

Philip L. Wickeri (Ed.)

# Unfinished History

Christianity and the Cold War in East Asia



Contact Zone

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# *ContactZone*

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Christianity and the Cold War in East Asia



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## Preface

The Cold War continues to cast a shadow over the relationships between the people and nations of Asia. The period between the end of World War II and the fall of the Berlin Wall affected nearly every area of life, and we continually are called to address the aftermath of this era in our churches.

“Christianity and the Cold War in East Asia, 1945-1990,” the conference held in April 2014 at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong, was an unprecedented gathering on a subject that is extremely important for our region. This conference was related to the work of the “International Research Program on the Christian Community and the Global Cold War, 1945-1990,” an ecumenical study project that has held earlier conferences in Europe and North America. I am happy that we have been able to work together in this program.

I recently read an interview with the well-known Japanese Christian scholar Prof. Shin Chiba of the International Christian University in Tokyo, in which he noted that East Asia is one of the last remaining areas of the world that has been structured by the Cold War. In other words, the Cold War has shaped our international and interregional relations. This has had an important impact on our churches as well. From Japan and the Korean Peninsula to cross-straits relationships in Greater China, to Hong Kong itself, our churches have often been divided by the Cold War, and this has shaped our relationships with one another and within our own societies.

On the basis of our Christian faith, churches should be able to work together for peace, justice and reconciliation, and thereby contribute to understanding and harmony in our societies. Scholars of religion, whether Christian or not, can help us better understand our situation. This is why I



encourage and support academic work on areas related to the study of religion in history and society. The Anglican Church, like many other churches, emphasizes the life of the mind in our approach to Christian faith. As such, the papers that are presented here provide us with insight and analysis so that we can better understand both ourselves and our churches.

A careful reading of the essays in this volume will help us re-envision the Church's mission. Through reflection on our history, we can build mutual understanding and trust with our brothers and sisters in Asia from whom we have been divided.

Paul Kwong  
Archbishop of Hong Kong  
Advent 2015

## **Introduction**

*Philip L. Wickeri*

The Cold War has had a continuing impact on Christianity in East Asia, perhaps more so than in any other part of the world. In Korea, in mainland China-Taiwan cross-straits relations, the Cold War legacy continues. During the Korean War, Christians and foreign missionaries moved from the North to the South, and this had a strong impact on church life and public opinion in both places. Christian missionaries departed from Mainland China during this same period, and many continued their work in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. Some Christians and church leaders also left the mainland during this period, re-establishing themselves in the same places, or in other parts of the world. Christians who remained in China and North Korea also confronted the Cold War as they struggled to continue their work in the churches. Christian institutions and other organizations formed during this period were inevitably caught up in the Cold War and in “East-West” tensions.

Over the next four decades, the experience of the Chinese Revolution and the Korean War exerted an influence on all aspects of life in Greater China, especially in cross-straits relationships, on the Korean Peninsula and other parts of East Asia. The dominant political forces in the Cold War were the USSR-led Soviet Bloc and the liberal democracies of the West, led by the United States. But the countries of East Asia and other parts of the world were drawn into this struggle, and responded in different ways. Religion, and especially Christianity, became an important aspect of “Cold War culture” in East and West, and in the non-aligned movement.

Over the last twenty years, there have been a number of studies of Christianity and the Cold War. Most of these have focused on Christianity in Europe and North America. To date, there has not been any in-depth study of the impact of the Cold War on Christianity in Asia, whether from a scholarly-academic or pastoral-theological point of view. Although there have been a number of journal essays and dissertations that have addressed the issue of Christianity and the Cold War in Asia, the time for more careful study is long overdue.

Since 2007, there has been an “International Research Program on the Christian Community and the Global Cold War, 1945-1990.” This committee, composed of scholars and church leaders, has met in Cambridge (2009), Frankfurt (2010), and Bratislava (2009, 2011). The basic mandate of the international research program has been to address the following questions:

- What relationships existed between the Christian world community and the dominant Cold War parties – political, ideological, social?
- What was the mission of the church during and in relation to the Cold War?
- How did the Cold War affect the Christian world community? To what extent did the churches become instruments of Cold War politics?
- How did the churches overcome the negative factors in Cold War mentalities?
- How did the churches express their unity during the Cold War? How did they succeed in building bridges – within their own constituencies, as well as ecumenically and internationally across political and ideological battle lines?
- What have been the internal realities for churches and Christian organizations in the aftermath of the Cold War? How have Christian communities come to terms with the effects of the Cold War?
- What were the main achievements of the churches and what were the lessons they learned during the period 1945-1990? What were their main problems?

