UNITED STATES POLICY AND THE DEFENSE OF THE CHINESE OFFSHORE ISLANDS

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Bachelor of Arts

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Springfield, Missouri

1952

Submitted to the faculty of the Graduate College
of the Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
August, 1965

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PREFACE

Since the close of World War II one of the main objectives of United States foreign policy has been the geographic "containment" of communism. In Europe, this took form and substance in the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Probably it is not premature to claim success for United States and Allied policies in that area of the world. Containing communist expansion in Asia, however, has posed a different and vastly more complex task for the United States. The main problem, of course, has been adjusting to the emergence of the People's Republic of China. Inextricably involved with this question has been the companion problem of formulating policies vis-a-vis the Government of the Republic of China, i.e., Formosa, the Pescadores and the offshore islands along the mainland coast of China.

Our Sinocentric policy in Asia is not a new phenomenon; however, its objectives were drastically altered following the triumph of the Chinese Communists on the mainland. Following that victory, in 1949, American policymakers were beset by a certain ambivalence. Earlier desires to see China united, strong, and unimpaired by foreign intervention were realized--but under the aegis of a vastly different kind of regime than most of our policymakers has foreseen or desired.

As will be developed later, the United States officially decided by late 1949 that it would not militarily interfere in the denouement

of the Chinese Civil War. Such a decision was in line with our earlier policy of "non-intervention." It also took cognizance of the reality that our post-World War II China policy had met with resounding failure; and, finally, it signified a general conviction in Washington that the fall of Formosa was imminent and that a final break with the Kuomintang was in order.

This fateful decision to abandon the Nationalist cause was summarily reversed by President Truman in 1950, because, inter alia, of the circumstances arising from the initiation of hostilities by North Korea.

The interposition of the United States 7th Fleet to "neutralize" Formosa and the Pescadores marked the beginning of our present China policy. It established a kind of precedent or framework for the future treatment of the mainland and Formosa regimes by American policymakers. Both of these aspects of policy, naturally, are subsumed under the total Asian policy challenge--a context within which the subsidiary problem of the defense of the Chinese offshore islands must be considered.

The purpose of this study is to determine the present United States policy regarding the defense of the Chinese offshore islands. Of necessity this involves an analysis of the evolution of United States relation with Formosa since World War II. American policy on Formosa has evolved from a position of uncertainty over its status in the late 1940's to a commitment to support and defend the Nationalist regime when the Korean War focused the attention of the United States upon the problem of Communist expansion efforts. An underlying assumption of this study is that Formosa is vital to the United States defense perimeter in Asia; that the United States is not willing to permit Formosa to be united with the Communist-controlled mainland. It is further

assumed that the offshore islands are of no particular importance to the United States' defensive position, except to the extent that they might be used to threaten the security of Formosa and the Pescadores themselves. With these assumptions in mind, it is the hypothesis of this study that the United States has not made an absolutely firm commitment to defend the offshore islands; that the United States position has been consciously kept vague and even ambiguous in order that each threat to the security of the offshore islands could be analyzed within the context of the broader interest of the United States in certain insular and peninsular regions of the Western Pacific. This also implies, and this study seeks to confirm, that the question of the offshore islands is closely linked to the broader "containment of communism" policy of the United States in a Pan-Asian context.

During the course of this inquiry it is necessary to consider contributory elements other than just presidential policy pronouncements or the constitutional relationships between the Congress and the Commander-in-Chief. As required, therefore, the role of the successive Secretaries of State, the influence of Congress in foreign policy maters, the actions of certain foreign powers, the work of particular publicists, and general historical data are all considered. Upon the basis of these materials is established the requisite foundation upon which rest the conclusions found at the end of the study.

The methodology utilized in the preparation of this thesis is both descriptive and explanatory. Rather extensive use was made of United States Government documentary sources. Also employed were political science journals, periodicals and newspapers. An invaluable source was found in the various biographical and personal accounts of former

Presidents, statesmen, and government officials.

A scrutiny of previous work accomplished in this area of foreign policy formulation revealed no effort to examine the evolution of United States policy on the offshore islands over the extensive time span comprehended by this study. Most references to the problem were fragmentary and incomplete. Those that were found in periodicals, journals and various news sources offered only the brief or contempory treatment one would expect to find in such publications. The work by Tang Tsou[1] is the most comprehensive in the field. It provided the author with valuable insight and perspective in accomplishing this study.

The introduction, or Chapter I, covers earlier United States policy toward China in general and Formosa in particular. It also treats briefly those concluding aspects of the Chinese Civil War which helped shape America's China policy up until the end of 1949.

Chapter II contains an analysis of those factors that prompted the United States policy reversal regarding Formosa during the tenure of President Truman. Initial United States policy statements were examined to determine whether there was at that juncture any awareness that the offshore islands were a potential source of future Sino-American complications.

Chapter III deals with the formalization of our containment policy and relationships with Formosa during President Eisenhower's years in office. Especial attention is directed to the actions of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in this period.

A review and analysis of presidential remarks and actions during

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[1]Tang Tsou, The Embroilment Over Quemoy (Salt Lake City, 1959).

the terms of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson comprise Chapter IV. Particular attention is given to President Kennedy's stated positions on this issue before and after the 1960 presidential elections.

Chapter V contains those conclusions which the author believes are justified by the evidence revealed in the body of the study.

Finally, numerous acknowledgements are in order. The author wishes to thank Dr. Clifford A. L. Rich, Head, Department of Political Science, for his invaluable criticisms at all stages of this work. A similar debt is owed to Professor Harold V. Sare, Political Science Department, for his many contributions of time and his scholarly critiques as the study progressed.

Sincere thanks for patient assistance is extended to the officers and staff of the Oklahoma State University Library; their many indulgences will be long remembered.

Lastly, appreciation is extended to Mrs. June Webb, who prepared the final copy of this thesis.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Importance of the Problem

United States concern over the Chinese offshore islands,[1] i.e., their defense and final disposition, is an aspect of our foreign policy that perhaps has received less than its just due from publicists. As a matter of practicality, this probably is attributable, inter alia, to the fact that the problem of the offshore islands has, to a large extent, been ignored in times of relative tranquility and superficially dealt with in times of crisis. The former United States ambassador (1949-1957) to Taipei, Mr. Karl Lott Rankin, noted that

> Many questions about China, by their very nature, could not be answered by a simple yes or no...There was a continuing and natural tendency to center attention on the locus of the most excitement at a given moment. When the communists were temporarily quiet in the Middle East or Southeast Asia, for example, and chose that time for a bombardment of the offshore islands, prominent press correspondents would

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[1] In this study the term "Chinese offshore islands" is construed to mean those residual islets off the mainland of China which remain under effective Chinese Nationalist political and military control. Originally, in late 1949, the Nationalists held up to 30-odd such islands, ranging from the Chusans near Shanghai to the very large island of Hainan in the Gulf of Tonkin. Today, only the Quemoy (Kinmen) and Matsu groups remain. The Pescadores (Penghus) Islands are more closely associated with Formosa, both historically and geographically, than with the mainland. Those many "offshore" islands captured by the Chinese Communists in the closing days of the principal mainland struggle are obviously not of substantive concern to this study.

> converge on Taipei. For a few days we would make the front pages. Political and editorial writers in various countries would point to the dreadful situations in and around Taiwan. Drastic and urgent proposals would be advanced, often if not usually at someone else's expense. Then the shooting would stop and the Reds would push a button elsewhere. The Fourth Estate would pack their bags and fly away. Their editors would forget about Taiwan, except for incidental references to the "relaxation of tension" in our region, which misled many into believing that there had been a basic change for the better.[2]

His view in 1954 that an understanding of the complexities of the hardy and perennial "China problem" cannot be gained by a few days "on-the-spot" reporting during the heat of a temporary crisis remains valid today. Particularly does this remain true with regard to the offshore islands issue.

Few facets of United States foreign policy, at least the post-World War II Asian aspects of it, are surcharged with such ambiguity and contradiction. Contrarily, few aspects of America's China policy have been subjected to such high level debate and reflection. Even today, after countless words and several years, one may reasonably inquire, as does this author: what, in fact, is the United States' present policy with respect to the offshore islands and how did that policy evolve?

While it probably would be intellectually stimulating and satisfying to be able to examine this matter within the total context of our recorded relations with China, such treatment is well beyond the scope of this work. At the present juncture, at least, the names of Quemoy and Matsu would probably suffer in stature when arrayed alongside such larger issues as the Open Door Policy and the Marshall Mission. Hopefully, upon completion of this paper, the reader will be able to make

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[2]Karl Lott Rankin, China Assignment (New York, 1964), pp. 215-216.

a fair determination of the relative merits that such a comparison would produce.

Perhaps Hans Morgenthau's prefatory remarks in a monograph by Tang Tsou can best tell us why we should want to know more of America's policy toward the offshore islands and how it evolved as it did:

> ...the issue of China and the conflict over the offshore islands in which that issue manifests itself is potentially the most explosive of all the unresolved issues with which the United States must deal around the globe. For this issue does not concern control of a piece of territory, or political and economic influences in a limited region. Rather it concerns the overall distribution of power in the Far East and the place of a potentially great power, such as China, within it. The assertion of predominance, thus far more in words than by deeds, by China, is met by its denial on the part of the United States. It is hard to see how this conflict can be compromised.[3]

Early Historical Perspective

American concern with Formosa before World War II was almost wholly commercial and even those interests were relatively modest.[4] Certainly there could not have been the remotest idea in those earlier days that the offshore islands of China would one day become a most exacerbating influence upon Sino-American relations.

American policy did not officially call for the preservation of the territorial and administrative integrity of China until the pronouncements of Secretary of State John Hay in 1899-1900 showed our adherence to the concept of the Open Door. Any possible grounds for American

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[3]Tang Tsou, p. 1.

[4]Joseph W. Ballantine, Formosa: A Problem for United States Foreign Policy (Washington, 1952), p. 116.

foreign policy interest in Formosa, however, were earlier foreclosed by China's cession of that island to Japan in 1895.[5] Thus, until America's war with Japan there was no legal or political basis for any kind of United States "policy" on Formosa.

It is a rather curious facet of history, however, that things might have been vastly different if the recommendations of an early United States Commissioner to China, the Reverend Peter Parker, had been accepted. Commissioner Parker suggested, in a note of December 1856, to Secretary of State Marcy that America should "temporarily" seize Formosa with an eye to forcing China to abide by certain of its treaty obligations to the United States and other powers. The reply that Washington sent to him revealed more than just American official thinking about the acquisition of colonial possessions. It reflected a very restrictive interpretation of presidential powers with regard to the employment of United States forces abroad. Secretary Marcy told Parker that

> The President does not believe that our relations with China warrant the "last" resort you speak of, and if they did, the military or naval forces of the United States could be used only by the authority of the Congress. The "last" resort means war, and the executive branch of this government is not the war-making power....For the protection and security of Americans in China and the protection of their property, it may be expedient to increase our naval force on the China station, but the President will not do it for aggressive purposes.[6]

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[5]The Treaty of Shimonoseki, signed in 1895, concluded the first Sino-Japanses War and resulted, among other things, in the acquisition of the Pescadores and Formosa by Japan. The designations "Formosa" and "Taiwan" are interchangeable at one's option. The early Portuguese explorers named it Formosa or "Beautiful Island" in 1590. The name Taiwan means "Land of the Terraced Bay" and is used consistently by the native people as well as by the Chinese Nationalists and Communists. Recent official United States government usage prefers "Taiwan."

[6]Sophia Su-fei Yen, Taiwan in China's Foreign Relations (Hamden, Conn., 1965), pp. 66-67.

Marcy's reply put an end to any possible official American steps to unilaterally seize Taiwan. Similarly rejected was Townsend Harris' suggestion in 1854, that the United States acquire all or part of Formosa by purchase from either China or the aboriginal inhabitants of the island.[7]

Wartime Planning

United States foreign policy concern with Formosa, in a recent planning sense, did not take form until 1943. On December 1, Presidents Roosevelt and Chiang Kai-shek, along with Prime Minister Churchill, issued the joint Cairo Declaration which stated, inter alia, that it was the intention of the three Allies that all of the lands "stolen" from China by Japan, i.e., Manchuria, Formosa, and the Pescadores, be returned to China. The intent of the Cairo Declaration was further affirmed by the Potsdam Proclamation of July 26, 1943; this, in turn, was later adhered to by the Soviet Union.

During the closing stages of World War II, American planning with regard to Formosa was concerned mainly with whether to capture the island for use as a "stepping-stone" to the conquest of Japan, and with the status of Formosa following Japan's defeat. The first of these considerations was dealt with by the decision to move directly against Japan from the Philippines, by-passing Formosa. The second question was more difficult to reconcile. Evidence exists to show that the American State Department and military circles had made rather serious plans

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[7]Ibid., p. 55.

for occupying and establishing a United States military government for Formosa. The training of military government personnel for this purpose was instituted at Columbia University by the United States Navy.[8] As far as can be determined, such preparation did not receive top-level endorsement. In any event, the pace of war in the Pacific Ocean areas moved so rapidly that all these interim plans seem to have been overtaken by other military and political developments.

Finally, when the terms of the Potsdam Agreement were accepted by Japanese authorities on August 14, 1945 the resulting document of submission called for the surrender of the Japanese on Formosa to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. When it became obvious by September of that year that the Nationalists forces could manage the task, all further considerations for an American military government apparatus on Taiwan were dropped.[9]

With the arrival of the Chinese Nationalists on Formosa in September, 1945 the island once again became a part of China. At least it did so pending a formal settlement of its legal status under international law; thus it came within the purview of the total China policy of America.

The period following the reimposition of Chinese authority on Formosa was one of stress for American policy-makers in view of the contest between the Nationalists and the Communists for control of the mainland.[10]

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[8]Ballantine, p. 55.

[9]Ibid., pp. 55-56.

[10]The trials and tribulations of the Formosans under Chinese Nationalist General Chen-yi comprise a sorry chapter indeed in Chinese history and is a long and bitter story unto itself. Suffice to note, for the scope of this study, that General Chen-yi was finally put to death at the order of Chiang Kai-shek for his cruelties and oppressions among the recently "liberated" Taiwanese.

Immediate Postwar Policy

During the period from 1945 to 1949, the American policymakers gave their prime attention to an attempt to bring a semblance of order and peace to China--order and peace that it sorely needed to overcome the political, economic, and social shambles created by years of war and internal strife. During this period, of course, there could be no United States "policy" for Formosa since the island had reverted to Nationalist de facto control. It was reincorporated as Taiwan Province in 1947.

The quandary in which our policy planners found themselves during this period was sketched by Secretary of State Dean Acheson in his letter of transmittal to the White Paper[11] issued by the Department of State on August 5, 1949. In his letter, the Secretary, responding to the President's request for a comprehensive record of our relations with China, said:

> When peace came the United States was confronted with three possible alternatives in China: (1) it could have pulled out lock, stock, and barrel; (2) it could have intervened militarily on a major scale to assist the Nationalists to destroy the Communists; (3) it could, while assisting the Nationalists to assert their authority over as much of China as possible, endeavor to avoid a civil war by working for a compromise between the two sides.

The Secretary took but few words to show why the first two alternatives had been unacceptable for various historical, policy, and domestic political reasons. He said that American choice of the third alternative was one

> ...whereunder we faced the facts of the situation and attempted to assist in working out a modus vivendi which would

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[11]Department of State, United States Relations With China (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1949).

avert civil war but nevertheless preserve and even increase the influence of the Nationalist Government.

His outline of the steps the United States took to bolster the Nationalist regime and bring compromise to China is a good summary in itself of Chinese-American relations in the years immediately following the close of World War II. The summary, and the study to a much greater depth, cites the vain attempts by Major General Patrick J. Hurley, General George C. Marshall, and Lt. General Albert C. Wedemeyer to bring to China the stability so desperately needed in those days of upheaval and violence. He observed that our traditional policy of assisting China in her resistance to foreign aggression was "...confronted with the gravest of difficulties." To him, our aid had been without avail because the Chinese had been taken in by Soviet domination masked behind the facade of a crusading movement--a movement accepted by many Chinese as wholly indigenous and national. In concluding his report to President Truman, the Secretary observed that:

> The unfortunate but inescapable fact is that the ominous result of the civil war in China was beyond the control of the government of the United States. Nothing that this country did or could have done within the reasonable limits of its capabilities would have changed that result; nothing that was left undone by this country has contributed to it. It was the product of internal Chinese forces, forces which this country tried to influence but could not. A decision was arrived at within China, if only a decision by default.
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> ...ultimately the profound civilization and democratic individualism of China will reassert themselves and she will throw off the foreign yoke.
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> In the immediate future, however, the implementation of our historic policy of friendship for China must be profoundly affected by current developments. One point, however, is clear. Should the Communist regime lend itself to the aims of Soviet Russian imperialism and attempt to engage in aggression against China's neighbors, we and other members of the United Nations would be confronted with a situation violative of the principles of the United Nations Charter and threatening world peace and security.

> Meanwhile our policy will continue to be based upon our own respect for the Charter, our friendship for China, and our traditional support for the Open Door and for China's independence and administrative integrity.

