

# **The Evolution and Establishment of the US's One-China Policy, 1949-1978**

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## **Abstract**

In recent years the US has frequently declared that it has a one-China policy towards the Taiwan Strait, and that the PRC is the sole legal government of China. In fact, the so-called “one China” policy was formally formed in 1978. During most of the period between 1949 and 1978, the US was pursuing a “one China, one Taiwan” policy or a two-China policy. The connotation of America’s one-China policy merely means that the US does not recognize multiple regimes claiming sovereignty over the Chinese mainland. At any time the US only recognizes one Chinese government that controls one particular territory. With respect to Taiwan’s international status, the US has never recognized Taiwan as a part of China after 27 June 1950. America’s long-term position is that Taiwan’s status has remained undetermined since the 1950s. As realism and idealism have been capable of co-existing in America’s foreign policy, in the future, Taiwan should continue to improve its defense capabilities, and to deepen and consolidate its democracy to gain America’s support for its national security.

Key words: the US, One-China Policy, Taiwan’s International Status, “one China, one Taiwan”, Two Chinas

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In recent years the US government has frequently announced that it has a one-China policy towards the Taiwan Strait, and that it recognizes the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the sole legal government of China. With respect to Taiwan's international status, the US only "acknowledges" but does not "recognize" the PRC's claim that "Taiwan is part of China." Although the Kuomintang (KMT) government of Taiwan has always insisted that Taiwan's official name is the Republic of China (ROC), the US did not agree to that after 1979.

What does America's one-China policy mean? Why did Washington adopt a one-China policy? And how did this policy originate and evolve? This paper argues that America's one-China policy was formally established in 1978, though it was not yet a diplomatic terminology at the time. Before 1979, the US implemented a "one China, one Taiwan" policy or a "two Chinas" policy towards the Taiwan Strait. With respect to Taiwan's international status, the US has never recognized Taiwan as part of China since 27 June 1950, two days after the outbreak of the Korean War. The first part of this paper introduces how the US oscillated between the ROC and the PRC when the ROC retreated to Taiwan from the Chinese mainland. The second part discusses why and how the US re-recognizes the ROC as the sole legal government in the 1950s and 1960s, and probes the origin of the theory "Taiwan's sovereign status undecided." The third part discusses the formation of America's *de facto* two-China policy between 1950 and 1978. The fourth part investigates how and why Washington changed its policy from the ambiguous "two Chinas" to "one China" between 1973 and 1978. The fifth part discusses the meaning of America's one-China policy and its position on Taiwan's international status. Finally, the last part explores the significance of realism and idealism in America's foreign policy.

The principal research method of this paper is documentary analysis. The author collects a lot of official documents and academic researches to probe the above questions. As many scholars have said that idealism frequently co-exists with realism in America's foreign policy, this paper also aims to examine this argument, and employs the viewpoints of idealism and realism to explain the decision making of America's one-China policy in each phase. Since America's foreign policy has always been a mix of idealism and realism, Taiwan, therefore, should continue to improve its defense capabilities, and to deepen and consolidate its democracy to secure America's support for its national security.

### **I. Oscillating between the ROC and the PRC (1949-1950)**

When the all-out Chinese civil war between the KMT government and the Chinese Communist Party erupted in the summer of 1946, the Truman administration

publicly provided military and financial assistance to the KMT regime as it tried to consolidate a non-Communist government in China in order to contain the USSR. At the final stage of the Chinese civil war the KMT was clearly in an inferior position and the Truman administration was on the point of abandoning the KMT regime. In January 1949, the US National Security Council reached a conclusion, which stated that the aim of American China policy was to prevent the CCP from becoming a subordinate of the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup> On 5 August 1949, the Truman administration released a *China White Paper*, which found that the KMT's failure was caused by its own corruption, and the US was not responsible for it.<sup>2</sup> On 8 December 1949, the KMT regime formally retreated from the Chinese mainland to Taiwan. On 5 January 1950, President Truman stated that Taiwan should return to China as stipulated in the *Cairo Declaration* and the *Potsdam Proclamation*. Moreover, he declared that "the United States and the other Allied Powers have accepted the exercise of Chinese authority over the Island...the US has no...intention of utilizing its armed forces to interfere in the present situation... the United States Government will not provide military and advice to Chinese forces on Formosa."<sup>3</sup> This was commonly known as a declaration of the US policy of neutrality towards the Taiwan Strait.

On 12 January 1950, US Secretary of State Acheson made a speech to explain the basic US position towards China, which defined the US defense lines in the West Pacific Ocean as running from the Aleutian Islands, through Japan and the Ryukyu Islands, to the Philippines, excluding Taiwan and South Korea.<sup>4</sup> This implied that the Truman administration had decided to abandon the KMT government and was willing to accept a united China, including Taiwan, ruled by the PRC.

There were some reasons why the Truman administration had such a position at that time. First, as the USSR had rapidly expanded its strength and Communism had spread swiftly around the world, the US had already adopted a "containment" policy to deal with this situation. Second, the US Department of State held that there were natural tensions between the two Communist countries, which would divide them in the future.<sup>5</sup> Third, to enable it to give maximum assistance to its European allies, the

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<sup>1</sup> The State Department of the US, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS), vol. 9 (1949), pp. 492-493.

<sup>2</sup> US Department of State, *United States Relations with China, with Special Reference to the Period 1944-1949 (The China Paper)* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1949), pp. xvi-xvii.

<sup>3</sup> *President Truman's Statement on Status of Formosa*, 5 January, 1950, in *American Foreign Policy* (hereafter *AFP*), 1950-1955 (Washington D.C.: US Department of State, 1957), II, pp. 2448-49, in MacFarquhar Roderick and Royal Institute of International Affairs, ed., *Sino-American Relations, 1949-71* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), p. 70.

<sup>4</sup> *Dean Acheson's Speech to the National Press Club, Washington D.C., on Relations Between the Peoples of the United States and Asia, 12 January 1950.* (*AFP*, 1950-1955, II, pp. 2313-18), in MacFarquhar Roderick and Royal Institute of International Affairs, ed., *Sino-American Relations, 1949-71*, p. 75.

<sup>5</sup> Wang Hungying, "Meiguo de chengce yu kanfa: 1949-1950 nien fenlie zhong su de xiezi chanlue," translated from John Gaddis, "American Policy and Perspectives: The Sino-Soviet 'Wedge' Strategy,

Truman administration hoped the PRC could be another Josip Tito to impede the USSR in Asia.<sup>6</sup> It thus decided to drive a wedge between the PRC and the USSR. This strategy was demonstrated in Acheson's explanation of Truman's neutrality policy towards the Taiwan Strait to two Senators.<sup>7</sup> Owing to this "wedge" strategy, Acheson excluded Taiwan from America's defense lines in the Western Pacific Ocean.<sup>8</sup>

According to realism, allies offer a means to counterbalance threats and many states have forged alliances with others even in advance, against a probable aggression.<sup>9</sup> Since the Truman administration was threatened by the USSR's expansion and believed that there were tensions between the PRC and the USSR, it was a reasonable decision for the US to woo the PRC.

While Truman and Acheson were about to abandon Taiwan, however, the US military and some anti-Communist members of Congress maintained that Taiwan was pivotal to US security and its strategic interests in the Far East.<sup>10</sup> They contended that the US should not let the Communists occupy Taiwan.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, McCarthyism was rising,<sup>12</sup> domestic criticism of the administration's pro-PRC position was increasing,<sup>13</sup> and Mao Zedong announced his pro-USSR policy.<sup>14</sup> These domestic

1949-1955," in Yuan Ming and Harry Harding, ed., *Zhongmei guanxi shishang chenzhong de yiye* (*Sino-American Relations 1945-1955: A Collaborative Reassessment of A Troubled Time*) (Beijing: the Peking University Press, 1989), pp. 250-72.

<sup>6</sup> Hu Wei-chen, *Meikuo tui Hua "i ke Chungkuo cheng-tse" chih yen-pien* (*The Evolution of the US 'One China' Policy*) (Taipei: Taiwan Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 2000), pp. 6-7.

<sup>7</sup> On 5 January 1950, just a few hours before Truman released the declaration of the US neutrality policy towards the Taiwan Strait, Acheson told two US senators that the administration's purpose was to improve America's image in the Chinese mainland and to divide the PRC and the USSR. See "Formosa Problem," *Memorandum of Conversation*, 5 January 1950, in Harry S. Truman Library, Dean Acheson Papers, Box 35. Cited by Wang Jisi, "*Lun liang ge Zhongguo chengce de qi yuan*" (*The Origins of America's 'Two China' Policy*"), in Yuan Ming and Harry Harding, ed., *Zhong Mei guanxi shi shang chenzhong de yi ye* (*Sino-American Relations 1945-1955: A Collaborative Reassessment of A Troubled Time*), p. 321.

