

## ABSTRACT

Title of Document: SUITCASE DIPLOMACY: THE ROLE OF TRAVEL IN SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONS, 1949-1968

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This dissertation examines U.S. travel in the context of Sino-American relations between 1949 and 1968. Building on recent scholarship on tourism and foreign relations, this dissertation argues that historians cannot develop a comprehensive understanding of the U.S. relationship with the People's Republic of China (PRC), Taiwan, and Hong Kong without establishing travel and travelers as significant agents of historical change. Using tourism as a centerpiece of historical inquiry, moreover, adds complexity to the traditional Cold War narrative and suggests that other forces, aside from East-West struggle, defined the international climate in the post-World War II period.

The post-1945 boom in recreational tourism did not materialize uniformly around the world. On the mainland of China, swept up in civil war, travel was difficult and unappealing. The emergence of Cold War tensions in the region added a new obstacle to tourism as Washington imposed restrictions on American travel. Using the founding of

the PRC as a starting point, this dissertation follows the course of American travel and travel policy in the region. As opposed to being marked by isolation and disengagement, the period from 1949 to 1968 saw incredible activity in the area of travel. In terms of U.S.-PRC relations, travel served as a medium of engagement and both sides showed a willingness to initiate travel exchanges and reforms to travel policy as a means of feeling out the opposing camp. Moving beyond the mainland of China, U.S. officials, private industry, and individual travelers perceived Taiwan and Hong Kong as “alternatives” to the PRC and both destinations experienced huge booms in tourism.

In all these realms, travel developed both as a crucial element of U.S. containment policy and as a phenomenon that seemed disconnected from Cold War strategy. Using government archival material, travelogues, travel guides, records from international tourism associations, and popular advertisements, this dissertation demonstrates that tourism was not always the most efficient channel for foreign policy. The expectations and motivations of individual tourists, the overwhelming belief in a “right to travel,” and the unpredictable impact of tourism on local economies, all worked to add complexity and nuance to the Sino-American post-World War II relationship.

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RELATIONS, 1949-1968

By

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## **Dedication**

For my grandfather, Melvin Lieberman, to whom this dissertation meant so much.

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## **Abbreviations**

ACYF	All-China Youth Federation
ANTA	American National Theater and Academy
APL	American Presidents Line
ASTA	American Society of Travel Agents
CCO	Comprehensive Certificate of Origin
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
ECAFE	Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East
GMD	Guomindang (Chinese Nationalist Party)
HKTA	Hong Kong Tourist Association
ICA	International Cooperation Administration
IHC	Intercontinental Hotel Corporation
IUOTO	International Union of Official Travel Organizations
PATA	Pacific Area Travel Association
PRC	People's Republic of China
ROC	Republic of China
TTC	Taiwan Tourism Council
TVA	Taiwan Visitors Association
USIA/S	United States Information Agency/Service



## Introduction: The Traveler, the Tourist, and the Cold War

The traveler sees what he sees, the tourist sees what he has come to see.

-- G.K. Chesterton

But why don't we call a tourist a "tourist"? What useful purpose does it serve, for example, to refer to him as "sojourner," "transit passenger"... "overland tourist," or "transit"?<sup>1</sup>

-- *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East*, Commerce Department tourism survey, 1961

As the post-World War II civil war was raging in China, tourism to the region persevered. American Presidents Line (APL), America's leading cruise liner, filled the pages of travel periodicals with advertisements for luxurious cruises to the Far East. Advertisements showed passengers on deck enjoying shuffleboard and swimming, seemingly unaware of any turmoil on the Chinese mainland. The *President Wilson* and the *President Cleveland* – APL's transpacific "vacation ships" – tempted travelers with "swimming, dancing, games, motion pictures."<sup>2</sup> Beyond promotional material, tourism industry insiders spoke optimistically about international travel to the region. John Diggs, APL's vice president of passenger traffic, noted in early 1950, a few months after the Chinese Communists (CCP) claimed victory, that tourist interest in the Far East was on the rise and that the region would see a "rapid return...to its prewar position as one of the world's most interesting tourist areas."<sup>3</sup> When Pacific travel organizations met during the Korean War to discuss the potential obstacles to increasing tourism to the Far East, moreover, it was the insufficient numbers of hotels and restaurants, not political or

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<sup>1</sup> Harry G. Clement, *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961), 83.

<sup>2</sup> American Presidents Line advertisement, *Travel*, September 1947

<sup>3</sup> "APL Officer Makes Trip to Orient," *ASTA Travel News*, April 1950.

military instability, that topped the list.<sup>4</sup> With the appropriate accommodations and facilities, it seemed that tourism to the Far East had limitless possibilities.

The quixotic activities and language surrounding the ascent of mass tourism to the Far East suggest that overseas travel was somehow immune from the conflict, divisions, tensions, and geopolitical considerations of the Cold War. This, of course, was not true. In November 1950, as U.S. and Chinese troops were waging battle on the Korean peninsula, federal law demanded an immediate cessation of business transactions between the United States and the People's Republic of China (PRC). Cruise lines, airlines, and other components of the American tourism industry, terminated their connections with China. Even in Nationalist Taiwan and British Hong Kong, the ensuing U.S.-PRC conflict disrupted nascent tourism industries, discouraging frightened travelers and weary developers alike. More broadly, travel boosters and government officials regularly used Cold War rhetoric when discussing the role of American tourists overseas. John Steelman, President Harry S. Truman's chief of staff, for instance, hailed tourism and the "[f]ree movement of people" as one of the major distinctions between the free and communist worlds.<sup>5</sup> Y. T. Tan, Chairman of the Taiwan Tourism Council (TTC), similarly referred to tourism as the "symbol of democracy."<sup>6</sup> Beyond the rhetoric, the Cold War and tourism intersected in terms of passport restrictions, landing rights for planes, currency controls, private American investment overseas, and the dissemination of America's image abroad. U.S. policymakers, moreover, consistently saw mass tourism

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<sup>4</sup> F. Marvin Plake, executive director of the Pacific Area Travel Association, for example, later asserted that [o]f all the problems of China, this [the lack of suitable hotels in Taiwan] has been one of the most perplexing." "Orient Showing Vigorous Approach to Travel Problems, Says PATA Director," *Pacific Travel News*, January 1961. Also see, "PATA's Phenomenal Growth – Nine Conferences in Review," *Pacific Travel News*, January 1961.

<sup>5</sup> John R. Steelman, "The Meaning of Korea," *ASTA Travel News*, November 1950.

<sup>6</sup> Y. T. Tan, "The Pacific Message," *Pacific Travel News*, April 1959.

as an implicit argument in favor of the American democratic, capitalist system and unapologetically incorporated it into Washington's general policy of containment.

Using tourism as the focus of a study on the United States and China thus does not suggest that the Cold War narrative misrepresents Sino-American relations; instead, it demonstrates that a Cold War lens is too narrow. As historian Anders Stephanson paradoxically but perceptively notes, the Cold War "is not everything that happens in international politics...during the Cold War." An international approach, which offers a more accurate depiction of post-World War II foreign affairs, requires examining trends, actors, and themes outside of a bipolar framework.<sup>7</sup>

In this same way, American mass tourism did not always fit neatly into Washington's Cold War strategy nor did tourists and members of the tourism industry always see their activities as supportive of, or even a part of, American foreign policy. Focusing on "suitcase diplomacy" – including the impact of individual tourists as they traveled en masse overseas, the concerted efforts of the federal government to supervise and capitalize on that travel, and the cooperation and conflict between private industry, individual tourists, and Washington officials – enables an examination of another side of Sino-American relations. In this supplementary narrative, the U.S. government and individual Americans practiced engagement alongside containment and often approached the PRC, Taiwan, and Hong Kong in ways that ignored or even bucked the Cold War.

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<sup>7</sup> Anders Stephanson, "Cold War Origins," in *Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy*, eds. Alexander DeConde, Richard Dean Burns, and Fredrik Logevall (New York: Scribner, 2002), 223-24.

In 1994 David Engerman encouraged historians, specifically diplomatic historians, to bring tourism to the center of inquiry. Tossing out the notion that tourism amounts to a superficial, trivial activity outside the realm of diplomatic history, Engerman argues that American travel abroad “has constituted one of the most prominent and, on occasion, spectacular features of the economic and social relations between this country and other countries.”<sup>8</sup> Since then, only a few historians have taken up the call; those that have, however, have produced excellent scholarship on the intersection of foreign policy and tourism.

Christopher Endy, in his examination of American tourism to France during the Cold War, offers one of the most comprehensive explorations of tourism in the context of post-World War II affairs. Interspersing discussion of the Marshall Plan, people-to-people programs, and de Gaulle’s search for a “third way,” with critical examinations of Frommer’s travel guides, the architecture of Hilton hotels, and speeches and writings from industry leader such as Juan Trippe, Horace Sutton, and Conrad Hilton, Endy successfully designates mass tourism as a crucial component of American Cold War policy and Franco-American relations. Expanding the borders of diplomatic historical inquiry, Endy’s approach requires the use of nontraditional source material – travel advertisements, travel guides, hotel blueprints, photographs, travel diaries, and post-travel speeches – as well as the integration of non-state, apolitical actors into the narrative of foreign relations. Finally, Endy demonstrates that to understand the post-World War II

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<sup>8</sup> David Engerman, “Research Agenda for the History of Tourism: Towards an International Social History,” *American Studies International* Vol. 32 (October 1994).

world, historians must look beyond the Cold War to other international forces – in this case consumerism and globalization.<sup>9</sup>

Dennis Merrill's *Negotiating Paradise* broadens the temporal framework, examining the impact of U.S. tourism on twentieth century U.S.-Latin American relations. In separate essays on interwar Mexico, early-Cold War Cuba, and Cold War Puerto Rico, Merrill suggests that while U.S. tourism was a major component of national expansion and empire, the resulting “clash” between guests and hosts was quite nuanced. Though the United States clearly exercised hegemony over Latin America and, in fact, maintained a physical and virtual empire in the region, Latin Americans were “not passive victims.” Indeed, these hosts were able to maintain a great deal of autonomy by negotiating relationships with incoming tourists, manipulating the look and feel of the local tourism industry, and actually sharing in the creation of “empire.”<sup>10</sup>

Neal Moses Rosendorf's “Be El Caudillo's Guest” examines the relationship between private Americans and the Spanish Franco government in the development of recreational tourism to Spain in the early Cold War. Beyond linking tourism to Spain's postwar economic rehabilitation, Rosendorf's study highlights the remarkable degree to which Washington officials were unable or unwilling to control American tourists' interactions with Spain. Instead, Hollywood movie producers, airline executives, travel agents, publicity firms, and tourists themselves were major players in U.S.-Spanish relations, creating a sort of “Hispano-U.S. corporatism.”<sup>11</sup> By downplaying the role of the

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<sup>9</sup> Christopher Endy, *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> Dennis Merrill, *Negotiating Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Twentieth-Century Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Neal Moses Rosendorf, “Be El Caudillo's Guest: The Franco Regime's Quest for Rehabilitation and Dollars after World War II via the Promotion of U.S. Tourism to Spain,” *Diplomatic History* 30 (June 2006). 372.

U.S. government in American tourism to Spain, Rosendorf points to a crucial and unique component of suitcase diplomacy. While landing rights for planes, passport controls, customs regulations, and airline and shipping subsidies have provided government officials with significant resources to manipulate the scope and impact of American travel, tourists are, in the end, very much on their own when they travel abroad and their influence on foreign relations is as uncontrollable as it is unpredictable.

Offering a slightly different approach to tourism studies, Yale Richmond, in *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War*, expands on efforts to complicate the Cold War. Examining Soviet-American cooperation in the form of cultural exchange, Richmond explores how U.S. officials relied on these nontraditional channels of diplomacy to achieve foreign policy objectives. Merging public policy and diplomatic history in a book that is both memoir and monograph, Richmond argues that cultural contacts and exchanges between the United States and the USSR constituted a significant component of Gorbachev's reform policies in the late 1980s.<sup>12</sup>

Taken in sum, these studies introduce American tourism both as a crucial component of U.S. economic, political, and cultural policy, and an activity that often operated outside the immediate jurisdiction and control of government officials. The manner in which international travel maneuvered between structured, official diplomacy, and unpredictable, disengaged exploration, gives tourism a unique role in U.S. foreign relations and makes it worthy of further study.

No historian, however, has viewed the history of post-World War II Sino-American relations through the lens of travel. Building on the historiography discussed

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<sup>12</sup> Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003).

above, this methodology promises to add nuance and complexity to the historical narrative. The multitude of actors involved in tourism, the diversity and unpredictability of tourism's impact, and the connotation of recreation and escape that are associated with the act of international travel, create a remarkable and insightful contrast to the Cold War narrative centered state-to-state relations, conflict, and containment that has dominated the historiography of Sino-American relations. A focus on tourism and travel thus avoids forcing the entirety of Sino-American relations under the Cold War umbrella, a tendency which seems unnecessarily simplistic and teleological.

Approaching Sino-American relations solely as a product and producer of Cold War tends toward three results. First, it forces historical analysis of the U.S.-PRC relationship into a framework of containment, conflict, and disengagement. The years 1950 and 1972 become “bookends” – to use Richard Bush’s term – flanking a period of mutual hostility and distrust.<sup>13</sup> Chen Jian speaks of Sino-American relations in the post-Korean War era as one of “total confrontation” and Warren Cohen summarizes U.S. policy toward the PRC in the 1950s as an effort to “isolate, encircle, and bring about the collapse of the Peking government.”<sup>14</sup> Only in the late 1960s, when the Nixon administration recognized favorable geopolitical shifts and embraced Chinese overtures, did the era of conflict come to an end. This general approach to Sino-American relations – which associates the pre-rapprochement era with absolute conflict – makes it difficult to locate, or even look for, episodes of engagement, cooperation, or harmony between the United States and the PRC. Anders Stephanson, referring to post-1945 U.S.-Soviet

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<sup>13</sup> Richard C. Bush, *At Cross Purposes: U.S.-Taiwan Relations Since 1942* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 85.

<sup>14</sup> Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 1; Warren Cohen, *America's Response to China: A History of Sino-American Relations* Fourth Edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 180-81.

relations, makes this point as well, noting that the “inflated” Cold War narrative tends to “conceal or obliterate variations in the nature of the relationship.”<sup>15</sup>

Second, this approach relegates U.S. interaction with the Republic of China (Taiwan) and Hong Kong – the two most significant remnants of Chinese culture and politics that remained in Washington’s camp following the Chinese civil war – either to the sidelines or to the role of mere PRC counterweight. Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, for example, writes that Taiwan lived “in the shadow of China” and she refers to Hong Kong as “a pawn in the Cold War.”<sup>16</sup> Robert Accinelli, likewise, defines the U.S. dilemma surrounding Taiwan in the post-civil war era: “how to keep this strategically important territory from falling into Communist hands without incurring unwanted responsibilities or liabilities.”<sup>17</sup> Mark Chi-kwan discusses Hong Kong in much this same light. From the perspective of U.S. officials, Hong Kong was a window to the PRC and it served as a crucial post for propaganda, covert operations, intelligence gathering, and export controls – all of which were direct means of containing the Chinese Communists.<sup>18</sup>

Third, the tendency to depict Taiwan and Hong Kong as mere byproducts of nascent U.S.-PRC rivalry has led numerous historians, who are critical of Washington’s Cold War policy toward the PRC, to focus only on the “debit side” of Washington’s

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<sup>15</sup> Anders Stephanson, “Fourteen Notes: On the Very Concept of the Cold War,” *H-Diplo Essays* (February 2007), 2.

<sup>16</sup> Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945-1992: Uncertain Friendships*. (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994), 7, 215.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Accinelli, *Crisis and Commitment: United States Policy toward Taiwan, 1950-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 3.

<sup>18</sup> Mark Chi-kwan, *Hong Kong and the Cold War: Anglo-American Relations, 1949-1957* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 2.



relationship with “Free China.”<sup>19</sup> This argument points to the corruption and inefficiency of the Nationalist government as the primary explanation for its defeat in the civil war and depicts the defunct government (now on Taiwan) as a nag and a burden for the United States throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Tucker, for example, depicts the U.S.-ROC relationship as one of mutual frustration. Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) consistently wanted more American military and economic support than American officials were willing to give and the demands of the Nationalists tended to distract Washington policymakers from more pressing issues of national security. Simultaneously, Hong Kong was cause for major headaches in Washington since its mere existence forced U.S. officials into the difficult position of carrying out strict containment against the PRC without bringing damage to the economy or prestige of Hong Kong and its British supervisors.<sup>20</sup> Seldom does this literature suggest that the United States gained anything substantial from its associations with “Free China.”

All of this focus on the Cold War in Sino-American historiography acts to narrow the scope of historical inquiry. Limiting Sino-American relations to a binary of conflict/non-conflict and examining “Free China” purely in relation to the PRC prevents historians from asking key questions. Were U.S. and PRC officials able to navigate a course of comity or engagement in the years following the Chinese civil war? Was the U.S. policy of rapprochement in the late 1960s truly a radical shift from Washington’s earlier approach to China? Did American officials ever define their relations with Taiwan and Hong Kong in terms unrelated to the PRC? Did popular perceptions and images of

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<sup>19</sup> John W. Garver attempts to counter this line of argument, writing that the U.S. relationship with the Nationalist leadership “was an important and valuable element of U.S. strategy in Asia during the two decades between 1950 and 1971.” Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance: Nationalist China and American Cold War Strategy in Asia* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), 1,7.

<sup>20</sup> Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States*, 45.

Taiwan and Hong Kong – namely those that did not portray those regions as “Chinese alternatives” to the PRC – noticeably influence U.S. China policy? Did American interaction with “Free China” produce any benefits for the U.S. economy and American cultural development? In sum, does the Cold War explain the entirety of Sino-American relations in the post-World War II world?

Historians have begun to address the problems of the Cold War-centric approach to postwar American history. Cultural historians have successfully demonstrated that the Cold War was not as omnipresent – at least not at the level of average Americans – as some historians tend to assume. Peter Filene, for example, argues that gender roles, mainstream entertainment, suburbia, and the concerns of “Main Street,” all fell outside of the purview of the Cold War. Many Americans had little in depth knowledge of foreign or even domestic political issues and spent far more time poring over newspaper comics than they did front-page news.<sup>21</sup>

It has proven much harder for diplomatic historians to turn their gaze from the Cold War. The Sino-Soviet-U.S. geopolitical conflict loomed large, especially at the top levels of government; Cold War and post-1945 international relations have thus become synonymous for many in the field. But the complexity that Filene introduces to the Cold War seems as applicable to the study of foreign relations as it does domestic culture. As Steven Phillips suggests, “the Cold War provides only a general framework for understanding the history of Sino-American relations. It has become an ideal type – a

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<sup>21</sup> Peter Filene, “‘Cold War Culture’ Doesn’t Say it All,” in *Rethinking Cold War Culture*, eds. Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert, 156-74 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001). A 1952 Gallup Poll seems to confirm this generalization about the American public. While a sizable portion of the sample pool (35 percent), listed “clean[ing] out communism in this country” among the presidential initiatives that would matter the most, similar or greater numbers pointed toward eliminating government corruption, reducing the cost of living, and lowering taxes. Gallup Poll #488, 19 March 1952.

model against which actual policies and attitudes are compared – rather than the sole defining characteristic of the era.”<sup>22</sup>

Some recent scholarship on foreign relations in general and Sino-American relations in particular has begun to move in this direction, demonstrating both that Soviet-American conflict (the essence of the Cold War) does not explain the entirety of postwar international relations and that Washington officials were far more nuanced in their approach to foreign affairs than the Cold War narrative might suggest. In a very broad sense, several historians, including Jussi Hanhimaki, John Zubritzky, and Mark Chikwan, downplay the relative importance of the U.S.-Soviet conflict by focusing on small or middle-range powers that sought distinct international objectives in the postwar world.<sup>23</sup> With other powers on the international stage, all with unique political, economic, and ideological motivations, Soviet-American hegemony becomes less apparent and consequential. Cary Fraser makes this point more explicit, insisting that an international approach to post-World War II history – that is, one that “reaches beyond the bipolar paradigm” of superpower relations – is the only way to get a truly comprehensive assessment of the period.<sup>24</sup>

Andrew Preston launches a more direct challenge to the traditional Cold War narrative. In his book on U.S. Vietnam War policy, Preston questions the sense of

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<sup>22</sup> Steven Phillips, “Forming America’s Cold War Policy,” review of *Congress and the U.S.-China Relationship: 1949-1979*, by Guangqiu Xu and *Washington’s China: The National Security World, the Cold War, and the Origins of Globalism*, by James Peck. *Diplomatic History* 32 no. 5 (November 2008), 995-96.

<sup>23</sup> Jussi M. Hanhimaki, *Containing Coexistence: America, Russia, and the “Finnish Solution,” 1945-1956*, (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1997); John Zubritzky, *Confronting Sukarno: British, American, Australian and New Zealand Diplomacy in the Malaysian-Indonesian Confrontation, 1961-5* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000); and Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*.

<sup>24</sup> Cary Fraser, “A Requiem for the Cold War: Reviewing the History of International Relations since 1945,” in *Re-Thinking the Cold War*, ed. Allen Hunter, 93-115 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998).

inevitability that defines much of the scholarship on the Cold War, suggesting that a “Cold War consensus” was not the driving force behind American military intervention. Instead of American involvement being a natural, almost knee-jerk, response to American strategic and ideological concerns during the Cold War, U.S. intervention was instead the result of conscious, deliberate decisions from within the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. While Cold War considerations were a factor in U.S. foreign policy, they did not establish an impermeable framework within which all decisions were made.<sup>25</sup>

Applying this challenge of the Cold War to a broader geographic area, Matthew Connelly, Daniel Spiech, and Jason Parker argue that a Cold War perspective is not entirely appropriate when viewing parts of the Third World. In his examination of Algeria’s anti-colonial movement in the 1950s, Connelly notes that while Algerian nationalists recognized the existence of U.S.-Soviet rivalry and used it to their advantage, they did so in a way that muddles basic assumptions about the Cold War. Instead of merely playing the United States off of the Soviet Union, or vice versa, the Algerians “exploited every international rivalry that offered potential leverage – revisionist against conservative Arab states, the Arab League against Asian neutrals, China against the USSR, the communist powers against the Western allies, and, above all, the United States against France itself.”<sup>26</sup> Spiech argues that Nationalist leaders in 1960s Kenya similarly blurred traditional Cold War categories by thinking in north/south terms when approaching issues such as technical assistance and industrialization. To these leaders,

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<sup>25</sup> Andrew Preston, *The War Council: McGeorge Bundy, the NSC, and Vietnam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

<sup>26</sup> Matthew Connelly, “Rethinking the Cold War and Decolonization: The Grand Strategy of the Algerian War for Independence,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 33 (2001), 239.

the industrialized nations of both the United States and the USSR served as attractive models to imitate; from the perspective of Kenyan leaders, the countries of the “north” (the U.S. and the USSR included) belonged in the same camp.<sup>27</sup> Finally, Parker, in his examination of Third World decolonization, suggests that the overstuffed periodization of the 1945-1990 Cold War is too large to be useful. Other forces at work in the Third World, such as campaigns for self-determination and racial struggle, demand other temporal divisions.<sup>28</sup> In other words, when examining this area of international history, the traditional Cold War framework alone is not sufficient.

Gordon Chang’s *Friends and Enemies* provides an excellent basis for this approach in the field of Sino-American relations. Rejecting Cold War inevitability and downplaying partisan rhetoric, Chang argues that the State Department’s eventual policy of isolating the PRC through non-recognition, embargo, and military deterrence was not a given from the start, nor was it beyond the possibility of modification. Rational political calculation, not narrow-minded assumptions of communist monolithism, determined policy.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, Robert Accinelli’s *Crisis and Commitment* depicts the relationship between the U.S. and Taiwan as one of restraint and moderation. Maintaining the support of vital European allies and avoiding full-scale war with the PRC, Accinelli argues, usually took priority over both the needs of the Nationalist government and the desires of the China Lobby within the United States. Eisenhower’s talk of “unleashing Chiang,” along with other examples of aggressive rhetoric, were meant more to please domestic

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<sup>27</sup> Daniel Spiech, “The Kenyan Style of ‘African Socialism’: Developmental Knowledge Claims and the Explanatory Limits of the Cold War,” *Diplomatic History* 33 (June 2009).

<sup>28</sup> Jason Parker, “Cold War II: The Eisenhower Administration, the Bandung Conference, and the Reperiodization of the Postwar Era,” *Diplomatic History* 30 (November 2006).

<sup>29</sup> Gordon Chang, *Friends and Enemies: The United States, China, and the Soviet Union, 1948-1972* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990).

and international audiences than they were reflective of actual U.S. intentions.<sup>30</sup> More recently and dramatically, Yafeng Xia has challenged the notion that the Sino-American Cold War rivalry necessitated disengagement and unqualified enmity. Examining several instances of high-level U.S.-PRC talks, Xia argues that mutual distrust and public animosity did not preclude the possibility of comity and official contacts. Negotiations, easing of relations, and cultural contacts – alongside containment, isolation, and hostility – characterized Sino-American relations during this period.<sup>31</sup>

## II

Continuing down this intellectual path, this dissertation argues that the U.S. relationship with the PRC, Taiwan, and Hong Kong cannot be understood if historians approach it merely as an extension of the rise and fall of Cold War hostility. The transcendence of the Cold War happened in several ways related to travel and tourism. First, while policymakers consistently maintained some sort of ban on travel to the PRC during the 1950s and 1960s, Washington's tough policy was coupled with a stronger trend toward liberalization. In other words, the general policy of containment that Washington maintained on the political, economic, and military fronts did not translate fully into the realm of travel. During this period U.S. officials regularly amended and eased restrictions on American travel to China, granting numerous Americans permission to visit the PRC. In a pattern that would repeat itself throughout the 1950s and 1960s, U.S. officials found that travel policy reform – more so than changes to economic,

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<sup>30</sup> Accinelli, *Crisis and Commitment*.

<sup>31</sup> Yafeng Xia, *Negotiating with the Enemy: U.S.-China Talks During the Cold War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

military, or political policy – was a relatively politically safe mechanism for engaging or testing the PRC regime.

Responding to the changes in U.S. travel policy and eager for further elimination of travel barriers, a number of Americans, moreover, violated travel restrictions and visited the PRC during the 1950s and 1960s, often with invitations from Chinese officials in hand. For decades before the American table tennis team made its landmark 1971 visit to the PRC during the period of Sino-American rapprochement, these American travelers maintained a presence on the Chinese mainland. While the number of these individuals was quite small (likely under one hundred) their travel was the topic of discussion in countless Washington meetings and their actions no doubt sped up further government liberalization of travel policy. Furthermore, because the PRC government maintained near-total control over visitors to the mainland, these American travelers exercised far more political influence than their small numbers would suggest.

Second, as demonstrated by the gradual increase of lawful and unlawful American travelers in the PRC, efforts to stimulate domestic tourism were not the domain of “democratic” governments alone. U.S. officials regularly cited international travel as a crucial distinction between the worlds on either side of the Iron Curtain, but Tito’s Yugoslavia and post-Stalinist Russia both maintained active tourism industries and attracted a good deal of American tourists and American capital.<sup>32</sup> Soviet success at drawing foreign tourists, of which U.S. officials were well aware, was actually a considerable inducement for U.S. policymakers to put more funding toward the American

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<sup>32</sup> In 1956 the Soviet Union, for instance, welcomed roughly 480,000 tourists. Wayne Phillips, “Tours to Russia Gain Popularity,” *New York Times*, 31 March 1958.

tourism industry.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, in the 1950s the PRC conducted a significant campaign to increase travel to the mainland. Japanese, Russian, Indian, and North Korean tourists flocked to the PRC in these years. Though the numbers of incoming tourists never approached the figures for Taiwan or Hong Kong (the peak was around 5,000 in 1956) the effort of the PRC government to accommodate tourists signals a degree of universality in international travel and demonstrates that certain trends in international development do not fit into simple Cold War categories.<sup>34</sup>

Third, the same Cold War exigencies that limited the options of policymakers in terms of travel to the PRC, pushed officials toward increasing contact with “Free China” – namely Taiwan and Hong Kong. Though Taiwan and Hong Kong served dramatically different roles in Washington’s military, political, and economic policies, the two regions played remarkably similar parts in U.S. cultural diplomacy. To many Americans, Taiwan and Hong Kong represented the “true China,” and vacations to these destinations succeeded in filling the void created by the Communist takeover of the mainland. To policymakers, tourism to Taiwan and Hong Kong appeared to be an efficient means of bringing foreign exchange, technical assistance, symbolic support, and increased prestige to these crucial outposts. In this sense, U.S. travel policy toward China was not wholly negative and policymakers developed, guided, and co-opted travel connections to serve foreign policy objectives. Large-scale travel initiatives, run by the State Department, sent hundreds of artists, athletes, and lecturers to Taiwan and Hong Kong to entertain and enlighten locals. In addition to government-supported programs, travel agents, popular magazines, international travel associations, and airline and shipping companies

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<sup>33</sup> UPI, “Russia Held Beating U.S. in Tourism,” *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 23 August 1959.

<sup>34</sup> Greg MacGregor, “Foreign Visitors See Peiping’s Best Side,” *New York Times*, 26 August 1956.



recognized that Taiwan and Hong Kong were untapped “Chinese” tourist destinations and they focused much of their resources into getting recreational tourists and tourist dollars to move in.

Fourth, in the course of discussing and promoting travel to the region, U.S. officials, travel boosters, and private tourists often avoided depicting Taiwan and Hong Kong in terms of Cold War significance. Travel writing and advertisements – both of which served as a key medium for generating American images of China and shaping travel patterns in the region – regularly depicted Taiwan and Hong Kong on their own terms. Hong Kong and Taiwan were not merely democratic, capitalist alternatives to the PRC, nor were they means by which to undermine the Communist leadership on the mainland. Instead, they were serene destinations, exotic and exciting, and largely free from war and disorder. Travel agents, who sold package tours of Taiwan and Hong Kong, maintained this depiction by highlighting the modern hotels, beautiful landscapes, bargain shopping, and proximity to Japan and the Philippines. Communism and containment rarely entered the picture – at least not explicitly. If tourists are included among the numerous legitimate actors in Sino-American relations, it must be recognized that few saw themselves as extensions of U.S. foreign policy when their plane touched down at Kai Tak Airport or when they boarded APL’s *President Cleveland* en route to Taiwan.

Fifth, American tourism, which no doubt contributed to Washington’s efforts to compete with and challenge the communist world, also frequently butted up against or directly conflicted with Cold War containment. Individual tourists were not necessarily the best carriers of official U.S. foreign policy overseas. American travelers – who

understandably preferred relaxing and sightseeing to engaging in political debate – were prone to behave in ways that damaged, or at least failed to advance, America’s image and objectives overseas. Washington’s gradual liberalization of travel policy toward the PRC, for instance, made it increasingly difficult to impose *any* travel restrictions and the American public overwhelmingly opposed efforts of government officials to obstruct overseas travel. Strong pressure against travel restrictions meant that officials often had to allow leftist scholars, social critics, and American communists, to travel to the PRC, a development that seemed to threaten U.S. interests in the region.

In regard to recreational travel to Taiwan and Hong Kong, U.S. policymakers, through official correspondence and adopted policy, placed more focus on the economic benefits of tourism than they did its contributions to containment or the collapse of the PRC. Economic advancement often worked hand in hand with Cold War containment policy, but sometimes these two objectives clashed. Most blatantly, though American tourists often had to change their shopping habits – primarily in Hong Kong – to comply with the U.S. embargo on the PRC, there is no doubt that significant monetary and political benefit came to the PRC through American tourism to the region.

Finally, just as tourism does not fit neatly into the thematic framework of the Cold War, neither does it fit entirely in its temporal framework. Tourism’s place in international relations, in other words, did not emerge suddenly with the advent of Cold War and its significance did not dissipate with the Cold War’s conclusion. Ever since it emerged as a recreational activity, tourism influenced the ways that foreign governments and foreign peoples interacted with and perceived one another. Exemplifying this point, in December 1929 *Harper’s Magazine* writer Hiram Motherwell commented on the

steady and dramatic rise in overseas tourism. From the 1870s, when Mark Twain's *Innocents Abroad* "was at the full peak of its efficiency as a stimulus to foreign travel," to the 1920s, as Motherwell wrote his article, tourist numbers had increased more than tenfold and expenditures had increased 2700 percent. The American tourist, moreover, had "become a dominant factor in the modern world." Despite tourists' occasional gaffe, arrogant demeanor, or parochial outlook, Motherwell saw tourists as crucial to human progress:

Judged merely by the annual sums of money transferred abroad, they are more important than all the famous American foreign investments taken together and four times more important as the war debts. And as a factor in international relations, both economic and cultural, they constitute nothing less than a major element in the growth of modern civilization.<sup>35</sup>

Motherwell's observations, rooted in the climate of postwar disillusionment and economic depression, were as relevant to his time as they would be during the boom years of the 1950s and 1960s. In this manner, as well, the Cold War loses some of its explanatory power. Tourism – in terms of its influence on international affairs – developed independently of the Cold War and carried with it connotations and ramifications that far predated, and outlasted, the post-World War II Sino-American conflict.

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<sup>35</sup> Hiram Motherwell, "The American Tourist Makes History," *Harper's Magazine*, December 1929, 70.

## Ch. 1 – Expectations and Change: Developing a Travel Policy Toward China, 1945-1952

Ten years, five years, three years, perhaps even one year from now, the Orient will be a fascinating – and a pleasant – place to visit. But not this summer.

-- Foster Hailey, *New York Times* war and travel correspondent, May 1947

In Hong Kong's harbor, a huge Royal Navy Yard repairs and services the ships of Britain's Far Eastern Fleet. On land, a military air base is jammed with long-range flying squadrons and anti-aircraft nests.

-- *Holiday*, November 1950

Only by sea can you leave care and dull routine so very far behind. When you sail the serene and sparkling Pacific in "President" style, to romantic Honolulu and storied Far East ports of call – then, indeed, is your escape complete.

-- American Presidents Line advertisement, *Holiday*, November 1952

The years following the Second World War saw the rapid rise in overseas travel. Tourist destinations, long closed due to military conflict and political instability or unreachable due to a lack of tourist infrastructure and transportation, were now open to the eager traveler. As one writer noted, "There are so many countries inviting the American tourist...that his hardest job, perhaps, will be deciding where he wants to go."<sup>1</sup> This revitalized middle-class activity seemed to offer something for everyone. U.S. policymakers, eager to prevent postwar depression by stabilizing (primarily) European economies, salivated over the potential impact of millions of American tourists, and billions of American dollars, making their way overseas. For the first time, the U.S. government explicitly integrated mass travel into foreign policy; officials encouraged the dissolution of travel restrictions and the commensurate rise in tourism. Internationalists and "one-worlders," inside and outside the government, saw the travel boom as an

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<sup>1</sup> Paul J. C. Friedlander, "The American Tourist Comes Into His Own," *New York Times*, 6 March 1949.

opportunity to promote understanding and cultural harmony between nations and to heal the wounds of the war. Members of the travel industry latched on quickly to the new trends in travel, expanding their presence around the globe and establishing their companies as significant representatives of American power and prestige. Finally, anxious Americans, tired of sitting on their wartime savings, eagerly explored the world.

In a handful of countries, however, the legacy of World War II and the emerging reality of the Cold War kept the average American tourist on the outside looking in. As late as 1948, the State Department maintained restrictions on travel to the former Axis powers of Germany, Austria, and Japan. Yugoslavia, Hungary, and Albania – all falling behind the “Iron Curtain” – were also off limits to most American travelers. The Republic of China, engaged in civil war between Communist (CCP) and Nationalist (GMD) forces until late 1949, was among this small group of nations to which most American tourists could not travel. By the end of 1950, with the CCP consolidation of power on the mainland and Chinese “volunteers” waging war against U.S. troops on the Korean peninsula, temporary restrictions became permanent and U.S. passports soon bore prohibitory stamps eliminating the PRC as a legitimate destination.

The fact that restrictions on China remained in place even as the former Axis powers became more accessible to Americans, demonstrated that the Cold War had arrived in East Asia and that U.S. containment policy toward the newly formed PRC would extend to travel as well. At the same time, however, the process of eliminating American travel to China and developing travel as an integral component of U.S. Cold War strategy was a gradual and unwieldy development that challenges, to an extent, the traditional narrative of the Cold War. Various groups of American travelers lingered in

China during and even after the end of the civil war. Even as CCP victory became a *fait accompli*, airlines and cruise lines cooperated with Communist officials and actually expanded their presence in China. Similarly, though the collapse of the Nationalist government brought about the demise on the mainland of cultural exchange programs, such as the Fulbright Program, those programs withered away slowly and participants remained behind for years.<sup>2</sup>

## I

Recreational travel overseas was nothing new for Americans.<sup>3</sup> The 1920s and 1930s, which saw the perfection of luxury, “round-the-world” cruises, and the nascent years of commercial air travel, comprised only the most recent “golden age” in American international tourism. In the interwar years, however, short lists of cruise travelers vacationing to exotic locales had been staples of most leading newspapers, signaling the uniqueness and elitism associated with international travel.<sup>4</sup> Travel to the Far East, in particular, was an exclusive activity. Highlighting this status, whereas European tourism

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<sup>2</sup> For a history of the Fulbright Program, see Walter Johnson and Francis James Colligan, *The Fulbright Program: A History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); Richard T. Arndt and David Lee Rubin, eds., *Studies on Cultural Diplomacy and the Fulbright Experience: The Fulbright Difference, 1948-1992* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1993); Philip H. Coombs, *The Fourth Dimension of Foreign Policy: Educational and Cultural Affairs* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1964).

