

~~SECRET~~- SRC
-

1514

10 April 1961

Mr. Robert Komer
 Senior Staff Assistant
 The National Security Council
 The White House
 Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Bob,

You ask about such matters as the morale and motivation of the Mainlanders on Taiwan and their relation with The Taiwanese. We have wrestled with these questions time and time again in our estimates, always with a feeling of inadequacy because of the difficulty of coming to grips with problems of attitudes in a situation where, on the one hand, an officially imposed myth has sustained national purpose within Mainlander elite groups, while on the other hand, the role of the bulk of the population, the Taiwanese, has been largely one of passive resignation. Further compounding the difficulty of discerning political motivations has been the steady improvement of economic life on Taiwan -- a worthy development which, unfortunately, has been largely treated as incidental by the GRC leadership.

When we talk of the Mainlanders and their approach toward China, Taiwan, and their own personal future, we first must ask, "what Mainlanders are we talking about?" Addressing ourselves first to the top echelon of the GRC (the Gimo, his coterie, the high-ranking military officers, some of the legislators, and high KMT officials -- perhaps a group numbering not much more than a thousand, if that), we may find that the answers to these questions lie more in the field of psychiatry than in politics. This group, despite the passage of time and constant frustrations and disappointment, still appear to regard its residence on Taiwan as temporary. Although in their heart of hearts some of them may feel (as George Yeh is reported to have said) that "they will live out their days on Taiwan," as a group, they must maintain the hope and mystique of Return. So long as the awful moment of truth does not confront them, they are prepared to grasp and magnify any indication of dissidence on the Mainland as a sign of pro-Chiang sentiment and a justification for everything they have done and all the sacrifices

~~SECRET~~

4/12/61

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
 DATE: APR 2001

~~SECRET~~

they have made, over the past decade. The moment of truth will take place if and when the US takes action, either concerning the UN or the offshore islands, which the GRC would interpret as unequivocal US support for a two-China arrangement. What will happen when these people first face the shambles of their hopes and aspirations is, as I have said, probably as much a problem for the psychiatrists as it is for the political analyst. That the GRC will go through a period of trauma is certain: how long this will last and what its aftermath will be is more difficult to predict. A few things can be said with some confidence: there will be no large scale defections on the part of this group to the Communists; many of them, if they have the wherewithall and have had the foresight, might leave Taiwan for such places as Westchester County or Geneva; those that remain will, in time, (depending largely on the extent and nature of American military guarantees and promises of additional economic support) will work out a personal and group modus vivendi on Taiwan. Substantial, firm guarantees and additional US commitments would have to be given, and promptly. But as we have estimated all along, the dashing of hope for Return would not necessarily and automatically lead to a simple fold-up of non-Communist rule on Taiwan.

What of the middle group of Chinese Nationalist society? (the lower ranking military types, the bureaucrats and civil servants, the professional class, the intellectuals, the businessmen). It would appear that this group, while going along out of necessity, or expediency, (perhaps with a certain amount of self-delusion as well) with the Return-To-The-Mainland mystique, has, over the past several years, made a psychological, economic, and social adjustment to life on Taiwan. There are important variants, of course: the intellectuals have fared substantially worse than the businessmen (it's been the same in my family), and many of the civil servants are underemployed and therefore restless. While this group would not choose to stay on Taiwan if they could return to the Mainland under favorable circumstances, most of them probably realize that such a choice is not open to them. If faced with a more realistic choice, remaining on Taiwan or returning to the Mainland at substantial risk of life and treasure, most of them would probably prefer to remain where they were, recognizing that the probability of their being able to lead secure and comfortable lives on the Mainland was not sufficiently high to compensate for the sacrifices involved in getting there. For a large majority of this group there might be a great sense of relief if a choice were imposed on them; i.e., if they could shed once

- 2 -

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

and for all the schizophrenic approach to their future and establish permanent roots in a place which, although was not their ancestral home, was nonetheless not alien to them.

Finally, there is the group on the lower end of the economic and social scale (the soldiers and the assorted coolies, servants, and camp followers who found themselves caught up in the evacuation of the Mainland). I do not know the motivations of this group. I doubt that anyone does. By far the largest number had no wish to leave the Mainland and had no strong political convictions at the time of their evacuation (nor do they probably have now). I would guess that the relatively favorable economic circumstances of the civilian element in this group and the stories they hear of the regimented and austere life on the Mainland would probably make them disposed to remain on the island. Although most of them left their families behind, some have married Taiwanese and, with the passage of time, might establish substantial roots. Army morale would depend pretty much on their anti-Communist orientation, on the level of discipline, and the availability of amenities. These factors need not necessarily be affected if the Army's mission was entirely directed toward the defense of Taiwan. It is worth noting in this connection, that more than 75 percent of the enlisted strength of the GRC forces is now Taiwanese.

Relationships between the Mainlanders and the Taiwanese are cool rather than intimate. The Taiwanese, of course, have their share of grievances. There is a residue of hostility left from the early harsh and "imperialist" days when the Nationalists had pretty much taken over the island as an occupying power. Even now, the Taiwanese quite clearly do not have their share of good jobs, places in the university, or influence in the government. This is not to say that many of them haven't improved their lot in the past ten years. Should the Nationalists look inward toward Taiwan rather than outward toward the Mainland, the concentration of the country's resources and foreign assistance on long-run development and the undivided attention of the government on the problems of Taiwan itself might lead to a closer cooperation between the two segments of the community. On the other hand, it is conceivable that the Taiwanese are presently tolerating the Mainlanders in the hope that their residence is merely temporary and that in due course the Taiwanese will be their own masters.


Too much importance can be attached to evidences of friction between the Mainlanders and the Taiwanese. One

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

should not forget that the Chinese generally are closely bound to their ancestral areas and that a Cantonese has always (probably still does) regarded someone from another part of the country with suspicion and even hostility. The Taiwanese are looked upon pretty much as people from another province of China rather than an alien people and, in time, especially with increasing intermarriage, the feeling of apartness may be dissipated. In the last analysis, the Mainlanders (because of their political power, control of the security apparatus, and wealth) probably will continue to have the leading role in the political and economic life of Taiwan. The extent to which this control is maintained in a spirit of cooperation rather than by force, will very much depend on the attitude of the Mainlanders themselves.

EO 12958 6.1(c)>25Yrs


Sorry this has been so long delayed - but.

- 4 -

~~SECRET~~