American policy toward the defense of Formosa and the offshore islands, 1954-1955

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Donald H. Chang
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CHAPTER I

A CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The American attitude toward the defense of Formosa and the offshore islands during the Quemoy crisis that erupted in September 1954 was intertwined with American policy toward China in general and the Nationalist Government in Formosa in particular. The United States had tried to stay out of the civil conflict between the Nationalists and the Communists. Yet the sequence of events that developed in the Far East forced the United States to take a position in favor of the Nationalists on Formosa. The American policy toward Formosa, although it ran counter to the Communists, was not fully identified with the cause of the Nationalists. A review of the divergent objectives of each of the three parties involved is the first point in order.

The American Attitude

Formosa\(^1\) was Chinese territory before it was ceded

\(^1\)The word Formosa is used throughout this paper to indicate Formosa and the Pescadores unless otherwise specified. It is to be noted that the Chinese, both the Nationalists and the Communists, always use the Chinese terms, Taiwan and Penghu, to denote these islands. The tendency of the western world has been to use the term Taiwan rather than Formosa since 1960. However, in order to follow the customary usage of western literature in the 1950's, the word Formosa is used throughout this paper.
by treaty of Shimonoseki to Japan as a result of China's
defeat in the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895. During the
Second World War, the Cairo Declaration of December 1,
1943, stated that Formosa should be returned to "the
Republic of China."² The Potsdam Proclamation of July 26,
1945,³ reaffirmed the Cairo Declaration and the instrument
of Japanese surrender⁴ accepted the terms of the Potsdam
Proclamation.

After V-J day, General Order Number One of the
Japanese Imperial Headquarters issued under the direction of
General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander of Allied
Forces in Japan, provided for the surrender of the Japanese
forces in China and Formosa to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-
shek.⁵ With the assistance of the United States Navy, the
Chinese forces landed on Formosa in September 1945 and disarmed

often stress the significance of the use of "the Republic of
China" in the Cairo Declaration. To them, this terminology
carries a desirable implication that Formosa should be re-
turned to no other government of China than the Government
of the Republic of China, the Nationalist Government. Ob-
viously, in referring to China as "the Republic of China,"
the framers of the Declaration merely used the official title
of China in use after the revolution of 1911.

³Ibid., Appendix II, p. 160.

⁴U.S. Department of State Bulletin, XIII, No. 324
(September 9, 1945), p. 364. Hereafter cited as D.S.B.

⁵Feis, Contest Over Japan, Appendix VI, p. 165.
the Japanese troops on the island.\textsuperscript{6} After the Japanese were removed from Formosa, the Chinese Government took administrative control of the area, and formally incorporated it as the thirty-fifth Province of the Republic of China on October 25, 1950.\textsuperscript{7} In Chinese eyes, Formosa was restored to China in accordance with the Cairo Declaration by virtue of the fact that they had regained control of it.\textsuperscript{8}

The end of the Second World War did not bring peace to China. The struggle for national power between the Nationalist Party, which had constituted the legal government of China, and the Communist Party, which had possessed an independent army, soon developed into a large scale armed conflict or, from the Nationalists' point of view, a communist rebellion.\textsuperscript{9} The China White Paper, published by the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{8}The Chinese Nationalist Government designated October 25 as "Taiwan Restoration Day." It is interesting to note that the Chinese Communists also claimed that October 25, 1945, was the date when China regained sovereignty over Formosa. For instance, in his telegram to the United Nations General Assembly on October 10, 1954, condemning "United States aggression against Chinese territory of Taiwan," the Red Chinese Premier Chou En-lai declared, "It is a fact that Taiwan was taken on October 25, 1945 by the Chinese government of that time." \textit{Important Documents Concerning the Question of Taiwan} (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1955), p. 151.
\item \textsuperscript{9}A detailed study is Tang Tsou's \textit{America's Failure in China, 1941-1950} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).
\end{itemize}
State Department in August, 1949, indicated that the American Government would not get involved in China. With vast territory under their control, the Communists proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949. Meanwhile, the Nationalists had retreated from mainland China and announced that the site of the Government of the Republic of China had moved to Formosa as of December 8, 1949.

At this time the United States continued to recognize the Nationalist Government on Formosa as the government of China, but anticipated the loss of Formosa to the communists soon. The drastic change on the China scene necessitated the disclosure of American policy on what was expected to be the closing phase of a civil war. On January 5, 1950, President Truman issued a statement in which he stressed the

10 The official title of the White Paper is United States Relations with China, with Special Reference to the Period 1944-1949, Far Eastern Series No. 30 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1949). In his "letter of transmittal" to President Truman, Secretary Acheson said, "Nothing that this country did or could have done within the reasonable limits of its capabilities would have changed the result; nothing that was left undone by this country has contributed to it," p. xvi. See also McGeorge Bundy, The Pattern of Responsibility (Cambridge, Mass.: The Riverside Press, 1952), p. 191.

fact that Formosa had been surrendered to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek after V-J day and that for the past four years "the United States and the other allied powers have accepted his exercise of Chinese authority over the island." The President then went on:

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 present situation. The United States Government will not pursue a course which will lead to involvement in the civil conflict in China.

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 might consider necessary for the defense of the island. The United States Government proposes to continue under existing legislative authority the present ECA program of economic assistance.

This statement was an American official declaration of a hands-off policy toward the Nationalists on Formosa. One week later, on January 12, Secretary of State Dean Acheson, in an address before the National Press Club, stated that the American "defensive perimeter" in the Western

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12 D.S.B., XXII, No. 550 (January 22, 1950), p. 79.
14 D.S.B., XXII, p. 79.
Pacific ran from the Ryukyus to the Philippines but it excluded South Korea and Formosa.\textsuperscript{15} Thus, Formosa was written off in the American policy planning both politically and militarily in early 1950. This cleared the way for the Communists to 'liberate' the island if they could manage to cross the Formosa Strait. By June, 1950, the Communists had virtually completed all preparation for an invasion of Chiang's stronghold.\textsuperscript{16} Fortunately for the Nationalists, the outbreak of the Korean conflict on June 25, 1950, forestalled a Communist attack on Formosa.

On June 27, 1950, two days after the North Korean Communists launched their attack on the Republic of Korea, President Truman issued a statement on the Korean situation, which also marked a changed American position on Formosa. The President took the view that the occupation of Formosa by the Chinese 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.'\textsuperscript{17} He declared:

\begin{quote}
Accordingly I have ordered the Seventh Fleet to prevent any attack on Formosa. As corollary of this action I am calling upon the Chinese Government on Formosa to cease all air and sea operations against the mainland. The Seventh Fleet will see that this is done. The determination of the future
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., p. 116.


\textsuperscript{17}\textit{D.S.B.}, XXIII, No. 574 (July 3, 1950), p. 5.
status of Formosa must await the restoration of security in the Pacific, a peace settlement with Japan or consideration by the United Nations.\textsuperscript{18}

The impact of the Korean conflict had led President Truman to reverse his position on Formosa. He was determined not only to prevent Formosa from falling into communist hands but also to assert that the status of Formosa was unsettled. In his message to Congress on July 19, 1950, the President spoke of his June 27 statement with regard to Formosa as a policy of neutralization. "The present military neutralization," he stressed, "is without prejudice to the political questions affecting that island."\textsuperscript{19} The President made American intentions clear: "That Formosa not become embroiled in hostilities disturbing to the peace of the Pacific and that all questions affecting it be settled by peaceful means as envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations."\textsuperscript{20}

The neutralization of Formosa was a unilateral action taken by the United States, although the American Government did inform the United Nations on the same day of this course of action. In order to justify this action, it was desirable for the American Government to maintain the point that the status of Formosa was undetermined. This seemed to repudiate the Cairo declaration to which the United States

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid.


\textsuperscript{20}Ibid.
had subscribed. President Truman wrote in his Memoirs that when the Cairo Declaration was issued it had been anticipated that China would be friendly to the United States, but the situation had drastically changed—"China had not only fallen into unfriendly hands but also was now viciously hostile to the United States."²¹

Although the President himself did not express explicitly that the United States felt a custodial duty toward Formosa, it was spelled out by a ranking official of the State Department. In a statement delivered before the Political Committee of the United Nations on November 27, 1950, John F. Dulles, then consultant to the State Department, made this American attitude quite clear. He said:

Formosa is still affected with an international interest. It is a former Japanese colony in the process of detachment. The United States, certainly, is entitled to some voice in the determination of the future of Formosa, because, if it were not for the tremendous military effort and the great sacrifice which the United States made in that area of the world, none of us here, today, would be sitting around talking about Formosa.²²

The American policy to neutralize Formosa was prompted by military considerations with an aim of preventing the armed conflict in Korea from spreading to other areas in Asia. It was a temporary measure which was supposed to be

²¹Truman, Memoirs, II, p. 408.

terminated after the end of the Korean War.\textsuperscript{23} Washington, however, inevitably came to the aid of the Nationalist Government itself. At the time President Truman declared the neutralization of Formosa, he also made three decisions which were not made public: (1) to give extensive military aid to the Nationalist Government, (2) to conduct a military survey by MacArthur's headquarters on the needs of Nationalist forces, and (3) to make plans to carry out reconnaissance flights along the China coast to determine the imminence of attack against Formosa.\textsuperscript{24} In July 1950 the United States Government assigned Karl L. Rankin as Minister and Charge d'Affaires to Taipei, the provisional capital of the Republic of China.\textsuperscript{25} In May 1951 an American military mission was established in Formosa.

At the beginning of the Eisenhower Administration, a "new look" policy with regard to Formosa was pronounced in the State of the Union Message on February 2, 1953. President Eisenhower felt that President Truman's order of neutralizing

\begin{footnotes}
\item[23]In his news conference on August 31, 1950, President Truman said, "Of course, it will not be necessary to keep the 7th Fleet in the Formosa Strait if the Korean thing is settled." U.S. President, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Service, 1965), Harry S. Truman, 1950, p. 607
\item[25]After the recall of Ambassador John L. Stuart to Washington for consultation in 1949, the American diplomatic mission in China had been headed by a charge d'affaires. Before Rankin's appointment, the American Charge in Taipei was lower than the rank of a Minister.
\end{footnotes}
Formosa had the undesirable effect of protecting mainland China from attack. As the Chinese Communists were fighting the United Nations forces in Korea, there was "no longer any logic or sense in a condition that required the United States Navy to assume defensive responsibility on behalf of the Chinese Communists." The President declared, "I am, therefore, issuing instructions that the Seventh Fleet no longer be employed to shield Communist China." He emphasized, "The order implies no aggressive intent on our part." 

The deneutralization of Formosa or the "unleashing" of the Nationalists, as it was often called, caused much alarm among the American allies in Europe, especially the British. It was thought to presage an attempt to blockade the Chinese coast. However, the expression--"unleashing of the Nationalists"--was an overstatement in that it was neither in conformity with the factual situation which was prevailing in the Formosa Strait nor in line with the accord which was binding on the Nationalists. In point of fact, when the neutralization of Formosa had been in force, the Seventh Fleet had never tried to interdict the Nationalist

26 President Eisenhower, Public Papers, 1953, p. 17.
27 Ibid.
hit-and-run raids on the mainland coast. In point of written accord, when the Nationalist Government received United States military assistance, it agreed to the terms that all military material would be used for "internal security" or "legitimate self-defense."

Furthermore, as soon as President Eisenhower announced the denationalization of Formosa, American Minister Rankin, who shortly became Ambassador, obtained a promise from President Chiang that no major military action would be launched against mainland China without consulting the chief of the American military mission in Formosa. As a matter of fact, this was only a precautionary measure because the armed forces of the Nationalists were not capable of engaging in more than commando raids on the Chinese mainland without American logistic and other support.

That the denationalization of Formosa marked a change of China policy at the beginning of the Eisenhower Administration was therefore more apparent than real. The American

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29 A spokesman for Admiral William M. Fechteler, Chief of Naval Operation, said that the U.S. Navy had never "blocked" any "sorties" of the Nationalist Chinese forces. New York Times, February 4, 1953.


policy toward Formosa remained basically unchanged "owing to the tangible factors which continued to govern." President Eisenhower wrote later that the "practical value" of the denunciation of Formosa was to "put the Chinese Communists on notice that the days of stalemate were numbered; that the Korean War would either end or extend beyond Korea." He was convinced that it helped bring "that war to a finish." This implied that if the Chinese Communists had not engaged in the Korean truce talks earnestly, the United States might have assisted the Chinese Nationalists in launching an attack on the mainland China. As the Korean truce was signed shortly afterward, in July 1953, there was no way to know how the Eisenhower Administration would have reacted if the situation had been otherwise. It could be suggested, however, that President Eisenhower was primarily interested in using denunciation of Formosa as a bargaining point to effectuate an early truce in Korea rather than to sponsor a Nationalist attack on mainland China as such.

The Nationalist Mission

When the Nationalists retreated to Formosa in December 1949, they were not intending to make Formosa their permanent domain. Two layers of government had been maintained,

32 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
a central government and a provincial government. The central government officials planned to move back to the Chinese mainland as soon as a counter-attack could be launched. The Nationalist Government believed that the Communist regime on the mainland would not last long. It was a "sacred" mission of the Nationalist Government to regain mainland China and to throw off the yoke of Communist tyranny that had been imposed on the Chinese people.35 The political slogan, "Return to the Mainland," was necessary not only to bolster the morale of the armed forces and the 1,500,000 mainlanders who fled to Formosa before the Communist takeover but also to serve as a rallying cry to solicit the support of the 10 million overseas Chinese, a majority of whom were in Southeast Asia.36

The six months following the American statement of a hands-off policy on Formosa had been a period of uncertainty and anxiety in Formosa. Although the outbreak of the Korean conflict changed the situation, the Nationalist Government received the American policy of the neutralization

35 This writer resided in Formosa and worked with the Nationalist Government for ten years; therefore, he is familiar with the political orientation of the Nationalists.

36 The overseas Chinese numbered almost 10 million, and their distribution was as follows: Vietnam, 1,000,000 (5% of the local population); Cambodia, 300,000 (10%); Thailand, 3,000,000 (16%); Malaya and Singapore, 2,750,000 (45%); Burma, 300,000 (1.5%); Indonesia, 2,000,000 (3%); Philippines, 300,000 (1.5%); Sarawak, 150,000 (25%); and British North Borneo, 75,000 (22%). James Reston in New York Times, April 2, 1954, p. 2.
of Formosa with mixed feelings. On the one hand, the United States Seventh Fleet was ordered to protect Formosa from communist attack so that the security of the island was no longer a problem. On the other hand, Washington claimed that the legal status of Formosa on which the Nationalist Government was dependent awaited an international settlement. The Nationalist Government was unhappy about the latter aspect of the American policy announcement, but it did not take issue with Washington. Instead, the Nationalist Government tried to link its mission of regaining mainland China with that of the United Nations effort to repel the North Korean Communist aggression against South Korea.37

Immediately after the armed forces of the North Korean Communist regime attacked South Korea with sweeping success, the Chinese Nationalist Government offered 33,000 troops, to be equipped and transported by the United States, for use in Korea as a Chinese contribution to the common cause of anti-communist aggression.38 President Truman received the Nationalist offer with favorable consideration initially but had to decline it because of the undesirable complications which might ensue.39 The role of Formosa during the Korean War was the first controversy that developed between

37 This writer's personal knowledge as a former official in the Chinese Nationalist Government.
38 Truman, Memoirs, II, p. 342.
39 Ibid., pp. 343-44.
General MacArthur and President Truman. \textsuperscript{40} While the main purpose of the President's order of neutralization was to keep Formosa out of the Korean conflict, the General took the view that Formosa should take an active part in it. \textsuperscript{41} Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek had found an American spokesman for his cause in the person of General MacArthur, but it proved to be of no avail. It was the President, not the General, who decided American policy.

After the Chinese Communist intervention in the Korean War, the Nationalist Government renewed its attempt to be involved in the Korean conflict. The Nationalists proposed to make a landing on the South China coast as counter measure to divert the Chinese Communist forces in Korea. \textsuperscript{42} The American Minister, Karl Rankin, was responsive to this idea and tried to present it to the State Department on his consultation trip to Washington in February 1951. Rankin found that only John F. Dulles, then consultant to the Department of State, was in favor of "a policy of action." \textsuperscript{43} During the remainder of the Truman Administration,


\textsuperscript{41} This is the tenor of General MacArthur's letter to the Veterans of Foreign Wars intended for delivery on August 17, 1950. When the text of this letter was made known in advance, President Truman was furious about it, and ordered MacArthur to withdraw it. The letter was reprinted in Military Situation in the Far East, pp. 3477-80.

\textsuperscript{42} Rankin, China Assignment, p. 91.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
the American policy in regard to Formosa was to "quarantine the fighting in Korea, not to encourage its extension."44

President Eisenhower's announcement of the denunciation of Formosa, February 1953, gave the Nationalist Government, not unnaturally, a hope that it was a first step toward active support of the Nationalist mission to regain mainland China. It was a source of satisfaction to the Nationalists. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek said that the "moral force" of Washington's new Formosa policy deserved the "unanimous support" of "all freedom-loving peoples who realize the danger of Communist aggression and are prepared to resist it."45 A major part of the Nationalist strategy had been the attempt to tie up their mission to recover the Chinese mainland with other seemingly relevant events. This kind of maneuver on the part of the Nationalists had failed twice during the Truman Administration when they offered troops to fight in Korea and when they proposed to make a landing on the South China coast. Delighted with Eisenhower's denunciation statement, Chiang spoke his mind on February 4, 1953. He said, "Our plan for fighting communism and regaining the mainland will necessarily form, in my opinion, an important link in the general plan of the free world to combat world-wide

44 Acheson, Present at the Creation, p. 369.
45 Quoted in New York Times, February 4, 1953, p. 3.
In order not to cause alarm over this statement, he added, "The Republic of China will not ask for aid in ground forces from any nation to achieve our goal."  

Although the Eisenhower Administration did not share the aspirations of the Nationalist Government, there were tangible signs to show that the American Government under the Republican Party was improving its relations with Nationalist China. In February 1953, American Minister Karl Rankin was reappointed as Ambassador to the Republic of China. This appointment of a diplomatic representative of the highest rank indicated that a great importance was attached to Nationalist China. After presenting his credentials to President Chiang on April 2, Ambassador Rankin made a statement at his press conference in Taipei. In that statement, he quoted Secretary of State Dulles as saying that Americans "never acquiesced, never will acquiesce in the enslavement of other peoples. We do not accept or tolerate captivity as an irrevocable fact which can be finalized by force or by the lapse of time." Ambassador Rankin then went on to say, "The Government of China has dedicated itself to the liberation of the mainland from communism. Americans share Chinese hopes for the success

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46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
of this great enterprise." This statement gave the impression that the Eisenhower Administration was going to adhere to the 1952 Republican platform, which had advocated a policy of liberation, as opposed to the Truman policy of the containment of communism.

Meanwhile, only a few months after the Republican Party came to power, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles praised the Eisenhower Administration for improving relations with the Nationalist Government. In an address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Washington, D.C., on April 18, 1953, the Secretary declared

We have vastly improved our relations with the Chinese National Government. Now we have an ambassador at Taipei, Formosa, the provisional capital. We are speeding the delivery of military assistance, which was woefully in arrears. President Eisenhower has changed the instructions to the Seventh Fleet so that, while it is still instructed to defend Formosa, it is no longer instructed to protect the Chinese Communists on the mainland.

In 1953 official American visitors to Formosa steadily increased in numbers. These American dignitaries included Vice President Richard Nixon; Admiral Arthur Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Walter Robertson,

48Rankin, China Assignment, p. 159.


50Text of Secretary Dulles' address was recorded by the New York Times, April 19, 1953, p. 84.
Assistant Secretary of State. It indicated, at least, a friendly gesture to the Nationalist Government in Formosa. The American willingness to stress its improved relations with the Republic of China led the Nationalists to believe that someday they might win over the United States Government to their mission of recovering the Chinese mainland.

The Communist Objective

To the Chinese Communists, the "liberation" of Formosa was to be the finishing touch to a long, drawn-out revolution. When President Truman announced the American hands-off policy toward Formosa on January 5, 1950, the Communists had reason to believe that the United States would stick to a policy of non-intervention in Formosa. However, within just six months, the same American President had drastically changed American policy because of the outbreak of the Korean conflict. The People's Daily (Peking) on June 29 argued that the Korean situation could not justify the American action of neutralizing Formosa. The neutralization of Formosa frustrated any Communist attempt to assault Formosa. What enraged the Communists most was President Truman's statement that the status of Formosa awaited a future international settlement.

In an official statement on June 28, the Chinese Communist Premier and Foreign Minister Chou En-lai declared

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51 Tang Tsou, America's Failure in China, p. 562.
"The fact that Taiwan [Formosa] is part of China will remain unchanged forever. This is not only a historical fact but has been affirmed by the Cairo Declaration, the Potsdam Declaration and the existing conditions after Japan's surrender."\(^{52}\) He charged that President Truman's announcement and the actions of the United States Seventh Fleet "constitute armed aggression against the territory of China and a total violation of the United Nations Charter."\(^{53}\)

The Communist denunciation of the American policy of neutralizing Formosa did not rest there. On August 24, Chou En-lai cabled to the Secretary General of the United Nations and to the President of Security Council, accusing the United States of "armed aggression" in Formosa. In his cablegram, Chou En-lai reiterated that Formosa was an integral part of China and that the United States failed in redeeming its pledge professed in the Cairo and Potsdam Declarations that Formosa would return to China. By President Truman's June 27 order to the Seventh Fleet, Chou said, the American Government decided to "prevent with armed forces the liberation of Taiwan by the Chinese People's Liberation Army."\(^{54}\) He called upon the Security Council to

\(^{52}\) Documents on International Affairs, 1949-1950, pp. 633-34.

\(^{53}\) Ibid.

\(^{54}\) Text in Important Documents Concerning the Question of Taiwan, pp. 21-22.
condemn the United States for its "criminal" action and to seek the withdrawal of "all the United States armed invading forces from Taiwan and from other territories belonging to China."\textsuperscript{55}

The American Government immediately responded with a public statement that "the United States would welcome United Nations consideration of the Formosa problem."\textsuperscript{56} It was followed by a letter which American chief delegate to the United Nations, Warren Austin, addressed to the Secretary General of the United Nations on August 25. The letter set forth the American position in detail. It refuted the idea that the United States had ever "encroached on the territory of China" or had "taken aggressive action against China."\textsuperscript{57} The letter stated, among other things, that the American action was "an impartial action" and was "designed to keep the peace and was, therefore, in full accord with the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations."\textsuperscript{58} It stressed that the American neutralization was made "without prejudice to the future political settlement of the status of the island."\textsuperscript{59} The United States Government took

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{57} D.S.B., XXIII, No. 584 (September 11, 1950), p. 412.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
the position that the actual status of Formosa was "territory taken from Japan by the victory of the Allied forces in the Pacific" and that its legal status "cannot be fixed until there is international action to determine its future."\(^{60}\)

As further evidence to show that the American Government had no aggressive intent on Formosa, Secretary of State Dean Acheson on September 21 took the initiative by asking that the "Question of Formosa" be placed on the agenda of the current General Assembly session as an additional item of "an important and urgent character."\(^{61}\) Subsequently the General Assembly adopted the American proposal. As the Chinese Communist intervention in Korea on the side of the North Korean Communists became quite evident in November, the United States maintained that it was an inopportune time to discuss the long-range future of Formosa. Therefore, on November 15, the United States asked the General Assembly to defer the consideration of the item on Formosa.\(^{62}\) Later, that body adopted a British proposal to postpone the discussion of the Formosa question indefinitely.

\(^{60}\)Ibid.


However, the Security Council of the United Nations, after prolonged debates for a month, passed a resolution on September 29 to invite the Chinese Communists to be present to state their complaint against the United States for "armed aggression" of Formosa. Accepting this invitation, representatives of the Peking regime appeared before the United Nations. Yet their vociferous and intemperate speeches, falsely accusing the United States of aggression, were to no avail. Nevertheless, the intense reaction of the Chinese Communists to the American position that the legal status of Formosa was undecided proved to be one of the irreconcilable issues between the two sides.

After President Eisenhower announced the denuclearization of Formosa, Radio Peking said, "[President] Eisenhower boldly proclaimed not only the continued occupation of Chinese Taiwan but [also] use of the Kuomintang [Nationalist Party] brigands for aggression against the Chinese people." It stressed that this action "does nothing to frighten the victorious Chinese people," but predicted, on the contrary, that an active support of Chiang Kai-shek regime would prove to be "a millstone around the neck of the American aggressors."

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65 Ibid.
The Eisenhower Administration's policy to deneutralize Formosa with unilateral American naval protection for the Nationalists served to aggravate the hostile attitude of the Communists toward the United States. An American-sponsored Nationalist attack on the Chinese mainland, in the eyes of the Communists, was no longer a remote possibility. After the Korean truce was reached in July 1953, the United States did not withdraw its Seventh Fleet from the Formosa Strait, as former President Truman had intended. The accessibility of Formosa to the Chinese Communists was as remote as ever. The United States continued to oppose the Communists' avowed objective of "liberating" Formosa.
CHAPTER II

NEW AGITATION AND EMBROILMENT

Nationalist Urging for Counter-Attack

In a statement during a military review in honor of Vice President Richard Nixon's visit to Formosa in November 1953, Generalissimo Chiang said that 1954 would be "the year of decision" while 1953 was "the final year" of preparation for a counter-attack against the Chinese mainland.¹

Indeed, the year 1954 saw increasing pronouncements of the Nationalist pledges to regain the mainland. In his New Year Message, President Chiang said that a counter-attack against the Communist mainland, as a fight for freedom and light, would come "in the not distant future." He emphasized, "The recovery of the lost territory must be paid for with our own blood and flesh."² This statement obviously was made to tell the world that he would not seek foreign troops to achieve his mission.

On February 26, Premier Chen Cheng told the Legislative Yuan (Chinese Parliament): "Our policy used to be

defense of Taiwan and preparation for the mainland counter-attack. However, our future program will center on how to carry out the mainland recovery project." He stressed, "If we wait for three or five years the chances will become slimmer and slimmer. By that time not only will we not be able to attack but the enemy will be encouraged to attack us." It was the first time that a "number-two" Nationalist official had expressed the restless mood of the Nationalists in Formosa. To him the need for action was conditioned by several factors: the average age of the Nationalist soldiers was near thirty years, and time was running out for these men to be of service in a large scale military operation. Furthermore, Generalissimo Chiang was approaching his seventieth year. He would not have many chances left to accomplish the self-imposed mission of regaining the mainland during his lifetime.

