Chinese UN Representation at the Crossroads: International Pressures for Change in U.S. China Policy, 1961

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In 1961, the Kennedy administration confronted widespread domestic and foreign anticipation that significant changes would be made to existing U.S. China policy. Although the new administration proposed to liberate the United States from past policies and offer fresh, innovative solutions to problems confronted worldwide, the major issues that characterized and defined the American relationship with both the Chinese Communists on the mainland and the Chinese Nationalists on Taiwan posed a challenge for the new President and his top advisers. This study examines the Kennedy administration's deliberations with regard to the Chinese representation matter at the United Nations and mounting international pressures from U.S. allies and other nations for the United States to assume a more flexible posture toward Communist China. Despite the lack of a major departure from existing policies, initiatives proposing a reappraisal of U.S. China policy during the Kennedy administration precipitated discussions and debates that significantly contributed to the evolution towards the eventual transformation of Sino-American relations.

Keywords: Chinese representation, Kennedy China policy, U.S. China policy, United Nations, Change in U.S. China policy

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1961, the Kennedy administration confronted widespread domestic and foreign anticipation that significant changes would be made to existing U.S. China policy. Although the new administration proposed to liberate the United States from past policies and offer fresh, innovative solutions to problems confronted worldwide, the major issues that characterized and defined the American relationship with both the Chinese Communists on the mainland and the Chinese Nationalists on Taiwan posed a challenge for the new President and his foreign policy advisers.

Several contending circumstances offered the opportunity for the Kennedy administration to establish a new direction in U.S. China policy: the Chinese representation issue at the United Nations and related debates with the GRC (Government of the Republic of China) on alternative strategies; the U.S. position regarding the Nationalist regime's efforts to return to the mainland and the status of the offshore islands; the administration's deliberations surrounding the possibility of U.S. food aid for Communist China; and the growing trend advocating a more flexible American approach toward Peking and the circumstances that militated against the development of such ideas. Rather than pursue alternative approaches, however, the Kennedy administration chose to perpetuate the status quo in the U.S. posture toward both Chinese governments and aimed to maintain the tenuous balance of power existing in East Asia. Despite the lack of a major departure from existing policies, initiatives proposing a reappraisal of U.S. China policy during the Kennedy administration precipitated discussions and debates that significantly contributed to the evolution towards the eventual transformation of Sino-American relations.

From the outset of the Kennedy administration speculations arose, both domestically and internationally, regarding the potential need for change in U.S. China policy, including the possible re-examination of U.S. support of the Republic of China and the containment policy against Communist China. An issue that required the immediate attention of the new administration was the Chinese representation matter at the UN. With indications of waning international support for the moratorium procedure, which delayed discussion of the Chinese representation issue to the following General Assembly session, Kennedy's foreign policy advisers realized the need to re-evaluate not only the circumstances involved at the UN, but fundamental aspects of the new administration's posture toward the two Chinese governments. Although the United States' support of the Chinese Nationalists was best manifested in its staunch support of the GRC as the sole representative of the Chinese people at the United Nations, the practicality of continuing such support for the GRC was brought into question as Presidential advisers began preparations for the Sixteenth Session of the General Assembly in 1961. It became increasingly evident that the yearly request for a moratorium

to delay discussion of the issue until the next General Assembly session would be difficult to obtain. For nearly ten years since the Sixth Session of the Assembly in 1951, use of the moratorium regarding the Chinese representation question had been a U.S.-supported approach in reaction to Peking's threat to "peace-loving" and "law-abiding" countries of the free world. Due to its revolutionary and militant character manifested in its international behavior, the Chinese Communists were consistently refused consideration as appropriate candidates to represent the Chinese people in an international body that promoted international peace. However, it became increasingly difficult to deny that the People's Republic of China retained firm control over the mainland and governed the lives of over 600,000,000 Chinese people. Prompted by indications of probable defeat of the moratorium formula and a growing consensus within the international community for the inclusion of Communist China, the Kennedy administration was forced to investigate a new approach to the Chinese representation matter at the United Nations. With the recent addition of new members from the newly-independent African and Asian states to the General Assembly and changes to policy positions of several governments within the international body, the administration needed to reconsider U.S.-China relations vis-à-vis emerging realities of the increased visibility and recognition of Communist China.

II. EARLY INDICATIONS OF CHANGE

In a top-secret December 1960 memorandum to the Secretary of State Designate, Dean Rusk, the future Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, J. Graham Parsons, was quick to address the possibility of a "new approach" to U.S. China policy objectives.¹ Members of the U.S. delegation to the 15th Session (1960) of the General Assembly issued their findings to the Committee on Foreign Relations later in February 1961 which confirmed the steady decrease in votes supporting the United States' moratorium proposal.² In 1959, there were 44 votes in favor, 29 votes against, and 9 in abstention on the moratorium proposal. The vote in 1960 was 42-34-22; of the 22 abstentions, fourteen were cast by African states. In addition, there were indications that many of the new African countries would not vote against the seating of Communist China at the UN. The report concluded, "without trying to forecast how soon the present majority support of the United States position might be lost, it can be said that the United States has a serious problem on its hands." It was certain that Washington would clearly need to reassess the U.S. policy regarding the Chinese representation matter with consideration given to the position and views of other countries on the issue.