The program has encouraged regional explorations of Christianity and the Cold War, and has led to further study and reflection in churches and in theological seminaries. A small subcommittee suggested the idea for an East Asian-based consultation on Christianity and the Cold War in Asia, in

the belief that such a gathering would be relevant for the churches and seminaries, as well as scholars and academic institutions.

In response, a planning committee began to meet in Hong Kong in 2012 to work on a regional conference with the theme “Christianity and the Cold War in East Asia, 1945-1990.” The conference was hosted by the Tao Fung Shan Christian Center and the Lutheran Theological Seminary, in cooperation with Ming Hua Theological College, and met from April 10-13, 2014, with sponsorship from the Lund Missionary Society of the Church of Sweden and the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui (Anglican).

Seventeen scholars from eight countries and regions presented papers at the gathering. The languages used were English and Chinese with simultaneous interpretation. Participants came from Mainland China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, the United States, Sweden and Germany, as well as Hong Kong. The keynote address was delivered by Prof. Qiang Zhai, distinguished Professor of History at Auburn University, Montgomery, Alabama (USA). His subject was “Religion and US Policy Toward China During the Early Cold War.” Papers addressed the conference theme from a variety of perspectives, including the Korean War and its impact on Korean churches; changing religious perceptions during the Cold War; local churches and religious policy in China; the renewal of the Catholic Church in Asia; the departure of Western missionaries from China; the True Jesus Church in Taiwan during the Cold War; the reflections of Cold War tensions in the thought of Xie Fuya, a noted Christian thinker; and the visit of a Japanese Christian delegation to China in 1957. Eleven of the papers presented at the conference are included in this volume, all of which have been substantially revised for publication. Participants expressed the hope that there might be another consultation in the future, in order to explore the Cold War impact on Christianity in Asia from other perspectives and in greater depth.

Besides the institutions that have been mentioned above, several individuals need to be thanked, beginning with the planning committee. Members of the planning committee included Simon Chow (President, Lutheran Theological Seminary); Gareth Jones (Principal, Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Ming Hua Theological College); Jonas Jonson (Bishop Emeritus of the Church of Sweden); Nicholas Tai (Dean of Studies, Lutheran Theological Seminary); Wing-Sze Tong (Director, Bridge and Dialogue Division, Tao Fong Shan Christian Center); Philip L. Wickeri (Advisor to the Archbishop

on Historical and Theological Studies and Professor of Church History, Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Ming Hua Theological College); and Ted Zimmerman (Professor of New Testament, Lutheran Theological Seminary). The conference secretary was Chi Pang Wong (Tao Fong Shan Christian Center).

We also wish to thank all participants in the conference who presented papers or sat in for some or all of the sessions. We have not been able to include all of the conference papers in this volume. Ms. Janice K. Wickeri was generous with her time, expertise and attention to detail in the copyediting this book. Prof. Volker Küster shepherded it through publication in the Contact/Zone series. Finally, neither the conference nor this book would have been possible without generous support from the Lund Missionary Society and from Archbishop Paul Kwong, of the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui (Anglican Church), who has written the preface.

## **Religion and US Policy toward China during the Early Cold War**

*Qiang Zhai*

Unlike many previous major international confrontations, the Cold War came to an end in a remarkably peaceful manner. The Soviet Bloc suddenly disintegrated during 1989-1991. This surprising collapse stemmed not from a crushing military defeat on the battlefield but from fundamental changes within the Communist system. The way the Cold War ended has led many scholars to explore cultural reasons for the conclusion of the epic East-West conflict. They wonder whether the cultural infiltration, public diplomacy, and/or religious influence from the West played a role in undermining the confidence of people in the East in the governing principles of their government. As a result, in the field of Cold War studies, there has emerged over the past two decades a tendency toward “culturalism.” Although a porous and clumsy term and by no means universally endorsed and accepted, culturalism has established itself within the field of diplomatic history once viewed as resistant to methodological innovation and satisfied with its assumptions and beliefs about what constituted proper sources and subjects of investigation. International relations culturalism includes such

modes of analysis as race, gender, religion, memory, language, emotion, maturity, and identity.<sup>1</sup>

This article seeks to contribute to this emerging trend of cultural analysis in Cold War studies by focusing on the role of religion in the making of US policy toward China from the later 1940s through the 1950s. Specifically, it will examine the role of Christianity in American encounters with China on two levels: first, how Christian convictions shaped the view of Washington's policymakers regarding the Chinese revolution; and second, how missionary groups and individuals influenced public understanding and perceptions of China during this period. The paper argues that religion formed the basis of American leaders' perceptions of themselves and the world during the Cold War and that religious organizations (through the China Lobby) played a major role in framing domestic debates about policy toward China and in limiting the range of choices available to policy makers with regard to China.