<sup>3</sup> For a general history of American tourism at home and overseas, see Foster Rhea Dulles, *Americans Abroad: Two Centuries of American Travel* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964); Horace Sutton, *Travelers: The American Tourist from Stagecoach to Space Shuttle* (New York: William Morrow, 1980); John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); William W. Stowe, *Going Abroad: European Travel in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Orvar Löfgren, *On Holiday: A History of Vacationing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); and Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> For examples, see “Large Party to Make Tour of the Orient,” *Los Angeles Times*, 20 July 1920; “700 Start Today on a World Cruise,” *New York Times*, 22 January 1923; “350 Sail on Trip of 30,000 Miles,” *New York Times*, 26 January 1924; “Liner Sails Today for World Cruise,” *New York Times*, 25 November 1925.

understandably dipped during the Great Depression, tourism to the Far East – which required more time, money, and connections – actually increased. It was only the wealthiest of Americans who journeyed over the Pacific toward Asia.<sup>5</sup>

With the end of the Second World War, recreational travel emerged as a new middle-class activity. Elite lists of overseas travelers gave way to popular advertisements and columns dedicated to inexpensive and comfortable travel. Travel, in other words, became a way of fitting in as opposed to standing out. This changing dynamic led to dramatic increases in overseas tourism. Wartime savings, the conversion of military airstrips and planes for commercial use, and the general stability of the postwar climate, gave anxious Americans an unprecedented opportunity to see the world. The “boom,” though significant, was initially not strong enough to bring post-World War II numbers up to par with figures from the early 1930s, years that served as a benchmark for international tourism.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, the rate of growth and the remarkably smooth transition from war to leisure, made the late 1940s rise of mass travel quite remarkable. In 1947 only 200,000 Americans had valid passports. In 1949, which the *New York Times* designated the first “normal international travel year of the post-war era,” 1,500,000 Americans traveled abroad.<sup>7</sup>

The popularity and scope of postwar travel gave it a newfound prominence in government circles. Before World War II, Washington officials had not, in any substantive way, integrated tourism into their foreign policy. While officials were no

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<sup>5</sup> League of Nations Economic Committee. *Survey of Tourist Traffic Considered as an International Economic Factor* (Geneva: League of Nations Publications, 1936).

<sup>6</sup> M. H. Thompson, “Europe Again Invites the Tourist,” *New York Times*, 4 May 1947; Endy, *Cold War Holidays*, 25.

<sup>7</sup> Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 104; Friedlander, “The American Tourist Comes Into His Own,” *New York Times*, 6 March 1949.

doubt aware of the economic, political, and cultural benefits that arose from mass travel, there was no explicit effort to harness those assets. After 1945, on the other hand, officials actively encouraged the expansion of tourism and used a heavy hand to guide its development in a way that best suited U.S. foreign policy.

To this end, the Truman administration developed a primitive infrastructure within the government to develop travel policy recommendations. In the Department of Commerce, officials established a Travel Branch and geared it toward the research and facilitation of tourism. Through this division Commerce lobbied the White House and private industry for the reduction of travel barriers, the construction of overseas hotels, and the development of faster transportation technologies.<sup>8</sup> In October 1945 the administration oversaw the establishment of the Interdepartmental Committee on Foreign Travel, a purely advisory group consisting of representatives from Commerce, State, Agriculture, Interior, Treasury, Justice, and the Civil Aeronautics Board. The various agencies worked closely with overseas U.S. posts and foreign governments in order to get a better picture of the tourist scene and to pinpoint specific obstacles. Meeting roughly six times a year, the Committee developed and proposed means by which the federal government could facilitate overseas travel.<sup>9</sup> There was notable progress on this front. Government decisions to simplify visa formalities, offer hefty government subsidies to the cruise lines and airlines, and raise the duty-free allotment from \$100 to \$500,

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<sup>8</sup> “Our \$8,000,000,000,000 Foreign Travel Import,” editorial in Department of Commerce’s *Export Trade and Shipper*, 4 October 1948, in Records of Interdepartmental and Intradepartmental Committees, Entry #483, Box 126A, National Archives and Records Administration II, College Park, Maryland (hereafter NARA).

<sup>9</sup> State Department to American diplomatic and consular offices, “Travel and Tourism Reporting,” 28 January 1948, Records of Interdepartmental and Intradepartmental Committees, Entry #483, Box 126A, NARA; “Interdepartmental Committee on Foreign Travel,” no date, Records of Interdepartmental and Intradepartmental Committees, Entry #211, Box 68, NARA.



stemmed largely from Committee recommendations and signaled the central position that Washington was assigning international travel.

As demonstrated by the role that Commerce played in the promotion of American tourism, the most immediate advantage that tourism presented was economic. The dramatic rise in tourism buoyed the hopes of U.S. policymakers who, in the aftermath of World War II, understandably were concerned about postwar recession and financial instability around the world. Experts had, for some time, recognized that American tourists could serve foreign economies by building up dollar reserves overseas. Until the end of World War II, however, this rarely developed beyond an academic appreciation.<sup>10</sup> Turning away from this hands-off policy, in the late 1940s the Truman administration officially recognized tourism as a means of distributing U.S. currency around the world and worked to incorporate this “invisible export” into its foreign economic policy.<sup>11</sup> The most direct example of this was Truman’s decision to make tourism a key component of the Marshall Plan. The Department of Commerce, the European Travel Commission, and the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) worked closely to bring billions of non-grant, non-loan dollars – in the form of private investment and tourist expenditures – into western European economies. Private industry worked with the ECA and facilitated this fusion between tourism and foreign economic policy.<sup>12</sup> American Express, for example, distributed a brochure to various members of the Truman administration titled, “The Quickest Way to Help Foreign Countries Earn American Dollars.” The document

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<sup>10</sup> Economists and government officials were certainly aware of the impact of tourists on the balance-of-payments. Writing in 1929, Hiram Motherwell detailed how the rising tide of American tourism to Europe was, in fact, facilitating the repayment of U.S. loan interest. Regardless of how much money foreign governments owed the United States, “it is always possible for the American tourist to settle accounts.” Motherwell, “The American Tourist Makes History,” *Harper’s Magazine*. December 1929, 72.

<sup>11</sup> “Tourists Linked to Foreign Trade,” *New York Times*, 18 May 1947.

<sup>12</sup> Christopher Endy offers the most comprehensive discussion in *Cold War Holidays*.

explained that “dollar-spending Americans” could significantly reduce the dollar gap overseas.<sup>13</sup>

Like the Marshall Plan in general, “tourism aid” would, in addition to benefiting western European economies, bring economic benefits back to the United States. Powerful European economies meant that foreign governments could purchase more American-made products and American-grown crops. So much of the tourism industry was in American hands, moreover, that a trip abroad (during which one would fly in a Pan American plane, sleep in a Hilton Hotel, and purchase American Express travelers’ checks) directly boosted the U.S. economy. Playing off this idea, *United Nations World* frequently ran advertisements assuring readers that the money spent abroad while vacationing would likely “fly back, too.”<sup>14</sup>

To American policymakers tourism aid was, quite simply, a less burdensome form of assistance and economic stimulus. First, the influx of tourist dollars meant that taxpayers did not have to pay the entire bill for foreign assistance. “Pleasure dollars,” as one Pan American Airways report called them, could have the same positive impact as more traditional forms of foreign aid, while avoiding backlash from fiscal conservatives and tax weary citizens.<sup>15</sup> Second, in economic terms, an increase of American tourist dollars into foreign economies would serve the same function as an increase in foreign exports to the United States. Tourism, however, would avoid the political and economic complications associated with tariff disputes and manufacturing competition.<sup>16</sup> Finally,

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<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Rosendorf, “Be El Caudillo’s Guest,” 380-81.

<sup>14</sup> *United Nations World*, July 1947.

<sup>15</sup> 1949 Pan Am Annual Report, Series I, Box 15, Pan American World Airways, Inc., Florida Archives and Special Collections Records, Otto G. Richter Library, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida (hereafter PAA)

<sup>16</sup> Minutes of Travel Policy Committee, 19 February 1948, Records of Interdepartmental and Intradepartmental Committees, Entry #483, Box 126A, NARA.

based on the trends emerging in the late 1940s, overseas tourism was increasingly popular and was going to expand regardless of U.S. government action. If tourism could, unbeknownst to its participants, simultaneously benefit U.S. and foreign economies, Washington officials were not about to object.

Officials also quickly recognized the cultural advantages of mass travel. Just as tourists served as “one-man and one-woman Marshall Plans,” so too did they play the role of goodwill ambassadors and cultural diplomats.<sup>17</sup> For many foreign peoples, the American tourist was *the* face of Washington; the impression that tourists made was thus crucial to U.S. foreign relations. Recognizing that most tourists traveled overseas for purposes of recreation, luxury, and escape – as opposed to furthering U.S. foreign policy interests – Truman officials worked closely with travelers and industry leaders to develop means by which tourists effectively could play the dual roles of vacationer and diplomat. To this end, in 1949 the ECA teamed up with the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) in publishing a booklet titled “How to Help Your Clients Preserve Democracy.” The booklet fell somewhere in between propaganda and a traditional travel guide. It told travelers what sights to see and what locations to avoid, but it also alerted travelers to typical anti-American criticism and provided useful information and rebuttals for any verbal attacks they might encounter. Focusing primarily on explaining the Marshall Plan’s benefits to both Europeans and Americans, the booklet provided tourists with sufficient ammunition to deflect charges of American “imperialism” and “war-mongering”<sup>18</sup> Expanding this approach beyond Europe, the State Department, in an effort

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> “How to Help Your Clients Preserve Democracy,” *ASTA Travel News*, June 1949.

to “educate” potential travelers, issued a supplement with all passports that highlighted the importance of appropriate behavior overseas:

As we act, so are we judged. Tourists who assume an air of arrogance or who transcend the common bounds of decency in human conduct can do more in the course of an hour to break down the elements of friendly approach between peoples than the government can do in the course of a year in trying to stimulate friendly relations.<sup>19</sup>

## II

Washington’s interest in promoting Far East tourism resembled the general government approach toward international travel. In the late 1940s the Far East did not have an equivalent to the European Travel Commission and there were no large-scale government initiatives comparable to the integration of tourism into the Marshall Plan. Nonetheless, the State Department, working mostly through the United Nation’s Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE), lobbied Asian nations to streamline their tourist procedures and open their doors to American travelers. A “Resolution on Travel” adopted by ECAFE in October 1949 demonstrated that member delegations saw tourism as an underexploited yet effective foreign policy tool.<sup>20</sup> Not surprisingly, the benefit to local economies was the most relevant to ECAFE members. A report produced by an assemblage of ECAFE delegates noted: “One need not be steeped in economics to know the significance in obtaining dollars and other foreign exchange for the balance of trade in dollar-thirsty countries. Greater travel traffic affords a means of

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in George Kent, “How to be an American Abroad,” *Travel*, May 1949.

<sup>20</sup> Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, “Resolution on Travel Adopted on 27 October 1949,” in Records of Interdepartmental and Intradepartmental Committees, Entry #211, Box 67, NARA.

expanding invisible incomes in the balance of payments.”<sup>21</sup> To facilitate these developments, ECAFE urged governments to establish well-funded and effective travel organizations, reduce prohibitive taxes and restrictions on travel, and develop scenic attractions and hotel accommodations.<sup>22</sup>

Despite modest efforts to integrate Far East tourism into U.S. economic policy, the Truman administration showed relatively little interest in dedicating government resources toward transpacific travel. Government indifference reflected, and in turn shaped, middle-class Americans’ own tendencies not to vacation in East Asian destinations. Viewed from the other perspective, Truman’s integration of European tourism into the Marshall Plan and the numerous trade and travel agreements that his administration negotiated with the United States’ northern and southern neighbors, highlighted the fact that Western Europe, Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean pulled in the vast majority of American tourists.<sup>23</sup> In 1947 officials estimated that only 85,000 Americans traveled to the Far East. By comparison, in the same year Switzerland, Britain, and France alone welcomed around 200,000 American tourists. In general, until the late 1950s, travel to Asia accounted for around 2 percent of all American international tourism.<sup>24</sup> While “confirmed optimists,” like Leo Matthews of American Presidents Line (APL), insisted that the potential of the Far East’s postwar tourist industry was “almost

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<sup>21</sup> “Recommendations of Working Group, Measures to Stimulate and Encourage Travel,” 23 July 1949, Records of Interdepartmental and Intradepartmental Committees, Entry #211, Box 67, NARA.

<sup>22</sup> ECAFE, “Resolution on Travel Adopted on 27 October 1949,” in Records of Interdepartmental and Intradepartmental Committees, Entry #211, Box 67, NARA.

<sup>23</sup> Charles Sawyer, “Government Pushes Policy to Encourage Travel Abroad,” *ASTA Travel News*, February 1949.

<sup>24</sup> Subcommittee on Foreign Travel of the Executive Committee on Economic Foreign Policy, “Recommendations to be Considered at ECAFE Travel Meeting,” 13 September 1949, Records of Interdepartmental and Intradepartmental Committees, Entry #211, Box 67, NARA; Michael L. Hoffman, “Swiss Look Forward to a Brilliant Summer,” *New York Times*, 14 March 1948; Henry Giniger, “France Awaits A Hundred Thousand Americans,” *New York Times*, 14 March 1948; “Britain Attracts 25% Tourist Rise,” *New York Times*, 1 September 1947; Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 104.

beyond comprehension,” such a cheery outcome was not on the immediate horizon.<sup>25</sup> Representatives from American Express surveyed the Far East soon after the war’s conclusion and noted that it would be years until tourism in the region returned to pre-war levels.<sup>26</sup> As one 1947 travel article noted, “it is a hardy traveler who goes west of Honolulu today if he doesn’t have to.”<sup>27</sup>

In this context, tourism to China floundered during these postwar boom years. Though APL proudly announced in 1946 that a massive, \$100 million project was underway to convert its warships into a “luxury fleet” – an undertaking that would have had enormous ramifications for recreational tourism to Shanghai, Hong Kong, Yokohama, Manila, and other major East Asian ports – the numbers show that this campaign was slow to produce results.<sup>28</sup> Likewise, in 1947 Northwest Airlines demonstrated an interest in establishing an air route from Japan to Beiping (Peiping), “basically for tourist purposes,” but U.S. officials voiced concern that the military situation in China “was sufficiently dangerous to warrant the flights not being made at present.”<sup>29</sup> In the end, around 15,000 Americans traveled to China in 1947, but even this number is misleading; government and military representatives made up a significant portion of this travel flow.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Quoted in George Horne, “Orient’s Markets Called ‘Infinite’,” *New York Times*, 31 December 1948.

<sup>26</sup> “Tourists in Orient Find Housing Poor,” *New York Times*, 4 September 1948;

<sup>27</sup> Foster Hailey, “West of Honolulu,” *New York Times*, 4 May 1947.

<sup>28</sup> APL advertisement, “Plan Now for the Orient,” 1946, Ad #T2646, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising & Marketing History Duke University Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, <http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/adaccess>.

<sup>29</sup> Memorandum of conversation, “General Discussion of Current Activities of Northwest Airline,” 16 May 1947, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Entry #2314, Box 7, NARA.

<sup>30</sup> Subcommittee on Foreign Travel of the Executive Committee on Economic Foreign Policy, “Recommendations to be Considered at ECAFE Travel Meeting,” 13 September 1949, Records of Interdepartmental and Intradepartmental Committees, Entry #211, Box 67, NARA.

Travel restrictions, frequent electricity outages, and inhospitable hotel accommodations kept most tourists away. One postwar survey estimated that 90 percent of tourist facilities on the mainland of China were unfit for use – a result of years of Japanese looting and general wartime destruction.<sup>31</sup> A Marine, returning to China in 1947 as a tourist, described the havoc that war had played on China’s tourism industry:

The Palace, once a fine hotel but run down even before the war, is rickety and shabby. In my room there is an ugly patch on the wall where the radiator used to stand. (The Japs tore out the radiators for scrap metal but, because of shipping shortage, left them all piled somewhere near Woosung.) The rug is in holes, the linen tattered and gray; there is only one small electric light bulb in the room; hot water comes on only every other day.<sup>32</sup>

War and travel correspondent Foster Hailey, surveying the Far East tourist scene, confirmed these dreary depictions. Few of China’s hotels, Hailey wrote, furnished more than “the minimum amount of heat, light and water.” Tourists supplied their own towels, soap, and toilet paper. Compounding these problems, runaway inflation meant that these bleak hotel rooms were beyond the means of many middle-class Americans.<sup>33</sup>

Hailey’s article pointed to another factor in China’s pathetic tourism industry. In an era when travel periodicals were becoming increasingly popular and influential, China rarely received positive publicity. In general in the late 1940s, stories on recreational tourism focused on the traditional destinations of Europe, North America, and the Caribbean. The average travel article on China, on the other hand, stayed away from the

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<sup>31</sup> “Tourists in Orient Find Housing Poor,” *New York Times*, 4 September 1948.

<sup>32</sup> Letter to the Editor, “Former Marine Colonel Returns to Shanghai, Finds City Changed But Not Its People,” *Holiday*, January 1947.

<sup>33</sup> Hailey, “West of Honolulu,” *New York Times*, 4 May 1947.

theme of recreational tourism entirely. When *Travel* or *Holiday* offered the occasional story on China, they normally highlighted the lingering effects of Japanese occupation, air raids, uncontrollable inflation, oppressive heat and severe cold, and widespread poverty.<sup>34</sup> When pitted against the photographs and articles depicting the ease, luxury, and fantasy of vacations in France or Cuba, these travel reports did not exactly ignite enthusiasm in the hearts of tourists.

It was not merely infrastructural and promotional problems that burdened tourism during this period. As the ability of the Nationalist government to maintain control over China waned in the latter years of the 1940s, Washington officials approached future travel to the mainland with trepidation. While Washington officials recognized both that communism was not monolithic and that Jiang Jieshi was not an ideal ally, the Truman administration always leaned toward the Nationalists – to use Mao’s phrase – and anticipated a future in which the anticommunist government would dominate the region.<sup>35</sup> On the Chinese side as well, while Mao Zedong was not entirely opposed to courting the Americans from time to time, his ideological mission of revolution and the maintenance of Chinese sovereignty, prevented him from cooperating too closely with the Washington government.<sup>36</sup> Thus, as a CCP victory loomed, the future of Sino-American relations on the mainland – touristic and otherwise – became less certain.

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<sup>34</sup> For examples, see Frederick C. Othman, “Round the World in Six Days,” *Holiday*, March 1946; Harrison Forman, “China’s Great Peace-Time Migration,” *Travel*, August 1946; and Joseph E. Passantino, “The Gateway to China’s Richest Province,” *Travel*, May 1948;

<sup>35</sup> Chang, *Friends and Enemies*.

<sup>36</sup> Chen Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).



### III

The unfriendly and unstable conditions of China did not, however, entirely dissuade American presence in the region. Despite emerging economic restrictions on the PRC, U.S.-China trade in 1950 equaled nearly 60 percent of 1946 levels. Contributing to this continuity of trade, during these transition years numerous American businesses remained in China. Shanghai Power Company, Stanvac, Caltex, Stantelco, Pan American, General Electric, and APL all remained and actually expanded their businesses in China.<sup>37</sup> In this context, while tourism to China was never a huge business, various interest groups had developed a niche in the region and they saw little incentive to bail out in the late 1940s.<sup>38</sup>

Even after April 1949, when CCP forces seized the Nationalist capital of Nanjing and all but secured victory in the civil war, American businessmen remained optimistic. Representatives from Pan American and Northwest Airlines – which combined to offer seven weekly flights into China – announced in May that they would continue servicing Shanghai until “invited to leave.” Both companies maintained full staffs in China and showed no immediate concern about a change in regimes.<sup>39</sup> Executives of APL, as well, showed an eagerness to resume and expand business with the new Chinese government.<sup>40</sup> Displaying his confidence, company president George Killion sent APL ships carrying American passengers and cargo to the Chinese coast throughout early 1950. Advertisements from this period still listed Shanghai as one of the stops on APL’s famed

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<sup>37</sup> Shuguang Zhang, *Economic Cold War: America’s Embargo Against China and the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1949-1963* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001), 23, 75.

<sup>38</sup> Chang, *Friends and Enemies*, 53-54; “The Pacific Coast: Recognition of Communist China is a Widely Debated Issue,” *New York Times*, 9 October 1949.

<sup>39</sup> Frederick Graham, “Airlines to Ignore Fall of Shanghai,” *New York Times*, 7 May 1949.

<sup>40</sup> “Shanghai Cargo Accepted,” *New York Times*, 4 June 1949.

“Round-the-World Tour.” In the context of the 1948-49 Angus Ward affair and the failed 1949 Huang-Stuart talks – two events that historian Chen Jian cites as evidence of the inevitability of confrontation between Washington and the CCP leadership – the fact that the U.S. tourism industry persisted is especially significant.<sup>41</sup>

Many within the travel industry actually saw hidden potential in the tumultuous atmosphere surrounding China’s regime change. George Killion was sure that bringing American goods and American tourists to China was the “surest way to peace and international good will” and he was confident that CCP officials shared his enthusiasm.<sup>42</sup> Reflecting this, one popular APL advertising campaign adopted the slogan, “To visit and enjoy – to like and understand.” It was, after all, “easier to be friends with people you know and have visited.”<sup>43</sup>

APL’s campaign was, of course, largely an effort to salvage profits in a tumultuous part of the world.<sup>44</sup> China was APL’s most important market and the triumph of the CCP constituted a major reason for the company’s dramatic loss in revenue between 1947 and 1950.<sup>45</sup> At its core, however, the effort to link travel to international harmony resonated among American citizens and officials alike. It was common for travel writers and government officials to embrace the “one world” theme in the postwar

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<sup>41</sup> Chen, *Mao’s China and the Cold War*, 38-43.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in “Optimism Voiced on Chinese Trade,” *New York Times*, 12 June 1949; “Shanghai Cargo Accepted,” *New York Times*, 4 June 1949.

<sup>43</sup> See *Travel*, June 1946; *Travel* October 1946.

<sup>44</sup> For a critique of “internationalist” themes in travel writing and advertising, see Crick, “Representations of International Tourism,” 329.

<sup>45</sup> While the company’s net worth increased from \$23 million in 1948 to \$35 million in 1952, company revenues dropped from \$60 million in 1947 to \$49 million in 1950. John Niven, *The American President Lines and Its Forebears, 1848-1984* (Newark, Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 1987), 173.

years.<sup>46</sup> In the aftermath of World War II – a war that appeared to be the product of nationalist extremism – travel seemed like a logical and effective means of erasing international borders, misunderstanding, and conflict. Former Republican presidential candidate Wendell Willkie’s *One World*, written during World War II, suggested how private travel served the cause of internationalism and world harmony.<sup>47</sup> In the postwar years *United Nations World* magazine (unrelated to the international body) highlighted these themes on a monthly basis. The periodical’s articles and advertisements routinely linked overseas travel to international cooperation, harmony, and understanding. Trans World Airlines advertisements, for example, depicted their sky routes as “fast and free” and noted that the sky was a place “where the world was one.” APL was “dedicated to serving the cause of world peace and international goodwill by transporting friendly commerce to more than 30 ports ‘round the world.’”<sup>48</sup> Similarly, a *New York Times* travel writer praised the new travel guide genre as the “tome of peace.”<sup>49</sup>

Regardless of whether members of the travel industry genuinely saw tourism as the key to universal harmony, the continuing presence of passenger ships in the waters off of war torn China demonstrated that travel was not crippled by political and military realities. Tourists, traveling by ship, could visit the region without necessarily forgoing the comforts to which they were accustomed. The leveled hotels, inadequate roads, unsubstantial restaurants and entertainment, and even the threat of warfare, meant little to the cruise passenger. The *New York Times* noted, “the best quarters for tourists in the Far

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<sup>46</sup> This connection between travel and peace was nothing new in the postwar period. As Christopher Endy notes, peace advocates at the beginning of the twentieth century argued that increased travel would boost international understanding and make war less appropriate. Endy, “Travel and World Power: Americans in Europe, 1890-1917,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 22 (Fall 1998), 589.

<sup>47</sup> Wendell Willkie, *One World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1943).

<sup>48</sup> Advertisement: “Where the World is One,” *United Nations World*, May 1947; Advertisement: “American Presidents Lines’ Global Fleet,” *United Nations World*, March 1950.

<sup>49</sup> Richard Hakluyt, Jr., “Notes on Guides and Travel Books,” *New York Times*, 19 June 1949.

East now are to be found on several liners.”<sup>50</sup> APL, in fact, proudly and accurately declared itself “America’s Hotel Abroad.” Sticking to the coastline (usually docking at Shanghai or Hong Kong), American tourists could sightsee by day and return to their ship to eat and sleep.

Even the more rugged transpacific freighters guaranteed “high quality food” and comfortable staterooms. These cargo ships were surprisingly popular among American tourists throughout the 1940s and 1950s; by 1958 roughly one of every thirteen ship passengers traveled in this manner.<sup>51</sup> Freighters appealed to those individuals seeking greater adventure at a reduced price. For about half the cost of accommodations on luxury liners, these cargo ships promised tourists a “more realistic picture” of sea life than they would receive on a traditional cruise ship.<sup>52</sup> Passengers often dined with crewmembers and had to perform minor chores as they crossed the ocean.

Despite the conscious effort to downplay the glitz of modern cruises and to disassociate freighter passengers from the category of the helpless “tourist,” these ships, too, offered the recreational, hedonistic, and “all-inclusive” attributes of a traditional cruise liner. *Pacific Travel News* assured travel agents that most freighters had private lounges for passengers, rooms with private baths, and well-stocked bars.<sup>53</sup> Travel writer David Dodge recalled his Mediterranean cruise on board a French freighter, during which he enjoyed “French bread every day, two kinds of French wine free with meals, a double

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<sup>50</sup> “Tourists in Orient Find Housing Poor,” *New York Times*, 4 September 1948.

<sup>51</sup> “Pacific Freighters Lure Passengers,” *Los Angeles Times*, 2 November 1958.

<sup>52</sup> According to a 1960 travel guide, it cost \$1872 for a first class accommodation (with private bath) on APL round-trip cruise from California to Hong Kong. A room with a bathroom on a freighter cost only \$900 for the same trip. Donald S. Briggs, *Orient Guide: The Air-Sea Travelers’ Guide to Hawaii, Japan, Hong Kong, and the Philippines* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1960); Irving Petite, “West to the Orient,” *New York Times*, 24 August 1952.

<sup>53</sup> “Selling Freighter Travel in the Pacific,” *Pacific Travel News*, September 1957.

cabin just under the bridge wing with real beds, carpets and windows.”<sup>54</sup> Such descriptions underlined the fact that freighters, like other cruise ships, served as a buffer between tourists and the potentially unsavory elements of their vacation destination. All cruises to the Far East – especially during years of war – intentionally steered clear of the political and economic realities of the region. Despite a stated desire to see the “exotic,” tourists to China sought comfort, familiarity, and safety above all else.

This separation from regional turmoil allowed tourism to operate as a link between the United States and China even as other economic, political, and cultural links withered. State Department officials were well aware of APL’s lingering business and it encouraged – or at least condoned – its continued presence in communist-controlled portions of China. Underscoring this attitude, State Department restrictions, which prevented most Americans from traveling to mainland China in the years immediately after World War II, exempted those arriving via passenger ship.<sup>55</sup>

This inconsistency in China policy was due, in part, to the fact that Washington officials were more confident in the safety of cruise travelers than they were other varieties of visitors to China. More significantly, most officials still likened travel to Communist China to relations with European communist nations and thus saw little need for immediate prohibitions.<sup>56</sup> Even if the civil war resulted in a CCP victory – a conclusion that seemed quite likely by 1948 – it would not necessarily translate into a severing of all ties with China. Officials clearly wished to divide the Sino-Soviet camp but were not united on the most efficient means of doing so. While some felt that harsh, punitive policies toward the Chinese Communists would accomplish the goal, others

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<sup>54</sup> David Dodge, *The Poor Man’s Guide to the Orient* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), 138.

<sup>55</sup> “Travel Rules Now Easiest Since Before War,” *Washington Post*, 20 February 1949.

<sup>56</sup> Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 23.

argued that cooperation and assistance was more appropriate.<sup>57</sup> In this context, the continuation of travel and trade contacts seemed like an appropriate means of wooing the Chinese or, at the least, a harmless deviation from an otherwise confrontational policy. Hovering over all of this, moreover, was the sense that travel was, to some extent, an apolitical activity that should not be held to the same strict standards as military, economic, or political endeavors. This connotation of recreation was to be a defining characteristic of American travel and travel policy and gave suitcase diplomacy a unique position in U.S. foreign relations.

#### IV

Just as Washington's general travel restrictions in the years following World War II had not definitively ended recreational tourism to China, so too did they leave room for participants in Sino-American cultural exchange programs. China, by November 1947, had become the first country to sign a Fulbright agreement with the United States.<sup>58</sup> Chinese and U.S. officials got to work quickly to assemble the United States Educational Foundation in China (USEFC), the board that would oversee Fulbright operations. A year later, forty-one scholars received grants to travel to China, but because of the local conditions only twenty-seven made the trip.<sup>59</sup> Despite the small numbers, Washington officials had high hopes for the program. The Chinese Fulbright Program fit into a larger effort to combat both the Soviet propaganda campaign aimed at Chinese universities and

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<sup>57</sup> Chang, *Friends and Enemies*.

<sup>58</sup> The Fulbright Program drew its initial funds from revenues from wartime surplus. The initial sale to the Chinese, which funded the program, occurred in August 1946. For the next fifteen months, Washington and Beijing officials worked out the logistics of the program, establishing the Board of Foreign Scholarships, and selecting the actual grantees for the program. Wilma Fairbank, *America's Cultural Experiment in China, 1942-1949* (Washington, D.C.: Department of State Publication, 1976), 154-55.

<sup>59</sup> Fairbank, *America's Cultural Experiment*, 178.

a rising tide of anti-Americanism in the region. Top-level officials discussed using Fulbright funds to distribute American periodicals and films, send American professors to China to “explain our viewpoint,” and translate American history and political science textbooks into Chinese.<sup>60</sup>

There was little time, however, to carry any of these plans to completion. A month after Chinese and U.S. officials signed the Fulbright agreement, CCP forces were in the midst of a major offensive in Manchuria. By November 1948, when the first wave of American Fulbright grantees were arriving in China, Communist troops occupied Shenyang (Mukden), China’s largest city in the northeast. Tientsin fell on January 15, 1949, Beijing on January 31, Nanjing – the Nationalist capital and the site of Fulbright headquarters – on April 20, and Shanghai on May 25. The China Fulbright Program, the first one of its kind, soon held the less dignified distinction of being the first to close shop. By August 1949 the Fulbright office had shut down and by October, when Mao formally declared the establishment of the PRC, USEFC staff had evacuated the country.

While the program was extremely short-lived, the participating scholars played a significant role in the transition to PRC control and their lingering presence highlighted the attributes and weaknesses of suitcase diplomacy. Unlike cruise travelers, who enjoyed brief, antiseptic glimpses of China, Fulbright grantees engaged in longer, more “purposeful” visits. For this reason, it was far more difficult for Fulbrighters to avoid the region’s tumultuous atmosphere. In the transition years of 1948-50 State Department officials, however, did not take a firm stand on the future of the Fulbright grantees. While

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<sup>60</sup> Connors to Cabot, 9 February 1948, General Records of the Department of State, Central Decimal File (CDF) 811.42793, Box 4817, NARA; Cabot to Connors, 11 February 1948, General Records of the Department of State, CDF811.42793, Box 4817, NARA.

Washington officials encouraged the scholars to return to the U.S., they nonetheless gave the Fulbrighters the option to stay.

To this end, Fulbright officials in China and the U.S. negotiated an agreement with Pan American Airways for prepayment in Chinese gold yuan for return airfare for all Fulbright students. U.S. officials, moreover, prepaid Fulbrighters their stipends in a lump sum, as opposed to monthly installments. These moves ensured that the grantees could live comfortably and had a way of getting home, regardless of what events transpired in China.<sup>61</sup> Derk Bodde, a leading historian on Chinese history who had been the first American to receive a Fulbright grant for study in China, recalled that the efforts of the Fulbright Program in the late 1940s allowed him and other scholars “to continue working in Peking...despite political change.”<sup>62</sup> At the same time, Bodde was surprised that the Washington Fulbright office kept sending scholars to China, assuming that U.S. officials were not entirely aware of the seriousness of the military situation.<sup>63</sup> In August 1949, Bodde and his family returned home to Philadelphia.

Most of the American scholars in China followed Bodde’s lead and evacuated the country along with U.S. officials. Thirteen Fulbrighters, however, chose to remain in China after October 1949, a move that U.S. officials opposed but did not officially prohibit. As Wilma Fairbank, the Cultural Attaché to the U.S. Embassy in Chongqing, noted, the bulk of these scholars – who remained an additional few weeks or months following the establishment of the PRC – continued their work with only minor inconveniences.<sup>64</sup> State Department officials, in fact, kept in close contact with several of

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<sup>61</sup> Fairbank, *America’s Cultural Experiment*, 180.

<sup>62</sup> Derk Bodde, *Peking Diary: A Year of Revolution* (New York: Octagon Books, 1976), xx.

<sup>63</sup> Fairbank, *America’s Cultural Experiment*, 182-83.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 198-99.



the Fulbrighters and relied on them for intelligence on the new Chinese regime. After leaving Beijing in August 1950 – about a month and a half after the start of the Korean War – James Parsons, for example, held lengthy discussions with officials at the U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong. Parsons discussed the general attitudes of the Chinese toward the new government, the Soviet Union, and the United States. U.S. officials in Hong Kong and Washington eagerly read through Parson’s substantial report, which stressed his belief that the vast majority of the Chinese population questioned the “official line” on issues such as the Korean War and Taiwan.<sup>65</sup> Likewise, U.S. officials kept in contact with Frances Spieth, an American chemistry professor at Lingnan University in Canton, who arrived in China – outside the auspices of the Fulbright Program – in 1949. After leaving Canton in early 1951, she discussed her experiences with U.S. officials in Hong Kong, providing details on the rise of CCP influence on university campuses.<sup>66</sup>

For other scholars, however, the transition of power was not entirely smooth. Most notably, in 1951 the Chinese arrested three Fulbright students – Harriet Mills, Adele Rickett, and Walter Rickett – on charges of espionage.<sup>67</sup> Another Fulbrighter, Frank Bessac, fled from Beijing in early 1949 and joined up with three Russians and Vice Consul Douglas Mackiernan – who was left with the task of closing the U.S. Consulate in Urumchi. Upon entering Tibet, local guards shot and killed Mackiernan and

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<sup>65</sup> Harding to Clough, “Conversation with Mr. James Parsons, Who Recently Left Peking,” 24 August 1950, General Records of the Department of State, CDF511.933, Box 2533, NARA; Hong Kong to State Department, “Memorandum of Conversation with Mr. James Parsons, an American Who Has Recently Departed From Peking,” 29 September 1950, General Records of the Department of State, CDF511.933, Box 2533, NARA.

<sup>66</sup> McConaughy, “Interview With Frances Spieth, Chemistry Professor From Lingnan University, Canton,” 31 January 1951, General Records of the Department of State, CDF511.933, Box 2533, NARA.

<sup>67</sup> Mills and Adele Rickett were released in early 1955. Walter Rickett’s release came several months later, as part of a large-scale “prisoner release” that PRC officials intended to use as leverage at the Geneva talks. “Parents Think Woman Feigns ‘Brainwashing’,” *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 28 February 1955; Harrison E. Salisbury, “Red China to Free All U.S. Civilians; 29 Due to Depart,” *New York Times*, 11 September 1955.

two other members of the party, leaving only Bessac and one of the Russians to complete the journey. By fall 1950, the two men had reached India, 1,500 miles from their starting place.<sup>68</sup>

## V

As signaled by the unfortunate dissolution of the Fulbright Program on the mainland and the chaotic experiences of those scholars who remained behind, travel to China could not remain aloof indefinitely from political realities and the emerging Cold War divisions. CCP officials, consolidating power on the mainland, began to cast their net over the nation's tourist plant. Two *National Geographic* journalists, writing about Beijing in late 1949, noted the dramatic changes:

[I]ts once luxurious habits are so different that Americans and other foreigners who knew it in its palmy tourist times would now hardly recognize it. Such famed hotels as the Peking and the Wagons-Lits no longer shelter foreigners. Guarded by sentries, they are reserved for Chinese Communist officers and officials. Drab uniforms are everywhere. Men in European dress are scarce.<sup>69</sup>

Continuing this campaign of consolidation, a month after the founding of the PRC CCP officials took ownership of twelve commercial airliners – ten from China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC) and two from Central Air Transport Corporation (CATC)

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<sup>68</sup> Fairbank, *America's Cultural Experiment*, 199-200; Roland to Hunt, "Student Grantees in China Under Fulbright Act," 9 February 1950, General Records of the Department of State, CDF511.933, Box 2533, NARA.

