continued, saying “My immediate concern . . . is that American preoccupation with Korea and Japan may tend to divert our attention from other parts of the Far East, and particularly from recognizing the intimate relationship between our problems in such areas [of the Far East] and in Korea.”²⁷ Generally speaking, Rankin was trying to make his case to the State Department that the US needed to focus more attention on the *epicenter* of Communist expansion in the Far East – namely Communist China – and less time on the diversionary war in Korea.²⁸ Additionally, he believed that the Communist government on mainland China was just as much of a destabilizing force in the Far East as the Soviet Union was in Europe. Rankin also believed that since the US had “again put [its] hand to the wheel in the area of the South China Sea” it needed to coordinate its efforts in order to succeed in its intended mission.²⁹ That mission, in Rankin's mind, was to support the ROC in its effort to retake mainland China. Again, his comments came back to a lack of a

²⁶ Letter from Rankin to a friend, Rankin Papers, 1.

²⁷ Rankin to a friend, Rankin Papers, 4.

²⁸ Despite suggesting that the Korean War was a diversionary war, Rankin fully supported General MacArthur's decision making ability during the conflict. He said, about meeting MacArthur, that “He seemed confident and relaxed. His discussion of the Far Eastern problem in general, and of China and Taiwan in particular, showed a breadth of view which few statesmen could equal.” [Rankin, *China Assignment*, 30.] Moreover, Rankin was shocked when he heard that MacArthur was fired on April 11, 1951. Likely, he would have supported MacArthur's planned invasion of China, but in doing research for this project the author did not come across any primary source material that directly stated his opposition to the General's firing.

²⁹ Rankin to a friend, Rankin Papers, 5.

concrete policy in China and the Far East as well as the US tendency to treat the symptoms of Communism and not the cause.

While Rankin did call for support of the ROC, he was also pragmatic about the likelihood of the Nationalists' ability to survive as a viable government. In his April 19, 1951 telegram to the State Department he pointed out that "Not until [an] alternative presents itself with sufficient outside backing to give reasonable promise of success can active support of [Nationalist Chinese] people against [the Communists] be looked for. A [Chinese] Tito is not impossible but likelihood of one materializing without substantial outside support is too remote to provide basis for US policy."³⁰ This telegram was in reference to the widely-held belief in the State Department that the Communist government on mainland China could be used as an ally against the Soviets.

Indeed, some in the State Department believed that Mao, similar to Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia, was independent from the Soviets and had formed his Communist revolution independent from the Soviet Union. Historian John Lewis Gaddis noted this in his monograph *The Cold War: A New History*, saying:

Both Mao and Tito had long dominated in their respective communist parties, both had led them to victory in civil wars that had overlapped a world war, both had achieved their victories without the Soviet Union's help... American officials had consoled themselves with the argument that the 'loss' of China to the Communists would not amount to a 'gain' for the Soviet Union. Mao, they thought, might well turn out to be the 'Asian Tito' . . .³¹

Indeed, many in the State Department did console themselves with the idea that Máo could be turned away from the Soviets, and that any existing cracks in the Sino-Soviet alliance would be widened. Indeed, historian Nancy Bernkopf Tucker argued that the

³⁰ Letter from Karl Lott Rankin to Secretary of State Acheson, April 19, 1951, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1951, Korea and China, Vol. VI Part 2*, 1639.

³¹ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 37.

US made numerous efforts under Dean Acheson's watch to hurry along a split between the USSR and the PRC. She noted that Acheson considered normalizing relations with Communist China in order to encourage friction between the two Communist countries.

A Sino-Soviet split, she argued

would not occur in the immediate future, but, Acheson believed, it must come and Americans should be ready for it. The Department, therefore, devoted its resources to comparing Chinese Communism and Titoism, even posting [Ambassador] John Cabot from Belgrade to Shanghai so as to have an expert observer on the scene. It planted stories in the press during Mao Tse-tung's negotiations with Stalin in February 1950 emphasizing Soviet imperialism. Repeatedly, speeches by American officials called the Communist Chinese puppets, hoping to shame them into a show of anti-Russian nationalism.³²

Ambassador Rankin, however, believed that the Asian Tito scenario was unlikely without significant cajoling from the US, and continued to push for a sustained commitment by the US to support the ROC government in its effort to retake the mainland.

At the end of 1951, Rankin returned to the ever-present issue of the under-funded Nationalist government by emphasizing that Jiang's government could not survive without a large infusion of US capital and military aid. In a letter to Assistant Secretary of State Dean Rusk – labeled official and informal – Rankin attempted to sum up the situation in China and how it had evolved in the past five months. He explained that when he met the Assistant Secretary of State – Dean Rusk - the previous year Rusk suggested that the US should not send funding only to the government of Taiwan. Rusk recommended that the Nationalists encourage support from Chinese foreign nationals in other Asian countries such as Vietnam and Cambodia.³³ Rankin agreed with Rusk that the

³² Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Patterns in the Dust: Chinese-American Relations and the Recognition Controversy, 1949-1950*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 193.

³³ Rankin to Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs Dean Rusk, August 13, 1951, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951, Korea and China, Vol. VII*, 1779.

US should not commit all its resources to the Nationalist government, but also noted that “for years we [the US] have been looking around in various countries for nice, clean, honest, ‘democratic,’ middle-of-the-road groups to which we can give our support.” Rankin continued saying that there was minimal support for democratic government in countries such as those in Eastern Europe because according to him, “where Communism is an immediate and serious threat there seems to be no place for middle-of-the-roaders. People have to choose one side or the other. . .”³⁴ What Rankin tried to explain in this passage was that the US needed to stop searching for the “perfect” ally in the Far East. Leaders like Jiǎng Jièshí might not ha been the best choice, but no ally was entirely perfect.

In this letter Rankin also advocated that the State Department reconsider how it funded and armed the ROC military. He noted that those in Washington viewed the situation in Taiwan as “a comparatively minor part of a global problem,” and that “our insistence on the need for more economic aid for Formosa may seem exaggerated. I assure you that it is not.”³⁵ Rankin continued, saying that the money budgeted to the ROC for the Fiscal Year 1951 (FY51) was three times greater than the aid given to Greece in the first year of the Truman Doctrine, because the ROC military was three times as large.³⁶ Clearly, Rankin was attempting to justify the large amount of money that would be needed to adequately fund the Nationalist Army, but he also tried to highlight the fact that the ROC military would be used for primarily Containment-related military action, saying that “underdeveloped” countries such as Taiwan should be armed primarily for

³⁴ Ibid., 1779-80.

