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CIRCULATION
JUNE 1967

Radical Education Project
Box 625
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48108

STUDY GUIDE #6

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U.S. Policy Toward China Since World War II

(Note. The Radical Education Project is circulating this draft copy in order to obtain editorial comments, criticisms, and suggestions that will help us revise this study guide for printing in the near future. Any individuals with experience in this topic, or with experience in using this draft copy, are invited and urged to write their comments and suggestions to the Radical Education Project.)

The study of China policy is especially relevant since the current official enemy of the United States is Chinese Communism. This guide begins with an examination of what US policy toward China is and how it developed. Further analysis allows us to explore the causes of the Cold War in Asia. The main goal of this study guide is to help those who use it gain an understanding of that American society which produced the policy, on the assumption that foreign policy is determined, at least in major degree, by the domestic situation of the country. Once the study has progressed this far, it will be possible to begin discussing what would be necessary to bring foreign policy in line with our own goals. One may also be able to develop arguments against the justifications offered for present US policy.

One should be aware of the only difference within the mainstream of American political thought on China policy. This was most evident in pre-Korean War public discussion. One side wished to deal with Peking as the de facto government, the other wished to destroy Peking. This discussion was carried on with both sides holding common assumptions on American goals and values; the argument was over the means used to neutralize the power of China which was assumed to be hostile.

One can also examine the rhetoric of bipartisan foreign policy which is used to hide these differences and to prevent any criticism of the policy which was based on the rejection of the traditional American economic and political values.

This guide can be used for two types of study groups. First it can be used by those who are dissatisfied with present American policy but who have not yet challenged the accepted American value system. The aim of such a seminar should be to have the members ask basic questions about America and to struggle for the answers, and to have them realize that the present situation in Asia is not a temporary aberration but the result of long-term US policies in

Asia. One means to radicalization seems to be that the dissatisfied analyze their dissatisfaction and its causes. Hopefully the course will lead to the perception that the causes are deeply embedded within American society and can not be changed by merely electing new leaders or exerting pressure on the present leaders.

The course can also be used as an internal education project for those who have some knowledge of the causes of US policy in Asia. In this case the emphasis should be on developing critiques of US policy, exploring the directions that US policy should take, considering means to change the policy, and forming coherent and concrete arguments to present to others.

The course might first concentrate on discovering the facts of the situation, then on learning how the various parties perceived the facts. A serious attempt must be made to uncover the preconceptions of those making policy in order to understand their choices. For this reason both official statements and several readings from liberal sources have been included. It seems clear that unless one can understand the liberal mentality, one cannot analyze US policy. One must also study anti-communism to understand the sources of US policy.

The questions in each section, most of which are leading questions, can serve as an aid to begin discussions. The readings are offered as the basis of a discussion course and are certainly not complete. Each person will have to at least glance at the sources in order to have enough information on which to base his discussion. The first four weeks are devoted to collecting the fact and the final four weeks to analysis of the facts.

I. History of Pre- World War II Relations.

We begin with a study of the traditional interests of the US in Asia. These were usually expressed as a desire for an "open door" to Asia in order to maintain American access to Asia. This is closely related to the idea of "manifest destiny" expressed most vociferously in the 1890's. Until World War II the US attempted to preserve the open door by diplomatic manoeuvres; but when Japan invaded Manchuria, the US began issuing warnings to Japan to leave China. The course of these actions led to the bombing of Pearl Harbor. One should study the means used to obtain the open door and then try to discover the real interests of the US in Asia, i.e., why an open door was desirable.

Readings:

1. John K. Fairbank, United States and China, 1962 (Compass C108). pp. 246-278: Summary of US policy from about 1900 to Korean War. pp. 162-239: History of the development of the Nationalists and Communists in China.
2. William A. Williams, The Tragedy of American Diplomacy, 1962 (Delta 9002) pp. 190-191; on US-China trade; pp. 229-276: on

the beginning of the Cold War.

3. Charles Beard, Economic Basis of Politics, 1957 (Vintage V-42) Ch. XX-XXI pp 228-263: US interests in Asia between the world wars.
4. J. William Fulbright, The Arrogance of Power, 1966 (Vintage V-378) pp. 139-156: Fulbright's summary of US-China relations before 1966.
5. George F. Kennan, American Diplomacy, 1951 (Mentor MP360) pp. 23-50: History of relations; note his belief in balance of power and that his goal for diplomacy is stability, not justice.
6. Werner Levi, "An Historical View of Chinese Foreign Policy", Current History, Dec. 1959, p. 321. A discussion of those elements in China's history which influence her foreign policy today.