<sup>8</sup> Wang Hungying, "*Meiguo de chengce yu kanfa: 1949-1950 nien fenlie Zhong Su de xiezi chanlue*" (*American Policy and Perspectives: The Sino-Soviet 'Wedge' Strategy, 1949-1955*"), p. 254; Hu Wei-chen, *Meikuo tui Hua "i ke Chungkuo cheng-tse" chih yen-pien* (*The Evolution of the US 'One China' Policy*), p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Charles W. Kegly Jr. and Eugene R. Wittkopf, *World Politics: Trend and Transformation*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: St. Martin's/Worth, 1999), p. 25.

<sup>10</sup> Chen, Yu-chun, *Yi ke Chungkuo yu Taipei Huafu Peking* (*"One China" and Taipei, Washington, and Beijing*) (Taipei: Huan-yu chu-pan-she, 1996), p. 67.

<sup>11</sup> In November 1948, for example, General William Leahy, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, submitted a memorandum, stressing Taiwan's crucial strategic value for the US. He also suggested that the US should adopt diplomatic and economic measures to impede the PRC's occupation, and to ensure Taiwan remained under the control of a pro-US government. See *FRUS*, 1949, vol. 9, p. 262, cited by Chen Yu-chun, *Yi ke Chungkuo yu Taipei Huafu Peking* (*"One China" and Taipei, Washington, and Beijing*), p. 67.

<sup>12</sup> Yuan Ming, "*Xin Zhongguo chengli hou de Meguo dui Hua zhengce guan*" (*The Failure of Perception: America's China policy 1949-1950*"), in Yuan Ming and Harry Harding, ed., *Zhong Mei guanxi shi shang chenzhong de yi ye* (*Sino-American Relations 1945-1955: A Collaborative Reassessment of A Troubled Time*), p. 220.

<sup>13</sup> Hu Wei-chen, *Meikuo tui Hua "i ke Chungkuo cheng-tse" chih yen-pien* (*The Evolution of the US*

and external factors impeded the Truman administration in its efforts to secure closer US-PRC relations. By then, American policy was vacillating between the two Chinas.

## II. "One China" Refers to the ROC while Taiwan's Status Remains Undetermined (1950-)

On 14 February 1950, the PRC and the USSR signed the *Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Assistance*. Once the PRC and the USSR had become allies, it no longer seemed possible for the US to establish diplomatic relationships with the PRC.<sup>15</sup> On 25 June 1950, the Korean War broke out. The Truman administration regarded this as Communist expansion in Asia. If the PRC annexed Taiwan, this would breach America's defensive line in the western Pacific and US military bases in the Philippines and the Ryukyu Islands would be threatened by the two Communist regimes.<sup>16</sup> Truman thus dispatched the Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait to prevent a PRC invasion of Taiwan.

In mid-October, as the PRC sent troops to help North Korea to fight the US, Acheson declared that the US opposed the PRC's admission to the UN. In May 1951, the US announced that the Beijing authorities were not the government of China and the US would instead recognize the government of the ROC. Accordingly, from May 1951 until 1978 the US recognized the ROC as the sole legal government of China.<sup>17</sup>

Truman's support of the ROC demonstrated that America's foreign policy often combined the considerations of both idealism and realism. Idealism holds that a state should make its internal political philosophy the goal of its foreign policy, and democracy is one of the major American traditional values and promoting democracy overseas has long been an American tradition.<sup>18</sup> Although Taiwan was not genuinely democratic at that time, the ROC government had implemented elections in Chinese mainland. In fact, the ROC government began to carry out local elections in Taiwan on October 1950, an important step on the road towards democracy. On the other hand, in order to block communist expansion in Asia, the US had to prevent Taiwan from

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"One China" Policy), p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> Mao Zedong announced on 30 June 1949 that the CCP would adopt a "yibiandao" (leaning to one side) policy to tilt towards the USSR.

<sup>15</sup> Andrew J. Nathan and Robert S. Ross, *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress* (NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1997), pp. 59-60. However, Yuan Ming, a PRC scholar, had a different opinion. He argued that it was the US's confrontation with the PRC that led to the formation of the USSR-PRC alliance, not the USSR-PRC alliance causing the US-PRC confrontation. See Yuan Ming, "*Xin Zhongguo chengli hou de Meguo dui Hua zhengce guan*" (The Failure of Perception: America's China policy 1949-1950), p. 224.

<sup>16</sup> Hu Wei-chen, *Meikuo tui Hua "i ke Chungkuo cheng-tse" chih yen-pien* (*The Evolution of the US "One China" Policy*), p. 9.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>18</sup> Steven W. Hook and John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy Since World War II*, 15<sup>th</sup> edition (Washington D. C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2000), pp. 281-82.

being controlled by the PRC--- a realist consideration. As Felix Gilbert said, “America has wavered in her foreign policy between idealism and realism, and her historical moments have occurred when both were combined.”<sup>19</sup> Henry Kissinger, a famous realist, has also said that the process of formulating US foreign policy has always swayed between “moralism” and “national interest.”<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, although the ROC already controlled Taiwan, Truman declared on 27 June 1950 that the “determination of the future status of Formosa must await the restoration of security in the Pacific, a peace settlement with Japan, or consideration by the UN.”<sup>21</sup> This was the origin of the US policy which declared that Taiwan’s status remains undetermined. In order to prevent Taiwan from being annexed by the PRC, this has long been America’s stance since June 1950.<sup>22</sup>

In fact, even during the final stages of the Chinese civil war, some senior US officials had suggested that Taiwan should not be transferred to China.<sup>23</sup> General Douglas MacArthur, a strong supporter of Chiang Kai-shek, and Acheson shared this opinion.<sup>24</sup> In September 1950, Acheson publicly suggested that the UN should establish a committee to discuss and resolve Taiwan’s legal status. As the Truman administration’s position that Taiwan’s status remained undetermined was a strategic consideration aimed to contain the USSR’s expansion in Asia, this position might change if Beijing agreed to cooperate with Washington in containing Moscow.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Felix Gilbert, *To the Farewell Address: Ideas of Early American Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 136.

<sup>20</sup> Henry Kissinger, “Reflection on Containment,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 3 (May 1994), p. 118.

<sup>21</sup> “President Truman’s Statement on the Mission of the US Seventh Fleet in the Formosa Area, 27 June 1950,” in *American Foreign Policy, 1950-55, Basic Documents, II*, p. 2468. Cited by Chiu Hungdah, ed., *China and the Question of Taiwan: Documents and Analysis* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), p. 228.

<sup>22</sup> Chen Li-tung, *Tai-wan Chu-ti lun (On Taiwan’s Autonomy)* (Taipei: Angle Publishing Co., Ltd., 2002), p. 17.

<sup>23</sup> In July 1949 George Kennan, a senior official of the Department of the State, proposed that the US unite with some other related countries, under the flag of the UN, to impede the KMT regime from retreating to Taiwan, to establish a temporary American-style political system, and to conduct a plebiscite to decide Taiwan’s sovereignty. See Chen Yu-chun, *Yi ke Chungkuo yu Taipei Huafu Peking (“One China” and Taipei, Washington and Beijing)*, p. 67.

<sup>24</sup> In a secret discussion with Minister of Defense Louis Johnson, General MacArthur advocated establishing Taiwan as an independent autonomous country. See “Memorandum for the President by Louis Johnson,” 15 December 1949, in Harry S. Truman Library, President’s Secretaries’ Files (PSF), Box 177. Cited by Wang Jisi, “Lun liang ge Zhongguo chengce de qi yuan” (“The Origins of America’s ‘two China’ Policy”), p. 321. Acheson held the view in 1949 that the US should help to develop the Taiwanese Independence Movement so that the US could win the approval of the international community for any future intervention in cross-Strait disputes. See Yuan Ming, “Xin Zhongguo chengli hou de Meiguo dui Hua zhengce guan” (“The Failure of Perception: America’s China policy 1949-1950”), p. 217.

<sup>25</sup> On 3 May 1951 Acheson expressed this view at the 90<sup>th</sup> meeting of the National Security Council, saying that what he really wanted to do was to prevent Taiwan from falling to an unfriendly China, and if a friendly regime emerged in China then Taiwan’s status would be re-considered. See “Memorandum for the president about the 90<sup>th</sup> meeting of the National Security Council,” 3 May 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, President’s Secretaries’ Files (PSF), Box 220. Cited by Wang Jisi, “Lun liang ge Zhongguo chengce de qi yuan” (“The Origins of America’s ‘two China’ Policy”), p. 326.