### **1. Religion in American History and the Cold War**

Throughout American history, religion played an important role in defining people's way of life, enabling them to make sense of their environment and give order to their society. In the twentieth century, religion's influence in American society waxed and waned. During the 1920s and 1930s, secularization increased due to a decline in religious observance among Americans and a reduction in public reference to religious images, catechisms, and language by elite institutions such as government, the media, and universities. After the conclusion of the Second World War, however, as Soviet Communist doctrines came to be viewed as a mortal threat to US national security, a coalition of American leaders used religion to rally the war-weary and reluctant American public for a new international crusade against communism. The early decades of the Cold War witnessed a religious revival in the United States.

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<sup>1</sup> My thinking on this issue has been influenced by Akira Iriye, *Culture and International History*, in: *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson (eds), 2nd. edition, New York 2004, 241-256; Andrew Rotter, *Culture, the Cold War, and the Third World*, in: *The Cold War in the Third World*, Robert J. McMahon (ed.), New York 2013, 156-177.

Religion served as the foundation for the beliefs, attitudes, and practices of US foreign decision-makers during the Cold War. In America, the Cold War, in its essence, was perceived as a slugfest between believers and unbelievers, between good and evil. The Soviet Union suppressed religion at home and sought to spread its godless doctrines beyond its borders. The United States must lead religious believers in the world against the forces of atheism and irreligion led by the Soviet Union. When the American leaders devised Cold War strategies against the Soviet-led Communist camp, they not only looked to their material strengths (economic power and military might) but also emphasized their spiritual advantages (political ideas and religious faith). In other words, they considered their attitudes toward individual freedom and belief in God a potent weapon in their Cold War arsenal. The American region at this time embraced Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, and in the description of one scholar, there emerged a process of “sacralization” of American government and public life.<sup>2</sup>

The Harry Truman administration was credited with the establishment of the containment strategy that served as the basis of US policy toward the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The containment strategy called for the mobilization and utilization of America’s material and spiritual resources to stop Communist expansion. In March 1947, President Truman introduced the Truman Doctrine, pledging American aid to Greece and Turkey, who were then resisting communist pressures. Three months later, Secretary of State George C. Marshall unveiled the European Recovery Program, popularly known as the Marshall Plan, which provided massive financial assistance to help Europe recover from the economic devastation of the Second World War. And in July, Truman signed the National Security Act, which created the Department of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the National Security Council (NSC). These political, diplomatic, economic and military measures put the United States on something close to a permanent wartime footing in waging Cold War against the Kremlin.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Jonathan Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex: America’s Religious Battle Against Communism in the Early Cold War*, New York 2011.

<sup>3</sup> On the making of the Truman administration’s containment policy, cf. John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947*,



Although Truman and his advisers saw the above-mentioned measures as playing to their country's strengths, they also believed that what ultimately set them apart from the Soviet Communists was not prosperity or power but their political values and systems, especially their different conceptions of individual liberty. As a devout Baptist, Truman was convinced that the crucial difference between the United States and the Soviet Union was religious belief. To him, the most fundamental strength of the United States was spiritual. Like his predecessor, Franklin Roosevelt, Truman viewed religion as a source of democracy because it safeguarded the dignity of the individual man and woman and protected freedom of conscience, and thus the individual's autonomy from government. The Soviets, in contrast, were atheists, who shunned faith completely, stifled individual worth, and justified lies and falsehood. Although both sides in the Cold War claimed to represent the interest of people and to advance world peace, progress, and prosperity, only one side could claim God.<sup>4</sup>

Consequently, Truman incorporated religion into US Cold War policy. Religion helped to define the lines of battle, namely: to determine which countries would do the "containing," and which would be "contained."<sup>5</sup> Seeing religion as a potential winning weapon, Truman felt that if economic and military resources had been exhausted in the search for peace and security in the world, "one solution and only one solution will remain – the substitution of conscience for force in the government of man. The alternative is the annihilation of civilization [...]. Religion alone has the answer to humanity's twentieth century cry of despair."<sup>6</sup> Based on the notion that an all-out military clash between the United States and the Soviet

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New York 1972; Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War*, Stanford 1992.

<sup>4</sup> On Truman's Baptist faith, cf. David McCullough, *Truman*, New York 1992, 83; Alonzo L. Hamby, *Man of the People: A Life of Harry S. Truman*, New York 1995, 21, 474. On the similarity between Truman and Franklin D. Roosevelt in terms of their religious outlook, cf. Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy*, New York 2012, 412f.

<sup>5</sup> William Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960*, Cambridge, UK 2008, 107.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Preston, *Sword of the Spirit*, 412.

Union would lead to mutual destruction, the containment doctrine was designed instead to block the further spread of communism while stimulating internal decline in the Soviet Bloc. Truman hoped to employ religion as a potent instrument to undercut faith in the Soviet system and to facilitate its final collapse.

