

**January 30, 1952**  
**Despatch No. 321 from American Embassy Taipei to  
the Department of State, 'General Chiang  
Ching-kuo'**

**Citation:**

"Despatch No. 321 from American Embassy Taipei to the Department of State, 'General Chiang Ching-kuo'", January 30, 1952, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Case Number F-1979-01277, US Department of State Virtual Reading Room. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/301246>

**Summary:**

Evaluates the role and reforms of Taiwan's Political Department within the National Government. It provides insights into changes implemented to reduce political interference in military operations while enhancing troop morale and administrative integrity

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**Original Language:**

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**Contents:**

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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR  
January 30, 1952  
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FROM : AMEMBASSY, TAIPEI  
TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON  
REF : Department's A-132, December 13, 1951 (10587)  
A-153, January 11, 1952 (1058)  
SUBJECT: General CHIANG Ching-kuo.  
FEB 14 1952

With regard to the data requested in the above-mentioned instruction concerning General CHIANG Ching-kuo, reference is made to the Embassy's despatch No. 242, December 11, 1951, "The Political Department of the Ministry of National Defense". The transcripts of conversation between General William C. CHASE, MAAG Chief, and General Chiang, which were enclosed with the despatch, provided a good deal of information about the latter. With a view to obtaining information more closely responsive to the Department's requirements, Mr. Alfred le Sene JENKINS interviewed General Chiang and also discussed him with Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. BARBER of MAAG, who has been assigned to work in the Political Department at General Chiang's request.

Unfortunately, however, because of Mr. Jenkins' transfer to the Department on short notice, he was unable to prepare a report incorporating the foregoing data. He will, therefore, as soon as possible after arrival in Washington, prepare such a report, which it is believed will answer the queries posed in the Department's instruction.

The United States Military Attache at Taipei, Colonel David D. BARRETT, has submitted to the Defense Department a report, dated January 22, 1952, and entitled "Brief Introduction to the Political Department, MND". Since the Political Department of the Ministry of National Defense seems to be so much a creature of General Chiang's making it is believed that this report would be enlightening with respect to his character and activities. Colonel Barrett says the report can be readily obtained from the Defense Department, Washington.

With regard to the Department's A-153, January 11, 1952, and to the general question of General Chiang and the Political Department, Lt. Col. Barber made the following comments on January 26, 1952, to the reporting officer:

- (1) General Chiang's political influence will be what President Chiang wishes it to be; he will not subvert his father's position. He enjoys the President's absolute confidence and, through him, sees all state papers.
- (2) The Political Department of the Ministry of National

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Defense insists that the Pao Mi Chu is an independent agency of the Ministry, operating strictly for security purposes and separately from the Political Department.

(3) Ministry of National Defense General Order 108, November 3, 1951, formally abolished the system of political officers' interfering with military commanders. Moreover, in a recent critique, President Chiang pointed out that political officers must not intervene in the military command and that, if any case of such intervention is brought to his attention, he will take appropriate action. This expression of intention by President Chiang to preserve the integrity of the command should be construed as a directive.

(4) At the Ministry of National Defense level, General Chiang issues no orders without their being promulgated by General CHOU Chih-jou, Chief of Staff. Barber said that, while the technical channel for General Chiang possibly to circumvent General Chou still exists, he does not know to what extent it is utilized.

(5) In the higher echelons, political officers rank lower than unit commanders but in the lower echelons (battalion and company level) political officers and commanding officers are customarily of equivalent rank. In the navy, however, political officers tend to rank higher than in the other armed services and they are less likely to be regular naval officers.

Barber remarked that during the past two months when he has been working closely with the Political Department he has encountered no concrete examples of political officers' interference with the military command. At the same time, however, he believes that fear of political officers' influence does exist among military commanders and that those commanders who are least competent are the most apprehensive of the political officers' reporting and other activities. In this regard, he said that in the case of the Chinese Air Force, whose commanding officers generally evoke respect for their ability, there seems to be relatively little concern about political officers.

(General Chase, Chief of MAAG, concurs in the foregoing account.)

\* The Pao Mi Chu is a successor to General Tai LI's intelligence organization. The Investigation Bureau of the Ministry of Interior, which concerns itself primarily with internal security, is sometimes referred to as the Chinese counterpart of the American F.E.I. It may be remarked that the delineation of functions among the various security and intelligence agencies of the Chinese Government is obscure.

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K. L. Rankin