Around this time, the Office of Far Eastern Affairs at the State Department acknowledged a "strong sentiment among many members of the United Nations"

for a “two Chinas” solution to the Chinese representation matter. The problem, however, revolved around the fact that both the mainland and the GRC were adamantly against a “two Chinas” resolution. Furthermore, such an approach would raise specific questions concerning the exact nature of membership and representation at the UN. The Office of Far Eastern Affairs believed that the likely result of a “two Chinas” approach would be a “one China, one Taiwan” solution, with the Communist Chinese replacing the GRC as representatives of the “Republic of China” and the Chinese Nationalists being required to re-apply for membership as the “Government of Taiwan” or the “Government of Formosa.”³ Therefore, other alternatives were considered by the United States, such as the acceptance of “two Chinas” as equal “successors” to the “Republic of China” mentioned in the original Charter of the UN. While the “successor states” option would differentiate between the mainland and Taiwan, and thus indicate that there were in fact “two Chinas”, both would assume legitimate membership in the UN without the opportunity for a Soviet Union veto. Despite increasing support for a “two Chinas” solution by other members in the UN, Washington remained wary of giving its approval to such an approach before examining other alternatives to the moratorium formula.

The issue of a “two Chinas” scenario had to be set in an international context, as a unilateral change in U.S. China policy alone could not ensure the success of a “two Chinas” solution to the Chinese representation matter. Aside from the predictable reaction of the two Chinese governments, the positions taken by other countries with respect to a possible “two Chinas” scenario were also considered determining factors in the potential success of such an approach. Nations such as the Scandinavians and other “neutralists” countries that recognized the sovereignty of the Chinese Communists over the territory controlled by the GRC were resistant to any arrangements not premised on such recognition. Meanwhile, other countries recognized the GRC’s sovereignty over the territory controlled by the Chinese Communists, including France, Spain, the Philippines, and Thailand. These nations were also expected to resist any “two Chinas” arrangement, albeit for opposite reasons. As for the British, while they had recognized the Peking regime since 1950, they were sympathetic to the GRC and maintained consular representation in Taiwan, contending that the eventual status of former Japanese territories remained undefined. However, the British would soon demonstrate increased support for the Chinese Communists at the UN, much to the concern of the new administration. The crucial consideration, however, was the potential reaction of the Soviet Union and its satellites. It was predicted that Moscow would be quick to equate any proposal for international acceptance of a “two Chinas” scenario with its objective to gain international support for “two Germanys.” The matter of how to diffuse Soviet influence in the Chinese representation question would constitute one of the great obstacles for the United States and supporters of Nationalist China at the United Nations.

Ultimately, the "two Chinas" issue was not simply a matter that could be designed and agreed upon by the United States alone. The international response to a "two Chinas" scenario would prove to be an equal, if not greater, influence on the potential acceptance of such a proposal.

III. INTERNATIONAL CALL FOR CHANGE

With expanded membership at the UN and the growing threat of nuclear weapons development, various countries began to recognize the deficiencies of a world organization which aimed to facilitate diplomatic relations between countries while devising policies to aid in the peaceful co-existence among nations. Strategies regarding arms reduction were argued by some to be unrealistic and meaningless without the participation of a major country such as Communist China, regardless of its aggressive and offensive posture. The matter of how to incorporate the People's Republic into the United Nations was difficult to address, however, without the support of the United States. In 1961, the Kennedy administration was determined to support the continued representation of the GRC and adamantly opposed the membership of the People's Republic of China. Despite such a posture, however, a growing number of nations demonstrated their support for the inclusion of Communist China at the United Nations and increasingly sought to obtain American acquiescence to such a move.

In March 1961, officials at the American Embassy in London informed Washington of an increase in "public and official British comment" favoring the seating of Communist China in the UN.⁴ For the United States, the support of the United Kingdom at the UN was important due to the latter's ability to influence the votes of the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, as well as several of the old Commonwealth countries. Although the British had discouraged Washington since the end of the Korean War against the continued use of the moratorium formula, claiming that "the postponement of the question was unrealistic", the British had continued to support the U.S. position at the UN through the Eisenhower years. However, the head of the Far East Department at the British Foreign Office had stated on February 27, 1961, that despite past British support of the moratorium proposal, it would be difficult to continue the support of the moratorium process in the face of declining votes from other countries. As the United Kingdom appeared particularly preoccupied with disarmament issues, the absence of Communist China from the United Nations caused widespread dissatisfaction throughout the country and growing pressure within Parliament for some UK initiative to promote Communist China's membership to the UN. As the moratorium route would prove to be in the future a "wasted asset", the British preferred to assume a new posture, which to many officials was considered inevitable. In addition, by supporting Chinese Communist member-

ship at the UN, the United Kingdom hoped to be more in line with Afro-Asian members, with whom the British endeavored to establish better relations. All indications pointed, therefore, to potential conflict between the United States and the United Kingdom regarding Chinese representation at the UN.