An appraisal of the American government's pronouncements and actions in 1949 leaves little doubt that the White Paper was the clear-cut prelude to an administration effort to disentangle itself from the misfortunes of Chiang and the Nationalists. This was the project which Secretary of State Marshall had rejected a year before but of which Acheson heartily approved. Defense Secretary Johnson's protestations that it was politically inadvisable to release the paper were overruled by President Truman.[12] Our former ambassador to Nationalist China, Karl L. Rankin, noted in his China Assignment that the public revelation of such confidential material touching people still in high public office was unwise and "...that the most valid position is that it should never have been published at all."[13]

The White Paper, however, was merely a surface culmination; beneath had raged, and was continuing, a first class battle-royal over what shape America's China policy would take as the Nationalist military collapse accelerated and the size and impact of the debacle became publicly more apparent.

In January, 1949 upon his assumption of the Secretaryship, Dean Acheson attended a National Security Council meeting in which a recommendation was made to President Truman to halt the $60 million worth of military aid still destined for the Nationalists from the Eightieth

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[12]H. Bradford Westerfield, Foreign Policy and Party Politics (New Haven, 1955), p. 354.

[13]Rankin, p. 10.

Congress' $125 million "additional aid" fund for China. The Council's advice was certainly approved by Acheson and most probably originated in the State Department.[14]

On February 5, 1949 the White House moved to forestall new Congressional criticism by hosting a private session composed of the President, Vice-President, Secretary Acheson, and, among others, Senators Vandenberg and Connally. The episode was recorded in Vandenberg's diary and Barkley's opinion, the entry revealed, coincided with his. The Republican Senator firmly opposed the actions recommended by the Council, saying:

> ...I make it plain that I have little or no hope for stopping the immediate Communist conquest. That is beside the point. I decline to be responsible for the last push which makes it possible.[15]

Various proposals to increase China aid, install American officers as leaders of Chinese troops, and the pledging of Chinese customs tolls for loan repayment were advanced by members of both parties in Congress in the spring of 1949 but all were, in one fashion or another, turned down. In fact, Acheson's reply to the Foreign Relations Committee Chairman, Senator Connally, was merely a precursor of things to come in the later White Paper; he said:

> To furnish solely military materiel and advice would only prolong hostilities and the suffering of the Chinese people and would arouse in them deep resentment against the United States. Yet, to furnish the military means for bringing about a reversal of the present deterioration...would require large American armed forces in actual combat...contrary to the interests of this country.[16]

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[14]Westerfield, p. 346.

[15]Ibid., pp. 346-347.

[16]Ibid., p. 348.

A proposal before Congressional committees on May 3, by General Chennault of Flying Tiger fame, for a $700 million aid program for the non-Communists in South China was dismissed by Acheson with a curt declaration that "...American policy was unchanged."[17]

The two painfully obvious questions on Asian policy that year were: (1) should the United States extend recognition to the Red Chinese, and (2) should the Americans aid the Nationalists in the defense of Formosa. Question number one has, so far, been perennially answered in the negative; question number two, proving unsusceptible to postponement because of rapidly moving events on the mainland, was first answered in the negative. Later events caused this to be reversed, and from this reversal evolved America's continued non-recognition of Communist China and the problem of the offshore islands.

Since late in 1948, it had been the administration's "policy" that the United States had insufficient armed forces to commit to the defense of the island of Formosa--notwithstanding its strategic importance. On August 4, 1949 Acheson circulated a memorandum predicting that the Nationalist redoubt would fall to the Communists because American economic and diplomatic weapons would no longer be strong enough to stem the tide. The Joint Chiefs of Staff met on August 16, and reiterated their earlier view that open American military intervention in the defense of the island would not be justified. In September, the Chiefs considered, and decided against, sending a military mission to the island to investigate matters. On October 12, members of the Defense and State Departments finished a new survey of the island's prospects; they unanimously opined

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[17]Ibid., p. 350.

that it would fall to the Communists in 1950.[18]

The Shaping of Disengagement

On December 8, 1949 the Nationalists abandoned the mainland and announced the activation at Taipei, Formosa, of a temporary capital.

A "last-minute" request was made to President Truman by the Joint Chiefs that a military fact-finding team be sent to Formosa. The request, supposedly "non-political" and submitted at the behest of Secretary of Defense Johnson, was received by the President at Key West on December 17, and was immediately resisted by the State Department. While the formal presidential decision was not reached until a National Security Council meeting of December 29, Johnson learned at lunch with the President on December 22,

> ...that I had lost my fight on Formosa...I was told... that he wasn't going to argue with me about the military considerations but that on policy grounds he would decide with the state department.[19]

The efforts of Johnson, along with various leaders of Congress and citizens of national prominence, to get the United States committed to a policy of at least denying Formosa to the Communists were symptomatic of the "lower echelon" struggles which often occur as policy is being formulated prior to decisions by the final arbiter---this being the President in the case of United States policy.[20]

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[18]Ibid., p. 362.

[19]Ibid., p. 363.

[20]Kurt London, The Making of Foreign Policy (New York, 1965), p. 209.

In this instance of policy formulation struggle, the Department of State felt secure enough in its position to issue an information guidance paper to its world-wide missions---and to departmental officers dealing with the domestic press--advising them to minimize the importance of Formosa since there was rather broad administration consensus as to its imminent fall to the Communists. (See Appendix A). The guidance memorandum, formally titled "Policy Information Paper--Formosa," Special Guidance Number 28, dated December 29, 1949, though not made public at the time of its initial distribution, was apparently "leaked" to the press from General MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo and soon became a celebrated cause among those of the so-called China Lobby. During the height of the public debate on China policy, the critics of the administration claimed that it reflected official policy at the time of its inception and dissemination. Administration spokesmen, on the other hand, later denied that it represented any fixed official policy at that time.[21] In retrospect, it would seem that the memorandum, if not representing official presidential foreign policy, did indeed reflect the desires and inclinations of those persons in the State Department, indeed in all of the government, who wished to see the abandonment of the Nationalists take place. It is exceedingly difficult to understand how an instruction of such significance could be disseminated to the many United States diplomatic missions and later be denied as reflecting official policy.

The National Security Council's decision, in December 1949, to refrain from sending a fact-finding team to Formosa was virtually the

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[21]Ballantine, p. 119.

capstone of the efforts of Secretaries Marshall and Acheson to disengage the United States from the failing Nationalist regime; however, the formal presidential announcement would come later.

The period from 1949 to January 1950 is especially important with regard to our China policy because it is the time-span within which Communist forces completed their capture of the mainland and Chiang Kai-shek's government fled to Formosa. This geographic division of the contending forces placed the matter of whether to help defend Formosa in a new and compelling relief. What previously had been a question for mostly speculation and recrimination suddenly reduced itself to a virtual "yes" or "no" type answer; and on the reply, to a large extent, would turn United States policies toward the Communists and Nationalists for some time to come.

American policy on the mainland, then, had obviously failed in its efforts to reconcile the warring factions. That failure, and the resultant questions posed by it, brought the status and disposition of Formosa once again to a point of prominence.

It may be observed at this stage in the progression of Sino-American relations that the question of the offshore islands, naturally, had not yet emerged. Neither, however, is there any evidence available to suggest that those advocates of American involvement in the defense of Formosa had given the matter any consideration to this time. The military situation, however, was so fluid in 1949 that it was widely taken for granted that the Communists would experience little difficulty in seizing all of the historically Chinese islands immediately adjacent to the mainland. Hence, no valid reason for any policy planning was apparent.

CHAPTER II

TRUMAN: DISENGAGEMENT AND REVERSAL

From Mainland Disaster to War in Korea

The expulsion of the Nationalists from the mainland, as was noted, placed the question of Formosa defense in such clear relief that the matter could no longer be sidestepped. Also, it probably seemed a propitious time, to the administration, to place the capstone on the edifice of disengagement that Secretary Acheson had been so busily building since assuming office on January 21, 1949 as successor to George C. Marshall.

On January 5, 1950 an extremely significant policy statement on the matter of Formosa was issued by President Truman.[1] After an initial reference to the long-standing Open Door policy toward China, the Cairo Declaration, and the presence of Nationalist authority on Formosa since its reacquisition by China in 1945, he elaborated on what would henceforth be American policy toward the island:

> The United States has no predatory designs on Formosa or on any other Chinese territory. The United States has no desire to obtain special rights or privileges or to establish military bases on Formosa at this time. Nor does it have any intention of utilizing its armed forces to interfere in the

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[1]Department of State, American Foreign Policy, 1950-1955: Basic Documents, II (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1957), pp. 2448-2449. Hereafter cited as Basic Documents.

> present situation. The United States will not pursue a course which will lead to involvement in the civil conflict in China.
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> Similarly, the United States Government will not provide military aid or advice to Chinese forces on Formosa. In the view of the United States Government, the resources on Formosa are adequate to enable them to obtain the items which they consider necessary for the defense of the island. The United States Government proposes to continue under existing legislative authority the present Economic Cooperation Act program of economic assistance.

That same day, Secretary Acheson held a news conference "at the request and at the direction of the President" in order to provide background and any needed clarification of the President's remarks. In the conference, he maintained that the President had really said little that was new and that what was intended was to bring "clarity out of confusion." He noted that it would have been preferable to have had full discussions with members of both parties in the Congress before the issuance of the Presidential statement, but justified the action on the ground that it was more important to "clarify thinking" than, at that time, to attempt to engage in "consulations /with the Congress/." After reviewing earlier United States policy, he reiterated that it was not "new policy" and added that he knew of "no responsible person in government, no military man /who/ has ever believed we should involve our forces in that island." Finally, he insisted that the problem of defending the island did not turn upon material considerations but was of a psychological nature: "...it is not the function of the United States... nor will it or can it...furnish a will to resist...to those who must provide for themselves."[2]

President Truman's disengagement declaration and its buttressing

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[2]Department of State Bulletin, XXII, Jan. 16, 1950, pp. 79-81. Hereafter cited as Bulletin.

by Secretary Acheson found, of course, little favor with the Republican opposition in Congress. Senator Taft said that the decision not to employ American forces in the Far East to fight the spread of Communism was highly inconsistent with what we were doing in Europe.[3]

The attacks by Senators Taft, Vandenberg, Smith, and others, were met with vigor by the defenders of the administration's policies. Senator Connally was especially critical of those Republicans pushing for a military stand on Formosa. On January 9, he cautioned:

> I am going to review this matter from time to time. Whenever this subject is brought up again, I am going to want to know who are the Senators who want to plunge this country into war--not directly to do so but to risk doing so--in the name of bitter attacks on the President and the Secretary of State.[4]

The "peace offensive" of the Democrats struck a responsive chord in American public opinion. An aura of pure partisanship seemed to surround the Republicans, especially when one considers the presence in their front ranks of such customary isolationists as Hoover and Taft demanding "extreme" military measures to counter the Communist threat.[5]

Press and public opinion aligned themselves increasingly against the suggestions of direct military support of the Nationalists on Formosa. Adding to the strength of the administration's "non-intervention" policies was the appearance before the National Press Club in Washington on January 12, 1950 of Secretary Acheson. He once again outlined our traditional policies toward China and emphasized that the fall of Chiang Kai-shek could not be considered to have resulted from an insufficient

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[3]Ballantine, p. 121.

[4]Westerfield, p. 365.

[5]Ibid.

American effort. To him, the policy of territorial integrity for China applied not just to foreign nations generally, but specifically to its most outspoken proponent, i.e., the United States. He stated as a prime necessity the need "to keep our own purposes perfectly straight...and not get them mixed up with the...attempt to do one thing and really achieve another." Replying indirectly to Senator Taft and others who criticized the "inconsistencies" of United States policy in opposing Communism in Europe but failing to do so in Asia, Acheson said it was a fallacy to think that the pursuance of American interests should result in a policy program so inflexible as to preclude the adaptation of such policy to local or areal needs. A final foundation stone for American disengagement from the Nationalists was provided in his description of what constituted the American defense perimeter in the Pacific area. He traced the United States' line of defense from the Aleutian Island chain, southward through Japan and Okinawa, and finally to the Philippines.[6]

During the spring of 1950, the widespread debate on Formosa continued, but its intensity abated. Additional statements reinforcing the position of the administration's course were made, but they were largely repetitive or elaborative of preceding statements by Secretary Acheson.

Testifying before the Armed Services Committee and the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate on July 1, 1951, concerning United States policy toward Formosa from October, 1948 to June 27, 1950, Secretary Acheson described such policy as containing four essential

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[6]Bulletin, XXII, Jan. 23, 1950, pp. 111-118.

elements, viz.: (1) American recognition that Formosa had a strategic importance for the United States; (2) that this called for denying Formosa to any unfriendly power, but not for American occupation or use of the island; (3) that the force levels of the American military establishment did not, during that period, permit the commitment of any forces whatever to the defense of the island; and (4) the Department of State was to do its best, by diplomatic and economic means, to prevent the fall of the island into unfriendly hands.[7]

The inconsistencies between Acheson's statements at the hearings and his earlier disclaimers of Formosa's value to the United States is not easy to explain. The most distinct impression left by his testimony was that he tried to publicly minimize any possible earlier policy miscalculations of the administration.

The role that Congress played in assisting in the formulation of China policy in the period from the end of World War II to the beginning of the Korean Conflict was not known for its perspicacity or dynamism. Certainly there were numerous public statements made and positions taken both for and against certain of the policies of the administration. But just how much influence did the Congress exert when the more fundamental considerations presented themselves, e.g., the defense of Formosa? This is a question to which probably no hard and fast answers can be provided, even in retrospect. Perhaps, however, a statement by Senator Brian McMahon, made "without fear of contradiction" after he re-read the secret

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[7]U. S. Congress, Senate, Hearings Before The Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Foreign Relations. Military Situation in the Far East, 82d Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1951), pp. 1671-1672. Hereafter cited as Military Hearings.

transcripts available to the executive sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in the period from 1947 to 1949, sheds some light:

> In the years between '47 and '49 there was not a single solitary suggestion made for the formation of policy, change of policy, or disagreement of policy /on China/ by any member of this /Senate Foreign Relations/ committee in its executive sessions.[8]

According to H. Bradford Westerfield, the spring of 1950 saw our China policy stopped on dead center. He further contended that:

> ...the policy stalemate was in effect contributing to a continuation of the "wait-and-see," "do-nothing" conduct of American relations with China for which the administration had long been condemned. To be sure, there still was...a serious argument, from the standpoint of prudent diplomacy, for thus "waiting for the dust to settle" a little more; the true strength and character of Red China might yet be revealed with greater clarity. But the fact remained grave that the years of accumulated partisan suspicion had virtually destroyed all freedom of choice in any direction.
>
> Clearly in Washington the passage of time was not bringing the administration any closer to securing a free hand to pursue a new Far Eastern policy. Most people still believed, however, that in Asia the day was drawing near when the problem of Chiang Kai-shek would be wiped away by a Communist invasion of Formosa.[9]

Policy Reversal and Commitment of Forces

The widespread belief that the Formosa "problem" would be conveniently disposed of by Communist conquest of that island was quickly dissipated upon the advent of the Korean War. On June 27, 1950, two days after the North Korean Army had plunged across the 38th parallel, President Truman issued a statement which revealed a major shift in United States policy. That portion of the pronouncement applicable to

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[8]Ibid., p. 1906.

[9]Westerfield, pp. 367-369.

Formosa follows:

> The attack upon Korea makes it plain beyond all doubt that communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war. It has defied the orders of the Security Council of the United Nations issued to preserve international peace and security. In these circumstances the occupation of Formosa by Communist forces would be a direct threat to the security of the Pacific area and to the United States forces performing their lawful and necessary functions in that area.
>
> Accordingly, I have ordered the 7th Fleet to prevent any attack upon Formosa. As a corollary of this action I am calling upon the Chinese Government on Formosa to cease all air and sea operations against the mainland. The 7th Fleet will see that this is done. The determination of the future status of Formosa must await the restoration of security in the Pacific, a peace settlement with Japan, or consideration by the United Nations.[10]

In a message to the Congress on the Korean problem on July 19, the President elaborated on his statement of June 27th. He said once again that America had no territorial or other ambitions in Formosa. Most of all, we wanted Formosa to remain uninvolved in any hostilities that might occur in the Pacific area; similarly, all questions regarding the island should be settled in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter. He characterized the military neutralization of the island as being without prejudice to later settlement of the political questions involved.[11]

During July and August, Taipei was the destination of several high-ranking American visitors. General Douglas MacArthur's visit there on July 19 was followed by Sino-American pronouncements that the defense of Formosa had been made a joint affair. The arrival of MacArthur's deputy chief of staff, General Fox, signified the establishment of a

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[10] Bulletin, XXIII, Jul. 3, 1950, p. 5.

[11] Ibid., July 31, 1950, pp. 165-166.

permanent military liaison with the Nationalist Government.[12]

President Truman attempted even further clarification of the American position on Formosa when he dispatched a letter to Ambassador Warren R. Austin, United States envoy to the United Nations, on August 27, 1950. The prime purpose of the letter was to re-emphasize the impartiality of the American decision to neutralize Formosa and to try to convince the world that it did not mean a blanket endorsement of Chiang Kai-shek and his hegemony on the island. Among other things it stressed that the American action was without prejudice to the future political status of Formosa, such status not being affected "until there is international action to determine its future." It was also a simultaneous effort to try to preserve at least a modicum of flexibility for future United States policy with respect to the Formosa problem.[13]

The reversal of the administration's earlier policy gained momentum as the United States became more deeply involved in the Korean War and firmer positions were successively taken. This crystallization of policy was well illustrated by the remarks delivered by Dean Rusk, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, on May 18, 1951 to members of the China Institute. In his allusions to American policy toward Formosa he said:

> We recognize the Nationalist Government of the Republic of China even though the territory under its control is severely restricted. We believe it more authentically represents the views of the great body of the people of China, particularly their historic demand for independence from foreign control.