From 1950 to 1954, the US frequently stressed that Taiwan's sovereignty was undetermined. For examples, On 25 August 1950, in defending America's policy against the PRC's charge of an intervention of the Chinese internal affairs, E. Gross, the US Representative to the UN, said to the Security Council of the UN:<sup>26</sup>

The actual status of the island is that it is territory taken from Japan by the victory of the Allied forces in the Pacific. Like other such territories, its legal status cannot be fixed until there is international action to determine its future. The Chinese Government was asked by the Allies to take the surrender of the Japanese forces on the island. That is the reason the Chinese are there now.

On 1 December 1954, the US Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, stated in a press conference that "technical sovereignty over Formosa and the Pescadores has never been settled."<sup>27</sup> In the exchange of notes accompanying the *1954 ROC-US Mutual Defense Treaty*, the US recognized only that the ROC "effectively controlled" Taiwan and the Pescadores.<sup>28</sup> The Senate's ratification of the 1954 Mutual Defence Treaty contained the reservation that "nothing in the present treaty shall be construed as affecting or modifying the legal status or the sovereignty of the territories referred to in Article VI (i.e. Formosa and the Pescadores)."<sup>29</sup> This position has not changed since. Although both Kissinger and Nixon seemed to have tried to change it in the early 1970s,<sup>30</sup> the US in the subsequent three US-PRC *communiqués* only "acknowledges" but does not "recognize" the Chinese position that "Taiwan is part of China." On 25 October 2004, Secretary of State Powell Colin said in an interview in

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<sup>26</sup> United Nations Security Council, *Official Records*, 490<sup>th</sup> Session, U.N. Doc. S/1715(2 August 1950), p. 7.

<sup>27</sup> Ely Maurer, "Legal Problems Regarding Formosa and the Offshore Islands," excerpt from Department of State Bulletin of the US, XXXIX, 1017 (22 December, 1958), 1009-10. Maurer was assistant legal adviser for Far Eastern affairs. This was an address made before the Washington chapter of the Federal Bar Association on 20 November 1958. See Chiu Hungdah, ed., *China and the Question of Taiwan*, pp. 128, 293, and 296.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 128 and 252.

<sup>29</sup> US Congressional Record - Senate, Vol. 101, Part 1, p. 1381. Article VI of the *1954 US-ROC Mutual Defence Treaty* reads, "For the purposes of Articles 2 and 5, the terms 'territorial' and 'territories' shall mean in respect of the Republic of China, Taiwan and the Pescadores; and in respect of the United States of America, the island territories in the West Pacific under its jurisdiction."

<sup>30</sup> In July 1971, Kissinger promised the PRC Premier Zhou Enlai in his secret visit in Beijing that the US would not repeat that Taiwan's status was not yet settled. See Winston Lord, "Memorandum For Henry A. Kissinger," *Memorandum*, the White House, 6 August 1971, p. 15. Available at *The National Security Archive*, George Washington University website <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB66/ch-35.pdf>. On 22 July 1972, when President Nixon talked with Zhou in Beijing, he said vaguely, "There will be no more statements made — if I can control our bureaucracy — to the effect that the status of Taiwan is undetermined." See the White House, "Memorandum of Conversation," 22 February 1972, 2:10 pm – 6:10 pm. Available at *The National Security Archive*, George Washington University website <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB106/NZ-1.pdf>.

Beijing, “There is only one China. Taiwan is not independent. It does not enjoy sovereignty as a nation, and that remains our policy, our firm policy.”<sup>31</sup> On 30 August 2007, when Taiwan was planning to hold a referendum to apply for a UN membership, Dennis Wilder, the US National Security Council Senior Director for Asian Affairs, declared that both Taiwan and the ROC were not countries, and that the ROC was an issue undecided.<sup>32</sup> Since the US neither recognizes Taiwan as part of China, nor regards Taiwan (or the ROC) as a country, it can be inferred that the US still holds the view that Taiwan’s status remains undetermined.<sup>33</sup>

### III. The Promotion of A Two-China Policy (1950-1972)

By late 1949, for strategic reasons, some senior American officials had the idea of creating two Chinas.<sup>34</sup> After the outbreak of the Korean War, with the release of the theory “Taiwan’s status remains undetermined,” America’s two-China policy gradually became clear. In fact, when Truman dispatched the Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait to prevent the PRC and the ROC from attacking each other, it not only alleviated tensions in the Taiwan Strait at the time, but also set the stage for the US to carry out its two-China policy for the future. This policy evolution was caused by four factors. First, the US had acknowledged that the PRC was unlikely to be overthrown in the near future and the KMT regime would have no chance to regain the Chinese mainland. Second, the US had to protect the KMT regime as part of its defense lines against the Communist forces in the western Pacific. Third, the US believed that the coexistence of two legal Chinas could end the Chinese civil war and prevent the US from becoming involved. Last, Washington still hoped for an alliance with Beijing to

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<sup>31</sup> US Department of State, “Interview with Anthony Yuen of Phoenix TV,” Secretary Colin L. Powell, China World Hotel, Beijing, China, October 25, 2004. Available at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/37361.htm>

<sup>32</sup> Dennis Wilder, the US National Security Council Senior Director for Asian Affairs, said, “However, membership in the United Nations requires statehood. Taiwan, or the Republic of China, is not at this point a state in the international community. The position of the United States government is that the ROC -- Republic of China -- is an issue undecided, and it has been left undecided, as you know, for many, many years.” See White House, “Press Briefing on the President’s Trip to Australia and the APEC Summit by Senior, Administration Officials,” August 30, 2007. Available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/08/20070830-2.html>

<sup>33</sup> John Tkacik and Arthur Waldron, “What the ‘One China Policy’ Really Means?” *Wall Street Journal*, 19 September 2002.

<sup>34</sup> When Truman and Acheson were going to abandon Taiwan in 1949, some senior members of the administration insisted that Taiwan should not be controlled by the CCP. On 25 October 1949, an official report entitled *The Position of the United States with respect to China* was made by the US National Security Council, which asserted that the US should do its best to avoid recognizing the PRC as the sole government of China. Instead, the US should explore the possibility of recognizing a Communist regime in part of the Chinese territories and another authority in the non-Communist ones. This might be seen as the origin of the American two-China policy. See “*The Position of the United States with Respect to Asia*,” 25 October 1949, S. Truman Library, PSF, Box 207, as cited by Wang Jisi, “*Lun liang ge Zhongguo chengce de qi yuan*” (“The Origins of America’s ‘two China’ Policy”), p. 320.



contain Moscow as many senior US officials believed that the PRC would eventually clash with the USSR.

In January 1953, the Eisenhower administration took office and continued to adopt the “wedge” strategy. Secretary of State Dulles was a more resolute anti-Communist and believed that the two Communist regimes would quarrel in the future. Nevertheless, although the US continued to provide the ROC with financial and military support, it did not prepare to help the ROC retake the Mainland.<sup>35</sup> In July 1954, the PRC strenuously propagated in the international community its mission of liberating Taiwan. In order to resolve the so-called “Taiwan question” through political means, the US began to study how to include two Chinas in the UN.<sup>36</sup>

On 2 December 1954, Washington and Taipei concluded the *US-ROC Mutual Defense Treaty* which recognized only Taiwan and the Pescadores as the ROC territories.<sup>37</sup> The exchange notes of the treaty stipulated that the US's defensive obligation did not extend to the offshore islands, nor could any significant ROC military action against the Mainland be undertaken without prior US agreement.<sup>38</sup> The signing of this treaty was therefore seen as a significant step in the process of separating Taiwan and the Mainland,<sup>39</sup> and a tacit recognition of two Chinas.<sup>40</sup> As its price for signing the treaty, Washington repeatedly tried to persuade Taipei to abandon the offshore islands, including Quemoy and Matsu, since the US had no wish to become embroiled in a war between Beijing and Taipei.<sup>41</sup> During the two major

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<sup>35</sup> Chen Yu-chun, *Yi ke Chungkuo yu Taipei Huafu Peking* (“One China” and Taipei, Washington and Beijing), p. 73.

<sup>36</sup> In August 1954, Dulles began to study the possibility of amending the UN Charter and creating two Chinas in the UN. He submitted a secret document to President Eisenhower, which suggested that the US policy toward China and Taiwan should be in accordance with the model of West Germany and East Germany. Dulles also expressed his hope for a long-term separation of the two Chinas. See Wang Jisi, “*Lun liang ge Zhongguo chengce de qi yuan*” (“The Origins of America's ‘Two China’ Policy”), 329; Chen Yu-chun, *Yi ke Chungkuo yu Taipei Huafu Peking* (“One China” and Taipei, Washington, and Beijing), p. 231.