On March 3, 1961, Kennedy addressed the recent British statements concerning its shift in support of Communist China at the United Nations.⁵ The President reinforced that there would be no abandonment of the Republic of China on Formosa. As for the moratorium procedure, Kennedy warned that the matter needed to be dealt with in such a way as not to lose U.S. domestic support for the United Nations, which would most likely result if Communist China were to gain admission. The President's statement was intended to be a reminder not only to the United Kingdom, but to the other countries represented at the UN, that Communist China's entry into the UN would not be an easy task and could potentially result in the withdrawal of the United States from the international forum. If the United States were to suffer a defeat on the Chinese representation issue, it would not only weaken U.S. leadership in East Asia but also have a lasting effect on the U.S. role in the free world.

IV. GROWING CONCERN IN WASHINGTON

In March 1961, National Security Council aide, Robert W. Komer, warned his superior, National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy, that the China problem had the potential to develop and catch the United States off guard without proper preparations within the government.⁶ Komer stressed that "China problems may not wait for careful, leisurely review" and that it was necessary to "prod State to get started pronto on (a) broad-scale rethinking exercise." Convinced that at some point the Kennedy administration would have to adopt a "two Chinas" policy which recognized and incorporated both Chinese governments into an overall U.S. China policy, the NSC aide recommended that a "few public hints" of such policy rethinking within the government be revealed in order to later avoid looking as though the U.S. were "being dragged into such changes" due to defeat of long-standing policies. Although public and Congressional reaction was anticipated to be "a real problem", Komer advised that the United States "disengage as skillfully as we can, from unproductive aspects [of] our China policy", with specific reference to the UN membership question, lest the U.S. get "lobbered" at some later point. In terms of the Chinese representation issue, the National Security aide was confident that if the United States was able to move quickly towards change in its own China policy, the UK, India and other countries could be convinced to support a "two Chinas" policy, with the ulterior aim of forcing Peking to decline UN membership which would then make the United States appear reasonable while "shifting (the) onus to

intransigent CPR."⁷ A slow shift to a "two Chinas" policy appeared to the NSC aide a rational means for the United States to incorporate Communist China into U.S. policy while honoring U.S. treaty commitments to Nationalist China. Komer was convinced that if the United States continued to avoid acknowledging the presence and potential influence of Communist China, the U.S. would confront criticisms by its closest allies that insisted on a more "realistic" approach toward the communist nation. A U.S. shift toward a "two Chinas" policy, however, represented a long-term potential for the President as well as some of his closest advisers. While opinions such as Komer's continued to receive consideration within the administration, the issue of how to avoid "defeat" on the Chinese representation issue at the next General Assembly constituted the immediate problem for Washington.

By April 1961, the need to discuss potential changes to the U.S. approach with regard to the Chinese representation issue became increasingly urgent as top policy makers and presidential advisers forecasted a major movement towards the inclusion of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations, with or without support of the United States. Komer summed the situation as follows:

In short, after ten years of successfully denying Peiping a UN seat, we have probably reached the end of this road. But we want to shift gears in such a way as to avoid the major defeat to our prestige ... once we confess our willingness even to discuss PRC membership, it will be hard to stem the deluge.⁸

With growing international support for the inclusion of Communist China at the UN, Komer, Bowles, Stevenson, Hilsman and others who envisioned a more flexible U.S. China policy advocated a slow shift toward improved relations with the PRC, while the U.S. maintained its commitments to the Republic of China. Further, it seemed to be a matter of time before the U.S. would have to adjust its China policy to acknowledge, if not formally recognize, Communist China as a formidable force in East Asia. It was also feared that by supporting the GRC in a situation that would result in a probable defeat, U.S. prestige would be irreversibly damaged. However, for Kennedy, Rusk, Bundy, and others, the focus rested on finding a solution for the immediate future. The main priority was to devise a method that would avoid defeat and ensure that the GRC maintained its UN position, at least for the coming session of the General Assembly.

V. WAVERING INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE GRC

In late February 1961, Ambassador Koichiro Asakai from the Embassy of
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Japan informed Under Secretary Bowles of a growing interest in his country regarding Communist China.⁹ Amid speculations of a new U.S. approach toward the People's Republic, the Japanese Ambassador inquired about the position of the Kennedy administration regarding the Chinese representation question. Under Secretary Bowles asserted that while the U.S. position on Communist China had not yet been "totally worked out", many issues were "largely unnegotiable at the present time." As neither the mainland nor Taiwan were willing to consider a "two Chinas" policy, the United States found it difficult to devise a new approach to the China situation that would be beneficial to free world interests. Bowles assured the Japanese Ambassador, however, that as Communist China had made their entry into the UN conditional upon international acceptance of its sovereignty over Taiwan, it was unlikely that the Peking regime would be easily supported at the General Assembly.