Although containment provided a clear-cut general principle for US foreign policy, its application posed agonizing challenges for policy makers in Washington. How would the lines of containment be drawn? Would the United States treat international communism as a monolith and try to contain all Communist movements in the world? And how was containment to be applied to the civil war in China, a country with which many Americans felt that they had a “special relationship”?<sup>7</sup>

## 2. Truman’s China Policy and the Missionary Legacy

It is no exaggeration to say that no other country on earth triggered as much passion and interest among the American public as China. The Celestial Empire in the Orient had long occupied a place in the American imagination and mythmaking. Since the nineteenth century a steady stream of Americans, including missionaries, businessmen, reporters, sailors, and adventurers had returned from China armed with fascinating stories of an exotic civilization and a people supposedly in eager need of the Christian faith and Western culture. Prominent individuals such as the novelist Pearl Buck and the publisher Henry Luce, who had spent their early years in China with their missionary parents, popularized Chinese themes and transfixed a whole generation of Western readers. Through their writings and magazines, they kept China in the headlines and in the forefront of many American minds.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> On the making of a “special relationship” between the United States and China, cf. Michael Hunt’s classic *The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and China to 1914*, New York 1983.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Robert E. Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce, Time, and the American Crusade in Asia*, Cambridge, UK 2005; Hilary Spurling, *Pearl Buck in China: Journey to the Good Earth*, New York 2010.

President Chiang Kai-shek's conversion to Christianity only added to the allure. Succeeding Sun Yat-sen as the leader of the Nationalist government, Chiang also adopted his predecessor's religion. Chiang's baptism in 1928, widely reported in American religious circles, further endeared him to many Christians in the United States. After WWII, Chiang found himself in a fierce struggle with his domestic opponent, Mao Zedong, head of the Communist Party of China (CPC). Largely due to his ineptitude and mismanagement, he was losing the civil war to the Communists. What to do about China became a serious challenge for the Truman administration.<sup>9</sup>

Officials in the Truman administration had mixed views of Chiang Kai-shek. On the one hand, they liked his Christian credentials and anti-Communism. On the other hand, they were disgusted by the corruption and chaos of his government. In August 1949, more than two years after George Marshall's failure to arrange a ceasefire in the Chinese civil war and disappointed with the Kuomintang's (KMT) mounting political problems and military setbacks, Secretary of State Dean Acheson decided to disengage from Chiang Kai-shek and issued a thousand-page "White Paper," indicating that the KMT's pending defeat was not a result of American mistakes and that there was little the United States could do to prevent a Communist takeover.<sup>10</sup>

Washing their hands of China was not something that American missionaries found it easy to do. After all, the Middle Kingdom had been their largest mission field and, they had hoped, their ultimate prize. If they could convert the most populous country on earth, they had performed the greatest service for God. Just as they had been instrumental in helping form American impressions about Chinese people and their culture, missionaries in China once again helped shape American understanding of the conflict in China. One missionary in China said that Mao and his supporters were

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China*, Cambridge, MA 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Patterns in the Dust: Chinese-American Relations and the Recognition Controversy, 1949-1950*, New York 1983, 160f; Warren I. Cohen, Acheson, His Advisers, and China, in: Dorothy Borg and Waldo Heinrichs (eds), *Uncertain Years: Chinese-American Relations, 1947-1950*, New York 1983, 13-51.

“totalitarian, anti-religious, and anti-western,” and that they were also powerful and probably unstoppable. In a newsletter to friends in the United States in 1948, Gertrude McCulloch, a Woman’s American Baptist Foreign Mission Society missionary based in Hangzhou, wrote: “Communists are terrorizing the people and causing intense suffering and loss of life and property. Christian work has been treated ruthlessly wherever they have come to stay, and we are fearful of our Chinese Christians.”<sup>11</sup>

Both the American government and public had long relied on missionaries to help them make sense of what was happening in China. So it was not strange and out of character for President Truman to do the same. In 1946, he named John Leighton Stuart, a missionary-educator in China, as America’s ambassador to Chiang’s government. Since the early 1930s, Stuart had been sounding the alarm about the emergence of Chinese communism. But despite his high regard for Chiang, he was also a realist who realized by 1947 that the KMT would not prevail in its contest with the Communists. Becoming resigned to the fact of the impending Communist victory in China, Stuart hinged his hope on the possibility of maintaining an open door for continued American involvement in China, regardless of which party was running the government. In this sense, he never gave up his missionary calling and his deep attachment to China because he was convinced until the end that China would remain receptive to the double benefits of democracy and Christian morality. Entertaining no illusion that Mao and his cohort would abandon communism and become Christian, Stuart hoped that they would tolerate a missionary presence in China after they assumed power. From there, missionaries would convert the Chinese people as well as their Communist masters with a straightforward message of justice that would appeal to an Asia being transformed by decolonization, nationalism, and development. Expressing his confidence about the Christian attraction to the Asian people, Stuart remarked in 1949: the “Christian faith as a determined effort to realize the ideal social order which Jesus described as the kingdom of heaven on earth, as the most dynamic revolutionary movement of all time, cannot fail in its appeal to the Oriental