<sup>37</sup> Article 6 of the *1954 Mutual Defense Treaty between the US and the ROC* reads, “For the purposes of Articles 2 and 5, the terms ‘territorial’ and ‘territories’ shall mean in respect of the Republic of China, Taiwan and the Pescadores.” Available at [http://usinfo.org/sino/dtreaty\\_e.htm](http://usinfo.org/sino/dtreaty_e.htm)

<sup>38</sup> *Exchange of Notes Constituting an Agreement between the United States of The America and The Republic of China Relating to the Mutual Defense Treaty of 2 December 1954* stated, “In view of the obligations of the two Parties under the said Treaty and of the fact that the use of force from either of these areas by either of the Parties 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. Military elements which are a product of joint effort and contribution by the two Parties will not be removed from the territories described in Article 6 to a degree which would substantially diminish the defensibility of such territories without mutual agreement.” Available at <http://www.taiwandocuments.org/mutual02.htm>

<sup>39</sup> Wang Jisi, “*Lun liang ge Zhongguo chengce de qi yuan*” (“The Origins of America's ‘Two China’ Policy”), p. 328.

<sup>40</sup> Hu Wei-chen, *Meikuo tui Hua “i ke Chungkuo cheng-tse” chih yen-pien* (*The Evolution of the US “One China” Policy*), p. 36.

<sup>41</sup> Chen Yu-chun, *Yi ke Chungkuo yu Taipei Huafu Peking* (“One China” and Taipei, Washington and Beijing), p. 74.

Taiwan Strait Crises of 1954 and 1958, this issue caused bitter disputes between Washington and Taipei. Although the US military often emphasized the strategic value of those islands, the general view in the US Department of State was that losing them would benefit the US, since this would reduce the chances of armed conflict with the PRC, and create a more logical situation, geographically, for a two-China policy.<sup>42</sup>

In February 1955, Washington began its campaign to try and convince Taipei that there were two Chinas.<sup>43</sup> From 1 August 1955 the US and the PRC began ambassador-level negotiations in Geneva, which were shifted to Warsaw in 1958, and which, by 1972, had convened 136 times. Although the US declared that these negotiations had nothing to do with diplomatic recognition, they inevitably had the effect that the US recognized the PRC.<sup>44</sup> Owing to objections from Taipei and Beijing and other international factors, however, “two Chinas” did not become a formal US policy during the Eisenhower administration.<sup>45</sup> Certainly, as Harry Harding has said, many of the US’s measures in the 1950s were designed to reduce tensions in the Taiwan Strait. The PRC had often regarded them as intentionally creating two Chinas, in particular the Eisenhower administration’s repeated efforts to force the KMT regime to abandon the offshore islands in order to avoid armed conflict with the PRC, and the US proposal made at the 1955 Geneva Conference of a cease-fire across the Taiwan Strait.<sup>46</sup>

Because the USSR’s strength in the world was increasing, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations continued to apply the “wedge” strategy to divide the PRC and the USSR. They also pursued a *de facto* two-China policy and advocated a two-membership policy toward the issue of Chinese representation in the UN. In May 1961, Kennedy sent Vice-President Johnson to Taipei to probe Taipei’s view on the issue of “two Chinas.”<sup>47</sup> In April 1964, Secretary of State Dean Rusk visited Taiwan to tell Chiang Kai-shek that the US would no longer refuse PRC entry into the UN,

<sup>42</sup> Steven M. Goldstein, “The United States and the Republic of China, 1949-1978: Suspicious Allies,” *Taiwan Security Research*, February 2000. Available at <http://www.taiwansecurity.org.tw>.

<sup>43</sup> For example, Dulles told the ROC Minister of Foreign Affairs George K. C. Yeh and the ROC Ambassador to the US Ku Wei-chun, that there were two Chinas. The following month Dulles visited Chiang Kai-shek and told him that the US regarded the cross-Strait conflict as an international war, not a civil war. See Wang Jisi, “*Lun liang ge Zhongguo chengce de qi yuan*” (“The Origins of America’s ‘Two China’ Policy”), p. 331.

<sup>44</sup> Hu Wei-chen, *Meikuo tui Hua “i ke Chungkuo cheng-tse” chih yen-pien* (*The Evolution of the US “One China” Policy*), pp. 21 and 23.

<sup>45</sup> Chen Yu-chun, *Yi ke Chungkuo yu Taipei Huafu Peking* (“*One China*” and Taipei, Washington and Beijing), p. 232.

<sup>46</sup> Harry Harding, “The Legacy of the Decade for Later Years: An American Perspective,” translated by Wang Jisi, “*Shi nien liu xia de yichan: Meiguoren de guandian*,” in Yuan Ming and Harry Harding, ed., *Zhong Mei guanxi shi shang chenzhong de yi ye* (*Sino-American Relations 1945-1955: A Collaborative Reassessment of A Troubled Time*), p. 416.

<sup>47</sup> Chen Yu-chun, *Yi ke Chungkuo yu Taipei Huafu Peking* (“*One China*” and Taipei, Washington and Beijing), p. 233.

and to ask Taipei to accept a two-China arrangement.<sup>48</sup> During the period of the Vietnam War, some senior American officials also suggested that the US formally implement a two-China policy.<sup>49</sup>

Meanwhile, both the US Congress and many academics expressed the same view. In 1959, the Conlon Incorporation, commissioned by the US Senate, released a research report on America's Asia policy, which suggested that the US should recognize "the Republic of Taiwan" and let the PRC and Taiwan both enjoy membership of the UN. This research further advanced the view that Taiwan should abandon Quemoy and Matsu in exchange for continued US assistance in the defense of Taiwan and the Pescadores.<sup>50</sup> John K. Fairbank, a famous expert on Chinese affairs, also saw Taiwanese independence as the best and only way to end the Chinese civil war and to prevent the US from becoming involved.<sup>51</sup> It is worth noting that these suggestions implied that "one China, one Taiwan" was a good way to resolve the disputes between the two Chinas, and that the US should recognize the PRC as the sole government of China.

The USSR-PRC relations were becoming increasingly tense when the Nixon administration took office in 1969. In late 1969, Beijing's leaders decided to play the "America card" to resist the USSR, as they believed that the USSR's threat to the PRC was more serious than that of the US.<sup>52</sup> This provided the Nixon administration with a good chance to manipulate the "wedge" strategy and pursue a two-China policy. In February 1970, Nixon made a speech to Congress, publicly stressing that the US should not isolate the PRC. In response, the PRC said it welcomed the US sending senior officials to Beijing to talk.<sup>53</sup> After January 1971, the US spared no efforts to promote the dual-representation plan for Taipei and Beijing in the UN.<sup>54</sup> In May 1971,

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

<sup>49</sup> Hu Wei-chen, *Meikuo tui Hua "i ke Chungkuo cheng-tse" chih yen-pien (The Evolution of the US 'One China' Policy)*, p. 33.

<sup>50</sup> US Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *United States Foreign Policy*, Compilation of Studies. Prepared under the Direction of the Committee of Foreign Relations, 86<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, vol. 1 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1960), pp. 549-551, as cited by Lin Cheng-yi, *Taiwan an-chuan san-chiao hsi-ti: Chungkung yu Meikuo te ying-hsiang (The Triangular Problem of Taiwan's Security: The PRC and American Influence)*, second edition (Taipei: Kui-kuan Books Company Ltd., 1997), p. 233.

<sup>51</sup> John K. Fairbank, "Communist China and Taiwan in United States Foreign Policy," *The Brian McMahon Lectures*, The University of Connecticut, 21 November 1960, p. 179.

<sup>52</sup> Su Ge, *Mei guo dui Hua zhengce yu Taiwan wenti (American China Policy and the Taiwan Issue)* (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi chubanshe), pp. 362-63.

<sup>53</sup> Hu Wei-chen, *Meikuo tui Hua "i ke Chungkuo chengtse" chih yen-pien (The Evolution of the US "One China" Policy)*, p. 42.

<sup>54</sup> In January 1971, the US Department of State drew up a dual-representation plan whereby both the ROC and the PRC were admitted to the UN. (See Chen Yu-chun, *Yi ke Chungkuo yu Taipei Huafu Peking*, p. 88.) the US sent a diplomat, Robert Murphy, to Taipei to discuss the dual-representation plan, in which the US promised to preserve Taipei's UN membership and its permanent membership of the UN Security Council in exchange for Beijing's UN entry. In August 1971, Rogers further said that participating in the same international organization would not damage respective sovereignties of the

the US promised the ROC to preserve Taipei's UN membership and its permanent membership of the UN Security Council in exchange for Beijing's UN entry.<sup>55</sup>

In February 1972, Nixon visited Beijing and a joint US-PRC *communiqué* was signed, in which the two sides stated that “progress towards the normalization of relations between China and the United States is in the interests of all countries.” Accordingly, in May 1973 the two sides established their liaison offices, with diplomatic immunity for their staff, in each other's capitals. In Kissinger's view, this measure was tantamount to establishing *de facto* diplomatic relations between the two countries.<sup>56</sup> Likewise, PRC Premier Zhou Enlai regarded these offices as “embassies in all but name.”<sup>57</sup> As the US still had a diplomatic relationship with the ROC at that time, some have stated that the US and the PRC were in fact carrying out a policy of “two Chinas” or “one China, two Governments.”<sup>58</sup> America's *de facto* two-China policy had finally been established.