<sup>69</sup> Nelson T. Johnson and W. Robert Moore, "Power Comes Back to Peiping," *National Geographic*, Vol. XCVI, No. 96 (September 1949), 337.

– and transported the planes from Hong Kong’s Kai Tak Airport to the mainland. The seventy-one remaining planes from these two companies remained immobilized in Hong Kong.<sup>70</sup>

Time seemed to be on the side of the PRC. Were the British to recognize the PRC government – a move that looked likely in the months following the Communist victory – the transfer of the remaining planes to PRC ownership would be relatively smooth. It was not, however, merely a matter of cooperation between British and PRC officials. Just as APL executives had pursued a normal working relationship with CCP officials, so too did American employees of CNAC and CATC. American pilots working for CNAC – a subsidiary of Pan American Airways of which the Chinese Nationalists owned 80 percent – showed especially little concern for the regime change; in the months after the CCP victory the pilots kept their jobs and announced proudly that they would continue to work under the new management.<sup>71</sup> Juan Trippe, president of Pan American, also was hesitant to make any sudden changes, preferring to continue operating the airline from the mainland.<sup>72</sup>

Not all American representatives in China, however, were so agreeable. Retired Lieutenant General Clair Chennault and Whiting Willauer, who in 1946 had founded a third airline in the Republic of China, voiced strong concern that a transfer of the seventy-one planes to the Communist regime would doom the Nationalist government and cripple Washington’s standing in the region. In December 1949, to address the issue head on, Chennault and Willauer sought to transfer ownership of the planes to their

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<sup>70</sup> Tillman Durdin, “Two Chinese Airlines Join Reds; 12 Planes Leave Hong Kong Base,” *New York Times*, 10 November 1949.

<sup>71</sup> Tillman Durdin, “Americans Ready to Fly in Red China,” *New York Times*, 11 November 1949.

<sup>72</sup> Marilyn Bender and Selig Altschul, *The Chosen Instrument: Pan Am, Juan Trippe, the Rise and Fall of an American Entrepreneur* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 481.

company – the wholly American-owned Civil Air Transport (CAT) – in order to keep them out of Communist hands. Faced with foot-dragging from British and Hong Kong officials, Jiang Jieshi showed enthusiastic support for the move and Juan Trippe, recognizing that the Truman administration would not be issuing diplomatic recognition to the new Communist regime, sold his 20 percent share of CNAC to the Nationalist government. In 1950 Truman made his position clear when he approved the CIA’s purchase of the financially desperate CAT company.<sup>73</sup>

The transfer of ownership hardly settled the issue. The initial legal dispute quickly devolved into a media circus, with lawyers of Chennault and Willauer criticizing British and Hong Kong officials for their lack of grit. Despite Chennault and Willauer’s efforts to use the increased publicity to nudge British and Hong Kong officials quickly into the Americans’ corner, the battle soon stalemated in a drawn out court proceeding over the fate of the planes. While Hong Kong court’s initially sided with the PRC, in 1952 British officials – frustrated with the status of Sino-British relations and hesitant to augment tensions with Washington – overturned the Hong Kong ruling and confirmed American ownership of the planes.<sup>74</sup> The court decision, however, marked more of a symbolic victory than it did a substantive change in Sino-American travel relations. By the time British officials overturned the Hong Kong decision, neither American nor Chinese officials allowed tourism between the U.S. and the PRC to continue.

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<sup>73</sup> Truman’s decision was part of a larger effort to buy up “proprietary” airlines in order to prevent them from falling into Communist hands. Victor S. Kaufman, “The United States, Britain and the CAT Controversy,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 40 (2005), 98-101; Bender and Altschul, *The Chosen Instrument*, 480-81.

<sup>74</sup> Burton Crane, “Hong Kong Court Gives Reds Planes,” *New York Times*, 24 February 1950; Kaufman, “The United States, Britain and the CAT Controversy,” 110-12.

The immediate cause for this cessation of travel was the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950. With U.S. and Chinese troops waging war on the Korean peninsula, Washington's attitude toward travel to the PRC gradually became less ambivalent. This strengthened travel ban was a component of a larger shift in U.S. policy toward the PRC that emerged following the outbreak of the Korean War. The American trade embargo, the placement of the Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Straits, and the 1954 U.S.-ROC mutual defense treaty, all aimed to "bring about the collapse of the Peking government" and signaled the arrival of the Cold War in Asia.<sup>75</sup>

The nuanced approach discussed above, however, did not go away entirely. In August 1950 the State Department's Bureau of Chinese Affairs felt it was still "inadvisable" to stamp all U.S. passports "not valid for travel in China." While the Department did not foresee sending significant numbers of Americans to the PRC, it opted to leave the option on the table, "so that certain individuals might be allowed to go." It was not until the beginning of 1952 that the Department began inserting prohibitory stamps on U.S. passports, making all travel to the PRC illegal.<sup>76</sup> The relatively slow pace of the State Department on the passport front did not signal a strong desire on the part of U.S. officials to engage the Chinese in a program of cultural or recreational exchange. The hesitation toward passport restrictions, especially in the context of the Korean War and the strict economic embargo placed on the PRC, nonetheless highlighted how travel policy developed along a slightly different trajectory than other components of U.S. foreign policy.

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<sup>75</sup> Cohen, *America's Response to China*, 180-181.

<sup>76</sup> "Telephone Call to Mr. Willis Young of the Passport Division," 27 August 1957, Series 2A, Box 5, D.D. Eisenhower Files Relating to J.F. Dulles, MC018, Public Policy Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey (hereafter JFD).

By the time that the State Department enacted its official ban on travel to the PRC in 1952, it had also eliminated the ability of private tourism companies to do business with the Communist regime. New government restrictions, emerging in between 1949 and 1951, meant that companies like APL and the American-owned airlines could no longer participate in trade with the PRC or bring American passengers to the mainland. By expanding the Trading With the Enemy Act to cover the PRC and North Korea in 1950, moreover, the Truman administration effectively made American travel to those countries illegal.<sup>77</sup> Under this statutory authority, the Treasury Department could prosecute or at least penalize even the casual tourist purchasing souvenirs in Shanghai while his ship waited offshore.

The emerging U.S.-PRC conflict also resonated in Hong Kong and Taiwan – both of which emerged as crucial outposts for U.S. officials after the “loss” of China. Hong Kong’s hotels and infrastructure were overwhelmed in 1949-1950, as refugees, U.S. officials, Chinese troops, and journalists congregated in response to the CCP takeover on the mainland. Karl Rankin, who arrived in the British colony in summer 1949, recalled that he, his wife, and his entire staff had to quarter on the U.S.S. *Dixie*, which was docked in Victoria Harbor.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> The Trading With The Enemy Act initially emerged in 1917 to prevent the United States from engaging in trade with the Central Powers during World War I. By the early 1950s the decision to end trade with Communist China merged with the larger debate over trade with the communist world. As U.S.-Soviet tensions increased in the years after World War II, Congress and the Truman administration sought out means of using trade controls as a form of containment. The Export Control Act of 1949 and the Mutual Defense Assistance Control Act (Battle Act) of 1951 were the two most significant pieces of legislation. In sum, the acts prohibited trading certain “strategic” items with the Soviets and gave the President authority to terminate economic and military assistance to any nation that conducted in such activity. The Battle Act, in particular, was a political compromise since hardliners in Congress wanted to take far more punitive and immediate action against nations that stood in the way of embargo. The best works on travel controls and Western trade with the communist bloc are Philip Funigiello, *American-Soviet Trade in the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988) and Zhang, *Economic Cold War*.

<sup>78</sup> Karl Lott Rankin, *China Assignment* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964), 13.

Beyond logistical setbacks, Hong Kong's geographic location gave travel there a palpable precariousness. A 1950 *Holiday* article depicted the dual roles of Hong Kong as a "money-maker" and "British fortress," placing photographs of Hong Kong soldiers alongside those of bustling curio shops. "As long as Communist China does not attack," the article assured readers, "China indirectly benefits by having a nearby market. Should the Reds attack, many feel, World War III would start."<sup>79</sup> This image of Hong Kong as a garrison state on the brink of Armageddon proved difficult to shake; even as Hong Kong's future seemed more certain and the colony's tourist industry became the envy of the region, this dreary image maintained a place in tourists' minds.

The island of Taiwan, suddenly thrown in the center of the Chinese conflict as the new home for the Nationalist government, had none of the allure of Hong Kong but suffered from the same sense of uncertainty. A *National Geographic* journalist, traveling to Taiwan in the early days of 1950, recalled that the "illusion of peace" that he had as he flew over the "opalescent waters" of Taiwan, quickly disappeared when he landed on "a military field alongside...camouflage-painted American-built planes of the Chinese Nationalist Air Force." Almost immediately upon disembarkation, "we had made the acquaintance of Chinese police, bent on keeping Communist spies from this uneasy island." On the island, inflation was rampant, military personnel were regular features of the landscape, and what little tourist infrastructure existed served primarily to keep travelers out of the island's unstable interior.<sup>80</sup>

As the epicenter of the Cold War shifted toward Asia and as U.S. policy toward the PRC became more concrete, the United States rapidly built up its alliances with its

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<sup>79</sup> "Hong Kong," *Holiday*, November 1950.

<sup>80</sup> Frederick G. Vosburgh, "Formosa – Hot Spot of the East," *National Geographic*, February 1950, 139-40.

Asian partners – Taiwan and British Hong Kong among them. In spite, or perhaps because of the fact that tourism to Taiwan and Hong Kong suffered from the precariousness of the Cold War, American travel to those destinations seemed to offer U.S. officials a useful weapon against the PRC. In a broad sense, mass travel – in both its motivating ideology and its physical presence – seemed to advance Washington’s objectives in the ongoing Cold War. Speaking to a gathering of travel agents in the midst of the Korean War, Truman’s chief of staff John Steelman established international tourism as a crucial distinguishing characteristic between the free and communist worlds. “Travel,” Steelman proclaimed, “is a privilege of the free, the prosperous, and the curious. And the Soviet world is determined both to prevent its citizens from seeing how the free world lives and from letting citizens of the free world see how the Soviets live.”<sup>81</sup> In addition to inherent contradictions with Soviet totalitarianism, tourism, in the eyes of most U.S. officials, was the embodiment of middle-class values, in that it required expendable income, a flexible work schedule, and a cosmopolitan sense of adventure. To promote American tourism – or better yet, to be an American tourist – was to promote American values. In the course of the Cold War – which was as much about cultural and ideological conflict as it was about military, political, and economic struggle – tourists represented millions of individual arguments for the supremacy of the American way of life.

As part of this emerging trend of linking tourism to U.S. international strategy, popular images of the PRC, Taiwan, and Hong Kong – in travelogues and travel guides – were increasingly compatible with the Cold War, anticommunist consensus. This had not always been the case. From the 1930s through World War II, despite the presence of

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<sup>81</sup> Steelman, “The Meaning of Korea,” *ASTA Travel News*, November 1950.



strongly pro-GMD writings in Henry Luce's *Time* and *Life*, among other periodicals, a large and influential contingent of travel writing on China came from political travelers such as Edgar Snow, Agnes Smedley, and Graham Peck – who all shared at least a latent sympathy for the communist cause.<sup>82</sup> Graham Peck, discussing his experiences in China during World War II in his travelogue *Two Kinds of Time*, wrote a scathing critique of the GMD and conservative forces in the United States. Peck developed a liberal version of the American exceptionalism ethos, arguing that U.S. support for the Nationalist government – which far exceeded Soviet aid to the CCP – was to blame for rise of communism on the mainland. In the years before the establishment of the PRC, “Americans had an excellent opportunity to influence the unavoidable revolution into democratic channels, but did not bother to make enough effort.” The result, Peck maintained, was that “[n]o acceptable alternative to communism had been presented.” It was conservative policymakers, along with their corrupt, undemocratic, and ineffective Nationalist allies, who were responsible for the postwar situation in China.<sup>83</sup>

A new strain of travel writing that emerged in the post-World War II era diverged quickly from the previous model, embracing the Cold War consensus and encouraging tourists to carry this same outlook when they traveled abroad. Most of these writers shared Washington and the public's concern over “losing” Asia to communism and worked to bring the region into the American consciousness. In addition to anti-PRC rhetoric – and indeed related to it – one of the dominant themes to come out of this literature was that Taiwan and Hong Kong were now the “true China.” The Communist

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<sup>82</sup> See Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* (1938); Smedley, *Battle Hymn of China* (1943); Graham Peck, *Through China's Wall* (1940).

<sup>83</sup> Graham Peck, *Two Kinds of Time* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1950), 6-8, 69-75.

revolution in the PRC was somehow “un-Chinese,” leaving the regions of China that remained free of CCP domination to carry the “China” appellation.<sup>84</sup>

James Michener epitomized this sort of politicized travel writing. Michener was a critic of Truman’s foreign policy, noting in *Life* magazine that Democratic policies had “stripped us of Asian friends and imperiled our national safety.” The result of this loss of security, Michener lamented, was that it was “all the more frightening for an American to travel in Asia today. Along the entire eastern seaboard [of the Asian continent] the American is utterly unwelcome.”<sup>85</sup> His popular travelogue *Voice of Asia* detailed his tour of Asia just a year after the end of the Chinese civil war and he unapologetically provided the reader with his take on the importance of Asia in the ongoing battle with communism. Michener invoked the common image of the U.S. “special relationship” with China and greater Asia: “At the topmost level, we are contending for the friendship of men like Nehru, Sukarno, Liaquat Ali Khan and Chou En-lai. We have already lost the last named to Russia. We must not lose the others.” To accomplish this, Michener supported the expansion of cultural exchanges, the distribution of American books, and other efforts to form bonds with Asian youth.<sup>86</sup>

This sense of urgency continued in Michener’s discussion of Taiwan, “the bright spot of Asia.” The maturity, enlightenment, and the development of the Nationalist stronghold merely underscored “the greatness of our loss [on the mainland].” Had the civil war turned out differently, “*this* might have been China today.”<sup>87</sup> In Taiwan, Michener asserted, “the questions of international consequence come to focus.” The

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<sup>84</sup> Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 103; Iriye, *Across the Pacific*, 292-93.

<sup>85</sup> James A. Michener, “Blunt Truths About Asia,” *Life*, 4 June 1951, 96.

<sup>86</sup> James A. Michener, *The Voice of Asia* (New York: Random House, 1951), 239-40.

<sup>87</sup> Michener, “Blunt Truths About Asia,” *Life*, 4 June 1951, 118.

island was “a symbol of a once free nation and a constant thorn in the flesh of the communists.” The conflict between the PRC and the United States was foremost in Michener’s mind and because Taiwan would likely be at the center of any global war, Michener demanded that Americans “know a great deal more about Formosa than they do now.”<sup>88</sup>

Just as central to the Cold War, Hong Kong was “perched on a precarious island,” and Michener stressed the vulnerability of the British colony. Woven between discussions of Hong Kong’s famous tailor shops and dazzling harbors, Michener warned, “[i]f war erupts in Asia generally, communist troops could probably overrun the city in a few days.” Like he had with Taiwan, Michener depicted Hong Kong as a bastion of hope in a chaotic world. People from all over the world seeking liberties of various sorts saw Hong Kong as their “mecca.” These metaphorical pilgrims ranged from the American G.I. seeking rest and recreation, to the American, European, and Asian shoppers lured by duty-free shopping, to the “[m]ore than a million freedom-loving Chinese from the mainland” who fled to Hong Kong in the years following the revolution.<sup>89</sup>

## VI

As the Cold War took shape in Asia, U.S. officials, as they had done in regard to European and Caribbean tourism, began to look to Far East travel as a potential addition to the American foreign policy arsenal. Local deficiencies, combined with international tensions, however, made suitcase diplomacy difficult in the region. But travel did not always follow the same pattern as the Cold War, nor did military, economic, and political

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<sup>88</sup> Michener, *Voice of Asia*, 64-65.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 80-82.

realities always resonate with travelers or the travel industry. Establishing a pattern that would continue for the next two decades, tourism developed both as a structured, government-controlled extension of containment and a non-official, casual, and apolitical activity.

On the one hand, for reasons of stimulating local economies and increasing cultural interaction, Washington policymakers worked with ECAFE and the tourism industry to streamline the process of international travel and encourage Asian nations to welcome American travelers. With the establishment of the PRC and the outbreak of the Korean War, moreover, travel to the region took on new importance as a way of building up relations with Taiwan and Hong Kong and undermining the new Communist regime. U.S. officials imagined tourists to be capsules of American culture, values, and ideals, who could effectively but subtly disseminate pro-American propaganda while gradually chipping away the foundation of the communist world. Popular travel guides, as well, embraced this sort of purposeful travel and with so few Americans traveling to China, images and descriptions coming from these travel writings contributed significantly to Americans' "knowledge" of the region. It is significant that the Pacific Area Travel Association (PATA) later named James Michener to its "Gallery of Legends" – alongside Thomas Cook, Juan Trippe, and Conrad Hilton – for his "outstanding literary contributions to greater awareness and appreciation of the Pacific Asia region."<sup>90</sup>

On the other hand, tourism emerged from World War II both as a seemingly endless source of revenue for private industry and a recreational luxury for middle-class Americans. For these reasons, the trajectory of tourism often clashed with U.S. objectives

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<sup>90</sup> Chuck Y. Gee and Matt Lurie, *The Story of the Pacific Asia Travel Association* (San Francisco: PATA, 1993), 11.

and the individuals involved – tourists, shipping and airline executives, and travel writers – did not always make the most efficient agents of U.S. foreign policy. Tourism was not, and never would be, entirely predictable, and U.S. officials had to sit back, recognizing that their chosen “ambassadors” were often no more than curious travelers, eager to sightsee, relax, and explore their exotic surroundings.

## **Ch. 2 – Filling the Void: Tourism and Cultural Exchange in Taiwan and Hong Kong, 1952-1957**

The purpose of this Act is to strengthen the ties that unite us with other nations by demonstrating the cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States.

-- From the International Cultural Exchange and Trade Fair Participation Act of 1956

The very fact that they *are* voluntary visitors with no government “axe to grind” is an argument in their favor.<sup>1</sup>

-- Memorandum on the International Educational Exchange Program, 1956

Finally, let us bear in mind that among the countries suffering under communist tyranny only China is fortunate enough to have its Taiwan, a bastion and rallying point where hope is being kept alive and preparations made for a better future.<sup>2</sup>

-- U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of China, Karl L. Rankin, 1953

In October 1954 Columbia University Chinese history professor Clarence Martin Wilbur arrived in Taiwan for a one-week stay. United States Information Service (USIS) and Foreign Operations Administration (FOA) officials, along with Taiwan’s Government Information Office, quickly became interested in Wilbur’s arrival. Wilbur had entered Taiwan in a “very critical frame of mind...prepared to find a situation that would confirm the worst reports about Taiwan that had been circulating in the United States.” Seeing any American traveler as a potential asset (or detriment) to America’s image overseas, U.S. officials were eager to change Wilbur’s mind. The urgency of this mission was heightened in Wilbur’s case since the professor planned to travel to

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<sup>1</sup> “Educational Exchange Annual Report,” 17 February 1956, CDF511.933, General Records of the Department of State, Box 2237, NARA.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Rankin, press conference, 2 April 1953. Reprinted in Rankin, *China Assignment*, 159-60.

Southeast Asia following his visit to Taiwan and officials were concerned that he would take his “skepticism” with him.<sup>3</sup>

Getting to work quickly, the Government Information Office arranged tours for Wilbur and provided opportunities for him “to be briefed by able and well-informed Chinese.” FOA officials escorted Wilbur on a tour to some of the agriculture and irrigation projects carried out by the Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction. The efforts seemed to pay off. Just before Wilbur left Taipei for Southeast Asia, he acknowledged “he had seen evidence of impressive improvement in many phases of life here.” During a brief stop in Hong Kong, moreover, where USIS officials and American correspondents “did their share in convincing him,” Wilbur developed an even more favorable opinion of the Nationalist government.<sup>4</sup>

U.S. officials kept their eyes on the American professor and when he made his way back to Taiwan at the end of March 1955, USIS and Embassy staff were eager to debrief him. Not only had Wilbur maintained his rosy view of “Free China,” he had also made “a consistent effort everywhere he went to enlighten the people with whom he came in contact.” He urged journalists and locals to visit Taiwan and “see for themselves.” U.S. officials were thrilled by his report. While officials acknowledged that it was near impossible to assess what kind of substantive impact Wilbur had on overseas Chinese and other Asians – not to mention the countless skeptical Americans he would engage after returning home – they were confident that this sort of people-to-people diplomacy could be a major asset to U.S. interests in the region. While favorable reports may have seemed propagandistic coming from an official representative of the United

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<sup>3</sup> USIS Taipei to the State Department, “Visits of Dr. Martin Wilbur,” 20 April 1955, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 92, NARA.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

States, American officials believed that private travelers such as Wilbur, with “no axe to grind,” could significantly alter perceptions of U.S. policy and strengthen the American position in the region.<sup>5</sup>

Wilbur’s travels highlight a number of important elements of U.S. suitcase diplomacy during the first several years of Eisenhower’s presidency. The attention that U.S. and Taiwan officials heaped on Wilbur underscores the scarcity of non-official American visitors to Taiwan and most of the Far East in the early 1950s. An inadequate supply of hotel rooms, a shortage of airline and cruise line routes, and security concerns, meant that local governments and tourists alike were hesitant to make a serious commitment. Despite, or possibly because of this small number of tourists, U.S. officials recognized the importance of using American travelers as agents of foreign policy in the region. Wilbur’s non-official status, moreover, made him even more attractive to U.S. officials as it gave him an air of objectivity not possessed by USIS or Embassy staff.

But to categorize Wilbur as a casual tourist, detached from Washington policy and “official business,” would go too far in the other direction. In fact, seven years after his initial visit, Wilbur was back in Taiwan as part of the Fulbright Program’s Inter-Country Exchange, producing a government-sponsored report on “Taiwan as an Example of Progress Under Freedom.”<sup>6</sup> Instead, what Wilbur exemplified was the fluidity with which travel could move from recreational to purposeful and the eagerness with which

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> American Embassy Taipei to State Department, “Educational and Cultural Exchange,” 25 February 1963, Box 316, J. William Fulbright Papers, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (CU) Historical Collection, MC468, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville, Arkansas (hereafter JWFP)



U.S. officials harnessed the efforts of official and non-official travelers alike to develop a comprehensive and effective brand of cultural diplomacy.

As James Michener made clear in *Voice of Asia*, the gradual but definite decline of travel to the PRC opened up a new set of opportunities in travel to Taiwan and Hong Kong. To Michener, tourism to “Free China” could become an extension of containment and serve to disseminate American values throughout the region. While the nascent tourism industries in Hong Kong and Taiwan advanced Washington’s objectives by establishing these destinations as “Free China,” recreational tourists in the region in the early 1950s were relatively uncommon. Washington officials, seeing this potential in Taiwan and Hong Kong, thus worked to supplement privately-funded travel with government-sponsored cultural delegations. To this end, in the early years of the Eisenhower administration officials developed a substantial program of cultural diplomacy that served to boost the prestige of these U.S. allies, facilitate mutual understanding, and subtly undermine the validity and stability of the PRC. Similar to Truman’s incorporation of tourism into the Marshall Plan, Eisenhower’s cultural exchange program built on existing, but limited, tourism infrastructure and gave American travelers a central place in U.S. foreign relations. In this sense, Eisenhower’s use of travel policy in the early 1950s was not wholly negative; in addition to prohibiting or severely restricting travel to the PRC, his administration worked hard to encourage, guide, and even co-opt travel to Taiwan and Hong Kong.

## I

The conclusion of the Chinese civil war and the establishment of the Nationalist government in Taiwan renewed hope that recreational tourism to “Free China” would approach the levels experienced in Europe and the Caribbean. To the contrary, this period of transition saw a decline in American tourism as travelers could no longer visit the mainland of China and the Nationalist government, for a variety of reasons, failed to develop a functioning tourist plant in Taiwan. Despite it being a “fashionable topic of conversation,” a thriving tourist industry in Taiwan was still “a distant dream.”<sup>7</sup> Travel guides for the Far East – which were, not surprisingly, far more sparse than their European and Caribbean counterparts – offered more nuanced, but still reserved, assessments of Taiwan tourism. *McKay’s* 1953 guide, for example, opened: “Should your travels take you of necessity to Taiwan (Formosa), you will find it a lovely and unexciting little island of approximately two hundred and fifty by ninety miles.”<sup>8</sup>

Few commercial airliners flew from the United States to Taiwan in the early 1950s. Aside from the dilapidated condition of airstrips, many of the physical aircraft belonging to CNAC and CATC were, by that point, in the possession of the PRC. There was, as well, a substantial shortage of suitable hotel accommodations. Even the two nicest hotels – the Grand Hotel and the Friends of China Club – were not entirely up to the standards of American visitors. The Grand (which Ambassador Karl Rankin insisted was a “misnomer”), for example, was in an inconvenient location far from the center of

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<sup>7</sup> Yager, “Tourism on Taiwan,” 8 October 1957, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 211, NARA.

<sup>8</sup> E. Cowles Gellhorn, *McKay’s Guide to the Far East and the Middle East* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1953), 77.

Taipei and was “pretty dreary inside.”<sup>9</sup> The only words of praise that *McKay’s Guide* could offer was that it had “charmingly pleasant personnel.”<sup>10</sup> The Friends of China Club was in a more convenient part of the city, overlooking a park. But a *National Geographic* journalist staying there in February 1950 remembered mosquito infestations in the room and significant water shortages.<sup>11</sup>

Moving beyond the superficial critiques, the two hotels were the only ones in the capital city of Taipei (which was the primary, if not exclusive, destination of most American tourists in Taiwan) and both doubled as the only sources of first-class dining on the island. For these reasons, despite the relatively small number of incoming visitors, the available accommodations were simply inadequate.<sup>12</sup> Highlighting this point, in a telegram to Secretary of State Dulles, Ambassador Rankin noted that an increase of one additional planeload of visitors in Taiwan would “produce [a] minor crisis.”<sup>13</sup> The situation got even worse when travelers moved beyond Taipei. Traveling with his family around the island, Embassy official Joseph Yager noted that hotels were scarce in the outskirts of the country. Those that were available to tourists, moreover, attracted an undesirable clientele and maintained filthy, “Japanese-inspired” outhouses for their bathrooms.<sup>14</sup>

Tourist attractions, as well, were sadly lacking. While Taiwan possessed a number of temples, shrines, and other historical landmarks, natural erosion, shoddy repair jobs,

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<sup>9</sup> Rankin, *China Assignment*, 285; Gellhorn, *McKay’s Guide* (1953), 80.

<sup>10</sup> Gellhorn, *McKay’s Guide* (1953), 80.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 80; Vosburgh, “Formosa – Hot Spot of the East,” *National Geographic Magazine*, February 1950, 144.

<sup>12</sup> Davenport to Secretary of State, “Tourism Possibilities in Taiwan,” 8 September 1955, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 211, NARA.

<sup>13</sup> Rankin to Dulles, 29 April 1954, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 150, NARA.

<sup>14</sup> Yager, “Tourism on Taiwan,” 8 October 1957, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 211, NARA.

and vandalism had despoiled their original grandeur. Sun Moon Lake, extolled for “its scenic beauties,” had no fishing, no swimming, and no significant attractions. The only memorable aspect of this scenic spot was the “genuine” performance by “some well-trained aborigines who...will don their garb and start dancing as soon as they see you coming.” Those few attractions that gained the attention of Taiwan tourist officials, moreover, often suffered from “cheap commercialism” or “omnipresent (and not too flattering) portraits of President Chiang Kai-shek.”<sup>15</sup> On top of all this, transportation to and from these attractions was an issue. *McKay’s Guide* noted the “endless beautiful spots” on the island, but warned that only travelers who “are not averse to discomfort” would be able to enjoy them.<sup>16</sup>

For government representatives like Yager, travel around Taiwan was not as dreary as it appeared. His association with the Embassy enabled him to obtain gasoline, travel guidance, rooms at clean hostels, meals at private residences, and access to the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) club. Ambassador Rankin recalled that the Nationalist government, in fact, operated several guesthouses – which were “much better than the hotels” – for officially invited guests.<sup>17</sup> But the average tourist, who would not receive this VIP treatment, could look forward to a burdensome vacation. Such a tourist, Yager concluded, would be better off spending his time and money in Hong Kong or Japan.<sup>18</sup>

Infrastructure problems – unattractive landmarks, shoddy roads, inadequate hotel rooms, and insufficient runways and docks – were only the most tangible obstacles to a

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Gellhorn, *McKay’s Guide* (1953), 80.

<sup>17</sup> Rankin, *China Assignment*, 280.

<sup>18</sup> Yager, “Tourism on Taiwan,” 8 October 1957, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 211, NARA.

thriving tourist market in Taiwan. American perceptions of the island as an unsafe and unstable nation also hindered the development of a large tourist market. The well-publicized tensions between Taiwan and the PRC, coupled with the mainland's overt bombardments of the offshore islands, led tourists to be understandably jittery when it came to traveling in the region. In late 1954, for example, a group of surgeons removed Taiwan from their Asian itinerary due to apprehensions over safety. One of the would-be travelers noted: "When I took a second look at the itinerary and thought about the chances of getting shot down while flying to Formosa I...decided to wait until things quieted down over there." Encouraging the cancellation of the surgeon tour was a spokesman for Pan American Airways, who noted that the "tense political situation" in Taiwan made the tour inappropriate at the time.<sup>19</sup> Pan Am was not alone in its hesitant approach toward Taiwan. Many other commercial air carriers, as well as APL, would not include the island on their itineraries until years after the hostilities in Korea ended.

U.S. officials themselves offered mixed messages on the safety of Taiwan. Embassy officials tried to downplay the "unduly apprehensive" statements, noting that while Pan Am did not make calls at Taiwan, "safe and comfortable service is...provided by several other airlines – American and otherwise."<sup>20</sup> It was, nonetheless, difficult for Washington officials in the 1950s to speak honestly of Taiwan as an entirely serene and safe tourist destination. In response to a 1955 Embassy report on Taiwan tourism that discussed the benefit that would arise from APL increasing its involvement in Taiwan, for example, one State Department official suggested that the International Cooperation Administration (ICA) or the State Department follow up on the suggestion. The idea was

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<sup>19</sup> American Embassy Taipei to State Department, "Apprehensions About Safety of Formosa for Visitors," 22 October 1954, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 150, NARA.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

shot down as “impractical,” however, lest a “war break out in the straits.”<sup>21</sup> As late as 1958, in fact, the State Department – in the same fashion as many private carriers – continued to caution private citizens against traveling to Taiwan due to political and military turmoil.<sup>22</sup>

The sluggish development of recreational tourism in Taiwan was not simply the result of political and military unrest. The specific policies of the Nationalist government, as well, deserve some of the blame. Nationalist President Jiang Jieshi purposefully restricted the expansion of a tourist industry on the island. There was a general uneasiness in Taiwan over an increase in the number of foreign visitors. The frustration of the Nationalist government aimed most directly at the scores of American VIPs – congressmen, military brass, and cabinet officials – who, throughout the 1950s, regularly toured Taiwan’s military installations, government agencies, and infrastructure projects.<sup>23</sup> The itinerary for many official visits, moreover, included at least one meal or meeting with Jiang. Ambassador Rankin noted that Jiang preferred not to receive visitors on Sundays but pointed to the first three months of 1954, during which various official U.S.

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<sup>21</sup> Cover note to Davenport, “Tourism Possibilities in Taiwan,” 8 September 1955, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #41, Box 4, NARA.

<sup>22</sup> Martin to Hickey, “Queries from Private American Citizens re Travel to Taiwan,” 17 September 1958, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #1335, Box 2, NARA.

<sup>23</sup> When Cardinal Francis Spellman visited Taiwan for three days in January 1958, for example, local U.S. officials treated him as a personal guest of Jiang Jieshi and his wife. Spellman was greeted upon his arrival by numerous government and church officials and was transported around the country via military aircraft. New Jersey Governor Robert B. Meyner, despite his claims that he was visiting Taiwan as a “private citizen” also received VIP treatment while touring the island. Meyner met and conferred with numerous high-ranking officials of the U.S. military stationed in Taiwan as well as Taiwan Vice President Chen Cheng and Foreign Minister George Yeh. “Official Visit of His Eminence Francis Cardinal Spellman,” American Embassy Taipei to State Department, 3 January 1958, General Records of the Department of State, CDF033.1193, Box 174, NARA; “Visit of the Honorable Robert B. Meyner, Governor of New Jersey, and Party to Taipei on June 11-12, 1958,” American Embassy Taipei to State Department, General Records of the Department of State, CDF033.1193, Box 174, NARA. Cook to Osborn, “Taipei’s Telegram #52 Concerning American Visitors,” 2 August 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA; Clough to Rankin, 2 August 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA.

delegations were in Taipei on ten different weekends. Each group, not surprisingly, expected to meet with the Generalissimo.<sup>24</sup> While U.S. officials recognized that it was integral to the interests of the United States and Taiwan to have influential Americans witness and report on Taiwan's progress firsthand, Taiwan officials and residents grew frustrated with these VIP American visitors, who demanded the time and resources of their Chinese hosts as they toured military installations and bases. Embassy officials estimated that the annual cost to Taiwan of these VIP visits was hundreds of thousands of dollars. A joke around the U.S. Embassy was that "more ammunition was expended in putting on displays for visiting Americans than would have been needed to repel a communist attack."<sup>25</sup> More seriously, one Taiwan editorial commented that the money spent entertaining these guests "could be more profitably engaged in other channels against the enemy."<sup>26</sup>

The culmination of this anti-American resentment came in May 1957 when tens of thousands of Chinese rioters destroyed several U.S. government buildings on the island. Though the immediate cause of the riots was the acquittal of an American soldier who had killed a Chinese man, U.S. and Nationalist officials agreed that the primary underlying cause was the "[a]nti-Americanism generated by the large numbers of Americans on Taiwan with obviously high living standards and privileges."<sup>27</sup> The palpable frustration toward American VIPs and relatively wealthy American residents

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<sup>24</sup> State Department to American Embassy Taipei, "Official Visits to Free China," 14 March 1955, CDF033.1193, General Records of the Department of State, Box 174, NARA; Rankin to Dulles, 29 April 1954, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 150, NARA.

<sup>25</sup> Rankin, *China Assignment*, 281.

<sup>26</sup> State Department to American Embassy Taipei, "Official Visits to Free China," 14 March 1955, CDF033.1193, General Records of the Department of State, Box 174, NARA; "VIPs, Visitors," editorial in *China News* (Taiwan), 12 January 1955, in General Records of the Department of State, CDF033.1193, Box 174, NARA.

<sup>27</sup> Collins, "Riot in Taiwan," 27 May 1957. Reproduced in *Declassified Documents Reference System* (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale, 2010) (hereafter *DDRS*).

spilled over into a general resistance to build up the nation's tourism industry. Taiwan's economy was weak and its resources were spread thin as it was; a sudden boom in well-off tourists seeking entertainment, lodging, and food seemed like more of a burden than a gift.

Nationalist leaders, furthermore, consistently gave preference to national security over tourism promotion. While these priorities were understandable, officials often took them too far. One British businessman with tourism interests in Taiwan noted that the Nationalist government had, in 1957, taken over a recently completed hotel and converted it into an army rest center. Along these same lines, the army placed a series of "outdated anti-aircraft guns" in the vicinity of a civilian resort, allowing soldiers to acquire favorable rates and privileges as a matter of "national security."<sup>28</sup> More generally, Nationalist officials worried about the implications of dedicating large amounts of resources or time toward the development of a permanent tourism industry on the island. Long after officials in Washington had lost any genuine hope of restoring Nationalist control of the mainland, Jiang and other Nationalist officials pursued that goal. Propagandistic slogans – urging residents to overcome "national difficulties" – could be found throughout the island, underscoring the fact that "the Government is bent upon returning to the mainland."<sup>29</sup> To most Nationalist officials, Taiwan was merely a temporary location for the Chinese government; any serious effort to boost tourism on the island would both distract officials from more important issues and exude a sense of resignation.

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<sup>28</sup> Bolton, quoted in Lacey to State Department, "Tourism in Taiwan," 25 June 1957, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 211, NARA.