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[12]Ballantine, p. 129.

[13]Public Papers of The President: Harry S. Truman, 1950 (Washington: Government Printing Office), p. 599. Hereafter cited as President's Papers.

> That government will continue to receive important aid and assistance from the United States. Under the circumstances, however, such aid in itself cannot be decisive to the future of China. The decision and the effort are for the Chines people, pooling their efforts, wherever they are, in behalf of China.[14]

Whether this speech by Mr. Rusk reflected the official policy of the United States was assessed by Joseph W. Ballantine as follows:

> This was taken to be the equivalent of an announcement that the United States was unequivocally supporting the Nationalist Government of China....There was, however, no official repudiation of Mr. Rusk's statement. The presumption remained that it reflected a considered official position.[15]

Looking back over the developments of 1950-51, Ballantine maintained that the three key factors determining United States policy with regard to the Nationalist Government of China and the denial of Formosa to the Communists were "...the state of American public opinion, the outbreak of the conflict in Korea, and the intervention of the Chinese Communist regime in that conflict."[16] Underscoring the shift of policy in a very substantial way was the resumption of arms shipments to the Nationalists and the dispatch of a sizable military mission to Taipei upon the intervention of the Chinese Communists in late 1950.[17]

The former United States ambassador to Nationalist China, Mr. Karl L. Rankin, said mid-1950 was a significant turning point in the American attitude toward Formosa. According to him "...we took a positive approach..." the result of which placed our actual programs for Formosa on a "...comprehensive, medium-to-long-term basis..." He said the most

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[14]Bulletin, XXIV, May 28, 1951, pp. 846-848.

[15]Ballantine, pp. 131-132.

[16]Ibid., p. 130.

[17]Ibid., p. 131

outstanding changes in the development of United States policy toward Formosa in the eighteen months following the interposition order of June 27, 1950 were:

> (1) the allocation of approximately fifty million dollars in equipment and supplies for the Chinese Army on February 16, 1951; (2) the communication to the Chinese government on April 20, 1951, that a Military Assistance and Advisory Group would be established on Formosa; (3) the allocation on June 21, 1951, of nearly forty-two million dollars in additional economic aid to be obligated in the last days of fiscal year 1951; (4) the passage of the Mutual Security appropriations in October, 1951 which included totals based on estimates of some three hundred million dollars in aid for Formosa in the fiscal year 1952.[18]

The Mechanics of Reversal

It is apparent from evidence already examined that the policy of disengagement announced by President Truman was one not easily arrived at and not widely acclaimed for its dynamism. However, McGeorge Bundy, in his The Patterns of Responsibility, said that such "...policy may be subject to debate and difference, but it can hardly be claimed that it was either pro-Communist or meaningless."[19]

Without an examination of the merits of the policy that was publicly and officially in effect from January 5, 1950 to June 27, 1950, there remains the consideration of how and why the President, in two days time (25-27 June), reversed the United States' stand of non-intervention in the matter of Formosa. There is no doubt that the principal event which prompted the President to react was the initiation of hostilities by the

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[18]Rankin, p. 123.

[19]McGeorge Bundy, The Patterns of Responsibility (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), p. 191.

North Koreans. The attack by the North Koreans, even though it occurred in a location approximately 1,000 miles distant from Formosa, and against an area earlier excluded from the American defense perimeter, resulted in an immediate change in the military balance in the Far East. It was only prudent for the presidential advisors to take into account the moral support of the North Korean action by Communist China and to adjust their military posture accordingly. The memoirs of President Truman provide valuable and illuminating details of this policy change. His summarization of the factors and his personal decisions, upon being informed of the North Korean assault, are quoted, in part, below:

> I asked Acheson to get together with the Service Secretaries and the Chiefs of Staff and start working on recommendations for me when I got back /from Kansas City/.
>
> /After returning to Washington on Sunday, June 25, 1950/ I then called Acheson to present the recommendations which the State and Defense Departments had prepared. He presented the following recommendations for immediate action:
>
> 1. That MacArthur should evacuate the Americans from Korea...
>
> 2. That MacArthur should...get ammunition...to the Korean Army...
>
> 3. That the Seventh Fleet should be ordered into the Formosa Strait to prevent the conflict from spreading to that area....We should make a statement that the fleet would repel any attacks on Formosa and that no attacks should be made from Formosa on the mainland.
>
> After this report I asked each person...to state his agreement or disagreement.../There was/ complete, almost unspoken acceptance...that whatever had to be done to meet this aggression had to be done.
>
> I then directed that orders be issued to put the three recommendations into immediate effect.
>
> /On Tuesday, June 27/ I asked a group of Congressional leaders to meet with me so I might inform them on the events and decisions of the past few days...
>
> I asked the Secretary of State to summarize the situation.
>
> I pointed out that, so far as our action concerned Formosa, we were acting on our own and not on behalf of the United Nations.

The Congressional leaders approved of my actions.[20]

Following the meeting with the Congressional leaders, the President issued a press statement containing the items he had discussed with them and his advisors.

There is nothing in Mr. Truman's account of the decisions to reverse the non-intervention policy to suggest that he rejected any of the proposals he had requested from the officials in the State and Defense Departments. Neither is there a hint that any of his decisions placed before the members of Congress were seriously disputed, much less rejected by any of them. The unanimous acceptance of these proposals would suggest that: (1) the over-all recommendations concerning Korea were, to United States policymakers at least, the right ones; (2) that the recommendations on Formosa brought it, finally, under the protection of our oft-repeated policy of containment; and (3) that this line of thinking was, in fact, but a reflection of the consensus held by those so apprised.

While both the decision to resist in Korea and to interpose in the Formosa Strait must be regarded, substantively, as reactions to Communist-initiated moves, there exists evidence that these aggressive moves were not the cause for the formulation of the "containment" of Communism Policy in Asia, but merely the trigger to a philosophy earlier hypothesized by the Truman administration in the event of such contingencies. Such evidence was provided by Bundy when he discussed in detail the instructions given Mr. Phillip C. Jessup on July 18, 1949, when the

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[20]Harry S. Truman, Years of Trial and Hope, II (Garden City, N.Y., 1956), pp. 341-348.

latter was directed by Secretary Acheson to carry out a "...comprehensive review of the problems of policy in the new situation in Asia..." According to Bundy, Jessup received a top secret memorandum which said, in part:

> You will please take as your assumption that it is a fundamental decision of American policy that the United States does not intend to permit further extension of Communist domination on the continent of Asia or in the Southeast Asian area...[21]

One might observe therefrom that Acheson's "top secret" containment assumption of July, 1949 did not harmonize very well with President Truman's dissociation-from-China statement of January 5, 1950 and Acheson's own "perimeter" speech. It must be kept clearly in mind, however, that regardless of what policy the United States might have wished to pursue in regard to the Communists in Asia, there was not really much that could be done without a provocation or turn of events of the first magnitude. The Korean War, fortunately or unfortunately, provided the ingredient that was heretofore missing. And so was implemented a policy which had undoubtedly received much private reflection prior to the actions of the North Koreans. In fact, our ambassador to Formosa, Karl Rankin, observed that:

> Our government was by no means entirely unprepared for the new responsibilities it assumed toward Formosa...there had been thinking and planning too, of the kind which before the event is labeled "top secret."[22]

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[21]Bundy, p. 180.

[22]Rankin, p. 121.

Consideration of the Offshore Islands

What discussions, if any, took place during the Truman administration concerning the offshore islands?

A thorough review of the public statements, speeches, and reports of President Truman from 1945 through 1952 revealed no mention by him of the offshore islands, either collectively or by group, such as Quemoy, Matsu, Chusan, or Nanchi.[23] Neither was there mention in Ambassador Rankin's work of any United States concern over the offshore islands through 1952.

In Mr. Truman's memoirs, Years of Trial and Hope, there is but one mention of any of the offshore islands. This concerned Quemoy and was only noted because it was included in a report submitted to the President by Mr. Averell Harriman after the latter's conference with General MacArthur in Tokyo on August 6, 1950. Mr. Harriman elaborated on MacArthur's trip to Taipei of a week earlier. The General, according to Harriman, said the following about the island:

> He spoke about the problem of the island of Quemoy, close to the mainland. The Generalissimo claims to have 70,000 men there which is important from the standpoint of eventually landing on the mainland but has no value to the United States.[24]

From the foregoing it may be concluded that as of the end of 1952, the issue of the offshore islands had not yet emerged in palpable form. Similarly, though, it becomes apparent that the foundation was being laid for American involvement in the defense of Formosa and the subsidiary problems generated by such a stance. Of these various problems,

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[23] President's Papers, 1945-52.

[24] Truman, p. 353.

the issue of what to do about the offshore islands has perhaps received the most notoriety, albeit as noted, on a rather temporary and superficial plane.

How the offshore island difficulty manifested itself and how it became embedded in our China policy became apparent as the American policy toward Formosa and the Nationalists experienced finalization and formalization under the administration of Dwight D. Eisenhower.

CHAPTER III

EISENHOWER: FORMALIZATION AND CONFRONTATION

The election of Dwight D. Eisenhower as President in 1952 presaged a formalization of United States policy on Formosa and an even more intense application of the containment policy.

President Eisenhower's tenure, for the purposes of this study, was highlighted by: (1) the delegation of broad authority in the field of foreign affairs to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles; (2) the revision of the mission of the Seventh Fleet; (3) the Korean Armistice; (4) the negotiation of a mutual defense treaty with the Republic of China in 1954; (5) passage of the 1955 Formosa Resolution; (6) the clear-cut emergence of the offshore island problem; (7) a succession of crises in the Formosa Strait; and, (8) a rather compliant Congress in the matter of formulating China policy.

The Influence of John Foster Dulles

The role and authority of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in foreign policy making must be clearly understood; it was, in the opinion of some, perhaps unique in the annals of American statecraft. Rexford G. Tugwell, in The Enlargement of the Presidency, said "...it was not... novel for weak Presidents to devolve upon a strong Secretary of State the direction of policy." In the case of Eisenhower's delegation of

authority, however, he was quite outspoken in terming it excessive and said that

> ...never, in determining policy, had there been the deference shown to an individual not President that was shown to Dulles. Several times his attempts at containment of Russia and, after China had become a monolithic communist camp, his affronts to that government that, in spite of him, existed, led almost to attacks on the nations he so abhorred. It was a curious exhibition of Christian righteousness--Dulles was a prominent Presbyterian layman--which would have seen violence used without hesitation.[1]

According to him, President Eisenhower supposedly intervened at the last moment against these adventures and refused to permit the employment of military force. However, Dulles was permitted to continue creating incidents leading to the verge of disaster and so rightly earned the title of being a master of "brinkmanship."

By Tugwell's description, "The Congress was futile." He attributed this partly to the fact that the Democrats, out of power, were aware that the Dulles policies had begun when they had possessed the responsibility. His denigration of the role played by Congress in foreign relations during Eisenhower's time in office was capped with the statement that

> There never was a better demonstration that the making of foreign policy belonged inescapably to the President, even when delegated by him to another. It seemed improbable that the Congress, even if it should try, could ever recapture it.[2]

Herman Finer seemed to have entertained a similar feeling about the role of Secretary Dulles as a policy originator and approver. He offered the hypothesis that

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[1]Tugwell, p. 463.

[2]Ibid.

> All those men who have been acclaimed as great Presidents have served as their own Secretary of State in foreign affairs. They permitted the Secretary of State to handle, on the whole, only minor executory matters ancillary to the high decisions which they themselves determined to be their own responsibility.[3]

He concluded that President Eisenhower's laudation of Secretary Dulles as the greatest Secretary of State in his memory was a most "unhistoric judgment" and that such eulogy merely revealed that Eisenhower did not properly understand his own duties as President in the field of foreign affairs. There is little doubt as to what Finer believed was proved when his hypothesis was put to the test. Obviously referring to Eisenhower, he said that "only a weak President allows his Secretary of State to make foreign policy."

It is a widely-held view that John Foster Dulles was indeed a Secretary of State who enjoyed power and prestige of a magnitude probably exceeding that of most of his predecessors. Whether the phenomenon of a "strong" Secretary of State automatically results in, or is a reflection of, a "weak" president would seem at best debatable. Most often, it seems, history's verdict of the competency of an administration's foreign policies has turned upon the success or failure of the policies pursued--not upon who, in a formalistic sense, originated them.

Nevertheless, according to Kurt London in The Making of Foreign Policy, the delegation of power to Secretary Dulles was the exception to long-established precedence. Dulles "...was his own master most of the time."[4]

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[3]Herman Finer, The Presidency (Chicago, 1960), p. 90.

[4]London, p. 145.

President Eisenhower, in his Waging Peace, takes direct exception to the allegations that Secretary Dulles enjoyed virtual free reign in foreign policy formulation and the decisions that must go with it. In the chapter devoted to the late Secretary, the President said:

> He was called legalistic, arrogant, sanctimonious, and arbitrary--but such descriptions never occurred to those who knew Foster Dulles as I did. It was also said that he sought not only to be influential in the conduct of foreign affairs, but to be responsible only to his own convictions and inclinations. What his critics did not know was that he was more emphatic than they were in his insistence that ultimate and personal responsibility for all major decisions in the field of foreign relations belonged exclusively to the President, an attitude he meticulously maintained throughout our service together. He would not deliver an important speech or statement until after I had read, edited, and approved it....It was the mutual trust and understanding, thus engendered, that enabled me, with complete confidence, to delegate to him an unusual degree of flexibility as my representative in international conferences...he was the adviser, recognizing that the final decisions had to be mine.
>
> ...He was sometimes considered by strangers as abrupt, even brusque. This often made him the target for the venom of smaller men, especially anyone who felt slighted by his serious, almost sharp form of address.[5]

Some further perspective of Mr. Dulles' role as Secretary of State may be gained from the transcript of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing of January 15, 1953. The session interviewed him in his status as Secretary of State-Designate and noted that he was not an official nominee at that time since such nomination could not be made until the President-Elect, Eisenhower, was himself sworn in. Mr. Dulles' performance was so creditable, in fact, that no protest was made when Senator Taft offered his "understanding" of the hearing:

> My idea of the proceeding in this committee is that when this proceeding is over, the committee will authorize the

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[5]Dwight D. Eisenhower, Waging Peace (Garden City, N. Y., 1965), pp. 363-365.

> chairman to state on the floor of the Senate, at the time the nomination arises, that the committee no longer desires further hearings and that, if the nomination were referred to them, the committee would recommend the confirmation of Mr. Dulles.[6]

Whatever the judgment of publicists and others in retrospect, we have at least Mr. Dulles' public comments in 1953 as to how he would try to fulfill his role as Secretary of State. He told the committee:

> Now of course you understand that as a member of the Cabinet and as Secretary of State, I will not make independent policies for the Executive. The principle job of the Secretary of State is to advise the President, and it is he who makes the final decisions about foreign policy, and whatever my own individual views in that respect would be, I would as the part of good teamwork, hope to be able to work and expect to be able to work in the closest cooperation with General Eisenhower in those respects.[7]

Nor was the Secretary-designate reluctant to state his appraisal of what our policy should be on trying to check, even to roll back, the Communist threat. In effect, he suggested meeting them in their own milieu. His concept of the problem was stated as follows:

> I ask you to recall the fact that Soviet communism, itself, has spread from controlling 200 million people some 7 years ago to controlling 800 million people today, and it has been done by methods of political warfare, psychological warfare, and propaganda, and it has not actually used the Red Army as an open aggressive force in accomplishing that.
>
> Surely what they can accomplish, we can accomplish.
>
> Surely if they can use moral and psychological force, we can use it; and, to take a negativist and defeatist attitude is not an approach which is conducive to our own welfare, or in conformity with our own historic ideas.[8]

Dulles gave all the "correct" answers during his appearance.

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[6]U. S. Senate, Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations. Nomination of John Foster Dulles as Secretary of State-Designate, 83d Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1953), p. 17.

[7]Ibid., p. 21.

[8]Ibid., p. 6.

Whether he was properly subordinate to the President in the matter of formulating foreign policy is a matter of opinion and conjecture--as we have seen.

One accusation was never aimed at Mr. Dulles and probably never will be: that he was weak or uncertain in his own mind as to how the United States should deal with the threat posed by Communist expansion.

Revising the Mission of the 7th Fleet

One of President Eisenhower's early actions was the so-called "unleashing" of Chiang Kai-shek. Popularly, he had been "leashed" when President Truman ordered the interposition of the 7th Fleet in 1950.

On February 2, 1953 the Chief Executive noted in his State of the Union message why he had revised the mission of that fleet. The President said there was

> ...no longer logic or sense in a condition that required the United States Navy to assume defensive responsibility on behalf of the Chinese Communists.

He emphasized that this was not to be interpreted as aggression on the part of the United States, but merely a recognition that "we have no obligation to protect a nation fighting us in Korea."[9] This decision by the President had little immediate military consequence. Such a change by a Chief Executive who had campaigned to end the war in Korea was not unexpected.