In addition to these internal difficulties facing the Nationalists, Generalissimo Chiang had long held that the seizure of mainland China by the Communists was the root of all turmoil in Asia. On May 20, in his inaugural address as President for another six-year term, he traced the troubles in Korea and Indochina to the loss of the Chinese mainland to the Communists. He concluded: "It is therefore obvious that the only way to eliminate this calamity of

3Ibid., February 27, 1954, p. 2.
4Ibid.
mankind and to reestablish international peace is through the discharge of our duty in the recovery of the mainland."\(^5\) He appealed to the free world to give the Nationalists a "reasonable amount of moral and material support" to fulfill their mission. He said, "We have confidence in our ability to retake the mainland and in the victory of our counter-attack."\(^6\)

Whether or not the Chinese Communists took seriously the Nationalist threat to launch a counter-attack on the mainland was difficult to assess, but they did feel the increase in Nationalist raids on Chinese coast in 1954. The Communists saw fit to use this threat as an excuse for mistakenly shooting down a British commercial airplane over Hainan Island on July 26. In answer to a strong British protest against this incident, the Chinese Communists apologized and explained: "Aircraft of the remnant Chiang gang in Taiwan have enlarged further their sphere of harassment covering the coastal areas and islands of China. Therefore, fighting is still taking place over the coastal areas and islands of China."\(^7\)

\(^5\)Ibid., May 21, 1954, p. 3.
\(^6\)Ibid.
\(^7\)Ibid., July 26, 1954, p. 3.
American Determination to Resist Communist Expansion

The international scene in early 1954 was favorable to the cause of the Nationalists, as the United States was alarmed by the surging Red tide in Indochina. The Chinese Communists had intensified their support of the North Vietnamese Communists ever since the Korean truce. The communists' successful inroads into Indochina were climaxed by the convocation of an international conference at Geneva in April 1954. The very fact that the Chinese Communist regime was invited to attend the Geneva Conference gave it unprecedented prestige. This joyful mood was not concealed when the Chinese Communist Foreign Minister, Chou En-lai, addressed the Conference on April 28. Aside from the situation in Indochina, Chou took the occasion for renewed accusations against the "American occupation" of Formosa ever since the outbreak of the war in Korea. He added, significantly, "This question is not yet settled."

The United States attended the Geneva Conference reluctantly and tried to ignore, rather than oppose, the

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11 Ibid.
Chinese Communist presence at the meeting. Secretary Dulles did not attend the Indochina phase of the Geneva Conference and let Undersecretary of State Walter B. Smith take over. Chinese Communist Foreign Minister Chou En-lai, on the other hand, played a leading role at the Conference and the resulting Geneva Agreement was a de facto partition of Indochina, a great setback for the free world.

The United States had not been in a position to demand a better bargain for the West and subsequently did not sign the Geneva Agreement. After the Geneva Conference, the American Government was determined to take positive steps to make a regional collective security arrangement to resist further communist expansion in Asia. In addition to a

12 During Secretary Dulles' attendance at the Geneva Conference, he did not speak a word to the Chinese Communists, and refused to shake hands with Chou En-lai. The Communists complained privately about these snubs. See Edgar Snow, The Other Side of the River (New York: Random House, 1961), pp. 94-95.


15 After the Geneva Agreement on Indochina was signed, Secretary Dulles indicated the American attitude in his press
proposed Southeast Asian defense pact, the United States also gave active consideration to a mutual defense treaty which Nationalist China desired.\footnote{Rankin, China Assignment, p. 186.}

When President Eisenhower, in his news conference on July 22, 1954, confirmed the press report that the United States was prepared to negotiate a mutual defense treaty with the Nationalist Government, it aroused furious reaction from the Chinese Communists. Their first response came from the New China News Agency, the official news agency of the Peking regime, on July 25. The report said that "United States plans for concluding a so-called American-Chiang Kai-shek bilateral mutual security pact are adding to the determination of the Coastal Defense Units of the Chinese People's Liberation Army to maintain their vigilance and work for the liberation of Taiwan."\footnote{American Consulate General, Hong Kong, Survey of China Mainland Press, No. 855 (July 24-26, 1954), p. 4.} In his report on foreign affairs at the Central People's Council on August 11, the Red Chinese Premier and Foreign Minister, Chou En-lai, gave a lengthy exposition on Formosa. He said that the United States was "seeking to extend armed intervention by (cont'd) conference on July 23, 1954. "The important thing from now on," he said, "is not to mourn the past but to face the future opportunity to prevent the loss in northern Vietnam from leading to the extension of communism throughout Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific."\footnote{D.S.B., XXXI, No. 788 (August 2, 1954), p. 163.}
more intensive use of the traitorous Chiang Kai-shek group, fugitive on Taiwan, for carrying on a war of harassment and destruction against our mainland and coastal areas." He said that the Chinese Nationalist Government "is further reorganizing its armed forces and blustering about preparations for an attack on the mainland." As negotiations were in progress "by the U.S. aggressive circles with the traitorous Chiang Kai-shek group for the conclusion of a so-called bilateral treaty of mutual security," Chou expressed the Communist opposition in most forceful terms. He stated:

The liberation of Taiwan is an exercise of China's sovereignty and it is China's own internal affair: we brook no foreign interference. Any treaties concluded between the United States Government and the traitorous Chiang Kai-shek group entrenched on Taiwan would be illegal and without any validity whatever. If any foreign aggressors dare to prevent the Chinese people from liberating Taiwan, if they dare to infringe upon our sovereignty and violate our territorial integrity, if they dare to interfere in our internal affairs, they must take upon themselves all the grave consequences of such acts of aggression.

So far the United States had made no legal commitment to defend Formosa against communist attack. President Truman's statement of neutralizing Formosa and President

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19 Ibid., p. 319.

20 Ibid., p. 320.
Eisenhower's subsequent pronouncement of deneutralization were executive orders which could be terminated at will by any future President. If the United States Government concluded a mutual defense treaty with the Nationalist Government, its commitment to defend Formosa would be much harder to break. Conversely, the Communist "liberation" of Formosa would be a more difficult task to perform, for any serious attempt to assault Formosa would mean a war with the United States. Naturally, the Chinese Communists employed all the expression of protest they could muster to forestall a mutual defense treaty between Washington and Taipei. In the meantime, the Communist military buildup along the South China coast facing Formosa intensified, as if they were ready to carry out their professed aim of "liberating" Formosa.21

The Difference Between Formosa and the Offshore Islands

Facing a mounting tension over Formosa, the American attitude was a clear-cut one. In answer to a reporter who, during a press conference on August 17, asked what would happen if the Communists did attack Formosa, President Eisenhower reminded his audience of the fact that the order of the Seventh Fleet to protect Formosa from communist attack was still in force. Therefore, he declared, "Any invasion of Formosa would have to run over the Seventh Fleet."22

22 President Eisenhower, Public Papers, 1954, p. 718.
spite of this firm American attitude, Radio Peking continued to propagate the shrill Communist cry to liberate Formosa.

When Admiral Felix B. Stump, Commander in Chief of the United States Pacific Fleet, visited the Tachens, the most easterly of the Nationalist-held offshore islands, with four destroyers on August 19, the Communists gained new accusations to level at the United States. Radio Peking declared that United States and Nationalist forces had intruded into the Chinese seacoast and conducted "armed provocation" against the Chinese people. The Communists did not say what the provocation was as there could not actually have been any. Inasmuch as the United States recognized the Nationalist Government as the legal government of China, it was not improper for its naval vessels to visit an island possession of a friendly government. However, a question came to the fore as to whether the President's order to defend Formosa included the Nationalist-held offshore islands.

In answer to a newsman's inquiry on that point in his press conference on August 24, Secretary Dulles said that the basic instruction to the Seventh Fleet was to defend Formosa, but the defense of the offshore islands "might from a military standpoint be so ultimately connected with the defense of Formosa that the military would be justified in

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concluding that the defense of Formosa comprehended a defense of those [offshore] islands." As a further explanation, Dulles said that some of the offshore islands might have radar equipment and early-warning devices upon them that were related to the defense of Formosa. Therefore, he maintained that whether or not to help defend the offshore islands "would be primarily a military decision." For the moment, the "buck" was passed, but the question had to be answered.

The Nationalists held more than thirty offshore islands after they retreated to Formosa from the Chinese mainland. These islands were strung out on a 350-mile belt along the South China coast, and their proximity to the mainland ranged from five to twenty miles. They could be roughly divided into four main groups, the Quemoy group in the south, the Tachen groups in the east, and the Matsu group and Nanki groups between the others. These islands commanded strategic positions in relation to the Communist ports on the mainland: Quemoy opposite the port of Amoy, Matsu opposite the port of Foochow, Nanki opposite the port of Wenchow, and the Tachens opposite the port of Ningpo.

The Nationalists used the offshore islands as bases for commando-type raids on the mainland, spying activities,

25 Ibid.
and leaflet-dropping. They were no less important as temporary stations for the Nationalist Navy while performing blockade duties on mainland ports. The Nationalist Government proclaimed the Communist-held mainland ports closed after the retreat to Formosa. The Nationalist Government justified the blockade on the grounds that it was the legal government of China, and as such was within its rights. The blockade, however, was not strictly enforced partly due to insufficient naval strength and partly because of political considerations. The Nationalist blockade, while it did not always prevent foreign vessels from sailing into and out of mainland ports, hampered the Communist coastal navigation to a degree. It also served as a reminder that the Communists were still not the complete masters of China. For these reasons, the existence of Nationalist-controlled offshore islands presented a problem to the Communists.

Since the American attitude toward the defense of the offshore islands was not clear, the Chinese Communists were prepared to take advantage of the situation. On August 26, 1954, forty communist raiders struck on Quemoy island, the main island of the Quemoy group, but were repelled by the Nationalist garrison. On September 3, the Communists began the first of a series of heavy bombardments of Quemoy. Twice previously, the communists had failed in major attempts

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26 This writer's personal knowledge, as a former official in the Nationalist Government, confirms the report in the *New York Times*, September 26, 1954, Sec. IV, p. 10.
to seize the island. By shelling Quemoy heavily and suddenly, it appeared that a third adventure was in the making.

**American Involvement in the Offshore Islands**

Whether the United States should help the Nationalists defend the offshore islands posed a difficult question to Washington. The status of the offshore islands was different from that of Formosa. The Allied Peace Treaty with Japan, signed in September 1951, stated: "Japan renounces all right, title, and claim to Formosa and the Pescadores." However, the Peace Treaty designated no beneficiary, and was purposely so arranged because there were two claimants to be the government of China. Therefore, it might be said that the status of Formosa was still undetermined. The offshore islands, on the other hand, had been historically attached to China, and no questions arose

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28 Speaking on behalf of the United States at the San Francisco Conference on September 5, 1951, John Dulles said: "Some Allied Powers suggested that article 2 should not merely delimit Japanese sovereignty according to Potsdam, but specify precisely the ultimate disposition of each of the ex-Japanese territories. This, admitted, would have been neater. But it would have raised questions as to which there are now no agreed answers. . . . Clearly, the wise course was to proceed now, so far as Japan is concerned, leaving the future to resolve doubts by invoking international solvents other than this Treaty." D.S.B., XXV, No. 638 (September 17, 1951), pp. 454-55.
as to their status.\(^\text{29}\) As President Eisenhower wrote, "If, therefore, the United States were to intervene in the contest over these [offshore] islands, this country technically would be participating in a Chinese civil war."\(^\text{30}\)

The problem was further complicated by the fact that the United States had become involved in the offshore islands in a somewhat unconscious manner. As a result, a certain moral commitment had developed. When the Korean War broke out, General MacArthur took notice of the Nationalist-held offshore islands. He commented that they were important from the standpoint of an eventual landing on the mainland, but had no value to the United States.\(^\text{31}\) However, soon afterward the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had established bases on some of the offshore islands, including Quemoy, under the cover name of "Western Enterprise, Inc.," to do "business." The Western Enterprise, Inc., was responsible, among other things, for organizing

\(^29\)This was also the American attitude, which Secretary Dulles stated on December 1, 1954, and later was repeated by a legal advisor of the State Department. See the State Department press release on December 1, 1954, in D.S.B., XXXI, No. 807 (December 13, 1954), p. 896; and Ely Maurer, "Legal Problems Regarding Formosa and the Offshore Islands," in Ibid., XXXIX, No. 1017 (December 22, 1958), p. 1005.

\(^30\)Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, p. 461.

\(^31\)Averell Harriman's memorandum to President Truman, reporting on his assigned trip to Tokyo to talk with General MacArthur in early August, 1950. It was partially reprinted in Truman's Memoirs, II, p. 353.
and equipping the Nationalist commandos to launch sporadic raids on the South China coast.  

When an American Military Assistance and Advisory Group (MAAG) was established on Formosa in May, 1951, its mission of equipping and training the Nationalist forces was limited to Formosa, and did not extend to the offshore islands. This was consonant with the Seventh Fleet's mission to shield Formosa, which likewise did not include the offshore islands. After the Eisenhower Administration took office, the change of high military command in Washington contributed to a gradual altering of the American military policy toward Formosa. Admiral Arthur Radford, Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet, was promoted to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in May, 1953, and thus became top military man in the Pentagon. Admiral Radford was known to favor a hard line against the Chinese Communists.  

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32 This writer's personal knowledge confirms the report in Stewart Alsop's article, "The Story Behind Quemoy: How We Drifted Close to War," Saturday Evening Post, December 13, 1958, p. 87.

While the Nationalists had not been able to fortify their military posts on the offshore islands without American military aid during the Truman Administration, the Communists had been stepping up their military buildup in the coastal areas facing the offshore islands since the truce negotiations began in Korea.\textsuperscript{34} A military imbalance between the two sides was developing. In early 1953, the opinion of American military advisors on Formosa was that if the Nationalists really wanted to hold the offshore islands, they should improve the defense of the islands, and that this could be done by moving in some American-equipped and trained Nationalist units from Formosa without objection from the Joint Chiefs of Staff.\textsuperscript{35} This was tantamount to encouraging the Nationalists to put more of their military stakes on the offshore islands. The Nationalists were hesitant to do that.

As this had been mentioned informally without any action having been taken, Ambassador Rankin decided to "try to bring matters to a head."\textsuperscript{36} It is doubtful that he had received prior instructions from the State Department. On July 6, Rankin visited President Chiang to discuss the offshore islands. Chiang was particularly worried about the

\textsuperscript{34}\textit{Rankin, China Assignment}, p. 167.
\textsuperscript{35}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 168.
\textsuperscript{36}\textit{Ibid.}
plight of the easternmost Tachen group, 200 miles away from Formosa, because air support would not be immediately available in case of communist assault. Rankin comforted him and remarked that similarly exposed islands, such as Corregidor and Malta, had withstood months and years of assault during World War II. Rankin stressed that a determined defense could help to deter aggression.37

During the talk President Chiang asked Ambassador Rankin to transmit three requests to the State Department. First, that the United States give renewed consideration to integrating the offshore islands into the Formosa defense system. Second, pending such a decision, that the United States Government make public expression of American interest in the offshore islands so as to deter the Communists. Third, that the American Government provide the Nationalists with shallow draft naval craft to be used in the offshore islands area. Rankin consented to forward these requests, but told Chiang that it would be unwise to expect quick answers. Rankin reminded him that the Communists might attack the offshore islands at any moment and that the Nationalists could not count on American assistance "on short notice."38 This was to urge Chiang to come to a decision whether or not to strengthen the offshore islands defense with or without

37Ibid.
38Ibid., p. 169.
later American assistance. Before Rankin left Chiang said that he would follow the American military advice to improve the defense of the offshore islands.

In early February of 1953 Ambassador Rankin commented in a State Department policy review that if the Nationalist armed forces "were intended for possible combat other than in defense of Formosa," he was in favor of expanding American military assistance to the offshore islands and placing the responsibility for various anti-communist guerrilla activities mounted from the offshore islands under the "purview" of MAAG. It is not known whether or not Washington approved Rankin's proposition that the possible use of the Nationalist forces for other than the defense of Formosa might be anticipated, but his recommended action was carried out. Soon afterward, the offshore islands became eligible to receive American military equipment, but little was available until 1954. The activities of Western Enterprise, Inc., on the offshore islands were gradually discontinued in early 1954. Meanwhile, officers and men of MAAG came to the islands to take an active part in preparing

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39The State Department policy review toward the Nationalist China was sent to Ambassador Rankin near the end of the Truman Administration and he was requested to comment on it. Rankin, China Assignment, pp. 150-52.

defenses. The sudden Communist bombardment of Quemoy on September 3, 1954, dramatized the American involvement in the offshore islands. On the first day of heavy artillery barrage, two American senior officers of MAAG were killed on Quemoy.

American Response to Quemoy Shelling

At this time, President Eisenhower was vacationing in Denver and Secretary Dulles was in Manila, negotiating a Southeast Asia collective security treaty. Therefore, the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington were the first to react to the Communist bombardment of Quemoy. As they regarded it to be a probable prelude to an invasion of Quemoy, the Joint Chiefs immediately proposed that the Nationalist Air Forces be permitted to take defensive action by bombing the Communist military targets across from Quemoy. The President approved this recommendation. After the initial response, the Joint Chiefs deliberated on the strategic value of the offshore islands in relation to Formosa. They concluded that the offshore islands were not militarily essential to the defense of Formosa, and that the Nationalists could not hold the offshore islands without American assistance.

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41 Ibid. See also Alsop, "The Story Behind Quemoy," p. 87.


43 Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, p. 463.
However, the Joint Chiefs, with the exception of General Matthew Ridgway, the Army Chief, recognized that the loss of the offshore islands to the Communists would have disastrous psychological consequences for the Nationalists. Therefore, Admiral Radford, the Chairman, supported by the Chiefs of the Air Force and Navy, proposed to order American naval and air forces to assist in the Nationalist defense of ten selected offshore islands, including Quemoy. The dissenting opinion of General Ridgway stated that the Joint Chiefs should not base their judgement on non-military considerations. From a military viewpoint, Ridgway believed that if the United States decided to defend the offshore islands, military action could not be limited to air and sea operations alone, and consequently would spread to a full-scale war against Communist China. President Eisenhower did not act on this three to one majority recommendation. He decided to hold a National Security Council meeting at Denver on September 12, with the return and participation of Secretary Dulles.

Secretary Dulles, after concluding the SEATO treaty in Manila, stopped at Taipei to confer with Generalissimo

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45 This decision of President Eisenhower was reportedly made at the suggestion of Walter B. Smith, his former military subordinate and then Undersecretary of State. Alsop, "The Story Behind Quemoy," p. 87.
Chiang on September 9 before returning to the United States. It was the first time that an American Secretary had ever visited Formosa. Upon arrival at Taipei, Dulles said, "The United States is proud to stand with those, who, having passed through so many trials, are yet courageously sustained by a faith that will not be subdued." As to the crisis developing in the Formosa Strait, Dulles said, "Red China is now intensifying its military and propaganda activity against Free China, but we shall not be intimidated." He stressed, "Our Seventh Fleet orders issued by the preceding Administration continue firm under the Eisenhower Administration." Dulles did not, however, specify whether the orders of the Seventh Fleet to protect Formosa extended to the offshore islands. During Secretary Dulles' five-hour visit in Taipei, the American military mission chief in Formosa, Major General William Chase, recommended to Dulles that Washington announce American intentions to help the Nationalists defend the offshore islands.

On September 12, Secretary Dulles arrived at Denver to attend the scheduled National Security Council meeting, which was held for the ostensible reason of the President's desire to hear Dulles' report on his Southeast Asia trip. Before going to the Council meeting, Secretary Dulles had a press conference. With regard to the question whether or

47 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
49 Rankin, China Assignment, p. 206.
not the United States would defend the offshore islands, Dulles maintained his previous attitude that it was "a matter primarily for the military, at least in the first instance, to recommend what is implicit in an effective defense of Formosa."\(^{50}\) The Secretary stated that during his stopover in Taipei the Nationalists had neither asked nor had the United States promised to help defend the offshore islands.

The National Security Council meeting, in fact, centered on the discussion of the tension in the Formosa Strait. Admiral Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, asserted that now there were considerable military reasons for holding the offshore islands. The Chiefs except General Ridgway urged that the United States commit itself to defend the offshore islands and help the Nationalists bomb the mainland. President Eisenhower maintained that such action, if taken, would not be confined to Quemoy. The President tended to accept the dissenting view of General Ridgway as previously expressed. He said, "We're not talking now about a limited, brush-fire war. We're talking about going to the threshold of World War III. If we attack China, we're not going to impose limits on our military actions, as in Korea."\(^{51}\) The President reminded


\(^{51}\) *Eisenhower, Mandate for Change*, p. 464.
his advisors, "If we get into a general war, the logical enemy will be Russia, not China, and we'll have to strike there." 52

Secretary Dulles then described the complexity of the offshore islands problem as he saw it. He explained that the Communist bombardment of Quemoy was probing American intentions and that it had to be stopped or the United States would face disaster in the Far East. However, he said that if the United States drew a line and committed itself to defend the offshore islands, it might find itself at war with Red China without allies. Faced with this dilemma, Dulles advanced an alternate course of action. He said, "We should take the offshore islands question to the United Nations Security Council with the view of getting there an injunction to maintain the status quo and institute a cease fire in the Formosa Strait. Whether Russia vetoes or accepts such a plan the United States will gain." 53 It was a means of wresting initiative from the Communists. The President accepted Dulles' recommendation.

While the National Security Council did not decide that the United States would help defend the offshore islands, Secretary Dulles, after the Council meeting, told newsmen, "The defense of Quemoy is primarily related to the defense

52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
of Formosa and it is being considered in that light."  

Meanwhile, the naval arm of the United States, the Seventh Fleet, had been intensifying its patrol in the Formosa Strait ever since the Communist shelling of Quemoy. The chief of American military mission on Formosa, Major General Chase, led a group of MAAG officers in a visit to Quemoy on September 11, showing keen American interest there. All these signs marked the beginning of a persistent United States attitude intended to keep Red China guessing as to American intentions in the defense of the offshore islands.

CHAPTER III

AMERICA IN THE MIDDLE

Artillery Coupled with Propaganda

After the start of the bombardment of Quemoy, the Communist propaganda drive to "liberate" Formosa reached a high pitch. A leading article in the People's Daily on September 5 proclaimed: "Taiwan compatriots! We have every confidence that Taiwan will be liberated. Your distress will be over. Your days of freedom and happiness will arrive. Final victory is ours!"¹ In a foreign policy speech delivered before the National People's Congress on September 23, Chou En-lai told 1,200 delegates that the "liberation" of Formosa was an urgent task. He said, "As long as Taiwan is not liberated, China's territory is not intact. China cannot have a tranquil environment for peaceful construction and peace in the Far East and throughout the world is not secure."² In the Communist drive for liberating Formosa, Chou stressed Peking's "indestructible"


²Important Documents Concerning the Question of Taiwan, p. 148.
friendship with the Soviet Union and its close ties with other "people's democracies."\(^3\)

A closer tie, indeed, was fostered between the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communist regime in 1954. Nikita Khrushchev, the First Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, led an impressive Soviet delegation to Peking on September 28 to participate in the celebration of the fifth anniversary of the Chinese Communist regime and to negotiate a series of agreements.\(^4\) In a speech delivered before a large crowd in Peking on September 30, Khrushchev expressed Soviet support of the objective of the Chinese Communists of "liberating" Formosa. He said, "The Soviet people deeply sympathize with the noble cause of the great Chinese people, support the Chinese people in their determination to liberate their suffering brothers from the oppression of the Chiang Kai-shek brigands on Taiwan, and to eliminate the Chiang Kai-shek brigands on the Island."\(^5\)

On October 1, the Chinese Communist Defense Minister, Peng Teh-huai, echoed the Soviet support by issuing "an order of the day to all commanders and fighters of the Chinese Liberation Army" in which he declared:

\(^3\)Ibid.

\(^4\)Seven Sino-Soviet accords and policy statements of significance were made during Khrushchev's mission to Peking. Texts in Royal Institute of International Affairs, Documents on International Affairs, 1954, pp. 321-27.

It is the glorious duty of the Chinese People's Liberation Army to liberate Taiwan.

In order to liberate Taiwan . . . I give you these orders: hold yourselves constantly prepared for combat . . .

The Sino-Soviet solidarity on the question of Formosa was further expressed in their joint declaration on October 12. It stated:

The overt acts of aggression committed by the United States against the Chinese People's Republic, and especially its continued occupation of a part of the CPR's territory, the island of Taiwan, and also the military and financial support it is sending the enemies of the Chinese people, the Chiang Kai-shek clique, are incompatible with the task of maintaining peace in the Far East and lessening international tension.

All communist propaganda was aimed at depicting that American "occupation" of Formosa was the cause of tension in the Far East, and that consequently it endangered the peace of the world. As a part of this propaganda scheme, Chou En-lai sent a cable to the Secretary General of the United Nations on October 10, to renew his charge of United States "aggression of China's territory of Taiwan," a repetition of his abortive attempt in August 1950. Chou urged the Security Council to stop "aggressive action by the United States in interfering with Chinese people's liberation of Taiwan" and to call on the United States to withdraw all their armed forces and military personnel

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Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1954, p. 326.
from the island." He accused the United States of using the Nationalists to carry on a "war of harassment and destruction" against the Chinese mainland, as well as piratical attacks on foreign ships trading with Peking.9

The American chief delegate to the United Nations, Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., at first refused to receive a copy of Chou's cable, as he thought it was unduly circulated by the Secretary General.10 The Soviet delegation promptly backed up the Communist move by calling upon the General Assembly on October 15 to place an additional item of American "aggression" against Communist China on the current agenda as an urgent matter. In its explanatory memorandum, the Soviets charged that the United States Seventh Fleet "are staging provocative naval demonstrations off the Chinese coast and providing cover for the Chiang Kai-shek warships and aircraft which are continuing acts of provocation against the People's Republic of China."11 Thus, it accused the United States of having converted the area around Formosa into a "breeding ground for a new war."12 The Russian delegate asked the General Assembly

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9 Ibid.


12 Ibid.
to pass the Soviet draft resolution to condemn the United States.

Ambassador Lodge promptly branded as a "plain lie" the Soviet allegation that the United States was engaged in aggressive action "in Formosa or anywhere else."

Nevertheless, the General Assembly acceded to the Soviet request and placed the item on the agenda. During the debate, the United States Representative, C. D. Jackson, listed seven major acts of aggression committed by the Chinese Communists since 1950. He deplored that those who supported Red China in the United Nations should have regarded a posture of resistance as "aggression." "To bow to this demand," Jackson said, "would be to adopt the principle that self defense against communist attack is an international crime."

The Soviet draft resolution was overwhelmingly defeated, first, in the Political Committee and then in the plenary session of the General Assembly on December 10 and 17, respectively.

Right Wing Republicans Impatient

Since the presidential election campaign of 1952 in the United States, the Republican Party had professed to discard the old policy of containment and to offer a new

\footnote{Ibid., p. 1.}

policy of liberation. It was supposed to be a policy of action, which would give "more bang for a buck." President Eisenhower's order deneutralizing Formosa in February 1953 appeared to be a start in that direction, but nothing followed. Republican Senator William F. Knowland of California had been an outspoken critic of American Far Eastern policy during the Truman administration and he felt free to voice his opinion on Asian policy under the Eisenhower Administration as well. In his Collier's article of January 24, 1954, Senator Knowland expressed what he thought would be a desirable China policy:

If we fail to take a strong stand behind Chiang Kai-shek's government and their claim to their rightful homeland, we are in effect handing all of Asia to the Communist gang. We have lost ground to the Communists in Indo-China, and we allowed the Chinese Reds to stop us in Korea. . . . One more defeat at the hands of the Communists in Asia will spell disaster. . . . We must be prepared, then, to go it alone in China if our allies desert us.

Nevertheless, the United States tolerated the partition of Indochina in July 1954 without taking action. Now,


16 In a bitter memorandum of August, 1949, Senator Knowland and others termed the China White Paper "a 1,054-page whitewash of a wishful, do-nothing policy which has succeeded only in placing Asia in danger of Soviet conquest." Quoted in Graebner, New Isolation, p. 45.

