

November 1, 1958
**Telegram No. 707 from Taipei to the Secretary of
State**

Citation:

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Summary:

Reports Taiwanese reactions to the October 23 joint US-GRC communique.

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Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

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Department of State

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FROM: Taipei

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 707, November 1, 9 p.m. (SECTION ONE OF TWO)

SENT DEPARTMENT 707, HONG KONG 171, CINCPAC 214.

CINCPAC FOR POLAD.

1. Reaction in Taiwan to October 23 joint communique initially reflected gratification over success of consultations, relief that US had not "pressured" GRC into reducing forces on off-shore islands, welcome of reaffirmation of US solidarity and support of defense of Kinmen, Matsu. To considerable extent, these emotions still characterize opinion of "average" observers.

2. However, microscopic examination of wording of communique soon convinced some representatives of press, members of legislative Yuan, KMT members, other politically minded persons of restoring freedom to mainland was concession "wring" from GRC. Such suspicions were intensified by reports of comment in US and elsewhere tending to treat communique as embodying "renunciation of force". Equally source of concern, though too sensitive to be thrashed out openly in press, was implication of "two Chinas" read into communique's reference to Republic of China as "authentic spokesman of free China" with capital "F".

3. Initial adverse reaction to communique came from quarters, such as Hong Kong KUNG SHEUNG PAO, which maintain extreme pro-counterattack position. GRC itself has long privately entertained few illusions concerning feasibility of military counterattack, and appreciates necessity for sake of its international position of avoidance bellicose posture. Nevertheless GRC felt it could not afford to disavow completely "counterattack" slogan, which is regarded by many as necessary to sustain morale of overseas Chinese as well as on mainland.

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-2-707, November 1, 9 p.m. (SECTION ONE OF TWO) from Taipei

mainland, and which (together with threat of Communist subversion) has provided useful justification for emergency political measures on Taiwan, for special position of KMT, et cetera. Hence official comment, including Minister Kuang's remark to press October 23 and Ambassador Yeh's airport statements in Taipei and Washington, hastened to stress view that communique does not embody unconditional renunciation of force. Editorials in major official dailies have contended that practically everyone connected with KMT, from Dr. Sun Yat-Sen down, has "always" acknowledged primacy of political methods in "revolutionary" struggle. They have maintained that President's press conference of September 29 (in which he acknowledged that mainland revolt must precede counterattack (and communique) which expressed view that force is not "principal means" for accomplishing mission of GRC (are thus entirely consistent with "counterattack").

4. Slower in coming to light, due to persisting sacrosanct character of "counterattack" slogan, has been reaction political "opposition" to KMT, advocates of formation "genuine" opposition party and other exponents of "liberal" reforms, who have for years been butting heads against argument that various temporary limitations of political rights are necessitated by requirements of counterattack. Reflecting views of these elements; some independent papers have begun calling for "realism" in admitting fact that counterattack has been ruled out and in adjusting to change. One reform that has been mentioned as possible implementation of reformulation of GRC mission in terms of political methods has been that of annulment of publications law revisions bill, whose passage last June was the object of much criticism from "opposition" elements. Another step that has been urged is holding of long-deferred "anti-Communist National Salvation Conference", whose convocation was promised by Ch En Ch Eng during his previous administration. Holding of ACNSC is supposed to result in formation of "genuine" opposition party.

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FROM: Taipei

TO: Secretary of State

SS

NO: 707, November 1, 9 p.m. (SECTION TWO OF TWO)

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5. Two-Chinas aspect of communique has received little press attention, since it is even more sensitive topic than counterattack. However, it is genuine concern of members of legislative Yuan, other political observers, which is readily voiced in private. Communist even-day cease fire announcement of October 25 attempted exploit this concern. Closest press has come to attempting refutation this point has been citation in several papers of Chinese language text of communique's reference to Republic of China as "authentic spokesman of Free China" (with small "f") as proof that US does not support two Chinas. Despite such explanations, many local observers retain suspicions on this score. They tend confuse existing "divided China" situation with "two Chinas". They feel renunciation of force aspect of communique, making China situation more-nearly parallel to that of other divided countries, in effect is trend toward "two Chinas". Some of concern arises from objective situation, from feeling that "divided China" situation is inherently unstable, due to disparity of power of two halves

6. On balance, despite criticism of "politicians", reaction to joint communique has been favorable. GRC, despite gestures toward avoidance of precipitate sacrifice of "counterattack" slogan, has tried avoid actions (such, for example, as early legislative Yuan interpellation of Foreign Minister) which might have negated favorable international effect of communique in presenting GRC (and US Government) in peaceful posture. Some other apparent criticisms of communique are actually reflection of domestic political differences. As to potential

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positive domestic effect of communique's reformulation of GRC mission in terms of political rather than military emphasis, it is still too early to say; however, ultimate result may be acceleration of wholesome trends.

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