In retrospect, it is clear that America's two-China policy was concurrent with the assertion “Taiwan's status remains undetermined” from the 1950s to the 1970s, and that the former was founded on the latter. During this period, the imperative of US foreign policy towards Asia was to contain the Communist expansion. To prevent Taiwan from being controlled by the Communists, the US proposed the concept “Taiwan's sovereignty remained undetermined” and it recognized the ROC's legitimacy during the 1950s when the PRC seemed to be a puppet of the USSR. On the other hand, as many US leaders believed the PRC was in nature different from the USSR, the US simultaneously promoted the two-China policy to cajole a friendly PRC to jointly contain the USSR. Under such circumstances, in spite of Taipei's objection, all the US Presidents during the 1950s and the 1960s tried to maintain contact with Beijing and avoid provoking any conflict, though they did not formally recognize the PRC diplomatically and occasionally vetoed its entry into the UN.<sup>59</sup>

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ROC and the PRC, and that it was US policy to favor dual-representation in the UN. (See *New York Times*, 3 August 1971). Rogers also emphasized that it would be helpful to the two Chinas to cooperate on common issues if they attended the UN at the same time. See Lin Cheng-yi, *Taiwan an-chuan san-chiao hsi-ti (The Triangular Problem of Taiwan's Security)*, pp. 228 and 232.

<sup>55</sup> The US sent Robert Murphy to Taipei to discuss the dual-representation plan and gave Taipei this promise. Chiang Kai-shek approved reluctantly. (See Hu Wei-chen, *Meikuo tui Hua “i ke Chungkuo cheng-tse” chih yen-pien*, p. 46)

<sup>56</sup> Henry A. Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (London: George Weidenfeld & Nicolson Ltd, 1982), p. 61.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>58</sup> Hu Wei-chen, *Meikuo tui Hua “i ke Chungkuo cheng-tse” chih yen-pien (The Evolution of the US “One China” Policy)*, p. 59.

<sup>59</sup> There were some instances which elucidated the US position: On 5 March 1953, John Foster Dulles promised Anthony Eden, then British Foreign Minister, that the US would not consider undertaking any military action against the Chinese mainland from Formosa. (See *FRUS*, 1952-1954, vol. 14, Part 1, pp. 132-135, as cited by Chen Yu-chun, *Yi ke Chungkuo yu Taipei Huafu Peking*, p. 73) In the same month, fearing for deteriorating relations with the PRC, Dulles, in spite of the ROC continuous demands, repeatedly postponed signing a mutual security treaty with the ROC. See Xu xin, “*Guli Zhongguo: di yi ren Aisenhao Weier chengquan de Yachou chengce*,” translated from Nancy Tucker, “To Isolate China:

According to realism, international politics is a struggle for power and the primary obligation of every state is to promote its national interest, and to acquire power for this purpose. If all states seek to maximize power, stability will result from maintaining a balance of power, lubricated by fluid alliance system.<sup>60</sup> Since the US regarded the USSR as a major threat, it should form strong coalitions to safeguard its national security. As there were discords between the USSR and the PRC, it was a reasonable choice for the US to seize this chance to engage the PRC to contain the USSR. On the other hand, as Taiwan was called “free China,” and the ROC government had always pledged to defend democracy, the US maintained diplomatic relationship with Taiwan---a policy in line with idealism.

Nevertheless, the following development showed that the Nixon administration was going to recognize the PRC and abandon the ROC.

#### **IV. From the Ambiguous Two Chinas to “One China” (1973 - 1978)**

##### *1. Nixon and Kissinger's Secret Diplomacy and the 1972 US-PRC Communiqué*

Nixon was an anti-Communist China hard-liner before 1960, but his thinking about the PRC had undergone a dramatic shift during his travels in Asia in the mid-1960s.<sup>61</sup> In the autumn of 1967 when he was preparing to run for the Republican nomination for presidency, Nixon wrote an article to stress the urgent need of the PRC for America's Asia policy.<sup>62</sup>

There were four factors contributing to Nixon adopting a pro-PRC policy. First, when Nixon won the presidency in 1969, the international situation was gradually becoming disadvantageous to the US as the USSR had gained the upper hand in North Vietnam, Cuba, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East. Nixon believed that the USSR was the prime threat to the security of the Free World, and the US should and must

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The First Eisenhower Administration's Policy in Asia,” in Yuan Ming and Harry Harding, ed., *Zhong Mei guanxi shi shang chenzhong de yi ye (Sino-American Relations 1945-1955: A Collaborative Reassessment of A Troubled Time)*, p. 373. Even after the two Taiwan Strait crises, the US modified its political attitude toward the PRC, but did not give up the expectation of good relations with the PRC. On September 1958, the US and the PRC restored the ambassadorial meetings in Warsaw after the second Taiwan Strait crisis. During the Vietnam War, although the Johnson administration took the PRC as its enemy in Asia, the US did not seek to confront the PRC. Furthermore, as the war escalated, the Johnson administration also sought to ease PRC concerns about American military intervention by offering to explore ways to improve the relationship with the PRC. See Steven M. Goldstein, “The United States and the Republic of China, 1949-1978: Suspicious Allies.”

<sup>60</sup> Charles W. Kegly Jr. and Eugene R. Wittkopf, *World Politics*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>61</sup> James Mann, *About Face: A History of America's Curious Relationship with China, from Nixon to Clinton* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1998), pp.17-18.

<sup>62</sup> Nixon said, “Any American policy toward Asia must come urgently to grips with the reality of China...taking the long view, we simply cannot afford to leave China forever outside the family of nations...The world cannot be safe until China changes. Thus, our aim, to the extent we can influence events, should be to induce change.” See Richard M. Nixon, “Asia after Vietnam,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 46 (October 1967), p. 121.

defend itself against the Russian threat in cooperation with the PRC.<sup>63</sup> Second, the US was already seriously involved in the Vietnam War and needed to calm anti-war feelings at home and subdue criticism abroad. The Nixon administration thus did its best to seek better relations with the PRC in order to facilitate withdrawal from the Vietnam War and to stabilize Asia in preparation for reducing the American military presence.<sup>64</sup> Third, in 1969 a series of military conflicts broke out on the border between the PRC and the USSR, and Sino-Soviet relations deteriorated dramatically. The PRC also needed US support to resist the Soviets. Last, Nixon's rivals during the 1968 campaign for presidency, including the Republican Nelson Rockefeller and the Democratic nominee Hubert Humphrey, had proposed improving relations with the PRC. Nixon thus decided to forestall his competitors to consolidate his domestic status.<sup>65</sup>

On 9 July 1971, Kissinger, on Nixon's instructions, paid a two-day secret visit to Beijing with two major purposes: to seek Beijing's help in ending the Vietnam War, and to goad the USSR into *détente* with the US through a better US-PRC relationship. In Beijing, Kissinger discussed the so-called "Taiwan question" with the PRC and promised that the US would: (1) recognize that Taiwan belonged to China but that it hoped to settle the Taiwan question peacefully; (2) not support "two Chinas," "one China, one Taiwan," or Taiwan's independence; (3) support Beijing's membership in the UN and a permanent seat on the Security Council, but added that the expulsion of Taiwan from the UN should be by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly; (4) withdraw two-thirds of its army deployed in Taiwan after the end of the Vietnam War and reduce the rest as the US-PRC relations improved; (5) use its influence to discourage Japan from supporting a Taiwan independence movement and from moving into Taiwan as the American military presence was reduced; and (6) recognize the PRC during Nixon's second term.<sup>66</sup> The first two promises clearly contradicted America's two-decade official position that Taiwan's status was undetermined<sup>67</sup> and US's effort to pursue a two-China policy. These promises, with the exception of the UN issue, the KMT regime having been expelled in October 1971, were fully reaffirmed by Nixon when he met Zhou Enlai during his historical visit in Beijing on

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<sup>63</sup> David N. Rowe, *US China Policy Today* (Washington D. C.: UPAO, 1979), p. 9. Cited by Chen Li-tung, *Tai-wan Chu-ti lun (On Taiwan's Autonomy)*, p. 372.

<sup>64</sup> Steven M. Goldstein, "The United States and the Republic of China, 1949-1978: Suspicious Allies."