Questions:

1. What is the economic interest of the US, if any, in Asia?
2. Is the US attempting to control Asia in order to keep Asia from Socialist control?
3. What is the Chinese attitude toward foreign powers?
4. What was the relation of US interests in China to the war with Japan?
5. Trace the influence of "manifest destiny" and the "frontier thesis" on US policy toward China.
6. How have the psychological attitudes of the average US citizen about China developed; e.g., missionary work, economic interests and so forth?

II. From World War II to Korea.

Between 1946 and 1950 there was a policy conflict within the Congress which was somewhat hidden by the rhetoric of "bipartisan foreign policy". Some wished to extend the containment concept to China since they saw Mao as a tool of Moscow and to fully support Chiang. The Truman administration however limited its aid to Chiang and attempted to avoid any deeper involvement in the Chinese civil war. When Chiang was defeated and fled to Taiwan, the Truman administration declared that it could offer no further support. But the attack on South Korea appeared to give substance to the containment theory, and the Truman administration reversed its policy.

Readings:

1. "Wedemeyer Report on China", Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer, Current History, Oct. 1949, p. 229. Felt that Communists had to be contained but Chiang's regime was corrupt and undermined by inflation. He proposed a five-power guardianship be established.

over Manchuria and increased support for Chiang be given.

2. "The Situation in China", Gen. George C. Marshall, statement of Jan. 7, 1947. A report of Marshall's futile attempt to mediate between the Nationalist and Communist factions in the Chinese civil war.
3. "US Policy toward China" Harry Truman, statement of Dec. 18, 1946. Review of the Marshall mission to China.
4. Walter Lippmann, The Gold War, pp. 52-55 ch. 10: in 1947 three ideas struggled for control of US policy: i) Truman Doctrine ii) Marshall plan for aid to help Chinese help themselves, and iii) US commitment to support ideals of UN.
5. Thomas E. Dewey, speech of July 28, 1949, Vital Speeches 1949, p. 646. A statement of the domino theory in which the first domino is China; also lists US economic interests in Asia.
6. Richard W. Van Alstyne, "The White Paper and China", Current History, Oct. 1949, p. 193. A summary of the events leading to the fall of Chiang based on the State Department White Paper of 1949.
7. John K. Fairbank, "Competition with Communism, not Containment", Foreign Policy Reports, March 15, 1949, p. 6. Factors in revolution are nationalism and the peasant's demand for social change; answer is competition of systems.
8. United States Relations With China, with Special Reference to the Period 1944-1949, US Department of State 1949. The famous white paper issued after the defeat of Chiang.
9. Fleming, D.F., The Cold War and its Origins 1917-1960.
10. I.F. Stone, The Hidden History of the Korean War.

Questions

1. Compare the events outlined in these documents with what was occurring in domestic policy and in Europe.
2. Analyze the effect on China policy of the US tendency to look toward Europe instead of Asia.
3. Compare the factions in US foreign policy after world war II.
4. Analyze the term "bipartisan foreign policy".

III. The Eisenhower-Dulles Era.

The Dulles reign brought the full-blown application of the containment policy to China. This was justified on various versions of the domino theory and by US interests in Southeast Asia. The commitment to Chiang was formalized in 1955 with the Mutual Defense Treaty between the US and the Nationalists.

Readings:

1. Dean Rusk, "The Peking Government Isn't Chinese", speech May 18, 1951 in Vital Speeches: the Peking government is not legitimate since it is an arm of Moscow and thus cannot be Chinese.
2. D.D. Eisenhower, "State of the Union 1953" gives the economic reasons for containment and gives some support to the accusation of imperialism by stating US goal of profitable world trade and encouragement of private overseas investment.
3. John F. Dulles, "The Threat of a Red Asia", US Dept of State Bulletin, April 12, 1954 p. 539: gives domino theory and economic reasons to defend Southeast Asia.
4. Mutual Defense Treaty of Dec. 2, 1954: makes Formosa part of the US defense perimeter, gives the US bases on Formosa and stabilizes Formosa by giving it US protection.
5. "The China Lobby" The Reporter, April 15, 22, 1952. A series on those representatives of the Nationalist government which were lobbying in Washington for US support.
6. Ross Y. Koen, The China Lobby in American Politics 1960 (Mac-Millan)
7. Chester Bowles, "Memo on Our Policy in Asia" NY Times Magazine, April 10, 1955. We must contain communism, but our military emphasis gives a bad impression to Asians. We must treat Asians as Asians and emphasize the positive aspects of democracy. He says we must develop a "tenable colonial policy".
8. G.F. Hudson, "The Basis of Our Defense of Formosa", Commentary March 1955 pp. 236-242: Justification for US stand in Formosa.
9. Harold Levine, "Mr. Eisenhower's Far East Policy", Commentary May 1955 pp. 415-420.
10. Rep. Charles O. Porter, "Iron Curtain is Made in USA" Cong. Record, Vol. 105, part 7, pp. 17634-17637. Summary of dispute with China over the admission of newsmen.
11. Rep. Charles O. Porter, "Proposals for a Trade Mission to China" Cong. Record, Vol 105, part 7, pp. 9913-9924: a step by step proposal from the Congressman from Oregon with supporting letters from businessmen.
12. Harold S. Quigley, "Trade with Communist China" Current History, Dec. 1958 p. 353.
13. John F. Dulles, US Dept of State Bulletin, Sept. 22, 1958, pp. 445-447. Dulles statement of Sept. 4 during the Formosa Strait crisis of 1958 which extends US defense perimeter to include offshore islands, Quemoy and Matsu.

14. Chester Bowles, "The China Problem Reconsidered", Foreign Affairs, April 1960 p 476. Still accepts containment, but now we need to deal with China for disarmament. Calls for an independent Formosa ruled by native Formosans (not refugees from the mainland). "One Formosa - One China" policy.

Questions

1. Discuss the concept of limited war and its relation to Korea and the Formosa Straits crises of 1955 and 1958.
2. Who were the aggressors in Korea? Was China defending its borders?
3. Why were the Formosa Straits crises started?
4. Analyze the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1955 and its relation to the Formosa Straits crisis and to the peak of McCarthyism in 1954.
5. Analyze the machinations over the exchange of news correspondent
6. What were the implications for the American political system of the joint resolution of 1955 giving the President the right to defend Formosa at his own initiative? (compare to the Tonkin resolution of 1964)

IV. The Kennedy-Johnson Era.

Kennedy, contrary to expectations, did little to change China policy. Johnson, however, has not only fully applied the containment theory to Vietnam on the assumption that in some way the Chinese are behind the Vietnamese civil war, but has stated that the US will attempt to build a great society in Asia. The question is, therefore what will the US gain by building a great society in Asia?

Readings:

1. J. William Fulbright, "Old Myths and New Realities", speech in Senate, March 25, 1964. Calls for a reassessment of China policy.
2. Hearings before the Subcommittee on the Far East and the Pacific of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Feb. 1966, and Hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Jan. 1967: the idea of "containment without isolation" was expressed by many witnesses.
3. J. William Fulbright, "Johnson's Asian Doctrine", Cong. Record, July 22, 1966 pp. 16027-33: the speech of Fulbright's analyzes Johnson's proposals to build a great society in Asia.
4. L.B. Johnson, "State of the Union", Jan. 10, 1967: Draws directly the parallel between containment policy applied to Europe and his actions in Asia; justifies his actions in terms of the containment policy.
5. Richard Butwell, "Southeast Asia: How Important - To Whom?" Current History, Jan. 1967 p. 1-7: An examination of present US interests in Asia. He is sympathetic to present policy.

Questions

1. Compare the Dulles and Johnson Asian policies: containment vs. Johnson's Asian doctrine.
2. What is the relation of Vietnam to China policy?
3. What does the US response to Chinese encouragement of wars of liberation indicate about US policy and about American society?
4. Analyze the idea of "containment without isolation" and compare it to previous policies.

V. Containment Policy.

Containment policy is considered separately because it is basic to the whole question of China policy. One should attempt to discover the sources and motivations for the policy, some of which are anti-communism and the Munich experience, compare its application to Europe and Asia, and attempt to discover what the US hopes to gain by containing communism.