<sup>29</sup> Yager, "Tourism on Taiwan," 8 October 1957, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 211, NARA.



Those American officials who had any interest in tourism to Taiwan were dubious that there would be any progress until Jiang enacted more conducive policies. Addressing the ineffectiveness of the Nationalist regime in stimulating foreign tourism, two U.S. Embassy reports in 1957 came to the same conclusion: though there was great potential in tourism – due to the island’s beauty, its convenient location between Hong Kong, the Philippines, and Japan, and its novelty to the well-traveled tourist – “government indifference” toward tourism made it unlikely that such potential would be realized. Only after Jiang reformed the nation’s outdated entry and exit procedures, revitalized the dilapidated tourist infrastructure, and embraced the island as the permanent home of the Nationalist regime, could Taiwan join the scores of other nations benefiting from streams of American tourists.<sup>30</sup>

## II

Hong Kong’s recreational tourism industry was significantly stronger than Taiwan’s. In general, the British colony recovered quickly following the end of Japanese occupation in 1945. Civil government returned less than a year later and Hong Kong resumed its position as a great international entrepôt.<sup>31</sup> Tourism, too, bounced back, aided by Hong Kong’s well-founded infrastructure and its reputation as a shopper’s paradise. During World War II the colony had served, as well, as a valued recreation destination for American servicemen. This trend continued throughout the 1950s, as U.S. commanders in the Far East saw frequent stops at Hong Kong as a means of boosting

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<sup>30</sup> Yager, “Tourism on Taiwan,” 8 October 1957, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 211, NARA; John Lacey, “Tourism in Taiwan,” 25 June 1957, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 211, NARA.

<sup>31</sup> Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, 14.

morale. By 1955, 10,000 U.S. sailors were visiting Hong Kong every month. Because of this steady flood of tourist traffic, travel guides, tour operators, currency exchange, and souvenir shops were fully established by the time recreational tourists began arriving in larger numbers.<sup>32</sup>

Despite its solid footing, Hong Kong tourism faced early problems as well. Like Taiwan, Hong Kong suffered from its location and its precarious relationship with the PRC. While the establishment of the PRC did not directly or immediately threaten British rule in Hong Kong – due to Britain’s stepped up military defenses – Western officials still worried that the PRC would gradually destabilize the British colony by cutting off its water, food supply, and transportation services.<sup>33</sup> This persistent pestering by the Communist regime was no doubt on the minds of inbound tourists. One 1955 *New York Times* article lauding the tourist possibilities in Hong Kong, nonetheless noted that it was “not immune to the sea of ferment around it”; “someday,” the PRC would take control of the British colony.<sup>34</sup>

For most of the 1950s bureaucratic deficiencies, as well, kept Hong Kong tourism somewhat static. Until 1957, when the local government established the Hong Kong Tourism Association (HKTA), there was no official mechanism to facilitate the promotion and expansion of tourism. Individual companies like Northwest Airlines, APL, and Philippine Air Lines, along with international and regional organizations like PATA, ASTA, and IUOTO, tangentially promoted tourism to Hong Kong; without a central travel agency, however, the colony could not reach its potential. Due in part to the lack of

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<sup>32</sup> Henry R. Lieberman, “Navy Plans Cut of 50% in Draft,” *New York Times*, 27 December 1955; Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, 35-36.

<sup>33</sup> Mark Chi-kwan, “A Reward for Good Behaviour in the Cold War: Bargaining Over the Defence of Hong Kong, 1949-1957,” *The International History Review* Vol. 22 (December 2000), 837-42.

<sup>34</sup> Henry R. Lieberman, “Hong Kong Still Welcomes Tourists,” *New York Times*, 24 April 1955.

organization and direct promotion, from 1952 to 1957 the total number of tourists to the colony consistently hovered around 50,000 – a respectable but not entirely impressive figure. Considering that after 1957 Hong Kong tourism increased by an average of more than 50,000 tourists annually, these earlier figures are noticeably meager.<sup>35</sup>

Even if the local tourism industry could overcome these external and internal obstacles, some U.S. officials considered tourism to Hong Kong to be a political and strategic liability. Just as Jiang Jieshi worried about the impact of tourism on his perennial struggle with the Chinese Communists, so too did U.S. officials worry about the consequences of boosting tourism to a British colony bordering the mainland of China. Compounding these concerns was the fact that the views of British and Chinese officials were not always in line with Washington's policies.

This was especially true in terms of tourism's economic impact. Ever since the CCP victory in the Chinese civil war, Hong Kong's economy had been the focal point of Anglo-American disagreement. Most notably, any increase in U.S. monetary support for Hong Kong, or any influx of American dollars into the British colony, presented complications to Washington's economic embargo against the PRC.<sup>36</sup> To combat this, Washington officials gradually expanded the economic embargo to cover Hong Kong as well. In 1950 Congress had placed significant restrictions on the types of products that could be sold to Hong Kong and prohibited American merchants from buying or selling any item manufactured in the PRC – even if those items were located outside the PRC.

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<sup>35</sup> "Visitor Totals Over a Decade of Growth," *Pacific Travel News*, November 1962.

<sup>36</sup> This economic problem, moreover, was not isolated to Hong Kong. In the midst of the Korean War, Japan, for example, was becoming a legitimate economic power in the Far East. As Walter LaFeber has noted, the Korean War served Japan much in the same way that the Marshall Plan served western Europe. Considering the increasing benefit that Japan secured from American presence in the region, U.S. policymakers wanted to ensure that the Japanese government was not, directly or indirectly, channeling money back to the PRC in the form of trade. Walter LaFeber, *The Clash: U.S.-Japanese Relations Throughout History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), 294.

Historian Nancy Bernkopf Tucker notes the absurdness of Washington's strict policy on trade restrictions, noting that U.S. officials refused to allow even innocuous items into Hong Kong for fear of indirect benefit to the PRC. Businessmen selling dried ducks (whose eggs originated in the PRC) and large numbers of Patti Page albums ran into obstacles from U.S. officials.<sup>37</sup>

Washington's efforts, however, were not always completely successful. A National Security Council (NSC) assessment of the embargo, published almost simultaneously with Eisenhower's entry to the White House, listed the thousands of tons of goods that, despite Washington-sponsored restrictions, made their way into the USSR and the PRC. Part of the problem was that various governments had different levels of commitment to the embargo; few were as steadfast as Washington. The government of Ceylon, for example, was not a member of the United Nations and it explicitly worked out broad trade agreements with the PRC. In one such agreement, Ceylon annually would purchase 80,000 tons of rice from the PRC and the PRC could use the resulting funds to purchase Ceylonese rubber or other products.<sup>38</sup> Even close allies of the United States wavered in their support. Many were concerned that a tight economic embargo would provoke war. Also a concern – especially for nations like Great Britain, France, and Japan – was that continued trade restrictions would irreparably damage the Chinese economy and thus eliminate a crucial, future trading partner. This economic anxiety was particularly palpable in regard to Hong Kong, which had traditionally served as a base from which nations could trade with mainland China.

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<sup>37</sup> Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States*, 203.

<sup>38</sup> National Security Council progress report, "U.S. Policies and Programs in the Economic Field Which May Affect the War Potential of the Soviet Bloc," 19 January 1953, *DDRS*; Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 115-16.

“Leakage” from Hong Kong also proved to be a problem. Smuggling, remittances, foreign exchange, and outright trade between Hong Kong and the PRC, meant that Washington’s policy of containment was not airtight. PRC officials, from the moment they came into power, saw relations with Hong Kong as a means of circumventing any Western attempt at economic strangulation. This indirect trade, along with the obvious tensions between the United States and Great Britain, would be the PRC’s keys to success. To this end, as CCP officials consolidated power in summer 1950, Zhou Enlai ordered a “mass smuggling” campaign through Hong Kong and Macao as a means of countering the anticipated economic assault from the West.<sup>39</sup> U.S. intelligence showed that between December 1950 and January 1951, Hong Kong’s exports to the PRC – “because of the fear of increasing restrictions...from Western countries” – increased by 45 percent.<sup>40</sup> As late as 1953 Washington officials noted that while the embargo was placing “growing pressures” on the Chinese Communists, they estimated that 5,000 tons of goods a month entered from Hong Kong to Macao or the PRC.<sup>41</sup>

Despite these difficulties, preventing American companies from unintentionally helping the PRC was fairly straightforward. Following China’s intervention in the Korean War in October 1950, the Commerce Department announced that all U.S. shipments to the PRC, Hong Kong, and Macao required validated export licenses. Commerce officials did not intend to issue any such licenses for trade with the PRC, and American trade with the latter two colonies required a “case-by-case” consideration by U.S. officials. This

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<sup>39</sup> Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 72, 82.

<sup>40</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “Daily Digest,” 2 April 1951, *DDRS*.

<sup>41</sup> National Security Council progress report, “U.S. Policies and Programs in the Economic Field Which May Affect the War Potential of the Soviet Bloc,” 19 January 1953, *DDRS*.

extra burden made it quite difficult for Hong Kong to import from the United States any item that could potentially aid the PRC.<sup>42</sup> The U.S. policy – combined with the PRC’s retaliatory reduction of purchases from Hong Kong – served both to strengthen the embargo on the PRC and cripple the Hong Kong economy. Within years of the embargo’s implementation, Hong Kong officials saw the disappearance of 50 percent of the exports and 25 percent of the imports that normally went through the colony. Between 1950 and 1955, trade between Hong Kong and the PRC, likewise, dropped 15 percent.<sup>43</sup>

The embargo question became more complicated, however, when it involved hundreds of thousands of relatively inexpensive transactions carried out by unsuspecting tourists. In this case, it was not a matter of the Commerce Department withholding licenses from a handful of U.S. exporters; instead, it involved overseeing the mundane activities of tens of thousands of American tourists legally visiting Hong Kong. In the early 1950s American tourism to Hong Kong was relatively light but the colony was still welcoming upwards of 18,000 American recreational tourists a year.<sup>44</sup>

In late 1952, to deal with the steady flow of Americans scouring Hong Kong markets for bargains, the U.S. Treasury Department developed a complex system of Comprehensive Certificates of Origin (CCOs). Working with the Hong Kong Department of Commerce and Industry, U.S. officials distributed these documents to sanctioned Hong Kong shops. For a nominal fee (less than \$1), shoppers purchased a CCO that would cover most of their purchases within a particular shop. Upon approval from the colonial

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<sup>42</sup> Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, 143-50.

<sup>43</sup> Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States*, 200; Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 133.

<sup>44</sup> “PATA’s 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Statistical Report: Visitors to PATA Member Destinations 1952-1965,” *Pacific Travel News*, February 1966.

government (a process that usually took about a week), passengers could take their items home or the Hong Kong shop would ship the items to the United States.<sup>45</sup> Common and popular items like brassware, jade, ceramics, wood furniture, and silk goods, fell into the Commerce Department's "presumptive" category; unless a valid CCO demonstrated otherwise, U.S. Customs officials were to assume that such goods had PRC origins. Other souvenirs, such as binoculars, cameras, umbrellas, and watches, were "non-presumptive" and did not require any proof of origin.<sup>46</sup>

On top of the economic complexities of Hong Kong tourism, the fact that Hong Kong lay within mainland China presented unique problems when dealing with tourism development and infrastructure. While the colony's location, as one travel writer noted, allowed American tourists to "get an ersatz taste of China," it also meant that U.S., British, and Chinese officials would have difficulty separating Hong Kong affairs from those of the PRC.<sup>47</sup> In 1955, for example, shortly before tourism became the leading industry in the British colony, U.S. and British officials argued over air travel between Hong Kong and the PRC. While the issue of U.S. airlines traveling to the PRC had, for the most part, been settled when the State Department prohibited U.S. companies from doing business with the Chinese Communists, complications still remained. Most notably, officials of Hong Kong Airways, operated by Northwest Airlines, hoped to resume service between Hong Kong and Canton. Airline officials, furthermore, hoped to use Canton as the site of an "alternate airport" for the anticipated hordes of tourists visiting Hong Kong. State Department officials responded promptly that Hong Kong

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<sup>45</sup> Gene Gleason, *Hong Kong* (New York: John Day Company, 1963), 292; "The Sport of Shopping," *Pacific Travel News*, March 1960.

<sup>46</sup> "A Practical Guide for Hong Kong Shopping," *Pacific Travel News*, March 1962.

<sup>47</sup> Lieberman, "Hong Kong Still Welcomes Tourists," *New York Times*, 24 April 1955.

Airways, since its operating company was based in the United States, could not provide service into the PRC without a proper license, “which would not now be granted.” If Hong Kong officials continued to push for landing rights in Canton, the State Department concluded that it would “have no recourse but to warn American nationals not to travel on Hong Kong Airways or any other airline where the possibility existed that the aircraft might land at a Chinese Communist airport.”<sup>48</sup>

### III

In the early 1950s the conditions of recreational tourism in Taiwan and Hong Kong did little to inspire Washington officials. Applying frustratingly cyclical logic, U.S. officials reasoned that without planeloads and shiploads of tourists headed over the Pacific, there could be little benefit in devoting millions of dollars toward tourism development. More generally, international and domestic changes resulted in less U.S. government support for recreational tourism. European economies – to which the Truman administration had directed the bulk of the country’s tourist dollars – were improving somewhat; the economic and strategic exigencies which had guaranteed tourism a crucial spot in foreign aid programs, therefore, no longer held as much sway. Eisenhower’s brand of fiscal conservatism, moreover, reduced the likelihood that the federal government would continue to dedicate tax dollars toward the promotion of recreational tourism. Even though tourism was a relatively inexpensive way to spread American wealth, to some conservatives within the White House and Congress, it represented an

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<sup>48</sup> State Department to British Embassy, 24 October 1955, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #41, Box 6, NARA.



unnecessary expense that went beyond the appropriate parameters of government involvement.<sup>49</sup>

It did not, however, go away entirely. Like Truman before him, Eisenhower recognized that tourism had the potential to be an effective conduit for cultural and economic exchange. The strongest influence on the Eisenhower administration in regard to travel was Clarence Randall, who served as a White House economic advisor. Upon entering the administration he had consistently promoted the reduction of trade barriers and the increased use of private investment to close the dollar gap and restore international economic stability. From there, it was not a far leap to suggest that tourism, too, might play a pivotal role in international economics. In an unofficial 1954 report on American foreign economic policy, Randall advocated the use of tourists in the general exchange of currency and he urged policymakers to take economic advantage of the voluntary movement of Americans around the world. Regardless of how Washington officials approached this activity, American travelers – due to improved transportation technologies and a noticeable curiosity to see these “strange places” – were going to continue touring abroad and spend money in the process. To Randall, it seemed illogical to let this opportunity pass.<sup>50</sup>

Randall’s efforts did have some impact. In Eisenhower’s speech to Congress in May 1954 he called on policymakers to wean foreign nations off of direct aid and instead offer loans, private investment, trade, and tourism. While Eisenhower avoided the implication that the promotion of tourism overseas was primarily the responsibility of the U.S. government, he nonetheless urged Congress to take substantive, “helpful” actions.

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<sup>49</sup> Endy, *Cold War Holidays*, 144-45.

<sup>50</sup> Clarence Randall, *A Foreign Economic Policy for the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), 29-30.

These included simplifying customs, passport, and currency procedures, and increasing duty-free limits from \$500 to \$1,000.<sup>51</sup> Eisenhower also ensured that international tourism policy would maintain a permanent place on his administration's agenda. In July 1956, Eisenhower invited Randall to assume the role of Chairman of the Council on Foreign Economic Policy. The office, and the selection of Randall, signaled that Eisenhower was committed to using tourism as a means of international economic stimulus. Hitting the ground running, Randall set up meetings with government officials and representatives from the tourism industry to discuss how best to incorporate overseas travel into the nation's foreign policy agenda.<sup>52</sup>

On the whole, however, Eisenhower's early efforts resulted in few dramatic changes in Washington's tourism policy. Exemplifying this, by the end of 1955 the increase in the duty-free exemption, which initially had seemed destined to pass through Congress, became mired in a sea of protectionist opposition and failed to become law. Eisenhower's rhetorical support for tourism promotion, nonetheless, established a climate within which tourism promotion could advance and in the last few years of this administration Eisenhower took a far more active role in this regard.<sup>53</sup>

In these early years of the 1950s private organizations, more so than the Eisenhower administration, served as the driving force behind transpacific recreational tourism.<sup>54</sup> Top among these private associations was the nascent Pacific Area Travel

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<sup>51</sup> See "Text of President Eisenhower's Message to Congress Outlining Foreign Trade Policy," *New York Times*, 31 March 1954.

<sup>52</sup> Eisenhower to Randall, Council on Foreign Economic Policy (CFEP) Journal, 10 July 1956, Vol. 1, Box 6, Clarence B. Randall Papers, MC109, Public Policy Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey (hereafter CBR).

<sup>53</sup> Endy, *Cold War Holidays*, 129-30.

<sup>54</sup> This development was not entirely unique to travel to the Far East. As historian Neil Moses Rosendorf suggests in regard to American tourism to postwar Spain, "we must be careful not to oversubscribe

Association (PATA).<sup>55</sup> PATA was the brainchild of Lorrin Thurston, founder of the *Honolulu Advertiser* and chairman of the Hawaii Visitors Board, and William Mullahey, a former Pan American Airways executive. For years before the establishment of PATA, Thurston used his newspaper as a means of integrating Hawaii into the economic and cultural orbit of the continental United States, frequently promoting American tourism to Hawaii and beyond. Mullahey, too, had been a long-time proponent of increased tourism to the Far East and Pacific and had been actively involved in the expansion of Pan Am's Clipper routes in the 1930s.

To the consternation of Thurston and Mullahey, the Far East of the early 1950s was not wholly conducive to a large-scale tourism industry. In January 1961 writers of PATA's *Pacific Travel News* looked back nostalgically on these early years, noting the poor conditions that Thurston and Mullahey faced:

Hawaii was still a territory, an overnight plane trip from the Mainland. There were no tourist air fares in the Pacific, no jets, only three luxury-class passenger steamships. And to the average person the great countries of the Pacific beyond Hawaii were relatively unknown and little traveled.<sup>56</sup>

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American cultural promotional responsibility to the government, which has over time offered rhetorical and organizational support to a far greater extent than financial aid." Rosendorf, "Be El Caudillo's Guest," 370.

<sup>55</sup> The original name of the organization was "Pacific Area Travel Association." In 1985, delegates changed the name to "Pacific Asia Travel Association," but kept the same acronym, "PATA." Whereas tourism had, from the 1950s through the 1970s, largely been a one-way flow from the United States to the Far East, the 1970s and 1980s saw increasing tourism from East Asian nations to the United States and, more significantly, between East Asian nations themselves. The name change thus reflected the changing globe and put Asia front and center. For an overview of the history of PATA, see Gee and Lurie, *The Story of the Pacific Asia Travel Association*.

<sup>56</sup> "PATA's Phenomenal Growth – Nine Conferences in Review," *Pacific Travel News*, January 1961.

Though Hawaii itself was still quite a trek for the average American tourist, the exotic American territory was rapidly becoming a prime destination for American travelers. From the pre-war peak of 31,000 tourists in 1941, Hawaii rebounded and welcomed 41,000 tourists in 1948. Despite a significant labor strike that year that kept many cruise ships from docking, the tourist boom brought in an estimated \$15 million in tourist expenditures.<sup>57</sup> Thurston and Mullahey hoped to apply the same strategy that had brought success to Hawaii's postwar tourism market to the rest of the Pacific and Far East region. While distance and general lack of interest, in the prewar years, had stunted these tourism industries, Thurston and Mullahey were confident that with new transportation technologies, combined with the postwar cosmopolitanism and affluence of many returning soldiers, travel to the region was likely to grow.

Their efforts to expand tourism, however, ran into serious obstacles. Governments in the Far East – Taiwan's Nationalist government being one of the most blatant examples – showed almost no interest in overhauling their nations' antiquated travel procedures and encouraging the arrival of foreign visitors. Visa policies were confusing and worked only to frustrate and deter tourists. Hotels were lacking and those that did exist often failed to meet the expectations of would-be American travelers. Harbors were too shallow to accommodate many cruise liners and runways were too short to handle large commercial planes. Most Americans, due to a lack of publicity, were also simply unaware that tourism in this region was possible. Finally, European and Caribbean destinations, which served as successful models for PATA's founders, also played the

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<sup>57</sup> Richard MacMillan, "Hawaiian Welcome; Islands are Once More Ready to Invite Tourist Trade from the Mainland," *New York Times*, 21 September 1947; "Hawaii's Big Tourist Year," *New York Times*, 4 January 1949.

role of competitors, successfully drawing in travelers who may have otherwise headed the Far East.<sup>58</sup>

To address these and other problems, PATA took shape in January 1952 as ninety-one delegates from thirteen nations and territories met in Honolulu. Thurston's Hawaii Visitors Board sponsored the event. The first conference, though poorly attended and a bit erratic in structure, highlighted two aspects of PATA that would set it apart from other tourism associations. First, non-government delegations dominated the conference. Though government officials would come to play a larger part in PATA in later years, from its start it was airline and cruise line executives, hotel managers, travel agents, tour operators, and advertising firms that held the positions of power. This self-proclaimed "quasi-government" status offered a stark contrast to travel organizations such as the IUOTO, the Inter-American Travel Congress, the European Travel Commission, and the Caribbean Travel Association, all of which developed a state-centric infrastructure.

Second, PATA consistently and almost exclusively looked to its east – namely the United States – for business. Thurston and Mullahey, along with other PATA officials, recognized that the U.S. – particularly the West Coast of the United States – would be the primary supplier of tourists to the Far East and Pacific regions and thus required the bulk of PATA's attention. Underscoring this fact, California Governor Earl Warren delivered the keynote address at the first PATA conference. Likewise, Honolulu, the original location of PATA's headquarters and the site for the first two conferences, seemed appropriate since it was located as a midpoint between the U.S. and the countries of the Far East and Pacific. But even Hawaii was too distant from the American market and in

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<sup>58</sup> "PATA's Phenomenal Growth – Nine Conferences in Review," *Pacific Travel News*, January 1961.

1953 PATA moved its offices to a permanent location in San Francisco.<sup>59</sup> The importance of the American market to the future of PATA might also explain why officials issued invitations to Taiwan and Hong Kong, but not to the PRC. While PRC officials showed little interest in joining any international travel organizations, the IUOTO, for example, struggled with the question of PRC/Taiwan membership and delayed a decision until 1958. PATA's immediate embrace of Taiwan and Hong Kong – along with a sizeable delegation of American airline, shipping, and touring companies – signaled that PATA could eventually become an effective vehicle of U.S. foreign policy in the Far East.

The objectives of PATA in its early days, however, were largely disconnected from U.S. Cold War strategy. This was due in part to the sense of indifference emanating from Washington. In the early 1950s, the leading travel organizations were the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) and the IUOTO, both of which catered toward North American, European, and Caribbean tourism. To the extent that Washington officials were involved in tourism promotion, they worked within these select forums. For the first half of the 1950s, on the other hand, official U.S. involvement in PATA was strikingly limited. As late as February 1956 Secretary of State Dulles suggested that Japan, not the U.S., should take the leading role both in PATA and in the general campaign to draw tourists to the Far East.<sup>60</sup> Underscoring this, through the first half of the 1950s the U.S. delegation to PATA held the lowly “observer” status and it paid a mere \$500 in annual dues to the association. Department of Commerce officials, believing that the U.S. – out

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<sup>59</sup> Gee and Lurie, *The Story of the Pacific Asia Travel Association*, 29.

<sup>60</sup> Dulles, “Instructions to U.S. Representatives to the Annual Meeting of the Pacific Area Travel Association, February 13-17, 1956,” 31 January 1956, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA.

of all PATA members – had “the least to gain” from a boom in transpacific tourism, hesitated to increase support.<sup>61</sup>

As suggested by the response coming from Washington, PATA’s early efforts were directed mainly at convincing governments and members of the tourism industry to take a more active interest in Far East and Pacific tourism and overhaul debilitating travel procedures. PATA delegates understood that European tourism – due largely to the efforts of the European Travel Commission – was far simpler, cheaper, and more comfortable than the Asian variety. If the Far East and Pacific governments wanted any chance at pulling tourists away from Europe, they would have to reform their nations’ tourist policies and increase official support for the tourism industry. Signaling the changes that would be necessary, PATA delegates at the inaugural conference passed a resolution pledging to eliminate entry and exit visas and taxes, standardize the amounts of alcohol and perfume travelers could carry in and out of a country, and ease customs procedures.<sup>62</sup>

These efforts to overhaul the region’s tourist policies had some early successes. Soon after the 1952 conference the Japanese and Philippines governments agreed to liberalize their entry and exit procedures, eliminating visa fees and extending visa validity to sixty days. In Indonesia – a country known for its notoriously frustrating red tape – government officials promised, before the end of 1953, to ease visa requirements, foreign exchange controls, and customs procedures.<sup>63</sup> But on the whole, government

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<sup>61</sup> McClellan to Williams, “PATA’s Request for U.S. Government Contribution,” 10 April 1957, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 4, NARA.

<sup>62</sup> Richard F. MacMillan, “Pacific Tourism Plans,” *New York Times*, 27 January 1952.

<sup>63</sup> “Tourist Documents and Regulations,” *New York Times*, 22 February 1953; “Indonesia Plans Reforms,” *New York Times*, 28 November 1953; “Jakarta Red Tape Curbing Tourists,” *New York Times*, 13 December 1953.

intransigence was the defining characteristic of the era. True facilitation of recreational tourism was contingent on more government cooperation, which was in short supply in PATA's early days.

#### IV

Despite the fact that Washington officials consciously minimized their support for transpacific recreational tourism, the lack of a thriving industry in the Far East posed foreign relations problems. By 1953, following the death of Stalin and the end of the Korean War, the Cold War developed more as a protracted, ideological and cultural struggle. With both the United States and the Soviet Union possessing substantial arsenals of atomic and hydrogen bombs, a traditional military war became dangerous to the point of obsolescence. The swelling tide of nationalism in the Third World, moreover, gave U.S. officials added incentive to bolster the cultural and ideological dimensions of containment. Recreational tourists were a part of this cultural offensive. Speaking on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase, Eisenhower urged the traveler – “whether bearing a commission from his Government or traveling by himself for pleasure or for business” – to carry himself as “a representative of the United States of America” and to portray the United States as “a peace-loving nation, living in the fear of God, but in the fear of God only.”<sup>64</sup> By 1957 Eisenhower's State Department formalized this entreaty, placing an official note on decorum in each U.S. passport:

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<sup>64</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Address in New Orleans at the Ceremony Marking the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase,” 7 October 1953, from <http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org>, accessed 4 December 2009.



As you travel abroad, the respect you show for foreign laws and customs, your courteous regard for other ways of life, and your speech and manner help to mold the reputation of our country. Thus, you represent us all in bringing assurance to the people you meet that the United States is a friendly nation and one dedicated to the search for world peace and to the promotion of the well-being and security of the community of nations.<sup>65</sup>

The various efforts to bring the mass tourist directly into Washington's foreign policy establishment was quite effective in areas like Western Europe, the Caribbean, Canada, and Mexico, all of which welcomed hundreds of thousands of American tourists a year. In regard to Hong Kong and Taiwan, which, in 1952, welcomed around 35,000 and 5,000 tourists, respectively, this indirect approach to cultural diplomacy was not entirely appropriate.<sup>66</sup>

The meagerness of Taiwan and Hong Kong's recreational tourism industries did not, however, preclude U.S. officials from establishing cultural connections with "Free China." The Eisenhower administration, more so than any of his predecessors, elevated Washington's commitment to government-sponsored cultural exchange, psychological warfare, and the dissemination of propaganda. The establishment of the United States Information Agency (USIA), which oversaw literature exchanges, the construction of American-themed exhibitions, and broadcasts of American radio shows throughout the world, epitomized this approach. Eisenhower's prized People-to-People program – though it was officially detached from Washington – also maintained very close relations

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<sup>65</sup> Passport letter from Eisenhower to "Fellow Citizens," 12 July 1957, Records as President, White House Central Files, 1953-61, Permanent File, Box 6, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, Kansas (hereafter DDE).

<sup>66</sup> These figures are estimates based on "Visitor Totals Over a Decade of Growth," *Pacific Travel News*, November 1962.

with the State Department and advanced U.S. foreign policy objectives through cultural exchange. These new tools of cultural diplomacy gave the Eisenhower administration the ability to go on the “offensive” in its foreign policy in a way that was not entirely feasible with military, political, or economic endeavors. Less a means of diluting the tensions of the Cold War and more a means of combating communism with a new style of warfare, Eisenhower’s cultural diplomacy was uniquely flexible and allowed for a wide range of new actors to participate in U.S. foreign relations.<sup>67</sup> As part of this effort, in the early 1950s U.S. officials worked hard to engage Taiwan and Hong Kong – the two most prominent remaining outposts of “Free China” from the perspective of Washington and American travelers – in cultural diplomacy. In this way, despite the end of the Fulbright Program and other private exchanges with China in 1949-50, Washington continued its commitment to cultural diplomacy with the Nationalist government and the region as a whole.

To some extent, the Eisenhower administration needed to develop from scratch its cultural exchange program in Taiwan and Hong Kong. The successful cultural programs that had existed in China during World War II and in the immediate postwar years – namely the Exchange of Technical and Cultural Leaders Program and the Fulbright Program – had both ceased and no comparable programs had taken their place.<sup>68</sup> Instead, U.S. contacts in the region were mostly military or diplomatic in nature. A 1953 USIA-sponsored survey of American presence in Taiwan revealed that the only large-scale

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<sup>67</sup> Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower’s Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 46-47, 242.

<sup>68</sup> There was, however, a significant history of government-sponsored upon which the Eisenhower administration built. The best coverage of this history is Frank Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981). For the most in depth discussion of the successful Sino-American exchanges, including the Fulbright Program, the Exchange of Technical and Cultural Leaders Program, and other privately-sponsored exchanges, see Fairbank, *America’s Cultural Experiment*.

exchange programs on the island were under the auspices of FOA and MAAG.<sup>69</sup> Within five years of the Nationalist regime establishing itself in Taiwan, 570 American and Chinese scientists and technicians participated in FOA exchanges. Under MAAG sponsorship, over 1,000 Chinese in the armed forces had come to the United States for training.<sup>70</sup> These U.S. exchange and aid programs, as Neil Jacoby notes, all worked toward maintaining “a huge military establishment.”<sup>71</sup>

The overwhelming presence of military and political exchanges was not surprising. With the Chinese Communist victory in the civil war, the explosion of the first Soviet atomic weapon, and the outbreak of the Korean War, U.S. policy toward the PRC became noticeably more aggressive and militant. Hong Kong and Taiwan, once seen as peripheral to U.S. strategic interests, suddenly became central to Washington’s efforts to ostracize and smother the PRC. Taiwan became a military and political counterpoint to the PRC and Jiang, despite his obvious failings, became a crucial Cold War ally. Hong Kong, similarly, became a passageway for spies, propaganda, and potential military force, and its British associations meant that the colony figured prominently in discussions over NATO and other Cold War military alliances.

As important as these developments were to the maintenance of “Free China,” many U.S. officials recognized that the near absence of cultural programs in Hong Kong and Taiwan posed serious problems. Successful Asian containment required a degree of “soft power” – specifically ideological and cultural initiatives – to complement political,

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<sup>69</sup> Rankin to State Department, “Survey of Exchange of Persons Activities in Formosa,” 4 November 1953, CDF511.933, General Records of the Department of State, Box 2533, NARA.

<sup>70</sup> Rankin to State Department, “Semi-Annual Report on the International Educational Exchange Program,” 2 February 1954, Box 316, JWFP.

<sup>71</sup> Neil H. Jacoby, *U.S. Aid to Taiwan: A Study of Foreign Aid, Self-Help, and Development* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), 31.

military, and economic tactics.<sup>72</sup> Ambassador to Taiwan Karl Rankin – himself a hardliner and loyal supporter of the Nationalist regime – provided one of the most prominent voices on this issue. While he acknowledged that “technical and military assistance is badly needed in this country [Taiwan],” the “seeming lack of interest” on the part of the U.S. government in establishing cultural and educational exchange programs was concerning.<sup>73</sup>

To rectify this gap in Sino-American relations, Rankin urged that “all the present resources of the State Department be used in those neglected fields [information media and the humanities] and that every possible effort be made...to strengthen the program.”<sup>74</sup> The segments of Chinese who were not impressed by “how many tanks we give to the Republic of China or how much fertilizer we bring into the country,” Rankin reasoned, might instead be brought to the American side through softer, culturally-based exchanges.<sup>75</sup> “[I]ntellectual Chinese,” who would benefit greatly from cultural exchange, were the future political, educational, and cultural leaders of “Free China.” When Taiwan’s military leaders had achieved their objective of retaking the mainland, Rankin anticipated it would be these civilians who would oversee the “new democratic society” in China.<sup>76</sup> In Hong Kong, as well, U.S. officials recognized that the arrival of American cultural delegates could offset the substantial cultural and ideological offensive launched

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<sup>72</sup> For a detailed examination of the concept of “soft power,” see Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990); and Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

<sup>73</sup> Rankin to State Department, “Survey of Exchange of Persons Activities in Formosa,” 4 November 1953, CDF511.933, General Records of the Department of State, Box 2533, NARA.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*; “Semi-Annual Report on the International Educational Exchange Program,” American Embassy Taipei to State Department, 2 February 1954, Box 316, JWFP.

<sup>75</sup> Rankin to State Department, “Educational Exchange: Semiannual Report,” 18 October 1956, CDF511.933, General Records of the Department of State, Box 2238, NARA.

<sup>76</sup> “Semi-Annual Report on the International Educational Exchange Program,” American Embassy Taipei to State Department, 2 February 1954, Box 316, JWFP.

by the PRC government. In the early 1950s especially, when it proved difficult, for logistical reasons, to bring PRC refugees from Hong Kong to the United States in the form of cultural exchange, American cultural ambassadors in the British colony could be extremely effective.<sup>77</sup>

## V

To meet these objectives, the Eisenhower administration developed a series of programs – under the broad umbrella of International Educational Exchange – aimed at promoting intercultural understanding while boosting the prestige of the United States and its overseas allies. Between 1949 and 1963, 21,000 Americans went overseas as part of these exchanges.<sup>78</sup> The bulk of these Americans traveled as Fulbright scholars, but others traveled under the Lecturer and Research Scholar Program, the Teacher Program, the Foreign Specialist Program, and the Foreign Leader Program. In Taiwan, however, the Fulbright Program developed more slowly. It was not for lack of trying. Ambassador Rankin proposed reinitiating the program as early as 1953 and by the end of 1954 U.S. and Nationalist officials had approved the exchange. Washington officials looked forward to a partnership with the Nationalist government, expecting that a revived Fulbright program on the island would have a “healthy psychological effect” and would demonstrate “long-range American interest in Free China.”<sup>79</sup> Political and logistical problems, however, caused delays and it was not until 1957 that American and Chinese students began the two-way exchanges.

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<sup>77</sup> Lin Ye, “In China’s Shadow: The United States Foreign Policy Toward Hong Kong, 1945-1972,” PhD diss. (University of New Mexico, 2000), 156.

<sup>78</sup> Battle to Kennedy, “American Specialists,” May 1963, Box 139, JWFP.

<sup>79</sup> American Embassy Taipei to State Department, “Reactivation of Fulbright Foundation in China,” 15 May 1953, General Records of the Department of State, CDF 511.933, Box 2533, NARA.

Instead, two of the most prominent and unique exchanges in Taiwan and Hong Kong were the Cultural Presentations and the American Specialists Programs. Both of these programs supplied grants to private individuals and groups for short visits overseas.<sup>80</sup> Over the course of a few weeks to several months, the tours usually took participants to a number of locales in a particular region; it was not unusual to cover five or more countries in one tour. Having reached their destination, the participants – ranging from symphony orchestras to track and field coaches to legal experts – spent their days traveling, offering demonstrations and performances, meeting with Chinese officials, and conversing with local audiences.

The Cultural Presentations Program – also known as the President’s Special International Program – began haphazardly, as Eisenhower requested a congressional appropriation of \$5 million for the President’s “emergency fund” in order to expand U.S. cultural activities. Specifically, Eisenhower hoped both to counteract the increased attention the Soviets were giving to cultural and educational exchange and to rectify the perception that American society was superficial and devoid of culture.<sup>81</sup> The funds, which Congress approved in August 1954, went primarily toward the costs of participating in international trade fairs and sponsoring cultural delegations’ tours overseas.<sup>82</sup>

For the first two years of the program, officials worked on an ad hoc basis, sending delegates and exhibitions where they were needed at the time but without

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<sup>80</sup> During the first year of the Cultural Presentations Program, organizers discussed the possibility of using U.S. funds for foreign artists’ tours of the United States. By August 1955, however, officials decided that government funds were not necessary to attract foreign artists, in part because American cultural attaches encouraged artists to tour under private auspices. Operations Coordinating Board, Progress Report of the Activities of the OCB Cultural Presentation Committee, 3 August 1955, *DDRS*.

