

U.S. Studies Alternatives to a Crumbling Line

Vietnam Key to China Policy Shift

3/27/66

By Murrey Marder

Washington Post Staff Writer

The United States has shifted its verbal strategy in the containment of Communist China but any substantive switch of Washington's policy toward Peking turns largely on the course of the war in Vietnam.

That is the conclusion of informed sources in commenting on reports that the Johnson Administration soon may turn to a "two China" policy in the United Nations.

The Administration is re-examining its China policy. The White House itself, as well as the State Department, is making its own examinations of alternatives to the obviously crumbling line that the United States has held in blocking mainland China's admission to the U.N. since the Communists took over in 1949.

There are opposing schools of policy in the reviews and debates going on inside the Administration. The differences involve both international and domestic political strategy.

But so far, all that has occurred—and all that may occur—is a shift in semantics.

On Capitol Hill, non-governmental Asian experts have struck a surprising receptiveness with their pleas for a shift of United States policy from "containment" of China to "containment but not isolation." In turn, the Administration, which has been cautiously veering away from a policy of total isolation anyhow, increasingly has sounded the theme that it is China that is "isolating herself."

As recently as last month, William P. Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, said in a major policy speech:

"It continues . . . to be U.S. policy to support the position of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in the U.N. For our part, we will also continue to oppose the admission of Communist China."

The formulation has been altered. Instead of talking about opposing the admission of Communist China, as Secretary of State Dean Rusk put it on Friday, of-

News Analysis

rear-guard opposition to any early shift of position which the U.N. and Far Eastern experts advocate. He is a principal, or the principal, author of the original policy of containing and isolating Communist China.

Rusk in 1949 was Assistant Secretary of State for United Nations Affairs, then Deputy Under Secretary of State, and from 1950 to 1951, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs. He sometimes has said privately, with a smile, that at the time he never anticipated that the policy would be sustained for 17 years.

What is primarily sustaining it right now for the United States is the war in Vietnam, rather than the militant language of Peking. According to informed sources, it is the interplay of world affairs on the Vietnamese crisis, even more than the requisites of American policy in the U.N., that will influence President Johnson's decision to maintain, or alter, American strategy.

Inside and outside the Administration, Rusk has been maintaining that the United States must not appear in any way to be "rewarding militancy" by altering its position on China, which is doing its utmost to block negotiations in a war in

Vietnam that is taking a toll of American lives.

That is an argument that is reported to carry considerable domestic political weight with the President. Others, however, argue that the "two China" formula they advocate would not "reward" Peking at all, but, on the contrary, make her accept responsibility for her own obduracy in world affairs.

What will draw special attention from United States policymakers this week will be the Soviet Union's Communist Party Congress in Moscow. That will have repercussions for Sino-Soviet relations, and perhaps on the war in Vietnam as well. Officially, the Soviet Union strongly supports Peking's bid for U.N. membership; actually, since the Sino-Soviet rivalry became openly bitter, Moscow's has given only pro-forma support to Peking's cause.

ficious now stress that "a good deal of this isolation is self-imposed . . ."

The self-isolation of China theme has appeared within the past 10 days in speeches by Joseph J. Sisco, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, and by Arthur J. Goldberg, United States Ambassador to the U.N.

Rusk, Bundy, Goldberg and Sisco all have cited Peking's multiple self-set conditions for her entrance to the U.N. They include: the expulsion from the U.N. of Taiwan, or Nationalist China; rescinding the U.N. resolution branding Peking an "aggressor" in the Korean war, and expulsion of the United States and "its imperialist puppets."

Many experts regard all but Peking's demand for the expulsion of Taiwan as propagandistic debating points; a few take all the demands literally.

Both Peking and Taiwan adamantly oppose having the other in the U.N. on any "two China" basis. But the question for Washington is whether the United States should "get the monkey off back," and put it on Peking's back, by supporting a "two China" policy even if, or especially if, Communist China will spurn entry on that basis.

The argument has been recurring for years, but this year it is stronger because during the last U.N. General Assembly, the vote for Peking's admission was 47 to 47 with 20 abstentions.

Rusk himself leads the