Readings:

1. George F. Kennan, American Diplomacy, pp. 89-105. Kennan's famous "Sources of Soviet Conduct"
2. George F. Kennan, Internal Security Subcommittee of Senate Judiciary, 1952. Institute of Pacific Relations, parts 1-6, pp. 1556-1559.
3. J. William Fulbright, The Arrogance of Power, pp. 1-22, 67-81, 157-177. Fulbright supports containment and goes so far as to give us the view of mankind which allows him to do so.
4. Carl Oglesby, Containment and Change, 1967 (MacMillan 08809) Oglesby analyzes containment policy and shows how the European experience has been misapplied in Asia. He does not assume cold war values in his discussion. Recommended.
5. Gitlin and Ono, "Pluralism and Power", Studies on the Left, Vol. 5, no. 3, 1965. Two outlines of the pluralistic description of American society; gives sources of notes for further reading.

Questions

1. Is there any relation between the pluralistic view of American society and the preconception behind the containment policy?
2. What are the preconceptions of the containment policy?
3. Discuss the assumptions made in applying the containment principle to the USSR and those used in applying it to China.

VI. Imperialism

Containment is usually expounded as a defensive policy. This section, which asks if there is American imperialism, is directed

toward the offensive aspects of containment policy. (See also Radical Education Project Study Guide No. 4, by Steve Johnson, on U.S. Foreign Policy and Imperialism.)

Readings:

1. William A. Williams, "The Frontier Thesis" Pacific Journal of History, 1955 p. 397: Williams sees that Turner's frontier thesis has become part of the American consciousness and that China has become the new frontier to serve those functions that Turner saw necessary to preserve the American way of life.
2. Wolfe and Aronson, Studies on the Left, Vol. 6, no. 3, 1966, pp 28-61.

Questions

1. Is there any sense in which the US might be considered an imperialist nation?
2. Is there any relation between the containment policy and the imperialist tendencies of the US?
3. Is containment a rationalization or projection of US imperialism, i.e., is the real goal of containment to take ground for the US interests and not to defend against communism?

VII. Rhetoric and Propaganda.

For this seminar one should return to the previous readings and review the rhetoric used to justify US policy and actions. This guide makes the assumption that most US officials actually believe the reasons they have offered. To study China policy, therefore, one must study these rationalizations and try to fit them into the context of the American life that produced them, in order to see their source and use.

Reading:

1. Tang Tsou, "The American Political Tradition and the American Image of Chinese Communism", Political Science Quarterly, Vol. LXXVII no. 4. Dec. 1962. pp. 570-600. Discusses the "givenness" of American values and the effect this has of creating consensus on foreign policy.

Questions

1. How much does the State Department believe its rhetoric and how much is devised to manipulate the people into support of the policies?
2. Is it true that the threats to the US that the State Department sees are threats only because of the identification in their minds between the interests of the US and the interests of capitalism?
3. What is behind the attempt to break the Peking regime by the claim that it was not legitimate? Compare this to other instances.

- in which the US immediately recognized a regime which took power by force.
4. Is the rhetoric used to convince people that their interests are identical to the interests of some elite? Attempt to identify that elite.
 5. What are the preconceptions of this rhetoric, e.g., about the nature of man, relations between states, nature of states, of the US goals and position in the world?
 6. Are there commonly accepted American values?
 7. Are ideas such as "bipartisan foreign policy" used to inhibit dissent? Did this lead to the end of ideology talk in the '50s?

VIII. Change.

A study of history is only valuable if it leads to action. Thus the final session is devoted to reading suggestions for solving the problem of China policy. Hopefully then one will develop one's own conception of the ideal policy toward China and find the means by which this policy may be adopted.

Readings:

1. J. William Fulbright, Arrogance of Power, pp. 223-258. We must give more foreign aid with no strings attached.
2. William A. Williams, The Tragedy of American Diplomacy, pp. 297-309. Wants an open door for social revolutions.

Questions.

1. Does US policy depend on the personality of our leaders; i.e. would JFK have reduced the effort to contain China while Johnson hasn't, or does the policy have an inner logic of its own depending only on the nature of the American political system?
2. Would US policy change if US officials only understood the facts better?
3. Can US foreign policy change without a total reorientation of domestic policy?
4. What action can be taken to change US foreign policy? Is not playing pressure politics playing into the hands of those who would wish to play your group off against another one? Analyze the peace movement in this light.
5. What truth is there in the claim by US officials that US policy toward China cannot change because the public is not ready for a change?
6. What would be the ideal policy for the US to adopt toward China?

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