17 William F. Knowland, "Be Prepared to Fight in China," Collier's, January 24, 1954, p. 120.
confronted with the Chinese Communist bombardment of Quemoy island with the possible attempt to seize it by force, the Administration took the less positive attitude of keeping Peking guessing as to American intentions. There were reasons to be alarmed at the unchecked communist expansion and challenge in Asia. Senator Knowland expressed his concern over the situation in an article for Collier's published on October 1, 1954. The article carried the striking title: "We Must Be Willing to Fight Now." The highlights of the article were made known in advance. Knowland warned, "The free world must face up to this grim threat now, for tomorrow may be too late." He maintained:

We and our allies must, as quickly as possible draw a line in Asia and notify the communists that if they cross it, they must fight. The free nations should let Red China know that if she invades—directly, as in Korea or indirectly, as in Indochina—any territory we have undertaken to defend, she must take the consequences not only on the violated land, but on her own mainland.

To avoid a Communist world, we of the United States and other free nations must be willing to fight now, if necessary.

Senator Knowland conceded, "It will not be easy to draw a so-far-and-no-farther line against the Communists in Asia, but we must try to do so."

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18 William F. Knowland, "We Must Be Willing to Fight Now," Collier's, October 1, 1954, p. 23.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
This kind of war-like pronouncement alarmed the Democrats. Senator Estes Kefauver of Tennessee charged pointedly that a "sinister group" including Senator Knowland, apparently was trying to get the United States into a full-scale war with Communist China. He said that the Administration must share "partial" blame for it.  

Adlai Stevenson, the titular head of the Democratic Party, also assailed the foreign policy of the Eisenhower Administration. He said that President Eisenhower and his advisors talked loudly of bipartisanship in foreign policy, but "they haven't been able to establish bipartisanship within the Republican Party." Stevenson singled out Senator Knowland as the one who "takes a pot shot at the President's policy every few days."  

Adlai Stevenson's estimation of Knowland's behavior was accurate. Senator Knowland very soon formally expressed his dissatisfaction with the Administration's foreign policy when he interrupted the scheduled proceedings in the Senate and delivered his statement on November 15. It was just one day before a meeting of senior members of Congress in the White House at the invitation of President Eisenhower.  

_Sources:_

free nations might be "nibbled away" one by one under the circumstances. As there was "clear and present danger," he proposed that Congress promptly summon the State and Defense Departments officials and Joint Chiefs of Staff for a full and critical review of the Administration's foreign policy. Since the Democrats had won the midterm congressional election, Senator Knowland in effect assigned this task to the incoming Democratic Congress.

Secretary Dulles responded with a statement that he welcomed a discussion and review of foreign policy, but added: "I do not myself see any immediate emergency which requires either that review or discussion should be on any different basis from what it normally is." As to the situation in the Formosa Strait, Dulles said any communist attempt to take Formosa would mean hostilities with the United States. But he asserted that the United States would not be drawn into any war except upon its own decision that action was required, and that the United States wanted to maintain mobility of action in such a situation.

The President immediately, though indirectly, endorsed the stand taken by Secretary Dulles. The White House Press Secretary, James Hagerty, said, "He [the President]..."
has often told me and said so publicly that he believes we have one of the wisest, most courageous and most dedicated men in our history as Secretary of State--John Foster Dulles.\textsuperscript{27}

In spite of the Administration's disapproving attitude toward his alarm, Senator Knowland said that he had no intention of resigning as Republican Senate leader because of his public difference with the President and Secretary Dulles over some aspects of foreign policy.\textsuperscript{28} Soon afterward the President himself gave public indication as to what his attitude would be toward dissidents in his own party. In response to a newsman's question whether Senator Knowland's opposition to the Administration on several recent issues would be a threat to Republican harmony in the new Congress, the President said, "I would hope that the men with whom I have to work would not be differing greatly from me in the main issues in which we have to work, or it would be extremely difficult."\textsuperscript{29}

\textbf{The Communists' NewProvocations}

The Chinese Communists had kept the situation in the Formosa Strait tense by shelling Quemoy sporadically

\textsuperscript{27}\textit{Ibid.}


\textsuperscript{29}Transcript of the President's news conference on December 2, 1954, in President Eisenhower, \textit{Public Papers}, 1954, p. 1078.
after commencing an intensive bombardment on September 3.

In spite of the President's denial that the American Government had prohibited the Nationalists from launching air raids against the mainland coastal area, the Nationalist Government was strictly advised not to bomb the mainland to a degree more than justified as a defensive measure. In early November, the Communists shifted their target from Quemoy to the Tachen group, the most weakly defended of the Nationalists' offshore islands. The Communists began to use airplanes to bomb the Tachen group in addition to artillery fire. The little war that developed in the Tachen area was highlighted by Communist torpedo boats which attacked and sank a Nationalist 1,800-ton destroyer. The Nationalist Foreign Minister George Yeh called this incident, which was a sneak attack during mid-night hours, a Communist "atrocities." He said, "This is a test of the moral

30 The press declared on October 8, 1954, that the American Government had advised the Nationalists to halt air raids on the mainland but officials in Washington refused to confirm this report. This was the exact time that Ambassador Rankin made the suggestion to Washington that the MAAG in Formosa should advise the Nationalist military authorities to restrain their air raids. There had been a difference of opinion between the Ambassador and the MAAG on the matter. Cf. Rankin, China Assignment, p. 207. When President Eisenhower during a news conference on November 10, 1954, said that the United States Government did not "order" the Nationalist Government to halt air raids, it was true in that sense. However, the Nationalists deferred to the American military opinion that it would be undesirable to raid the mainland more than was necessary as a necessary measure. President Eisenhower, Public Papers, 1954, p. 1034.
position of a free nation, a test to find out how the United States and other nations will react to this atrocity."\textsuperscript{31} This stirring remark caused no reaction from the United States.

As the bombardment of Quemoy, the renewed accusation of American "aggression" in the United Nations, and the attacks against the Tachen group had forced neither action nor concession from the United States, the Chinese Communists tried once more to irritate Americans by violating the most treasured American value--the liberty of their fellow citizens. On November 23, 1954, the Chinese Communists announced that thirteen Americans had been indicted "for having clandestinely crossed the Chinese border by plane to conduct espionage activity."\textsuperscript{32} In actuality, eleven of these men were crew members of a United States Air Force plane which had been shot down on January 12, 1953, in a leaflet-dropping operation over North Korea during the Korean War.\textsuperscript{33}

According to the provisions of the Korean Armistice, all prisoners of war on both sides were to be repatriated


\textsuperscript{33} A statement by the U.S. Chief Delegate to the U.N., Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., in the plenary session of the General Assembly on December 8, 1954, in \textit{ibid.}, p. 355.
not later than September 23, 1953, if they so desired. Instead, the Chinese Communists retained these prisoners of war and sentenced them to imprisonment from four to ten years. On November 26, 1954, the American Government lodged a strong protest to the Chinese Reds through British diplomatic channels, as the United States did not recognize the Chinese Communist regime. The American statement told the Chinese Reds to bear in mind that "the long list of Chinese Communist outrages against American nationals, which the American people have borne with restraint thus far, is significantly extended by the Chinese Communist announcement of November 23rd."^3

Senator Knowland was infuriated at the imprisonment of thirteen Americans on trumped-up charges of spying. On November 27, just one day after the State Department's note of protest, he held a press conference to advance his position on the matter without prior consultation with the State or Defense Departments. Knowland said, "If the Communists don't respond to our note and continue to hold our uniformed men in prison in direct violation of the Korean truce, with or without the support of the United Nations, we would be justified in clamping a tight blockade on China. We should

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serve notice on them that no vessel can get in or out of China until these Americans are released.\textsuperscript{36} He maintained that the United States should go it alone if her allies were not willing. Senator Knowland stressed, "We have the power to do this and the moral obligation to do it. Those associated with us in the free world should cooperate but I don't think we should give them a veto on our actions."\textsuperscript{37}

The Eisenhower Administration, however, was not inclined to take such drastic action against the Chinese Communists. As the United States armed forces had been in Korea to repel communist aggression under United Nations command, it was deemed more desirable to seek the release of the captives through the channels of the United Nations rather than by taking unilateral action. In an address delivered on November 29, Secretary Dulles said, "Our nation has agreed with others, by the United Nations Charter, to try to settle international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace is not endangered. Therefore, our first duty is to exhaust peaceful means of sustaining our international rights and those of our citizens, rather than now resorting to war action such as a naval blockade of Red China."\textsuperscript{38} This was an open rebuttal to


\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{38} Secretary Dulles' address delivered before the 4-H Congress in Chicago on November 29, 1954. \textit{D.S.B.}, XXXI, No. 807 (December 13, 1954), p. 890.
Knowland's proposal. As Secretary Dulles conceived it, the Chinese Communists were trying to provoke the United States into taking hasty action. He stressed, "Our nation will react, and react vigorously, but without allowing ourselves to be provoked into action which would impair the alliance of free nations."\(^{39}\)

President Eisenhower also counselled the American people to be patient, but he stressed that American restraint should not be interpreted "as appeasement or any purchase of immediate favor at the cost of principle."\(^{40}\)

The President reminded the American people that these American airmen had been held by the Communists for two years, so their timing of the announcement was a "deliberate" act. The Communist intention, as he saw it, was "to goad us into impulsive action in the hope of dividing us from our allies."\(^{41}\) "The hard way," the President said, "is to have courage to be patient, tirelessly to seek out every single avenue open to us in the hope even finally of leading the other side to a little understanding of the honesty of our intention."\(^{42}\)

The President disapproved of a naval blockade

\(^{39}\)Ibid.  
\(^{40}\)A statement issued at the White House on December 2, 1954, in President Eisenhower, Public Papers, 1954, p. 1074.  
\(^{41}\)Ibid., p. 1075.  
\(^{42}\)Ibid., p. 1076.
of mainland China as a means of hastening the release of the American airmen. Of this he said, "It is possible that a blockade is conceivable without war. I have never read of it myself."^43

As might be expected, the American protest of unlawful imprisonment of its airmen was outrightly rejected by the Chinese Communists. On December 4, the United States called on the General Assembly of the United Nations to act "promptly and decisively" to bring about the release of the eleven flyers and all other captured personnel.^44 The sixteen nations who had contributed forces to the United Nations effort in Korea gave solid support to the American appeal. On December 10, the General Assembly overwhelmingly passed a resolution condemning "the trial of prisoners of war illegally detained after the date fixed by the Korean armistice," and asked the Secretary General to make "continuing and unremitting" effort to obtain their release.^45

Immediately afterward the Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjold, cabled Chou En-lai expressing his wish to visit Peking to discuss the matter of the imprisonment of American airmen. The Communist response was delayed for one

^43 Ibid.


^45 Text in D.S.B., XXXI, p. 893.
week. On December 17, Chou sent two cables to the Secretary General. In the first cable Chou agreed to his visit to Peking to discuss "pertinent questions." In his second cable, however, Chou denied that the United Nations was competent to "interfere in China's conviction of full-proved United States spies." This demur, in fact, destroyed the whole basis on which the Secretary General's visit was projected. Nevertheless, Secretary General Hammarskjold journeyed to Peking in early January 1955, only to return empty-handed.

**Conclusion of Mutual Defense Treaty**

After the signing of a mutual defense treaty with the Republic of Korea in October 1953, the United States arranged mutual defense treaties with all its allies in the Western Pacific except Formosa. It was not due to American lack of awareness of a missing link in the island chain of the United States defense in that area, but due to difficulties involved in the treaty negotiations. The initial discussion on the matter had been made in December 1953, and the main hurdle was the territorial scope of application with regard to the treaty.

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47 Ibid.
48 Up to that time, the United States had concluded mutual defense treaties with the Philippines on August 30, 1951; with Australia and New Zealand on September 1, 1951; and with Japan on September 8, 1951.
49 Rankin, *China Assignment*, p. 195.
There were two aspects to the question. In respect to the "present" territory, the Nationalists desired to include the offshore islands in addition to Formosa and the Pescadores, but the United States would not agree. With regard to the "lost" territory, mainland China, the Nationalist Government suggested a clause corresponding to that in the Sino-Japanese peace treaty of 1952, which applied "... to all the territories which are now or which may hereafter be, under the control" of the Nationalist Government. This meant that the Nationalist Government would reserve its right to recover the mainland by launching a counter-attack whenever feasible. Washington tended to regard such a provision as too sweeping under the circumstances. And yet if the territorial application was limited to Formosa and the Pescadores, it would be tantamount to recognizing communist control of the Chinese mainland as permanent.

Anxiously seeking an American treaty commitment to defend Formosa, the Nationalist Government was willing to make concessions on some principles which it had cherished.

50 In view of the fact that there were two claimants for the government of China, the San Francisco Peace Conference invited neither to sign the peace treaty with Japan. However, by terms of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, Japan was at liberty to choose one of them to sign a separate peace treaty. Japan decided to sign a bilateral peace treaty with the Chinese Nationalist Government on April 28, 1952.

51 Rankin, China Assignment, pp. 195-96.
In June 1954 the Nationalist Government indicated that it would agree to obtain the prior approval of the American Government before undertaking any important military action against mainland China so as to facilitate the treaty negotiations.\textsuperscript{52} When Secretary Dulles visited Taipei on September 9, 1954, he talked with Generalissimo Chiang about the treaty but the matter was still unsettled.\textsuperscript{53} After the decision of the National Security Council on September 12 to bring the offshore islands question to the United Nations, Secretary Dulles contacted the western powers behind the scenes.\textsuperscript{54} In the meantime, Dulles sent Walter Robertson, Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, to Taipei on October 14 to explain this American move. Chiang was bitterly opposed to the idea of a cease-fire through the United Nations, as it would mean the acceptance of a two-China concept. Chiang argued that the Nationalist Government did not even have an American written agreement to defend Formosa.\textsuperscript{55}

The result of Robertson's visit was that the cease-fire proposal in the Formosa Strait was shelved temporarily

\textsuperscript{52}Nationalist Foreign Minister George Yeh told Ambassador Rankin on June 28, 1954. Rankin, \textit{China Assignment}, p. 197.


\textsuperscript{54}Eisenhower, \textit{Mandate for Change}, p. 464.

while the negotiations on the mutual defense treaty moved at a quicker tempo.\textsuperscript{56} While attending the General Assembly annual meeting in New York, the Nationalist Foreign Minister George Yeh was responsible for negotiating the treaty with Washington. At one point during the negotiations, Secretary Dulles was willing to include Quemoy and Matsu, the offshore islands, under the American defense commitment, but President Eisenhower struck that out.\textsuperscript{57} The mutual defense treaty was initialed on November 23, 1954 (the same date that the Chinese Communists announced the spy charges against the thirteen Americans), and was formally signed in Washington on December 2.

The treaty consisted of a preamble and ten articles, and the heart of the treaty was its provision on the treaty area. It was so defined that "in respect to the Republic of China, it was Taiwan and the Pescadores," but it could extend "to such other territories as may be determined by mutual agreement."\textsuperscript{58} As to the American defense commitment, it was the same as that stipulated in other mutual defense treaties: "each party would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes."\textsuperscript{59} The treaty would remain in force indefinitely

\textsuperscript{56}Ibid., and Rankin, \textit{China Assignment}, pp. 213-14.


\textsuperscript{59}Article V of the treaty.
but either party could terminate it one year after giving notice. 60

After the signing of the treaty, Secretary Dulles held a press conference. He emphasized that the significance of the treaty was to "put to rest once and for all rumors and reports that the United States will in any manner agree to the abandonment of Formosa and the Pescadores to Communist control." 61 In the meantime, Dulles said that "technical sovereignty" over Formosa and the Pescadores had never been settled because the peace treaty with Japan merely provided for a Japanese renunciation of its title and right to those islands. 62 When questioned about the offshore islands, he answered:

The position on the offshore islands is unaffected by this treaty. Their status is neither promoted by the treaty nor is it demoted by the treaty. . . . The injunction to our armed forces is to defend Formosa and the Pescadores. Now, whether or not in any particular case the defense of these offshore islands by reason of the nature of those islands or by nature of the attack against them is such that it is deemed part of the defense of Formosa, that would be a matter which on the first instance at least the military people would advise, and the president would probably make the final decision. 63

It was the familiar tactic of keeping the enemy guessing. In case of communist attack on Formosa henceforth,
Secretary Dulles indicated that the United States would take retaliatory action which did not necessarily mean a general war. He said, "It is a retaliation of sufficient severity to make it clear that the aggressor cannot gain by his attack more than he loses." This was a distinctly modified version of Dulles' theory of massive retaliation.

While the treaty itself did not impose restrictions on the Nationalist initiative to launch attacks on mainland China, restrictions were established in the form of an exchange of letters between Secretary Dulles and Nationalist Foreign Minister George Yeh on December 10. That exchange of letters set forth a policy:

In view of the . . . fact that the use of force from either of these areas [under Chinese Nationalist control] by either party affects the other, it is agreed that such use of force will be a matter of joint agreement, subject to action of an emergency character which is clearly an exercise of the inherent right of self-defense.

Furthermore, it provided that the Nationalist military "elements," pertaining to troops and armament received under the American assistance program, "will not be removed from the territories described in Art. VI [Formosa and the

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64 Ibid., p. 898.

65 Secretary Dulles' theory of massive retaliation was first expounded in his address delivered before the Council on Foreign Affairs on January 12, 1954. It was somewhat revised in his article on "Policy for Security and Peace" in Foreign Affairs, XXXII, No. 3 (April, 1954).

Pescadores] to a degree which would substantially diminish the defensibility of such territories without mutual agreement." With these double restrictions imposed upon the Nationalist Government and with an American military mission in Formosa on hand to guard against any possible unilateral action by the Nationalists, the Nationalists hope to launch a counter-attack on the Chinese mainland was, to all intents and purposes, ended. Thus, the Nationalists were "re-leashed" for good, if they had ever been for a moment "unleashed" by the Eisenhower Administration. So far as the American Government was concerned, nothing was left to be desired in its mutual defense treaty with the Chinese Nationalist Government. The exchange of letters was kept secret for a month, and was made known to the public on January 13, 1955.

In an effort to seek some sort of American commitment to help defend the offshore islands, Nationalist Foreign Minister George Yeh proposed during a visit to the White House on December 20 that American assurance to provide the "logistic support" for the defense of the offshore islands would be "good psychological warfare." President Eisenhower refused it, saying, "It would be a mistake to expand the treaty at this time." Obviously the Nationalist

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67 Ibid.
68 Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, p. 466.
Government did not derive full satisfaction from the scope and limitation of the mutual defense treaty, but it finally secured an American written commitment to defend Formosa.

The Sino-Soviet Reactions

In spite of the defensive nature of the mutual defense treaty which was concluded between the American Government and the Nationalist Government, the Chinese Communist Foreign Minister Chou En-lai issued a lengthy statement denouncing the treaty on December 8, 1954. He distortedly interpreted the mutual defense treaty as an aggressive move by the United States. Chou said, "By this treaty, the United States Government attempts to legalize its armed seizure of China's territory of Taiwan, and with Taiwan as a base, to extend its aggression against China and prepare a new war." 69 He stressed:

To liberate Taiwan and liquidate Chiang Kai-shek clique is a matter which falls entirely within the scope of China's sovereignty and internal affairs and no interference by any foreign country will be tolerated. Threats of war cannot shake the determination of the Chinese people to liberate Taiwan. 70

Chou warned that if the United States did not withdraw its armed forces from the Formosa area, "it must take upon itself all the grave consequences." 71

70 Ibid.
71 Ibid., p. 331.
The Soviet Government supported the Chinese Communists in denouncing the mutual defense treaty. A statement issued by the Soviet Foreign Ministry on December 15 said that the Soviet Government "shares the position" formulated in Chou En-lai's statement of December 8 that the treaty was "an interference in the internal affairs of China, an attempt on her territorial integrity and places in danger the security of China and peace in Asia." The statement also said that the Soviet Government "fully supports" the demand of the Chinese Communists for the withdrawal of American troops from Formosa and the Formosa Strait and for the cessation of "the aggressive actions against the Chinese People's Republic." The Soviet statement, however, did not say what kind of support Russia would extend to the Chinese Communists in case a head-on armed conflict developed in the Formosa area between the United States and the Chinese Communists.

Thereafter the Communists continued to denounce the mutual defense treaty. On December 25, the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference issued a declaration in which it proclaimed:

The attempt by the aggressive circles in the U.S. to occupy Taiwan and extend aggression against China by means of their treaty with Chiang Kai-shek can only strengthen the Chinese people's determination

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73 Ibid.
to liberate Taiwan and put an end to the Chiang Kai-shek traitor gang.\textsuperscript{74}

The United States Government considered communist denunciations of the mutual defense treaty too absurd to rebut. However, the communist charges that the American Government's signing of a treaty with the Nationalists was "an interference in the internal affairs of China" appeared to be plausible. Since there were two claimants to be the government of China, it could logically be construed as an act of American intervention in the Chinese civil war to sign a treaty with the Nationalist Government. Even so, it was not illegal for a state to intervene in a civil conflict. According to international law, historically it had not been forbidden a state to aid the legally recognized government of another state to put down insurrection, although some recent authorities said that it was desirable to avoid doing so.\textsuperscript{75}

Perhaps it was for this reason that the United States, since President Truman's order to neutralize Formosa in June 1950, had avoided expressing any American action regarding Formosa as an intervention in the Chinese civil war on the side of the Nationalists. The United States policy stressed the theme that sovereignty over Formosa had

\textsuperscript{74} Important Documents Concerning the Question of Taiwan, pp. 174-75.

\textsuperscript{75} Claude S. Philips, Jr., "The International Legal Status of Formosa," Western Political Quarterly, X, No. 2 (June, 1957), pp. 284-85.
never been settled, as the peace treaty with Japan in 1951 conferred its title to no one. Though a valid argument, it was a two-edged sword. On the one hand, any action by the Chinese Communists to invade Formosa would constitute an attempt to seize by force a territory which did not belong to them. Such an action would contravene the principles of international law and the explicit provisions of the United Nations Charter. In that case, there would be ample justification to call for international action. On the other hand, the United States Government had concluded a mutual defense treaty with the Nationalist Government which also had no clear legal title to Formosa. One critic asserted, "We have a solemn compact with a government-in-the-sky, a government with no legitimate site on the mainland or in Formosa." In this respect, the American Government inevitably found itself in an awkward predicament. It was even more embarrassing to the Nationalist Government in that it had nothing more than prescriptive "squatter's rights" to Formosa, as some scholars maintained.

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76. Article I, section 1, of the United Nations Charter provides, "The purpose of the United Nations are: . . . to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of the threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or the breaches of the peace. . . ."


An Issue in British Politics

The British Government recognized the Chinese Communist regime in January 1951, marking a basic departure from the American policy. It was the Labor Government under Prime Minister Clement Attlee that extended this recognition to Peking. Prime Minister Attlee was eager to have the American Government follow suit. During his visit to Washington in early December 1950 after the Chinese Communists had joined in the Korean conflict, Premier Attlee advocated the admission of Red China into the United Nations. He believed that withdrawing from Korea and Formosa, and giving the Chinese seat in the United Nations to the Communists "would not be too high price" in order to avoid an all-out war with Communist China.

After the Korean armistice was concluded, and Attlee had become the leader of the party in opposition as a result of the Laborite defeat in the 1951 election, he did not hesitate to air openly his differences with the United States policy toward the Chinese Communists. While the Geneva Conference on Indochina was going on, Attlee, in the House of Commons, reopened the debate on the question of admitting Peking on July 14, 1954. "As far as Formosa and Chiang Kai-shek are concerned," he said, "the island should be placed under the control of the United Nations, and

80 Acheson, Present at the Creation, p. 481.
Chiang and his associates should be pensioned off.\textsuperscript{81} Prime Minister Winston Churchill, in responding, took a restrained position and maintained that it was not an opportune time to force the issue.\textsuperscript{82}

In the late summer of 1954 Attlee visited the Soviet Union and mainland China. After arriving in Hong Kong from Peking on September 2, he confirmed the news report that Mao Tsu-tung had asked for British Labor Party support in securing a change of American policy on Formosa.\textsuperscript{83} On the rest of his tour, Formosa was Attlee's favorite topic. While in New Zealand, Attlee told the reporters that he "definitely" disapproved of the United States Seventh Fleet's role in protecting the Chinese Nationalist area of Formosa; but he added, "That is a matter for the United States."\textsuperscript{84}

Upon returning to London on September 22 after his round-the-world tour, Attlee said, "I think the sooner we get rid of Chiang Kai-shek and his troops the better it will be."\textsuperscript{85} On the eve of the Labor Party annual conference

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{82} The substance of Prime Minister Churchill's defense, \textit{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{83} \textit{New York Times}, September 3, 1954, p. 1; and \textit{The Times} (London), same date, p. 6.
\item \textsuperscript{84} \textit{New York Times}, September 15, 1954, p. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{85} \textit{The Times} (London), September 23, 1954, p. 6.
\end{itemize}
held on September 27 at Scarborough, Attlee urged that Formosa be "reunited" with China and suggested that Chiang Kai-shek and his immediate adherents be retired to "a safe place." The Soviet newspapers Pravda and Izvestia gave simultaneous coverage of Attlee's speech.  

As to the incumbent British Conservative Government's attitude, it had watched the events closely since the Communist bombardment of Quemoy, and had established close contact with the American Government. The Conservative Government was worried lest a situation develop in the Formosa Strait that would result in a further increase of tension. When the mutual defense treaty between the United States and Nationalist China was being negotiated, the British Government had been kept informed of its general lines. After the treaty was signed, the British Government gave limited approval. On December 8, Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden told the House of Commons: "Her Majesty's Government are satisfied that its object is to place relations between the United States Government and the Nationalist Chinese on such a basis as will result in a close degree

89 Ibid.
of consultation." He also said that the British policy toward the offshore islands had been "to urge upon all concerned the danger of fighting and the importance of lowering tension and the avoidance of precipitate action." So far this Conservative Government position satisfied the Laborites.

However, a dispute arose in London when Anthony Nutting, Britain's Minister of State and chief United Nations delegate, declared during a television appearance in the United States that in the event of a communist attack on Formosa, Britain would be "involved" as a member of the United Nations. What Nutting said precisely in the National Broadcasting Company television program, "Meet the Press," on December 12, 1954, was as follows:

> Well, a communist Chinese attack on Formosa, of course, is an attack upon a member of the United Nations and would no doubt call for collective action by the United Nations, in which we would, of course, be involved, as a member of the U.N.

> We are under an obligation to take action through the United Nations when a member of the United Nations is attacked, and we certainly took action pretty quickly, led by the United States, when Korea was attacked.

90 The Times (London), December 9, 1954, p. 3. There is a Parliamentary session in The Times, which daily prints the major dialogues occurring in the Parliament the previous day.

91 Ibid.

Nutting was perfectly correct in stating Britain's obligations under the United Nations, but he might have found a different way of saying it. The Laborites, therefore, immediately seized the opportunity to attack the Government, and demanded an official clarification.  

On December 20 simultaneous debates on the question of Formosa were held in both chambers of the British Parliament. The Laborite attacks centered on two main points: the nature of Britain's commitment to the defense of Formosa and the status of Formosa.

In the House of Commons, Attlee, taking the lead, demanded that some statement should be made to correct the implication that Britain was bound to come to the aid of the United States "in the event of an attack on her when engaged in a possible intervention in a civil war in China." R. H. Turton, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, replied that no such statement would be made, for what Nutting had said was a "perfectly factual situation of those who are members of the United Nations and who are not." The Laborites argued that Formosa was not a sovereign state, and was not a member of the United Nations; therefore, Britain had no obligation on that score. Attlee wanted to make it "perfectly clear" that "action of the United States

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93 _The Times_ (London), December 14, 1954, p. 4.
95 Ibid.
in Formosa is not an action of the United Nations" and that "this country had no participation in it."  

