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Quaker Answer to Chinese Puzzle

WASHINGTON — Nothing is harder, in the midst of a war, than to look beyond the immediate struggle to the problems and hopes of the long future. Yet precisely this look into the future has been attempted as a brave act of public service by the American Friends Service Committee (the Quakers) in its proposals for a new policy toward China.

Quite plainly there can be no immediate change in our policy while China disturbs the security of Asia. The Quakers, with all their faith in the persuasive power of good will, are not blind to political realities.

Their analysis contains some of the shrewdest comments on Chinese problems that have yet been presented for public consideration. Even among officials who dissent from their assumptions and principles, this report by the Quakers has won a most respectful hearing.

At the very center of their analysis the Quakers have put two troubling questions. Are we satisfied with our present policy? Do we wish to continue it indefinitely? No further discussion is needed by those who are satisfied with things as they are. But for many others these matters are by no means completely closed issues and they would welcome further discussion. It is to them that the Quaker appeal is addressed.

The Quakers ask us to weigh the gains and penalties of our policy of non-recognition, of a trade embargo, of mutual hostility, and of armed resistance. Without denying that such a policy had its ori-

gins and its justification in the threat of Chinese aggression, the Quakers ask whether we have nothing better to expect than another generation of armed antagonism and military struggle.

The policy of ranging China and the United States as mutual enemies, disputing the position of the paramount power in Asia, merely exposes the cluster of small states in Southeast Asia to the tensions and upheavals of a cruel struggle for power between two armed giants.

TO BREAK this fatal deadlock in which our policy has so long been imprisoned, the Quakers propose that we begin the long journey to the restoration of normal relations with China, in all areas from the diplomatic to the cultural.

But they concede that the stumbling block is Formosa. With their horror of brutality and persecution, the Quakers are the last people to tolerate the transfer of the people on Formosa to the savage reprisals of Peking. A definite and binding agreement to protect the safety and freedom of the Formosans must therefore be the first essential principle to any Chinese settlement.

Perhaps such a settlement will no longer appear remote and utopian if Peking is recognized as the government of one united China; if Formosa is granted a large measure of local autonomy and protected in its human freedom; if the American 7th Fleet is withdrawn from those waters, and if Peking becomes a member of the United Nations and no longer suffers any discrimination in the world community.

This clearly is a most formidable list of speculative possibilities and any approach to China on these principles is not practical for the United States in the visible future. All the same, if we take the easy course of seeking refuge in bleak negotiations palatable to us if only because of their long familiarity, then we doom ourselves to an endless entanglement with the China problem in its present dangerous form.

THE EMERGENCE of China as a nuclear power, still with a small and primitive capacity, but one capable of ruthless expansion in the next decade, gives a tragic and urgent emphasis to the necessity of no longer treating China as an outlaw state.

Perhaps China will obstinately resist all overtures but can anyone really argue that we have tried and exhausted all available policies? We have

been no more eager to reach an accommodation with China, in a significant and fundamental sense, than we were to come to terms for many years with Russia after its revolution. Our hostility did not break Russia's power then, and it has not yet broken China's power now.

The Quakers see a useful check on potential Chinese aggression in the presence of an international force in the threatened lands, with the United Nations taking an increased role in Southeast Asia.

Beyond all doubt the Quakers are far ahead of general American opinion, but there would be much support for their position in Asia, notably in Japan and India. They have, meanwhile, given us all a valuable lesson in the art of discussing public questions without self-righteousness and with a brave freedom from old dogmas.