<sup>65</sup> James Mann, *About Face*, p. 18.

<sup>66</sup> Winston Lord, "Memorandum For Henry A. Kissinger," *Memorandum*, the White House, 29 July 1971, pp. 10-16. Available at *The National Security Archive*, George Washington University website <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB66/ch-34.pdf>

Winston Lord, "Memorandum For Henry A. Kissinger," *Memorandum*, the White House, 6 August 1971, pp. 15-19. Available at *The National Security Archive*, George Washington University website <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB66/ch-35.pdf>

<sup>67</sup> James Mann, *About Face*, p. 33.

22 February 1972.<sup>68</sup>

On 16 September 1971, Nixon publicly announced that the US hoped Taipei would concede its permanent membership of the UN Security Council to Beijing.<sup>69</sup> Because this position violated America's promise made in May, Chiang Kai-shek repudiate this suggestion and the ROC lost its seat in the UN the following month. The Nixon administration's effort to implement the dual-presentation formula was half-hearted, as Kissinger himself did not support this idea.<sup>70</sup>

In February 1972, Nixon visited the PRC and signed a joint *communiqué* in Shanghai with the PRC. This *communiqué*, the origin of the following US administrations' so-called "one China" policy, set three main principles of America's policy towards the Taiwan Strait: (1) There is only one China; (2) the Taiwan question should be settled peacefully; and (3) the US would not act as a mediator in any cross-Strait dispute.<sup>71</sup> This *communiqué* also tacitly implied that one of the main purposes of US-PRC alliance was to prevent the USSR's expansion in Asia.<sup>72</sup> The most important was that Nixon's China policy set out the rules for subsequent US administrations: close relations with the PRC could help the US to tackle the USSR, and Washington should work together with Beijing to settle arrangements throughout East Asia.<sup>73</sup>

Three points need to be noted about the 1972 Shanghai *Communiqué*. First, it seemed on the surface to have gone beyond the previous US position that Taiwan's status was "undetermined,"<sup>74</sup> but this did not necessarily mean that the US would no longer pursue the two-China policy to create two *de jure* Chinas or one China and one Taiwan. The *Communiqué* stated only that the US "acknowledges" (not "recognizes") the Chinese position that there was but one China and Taiwan was part of China, and the US "does not challenge this position." Therefore, some have argued that the US did not completely accept Beijing's one-China principle<sup>75</sup> or promise to carry out a one-China policy.<sup>76</sup> In fact, as discussed above, the US instituted a two-China policy

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<sup>68</sup> The White House, "Memorandum of Conversation," 22 February 1972, 2:10 pm – 6:10 pm.

<sup>69</sup> Hu Wei-chen, *Meikuo tui Hua "i ke Chungkuo cheng tse" chih yen pien (The Evolution of the US "One China" Policy)*, p. 46.

<sup>70</sup> James Mann, *About Face*, p. 38.

<sup>71</sup> In the 1972 US-PRC Joint *Communiqué*, the US declared, "The United States *acknowledges* that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but *one China and that Taiwan is a part of China*. The US Government does not challenge that position. It reaffirms its interest in a *peaceful settlement* of the Taiwan question by *the Chinese themselves*." (italics added)

<sup>72</sup> The 1972 US-PRC Joint *Communiqué* reads, "Neither should seek hegemony in the Asia Pacific region and each is opposed to efforts by any other country or group of countries to establish such hegemony."

<sup>73</sup> James Mann, *About Face*, p. 50.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>75</sup> Chen Yu-chun, *Yi ke Chungkuo yu Taipei Huafu Peking (One China and Taipei, Washington and Beijing)*, p. 89.

<sup>76</sup> Hu Wei-chen, *Meikuo tui Hua "I ke Chungkuo cheng-tse" chih yen-pien (The Evolution of the US "One China" Policy)*, p. 49.

from May 1973. Second, there was another ambiguity in the *Communiqué*: the question whether the US would recognize the PRC or the ROC as the legal government of “one China.” Third, it ignored the reality that many native Taiwanese opposed the KMT position that Taiwan belonged to China.<sup>77</sup> This also demonstrated that when there was a clash between idealism and realism on the process of making America’s foreign policy, the latter was very likely to override the former.

Although Nixon told the ROC that this *Communiqué* was only a joint declaration, not a treaty or agreement, it became an influential normative document for the following US administrations.<sup>78</sup> The most important aspect for Taiwan was Nixon and Kissinger’s private promise of the five principles which put Taiwan into a very disadvantageous position in the following decades. The controversial “three noes” released by Clinton in June 1998 was the result of this *communiqué*.<sup>79</sup>

## 2. *The Establishment of the US-PRC Diplomatic Relationship*

On 17 March 1973, Nixon was implicated in the Watergate scandal and resigned in the summer of 1974. This abrupt change foiled the implementing of Nixon and Kissinger’s secret promises to the PRC and delayed the establishment of the US-PRC diplomatic relationship. Gerald Ford succeeded to the presidency and immediately promised Beijing that America’s Taiwan policy would not change and that “no policy has higher priority than accelerating” the process of normalization with the PRC.<sup>80</sup>

In the spring of 1975, Vietnam fell into the Communist hands. Fearing for the political right’s attacks in the 1976 Presidential election, many senior officials of the Ford administration, including Kissinger, suggested postponing the normalization of the US-PRC relations. They believed that the Taiwan question would be an explosive issue that would trigger a conservative reaction against Ford.<sup>81</sup> In 1976 Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai died and the “Gang of Four” struggled with Deng Xiaoping for power, the pace of normalization between the two countries temporarily slowed down.

<sup>77</sup> James Mann, *About Face*, p. 48.

<sup>78</sup> Chen, Yu-chun, “*Yi ke Chungkuo yu Taipei Huafu Peking (One China and Taipei, Washington and Beijing)*”, p. 89.

<sup>79</sup> On 30 June 1998, Clinton said in Shanghai that “we don’t support independence for Taiwan, or two Chinas, or ‘one Taiwan, one China.’ And we don’t believe that Taiwan should be a member in any organisation for which statehood is a requirement.” Although this statement goes beyond the three US-PRC *communiqués* and the *Taiwan Relations Act*, which have been regarded as the cornerstone of American policy towards the Taiwan Strait since the 1972 *US-PRC Joint Communiqué*, Clinton said that “we have a consistent policy.” See the US Department of State, “Title: Transcript: President, First Lady on China in 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Important to understand China’s changes, challenges),” *PDQ*, 30 June 1998. Available at

[http://64.0.91.34/scripts/cqcgi.exe/@pdqtest1.env?CQ\\_SESSION\\_KEY=XKPCNWFNMOED&CQ\\_QUERY\\_HANDLE=124127&CQ\\_CUR\\_DOCUMENT=1&CQ\\_PDQ\\_DOCUMENT\\_VIEW=1&CQSU\\_BMIT=View&CQRETURN=&CQPAGE=1](http://64.0.91.34/scripts/cqcgi.exe/@pdqtest1.env?CQ_SESSION_KEY=XKPCNWFNMOED&CQ_QUERY_HANDLE=124127&CQ_CUR_DOCUMENT=1&CQ_PDQ_DOCUMENT_VIEW=1&CQSU_BMIT=View&CQRETURN=&CQPAGE=1)

<sup>80</sup> Ford made these promises in a personal letter to Mao Zedong, which was delivered by Huang Zhen, head of the PRC liaison office in Washington. See James Mann, *About Face*, p. 66.

<sup>81</sup> James Mann, *About Face*, pp. 68-69.



In January 1977 Carter was inaugurated. At this time the USSR was clearly expanding its power and influence around the world. It intervened in Angola's civil war in 1976, signed a treaty of friendship and alliance with Vietnam in 1978, and instigated a *coup d'etat* in Afghanistan which established a pro-USSR regime in 1978. The international situation prompted the Carter administration to move urgently to contain the USSR. Carter's National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, motivated by strategic concerns,<sup>82</sup> believed that the PRC would be an extremely useful factor in the US's worldwide struggle with the USSR,<sup>83</sup> and so the Carter administration decided to collaborate with the PRC. In early April 1978, some heavyweights in Congress, including Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Alan Cranston (D-Calif.), also advocated that Washington should shift its diplomatic relationship from Taipei to Beijing. This demonstrated that domestic support for establishing relations with the PRC was increasing.<sup>84</sup>

On the PRC side, clashes between the PRC and Vietnam became more serious and the USSR helped the latter to expand its strength in Indochina. In addition, since the USSR continued to deploy massive forces on its frontier with the PRC, the PRC also needed to form an alliance with the US to reduce the USSR threat. These domestic and external factors thus accelerated the pace of America's normalization of relationships with the PRC.