In early March, the U.S. Representative to the UN, Adlai E. Stevenson, raised his concerns to the State Department regarding Japan's vacillating position on the Chinese representation matter. Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda had informed Stevenson of the mounting domestic pressure within his country to have Japan follow the Indian example at the UN, which demonstrated a "closer identification with (the) emotional aspirations (of) Asian and African states."¹⁰ As the degree to which the U.S. could depend on Japanese support at the UN was uncertain, Stevenson requested the State Department to investigate the durability of the present Ikeda government if it were forced to maintain its current China policy and it became necessary to support the moratorium procedure at the 16th Session of the General Assembly. For the United States, it was important to retain Japan's support at the UN, not only as a leading representative from the region, but as a potential candidate able to initiate and endorse proposals stemming from the United States. However, Japan also appeared influenced by the growing international interest in the inclusion of Communist China at the UN. Japan's UN representative, Koto Matsudaira, had indicated to Stevenson his country's hope that the U.S. would not maintain the moratorium procedure nor request that Japan honor Prime Minister Ikeda's pledge of support.¹¹ The Japanese representative had stated "most emphatically" that he felt the tide was turning against the United States in terms of its continued support of the GRC as the sole representative of China at the UN. While Matsudaira carefully refrained from any specific reference to whether his country desired the presence of Communist China at the UN, he pointed to Prime Minister Ikeda's views that emphasized the need to create "conditions of security for Formosa." Due to public pressures within Japan, Stevenson believed that Japan's UN representative was having a difficult time maintaining a "constructive but moderate role" at the UN. It was thus necessary, in Stevenson's view, to determine the prevailing domestic conditions in Japan, and more specifically, to ensure that Matsudaira's role be made more conducive to U.S. objectives at the UN, without identifying

him too closely to the United States. If Japan's opposition to the U.S. position regarding the Chinese representation issue was to be publicly announced, such a move would not only be intolerable to Washington, but had the potential to affect other important votes within the General Assembly. Several days later on March 15, Stevenson informed Secretary of State Rusk that Japan's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister had formally withdrawn their commitment to support the moratorium formula as it related to the Chinese representation issue. Due to "internal political considerations", Matsudaira stated that the matter was "undergoing review and study" in his country. The domestic pressures within Japan calling for the inclusion of Communist China at the UN had become forceful enough to prevent the country from offering unilateral support for the United States position at the UN. Although the Kennedy administration had not yet determined the strategy to be used at the next UN session, the State Department remained convinced that Japan would ultimately support the U.S. position, despite the growing domestic opinion advocating interaction with the People's Republic of China, as Japan would not want to risk alienation by the United States and jeopardize its own security interests.¹²

VI. BRITISH ATTITUDES REGARDING CHINESE REPRESENTATION

Soon thereafter, the British also demonstrated an increased inclination toward supporting the seating of the Chinese Communists at the UN. In mid-March, officials at the American Consulate in Hong Kong were informed by Secretary Rusk that the British Ambassador to the U.S., Sir Harold Caccia, had recently indicated the UK desire to "avoid possible misunderstanding" with the United States regarding Chinese representation at the UN.¹³ Caccia pressured Secretary Rusk to acknowledge the inevitability of the PRC's seating at the UN, despite the fact that the UK also did not consider the seating of the Chinese Communists at the UN wholly desirable in and of itself. If the seating of the PRC was unavoidable, Caccia concluded, it was wise to examine the benefits that could be potentially derived from the situation, which included the ability to exert outside pressure on Communist China, the avoidance of any added obstacles in disarmament negotiations, and the possibility of enlarging the Security Council, as well as the Economic and Social Council. Rusk, however, was not prepared to discuss the possibility of PRC presence at the UN and suggested that a new approach other than the moratorium might be pursued which could result in some type of a deadlock. The Secretary's statements reflected the concern and indecision of the new administration regarding an alternative approach to the Chinese representation issue. While it was certain that Britain's support, or at least its neutral position at the UN, was critical for any formula proposed

by the United States, the Kennedy administration was not ready to accept Communist China's presence at the UN. Therefore, Washington needed to devise a delaying tactic other than the moratorium procedure that could maintain the status quo while it obtained the support of essential countries. The new proposal would have to be attractive not only to Britain but to the other countries increasingly swaying towards the position to include Communist China at the UN.

On April 4, Lord Home, the British Foreign Secretary, and other high-level UK officials met with State Department representatives in Washington to discuss the Chinese representation matter.¹⁴ At the meeting, Rusk outlined the three scenarios involving the issue of Chinese representation that might be confronted at the coming session: the seating could be posed as a procedural question of credentials which would be decided by a bare majority; the question could be considered as a political matter, or "important question", which would require a 2/3 vote for a change in the current situation; or a decision could be made that the seat is possessed by both Communist China and Nationalist China as "successor states", and that both would be seated in the General Assembly. As for the Security Council seat, the United States had been considering postponing any action on this matter, viewing it as part of a general reorganization. Rusk made clear from the start that the United States regarded the "retention of a seat by Formosa as an obligation." Concerned that the GRC could be replaced with Communist China by a simple majority vote, Rusk also warned of the "serious implications" involved if Nationalist China were replaced by Communist China in the UN. The practical outcome of such an event would be that "the UN would gain Peking but lose the U.S." Furthermore, in such a situation the U.S. Congress would probably only vote the funds "technically obligated" to the UN, and no more. On the international front, a change in Chinese membership, Rusk continued, would also "give impetus to the isolationist sentiment in the U.S." Therefore, the British were made to understand that the damages of supporting a change in Chinese representation which involved the removal of the GRC would far outweigh the benefits deemed to be associated with Communist China's participation at the UN.