³⁵ Ibid., 1780.

³⁶ Ibid., 1781.

defense. Rankin continued, saying that “If this is well done, further Communist aggression will be discouraged and we shall also have useful allies in case of trouble.”³⁷

Rankin’s overall point in this message was to show the State Department that a “nice, clean, honest, democratic” political entity did not exist in the Far East. Every government or political group that the US would potentially support, to include the Chinese Nationalists, had an unsavory aspect about it. Rankin furthermore pointed out that, while his request for funding to the ROC was high, it was well worth the cost as the Nationalist Army was to be armed and trained as a defense force, similar to countries in Eastern Europe. Previously, Rankin called for the Department to commit troops to Taiwan in an effort to retake the mainland. By 1951, however, Rankin seemed to be changing his opinion about Jiǎng and the Nationalists, though mostly to the State Department. This strategy would presumably be more palatable to the State Department than a commitment of troops, and it was likely for this reason that Rankin altered his suggestions.

Despite changing his suggestions about the Nationalists, Rankin was correct in his statement that middle-of-the-road candidates had little chance of surviving the Communist political system. In his 1937 piece *Combat Liberalism* Máo Zédōng wrote that liberals rejected revolutionary thought and that they stood for unprincipled peace. Moreover, according to Máo, liberals did not value art or intellectual pursuits. Instead they valued material possessions, and, according to Máo, liberals viewed Marxist thought as dogma that they approve of, but do not practice. He continued, saying:

These people [liberals] have their Marxism, but they have their liberalism as well--they talk Marxism but practice liberalism; they apply Marxism to others but liberalism to themselves. They keep both kinds of goods in

³⁷ Ibid., 1782.

stock and find a use for each. This is how the minds of certain people work.³⁸

While it is likely that Máo wrote this piece in reaction to Jiǎng Jièshí's "New Life Movement" it is a telling example of Máo's belief in a black versus white situation within the CCP. Máo did not believe that the CCP could reconcile itself with any other political faction, even one which shared similar values. Máo's nearly fanatical devotion to the Communist revolution in China eliminated any possible alliance with another group – such as the GMD. He believed that any compromise between Marxism and liberalism, was intolerable.

Despite the clear ideological differences between the Chinese Communists and the Nationalists, Rankin cautioned the State Department against giving aid to both the Nationalists and what he termed "middle-of-the-road" candidates, saying in a letter to the State Department that:

[it is] justified up to a point where the law of diminishing returns begins to operate. It is not a bad idea at all to keep the Nationalists and the others on their toes by giving appropriate support to all of them, but when they begin to feel that we intend to play them against each other in any important respect, we shall begin to lose not only their confidence but their cooperation.³⁹

Rankin cautioned the State Department against supporting multiple anti-communist groups in China. Clearly, he was pushing for the US to focus its support on the GMD. In addition, Rankin felt that supporting multiple anti-communist groups could undermine support for the US in Asia by presenting US policy in China as erratic.

³⁸ Mao Zedong, "Combat Liberalism," in *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, n.d., <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2_03.htm>, 3 October 2009.

³⁹ Rankin to Rusk, *Foreign Relations Korea and China Vol VII*, 13 August 1951, 1780.

In addition to needing to focus its policy, Rankin also felt that the US needed to address the possibility of an uprising in Taiwan. Civil unrest in Taiwan was a very real threat immediately after the Communist revolution. When Jiǎng Jièshí retreated to Taiwan, he took with him the political leadership of the Nationalist government. Between 1945 and 1949 the GMD influenced leadership in Taiwan with the intention of having a relative safe haven to retreat to should the CCP be victorious in the civil war.⁴⁰ As a result, the GMD essentially took over operation of the Taiwanese government by replacing native Taiwanese officials with members of the GMD. The native Taiwanese increasingly resented encroachment by the GMD. Their dissatisfaction centered on the inability of the Nationalist government to manage Taiwan's economy as well as the perception that being governed by the GMD was no better than being governed by Japan during WWII. Indeed, author Steven Philips pointed out that "The Taiwanese considered both the [Nationalist] Chinese and Japanese regimes exploitive, but deemed the new government [the GMD was] particularly dishonest, incompetent, unpredictable, and inefficient."⁴¹ Additionally, many of the Taiwanese elite felt that the Nationalists were more interested in seizing former Japanese holdings on the island and resented the virtual elimination of private commerce between businesses in Taiwan and the outside world.⁴²

Rankin, however, defended Jiǎng's government believing it to be a much better alternative to the CCP. He wrote in the same August 13, 1951 letter that "Whatever the shortcomings of the regime in Formosa, it is evolving and, on balance, improving . . . it differs enormously, both in theory and in practice, from the Communist strait jacket

⁴⁰ Steven E. Philips, *The Taiwanese Encounter China, 1945-1950* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003), 13.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 66.

which holds the mainland.”⁴³ As this passage illustrates, Rankin hoped to show the State Department that the Nationalist government made numerous strides since the Communist takeover of mainland China in 1949, and that the ROC was indeed worth supporting. This was in sharp departure from earlier suggestions that the Department orchestrate a coup against the GMD. Again, this was due to Rankin’s effort to make support for the GMD more palatable to the State Department.

As the conflict in Korea stabilized and eventually stalemated in the years 1952 and 1953 the US shifted its focus back to China and the possibility of an invasion of Taiwan by the PRC. Rankin, similar to his predecessor, was privy to the negotiations between the US, the ROC and the PRC. The tense situation between the two Chinas gave Rankin an opportunity to push for increased support of the Nationalist government, but by 1953 the US cut much of its aid to Taiwan. Rankin, as ambassador to Taiwan, had the duty of informing Jiǎng Jièshí of US intentions. In his April 16, 1953 telegram, Rankin reported that “I have informed President Chiang and [the ROC] Foreign Minister that the US seeks ‘formal undertaking from Chinese government not to engage in offensive military operations which US considers inimical to its best interests.’”⁴⁴ Essentially what Rankin told Jiǎng was that the State Department was unwilling to support the ROC if it developed plans which would “radically alter the pattern or tempo of current operations of the Chinese armed forces, including specifically any offensive use of aircraft.”⁴⁵ In theory, the United States supported the ROC in any attempt to retake mainland China. In practice, however, the US was unwilling to give any aid that would provoke cross-strait

⁴³ Rankin to Rusk, *Foreign Relations Korea and China Vol. VII*, 1783-84.