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<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Preston, *Sword of the Spirit*, 477f.

peoples.”<sup>12</sup> Throughout his interactions with China, Stuart’s objective remained unchanged: to keep an American presence in China, one way or another.<sup>13</sup>

As the dust was settling in China, the Truman administration faced the tough issue of whether to recognize the People’s Republic of China (PRC) that Mao established in October 1949. Acheson and his advisers had been toying with the idea of using recognition and trade to induce the Communists to moderate their behavior and to drive a wedge between Beijing and Moscow.<sup>14</sup> But the pro-KMT China Lobby vehemently opposed recognition of the PRC and urged continued support for Chiang Kai-shek, who had retreated to Taiwan. The China Lobby included strong advocates of the KMT cause such as Congressman Walter Judd from Minnesota and Senator H. Alexander Smith from New Jersey.

Judd served as a medical missionary for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and spent many years in China during the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>15</sup> Being an adamant opponent of Communism, Judd declared in Congress “the Chinese Communists came into South China where I lived, and their program was to set up Russian Communism.

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<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960*, 167; Preston, *Sword of the Spirit*, 478. On Stuart’s career in China, cf. Yu-ming Shaw, *An American Missionary in China: John Leighton Stuart and Chinese-American Relations*, Cambridge, MA, 1992; Preston, *Sword of the Spirit*, 478.

<sup>13</sup> John C. Brewer and Kenneth W. Rea, Dr. John Leighton Stuart and U.S. Policy toward China, 1946-1949, in: *United States Attitudes and Policy toward China: The Impact of American Missionaries*, Patricia Neils (ed.), Armonk, NY 1990, 230-244.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. David Allan Mayers, *Cracking the Monolith: U.S. Policy against the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1949-1955*, Baton Rouge, LA 1986; Gordon H. Chang, *Friends and Enemies: The United States, China, and the Soviet Union, 1948-1972*, Stanford 1990; Qiang Zhai, *The Dragon, the Lion, and the Eagle: Chinese-British-American Relations, 1949-1958*, Kent, OH 1994.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Lee Edwards, *Missionary for Freedom: The Life and Times of Walter Judd*, New York, 1990; Tony Ladd, Mission to Capitol Hill: A Study of the Impact of Missionary Idealism on the Congressional Career of Walter H. Judd, in: *United States Attitudes and Policies toward China: The Impact of American Missionaries*, Patricia Neils (ed.), Armonk, NY 1990, 263-283.

It was utterly ruthless.”<sup>16</sup> He disagreed with Stuart about the likelihood of Christian missions under Communist rule. “If the Communists win in China,” Judd told a missionary friend in China, “there isn’t going to be any missionary work anywhere in areas they control.” Blaming the Truman administration for expecting too much from Chiang Kai-shek, Judd emphasized that Chiang remained the only hope for true democratic reform in China, even if prevailing conditions had rendered it difficult for him to realize this potential.<sup>17</sup> After the State Department released the China White Paper on August 5, 1949, defending the administration’s handling of China and criticizing Chiang’s government for its embezzlement and mismanagement, Judd accused the department of neglecting key documents that would have confirmed his criticism of China policy.<sup>18</sup>

Smith’s views about China were strongly influenced by John Roots and Ken Twitchell, pro-Chiang Kai-shek figures associated with the Moral Re-Armament (MRA), a quasi-religious movement created in the 1920s by an American Lutheran minister named Frank Buchman. Roots grew up in China in a missionary family and had known Chiang Kai-shek since 1926. As MRA’s leading China expert, Roots, together with Twitchell, was instrumental in turning Smith into a staunch supporter of the Nationalist cause in Congress. Beginning in 1948, Roots and Twitchell bombarded Smith with messages about the urgent need to prop up Chiang’s tottering regime. On July 26, 1948, Twitchell wrote Smith that “the time has come for us to enter wholeheartedly into a business of aid-to-China exactly as we have done with Greece and Turkey.” Two months later, Twitchell reminded Smith that “Asia is still the Number 1 treasure of the Communist heart. So very much hangs on the support we give to China. If China goes, half the world will go.” When Smith mentioned the usual complaints (corruption, ineptitude, and waste) against the Chiang government, Roots and Twitchell tried their utmost to disabuse Smith of his negative judgment of Chiang. They succeeded in converting Smith to the Nationalist bandwagon.