Karl Lott Rankin's account leaves one with the impression that the episode of "interposing" and "withdrawing" the 7th Fleet was, to a large

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[9]*President's Papers*, 1953, pp. 16-17.

extent, a psychological ploy. In 1951, he said that he was "not satisfied with the preparations to defend Taiwan" and that "Not infrequently during the Korean War no American naval vessel was seen within several hundred miles of Taiwan."[10] He had occasion to discuss Taiwan defense with John Foster Dulles while on a visit to Washington in February, 1951. Rankin said he found in Dulles, when weighing the merits of possible Chinese Nationalist landings in South China to support our operations in Korea, "that he favored a policy of action."[11] His observations at this point were a reliable index to the militant policies that Dulles later pursued with respect to some of the offshore islands.

Rankin later emphasized the distinctly unilateral manner in which the United States first "leashed" and then "unleashed" the Nationalists. He said that the 1950 decision was taken without any prior consultation with the Nationalists, but that this might have been justified due to the extreme fluidity of the situation at that time. However, the American action in February, 1953 was similarly precipitous--to the point of being reported extensively in the newspapers several days before Rankin had an opportunity to consult or inform Chiang Kai-shek.[12]

It was Rankin's further observation that the revision order to the fleet was taken by the Nationalists as "suggesting the possibility of American support for offensive action on their part." To preclude any such misinterpretation on the part of the Generalissimo, Rankin spoke to him; his account of this is as follows:

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[10]Rankin, pp. 83-84.

[11]Ibid., p. 95.

[12]Ibid., p. 155.

> I therefore took the occasion of my call on President Chiang Kai-shek to ask that no such action be initiated by his armed forces, particularly if aircraft or armor were involved, without consulting with the senior American military officer on Taiwan, General Chase. He readily agreed. To this extent was the Chinese government "unleashed"--unfortunate word--and a moment later, "neutralized" once more.[13]

The statement by Rankin was probably valid--insofar as offensive forays on the mainland were concerned. The matter of strength build-ups on the offshore islands was a different subject however. Tang Tsou said of that:

> When the Eisenhower administration took office Dulles' ideas /on unleashing Chiang Kai-shek/ were translated into official policies. Although no formal "warrant" was given to Chiang, the pressures exerted by the United States Military Assistance and Advisory Group on Nationalist officials to strengthen the garrisons /on the offshore islands/ was subsequently considered by the Nationalists as a moral commitment to defend the islands.[14]

As was previously noted, General MacArthur reported to Averell Harriman as early as 1950 that there were some 70,000 Chinese Nationalist troops on Quemoy alone. Various writers have since attempted to depict the alleged number of troops on the offshore islands on a kind of scalar device. By using this "device" theoretically one can then arrive at a measure of American policy at any given time. When the author was assigned to Air Task Force Thirteen in Taipei during the Formosa Strait crisis of 1958, one of the favorite pastimes of Americans there was to estimate the number of troops on Quemoy and the other offshore islands. To his knowledge, few persons in American circles were ever really certain of the force levels. It apparently was a rather

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[13]Ibid.

[14]Tang Tsou, pp. 6-7.

well-kept Chinese Nationalist statistic at that precise time.

In a communication of February 3, 1953, to the Department of State, Ambassador Rankin provided what probably were reliable figures on troop dispositions on the offshore islands. He said that the forces stationed on Kinmen, Matsu, and the Tachen Islands totaled about 75,000. At the same time, he noted there were about 500,000 troops on Formosa and the Pescadores.[15] One may deduce, after calculating the number of troops later withdrawn from the Tachens (14,000), that there probably were at least 60,000 troops stationed on Quemoy and Matsu in early 1953.

Formalizing Defense Relationships

Although the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty was not negotiated until 1954, thus throwing the offshore island problem into sharp legalistic relief, the first hints that the islands would soon become a matter with which the Americans would have to deal come from Ambassador Rankin in 1953.[16] In June of that year he said that "...a grave situation was in prospect on the...offshore islands," in that the Chinese Communists had begun strengthening their forces on the mainland opposite the islands since the truce negotiations on the Korean hostilities had begun. After discussing the problem briefly with Chiang Kai-shek, Rankin said the Generalissimo "asked me to transmit three requests to the State Department." These requests asked: (1) that renewed consideration be given to the formal integration of the islands into the defense system

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[15]Rankin, p. 152.

[16]Ibid., p. 167.

of Formosa and the Pescadores (Penghu); (2) that an immediate expression of American interest in the islands be made; and (3) that certain shallow draft boats be made available to him for use in the offshore island areas.[17]

Ambassador Rankin assured Chiang Kai-shek that his requests would be transmitted but advised him that it involved "important questions of policy" and not to expect quick results. In the meantime, he advised the Generalissimo "...there might be an attack /on the islands/ at any time and the Chinese should not look to us for assistance on short notice."

While he did not think it wise to say so flatly at the time, Rankin doubted "that the United States would commit itself directly in the defense of Tachen"--the most northerly group of offshore islands and then the most vulnerable, because of inadequate preparation for defense.

In February, 1953, the ambassador had recommended that early consideration of United States desires "as to bilateral or multilateral agreements affecting the Government of the Republic of China and/or Formosa" be undertaken. He felt the absence of any "formal and continuing" American commitments made all United States programs tentative in nature and tended to produce diffidence in Nationalist planning circles.[18] Later that year, he noted, the Chinese approached him with a draft for a bilateral treaty with the United States. The draft followed rather closely the provisions of the Philippine-American agreement. Rankin suggested that their ambassador in Washington give a copy to the

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[17]Ibid., pp. 168-169.

[18]Ibid., p. 154.

Department of State for study. This was done in October 1953. Though formal negotiations did not begin until several months later, "the project of a treaty of mutual defense began to take form at that time."[19]

Rankin's opinion, in April 1954, that "insufficient attention" was being given to the offshore islands, probably reflected a desire on his part to see the treaty negotiations speeded up. He accordingly asked Secretary Dulles in a dispatch of April 21, whether the United States was willing to use American naval and air forces to defend them

> ...or shall we simply dare the communists to attack them and risk their loss in the near future with consequent damage to the defenses of Formosa and serious loss of face by both Free China and the United States?[20]

Negotiations on the treaty proceeded during the spring and summer of 1954 with most of the delay being attributable to: (1) questions of scope, i.e., would the Americans agree to help protect the various offshore islands; and, (2) what should be done about territory Taipei might later recover from the Communists.[21]

On September 3, 1954 the Communists began a heavy artillery bombardment of Quemoy and so began the sporadic series of barrages which served to bring the offshore islands into public prominence from time to time over succeeding years. As far as can be ascertained, the 1954 bombardment was the first significant effort by the Communists against Quemoy since the close of the mainland campaign and represented not only a probe of the Nationalists spirit of resistance but probably a test of United

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[19]Ibid., p. 186.

[20]Ibid., p. 193.

[21]Ibid., p. 195.

States intentions as well.

Earlier, in October 1949, the Communists had launched an estimated 30,000 troops against the island from Amoy, about six miles distant, but had been repulsed with heavy losses.[22] From that day until the present the Communists have never mounted any sizable amphibious troop assaults against the major offshore islands.

With the Quemoy bombardment providing a backdrop, Secretary Dulles stopped by Taipei on September 9, 1954 on his way from the Manila Conference. During his visit Rankin observed that the "sympathetic...attitude which he showed toward the Chinese...served our cause in Formosa very well...." The senior American military officer on Taiwan, General Chase, recommended to Dulles that the United States "announce our intention to help the Nationalists defend the offshore islands." Rankin, however, advised the Secretary that some of the islands probably were militarily indefensible and that such a blanket assurance would not be desirable. The Ambassador "thought it would be best to keep the Communists guessing, and to give authority to United States military commanders to extend assistance wherever it was considered necessary and desirable, most likely in the form of air support from carriers."[23] Unfortunately, Rankin gave no details of Dulles' response, if any, to the suggestion proffered him. Later events proved, however, that he tended toward Rankin's view.

During the visit a discussion ensued about the scope of the pending treaty and Rankin told Dulles that the treaty, in his opinion, should

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[22]H. McClair Bate, Report From Formosa (New York, 1952), p. 50.

[23]Rankin, p. 206.

specify only Formosa and the Pescadores by name but could also extend, "subject to mutual agreement, to any territory which is now or may hereafter be under the control of the Government of the Republic of China."[24] As we shall later see, his recommendations were rather closely followed in the final draft of the treaty.

With the general level of tension still remaining high in the Formosa Strait, the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty was finally signed in Washington on December 2, 1954. Ratification of the treaty was advised by the Senate on February 9, 1955 and ratification by the President occurred on February 11, 1955. The exchange of ratifications took place at Taipei on March 3, 1955 and the agreement came into force on that same day. According to Rankin, "The Republic of China had its treaty at last, and the United States had, among other things, a substantial basis for a positive and continuing China policy."[25] (See Appendix B).

The agreement between the two nations pledged each to assist the other in the event of an attack on the territories stipulated in the treaty; such assistance was not to be automatic but "in accordance with its /each signatory's/ constitutional processes." A further manifestation of the United States' effort to maintain the whip hand in dealing with the problem of possible unilateral Nationalist military excursions against the Communists was reflected in an exchange of notes between the two countries on December 10, 1954. Each therein agreed not to use force from the area specified in the treaty without joint agreement with

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[24]Ibid., p. 207.

[25]Ibid., p. 214.

the other. The existence of these restrictive notes was emphasized by the Senate when it advised ratification.[26]

In an attempt to keep its hand in the matter of policy formulation, the Senate conveyed its express understanding to the President that any effort to extend United States defensive responsibilities beyond Formosa and the Pescadores, i.e., to the offshore islands, would require "the advice and consent of the Senate."[27]

The new treaty, then, clearly signified that the United States had decided to firmly back the Government of the Republic of China and would consider it, henceforth, an important segment of its chain of defenses in the Western Pacific area.

Both the statement of Secretary Dulles before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on February 7, 1955 and the report submitted by that committee to the Senate on February 8, 1955 reflected a close rapport as concerned the objectives and rationale of the treaty.

In urging the treaty's approval by the Senate, Secretary Dulles had said that

> It would give the Chinese Communists notice, beyond any possibility of misinterpretation, that the United States would regard an armed attack directed against Taiwan /Formosa/ and the Pescadores as a danger to its own peace and safety and would act to meet the danger--such action to be in accordance with our constitutional processes.[28]

For its part, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee concluded in its report to the Senate that

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[26]Basic Documents, pp. 947-949.

[27]Ibid., p. 962.

[28]Ibid., p. 955.

> By doing this in terms which cannot be misunderstood, it is hoped that the Communist military regime will be deterred from further attempts to aggrandize its position in the Far East at the expense of the free world.[29]

The hearings on the treaty were conducted in closed session. Considerable debate on the floor of the Senate took place on February 9th and six Senators, led by Morse and Lehman, argued against the treaty on legal, constitutional, and political grounds. The proponents of the treaty prevailed, however, and the final vote was 65 yeas, 6 nays, and 25 not voting. Among those not voting were then-Senators Lyndon B. Johnson and John F. Kennedy. There is no indication in the Congressional Record that either offered any comment on the Senate floor regarding the merits or demerits of the pending treaty.[30]

Developing a Policy

The Sino-American treaty provided the executive department the authority it judged it needed to deal with the central problem of Taiwan's defense. Particularly pleasing to all concerned, it seemed, was the provision for a rather leisurely process of "mutual agreement" if things grew too pressing in and around the offshore islands themselves. Chinese Communist actions against the islands, however, were to introduce an element of urgency that, in the assessment of the administration, could not be dealt with by attenuated talks and negotiations but, instead, called for presidential authority to make quick evaluations and rapid decisions.

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[29] Ibid., p. 965.

[30] Cong. Record, 84th Cong., 1st Sess. (1955), p. 1416.

The upshot was a request to Congress by President Eisenhower on January 24, 1955 calling for authority to employ United States armed forces in the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores as he might deem fit and necessary. The President said he was not proposing to enlarge American defense obligations beyond Formosa and the Pescadores "...as provided by the treaty now awaiting ratification" but that it was necessary to take into account closely related positions, i.e., the offshore islands, which might have a direct bearing on the failure or success of an assault on the treaty territories. The President spoke of his authority as Commander-in-Chief in a most diplomatic manner. He noted that he had substantial inherent powers as chief of the military forces but felt that "...a suitable congressional resolution would clearly...establish the authority of the Commander-in-Chief to employ the Armed Forces...for the purposes indicated...if in his judgment it became necessary." The President emphasized that the requested authority was no substitute for the treaty under consideration. He further noted that the threat might be temporary in nature and recommended that the resolution expire as soon as the President was able to report that peace and security had been reestablished in the area.[31]

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[31]Ibid., II, pp. 2483-2486. Speaking of Eisenhower's request to Congress for approval of the Formosa Resolution, the former President's personal assistant, Sherman Adams, said that: "Eisenhower was well aware that as President he already had the power to go to war against the Reds without consulting Congress. I remember his making a careful change in the message that he sent to the Capitol with the intention of making this point very clear.

In the original draft of the message prepared by the State Department there was a sentence that said, 'The authority I request may be in part already inherent in the authority of the Commander-in-Chief.' Eisenhower crossed this out and wrote in its place, 'Authority for some of the actions which might be required are inherent in the authority of the Commander-in-Chief.'" Sherman Adams, Firsthand Report: The Story of the Eisenhower Administration (New York, 1961), p. 128.

The alacrity with which the Senate acted is attested by the dates involved. Senate authority and acquiescence came on January 29, 1955, just four days after the submission of the request. The authorization granted in full all of the President's requests. There were only three dissenting votes on the resolution.[32] (See Appendix C)

Parenthetically, it is interesting to note that then-Senators John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson also failed to take part in the Senate's floor considerations of the Formosa Resolution. Similarly, neither was present to cast a yea or nay vote on January 29.[33]

The actual consideration of the Formosa Resolution was superimposed upon the Senate's hearings on the proposed Sino-American defense treaty, which had been submitted to the Senate on January 5, 1955.

Expressing his satisfaction on the Congressional actions, Secretary Dulles said in a radio address on March 8, 1955 that

> The political decision of what to defend has been taken. It is expressed in the /Mutual Defense/ Treaty and also in the law whereby Congress has authorized the President to use the Armed Forces of the United States in the Formosa area. That law is to defend Formosa and the Pescadores. However, the law permits a defense which will be flexible.[34]

The hearings on the Formosa Resolution took place in closed session; the minutes have not been released to this date. It is possible, however, to gain a good over-all grasp of what was placed before the Senators by reading the remarks from the floor considerations. In sum, these

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[32] Ibid., p. 2486.

[33] Cong. Record, 84th Cong., 1st Sess. (1955), p. 994.

[34] Department of State, "The Quest for Peace," Publication No. 6931, General Foreign Policy Series, No. 111 (Washington: Government Printing Office, Sep., 1956), p. 10.

considerations revealed that the administration quite probably:

(1) was convinced that it had to have interim "authority" to protect Formosa and the Pescadores, strategic islands in its Western Pacific chain of defense, from what is considered to be imminent danger from the Chinese Communists;

(2) felt that it should have the option of selecting which, if any, of the offshore islands it should encourage the Chinese Nationalists to hold or evacuate;

(3) believed that such authority as contained in the Resolution would give the Communists pause to reflect before proceeding to further threaten the offshore islands and Formosa;

(4) entertained ideas that the offshore islands might be useful in later attempts to trade to the Chinese Communists for at least a modus vivendi in the Taiwan Strait;

(5) wanted authority to smash any incipient Communist invasion plans against Formosa--even if this meant using American aircraft against enemy targets located well inland.[35]

It has been contended by some that Chiang Kai-shek used the guarantees of both the Formosa Resolution and the Sino-American Treaty as vehicles by which to militarily entangle the United States with Communist China. Whether he later believed he was accomplishing this by certain of his actions is really of little moment here. It is vitally necessary, however, that a clear understanding be had of what was the United States' position in late January, 1955 regarding Nationalist efforts to hold certain of the offshore islands.

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[35] Cong. Record, 84th Cong., 1st Sess. (1955), pp. 600-994.

The American position was rather clearly put by the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator George, on January 28, 1955, as he was shepherding the Formosa Resolution (later formalized as Public Law 4) through floor debate:

> The Republic of China is holding military planning in suspense until the United States position is made clear by this resolution. That means that the build-ups by the Chinese Communists are not, while matters are thus in suspense, being matched by corresponding dispositions on the part of the Government of the Republic of China.[36]

It must be appreciated that Senator George presided over the closed hearings on the Resolution and that the witnesses included, among others, the Secretary of State, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and representatives from the National Security Council. From this it may be confidently assumed that Senator George was fully apprised of the administrations's line of strategy and its immediate intentions concerning the strengthening of the offshore islands' defenses. Most obvious, of course, was his veiled implication that the Nationalist defense build-up on the islands would proceed at full speed once the measure was passed and American intentions of support had become "clear."