In answer to a question about the present international status of Formosa, the Marquis of Reading, Minister of State, replied in the House of Lords that it was "somewhat difficult in international law." He explained that Japan had renounced sovereignty over Formosa in the peace treaty, but no beneficiary had been designated. Therefore, he said, "This Government does not regard it as forming part of the Chinese People's Republic." With regard to Formosa, Reading stressed, "The Government has no obligation other than that arising out of our membership of the United Nations."  

What the debates in the British Parliament indicated was that any move by the British Government toward a firmer support of the position of the United States on Formosa would court strong Laborite opposition. 

The Chinese Communists tried to threaten the British Government for its support of the United States on the Formosa question. In a speech made in the People's Political Consultative Conference on December 21, Chou En-lai said that Britain was "vigorously following . . . dangerous" American

\[96\text{Ibid.}\]
\[97\text{Ibid.}\]
\[98\text{Ibid.}\]
\[99\text{Ibid.}\]
policy on "certain major issues." Referring to the mutual defense treaty between the United States and Nationalist China, Chou said that Britain's attitude had encouraged what he called the "seizure" of Formosa. He declared, "This contravenes the obligation undertaken by the British Government in many solemn international agreements and impairs the relations between China and Britain."100

The British Government might ignore the threat from Peking, but it could ill afford not to be mindful to the clamors from the Laborites, especially as the next general election would be held in the spring of 1955. Aside from other considerations, domestic politics would require the British Government to chart a cautious course for its Formosa policy.

CHAPTER IV

NATIONAL UNITY DISPLAYED: FORMOSA RESOLUTION
ADOPTED AND MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY RATIFIED

A Communist Show of Force

Following a well-publicized protest of the Mutual Defense Treaty signed on December 2, 1954, between the United States and the Chinese Nationalist Government, Peking decided to force America's hand by attacking the offshore islands, which were not specifically protected by the treaty. On January 10, 1955, the Chinese Communists employed one hundred airplanes of various types to raid the Tachen island group. One week later, on January 18, the Chinese Reds overran Yikiang Island in the Tachen group by amphibious assault with air support. It was the first time that the Chinese communists had made territorial gain in the Formosa Strait in the months of tension since the Quemoy bombardment on September 3, 1954.

Washington's initial reaction to this Communist military conquest was indifference. Secretary Dulles, after conferring with the President, held a news conference on January 18 to discount the importance of the loss of Yikiang to the Communists. He said that the Tachen islands to which Yikiang Island belonged were "not in any sense
essential to the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores which we do regard as vital to us.\(^1\) When a newsman asked about the possibility of a Nationalist-Communist cease-fire in the Formosa Strait, the Secretary replied that a cease-fire would be in line with the broad policies of the United States and the United Nations in seeking peaceful solutions to controversial problems. Yet he also said that it was easier to discuss such matters in principle than it was to work them out in practice. Dulles expressed the view that the American Government would not object to a cease-fire arranged by the United Nations, but that he would not initiate such a move without the concurrence of the Chinese Nationalist Government.\(^2\)

The next day, January 19, President Eisenhower in his news conference also said that the Tachen islands were not "a vital element" in the defense of Formosa.\(^3\) His attitude toward a cease-fire in the Formosa area was warmer than that of Secretary Dulles. He declared, "I should like to see the United Nations attempt to exercise its good offices."\(^4\) However, he added, "Whether the United Nations

\(^{1}\) *New York Times*, January 19, 1955, p. 3.

\(^{2}\) Ibid.


\(^{4}\) Ibid.
could do anything in this particular place, I don't know because probably each side would insist that it was an internal affair; although from our viewpoint it might be a good thing to have them take a look at the problem."

An Attempt to Draw A Line

Despite a seemingly indifferent attitude, the Administration decided to reappraise its policy toward the offshore islands. After the capture of Yikiang Island, the Chinese Communists made it clear that this was a first step toward the "liberation" of Formosa. On January 19, the Jen Min Jih Pao (People's Daily) declared, "The victory shows that the Chinese people are unshakable in the determined will to fight for the liberation of Taiwan."

Meanwhile, the Chinese Nationalist Government had asked for American military assistance, particularly air support, to help defend the rest of the Tachen islands. Ambassador Rankin forwarded the Nationalist request and recommended "most sympathetic considerations" on both political and psychological grounds. He believed that the loss of the Tachens "would, by undermining confidence in United States strength and determination, have a most unfortunate effect on Chinese and Asian opinion."

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5 Ibid., p. 187.
7 Rankin, China Assignment, p. 220.
8 Ibid.
Thus far, American policy toward the offshore islands, as determined in the National Security Council meeting on September 12, 1954 in Denver, had been simply to take the question of a cease-fire to the United Nations without making a decision as to an American commitment, if any, to defend the islands. The cease-fire idea ran aground after Generalissimo Chiang rejected it during Assistant Secretary of State Robertson's visit to Taipei in October 1954. As luck would have it, Communist military action against the offshore islands was limited to the artillery bombardment until the seizure of Yikiang Island by a show of force. As the President wrote, "The time had come to draw the line."9

On January 20, 1955, the second anniversary of General Eisenhower's term as President, a National Security Council meeting was held in the White House. During the meeting, Secretary Dulles said, "It is unlikely any of the offshore islands can be defended without large-scale American armed help. But we all agree that we cannot permit the Communists to seize all the offshore islands."10 Therefore, he proposed, "We must modify our policy: we should declare that we will assist in the evacuation of the Tachens, but, as we do so, we should declare that we

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9Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, p. 466.
10Ibid., p. 467.
will assist in holding Quemoy and Matsus [sic] as long as the Chinese Communists profess their intention to attack Formosa.\footnote{11}{President Eisenhower approved the Secretary's proposal and ordered implementation of this policy--an effort to hold a desirable line. However, as later development showed, this "line" had not been drawn explicitly.}

A Request for Congressional Sanction

In order to implement the policy of drawing a line and holding it, it was necessary to serve a clear warning to the Chinese Communists. The policy might have run the risk of war but not necessarily so. Herein lay a favored idea of Secretary Dulles. In a speech delivered before the American Legion Convention at St. Louis on September 2, 1953, Dulles said:

\begin{quote}
The Korea War began in a way in which wars often begin--a potential aggressor miscalculated. From that we learn a lesson which we expect to apply in the interests of future peace.

The lesson is this: If events are likely which will in fact lead us to fight, let us make clear our intention in advance, then we shall probably not have to fight.\footnote{12}{D.S.B., XXIX, No. 742 (September 14, 1953), p. 339.}
\end{quote}

In the present crisis in the Formosa Strait, Dulles conceived of issuing the warning in the form of a joint congressional resolution, authorizing the President to take whatever military measures became necessary to defend Formosa. In this connection, the Mutual Defense Treaty

\footnote{11}{\textit{Ibid.}}
\footnote{12}{\textit{D.S.B.}, XXIX, No. 742 (September 14, 1953), p. 339.}
signed with Nationalist China on December 2, 1954, obviously could not meet the exigencies of the present situation. In the first place, the Senate had not yet ratified the treaty.\(^\text{13}\) In the second place, while the treaty area was confined to the American defense of Formosa and the Pescadores only, the Administration intended to assist the Nationalists in evacuating their forces from the Tachens and to help defend Quemoy and Matsu.

A Presidential request for congressional sanction in advance to employ American forces was an "unprecedented" move in the American history in peacetime.\(^\text{14}\) It was a difficult undertaking by its very nature. What appeared to be more difficult was that a Republican President had to deal with a Democratic-controlled Congress. In order to ensure bipartisan support of the President's projected request, Secretary Dulles, experienced in handling party politicians,\(^\text{15}\) engaged in a series of consultations with

\(^{13}\) The President sent the treaty to the Senate for ratification on January 6, 1955.


Democratic and Republican congressional leaders, particularly foreign policy leaders.  

**Initial Congressional Response**

Senator Walter George, Democrat from Georgia and Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was highly pleased with Dulles' approach to bipartisanship by prior consultation before high policy was made. But some other Democrats were not so pleased. Senator John Sparkman, Democrat from Alabama and also a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, saw no reason for the White House to seek congressional sanction. He said that the President "has all the power in the world" to order the Seventh Fleet into action. Senator Mike Mansfield of Montana, another Democratic member of the Foreign Relations Committee, also said that the President could act without congressional authorization but that he apparently wanted "political protection." He recalled that former President Truman was bitterly criticized for his decision to send American troops into Korea without prior consultations with Congress.

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The Republican leaders generally expressed support for the President's intended action. Yet there were a few who, as was the case with several Democrats, felt that it was not quite necessary for the President to seek congressional authorization to take actions consistent with the executive powers vested under the Constitution. Representative Joseph Martin, the House Republican floor leader, said that in his opinion, the President had all the authority he needed to oppose a Communist attack on Formosa with United States Armed Forces, "but he wants the support of Congress so the world will know that, in the defense of that area, America stands united." 20

Eisenhower's Message to Congress

On January 24, the President's Message was transmitted to Congress. 21 In it, he said that Formosa and the Pescadores "should remain in friendly hands," because "in unfriendly hands" they "would seriously dislocate the existing, even if unstable, balance of moral, economic and military forces upon which the peace of the Pacific depends." He recounted a series of "provocative" political and military actions by the Chinese Communists "establishing


21 Republican Senate leader Knowland had urged the President to deliver the message in person, but Eisenhower decided not to present it in that fashion in order to avoid any implications that it was a "war message." Arthur Krock in New York Times, January 25, 1955, p. 24.
a pattern of aggressive purpose . . . the conquest of Formosa." The President noted that the Communists had climax ed their military action with the recent conquest of Yik iang Island, and said that the situation "poses a serious danger." 22

Under the circumstances, Eisenhower proposed two courses of action. The first was a call to the United Nations to take proper steps to deal with the situation in the Formosa area. He said:

We believe that the situation is one for appropriate action of the United Nations under its charter, for the purpose of ending the present hostilities in that area. We would welcome assumption of such jurisdiction of that body.

The President pointed out, "The critical situation has been created by the choice of the Chinese Communists, not by us. Just as they created the situation, so they can end it if they so choose."

The second was an appeal to Congress for support and special authorization of power. The President urged that it was necessary for "the Congress to participate now, by specific resolution . . . to improve the prospects for peace." He continued:

I do not suggest that the United States enlarge its defensive commitments beyond Formosa and the Pescadores . . . But unhappily, the danger of armed attack directed against that area compels us to take into account closely related localities and actions, which, under the current conditions,

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22Text of the President's Message in New York Times, January 25, 1955, p. 3. The quotations that follow are also from the Message; therefore, no additional footnotes are used until the end.
might determine the failure or the success of such an attack.

The President emphasized that the authority thus requested from Congress "would be used only in situations which are recognizable as parts of, or definite preliminaries to, an attack against the main positions of Formosa and the Pescadores." In asking for a congressional resolution, the President explained that "the authority for some of the actions" required "would be inherent in the authority of the Commander-in-Chief," but he urged Congress to "make clear the unified and serious intentions" of the United States.

In sum, the President believed that a congressional resolution would reduce the possibility of the Chinese Reds "misjudging our firm purpose and national unity" to the extent of precipitating "a major crisis." While stressing his desire for peace, President Eisenhower declared, "The United States must remove any doubt regarding our readiness to fight, if necessary . . . ."23

Formosa Resolution Presented to Congress

As soon as congressional clerks finished reading the President's Message in both Houses, identical resolutions carrying the Presidential wishes were presented. As a matter of fact, the resolution was drafted by the Administration and approved by key leaders of both parties, including

23The end of quotations from the President's Message.
Senators George and Knowland. The resolution contained the following authorization:

The President . . . 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 . . .

There was no specific line of defense drawn in the resolution. In an early draft of the resolution, the Administration had established a line which the United States would defend, including Quemoy and Matsu, as Secretary Dulles had proposed and the President approved in the National Security Council meeting on January 20. However, after a final conference between Eisenhower and Dulles, such a specific line was deleted from the resolution in final form. There were at least two good reasons for this decision. For one thing, any line specifically including the offshore islands, such as Quemoy and Matsu, which had always been Chinese territory, would have entangled the United Nations in a jurisdictional squabble in its effort to secure a cease-fire in respect to the offshore


25 Text in New York Times, January 25, 1955, p. 3. The italics are mine. These words became the focus of controversy during the congressional debates.

islands. For another, it would have indicated to the Chinese Communists that whatever was not specifically protected would become easy prey.

Prompt House Action

On January 24, the same day that the President's Message was transmitted to Congress, Dulles and Admiral Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee. After the House hearing, Dulles told the reporters: "In my opinion, if the resolution is passed, it will decrease the risk of general war in that area [the Western Pacific]. If it is not passed, it will increase the risk of war."27 Later that day, the House Foreign Affairs Committee under the Chairmanship of James Richards, Democrat from South Carolina, unanimously approved the resolution by a vote of 28 to 0. In recommending that the House adopt the measure, the Committee Report stated that the primary objective of the resolution was to deter further Chinese Communist aggression, and that it was impractical to list individual islands to be defended. As the present activities of the Chinese Communists toward the offshore islands were "part of the progressive chipping away of the free world," the Report stressed, "Failure to act now . . . offers a risk as great, if not greater, than action."28

28 U.S., Congress, House, Authorizing the President to Employ the Armed Forces of the United States for Protecting the Security of Formosa, the Pescadores, and Related Positions and Territories of that Area, H.R.Rept. 4, 84th Cong., 1st sess., p. 4.
On January 25, the resolution was therefore placed on the House floor for debate under a "closed" rule which limited debate to two hours and did not permit amendment. Speaker Rayburn and his associates in the Democratic hierarchy of the House, including floor leader John McCormack of Massachusetts, stood in line with the Republican leadership in supporting the resolution.

McCormack urged bipartisan support for the President so that "a Republican administration with a Democratic Congress does not mean a divided nation." Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Richards said that the joint congressional resolution sought by the President was by no means a declaration of war. "All we are doing," he stated, "is stating clearly and firmly the policy of our Government." Speaker Rayburn, while strongly supporting the President, agreed with some of his Democratic colleagues that this resolution "should not be taken as a precedent."

After a brief, controlled debate under the "closed" rule, the House adopted the resolution virtually without

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32 Ibid., p. 664.

33 Ibid., p. 672.
objection that same day by a vote of 409 to 3. The three dissenting votes were cast by Graham Barden, Democrat of North Carolina; Eugene Siler, Republican of Kentucky; and Timothy Sheehan, Republican of Illinois. In explaining his vote, Barden said that the debates had been inadequate, and that what the House had done would permit the President to take the nation to war without a formal declaration by Congress. Siler said that he opposed the resolution because he had promised the mothers among his constituents that he would not help engage their boys in war on foreign soil. At the other extreme, Sheehan held that the resolution did not go far enough. He said that the United States should draw a line of demarcation against Communist Russia and declare that any warlike actions on the part of her satellites would cause Washington to retaliate against Moscow.

Senate Committee Actions

In the Senate, a joint session of the Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees heard Secretary Dulles

34At the beginning of the first session of the 84th Congress, the Democrats controlled the House by a margin of 231 to 203, with one seat vacant due to the death of a member. Congressional Quarterly Almanac (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly News Features, 1955), XI (1955), p. 16.

36Ibid.
37Ibid.
testify on January 24. Senator George, who acted as the Chairman of the joint session, issued a summary of what had happened during the hearing. "The Secretary warned," Senator George said, "it might not be possible to hold Formosa and the Pescadores if we sit idly by while all the other Nationalist islands are taken; although neither would it be necessary to defend all of these islands . . . ."38

Despite the sense of urgency with which Secretary Dulles appealed to the members of the two Committees, many Democrats were not convinced. They had misgivings, but most of them chose to express them in private. Senator Mansfield was one of the few who spoke out. He said, "The Senate is confronted with a highly unusual resolution with the implication that immediate action is essential. If there is an impending crisis why did not the President come in person to present the facts to Congress? Crises in foreign relations do not arise overnight."39 He held, "Congress has the high sworn obligation to examine this resolution as it would any similar resolution--that is, in an independent light."40 While most Republicans voiced approval of the President's proposal, some among them joined Mansfield in urging close congressional examination before acting.

38 Ibid., January 25, 1955, p. 3.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
Attempts at Amending

The next day, January 25, the Senate Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees, again sitting jointly, conducted a long interrogation in secret session of all members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. When asked if the Joint Chiefs were unanimous in support of the President's Formosa policy, Admiral Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, reportedly answered in the affirmative. However, General Ridgway, Army Chief, stated in effect that he was not consulted during a recent discussion of the Formosa problem among the Joint Chiefs. Radford told the Committees that he did not rule out the possibility of striking against the Chinese mainland or in defense of the offshore islands but he felt that this would entail the use of air and sea power. Ridgway held that such moves would eventually lead to the use of ground forces, which had been overextended in America's worldwide commitment. As a result of the testimony, some Senators feared that the consequences of granting vast yet undefined power to the President would result in a war of unlimited scale. Ironically, the remarks of the Joint Chiefs helped generate a movement aimed at amending the Presidential request.

41 Ridgway was out of Washington at the time but a deputy participated in the discussion. Later, the General claimed that his deputy was not authorized to speak on his behalf. "General Wasn't Consulted--Ridgway versus Radford at Hush Hearing," Washington Daily News, January 27, 1955. Reprinted in the Congressional Record, V. 101, Part 1, pp. 844-45.
42 Ibid., p. 844.
On January 26, before the joint committee could vote on the resolution, there were two attempts at limiting the President's authority to use American armed forces in the Formosa area, but each was rejected by a vote of 20 to 8. The first to be defeated was an amendment introduced by Senator Hubert Humphrey, Democrat of Minnesota. He wanted to strike out the phrase that would extend the President's authority in protecting Formosa and the Pescadores "to include the securing and protection of such related territories of that area now in friendly hands." The second rejected amendment had been offered by Senator Estes Kefauver, Democrat of Tennessee. His motion, which emphasized the United Nations as the ultimate and appropriate authority both to arrange a cease-fire and to settle the status of Formosa, would have given authority to the President pending effective United Nations action. Finally, the joint committee adopted the resolution by a vote of 27 to 2, with Senators William Langer, Republican of North Dakota, and Wayne Morse, Independent of Oregon, casting the negative votes.

Initial Senate Floor Debates

When the joint committee passed the resolution without

45 Ibid.
amendment on the morning of January 26, Senator George, acting as chairman of the two committees, did not intend to press the Senate for action on the same day, but some Senators desired to commence debate immediately. While most recognized the need for firm American commitment to the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores, some Senators questioned the desirability of extending the President's authority to the "related positions and territories," pertaining to the offshore islands. Since American defense of the offshore islands was contemplated by the language of the resolution, the possibility of a preventive war appeared to be in the offing. There was also concern that the role of the United Nations was not sufficiently stressed. The two abortive attempts at amending the joint resolution in committee reflected the trend of the opposition. On the Senate floor these views were reiterated and there were renewed attempts at amendment. The voices of opposition were few but intensive.

Senator Russell Long, Democrat of Louisiana, held that if the President were to take full advantage of the authority in the resolution as presently worded, it could lead to an all-out war with Red China. He stressed that the

American people had not been informed of the implications of this joint resolution by which American commitments "are being extended far beyond anything any of us have realized prior to this time." 47

Senator Morse, the most vehement opponent of the resolution throughout the three-day debate, said, "One of the effects of the resolution will be to seal the lips of the elected representatives with respect to the course of action the President may take . . . . What the President is asking for is a predated authorization of anything he may do under the resolution." 48 Taking note of the unsettled status of Formosa, Morse asserted that the responsibility for protecting Formosa belonged to the United Nations. Therefore, he maintained that "stronger language and more specific language than is contained either in the message or the resolution" should be expressed by Congress. 49

Senator Kefauver urged, "We must guard against becoming involved in a large-scale war; not in defense of Formosa and Pescadores, but in defense of the offshore islands." 50 He saw the need for soliciting allied support of the American position, and argued, "We cannot convince the

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47 Congressional Record, V. 101, Part 1, p. 735.
48 Ibid., p. 738.
49 Ibid., p. 741.
50 Ibid., p. 763.
world that the Communist attacks on the offshore islands are primarily designed in preparation for armed attacks on Formosa."

Expressing a mood of dilemma, Senator Humphrey said, "The resolution is not one which we are permitted to design; it is one which we are permitted to accept or reject; and to reject it would be to undermine the President's authority completely and totally."  

White House Reassurances

In view of the fact that members of the Senate had expressed misgivings of various kinds and had created an atmosphere which was not conducive to prompt passage of the resolution, the Administration decided to reassure the public in general and Congress in particular. On January 27, after President Eisenhower had a conference with his top civilian and military advisers, the White House Press Secretary, James Hagerty, issued a statement saying:

The President made it clear that these United States forces were designed purely for defensive purpose and that any decision to use United States forces other than in immediate self-defense or in direct defense of Formosa and the Pescadores would be a decision which he would take and the responsibility for which has not been delegated.

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51 Ibid.
52 Ibid., p. 768.
The purpose of emphasizing the purely defensive role of the United States forces in the Formosa area was to end talk on Capitol Hill that the resolution authorizing the defense of Formosa was in any sense authority to carry on a preventive war. It also served notice that American military forces would not be sent to the Formosa area to help the Nationalists reconquer the Chinese mainland. By stressing the President's sole responsibility to decide whether or not the American forces should be used in other than in immediate self-defense or in direct defense of Formosa and the Pescadores, the statement reassured Senators who had feared that some impetuous American military commanders or line officers might "pull the trigger."

**Senator George's Speech**

Senator Walter George, after reading the White House statement, gave an eloquent speech to the Senate, rallying both the Democrats and Republicans to stand against any alteration of the text of the resolution. He said, "I believe that President Eisenhower is a prudent man. I believe what he says, and I am willing to act upon it." He asked, "If the Congress of the United States is willing to withhold moral support from the President . . . what is the alternative?" In concluding his speech, George especially admonished the junior Democrats:

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54 *Congressional Record*, V. 101, Part 1, p. 820.

I hope no Democrat will be heard to say that because the President . . . came to Congress he is thereby subject to criticism. He chose a courageous course, a course which would be taken only by a prudent man who knows the pitfalls along the course and who knows the horrors of war.  

After strong reassurance from the White House and Senator George's persuasive speech, efforts in the Senate to limit the President's authority under the pending joint resolution weakened. Some in the Democratic group, however, remained adamant. Senator Herbert Lehman of New York said, "My alternative is to confine our defense commitment to Formosa and the Pescadores." He still insisted that Congress should not give the President authority to "engage in unspecified and indefinite acts which might even be beyond his constitutional powers." Senator Morse said that the White House statement only confirmed that American forces might be employed in actions "over and beyond the immediate defense of Formosa and the Pescadores." Morse proclaimed that he could not support such possible use of American power.

Senate Dissenters Entrenched

On January 28, Senator George again took the floor to urge prompt approval of the joint resolution. He contended  

56 Ibid., p. 821.  
57 Ibid., p. 826.  
58 Ibid.  
59 Ibid., p. 841.
that adoption of the measure would have a restraining effect upon the Chinese Communists. 60 As a United Nations effort to arrange a cease-fire was going to begin soon, he stressed the need for the Senate to complete the legislation before the United Nations took action. 61 He said, "At the beginning of that debate there should be a position of strength, and not vacillation, on the part of the United States." 62 He also pointed out that while the Communists were speeding up their military preparedness, the Nationalists were holding military planning "in suspension" until the American attitude was made clear. 63

The objections from Senators Lehman, Morse and Langer persisted. Lehman was not satisfied with the White House statement. The President, he asserted,

... has not reassured me concerning his intentions with regard to the Quemoy group, the Matsu group, and the Tachen group... He has not indicated to me any reason why the blank-check language should be contained in the resolution. Nor has he explained why there should be no reference to the United Nations in the resolution. 64

Langer warned in simple terms of a possible danger in the resolution. As he declared,

60 Ibid.
61 The Security Council of the United Nations was scheduled on January 31 to debate the Chinese coastal islands situation.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid., p. 926.
It is simply a question of whether the Senate, in advance, is going to authorize our President to send forces into the mainland of China or whether it is not. If the President were to send such forces into the mainland of China, it would be an act of war.65

Morse reiterated the theme of a preventive war, which, he thought, was implicit in the resolution. "One of the most dangerous implications of this resolution," he asserted, "is that for the first time in our history we now enunciate a threat of aggression against a nation not now at war with us."66 In his final remarks, Morse said:

If it is unity the President wants . . . we can have unity because we are in complete union on the proposal that we should defend to the limit Formosa and the Pescadores. However, we are not in agreement that we should defend Quemoy and Matsu, because we fear that would lead to World War III.67

Some Senators had misgivings but were reluctant to vote against the resolution. Mansfield expressed this view when he said:

Whatever the faults of the joint resolution in its origin and content, however, I do not see how it can be rejected . . . An adverse vote at this time, a failure to uphold the President, can only be interpreted throughout the world as a faltering in our resolve, with disastrous consequences to peace and to the free nations.68

65 Ibid., p. 940.
66 Ibid., p. 956.
67 Ibid., p. 973.
68 Ibid., p. 975.
Senate Action Completed

Inasmuch as there were a few Senators who persisted in their opposition to grant the President's request without restriction, the Senate had to take a formal vote on their attempts at amendment.

First to be defeated, by a vote of 83 to 3, was an amendment which Langer offered to forbid the sending of American forces into the Chinese mainland or nearer than twelve miles from the Chinese coast except to help evacuate Nationalist forces in that area. The only Senators who voted for this limitation were Langer, Morse, and Lehman. 69

The Senate also rejected, by a vote of 75 to 11, a substitute resolution proposed by Kefauver to declare it to be the sense of Congress that the President had authority to employ armed forces to defend Formosa and the Pescadores, pending effective action by the United Nations. This was the measure which had been voted down in the Foreign Relations Committee. After the defeat of his motion, Kefauver declared that he would vote for the joint resolution despite the misgivings he had expressed. 70

The Senate then defeated, by a vote of 74 to 13, a third amendment, which Humphrey originally proposed but which Lehman took over after the Minnesota Senator decided


70 Congressional Record, V. 101, Part 1, p. 991.
not to press it. The Lehman amendment would have eliminated a phrase in the joint resolution authorizing protection of related positions and territories in the Formosa area. Humphrey, while voting for this amendment, declared his intention of supporting the joint resolution in advance. He said, "Even though the amendments which I hope will be accepted should be defeated, I would still feel that I owed the obligation to the Chief Executive, in view of his commitments, to go along with him." 71

Finally, the Senate, on January 28, adopted the joint resolution without alteration, and by an almost unanimous vote of 85 to 3. 72 The only three dissenting votes were again cast by Lehman, Morse, and Langer. 73

Mission Accomplished

On January 29, President Eisenhower signed the joint resolution into law. It was officially designated Public Law No. 4. In a brief statement during the ceremony of signing the congressional resolution, the President spelled out the essence of the Administration's policy. He said,

71 Ibid., p. 939.

72 Senate Democrats initially had a one-vote margin over Republicans, 48 to 47, with Wayne Morse as an independent, at the first session of the 84th Congress. The margin was increased to two when Morse announced on February 17, 1955, that he had joined the Democrats. Congressional Quarterly Almanac, XI (1955), p. 16.