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<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960*, 163.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Preston, *Sword of the Spirit*, 479.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Robert M. Blum, *Drawing the Line: The Origins of the American Containment Policy in East Asia*, New York, 1982, 94-95.

Expressing his resolve to support Chiang, Smith wrote in his diary on December 30, 1948: “I fear th at Marshall has been wrong in his position. I must follow this up because we must not let the Christian General Chiang down.” Seeing the situation in China as a clear conflict between good and evil, Smith believed that the hand of God favored one side over the other.<sup>19</sup>

In October 1949, Smith, as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations committee, journeyed to Taiwan despite the disapproval of State Department officials. After talking with Chiang Kai-shek, he wrote that the meeting was “very impressive,” and that he found no reason to consider the Nationalist leader “a political leper.” The trip convinced Smith that the United States should under no circumstances allow the island to fall into the hands of the CPC. He believed that the Truman administration had not given Chiang Kai-shek enough assistance and that God had subsequently revealed some of the American mistakes. Registering his anger with certain “China hands” in the Foreign Service, Smith complained that it was a “disgrace” for the United States to be controlled by a lot of “pink” young men.<sup>20</sup> In a closed session of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on January 10, 1950, Smith grilled Secretary of State Dean Acheson on whether there was a “pink” cell in the State Department.<sup>21</sup>

It is important to note that religious views about China were divided in the United States during this time. The opinions of Judd and Smith only represented one group of hard-line Christians. They had opponents as far as assessments of China were concerned. “Instead of a monolithic anticommunist consensus,” the historian Andrew Preston notes, “what actually occurred was a great schism between religious liberals and conservatives that led to the kind of bitter arguments over America’s role in the world normally associated with the partisanship of later decades.”<sup>22</sup> While religious conservatives like Judd and Smith trumped calls for shunning the PRC from the international community, religious liberals advocated engagement

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<sup>19</sup> Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960*, 201-214.

<sup>20</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War*, New York 1987, 82f; Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, 425f; Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960*, 211.

<sup>21</sup> Blum, *Drawing the Line*, 182f.

<sup>22</sup> Preston, *Sword of the Spirit*, 465.

and dialogue with the Communist government in Beijing. They subscribed to the view that the solution to China's problems, and thus to America's problems in China, were progress, development, and national self-determination. Just a month after the founding of the PRC, the Foreign Missions Conference pointed out that the competition in China was not chiefly "a test of arms" but rather "a social and political convulsion of revolutionary proportions," and that the Truman administration "should promote in every way the economic well-being of the peoples of the Far East." Beijing, not Taipei, should represent China on the UN Security Council.<sup>23</sup>

On policy toward China, Truman and his advisers, however, seemed to pay more attention to the voice of and pressure from religious conservatives than religious liberals. The outbreak of the Korean War hardened the administration's attitude toward the PRC. The Sino-American military confrontation in Korea dashed any lingering hope within the administration that Mao might turn out to be a Tito-type leader. The Truman administration reaffirmed commitment to Chiang's regime and pursued a harsh policy of containment against the PRC with a vengeance.

### **3. Eisenhower, Dulles and China: the Impact of Christianity on American Policy**

When the Eisenhower administration assumed office in 1953, it continued its predecessor's policy of political isolation, economic embargo, and military encirclement against the PRC. The United States in the 1950s was, in one historian's words, "God's country," an avowedly Christian country locked in a global struggle against a foe whose principal distinguishing feature was its atheism.<sup>24</sup> "Rarely," writes another historian, "has the identification of America's cause with God's been made more explicitly than during the Eisenhower years."<sup>25</sup> In this time of "American High,"<sup>26</sup> religious interest and enthusiasm saturated American society and filled American

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<sup>23</sup> Op. cit., 488.

<sup>24</sup> Ronald Oakley, *God's Country*, New York 1986.

<sup>25</sup> Seth Jacobs, *America's Miracle Man in Vietnam: Ngo Dinh Diem, Religion, Race, and U.S. Intervention in Southeast Asia*, Durham, NC, 2004, 61.

<sup>26</sup> William L. O'Neill, *American High: The Years of Confidence, 1945-1960*, New York 1987.



culture: newspaper syndicates vied for contributions from clerical writers and columnists; movies with religious themes drew huge crowds; religious books, especially the Bible, were immensely popular; and almost all mainstream magazines carried articles on religion.<sup>27</sup>

President Eisenhower actively cheered the countrywide turn toward religion. Although not a regular churchgoer before becoming president, he made a point of joining the National Presbyterian Church and attending it often. He entered the record as the first president ever to be baptized in the White House. Throughout his tenure as president, he delivered hundreds of speeches on the importance of religion. On Flag Day in 1954, Eisenhower signed a law that added the phrase “under God” to the Pledge of Allegiance. A year later, he approved legislation adding the words “In God We Trust” to American coins and currency. In 1956, he supported a congressional resolution designating “In God We Trust” as the national motto. He promoted a bill authorizing construction of a prayer room for legislators near the capitol rotunda. He started the practice of prayer breakfasts in the White House and regularly opened cabinet meetings with prayer.<sup>28</sup>