⁴⁴ Telegram from Karl Lott Rankin to the Department of State, April 16, 1953, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, China and Japan, Vol. XIV, Part 1*, 190.

⁴⁵ Telegram from the Secretary of State [Dean Acheson] to the Embassy in the Republic of China, April 17, 1953, *Foreign Relations of the United States Vol. XIV Part 1*, 191.

hostilities or drag the US into another war in Asia. Again, one sees Rankin's conflict with State Department policy. He favored support of the ROC in order to retake the mainland; however, the Department seemed unwilling to commit military forces to such an operation.

Despite the United States' unwillingness to increase tensions between the Communists and the Nationalists, the PRC seemed more than willing to foment conflict. By July 1953 the PRC mounted several small raids on islands around Taiwan. The ROC and the US viewed these attacks as preparatory to the eventual invasion of Taiwan. Rankin informed the State Department of the situation on July 22, and that the most recent raid on Taiwan included the use of napalm by the PRC.⁴⁶ Because of this increasingly hostile situation, the ROC was eager to develop a defense agreement with the US. Rankin, however, informed the ROC that the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Command (CINPAC) would not take action against Communist forces stationed on the islands surrounding Taiwan. CINPAC did this, according to Rankin, in an effort to "encourage prompt and effective Chinese strengthening of weak and poorly organized . . . defenses."⁴⁷ Clearly, the State Department was unwilling to significantly increase either troop levels in Taiwan or quickly formulate a defensive strategy for the island. Instead, the hope was that by *not* having US military aid to lean on the ROC would quickly develop its own defense for the off-shore islands.

Despite his rhetorical support of the ROC – and messages to the State Department along the same lines – Rankin seemed to have altered his opinion about the United States' role in the region. He knew that the Communists posed a serious threat to Taiwan,

⁴⁶ Telegram from Karl Lott Rankin to the Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Vol. XIV Part 1*, 231.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 229-30.

and he warned the State Department on July 22, 1953 that their recent troop build-up on the nearby island of Dàchén strongly suggested that the PRC intended to attack the islands surrounding Taiwan.⁴⁸ Additionally he urged the US to reconsider its defense policy in relation to Taiwan. Specifically, he asked that President Eisenhower widen the defense perimeter around Taiwan that the US was willing to maintain. This request was likely in reference to Secretary of State Acheson's January 1950 speech to the National Press Club in which he described the US defense perimeter as "run[ning] along the Aleutians to Japan and then goes to the Ryukyus."⁴⁹ Acheson continued, saying, "We hold important defense positions in the Ryukyu Islands, and those we will continue to hold . . . [the perimeter continues] from the Ryukyus to the Philippine Islands."⁵⁰ Not included in that defense perimeter was China or Taiwan. Seemingly, the State Department did not believe that the two countries were worth defending. Indeed, the State Department decreased its aid to Taiwan between the years 1945 and 1950, but rhetorically continued to support the "real" government of China in Taiwan. By 1953 it was likely that Rankin recognized that the US was unwilling to fully support the GMD or defend the islands surrounding it. As a result, he attempted to shape US policy the only way he could, which was through telegrams and opinion messages sent to the State Department.

Throughout the first three years of Rankin's ambassadorship, he primarily reported to the Department of State about events in Taiwan and served as an intermediary between the US government and the Nationalist government. He played the part of a US

⁴⁸ Ibid., 232.

⁴⁹ The Ryukyus Islands are a string of small islands that arch from the west coast of Taiwan north to the southern tip of Japan/

⁵⁰ Dean Acheson, "Speech on the Far East," January, 12, 1950, <<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1612>>, 6 September 2009.

ambassador by reporting about events in the region, giving input when it was requested, and relayed messages from the State Department to officials in the ROC government. Many of his letters and telegrams after 1953, however, were intended to give advice to the State Department concerning US policy in China. The State Department, however, either ignored much of this advice or chose not to include Rankin in key military negotiations. Rankin, like his predecessor, was confident in his mission in China. He believed that the US needed to support the GMD against the Communists and to aid them in retaking the mainland. More importantly, however, was that he and Stuart were either marginalized or entirely disregarded by the Department of State.

As early as January of 1951 Rankin pointed out in a message to the Director of Chinese Affairs that when he arrived in China in 1950 he urged the US military to establish a relationship with the Embassy and that the two entities should share information. He went on to say that “I was not prepared for a situation in which, after five months, the Embassy and its Armed Services attaché are still studiously excluded from military plans for keeping Formosa outside the Iron Curtain.”⁵¹ Often, throughout his tenure as ambassador, the Department of State did not include the Chinese embassy in key meetings or negotiations. Sometime in the year 1953 Rankin made up his mind about the State Department believing that its rhetoric of supporting the “real” government in China (Taiwan) was empty rhetoric. As a result, Rankin increasingly expressed his opinion of US operations in the region as well as his dissatisfaction at being ignored by the State Department.

⁵¹ Letter from Karl Lott Rankin to the Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs O. Edmund Clubb, February 20, 1954, *Foreign Relations of the United States Vol. VII Part 2*, 1523.

This dissatisfaction with the State Department was glaringly evident in Rankin's February 20, 1953 telegram. In it, he criticized the continued exclusion of the China Embassy in key negotiations. Rankin pointed out that he and his staff was not included in discussions that "may determine whether we are to have peace or war, whether we are to succeed or fail in our struggle against Communism in the Far East." He continued, saying "I believe that we might have something useful to contribute in such cases in the future . . ."⁵² Rankin, on the same date as he write his telegram to Clubb, also sent a message to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, Everett F. Drumright, condemning the lack of initiative on the part of the US military, saying that "I am very much in favor of taking the initiative – call it the offensive, if you like – in every practicable way, but the activities now envisioned under MAAG [Military Assistance Advisory Group] auspices seem to me somewhat like Uncle Sam tickling the Communist tiger with a feather duster..." He continued, asking "Have we thought this through? Has the Department taken a firm position after careful study? If so, we in Taipei have been told nothing about it."⁵³ Clearly, Rankin favored military action in the Taiwan-Chinese conflict. He believed that the US needed to do more than rhetorically support the Nationalists, and he called for military support of the Nationalists in their future attempt to retake the mainland. It seems that Rankin gave up his attempts to marginally alter recommendations in order to make them more pleasing to the State Department. From 1954 on Rankin made efforts to shape United States' China policy directly by outright

⁵² Telegram from Karl Lott Rankin to Assistant Sec'y of State for Far Eastern Affairs Everett F. Drumright, February 20, 1954, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, China and Japan, Vol XIV Part I*, 363.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 364.

telling the Department how he felt about US policy and what he thought needed to be done.