<sup>81</sup> Humphrey, “International Exchange and Trade Fair Participation Act of 1956,” 16 March 1956, 84<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, Report #1664.

<sup>82</sup> Eisenhower to President of Senate, 27 July 1954, Box 93, JWFP.

establishing any long-term goals or strategy. In August 1956, through the International Cultural Exchange and Trade Fair Participation Act, the program became permanent and it developed a more efficient infrastructure. Receiving an annual allotment of around \$2.5 million, the Cultural Presentations Program fell under the authority of the State Department, with Theodore Streibert of USIA acting as coordinator. In addition, an advisory panel – made up of representatives selected by the American National Theater and Academy (ANTA) and the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) – provided suggestions and guidance to program officials.<sup>83</sup>

The American Specialists Program had emerged a few years earlier, as part of the 1948 Smith-Mundt Act, which laid much of the groundwork for U.S. cultural diplomacy and funded many of the exchanges of the 1950s and 1960s. Most of the other Smith-Mundt programs (the Fulbright Program most notable among these) offered long-term, two-way exchanges between the United States, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.<sup>84</sup> The American Specialists Program, on the other hand, offered a way for overseas posts to recruit “outstanding and prominent persons” for short-term, specific tasks. USIS staff, in conjunction with senior Embassy officers, made final selections of participants and supervised the program.<sup>85</sup>

Not surprisingly, the two programs had a good deal of overlap. Any distinctions were largely a matter of semantics. Participants in the Cultural Presentations Program – mostly dance troupes, choirs, musicians, and artists – tended to be part of large delegations and they dedicated the bulk of their tours to performance. American

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<sup>83</sup> State Department to all diplomatic and consular posts, “President’s Special International Program,” 9 July 1959, Box 47, JWFP.

<sup>84</sup> Though the Fulbright Program’s funding came primarily from wartime surplus sales, Smith-Mundt funds often acted as a supplement. Fairbank, *America’s Cultural Experiment*, 160.

<sup>85</sup> Donovan to Boerner, “Report on the American Specialist Program,” 9 February 1962, Box 138, JWFP.

Specialists, on the other hand, often traveled alone and their tours centered on instruction and exhibition.<sup>86</sup> In both programs, selection of participants usually derived from suggestions from overseas posts, universities, private organizations, or even by individuals interested in touring abroad. Delegates in both programs, moreover, traditionally filled a specific need for their host country.

This utilitarian dimension of the visit was often readily apparent. David Dallin, for example, visited Taiwan at the request of Taipei's Government Information Office to give academic lectures on Soviet affairs and contemporary Sino-Soviet relations. Robert Storey worked intimately with Taiwan's legal experts to help develop an Academy of American Law. At other times, however, participants pursued a far more general, less immediate, cultural objective. Jay Archer, who invented the game of "biddy basketball" for shorter and younger athletes, took his game on the road and successfully introduced the sport to youngsters in Taiwan. The Denver Jazz Band's 1965 tour of Hong Kong was, according to U.S. officials, "a very successful one," namely because the exchange facilitated American contacts with Chinese youth. Similarly, the visits of "Twilight Zone" creator Rod Serling and actor Kirk Douglas to Hong Kong were notable because of the significant impact the men had on Chinese college students.<sup>87</sup>

In this sense, the Cultural Presentations and American Specialists Programs operated as a continuation of the World War II-era Exchange of Technical and Cultural

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<sup>86</sup> The distinction between the two programs was never well-defined and there was consistently disagreement and confusion over which program had jurisdiction over a particular individual. For example, see "The Nature of the American Specialists Program," Box 138, JWFP.

<sup>87</sup> "Educational Exchange: U.S. Specialists Program – Visit of Dr. David Dallin," 7 January 1957, CDF.511933, Box 2238, NARA; "Educational Exchange: American Specialists Program Dr. Robert G. Storey," 20 March 1957, CDF511.933, Box 2238, NARA; "Educational Exchange: U.S. Specialists Program: Follow-up Report on Mr. Jay Archer's Program on Taiwan," 11 February 1958, CDF511.933, Box 2238, NARA; "Educational and Cultural Exchange: Annual Report on the Educational and Cultural Exchange Program," 27 September 1965, Box 317, JWFP.



Leaders Program, which sent engineers, biologists, weapons experts, and other specialists to the Republic of China to strengthen China's economy, infrastructure, and fighting capacity. But unlike the earlier program, these postwar exchange programs favored specialists in the fields of education, literature, athletics, journalism, and art. Thus while the programs intended to bolster the strength and prestige of the governments of Taiwan and Hong Kong – toward the ultimate objective of winning the Cold War – they did so with an eye toward cultural development.

## VI

The two programs remained remarkably small. The American Specialists Program sent a total of some 2,500 specialists abroad in its first fifteen years. The Cultural Presentations Program, comprising larger delegations, showcased only about a dozen tours a year. Taiwan and Hong Kong – which were usually on the same tour circuit for both programs – averaged a total of about six cultural delegations a year.<sup>88</sup> U.S. officials, however, were not incredibly concerned about the programs' small numbers. In fact, because embassy and consulate officials oversaw every detail of the tours and exhausted significant resources to ensure their success, organizers preferred the minimalist approach. When three American Specialists were in Taiwan at the same time in 1959, for instance, local U.S. officials complained that their staff was stretched too thin.<sup>89</sup> More substantively, officials correctly assumed that these tours – if placed in the right hands

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<sup>88</sup> Numbers based on the annual reports of the Cultural Presentations Program in Boxes 49 and 93, JWFP; Survey of Educational Activities, Part VII – Formosa," 1957, Box 316, JWFP; Reports on the American Specialists Category of Educational and Cultural Exchange, Box 138., JWFP; "American Specialists Program – Its First Fifteen Years," 1965, Box 138, JWFP.

<sup>89</sup> American Embassy Taipei to State Department, "Educational Exchange: Annual Report for Fiscal Year 1959," 1 August 1959, Box 316, JWFP.

and directed toward the right audience – could have a disproportionately significant impact.

This meant, first and foremost, that the tours would target the hearts and minds of “friendly” audiences everywhere. This inclusive rhetoric was partly due to the Eisenhower administration’s conscious effort both to avoid the appearance of “propaganda” and ease anxieties of those in the Free World who feared the catastrophic implications of U.S.-USSR-PRC war. In contrast to Truman’s “Campaign of Truth,” which critics saw as too explicitly anticommunist, Eisenhower’s program set out to fight the Cold War by more subtle means. To this end, Eisenhower’s various information programs fell back on positive themes of cultural understanding and avoided provocative references to the Soviet Union, nuclear war, or East-West conflict.<sup>90</sup> Despite this distinct, toned-down style, Eisenhower’s cultural programs sought to destabilize the communist world. Organizers of the Cultural Presentations Program, in fact, designed the tours to “refute communist propaganda by demonstrating clearly the United States’ dedication to peace, human well-being and spiritual values.”<sup>91</sup>

In Asia, in particular, the anticommunist dimension of American cultural exchange was quite apparent. Exemplifying this, the programs in Taiwan and Hong Kong worked to weaken the PRC in a subtle, but persistent, manner. By establishing Taiwan and Hong Kong as cultural outposts of China, U.S. officials were not only ensuring mutual sympathy and understanding between the U.S. and “Free China”; they were, in a sense, further undermining the very legitimacy of the PRC. As almost every memorandum on the programs made clear, moreover, these exchanges would work to

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<sup>90</sup> Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 99-100.

<sup>91</sup> Operations Coordinating Board, “General Policy and Operating Guidance for the President’s Emergency Fund for Participation in International Affairs – Fiscal Year 1956,” 29 June 1955, *DDRS*.

boost the prestige of the United States, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, by “countering communist claims,” “projecting the superiority of the Free World,” and “refuting the widespread misconception...that the United States is materialistic and has no significant cultural interests or achievements.”<sup>92</sup> Ambassador Rankin, a strong supporter of the program, noted that the increased understanding of American ideals was actually an “indirect aim” of the cultural exchanges; the “immediate practical purpose” of the cultural program was “to promote...the well-being of the population at large as a means of strengthening the free world and thereby supporting our basic foreign policy.” From the start, Taiwan’s cultural exchange program was a “vital part of the total campaign to support Free China in its anti-Communist battle.”<sup>93</sup> Hong Kong’s cultural exchange program, as it became larger in the 1960s, took on a greater role as a bulwark against the PRC. Beyond reorienting Hong Kong “toward the west,” the exchanges “help[ed] preserve Hong Kong’s continued existence as a free society on the rim of Communist China.”<sup>94</sup>

Making this dimension of the program even clearer was the absence of any comparable exchanges with the PRC.<sup>95</sup> In the mid-1950s, for example, Robert Breen

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<sup>92</sup> For examples, see “Educational Exchange: Annual Report for Fiscal Year 1958,” American Embassy Taipei to State Department, 29 July 1958, General Records of the Department of State, CDF 511.933, Box 2238, NARA; American Embassy Taipei to State Department, “Educational Exchange: China: Proposed Program for Fiscal Year 1961,” 20 May 1959, General Records of the Department of State, CDF 511.933, Box 2238, NARA; American Embassy Taipei to State Department, “Educational Exchange: Estimated Budget, Fiscal Year 1958,” 25 June 1956, General Records of the Department of State, CDF511.933, Box 2238, NARA; Operations Coordinating Board, “General Policy and Operating Guidance for the President’s Special International Program,” 8 February 1957, *DDRS*.

<sup>93</sup> Rankin, *China Assignment*, 278; Rankin to State Department, “Semi-Annual Report on the International Educational Exchange Program,” 2 February 1954, Box 316, JWFP.

<sup>94</sup> American Consulate General Hong Kong to State Department, “Educational and Cultural Exchange,” 7 August 1968, Box 317, JWFP.

<sup>95</sup> The omission of an official, cultural educational program with the PRC is worth noting, considering that the United States and the Soviet Union, in January 1958, signed such an agreement, which brought about numerous educational, scientific, athletic, and touristic exchanges. The renewed Soviet-American cultural relationship stemmed from the 1955 Geneva Conference at which the American and Soviet delegates made

proposed taking his production of *Porgy and Bess* on tour to the PRC. In exchange for Breen's production visiting the PRC, the Beijing Opera – which had already partaken in several international exchanges – would make a tour of the United States. Breen's request was not entirely unexpected or inappropriate. Since 1954 the State Department had partially subsidized the play's international tour, which included stops throughout South America, the Middle East, and Europe. Under private auspices, and with hesitant approval from the State Department, Breen also took his production to the Soviet Union and other nations behind the Iron Curtain. When he proposed a visit to the PRC, therefore, Breen likely expected a degree of support.<sup>96</sup>

Breen's proposal did, in fact, receive initial interest from some U.S. and PRC policymakers. Throughout summer 1955, as U.S., French, British, and Soviet officials were embedded in diplomatic talks in Geneva, Breen traveled through Europe, engaging in an intense campaign of private diplomacy. In Paris he met with Georges Soria, a French contact who had successfully negotiated Franco-Soviet cultural exchanges in the past. Soria helped Breen in his efforts to bring *Porgy and Bess* to Moscow and he was the first to suggest that a Sino-American exchange was a possibility. In Rome, armed with Soria's optimism, Breen took his proposal to USIA officials. Though he was not able to meet directly with Director Theodore Streibert, Breen later insisted that the USIA chief was quite interested in the proposal. Breen was more successful in his discussions with Chinese officials. In Brussels Breen met with Chang Chi-hsiang, the PRC vice-Minister

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certain commitments in the field of cultural exchange. See Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War*; Glenn Wesley Leppert, "Dwight D. Eisenhower and People-to-People as an Experiment in Personal Diplomacy: A Missing Element for Understanding Eisenhower's Second Term as President," PhD diss. (Kansas State University, 2003), 1.

<sup>96</sup> John Harper Taylor offers a lively and detailed account of this exchange in "Ambassadors of the Arts: An Analysis of the Eisenhower Administration's Incorporation of 'Porgy and Bess' Into its Cold War Foreign Policy," PhD diss., (Ohio State University, 1994).

of Culture, and the two worked out a joint agreement on a cultural exchange. The July 1955 agreement committed Breen to a ten-week, eight-city tour of *Porgy and Bess* that would begin in November.<sup>97</sup> The proposed tour, however, soon fell apart. In August Assistant Secretary of State Walter Robertson resorted to the standard Washington line, noting that while the State Department “understands the cultural motivation behind your effort,” the tour could not proceed.<sup>98</sup>

The destination of tours was not the only element over which U.S. officials exerted control. Program organizers also placed significant emphasis on selecting the right kinds of audiences. The tours, which offered performances and exhibitions, had the potential to reach huge crowds. During their twelve days in Taiwan, violinist Sylvia Rosenberg and pianist Seymour Bernstein came in contact with 10,000 people at clinics, concerts, and receptions. The Symphony of the Air played to a packed theater of over 7,000 in Taipei. Olympic decathlon champion Robert Mathias, over the course of three clinics in Taiwan, attracted an audience of 35,000. The United States AAU track and field team held a meet in Hong Kong for over 2,500 aspiring athletes. Audiences for the 1961 Joey Adams Variety Show tour, which offered eighty-one shows in eleven countries throughout the Far East, numbered 250,000 excluding the hundreds of thousands that listened and watched the performances on radio or television.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 123, 137-40; Thomas F. Brady, “U.S.-Peiping Trade of Shows Proposed,” *New York Times*, 30 July 1955.

<sup>98</sup> Robertson to Breen, 12 August 1955, CDF511.933, General Records of the Department of State, Box 2237, NARA.

<sup>99</sup> American Embassy Taipei to State Department, “Educational and Cultural Exchange: Annual Report,” 25 February 1963, Box 316, JWFP; American Embassy Taipei to State Department, “Education Exchange: U.S. Specialist: Robert Mathias in Taiwan, December 4-9, 1955,” 20 February 1956, General Records of the Department of State, CDF511.933, Box 2237, NARA; “Track and Field Tour to Far East, July 26-September 3, 1965,” Box 47, JWFP; Bauer to Boerner, “An Objective Appraisal of the Joey Adams Tour,” 3 April 1962, Box 53, JWFP.

Despite this ability to reach large audiences quite easily, the tours were, on the whole, a drain on the budget. Without a doubt, the programs were quite inexpensive for their accomplishments. Organizers boasted that the Joey Adams tour, which had entertained 250,000 Asians at a total cost of around \$250,000, had cost the State Department a mere \$1 for every spectator.<sup>100</sup> But even with relatively low costs, the performances often produced deficits since they did not bring in a great deal of revenue. The bulk of the \$2.5 million yearly budget for the Cultural Presentations Program went toward underwriting the deficits that the performances incurred.<sup>101</sup> With revenue a consistent problem, organizers struggled to balance the practical need for income with the broader objectives of the programs. U.S. officials in Hong Kong, for example, complained that they were often unable to reach their “preferred target group” because of the prohibitive cost of tickets. The wealthier, more cosmopolitan individuals that chose to attend performances in Hong Kong were, moreover, usually the ones that already maintained positive impressions of the United States and thus did not require “in-person visits from top-ranking artists.”<sup>102</sup>

Recognizing that budget shortfalls were inevitable, tour organizers shifted the focus of the program away from revenue and toward “the importance of the target.” Sometimes this required appealing to a “more sophisticated segment of foreign audiences.” Organizers wanted the tours to “correct misconceptions” about American culture and society; to do this it was necessary to reach out to “cultural leaders, critics,

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<sup>100</sup> Bauer to Boerner, “An Objective Appraisal of the Joey Adams Tour,” 3 April 1962, Box 53, JWFP.

<sup>101</sup> Herter to all diplomatic and consular posts, “Cultural Presentations: President’s Program: Program Guide,” 9 July 1959, Box 47, JWFP; Operations Coordinating Board, “Progress Report on the Activities of the OCB Cultural Presentation Committee,” 22 May 1957, *DDRS*.

<sup>102</sup> American Consul General Hong Kong to State Department, “Educational and Cultural Exchange,” 16 August 1967, Box 317, JWFP.

students, and individuals capable of shaping public opinion.”<sup>103</sup> But more frequently organizers looked beyond urban centers and booked tours for more provincial areas. These poorer regions, previously left off tour itineraries due to lack of revenue potential, made their way into performance circuits. If the goal of the program was to win hearts and minds, the State Department could hardly afford to ignore large segments of the population that might not be able to pay the cost of admission. This approach applied, as well, to Chinese exchanges in the United States. One memorandum encouraged sending Chinese delegates to “areas of our country [the United States] which do not normally have contact with persons from China...[and] where the local newspapers carry little news of international significance.”<sup>104</sup> Such priorities meant the program was almost always in the red. For example, the Symphony of the Air’s 1955 Asian tour – which traveled to seven cities in the Far East – resulted in a \$200,000 deficit. The locales that produced the greatest costs and least revenues for this particular tour – Taiwan and Hong Kong were high on the list – were, nonetheless, “psychologically most important.”<sup>105</sup>

As much as they worried about what sort of audiences would experience the American tours, U.S. officials were concerned with the participants themselves.<sup>106</sup> Program creators anticipated that participants, in the hours between performances or exhibitions, would practice personal diplomacy, engaging locals in discussions on U.S. politics and values or simply winning friends through warm banter and encouragement.

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<sup>103</sup> State Department to all diplomatic and consular posts, “President’s Special International Program,” 9 July 1959, Box 47, JWFP; “The Nature of the American Specialists Program,” 1962, Box 138, JWFP.

<sup>104</sup> American Embassy Taipei to State Department, “Educational Exchange: Educational Budget, Fiscal Year 1958,” 25 June 1956, General Records of the Department of State, CDF511.933, Box 2238, NARA.

<sup>105</sup> “President’s Special International Program Fourth Semi-Annual Report,” 1958, Box 93, JWFP; Robert G. Schnitzer to International Educational Exchange Service, 14 February 1955, Box 48, JWFP.

<sup>106</sup> State Department to all consular posts, “Cultural Presentations: President’s Program: Program Guide,” 9 July 1959, Box 47, JWFP; American Embassy Taipei to State Department, “Education Exchange: Annual Report for Fiscal Year 1959,” 1 August 1959, Box 316, JWFP.

Organizers of the exchange programs encouraged this sort of purposeful dialogue; officials in the American Specialists Program went as far as dividing up potential participants into three categories – “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” – in order to ensure that the tours sufficiently evinced American ideals.<sup>107</sup> Each participant served as a “living refutation of the lies and innuendos which circulate so persistently among the populace of many foreign lands.”<sup>108</sup> To this end, officials targeted participants who they believed, after returning home, would present a “sympathetic but fair-minded appraisal,” thus boosting popular support for U.S. China policy. “Criterion number one” for all cultural delegates going to Taiwan and Hong Kong was their “qualifications as a prestige-building representative of his country.”<sup>109</sup>

This extra attention was especially significant in regard to travelers to Taiwan. In the early 1950s Washington officials struggled to establish the Republic of China as a legitimate, friendly, and stable ally. Positive reports coming from American travelers advanced this objective, but Washington officials worried that critical reports, coming from individuals with first-hand knowledge of the region, could have disastrous consequences. The case of C. Martin Wilbur – discussed above – was emblematic of the critical mindset of many potential travelers to Taiwan and unless those travelers underwent a similar “conversion” process, U.S. and Nationalist officials preferred them to stay away. The 1952 visit of Supreme Court Justice William Douglas, for example, aroused attention and concern within Washington and Taipei. As both a vocal opponent of Washington’s China policy and an influential, well-published travel writer, U.S. and

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<sup>107</sup> “The Nature of the American Specialists Program,” no date, Box 138, JWFP.

<sup>108</sup> “Report on the American Specialist Category of the International Educational Exchange Program, Fiscal Year 1958,” 5 September 1958, Box 139, JWFP.

<sup>109</sup> American Embassy Taipei to State Department, “Educational Exchange: Estimated Budget, Fiscal Year, 1958,” 25 June 1956, General Records of the Department of State, CDF511.933, Box 2238, NARA.



Nationalist officials saw Douglas's visit as potential liability. Douglas had aggravated members of Congress a year earlier, after returning from a trip along the Russia-China border, when he voiced his support for recognition of the PRC.<sup>110</sup> As would be expected, Nationalist officials approached the visit with "a degree of coolness." Underscoring this tentativeness, President Jiang, who normally made himself available for VIP visits, remained in the southern part of the country for the duration of Douglas's trip. The visit, however, proceeded in a "friendly atmosphere" and, according to Taiwan's *China News*, Douglas departed the nation "a convert."<sup>111</sup>

The cases of Wilbur and Douglas demonstrated the tentative means by which Washington officials incorporated travel into their Cold War policy. Aware of the impact that returning travelers could have on public opinion and policy, policymakers worked hard to ensure that such visits would comprise only positive experiences. This was far easier to accomplish when Washington officials had some say in who would travel, what audiences they would encounter, and what message they would deliver. Thus, while the International Educational Exchange Program was not a foolproof means of advancing U.S. foreign policy objectives in the region, it was far less risky than relying on private tourists, traveling outside the auspices of the U.S. government.

This ability to control the outcomes of the exchange programs came across quite clearly as Washington officials tried to use the tours as a function of U.S. race relations.

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<sup>110</sup> AP, "Justice Douglas China Stand Irks Senators," *Washington Post*, 1 September 1951

<sup>111</sup> Several of the Nationalist officials with whom Douglas met insisted that Jiang wanted to meet the Justice, but that he was "unfortunately" unavailable. U.S. embassy officials, however, found this approach "not convincing." Chinese officials had learned of Douglas's visit weeks before his arrival; Jiang's absence likely had more to do with his concerns that Douglas would be critical of his administration. Rankin to State Department, "Visit to Taipei of Justice William O. Douglas," 16 December 1952, General Records of the Department of State, CDF033.1193, Box 173, NARA; Rankin to State Department, "Visit to Taipei of Justice William O. Douglas," 16 December 1952, General Records of the Department of State, CDF033.1193, Box 173, NARA.

As numerous diplomatic historians have demonstrated, foreign peoples paid close attention to domestic racial tensions in the United States. U.S. officials, including those involved in the exchange programs, were very much aware of these international observers and used civil rights legislation, protests, and developments to manipulate foreign attitudes toward the United States. This spotlight became all the more significant in the 1950s and 1960s as the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in a struggle over the loyalties of the Third World. While American race relations provided potential fodder for communist propaganda, they also gave U.S. officials an opportunity to showcase American tolerance.<sup>112</sup>

Just as important as combating potential Soviet or Chinese propaganda, U.S. officials wanted to assure Asian allies – Hong Kong and Taiwan high on the list – that Washington’s vision of the future transcended racial lines. As historian Matthew Jones argues, the Eisenhower administration saw the PRC as both a “red” and a “yellow” menace; in the context of rapidly changing world demographics, U.S. officials could not afford to quell the tide of Soviet communism if it meant sacrificing the loyalties of its Asian allies.<sup>113</sup> Indeed, Asian concerns about Western imperialism and discrimination often defined the Asian political landscape more so than fears of communist influence. Highlighting this point, renowned travel writer James Michener, traveling throughout Asia in the early 1950s, noted that the first questions locals posed to him were always in

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<sup>112</sup> For the most comprehensive work on this topic, see Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002); Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); and Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

<sup>113</sup> Matthew Jones, “A ‘Segregated’ Asia? Race, the Bandung Conference, and Pan-Asianist Fears in American Thought and Policy, 1954-55,” *Diplomatic History* Vol. 29 No. 5 (November 2005), 843-45.

regard to American race relations. He recounted a recurring conversation he had with multiple Asians in which he discussed lynchings, specific cases of African Americans on trial, and the racial inconsistencies of the American justice system.<sup>114</sup> For this reason, U.S. officials needed to tread carefully as they developed cultural exchanges in the region; these initiatives needed to highlight the values of equality and tolerance as much as they did anticommunism. As Peggy Von Eschen notes, it is no coincidence that the State Department's cultural exchange tours began almost simultaneously with the opening of the 1955 Bandung Conference for non-aligned and non-white nations.<sup>115</sup>

This race-consciousness was quite apparent in the U.S. tours to Taiwan and Hong Kong. Organizers of the American Specialists Program, fearful that the divisive issue of civil rights and race problems would undermine their objectives, included questions in post-tour debriefing interviews on the host people's awareness of American racial problems.<sup>116</sup> More directly, organizers symbolically chose artist Dong Kingman – the American-born son of Hong Kong immigrants – to be the first American to travel to Asia under the Cultural Presentations Program. In 1954 Kingman embarked on an Asian tour – including stops in Taiwan and Hong Kong – during which he offered art exhibitions and met with local artists. Throughout it all, U.S. officials made little effort to hide their anticipation that Kingman's Chinese ancestry would help evince sympathy toward and garner support from host audiences.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Michener, *Voice of Asia*, 233-35.

<sup>115</sup> Penny M. Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 7.

<sup>116</sup> Donovan to Boerner, "Report on the American Specialists Program: Suggested Topics for Debriefing," 9 February 1962, Box 138, JWFP.

<sup>117</sup> "Semi-Annual Report on Educational Exchange Activities," 16 December 1954, CDF511.933, Box 2533, NARA.

Kingman's tour was indeed an undisputed success, but from the perspective of tour organizers, merely displaying a racially diverse panel of artists was not enough. Like all participants, non-white delegates needed to represent "some generally accepted cultural theme in American life."<sup>118</sup> For most of these participants, this meant highlighting the progress in integration and tolerance that had taken place in the United States since the end of World War II. To this end, the State Department and the ANTA looked for participants who had a history of both patriotism and moderation. In the 1950s and early 1960s Dizzy Gillespie, Marian Anderson, and Alvin Ailey – all of whom met these qualifications – embarked on Cultural Presentation tours throughout Asia.

Marian Anderson was one of the most prominent American singers of the 1950s. Her landmark concert at the Metropolitan Opera launched to her celebrity status in the U.S. and abroad. Just as significantly, observers knew her as a political moderate who was reluctant to criticize publicly the treatment of African Americans.<sup>119</sup> Indeed, during her Far East tour a reporter questioned the singer on the ongoing crisis in Little Rock and Anderson offered an optimistic response. She even left open the possibility of performing for Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus, "if it could help at all."<sup>120</sup> Anderson was not, however, simply a passive messenger of Washington's foreign policy agenda; her visit to India, for example, stirred latent racial turmoil in that country and led one citizen to comment that Anderson's arrival shed light on those "who still suffer disabilities for no other reason than that they belong to a particular caste."<sup>121</sup> But State Department

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<sup>118</sup> State Department to all consular posts, "Cultural Presentations: President's Program: Program Guide," 9 July 1959, Box 47, JWFP.

<sup>119</sup> Allan Keiler, *Marian Anderson: A Singer's Journey* (New York: Scribner, 2000), 280-81.

<sup>120</sup> Gould, "T.V.: Singing Ambassador," *New York Times*, 31 December 1957; Keiler, *Marian Anderson*, 283-84.

<sup>121</sup> Quoted in Walter C. Daniel, "Musically Speaking," *Los Angeles Tribune*, 3 January 1958.

officials, as one African American newspaper noted, were likely not aware of these more nuanced ramifications of Anderson's visit and instead saw her as a "goodwill ambassador" with a positive racial message.<sup>122</sup>

Alvin Ailey, likewise, offered an appealing message on American race relations. Recognizing that most audience members were only aware of negative aspects of U.S. race relations, Ailey hoped to offer a new perspective through both speeches and dance. Officials saw Ailey as a potential asset to U.S. interests abroad and in 1962 his dance group became the first African American dance ensemble to go abroad under the Cultural Presentations Program, traveling to twenty-five Asian cities during a three-month tour.<sup>123</sup>

Even in private correspondence, U.S. officials recognized that non-white participants were potential assets to the program. A report on the American Specialists Program noted that the successful visit of track and field Olympian William Miller – which centered on preparing Taiwan's athletes for the coming Olympic games in Melbourne – was all the more significant because of Miller's views on race. Being "part Negro" and a "very well adjusted, broadminded member of his race," Miller was able to "counteract some of the exaggeratedly unfavorable reports on race relations in the United States."<sup>124</sup> Similarly, a report by Robert Schnitzer of the ANTA supporting a second Asian tour for Tom Two Arrows (Thomas Dorsey) – an Onondaga dancer and musician – noted that while Stella Dorsey, Tom's wife and manager, did not participate in her

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<sup>122</sup> Daniel, "Musically Speaking," *Los Angeles Tribune*, 3 January 1958.

<sup>123</sup> Naima Prevots, *Dance for Export: Cultural Diplomacy and the Cold War* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1998), 93-94.

<sup>124</sup> "Educational Exchange: U.S. Specialists: William P. Miller," American Embassy Taipei to State Department, 20 June 1956, CDF511.933, General Records of the Department of State, Box 2238, NARA; "Survey of Educational Activities International Educational Exchange Program, Part VII: Formosa," 1957, Box 316, JWFP.

husband's performance, she added interest to the project "as living proof that successful mixed marriages are possible."<sup>125</sup>

In a broader sense, the fact that the United States was committing itself to a cultural exchange program with Taiwan and Hong Kong was an implicit sign that Washington officials held Asian culture in high esteem. In light of legitimate concerns of Asian nations that the United States was carrying out a distinctly Western and "white" form of containment, the cultural exchange programs worked to solidify Asian cooperation. Promoting racial harmony and integration through the cultural exchange program, to some extent, provided the foundation on which the U.S. and Asian governments could build a working relationship.<sup>126</sup>

U.S. policymakers, nonetheless, saw race relations as a potential Achilles heel for the American image. There was great concern that African American participants in particular would taint international perceptions of American race relations by highlighting this aspect of American society in an inappropriate or unflattering manner. Tour organizers were thus cautious to avoid artists and athletes who might use the tour as a platform from which to criticize U.S. civil rights policy. This effort to quiet certain would-be spokesmen, moreover, was not a development that emerged only with the cultural exchange programs. Overseas travel and the civil rights movement both underwent booms in the post-World War II years and U.S. policymakers feared that critical activists, traveling privately around the world, would take their message to an international audience. To address this issue, the Truman and Eisenhower administrations seized passports from numerous notable African Americans who, in the course of their

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<sup>125</sup> Schnitzer to International Educational Exchange Service, "Thomas Dorsey to the Far East," 21 August 1956, Box 48, JWFP.

<sup>126</sup> Jones, "A 'Segregated' Asia?," 847.

international travels, regularly spoke out against American segregation, cruelty, and systemic racism. State Department officials harassed Josephine Baker, Paul Robeson, and William Patterson, among others, seizing their passports and limiting their ability to speak.<sup>127</sup>

The International Educational Exchange Program, which intentionally gave participants a platform from which to speak and engage locals, made this dilemma surrounding race relations even more explicit. Officials struggled to find a balance between advertising racial tolerance and providing a free international forum for anti-American criticism. Louis Armstrong, for one, was cause for headaches within Washington. Though Armstrong worked with U.S. officials during his 1956 African tour, in the wake of the 1957 Little Rock crisis Armstrong's public criticism of Eisenhower's civil rights policy became more audible and provocative. He publicly challenged the segregationist policies in Arkansas, insisted that the U.S. did not offer a democratic alternative to the Soviet Union, and announced that he would not participate in government-sponsored tours until he saw substantive changes. As he continued to speak out against the administration's civil rights policy, U.S. officials and numerous national newspapers intimated that Armstrong had "disqualified" himself as a goodwill ambassador.<sup>128</sup>

With Eisenhower's decision to integrate Little Rock High School by force, Armstrong warmed to the idea of reviving his State Department tours. Though U.S. officials were likely dubious about such a possibility due to Armstrong's history as an

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<sup>127</sup> For more details, see Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 136-37; Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 61-66.

<sup>128</sup> Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World*, 61-65; Lisa E. Davenport, "Jazz, Race, and American Cultural Exchange: An International Study of U.S. Cultural Diplomacy, 1954-1968," PhD diss. (Georgetown University, 2002), 127.

outspoken critic of U.S. race relations, his popularity around the world made it impossible for the State Department to pass him by. In this particular case, the benefit to U.S. foreign policy objectives that would be gained by sending “Ambassador Satch” overseas trumped any potential embarrassment he might cause on the civil rights front. In the end, Armstrong’s tours proved immensely successful from the perspective of both host audiences and U.S. officials. Tens of thousands of eager fans met Armstrong at every stop and Armstrong showed moderation and diplomacy when discussing his previous comments with American and foreign journalists.<sup>129</sup>

The case of Katherine Dunham, a world-renowned dancer and actress, offered a different outcome. Dunham first came on the radar of tour organizers in 1955. The content of her performances, however, proved to be a sticking point. At the time, Dunham was most well known for *Southland*, a controversial ballet that depicted a beating and lynching and ended with “a feeling of unresolved hatred and racism.”<sup>130</sup> The performance, which toured throughout South America and Europe, was not the sort of cultural exhibition that State Department officials hoped to promote. Making matters worse, several European communist newspapers, hoping to elicit more criticism of America’s history of racial violence, applauded the performance and regretted only that the staged lynching had not been more graphic.<sup>131</sup> From this anecdotal evidence, U.S.

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<sup>129</sup> Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World*, 61-65.

<sup>130</sup> Prevots, *Dance for Export*, 102-03.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. While *Porgy and Bess* dealt with many of the same issues as *Southland*, it offered a far less explicit indictment of American treatment of African Americans. If anything, *Porgy and Bess* was too moderate and “mainstream” in its depiction of racial norms to the point of promulgating detrimental stereotypes of African Americans. Many notable black celebrities of the 1940s and 1950s either refused to partake in various productions of the play or publicly criticized its message. In addition to this, American officials displayed great admiration and appreciation of Breen’s cast. Aside from consisting of “personable, well educated American Negroes,” the cast, “when off stage, departs itself in such a manner as to belie Communist propaganda of racial discrimination and maltreatment of negroes.” Operations Coordinating Board, “Porgy and Bess,” 21 September 1955, *DDRS*.



officials could easily connect the dots; Dunham's performance would provide unnecessary fodder for communist propagandists.

Also working against Dunham was the fact that she had, in 1956, attempted to take her dance troupe on tour in the PRC. CCP officials had approached Dunham when she was touring in Australia and the dancer hoped to fit a stop to the PRC into her upcoming tour to the Far East. Offering contrast to the Robert Breen case, Dunham did not seek out the assistance or advice of State Department officials and when word of the proposed trip leaked, the Department's response was abrupt and explicit. According to Dunham, State Department officials insisted that if she went she would lose her passport and face a \$10,000 fine for each member of her dance troupe. There is no direct mention, in State Department memoranda, that U.S. officials passed over Dunham due to her ideology or her agenda. Dunham insisted that the decision was simply a matter of race: "I think it was because they would not want anything as attractive as a black company, as we were, to go." The fact that she was kept out of the program, while her contemporaries such as Marian Anderson, Alvin Ailey, Jose Limon, and Duke Ellington participated extensively, however, implies that her racial politics and ideology served, at the least, as one factor in her exclusion.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> VeVe A. Clark and Sara E. Johnson, *Kaiso! Writings by and about Katherine Dunham* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), 357.

## VII

Though U.S. officials clearly integrated the exchange programs into their containment strategy and selected audiences and participants with an eye toward domestic and international impact, they also worked to mute the political dimension of the programs. Following the precedent established in the 1920s and 1930s, Washington officials were hesitant to take the cultural exchange programs entirely out of private hands. As critics within Washington were quick to point out, “Governments are not very well qualified” to determine what sort of cultural exchange “would do America good or not.”<sup>133</sup> Even State Department officials acknowledged they had “no special competence to judge performing arts or athletic abilities.”<sup>134</sup> In practice, though the State Department and USIA administered and coordinated the Cultural Presentations Program, the private ANTA and AAU took care of most logistical matters and private sponsors covered some of the tour costs.<sup>135</sup>

There was also a “voluntarist tradition” in U.S. cultural diplomacy that dated back to the country’s earliest exchanges.<sup>136</sup> Part of this was due to genuine concerns about the First Amendment, which suggested at least a partial separation between private cultural initiatives and governmental control. While institutional and political changes in the post-World War II era led Washington officials to take a more active and controlling role in cultural diplomacy, there was still a desire to give the appearance of a substantive public-

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<sup>133</sup> This criticism can be found in dialogue between Senator William Fulbright and USIA director Theodore Streibert, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *International Cultural Exchange and Trade Fair Participation Act of 1956: Report to Accompany S. 3116*, 84<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 1956, p. 7, in Box 47, JWFP.

<sup>134</sup> State Department to all consular posts, “Cultural Presentations: President’s Program: Program Guide,” 9 July 1959, Box 47, JWFP.

<sup>135</sup> Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 224.

