

August 7, 1950

**Memorandum of Conversation: American Position
with respect to Formosa**

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Summary:

This document summarizes a conversation between US and Dutch officials regarding American policy toward Formosa (Taiwan).

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Memorandum of Conversation
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DATE: August 7, 1950.

SUBJECT: American Position with respect to Formosa

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Van Boetezaelaer, Second Secretary, Netherlands Embassy.

Mr. Clubb, CA DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY *P. Adair* DATE *7/29/50*

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In the course of a general conversation this date Mr. Van Boetezaelaer, recently arrived from The Hague, said that officials at The Hague at the time of his departure were concerned with respect to American relationship to Formosa. The position, he said, would have been clearer in the event that American action in the first instance had been limited to Korea under UN mandate with SCAP subsequently making certain military dispositions affecting Formosa. In actuality, however, the action toward Formosa was taken by the United States unilaterally. It is difficult to see how the United States would handle the situation as it might develop from a clash with the Chinese Communists following upon a Communist attack on Formosa.

I explained that the present position respecting Formosa was clear as regards its inception, that the United States was uncertain at the time of the outbreak of the Korean hostilities that the Moscow strategists had not intended more to follow, and that it was therefore for military reasons, to protect the flank and rear of our positions in Korea, Japan and the Philippines, that the action of the Seventh Fleet was ordered. Formosa in the hands of a hostile Power would have constituted a military danger. Mr. Van Boetezaelaer said that he understood, but he added that it was to be feared that the Russians would make considerable use of any

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clash with the Chinese Communists for the service of their propaganda ends in Asia, and that the effect on the peoples of Asia of such clash would by itself be considerable.

I asked what Mr. Van Boetezaelaer might suggest in the circumstances as a means to influencing the thinking of the Peking regime. He said that he saw no other way than the extension at this time of recognition to the Central People's Government, but that he recognized that this was a practical impossibility. I agreed that it was and remarked that developments in Korea would assuredly, in my opinion, influence the thinking of the Peking leaders, that particularly if the UN defense in Korea proved stronger than had been anticipated at first by Moscow and Peking, and the Communist leaders saw the results of bombing on Korean industry, they might be caused to give serious thought to the results for themselves of any clash with the American forces respecting Formosa. I observed that any strengthening of the UN position in Korea might cause the Soviet strategists to press for the launching of a Chinese Communist attack on Formosa, and that this might develop a strain between Peking and Moscow which could be exploited.

Mr. Van Boetezaelaer opined that the exercise of pressure on Peking would more probably push them in the direction of Moscow - which was a development that we wished to avoid. I said that I believed that the major pressure for any change in pro-Moscow orientation would probably come from within China, and remarked that at the present time there was overt opposition to the Peking regime manifest in south and central China, and that any conciliation of Peking, whether with regard to Formosa or otherwise, would merely mean that they would take what we would offer and demand everything else they wanted besides. Mr. Van Boetezaelaer asked whether I therefore thought that it was a matter of causing a separation of Peking and Moscow rather than preventing the establishment of a closer relationship between the two. I said that such was the case, for it was my opinion that at the latest the signing on February 14 of the Treaty of Alliance between China and the Soviet Union put China definitely in the Soviet camp, and that it was now rather a matter of getting China out of the camp than one of preventing their entry into that camp. I said that it was my opinion that China now was following the Moscow line, that it was improbable that the Peking regime would get off the line because of any strain about the question of whether an attack on Formosa should be launched, but I admitted that it was well for us to consider the matter in all its angles.

I said that, in general, it was my opinion that we should all keep our eyes on the ball, that I felt that perhaps we here in the United States were more convinced than some people elsewhere that the moves of Communists everywhere were coordinated from Moscow, and that the problem was one of overall defense against Communist actions which might arise after and out of the Korean developments, which presumably were part of an overall program instead of limiting our actions to Korea alone. I

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remarked in passing that the President in his statement of June 27 had referred to possible UN action respecting Formosa, and suggested that conceivably the matter would come to the attention of the UN. Mr. Van Boetezelaer however seemed not to be ready to develop that particular line of thought.

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