Rankin turned to the State Department's lack of responsibility in a February 1954 telegram. In the conclusion to this message Rankin wrote that he and the other embassy officials would assume any risks that might occur should the Nationalists attack the mainland.⁵⁴ He cautioned, however, that he would do this only if there was a viable and concrete objective. Finally, Rankin warned the Department that "If matters follow the same course as in the [plans outlined above] the Department should be prepared to pick up the ball and take the blame if and when another mess has developed."⁵⁵ What is important to note in this message was that Rankin criticized the lack of responsibility on the part of the State Department, but not the goal in China. Rankin believed that the State Department did not have a concrete plan in China and that problems that resulted from a lack of direction were placed at the feet of the Embassy.

At this same time the Department of State, as well as President Eisenhower, came to the realization that direct confrontation with the Soviet Union or other Communist nations could provoke a full-scale war. As a result, the administration limited itself to political, economic and defensive military measures to halt Soviet expansion.⁵⁶ In relation to China, the US utilized non-traditional methods of combating the Communist threat, to include the use of psychological warfare, diplomatic negotiations, nuclear brinkmanship and covert operations. Indeed, all of these non-traditional methods of warfare were part of Eisenhower's larger New Look military strategy,⁵⁷ but the varied

⁵⁴ Presumably Rankin was referring to political and media backlash, and not actual military consequences.

⁵⁵ Telegram from Rankin to Drumwright, *FRUS Vol XIV, China and Japan, Part 1*, 364.

⁵⁶ Mayers, *Kennan and the Dilemmas*, 221.

⁵⁷ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 154-55.

nature of the policy led to unfocused tactics. Historian John Lewis Gaddis commented on this lack of focus saying that the New Look policy had many inconsistencies and that its “Reliance on nuclear superiority could delay negotiations with the other side. . . it could also unsettle allies,” and that “Psychological warfare and covert actions could easily backfire. . .”⁵⁸ Indeed, according to Gaddis, contemporary critics of the Eisenhower administration believed that the New Look policies failed because they relied too heavily on nuclear deterrence thus limiting possible responses to Communist aggression. Additionally, the New Look strategy “fumbled the handling of ‘third world’ revolutions . . . allowed a ‘missile gap’ to develop . . . and . . . neglected opportunities for negotiations to lower Cold War tensions.”⁵⁹ Robert Accinelli, writing in the late 1950s, agreed with Gaddis’s assessment, saying that:

The use of atomic weapons, even against limited and localized aggression, was sanctioned under the New Look national security policy first introduced by the Eisenhower administration in 1953 and most recently reaffirmed by the president and his National Security advisors in late July 1958. The central component of the New Look, the strategy of massive retaliation, emphasized nuclear weaponry and air power as the principal military means of deterring and defending against aggression.⁶⁰

Accinelli continued, saying that from its beginning the New Look’s massive retaliation policy provoked opposition from both the military and civilian areas of the administration. The opposition was especially fierce in the latter days of Eisenhower’s second term and, according to Accinelli, was the reason for much of the uncertainty within Eisenhower’s foreign policy strategy. While it is true that nuclear brinkmanship and covert military actions were not utilized extensively to combat the spread of

⁵⁸ Ibid., 159.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 163.

⁶⁰ Robert Accinelli, “A Thorn in the Side of Peace: The Eisenhower Administration and the 1958 Offshore Islands Crisis,” in *Re-Examining the Cold War: US-China Diplomacy, 1954-1973*, Robert S. Ross and Jiang Changbin eds., (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 115.

Communism in China, it should be noted that the New Look's strategy of limited military engagement was quite evident throughout Rankin's term as ambassador. Aside from unwillingness to be involved in another large-scale war, the State Department limited its military commitment in China due to a desire to implement the New Look.

It is likely that Rankin knew about the New Look policy, and that it was being implemented in part or in whole in China. He continued, however, to question not just US military policy, but also its reaction to provocative actions made by the People's Republic of China. By 1953 tension began to build between the ROC and the PRC. In September the PRC began to shell the islands of Jīnmén (Kinmen or Quemoy) and Mǎzǔ (Matsu). Rankin, as ambassador to Taiwan, had firsthand knowledge of many of the events on the islands. In a letter to Everett Drumright, the Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, Rankin wrote that he did not take seriously the bombing of Jīnmén and Mǎzǔ. He said that "my guess is that they [the Communist Chinese] are simply trying us [the US] out. . . . If they can make it appear to all and sundry that the United States is unable or unwilling to do anything about the off-shore islands, the Reds will have won another round."⁶¹ As is evident, Rankin did not view the crisis at Jīnmén and Mǎzǔ as a major concern to the US militarily. Rankin did, however, view it as a potential victory for the Communist Chinese should the US not help defend the offshore islands. As a Cold Warrior, Rankin believed that keeping Jīnmén and Mǎzǔ out of Communists hands was more important than actually using the islands in any kind of strategic capacity. Additionally, he believed that it was another attempt by the PRC to distract the US from its real intentions which were to spread Communist control farther in to Southeast Asia.

⁶¹ Letter from Karl Lott Rankin to Assistant Sec'y of State for Far Eastern Affairs Everett Drumright, September 5, 1953, box 6, folder 5, Karl L. Rankin Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, 1.

While it was true that Rankin favored support of the Nationalists, he did not favor the US extending support beyond Jīnmén and Mǎzǔ. Indeed, during a meeting with the Secretary of State, he mentioned that the US should only continue to aid the Nationalists to defend Jīnmén and Mǎzǔ. Seemingly to reemphasize this notion, Rankin wrote a letter to Walter McConaughy – fellow diplomat and future ambassador to the ROC – clarifying a previous telegram. In the letter, he wrote that:

In the [State] Department's September 7 summary of reports my mention of a few specific islands was rendered, "Kinmen or other threatened offshore islands." This would be clear enough to you or me, but someone might take it to mean that I had recommended Seventh Fleet protection for all of the 30-odd Nationalist-held islands along the China Coast. This, of course, is not the case.⁶²

What is critical to note in these messages concerning Quemoy and Mǎzǔ was that Rankin did not favor extensive military action on the part of the US. Additionally, he did favor former Secretary of State Acheson's concept of a limited defensive perimeter in Southeast Asia. In general, Rankin agreed with the US defense of Taiwan and its offshore islands, but did not favor an expansion of that defense perimeter beyond areas critical to the defense of Taiwan. He believed that US policy was unfocused in China and that extending US defensive efforts beyond Jīnmén and Mǎzǔ would further distract US efforts at aiding the Nationalists to retake the mainland.