<sup>136</sup> Frank Ninkovich details the early twentieth century philanthropic and private origins of American cultural diplomacy along with the shift toward more government control in the post-World War II years. Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*.

private partnership.<sup>137</sup> During the Eisenhower administration in particular, when the International Educational Exchange Program took shape, this objective was paramount. An introductory pamphlet explaining the exchange program noted that “the interdependence of Government and private activities in the promotion of educational exchange programs and the special competence of each make more effective the efforts of both in promoting the national interest.”<sup>138</sup> This harmonious, symbiotic relationship between the public and private sector – what historian Robert Griffith calls the “corporate commonwealth” – was thus just as much a part of Eisenhower’s cultural diplomacy as it was a part of his economic and political strategy.<sup>139</sup>

Though motivations were likely different, host governments, too, were dubious of any cultural program in which Washington left its lasting imprimatur, giving U.S. officials yet another reason to accentuate the non-official dimension of the programs. Highlighting this point, when famed theater director Edward Mangum traveled to Taiwan to test the waters for the Cultural Presentations Program with local Chinese officials, he consciously avoided calling the program by its other name – the President’s Special International Program. U.S. Embassy officials, who encouraged Mangum’s discretion, were concerned that the program’s links to Washington would chip away at its success and popularity.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Wilson P. Dizard, Jr., *Inventing Public Diplomacy: The Story of the U.S. Information Agency* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), 6.

<sup>138</sup> State Department, “The Citizen’s Role in Cultural Relations,” September 1959, Box 340, JWFP.

<sup>139</sup> Robert Griffith, “Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Corporate Commonwealth,” *American Historical Review*, Vol. 87, no. 1 (February 1982); Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 215.

<sup>140</sup> American Embassy Taipei to State Department, “Visit of Edward Mangum,” 11 January 1955, CDF511.94A3, General Records of the Department of State, Box 2245, NARA. U.S. officials eventually embraced their role in the cultural exchange programs, but came to this point gradually and hesitantly. See State Department to all consular posts, 9 July 1959, Box 47, JWFP.

Beyond these explanations, U.S. officials seemed to prefer the non-official status of these travelers and used that status to advance Washington's foreign policy objectives. Most of the participants' visits went off without a hitch, reducing the political risks involved in this sort of diplomacy. Every now and then tour organizers complained about artists who spent only a couple of days in Taiwan or Hong Kong – as part of a regional tour – and gave “cursory attention” to their hosts.<sup>141</sup> Other individuals used the tours as a springboard for their own career, undermining the cooperative spirit of the program. Most common were participants who spoke or acted in ways that offended local hosts or challenged U.S. foreign policy interests in the region. These cases, however, were the exception to the rule and most tours highlighted the effectiveness and decorum of these non-official travelers.<sup>142</sup>

Cultural exchange participants were attractive to U.S. officials for logistical reasons. U.S. officials overseas, burdened by a flood of demanding American travelers, routinely complained about the additional hassles and pressures that these visitors produced. All visitors, including “cultural ambassadors” and private tourists, contributed

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<sup>141</sup> American Consulate General Hong Kong to State Department, “Educational and Cultural Exchange,” 7 August 1968, Box 317, JWFP.

<sup>142</sup> The tour of harmonica player Larry Logan, for example, frustrated U.S. officials. While his tour was well-received in Taiwan and Hong Kong, U.S. officials were concerned that he approached his tour for selfish reasons and, moreover, that Logan would come off as a “brassy loud-mouthed American.” American Embassy Taipei to State Department, “Educational Exchange: Estimated Budget, Fiscal Year 1958,” 25 June 1956, General Records of the Department of State, CDF511.933, Box 2238, NARA; USIS Hong Kong to the State Department, “Report on the Tour of American Specialist Larry Logan,” 20 February 1961. Joey Adams and his wife, whose Far East tour received rave reviews, “violated all of our [State Department's] ‘don'ts’.” Adams and his wife spoke critically about the tourist facilities at some of the tour stops and he frequently ignored local customs despite substantial briefing. Bauer to Boerner, “An Objective Appraisal of the Joey Adams Tour,” 3 April 1962, Box 53, JWFP. Finally, a Fulbright scholar, Frederic Grab, left his position in West Germany to participate in Moscow's Youth Festival. He subsequently joined a group of American students who traveled to the PRC. According to State Department officials, Grab's actions were “prejudicial to the best interests of the Fulbright program.” U.S. officials consequently cut off Grab's financial assistance and demanded his return to the United States. State Department to American Embassy Bonn, 26 September 1957, General Records of the Department of State, CDF511.933, Box 2238, NARA.

to this “chronic trouble,” but most problematic were the scores of VIPs hoping to get an up-close look at the military, agricultural, and industrial developments in host countries.<sup>143</sup> Going on the attack against the “general problem” of official visitors, Ambassador Rankin described an “American official of no very exalted rank [who] arrives at a foreign capital in a two million dollar aircraft with a retinue. He frequently expects a guard of honor, a motorcycle escort, and to be received and entertained by the head of state.”<sup>144</sup>

Though increased visits by “importunate” American travelers posed problems in many U.S. embassies, the condition existed in an “acute form” in Taiwan. The explanation for this was largely a matter of tourist infrastructure. Officials visiting locales with a more solid basis for tourism, like France or the Caribbean, could be left on their own to seek out proper transportation, entertainment, dining, and accommodations. But through the early 1960s visiting officials in Taiwan were far more dependent on their hosts for their every need.<sup>145</sup> In this context, non-official visitors, cultural delegates included, were less of a burden on Taiwan in part because U.S. and Chinese officials felt less obligation to guarantee VIP treatment for these sorts of travelers. As Taiwan built up its tourism infrastructure, moreover, U.S. officials turned more and more to non-official, non-VIP recreational tourists who would take advantage of commercial airplanes, tourist hotels, and limited hand-holding during their stay on the island.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Clough to Rankin, 2 August 1957, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA.

<sup>144</sup> Rankin, *China Assignment*, 286.

<sup>145</sup> Clough to Rankin, 2 August 1957, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA.

<sup>146</sup> See, for example, Dutton to Goodell, 29 March 1963, General Records of the Department of State, Subject Numeric File, Box 3235, NARA; State Department to American Embassy Taipei, “People-to-People Program: Good Neighbors Abroad, Inc.,” 3 October 1963, Subject Numeric File, Box 3235, NARA.

## VIII

The significant role that the State Department assigned these cultural exchange participants underscored the breadth of the administration's travel policy as well as the fluidity between political representatives and non-official travelers. Eisenhower consistently approached international affairs as a realm not limited to the political elite. If the United States was to win allies and spread goodwill around the world, it could not attach itself only to generals, diplomats, and information officers; "it must have the active support of thousands of independent private groups...and millions of individual Americans."<sup>147</sup>

Included among these "millions," no doubt, were countless American recreational tourists. Also among them were the cultural delegates who took part in these exchange programs. This latter group, on the surface, did not fit the traditional "tourist" mold. Though they technically were not U.S. government officials, the participants traveled under the auspices or with the support of the State Department and local residents no doubt associated them with Washington. The participants, moreover, were not like the average, faceless tourists, who sought out little interaction with local residents. Instead, these world-renowned singers, actors, and athletes performed and spoke to large audiences, intentionally engaging in "offstage" conversations with locals. Their objective was to stand out, not blend in, and they actively pursued a political agenda in which they tried to spread American ideas and values to their hosts.

Despite these blatant differences from traditional tourists, from the perspective of Eisenhower officials – and in the context of Eisenhower's "people-to-people diplomacy"

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<sup>147</sup> Text of invitation to White House Conference on People-to-People Partnership, 31 May 1956, Records as President, Official File, Box 930, DDE; remarks at the People-to-People Conference, 11 September 1956, Public Papers of the President, 1956, DDE.

– there was little distinction between these exchange participants and recreational travelers who were, at the same time, spanning the globe in unprecedented numbers. For the first few years of the 1950s, in fact, these travelers, along with members of privately-funded cultural exchanges, represented one of the most significant groups of tourists to Taiwan and Hong Kong. Though cruise ships regularly made port at Hong Kong and the occasional commercial airliner made its way to the region, a lack of hotels, scarcity of tourist attractions, and a damaged infrastructure left would-be recreational tourists with little incentive to visit. Exchange programs, which offered more supervision, greater predictability, and a better chance at comfortable accommodations, helped fill the touristic void.

But it was not merely the scarcity of recreational tourists that produced this blurring between different forms of travelers. As was demonstrated by Washington’s intense interest in the travels of Clarence Martin Wilbur, there was an active effort to merge the roles of “travelers” and “tourists,” of non-official and official delegations. Symbolizing this, the U.S. government had, by 1955, expanded the definition of “tourist” to include not only sightseers, but also any temporary traveler visiting a foreign country for a legitimate purpose.<sup>148</sup> Eisenhower followed this up in a press conference on his “people-to-people” program, during which he placed educational exchanges alongside the “ordinary traveler.”<sup>149</sup> In NSC 5607, which outlined Washington’s approach to East-West cultural exchanges, an increase in “private tourism” was among the seventeen proposal

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<sup>148</sup> Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 105.

<sup>149</sup> Remarks at the People-to-People Conference, 11 September 1956, Public Papers of the President, 1956, DDE.

points, lodged between a commitment to encourage the free flow of ideas and a pledge to promote technical and educational exchanges.<sup>150</sup>

As non-official cultural delegations and private tourists began visiting the region in larger numbers, State Department officials latched on to them in order to supplement the nascent government-supported exchange program. Washington memoranda on exchanges constantly highlighted the visits of educators, musicologists, anthropologists, and museum curators – all traveling under private auspices.<sup>151</sup> In 1956 U.S. officials boasted that there had been a “considerable increase in interest and...actual participation” of private universities and institutions in exchange programs with Taiwan and Hong Kong, implying that such private exchange bolstered the government-run program. Because of limited government funding, educational exchange officials depended heavily on the programs of the China Institute, the University of Michigan, and Cornell University. The Cultural Affairs Officer in Taiwan, for one, regularly consulted with these and other outside programs whenever a proposed exchange was beyond the means of the government program.<sup>152</sup> By 1963, when private, recreational travel to Taiwan and Hong Kong was commonplace, Lucius Battle announced that the American Specialists Program was stepping up its efforts to recruit prominent Americans who would be vacationing abroad at their own expense. These “volunteers” presented a great opportunity to program officials who were faced with lofty goals and budget shortfalls. Tour organizers were not only open to the idea of merging their exchange program with

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<sup>150</sup> NSC 5607, “East-West Exchanges,” 29 June 1956, *DDRS*.

<sup>151</sup> American Embassy Taipei to State Department, “Educational Exchange: Semiannual Report,” 18 October 1956, General Records of the Department of State, CDF511.933, Box 2238, NARA.

<sup>152</sup> American Embassy Taipei to State Department, “Educational Exchange Annual Report,” 17 February 1956, General Records of the Department of State, CDF511.933, Box 2237, NARA.



recreational tourism, they urged “active” support in “seeking [out] persons who can be of real help.”<sup>153</sup>

Embassy officials, indeed, took an active effort to integrate these private travelers into their own exchange programs, noting that while U.S. officials lacked the staff necessary to interact with all these voluntary visitors, “even a minimum of guidance is rewarding.” They were convinced, moreover, that the “time and effort expended to utilize the services of voluntary visitors...is [frequently] more productive than the same amount of time and effort spent on government selected and connected visitors.” As had been the case in regard to government-sponsored delegates, U.S. officials saw voluntary visitors as “unofficial ambassadors,” who could share Western ideals and values with their hosts and return home with positive accounts of their trip. To capitalize on this asset, Embassy staff “attempt[ed] to do almost as thorough a job of planning for their visit as we do for our own grantees.” While these “non-program visitors” were “not an entirely satisfactory substitute” for those hand-selected by the State Department, they proved to be an asset if “wisely handled” by local U.S. officials.<sup>154</sup>

These “cultural ambassadors” were thus one part of a sweeping and multifaceted program of suitcase diplomacy that aimed to use all American travelers as agents of U.S. foreign policy. In the early 1950s, when recreational travelers in Taiwan and Hong Kong were still a rarity, participants in exchange programs filled the touristic void. As recreational tourism in Taiwan and Hong Kong developed into legitimate and sizeable

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<sup>153</sup> Battle to Kennedy, “American Specialists,” May 1963, Box 139, JWFP; Kennedy to Battle, “Plans for the American Specialists Program,” 16 May 1963, Box 139, JWFP.

<sup>154</sup> American Embassy Taipei to State Department, “Educational Exchange Annual Report,” 17 February 1956, General Records of the Department of State, CDF511.933, Box 2237, NARA; American Embassy Taipei to State Department, “Educational Exchange: Semi-Annual Report,” 18 October 1956, General Records of the Department of State, CDF511.933, Box 2238, NARA; Rankin to State Department, “Semi-Annual Report on International Educational Exchange Program,” 2 February 1954, Box 316, JWFP.

industries, American exchange participants continued to serve as one component of U.S. cultural diplomacy.

### **Ch. 3 – Creating a Touristic Image: PATA, Private Industry, and the Promotion of Tourism to Taiwan and Hong Kong, 1957-1961**

The main attitude of North Americans toward travel to this region is one of indifference, coupled with fear of war and communism.<sup>1</sup>

-- *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East*, Commerce Department tourism survey, 1961

There is no question but that almost every American...has firmly in his mind an image of what he will find in Hong Kong when his ship idles through the beautiful junk strewn harbor to tie up, or as his jet plane swoops down between the peaks onto one of the finest airfields in the Far East.

-- F. Marvin Plake, *Pacific Travel News*, January 1961

On July 29, 1959, a Qantas Airways Boeing 707 leaving from Sydney touched down at San Francisco International Airport after a flight of just less than fifteen hours. Following Qantas, other transpacific carriers promptly adopted jet technology. By the end of 1959 British Overseas Airway Corporation and Pan American were flying jets from the U.S. to Hong Kong and jet connections to Taiwan followed soon after. The Pacific Area Travel Association's (PATA) executive director, F. Marvin Plake, happily referred to the event as "a turning point in modern tourism."<sup>2</sup> While commercial jets had been landing in Latin America and Europe for years, the consistent arrival of these speedy commercial aircraft in the Far East and Pacific (at "tourist fare" prices) indeed ushered in a new era in American tourism to the region.

The boom in transpacific travel was a small component of a general growth in mass tourism that reached unprecedented heights in the late 1950s. The number of

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<sup>1</sup> Clement, *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East*, 17.

<sup>2</sup> F. Marvin Plake, "Multitude of Problems Posed for the Pacific in Decade Ahead," *Pacific Travel News*, February 1960.

Americans traveling abroad, which had hovered around the 1 million mark in the early years of the decade had, by 1959, reached 7,000,000. As stated by Pan Am's *New Horizons* travel guide, "vacations are a very necessary part of modern life."<sup>3</sup> U.S. officials even got in on the act, becoming tourists themselves as they used new jet technology and improved tourist infrastructure in the course of their work. Despite its levity, it was no insignificant gesture that *Travel* magazine awarded Secretary of State Dulles and Vice President Nixon its annual "Mr. Travel" award during their tenures in office.<sup>4</sup>

Continuing a pattern that emerged following World War II, however, the vast majority of the travelers stayed on the North American continent, visiting Canada and Mexico. Those who ventured overseas headed primarily to Europe and the Caribbean. Only a small percentage headed to Asia. Despite the relatively small numbers, tourism levels rose quickly, often at a faster pace than in other regions. Local travel boosters in Taiwan and Hong Kong – who had done little to promote incoming tourism in years past – suddenly embraced inbound travelers and worked to make their stay comfortable. Hong Kong government and business leaders encouraged the rapid construction of luxury hotels, modernization of airport and cruise line facilities, and disseminated a wide array of promotional literature. In Taiwan, restaurants began printing menus in English, travel agencies printed colorful and accurate maps and guides, local craftsmen produced more

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<sup>3</sup> Pan American World Airways, *New Horizons: The Guide to World Travel* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1957), 5.

<sup>4</sup> Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 107.

sellable handicrafts, and government agencies worked to improve roads, scenic attractions, and hotel accommodations.<sup>5</sup>

Also significant, tourists and travel boosters played a crucial role in developing popular and official images of “China.” As Christina Klein notes, for the first time in American history tourism became a “prominent feature of the social and cultural landscape.”<sup>6</sup> *Saturday Review*, *Reader’s Digest*, *Look*, *Travel*, *Holiday*, and PATA’s *Pacific Travel News* dedicated regular columns to travel writers, filled their pages with colorful advertisements, and increasingly “sold” the Pacific and Far East as exciting and feasible tourist destinations. Travel guides from Sydney Clark, Harvey Olson, and John Caldwell – all of which heralded the modern “tourist” and facilitated his vocation – became national bestsellers. Unlike older travel writing, which had focused on the exoticism and elitism of overseas travel, the new guides, articles, and advertisements stressed how familiar and attainable tourism had become. These touristic images were all the more influential in regard to these East Asian destinations precisely because so few Americans would ever visit Taiwan or Hong Kong, let alone the PRC.<sup>7</sup>

Private travel boosters and government officials ran into trouble, however, when trying to mesh this travel discourse with the overarching U.S. position in the Cold War. To the extent that they were successful, travel guides and official speeches sold Taiwan and Hong Kong as vital outposts of authentic Chinese culture and urged travelers to perceive these locales as more than mere tourist destinations. More often, however, tourist images of “China” seemed to clash with U.S. Cold War objectives. Tourist

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<sup>5</sup> Sturm to Secretary of State, “Tourism on Taiwan,” 16 February 1959, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 240, NARA.

<sup>6</sup> Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 103-04.

<sup>7</sup> Endy, *Cold War Holidays*.

“ambassadors” often placed a higher value on exploration, relaxation, and personal discovery than they did on the promotion and protection of U.S. foreign policy interests. To a greater extent than cultural exchange participants, recreational tourists approached overseas travel more as an escape from than an extension of international politics. Cold War concerns – threats from the PRC, political subversion, and renewed military hostilities – were not part of the idealized vision of China that most travelers maintained. To attract American tourists to these destinations, therefore, officials and travel boosters on both sides of the Pacific needed to downplay the Cold War in the course of developing travel relations with Taiwan and Hong Kong.

## I

Two distinct (and seemingly contradictory) developments explain the dramatic rise of American tourism to the Far East and Pacific in the late 1950s. First, travel promoters saw tourist potential in a region that was so utterly different than North America, Europe, and the Caribbean. American tourists were, in general, seeking out “new horizons” and while the majority of travelers still wound up going to traditional destinations, a remarkably large contingent now headed toward less recognizable locales. As *Time* explained, American travelers were “searching for some fresh identity with the elemental life and with the far past....search[ing] for remnants of ancient civilizations, for the humbling majesty of raw, rugged nature...a symbolic as well as genuine detachment from the rest of the world.”<sup>8</sup>

Along these same lines, in an era when many in and out of the travel industry lamented the fact that traditional destinations were overpopulated with tourists, travel

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<sup>8</sup> “Beyond the Horizon,” *Time*, 19 May 1961.

agencies, hotels, and attractions, the Far East seemed to be an undiscovered and underdeveloped gem. Horace Sutton remarked that many of the hassles of tourism – artificially high prices for souvenirs, hotel fees, and tourist taxes – stayed away from East Asian destinations far longer than they did in Europe. The region’s “best advertisement,” Sutton concluded, “would be to maintain the purity which makes it today one of the last refuges for the traveler whose back arches at the prospect of being bilked, milked, taxed and tolled.”<sup>9</sup> Another travel writer noted that Taiwan, in particular, had successfully developed the gimmick of “uncommercialized tourism.” It maintained few modern hotels, no nightclubs, and “the people still like Americans,” the combination of which led to a unique, rewarding tourist experience.<sup>10</sup>

While there was, no doubt, a certain cachet associated with the less refined tourist experience, this aspect of East Asian tourism was nothing new. The exoticism, backwardness, and burden of the Orient had long characterized the region’s tourism industry; American tourists – if they could afford it – saw a trip to the Far East as the epitome of rugged exploration and discovery. The fact that there was a noticeable boom in tourism to the region in the late 1950s, therefore, points to a second explanation: the development and maturity of tourist infrastructure. It was not until comfort, familiarity, and modernization arrived on the scene that American tourists sought out these “alternative” vacations in large numbers. According to a 1958 survey of American travel agents, the three primary deterrents to tourism in the Far East were costs, distance, and

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<sup>9</sup> Horace Sutton, “The Pacific Message,” *Pacific Travel News*, August 1961.

<sup>10</sup> Jerry Hulse, “Taiwan – Cold War is Warm – Friendships are Warmer,” *Los Angeles Times*, 22 April 1962.

poor accommodations.<sup>11</sup> The increase of commercial airliners, airports, modern hotels, restaurants, highways, and entertainment venues – all anathema to the rugged tourist experience – addressed these obstacles head on and they served to draw foreign tourists to the region in unprecedented numbers.

Epitomizing this willingness to seek out and embrace the “modern” and “familiar,” in the post-World War II period the “tourist” – historically the target of criticism and condescension – came into his own. Travel before the war had, no doubt, been the domain of the wealthy, but it also seemed to demand a sense of adventure, an open mind, and a willingness to get dirty. Being a recreational sightseer was not sufficient; every tourist needed to be simultaneously a risk-taker, a diplomat, and a discoverer. This grittiness – which was all the more applicable to the nontraditional destinations of the Far East – came through in popular travel guides and travelogues from Harry Franck and Owen Lattimore, as well as the articles and photographs in *National Geographic* magazine.<sup>12</sup> Commenting on the old style of travel writing, famed travel guide writer Karl Baedeker noted that its purpose was “to keep the traveler at as great a distance as possible from the unpleasant, and often wholly invisible, tutelage of hired

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<sup>11</sup> The statistics for “deterrents” were as follows: Costs (53.8 percent), distance (36.9 percent), poor accommodations (15.4 percent), and lack of knowledge of the area (9.2 percent). Cambell-Ewald survey, *Pacific Travel News*, February 1958.

<sup>12</sup> There was an overwhelming desire, in travel writing from this period, to locate the “real China.” Eliza Skidmore, for example, praised Beijing as a place where the “demon of progress has not brought down the dread monotony of the universal commonplace. Quoted in Clifford, “*A Truthful Impression of the Country*”, 89-90. In northern China – which was not as developed or cosmopolitan as southern cities like Shanghai – Harry Franck noted that he was “in the real China at last.” Franck, *Wandering in Northern China* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap Publishers, 1923), 104. Similarly, on his visit to Shanghai in the 1930s, George Kates wrote cynically that “this was not China.” Kates, *The Years that were Fat: The Last of Old China* (Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 1952), 8. For other examples of this sort of travel writing, see Owen Lattimore, *Mongol Journeys* (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., Inc., 1941); and Anne Morrow Lindbergh, *North to the Orient* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1935). For *National Geographic*’s articles on China, see Kenneth F. Junor, “Curious and Characteristic Customs of China,” *National Geographic*, September 1910, Frederick McCormick, “Present Conditions in China,” *National Geographic*, December 1911, Frederick McCormick, “China’s Treasures,” *National Geographic*, October 1912.



servants and guides...to assist him in standing on his *own* feet, to render him *independent*, and to place him in a position from which he may receive his own impressions with clear eyes and a lively heart.”<sup>13</sup>

Soon after the war had ended and international travel became attainable for middle-class Americans, travel writing and the negative connotations surrounding the “tourist” began to change. Offering a stark contrast to Baedeker’s style of self-sufficient travel, *McKay’s Guide* implored the American tourist to seek out U.S. officials when overseas for “even the most trivial information” and not to be “afraid to show your ignorance.”<sup>14</sup> In this vein, instead of “off-the-beaten-path” narratives and efforts to reclaim the traveler-adventurer label of the nineteenth century, travel guides from the 1950s onward were filled with shopping tips, “can’t miss” attractions, and directories of Western-style hotels and restaurants.

These new travel guides also placed less emphasis on the themes of authenticity, adventure, and difference that had been such staples of earlier travel writing. Finding the “real” China – regardless of the obvious flaws associated with that approach – was not the concern of most tourists in the 1950s and 1960s and most guides reflected and encouraged this viewpoint. Despite the resulting condemnation of these travel guides as superficial introductions to foreign countries that placed more importance on comfort and familiarity than true exploration (one recent critic retorted that they should, more accurately, be called *tourist* guides), these guides reflected, and in turn shaped, popular images of and popular activities in foreign destinations.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Edward Mendelson, “Baedeker’s Universe.” *The Yale Review* (Spring 1985).

<sup>14</sup> Gellhorn, *McKay’s Guide* (1953), xv-xvi.

<sup>15</sup> Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 42.

Some self-conscious tourists, unwilling to throw themselves in the same category as the masses of other globetrotting Americans, clung to some nostalgic remnants of the adventuresome, “genuine” travel of earlier years. Advertisers and writers routinely used terms like “exotic,” “authentic,” and “Old China” to appeal to these “anti-tourists.” Despite this underlying concern about the ubiquitous loud, camera-toting American tourist, most travelers and travel writers eventually cast off these anxieties. In regard to Taiwan and Hong Kong, a common approach among travel writers and advertisers was to acknowledge the vast differences and exotic adventures that tourists would encounter while vacationing, but primarily to focus on the level of modernization that had taken place in the region since the end of the war. Spokesmen for the Intercontinental Mandarin Hong Kong, for example, noted that the hotel was “an exciting blend of the Orient's colorful past and today's modern comfort” and that it was “modern with subtle Oriental influences.”<sup>16</sup> Advertisements for Hong Kong’s President Hotel and the Mandarin both show small junks in Victoria Harbor, dwarfed by the massive and modern steel hotels on the coast.<sup>17</sup> APL ran similar advertisements, highlighting the attractive contrasts of the region: “Like the splendor of a President liner – graceful and majestic – towering over a busy swarm of junks and sampans. Or the deep, restful peace and satisfaction a President cruise brings after the problems of workaday life ashore.”<sup>18</sup> One Pan Am brochure pointed to the “many strange and wondrous sights” that tourists could expect in the Orient, but assured them that Malaya and Hong Kong were “British Crown Colonies to

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<sup>16</sup> Mandarin Hong Kong Hotel press release, 24 October 1963, Series II, Box 578, PAA.

<sup>17</sup> Advertisement, “The President,” *Clipper*, November-December 1963, in Series I, Box 90, PAA; Advertisement, “Hong Kong’s Newest Hotel: The Mandarin,” Series II, Box 578, PAA.

<sup>18</sup> Advertisement, “A Delightful Ocean? Ask any Pacific Navigator,” *Pacific Travel News*, July 1957.

be sure.”<sup>19</sup> Another noted that Hong Kong was the “heir to the intrigue and glamour of Shanghai” but that this Oriental character was merely a “facade.”<sup>20</sup> The willingness to embrace the modern while still clinging to symbolic vestiges of an idealistic past was, perhaps, best captured by a cartoon in PATA’s *Pacific Travel News*. Standing on their balcony in an extremely modern, high-rise hotel, a couple looks down on a scene of Asian peasants and traditional architecture. Without a note of irony, the couple remarks: “Isn’t the Pacific wonderful...it’s so primitive.” Alongside the cartoon, the editors of *Pacific Travel News* noted that while “[t]ravelers enjoy the foreign and unfamiliar by day...by night they want the comforts of home.”<sup>21</sup>

## II

Regardless of which factor was dominant, the convergence of an abstract desire to experience the exotic Orient with the mundane, modern institutions needed to get tourists to their destination and keep them happy, promised to usher in a new era in regional tourism. The numbers bore out such optimistic predictions. The increase in tourism to the region was dramatic, outdoing the pace of both the Caribbean and Europe. The numbers (excluding Hawaii) jumped from 350,000 in 1954 to 680,000 in 1958 to 1.2 million in 1961 to 2.1 million in 1965. As would be expected, tourist expenditures rose by similarly exponential numbers. In 1956 travelers spent \$45 million in the region. By 1958, total

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<sup>19</sup> Pan American travel brochure, “People and Places of the Pan American World,” 1952, Series I, Box 53, PAA.

<sup>20</sup> “An Oasis in the South China Sea,” *Clipperwise*, Vol. II, no. 6 (June 1960), 5, in Series I, Box 88, PAA.

<sup>21</sup> PATA advertisement, *Pacific Travel News*, November 1966.

expenditures rose to \$200 million. By 1964 the figures reached \$439 million.<sup>22</sup> The economic benefit of tourism was augmented further by the “multiplier effect,” a boon to the local economy by which the same tourist dollars changed hands again and again. Within twelve months of being spent, economists estimated that a tourist dollar changed hands between three and four times, meaning that the average tourist who spent \$1,000 on his vacation (excluding air or cruise fares) produced \$3,000 of national income for the host country.<sup>23</sup> Signaling the impact of tourist dollars on local economies, by 1966 four of the twenty-five PATA member destinations counted tourism as their number one “export” and half placed it in their top four “exports.”<sup>24</sup>

Improvements in transportation and hotel facilities contributed significantly to this increase in tourism. Pan American Airways had first introduced transpacific flights in 1937 but the journey was expensive and often took over a week to complete. The introduction of larger, faster planes dramatically changed the way that people crossed the Pacific and the 1950s and 1960s saw air travel become the new norm. In March 1953 Pan Am initiated daily flights from the West Coast to the Far East with five weekly flights to Tokyo and two to Manila. Between 1952 and 1958, the number of total weekly flights to the region increased from 36 to 102. In 1957 Pan Am alone was making twelve weekly

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<sup>22</sup> “Soaring Visitor Totals Mark 1962 as Another Record Year for Pacific,” *Pacific Travel News*, November 1962; “PATA’s First Annual Statistical Report: Visitors to PATA Member Destinations, 1952-1965,” *Pacific Travel News*, February 1966; “U.S. Tourism Rises in Asia,” *New York Times*, 24 February 1957; Clement, *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East*, 290; “Gimmicks East & West,” *Time*, 25 August 1961.

<sup>23</sup> According to a Commerce Department tourism survey, the average “multiplier effect” was 3.27. This number was significantly higher in more developed regions, in which it was less necessary to import consumable goods such as food, drink, souvenirs, or gasoline. In less developed areas, where more of the original tourist expenditures “leak” out of the economy in the form of imports, the multiplier effect shrinks. Clement, *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East*, 18-27.

<sup>24</sup> “Visitor Expenditures in PATA Member Destinations,” *Pacific Travel News*, April 1966.

flights to Hong Kong.<sup>25</sup> By the early 1960s even Taiwan, which had been poorly served by international airlines in the past, had at least five international airlines landing daily.<sup>26</sup>

With the increase in routes and, in 1953, the introduction of coach class on transpacific flights, it became far cheaper to fly. The price in 1953 for a one-way ticket from New York to Hong Kong was \$599, which represented a \$120 drop from pre-coach class pricing. By 1966, following an agreement by the International Air Transport Association to reduce economy transpacific fares by another 15 percent, the price was \$470.<sup>27</sup> With the rapid increase in consumer credit plans – such as Pan Am’s “Go Now, Pay Later” program – flying overseas became feasible for most middle-class budgets.

As more and more international tourists poured into the Far East, industry insiders frantically built up accommodations to house the incoming guests. As would be seen, hotel growth consistently and frustratingly lagged behind the rise in tourism, but the proliferation of tourist hotels in the late 1950s and 1960s was, nonetheless, extraordinary. Between 1957 and 1966 hotel accommodations more than doubled, increasing from about 48,000 to 110,000 rooms.<sup>28</sup> Much of this development was the result of American businesses expanding their share of the international tourism market. Between 1958 and 1959 Intercontinental Hotel Corporation (IHC), a subsidiary of Pan American Airways, for example, was working on projects – at various stages of completion and certainty –

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<sup>25</sup> “Daily Service to the Orient,” *ASTA Travel News*, March 1953; “Pacific Area Travel Group Sets Parley,” *Los Angeles Times*, 4 February 1958; “The Pacific: 70 Million Square Miles of Travel-Land,” *Pacific Travel News*, February 1958; Pan American Airways Advertisement, “Your Guide to All the Pacific,” *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 14 July 1957.

<sup>26</sup> George K. C. Yeh, “‘Formosa’ Was Well Named,” *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 28 May 1961

<sup>27</sup> “Airlines Complete World Tourist Net,” *New York Times*, 24 November 1953; “North Pacific Air Fares Cut,” *Pacific Travel News*, May 1966.

<sup>28</sup> “The Pacific Hotel Industry Looks Ahead to the Jet-Age of the 1960s,” *Pacific Travel News*, July 1957; “Pacific Outlook for ‘66,” *Pacific Travel News*, April 1966.

for thirty-four overseas hotels. Hilton, between 1955 and 1966, opened seventeen new international hotels.<sup>29</sup>

The dramatic rise in tourism and facilities was not distributed evenly throughout the region. Hawaii, Japan, and Hong Kong saw the majority of this boom; those three regions attracted roughly three times more tourists than the rest of the Pacific and Far East combined.<sup>30</sup> As one tourism survey noted, Hong Kong was a “red-hot tourist attraction.” In 1958 the colony brought in over 100,000 international tourists (not including American servicemen) and \$67 million in tourist expenditures.<sup>31</sup> By 1968 the numbers had increased to 600,000 tourists spending roughly \$360 million in tourist expenditures. Taking into account the “multiplier effect,” tourist spending was bringing in well over a billion dollars to the Hong Kong economy. Such figures were a testament to Hong Kong’s thriving shopping scene, but they also meant large budgetary windfalls; by the time tourists began showing up in large numbers Hong Kong was earning roughly 30 percent of its governmental revenue from foreign tourists.<sup>32</sup> For an economy like Hong Kong’s, which suffered from a significant balance-of-payments imbalance, the relatively effortless and constantly growing tourist income was remarkable.

To some extent, the seemingly “overnight” tourist boom caught Hong Kong officials and industry insiders by surprise; the 1960s were marked by frequent bouts of hotel room and water shortages.<sup>33</sup> Travel guides alerted tourists to the likelihood of water

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<sup>29</sup> IHC, “Hotel Facilities,” 9 March 1959, Series II, Box 314, PAA; Annabel Jane Wharton, *Building the Cold War: Hilton International Hotels and Modern Architecture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 203.

<sup>30</sup> Clement, *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East*, 3.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>32</sup> June Shaplen, “Hong Kong, the Great Supermarket, Adds a Wing,” *New York Times*, 13 March 1966; Peggy Durdin, “Hong Kong’s Role: A Tourist’s Bargain,” *New York Times*, 2 March 1969; Clement, *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East*, 27.

<sup>33</sup> For an example of criticism, see “More Bargains Than Beds,” *Time*, 30 May 1960.

rationing and advised using bottled or boiled water for drinking purposes. Gene Gleason noted that the price of speedy hotel construction was inadequate elevator service, undersized rooms, and insufficient staff.<sup>34</sup> On the whole, however, tourist development in Hong Kong was smooth. Very much a leader in Far East tourism, Hong Kong hotel rooms increased from a mere 800 in 1958 to over 6,000 by the end of 1963. In 1961 alone, three new luxury hotels – with a total of 2,000 rooms – were under construction.<sup>35</sup> The 900-room Hong Kong Hilton, which opened in April 1963, was the first of the Hilton chain in East Asia and the largest hotel outside of North America. The \$15 million IHC Mandarin, with 650 all-balcony suites, rooftop swimming pool and garden, cocktail lounge, and views of “the world’s most exotic harbor,” opened that summer. The President Hotel, which promised a “rare combination of Oriental mystery and Western glamour and elegance,” opened its doors shortly thereafter.<sup>36</sup> These first-class hotels proved immensely popular; the vast majority of tourists to Hong Kong, when given the option, stayed in the most expensive category of hotels. This preference was even more dramatic in the case of Americans (67 percent) and Canadians (75 percent).<sup>37</sup> Though some tourists would likely have settled for lower quality hotels if there were no alternatives, the inclination toward luxury, especially when paired with the dramatic

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<sup>34</sup> Eleanor Cowles Gellhorn, *McKay’s Guide to the Far East and Hawaii* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc, 1965), 87; Gleason, *Hong Kong*, 300.

<sup>35</sup> “The Big News from Hong Kong – More Hotel Rooms for Tourists,” *Pacific Travel News*, March 1961; “Pacific Hotel Building and Planning Boom,” *Pacific Travel News*, January 1962; Hong Kong Tourist Association advertisement, “The Orient is Hong Kong,” *Pacific Travel News*, November 1962.

<sup>36</sup> Advertisement, “The President,” *Clipper*, November-December 1963, in Series I, Box 90, PAA; advertisement, “Hong Kong’s Newest Hotel: The Mandarin,” Series II, Box 578, PAA; press release, “The Mandarin in Hong Kong,” no date, Series II, Box 578, PAA; “900 Room Hotel Gilds Hong Kong,” *New York Times*, 5 April 1963.

<sup>37</sup> Prices at these first class hotels were significantly lower than their counterparts in the U.S. The Hong Kong Hilton’s rates were 30 percent below those of the New York Hilton and 40 percent below those of the Plaza Hotel in New York. Rates from “Two Orient Hiltons Formally Opened,” *Pacific Travel News*, July 1963; and Harold Hart, *Hart’s Guide to New York City* (New York: Hart Publishing Company, 1964); Robert Hazell, *The Tourist Industry in Hong Kong, 1966 (Short Report)* (Hong Kong Tourist Association, 1966), 26.

increase in tourism throughout the late 1950s and 1960s, demonstrates the impact that high-class hotel development had on Hong Kong's tourism industry.

