

25 November 1966

The Chinese Representation Issue

- I. The debate on Chinese representation opened in the UN General Assembly on the 18th of November and will continue until 29 November when the voting is expected.
  - A. The whole situation has become extremely fluid, largely because of Canadian threats earlier this month to propose a new resolution for Assembly consideration.
    1. The proposal would call on the Assembly president to negotiate with the Communist and Nationalist Chinese on a plan to admit Peking to the Assembly and give the Communists Taiwan's seat in the Security Council.
    2. The Nationalists would retain their Assembly seat, however.
  - B. Ottawa has favored this new approach to the representation issue primarily because Foreign Minister Martin and other top policy makers from all appearances firmly believe that Communist China's representation in the UN is a necessary first step to bringing Peking into the mainstream of international life.
    1. Only then can meaningful solutions to other international problems--i.e., disarmament, nonproliferation, etc.--be reached.
    2. Canada's commercial relations with China are also expanding.
    3. Ottawa likes to show that it is not influenced by the US in the formulation of its foreign policy.
    4. There has accordingly been considerable, but not intense, pressure from the press and public on the government to take some initiative that will bring Peking into the UN.

- C. It remains unclear whether or not Ottawa will actually follow through its stated intentions.
    - 1. In his 23 November statement to the Assembly, External Affairs Minister Martin did not introduce a resolution but reserved the right to do so.
    - 2. In any case Canadian maneuvers have already had the effect of creating major new procedural and voting uncertainties.
    - 3. The "important question" resolution requiring a two-thirds vote to seat China was tabled prior to the opening of the debate, and it presumably will be voted upon.
    - 4. The outcome is uncertain, but it is probable that the resolution will pass by a slim majority.
  - D. Peking's sponsors have also introduced the usual Albanian-type resolution, calling for the admission of Peking and the ouster of Taiwan.
    - 1. It had earlier been expected that the results would be close, and there is no way of knowing what shifts in previous voting patterns the new situation has brought about.
- II. The main effect of the Canadian moves, however, has been the introduction of a new resolution by Italy.
- A. Supported by five other countries--Chile, Brazil, Bolivia, Belgium, and Trinidad and Tobago--the resolution calls for the formation of a study committee to make recommendations to the 22nd Assembly for a solution to the question of Chinese representation in the UN.
    - 1. Many countries believe that the committee will come out with a two-Chinas recommendation.
    - 2. Although the US has endorsed it, none of the other major powers is very enthusiastic about the Italian idea.

3. The Soviets see it as a delaying maneuver while the French hold there is nothing to study.
  4. Peking has denounced the Italian proposal as "an absurd idea which in essence advocates two Chinas."
  5. The Chinese Nationalists are working vigorously to defeat the Italian resolution. President Chiang has threatened to withdraw from the UN if it is approved, but it is doubtful if he has yet made any firm decision.
- B. Whatever the outcome, it seems likely that those who favor Communist China will be able to claim a psychological victory even though from all indications it has no interest in joining the UN as it is presently constituted, and certainly not if Taiwan retains a seat.
1. It will be widely presumed that the US was compelled to shift its ground because it could no longer be assured of commanding majorities for the important question ruling and against the Albanian resolution.
  2. Moreover a study committee may well lend itself in practice to a further erosion of Taiwan's claims.
  3. Canada's own proposal, for example, is designed to attract Peking by awarding it a permanent Security Council seat.
  4. The temptation may be great to make other inducements.
- C. However, even those countries which strongly oppose Peking's admission see certain advantages in the study committee as a fallback position.
1. It will at least delay the issue another year.
  2. If Peking should continue to insist on total exclusion of Taiwan and fundamental changes in the UN itself, the blame for its exclusion would tend to shift onto China itself.