

U.N. Tie on China Blamed on U.S.

Former State Dept. Aide Notes Foreign Policy Flexibility Loss

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NEW YORK—The United States could have avoided the humiliation of the tie vote in the General Assembly on the admission of Communist China if it had adopted a more flexible policy in Asia, according to Roger Hilsman, assistant secretary of state for Asian affairs in 1963-64.

President Kennedy had approved a four-point program which would have introduced more flexibility in American foreign policy toward Red China, but he died before it could be implemented, Hilsman said.

Since then, the policy has become more rigid and the results more dangerous, Hilsman argued.

Recent developments have led Hilsman to believe that there is now a much greater chance that Communist China will take a direct and active part in the war in Vietnam.

All of the indicators are not yet clear, Hilsman emphasized. But he has a growing suspicion that North Vietnam may be overtly maneuvering both the United States and China toward a direct confrontation with the most dangerous possible consequences.

Campus Interview

These fears were developed by Hilsman in an interview. He is now professor of government at Columbia University. He was interviewed on the campus.

Hilsman made headlines around the world on Dec. 13, 1963, a few weeks after the death of President Kennedy when he outlined a new China policy for the United



Roger Hilsman
(AP Wirephoto)

States, but the policy died with Mr. Kennedy.

The policy was based on the premise that the Communist regime was in Peking to stay. Therefore, it was argued, it made sense no longer to perpetuate the policy of John Foster Dulles, which was predicated on the assumption that communism was a transitory affair for China.

Firmness, flexibility and dispassion were the basic principles of the new policy.

Kennedy Intent

Just a year ago Hilsman elaborated on the plan, revealing for the first time some specific actions which President Kennedy had intended to implement. These were: to ease travel restrictions on Americans desiring to go to China; reviewing trade policy with an eye to lifting restrictions on non-strategic gifts; increasing direct communications in addition to the continuing bilateral talks in Warsaw and extending diplomatic recognition to Mongolia.

"I had hoped that President Johnson, armed with the tremendous mandate of the election last year, would undertake some of these things," Hilsman said in the interview at Columbia.

"Instead of getting more flexible, however, our policy appears to be getting more rigid," he said.

Hilsman said this has two deleterious results:

(1) It encourages a lot of countries, including many that voted for Peking at the United Nations, to blame the United States rather than Red China for China's misbehavior, arguing, as France did in the debate here, that the bad behavior is merely a result of discrimination and isolation.

(2) It discourages any evolution of thinking by the second echelon in Peking's leadership, the younger men who are more susceptible to change and to the eventual development of a more sophisticated attitude along the lines of what has happened to the leadership in the Soviet Union.

"What frightens me is the excess of black and white military approaches to the problems of Asia in American policy thinking," Hilsman said.

Educational Aim

"We really have to stand up to the Communists, yes, but we also have to pursue a policy that educates them in the process."

Hilsman said that he did not expect an affirmative response to any of the proposed American initiatives from Peking. China needs an enemy and the United States is a convenient one, he said. But, he added, by making reasonable overtures repeatedly, the United States will dramatize to the world that the problem of intransigence, bellicosity and aggression lies in Peking, not in Washington.

"We are talking about a 30-year proposition as a minimum," Hilsman said.

But, until some reasonable understanding is reached, the United States must remain firm while flexible, probably firmer before it can be more flexible, Hilsman believes.

Hilsman's proposals, in effect, appeared to support a

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two-China theory under which there ultimately would be recognition of Peking as the government of mainland China and of Taiwan as an independent state. But he was unwilling to recommend a policy overtly committed to this.

So long as the people of Taiwan want to be independent, the United States must keep its commitment to them, he emphasized. This is not for military reasons, but purely in support of the right of self-determination of those people.

Hillsman also was critical of repeated statements from Washington blaming Red China for the war in Vietnam.

"Of course, the Chinese indeed are the source of the trouble," Hillsman said. "But there are differences between Peking and Hanoi. We should exploit the differences rather than minimize them by always talking about the Chinese role."

Criticizes Bombing

Hillsman repeated his criticism of the decision of the United States last March to bomb North Vietnam. The negative aspects, particularly the reaction this has forced on Moscow and the eastern Europeans, far outweighs any limited military gains, he feels.

"It appears to me that the United States has vastly underestimated the strength of North Vietnam," he said.

"There is a possibility that the situation in Vietnam may get much worse by an

increased commitment of North Vietnamese forces and even of Chinese.

"I've been puzzling over this the last few days," he continued. "It seems to me, and be careful about this, but there is a suspicion beginning to be aroused that North Vietnam is trying to create a situation in which both the United States and Communist China would be forced to put up or shut up."

"They may, and emphasize that word 'may', they may be trying to manipulate both friend and enemy into a position in which one or the other would be forced to back down."

In this dangerous circumstance, Red China might be forced to commit its forces to the war and thus create a second Korea, he indicated.