



Harry Golden

Was JFK revising Peking policy?

Charlotte, N. C. — In preparing my book on Israel, I enjoyed a two-hour long interview with David Ben-Gurion, the first Prime Minister. Interview is a misnomer.

Ben-Gurion conducts a lecture with visiting firemen, there is none of the usual give and take. Still, it is instructive for a newspaperman to listen for a change instead of coax.

Toward the end of our history lesson, Ben-Gurion reminisced about some of the Americans he had met and he said that John Kennedy's assassination was a crucial event for American history because Kennedy's death cut short what he might have corrected.

"The serious mistake you Americans made in the second third of this century," said Ben-Gurion, "was trying to isolate China. I think Kennedy was reassessing this state of affairs and I think he would have moved to correct it." (Adlai Stevenson once told me that the two greatest tragedies of the 20th century are the slaughter of the Jews by the Germans and the attempt of America to isolate Red China.)

Well, Ben-Gurion knows no more about what Kennedy might or might not have done than the rest of us but I cannot help recalling his remarks on the eve of the United Nations debate

on whether to admit Red China to its councils.

We have been adamant about excluding Red China since Mao pushed Chiang off the mainland. Many of the Republican critics charged that Roosevelt or Truman "lost" China much in the same way a man loses a collar button.

The Korean War intensified our intransigence and John Foster Dulles lay down the moral imperative that he would not let Red China shoot its way into the UN.

After all these years, the State Department has formulated a new policy. The United States might vote for the admission of Red China as a member provided that seating the communists does not mean unseating Nationalist China. It is, to say the least, a softening of the hard line.

The most curious aspect of our efforts to erase Red China from political and physical geography of the world is that we have always been aware of what interests we have in the Far East. We have been characterized from time to time as an isolationist nation but we were isolationists only because Germany was the enemy in two world wars. We have been far from isolationists about the Far East. We have presumed we have interests there ever since Admiral Perry sailed into Tokyo Bay in 1852.

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