"We are ready to support a United Nations effort to end the present hostilities in the area. We are also united in our determination to defend an area vital to the security of the United States and the free world." The Congressional approval of the Formosa Resolution clearly indicated to the Chinese Reds that the United States was prepared for the best or the worst—peace or war.

The President expressed his gratification at the "almost unanimous vote" in both houses of Congress in passing the desired resolution. As a matter of fact, it was the result of no small effort on the part of the Administration. Prior consultation with both Democratic and Republican leaders in Congress had won bipartisan support in principle before the President's request was formally delivered. Close watchfulness of the mood of Congress and timely reassurance from the White House further consolidated the Administration's position. The President's Message itself was a double manoeuvre. On the one hand, the pronouncement of American determination to stand fast and prepare to fight if necessary suited the tastes of right-wing Republicans. On the other hand, Democrats could lean on the appeal to the United Nations for action which would lead to a cease-fire and peace.

The interplay of these factors during an international crisis quite effectively muffled the usual divisiveness in Congress. Nevertheless, the voice of dissent, though feeble, could still be heard distinctly. Although it was not disputed that Formosa should remain in friendly hands with American commitments for its defense, there was no consensus as to the wisdom of possible American defense of the offshore islands. Many a congressman was reluctant to do anything which might increase the risk of war with the Chinese Communists.

Mutual Defense Treaty in the Spotlight

After the Mutual Defense Treaty was signed with the Chinese Nationalist Government on December 2, 1954, President Eisenhower on January 6, 1955, transmitted the treaty to the new Democratic-controlled Senate for ratification. In the message of transmittal, the President had said that the document was "defensive" in purpose and was designed to "deter any attempt by the Chinese Communist regime to bring its aggressive military ambitions to bear against the treaty area."\(^75\) He explained that the treaty reinforced "the system of collective security in the Pacific area" when taken in conjunction with similar treaties already concluded with Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand.\(^76\)

\(^75\)President Eisenhower, Public Papers, 1955, p. 31.
\(^76\)Ibid.
Further, the President stressed in his January 24 Message to Congress that the Formosa Resolution was no substitute for the Mutual Defense Treaty. He said, "Present circumstances make it more than ever important that this basic agreement should be brought into force, as a solemn evidence of our determination to stand fast in the agreed treaty area." 77

Background for Bipartisan Support

Behind the official actions, the Eisenhower Administration, in fact, had made calculated moves to ensure that a mutual defense treaty with Nationalist China would meet with a minimum of resistance in the Senate. On October 19, 1954, when the treaty was being negotiated and before the mid-term congressional elections, the Administration sent Walter Robertson, Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, to see Senator George at his home in Vienna, Georgia. At that meeting, Robertson informed the Senator, a senior ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, of the Administration's intention to sign a mutual defense treaty with the Nationalist Government, and secured George's promise of support in advance. 78

77 Ibid., p. 211.
After Congress reorganized in January 1955 with the Democrats in control, Senator George, to the satisfaction of the Eisenhower Administration, assumed the chairmanship of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He came to be an adamant supporter of the bipartisan approach to American foreign policy as urged by President Eisenhower in the State of the Union Message to the Congress on January 6, 1955. With the immense influence as a senior Democratic leader in Congress and Chairman of the powerful Foreign Affairs Committee, George was destined to exert his influence in supporting the Administration's foreign policy. After

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79 When the new Congress convened, Senator George was the ranking member of both the Senate Finance Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He could be chairman of either Committee. Partly because of his primary interest in foreign policy and partly because of promptings from the President, the Senator chose the Foreign Relations Committee. Roscoe Drummond, "Preeminent Senator of 1955," New York Herald Tribune, May 1, 1955. Reprinted in the Congressional Record, V. 101 (Appendix), p. A1426.


the passage of the Formosa Resolution, the next task for George was to secure ratification of the Mutual Defense Treaty with Nationalist China.

A Disturbing Source: Cohen's Memorandum

Although the Mutual Defense Treaty with Nationalist China, signed on December 2, 1954, was not the first of its kind which the United States had concluded with friendly nations in the Pacific, some Democrats viewed it in a different light. On January 11, 1955, the Democratic National Committee began to circulate among Senate Democrats a private memorandum on the subject prepared by Benjamin Cohen, once a prominent member of President Franklin Roosevelt's "braintrust" and a legal counselor of the State Department under the Truman Administration. Cohen contended that ratification of the treaty would constitute for the first time formal recognition of Nationalist China's claim to Formosa and the Pescadores, a step which the United States had been careful to avoid thus far. "What we recognize as territories of Chiang's China," he said, "other countries, including our allies which recognize Mao's China, may feel compelled to recognize as territories of Mao's China." Therefore, an attack on Formosa by the Chinese

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83 Ibid., p. 1396.
Communists would not, as Cohen expressed it, be "international aggression on their part but civil war in which the right and purpose of other nations forcibly to intervene would be open to serious doubt."^{84}

Although the memorandum did not question the vital importance to the United States of having these islands remain in friendly hands or the policy of defending them from unprovoked Communist attack, Cohen doubted the wisdom of the treaty on still further grounds. He observed, "It is not at all clear that any attempt by the Republic of China to extend its effective control and jurisdiction from Formosa to the mainland of China would be contrary to article I of the mutual defense treaty. . . ."^{85} Another basic point of objection, according to Cohen, was that the treaty area could be extended to other territories than Formosa and the Pescadores by "mutual agreement." He asserted, "The provision is a dangerous and unprecedented delegation of the treaty-ratifying power of the Senate."^{86}

While the Democratic leaders in the Senate, including Walter George, were not pleased with the circulation of the memorandum by the Democratic National Committee without their prior knowledge and consent, many a Democrat took it as a

^{84}Ibid.
^{85}Ibid., p. 1397.
^{86}Ibid.
guide in studying the implications of the treaty. When Secretary Dulles testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on February 7, he explained the treaty provisions in detail, as well as a significant restraint put on the Chinese Nationalist Government by virtue of his subsequent exchange of letters with the Nationalist Foreign Minister. Nevertheless, some Senators still entertained doubts along the line suggested in the Cohen memorandum.

**Senate Committee "Understandings"**

In the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Morse wanted to put into the treaty a reservation which would have deleted the provision that the territory covered by the document could be expanded by mutual agreement. Senator Humphrey proposed a similar but less fundamental reservation by attaching to the resolution of ratification an understanding that the "mutual agreement" with regard to the extension of the treaty area should be construed as requiring the advice and consent of the Senate. Whatever form the reservations took, they indicated a desire to put in plain English that American commitment under the treaty

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87 Reston, "Democrats and the Island."


89 To alter the text of a treaty by deleting or adding a language would require renegotiation of the treaty; to introduce language of an explanatory nature in the resolution of ratification would not.
would be limited to the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores and nothing else. It was exactly the same thing attempted in the debates on the Formosa Resolution.

On February 8, the Foreign Relations Committee defeated the Morse reservation by a vote of 11 to 2, and Humphrey's compromise reservation by a vote of 9 to 5. In view of the element of dissatisfaction with some provisions of the treaty, the Committee majority under the chairmanship of Senator George sought to placate the opposition after rejecting their proposals. The Committee drafted three "understandings," in the spirit of the Cohen memorandum, but none of which was to be in either the treaty text or the Senate resolution of ratification. These "understandings," to be incorporated into the Committee report of the treaty to the Senate, stated:

1) That the obligations of the parties ... apply only in the event of external armed attack; and that military operations by either party from the territories held by the Republic of China shall not be undertaken except by joint agreement.

2) That the 'mutual agreement' referred to ... shall be construed as requiring the advice and consent of the Senate of the United States.

3) That nothing in the treaty shall be construed as affecting or modifying the legal status or sovereignty of the territories to which it applies.90

Senator George made it known that this arrangement was agreeable to Secretary Dulles as well as to the majority of the Committee. The proponents took the view that while not legally binding on the Administration, the "understandings" would have a morally binding force as an expression of fixed Senate attitude. After the "understandings" were accepted, the Committee approved the treaty by a vote of 11 to 2, with Senators Morse and Langer casting the negative votes.

**Legal Point of Opposition**

The next day, February 9, the treaty was placed before the Senate for ratification. Senator George first took the floor to explain the difference between the Formosa Resolution and the Mutual Defense Treaty, urging prompt action by the upper house. He said, "The essential difference is that by treaty the United States undertakes an international obligation, whereas by Public Law No. 4 [Formosa Resolution] our action was unilateral and voluntary." It was precisely the solemn international obligation in the treaty that triggered a legal argument. What was at issue was whether or not the Chinese Nationalist Government could sign a treaty relative to territories over which the sovereignty was unsettled.

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92 Congressional Record, V. 101, Part 1, p. 1381.
Secretary Dulles had acknowledged publicly on the occasion of the signing of the Mutual Defense Treaty with Nationalist China that "technical sovereignty" over Formosa and the Pescadores had never been settled. With this in mind, Senator Morse, speaking against ratification, said that the document was hardly a treaty; rather, it was a military alliance with a faction in the Chinese civil war. Senator Lehman then observed that the three "understandings" in the Committee Report declaring that the treaty neither intended to determine the status of Formosa nor to envisage American assistance in offensive military actions by the Nationalists were inadequate. These "understandings," he said, lacked the force of law and merely expressed the interpretation of the Foreign Relations Committee. Senator Kefauver added that "I do not see how this treaty accomplishes anything not accomplished by the joint resolution we have already passed, and it has many foggy, if not evil, implications." He maintained, "If we limit our position to the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores, without a treaty, then we have a sound right . . . to call upon all our allies for their help in the event of war."  

93 Supra, Chapter III, footnote No. 62.  
94 Congressional Record, V. 101, Part 1, p. 1398.  
95 Ibid., p. 1406.  
96 Ibid., p. 1413.  
97 Ibid.
Ratification of the Treaty

Subsequently, Senator Morse renewed his effort to modify the treaty in spite of the fact that such attempts had failed in the Foreign Relations Committee. The Senator proposed two amendments and two reservations on the Senate floor. The first amendment, rejected 57 to 11, would have added a sentence to the effect that the treaty did not affect or modify the legal status or sovereignty of Formosa and the Pescadores. The second amendment, defeated 60 to 10, was to eliminate the sentence which provided that the treaty area might be extended by mutual agreement. Two reservations of the same intent were rejected by voice vote. Senator Morse undauntedly tried to carry his viewpoints but the odds were against him.

Although the few voices of opposition were negligible, their arguments that the Chinese Nationalist Government lacked the sovereign power to sign a treaty and that the three "understandings" to be read with the treaty were extra-legal were never dealt with squarely. One observer commented that the Administration probably knew that they already had the votes. Indeed, the votes were overwhelmingly in favor of the treaty. After defeating the amendments and reservations proposed by Senator Morse, the

98Ibid., p. 1415.

Senate on the same day, February 9, ratified the treaty by a vote of 65 to 6 at the end of one day's debate.

U.S. in a Position of Strength

With the passage of the Formosa Resolution and the ratification of the Mutual Defense Treaty with Nationalist China, the United States had built up a position of strength ready to deal with any move by the Chinese Reds in the Formosa area even though the line of defense was not specifically drawn due to strategic and political reasons. While there was no doubt of American determination to stand firm in the area, the Administration deliberately kept its attitude vague toward the offshore islands. In this sense, it continued the policy of keeping the enemy guessing while retaining maximum flexibility.
Cease-Fire Efforts Renewed

As previously mentioned in Chapter III, Secretary Dulles had contacted the British and other allies behind the scenes in an attempt to promote a United Nations cease-fire in the Formosa Strait in the autumn of 1954. This attempt for a cease-fire was given up when Assistant Secretary of State Robertson was unable to persuade the Nationalist Government to accept it. Yet when tension flared to a new height due to the assault and capture of Yikiang Island by the Chinese Communists in January 1955, the United States revived the cease-fire plan without regard to Nationalist feelings. As soon as President Eisenhower publicly announced his willingness to see the United Nations attempt to improve the situation in the Formosa area, both the British and New Zealand Governments welcomed the move. Sir Leslie Munro, chief delegate of New Zealand to the United Nations, declared that his Government would take the initiative to bring the matter to the United Nations.¹

Prospect Unpromising

The Chinese Communists, as well as the Nationalists, strongly disapproved of United Nations action in the Formosa Strait. On January 24, the same date that President Eisenhower's Message embodying an appeal to the United Nations was sent to Congress, Chou En-lai, the Chinese Communist Premier and Foreign Minister, issued a statement that categorically repudiated the idea of a cease-fire. He declared:

The Government of the People's Republic of China cannot agree to a so-called cease-fire with the traitorous Chiang Kai-shek clique repudiated by the Chinese people.

The so-called cease-fire between the People's Republic of China and the Chiang Kai-shek clique that the United States Government and its followers are trying to engineer is in actuality intervention in China's internal affairs and alienation of China's territory.\(^2\)

Chou quoted Article 2, paragraph 7 of the United Nations Charter, barring the world organization from intervening in "matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state." He contended that under this clause, "neither the United Nations nor any foreign country has the right to intervene in the Chinese liberation of Taiwan."\(^3\) In quoting that clause, it was interesting to note that Chou omitted the remaining part which added: "... but this principle shall not prejudice the application


\(^3\)Ibid.
of enforcement measures under Chapter VII." Though rather ambiguous, Chapter VII permitted the Security Council to enforce "action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression." 4

New Zealand's Proposal Introduced in the U.N.

Despite the Chinese Communist refusal to consider a cease-fire, New Zealand asked the Security Council to take up the question of the offshore islands on January 28. The New Zealand delegate, Leslie Munro, who was currently serving as President of the Security Council, 5 as a formality addressed a letter to the President of the Security Council, calling attention to the fact that:

The occurrence of armed hostilities between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China in the area of certain islands off the coast of the mainland of China has made it clear that a situation exists the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace. 6

Munro's letter did not mention Formosa and the Pescadores, but it showed the clear intention of the Western powers to ask the United Nations to seek a termination to the hostilities in the offshore islands. In a news conference on the same day, the New Zealand delegate indirectly replied

5 Council members assumed the Presidency of the Security Council in rotation according to alphabetical order.
to Chou's argument that the United Nations had no right to question the situation in the Formosa area. He said, "We are approaching the subject of these islands not on considerations of jurisdiction but simply on the consideration that we desire the fighting to be stopped, and we are of the opinion that there is no question of Article 2 (7) [domestic jurisdiction clause]." Under the proceedings of the Security Council, if a party involved in an issue under discussion in the Council was not a member of the United Nations, that party would be invited to attend the meeting to state his case. Therefore, the Security Council was expected to invite the Chinese Communists to send a representative to attend the upcoming Council debates, as it had done in November 1950.

Simultaneous British Effort

The British, fearing that the Chinese Communists would not attend the Council meetings, asked the Soviet Government to help persuade Peking to accept the Council's invitation. On the same day that the New Zealand delegate brought the question of the coastal islands to the Security Council, Sir William Hayter, British Ambassador to Moscow, visited the Soviet Foreign Minister, Vyacheslay Molotov, and advised him that the British Charge d'Affaires in Peking was informing the Chinese Communist Government of New
Zealand's move in the United Nations. Hayter told the Soviet Foreign Minister that the British Government hoped they would have the cooperation of the Soviet Government in the Security Council and that, in particular, Russia would "urge on the Chinese Communists very strongly that they accept the Security Council invitation to attend the Council when it is made."8

The immediate Soviet response was not very cooperative. Molotov extemporaneously remarked that the British Government "avoided all reference to the real reasons for the tension in the area of Taiwan."9 He asserted, "these reasons lie in the gross interference of the United States in China's internal affairs, in the desire to wrest Taiwan from China."10 Molotov said, "If the United States ceased its aggressive actions in the Taiwan area, this would help to reduce international tension."11 Furthermore, he indicated to the British Ambassador that if Britain did not support the American "aggressive actions" in the Formosa area, the United States would not undertake them. Molotov's

10Ibid.
11Ibid.
remarks obviously were no expression of appreciation for
British efforts at conciliation. 12

Soviet Cease-Fire Plan

On January 30, the Soviet Union delivered to the
United Nations a cease-fire plan of its own for the
Formosa area. The Soviet delegate urged the Security Council
to consider what it called "U.S. acts of aggression against
the Chinese People's Republic in Taiwan and other islands
of China." 13 The accompanying draft resolution accused the
United States of "aggression" and demanded that American
forces be withdrawn from the Formosa area. The text of the
Soviet draft resolution was similar to the one that was
brought before the Council in November 1950.

The new version differed from that of the previous
mainly in its final paragraph which read:

[The Soviet Union] urges that no military action
should be permitted in the Taiwan area by either
side, so that the evacuation from the islands in
this area of all armed forces not controlled by
the People's Republic of China may be facilitated. 14

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12 According to the Soviet version of the Molotov-
Hayter meeting, the British Ambassador told the Soviet
Foreign Minister: "It would be rather dangerous if the
Chinese [Communist] Government proceeded on the assumption
that the United States will in no circumstances assist their
Nationalist allies in the area of those [offshore] islands."
The warning, however, was not mentioned in a public statement
released by the British Embassy in Moscow. Cf. The Times
(London), January 29, 1955, p. 6, and Current Digest of the


14 Ibid.
The Russians, in effect, asked the Security Council to request the Chinese Nationalists to evacuate their troops from the offshore islands, and to guarantee them safe conduct.

Meanwhile, in a formal reply to the British request for Soviet cooperation in the United Nations, the Soviet Foreign Ministry issued a statement which put the blame on the United States for the tension in the Formosa Strait. "The Government of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics hold," it declared, "that the cause of the situation that has arisen lies in the fact that the United States, with the aid of Chiang Kai-shek, several years ago seized the island of Taiwan and the Penghu [the Pescadores], which belongs to China, and several other Chinese islands."  

U.N. Invitation Issued

On January 31, the Security Council voted nine to one, with the Soviets opposed, to consider the fighting in the Chinese coastal islands as "a situation threatening international peace and security." In a subsequent vote of nine to one, with Nationalist China opposed, the Council invited Peking to take part in the forthcoming Council debates. T. F. Tsiang, the Nationalist chief delegate to the United Nations, said that it would be an "insult" to the Chinese

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people to allow the presence of representatives of Communist China in the United Nations or elsewhere and that the invitation would increase the prestige of the Peking regime in the Far East.\textsuperscript{16}

The United States voted in favor of inviting the Chinese Communists to participate in debating the coastal islands question. However, Ambassador Lodge made clear that his vote for the invitation had no bearing upon the United States opposition to the seating of Red China in the United Nations, nor did it imply any change in the American refusal to recognize the Communist regime.\textsuperscript{17}

The Soviet request, condemning what was termed "acts of aggression" by the United States against Communist China, was placed on the agenda as a second item, not to be considered until action of the item concerning the coastal islands had been concluded. The vote was ten to one, with Nationalist China casting the negative vote.\textsuperscript{18}

Peking's Negative Response

As soon as the New Zealand cease-fire move was made known, the Chinese Communist press vehemently denounced the effort. The \textit{People's Daily}, in an editorial on January 29, said:


\textsuperscript{17}Text of Lodge's statement in \textit{D.S.B.}, XXXII, No. 816 (February 14, 1955), p. 253.

There is no cease-fire to discuss. To have a cease-fire with the Chiang Kai-shek nest of traitors is to sell out the interests of the Chinese people.

This cease-fire plot contravenes the United Nations Charter and constitutes an intervention in China's internal affairs.¹⁹

On January 31, the People's Daily added that, "The proposal of New Zealand is absolutely unacceptable to the Chinese people. The Chinese people are determined to liberate their coastal islands, Taiwan and the Penghu islands."²⁰ The formal Communist reply came three days after the Security Council extended its invitation. On February 3, Chou En-lai issued a statement in which he set forth three conditions to be fulfilled if the United Nations expected Communist participation in the Council meetings. He declared:

The Government of the People's Republic of China holds that [1] only for the purpose of discussing the resolution of the Soviet Union and [2] only when the representative of the Chiang Kai-shek clique has been driven out from the Security Council and [3] only when the representative of the People's Republic of China is to attend in the name of China, can the People's Republic of China agree to send a representative to take part in the discussion of the Security Council.²¹

By demanding conditions impossible for the United Nations to accept, Peking virtually rejected the United Nations


²⁰ Ibid., No. 978 (February 1, 1955), pp. 1-2.

invitation. Chou, however, did not rule out the possibility of international settlement of the problem through other channels. In concluding his statement, Chou said:

All genuine international efforts to ease and to eliminate the tension created by the United States in this area and in other areas of the Far East will receive the support of the People's Republic of China.\textsuperscript{22}

The Chinese Communists might have remembered their experience in participating in the debates of the Security Council on the question of Formosa in November 1950. It was futile for them to expect any gains in that world body so long as the United States and other Western powers commanded the votes.\textsuperscript{23} On the other hand, Peking had scored a tremendous success in the 1954 Geneva Conference leading to the partition of Indochina. It was highly probable that what the Communists had in mind was another Geneva-type conference.

\underline{U.N. Action Suspended}

The State Department, regretting Communist China's abrupt rejection of the Security Council invitation, said, "It is for the Security Council, which is constantly striving for peace, to consider this rejection. . . ."\textsuperscript{24} Meanwhile,

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{23}Until the early 1960's when a host of newly-independent African nations were admitted into the United Nations, the American Government had nothing to worry about so far as votes of support were concerned.

the State Department indicated its distaste for another Geneva-style meeting. As Henry Suydan, press officer of the Department, observed, "I find it difficult to imagine that anyone who participated in that experience would wish to repeat it." Confronted with the prohibitive price demanded by the Chinese Communists, the Security Council decided without a vote on February 14 to suspend its efforts to proceed with the New Zealand proposal. At the same time, the Council voted down, ten to one, the Soviet motion that it take the Russian item calling for the ouster of American and other non-Communist forces from all the Chinese islands.

Taipei's View on a Cease-fire

President Eisenhower's expression of hope in a news conference on January 19 that the United Nations would look at the situation in the Formosa Strait was interpreted in Nationalist China as a cease-fire move by the world organization itself. Taipei was unhappy about a cease-fire, but there was no immediate official comment. On January 19, China News, an English language daily whose publisher had close connections with government circles, said that free China would fight to the very end "against


such a presumptuous idea as a cease-fire" with the Communists. The next day, January 20, China News reported that "both official and private sources" regarded the idea of a cease-fire as "inconceivable and arbitrary." The papers quoted these sources as saying that Nationalist China would "never recognize an artificially fixed line that would "even hint at recognition of the status quo created by the Communist rebellion as it exists today." The English daily also reported a Nationalist source as saying, "A cease-fire involves a preliminary step to acceptance of the two Chinas theory." "Such an idea," it continued, "affects our sovereignty and will meet with basic opposition."

Although a cease-fire would seem to have been to the Nationalists' advantage, considering their weak position on the offshore islands, their opposition, although less articulate, was no less intense than that of the Communists. The reason for the Nationalists' objection must be viewed in the light of their political ideology. In spite of the fact that the Chinese mainland was under Communist control, the Nationalist Government considered itself

29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
to be the only legal government of China. Although its domain consisted only of Formosa, the Pescadores, and some offshore islands, the Nationalist Government insisted that it was still "suppressing a rebellion." Following this line of thinking, the Nationalists naturally opposed any proposal that would help consolidate in law the actual existence of two Chinese governments.

On Saturday, January 22, it was publicly known that the President's Message requesting Congressional sanction to use American forces in the defense of Formosa was scheduled to be delivered to Congress on the following Monday. Nationalist Foreign Minister George Yeh, after a talk with Assistant Secretary Robertson on Saturday morning, encountered questioning from newsmen who gathered in the State Department. He spoke in a dour and impatient manner: "We feel that anything which would suggest two Chinas would be objectionable, period, period, good-by."

After President Eisenhower's message went to Congress, there was no official comment in Taipei. However, China News, on January 25, summed up various local reactions in an editorial declaring that the message had been received there with "mixed feelings of gratification and disappointment."

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31 This continues to be the position of the Nationalist Government up to the present, although it has been soft-pedalled in recent years. (Personal knowledge of this writer.)


It was understandable that Eisenhower's message was a source of gratification because he was asking Congress for advance sanction to use American forces to defend Formosa and other related areas. On the other hand, President Eisenhower, while making no specific mention of defending the offshore islands, clearly indicated that he felt American forces would have to be ready to assist the Nationalist Government to "redeploy" their forces in some of these islands if the Taipei Government "should so desire." This reference was obviously to the Tachen Islands which the Administration had declared were not vital to the defense of Formosa. Consequently, the Nationalists were also disappointed in the President's message.

Evacuation of the Tachens and Nanchi

As previously mentioned, American Ambassador Rankin had given Generalissimo Chiang some encouragement to fortify the Tachens in 1953 in the wake of American military opinion in Taipei favoring such a measure. However, it was decided at the National Security Council meeting on January 20, 1955, that American forces should assist the Nationalists to evacuate their forces in the Tachens. Later, Joseph Alsop, who knew that it was a reversal of the Administration's policy, commented, "Just two years ago the shoe was on exactly the other foot."^36

^34 President Eisenhower, Public Papers, 1955, p. 209.
^35 Supra, Chapter IV.
^36 Joseph Alsop, "We Pushed Chiang Into Tachens,"
After the decision made at that National Security Council meeting, Washington began trying to persuade Taipei to evacuate the Tachens. The Nationalist Government did not budge until February 5, after the Communists had rejected the Security Council's invitation to take part in the discussion of a possible cease-fire. The Nationalists were more worried about a cease-fire move initiated by the United Nations than they were by a retreat from the Tachens, which, by their own estimate, were difficult to defend. If a cease-fire were to materialize under the auspices of the United Nations, it would be an international recognition of two Chinese governments. The potential political, moral and psychological impact of such an undertaking would be more disastrous than the loss of the Tachens. It would, among other things, destroy the Nationalist hope with its rallying cry, "Return to the mainland!", upon which the raison d'etre of the Nationalist Government was mainly dependent.

The Nationalist Government, having learned that the Communists also repudiated a two-China concept, acquiesced in United States pressure and accepted American naval assistance as of February 6 to evacuate its forces and civilian population from the Tachens. During the Tachens


37 Rankin, China Assignment, p. 223.
evacuation, the United States employed seventy-five vessels of several different types, an impressive show of American military might in the Western Pacific. Notwithstanding the emphatic Communist warnings that any provocation would lead to a major conflict, the evacuation was uneventful.\(^{38}\) Obviously, the Chinese Communists did not intend to precipitate a direct confrontation with the United States, especially since the Defense Department had indicated that American forces would defend themselves if attacked during the evacuation operation.\(^{39}\)

After Washington informed Taipei, on February 22, that the United States would not help defend Nanchi, an island group about 150 miles north of Formosa, the Nationalist Government decided to evacuate the islands and completed the operation without American aid.\(^{40}\) With the evacuation of the Tachens and Nanchi, the Nationalist-held offshore islands were reduced to Quemoy and Matsu. However, these were considered strategically important because they commanded vessel movement in and out of the Ports of Amoy and

\(^{38}\) An American naval plane was shot down by Communist coastal gunfire, but the flyer was rescued by American vessels. President Eisenhower treated the incident lightly during a news conference on February 9, 1955. President Eisenhower, *Public Papers, 1955*, p. 262.


\(^{40}\) *Rankin, China Assignment*, p. 223.
Fuchow on the mainland. Thereafter international discussion of the Nationalist offshore islands pertained only to Quemoy and Matsu.

