

To 'Contain' China Is Our Problem Now

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 26—Whatever its shortcomings, the great debate on Vietnam offered clear proof that American actions there are a direct expression of American calculations about Communist China.

Although there are groans around the country and even around the Government about our rusty China policy, the fact is that the United States is betting enormous stakes on the correctness of that policy. Only the fear of Chinese expansionism explains the American involvement in the war. Only the fear of Chinese intervention explains the American restraint in that war.

There is little enthusiasm here for a war against China herself, so that the policy of 1950 has matured to the point of uneasy acceptance of a Communist China for a long time to come. But there is determination here to bleed, if necessary, to "contain" that China and to accept no further spread of her influence and power.

At the start of the Kennedy Administration, there had been a few faint efforts to take the passion out of China policy and to unravel its contradictions. There were hopes that the Nationalists on Taiwan could be persuaded to establish themselves as a separate state, disengaged from the useless islands on China's coast, disabused

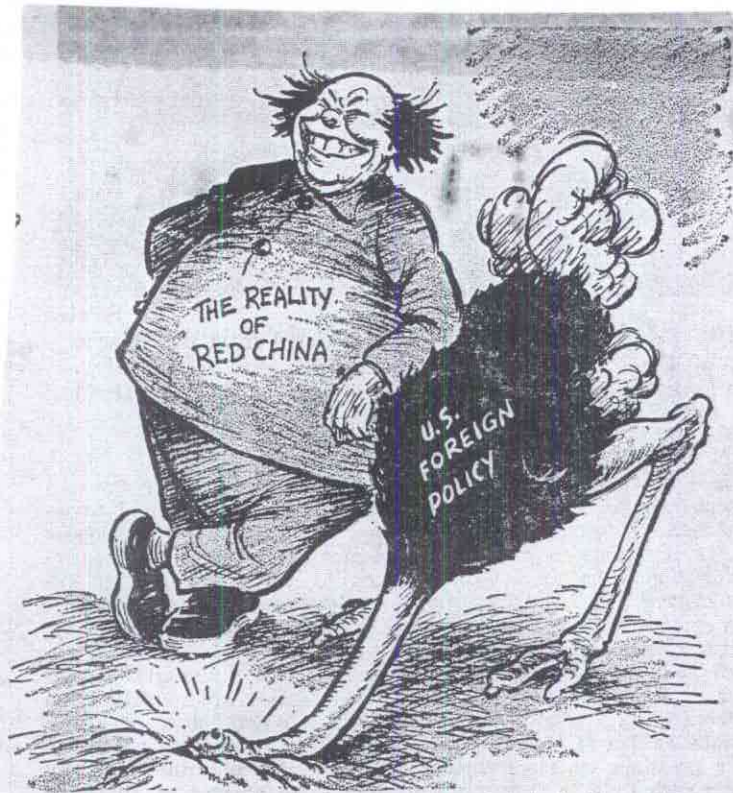
of the dream of a return to the mainland and eventually seated at the United Nations, as Taiwan, as part of a deal admitting the Communists, as China.

There were negotiations to recognize Outer Mongolia, against the wishes of the Nationalists, and of easing travel and trade restrictions on Americans so that decent contacts with the mainland could work a moderating influence on Peking. Tentatively, President Kennedy even offered to consider selling wheat to Peking when famine threatened in 1961.

But these moves, which promised to be politically difficult, if no longer impossible, were soon frustrated by the pressure of international events and by the persistent hostility of the Chinese Communists themselves.

The rapid deterioration of relations between Moscow and Peking produced a brief period of Soviet-American cooperation, culminating in the nuclear test ban treaty. China saw this as proof of collusion against her interests, as a pact of encirclement, and declared herself the leader of all elements everywhere hostile to the white and "bourgeois" and industrialized West.

The progressive military involvement of the United States in Vietnam was at first an expression of this antagonism. It has now be-



Justus in The Minneapolis Star

"Bird's eye view."

come the principal consequence, a great trial of strength that will determine the future course of the contest.

The problem of China demonstrates that governments do not long indulge in the luxury of history, fairly apportioning guilt for the past. Washington concedes many grievances to the Chinese people. But it also claims them against the Communists, especially for Korea and for the current efforts to undermine stability and

progress wherever Peking cannot have relations on its own terms, with Western, neutral and even Communist nations.

As William P. Bundy put it last week in one of the Administration's rare treatises on China policy, Washington is persuaded that Chinese and American objectives are now "totally antithetic." The Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs said the United States sought only the "independence" and progress of nations

in Asia, whereas Peking was determined to promote violent revolution leading to the "subjugation" of her smaller neighbors and ultimately threatening even secure countries such as India and Japan.

He defined it as an ambition that is promoted not primarily by conventional military assault, for China is "tactically cautious," nor in a "contest of ideas" between Communism and something else, but by the "power of subversive organization—perhaps the one field in which Communist China has shown real innovation and skill."

U.S. Hope

From this analysis, the Administration has concluded that all nations interested in stability and in orderly progress and change must join to frustrate China, hoping that she will eventually turn her energies inward under a new generation of more moderate leaders.

American economic and military power alone can maintain the "balance of power in Asia" to do unto China what was done unto the Soviet Union a decade ago, it is said; thus, even the Soviet Union should be quietly applauding our effort, officials contend.

All the while, the Administration adds, it will stand ready for an improvement of relations and contacts, although there can be no thought of formal diplomatic recognition or admission to the United Nations until Peking has proved its devotion to "peace."