In August 1977, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance visited Beijing to discuss the establishment of diplomatic relations. The two sides did not reach an agreement as Vance wanted to maintain a presence on Taiwan after it had established diplomatic ties with the PRC, while Deng Xiaoping rejected this US proposal. This suggested that the US did not repudiate the existing policy of "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan." Deng insisted on three conditions as the prerequisite for the establishment of US-PRC diplomatic ties: the complete severance of US-ROC diplomatic relations, the abolition of the 1954 *US-ROC Mutual Defense Treaty* and the withdrawal of all US military personnel and installations on Taiwan.<sup>85</sup>

On 26 April 1978, Carter publicly announced that the US recognized the concept of "one China," and that establishing normal relations with the PRC would conform to US interests.<sup>86</sup> In May 1978, Brzezinski told Deng Xiaoping in Beijing that the US

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<sup>82</sup> Brzezinski said in his memoirs that the US-PRC relationship was being forged "with relatively little knowledge of or special sentiment for China, but with larger strategic concerns in mind." See Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser, 1977-1981* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1983), p. 209.

<sup>83</sup> James Mann, *About Face*, p. 84.

<sup>84</sup> Hu Wei-chen, *Meikuo tui Hua "i ke Chungkuo cheng-tse" chih yen-pien (The Evolution of the US "One China" Policy)*, p. 83.

<sup>85</sup> James Mann, *About Face*, p. 83.

<sup>86</sup> *New York Times*, 27 April 1978.

would accept Beijing's three conditions for establishing diplomatic relations.<sup>87</sup> On 16 December 1978, the Carter administration finally announced that the US would withdraw recognition of the ROC and recognize the Government of the PRC as the sole Government of China from 1 January 1979. The Taiwan question remained one for the Chinese people to settle in the future. The US also unilaterally announced that the 1954 *US-ROC Mutual Defense Treaty* would expire at the end of 1979. Nevertheless, it failed to obtain a Chinese commitment to renounce the use of force against Taiwan, which the US had been demanding since early in the Nixon administration.<sup>88</sup> The US could only unilaterally express its expectation that it "continues to have an interest in the peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue and expects that the Taiwan issue will be settled peacefully by the Chinese themselves."<sup>89</sup> The Carter administration actually considered the PRC as "strategic imperative" and was indifferent to Taiwan's fate. A prevailing view at the time was that the PRC would soon annex Taiwan.<sup>90</sup>

The Carter administration was too anxious to judge the international situation. In fact, in the late 1970s, the PRC faced much a greater USSR threat than the US did, and the PRC needed the US far more than the US needed the PRC.<sup>91</sup> Moreover, the PRC urgently needed to consolidate the two sides' relations as it was preparing to invade Vietnam. It was unnecessary for the US to abandon Taiwan.<sup>92</sup>

The establishment of the US-PRC diplomatic relationship formally announced that the US would carry out a one-China policy ever since, which has actually dominated the following administrations for decades. Obviously, on the basis of geopolitical considerations----"playing the China card" against the USSR ----the US

<sup>87</sup> James Mann, *About Face*, p. 89.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>89</sup> "US Statement on Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and the People's Republic of China," 15 December 1978. See Harry Harding, *A Fragile Relationship: The United States and China Since 1972* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1992). Cited by Shirley A. Kan, "China/Taiwan: Evolution of the "One China" Policy – Key Statements from Washington, Beijing and Taipei," Congressional Research Service (CRS) *Report for Congress*, the Library of Congress, 12 March 2001, p. 13. Available at <http://www.fas.org/man/crs/RL30341.pdf>

<sup>90</sup> Natale H. Bellocchi, "US-Taiwan Relations," in US Congress House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, *US-Taiwan Relations*, Hearing, 105<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 20 May 1998 (Washington, D. C.: US Government Printing Office, 1998), p. 65. Cited by Jaw-Ling Joanne Chang, "Managing US-Taiwan Relations: 20 Years after the Taiwan Relations Act," in Jaw-Ling Joanne Chang and William W. Boyer, ed., *United States-Taiwan Relations: Twenty Years after the Taiwan Relations Act* (Baltimore: Maryland Series in Contemporary Asian Studies, Inc., 2000), p. 15.

<sup>91</sup> Run Ming, "Chungkuo wei-hsieh yu Taiwan an-chuan" (The China Threat and Taiwan's National Security), *Nan Fang Kuai Pao (Southern News)*, 5 June 2003. [http://home.kimo.com.tw/snews1965/specil\\_coul/Yuan/Yuan\\_index.htm](http://home.kimo.com.tw/snews1965/specil_coul/Yuan/Yuan_index.htm)

<sup>92</sup> Arguments of Paul Wolfowitz, director of the Department of Policy Planning in the early Reagan administration. See James Mann, *About Face*, pp. 128-29. See also Run Ming, "Jiang Zemin te chiang-tao luo-chi yu Meikuo te i Chung cheng-tse" ("Jiang Zemin's Arbitrary Logic and America's 'One China' Policy") *Nan Fang Kuai Pao (Southern News)*, 31 October 2002.

backed away from unequivocal support for Taiwanese self-determination.<sup>93</sup> This was a choice in line with the realist perspective----a nation's national interest is more important than ethical and moral considerations.

## V. The Meaning of "One China" in the US's Policy towards the Taiwan Strait

The 1979 US-PRC *Communiqué* states that the US would only maintain unofficial relations with the people of Taiwan. In legal terms, this was tantamount to an indirect US announcement that it was ending its previous two-China policy.<sup>94</sup> It also implied that the US would not pursue a policy of *de jure* "one Taiwan, one China." The meaning of "one China" policy, however, remained ambiguous. The most controversial issue was Taiwan's international status.

In terms of international law, America's one-China policy refers merely to recognition of the government;<sup>95</sup> it has no bearing on the existence of other countries. In other words, it denies the ROC government's claim of sovereignty over the Chinese mainland without necessarily implying that the US denies the existence of the country ROC (or the country Taiwan). It merely means that the US does not recognize multiple regimes claiming sovereignty over the Chinese mainland. At any one time the US recognizes one Chinese government which controls one particular territory.<sup>96</sup>

It is worth noting that in the English version of the 1979 US-PRC *Communiqué* the US states that it "acknowledges" the Chinese position that there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China; it still does not use the word "recognises." In the Chinese version, however, the PRC purposely uses the word "*chengren*" (recognises) instead of "*renzhi*" (acknowledges). As the US did not express any opposition to the PRC over such a semantic difference when the *Communiqué* was being signed, some have said that this might be a signal that the US had made concessions to the PRC over the Taiwan question.<sup>97</sup> However, testimony made by then Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher demonstrated that Beijing's intentional mistranslation had not been accepted by the US.<sup>98</sup> This also suggests that "recognise" is different from

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<sup>93</sup> Marc J. Cohen and Emma Teng, *Let Taiwan Be Taiwan: Documents on the International Status of Taiwan* (Washington D. C.: Center for Taiwan International Relations, 1990), p. 164.

<sup>94</sup> Haig stated, "In legal, if not emotional terms, the massive concession by the United States ended the Two China policy." See Alexandra M. Haig, Jr., *Caveat: Realism, Reagan, and Foreign Policy* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984), p. 197.

<sup>95</sup> Yan Jiaqi, "*Liang'an zhengduan de chulu: hui dau yi guo liang fu*" (The Resolution for the Cross-Strait Disputes: Returning to the 'One Country, Two Government' Formula), *Zheng Ming Monthly*, vol. 299 (September 2002). Available at <http://www.chengmingmag.com/cm299/299spfeature/spfeature3.html>

<sup>96</sup> John Tkacik and Arthur Waldron, "What the 'One China Policy' Really Means ?"

<sup>97</sup> Chang Ya-chung and Sun Kuo-hsiang, *Mei-kuo te Chung-kuo cheng-tse: wei-tu chiao-wang chan-lueh huo-pan* (America's China Policy: Containment, Engagement, and Strategic Partnership) (Taipei: Sheng-chih Cultural Enterprise Co., 2000), p. 60.

<sup>98</sup> In February, 1979, when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held its hearing on the Taiwan Bill,

“acknowledge” in US foreign policy.

In fact, many experts said that the word “acknowledge” was deliberately chosen to hint that Washington did not agree with or accept Beijing’s position.<sup>99</sup> One of these experts was Harvey Feldman, formerly a member of the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department who helped to plan President Nixon’s epoch-making first visit to the PRC, and he served as Director of the Office of the Republic of China Affairs later. Feldman spoke clearly about the language used in the *communiqué*:<sup>100</sup>

The word ‘acknowledges’ is polite, diplomatic speech for *we understand that this is the position you take*. In fact, neither then nor since has the United States formally stated that Taiwan is a part of the People’s Republic of China or officially agreed to this claim of the PRC ... In formal statements, such as *communiqués*, the US has remained completely agnostic, taking no position at all on Taiwan’s status.