Nationalists Firm on Quemoy and Matsu

In a statement on February 8, Generalissimo Chiang personally criticized the United Nations move toward a cease-fire and the two-China scheme. He stated that a cease-fire would threaten the sovereignty of the Nationalist Government and contended that it would whet the Communist appetite for further aggression. He repudiated the two-China idea and called it "ridiculous." Chiang said, "I would like to ask those people holding such a view whether, if unhappily Soviet Russia should invade their countries and install Quisling [puppet] regimes on their soil, they would still be prepared to swallow the reality of having their countries cut into halves?" He quoted a teaching of Confucius: "Do not do unto others what you do not like done unto yourself." Then Chiang observed, "This is a principle of behavior not only between men but also between countries." The Generalissimo believed that the Communist occupation of the Chinese mainland was the result of Soviet intrigue in China over the past forty years and that the Peking regime was a puppet of Moscow.

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42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
After the evacuation of the Tachens, Chiang expressed the Nationalists' determination to hold on to Quemoy and Matsu at all cost. In one of his rare press conferences, on February 13, President Chiang declared, "They [Quemoy and Matsu] constitute parts of the bastion where our people and government are withstanding the aggression of the international Communist bloc." He stressed, "In no case would they be abandoned to the enemy." Chiang reiterated Nationalist opposition to the idea of two-Chinas: "It goes without saying that the Republic of China can not renounce the sacred mission of liberating the compatriots on the mainland." While the Nationalists and the Communists were opposing each other on all other counts, they agreed on at least one thing: both rejected a cease-fire arrangement.

Soviet Proposal for an International Conference

As soon as the Chinese Communists had rejected the invitation of the Security Council to take part in the discussion of the hostilities in the Formosa Strait, Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov proposed in a conversation with British Ambassador Hayter on February 4, that a ten-power international conference settle the matter. The proposal,

46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
However, was kept secret until February 12 when Radio Moscow broadcast its contents. The Soviet proposal stated that the unwillingness of the United States and Britain to consider the "just and lawfully"-made demands of Peking had rendered it impossible "lawfully and impartially" to discuss the Formosa Straits problem in the Security Council. Consequently, Moscow maintained that it was necessary to act to reduce tension in the area through other channels.

According to the Soviet proposal, the ten powers would consist of the United States, Communist China, Britain, the Soviet Union, France, India, Burma, Indonesia, Pakistan and Ceylon. Among them, Britain, India and the Soviet Union would be the sponsors of the conference. The Russians suggested that the conference be held in either Shanghai or New Delhi. It was interesting to note that the five Asian nations included were those which already recognized the Peking regime. The very composition of the conference indicated that such a meeting, if it were to be convened, would be predominantly pro-Communist China.

Britain objected to the fact that the Soviet proposal would exclude Nationalist participation. Commenting on the proposal, the British reply noted, "A conference that did


49Ibid., p. 452.
not include both of the two parties most directly concerned could not have a useful result."\(^{50}\) It further observed, "The position of the United Nations should not be over­looked."\(^{51}\) As the Soviet proposal was not addressed to the United States, Washington made no official comment but fully agreed with the British position on the matter.\(^{52}\)

**British Views on the Offshore Islands**

The British Government's attitude toward the hos­tilities in the Formosa Strait became increasingly clear after President Eisenhower's January 24 message to Congress, seeking advance congressional authorization to use American forces in the defense of Formosa and related areas. This was in large part due to the fact that the Labour Party was forcing the Government's hand more than ever. Dissatisfied with American policy as indicated in Eisenhower's message to Congress, the Labour leader, Clement Attlee, on January 26 in the House of Commons asked Foreign Secretary Eden to report on the situation in the Formosa Strait.

Speaking in defense of the American position, Eden pointed out that President Eisenhower was careful to say that he did not suggest enlarging the American defensive commit­ment beyond Formosa and the Pescadores. At the same

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\(^{50}\) Ibid., p. 454.

\(^{51}\) Ibid.

time, the Foreign Secretary balanced his statement by saying:

On the other hand, Her Majesty's Government also understand that in the matter of the coastal islands the Chinese [Communist] Government cannot be expected to act in such a way as might seem to prejudice what they regard as their rights.\(^{53}\)

The British Government saw a significant difference between Formosa and the offshore islands and was forced to spell it out in a subsequent exchange between the Opposition and the Government. Attlee asserted that "in the matter of Formosa and the offshore islands" there was an intervention in the Chinese civil war on the part of the United States. Aneuran Bevan, leader of Labour radical wing, claimed that both Formosa and the offshore islands belonged to the Peking regime. Eden replied that he was surprised to hear the Labourite utterance that Formosa and the offshore islands should be treated in the same category. He stated bluntly:

Formosa has never in this century been a part of China . . . whereas the offshore islands have always been regarded by us as part of China.\(^{54}\)

The Labourites were not satisfied with Eden's statement. Attlee insisted that although Formosa was seized by Japan, it was declared during the War to be an integral part of China, and that Chiang Kai-shek's deposition did not

\(^{53}\)The Times (London), January 27, 1955, p. 6.

\(^{54}\)Ibid.
alter this fact. Eden, throughout the debate, held fast to his position that the status of Formosa was not comparable to that of the offshore islands.  

Peking likewise did not relish Eden's distinction between Formosa and the offshore islands. The People's Daily, in an article on January 29, rebutted the British Secretary's statement, saying:

The purpose of Eden's attempt to represent Taiwan as not being part of China is to dismember China and bring into being a so-called "two Chinas" idea . . . This is a most unfriendly attitude on their part to the Chinese people. The Chinese people absolutely will not tolerate it.  

Relevance of the Cairo Declaration

Obviously the Labourite claim that Formosa belonged to China was based on the Cairo Declaration of December 1943 to which the British Government had subscribed. The question of the Cairo Declaration, therefore, was addressed to Prime Minister Winston Churchill, the British signatory to the Declaration, in the House of Commons on February 1. Churchill said that the Cairo Declaration "contains merely a statement of common purpose," and since it was made "a lot of things have happened." He concluded, "The position of

55 Ibid.
Formosa has become an international one in which a number of other nations are closely concerned." This was in harmony with the American viewpoint on the status of Formosa. The Chinese Communists, unable to tolerate any suggestion that Formosa was a problem of international concern, immediately accused Churchill of a "dishonest repudiation of the Cairo Declaration." On February 4, the Labourites in the House of Commons renewed interrogation on the question of Formosa, particularly its present status. In a written statement, Foreign Secretary Eden replied:

The arrangement made with Chiang Kai-shek to put him there was on a basis of military occupation pending further arrangement, and did not, of itself, constitute the territory Chinese.

Formosa and the Pescadore Islands are, therefore, in the view of Her Majesty's Government, territory the de jure sovereignty over which is uncertain or undetermined.

In this statement, Eden also declared that the offshore islands presently under the Nationalist control were an "undoubted part of the territory of the People's Republic of China." But he added:

Any attempt by the Government of the People's Republic of China, however, to assert its authority over these islands by force would ... give rise to a situation endangering peace and security, which is properly a matter of international concern.

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58 Ibid.
60 The Times (London), February 8, 1955, p. 11.
61 Ibid.
Thus, it became clear that while the British position on the status of Formosa was in line with the thinking of the United States, its professed attitude that the offshore islands formed part of the territory of Peking went too far for Washington to accept. Since the British Government did not favor the Chinese Communists taking the offshore islands by force, the logical conclusion was that the Nationalists should surrender them to the Reds. This was what the Labourites asked Foreign Secretary Eden to say explicitly in the House of Commons on February 7. Nevertheless, the Foreign Secretary refused, at least at the moment, to make utterance on that count. Eden said, 'I think we should do far better to try to get agreement between all concerned.'

Eisenhower-Churchill Correspondence

Since the crisis in the Formosa Strait began in September 1954, the United States had kept its principal ally, Britain, informed of American policy in that area. In addition to formal diplomatic contacts, President Eisenhower had maintained personal correspondence with British Prime Minister Churchill. In a letter to Churchill of February 10, 1955, Eisenhower explained the great psychological and political significance which the Nationalists attached to the islands of Quemoy and Matsu, and pointed out that the abandonment of these outposts would endanger the very existence

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62 Ibid., February 8, 1955, p. 11.
of the Nationalist regime in Formosa. Consequently, Eisenhower believed that "certain assurances with respect to the offshore islands" would have to be given to Taipei, but they "must be less binding on us than the terms of the Chino-American [sic] treaty." Eisenhower told Churchill what the Administration would do in the event of a Communist attack on the offshore islands:

We must make a distinction—(this a difficult one)—between an attack that has only as its objective the capture of an off-shore Island and one that is primarily a preliminary movement to an all-out attack on Formosa.

Churchill replied, however, that there was "no decisive relationship" between the offshore islands and the defense of Formosa, and that the Nationalists' purpose for holding the offshore islands was "as a bridgehead for an invasion of Red China." He was inclined to think that the Chinese Communists would be satisfied to get the offshore islands and would no longer harbor serious intentions to attack Formosa. Eisenhower could not agree with him on these points. He wrote again to Churchill on February 19, explaining all the painstaking efforts made by the Administration to restrain the Nationalists from offensive military actions against the Chinese mainland. Eisenhower told him that a Nationalist retreat from Quemoy and Matsu would not

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63 Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, p. 471.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid., p. 472.
solve the real problem, which was the Communist determination to conquer Formosa. In addition to being a futile attempt at solving the real problem by retreating from Quemoy and Matsu, Eisenhower said, "This retreat, and the coercion we would have to exert to bring it about, would undermine the morale and the loyalty of the non-Communist forces on Formosa."^66

Anglo-American Differences Crystalized

Apparently, Eisenhower could not persuade Churchill to accept his viewpoints on the offshore islands. Churchill made public the attitude of the British Government in a statement to the House of Commons on February 23. In that statement, he said:

There is no question of our being involved militarily or indeed of our being needed in the defense of the coastal islands. We should be careful of what advice we should offer to our friends and allies upon it. . . . This is especially true at a time when the Chinese communists keep stridently asserting that the islands are to be regarded as a stepping stone to the seizure of Formosa itself . . . "^67

While Churchill publicly announced that the British Government had nothing to do with the offshore islands, he was careful not to say what advice on that matter he had given to Eisenhower for the sake of Anglo-American unity. Yet through secret diplomacy the British Government urged

^66 Ibid., pp. 473-74.
^67 The Times (London), February 24, 1955, p. 12.
Washington to accept the principle of a Nationalist withdrawal from Quemoy and Matsu. During the SEATO Council meeting in Bangkok shortly afterward, British Foreign Secretary Eden championed this policy in his talks with Secretary Dulles. The Secretary was instructed to tell his British counterpart that the United States "did not intend to blackmail Chiang into an evacuation of Quemoy and Matsu as long as Chiang deemed their possession vital to the spirit and morale of the Formosan garrison and population." There was no progress toward Anglo-American policy coordination on the offshore islands issue.

**Sino-Soviet Solidarity**

While the United States could not see eye to eye with its major ally, Britain, on the question of the offshore islands, the Soviet Union had been giving the Chinese Communists unfailing support through diplomacy and propaganda. These manoeuvres were evidenced by the Soviet version of a cease-fire and the proposed ten-power international conference for the benefit of Peking. The avowed Soviet support was not affected by the power reshuffle in the Kremlin on February 8, 1955. On the same day that Marshall Nikolai A. Bulganin became the new Soviet Premier, Foreign

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Minister Molotov made a policy statement before the Supreme Soviet to reiterate the Soviet policy on Formosa. He declared:

The position of the Soviet Union in this question is clear and well known: we consider the question of Taiwan is an internal affair of China, while the aggressive action of the United States and its threats of war we consider as an aggression which must be unconditionally condemned by the United Nations, if it values its authority.70

Premier Bulganin, in his first speech to the Supreme Soviet on February 9, also accused the United States of following an "aggressive" policy in Asia. He said, "They are setting up military blocs, organizing military provocation against the Chinese People's Republic and intervening in her internal affairs."71 Bulganin stressed that Communist China "can count upon the help of its faithful friend, the great Soviet people" and "that help will be forthcoming when needed."72

The Soviet message of February 14, on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance, emphasized that the "inviolable friendship" between the Soviet and Chinese people was of "permanent significance today," especially in the Far East.73

72 Ibid.
 Meanwhile, the Chinese Communist leadership played up the significance of the Soviet support. Mao Tse-tung, in one of his rare public appearances, spoke briefly but emphatically at a reception in the Soviet Embassy on February 14, held in observance of the Sino-Soviet Treaty. He declared:

... With the great cooperation between China and the Soviet Union there are no aggressive plans of imperialism which cannot be smashed. They will certainly be thoroughly smashed. Should the imperialists start a war of aggression, we, together with the people of the whole world, will certainly wipe them out clean from the surface of the globe.  

On the same occasion, Chou En-lai charged the United States with "stepping up aggression and war provocation against the Chinese people in the area of Formosa." Chou's speech also stressed that the Sino-Soviet alliance would serve as a deterrent against "aggressive" American action.

The Chinese Communist military high command likewise harped on Sino-Soviet unity in the event of an "aggressive" war launched by the United States. On February 22, Peng Teh-huai, Communist Defense Minister, in a rally honoring Soviet Red Army Day at Port Arthur, the joint-controlled naval base in Manchuria, declared:

75 Ibid., p. 3.
If anyone should dare to launch an aggressive war, our countries will support each other at all times. We warn the United States aggressive clique not to make a miscalculation, otherwise nothing but the most deplorable and ignominious end awaits it.\footnote{Ibid., No. 993 (February 22-23, 1955), p. 6.}

By repeatedly stressing Sino-Soviet solidarity to warn the United States not to attempt an "aggressive war," Peking intimated that, if attacked, it would rely upon an invocation of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance of February 14, 1950. Article I of that treaty provided:

\begin{quote}
In the event of one of the high contracting parties being attacked by Japan or states allied with it, and thus involved into a state of war, the other high contracting party will immediately render military and other assistance . . .\footnote{Text in Documents on International Affairs, 1949-1950, p. 542.}
\end{quote}

\textbf{Washington's Appraisal of the Treaty}

The treaty provision appeared to be defensive in purpose, and it was aimed at "Japan or states allied with it." During the discussion of the Formosa Resolution, the Senate Committees on Foreign Relations and Armed Services, and no doubt the Administration as well, had studied the implications of the Sino-Soviet treaty and the possibility of Red China enlisting Soviet assistance under the treaty provisions. The Senate joint committee in its report on the Formosa Resolution to the Senate stated that the United
States was not to take aggressive action, but that the language of the Sino-Soviet treaty was open to wide interpretation.\textsuperscript{78} At the same time, the Administration indicated to the committee that it doubted very much whether the terms of the treaty would be invoked "even if further difficulties should arise between the United States and Communist China."\textsuperscript{79} This conviction of the Administration, which was probably derived from intelligence studies, was also expressed in Eisenhower's letter to Churchill of February 10, 1955. As the President said, "I do not believe that even if we became engaged in a serious fight along the coast of China, Russia would want to intervene with her own forces.\textsuperscript{80}

A Stalemate

Although the Chinese Nationalist Government was opposed to inviting the Peking regime to participate in the Security Council's discussion of the hostile situation in the Formosa Strait, the objection was overruled by a majority of the Council members. The failure of the Security Council to deal with the Formosa situation was mainly due to

\textsuperscript{78} U.S., Congress, Senate, Authorizing the President to Employ Armed Forces of the United States for Protecting the Security of Formosa, the Pescadores, and Related Positions and Territories, S. Rept. 14, 84th Cong., 1st sess., 1955, pp. 7-8.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{80} Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, p. 471.
the Communist rejection of its invitation to come to the Council for peaceful discussion. Britain's simultaneous move to solicit the Soviet cooperation in furtherance of a desirable settlement was also of no avail. The Soviet Union took advantage of the disappointing development to propose a ten-power international conference to take up the offshore islands question. Britain and the United States gave chilly responses to the Soviet proposal because the proposed conference would exclude the participation of the Chinese Nationalist Government, which was one of the two contesting parties in the dispute. There was no immediate prospect for a peaceful solution to the inflammable situation in the Formosa Strait.

Meanwhile, the Nationalist Government was forced to withdraw from the Tachens and Nanchi, the far-flung offshore islands, in addition to having been restrained from taking offensive military actions against the Chinese mainland by the treaty agreements with the United States. This retreat from two exposed positions and a de facto cease-fire on the part of the Nationalists were helpful in the reduction of causes of conflict with the Communists. However, the Nationalist Government avowed no further retreat and was determined to entrench in the remaining offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu. The British sought to have the Nationalists withdraw from Quemoy and Matsu, but the United States would not coerce Taipei to do so. Therefore, London
made it known that the British Government would have no part in an offshore islands war if the United States became involved in one. Likewise, Russian rhetoric notwithstanding, the Eisenhower Administration concluded that the Soviet military would not come to the aid of the Chinese Reds if Peking precipitated a direct confrontation with the United States in the Formosa Strait.

The conciliatory role that the British had tried to play on the Formosa question led only to vituperation from Peking. Whenever the British Government made statements relating to differences in the legal status of Formosa and the offshore islands, the Red Chinese regime rewarded her with instant and vigorous denunciation. Peking's position that Formosa and the offshore islands were "China's internal affairs" seemed to preclude reconciliation. After much noise and confusion, the situation had reached a stalemate on the international scene while the power alignments had become clear.
A Broken Promise

Before Congress adopted the Formosa Resolution on January 28, 1955, Secretary Dulles met with Nationalist Foreign Minister George Yeh and assured him that President Eisenhower would issue a statement that would in effect guarantee the American defense of Quemoy and Matsu as soon as the Resolution was passed. However, the President refused to comply with Dulles' promise. Assistant Secretary Robertson informed Yeh on February 10, 1955, that there had been "a little misunderstanding between the State Department and the White House" on the matter.¹ Yeh produced the minutes


In addition, Karl Rankin, former American Ambassador to Taipei, had an interesting passage in his book, China Assignment: "In March, 1956, Secretary Dulles again made a brief stop in Taipei . . . The Secretary took full and personal responsibility for misunderstandings that had arisen during the previous year over the offshore islands. He was too generous . . . .", p. 253.

Although the manuscripts of John F. Dulles have been deposited at the Princeton University Library, an important part of the Dulles collection still has a United States
of the meeting, a copy of which Dulles had given him, but to no avail.

Foreign Minister Yeh was most unhappy to receive this news in his farewell visit to the State Department before leaving for Taipei on February 11. When asked by a newsman whether he had received a pledge of United States military assistance for Quemoy and Matsu, he replied that Washington had promised to help the Nationalists defend related positions and territories. "Did that mean Quemoy and Matsu?" another reporter queried. "Of course," Yeh replied, "the pledge includes all the offshore islands." 2

Yeh's remarks aroused immediate reactions from Democrats in Congress. Senator George said he understood that the Administration had made no pledge to defend Quemoy and Matsu. But he was sympathetic in attitude, taking the view that Yeh had said what he did for "home consumption" and that he was trying to "keep up the courage and morale of the people" on Formosa. 3 Those Democrats who had opposed

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the Formosa Resolution were not as calm in their reactions. "I should like to know who is lying," Senator Morse said, "if the Nationalist Chinese have a Foreign Minister in this country who is issuing such a lie, he should be repudiated by this Administration." \(^4\) Senator Lehman said that Yeh's statement "may be prophetic of serious difficulties to come." \(^5\) Senator Humphrey announced that he intended to request "a firm declaration of policy from Secretary Dulles on the question of the offshore islands." \(^6\)

The State Department was also unhappy about Yeh's statement and suggested to him that he should clarify his previous remarks. \(^7\) So, the next day, February 11, the Nationalist Foreign Minister denied having used the word "pledge," and revised his comment on whether the Administration would defend Quemoy and Matsu under the Formosa Resolution. Yeh said, "I would not eliminate that possibility. But it is a United States resolution. It is for the United States to decide." \(^8\) This incident reflected congressional sensitivity lest the Administration should commit itself to

\(^4\) Congressional Record, V. 101, Part 2, p. 1473.  
\(^6\) Ibid.  
\(^7\) Ibid., p. 1.  
\(^8\) Ibid., p. 3.
the specific defense of the offshore islands under the Formosa Resolution.

American Intentions Clarified

Thus, Secretary Dulles, in his address before the Foreign Policy Association in New York on February 16, made a special point of stressing that the United States "has no commitment and no purpose to defend the coastal positions as such." However, he did not suggest that the Nationalists should surrender the islands to the Communists. He pointed out that it was the Chinese Communists who had "linked the coastal positions to the defense of Formosa." Dulles maintained that the United States "shall be alert to subsequent Chinese Communist actions, rejecting for ourselves any initiative of warlike deeds."

At the same time, Dulles expressed the hope that the Chinese Communists would forbear using force to achieve their "goals." It was the first such expression he had used since the Chinese Reds rejected the Security Council's invitation. He said:

It is hardly to be expected that the Chinese Communists will renounce their ambitions. However, might they not renounce their efforts to realize their goals by force?

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10 Ibid., p. 330.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
In this connection, Dulles held that Communist rejection of the United Nations invitation "has not ended the responsibility of that body." The President supported Dulles on this count by saying that the United States was on record as seeking "every possible means for a cease-fire with justice to everybody in that region."

**Surprised Reactions from Congress**

Dulles' address, declaring that the Administration had no intention to defend the offshore islands "as such," likewise caused immediate congressional reactions. It was generally interpreted as suggesting that the offshore islands might be traded for a cease-fire agreement in the light of his call to the Chinese Communists to renounce the use of force while not giving up their "ambitions." Senator Knowland, surprising no one, warned against a "Far Eastern Munich" that would give the Red Chinese the Quemoy and Matsu islands.

Unfavorable reactions to the address unexpectedly came from the Democratic side. On February 23, James Richards, Chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, accused Dulles of a lack of clarity or candor on the policy toward Formosa. He told the House that Dulles

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13 Ibid.
had led Congress to understand that the United States "would assuredly defend" the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu. But now, Richards said, "Confusion has replaced determination among some of our leaders in the executive branch." He continued, "The Communist dictators, instead of being given notice that we would not acquiesce in any further aggression in the area of Formosa, apparently are being invited to bargain with us for territory held by the Nationalist Government of China." The House Democratic floor leader, John McCormack, said that he, too, had understood from Dulles that Quemoy and Matsu were going to be defended.

Dulles' Trip to Southeast Asia

Secretary Dulles was not available to answer these charges at the time, as he was in Bangkok for the first Council meeting of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). On February 23, the opening day of the SEATO Council meeting, Dulles urged the member nations not to view their defense problems as isolated situations but on a broader basis. He set forth a "three-front" strategy to cope with Communist aggression. The Secretary declared:

17 Ibid., p. 1962.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., pp. 1963-64.
Asia is three fronts. It is unlikely any war started by Communist China would be confined only to Formosa or South Korea. The forces of these two fronts exist as a common part of the forces deterring possible Communist aggression in Southeast Asia.

Dulles gave indications that the concentration of American air and sea forces in the Western Pacific were at an all-time high since the end of the Pacific War, and that these forces were prepared to meet any emergency with great mobility. It was a warning to the Chinese Communists that the United States was prepared to meet them on all fronts, as Peking was prone to probe each front one by one and then attack the weakest.

After the Bangkok conference, Dulles visited Burma, Laos, Cambodia, South Vietnam, and the Philippines before proceeding to Taipei for the exchange of instruments of ratification of the Mutual Defense Treaty with Nationalist China on March 3. In Taipei, he gave specific warning to the Chinese Communists not to assume that the American defense "would be static and confined to Taiwan itself, or that an aggressor would enjoy immunity with respect to the area from which he stages his offensive." At the same time, Dulles again expressed the hope that the Chinese Reds "will not insist on war as an instrument of their

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policy." He stressed, however, that "The United States will not enter any negotiations dealing with the territories or rights of the Republic of China except in cooperation with the Republic of China."  

Dulles' statement was meant to serve two purposes. On the one hand, it served notice to the Communists that the United States would be flexible in the defense of Formosa, including possible attacks on the Chinese mainland as well as an all-out defense of Quemoy and Matsu. On the other hand, the United States would not use Quemoy and Matsu to bargain for a cease-fire, thus dispelling any doubts that might have been generated by his February 16 speech.

The Chinese Communists were attentive to all the American statements and moves. In response to Dulles' Taipei statement, People's Daily, in an article on March 5, said, "It is day-dreaming for Dulles to think that the Chinese people would beg for peace." The paper declared, "The Chinese people must liberate Taiwan to protect their sovereignty and territory . . . This is the firm stand of the Chinese people."  

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22 Ibid.  
23 Ibid.  
25 Ibid.
Serving Warning

The Secretary brought back a gloomy picture from his two-week tour in Asia. Despite repeated admonitions to the Chinese Communists not to engage in further aggression, Dulles was not sure of the effectiveness of these warnings. While stopping over in Honolulu on his return trip, the Secretary told reporters: "I am still concerned about intentions of the Chinese Communists." 26

After arriving in Washington and twice conferring with the President, Secretary Dulles made a widely publicized radio and television address to the nation on March 8, formally announcing a new American strategy for resisting Communist expansion in Asia. He told the American people: "Everywhere I found ominous evidence of Communist efforts to terrorize, to beguile, to subvert." 27 In order to cope with the situation, Dulles held that any aggressive Communist move should be regarded as an attack on the whole of Southeast Asia and should be met with a mobile striking force. 28 He pointed out particularly that American sea and air forces in the Western Pacific had now been equipped with "new and powerful weapons of precision, which can utterly destroy military targets without endangering related

28 Ibid.
civilian centers.\(^{29}\) Dulles was referring to tactical atomic weapons which were then ready for use.

**The "Paper Tiger" Image**

During his tour of Asia, Dulles was deeply impressed by the success with which the Chinese Communists had portrayed the United States as merely a "paper tiger," one that would always find reasons to fall back when faced by brutal and uncompromising power. The Secretary made a special effort in his address to point out the fallacy of this description. He emphasized, "We must, if occasion offers, make it clear that we are prepared to stand firm, and, if necessary, meet hostile force with the greater force that we possess.\(^{30}\)

In the case of Formosa, Dulles said that the question was not what to defend but how to defend, and that the President would decide how to implement a flexible plan of defense. The Secretary observed that Peking seemed determined to conquer Formosa, and that the response of the United States to an outright aggressive move "will have importance both to Formosa and to all the Southeast Asia and Pacific countries."\(^{31}\)

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\(^{29}\)Ibid., pp. 459-60.  
\(^{30}\)Ibid., p. 463.  
\(^{31}\)Ibid.
The Communist propaganda machine tried to stir up anti-colonial feelings in the Asian countries by making use of Dulles' speech. Radio Peking, quoting the Tientsin Ta Kung Pao of March 12, said, "By stressing that the United States would only provide sea and air power, Dulles revealed at the same time that the United States was attempting to use Asians to fight Asians."*32

The British Suggestion

On the same day that Dulles made his radio and television address, British Foreign Secretary Eden also reported to the House of Commons on Southeast Asian affairs. On the topic of Formosa, Eden, observing that the Chinese Communists had refrained from attacking Quemoy and Matsu, stated:

"Her Majesty's Government trust that it [the Peking Government] will continue to exercise this restraint and that . . . while maintaining intact in all respects its position in regard to Formosa and the Pescadores it will not prosecute its claims by forceful means."*33

As to the Chinese Nationalists, Eden asserted that:

"We would like to see them withdraw their armed forces from the other coastal islands. [Hopefully] . . . they too, while maintaining their claims, will not prosecute them by forceful means and will abstain from all offensive military action."*34

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*33 The Times (London), March 9, 1955, p. 6.
*34 Ibid.
The British Foreign Secretary believed that if these expectations could be realized, it would be possible to settle the whole Formosa problem internationally. While the main features of Eden's proposal were to urge both sides to renounce the use of force as a means to carry out their claims, the immediate step to be taken required the Nationalists to evacuate their forces from the offshore islands. It was implicit that after the Nationalist forces withdrew, the Communists would take over the islands. Eden tended to think that by doing so it would clarify the problem: Thereafter any communist military actions against Formosa would be attempts at seizing territory whose legal status was undetermined.

