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'National Debate' Is The Tipoff

'Out Of The Blue: A New U.S. Policy On Red China?'

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WASHINGTON -- A

closey guarded sweeping change in foreign policy is behind that surprise announcement by Undersecretary of State Averell Harriman welcoming a national debate on relations with Red China.

President Kennedy personally had a hand in this out-of-the-blue declaration by his top diplomatic trouble-shooter who is going to Moscow on a special mission to try to induce Premier Khrushchev to agree to a nuclear weapons test ban.

Harriman's highly significant statement is the first of a series of trial balloons

aimed at sounding out voter sentiment on possible overtures to Red China that the President and his foreign policy advisers have long been deliberating.

FOREMOST among those favoring that are Harriman, McGeorge Bundy, special White House foreign policy assistant, and Dr. Walt Rostow, head of the State Department Policy Planning Council. There are leaders of an inner council group advocating an "open door" policy toward Communist China.

In congressional circles they are credited as urging the President to undertake to induce Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek to cooperate

Nationalists' powerfully fortified offshore strongholds of Quemoy and Matsu before the Red Chinese test their first nuclear device -- anticipated either late this year or early in 1964.

The argument reputedly advanced by these advisers is that delay until after the Communists attain nuclear power would make it appear that a policy change was forced by Peiping's nuclear menace.

THIS HIGHLY controversial counsel is understood to be strongly opposed by some of the President's closest political advisers, foremost among them Kenneth O'Donnell and Ralph Dungan, members of his White House staff. They have been with the President throughout his political career, and while they have no direct voice in foreign policy, their opinions carry great weight with him.

Both are deemed emphatically against any change in policy toward Red China before the 1964 presidential election. They are warning such a shift would involve great political risk.

As expounded in a National Security Council study on the "formation of a China policy," the administration would initiate what would amount to in fact, if not in name, a "two-China" policy.

Under this policy the U.S. would still be committed to

defend the Nationalists on Formosa, but not their claims to the mainland and offshore strongholds. Also proposed is "opening the door" to contacts with the Chinese Communists.

On that the Security Council paper says:

"We should leave ajar possibilities for expanding commercial, cultural and other contacts with Communist China. We should make clear that there is no final bar to the entrance of Communist China into more normal relations with the U.S. if it is prepared to modify its present aggressive policies. The specific kinds of modifications that we would require as the price of more normal relations should be the subject of continuing planning study."

EFFORTS to put an end to the protracted armed strife between the Nationalists and Communists are advocated, as follows:

"We should work within the limits which a useful relationship with the Chinese Nationalists will allow for a stepping down of the Chinese Nationalist-Chinese Communist civil war. The removal of Nationalist forces and/or the disengagement of U.S. troops from the offshore islands should be a major objective of U.S. policy.

We should periodically re-evaluate the situation to deter-

mine whether action to this end would, on balance, serve the national interest, taking into account both the continuing cost and risks of our present position concerning the offshore islands and the psychological effect of a change in that position on the Western Pacific area.

"If the policy of disengagement from the offshore islands is possible, there would be advantages in completing it before Communist China detonates a nuclear device (possibly in 1963 but more likely 1964), since thereafter it might appear to be a response to Peiping's nuclear program.

"Thus, within the framework of current policy, and as part of our effort to build a community of free nations, we should as opportunity affords move toward a posture vis-a-vis Communist China which will place the onus for continued hostility squarely on Peiping and keep open the possibility that, in the future, Chinese Communist authorities might adopt policies of less hostility and greater relative dependence on the West."

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