The terms of the treaty itself and the "flexibility" Secretary Dulles ascribed to the resolution passed by Congress were put to the test during the first two months of 1955. It is especially important to gain insight into administration actions during this period with regard to the offshore islands policy. As noted earlier, the Nationalists held some 30-odd of these islands upon their retreat to Formosa in 1949. It is, therefore, a necessary exercise to determine what was the policy

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[36]Ibid., p. 929.

followed by the United States when some of the islands were actually assaulted or put under such pressure by the Communists that the Nationalists were either defeated in battle or forced to make a strategic withdrawal.

On January 18, 1955 a determined amphibious assault was launched by the Communists against the islet of Ichiang, located a few miles north of the Tachen island group, which, in turn, is located about 200 nautical miles northwest of Formosa. It was obviously a test of Sino-American intentions since the only practicable relief was by air forces. No aerial support was provided by either the Nationalists or the Americans and the island fell after about two days of battle.

The United States response to the fall of Ichiang and the continued threat to the Tachen group was a proposal for their evacuation--with American naval and air assistance.[37]

On the same day that Ichiang fell, Secretary Dulles held a news conference in the course of which the relation of the Tachen Islands to the defense of Formosa was discussed. In a direct reply to a question as to the essentiality of the Tachens to the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores, the Secretary replied that "I would not say that the Tachen Islands are in any sense essential to the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores, which we do regard as vital to us."[38]

In consequence of the American decision not to assist in the defense of the Tachen Islands, the Nationalists agreed on February 5, 1955 to the American proposal for evacuation. The withdrawal of the

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[37]Rankin, pp. 220-221.

[38]Basic Documents, II, p. 2482.

approximately 14,000 troops and 16,000 civilians was well under way by February 10, 1955.[39]

The next group of Nationalist-held islands to the south of Tachen was Nanchi--about 75 nautical miles nearer to Formosa than the former group. United States personnel on Formosa believed it would be advisable for the Americans to be prepared to assist in providing air and naval support to hold Nanchi and the remaining groups of Matsu and Quemoy. The embassy at Taipei advised Washington of this appraisal and forwarded recommendations on February 10, 1955.[40]

On February 22, the Chinese were informed "...that the United States would not assist them in the defense of Nanchi." They thereupon decided that holding the islands would place too great a strain upon their resources. Within a few days of receipt of the Washington decision, the Chinese Navy evacuated the 4,000 troops and 2,000 civilians who had occupied the islands.[41]

It is clear from the foregoing that definite public decisions about the defense of certain of the offshore islands were taken in early 1955 and that the authorities in Washington had not used the Formosa Resolution as a blank check with which to become involved with the Chinese Communists. It is to be noted that in none of these instances (Ichiang, Tachens, Nanchi) had public pronouncement by the administration about these islands been ambiguous or contradictory. Rather an attitude of straightforward decision was the rule in these first "test" cases.

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[39]Rankin, p. 221.

[40]Ibid., pp. 222-223.

[41]Ibid.

The tension in the Strait continued during the summer of 1955; later American efforts were made in the United Nations, and at Geneva and Warsaw, to get a formal cease-fire arranged with the Communists but nothing worthwhile came of them.

The offshore problem was to be absent from the headlines until the autumn of 1958, at which time the severest confrontation and test of policies was to occur.

During the intervening years nothing was done to dispel the public vagueness and ambiguity surrounding American policy toward the remaining offshore islands. Indeed, according to Secretary Dulles, nothing should be done. At a news conference on April 5, 1955, he summed up the policy of the United States at that time as follows:

> ...We have no commitment of any kind...which binds the United States to anything except the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores....Some people say we should announce in advance precisely how we are going to defend...Formosa and the Pescadores....Once you extend your commitment to defend Formosa to a commitment to particular means...then you are getting into very difficult ground. But nobody yet has required us to state publicly precisely what the means would be of defense in the event of certain types of attack which cannot be predicted....[42]

Although Secretary Dulles' remarks left America's public position on the defense of Quemoy and Matsu in a state of uncertainty, there is evidence to show that the United States was not only not going to seriously hamper any Chinese Nationalist build-up on the islands, but would indeed aid and abet such efforts. In this vein, Ambassador Rankin noted on March 2, 1955 that

> The Chinese were reinforcing and improving the defenses of the remaining and far more important offshore islands so

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[42] Basic Documents, II, p. 2495.

> that they could repel all but the very heaviest assault. We would work ever more closely with them in their military planning, and be better prepared ourselves in consequence.[43]

Further underscoring United States approval of Nationalist defense efforts on the offshore islands was a telegram from Secretary Dulles to President Chiang Kai-shek, on May 3, 1955 via the ambassador. The message informed the Generalissimo that the United States understood his position with reference to the defense of the offshore islands. He was further advised that he would "...continue to enjoy strong United States support."[44]

Sherman Adams observations about how the administration handled the offshore island problem on a day-to-day basis lends strong support to the assumption that the policy itself was essentially crisis-oriented. He quoted Eisenhower as saying:

> Foster /Dulles/ and I are living 24 hours a day with the question of what to do if something happens in Quemoy and Matsu. That is the most difficult problem I have had to face since I took office.[45]

There is no evidence available to suggest that the administration's day-to-day thinking changed much between 1955 and the crisis in late 1958.

It will become apparent later that Secretary Dulles' policy of studied public enigmatism would prove difficult to maintain during the most violent of the offshore island crises.

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[43]Rankin, p. 228.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Adams, p. 132.

Quemoy: A Policy Rechallenged

As noted previously, fundamental United States policy authority regarding the defense of the offshore islands was established in 1955 by the Formosa Resolution and undergirded by the Sino-American treaty of that same year. That year also witnessed the first test of American intentions. It is only reasonable to infer from the treatment we accorded the Nationalists when the problem of Ichiang islet, and the Matsu and Nanchi groups arose, that the United States did not view these holdings as vital to the defense of Formosa. Or, for that matter, and more directly, neither were they vital to the security of general United States interests in the Western Pacific. Perhaps it would be more precise to say that the President himself was never convinced of the need to hold these islands--for it rested upon his final judgment, as authorized in the Formosa Resolution, to decide whether to employ American forces. Thus, upon the initiation of the Communist bombardment in 1958, the United States did indeed have a policy toward the offshore islands: it was a "policy" of calculated ambiguity and one that would have to await each individual challenge before the object of the policy could hope to learn its genuine contents.

The massive artillery bombardment of Quemoy began on August 23, 1958 and was carried out by an estimated 200 to 500 cannons located on the nearby island of Amoy and the mainland proper. The guns could reach every part of Quemoy, Little Quemoy, and the nearby islets of Ta-tan and Ehr-tan. Though there was no concentration of landing craft noted, the Communists had 50 to 80 motor torpedo boats in the area which could be used against Nationalist resupply efforts. During the first three weeks

of the interdiction they employed mostly anti-personnel rounds. About the middle of September, the Communists turned to barrages from higher calibre (in excess of 200-mm) guns using delayed action fusing in an attempt to penetrate and destroy the more permanent works on the island. During the height of the interdiction effort the number of rounds expended during a given day's firings sometimes exceeded 50,000.[46] The Communists never employed aerial bombardment against Quemoy at any time during the crisis, but did engage in some strafing attacks against Nationalist resupply craft on September 18--three days after such craft had made their first large resupply run to the island. The shepherding of these runs by United States warships to the three-mile limit of Quemoy's territorial waters began on September 7, but they were not successful until as noted above. Toward the end of September, the Nationalists announced that resupply, due to improved techniques, was no longer a problem and the defenders could, logistically at least, hold out indefinitely.

The Communists announced a unilateral cease-fire on October 6; the cessation was to last one week and was conditioned upon the discontinuance of American naval surface escort for the Nationalist convoys. On October 25, a bizarre, "even-numbered days" respite was proclaimed by the Communists, i.e., the bombardment would thereafter be carried out only on odd-numbered days.

During November, the tension waned as the Communists reduced their firings to a mere nuisance level. By the end of December, many of the

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[46]It was a gratuity to the defenders that many of these proved to be duds. Later information revealed that much of the ammunition stocks used were of Soviet World War II origin.

American military forces sent to Formosa and surrounding areas under the pressure of crisis were on their way back to their normal duty stations.

The foregoing is, of course, only a very brief account of what transpired in the Formosa Strait area during the months of August through December, 1958. A full description of all the military and other aspects of that period is appropriate neither to the space limitations nor to the purpose of this study. What is germane is a careful examination of high-level American actions and pronouncements during this time-span in order to determine what genuine policy changes, if any, occurred as a result of the crisis.

Virtually coincidental with the initiation of heavy shelling, Secretary Dulles had occasion to state the administration's position about the matter of possible Communist aggression against the offshore islands. Replying to an inquiry by Chairman Thomas E. Morgan of the House Foreign Affairs Committee about a reported force build-up opposite the islands, he said on August 23:

> As you know, these islands have been continuously in the hands of the Republic of China, and over the last four years the ties between these islands and Formosa have become closer and their interdependence has increased.
>
> I think it would be highly hazardous for anyone to assume that if the Chinese Communists were to attempt to change this situation by force and now to seek to attack and conquer these islands, that could be a limited operation. It would, I fear, constitute a threat to the peace of the area. Therefore, I hope and believe it will not happen.[47]

The "close ties" of which Dulles spoke were re-emphasized by President Eisenhower in a news conference just four days later. The President, it seemed, was even a bit more definite than his advisor;

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[47] Bulletin, XXXIX, Sep. 8, 1958, p. 379.

he said:

> /The offshore islands/ have this increased importance: what we call the Nationalist Chinese have deployed about a third of their forces to certain of the islands...and that makes a closer interlocking between the defense systems of the islands with Formosa....Before...they were...thought of as outposts...Now, apparently, the philosophy /of the Nationalists/ is to hold the whole thing.
>
> ...we are supporting the Nationalist regime...we are not going to desert our responsibility or the statements we have made.[48]

A gratuitous invitation for the Department of State to show an even firmer connection between the defense of the islands and Formosa was given by the Chinese Communists on August 27, 1958. On that date, Peking Radio rebroadcast an earlier statement by the Fukien Military Command (opposite Formosa) that "The Chinese People's Liberation Army has determined to liberate Taiwan, a territory of the fatherland, as well as the offshore islands and the landing on Quemoy is imminent." The monitored broadcast's contents were contained in a State Department news release of the next day, along with appropriate comments about Communist intentions.[49] President Eisenhower said in his Waging Peace that the announcement by the Chinese worked to his advantage and that if they attacked the offshore islands as a declared preliminary to moving on Formosa "under the Formosa Doctrine we could instantaneously come to the tactical aid of the Nationalists."[50]

At Newport, Rhode Island, on September 4, the White House released a rather lengthy official appraisal by the Secretary of State of the

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[48] President's Papers, 1958, pp. 641-644.

[49] Bulletin, XXXIX, Sep. 15, 1958, p. 415.

[50] Eisenhower, p. 298.

situation in the Formosa Strait. He really said little new except to reveal that "Military dispositions have been made by the United States so that a Presidential determination /that such forces are needed to defend Formosa/, if made, would be followed by action both timely and effective."[51]

Tang Tsou said that the vague denials by Secretary Dulles at Newport that the President had not yet reached a decision to intervene under the Formosa Resolution were unconvincing and that the statement represented the nailing of the American flag to Quemoy.[52] He said further that a later background briefing held at Newport to clarify some of the Secretary's remarks were "...interpreted by everyone to mean that a decision had been reached to defend Quemoy and Matsu if the Nationalist garrisons there proved unequal to the task." Tsou completed his remarks on the conference with the conclusion that "With this official statement and the background briefing, the United States moved to the brink of war."[53]

Walter Lippmann, writing during some of the most crucial days of the bombardment, indicated his dissatisfaction with the administration's policy judgments when he commented, on September 18, that:

> We have been maneuvered into a position where the question is not whether we will defend Quemoy...but whether we will make war against the China mainland. Was this maneuver foreseen when John Foster Dulles persuaded the President to stake American prestige on the defense of Quemoy?...There is reason to doubt whether the President and Dulles and their military advisors had fully realized that Quemoy could be blockaded by

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[51] Bulletin, XXXIX, Sep. 22, 1958, pp. 445-446.

[52] Tsou, p. 18.

[53] Ibid., p. 19.

> artillery fire from the mainland. There is strong evidence that the commitment to defend Quemoy was made before the plan to defend Quemoy."[54]

President Eisenhower said his own outlook at that time regarding the possible breaking of the artillery blockade was "optimistic" and that the main reason for the Newport declaration was to reassure Chiang Kai-shek and to make "...our position clear before the world."[55]

On September 9, Secretary Dulles met the press and again discussed the problem of Quemoy and Matsu, this time emphasizing their significance to the United States; he said:

> ...What is involved, and what is under threat, is the entire position of the United States and that of its free-world allies in the Western Pacific, extending from Japan, Korea, Okinawa, Formosa, the Philippines, on down to Southeast Asia. ...And we have to conduct ourselves in relation to that situation, not as though little bits of it could be segregated and treated as isolated problems to be dealt with entirely on their own.
>
> ...But we cannot just say, through Presidential action, that we will defend, come what may, under any and all circumstances, an area /Quemoy and Matsu/ which is beyond that to which we are committed by the treaty. This can be done only if there is a relationship between the two at the time in question.
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> .../The evacuation of the Tachen Islands in 1955/ was done under circumstances which did not involve that threat /to our position in the Western Pacific/. The facts speak for themselves, that our analysis of the situation was correct. I believe our analysis of this situation is also correct.[56]

The attempt by the Secretary to attribute the administration's ambiguity about taking a definite stand on the defense of the offshore islands to a lack of authority under the 1954 treaty was only too true.

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[54]Walter Lippmann, "Predicament at Quemoy," New York Herald Tribune, Sep. 18, 1958, p. 20.

[55]Eisenhower, p. 299.

[56]Bulletin, XXXIX, Sep. 29, 1958, pp. 486-492.

However, it was possible for anyone to see that the Formosa Resolution provided all the "authority" necessary to take a definite stand. Again, it is clear that the administration did not want to make a firm commitment but at the same time was apparently unwilling to accept the proposition that the decision was wholly its own responsibility to make.

During the time between the initiation of Communist pressures and September 11, the date of an all-major network address by the President to the American public, several decisions were reached by the administration. These make intriguing reading when viewed against the radio-TV address and the attempts at studied ambiguity found in so many of the "discussions" with the press. Mr. Eisenhower detailed some of these decisions under the heading of "assumptions" in his memoirs, e.g.:

> We assumed under the circumstances of the moment we would probably have to come to the aid of our ally, Chiang, no matter when an assault occurred...To save the offshore islands against a first phase attack limited initially to those islands alone, a lesser response would be required and would conform to the terms of the Formosa Resolution.
>
> For our part, once we had intervened with major military forces to save Quemoy, we would accept nothing less than victory....We recognized, however, that to succeed we might face the necessity of using small-yield atomic weapons against hostile airfields.[57]

The President explained the reliance upon tactical nuclear weapons as being necessitated by the wide dispersion of Communist airfields in Southeast China--a dispersion we could not cope with by conventional means alone because of the number of aircraft it would require. An awareness of possible adverse world reaction from the implementation of such plans was indicated but held to be an indivisible part of the calculated risk.

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[57]Eisenhower, p. 295.

According to the President, he and the Secretary of State edited and agreed upon a memorandum that spelled out the official line of reasoning that would be followed if matters continued to deteriorate in the Strait "...to insure that there was no discrepancy in our thinking."[58]

The foregoing suggests that the administration had in actuality decided privately to assist in the defense of the offshore islands on a virtually instantaneous basis. About the only "unknown" was precisely when this would occur. The President discussed some of the complexities of command and timing, saying:

> Throughout this whole period it seems that I was continually pressured--almost hounded--by Chiang on one side and by our own military on the other requesting delegation of authority for immediate action to United States commanders on the spot in the case of attack on Formosa or the offshore islands. On September 6, a request came from the Joint Chiefs of Staff asking authority for the U. S. Air Force to support the Chinese Nationalist Air Force in the event of a major landing attack on the offshore islands. In potentially explosive situations and with attendant communications only vaguely understood, such delegations were at times necessary. But for this case I insisted that I would assess developments as they occurred. Therefore, I kept to myself the final decision to employ U. S. forces.[59]

The President's difficulties were further compounded when he received, on September 11, on the eve of his network address, a note from Secretary of Defense Neil McElroy telling him that the Joint Chiefs of Staff had shifted their position. According to McElroy, the military chiefs now felt that Quemoy and Matsu should be vacated--or lightly manned as outposts only. The President added the remark that this had

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[58]Ibid. This paper may be read in its entirety under Appendix D hereto.

[59]Ibid., p. 299.

long been desirable from a technical military standpoint.[60]

The matter of numbers seemed to be a favorite subject with numerous officials. It is difficult to fully understand how the Joint Chiefs of Staff could now assume a new stance, i.e., advocate vacation of the islands or a vast reduction in the number of troops there, unless indeed it represented a change from a preceding position. Obviously, the earlier outlook called for holding the islands, which would have required very sizable troop dispositions. Similarly, a call for reduction of the island garrisons to outpost functions could only imply that a much more important role for them had been the earlier attitude of the Joint Chiefs. What is significant here is that there seems to be a contradiction between the Joint Chiefs of Staff' recommendations on September 11th and the policies they must have been promoting the day before and indeed the year before.