Rankin did, however, agree with one aspect of US strategy in Taiwan. Shortly after taking office in January of that year, President Eisenhower lifted the naval blockade of the Taiwan Strait in an effort to "unleash Chiang Kai-shek" against the PRC. In an October 1954 letter to Assistant Secretary of State Walter Robertson, Rankin stated that he supported this move by the administration, but noted that many in both Europe and

⁶² Letter from Karl Lott Rankin to Walter P. McConaughy, Esquire, September 30, 1954, box 6, folder 5, Karl L. Rankin Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, 1

Taiwan did not fully understand the actions of the State Department, saying that “To our Western Allies the United States is made to appear bellicose and irresponsible. To Free China [Taiwan] and others in the Far East we seem irresolute and appeasement-minded.”⁶³ He also pointed out that ever since the Seventh Fleet left the Straits, Taiwan was criticized for not taking the initiative and recapturing the mainland. As a result, according to Rankin, the US was suspected of “keeping the wraps” on Jiang. Rankin recommended that the US simply explain the situation in Taiwan, presumably to those who criticized US actions, in an effort to clarify and justify the United States’ position.⁶⁴

By 1955, however, the Eisenhower administration found itself contributing money to a plan developed by the ROC that the State Department believed would never happen. In December of the previous year Rankin mentioned in a letter to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Arthur Radford, the proposed “Hsieh Plan” developed by the ROC. The plan was to train and deploy over 300,000 reserve troops, the cost of which to the US would be well over \$100 million. He noted his concern that certain members of the US Congress were attempting to withhold or eliminate funding for the ROC.⁶⁵ Clearly, support for the ROC in Washington was waning as a result of the diminishing influence of the anti-Communist movement within United States. In previous years Congress supported the ROC out of a desire to combat Communism and put up a strong front against the Communist threat. By 1955, however, Joseph McCarthy (the man most closely associated with the anti-Communist movement of the 1950s) had been censured

⁶³ Letter from Karl Lott Rankin to Walter S. Robertson, October 21, 1954, box 6, folder 6, Karl L. Rankin Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, 1.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

⁶⁵ Letter from Karl Lott Rankin to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Arthur Radford, December 29, 1954, box 6, folder 6, Karl L. Rankin Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, 1.

by the Senate and the national hunt for domestic Communists had effectively ended. In due course, the US Congress, while still concerned with the threat of international Communism, was not willing to fund a military operation with little chance of success. Indeed, during this period the US began to ratchet down funding to and training of traditional military forces under President Eisenhower's New Look policy.

Further cuts in financial aid to the ROC were evident throughout many of Rankin's letters and telegrams of 1955. In January Rankin addressed a letter to the US Ambassador to Manila, Raymond Spruance. In the letter Rankin asked for advice concerning questions that may be posed to the US embassy in Taiwan. Most of the questions dealt with plans to evacuate Americans from Taiwan as well as whether or not the Chinese Communists were capable of "taking Formosa." Rankin's answer to the "taking Formosa" question was that "The considered judgment of the Embassy is that the Chinese Communists are not now and for the foreseeable future will not be capable of defeating the available American and Chinese Nationalist forces defending Formosa."⁶⁶

Additionally, in response to the question "Under what conditions would the Embassy issue a statement advising Americans to leave Formosa" Rankin responded that there was no foreseeable reason that the embassy should issue such a recommendation. Moreover, he noted that the issuance of a recommendation that Americans leave Taiwan would be a severe blow to Nationalist Chinese morale, and would give the appearance that the US was abandoning its policy of support for the ROC.⁶⁷ While Rankin's answers did attempt to shine a positive light on the situation in Taiwan – as well as advocate for

⁶⁶ Enclosure accompanying letter from Karl Lott Rankin to Raymaond Spruance, January 18, 1955, box 7, folder 1, Karl L. Rankin Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, 1.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 1-2.

continued support of the Nationalists – the very fact that the questions were being asked suggested that the US was considering dropping support for the ROC.

In February, however, the US was forced to aid in the evacuation of a small island group off the east coast of mainland China known as the Dàchén Islands. The Dàchéns were, as Rankin noted, not particularly important to the US in the strategic sense, but would be another blow to the morale of the ROC. Additionally, he called attention to the fact that he did not believe that the “Reds” (the Chinese Communists) would launch a large-scale attack against Taiwan saying that “it may require some military engagement to convince them [the CCP] of our firm intentions.”⁶⁸ In this case Rankin tried to explain that while the Dàchén Islands were not critically important, the US should continue to support the Nationalists’ effort to mount an attack against the Chinese Communists and retake the mainland. That support also included military engagement.

The State Department, however, disagreed with Rankin’s evaluation of the situation. The Department believed that the only way to effectively “negotiate” with the Soviets – and by extension the Chinese Communists – was through the use of large-scale retaliation through the use of ballistic missiles and artillery. Secretary of State Dulles in his January 12, 1954 speech before the Council of Foreign Ministers attempted to define this strategy saying that:

It is not sound military strategy permanently to commit U.S. land forces to Asia to a degree that leaves us no strategic reserves. It is not sound economics, or good foreign policy, to support permanently other countries; for in the long run, that creates as much ill will as good will. Also, it is not sound to become permanently committed to military expenditures so vast that they lead to "practical bankruptcy."⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Paraphrase of Communication from Karl Lott Rankin to the State Department, February 10, 1955, box 7, folder 1, Karl L. Rankin Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, 2-3..

⁶⁹ John Foster Dulles, *"The Evolution of Foreign Policy, Speech Before the Council of Foreign Relations,"* New York, N.Y., Department of State, Press Release No. 81 (January 12, 1954).