Though never in the same league as Hong Kong, more obscure destinations like Taiwan saw exponential increases as well. The conclusion of the Taiwan Straits Crises in 1958 – which Embassy officials called a “definite deterrent to increased visits by foreigners” – restored a sense of calm to the region and travelers began to show mild interest.<sup>38</sup> Receiving almost no recreational tourist traffic in the first several years of the 1950s, by 1958 Taiwan was welcoming well over 20,000 visitors a year. The numbers continued to rise exponentially, rising from 44,000 in 1962, to 155,000 in 1966, and to 300,000 in 1968.<sup>39</sup> U.S. officials in Taipei who, only years earlier, had written off Taiwan as a backward, unappealing, and doomed tourist destination, began offering more positive (though far from glowing) assessments. The 1959 edition of *McKay's Guide*, as well, recognized the changes, adding a section on Taiwan's steady progress in education, public health, land reform projects, and tourist infrastructure.<sup>40</sup>

Hotel construction, perhaps, best highlights Taiwan's moderate but steady progress. As late as 1957, as discussed above, the Grand Hotel and the Friends of China Club remained the only first-class hotels in Taipei. Considering that the bulk of foreign visitors remained only in the capital city, Taiwan could handle just over a planeload of tourists at a time. By the last few years of the 1950s, however, the number of hotel rooms rose dramatically. Commencing this development boom, in 1956 the Grand Hotel

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<sup>38</sup> Sturm to Secretary of State, “Tourism on Taiwan,” 16 February 1959, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 240, NARA.

<sup>39</sup> “16 Countries Report that Jet Age has Boosted Business to Record Volume,” *Pacific Travel News*, September 1960; Murray J. Brown, “Lure of the Orient is Not Occidental,” *Los Angeles Times*, 28 February 1965; “Total Visitors to PATA Member Destinations” *Pacific Travel News*, April 1966; Tillman Durdin, “Help for Taiwan's Tourists,” *New York Times*, 16 March 1969.

<sup>40</sup> Gellhorn, *McKay's Guide to the Far East and the Middle East* (New York: David McKay, Inc., 1959), 77.



doubled its capacity by adding forty rooms and four cottage suites. Contrasting with the earlier designs of Taiwan hotel rooms, all these rooms were air-conditioned and had private baths. Several other smaller hotels, likened to European pensions, also opened their doors that year. The “western-style” Kao-Hsiung and Tai-Chung Hotels opened in early 1958 and the Railway Hotel, the Overseas Chinese Mansion, and the Hua Yuan Hotel all began welcoming guests the following year. From less than 200 rooms in 1957, accommodations rose to 375 in December 1960, to 760 at the end of 1961, and to 3,000 by the end of 1966. A 1966 *Pacific Travel News* feature on Taiwan tourism showcased four luxury hotels and fourteen more modest venues in Taipei alone.<sup>41</sup>

### III

The increase in tourist flows encouraged and reflected active participation from the governments of Taiwan and Hong Kong and private businesses. In 1957 Hong Kong saw the establishment of both the semi-governmental Hong Kong Tourist Association (HKTA) and the private Hong Kong Association of Travel Agents. HKTA, the larger and more influential of the two tourism agencies, quickly joined PATA and took on an active role. Though its budget was remarkably small (just \$166,000 in 1959), it became a leader in tourism promotion, distributing posters, travel literature, and promotional films.<sup>42</sup> In 1959 it distributed over 500,000 pieces of promotional literature, the vast majority of

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 80; “Pacific Hotel Building is on the Increase,” *Pacific Travel News*, February 1957; “Pacific Hotel Building and Planning Boom,” *Pacific Travel News*, January 1962; George F. Rodts, “Pacific Outlook for ’66,” *Pacific Travel News*, April 1966; “Sales Folder Taiwan,” *Pacific Travel News*, November 1966.

<sup>42</sup> The relatively low budget of the HKTA was a source of praise and criticism from travel experts. On the one hand, in 1959 the ratio between tourist expenditures in Hong Kong and the amount of money spent on tourism was about 530 to 1, by far the most impressive cost-benefit ratio in the region. On the other hand, critics pointed out that if the government gave more attention to tourism and increased the budget of the HKTA to be commensurate with its economic importance, tourism to the colony would increase exponentially. Clement, *The Future of Tourism in the Far East and Pacific*, 98.

which ended up in American periodicals such as *Saturday Review*, *Holiday*, and the *New Yorker*. HKTA's "A Million Lights Shall Glow" – a twenty-minute film highlighting the cultural, historical, and recreational facets of Hong Kong – won international recognition and received the best travel documentary award at the 1961 Cannes Film Festival.<sup>43</sup> On the facilitation front, in 1961 the Hong Kong government modified the colony's visa policy, allowing American visitors to acquire multiple-entry visas (good for any number of visits within twelve months) for the same \$2 fee as a single-entry visa. By 1966 the colony allowed U.S. citizens to visit up to fourteen days without a visa.<sup>44</sup>

More striking reforms came out of Taipei. Though Taiwan would never approach the level of Hong Kong tourism, the attitudinal and substantive change of the government was incredibly significant, especially when viewed alongside Jiang's past intransigent view towards tourism development and the country's dismal tourism industry. According to one government spokesman, "visitors are as welcome as the sun" and a member of Taiwan's PATA delegation humorously noted that the infamous "head-hunters" of the island's interior were "now entirely friendly, particularly so with tourists."<sup>45</sup> Changes seem to have begun in 1956 when, according to several government and private representatives, Jiang himself "decreed that the tourist industry should be developed." The policy shift, which was part of a broader, "3-point" program in Taipei to move the

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<sup>43</sup> "1959 Pacific Preview," *Pacific Travel News*, January 1960; "Pacific Preview," *Pacific Travel News*, February 1960.

<sup>44</sup> "Visa Requirement Relaxed; More Visitors," *Pacific Travel News*, January 1961; "Tourist Documents and Regulations," *New York Times*, 23 February 1964; "Sales Folder for Hong Kong, Including Macao," *Pacific Travel News*, November 1966.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in "A Tour of Taiwan," *Pacific Travel News*, April 1959; C. K. Tseng, *Taipei Chinese News*, quoted in Oscar F. Gavrilovich, "The Foreign Press," *Los Angeles Times*, 20 March 1956.

nation toward economic independence, signaled that the Nationalist regime finally recognized the economic and political benefits that foreign tourists could produce.<sup>46</sup>

The new attitude of Nationalist officials produced substantive institutional changes. The government rapidly developed a multi-layered bureaucracy to facilitate incoming tourism. In November 1956 Jiang's government established the Taiwan Tourism Council (TTC), which became the nation's official travel agency. The Council quickly became an active member in PATA and, despite objections from the PRC and the Soviet Union, joined the IUOTO.<sup>47</sup> The non-official Taiwan Visitors Association (TVA), consisting of travel agents, and representatives from airlines, hotels, and restaurants, followed shortly afterward. The TVA served as an advisory board of sorts for the government-run TTC and the Council, in turn, provided substantial subsidies to the private TVA.<sup>48</sup>

Beyond establishing and supporting these new administrative bodies, the Nationalist government threw its support behind the island's tourist infrastructure. In 1957 the Nationalist government initiated a three-year plan to promote tourism development and hotel building. To this end, officials designated almost \$287,000 toward the construction of tourist accommodations.<sup>49</sup> The government further facilitated the development of first-class hotels by streamlining land sales, allowing selected building materials to be imported at lower customs duties, and offering five-year tax exemptions

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<sup>46</sup> Sturm, "Tourism on Taiwan," American Embassy Taiwan to State Department, 16 February 1959, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 240, NARA; Greg MacGregor, "Taiwan Planning Era of Self-Help," *New York Times*, 11 September 1956.

<sup>47</sup> "Taipei Gets Travel Unit Seat," *New York Times*, 11 October 1958.

<sup>48</sup> Sturm, "Tourism on Taiwan," American Embassy Taipei to State Department, 16 February 1959, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 240, NARA; ICA Taipei to ICA Washington, 18 August 1959, "Tourism Activities," Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 240, NARA.

<sup>49</sup> These U.S. currency figures are based on the 1960 conversion rate of U.S.\$1=NT\$40.

to certain government-approved hotels.<sup>50</sup> The results were significant; five new hotels – most with private bathrooms and air conditioning – opened in 1957.<sup>51</sup> In a joint effort with the TTC and Taiwan’s Highway Bureau, the government spent \$315,000 on road repairs in order to “attract tourists to scenic spots.” As part of its road improvement campaign, the government began construction on an East-West highway. This “Dragon Road,” which stretched 200 miles and linked the east and west coasts of Taiwan, offered tourists easier access across the island.<sup>52</sup> In total, between 1958 and 1962 the Nationalist regime committed around \$5 million to various tourism projects.<sup>53</sup>

Taiwan tourism officials, moreover, undertook a number of initiatives to attract foreign travelers. In mid-1956 Nationalist officials negotiated directly with APL – which still did not offer direct service to Taiwan – to organize an island-wide tour.<sup>54</sup> Such activities continued over the next several years. In 1958 the TTC and the private China Travel Service organized a visit for 400 American tourists on board the SS *Stattendam* who were partaking in a “round-the-world” cruise. To ensure the visit’s success, the TTC dredged the harbor to accommodate the large cruise liner, organized tours, set up a bazaar at the pier, and streamlined entry and exit procedures for the passengers. More broadly,

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<sup>50</sup> Yeh, “‘Formosa’ Was Well Named,” *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 28 May 1961; “Pacific Hotel Building is on the Increase,” *Pacific Travel News*, February 1957.

<sup>51</sup> “The Pieces of China that Border the Pacific,” *Pacific Travel News*, February 1958.

<sup>52</sup> ICA Taipei to ICA Washington, 18 August 1959, “Tourism Activities,” Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 240, NARA; Florence Teets, “Touring Taiwan Via New Cross-Island Road,” *New York Times*, 12 June 1960; “1959 Pacific Preview,” *Pacific Travel News*, January 1959; Paul J. Sturm, “Tourism on Taiwan,” 16 February 1959, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 240, NARA.

<sup>53</sup> “Pacific Hotel Building and Planning Boom,” *Pacific Travel News*, January 1962.

<sup>54</sup> MacGregor, “Taiwan Planning Era of Self-Help,” *New York Times*, 11 September 1956.

by the end of 1958 the TTC had pinpointed and began developing twenty scenic locations as tourist attractions.<sup>55</sup>

Finally, the government gradually began to deal with the massive amount of red tape and bureaucracy encumbering Taiwan tourism. Tourists had difficulty acquiring visas, entry and exit procedures were complex and prohibitive, and security concerns prevented easy mobility throughout the island. By 1957, however, the TTC, along with outside institutions like PATA, the IUOTO, and U.S. travel boosters, had convinced the Taiwan government to reform these debilitating practices. Signaling these changes, in 1957 Taiwan made “drastic relaxations” in its entry and exit procedures for its own Chinese residents. The new policy, which applied only to Chinese tourists traveling to or from nations with diplomatic relations with Taiwan, allowed tourists to acquire their travel permits with ease. More broadly, in 1959 Taiwan provided incoming tourists with Register of Currency cards, providing them with a 33 percent more favorable exchange rate. A year later, following a TVA-sponsored mission to Japan to explore ways to relax entry and exit requirements, the government instituted a less-burdensome customs declaration form and updated its antiquated travel laws to allow visitors to stay seventy-two hours without a visa.<sup>56</sup> In 1961, to show support for all these changes, Jiang established the Vice Ministry for Tourism, a position within the Ministry for

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<sup>55</sup> Gladwin Hill, “Expanding Pacific,” *New York Times*, 23 February 1958; Tillman Durdin, “Hong Kong: Alive, to the Present,” *New York Times*, 6 April 1958; Paul J. Sturm, “Tourism on Taiwan,” 16 February 1959, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 240, NARA.

<sup>56</sup> “Taiwan Government Liberalizes Exit-Entry Regulations: Japan-United States Enter New Visa Agreement,” *Pacific Travel News*, June 1957; “Special Exchange Rate for Tourists,” *Pacific Travel News*, April 1959; Clement, *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East*, 247.

Communications that oversaw this sizable bureaucracy and coordinated the efforts of Taiwan's public and private tourism agencies.<sup>57</sup>

Taiwan's progress on tourism was commendable, but critics continued to complain. The government, according to some observers, was not giving its "whole-hearted support" to the industry and when officials did initiate reforms, they did so only after intense, incessant lobbying from the TVA and other tourism interest groups.<sup>58</sup> The Nationalist government, moreover, consistently refused to place tourism interests above (often exaggerated) security concerns. Tourists, for example, still faced numerous restrictions on travel to the interior of the island.<sup>59</sup> Taiwan's new "72-hour" visa policy applied only to tourists from "friendly countries." Along these same lines, the government refused to adopt PATA's recommendation to eliminate visa requirements for any tourist staying less than thirty days, citing concerns about "internal security."<sup>60</sup> These security concerns led to significant restrictions on what items tourists could bring into the country; those wishing to carry a camera, for instance, had to fill out piles of paperwork and, even then, local police prohibited photographs in many areas.<sup>61</sup> Travel writer John Caldwell, referencing the "security-conscious" officials at Taipei's airport, warned travelers: "immigration and customs formalities may not be as speedy as in Tokyo or Hong Kong."<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> "Orient Showing Vigorous Approach to Travel Problems, Says PATA Director," *Pacific Travel News*, January 1961.

<sup>58</sup> Sturm, "Tourism on Taiwan," 16 February 1959, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 240, NARA.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> "Report on Progress of Pacific Facilitation," *Pacific Travel News*, January 1962.

<sup>61</sup> This practice officially ended in January 1961, but implementation took several months. Robert G. Smith, "Call it Taiwan," *Baltimore Sun*, 9 September 1961; "Easing of Visa Regulations, a Growing Hotel Industry Help Taiwan Prepare for Tourist Influx," *Pacific Travel News*, January 1961.

<sup>62</sup> John C. Caldwell, *Far East Travel Guide* (New York: John Day Company, 1959), 114-15.

Regardless of these persistent and legitimate critiques, the private American tourism industry was eager to capitalize on Taipei's new attitude. Taipei's efforts to highlight tourist attractions and make travel more accessible to tourists was especially important in a nation like Taiwan, which never ranked high on lists of tourists' dream destinations.<sup>63</sup> Tourism promoters in the United States and Taiwan had never believed that the island was a tourist magnet on its own. Embassy official Paul Sturm, for example, noted that Taiwan offered "little which would in itself merit a special trip to the area." Put differently, *Fodor's* guide noted that any tourist who expected to find the "gaiety and glamour" of Hong Kong and Japan "is in for a disappointment."<sup>64</sup> Because of the peripheral status of Taiwan in the eyes of American tourists and travel boosters, the new tourist policies, specifically the more liberal visa policy, were significant achievements. The key to Taiwan's success was its fortunate position in the Pacific Ocean, lying along the main air route between Japan, Hong Kong, and the Philippines. If the Nationalist government could make travel to Taiwan pleasant and simple, and if promoters could convince travelers of these changes, tourists were more likely to include Taiwan on their Far East itinerary, even if it was not the primary purpose of their vacation.

In a travel piece in the *Washington Post*, ROC Ambassador George Yeh worked toward this goal, highlighting the ease of travel to Taiwan. Because a visa was no longer necessary for a short stay, Yeh wrote, "all one needs to do...is to contact one's airline or

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<sup>63</sup> According to a 1958 survey of U.S. and Canadian tourists, Taiwan ranked thirteenth on a list of nineteen Pacific and Far East countries that tourists would want to visit. Vietnam, Macao, Cambodia, Okinawa, Korea, and Laos were the only destinations to rank lower. Clement, *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East*, 17.

<sup>64</sup> Sturm, "Tourism on Taiwan," American Embassy Taiwan to State Department, 16 February 1959, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 240, NARA; Barbara Hoard, "The Miniature Republic of China," in *Fodor's Guide to Japan and East Asia 1963*, eds. Eugene Fodor and Robert Fisher (New York: David McKay Company, 1963), 521.

travel agency.”<sup>65</sup> PATA’s executive director F. Marvin Plake, as well, did his part, being on the scene to greet the first tourists to arrive under the new “72-hour” visa regulation. As he and other tourism insiders had hoped, the first arrivals – Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Erickson of Stockton, California – had not planned on visiting Taiwan, but upon hearing of the policy change while in Hong Kong had decided to make a quick stop to the island on their way to Japan.<sup>66</sup> American travel promoters expanded on this strategy, organizing potential visits to Taiwan around the new visa laws. *Pacific Travel News* offered up several itineraries for three-day tours. These seventy-two-hour “stopover” trips would be an easy sell to tourists due to Taiwan’s proximity to Japan, Hong Kong, and the Philippines and the fact that a visit to Taiwan could be included in a round-trip ticket for no extra cost. Three days, moreover, “gives time enough for a good sampling of Taiwan as a bit of Old China”<sup>67</sup> Taiwan travel agencies, as well, embraced this approach in their promotional literature; almost every advertisement for Taiwan noted that on most flights between Japan, Hong Kong, and the Philippines, a stopover to Taiwan would not cost anything extra.<sup>68</sup> Travel writer Sydney Clark playfully disagreed with the new visa law: “Three days is *barely* enough time to see something of Taipei and then hustle down to Sun Moon Lake and perhaps the Taroko Gorge.”<sup>69</sup> Clark’s mild criticism, nonetheless, underscored the ubiquity of the “3-day tour” in Taiwan tourism. In the year before the law went into effect, nearly 20,000 tourists visited Taiwan. Following the policy’s

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<sup>65</sup> Yeh, “‘Formosa’ Was Well Named,” *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 28 May 1961.

<sup>66</sup> “Three Day No Visa Visits Announced for Taiwan, and for Australians in the Philippines,” *Pacific Travel News*, December 1960.

<sup>67</sup> “Taiwan Offers 72-hour Tourist an Orient Bonus,” *Pacific Travel News*, April 1961.

<sup>68</sup> For examples, see China Travel Service, “Taiwan,” no date, in Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 240, NARA; and TTC advertisement, “Taiwan: Epicenter for Orient Tours,” *Pacific Travel News*, October 1966.

<sup>69</sup> Sydney Clark, *All the Best in Japan and the Orient: Including Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and the Philippines* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1964), 324.



implementation, tourism increased by 37 percent. Not surprisingly, moreover, these visitors stayed for an average of three days in order to avoid the hassle of getting a visa.<sup>70</sup>

#### IV

Christopher Endy, writing about American tourists to France in the 1950s and 1960s, notes that the majority of travelers “refused to reduce their trips to Cold War-themed vacations.”<sup>71</sup> Escapism, adventure, and relaxation – more so than patriotic mission and political ideology – motivated Americans to travel abroad. To understand American perceptions of and relations with the outside world, historians must thus look beyond the Cold War. This desire to escape was present, as well, among the tourists and travel boosters in Taiwan and Hong Kong. The unique roles that these destinations played in Sino-American relations and, more broadly, East-West conflict, however, made this proclivity to “ditch” the Cold War far more difficult.

The Cold War was apparent from the moment travel boosters considered promoting tourism industries in Taiwan and Hong Kong. The key to boosting tourism to those destinations was making them seem stable, alluring, and exciting. Such “spin” was, however, difficult to maintain. Because of their associations with the PRC, Taiwan and Hong Kong both suffered from palpable concerns about safety. These concerns often were logical and justified. The Chinese Communist military had, in 1954 and 1958, shelled two of the small islands between Taiwan and the mainland. As the United States

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<sup>70</sup> “The Measure of Tourist Traffic in the Pacific,” *Pacific Travel News*, January 1962; “Taiwan – Sales Data and Three 72-Hour Tour Ideas,” *Pacific Travel News*, March 1962. Following on the success of the revised policy, the Taiwan government, in preparation for the 1964 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, allowed tourists to visit for five days without a visa. “News From the Field of Travel,” *New York Times*, 26 July 1964.

<sup>71</sup> Endy, *Cold War Holidays*, 9-10.

beefed up its presence in the Taiwan Straits and the Eisenhower administration toyed with the idea of using nuclear weapons, a military conflict between the PRC and the United States seemed imminent. Even when the Communist regime was not bombing the offshore islands, the Chinese civil war (though technically over by 1949) remained a constant presence in Taiwan. Large, ominous photographs of Jiang Jieshi and the “ever-present” Nationalist soldiers in the streets gave Taiwan the feel of a “big brother state,” while ubiquitous posters with irredentist messages drove home the lingering unease between the Nationalist and Communist regimes.<sup>72</sup>

In Hong Kong, as well, the Cold War could not hide. U.S., British, Nationalist, and Communist officials all saw the potential in using Hong Kong as a base for trade, travel, espionage, and propaganda. Because of this constant struggle by all sides to use Hong Kong to advance foreign policy interests, the colony quickly became a cosmopolitan “Cold War city.” While the constant interaction between Britons, Americans, and Chinese made Hong Kong “officially neutral in regard to all politics,” in practice such neutrality rarely prevailed. A 1956 clash in Hong Kong between Communists and pro-Nationalists, for instance, led to street riots and local officials encouraged tourists to remain in their hotels. More than just the occasional outburst of conflict, looming over the British colony was the knowledge that the PRC could easily swallow up Hong Kong at any moment.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Greg MacGregor, “A Political Guide for Tourists: Hong Kong, Taiwan, the Philippines,” *Saturday Review*, 7 January 1961; Yager, “Tourism on Taiwan,” 8 October 1957, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 211, NARA.

<sup>73</sup> Anne Norman, “Meals for Millions: Thailand Fascinates, Hong Kong Saddens, Says Dr. Iliana Cosby,” *Los Angeles Times*, 8 November 1956; MacGregor, “A Political Guide for Tourists: Hong Kong, Taiwan, the Philippines,” *Saturday Review*, 7 January 1961.

Tourists were not entirely turned off by the precariousness of Taiwan and Hong Kong. There was a certain cachet associated with risky and unpredictable tourism. The physical, cultural, and psychological proximity of Taiwan and Hong Kong to “Red China” infused those tourist destinations with a greater sense of importance and a degree of added excitement. Henry Lieberman wrote that the Hong Kong-PRC border was, in fact, one of the primary draws for American tourists.<sup>74</sup> A HKTA survey backed this up, noting the first question asked by most incoming American tourists: “Where is the Red border and how far away is it?”<sup>75</sup> To many incoming tourists, Hong Kong was a proverbial peephole on an isolated nation. Satiating these voyeuristic and thrill-seeking tendencies, Hong Kong’s “Red China Border Tours,” which promised an up-close look at the “forbidden” PRC became increasingly popular among foreign visitors.

Travel writers, as well, fed into this fixation. One guide promised that a drive in Hong Kong’s New Territories offered a “good glimpse behind the Bamboo Curtain.”<sup>76</sup> Another directed tourists to gaze toward the “barbed-wire fence and a few Communist soldiers in mustard-color uniforms at the frontier station on the Kowloon-Canton railway.”<sup>77</sup> By 1962, according to one *Saturday Review* article, the only “spice” remaining in the Portuguese colony of Macao was “the proximity of the Communist neighbors sitting on the far side of the West River with their patrol boats.”<sup>78</sup> John Caldwell, with a note of sensationalism, informed his readers: “Taiwan is just 100 miles off the coast of Red China so that its air defenses must always be on the alert. As your

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<sup>74</sup> Henry R. Lieberman, “Hong Kong Haven,” *New York Times*, 4 March 1956.

<sup>75</sup> Quoted in Jacques Nevard, “Hong Kong Heat Wave,” *New York Times*, 18 August 1962.

<sup>76</sup> “PATA Publicity Man Reports on Swing Around the Pacific,” *Pacific Travel News*, May 1962.

<sup>77</sup> “The Fragrant Harbor,” *Time*, 21 November 1960.

<sup>78</sup> Arthur Knight, “‘Booked For Travel,’” *Saturday Review*, 7 April 1962.

plane taxis down the runway, you may note constantly manned anti-aircraft batteries on both sides.”<sup>79</sup>

But these allusions to danger and imminent war only went so far. The tense environment was, on the whole, a deterrent to the average tourist. For the same reasons that tourists and travel companies hesitated to set their sights on Taiwan and Hong Kong in the early 1950s, they continued to exhibit anxiety in the latter half of the decade. Both Taiwan and Hong Kong consistently ranked within the top four countries seen as “unsafe” by potential tourists. In 1958 Taiwan topped the list, with nearly 30 percent of tourists concerned about travel there. Likewise, of those tourists who felt that Hong Kong was a dangerous destination, 68 percent cited apprehensions over “communism,” “war danger,” and “Chinese danger.”<sup>80</sup>

U.S. officials recognized that this perception would prove to be a major obstacle for tourism development, particularly in a location like Taiwan that had a poor reputation for drawing foreign tourists and had only a minimal tourist plant already in place. In a report from the International Cooperation Administration (ICA), a State Department agency that played a major role in providing technical assistance and financing for local tourism programs, officials noted that Taiwan would never achieve its full tourist potential as long as would-be visitors saw it as an “active war zone subject to possible immediate hostilities.” ICA, in fact, long considered Taiwan a low priority due to its precarious position on the world stage.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Caldwell, *Far East Travel Guide*, 114-15.

<sup>80</sup> The percentage of American and Canadian travelers who viewed Far East destinations as “unsafe” were as follows: Taiwan (28.6 percent); South Vietnam (13.9 percent); South Korea (13.7 percent); and Hong Kong (8.7 percent). The remaining fifteen nations surveyed had rates of 7 percent or lower. Clement, *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East*, 17, 107.

<sup>81</sup> ICA Taipei to ICA Washington, “Tourism Activities,” 18 August 1959, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 240, NARA.

Travel boosters on both sides of the Pacific, realizing that tourism worked best in a generally stable and peaceful environment, consequently downplayed Cold War tensions. Advertisements, articles, guides, and government reports embraced escapism more than gritty realism, recreation more than politics, and enjoyment more than mission. One article introducing would-be travelers to Taiwan read: “It is a big mistake to let front-page datelines keep Taiwan off an Asian itinerary. Nature knows nothing of politics and troubles, and the island’s beauty and its people’s charm have been untouched by the heat of international debates.”<sup>82</sup> Caldwell, despite his frequent anticommunist diatribes, opened his Far East travel guide by telling readers: “The Far East shows little evidence of the war it has experienced. The hotels are good and getting better. The Grand Hotel in supposedly isolated and war-threatened Taiwan...is one of the world’s best.” Despite the expectations of many tourists, he continued, Taiwan was not an “embattled island fortress where people live in dugouts while fearfully awaiting enemy attack.”<sup>83</sup> David Dodge, similarly, assured American travelers that “the guns aren’t booming at American rubbernecks. They never have boomed at American rubbernecks. The never will boom at American rubbernecks.”<sup>84</sup>

Washington reports, as well, drove home this theme of stability. To discourage tourists from associating Hong Kong and Taiwan tourism with impending war, a Commerce Department tourism survey, carried out in cooperation with PATA, recommended highlighting the safety of travel to those destinations in any national advertising campaign. Going even further, the survey encouraged referring to Hong Kong as “The Crown Colony of Hong Kong” in order to “counteract the impression...that

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<sup>82</sup> Florence Teets, “Tropical Taiwan, An Island for ‘Viewing’,” *New York Times*, 17 May 1959.

<sup>83</sup> Caldwell, *Far East Travel Guide*, 7, 116.

<sup>84</sup> Dodge, *Poor Man’s Guide*, 9-10.

Hong Kong is in China.”<sup>85</sup> Private industry came to these conclusions as well. Pan Am’s 1951 *New Horizons* travel guide stated only that Hong Kong lay within southeast China, but the 1957 edition specified that its “correct designation is ‘Hong Kong, British Crown Colony’ ...*not* China [italics in original].” Don Briggs, who worked closely with HKTA and PATA in the development of his travel guide, included “Don’t Say Hong Kong, CHINA” in his long list of inappropriate behavior for tourists.<sup>86</sup> Attempting to protect Taiwan from similar associations with the PRC and general instability, U.S. officials encouraged the Nationalist government to employ the Hamilton Wright public relations firm (which it soon did) in order to develop and distribute stories on the economic and political stability of Taiwan.<sup>87</sup>

The travel discourse did not, however, entirely hide the ongoing controversy and conflict between Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the PRC. In regard to Taiwan, most guides included a brief history of the island and obligatory remarks about the “fall” of mainland China. The manner in which these writings “sold” Taiwan, however, centered on the physical beauty and recreational activities that Taiwan offered. American journalist and Taiwan resident Barbara Hoard, for example, applauded the “phenomenal” results of Taiwan’s tourism promotion campaign and pointed tourists toward the island’s Buddhist temples, tranquil lakes, and national parks.<sup>88</sup> Even George Yeh, Taiwan’s Ambassador to the United States, failed to mention the PRC once in his opinion piece extolling the virtues of Taiwan tourism. Instead, he highlighted the island’s “[n]umerous scenic spots

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<sup>85</sup> Pacific Area Tourism Development Project report, July 1959, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA; Clement, *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East*, 106-07.

<sup>86</sup> Pan American Airways, *New Horizons* (Pan American World Airways, Inc., 1951), in Series I, Box 423, PAA; Pan American Airways, *New Horizons* (1957), 446; Briggs, *Orient Guide*.

<sup>87</sup> Clement, *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East*, 249.

<sup>88</sup> Hoard, “The Miniature Republic of China,” in *Fodor’s Guide to Japan and East Asia 1963*, eds. Fodor and Fisher, 518-46.

and tourist attractions” and boasted that at least five international airlines maintained regular service into Taipei.<sup>89</sup> Even the terminology of most travel guides and articles sidestepped the divisiveness of the Cold War. Few traveler writers used the term “Formosa” – the Dutch name for the island preferred by the China Lobby and used in much of Washington’s official documentation – relying instead on the less provocative, Chinese-approved “Taiwan.”

More dramatically, one of the trends in advertising and writing was to discuss Taiwan or Hong Kong barely at all. APL advertisements, which appeared in all the leading travel magazines in the 1950s and 1960s, showed photographs of laidback passengers enjoying sun-drenched decks, fine dining, and cruise activities. One APL advertisement for a transpacific cruise announced: “So Much To See...Enjoy...Remember!” The illustrations in the advertisement, however, depicted a buffet dinner, sunbathing vacationers, a side-view of the luxurious *President Cleveland*, and only a small image of the Japanese coast.<sup>90</sup> Even APL’s slogan throughout the period – “All this fun...and the Orient too!” – demonstrated the priorities of many American tourists. Along these same lines, many travel guides included as much discussion on the *means* of travel as they did the destination itself. Explaining why he so admired Taiwan, Sydney Clark, in his *All the Best* series, highlighted the Civil Air Transport (CAT) aircraft that brought him to the island. While acknowledging that the aircraft represented the tenacity and freedom of the Chinese people, he also dedicated many lines to the attire

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<sup>89</sup> Yeh, “‘Formosa’ Was Well Named,” *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 28 May 1961

<sup>90</sup> Advertisement, “So Much To See...Enjoy...Remember!,” *Holiday*, October 1952.

of the attractive stewardesses on board the plane.<sup>91</sup> Ships and planes became destinations in themselves and Taiwan and Hong Kong faded to the background.

The campaign in Washington and the private tourism industry to downplay the Cold War in the public space was part of a broader effort to rebuild the image of the Far East and Pacific. More than just a means of maximizing profits in an unstable tourist environment, “image creation” – through architecture, advertisements, travel guides, and articles – served as a primary means of creating “knowledge” of Asia. The infusion of these images in popular culture, moreover, meant that despite the relatively small number of Americans who actually visited the region, knowledge of the Far East was quite widespread.

This aspect of tourism was not entirely unique. Throughout the 1950s Americans demonstrated a heightened interest in Asia, a trend that materialized in numerous popular culture venues. Christina Klein has looked to the works of James Michener, Broadway musicals such as *The King and I* and *South Pacific*, and films like *The World of Suzy Wong* and *Love is a Many-Splendored Thing*, all of which earned accolades and widespread popular appeal. Tourists, as well, contributed to such awareness. Referencing American tourism in postwar France, Christopher Endy notes that outside of immigrants coming to the United States, “tourist impressions” served as one of the primary ways that Americans “knew” foreign countries.<sup>92</sup>

These imaginings and images were not necessarily accurate. As seen above, some images, in fact, explicitly eschewed objectivity and developed false representations of the

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<sup>91</sup> Clark, *All the Best* (1964), 319-20.

<sup>92</sup> Endy, *Cold War Holidays*, 7; Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 114.



Far East.<sup>93</sup> Popular depictions of Hong Kong, in particular, developed layers of romantic, exotic imagery that masked the true character of the British colony. As one scholar notes, even as Americans began visiting Hong Kong in larger numbers by the late 1950s, the city “served more as an imaginary landscape than actual topography.”<sup>94</sup> Humorist Art Buchwald underscored this disconnect between image and reality, joking that most tourists to Hong Kong were traveling 18,000 miles either to buy a cheap suit or meet Suzie Wong, a reference to the 1960 film that followed the romance of a young Englishman and a Hong Kong prostitute.<sup>95</sup>

Regardless of their objectivity, Americans depended on these popular visions of Asia as they developed their own attitudes toward the region. This was especially true in locales like Taiwan and Hong Kong, with which few Americans were familiar and to which fewer Americans actually traveled.<sup>96</sup> Travel guides and reading material in general regularly depicted Hong Kong, for example, as a romantic Eastern port, a peephole on the PRC, and a bastion of democracy and freedom. A 1966 HKTA report noted that roughly half of all American tourists to Hong Kong used a travel guide in the course of their vacation. Eighty-three percent said they acquired their knowledge of the British colony from “general reading.”<sup>97</sup> These popular perceptions, moreover, had some impact on official U.S. policy. While there was no “one-to one” relationship between popular

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<sup>93</sup> Harold Isaacs, in his classic work on Asia, makes this point in regard to American “knowledge” of the region. “Knowledge,” he wrote, “is a highly relative matter,” and American perceptions and attitudes from China and the rest of the region derived largely from sources other than objective fact and academic study. Harold Isaacs, *Scratches on Our Minds: American Images of China and India* (New York: The John Day Company, 1958), 37, 40.

<sup>94</sup> Thomas Y. T. Luk, “Hong Kong as City/Imaginary in *The World of Suzie Wong*, *Love is a Many Splendored Thing*, and *Chinese Box*,” *New Asia Academic Bulletin* Vol. 18 (2002), 74.

<sup>95</sup> Art Buchwald, “Off to the World of Suzy Wong,” *Los Angeles Times*, 12 May 1960.

<sup>96</sup> This phenomenon, moreover, was not isolated to China in the post-World War II era. Akira Iriye suggests that because most Americans would never travel to the Far East, let alone China, travelers’ perceptions – along with inherited generalizations and myths about China – shaped the American image of China. Iriye, *Across the Pacific*, 3-7; Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 114.

<sup>97</sup> Hazell, *The Tourist Industry in Hong Kong, 1966*, 26.

images and foreign policy decisions, the images, in order to be effective, had to fit into a general discourse with which most Americans sympathized and understood. U.S. policymakers, no less than the average American traveler, recognized these popular images as at least part of the “true” China. In other words, these depictions formed a portion of the “cultural space,” within which foreign policies were developed, executed, and challenged.<sup>98</sup>

Very much at the center of this “image building” project was PATA. PATA, which by the late 1950s was emerging as the chief institutional driving force behind tourism to the region, rapidly and dramatically expanded its influence. Membership grew from 80 member delegations in 1953, to 500 in 1962, to 800 in 1966.<sup>99</sup> With its growing influence – and an enlarged budget to match – PATA stepped up its promotion campaign to “sell” the Pacific to travelers. Its advertising budget of \$8,000 in 1955 jumped to \$92,000 in 1958, to \$140,000 in 1959, and to \$187,000 by 1961. Maintaining focus on the North American tourist market, PATA directed its advertising campaign at U.S. and Canadian periodicals, hoping to offset the overwhelming dominance of North American, European, and Caribbean tourism in the public space. Advertising campaigns like “Discover the Festive, Fabled, Fascinating Pacific,” “Explore the Wonderful World of the Pacific,” and “Discover the Pacific,” adorned the pages of *Holiday*, *Saturday Review*, *Sunset*, *Esquire*, *National Geographic*, *Atlantic*, *New Yorker*, and most large city papers. “Total impressions” – a phrase that PATA executives developed in reference to the number of times that advertisements were printed – jumped from 8 million in 1959 to 32

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<sup>98</sup> Christopher Jespersen, *American Images of China, 1931-1949* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1996), xix-xx; Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 8-9.

