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GEORGE  
WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY

Washington, D.C. 20052 / Institute for Sino-Soviet Studies / (202) 676-6340

April 18, 1975

Admiral E. R. Zumwalt, Jr., USN (Ret.)

*NR*  
*copy file*

Dear Admiral Zumwalt:

As you know I agreed largely with your sober assessment of our crucial situation. However, as I indicated to you, I disagree on the role of the People's Republic of China and of Taiwan, and I take the liberty of enclosing a statement by me made about a month ago on United States' policy with regard to recognition of the PRC, which seems to be in the works right now. I think it would be disastrous if we abandon another committment at this point and in view of the importance, I thought I should bring this to your attention.

With best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

*Franz Michael*  
Franz Michael

FM:kc

Enclosure

## U.S.-China Policy

The new United States policy initiated under the Nixon Administration aimed at the "normalization" of our relations with the People's Republic of China. This policy was highly successful and beneficial to the United States. It took advantage of the Sino-Soviet conflict to establish independent United States' policies and relationships with Peking and Moscow without taking a stand in the conflict. These independent relationships strengthened the United States' position and certainly greatly contributed to the successful agreement in Paris regarding Vietnam.

The new China policy has found broad support within the United States from very different sides of the political spectrum and not always for the same reasons. It served the purpose of American policy and security.

If the policy served our purpose, it clearly also served that of Peking by strengthening the position of the People's Republic in the face of what then appeared as an imminent danger of Soviet intervention in Chinese affairs, and by enabling the People's Republic to enter the United Nations with the added advantage of excluding the representatives of the Republic of China government. U.S.-China policy led eventually to a new formal relationship between the People's Republic and the United States, expressed by the exchange of diplomatic missions between Peking and Washington, D.C. without any curtailment of the formal diplomatic relations between the United States between the United States and the Republic of China on Taiwan. This singularly successful policy then led in practice if not in theory to a two-China situation, the principle of one country--two governments, as it has since been realized in the case of East and West Germany

and attempted, so far unsuccessfully, in the case of North and South Korea and North and South Vietnam.

This highly successful policy has therefore gone as far as possible in exploiting the reality of the situation to the mutual advantage of the People's Republic and the United States.

Today, sources, who seem to believe that rather basic changes are occurring in Peking and Moscow, want to go beyond the present arrangement and are willing to sacrifice allies and commitments in the hope of effecting permanently the policies of our adversaries in these capitals. The goal, sometimes clearly expressed, sometimes hinted at, is the establishment of full diplomatic relations with Peking at the sacrifice of our formal diplomatic recognition of the Republic of China government on Taiwan. The arguments in favor of this departure from present policy vary. Sometimes they are the result of a concern with the possibility of Sino-Soviet reconciliation and are meant to provide the means by which this could be prevented; sometimes they are regarded as a means to speed the Chinese Communists along a "pragmatic course" which is assumed to have replaced the doctrinal and totalitarian goals and policies of the past. For others, it is an expression of a continued hostility and disdain towards the Republic of China government on Taiwan which for some Americans still remains under the shadow of corruption and disintegration perceived at the time of the loss of the mainland at the end of World War II. These arguments never consider fully the legal and political consequences of such a move and its impact on American policy and American security. It is this lack of full realization of the potential consequences of such a policy which causes deep concern.

For some who think of themselves as political realists, the question of the moral issue of our defense of 16 million Chinese on Taiwan against a forced Communist takeover is discarded because of the larger concern of maintaining peace by balancing existing forces. They also do not believe in the danger that any one-sided retreat from our commitment may seriously affect our credibility in the eyes of other allies and neutral nations as well as of our antagonists.

The legal issue of our ability to defend Taiwan in case of military action by the People's Republic is, by some, regarded as remote today. If, however, any promises on the side of the People's Republic not to use military force against Taiwan were broken, any move by the United States to support a Nationalist defense of Taiwan against Communist attack would be assailed as intervention in what, after a U.S. diplomatic recognition of Peking, would become an internal Chinese affair.

The question of our continued formal diplomatic relationship with the government of the Republic of China is however of larger importance. It affects our whole negotiating ability in this delicate international system that Dr. Kissinger has managed with such extraordinary virtuosity. It is the trump card in a game which has no foreseeable conclusion. As it stands, the new relationship with the <sup>quasi</sup>-diplomatic representations in Peking and Washington, D.C. has accomplished for the United States everything that could conceivably be gained from normalization with Peking. In order to maintain the restraint which normalization has helped to impose on Peking's goals of revolution and subversion, the chief weapon of our relations with Taiwan must not be abandoned. There appears to be no possible quid pro quo that could justify such a crucial step. Paper

agreements with a Communist nation, as we have learned before, cannot be expected to last unless the positions of strength remain constant on our side. Thus for the continuation of the negotiations themselves, it is vital that our position should remain as strong as it is at the present time.

If it is our concern to restrain any move by a future leadership in Peking towards a realignment with Moscow, no sacrifice at this time would in any way prevent this possibility nor indeed would any action on our side place us in a position to influence the domestic power struggle which may result from Mao's departure. On the other hand it appears vital for the United States to retain a fall-back position if a new cooperative policy of Peking towards Moscow should materialize. This fall-back position presumably would be based primarily on our security treaty with Japan. Not only our credibility in Japan but also the weight of our influence on Japan's future international policy will be strongly affected about our position in Korea and in Taiwan, the two basic screens for Japan's security and freedom of action, with Taiwan crucial in relation to Japan's supply line for the energy resources on which her survival depends.

Normalization with the People's Republic going beyond the present balance of strength, would therefore provide no guaranteed nor visible results, nor gain possible advantage, but would on the contrary weaken our position and, more important, weaken our bargaining strength in future negotiations with the People's Republic. It would clearly undermine our security position in Asia.

Franz Michael  
Professor of International Affairs  
and Far Eastern History