The Chinese Communists, however, were not in the least interested in Eden's proposal, which involved the Nationalist retreat from the offshore islands so as to facilitate a political settlement. In rebuffing the British Foreign Secretary's conciliatory approach, Radio Peking, on March 11 declared:

The substance of his proposal is to secure the withdrawal of the United States and traitor Chiang Kai-shek from China's offshore islands as a means to legalize the occupation of Taiwan indefinitely by the United States and perpetuate the military threat against China.36

35 Ibid.
That the withdrawal of the Nationalist forces from the offshore islands would be a forward step toward a peaceful settlement of the Formosa problem proved to be wishful thinking on the part of the British. Peking was not contented with the withdrawal of the Nationalists from Quemoy and Matsu. This confirmed President Eisenhower's belief that "what they are really interested in is Formosa," as he wrote to Churchill on February 19.\(^\text{37}\)

**The Atomic Deterrent**

When Secretary Dulles said in his address of March 8 that American forces in the Western Pacific possessed "new and powerful weapons of precision," he was referring in veiled terms to atomic weapons. The matter was clarified in a White House meeting on March 10. The President shared Dulles' view that the Chinese Reds were determined to capture Formosa and that surrendering Quemoy and Matsu to them would not be an end to the matter. Therefore, Dulles said, "If we defend Quemoy and Matsu, we'll have to use atomic weapons. They alone will be effective against the mainland's airfields."\(^\text{38}\) The President approved a limited use of atomic weapons if necessary and stated this point publicly. In his news conference on March 16, President Eisenhower said that the atomic weapons would be used with "bullet"


\(^{38}\)Ibid., p. 476.
precision against military targets in the event of war. 39

As part of a concerted effort by the Administration to exploit the deterrent effect of atomic weapons, Vice President Richard Nixon, in a speech on March 18, stated bluntly:

It would be insanity and madness for them [the Communists] to embark upon an additional aggression in the face of the consequences we have made clear will follow. 40

Nixon did not say whether the Administration would aid the Nationalists in defending the offshore islands, but he implied strongly the possibility. As he said,

Those who suggest we could get peace in the Pacific by giving up additional territory to the Communists simply do not know the kind of animal we are dealing with. 41

Meanwhile, Secretary Dulles stressed the dangerous characteristics of the Chinese Communists. He told the Advertising Club in New York on March 21 that the Chinese Reds "constitute an acute and imminent threat." 42 He said that they seemed to be "dizzy with success," and that they had "a very exaggerated sense of their own power" while they "gravely underestimate the power and resolution of the non-Communist world." 43 Dulles maintained that the

41 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
"aggressive fanaticism" of the Chinese leaders "presents a certain parallel to that of Hitler" and "contrasts with the past tactics of Soviet communism." The Secretary concluded that the Chinese Communist tactics "may prove more dangerous and provocative of war" in the immediate future than those of the Soviet Union.

Behind these declarations of the readiness to use tactical atomic weapons and the particular danger of the temperament of the Chinese Communists was a military appraisal that the period from March 15 to 25 was the time of "greatest danger" during which the Chinese Communists might launch an all-out attack against Quemoy or Matsu. Playing up the deterrent effect of atomic weapons was designed to prevent the Communists from attempting such an adventure. Peking simply called it a vain attempt at "atomic blackmail." In fact, a reluctance on the part of the Administration to actually plan to use atomic weapons in the Formosa area was reflected in the President's news conference on March 23. He said that the United States would not use atomic weapons in a "police action," although he declined to predict how he would characterize a possible

44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
46 Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, p. 477.
fight over Quemoy and Matsu. He spoke unequivocally against indiscriminate use of atomic weapons. The President said, "I repeat, the concept of atomic war is too horrible for man to endure and to practice, and he must find some way out of it." 48 A peaceful settlement of disputes was the alternative. The President declared again, "Any just, reasonable solution of the difficulty in the Formosa Strait would receive our most earnest and sympathetic consideration." 49

A New Trend in Cease-fire Ideas

The idea of a cease-fire, since its inception on September 12 at the National Security Council meeting, had, in fact, always haunted the thinking of the Administration despite the abortive attempt made by the United Nations. Dulles' address to the Foreign Policy Association on February 16 was the first open American bid. The Secretary's subsequent statements of March 3 and 8, while stressing that the United States stood firm and would use atomic weapons to deal with further Communist aggression, were mingled with a desire for a cease-fire expressed in varying terms.

In this respect, Secretary Dulles broke new ground in his news conference on March 15 when he was asked to

49 Ibid., p. 362.
comment on Eden's assertion that a renunciation of the use of force did not mean a renunciation of claims. He said:

Well, if there were a renunciation of the use of force, that would meet the immediate requirements of the situation and there would be no necessity that I can see for anybody, either on the Republic of China's side or the Communist side, to renounce what they might call their legal pretensions, their legal claims.50

During his first visit to Canada as the Secretary of State, Dulles reiterated this point. In a news conference held at Ottawa on March 18, Dulles said that the best way for the Chinese Communists to avoid misunderstanding of their aim in the Formosa Strait would be for the Peking regime to make a clear statement that it would not use force to achieve its goals. In this connection, he remarked that such a renunciation of the use of force would entail no relinquishment of either Nationalist or Communist China's conflicting claims of sovereignty.51

The Canadian Attitude

A cease-fire of this nature had first been expressed by the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, L. B. Pearson, in the House of Commons on January 25. In answer to parliamentary inquiries as to the cease-fire move proposed by President Eisenhower in his January 24 message

to Congress, the Canadian Foreign Secretary told the House:

My understanding of the basis of a truce or cease-fire is that neither the Nationalists, which we recognize, nor the Communists need be asked to give up their claims on the territory now held by the other side. What they would be asked to give up, of course, is the use of military means to achieve their aspirations.  

On March 24, Secretary Pearson further explained the Canadian Government's attitude toward the tension in the Formosa Strait. He told the House of Commons that Canadian neutrality in any major war involving the United States was impossible. However, Pearson held that he did not consider a conflict over Quemoy and Matsu to be one "requiring any Canadian intervention in support of the Chinese Nationalist regime." He expressed the fear that even limited American intervention in the Formosa Strait, defensive in purpose, might start a chain reaction that would cause the conflict to spread "even across the ocean." Thus, the situation became clear: neither Britain, America's major ally in Western Europe, nor Canada, America's close neighbor, would participate in a war over the islands.

52 Reprinted in the Congressional Record, V. 101, Part 1, p. 985.
54 Ibid.
A War Scare

While the Administration played up the deterrent effects of atomic weapons, it also endeavored to express the American desire for a cease-fire to the extent of advocating the formula that a renunciation of the use of force did not mean a relinquishment of a claim. Unfortunately, unexpected "war talk" from a high military official in the Administration blurred the picture. On March 24, Admiral Robert Carney, Chief of Naval Operations, at a luncheon party with Washington correspondents, reportedly predicted an American war with the Chinese Communists over Quemoy and Matsu by April 15. Although it was an off-the-record remark, the story was leaked out on March 25. Since the Administration made no secret of its preparedness to use tactical atomic weapons in the event of a war, it was not hard to imagine the grim prospect of such a conflict. Immediately after Carney's alleged prediction of war, the White House purposely allowed a "news leak" saying that the President did not believe in any imminent danger of war, but this could not dispel the effects of a war scare. People were more inclined to believe the bad news than the good, as is usually the case.


56 Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, p. 479.
Following the propagation of Carney's war story, the right-wing Republicans publicly advocated American commitment to the defense of Quemoy and Matsu. On March 27, Senator Knowland on the Columbia Broadcasting System's "Face the Nation" television program said that America's "active defense" of Quemoy and Matsu would be worth "whatever was necessary to do the job . . . unless we are prepared to see all of Asia go down the drain." On the same day, Senator Styles Bridges, Chairman of the Senate Republican Policy Committee, appeared on the "Meet the Press" television program of the National Broadcasting Company. He said, "I personally would hold Quemoy and Matsu. . . . I think it will be done and I certainly am for that."

Talk of a "War Party"

In view of the scare that developed after Carney's alleged prediction of war, the Administration, hoping to clear the air, invited the leaders of both parties in the House and Senate to the White House on March 30 and 31. However, before the scheduled meetings took place, there was an open exchange in the Senate between Lyndon Johnson, the Democratic majority leader, and William Knowland, the Republican minority leader.

58 Ibid.
Senator Johnson, who had been absent during the debates on the Formosa Resolution due to illness, brought up the charge of a "war party" in the Senate on March 28. He told the Senate:

"... it would be folly to jeopardize our future through an irresponsible adventure for which we have not calculated all the risks. We do not want a war party nor do we want an appeasement party."

Johnson praised the President and Senator George, saying that neither had joined a war party nor an appeasement party. The Senator's remarks referred to the right-wing Republicans who were regarded as favoring a preventive war against the Communists.

Knowland replied that the three wars in which the United States had been involved in his lifetime had come under Democratic Administrations. He declared that he knew of no "war party" or "war faction" in the United States. He posed a question:

"After having taken a firm stand in January by passing the Formosa Resolution... are we to be placed in position of marching up the hill, as soon as there are some dire communist threats, marching down again in the face of those threats?"

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60 For the assertion that there was a war party in the United States, see D. F. Fleming, "Our Brink-of-War Diplomacy in the Formosa Strait," Western Political Quarterly, LX, No. 3 (September, 1956), pp. 535-52; and Richard H. Rovere, "Letter from Washington," New Yorker, April 30, 1955, pp. 103-08.

61 Congressional Record, V. 101, Part 3, p. 3789.
Knowland said that all American people "desire our policy to be not one of peace at any price but peace with honor." The charge that there was a war party in the United States did not end with the Johnson-Knowland exchange. Senator Kefauver, who had been opposed to any reference to the offshore islands during the debates on the Formosa resolution, delivered a violent speech attacking the Administration over the offshore islands policy on March 30. He asserted:

That the United States should be plunged into a war over Matsu and Quemoy ought to be unthinkable. Yet there are those in high places in the present Administration who are plotting and planning to bring such a war about, whatever the risk involved.

President Eisenhower has wisely limited the final decision as to United States action to himself. But the conclusion is inescapable that the present war party is attempting to create a situation and an atmosphere in which the President would have no choice but follow them.

The issue was that the right-wing Republicans led by Knowland were pressing the President hard to make an unqualified public declaration that the United States would defend Quemoy and Matsu while the Democrats sought to reserve for the President full flexibility in decision-making, should the occasion ultimately arise. Since a majority of the Democrats had voted for the Formosa Resolution under the appeal for national unity, they were deprived

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62 Ibid.
63 Ibid., p. 4043.
of the weapons of opposition at this stage. Trying to mitigate the influence exerted by the Knowland group on the President was the best that the Democrats could do under the circumstances.64

Four days later, the Administration made a forceful rebuttal of the war-party charges through the person of Vice President Nixon. Taking the opportunity of speaking to a convention of the American Association of School Administrators on April 3, the Vice President declared:

I know no one in the House or Senate—Democrat or Republican—no one in the Administration, no one of our top military leaders, who wants war.

Any one who charges that there is a war party in the United States is unfortunately beating the Communist propaganda mill which has been grinding out this big lie and trying to peddle it around the world for years.

Let us advocate vigorously the policies we think are best designed to avoid war and obtain peace. But let us do so without questioning the motives of those who disagree with us. We may disagree on the means but we all agree on the end.65

Britain's New Peace Formula

While the charge of a war party in the United States was making headlines, Britain was seeking a new formula for peace in the Formosa area. According to a New York Times dispatch from London, the British cabinet on March 29 had

discussed a guarantee of support for the United States in Formosa and the Pescadores if and when Chinese Nationalist forces were withdrawn from the Quemoy and Matsu Islands. This guarantee would be of temporary duration, aimed at emphasizing allied unity in opposing Communist aggression against Formosa. The British also proposed that during the period of the guarantee a plebiscite be taken in which the people on Formosa could make a choice between the Nationalist and Communist governments. 66

The Chinese Communists would not agree even to discuss such a scheme. People's Daily, in a commentary on April 7, asserted, "It is quite clear that all suggestions of a 'plebiscite' on Taiwan are aimed at building up the 'two Chinas' myth and legalizing the U.S. seizure of Taiwan." 67 "Whatever the United States may resort to," the paper declared, "the Chinese people will never waver in their determination to liberate Taiwan." 68 At the same time, the People's Daily warned the British Government, "It would not be hard to see what reaction and consequences would follow such an interference [as an attempted plebiscite]." 69 The implication was that if the British Government

66Ibid., March 30, 1955, p. 1. Owing to a labor dispute in the newspaper industry, The Times (London) was not published between March 26 and April 26, 1955.


68Ibid.

69Ibid.
pushed the idea of a plebiscite in Formosa, Peking could conveniently exert pressure against the British Crown colony of Hong Kong.

At this stage, the Communist attitude toward the Formosa issue became crystal clear. They were opposed to any kind of peaceful settlement that could be conceived of in a Western mind—no United Nations cease-fire, no two-China formula, no being bought off with Quemoy and Matsu, and no plebiscite in Formosa. The "liberation" of Formosa appeared to be the only solution that Peking, as it persistently clamored, would accept.

Continued Speculation in the United States

President Eisenhower expressed his displeasure at war talk in his news conference on March 30. He put the Administration's high military leaders on notice that the cause of peace was not promoted by speculative talk of war in the Formosa Strait. He remarked, "I cannot say that there will not [be war], because I don't know. But I do say that if anyone is predicting it [will be] that soon, and can give me logical reasons for believing it will be that soon, they have information that I do not have." 70 The President still refused to say flatly whether or not the United States would defend Quemoy and Matsu under any and all circumstances.

70 President Eisenhower, Public Papers, 1955, p. 373.
He expressed the same attitude during the scheduled luncheon meeting with House leaders of both the Republican and Democratic parties that day. House Speaker Rayburn said he assumed that the United States would be unavoidably involved in the event of a Communist attack on Quemoy and Matsu. The President disagreed with his assumption and told him, "We have not made that decision and will not make it until we know the circumstances surrounding any given attack."\(^71\) President Eisenhower said, "In any event, the tricky business is to determine whether or not an attack on Quemoy and Matsu, if made, is truly a local operation or a preliminary to a major effort against Formosa."\(^72\) The President indicated that if there was a reasonable chance for the Nationalists themselves to repel invading forces from the offshore islands, he would not order American forces to come to their aid.\(^73\)

The next day, March 31, the President had another scheduled luncheon meeting with the Senate party leaders. He maintained the same attitude toward the defense of Quemoy and Matsu that he had expressed to the House party leaders the previous day. The Senate Democrats did not intend to query the Administration's policy on Quemoy and

\(^71\)Quoted by Eisenhower in his *Mandate for Change*, p. 480.

\(^72\)Ibid.

Matsu in the White House meeting despite the fact that Senate majority leader Johnson had initiated the charge of a war party. Johnson had aimed it at the right-wing Republicans rather than at the President. As a matter of fact, Senator Johnson, after a meeting with the Senate Democratic Policy Committee, issued a statement on March 29, indicating the Democratic attitude toward the forthcoming White House meeting. The statement said in part:

We do not take the position that we should usurp or arrogate to ourselves the constitutional responsibility of the President in foreign policy.

If we cannot agree with the President's decision, we will treat him reasonably and not seek to use any disagreements for partisan purposes.

It is our intention not to confront the President with any demand or any ultimatum; not to urge that he drop bombs here or use nuclear weapons there.74

This pronouncement clearly indicated that the Democrats at that time at least supported the constitutional theory that foreign affairs were a Presidential rather than a Congressional prerogative. After the White House meeting, Senator Johnson continued to hold the same attitude. He told newsmen: "No policy decision of any kind was arrived at. The Democrats asked for no commitments nor did the President; and none were made."75 He said, "The

75 Ibid., April 1, 1955, p. 4.
Democrats felt that under his constitutional authority, the responsibility is the President's."\textsuperscript{76}

Perhaps it was this conception of constitutional theory that had prompted the majority of Democrats to approve the Formosa Resolution and call for national unity at a time of an international crisis. They were willing, even if with misgivings, to leave it to the President to appraise the situation and make the final decision on whether or not to intervene in case the Communists launched an attack on Quemoy and Matsu. As William S. White, congressional correspondent of the \textit{New York Times}, vividly described it, "the Democrats, in short, seem tied to the President's Formosa policy with bonds as gossamer as the moonlight but as effective as steel."\textsuperscript{77}

\textbf{A Policy of Flexibility}

Since the Chinese Communists rejected the United Nations Security Council's invitation to talk over the question of the coastal islands around a conference table, the Eisenhower Administration had employed a "carrot and stick" approach with the hope that it might induce the Communists to agree to a cease-fire arrangement in the Formosa Strait. The "carrot" was the promise that a renunciation of the use of force would not mean a renunciation of

\textsuperscript{76}Ibid.

"goals." This happened to be the attitude first entertained by Canadian Foreign Secretary Pearson and then advocated by British Foreign Secretary Eden. The "stick" was the threat that a further aggressive move would be met with atomic reprisal. While this alternative was not primarily intended, an unexpected and unwanted prediction of war undermined whatever chance the Administration had for securing its objective of a cease-fire. Furthermore, it prompted charges of a "war party" and it increased pressure on President Eisenhower to utter a clear-cut policy on Quemoy and Matsu. However, the President adhered to a flexible policy in the defense of Formosa, with possible intervention in the event of Communist attacks on Quemoy and Matsu. American reaction to a Communist assault on Quemoy and Matsu hinged on, in his judgment, whether or not it was a preliminary to an invasion of Formosa and also whether or not the Nationalists could repel invading forces. In this regard, a majority of Democrats in Congress had shown an abiding trust in the President.
CHAPTER VII

A SURCEASE

Depression in the Senate

President Eisenhower's public repudiation of the war prediction and his subsequent meetings with congressional party leaders served the useful purpose of clarifying the Administration's position regarding Quemoy and Matsu. These actions, however, could not silence a few Democrats who had been opposed to the Formosa Resolution since its inception. A handful of dissenting Democrats also renewed their opposition to American involvement in the defense of Quemoy and Matsu. On April 1, Senator Morse, who had recently announced his affiliation with the Democrats, introduced a resolution expressing "the sense of Congress" to the effect that the Formosa Resolution "shall not be construed to authorize the President to employ any of the armed forces of the United States in military operations concerning Matsu and Quemoy."\(^1\) He asserted that the United States had "not a single legal right" to intervene in the offshore islands for the Chinese Nationalists.\(^2\)

\(^1\)Congressional Record, V. 101, Part 3, p. 4218.
\(^2\)Ibid.
the Morse resolution would call on the President to request the United Nations to supervise the evacuation of Nationalist Chinese forces and civilians from Quemoy and Matsu, which was in effect the same idea advocated by British Foreign Secretary Eden. Republican Senator Knowland immediately denounced the Morse proposal. He said that such a resolution, if actually adopted by the Senate, would so undermine anti-Communist morale "that in a year or two most of Asia would be passing behind the Iron Curtain." ³

The Morse resolution, co-sponsored by Senators Lehman, Long, and Humphrey, was referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, but it did not stand a chance of success. Senator George was strongly opposed to any attempt to force the President to declare definitely the American attitude toward Quemoy and Matsu. Although he did not voice it on the Senate floor, George told the Press: "I do not believe it is wise for any group, right or left, to press the President into a statement or rigidity which will leave no flexibility." ⁴ The Senator said that the Foreign Relations Committee would take up the Morse Proposal "in due course, but I do not believe the Committee will approve it." ⁵ Such was the fate of the Morse resolution.

³Ibid., p. 4284.
⁵Ibid.
While Senator George was an ardent supporter of the Administration's Formosa policy, he had shown a change of mood since Carney's prediction of imminent war with the Chinese Communists. In late March, George told a reporter: "We are burning daylight. The darkness is coming on in the Far East." The Senator had a strong feeling that the foreign policy orientation of the Democratic Party should be directed by the leadership from "the Hill" and not from elsewhere. His displeasure at the circulation of the Cohen memorandum by the Democratic National Committee had forced the latter to disavow that document. Although George had been, and was supporting the Administration's Formosa policy, his worried expression to the reporter indicated a somewhat different frame of mind.

**Adlai Stevenson's Viewpoint**

It is interesting to note that Adlai Stevenson, the titular head of the Democratic Party, had been silent since the debates on the Formosa Resolution. He had been kept in the dark by both his party's congressional leaders and the Administration. Stevenson had not been consulted by either party nor had he been given information on the Formosa policy. He did not like the Administration's policy on Quemoy and

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6 James Reston in *ibid.*, March 27, 1955, sec. IV, p. 10.

7 James Reston, "Democrats and Islands," *ibid.*, April 4, 1955, p. 4.
Matsu but he refrained from speaking out for an additional reason. Since the congressional leaders of his party had supported the Administration's policy, his criticizing it would at the same time be blaming the Democrats who had supported it. At the urging of his supporters, however, Stevenson finally broke his silence.  

In a radio address from Chicago on April 11, Stevenson urged the Administration to consult America's allies promptly and ask them to join the United States in an open declaration condemning the use of force in the Formosa Strait and agreeing to stand together against any invasion until the final status of Formosa could be settled by "independence, neutralization, trusteeship, plebiscite, or whatever is wisest." He declared that the policy of "extravagant words" from the Administration had "alarmed our friends a good deal more than it had deterred the aggressors." He questioned how the President could "read the mind of the enemy within a few hours" of an attack on the Quemoy and Matsu Islands to determine whether the enemy planned to go on to the invasion of Formosa. This

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9 Text in Ibid., April 12, 1955, p. 4.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
utterance, in fact, challenged the judgement of the President as the Commander-in-Chief in a critical situation.

In response to Stevenson's speech, Secretary Dulles on the following day, April 21, said that what Stevenson had suggested as "original ideas" were "the very approaches which the Government has been and is actively exploring," but the result could not be advanced by "publicly prodding friendly governments." Dulles saw only one major point of difference between Stevenson and his own idea: "Mr. Stevenson speaks feelingly about our 'allies.' However, he forgot one ally, namely the Republic of China." The Secretary held that the defense of Formosa primarily depended upon the Nationalist Government; therefore "that ally can not be ignored and rebuffed."

Eisenhower's Policy Directive

Indeed, the primary responsibility for the defense of Formosa relied upon the Nationalist Government itself. However, the Nationalist defense strategy was worrying the Administration because Chiang's government attached equal, if not more, importance to the remaining offshore islands than to Formosa itself. After the Nationalist Government was forced to evacuate the Tachens in early February,

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13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
Generalissimo Chiang redeployed these forces on Quemoy and Matsu, and sent additional troops to the islands to the extent that one-third of all of his armed forces were stationed in Quemoy and Matsu. One critic regarded it as a sly move on the part of Chiang in that he took initiative to "create an artificially manufactured tie between the defense of the offshore islands and the protection of Taiwan." Others interpreted it as deliberately posing a dangerous situation that could touch off a major conflict, the only chance that might fulfill Chiang's aspiration to return to the mainland. Whatever the intention of Chiang, Washington did not like this Nationalist strategy.

Although it was not made known at the time, on April 5, President Eisenhower had issued a confidential policy directive, in the form of a memorandum, to Secretary Dulles, mapping out a definitive American policy toward the offshore islands. The confidential memorandum stated in part:

a) Without abandoning the offshore islands, make clear that neither Chiang nor ourselves is committed to full-out defense of Quemoy and Matsu, so that no matter what the outcome of an attack upon them, there would be no danger of a collapse of the free world position in the region . . .


b) Initiate, immediately the process of bringing to Chiang's attention the great advantage, political and military, that would result from certain alterations in his present military plans.\textsuperscript{18}

The desired changes in the Nationalist defense plans included: (1) "... regard the offshore islands as outposts consequently to be garrisoned in accordance with the requirements of outposts," and (2) "evacuation should take place (if this finally becomes necessary) only after defensive forces had inflicted upon the attackers heavy and bloody losses."\textsuperscript{19} What the Administration wanted the Nationalist Government to do was to take a flexible posture, so that it would be possible to withdraw from Quemoy and Matsu under overwhelmingly disadvantageous conditions without losing morale. Likewise, it implied that should American forces be employed to help defend the offshore islands when deemed necessary to the defense of Formosa, the commitment was by no means unlimited.

On April 20, Admiral Radford and Assistant Secretary Robertson went to Taipei, as representatives of the Administration seeking "to induce the Generalissimo to propose some solution to the Formosa-Quemoy-Matsu problem that will be acceptable both to him and to us."\textsuperscript{20} They hoped to

\textsuperscript{18}Excerpts reprinted in Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, pp. 611-12.

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{20}Quoted by Eisenhower in his Mandate for Change, p. 481.
arrive at an agreement that would "neither commit the United States to go to war in defense of the offshore islands nor constitute an implied repudiation of the Generalissimo." However, Radford and Robertson failed in their mission in spite of the fact that, to Chiang, they were most welcome American dignitaries. The Generalissimo could not be persuaded to accept the concept of redeploying his forces and considering Quemoy and Matsu merely as "outposts."

There were good reasons for the Chiang Government to be adamant in this regard. For one thing, since President Eisenhower's order deneutralizing Formosa in February 1953, the American military authorities had encouraged the Nationalist Government in one way or another to fortify the offshore islands. For another, the Nationalist Government had been persuaded to abandon the far-flung islands of the Tachens and Nanchi groups with the expectation that the United States would be committed to the defense of Quemoy and Matsu as Secretary Dulles had promised. Generalissimo Chiang, counting upon this moral obligation on the part of the Eisenhower Administration, felt that he could entrench on the remaining offshore islands.

Furthermore, the Nationalists had great political

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21 Ibid.
22 Supra, Chapter III.
23 Supra, footnote No. 1, this Chapter.
stake in the remaining offshore islands. A firm grip on Quemoy and Matsu symbolized Nationalist authority on the Chinese mainland. The tiny islands were indispensable possessions upon which the raison d'etre of the Nationalist Government for a "return to the mainland" was built. Consequently, the morale of the Nationalist Government hinged on the ability to hold Quemoy and Matsu.