President Eisenhower maintained that Chiang Kai-shek had earlier ignored "...our military advice..." by adding personnel to the Quemoy and Matsu garrisons.[61] There is, however, little evidence available to suggest that the Eisenhower administration ever made any really forceful attempts to get Chiang to reduce the size of his garrisons. The statements by the former United States ambassador to Taiwan, Karl Rankin, lend credence to the assumption that the United States followed a policy of urging the strengthening of the islands' defenses, at least until a very short while before the 1958 crisis.

Significant, too, is the fact that the Joint Chiefs of Staff

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[60] Ibid., pp. 300-301.

[61] Eisenhower, p. 293.

apparently did not change their attitude until about September 11th. If this was truly the case, one can readily imagine just how assiduously the personnel in the Military Assistance and Advisory Group, Taiwan, and the Taiwan Defense Command cultivated any kind of force reduction philosophy among the people they were advising, i.e., the Nationalists. One also might observe that if the President had firmly made up his mind as early as he implied that he did, he would hardly be receiving messages from his military subordinates that they now felt inclined to agree with him.

Tang Tsou dealt rather lengthily with numbers in his analysis of the 1958 crisis. He made the point that between the first part of 1955 and August 1958, that Chiang Kai-shek increased the garrisons on the offshore islands until there were 90,000 men on Quemoy alone. In doing this the Generalissimo allegedly expended about $500,000,000.00--a rather considerable sum of money and presumably mostly of American origin.[62]

Whether this was really an increase of such criticality as made out by numerous persons may be judged by a comparison with earlier figures provided by Ambassador Rankin, under whose authority the advisory commands on Taiwan functioned. He said, as earlier noted, that there were about 75,000 troops on the offshore islands in early 1953. MacArthur had placed 70,000 on Quemoy alone as early as 1950. By comparing Rankin's figures with the ones cited by Eisenhower and others, one perceives a total increase of approximately one-third in about five and one-half years. This does not seem to represent such a startling change considering the time-span involved and the apparent desires, during

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[62]Tang Tsou, pp. 15-17.

Rankin's tenure on Taiwan (1952-1957), to see the Nationalists firmly hold the Quemoy and Matsu groups. Also, major attention was paid to the supposed 90,000 troops on Quemoy--yet the contingency planning of President Eisenhower as shown in Appendix D would have called for the same response if anything serious happened to Matsu--where only 10,000 troops were supposedly stationed.

The President's nationwide address of September 11, marked the high-point of public statements about what the Americans might do if Quemoy or Matsu were assaulted. The most revealing passage occurred when he said that

> ...it is clear that the Formosa Strait Resolution of 1955 applies to the present situation. If the present bombardment and harassment should be converted into a major assault with which the defenders of Quemoy could not cope, then we would be compelled to face precisely the situation that Congress visualized in 1955.
>
> There is not going to be any appeasement. I believe that there is not going to be any war.[63]

Although there were additional statements made by administration spokesmen as the crisis continued, they were mainly repetitive or elaborative of the earlier positions taken by the President or Secretary Dulles.

Precisely what does the foregoing analysis of policy statements reveal? Did the United States pronouncements, as Tsou and Lippmann portrayed them, definitely commit us to the defense of the offshore islands and therefore bring us to the brink of hostilities with China? The analysis conditionally supports these conclusions. There can be no doubt that the American policy statements hardened; but they lacked

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[63] Bulletin, XXXIX, Sep. 29, 1958, pp. 481-484.

that final and full public commitment--which is indeed what the administration tried its hardest to stay away from. Also, the memoirs of President Eisenhower revealed the seriousness with which he viewed the problem and the contingency responses that might have been implemented. However, they also revealed that he refused to make an unqualified precommitment, even to his most senior and experienced military advisors, as to what would be done as an immediate response to assault.

As to the seriousness of the overall confrontation, however, Tsang Tsou himself seemed to partly backtrack in his own conclusions when he said:

> Looking back to Secretary Dulles' handling of the Quemoy crisis, one must admit that he was correct in his assumption that the Communists would not engage in a level of military effort which is likely to provoke a general war. Consequently, one must further admit that...the danger of extending the war was not very great.[64]

While reluctantly admitting the efficacy of the policy Dulles' pursued, Tsou remained highly critical of the tactics employed by the administration; he said:

> The sweeping proclamations witnessed during the Quemoy crisis did not contribute to political realism in American thinking and are bound to plague the United States in the future. They stood in sharp contrast to the quiet and matter-of-fact manner in which the Truman administration handled the Berlin crisis.[65]

A major criticism levelled at the policy statements implied that the United States took itself to a point of no return for insufficient reason; in other words, Quemoy and Matsu were not that vital to our interests. The drawback to this approach is that it so intertwines the

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[64]Tsou, p. 37.

[65]Ibid.

matter of objectives and tactics that a fair judgment of each becomes virtually impossible. As a matter of fact, judgments on the former are to a large extent matters of personal valuation and political orientation; acceptable criteria by which one may reach a "satisfactory" explanation on them are never possible to establish to the satisfaction of all concerned. The other aspect, tactics, is a different subject entirely. It is clear from the statements of the administration, as well as the Commander-in-Chief's memoirs that the tactic employed was one that sought to keep the likely enemy in a state of doubt about our ultimate intention. It is likewise clear, however, as noted by Tsou and Lippmann that the administration's vagueness was rather fully dispelled by its later "clarifications." A key point made by the President in his broadcast of September 11, as well as in his memoir reference to delegation of military command authority, was that he would have to face a decision under the Formosa Resolution <u>if</u> the Chinese Nationalist defenders of Quemoy found they could not "cope" with a <u>major</u> assault. Such "defenders" included not just the combat troops on Quemoy but all Chinese Nationalist air and naval forces that might be sent from Formosa proper in the event of a serious attempt to take the offshore islands. It is rather obvious why the President and Secretary Dulles had confidence in the outcome of the crisis and chose the course they did: the force balance was definitely on the Nationalist Chinese-American side in the area of criticality.

While the number of troops on Quemoy was on several occasions criticized by both the President and Dulles as being unduly large from a technical military standpoint, the fact remains that such disposition gave the Chinese Nationalists overwhelming superiority in surface forces.

Quemoy is only about fifty square miles in area; the reported 90,000 troops Chiang had there provided roughly 1,800 soldiers per square mile for defensive purposes--a formidable figure indeed. The administration was also well aware that the Communists had never tried an amphibious assault against Quemoy since their abortive attempt in October, 1949. Also, the absence of any significant build-up of landing craft in the area during the entire crisis was fully known to the administration and very carefully watched as an early warning indicator. Additionally, the tactical interdiction capability of the Chinese Nationalist Air Force was a distinct advantage if fleeting targets (landing craft) had to be dealt with.

Parenthetically, it may be noted that the President, in spite of what his memoirs stated, had already "delegated" some reaction authority as early as the first week in September. The cruiser USS Helena, throughout its convoy operations, was authorized to engage in full-scale suppressant bombardment if interdiction efforts were effective against it during its actions. By United States interpretation, the Helena was always in international waters and retained its inherent right of self-defense. United States combat air patrols, naturally, were kept away from the vicinity of Quemoy and Matsu; however, there was no doubt as to what actions they would have taken if any Communist aircraft had engaged them or attempted to penetrate the Taiwan Air Defense Zone.

It also should be borne in mind that there was a great deal of rather sensational publicity about the deployment of United States forces to the Strait area. Too often this has been interpreted as an a priori decision to intervene in the defense of the offshore islands on a moment's notice. The President's refusal to delegate immediate air

reaction authority to Air Task Force 13 at Taipei provides an indirect comment on such assumptions. In the event of such assaults on Formosa proper, of course, America would have been morally obligated under the terms of the treaty of mutual defense to use its military forces for instantaneous response. The fundamental purpose for the deployment of such forces was to insure the security of Formosa and the Pescadores; if a psychological bonus accrued to the Sino-American side because of this it certainly was not going to be rejected out of hand by the administration.

The assessment of United States policy statements in this period was rather well covered by Professor Henry A. Kissinger in The Necessity for Choice: Prospects of American Foreign Policy. He wrote that

> The dangers as well as the uses of deliberate ambiguity were well illustrated by the Quemoy crisis of 1958. At the beginning, we sought to leave the Chinese Communists in doubt as to whether we would resist an attack on the offshore islands. Both the President and the Secretary of State made statements that we would resist only if the Communist's attack seemed a prelude to an assault on Formosa and the Pescadores. Since this implied that there were some attacks to which we would not respond, the impression was created that we might want to leave a loophole for yielding. When Communist pressure continued, we were therefore forced step by step to depart from our original stand. Every succeeding statement made the American commitment to defend Quemoy more explicit. We went further and engaged in a series of actions whose only purpose could be to remove any doubt about whether there would be American resistance: the transfer of United States tactical aircraft to Formosa, the convoying of Nationalist supply ships to within three miles of Quemoy, the strengthening of United States naval forces in the Far East. The crisis was thus ended, not by Communist uncertainty as to our decision to resist, but by the strong likelihood that a full-scale assault would meet with United States opposition.[66]

It may reasonably be concluded, then, from the evidence of policy

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[66]Henry A. Kissinger, The Necessity For Choice: Prospects of American Foreign Policy (New York, 1960), p.54.

statements and the personal memoirs of the Commander-in-Chief at the time, that the public policy of the United States during the 1958 episode remained fundamentally unchanged, i.e., no absolute precommitment emerged. Whether or not the United States would intervene in support of the offshore islands defense would turn upon Chinese Communist actions. Their actions were not of such nature as to force the President to make an absolute public commitment. It is clear, however, that the President had placed himself in such a position as to make the withholding of United States assistance difficult indeed in the event of a heavy assault.

The question as to why United States policy remained ambiguous does not lend itself to an easy answer. During the floor debates on the Formosa Resolution, the proviso dealing with presidential authority to "secure related positions" and to take other actions at his discretion came under a great deal of criticism and efforts were made to modify it because of the alleged dangers involved. All such attempts failed and the proponents insisted that the wording had been exhaustively studied before it was presented to the Congress and that not one word should be changed.

Earlier in this thesis are listed several convictions the administration probably held in January 1955, when it rushed the measure through under dire warnings of what might transpire if it did not get its way.

There was no particular legal reason why the President could not have clearly included Quemoy and Matsu within an area the United States would defend in the period 1955-58. The point is that the President and his Secretary of State merely believed that their course of purposeful ambiguity was the correct one. It had worked well in the 1955-58

interlude, why change it?

The ambiguity of the policy was hardly "explained," when the President said in his memoirs:

> I...interpreted the Congressional Joint Resolution backing up the Formosa Doctrine as requiring me not to make absolute advance commitments...but to use my judgment according to the circumstances of the time.[67]

It was an unsatisfactory and evasive explanation because it attempted to identify Congress as the initiator of the ambiguity. Congress, of course, did no such thing; it merely stamped "approved" upon an administration idea. As to what policy would be in effect a week, a month, or indeed a year hence, was a matter for political judgment. The record shows only that the President chose not to make any unequivocal commitment to defend Quemoy and Matsu between 1955 and 1958.

Sherman Adams, had certain observations to offer concerning the President's attitudes and actions in the crucial 1954-55 period. Speaking of the President's decision to maintain the United States' defense policy toward the offshore islands in a kind of planning limbo, Adams said there were several reasons for the position taken. Most important, however, the President disagreed with his military advisors, who wanted a more precise statement about the islands. He was willing to use force if Formosa itself was threatened, but he was totally unwilling to be rushed into any full mobilization for war over some small islands near the China coast unless it was clear that the Communists were moving simultaneously to attack Formosa.[68]

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[67]Eisenhower, p. 301.

[68]Adams, p. 128.

Post Quemoy Policy

During the remainder of the term of President Eisenhower the offshore islands issue was quiescent. There was, of course, little reason to suggest changes upon a policy that had apparently been successful. Neither was there any indication, at least publicly, that the administration had done much to convince Chiang Kai-shek that he should reduce the Quemoy and Matsu garrisons to mere forward outposts.

Professor Hans Morgenthau commented on the administration's policies following the 1958 Formosa Strait crisis. Before a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on April 15, 1959, the eminent political scientist said:

> When the location of the next crisis is virtually predictable, as with regard to the islands off the coast of China, we refuse to anticipate the crisis by appropriate action.
>
> We wait until it occurs and until we are confronted with an impending disaster. Then we react hastily and ineffectively.
>
> To address myself more particularly to the problem of the offshore islands. When the last crisis broke out in the fall of last year, we appeared ready to commit ourselves to a reduction of Nationalist manpower on those islands, but after the crisis subsided, manpower was but very slightly reduced and firepower is being drastically increased.
>
> Thus we...invite a repetition of the crisis without having developed a policy with which we can successfully meet it.[69]

Professor Morgenthau was similarly critical of the way in which he felt the United States let its policies be determined by Chiang Kai-shek. He said the United States should concentrate upon denying Formosa to the Communists and should quit worrying about what particular political regime on Formosa would be required to do that job.

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[69] U. S. Senate, Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations. What is Wrong With Our Foreign Policy, 86th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1959), pp. 3-15.

The successor to John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State Christian Herter, illustrated rather well the administration's continuing policies at a news conference on July 9, 1959. At that time the Secretary said:

> ...As far as I know there are no American commitments on those /offshore islands/. There has never been more than a small number of /U. S./ observers. We have never had troops on those two islands.
>
> As far as I know, any commitment that we have--and I am speaking now from a legalistic or moral point of view--has remained unchanged. The thinning out of the troops on Quemoy, particularly, is something that was under discussion /in 1958/. Just what the figures are now, I couldn't tell you, but I understand that there has been some thinning out.[70]

President Eisenhower once more discussed the significance of the islands at a White House press conference on May 11, 1960--his last full year in office. It is clear from the excerpts that follow that the situation in the Formosa Strait had returned to the status quo ante and that United States policy, as concluded above, remained unaltered:

> If you go back to the Formosa Doctrine, you will find that the responsibility is placed upon the President to determine, in the event of an attack upon Quemoy and Matsu, whether this is in fact a preliminary to or part of an attack against the Pescadores and Taiwan. If that is true, then he must participate because then it will become the defense of Formosa, one of our allies.
>
> Now as to the actual value of Matsu and Quemoy, of course we must remember how much this seems to mean to the morale of all the Chinese forces on Formosa. From their viewpoint, any desertion of those islands means a complete surrender--abject surrender. So, it is a factor that anyone who is going to have to make possible decisions in the future has to take into consideration when he talks about the abandonment of these sets of islands...
>
> ...So none of these problems is ever a simple, black and white thing. You have got a very great number of conflicting considerations.[71]

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[70] Bulletin, XXXIX, July 27, 1958, p. 114.

[71] President's Papers, 1960, p. 409.

CHAPTER IV

KENNEDY AND JOHNSON: HOLDING THE STATUS QUO

Living With The Kennedy-Nixon Debates

During the presidential campaign in the fall of 1960, Senator John F. Kennedy and Vice-President Richard M. Nixon appeared in a series of publicly-televised debates. The subject of Quemoy and Matsu came up in the course of these confrontations and prompted each participant to try to make clear his attitude on it.

This was important: the views expressed could reasonably be expected to provide a fairly accurate index to the winner's behavior on the matter once he was ensconced in the White House.

The question of the defense of Quemoy and Matsu was actually originated by neither candidate but was rather in response to newsmen's questions before and during the debate. Vice-President Nixon first responded in rather specific terms that implied that the United States should defend Quemoy and Matsu as a matter of principle. A later "modification" of his statements tended to bring him more nearly into line with President Eisenhower's position under the Formosa Resolution. Even in his book, Six Crises, there is evidence that he never really recanted his position. He wrote that:

> But no one, of course, had ever remotely suggested that an attack on Quemoy and Matsu could represent anything other than the beginning of an attack whose ultimate objective was

Formosa itself.[1]

Such a statement, of course, directly contradicted the thesis of President Eisenhower when he told Congress in January 1955, that the intent of the Formosa Resolution was not to enlarge American obligations beyond the pending treaty but to permit reaction if he determined such an attack to be preliminary to, or part of, an assault aimed at the Pescadores and Formosa.[2]

It is necessary for the purpose of this study to review in detail some of President Kennedy's more pertinent remarks during the debates so that they may be compared with his later pronouncements on the subject.

During the debate on October 7, 1960 he gave a summary of his position on the matter; it is quoted below at some length:

> Well the United States has on occasion attempted--mostly in the middle 50's--to persuade Chiang Kai-shek to pull his troops back to Formosa. I believe strongly in the defense of Formosa. These islands are five or six miles off the coast of Red China within a general harbor area, and more than 100 miles from Formosa. We have never said flatly that we would defend Quemoy or Matsu if attacked. We say we will defend it if it is a part of a general attack on Formosa, but it is extremely difficult to make that judgment. Mr. Herter, in 1958, when he was Under Secretary of State, said Quemoy and Matsu were strategically indefensible. Admirals Spruance and Collins in 1955 said that we should not attempt to defend these islands...
>
> General Ridgway has said the same thing. I believe that, if you are going to get into a war for the defense of Formosa, it ought to be on a clearly defined level...
>
> I believe we should defend Formosa, we should come to its defense. To leave this rather in the air--that we will defend it under some conditions but not under others--I think is a mistake.
>
> Secondly, I would not suggest withdrawal at the point of

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[1]Richard M. Nixon, Six Crises (New York, 1962), p. 347.