Like Truman, Eisenhower was fundamentally hostile to Communist doctrines and to Eastern Bloc leaders whom he considered immoral, expansionist, and cunning. He surrounded himself with advisers who shared his views about the threat of the Soviet Union and America’s role in the Cold War.<sup>29</sup> For the position of secretary of state, he chose John Foster Dulles, a man memorably described by Winston Churchill as a “dour Puritan, a great white bespectacled face with a smudge of a mouth.”<sup>30</sup> A man of strong religious convictions and missionary zeal to spread Christian teachings around the world, Dulles, as the historian Samuel Flagg Bemis

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. Jacobs, *America’s Miracle Man in Vietnam*, 65-67.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex*; Jacobs, *America’s Miracle Man in Vietnam*, 67-69.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. H. W. Brands, Jr., *Cold Warriors: Eisenhower’s Generation and American Foreign Policy*, New York 1988.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, New York 1994, 535.

put it, “was the only religious leader, lay or clerical, ever to become secretary of state.”<sup>31</sup> Dulles hailed from a family prominent for its achievements in both religious and diplomatic spheres: his paternal grandfather, John Watson Dulles, was a career missionary to places such as India; his father, the Rev. Allen Macy Dulles, was a distinguished Presbyterian minister in New York; his maternal grandfather, John W. Foster, was secretary of state under President Harrison; and his uncle, Robert Lansing, served as secretary of state in the Wilson administration.<sup>32</sup>

As the chief cabinet officer, Dulles confronted the same set of issues that had confounded his Puritan forefathers back in the colonial days. As one writer aptly phrases it, the “Puritan dilemma” of the seventeenth century entailed attempting to live virtuously in a fallen and wicked world without in turn succumbing to the corruptions of that world.<sup>33</sup> The Puritans left a profound and permanent imprint on American culture.<sup>34</sup>

Despite the fact that Puritanism as a religious movement faded away, the Puritan dilemma remained, at least for all successive generations of religious Americans who refused either to conform to the world or to disengage from the world. Dulles faced the same dilemma in his own way. For Dulles, all people should be connected as members of one human family in a world guided by God, sharing peace, liberty, and prosperity, and adhering to the divinely ordained universal moral law. But when Dulles examined the actual world he lived in, he encountered an unsettling reality that contradicted his idyllic vision. He found his ideal world challenged by war and revolution, conflict and division, and pernicious ideologies such as atheistic communism. Considered in this context, his entire diplomatic endeavor

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<sup>31</sup> Samuel Flagg Bemis, Preface, in: Louis Gerson, John Foster Dulles, New York 1967, xi.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Mark Toulouse, *The Transformation of John Foster Dulles: From Prophet of Realism to Priest of Nationalism*, Macon, GA 1985.

<sup>33</sup> Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop*, 2nd. edition, New York 1999.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America*, New York, 1996, 1f.

can be interpreted as a continuous effort to reconcile the ideals he envisioned with the grim reality he experienced.<sup>35</sup>

A subscriber to spiritual determinism, Dulles believed that the Cold War was fundamentally a moral rather than a political contest and that Cold War politics was a zero-sum game. His writings and speeches brimmed with references to the theme that spiritual qualities determined the conduct and capabilities of nations. Convinced that the West enjoyed a moral superiority over the East, he clung to the view that although in the short term the Soviet Bloc looked strong and formidable, in the long term it would collapse under the weight of its internal spiritual failure coupled with external pressures that would help accelerate the internal decay.<sup>36</sup> This was the reason Dulles declared in a major policy speech before the Lions International Club in San Francisco on June 28, 1957: “We can confidently base our policies on the assumption that International Communism’s rule of strict conformity is, in China as elsewhere, a passing and not a perpetual phase. We owe it to ourselves, our allies and the Chinese people to do all that we can to contribute to that passing.”<sup>37</sup> This was also the reason why Dulles asserted at his news conference on October 28, 1958 that the Soviet Union “is going to collapse through the fact in the long run people are not going to allow themselves to be exploited, to be squeezed, merely to gain external conquests. The Government is going to have to adjust itself more to meet the needs of its own people.”<sup>38</sup>

Outside the administration, domestic controversy over what to do with China continued unabated. Religious conservatives and their liberal counterparts remained divided over whether the United Nations should admit the PRC. The China Lobby stepped up its activities to solicit support for

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960*, 226; Townsend Hoopes, *The Devil and John Foster Dulles*, Boston 1978.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Ole Holsti, The ‘Operational Code’ Approach to the Study of Political Leaders: John Foster Dulles’ Philosophical and Instrumental Beliefs, in: *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 3, No. 1, March 1970, 123-157.