President Eisenhower was disappointed in Chiang's uncompromising attitude but showed some sympathy for the Nationalist leader. He wrote later, "Despite my disappointment, I could not help reflecting that if I had been in his position, I might have made the same decision." 24

The American Government made no further effort to "persuade" Chiang to revise his plan for the defense of Quemoy and Matsu. On the contrary, Washington indicated that "we understand his position" in connection with the defense of the offshore islands and some assurance on the matter was given to the Nationalist Government in early May. On May 3, Secretary Dulles sent a cable to American Ambassador Rankin, authorizing him to advise Chiang's government of this American attitude. When Rankin gave the substance of this telegram to Chiang in a visit on that same day, the Generalissimo asked if it meant that President Eisenhower would actually commit American forces to help

24 Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, p. 482.
defend Quemoy and Matsu. In Rankin's account of the conversation, he wrote, "I thought not, but suggested if my previous analysis was correct, this might not make much practical difference." 25

The Administration's public announcements were centered on renewed calls for a cease-fire and a renunciation of the use of force by the Chinese Communists. On April 5, Secretary Dulles declared, "We have made perfectly clear our desire that there shall be no war . . . that there shall be a cease-fire." 26 He said that if there was war in the Formosa Strait, it would be the Chinese Communists who started it. On April 13, Dulles again called upon Peking to renounce the use of force without giving up its claims on Formosa. He stated, "We hope to be able and are trying

25 Rankin, China Assignment, pp. 228-29. The story was mentioned by a Dulles biographer, John Beal, in a different version before the publication of Rankin's book. Beal wrote, "... Chiang Kai-shek received a personal letter from Mr. Eisenhower satisfying him that the United States would help defend Quemoy and Matsu. ..." Beal, John Foster Dulles, p. 221. Whatever the form and substance of that assurance might have been, American assistance to the Nationalist defense of Quemoy and Matsu later proved to be logistic support. In 1958 when the Communists resumed the heavy bombardment of Quemoy, they showed a more determined effort to take the island by firing on Nationalist supply vessels sailing to Quemoy. In that situation, President Eisenhower ordered the United States Navy to escort Nationalist vessels to Quemoy, thereby breaking the blockade.

in many ways to bring about acceptance of some sort of cease-fire situation where force will be renounced as an instrument for achieving national goals." The Secretary elaborated his version of a cease-fire in these terms:

We don't expect that the national goals will be themselves abandoned, just as it has been brought about in West Germany that Adenauer has agreed to renounce the use of force to unite Germany . . .

Dulles' pronouncement was an indication that the Administration favored the maintenance of a de facto two-China situation, for this would be the obvious result of a cease-fire.

A Communist Propaganda Slowdown

While on the American domestic scene there were anxieties over possible United States intervention in the defense of Quemoy and Matsu, also among the Communists there were signs to show that they did not really want to press the issue to the extreme. The Administration's sources noticed a sharp decline in time spent on the "Taiwan Liberation" theme by the Peking propaganda mouthpiece. In November and December, 1954, up to twenty per cent of Radio Peking broadcast time was devoted to the question of Formosa. After that, toward early April 1955, time spent on the subject dropped to about five per cent. More attention

28 Ibid.
was paid to the forthcoming Asian-African Conference to be held at Bandung, Indonesia, on April 18, 1955.  

**Impact of Bandung Conference**

The Bandung Conference had been initiated by five Colombo powers, Indonesia, Burma, Ceylon, India, and Pakistan, and drew participants from twenty-nine Asian and African nations. The Conference was permeated with a strong mood of anti-colonialism, not only in respect to Western colonialism but also Communist colonialism. Attuned to the prevailing mood of the Conference, Chou En-lai, who headed the Chinese Communist delegation, decided not to read his prepared rather stormy speech scheduled to be delivered on April 19. Instead, he made an off-the-cuff speech in a conciliatory tone and in defense of Peking's policy. He stressed that his delegation had come to Bandung "to seek unity and not to quarrel." Chou said that the tension in the Formosa area was created "solely" by the United States and that, but for his desire to avoid controversies, he would have submitted it for the deliberation by the Conference.

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30 This has been derived from this writer's examination of the Survey of China Mainland Press.


33 Ibid., pp. 51-52.
Nevertheless, Sir John Katelawla, Prime Minister of Ceylon, after questioning the sincerity of Communist China's pronouncement of peaceful co-existence, brought up the question of Formosa in a speech on April 22. He suggested an eight-power conference to discuss the issue. The Ceylonese Prime Minister also proposed a five-year trusteeship for Formosa by either the United Nations or the Colombo powers. According to his proposal, the people on Formosa would vote in a plebiscite to determine their future form of government at the end of the trusteeship.\(^{34}\)

**Chou's Offer to Talk to the United States**

In response to this challenge, Chou made a sudden and daring move on April 23. During a secret session of the Political Committee, he unexpectedly declared: "The Chinese people do not want a war with the United States. We are willing to settle international disputes by peaceful means."\(^{35}\) Shortly afterward, this Communist declaration was issued to the press as follows:

The Chinese Government is willing to sit down and enter into negotiations with the United States Government to discuss the question of relaxing tension in the Far East and especially the question of relaxing tension in the Taiwan area.\(^{36}\)


A spokesman from the Chinese Communist delegation was reluctant to elaborate on the statement. He revealed, however, that the announcement referred to "direct bilateral talks" rather than a multipower conference. By implication, this excluded Nationalist China from any possible meeting.

The Administration's Initial Response

In answer to Chou's call "to sit down and enter into negotiations," the State Department issued a statement that same day, declaring that the United States would "insist on" Chinese Nationalist participation as an equal in any discussion concerning the Formosa area. The statement expressed doubt about Communist sincerity in the offer but said that it could be proved by announcing an immediate cease-fire in the Formosa area, an immediate release of unjustly detained American airmen, and prompt acceptance of the Security Council's invitation.

The statement was made during the absence of Secretary Dulles, who was in retreat at Lake Ontario, Canada. It was drafted under the direction of Undersecretary Herbert Hoover, Jr. The draft was read to the President at his Gettysburg farm and approved by him via telephone. After the official American statement was issued, the State

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37 Ibid.
Department took a wait-and-see attitude. On April 24, a spokesman from the Department said, "Now it is up to Mr. Chou to formalize his proposal. . . ."\(^{39}\)

**Congressional Reactions**

Meanwhile there were reactions from Congress as soon as the sensational news of Chou's offer was made known. Senator George's response was favorable. He said, "I don't know what degree of sincerity lay behind the words spoken by the Red Chinese leader today, but when he says that he is willing to talk, I think it is high time that the high officials of this Government indicate a willingness to talk also."\(^{40}\) George dismissed the thought that willingness to talk with the Communists could be regarded as "appeasement." He observed, "It is never appeasement when a powerful country such as the United States indicates a willingness to discuss problems."\(^{41}\) In the evening of that day, the Senator reiterated this attitude in his address before the American Society of Newspaper Editors. He told the participants of the dinner party:

> I unhesitatingly say that this nation should be big enough and great enough . . . to sit down and talk. It is high time that we should relieve the tension of the world if we can.\(^{42}\)

\(^{40}\) Ibid., April 24, 1955, p. 3.  
\(^{41}\) Ibid.  
\(^{42}\) Ibid.
Representative James Richards, Democratic Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, also felt that the Red Chinese proposal should be explored if bona fide proposals for the talks were presented. He cautioned, "If Chou's proposal appears to be an effort to get us to violate our treaty with Formosa, it should be rejected at the start. If it appears to be primarily propaganda, it should be exposed as such." 43

Republican Senator Knowland called Chou's suggestion of bilateral talk an "invitation to Munich." He said that the Red Chinese proposal was "unacceptable" because the United States would not "bargain away the rights of the Chinese Nationalists in their absence." 44 Senator Alexander Wiley, ranking Republican member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said that Chou's offer should be approached promptly "but warily." He held that the sudden change of heart in Peking "proves that Red China is very definitely subject to pressure for peace by world opinion, such as has been expressed by the Bandung Conference." 45

Senator George's attitude in favor of talking with the Chinese Communists received general support from Democrats. On April 25, Senator Lyndon Johnson said that he

43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
hoped that George's statement "will receive the careful consideration of every policy-making official of our government." He hailed George's speech by saying that it "should have far-reaching-effect" as a "challenge for bold and courageous thinking on the vital issues of war and peace." But Johnson also expressed doubt as to the sincerity of Chou's pronouncement. Senator John Sparkman, Democrat from Alabama, maintained that the best way to test the sincerity of the Communist offer was to renew the efforts of the United Nations to obtain a cease-fire in the Formosa Strait.

Chou's Qualified Statement

The Peking propaganda machine made no comment on the State Department declaration of April 23. The New China News Agency treated the official American statement in the form of a news report, saying that the State Department avoided "definite clarification" of whether or not the United States was willing to negotiate with Communist China. Meanwhile, Chou En-lai, in a statement made at the

\[46\] Ibid., April 26, 1955, p. 4.
\[47\] Ibid.
\[48\] Ibid.
closing session of the Bandung Conference on April 24, qualified significantly his previous offer to talk with the United States. Chou said that any negotiations with the United States "should not in the slightest degree affect the just demand of the Chinese people to exercise their sovereign rights in liberating Taiwan."  

According to an explanation given by a spokesman of the Peking delegation, Chou's stiffened attitude was prompted by the statement of the State Department on the previous day. The Peking press still made no comment or elaboration on Chou's offer to talk with the United States, but the New China News Agency issued a news item saying that the American Government raised many "unreasonable prerequisites" so as to close the door to talk on the Formosa issue.

Chou's Interview With An American Correspondent

The fact that the Peking propaganda mouthpiece chose not to comment on Chou's peace offer was meaningful in that the Red Chinese regime's position on Formosa had not changed. Chou En-lai was merely repeating the persistent Communist attitude toward Formosa in attractive but

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52 Ibid., p. 1.
misleading language. As a matter of fact, on April 24, the same day that Chou qualified his peace offer at the closing meeting of the Bandung Conference, he gave an interview to Sam Jaffe, a Nation correspondent, presenting Peking's viewpoint on the question of Formosa in a nutshell. He told the American reporter:

The liberation of Taiwan is China's internal affair. The Chinese people have the right to make the demand and to put it into effect.

As to the tension in the Formosa area, it has been caused by the U.S. intervention. This is an international question. In order to relax the tension in the Formosa area, China proposes that China and the U.S. sit down and enter into negotiations in order to seek a solution to this question.54

Apparently, the solution that the Communists sought to obtain through bilateral talks with the United States was to remove the "cause of tension—U.S. intervention in the Formosa area." It meant the withdrawal of all American forces in the area. In contrast, the United States sought to have the Chinese Communists renounce the use of force so that a cease-fire in the area might be possible. The conflicting aims of the two sides doomed the subsequent bilateral talks to failure.

In that interview, Chou also explained why Peking would not permit Nationalist participation in his proposed

54 The content of this interview, strange to say, was belatedly made known to the Western world on April 29. Survey of China Mainland Press, No. 1037 (April 29, 1955), p. 20, and New York Times, April 30, 1955, p. 3.
negotiations with the United States. He commented:

Relations between China and the United States is an international question. Relations between the People's Republic of China and the Chiang Kai-shek clique is a question of internal affairs. These two matters should not be mixed together.\(^{55}\)

In concluding his interview with the American correspondent, Chou made a remark calculated to relieve the Communists of the responsibility of stirring up tension in the Formosa area. "Whether the present situation will lead to a world war depends upon the United States," he said, "because there is no war at present between China and the United States."\(^{56}\)

A Modified American Attitude

After returning to Washington on April 25, Secretary Dulles conferred with the President. The next day, at a momentous news conference, the Secretary indicated that the Administration had decided to take a new approach toward Chou's offer to talk. Dulles said that he did not know whether Chou's offer was a "sincere proposal" or a "propaganda game" but that the United States would try to "find out." "In doing so," he remarked, "we shall not, of course, depart from the path of fidelity and honor toward our ally, the Republic of China."^57 When asked whether or


\(^{56}\)Ibid.

not the United States would sit down and talk with Communist China, he said, "that depends on what to talk about... We are not going to talk about the interests of the Republic of China behind its back." However, the Secretary made a distinction between talking with the Communists about a cease-fire and talking with them about other questions affecting the interests of Nationalist China. He took the view that the former did not necessarily require Nationalist participation. Dulles commented that the possibility of a cease-fire in the Formosa area "is a matter which can be discussed perhaps bilaterally or at the United Nations or possibly under other circumstances." He explained that American interest in a cease-fire was due to the fact that the United States had agreed to respond to an attack against Formosa.

Dulles' willingness to engage in bilateral talks with the Chinese Communists in actuality reversed the State Department pronouncement of April 23 which required the presence of the Nationalists in "any" discussions with the Peking government. Moreover, the Secretary apparently departed from the April 23 statement in another respect. The statement had implied that an immediate cease-fire in the Formosa area, the immediate release of unjustly detained

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58 Ibid.
59 Ibid., p. 4.
American airmen, and the prompt acceptance of the Security Council's invitation were also prerequisites to Chou's suggested meeting. Yet Dulles now commented, "Those are not stated as conditions precedent. Those things were not stated as conditions and were never intended to be conditions." Dulles also pointed out that it would not be a new experience for the United States to talk with the Chinese Communists and that the talks had not and would not involve diplomatic recognition.

**Dulles' Position Endorsed**

The next day, April 27, President Eisenhower gave firm endorsement to Secretary Dulles' position on negotiating with Peking by declaring:

> If the Chi-Coms [Chinese Communists] wanted to talk merely about a cease-fire, we would be glad to meet with them and talk with them, but there would be no conferring about the affairs of the Chi-Nats [Chinese Nationalists].

The President deemed it "perfectly legitimate" to talk with the Communists without Nationalist participation on the question of a cease-fire in the Formosa Strait. He explained that a cease-fire was mainly concerned with the Chinese Communists because the Nationalists were not firing on the Communists except in self-defense. A cease-fire to the Nationalists, therefore, would be "purely

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60 Ibid., p. 2.

academic." President Eisenhower did not regard this willingness to talk with the Communists as a reversal of the Administration's policy. He described the previous State Department pronouncement as having "an error in terminology" or "a touch of overstatement."62

Right-Wing Republicans Opposed

The right-wing Republicans in the Senate were unhappy about the Administration's modified attitude toward talks with the Chinese Communists. After Secretary Dulles' news conference which marked this change, the Senate Republican Policy Committee discussed Dulles' remarks in private. Later, Senator Styles Bridges, the Chairman of that Committee, told reporters that it would be "a great mistake" to sit down at any conference with the Chinese Communists while ignoring the Chinese Nationalists, "who have been our ally through thick and thin."63

In a news conference on April 27, Senate Republican leader Knowland openly criticized the Administration's willingness to negotiate with the Chinese Communists. He declared that it was hard for him "to comprehend how we could enter into direct negotiations with Communist China without the interests of the Republic of China being deeply

62 Ibid.
involved." Knowland held that there was no need for a conference to bring about a cease-fire. "All they need," he said, "is to stop shooting and building up their aggressive forces in that area of the Formosa Strait." Knowland did not believe that Peking would change its aggressive intentions. He declared, "I, for one, do not believe the Communist leopard has changed its spots." 

Following Knowland's statement, another right-wing Republican, Senator William E. Jenner of Indiana, on April 28 asked the Senate to adopt a resolution to repudiate in advance any territorial concession the Administration might give to Communist China. He maintained that the air was "full of foreboding that a carefully laid plan is under way for the United States to give up bit by bit its commitment in the Formosa Strait." He demanded that the United States not "surrender a single square foot of free land to Communist rule." However, the prevailing mood in the Senate was not to consider his proposal seriously.

The objection of right-wing Republicans to talk with the Peking regime was understandable in the light of their

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64 Text in *ibid.*, April 28, 1955, p. 13.
consistent opposition to "softness" toward Communists, particularly the Chinese Communists. The publication of the China White Paper by the Truman Administration in August 1949 saw the beginning of the most vehement attacks on the China policy of the Democrats. The Communist victory in China became the theme that played a major role in the 1950 and 1952 national elections. The Republican Party during the 1952 Presidential election campaign had promised to launch a dynamic policy of "liberation" instead of "containment" in dealing with communism. The Eisenhower Administration, however, falling short of its professed goal of liberation, was willing to negotiate with the Chinese Communists. Although this was naturally unthinkable to the right wing of the GOP, the Administration ignored the voice of opposition within its own Party.

Toward Bilateral Talks

After the United States gave a favorable response to Chou's offer to negotiate, the tension in the Formosa Strait was lessened. In May, the press reported that a de facto cease-fire prevailed in the area. On May 17, Chou En-lai, in his report to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on the achievements of the Asian-African Conference, renewed his offer to "sit down and enter

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into negotiations" with the United States. Meanwhile he declared that the Peking regime was "willing to strive for the liberation of Taiwan by peaceful means so far as it is possible." On May 30, Peking announced the release of four imprisoned American airmen as deportees, the first concrete indication of Communist willingness to negotiate seriously. With Britain and, to a lesser degree, India acting as intermediaries, agreement was finally reached between the United States and Communist China to begin bilateral talks on August 1, 1955, at Geneva.

As a matter of fact, talks between the two sides had been going on for some time on a consular level. Since June 1954 the American Consulate General at Geneva had been in contact with the Chinese Communist representatives there in an effort to secure the release of American citizens imprisoned or otherwise detained in Communist China. After the failure of the United Nations Secretary General in his trip to Peking in January 1955 to negotiate the release of American airmen captured during the Korean War, American consular officers resumed contact with their Chinese Red counterparts for the same purpose without success. It was

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72 State Department Announcement on U.S. Representations to Secure the Release of Americans Held Captive by
not until August 1, 1955, however, that the bilateral talks were elevated from consular to ambassadorial level. It was indeed a gain in prestige for the Peking regime.

The End of An Episode

After a statement was issued simultaneously by Washington and Peking on July 25 to announce the forthcoming Geneva talks, Secretary Dulles reiterated the American position. He said that the bilateral talks did not imply "any diplomatic recognition whatsoever" of Communist China and that the United States was not prepared to negotiate "in any way" to prejudice the rights of Nationalist China. The Secretary declared, "We shall hope to find out in the forthcoming talks whether the Chinese Communists accept the concept of a cease-fire in accordance with the United Nations principle." In addition, he remarked that the United States was very much concerned with the release of the American civilians still detained in Communist China. The United States was true to its declared principles and the Geneva talks on a cease-fire in the Formosa area ended in a deadlock. While the talks produced


73 A statement made by Secretary Dulles on July 26, 1955. Text in ibid., p. 312.

74 Young, Negotiating with the Chinese Communists, pp. 93-115.
no concrete results, the de facto cease-fire was to last for three years. In August 1958 the Communists started all over again with a heavy bombardment of Quemoy, but that is another story.

An Evaluation

The Administration's policy toward the 1954-1955 crisis in the Formosa Strait has been criticized as one that brought the nation to the brink of a general war and that alienated all of America's allies with the exception of the "trigger-happy" Chinese Nationalists. However, Secretary Dulles was so pleased with his diplomacy in simmering down the crisis that he claimed it as one of the three instances during which his "brinkmanship" had been successful. The Secretary affirmed that he had said in substance the following:

The ability to get to the verge without getting into the war is the necessary art. If you cannot master it you inevitably get into war. If you try to run away from it, if you are scared to go to the brink, you are lost. We had to look it square in the face—on the question of enlarging the Korean War, on the question of getting into the Indochina War, on the question of Formosa. We walked to the brink and we looked it in the face. We took strong action.

Dulles also boasted of himself: "Of course, of all the

\[75\] Fleming, "Our Brink-of-War Diplomacy in the Formosa Strait."

things I have done, I think the most brilliant of all has been to save Quemoy and Matsu." 77

On the other side of the coin, the United States was still painted as a "paper tiger." Chou En-lai was quoted as having often said with pride:

We have attacked America bluntly several times, every time the attack was effective. Through the Korean War, we forced her to attend the Panmunjom truce conference; out of the battle of Dienbienphu, there came the Geneva Conference and peace for Indo-China; the internment of American civilians compelled her to agree to a conference at ambassadorial level. 78

Nevertheless, Dulles was credited with having a better understanding of the Chinese Communists than the British and French statesmen, and he caused a lot of "headaches" for Peking. "The trouble was," Chow Ching-wen, a high ranking defector from the Chinese Communist Party, said, "many Americans who were not themselves familiar with the realities of the Chinese Communist regime sought to hinder Dulles from carrying his policy decisions, which, not unnaturally, pleased the Chinese Communists." 79


78 Cited by Chow Ching-wen in his Ten Years of Storm (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1960), p. 287. Chow Ching-wen, a well-known Chinese scholar and former president of National Northeast University, had served for eight years in high-ranking positions in the Chinese Communist Party before his escape to Hong Kong in 1957.

79 Ibid., p. 288.
The fact of the matter was that the United States had dealt with a wily antagonist whose strategy, as President Eisenhower had been aware, was: "Enemy advances, we retreat; enemy halts, we harass; enemy tires, we attack; enemy retreats, we pursue." The United States did not retreat in the face of a display of force, nor did it yield over a conference table. Although both sides claimed a victory, the Chinese Communists, being true to Mao Tsetung's theory of guerrilla warfare that they would "on no account fight" if not "sure of victory," temporarily suspended their ambitions of "liberating" Formosa, and tension in the Formosa Strait was eased.

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80 Eisenhower, Mandate for Change, p. 483.

81 Tang Tsou, "Mao's Limited War in the Taiwan Strait," Orbis, III, No. 3 (Fall, 1959), p. 337.
CONCLUSION

Formosa was written off in the American policy planning in early 1950. At the outbreak of the Korean conflict, however, the United States reversed its attitude and developed a "passive" interest in Formosa: the island should not fall into "unfriendly" hands. Meanwhile, the Nationalist-held offshore islands, such as Quemoy and Matsu, had served as advance bases from which some American intelligence activities directed at the mainland China were conducted.

The beginning of a series of heavy bombardments of Quemoy by the Chinese Communists on September 3, 1954, posed a problem for Washington. The United States had made a voluntary commitment to defend Formosa since the Korean War, but this commitment did not extend to the offshore islands. The Joint Chiefs of Staff interpreted the Communists' shelling of Quemoy as a preliminary to an attempt to capture the island, which might be an operational scheme to facilitate the invasion of Formosa. Thus, a case was made for the American military participation in the defense of Quemoy. President Eisenhower made no immediate military decision on that score, but accepted a proposal of Secretary Dulles that the United States should ask the United Nations to arrange a cease-fire in the Formosa area.
However, the idea of a cease-fire was shelved temporarily due to strong objections from Chiang's Government. Instead, the United States signed a mutual defense treaty with the Chinese Nationalist Government. The practical effect of the treaty from the American point of view was to restrain the Nationalists from taking offensive military action against the Chinese mainland. At the same time, it allayed Nationalist fears by putting the American commitment to the defense of Formosa on a solemn legal basis. A cease-fire restraint was in actuality imposed upon the Nationalists by the treaty. To the Communists, the treaty was a source of aggravated resentment against the United States, as it made the "liberation" of Formosa a more difficult task than ever.

However, the Treaty did not mention the offshore islands as included under its protection. The Chinese Communists saw this as a chance to probe the American attitude toward the offshore islands. After seizing Yikiang Island by force, the Communists openly professed that they had taken a step toward the "liberation" of Formosa. Since Peking linked the offshore islands with Formosa as its ultimate objective of conquest, the United States could not but react to meet this Communist challenge. President Eisenhower made an unprecedented move in requesting Congress in advance to sanction the use of American forces in the defense of Formosa and related positions. Meanwhile, the
President asked the United Nations to take appropriate actions leading to a peaceful settlement in the Formosa Strait. With bipartisan support for the President, the requested Formosa Resolution was promptly adopted by Congress, although some Congressmen were opposed to American involvement in the defense of the offshore islands. Subsequently, Congress approved the Mutual Defense Treaty with Nationalist China with equal promptness.

With two pieces of legislation in hand, President Eisenhower maintained a flexible position in the defense of Formosa, including the possible defense of Quemoy and Matsu. It was a guessing game for the Chinese Communists as well as for the American public. While the need for American defense of Formosa was not questioned, a controversy arose over the possible defense of the offshore islands. The opposition to American involvement in the defense of Quemoy and Matsu was voiced not only by members of Congress but also by America's allies. In spite of pressure from various quarters upon the Administration to state clearly its policy on Quemoy and Matsu, President Eisenhower maintained his attitude of deliberate inscrutability throughout the crisis.

The President was in a very difficult position. The Nationalists had been forced to evacuate the far-flung offshore islands of the Tachens and Nanchi groups. Whatever the merits in asking the Nationalist Government to give up the remaining offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu, it
would not have been a good policy to retreat while the Communists advanced by force. Furthermore, it was Eisenhower's conviction, which proved to be right, that a mere surrender of Quemoy and Matsu would not solve the real problem—the avowed Communist objective of "liberating" Formosa. On the contrary, the coercion of the Nationalist Government that would have been necessary to execute such a surrender and the subsequent impact on the morale of the Nationalist forces and the people on Formosa would have produced very undesirable effects.

Under the circumstances, if the President stated flatly that the United States would not help defend Quemoy and Matsu, as some Democrats and the British Government desired, it would have been tantamount to inviting Communist seizure. The Nationalist Government could not possibly hold the islands under a major Communist attack without American air and sea support. If the President declared American commitment to the defense of Quemoy and Matsu, as the right-wing Republicans and the Nationalist Government hoped, it would have, among other things, the most undesirable consequence of a public manifestation that the United States was involved in a Chinese civil war. In this connection, it must be recalled that the American Government, as well as the British, took the position that the legal status of Formosa was as yet undetermined. Therefore, American commitment to the defense of Formosa would not constitute
an intervention, although the diametrically opposite position was taken by the Chinese Communists.

Caught between the horns of a dilemma, President Eisenhower decided that the only tenable position was to adopt a wait-and-see attitude. In the event of a Communist attack on Quemoy or Matsu, the American forces would react only if the President, as the Commander-in-Chief, judged it to be a preliminary to an invasion of Formosa. Nevertheless, this was an unenviable position from which the United States desired to be extricated whenever feasible. While the United States did not intend to intervene or mediate in the unfinished Chinese civil war, a cease-fire in the Formosa Strait would be in the best interests of the United States.

American interest in a cease-fire, the maintenance of the status quo in the Formosa area, was not difficult to comprehend. Since the June 1950 outbreak of the Korean conflict, the United States had had a commitment, which subsequently became a treaty obligation, to defend Formosa against Communist invasion. To fulfill an international obligation of a military nature was not a pleasant prospect even if the situation dictated it.

Following the Communist rejection of the United Nations effort to conduct a peaceful settlement, the United States had endeavored to seek a cease-fire in the Formosa Strait by the "carrot-or-stick" approach but without success.
Chou En-lai's gesture of peace at the Bandung Conference, though a self-serving manoeuver on his part, opened the door for talking rather than fighting. As originally conceived, the United States took the view that the United Nations was the most desirable channel through which a cease-fire in the Formosa area could be arranged. Chou's daring offer caught the State Department unprepared, especially in the absence of Secretary Dulles.

The initial American response indicated doubt as to the sincerity of the Communist peace offer. In fact, the State Department's reply set forth certain pre-conditions before talking could begin. This attitude might well have hampered a cease-fire which all along had been the Administration's policy objective. However, with the support of Democratic leaders in Congress and with the concurrence of the President, Secretary Dulles on his return made a courageous move to modify substantially the previous State Department response and a dialogue with the Chinese Communists was finally established.

The Administration's ardent desire to achieve a cease-fire did not mean it was ready to surrender to the Communists at a conference table, as the right-wing Republicans had feared. Due to American adherence to its declared principles on negotiation, the Geneva talks did not result in a cease-fire agreement. Although the Administration had not achieved its primary policy objective through the
bilateral talks, the tension in the Formosa area was reduced and a state of de facto cease-fire existed until 1958. Throughout the 1954-1955 crisis in the Formosa Strait, the Americans desired only the maintenance of the status quo. Although the basic tension in the area could not be eliminated as long as the aims of Washington and Peking remained in conflict, the Eisenhower Administration weathered the storm in the Formosa Strait without military intervention or concession. A policy that was firm in principle and conciliatory in attitude had achieved the desired objective.
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