Without directly addressing Rusk's pressure tactic, Lord Home maintained that the UK did not believe that negotiations on nuclear testing or disarmament procedures could get very far without the inclusion of Communist China. The Secretary, however, quickly dismissed the UK's concern, claiming that the United States "did not place a high priority on this aspect because there was little prospect for disarmament anyway." Although Lord Home would later claim that "the matter would be simplified if Formosa stood for membership as a separate member", Rusk made clear that the prospect of the GRC leaving the UN and re-entering as a new member was not an acceptable scenario for the United States.¹⁵ The British insistence that the GRC leave the UN and reapply

for membership was, in essence, advocating that the China seat be assumed by Communist China. Under Secretary of State Chester A. Bowles assured British officials, "Chiang Kai-shek would not play the game of leaving the UN and coming in under separate membership."¹⁶

Troubled that the two countries appeared at odds on the Chinese representation issue, Rusk suggested that a plan be devised to formulate parliamentary procedures which the British could go along with, adding he "shuddered to think that the U.S. and UK would be on opposite sides of this issue."¹⁷ Although Lord Home appeared open to suggestions from the United States, he "did not see any way out", adding that he had been surprised by the unanimity with which the Commonwealth members, except Australia, supported Peking at the UN. Almost rhetorically, the Secretary asked what the reaction might have been had it been stated as a choice between Peking and Washington. Finally, Rusk suggested a possible approach to the Chinese representation problem that was based on a "two Chinas" concept: "the creation of two Chinese states in the General Assembly and reconsideration of the Security Council seat in a general reorganization." Although a decision on the "successor states" approach would be left to be discussed at the upcoming Kennedy-Macmillan talks, the meeting between Rusk and Lord Home clearly delineated the differences in views held by the two countries and, more significantly, forced to the surface U.S. support of the "two Chinas" successor states approach as the preferred alternative to the moratorium procedure.

In preparation for talks with British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, Harlan Cleveland, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, informed President Kennedy that in order to effectively command a simple majority for strategies regarding the Chinese representation matter, the United States would need to "complete a good deal of preparatory diplomatic work" before the next session of the General Assembly.¹⁸ It was considered important for the U.S. to deliver a clear message to other countries as to "where our tactics are leading and to make them satisfied with the foreseeable outcome" in order to secure as many votes as possible. While concerned that a decision over strategy had not yet been reached, Kennedy continued to grapple with the question of how "to deal successfully with the question of Chinese representation in the United Nations if the GRC were not disposed to be cooperative" and wondered about the feasibility of finding a course of action "which effected a solution without requiring affirmative action and unilateral sacrifice of claims by the GRC."¹⁹ Ultimately, the President endorsed the "successor states" approach as a tactical method to ensure that the GRC retained its position at the UN and that Peking was kept out, at least for the coming session of the General Assembly. Meanwhile, State Department officials focused their efforts on convincing the GRC that the "successor states" approach was a reasonable alternative. By pursuing the "successor states" approach, the State Department sought to

accomplish two important objectives: to appease those members of the UN disgruntled with an "unrealistic" approach to the Chinese representation matter that aimed at keeping Communist China out of the UN; and to create a situation that would be unacceptable to the Peking regime, and thus have the onus of Communist China's absence from the UN placed on the PRC itself. Despite such merits, State Department officials recognized that it would be difficult to persuade Chiang Kai-shek and his government of the tactic.

VII. KENNEDY-MACMILLAN TALKS

On April 5, at a meeting with UK Prime Minister Macmillan and other British officials, President Kennedy stressed from the outset the importance of the Chinese representation matter to the United States.²⁰ Kennedy admitted that a "defeat" at the UN on the Chinese matter would certainly bring disastrous consequences to the new administration. At the same time, however, the President emphasized that the U.S. "could not support Red China's admittance to the UN" and that a formula would be sought "for keeping them from wanting to get in." What appeared to be of utmost importance to the Kennedy administration was to ensure that the Chinese Nationalists were not replaced by Communist China by a majority vote at the UN. Of the various possibilities under consideration, UN Ambassador Stevenson pointed to two proposals that were believed to be most conducive to achieving "the objective to keep Taiwan in the United Nations." First, a proposal for a resolution stating that Communist China was eligible for admission had been devised with the assumption that the necessary two-thirds votes in the General Assembly would not be obtainable. However, in light of growing international interest in the inclusion of Communist China at the UN, the first strategy appeared too vulnerable for it to be supported by the United States. The alternative proposal was a "successor states" approach which would maintain that two states had succeeded China's seat at the UN and therefore, both were entitled to membership.