Dulles pointed out that it would not be a cost effective plan to station troops throughout Asia to combat foreign threats in the region, nor was it politically wise to permanently support specific governments. Additionally, and perhaps the most controversial point of the speech, was Dulles's suggestion of using large-scale retaliation against any potential Communist threat. He said outright that:

What the Eisenhower administration seeks is . . . a maximum deterrent at a bearable cost. Local defense will always be important. But there is no local defense which alone will contain the mighty landpower of the Communist world. Local defenses must be reinforced by the further deterrent of massive retaliatory power. A potential aggressor must know that he cannot always prescribe battle conditions that suit him.⁷⁰

These comments referred to Dulles's conviction that the US needed to develop a military strategy that allowed it to choose where and when the US fought its wars. Part of Dulles' concept of military defense included the use of "massive retaliatory power." He believed that the threat of military action – or in this case massive retaliatory action – would be more of a deterrent to Communist expansion in areas such as Quemoy and Mǎzǔ than the actual use of troops on the ground. Rankin was clearly at odds with Dulles' strategic thinking as Rankin advocated military assistance in order to defend Quemoy and Mǎzǔ as well as Taiwan.

While Rankin frequently expressed his opinion about Taiwan and its surrounding islands, his opinions were not limited to State Department telegrams and official correspondence. In a letter to his friend William E. Massey, Rankin again noted that the Dàchén Islands were not strategically of great importance, and that "It is bad enough to lose additional territory to the Reds, however unimportant as real estate in this particular case; it is worse to have our friends in Asia and elsewhere observe that Communism is

⁷⁰ Ibid.

advancing once more.”⁷¹ Interestingly, Rankin continued in this same letter by describing the offshore islands as being more than just potential lost territory to the Communist Chinese. He wrote that the Chinese Communists had no naval power, and likely would not gain one in the future. What the Communists could gain by controlling the islands were the shipping routes within the Taiwan Strait. As a result, “These islands of themselves have no particular value as jump-off points for a possible future Nationalist attack on the Mainland.” He continued, saying “Their retention in friendly hands is important to the control of the Formosa Strait and to restricting any military build-up intended for an attack on Formosa itself and all points south.”⁷² In this letter Rankin seems to express his own private thinking about the Communist threat in the region. He believed that the Chinese Communists did not, and would not in the near future, possess a large navy. The implication here was that the CCP could not mount a sea-based invasion of Taiwan as many in the State Department theorized. Moreover, unlike his previous messages to the department about the importance of defending the islands, he did not believe the Dàchéns could be used as a staging point for an invasion by either the ROC or the PRC. Instead, along with other islands in the Taiwan Straits, they were only a means to controlling shipping routes in the area. In contrast to his private letter, Rankin emphasized in both official and unofficial government communications that the Dàchéns Islands as well as Quemoy and Mastu Islands were important to the defense of Taiwan, referring to them as the “front line of defense in the Pacific.”⁷³ He claimed that they were

⁷¹ Letter from Karl Lott Rankin to William Massey, March 10, 1955, box 7, folder 1, Karl L. Rankin Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, 1.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 2.

⁷³ William D. Miller, “Interview with Ambassador K. L. Rankin by William D. Miller,” March 24, 1955, United Press Association, folder 7, folder 1, Karl L. Rankin Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, 1.

a critical aspect of the ROC's plan to retake the mainland, and that they needed to be defended at all costs by the US. These two competing viewpoints – one expressed publicly to the State Department and the other expressed privately to friends and fellow ambassadors – came into conflict throughout the rest of his career as ambassador.

Rankin seemed to try to clarify his position about the defense of the islands around Taiwan in a letter to the Assistant Secretary of State saying that he questioned George Yeh, the Republic of China's Foreign Minister, about what effect the loss of the offshore islands would have on the morale of the people of Taiwan. According to Yeh, the loss of the islands would jeopardize the Nationalist government's control over its own military and erode public support for the GMD. Moreover, Rankin expressed his own belief to Ambassador Yeh that the loss of the offshore islands would be detrimental to US military strategy in the region, but not disastrous.⁷⁴ Rankin also pointed out that he did not want to entirely write off Quemoy or Mǎzǔ, saying "I hope that you and the Secretary [of State] did not carry away the impression that I consider the retention of Kinmen [Quemoy] and Matsu as less important than do the Chinese. If anything, the contrary is true..." Rankin continued by addressing the possibility of a "two Chinas" solution wherein both the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China would be recognized as sovereign governments. Rankin said that that situation would likely be more detrimental to the morale of the Republic of China, and that "anything which would indicate definitive United States acquiescence in the Communist conquest of the Chinese Mainland would represent irretrievable disaster in Free Chinese eyes."⁷⁵ Rankin also acknowledged that the most important reason for keeping Quemoy and Mǎzǔ out of the

⁷⁴ Letter from Karl Lott Rankin to Walter Robertson, March 13, 1955, box 7, folder 1, Karl L. Rankin Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, 1-2.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

hands of the Communists was the psychological impact their loss would have on the people of Taiwan.

Again, Rankin clearly demonstrated his belief that intended actions and rhetorical support were, at times, more important than winning large military battles against the Communists. According to Rankin's thinking, the US could combat the spread of Communism in East Asia by supporting democratically-friendly governments and ignoring the establishment of Communist governments such as the CCP. More interesting, however, were the situations in which he expressed these views. In official reports and communications to the State Department or if he was expressing his views in a public forum such as a newspaper interview, Rankin expressed the same views as the State Department. In private communications – meaning those not likely to be disseminated by the public – he expressed reservations about State Department policy or how best to proceed in China.

For example, in an interview by William D. Miller for the United Press Association (UP) dated March 24, 1955 Rankin was asked several questions about US policy in China including what the relationship of Quemoy and Mǎzǔ was to the defense of Taiwan. Rankin responded by saying that “It is generally believed in military circles that any attempt to invade Taiwan itself would have to be preceded by the occupation of Quemoy and Matsu.”⁷⁶ Rankin's implication in this interview was that Quemoy and Mǎzǔ would need to be captured, and used as a stepping stone, in order for the CCP to take Taiwan. In another set of questions and answers, this time sent to the State Department for input, Rankin seemed to contradict himself. Concerning the question “Why is Free China more strongly opposed to giving up Kinmen and Mǎzǔ than in the

⁷⁶ Miller, “Interview with K. L. Rankin,” 2.

case of Tachen?” Rankin responded that “in a military sense, their retention [in the hands of Taiwan] is much more important to the defense of Taiwan than as jumping-off points for a possible future Nationalist attack on the China Mainland.”⁷⁷ In his internal memo to the State Department as well as the UP article, Rankin stated that the islands of Quemoy and Mǎzǔ were important to the Nationalists as a jump-off point. In his private letter to William Massey, however, he said that the islands likely could not be used as a jump-off point. One can see that Rankin was hesitant to express his true beliefs about the Nationalist’s ability to retake the mainland. Likely he did not make his true opinion known for fear of contradicting the basic tenet of US policy in China – that the Nationalists could retake the mainland. This admission could have led to Rankin losing his position as ambassador. Moreover, the State Department considered evacuation plans for Taiwan in 1955, and Congress continued to reduce support for the ROC between 1950 and 1955. Clearly, support for Taiwan and the ROC was waning, and any admission from Rankin that the Nationalists could not retake the mainland would be the final nail in the coffin for US support of the island.