<sup>37</sup> Our Policies toward Communism in China, Address by the Secretary of State, San Francisco, June 28, 1957, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957*, vol. 3, 558-566.

<sup>38</sup> Dulles, News Conference, October 28, 1958, *State Department Bulletin*, November 17, 1958, 769.

Chiang Kai-shek. In Congress, Senator William Knowland led an influential China Bloc to call for increased aid to the Nationalist government on Taiwan and a blockade of Mainland China. Walter Judd remained an admirer of Chiang Kai-shek, developing a reputation as the “China expert” among policy makers and one of Congress’s most sought-after speakers, not only for partisan Republican rallies, but for civic, religious, and professional organizations. In 1953, he joined hands with New Jersey Governor Charles Edison in launching a campaign to oppose the admission of the PRC into the United Nations. They eventually claimed to have gathered one million signatures on their petition against the PRC’s admission, and hence called themselves the Committee of One Million. On October 22, 1953, Judd wrote to Eisenhower petitioning him to take a firm stand against the PRC representation in the United Nations. In his reply, the president expressed agreement with Judd, claiming that Mao’s government “seeks representation in the UN in order to promote the objectives of international communism.” Outside the Congress, Henry Luce and his media spearheaded a publicity campaign to drum up support for Chiang Kai-shek’s government.<sup>39</sup>

Religious liberals, in contrast, continued their argument that the seating of the PRC at the United Nations would reduce hostility between Beijing and Washington and forestall future conflicts like Korea. Even in the midst of the Korean fighting, liberal Protestants urged including the PRC in the United Nations. In the view of the Peace Council of the East Harlem Protestant Parish, a mission established by Union Theological Seminary, it was a move that would not only terminate the war but also “restore the United Nations as an effective agency of mediation.” After the Korean armistice was signed, the Foreign Policy Commission of Christian Action contended that Chinese admission to the United Nations would make the

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<sup>39</sup> Eisenhower, quoted in Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960*, 188. On William Knowland’s advocacy of Chiang Kai-shek’s cause, cf. Norman A. Graebner, *Eisenhower and Communism: The Public Record of the 1950s*, in: *Reevaluating Eisenhower: American Foreign Policy in the 1950s*, Richard A. Melanson and David Mayers, (eds), Urbana, IL 1987, 68. On the formation and activities of the Committee of One Million, cf. Stanley Bachrack, *The Committee of One Million: “China Lobby” Politics, 1953-1971*, New York 1976.

international organization “an even more effective instrument for peace.” Throughout the period of the Eisenhower administration, the National Council of Churches echoed these appeals for the inclusion of the PRC in the United Nations.<sup>40</sup>

The Eisenhower team, like its predecessor, appeared to be more sensitive to the arm-twisting of religious conservatives than to the pressure of religious liberals. To display their sensitivity to right-wing sentiments on China, Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles recruited prominent anti-PRC and pro-Chiang figures to handle Chinese affairs in the State Department. Adopting Judd’s recommendation, Dulles appointed Walter S. Robertson as the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs. For the position of director of the Office of Chinese Affairs, Dulles selected Walter P. McConaughy, another well-known Beijing basher. Two strong supporters of Chiang became US ambassadors to Taipei, first, Karl Lott Rankin, followed by Everett F. Drumwright. These men helped set the tone of China policy and contributed to shaping public opinion of Mao’s regime.<sup>41</sup>

As to the Sino-Soviet alliance, Eisenhower and Dulles hoped to strain and disrupt it through a high-pressure policy toward the Beijing government. Both leaders believed that the Soviet-led international Communist camp was vulnerable and that long-term historical forces would contradict Moscow’s ability to control its allies. On many private occasions, they talked about the independent nature of Chinese communism and indicated intentions to undermine Sino-Soviet ties. Eisenhower expressed his belief in the possibility of exploiting tensions within the Communist movement at an NSC meeting on December 1, 1954. The meeting discussed an NSC draft statement regarding current US policy in East Asia. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had shown reservations about one sentence with respect to China in the draft paper that read: “While there is now no reason

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<sup>40</sup> Preston, *Sword of the Spirit*, 488.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *A House Divided: The United States, the State Department, and China*, in: *The Great Powers in East Asia, 1953-1960*, Warren I. Cohen and Akira Iriye (eds), New York 1990, 36f; Rosemary Foot, *The Practice of Power: American Relations with China since 1949*, Oxford 1995, 89; *China Confidential: American Diplomats and Sino-American Relations, 1945-1996*, Nancy Bernkopf Tucker (ed.), New York 2001, 91.