The British officials clearly showed their preference for a resolution along the lines of the "successor states" approach. Lord Home argued that as there were two countries each claiming control of the other, a resolution stating that both should be in the United Nations appeared appropriate. Yet, he believed that if both countries called themselves "China" there would be difficulty, and thus, the British Ambassador to the U.S., Sir Harold Caccia, suggested that the resolution further specify that there were two states and then leave the question of title to the countries concerned. Ambassador Stevenson also endorsed the "successor states" approach and stated that it appeared possible to obtain the necessary two-thirds vote on the resolution at the fall session of the UN. At this juncture, Kennedy recommended that the matter be left to the two

countries' UN ambassadors, Adlai Stevenson and Sir Patrick Dean, to examine the feasibility of a "two Chinas" approach and asserted that the United States "would have to stay way in the background as far as a 'successor states' resolution was concerned." Kennedy and his advisers feared that direct U.S. support of a "two Chinas" scenario would constitute a larger political liability than the administration was prepared to assume, at least for the first year in office. The President reiterated to British officials that "it would be best from our standpoint if Red China were not admitted this year" and that from a "purely domestic political point of view, it did not look good for a new administration to have allowed Chinese Communist admission so soon." Significantly, while it appeared that the administration recognized the inevitability of witnessing the representation of Communist China at the UN, it was also clear that Kennedy placed great importance on trying to maintain the status quo at the coming General Assembly session in order to avoid potential political repercussions stemming from major changes to U.S. China policy. Although the "successor states" approach was supported by Kennedy as a strategy based on the assumption that Peking would reject the conditions of joint representation with the Chinese Nationalists, it remained that the United States would not tolerate the admission of Communist China at the coming UN session.

VIII. THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION AND THE "SUCCESSOR STATES" APPROACH

The "successor states" proposal was one that needed to be skillfully handled by the Kennedy administration. In an executive meeting on May 24, Secretary Rusk advised the President against detailed disclosures on the "successor nation or other specific formulas" regarding the Chinese representation question.²¹ UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson endorsed Rusk's recommendation, adding that it was important that the motive behind the "successor states" proposal, designed to keep the Chinese Communists out of the UN at the current time, not be divulged to the general public as future U.S. proposals regarding this issue would then seem hypocritical. Stevenson added that although he did not want to see Communist China in the UN, the Chinese representation question was not important enough to warrant the loss of U.S. prestige or leadership in international affairs.²² The administration also anticipated staunch Congressional and public opposition to any such solution; therefore, Kennedy advised that the United States avoid taking a lead role in the promotion of a "two Chinas" policy and informed Bundy that he wanted other nations to take the lead on this matter.²³ The potential controversy induced by public disclosure of a "two Chinas" policy proposal could adversely affect the passage of the foreign aid bill and other objectives of the new administration. The President subsequently

instructed that all discussion regarding U.S. options on the China question take place through informal diplomatic channels only. Until it could be proven that the "successor states" approach could be successfully executed at the UN, Kennedy remained wary of the potential negative ramifications resulting from what would appear to be a major change in U.S. China policy.

Two days later, Rusk informed Kennedy that after researching various alternatives to the moratorium formula, some form of the "two Chinas" consistently appeared to be the best means of avoiding the removal of the Chinese Nationalists from the United Nations by a majority vote.²⁴ After discussions with Ambassador Yeh and Foreign Minister Tsiang, the Secretary was convinced that the GRC would "not take any action implying acceptance" of a "two Chinas" solution. Although both Chinese officials suggested that the "successor states" proposal would be considered unacceptable to the GRC, they also indicated that "if the majority of the General Assembly voted to accept a resolution based on a 'Successor States' approach, they 'could do nothing about it.'"²⁵ Thus, while it seemed possible that the GRC might reluctantly acquiesce to the "successor states" approach if endorsed by the majority of the UN, U.S. officials questioned how long the tactic would serve the objective of allowing the GRC to retain its seat while keeping the PRC out of the organization. The State Department was apprehensive that if the PRC chose to conform to obligations of UN membership and decided to take up its seat in the General Assembly, it would be unlikely that the Chinese Communists could be kept out of the Security Council for any extended period of time. Therefore, to prevent such an outcome, it was also suggested that a proposal for a special committee, which would examine the possibility of expanding Security Council membership, be linked to the "successor states" approach to gain more time.

Meanwhile, the securing of support from allied nations and key members of Congress was considered essential in order for the "successor states" proposal to be successfully adopted at the United Nations. Yet, there were concerns within the administration that sufficient preparations had not been made to obtain the necessary support. On the international front, Rusk requested Kennedy to authorize immediate consultations with the GRC, the UK, and Australia regarding the "successor states" approach. It was hoped that Washington could manage to gain at least tacit GRC "acquiescence" to the proposed course of action, although official GRC "support" was not considered likely. As for the UK, the United States needed British cooperation to ensure, at a minimum, that they would adopt a neutral position on the proposal. Finally, the State Department viewed Australia as the prime candidate to take the lead in presenting the outlined course of action "as their own" in private consultations with key delegations. Other friendly governments, such as Canada, Norway, and Japan were also considered potential sources of support that could be influential at the UN. If consultations were successful, it was hoped that preliminary reactions

to the proposed course of action could be determined without direct involvement of the United States. As for Congressional support, it was essential that it be obtained before any international consultations were begun. After initial acceptance of the "successor states" proposal by key components, Rusk believed that the United States would then need to take a more active role in ensuring that a stable majority would reject the substitution of Communist China for the Republic of China at the United Nations.