[2]Cong. Record, 84th Cong., 1st Sess. (1958), p. 600.

> the Communist gun. It is a decision finally that the Nationalists should make and I believe that we should consult with them and attempt to work out a plan by which the line is drawn at the island of Formosa...
>
> ...it has been my judgment ever since 1954...that our line should be drawn in the sea around the island /of Formosa/ itself.[3]

In the debate with the Vice-President on October 13, Kennedy focused his attention on the 1954 treaty the United States had signed with Taipei and said he would abide by it and that it did not obligate us to defend the offshore islands. Attempting to clarify his position, he said:

> So I stand with the Secretary of State, Mr. Herter, who said these islands were indefensible. I believe that we should meet our commitments, and, if the Chinese Communists attack the Pescadores and Formosa, they know it will mean war. I would not hand over the islands under the point of any gun, but I merely say that the treaty is quite precise, and I sustain the treaty....[4]

A few days later Mr. Kennedy modified his position and indicated that he supported the Eisenhower administration policy on Quemoy and Matsu over the preceding five years. In doing this he said any American defense efforts in support of the offshore islands must be mounted only if such an attack against the offshores was part of an attack against Formosa and the Pescadores.

We are told by Mr. Theodore C. Sorenson in Kennedy that:

> ...Kennedy...recognized that his position, while correct, was too sophisticated for the average /TV/ viewer who understood Nixon's refusal to surrender one square inch of free soil. Consequently, both Kennedy and Nixon began to emphasize

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[3] U. S. News and World Report, "Big Debate: Round 2," XLIX, Oct. 17, 1960, pp. 108-115.

[4] Ibid., Oct. 24, 1960, p. 81.

the official administration position.[5]

The Senate's interview of Secretary of State-designate Dean Rusk on January 12, 1961 seemed to presage a fresh airing of the United States policy respecting the offshore islands. However, when queried by Senator Lausche whether there was any "fixed judgment" on Formosa, Quemoy or Matsu, Mr. Rusk said:

> ...I would not want to speak for the new administration on this point...there has not been an opportunity for the new administration to get in position and consult on such matters, and I would not want to intimate a specific point of view on that point this morning.[6]

Remembering that Mr. Rusk had served as Under Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs since about 1951, it would be presumed that he would have exhibited a bit more confidence in this matter. As a matter of fact, he could have cited United States treaty obligations and the Formosa Resolution without becoming the least bit controversial.

The problem of the islands remained dormant during President Kennedy's first eighteen months of office.

On June 27, 1962 the President announced at his news conference that the situation in the area of the Taiwan Strait was very serious due to large movements of Chinese Communist forces into that area. He said their purposes were unclear and that it would therefore be best for all concerned if the position of the United States were clarified. He then discussed the matter at some length:

> ...One possibility is that there might be aggressive

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[5]Theodore C. Sorenson, Kennedy (New York, 1965), p. 205.

[6]U. S. Senate, Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations. The Nomination of Dean Rusk: Secretary of State-Designate, 87th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1961), pp. 28-29.

> action against the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu. In that event the policy of this country will be that established 7 years ago under the Formosa Resolution. The United States will take the action necessary to assure the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores. In the last crisis in the Taiwan area in 1958, President Eisenhower made it clear that the United States would not remain inactive in the face of aggressive action against the offshore islands which might threaten Formosa...
>
> Under the policy sustained continuously by the United States Government since 1954, it is clear that any threat to the offshore islands must be judged in relation to its wider meaning for the safety of Formosa and the peace of that area.
>
> Exactly what actions would be necessary in the event of such an act of force would depend on the situation as it developed. But there must be no doubt that our policy, specifically including our readiness to take necessary actions in the face of force, remains just what it has been on this matter since 1955. It is important to have it understood that on this point the United States speaks with one voice.

Later, during the same news conference, a reporter reminded the President of his remarks in 1960 about the islands being indefensible and of our necessity to reduce our commitments to them. To this the President replied:

> I think that my statement represents the view of the United States Government, and the view of the United States Government is regulated by the resolution which was passed... by the Congress in 1955, and which has been interpreted by President Eisenhower and again by me...
>
> Now that is what my statement says. We stand in the traditional policy which has been true since 1954.[7]

It is interesting to note that Sorenson indicated that major cause for the 1962 tensions with respect to the offshore islands rested with Chiang Kai-shek. He wrote that Chiang Kai-shek began talking freely about a Nationalist invasion, "...hoping to embarrass the United States into action." What kind of precise action he did not specify. According to Sorenson, the Chinese Communists then began a large-scale movement of troops into the coastal sectors--presumably because they were

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[7] President's Papers, 1962, pp. 509-510, 512.

agitated and fearful about Chiang's bellicose statements. Sorenson said that after President Kennedy issued his reaffirmation of American intention to defend Formosa, the Pescadores, and the offshore islands (if the attack threatened Formosa), "...tensions on both sides of the Formosa Straits soon subsided."[8] There was no comment by Sorenson as to whether the Chinese Communists subsequently removed these forces from the coastal provinces. Also, and perhaps significantly, Sorenson did not discuss or even mention any problem relating to the size of the offshore garrisons or any attempts by the United States to have them increased or reduced.

As is the case with Eisenhower's reference to Chiang Kai-shek's "responsibilities," Sorenson's remarks are not necessarily the last word on the subject. Speaking on the American Broadcasting Company's television network program "Issues and Answers" on July 8, 1962, Secretary of State Dean Rusk did not attempt to be so narrow when discussing the causative elements of the 1962 offshore island "crisis"; he said:

> It is always a little dangerous to try to say exactly what is in the mind of someone on the other side, on the mainland for example. There seems to have been some reinforcement of the areas adjacent to Formosa, but there are several possible explanations, including present measures in view of some of the speeches and talk that has been coming out of Formosa. Another might well be the disturbances which have been associated with food shortages and floods in that part of mainland China. There are /also/ some indications that perhaps the Communist discipline in that area has not been as tight as they had expected it to be.[9]

Underlining the complexities of decision-making within the general context of the historic United States defense policy for the offshore

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[8]Sorenson, pp. 661-662.

[9]Bulletin, IIIL, July 30, 1962, p. 180.

islands was another comment by Secretary Rusk. On the same television program, he was asked if there were any conceivable circumstances under which an attack on the offshore islands might be adjudged as not constituting a threat to Formosa and the Pescadores. In reply, he said:

> I think this is a matter on which the President would have to make a judgment, and I would not myself want to speculate about the circumstances under which that judgment would be made.

Notwithstanding his earlier remarks in the 1960 debates, the record clearly establishes that President Kennedy picked up the old policy where his predecessor left it. The formal language of the 1954 treaty and the 1955 resolution would continue to provide the necessary basis for public discussions and pronouncements. The interpretations and decisions would remain, as before, a matter of Presidential discretion and temperament.

Johnson: Endorsement and Dormancy

Up to the time Lyndon B. Johnson assumed the Presidency from the assassinated Kennedy, there had occurred no perceptible shift in United States policy with regard to the defense of the offshore islands. A search of the public records revealed no substantive policy statements by President Johnson or members of his administration with direct reference to the matter.

The President did make some remarks about the general problem of Communist aggression in the Taiwan Strait area during the campaign preceding presidential elections in the fall of 1964. On twelve different occasions betweeen September 28 and October 31, the President emphasized how closely he had worked with President Eisenhower during the 1958

Formosa crisis. He noted that he was in full agreement with him, saying upon one occasion that "Lyndon Johnson stood right by the side of Eisenhower at Suez and in the Strait of Formosa."[10]

The record, then, reveals no precise Johnson endorsements of the policies that were followed by Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy--policies that never really moved to the center of public notice and criticism until forced there by the pressure of events.

Although it might be said that President Johnson's campaign endorsements of President Eisenhower's policies are sufficient evidence in themselves, they must be regarded and valued only for what they really are--political remarks made during the heat of a presidential election campaign.

In the absence of any remarks to the contrary, however, it is a reasonable inference that the President feels he has sufficient latitude under the terms of the extant Formosa Resolution and the 1955 treaty. Therefore, any public statements without good cause would merely agitate otherwise placid political waters.

A further observation might be at least as credible: the problem of the offshore islands has lain dormant for so long that many people have simply forgotten it.

For example, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations held extensive hearings throughout most of March, 1966 with regard to our over-all policy on mainland China. One of the expert witnesses present to testify on March 30, was Dr. Robert A. Scalapino, Chairman of the Political

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[10] President's Papers, 1963-64, pp. 1161, 1242, 1395, 1476, 1484, 1501, 1510, 1551, 1553.

Science Department at the University of California and editor of the monthly journal Asian Survey. He had contributed the "Northeast Asia Section" of the Conlon Report of 1959, one of fifteen such studies authorized by the Foreign Relations Committee to be accomplished by expert and scholarly sources. In his contribution to that 1959 report, Dr. Scalapino observed, inter alia:

> The offshore island issue is extremely serious. It might become critical again at any point. Thus it is possible to argue that...we should extricate the Nationalists and ourselves from this area. These islands bear no relation to the defense of Taiwan, and can only be considered as steppingstones to the mainland....They are an integral part of the mainland. Militarily they are very vulnerable. Politically, they are a liability, both in terms of world opinion and in terms of the unhealthy psychology they foster in Taiwan. In the event of full military action over them, the American people would be of divided opinions.[11]

One of Dr. Scalapino's 1959 recommendations on carrying out a policy of "exploration and negotiation" with Communist China was "...that the military forces of Taiwan would be withdrawn from the offshore islands, together with those civilians desiring to leave."

During the hearings on March 30, 1966, the following exchange between Senator Lausche and Dr. Scalapino occurred:

> Senator Lausche: /You recommended/ that the Kuomintang forces be withdrawn from the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu?
>
> Dr. Scalapino: I do not have the wording in front of me, but I believe that is correct.
>
> Senator Lausche: Do you still adhere to that recommendation?

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[11]U. S. Senate, U. S. Foreign Policy: Compilation of Studies (Washington: Government Printing Office, March 15, 1961), pp. 549-550.

Dr. Scalapino: I am not certain that I do...[12]

The foregoing episode casts no reflection of any kind upon Dr. Scalapino. It merely serves to illustrate how very important issues, even though never fully resolved, are frequently relegated to a position of such low priority that they are for all practical purposes forgotten.

To a wide extent this dormancy of the offshore island problem was reflected throughout the entire spring hearings. In over 650 pages of testimony by expert witnesses on the state of our China policy, the problem of the offshore islands was mentioned but very few times and then most briefly.[13]

Finally, it must be noted that despite the dormancy of the issue, the government's day-to-day assessments of the problem must be continuing in much the same manner as in the days of the Eisenhower Administration. In a recent discussion of the matter with the Chief of the Republic of China Desk, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, the author was apprised that the current public policy of the United States Government is as follows:

> The present position of the United States Government with respect to the defense of the Chinese offshore islands remains precisely the same as it was upon the original passage of Public Law Number 4, 84th Congress, 1st Session. That is, the President will take such action in the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores as he deems necessary and within the authority provided by Public Law 4. Additionally, any actions taken under this law will be in consonance with the original request submitted to the Congress in which the President called for the

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[12]U. S. Senate, Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations. United States Policy With Respect to Mainland China, 89th Cong., 2d Sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1966), pp. 578-579.

[13]The May 1966 hearings were held in order to get scholarly and expert opinion on Sino-United States Relations. There were no spokesmen present on behalf of the Government at these cited hearings.

authority contained therein.[14]

The desk chief, Mr. Josiah W. Bennett, also noted that there had occurred no public pronouncements by the present administration concerning the subject of troop levels on the offshore islands.

[14]Personal telephone conversation on July 13, 1966 between the author and Mr. Josiah W. Bennett, Chief, Republic of China Desk, Office of the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

It is apparent that American policy with respect to the Chinese offshore islands has always been intimately related to the larger issue of the island of Formosa and the Pescadores Islands. Formosa and the Pescadores, in turn, have been of varied importance in United States planning because of the strategic and political value assigned to them by American policymakers. Immediate post-World War II plans, as we have seen, did not comprehend much beyond the simple denial of Formosa to the Chinese Communists--and that only through the employment of non-military means. However, with the advent of the Korean War the strategy of mere denial changed. The interposition of the Seventh Fleet signified a more positive approach to the containment of Communism in the Far East. Coupled with United States efforts on the Korean Peninsula, it became clear that an Asian version of the Truman Doctrine was being placed into effect in that region.

Research for this study clearly shows that with the advent of the Korean War American policy began to evidence much more positive characteristics. A series of Far Eastern mutual defense treaties, ranging from Korea and Japan to the Philippines and Australia, was entered into by the United States during the 1950's. The inclusion of a treaty with the Chinese Nationalist government in this series underscored the new and long-range outlook that the United States was assuming. In other

words, mere denial to the Chinese Communists of Formosa would no longer suffice; Formosa, and the Nationalist regime were, at this point, considered to be vitally important to United States interests in the Far East. Thus it became important for the United States to ensure the security of Formosa and the Pescadores. The issue of the offshore islands evolved from this commitment.

This study has revealed that the offshore islands were but one consideration within what the Eisenhower administration viewed as an imminent threat to the safety and security of Formosa and the Pescadores in 1954-1955. In dealing with this assumed threat, the administration wanted flexibility of action for a very fluid military situation, and at least professed unity at the top levels of the American policymaking edifice. The provisions of the Formosa Resolution (Public Law 4), drafted in fact by the State Department, provided the needed latitude for presidential discretion in the taking of strategic and tactical decisions. The enactment of Public Law 4 also assured the President of Congressional approval for whatever actions he might later deem necessary to take in the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores above and beyond the obligations the United States had assumed in the 1954 Sino-American Treaty.

It is interesting to note that President Eisenhower succeeded in making the Congress a party to his strategic and military planning in a very effective manner. He not only strengthened the prerogative of Congress in the foreign policy making field, but did it in such a way that any later partisan criticism of his actions would be effectively blunted even before it became public; it was "consensus-making" in the grandest manner.

Although administration plans for defensive measures outside the

territories of Formosa and the Pescadores proper certainly included considerations beyond the offshore islands themselves, the policy was later widely interpreted and reported as one aimed principally, if not solely, at those islands. With the departure of Secretary Dulles, Senator Knowland, Admiral Radford, and others of similar persuasion from the field, the concept of employing United States forces against mainland targets has been gradually removed from the area of serious planning, except for the short interlude of the 1958 crisis.

The authority established by the Formosa Resolution, as interpreted by successive Presidents, has provided the real basis for the American position regarding the defense of the offshore islands. That policy, essentially, has been four-faceted, viz., it has (1) reserved to the President, in totality, the prerogative of making all final decisions with respect to the employment of United States strategic and/or tactical military forces for the defense of the offshore islands; (2) by interpretation, following the Tachen evacuation, called for no absolute beforehand "inclusions" or "exclusions" of the offshore islands in American defense planning; (3) always purportedly tied any measures to defend the offshore islands to a determination that such measures were to be taken only if an assault against the offshore islands were identifiable as part of a wider threat against Formosa proper; and, (4) necessitated, by its very nature, a crisis-oriented decision-making environment.

Research for this study produced no evidence to suggest that these four basic conditions for planning and deciding have been permanently altered--either singly or in combination. Despite alternating periods of tranquility and tension, the framework, the "policy" if you will, within which decisions might be taken, remains fundamentally what is was

in 1954-55. Caution must be exercised in accepting the various judgments concerning the impact of the 1958 crisis on longer-range United States policy. By no means should one conclude that that episode completely negated previous policy or set an iron-bound precedent necessitating future commitment. It must be placed in its proper perspective along the 1954-1966 policy continuum. When viewed in this manner its effect on "permanent" offshore island defense policy becomes far more meaningful, albeit perhaps less dramatic.

In any consideration of precedent, and past versus present policy, it is profitable to keep in mind that Eisenhower, Dulles, and Kennedy either stated or implied that any American action in the defense of the offshore islands would be mounted only in response to an assault that was part and parcel of a larger effort clearly threatening Formosa and the Pescadores. Such statements reveal a decidedly narrow "interpretation" of the provisions of Public Law 4. The authority contained in that statute is far broader, and would even permit the garrisoning of Quemoy and Matsu with American troops--if indeed the President so decided. An assault by the Chinese Communists in a case like that would certainly make academic any interim judgment of whether the attack was identifiable as part of a larger move against Formosa and the Pescadores. Obviously, however, successive Commanders-in-Chief have chosen to remain within the guidelines laid down by President Eisenhower's message to Congress that requested passage of the Formosa Resolution. In that message, he said he would not use the requested authority unless needed to repel attacks (or pending attacks) that contained recognizable designs against the safety of Formosa and the Pescadores as a wider goal. There is little doubt, of course, that such a fine determination is very difficult

to make. Any serious effort to so categorize an incipient threat to Formosa requires the highest quality of foreknowledge of enemy intentions--his genuine intentions, that is, and not merely some "finding" perhaps based upon contrivance or expediency occasioned by possible shortcomings of what was originally conceived to be an adequate policy.

There is no doubt that such a course has generated ambiguity and uncertainty in the public mind. This was amply illustrated by administration efforts to make United States policy with respect to the offshore islands "clear" in 1958, yet remain formally "uncommited." Another example of what studied enigmatism can produce was the troop disposition rationalization indulged in by Eisenhower and Dulles when the time came to shoulder responsibility for a policy freely chosen by them beforehand. Neither of the foregoing responses should have been totally unexpected in view of the crisis-oriented approach that United States policy has followed.