These experts’ arguments suggested that the US indirectly expressed in the *Communiqué* that it did not recognize Taiwan as part of China. The US, at most, holds the view that Taiwan’s status “remain[s] to be determined” and Taiwan’s future “has been opened for honest discussion.”<sup>101</sup>

## VI. The Co-existence of Idealism and Realism in America’s Foreign Policy

The previous sections of this paper have demonstrated that realism and idealism actually co-exist in America’s foreign policy. Although power figured prominently in America’s foreign policy during the Cold-War era, the precepts of idealism remained alive.<sup>102</sup> Historically, Woodrow Wilson’s approach, the symbol of America’s idealism,

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Christopher assured the Committee that the US adhered only to the English translation of the joint *communiqué* on normalisation. See Taiwan Enabling Act, Report of the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate Together with Additional Views on S. 245, 96<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, Report 96-7 (Washington D. C.: US Government Printing Office, 1979), p. 9, as cited from Chiu Hundah, “The Taiwan Relations Act and Sino-American Relations,” in Jaw-Ling Joanne Chang ed., *ROC-USA Relations, 1979-1989* (Taipei: Institute of American Culture, Academia Sinica, 1991), p. 46.

<sup>99</sup> John Tkacik and Arthur Waldron, “What the ‘One China Policy’ Really Means?” See also Luo Chih-cheng, “Mei-kuo ‘yi chung cheng-tse’ te nei-han yu shih-chien (The Meaning and Practice of the US’s One-China Policy),” in Luo Chih-cheng and Sung Yun-wen eds., *Chie-kuo “yi ke Chung-kuo” : Kuo-chi mai-luo hsia te cheng-tse chie-hsi* (Deconstructing “One China”: Theoretical, Comparative and Historical Studies) (Taipei: Taiwan Thinktank, 2007), p. 64.

<sup>100</sup> Harvey Feldman, “A Primer on US Policy towards the ‘One-China’ Issue: Questions and Answers,” *Backgrounder*, no. 1429 (12 April 2001), Heritage Foundation.

Available at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/AsiaandthePacific/BG1429.cfm>

<sup>101</sup> Harvey Feldman, “A Primer on US Policy towards the ‘One-China’ Issue.” See also Luo Chih-cheng, “Mei-kuo ‘yi chung cheng-tse’ te nei-han yu shih-chien (The Meaning and Practice of the US’s One-China Policy),” pp. 64-65.

<sup>102</sup> Charles W. Kegley, Jr. and Eugene R. Wittkopf, *American Foreign Policy*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (New York: St.

encouraged the US to throw away isolationism to take part in the First World War. In 1947, President Truman released the “Truman Doctrine,” based on the Wilsonist idealism, contending that America’s struggle with the Soviet Union was a war between two different ways of life. During the Cold War period, idealism was the rationale of the US containment of the Soviet Union.<sup>103</sup> America’s participation in the two World Wars and in the Cold War was not only about stopping or deterring aggression, it was also about “freedom versus tyranny.”<sup>104</sup> Samuel Huntington argues that the US’s “identity as a nation is inseparable from its commitment to liberal and democratic values.” Therefore, “Americans have a special interest in the development of a global environment congenial to democracy.”<sup>105</sup> The following remarks made by Kissinger well demonstrate the impact of idealism on American foreign policy:<sup>106</sup>

As an approach to foreign policy, Wilsonism presumes that America is possessed of an exceptional nature expressed in unrivaled virtue and unrivaled power. The United States was so confident of its strength and the virtue of its aims that it could envision fighting for its values on a worldwide basis. American exceptionalism must be the point of departure for a Wilsonian foreign policy.

In sum, idealism and realism often co-exist in America’s foreign policy. Most Americans held the view that foreign policy goals should reflect “the security interests of the nation” and “the economic interests of key groups within the nation,” as well as “the political values and principles that defined American identity,” including “liberal, democratic, individualistic, and egalitarian values.”<sup>107</sup> Kegley and Wittkopf also stated, “American policymakers and policy influentials of both realist and idealist persuasions share an increasing common conviction about the virtue of democratisation.”<sup>108</sup> For example, during the 1996 missile crisis in the Taiwan Strait, though the Clinton administration was comprehensively engaging the PRC and was intending to adopt the three-no policy to deny Taiwan’s statehood, it dispatched two aircrafts to the Taiwan Strait to deter the PRC from attacking Taiwan. The most important reason was that Taiwan had accelerated democratization in the early 1990s

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Martin’s Press, Inc., 1996), p. 539.

<sup>103</sup> Chang Ya-chung and Sun Kuo-hsiang, *Mei Kuo te Chung Kuo cheng tse* (America’s China Policy), pp. 36-42.

<sup>104</sup> Strobe Talbott, “Democracy and the National Interest,” in G. John Ikenberry, ed., *American Foreign Policy: Theoretical Essays*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (New York: Addison-Wesley Longman, Inc., 1999), p. 301.

<sup>105</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratisation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), pp. 29-30.

<sup>106</sup> Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), p. 809.

<sup>107</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, “American Ideals versus American Institutions,” in G. John Ikenberry, ed., *American Foreign Policy*, pp. 221 and 237.

<sup>108</sup> Charles W. Kegley, Jr. and Eugene R. Wittkopf, *American Foreign Policy*, p. 541.

and it was going to hold an unprecedentedly democratic presidential election at that time.

By reviewing the past, it is reasonable to predict that America's policy toward the Taiwan Strait would also oscillate between realism and idealism in the future. Since Taiwan has already become a democracy while the PRC is the largest communist regime, the US would certainly defend Taiwan's democracy from the PRC's threat, especially when Taiwan's strategic status was so important to the US which needed to contain a likely rival in the future. Therefore, Nancy Tucker has said, "A common belief [in the US] is that, in the event of an unprovoked attack by China, Congress, supported by the public, would favor defending Taiwan. Although some analysts are sceptical, appeals to defend democratic states against aggressors have succeeded in the past."<sup>109</sup> In order to attain support from the US to safeguard its national security, Taiwan not only needs to improve its defense capabilities, but also needs to deepen and consolidate its immature democracy.

## VII. Conclusion

In a sense, America's "one China" policy was a product of the Cold War when the US wanted to contain the USSR. Nevertheless, since the founding of the PRC, the US has in fact promoted a two-China or "one China, one Taiwan" policy, although it has always maintained formal diplomatic relations with one of the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. Before the outbreak of the Korean War, the US intended to abandon the ROC, as it believed that the PRC was naturally different from the USSR. After the Korean War, though the US had to recognize the ROC as the sole legal government of China, it never renounced all thought of engaging the PRC. This is because realism and idealism often co-exist in America's foreign policy. Realism induced Washington to engage Beijing to contain Moscow, which culminated in the establishment of its diplomatic relations with Beijing. Idealism led the US to recognize the ROC as the sole legitimate government of China until 1978.

As for the meaning of the US's one-China policy, it merely means that the US recognizes there is only one Chinese government controlling the Mainland at any one time, which is nothing to do with Taiwan's international status. In America's long-term position, Taiwan's international status is undetermined.

Obviously, the rising PRC will be the US's largest rival in the future. Based on this research, it can be inferred that if only Taiwan continues to improve its defense capabilities, and deepen and consolidate its democracy without provocation, the US would help Taiwan to defend itself against the PRC's military attacks.

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<sup>109</sup> Nancy Tucker, "If Taiwan Chooses Unification, Should the United States Care?" *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 25, no. 3 (Summer 2002), p. 26.

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## 美國「一個中國」政策的演變與確立，1949~1978 年

林進生\*

### 摘要

自一九九零年代中期以來，美國政府經常宣稱美國有其「一中」政策，而中華人民共和國則是唯一代表中國的合法政府。事實上，美國所謂的「一中」政策是冷戰時期的產物，是在 1978 年正式確立下來的。從 1949 年到 1978 年間，美國在大部分的時期都是實施「一中、一台」或是「兩個中國」的政策。美國「一中」政策的內涵，是指美國政府不承認有數個政權同時聲稱擁有中國大陸的主權。換言之，在任何時候，美國都只承認全世界僅有一個中國政府擁有中國大陸。至於台灣的地位問題，美國政府從未承認台灣是中國的一部分。美國政府長期以來的立場是——自 1950 年代以來，台灣的國際地位仍未確定。由於理想主義與現實主義始終並存於美國的外交政策中，未來台灣除了應強化其防衛能力外，更應持續深化、鞏固其民主，以獲得美國對其國家安全的支持。

關鍵字：美國，「一個中國」政策，台灣國際地位，「一中一台」，兩個中國

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