In an "Eyes-Only" May 31 letter, Stevenson informed Rusk that in a recent meeting with Sir Patrick Dean, the British UN Representative, it had been indicated that although final decisions had not been taken, the United States was optimistic that the "successor states" approach might work, with the GRC retaining its seat and the Chinese Communists being recognized as entitled to a seat only if they declared their adherence to the Charter.²⁶ Significantly, Washington revealed its inclination to officially pursue a decidedly "two Chinas" approach at the next UN session, despite the GRC's continued opposition to any such solution. Supporting Stevenson's assessment, the UK representative added that Communist China would continue to reject such a proposition "at least for a year." The British representative also emphasized that it was "most important" for the success of the "successor states" proposal that it not appear to other countries to be a delaying tactic. In terms of establishing which delegation could take the lead in introducing the "successor states" proposal at the next General Assembly session, Australia, Canada, and Sweden were considered possible candidates. Although Stevenson mentioned that the Australian Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, had expressed an interest in the question to the U.S., it was a concern that Australia might be considered by some states to be too closely linked to the United States and the United Kingdom. Dean, however, argued that this was a special case in which Australia might be useful. Although the question was left undecided, it was clearly understood by both UN representatives that the United States would not take the lead in introducing the alternative procedure to the moratorium approach at the next UN session.

IX. DECISIONS FOR A NEW UN STRATEGY

Meanwhile, without a concrete decision made on U.S. tactics regarding the Chinese representation issue, NSC aide Komer urged Washington to determine its position on the issue so the focus could be turned to acquiring necessary international support.²⁷ The NSC aide believed that the impending visit of Prime Minister Ikeda in late June presented an ideal opportunity for the United States to secure Japanese support on the new plan to replace the moratorium formula. Although the State Department had not called for any positive action by Kennedy to request that Japan actively promote the "successor states" approach, Komer

was convinced that Tokyo's assistance would be crucial and that there was little time to waste in terms of gathering international support for a chosen tact. As the U.S. endorsed the "successor states" approach, the NSC aide was confident that Japan would have little difficulty lending its support, as the country had long wanted to move toward a "two Chinas" policy. With only three months before the next General Assembly session, Komer believed that the United States needed to make every effort to enlist the aid of other countries by the earliest date.

On May 26, Akira Nishiyama, Minister from the Japanese Embassy, met with Harlan J. Cleveland, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization, to express that his government was anxious to know how the United States planned to handle the Chinese representation matter, as the issue had become a domestic political issue that could "topple the government" if the Japanese people did not approve of what their delegation did at the UN on the issue.²⁸ Cleveland maintained that the China question was one that was also politically heated in the United States, and that it was difficult to predict how U.S. policy would be resolved. The Assistant Secretary outlined the various alternatives that were being considered in Washington and added that a decision on the issue could adversely affect the attitude of the American people toward the UN itself. Cleveland took the opportunity to hint that the United States would not take the initiative on the Chinese representation matter alone, and therefore, indicated that the main question revolved around "who will take the lead" to ensure that a majority in the UN would be capable of retaining a seat for the GRC. The Assistant Secretary concluded, "these questions must be discussed with such close allies as the United Kingdom and Japan."²⁹ It was clear that Washington wanted to avoid leading the discourse on the Chinese representation issue at the UN and was looking to other nations to take initiative toward alternative approaches. At the same time, however, it was questionable to what degree the Kennedy administration would be able to disentangle itself from the matter, as the GRC as well as other countries looked to the United States to determine their own course of action.

Later, at a June 21 meeting with Japan's Foreign Minister Zentaro Koshiro, Secretary of State Rusk reinforced from the outset that the United States could not look upon the question of recognition of Communist China as an open question.³⁰ It was made clear that the United States was not anticipating formal recognition of the PRC and that at the present time had no intention of considering the issue. Furthermore, Peking had given no indication that it was interested in recognition by the United States unless Communist China's sovereignty over Taiwan was established, and in such a circumstance, Rusk added, the United States was not willing to concede. However, the Secretary also stressed that at the same time, the United States was not prepared to jeopardize relations with its allies due to the Chinese representation issue. In view of its own nation-