Also, it should be noted that actions of both the Chinese Communists and Nationalists have on occasion significantly affected the context within which the United States government has had to consider the problem of Formosa, the Pescadores, and the various offshore islands. To the Communists, the issue has provided numerous avenues for the exploitation of political and propaganda opportunities. For their Nationalist adversaries it has furnished numerous advantages through which they might further strengthen their political, military, and economic position on Taiwan. Whether Chiang Kai-shek has been enabled to actually employ the issue to the extent that he is the real decider of United States policy, as maintained by some, remains speculative and controversial. That American policy is dictated year after year by Chiang's alleged scheming

suggests a "delegation" of American policy planning authority that is most difficult to sustain. There can be little doubt, however, that the issue has given both him and his opponents on the mainland certain gratuitous opportunities on occasion to increase tensions in the Formosa Strait and to compound America's foreign policy problems--not only in the Western Pacific region, but in the United States' relationships with various allies, members of the Soviet Bloc, and some of the non-aligned nations as well.

On balance, there seems little likelihood that any significant alteration in United States policy will occur--at least in the near future. A reconciliation between the United States and the People's Republic of China, or some other development of an equally momentous nature could, of course, greatly influence American policy with respect to the offshore islands and the wider question of American security requirements in the Western Pacific region. This is similarly quite unlikely in the short term.

It is possible, as pointed out by Professor Morgenthau, that a different course of action might better have served American interests. While not in full agreement with his contention that simply the denial of Formosa and the Pescadores to the Communists would suffice, the author tends to agree with his more basic premise--that America's policy with reference to the offshore islands has accomplished little more than a precarious maintenance of a fundamentally unsatisfactory status quo.

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APPENDIX A

DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICY INFORMATION PAPER--FORMOSA. SPECIAL GUIDANCE NO. 28, DECEMBER 23, 1949.

I. Problem

To formulate information policy which will minimize damage to United States prestige and others' morale by the possible fall of Formosa to the Chinese Communist forces.

II. Background

A. Comment on Formosa is on the increase as the Communist advances on the Chinese mainland leave the island as the last substantial part of China under Nationalist control. Attention is focused by three principal elements.

1. Communists, world-wide, who charge the United States with conspiring to build the island into a fortress to be taken over by the United States (if it does not already control it), thereby trying to brand the United States with the mark of aggressive imperialism, and also hoping to get us involved in a risky and unpromising venture;

2. Pro-Nationalists (principally in the United States) who consider Formosa a redoubt in which the government could survive, and who tend to create an impression the United States is delinquent if it fails to "save Formosa";

3. Groups in the United States who are inclined to be critical of the United States for failure to act to prevent loss of the island to the Communists, largely because of mistaken popular conception of its strategic importance to United States defense in the Pacific.

B. Loss of the island is widely anticipated, and the matter in which civil and military conditions there have deteriorated under the Nationalists adds weight to the expectation. Its fall would threaten:

1. Loss of United States prestige at home and abroad to the extent we have become committed in the public mind to hold it;

2. Damage to the morale of other nations, particularly in the Far East, which are disturbed by the Communist gains and fear its possible further advances.

C. Formosa, politically, geographically, and strategically, is part of China in no especially distinguished or important way. Though ruled by the Japanese (as "Taiwan") for 50 years, historically it has been Chinese. Politically and militarily it is a strictly Chinese responsibility.

It is true that the technical status of the island remains to be determined by the Japanese peace settlement, but the Cairo agreement and the Potsdam declaration and the surrender terms of September 2, 1945, looked to its return to China and the United States facilitated its

takeover by Chinese troops shortly after VJ-day.

Even the small United States military advisory group sent there at Chinese Government request was completely withdrawn a year ago. Merely a handful of military attache personnel with diplomatic status remains. The United States never has had military bases there, and never has sought any special concessions there.

ECA work done on the island, particularly through the Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction, has been of purely economic and technical nature for assistance in improvement of conditions, and no quid pro quo has been sought.

D. United States public opinion has concerned itself primarily with the question of the island's strategic importance; there has been insistent demand from a few sources for military action by the United States, but it has not assumed significant proportions. Rather public opinion is obviously divided and uncertain, and there is no apparent consensus for a particular course of active intervention.

III. Treatment

A. If rising public interest warrants it, gradually increasing attention may be paid Formosa, to establish the facts indicated below. Overseas use should be made of unofficial materials in public analysis and comment appearing both at home and abroad, as well as official statements as they may appear. Label conflicting public statements properly as "individual expression of opinion," as "unofficial," etc.

B. All material should be used best to counter the false impressions that:

1. Formosa's retention would save the Chinese Government;

2. The United States has a special interest in or "designs on" the island or any military bases on Formosa;

3. Its loss would seriously damage the interests of either the United States or of other countries opposing communism;

4. The United States is responsible for or committed in any way to act to save Formosa.

C. Without evidencing undue preoccupation with the subject, emphasize as appropriate any of the following main points:

1. Formosa is exclusively the responsibility of the Chinese Government:

(a) Historically and geographically a part of China;

(b) The national government has run the island's affairs since the take-over and is responsible for present conditions there;

(c) The United States has assumed no responsibilities or obligations, actual or moral.

2. Formosa has no special military significance:

(a) It is only approximately 100 miles off the China coast;

(b) Other potential objects of Communists aggression are closer to points on the Chinese mainland than to Formosa;

(c) China has never been a sea power and the island is of no special strategic advantage to the Chineses Communist armed forces.

3. Economic assistance in Formosa has been for economic and social purposes, has been consistent with demonstrated United States concern for the welfare of the Chinese generally, and has involved no thought of special concessions for the United States.

4. In areas of insistent demand for United States action,

particularly in the United States itself, we should occasionally make clear that seeking United States bases on Formosa, sending in troops, supplying arms, dispatching naval units, or taking any similar action would:

(a) Accomplish no material good for China or its Nationalist regime;

(b) Involve the United States in a long-term venture producing at best a new area of bristling stalemate, and at worst possible involvement in open warfare;

(c) Subject the United States to a violent propaganda barrage and to reaction against our "militarism, imperialism, and interference" even from friendly peoples, and particularly from Chinese, who would be turned against us anew;

(c) Eminently suit purposes of the U.S.S.R., which would like to see us "substantiate" its propaganda, dissipate our energies and weaken effectiveness of our policies generally by such action.

5. In reflecting United States unofficial demands for action of various kinds in Formosa, avoid giving them prominence unwarranted by their limited (usually individual) source, and make clear that the total of such demands evidences concern and frustration in some quarters but does not add up to a consensus on any particular position different from that officially taken.

D. Avoid:

1. Speculation which would show undue concern with whether Nationalists can hold the island or when Communists may take it;

2. References which would indicate important strategic significance, or that the island is a political entity;

3. In output to China, any emphasis on bad conditions in Formosa under the Nationalists, although to other areas reference can be made to reasons why Nationalists are vulnerable there as they are elsewhere.

4. Statements that Formosa's final status still is to be determined by the Japanese peace treaty.

5. Name "Taiwan"; use "Formosa."

Source: William, William Appleman, ed. The Shaping of American Diplomacy. Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1956, pp. 1108-1111.

APPENDIX B

PROVISIONS OF THE MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND PERTINENT DATES

Signed at Washington December 2, 1954; Ratification advised by the Senate of the United States February 9, 1955; Ratified by the President of the United States February 11, 1955; Ratified by the Republic of China February 15, 1955; Ratifications exchanged at Taipei March 3, 1955; Proclaimed by the President of the United States April 1, 1955; Entered into force March 3, 1955.

The Parties to this Treaty,

Reaffirming their faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and their desire to live in peace with all peoples and all Governments, and desiring to strengthen the fabric of peace in the West Pacific Area,

Recalling with mutual pride the relationship which brought their two peoples together in a common bond of sympathy and mutual ideals to fight side by side against imperialist aggression during the last war,

Desiring to declare publicly and formally their sense of unity and their common determination to defend themselves against external armed attack, so that no potential aggressor could be under the illusion that either of them stands alone in the West Pacific Area, and

Desiring further to strengthen their present efforts for collective defense for the preservation of peace and security pending the development of a more comprehensive system of regional security in the West Pacific Area,

Have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE I

The parties undertake, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, to settle any international dispute in which they may be involved by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace, security and justice are not endangered and to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

ARTICLE II

In order more effectively to achieve the objective of this Treaty,

the Parties separately and jointly by self-help and mutual aid will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack and communist subversion activities directed from without against their territorial integrity and political stability.

ARTICLE III

The Parties undertake to strengthen their free institutions and to cooperate with each other in the development of economic progress and social well-being and to further their individual and collective efforts toward these ends.

ARTICLE IV

The Parties, through their Foreign Ministers or their deputies, will consult together from time to time regarding the implementation of this Treaty.

ARTICLE V

Each Party recognizes that an armed attack in the West Pacific area directed against the territories of either of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.

Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall be immediately reported to the Security Council of the United Nations. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security.

ARTICLE VI

For the purposes of Articles II and V, the terms "territorial" and "territories" shall mean in respect of the Republic of China, Taiwan and the Pescadores; and in respect of the United States of America, the island territories in the West Pacific under its jurisdiction. The provisions of Articles II and V will be applicable to such other territories as may be determined by mutual agreement.

ARTICLE VII

The Government of the Republic of China grants, and the Government of the United States of America accepts, the right to dispose such United States land, air and sea forces in and about Taiwan and the Pescadores as may be required for their defense, as determined by mutual agreement.

ARTICLE VIII

This Treaty does not affect and shall not be interpreted as affecting in any way the rights and obligations of the Parties under the Charter of the United Nations or the responsibility of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security.

ARTICLE IX

This Treaty shall be ratified by the United States of America and the Republic of China in accordance with their respective constitutional processes and will come into force when instruments of ratification thereof have been exchanged by them at Taipei.

ARTICLE X

This Treaty shall remain in force indefinitely. Either Party may terminate it one year after notice has been given to the other Party.

Source: U. S. House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs. Treaty Provisions Relating to the Use of U. S. Forces For Mutual Defense. Committee Print. 84th Cong., 2d Sess. Washington: Government Printing Office, Dec. 27, 1956, pp. 29-30

APPENDIX C

CONGRESSIONAL AUTHORIZATION FOR THE PRESIDENT TO EMPLOY THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES TO PROTECT FORMOSA, THE PESCADORES, AND RELATED POSITIONS AND TERRITORIES OF THAT AREA: Public Law 4, 84th Congress, 1st Session, January 29, 1955

Whereas the primary purpose of the United States, in its relations with all other nations, is to develop and sustain a just and enduring peace for all; and

Whereas certain territories in the West Pacific under the jurisdiction of the Republic of China are now under armed attack, and threats and declarations have been and are being made by the Chinese Communists that such armed attack is in aid of and in preparation for armed attack on Formosa and the Pescadores,

Whereas such armed attack if continued would gravely endanger the peace and security of the West Pacific Area and particularly of Formosa and the Pescadores; and

Whereas the secure possession by friendly governments of the Western Pacific Island chain, of which Formosa is a part, is essential to the vital interests of the United States and all friendly nations in or bordering upon the Pacific Ocean; and

Whereas the President of the United States on January 6, 1955, submitted to the Senate for its advice and consent to ratification a Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Republic of China, which recognizes that an armed attack in the West Pacific area directed against territories, therein described, in the region of Formosa and the Pescadores, would be dangerous to the peace and safety of the parties to the treaty: Therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled, That the President of the United States be and he hereby is authorized to employ the Armed Forces of the United States as he deems necessary for the specific purpose of securing and protecting Formosa and the Pescadores against armed attack, this authority to include the securing and protection of such related positions and territories of that area now in friendly hands and the taking of such other measures as he judges to be required or appropriate in assuring the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores.

This resolution shall expire when the President shall determine that the

peace and security of the area is reasonably assured by international conditions created by action of the United Nations or otherwise, and shall so report to the Congress.

Source: American Foreign Policy, 1950-55: Basic Documents. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1957, pp. 2486-2487.

APPENDIX D

MEMORANDUM RE FORMOSA STRAIT SITUATION: SEPTEMBER 4, 1958

Events in the Taiwan Straits indicate that the Chicoms, with Soviet backing, have begun tentatively to put into operation a program, which has been prepared for over the past 3 years, designed initially to liquidate the Chinat positions in Taiwan and the offshore islands, and with probably even more far-reaching purposes.

The program has been begun by intense pressure on the weakest and most vulnerable of such positions, namely, the Chinat-held offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu. It seems that the operation is designed to produce a cumulating rollback effect, first on the offshore islands, and then on Taiwan, the "liberation" of which is the announced purpose of the present phase. The "liberation," if it occurred, would have serious repercussions on the Philippines, Japan, and other friendly countries of the Far East and Southeast Asia.

The first phase of the operation--that involving Quemoy and/or Matsu--would be primarily military; for these initial obstacles cannot be overcome otherwise. The follow-up against Taiwan might be primarily subversive, taking advantage of the blow to the Republic of China involved in the loss of the offshore islands where it has virtually staked its future. However, armed Chicom attack against Taiwan is not to be excluded. This is, indeed, forecast by the current Chinese Communist broadcasts.

The taking over of Taiwan by the Communists would greatly enhance Communist influence and prestige throughout the free Asian world and depreciate that of the U.S.

The foregoing summary is based upon the following more specific estimates:

1) In the absence of US intervention, the Chicoms, by accepting heavy casualties, could take Quemoy by an amphibious assault supported by artillery and aerial bombardment. Such an assault could be staged with little advance notice. The operation once initiated might take from one to several days depending on the quality of the resistance.

2) If the Chicoms believe the US will not intervene, they can be expected to mount such an assault whenever they believe the defenders have been sufficiently "softened up."

3) If the Chicoms believe the US would actively intervene to throw back an assault, perhaps using nuclear weapons, it is probable there would be no attempt to take Quemoy by assault and the situation might quiet down, as in 1955.

4) It is, however, also possible that if the Chicoms felt that the US would intervene only if there were a major assault, they might keep that assault as an overhanging menace but never an actuality, and

meanwhile continue the type of pressures now being exerted, including bombardment and attempted blockade, on the theory that if this were prolonged, the defense would collapse due to deterioration of morale and lack of supply.

5) Under these conditions, and if interdiction were not broken, the morale and defense capability of the defenders would, in fact, deteriorate and might eventually collapse, particularly since the US would find it difficult to find new ways to support the morale. Indeed, the US would find it difficult to maintain in the area its present show of strength for any considerable period of time.

6) If Quemoy were lost either through assault or surrender, this would have a serious impact upon the authority and military capability of the anti-Communist, pro-US, government on Formosa. It would be exposed to subversive and/or military action which would probably bring about a government which would eventually advocate union with Communist China and the elimination of US positions on the island.

7) If the foregoing occurred, it would seriously jeopardize the anti-Communist barrier consisting of the island and peninsular positions in the Western Pacific; e.g., Japan, Republic of Korea, Republic of China, Republic of the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. Other governments in Southeast Asia such as those of Indonesia, Malaya, Cambodia, Laos and Burma would probably come fully under Communist influence. US positions in this area, perhaps even Okinawa, would probably become untenable, or unusable, and Japan with its great industrial potential would probably fall within the Sino-Soviet orbit. These events would not happen all at once but would probably occur over a period of a few years. The consequences in the Far East would be even more far-reaching and catastrophic than those which followed when the United States allowed the Chinese mainland to be taken over by the Chinese Communists, aided and abetted by the Soviet Union.

8) The impact of these adverse developments in the Western Pacific and Southeast Asia would undoubtedly have serious, world-wide effects.

9) If the Communists, acting on the supposition that we will not actively intervene, seek to take Quemoy by assault and become increasingly committed, and if we then do intervene, there might be a period between the beginning of assault and irrevocable commitment when prompt and substantial US intervention with conventional weapons might lead the Chicoms to withhold or reverse their assault effort. Otherwise, our intervention would probably not be effective if it were limited to the use of conventional weapons.

10) US destroyers are cooperating with the Chinat sea supply operations within the limits of international waters, i.e., up to within three miles of Quemoy. There is thus a possibility of a deliberate or accidental hit by the Chicoms, which would have potential and unplanned reactions which might involve at least limited retaliation.

11) Once we intervened to save the offshore islands, we could not abandon that result without unacceptable damage to the safety of the free world and our influence in it.

If accomplishment of this result required the use of nuclear weapons, there would be a strong popular revulsion against the US in most of the world. It would be particularly intense in Asia and particularly harmful to us in Japan.

If relatively small detonations were used with only air burst, so

that there would be no appreciable fallout or large civilian casualties, and if the matter were quickly closed, the revulsion might not be long-lived or entail consequences as far-reaching and permanent as though there had occurred the series of political reversals indicated in Point 7 above. It is not certain, however, that the operation could thus be limited in scope or time, and the risk of a more extensive use of nuclear weapons, and even a risk of general war, would have to be accepted.

(References are here made to Quemoy as the most likely Communist target. If Matsu became the initial target, the situation would be substantially the same.)

Source: Eisenhower, Dwight D. Waging Peace. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1965, pp. 691-693.

VITA

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Master of Arts

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