As is evident, there were major differences between Ambassadors Rankin and Stuart in terms of their views about the situation in China. Stuart was an outsider to the State Department. He was well-educated and worked in China before he became ambassador. Stuart fundamentally disagreed with US Containment policy, believing that China would be best served by a government of its own choosing even if it was one which the US did not agree with. The most telling example of Stuart’s opinion of China can be found in his memoir entitled *Fifty Years in China*. In it, he explained that

⁷⁷ Memo from Karl Lott Rankin to the Department of State, “Kinmen and Matsu Islands: Questions and Answers,” April 2, 1955, box 7, folder 2, Karl L. Rankin Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, 4.

Americans needed to understand and learn about the Chinese as people, not as a political entity. Stuart urged that the US should:

Review and study and ponder their modern history of that land, the history of the United States relations... with it. They should view it in perspective of the history of its revolution, of its Nationalist movement, of the constructive efforts of its 'National' Government... of the struggle which continues between the National Government now on Formosa and the Communist "People's Government" established in 1949 in Peiping. [Americans] should scrutinize, compare and contrast the attitudes and performance of those two governments respectively during the years since the latter came into existence.⁷⁸

Stuart viewed China with the breadth and depth of Chinese history. He did not see the CCP as part of a Communist monolith as many others in the State Department did. Instead, Stuart viewed the PRC as having a unique culture which the US needed to understand in order to adequately assess it.

In contrast, Rankin was born and raised in the US and had only one year of experience in Hong Kong and Canton before the State Department assigned him to his post in Taipei in 1950.⁷⁹ Similar to Stuart, he did not agree with every aspect of US policy in China. Also, similar to Stuart, Rankin was hesitant to express his own opinions about US policy in China to his superiors. More often than not Rankin did not support State Department policy, disagreed with many of the decisions the State Department made, and believed that the Department had little or no concrete policy in the region. Rankin summed up his position as ambassador in his memoir, saying:

There is indeed a danger of hypnotizing ourselves by continual repetition of what we have determined to be valid, and thereby closing out minds to the significance of new developments. But there also is a great value in repetition. . . In influencing opinion, we scarcely could find a better

⁷⁸ John Leighton Stuart, *Fifty Years in China: The Memoirs of John Leighton Stuart, Missionary and Ambassador*, (New York: Random House, 1954), 304-05.

⁷⁹ "Karl L. Rankin Papers, 19916-1973 Finding Aid," n.d., <<http://diglib.princeton.edu/ead/getEad?id=ark:/88435/pz50gw091>>, 20 May 2009.

method than to simplify and repeat, simplify and repeat. Repetition is easy, but honest simplification of highly complex international issues is difficult.⁸⁰

What Rankin pointed out in this passage was that the method of persuading officials in the State Department was through repetition of his opinions. He continued along these lines, saying that taken at its surface value US policy in Taiwan seemed to be subject to constant revision and often outright reversals. Rankin believed that this handicapped the US effort in the region in relation to the CCP, saying that “[the Communists’] basic policies, both actual and avowed, were simple, widely understood, and relatively unchanging. I was increasingly impressed by our [the US] need to simplify and repeat, and again in drafting two despatches [sic] to the Department I found repetition so much easier than honest simplification.”⁸¹ Rankin clearly believed that during his tenure as ambassador the State Department did not have a firm or organized policy in China, and that it was his constant mantra to the Department that it needed to develop some kind of policy.

Despite his criticisms of the Department, and constant repetition of his opinion, Rankin was hesitant to fully express his views about the Nationalists because of an unspoken rule within the diplomatic community. Generally, ambassadors were not expected to express their opinions about US policy as much as Rankin did. Instead, they were to recommend how best to implement the current administration’s policy. Rankin appeared to have stepped beyond his bounds within the Foreign Service, though not to the point of suggesting that the entire mission in China was for naught.

⁸⁰ Karl Lott Rankin, *China Assignment*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964), 308.

⁸¹ Rankin, *China Assignment*, 315.

When Rankin did express his disagreement with the State Department, his recommendations and complaints fell on deaf ears. Both Stuart and Rankin were essentially ignored by officials in the State Department. Seemingly, it was because both men did not agree with State Department policy. However, it is likely that the political situation in the US at the time also contributed to not only the State Department ignoring its ambassadors, but also the ambassadors' unwillingness to seem soft on Communism. Neither Rankin nor Stuart wanted to make an all-out declaration against the US defense of Taiwan for fear of losing their positions in the diplomatic corps.

Conclusion

“What frightens me,” he said quietly, “is the thought that this thing is so violent, so ruthless, so . . . so *crazy*, that it might easily not be a one-shot deal, but the first step in something on an even more ambitious scale.”¹

Written at the height of the Vietnam War and the Chinese Cultural Revolution, the James Bond novel *Colonel Sun* revolved around a plot by the book’s villain – Colonel Sun Liang-tan of the People’s Liberation Army – to sabotage a détente summit in the Middle East and blame Great Britain. James Bond’s comment summed up much of the thinking about the Soviets during the early Cold War; that a single act of aggression could be the prelude to an all-out war. According to this line of thought, every minor aggressive action by the Soviet Union was viewed through the prism of a potential nuclear attack and the beginning of World War III. The desire to avoid war, coupled with limited military engagement on the part of the US, as well as domestic political considerations, resulted in a political tug of war between those in high offices of the State Department and those in the Foreign Service.

Both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations distrusted the Soviet Union, believing that it was expansionistic and bent on world domination. According to Truman, the Soviets were a threat to world peace, and that “the strategy of the Kremlin concentrates on trying to pick off the free countries one by one, so that their resources and people can be organized against the rest of the free world.”² Eisenhower had a similar opinion of the USSR, saying that the coalition between the US and the USSR during

¹ Robert Markham, *Colonel Sun* (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), 88.

² Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project*, “Special Message to Congress on the Mutual Security Treaty, May 24, 1951, <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=13793&st=Soviet+Union&st1=Expansion>> (9 November 2009).

WWII was merely a façade put on by Stalin in order to make territorial gains at the Potsdam and Yalta summits.³ Of the two presidents, only Truman believed in a Communist monolith holding firmly to the idea that the Soviets had infiltrated Chinese society and aided in the creation of the CCP. Eisenhower, on the other hand, believed that China was somewhat independent from the USSR, and that the two crises in the Taiwan Straits were coordinated by the Chinese Communists with Soviet oversight.

Like the President's, both of the Secretaries of State had differing opinions about the Soviet threat and the parallel Chinese Communist threat. Truman's Secretary, Dean Acheson, believed that Soviet expansion into Western Europe after the Second World War was the beginning of a much larger effort to spread Communism. His thinking about Chinese Communism, initially, was to recognize Máo's regime as the legitimate government of China, reasoning that the Chinese Communists could be used as an ally against the Soviet Union. Ultimately, however, Acheson believed that the potential for the Chinese to turn on the US was not worth the effort involved in recognizing the government. He also viewed the Chinese Communist government in the same light as any of the other Communist countries in Europe, namely that it was a satellite of the Soviets. Coupled with Acheson's views about the CCP was his unwillingness to commit US troops to aid Jiǎng Jièshí and the Chinese Nationalists. Acheson, as well as President Truman, feared that US involvement could lead to an escalation of tensions and the possible spark of World War III.

Acheson's successor in the Eisenhower administration was John Foster Dulles, and he, unlike Eisenhower, strongly believed in the existence of the Communist monolith. He saw Communism in China as being forced on Chinese citizens by the

³ Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 76-7.

Soviets, and that Máo's government was directly controlled by Moscow. Moreover, his concept of how best to contain the spread of Communism was through the use of massive retaliatory force. Dulles believed, for example, if the Chinese Communists made an advance against the Nationalists on Taiwan, that the US should threaten to use nuclear or atomic weapons against the Chinese mainland. His brinkmanship policy, while a potentially effective bargaining tool, could cause the very thing that the US was looking to avoid.

What needs to be understood about Truman and Eisenhower as well as their Secretaries of State, was that none of them truly understood the situation in China. All four policy-makers believed, to some degree, in the Communist monolith. None considered that Máo and the Communist Party appealed to the Chinese people. In the eyes of many Chinese, Máo was a figure akin to George Washington. He was a man who stood up against an oppressive government and defeated its larger and more well-equipped army. Truman's ambassador to China, John Leighton Stuart, understood this dynamic. He saw the appeal of a Communist government to a people who were ruled by a dynastic imperial government for more than one-thousand years, and their desire for land reform and a radical departure from the status quo. Additionally, while trying to negotiate a coalition government between the Nationalist and the Communists, Stuart advocated for Communist representation in the coalition government. This advocacy was likely a contributing factor to Stuart's replacement by Karl Lott Rankin in 1949. One would assume that after the Communist takeover that the State Department would want to maintain continuity of representation in the region by keeping Stuart as ambassador, but President Truman's desire to take a strong stance against Communism likely

influenced the State Department's choice for a new ambassador. The Communist takeover was a convenient reason to move the US embassy, and install Karl Lott Rankin as the new ambassador.

Rankin, unlike Stuart, was fully opposed to a Communist government in China. He believed in the US mission in the China region – to contain the spread of Communism – but not in the manner in which it was implemented. Throughout his tenure Rankin constantly called for additional economic and military commitments to the Nationalists in their proposed plan to retake mainland China. The State Department, however, had no intention to commit US troops to a potential world war.

The overarching question, then, was why Stuart and Rankin's recommendations and opinions about the political situation in China were not taken into consideration. Stuart's opinion was that the Chinese people should be able to choose whichever government, or amalgamation of governments, that they desired. This opinion was mostly ignored by the State Department, because it continued to support the Nationalists during the Chinese Civil War. Stuart was recalled from his post, in the middle of Harry Truman's second term, in August of 1949. This was before the Communist takeover on the mainland, and indeed, his successor, Karl Lott Rankin resided as ambassador in the city of Shànghǎi until the takeover in October. Likely, Stuart was replaced in the middle of Truman's term because of political considerations. In the latter half of his tenure as President, accusations were made against the Truman administration that he was not only soft on Communism, but that he had also allowed Communists into high-ranking positions of the administration. Having an ambassador who advocated for a Communist government in China would likely be more fodder for Truman's opponents. Rankin was

likely chosen as the next ambassador because he was adamantly opposed to Communism and the PRC.

He was, however, recalled to the US in 1957 and replaced by Everett Drumright. The question should be asked, then, why was Rankin replaced at the end of Eisenhower's first term. If the President intended to maintain peace in the region, one would think that he would want consistency with regard to the US ambassador to China. What was likely the case was that Rankin voiced his opinions about US funding and military aid to the Nationalists which ran counter to the State Department's intended policy. Rankin believed that the US needed to make a significant military commitment to the Nationalists if they were to successfully mount an attack on the mainland. More importantly, Rankin tried to shape US policy in the region, by recommending specific actions that the US needed to take. This was in contrast to Stuart who merely reported events in the region, and occasionally gave his opinion about US policy. Stuart's opinions were generally about how current US policy could be improved. Rankin, however, made detailed recommendations concerning the need for additional troops and money. His recommendations were in opposition to current US policy, and it was likely for this reason that the State Department replaced him at the end of Eisenhower's first term.

What can definitively be said about the dynamic between the State Department and President versus the ambassadors to China? Truman, Eisenhower and their respective Secretaries of State saw the Chinese Communists as a major threat to the US. None of them were willing to recognize the CCP as the government of China as recognition was perceived as weakness on the part of the US and a win for the Communists. Additionally, Eisenhower and his Secretary of State focused mainly on the Soviet Union in their

administration. Both viewpoints negated the personal element of the problem, which is to say the Chinese people themselves. Many Chinese supported a Communist government, but the State Department believed that the Communist system was imposed by the Soviets. Ambassador Stuart did, however, see the personal end of the situation, believing that if the Chinese wanted a Communist government they should be allowed to elect one. Ambassador Rankin, while he was ant-Communist, did not support the US strategy in the region. Stuart and Rankin were ignored out of rhetorical necessity – in the case of the Truman administration – and fear of another world war – in the Eisenhower administration. It took an additional fifteen years and another war in Southeast Asia before the US extended diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic of China.

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