interests, there were limits to the amount of pressure the United States would exert on other countries. Rusk pointed to the example of U.S. relations with India and stated that the U.S. would be "unwilling to threaten India with a cut-off of all assistance in order to get a favorable vote on the Chinese representation issue."³¹ As for Japan, Foreign Minister Kosaka informed the Secretary that his country also had no intention of recognizing Communist China. Rather, Japan desired to reach an agreement with the United States and the United Kingdom regarding an appropriate resolution of the Chinese representation matter.³² There were three aspects that Japan wanted highlighted: its belief that it was "vitally necessary to create a common free world front"; that the Security Council problem be divorced from the General Assembly discussion of the Chinese representation; and that the status of the Taiwan Government be limited to only the areas under its control.³³ Clearly, Japan supported the growing sentiment that the GRC position at the UN was "unrealistic and unnatural" since the latter's authority did not in fact extend throughout all of China. Kosaka's comments, however, reflected the ambivalence of Japan's posture regarding the Chinese representation issue. Although it appeared that Japan would ultimately follow the direction set out by the United States, a more "realistic" approach regarding the two Chinese governments was clearly desired by the U.S. ally. In terms of leading the position of retaining a UN seat for Taiwan, Rusk informed Foreign Minister Kosaka that Washington preferred to have a new formula developed through multilateral discussions, "without the United States taking the initiative." The Administration wanted to ensure that the alternative strategy pursued for the Chinese representation question not appear to stem from the United States, as Kennedy wanted to avoid accusations from other countries of developing yet another delaying tactic and to minimize the domestic repercussions resulting from a "two Chinas" policy at the UN.

In a statement at the National Press Club on July 10, 1961, Rusk announced that the moratorium formula was losing support in the United Nations and added that it was a "dangerous point on which to rely."³⁴ The Secretary added that the United States, the GRC, and other governments needed to address seriously the parliamentary problems that would arise in the coming session of the General Assembly. As for the Outer Mongolian question, the Secretary stated that the United States had not yet determined its position on the matter, adding however that disagreement with the Republic of China on the matter was "no reflection upon the solidarity of the alliance itself." However, in the months to follow, the issue of UN membership for Outer Mongolia would not only test the will of both the U.S. and the GRC but would pose fundamental questions regarding future U.S. China policy.

Meanwhile at the State Department, it was feared that if the Kennedy administration further postponed a decision on tactical procedures for the Chinese representation matter, it would not be possible to gather the necessary support

from other countries. In a July 31 State Department memorandum for the President, Rusk insisted that the United States should no longer wait to determine which countries would vote favorably on the China question:

We believe it is essential to try to determine at the earliest practicable date the kind of proposal or proposals which will receive the required majority. The longer there is delay in organizing a strong and favorable coalition on this question, the greater the risk that the other side will seize the initiative to our tactical disadvantage.³⁵

In order to gauge the situation in the General Assembly, Rusk recommended that a representative group from the General Assembly be formed to assess proposals which had the potential of attaining a majority vote. More specifically, the feasibility and desirability of pursuing the "important question" approach requiring a two-thirds vote could be evaluated.³⁶ It needed to be determined whether the proposal would be sufficient to carry out U.S. objectives and when such a proposal should be brought to the General Assembly. The Secretary recommended a resolution for the study committee to examine the broader question of membership criteria in the UN and the composition of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.³⁷

By mid-September, U.S. officials consolidated their views and constructed a course of action that reflected the administration's determination to avoid, in the short-term, defeat on the Chinese representation matter. The standing instructions outlined to UN representative Stevenson included taking the initiative to introduce the "important question" approach at the General Assembly if other countries could not be induced to take the lead.³⁸ Significantly, Stevenson was also authorized to vote in favor of Outer Mongolia's membership bid and to state that the United States did not "exclude the possibility that the study committee would recommend to the 1962 session a successor state solution", thus accepting the idea of a "two Chinas" solution.³⁹ Although it was realized in Washington that the "successor states" proposal and a positive U.S. vote on Outer Mongolia would be vehemently opposed by the GRC, the instructions for Stevenson demonstrated that the United States was prepared to act independently of Nationalist China if an agreement in tactics could not be reached between the two governments.

X. CONCLUSION

On December 1, 1961, UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson delivered a State Department-drafted speech to the General Assembly, dealing solely with the issue of Chinese representation. He asserted that the United Nations would

be making a "tragic and perhaps irreparable mistake" if it were to yield to Communist China's claim to replace the Republic of China in the United Nations.⁴⁰ Stevenson argued that if the PRC were granted admission into the UN, the Peking regime would be encouraged by the success of its "bitter words and ruthless actions" and gain momentum to be all the more forceful and disruptive within the community of nations. The UN Ambassador made it clear that admission of the PRC would violate and defy the basic principles of the UN Charter. At a minimum, the people of the United States would lose its confidence in the UN, and this fact alone was thought to be significantly detrimental to the organization.⁴¹

On December 15, the Soviet draft resolution to admit Communist China to the United Nations was defeated by a vote of 48 against, 37 for, and 19 abstentions.⁴² The considerable margin was explained by Soviet insistence that Communist China's admission be accompanied by Taiwan's expulsion.⁴³ On the same day, the General Assembly voted 61 to 34 with 7 abstentions to make the Chinese representation an "important question", requiring a two-thirds majority of the Assembly to pass proposals for change. In terms of the Chinese representation question, the UN outcome in 1961 was considered a success by the Kennedy administration. The "important question" approach afforded Kennedy's policy advisers, at a minimum, another year to formulate strategies to ensure continued GRC representation of China at the UN. The lessons of 1961, however, would not be soon forgotten by the administration. Although Kennedy and his advisers maintained U.S. support of the GRC due to Congressional and public pressures, the increased international demand for the inclusion and recognition of the PRC would become a looming presence in considerations of future U.S. China policy.

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