

October 13, 1954

**Despatch No. 178 from American Embassy Taipei to
the Department of State, 'Chiang Ching-kuo'**

Citation:

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Summary:

Recounts an interview between Dr. Paul F. Langer and General Chiang Ching-kuo, focusing on the latter's authoritarian approach to governance and anti-Communist efforts. General Chiang emphasized the necessity of subordinating civil liberties to the campaign against Communism and criticized the Western-educated Chinese elite for being out of touch with grassroots realities. Langer observed Chiang's strong leadership qualities and authoritarian nature, predicting his continued influence in Free China. This document summary was generated by an artificial intelligence language model and was reviewed by a Wilson Center staff member.

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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

793.00/10-1354

FROM

A. EMBASSY, TAIPEI

STATE A/C/CD/AR 793.001

TO

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OCT 2 1954

REF

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REASON(S)
EXT. DATE
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REC'D	10-22	CIA-7	DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
		USA-10	RELEASE DENIED
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SUBJECT: CHIANG Ching-kuo

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Name of Officer

File

On October 8, 1954, Dr. Paul F. LANGERT, School of International Relations, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, who is engaged (under the auspices of the Ford Foundation) in a study of the impact of Communism in Japan, had a two-hour interview with General CHIANG Ching-kuo. The first part of the conversation was in Russian, which Langer speaks well, and the remainder in Chinese -- with "Jimmy" WEI (General Manager, Broadcasting Corporation of China) acting as interpreter. A summary of Langer's discussion with General Chiang -- insofar as it dealt with political questions and of Langer's reactions to the General follows.

* * * * *

The General explained that at the present time the Chinese Government "could not tolerate interference with its anti-Communist struggle". It is imperative now that all energies be directed towards the military defeat of the Communists on the mainland. Criticism of the government and divisions in political thinking are harmful because they have a disruptive and weakening effect on the anti-Communist cause of Free China. When the mainland has been retaken and more normal conditions prevail, it will then be possible to increase the scope of civil and personal liberties but under present conditions it is necessary to subordinate them to the national anti-Communist campaign.

Langer remarked to the General that he had read an China magazine and had been favorably impressed by the there were strictures in the review on certain aspects Government. He thought that it was to the Government's it allowed critical comment about its actions and also constructive criticism was desirable for the best functioning a government. The General's reaction to Langer's observations was negative, the latter said.

The General said that the Western-educated, English-speaking Chinese with whom American officials associate almost exclusively

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and on whose information and opinions they rely so heavily have few "grass roots" among the Chinese people and cannot speak for them. American judgments on Chinese affairs are therefore much affected by their limited knowledge of actual conditions. Langer said that the General seemed to regard these Chinese officials as "compradores".

Langer felt that the General had few intimates and that among those with Western background about the only one was "Jimmy" Wei. It was Langer's opinion that the General enjoyed "Jimmy's" company and consulted him on such matters as probable reaction of American public opinion to various Chinese measures and asked him for information regarding the United States. Langer did not think, however, that the General took "Jimmy" very seriously or would advise with him on high policy decisions.

Langer thought that the General's trip to the United States in the fall of 1953 had been worthwhile but he regretted that it had not been longer. The General mentioned to Langer that he had found the American people more organized and disciplined than he had expected and that they were hard-working. Langer remarked to the RO that the General seemed to feel that people should be "toilers" and that American industriousness had struck him favorably. The General said that Hollywood movies give a very misleading picture of Americans, who are not as frivolous as represented in the cinema. Although the General made no adverse comment about Americans, Langer felt that he did not find them congenial.

From the General's remarks, Langer deduced that "little love was lost" between him and General CHIANG Wei-kuo. He noted that "Jimmy" spoke disparagingly of the younger brother in the elder brother's presence.

Before coming to Taipei, Langer had been given the name of a member of the Legislative Yuan, Mr. WANG Hsin-heng (王新衡), as being a close associate of General Chiang Ching-kuo. Langer called on Wang and confirmed this fact. Langer said that Wang had been a fellow student of the General at Sun Yat-sen University, Moscow, that Wang was able to pick up the telephone and arrange to see the General and that the latter frequently consulted with Wang on important matters. Communist agents in Hong Kong made an attempt on Wang's life there in 1951.

(COMMENT: The Embassy's biographic data files indicate that Wang was born 1908 in Chekiang, that he is a graduate of Shanghai University and that he attended Sun Yat-sen University, Moscow. He is also listed as a former supervisor, Political Training Research Class, Central Military Academy; Editor, Soviet Russia Criticism (); departmental chief with the rank of major general in the National Military Council; counselor and concurrently director, Department Counselors, Shanghai Municipal Government.

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Langer is interested in learning the influence education in Moscow has had on the Asians who studied there. The General thought that a limiting factor in Russian training was that it was too obviously designed to bend Asians to Russian purposes and not to develop them for service in their own countries.

Langer observed that he found the General a likeable, disarming person and that the latter has a great future, as well as great present power, in Free China. Langer was impressed with his force, ability and frankness. The General is "authoritarian by nature" and not likely to change very much, Langer thought.

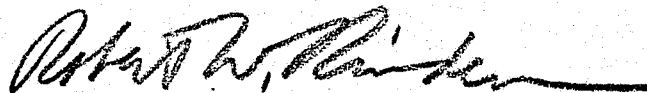
COMMENT:

Langer's reaction to the General was much like that of most Americans who have conversed with him along political lines: the General is able, agreeable and authoritarian.

A copy of this despatch has been sent to Hong Kong.

Action Requested: Dept. pls send copy of despatch to Moscow.

For the Ambassador:



Robert W. Rinden
First Secretary of Embassy

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