<sup>99</sup> F. Marvin Plake, “Pacific Travel Will Hit New Records in 1962,” *Pacific Travel News*, January 1962; F. Marvin Plake, “Report to Members,” *Pacific Travel News*, February 1966.

million in 1962.<sup>100</sup> Though it is difficult to determine the impact of these direct advertising campaigns, the fact that PATA, by the beginning of the 1960s, was annually receiving about 14,000 direct inquiries from readers (three times greater than the average inquiry level for travel advertising), signaled that the organization's promotional campaign was having an effect.<sup>101</sup>

Beyond advertisements, PATA supplied photographs and brief news stories to numerous periodicals, keeping readers up to date on new developments in Far East and Pacific tourism. In 1958 PATA distributed seventy-seven travel stories to 550 travel editors. PATA executives estimated that 22 million North Americans regularly read about the Pacific because of PATA's publicity department.<sup>102</sup> PATA, moreover, worked with well-established travel writers and major movie studios to acclimate the average American to Far East travel. Teaming up with Eugene Fodor, Sydney Clark, and John Caldwell, PATA officials urged writers to produce more travel guides for destinations in the Far East and Pacific.

Even with the increasing success in exposing potential tourists to the Far East and Pacific, PATA executives struggled to find suitable outlets for promotional and informational material. A solution emerged in 1957, when PATA established *Pacific Travel News* – a trade magazine that detailed the activities of PATA and offered news articles, tour suggestions, travel information, and advertisements for travel agents and other travel insiders. *Pacific Travel News* proved very successful and circulation rose

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<sup>100</sup> "PATA's Ads Are in Their 4<sup>th</sup> Year," *Pacific Travel News*, January 1962.

<sup>101</sup> This number of "inquiries" had grown steadily in the late 1950s. In 1958 the number was 9,000 and in 1959 it was 13,000. "PATA Launches 3<sup>rd</sup> Ad Push," *Pacific Travel News*, September 1960; "PATA's Ads Are in Their 4<sup>th</sup> Year," *Pacific Travel News*, January 1962.

<sup>102</sup> George Turner, "For PATA 1958 Was a Year of Achievement," *Pacific Travel News*, January 1959; "PATA Launches 3<sup>rd</sup> Ad Push," *Pacific Travel News*, September 1960.

from 5,000 for its initial release in 1957 to nearly 8,000 two years later.<sup>103</sup> Unlike *Holiday and Travel*, *Pacific Travel News* was not meant for the average tourist, but its advertisements, tour suggestions, and advertising campaigns made their way into travel agencies across the country and littered the travel sections of popular periodicals. The magazine, moreover, allowed PATA to expand its collaboration with top-level talent in the travel industry. In 1957 PATA teamed up with MGM studios and launched a “Win a Pacific Island” contest in conjunction with MGM’s film “The Little Hut.” Advertisements for the contest, which became a regular feature in *Pacific Travel News*, resulted in a “barrage of publicity” as PATA received 50,000 entry forms.<sup>104</sup> In August 1960 John Caldwell, the popular travel writer, produced two tourism articles exclusively for *Pacific Travel News*, detailing “off-the-track” tourist sites in Southeast Asia and alerting tourists to “common pitfalls” they might encounter. But overall, Caldwell portrayed a “romantic Asia” to which American travelers – “bored with Europe” – could travel with ease and enjoyment.<sup>105</sup>

Though PATA rarely made it explicit in its advertising and promotional literature, its portrayal of the Far East and Pacific in the 1950s and 1960s worked to overturn the image of the region as unstable, unsafe, and unready for tourists. The popularity of these images shows that, despite efforts by government officials and some within the travel industry to establish a Cold War script for American tourists, many travelers refused to become active Cold Warriors. Cultural historians, looking at American domestic life during the two decades following World War II, have argued that Americans often

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<sup>103</sup> “Turner Resigns as PATA’s Executive Director,” *Pacific Travel News*, October 1959.

<sup>104</sup> Advertisement, “Win an Island!,” *Pacific Travel News*, June 1957; “California Couple Named Winners of Ava Ava Island in the South Pacific,” *Pacific Travel News*, December 1957.

<sup>105</sup> John Caldwell, “Know More of South Asia,” *Pacific Travel News*, August 1960.

refused to integrate the Cold War into domestic, popular culture. Just as Disney movies, soap operas, and John Wayne films enjoyed far more popularity in the 1950s than did explicitly Cold War-themed entertainment such as *The Red Menace* (1949), *I Married a Communist* (1949), and *I Led Three Lives* (1952), so too did travel advertising and writing that focused more on the exoticism and leisure of tourism than on its strategic and political implications.<sup>106</sup>

## V

This argument, however, only goes so far. While government officials, writers, advertisers, and industry insiders took great care to build up Taiwan and Hong Kong as safe and recreational destinations detached from the troublesome realities of the post-World War II environment, they simultaneously gave “purpose” to tourism by placing it squarely within the context of the international politics, the Cold War, and Sino-American conflict. Examining post-World War II middlebrow culture and popular attitudes toward Asia, Christina Klein notes that the Cold War “made Asia important to the United States in ways that it had not been before.”<sup>107</sup> International travel, a significant part of the cultural landscape of the 1950s and 1960s, seemingly allowed Americans to place themselves (either physically or vicariously) in the center of world affairs.<sup>108</sup> *McKay’s Guide*, for instance, reminded readers that “every...traveler is an ambassador of good will.”<sup>109</sup> White House official Clarence Randall, writing the introduction to a

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<sup>106</sup> Filene, “‘Cold War Culture’ Doesn’t Say it All,” in *Rethinking Cold War Culture*, eds. Kuznick and Gilbert, 162-63.

<sup>107</sup> Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 102-03.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>109</sup> Gellhorn, *McKay’s Guide* (1959), 45.

government report on tourism, similarly wrote that travel was a “unique instrument of friendly, peaceful communication among the nations and the peoples of the earth.”<sup>110</sup>

Several of the most influential “producers of knowledge” on Asia – travel writers and industry insiders among them – were, moreover, those individuals with a Cold War outlook that resembled attitudes in Washington. Embracing the “purposeful” approach to tourism, these individuals saw travel not merely as a means of forging cultural connections, but also as a way of strengthening U.S. containment policy. James Michener had demonstrated this fusion of “tourist guide” and Cold Warrior literature in *Voice of Asia* and, as recreational tourism to the Far East rose in tandem with Sino-American tensions, this genre gained influence.

John Caldwell, for instance, saw tourism as a blend of recreation and purposeful, anticommunist behavior. Increased American travel to the region, Caldwell noted, was a leading explanation for improved perceptions of the United States; in the early 1950s – before the American tourism boom and before President Eisenhower made his successful 1959 tour through Asia – “American-baiting was a common sport” and local residents generally had more sympathy with Beijing than they did Washington. After Eisenhower’s trip, Caldwell noted the increased affection directed at Americans. Referencing India, Caldwell wrote that while the nation “still is a neutral...she is neutral on ‘our side’.”<sup>111</sup>

Caldwell, moreover, linked American tourists to the Far East with the military and political treaties that bound the U.S. to the region, and urged visitors to recognize their potential impact.<sup>112</sup> Tourists, themselves, could advance or cripple the cause of

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<sup>110</sup> Randall, “Report to the President of the United States: International Travel,” 17 April 1958, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 1, NARA.

<sup>111</sup> Caldwell, “Know More of South Asia,” *Pacific Travel News*, August 1960.

<sup>112</sup> Caldwell, *Far East Travel Guide*, 7-8.

international freedom through their actions. Caldwell urged them to avoid stereotypical American behavior – drunkenness, over-tipping, inappropriate dress, and ethnocentrism – which tended to make American travelers quite conspicuous and gave credence to stereotypes of arrogance and ignorance. This simple modification of behavior, he insisted, would deprive the “communist world” of propagandistic fodder.<sup>113</sup>

The relevance of the American tourist was even more pronounced in areas like Taiwan and Hong Kong, in which the U.S.-PRC rivalry was readily apparent. Taiwan, Caldwell insisted, “is more than a place.” The notion that Taiwan was more Chinese than the PRC – a perception derived both from U.S. restrictions that cut off Americans from the mainland and from the growing belief that communism, instability, and hostility were not genuine Chinese traits – came through in Caldwell’s travel guide. Taiwan was “*the* [italics in original] China recognized by the United States and the more vigorously anti-communist countries of the world.” In this sense, Taiwan “is anathema to the Communist world, denounced, threatened, and coveted.”<sup>114</sup> Referencing Hong Kong, Caldwell detailed the history behind the Comprehensive Certificates of Origin (CCOs), explaining that purchase restrictions were in place because of the continuing U.S.-PRC conflict. After citing some past cases of “trading with the enemy,” Caldwell railed against those tourists who would try to circumvent the U.S. Customs policies: “As far as I am personally concerned, it is a matter of patriotism and of being a law-abiding citizen.”<sup>115</sup>

Numerous other travel writers, as well, routinely invoked the East-West conflict in their discussions of tourism to the region. In *Fodor’s Guide*, Doris L. Rich called Hong Kong the “West Berlin of Asia” and noted that its “political future [was] threatened by

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 41-43.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 159.

the Communist colossus which borders it.” Sydney Clark similarly referred to Taiwan as the “welcoming world of Free China,” and optimistically predicted that the “Communist rebellion” was merely a “temporary phase.” Robert S. Kane’s *Asia A to Z* travel guide noted that without the establishment of the Bamboo Curtain, Hong Kong would still be a relatively unimportant “tiny British colony.”<sup>116</sup>

Taiwan’s own travel literature also scattered subtle and not-so-subtle attacks on the PRC around idyllic descriptions of Taiwan’s landmarks and attractions. Such political polemics were to be expected, considering that travel services in Taiwan were more closely associated with the national government than were comparable agencies in the United States. According to a TVA brochure, Taiwan’s capital of Taipei exuded “the pulse of the nation, the determination of the Chinese people to maintain their freedom, even though the great mainland is at present in the hands of the Communists.” Taiwan, furthermore, was “a demonstration of democracy in action, a prosperous pocket-size China, the achievement of free men who have a will to work – not industrial progress at the price of human slavery.”<sup>117</sup>

Such Cold War imagery was not limited to travel literature. The Hamilton Wright Organization – a leading public relations firm that had gained prominence in the early twentieth century for turning Egypt’s pyramids into tourist attractions – worked on Taiwan’s behalf to produce a variety of promotional materials, including short films, photographs, and press releases. While the company promised that these “publicity campaigns” stayed “entirely clear of politics and ‘political propaganda’,” its objectives

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<sup>116</sup> Doris L. Rich, “China in a Gray Flannel Suit,” in *Fodor’s Guide to Japan and East Asia 1968*, eds. Eugene Fodor and Robert C. Fisher (New York: David McKay Company, 1968), 475; Clark, *All the Best* (1964), 264, 319; Robert S. Kane, *Asia A to Z* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1963), 122.

<sup>117</sup> Taiwan Visitors Association, “Visit Taiwan,” February 1959, in Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 240, NARA.



were, nonetheless, to boost mutual understanding as well as foreign investment – both of which were strong “antidote[s] to communism.” Epitomizing the approach of the publicity firm, the tagline for one film on Taiwan, “Majestic Island,” read: “The story of a tiny part of China, the island of Taiwan, where Chinese tradition, expressed in love of home and country, still prevails free from Communist domination.”<sup>118</sup>

Hamilton Wright, moreover, worked closely with Taiwan and U.S. officials in the promotion and development of a Taiwan tourism industry. Wright, for instance, was regularly in touch with ICA officials and had, at their request, added specific scenes to his 1958 documentary, “Fortress Formosa,” in order to depict Taiwan in a manner that better reflected U.S. interests. Wright seemed unfazed by the propagandistic aspects of his work, standing behind his films “even if we have to turn the place into a ‘Hollywood’ to create news.”<sup>119</sup> In testimony before Congress, Wright fully acknowledged that his promotional material worked to “arouse public opinion in the United States . . . and to create a sympathetic understanding of Free China that would have dramatic impact on members of the United Nations and prevent the seating of Red China.”<sup>120</sup>

Wright’s “productions” made significant inroads into the mainstream media. Universal-International Pictures distributed “Majestic Island” and other Hollywood studios such as Warner Brothers and Twentieth Century Fox routinely worked with the publicity firm. Writing to Assistant Secretary of Commerce Henry Kearns in May 1959, Wright boasted that his company had six “featurettes” currently showing in theaters

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<sup>118</sup> Advertising brochure for “Majestic Island,” in General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>119</sup> Wright to Kearns, 18 May 1959, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>120</sup> Quoted in Karla K. Gower, “The Fear of Public Relations in Foreign Affairs: An Examination of the 1963 Fulbright Hearings Into Foreign Agents,” *Public Relations Review* 31 (2005), 42.

across the country. “Fortress Formosa,” for example, showed for seven weeks at New York’s Radio City Music Hall. Hundreds of television stations ran Wright’s “short subjects.” The leading wire services, moreover, regularly distributed stories and photographs to leading media outlets. Hamilton Wright photographs and articles, consequently, appeared regularly in the travel columns of the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Life*, and *Time*.<sup>121</sup>

The luxury hotel, often the most explicit symbol of tourism’s presence, in itself also contributed to the political dialogue and shaped the Cold War consensus. On the one hand, these hotels served as a means of escape. In volatile or uncomfortable settings, luxury hotels often served as the only source of refuge, familiarity, and leisure. As Annabel Jane Wharton writes, the Hilton hotel – in its various manifestations around the world – was literally “a little America.” Its manicured lawns, swimming pools, air-conditioning, telephones, and familiar American delicacies, all combined to radiate “the new and powerful presence of the United States.” Advertisements, and the architecture itself, served to depict tourist hotels as dramatic examples of Western familiarity in the midst of an “alien territory.”<sup>122</sup> Along these lines, *Fortune* magazine labeled the IHC Mandarin one of several “imperturbable oases in a clamorous world.”<sup>123</sup> Similarly, commenting on a stay at Taiwan’s Grand Hotel, one travel writer noted that while the “Reds still shell the offshore islands...on Taiwan it’s as quiet as a butterfly in flight.”<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> For examples, see Nancy and Horace Sutton, “All Quiet in Haiti,” *New York Times*, 28 May 1950; Walter Breede, “Europe Sets Sights on a Tourist Boom this Year,” *Washington Post*, 10 June 1951; and Teets, “Tropical Taiwan, an Island for ‘Viewing’,” *New York Times*, 17 May 1959.

<sup>122</sup> Wharton, *Building the Cold War*, 1-6.

<sup>123</sup> “The Great Hotels: Imperturbable Oases in a Clamorous World,” *Fortune*, November 1967.

<sup>124</sup> Hulse, “Taiwan---Cold War is Warm---Friendships are Warmer,” *Los Angeles Times*, 22 April 1962.

On the other hand, the men behind these hotels intended their structures to go beyond “insulation”; they built them to be bulwarks of American democracy and visible icons of U.S. containment. Conrad Hilton, in many ways the personification of the postwar travel boom, made this connection explicit: “An integral part of my dream was to show countries most exposed to Communism the other side of the coin – the fruits of the free world.”<sup>125</sup> Similarly, in a letter to Henry Kearns encouraging government support in financing Hilton hotels overseas, executive vice president John Houser noted that “private American business...with appropriate help and guidance...is so important to the development of a peaceful and prosperous world.”<sup>126</sup>

The same was true with commercial airlines. According to Pan American President Juan Trippe, the dramatic reduction in air travel costs in the post-World War II era was, in itself, a symbol of democracy, freeing most Americans from the “high walls of an economic jail.” But more than just contributing to the democratization of the country, airlines played a crucial role in the ongoing fight against communism. For the United States to be the leader of the free world, Trippe insisted that Americans needed to “know and understand foreign lands.” The very “survival of the free world,” in fact, was linked to increased commercial air routes across the Atlantic and Pacific and a commensurate increase in foreign travel.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Conrad Hilton, *Be My Guest* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1957), 237.

<sup>126</sup> Houser to Kearns, 22 August 1958, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>127</sup> For examples, see Trippe, “Aviation and the Cold War,” 17 December 1954; Series I, Box 458, PAA; Trippe, “Address of Welcome, 11<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting I.A.T.A.,” 17 October 1955, Series I, Box 458, PAA; and Trippe, “Address to 12 Annual General Meeting I.A.T.A.,” 17 September 1956, Series I, Box 458, PAA.

## VI

Writing in 1961 on the status of Hong Kong tourism, PATA executive director F. Marvin Plake commented: “almost every American...has firmly in his mind an image of what he will find in Hong Kong when his ship idles through the beautiful junk strewn harbor to tie up, or as his jet plane swoops down between the peaks onto one of the finest airfields in the Far East.”<sup>128</sup> Due in large part to the efforts of PATA, Plake’s assessment was on point. With the rapid construction of hotels, expansion of air routes, and active involvement of local governments, tourism to the Far East grew at exponential rates. Still, relatively few Americans ever made it as far as Hong Kong’s harbors or airstrips, let alone the more obscure destination of Taiwan. The image of the Far East as a tourist mecca, however, was readily available to tourists and armchair travelers alike. The creation and dissemination of these heterogeneous images throughout the American public space gave travelers and travel boosters a great deal of influence over popular opinion and, in turn, foreign relations.

The position of these touristic images in the context of the Cold War, however, was never standard. On the one hand, the purposefully politicized language and images of Caldwell, Hilton, Wright, and Trippe clearly complemented the Cold War rhetoric of top-level officials in Washington. These individuals sought to use their positions within the travel industry to integrate tourists fully into international affairs and make them active agents of containment. On the other hand, the sense that the PRC was a true threat and that Taiwan and Hong Kong could, at any moment, fall behind the Bamboo Curtain, was tempered by depictions of calm landscapes, scenic beauty, and modern skylines. With

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<sup>128</sup> F. Marvin Plake, “Orient Showing Vigorous Approach to Travel Problems, Says PATA Director,” *Pacific Travel News*, January 1961

Americans understandably scared of nuclear war and communist takeover, it often proved easier and more effective to downplay the Cold War. Travelers, travel boosters and, in turn, government officials, often seemed more interested in Taiwan and Hong Kong as “stepping stones” on tourist itineraries of the Far East than they did as bases for anti-PRC activity.

The two sets of images were not wholly incompatible. The common link was that both presented Taiwan and Hong Kong as *the* true China. In the former group, authors, film producers, and architects made explicit arguments linking Taiwan and Hong Kong to the cause of freedom, the steady sabotage of the PRC, and the success of the United States in the Cold War. In this manner, individual tourists traveling to “Free China” actively played a positive role in the ongoing Cold War. The latter group of images never designated tourists as vital actors in the Cold War, nor did it muddy Taiwan and Hong Kong tourism with references to warfare, East-West struggle, and containment. Nevertheless, merely by establishing Hong Kong and Taiwan as legitimate tourist destinations and showcasing their “Chinese-ness,” these images reinforced the idea that Taiwan and Hong Kong were as close to China as American tourists would get and that those destinations could, if need be, serve as culinary, aesthetic, and cultural substitutes for the real thing.

Titles of travel articles on Taiwan and Hong Kong – which included “The Pieces of China that Border the Pacific,” “China in a Gray Flannel Suit,” and “The Miniature Republic of China” – all point to this urge to find ersatz Chinas.<sup>129</sup> A Department of Commerce tourism survey, likewise, recognized that “Chinese atmosphere” was a unique

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<sup>129</sup> “The Pieces of China that Border the Pacific,” *Pacific Travel News*, February 1958; Rich, “China in a Gray Flannel Suit,” in *Fodor’s Guide to Japan and East Asia 1968*, eds., Fodor and Fisher; Hoard, “The Miniature Republic of China,” in *Fodor’s Guide to Japan and East Asia 1968*, eds. Fodor and Fisher, 519.

and marketable asset in both Taiwan and Hong Kong, and it encouraged local businesses, guides, and travel agents to exploit it fully. The average tourist, the report noted, “does not know the real difference between what is Taiwanese, what is Chinese, and what is aborigine. Experience seems to indicate, however, that tourists react favorably and are attracted to things Chinese, and these should be emphasized.” It encouraged future hotel construction to be “distinctly *Chinese* [italics in original] in architecture and design.”<sup>130</sup> Travel boosters should go further, “subsidizing traditional Chinese events, continuing to feature Chinese operas in promotional materials, and encouraging travel agents to schedule Chinese meals...for groups of tourists.” If tourists were seeking out “China,” Taiwan and Hong Kong travel officials were not about to disappoint them.<sup>131</sup>

This effort to Sinicize these outposts of “Free China,” however, went only so far. Such characterizations often had more to do with maximizing tourist interest and dollars than they did providing a means by which Taiwan or Hong Kong could actually counteract or undermine the PRC’s influence in the region. In Hong Kong in particular, because of the colony’s geographic proximity to the PRC, officials and travel promoters had to walk a fine line between highlighting the “Chinese-ness” of Hong Kong and implying that Hong Kong and the PRC were one and the same. To this end, the strategy of travel boosters was not intended to go so far as depicting Hong Kong as a bulwark against, or even an alternative to, the PRC. In fact, as discussed above, the trend in most travel guides was to use careful language to distinguish British Hong Kong from mainland China. The seemingly contradictory advice of highlighting Chinese attributes of Hong Kong while simultaneously distancing Hong Kong from China underscored that

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<sup>130</sup> Clement, *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East*, 251-52.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

travel boosters conceptualized Taiwan and Hong Kong's relationships with the PRC in terms that appealed to tourists. Tourists had vague, romanticized, and likely inaccurate conceptions of a "Chinese" vacation and Taiwan and Hong Kong seemed to fit the bill. The only thing that would disrupt the exotic voyage, however, would be the potential "war danger" coming from the PRC.

The ambiguity surrounding the image of tourism to Taiwan and Hong Kong again highlights the limitations of the Cold War in explaining the foreign relations of the post-World War II period. While tensions with the PRC and the ongoing efforts of Washington to contain communism clearly reflected and influenced travelers' perceptions and much of the travel discourse, those factors alone do not tell the whole story. Other motivations – outside the realm of Cold War – shaped public awareness, attitudes, and actions toward Taiwan and Hong Kong.

## Ch. 4 – Washington Takes a Leading Role: Tourism Policy and its Place in Cold War Containment, 1958-1961

The friendly tourist, his camera slung over his shoulder and his travelers' checks in his pocket, meets the people of other nations face to face. With acquaintance comes understanding. With understanding comes peace. More power to the tourist, the unofficial ambassador for us all.<sup>1</sup>

-- Secretary of Commerce, Sinclair Weeks, February 1958

I hold the strong conviction that tourism has deep significance for the peoples of the modern world, and that the benefits of travel can contribute to the cause of peace through improvement not only in terms of economic advancement but with respect to our political, cultural, and social relationships as well.<sup>2</sup>

-- Clarence B. Randall, *Report to the President of the United States*, 1958

Something happens to the spending habits of all tourists when they reach Hong Kong. Wallets fly open, purse-strings snap and money gushes forth in a golden shower.

-- Gene Gleason, *Hong Kong* (1963)

In Washington, just as had been the case in Hong Kong and Taipei, the dramatic rise of tourism to the Far East caught the attention of policymakers. While U.S. administrations since the end of World War II had incorporated tourism – to varying degrees – into their general foreign policy strategies, such efforts had been directed, for the most part, at Europe and the Caribbean. By the late 1950s, with Hong Kong, Japan, the Philippines, and Hawaii successfully challenging many European and Caribbean destinations in terms of the tourist market share, U.S. politicians and administration officials began directing more resources toward transpacific travel.

This effort took several forms, many of which fit nicely within Washington's Cold War arsenal. First and foremost, U.S. officials saw tourism to the Far East as an

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<sup>1</sup> Sinclair Weeks, "The Pacific Message," *Pacific Travel News*, February 1958.

<sup>2</sup> Randall, "International Travel: Report to the President of the United States," 17 April 1958, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 1, NARA.



economic strategy that would infuse local economies with stable U.S. currency. Just as U.S. officials saw foreign aid as a useful means of strengthening foreign economies and fending off communism, so too did they see tourism as an economic bulwark. In regard to Taiwan and Hong Kong, the cultural and political repercussions of tourism played a part in Washington's strategy as well. Bringing American tourists to these "alternative" Chinese destinations helped reinforce their legitimacy vis-à-vis the PRC and cemented transpacific sympathies and allegiance.

There was a limit, however, to Washington's incorporation of tourism into its containment policy or even policymakers' ability or willingness to control the development and direction of international travel. The unwieldiness of tourism as a foreign policy tool emerged, in part, from the fact that U.S. and foreign leaders were hesitant, and often outright opposed, to co-opt or restrict travel for reasons of economic, strategic, or political self-interest. The recreational connotation surrounding tourism and the fact that American – and increasingly international – tourists embraced the activity as a vital component of modern life, made it very difficult for national governments to fit tourism neatly into their general foreign policy strategies. At times, this meant merely that American tourism, and the policies that encouraged it, failed to advance U.S. Cold War strategy in the Far East. But such discrepancies between travel, travel policy, and U.S. Cold War objectives, also meant that tourism could produce unexpected results that challenged or conflicted outright with U.S. containment of the PRC.

Paralleling the dramatic rise in Hong Kong and Taiwan governmental support for tourism, the U.S. government began to take a more proactive position on travel to the Far East and worked to incorporate tourism into its general foreign policy. Contributing to this was the fact that in the latter half of the 1950s, Americans, more than any other nationality, dominated the wave of transpacific travelers. American tourism to the Far East and Pacific grew at more than double the rate of tourism to Europe. Americans, moreover, made up roughly half of all tourists to Taiwan and around 35 percent of tourist traffic to Hong Kong. As of 1962, in the region as a whole (excluding Hawaii), Americans made up over 40 percent of all tourists and contributed more than half of all tourist expenditures.<sup>3</sup> By comparison, while the actual number of American tourists to Europe was significantly higher, there were few European nations in which American tourists comprised more than 10 percent of total visitors.<sup>4</sup> The numbers gave U.S. officials more incentive to influence the nature of transpacific tourism and placed additional responsibility on Washington to take a leading role in promoting, facilitating, and expanding tourism to the region.

Within the Eisenhower administration, it was Clarence Randall, a member of the White House foreign economic policy team, who took the lead in shaping Washington's approach to tourism as a function of U.S. foreign policy. Randall had experience in the

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<sup>3</sup> "The Pacific: 70 Million Square Miles of Travel-Land," *Pacific Travel News*, February 1958; Plake, "Multitude of Problems Posed for the Pacific in Decade Ahead," *Pacific Travel News*, February 1960; "Soaring Visitors Totals Mark 1962 as Another Record Year for Pacific," *Pacific Travel News*, November 1962; Clement, *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East*, 96; Plake, "Pacific Travel Will Hit New Records in 1962," *Pacific Travel News*, January 1962.

<sup>4</sup> Michael L. Hoffman, "Tourism Now Europe's Best Dollar Earner," *New York Times*, 4 September 1955. This economic reality goes far in explaining why PATA maintained English as its official language whereas the IUOTO followed the precedent of the UN and employed several official languages. Ford H. Wilkins, "Tourism: What is to Come," *New York Times*, 13 December 1959.

field. Since the early years of the Eisenhower administration he had been a consistent voice for expanding the use of international travel. Though his early efforts never amounted to substantive reform, he received a boost in 1957 when New York Senator Jacob Javits included a brief and vague reference to a travel report in that year's Mutual Security Act.

The task of carrying out the report – which came with little funding – fell on Randall's shoulders. In this capacity, Randall was to act as both a lobbyist and point man for international travelers. Though tourism circulated billions of dollars a year and was second only to war in producing international exchanges and interactions, its grouping of disparate actors – private airline and shipping companies, advertising agencies, foreign governments, international travel associations, and individual tourists – made it difficult to formulate a coherent strategy for simplifying and expanding international travel. Compounding this disarray, numerous U.S. agencies – State, Commerce, Treasury, ICA, and USIA – all had various interests in and suggestions for overseas travel policy. Randall worked to consolidate, publicize, and pursue the agendas and strategies of these diverse and disconnected actors, many of whom were struggling to get their voices heard.

The final report, which Randall presented to Eisenhower in April 1958, provided a comprehensive outline of tourism's place in U.S. foreign policy and, more or less, dictated the administration's policy in this regard.<sup>5</sup> The integration of tourism into foreign policy was not an exact science but Randall saw benefits to be gained in several areas of international relations. First and foremost, tourism was to be a powerful vehicle for economic exchange. By 1957 American tourists as a whole were spending almost \$2

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<sup>5</sup> Randall, "Report to the President of the United States: International Travel," 17 April 1958, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 1, NARA.

billion outside of the United States. This money had a similar effect as foreign aid; tourism, however, served as a voluntary, fun, and seemingly limitless way of distributing U.S. currency overseas. Extolling this theme, a popular slogan within the Eisenhower administration became, “vacations not donations.”<sup>6</sup>

Tourism boosted the U.S. domestic economy as well. By the late 1950s, roughly one-sixth of the money that American tourists spent on their vacations went to American companies like Pan Am, APL, Hilton, and American Express. Even money that did not go directly to American companies often made its way back to the United States; with the influx of U.S. tourist dollars, foreign nations had far more purchasing power, providing new customers for American manufacturers and farmers. In an informational advertisement, Pan Am played up this point, noting that “tourist dollars spent abroad” filled millions of Americans’ paychecks at home. Taking this theme to the point of hyperbole, the advertisement concluded, “*all* [italics in original] tourist dollars come back to the U.S.A.”<sup>7</sup>

Beyond the economic potential of international travel, Randall pointed to the cultural and political ramifications of tourism. On the cultural front, Randall noted that tourism – more so than any form of communications media – had the ability to enrich the lives of both traveler and host. Building on the successes of the International Educational Exchange and People-to-People programs, Randall noted that recreational tourists could reach components of the world that military bases, economic aid programs, and political summits could not touch. As improving international opinion of the United States became more central to U.S. Cold War strategy, policymakers turned to charming yet effective

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<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Endy, *Cold War Holidays*, 129.

<sup>7</sup> Pan American Airways, “A Story of People, Opportunities and Services,” Series I, Box 53, PAA.

forms of soft power such as tourism. In addition to strengthening bonds at the grassroots level, Randall also hoped that increased overseas tourism would bolster Washington's political friendships with critical governments. Referencing Germany, Japan, and, notably, the USSR, Randall argued that tourism could serve the cause of world peace: "Prejudices will soften, and it will become clear that no man at heart really wishes to destroy his fellow man."<sup>8</sup>

Eisenhower immediately embraced Randall's report and urged cabinet officials and Congress to continue this work.<sup>9</sup> Following the release of the report, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for International Affairs Henry Kearns established the Interdepartmental Travel Policy Committee. The Committee – including members from Commerce, State, Treasury, Agriculture, USIA, ICA, the Export-Import Bank, the Development Loan Fund, and numerous industry insiders – primarily addressed the recommendations of Randall's report and attempted to bring them to fruition. Commerce officials, for example, soon ran with the ideas of raising the duty-free limit for returning American tourists to \$1,000, lowering the costs of passport fees, and extending the validity of U.S. passports.<sup>10</sup>

Congress, too, had moderate success on this front. In 1958 the Senate and the House both presented bills to raise the duty-free limit to \$1,000 and both bills received strong support from the White House.<sup>11</sup> The move to encourage more spending overseas, however, once again came up short. Despite minor setbacks, policymakers – led most

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<sup>8</sup> Randall, "Report to the President of the United States: International Travel," 17 April 1958, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 1, NARA.

<sup>9</sup> AP, "President Urges Help for Travel," *New York Times*, 13 May 1958.

<sup>10</sup> Kearns to Ostroff, "Travel Legislative Proposals," 4 June 1958, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 1, NARA.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*; Randall to Kearns, 3 June 1958, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 1, NARA.

noticeably by Senator Jacob Javits, who served as Randall's congressional liaison throughout the tenure of the travel study – made strides on the facilitation front.

Eisenhower soon signed into law legislation allowing tourist literature to be imported to the United States without tariffs and extending the length of passport validity from two to three years.<sup>12</sup>

One of the primary obstacles to outbound tourism, from the perspective of government travel boosters, was the shortage of suitable hotel rooms overseas. Randall included a lengthy discussion of hotel shortages – “one of the most formidable barriers to international travel” – in his report.<sup>13</sup> In other memoranda on the subject, officials depicted hotel construction not only as a means of stimulating foreign investment and attracting more U.S. tourist dollars; the growth of American hotels overseas would also “add dignity and prestige” to the host country in question.<sup>14</sup>

Recognition of the hotel shortage problem was not, however, anything new in the late 1950s. PATA, for one, had argued since its inception that hotel development was the key to a successful tourism industry in the region. Going back even further, Conrad Hilton recalled State and Commerce officials approaching him shortly after the end of World War II, suggesting that overseas hotel development could prove beneficial in stimulating American travel and trade. Juan Trippe, as well, met with Commerce and Export-Import Banks officials in 1956 to discuss government assistance in financing the

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<sup>12</sup> Wilkins, “Tourism: What is to Come,” *New York Times*, 13 December 1959.

<sup>13</sup> Randall, “Report to the President of the United States: International Travel,” 17 April 1958, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 1, NARA.

<sup>14</sup> Smith to Kearns, “International Hotel Financing,” 17 December 1958, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 3, NARA.

Intercontinental Hotel Corporation (IHC). At the time, however, congressional opposition hindered any broad-based policy of government support.<sup>15</sup>

Randall and Kearns succeeded in reversing the trend and moved the Eisenhower administration toward more active participation in overseas hotel development. Working closely with private businessmen, Washington officials leveraged U.S. lending institutions – such as the Export-Import Bank and the Development Loan Fund – to provide more loans for overseas hotel projects. Kearns was in regular contact with John Houser of Hilton International and Juan Trippe and seemed willing to offer the hotel companies as much assistance as possible. As a sign of the rapid progress, at a 1959 subcommittee meeting on hotel financing, a representative of the Export-Import Bank noted it was currently reviewing nineteen loan applications from IHC and would be moving forward with them shortly.<sup>16</sup>

Randall's report also urged U.S. officials to expand their involvement in international tourism associations, a recommendation that U.S. officials acted on quickly. Predating the release of Randall's report by a few years, the United States delegation to PATA – represented by Commerce officials – became an active member (as opposed to merely an observer). But Randall, concerned that U.S. officials still did “not exercise sufficient initiative in these organizations,” wanted to make sure Washington maintained

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<sup>15</sup> Hilton, *Be My Guest*, 233; Letter from Juan Trippe to Sam Waugh, no date, Series II, Box 314, PAA; Trippe, “Statement Before President Eisenhower’s Committee on Facilitation and Promotion of International Travel,” 22 January 1958, Series I, Box 458, PAA; Kelly to Smith, “Hotel Development in Foreign Countries,” 11 February 1959, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>16</sup> Kearns to Macy, “Importance of Hotel Development Abroad,” 12 June 1958, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 1, NARA.; Randall, *CFEP Journal*, 30 July 1956, Vol. 1, Box 6, CBR; Houser to Kearns, 22 August 1958, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 3, NARA; Kearns to Houser, 3 September 1958, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 3, NARA; Minutes from Subcommittee on Hotel Financing, Interdepartmental Travel Policy Committee, 11 May 1959, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA.

and strengthened its esteemed position in these forums.<sup>17</sup> Foreign delegates were usually more than happy to oblige. Randall's report proved extremely popular overseas – especially in areas likely to benefit from an increase in American tourism – and the Eisenhower administration sent copies to hundreds of posts around the world. There was, moreover, a notable bump in Washington's involvement in PATA following the release of the White House report. Officials within the State and Commerce Departments regularly sent instructions to PATA's U.S. delegation with draft speeches and policy objectives. By the end of the 1950s the U.S. delegation comprised by far the largest and strongest influence in the organization.<sup>18</sup>

## II

As demonstrated by the central role played by Clarence Randall and the Department of Commerce, in the late 1950s the biggest change that developed in U.S. tourism policy toward the Far East was that it developed an economic basis. Despite some modest efforts to integrate recreational tourism into the agenda of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE), for the first ten years following the end of World War II American tourism to the region never amounted to a major financial stimulus, especially when compared to travel to western Europe or Latin America. That changed dramatically as ships, planes, and hordes of tourists traversed the Pacific Ocean in search of East Asian destinations. Numerous Far Eastern economies suffered from

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<sup>17</sup> Randall, "Report to the President of the United States: International Travel," 17 April 1958, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 1, NARA.

<sup>18</sup> For examples, see State Department to American Embassy Tokyo, "Suggested Statement to be Made at Opening Session of the Annual Meeting of the Pacific Area Travel Association in Tokyo, February 13, 1956," 3 February 1956, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA; State Department to American Embassy Tokyo, "Instructions to U.S. Representatives to the Annual Meeting of the Pacific Area Travel Association, February 13-17, 1956," 31 January 1956, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA.



either significant balance-of-payments deficits or heavy dependency on U.S. foreign aid. Because of these economic vulnerabilities, and the fact that the region had not yet enjoyed the massive influx of tourist dollars that had already blessed European and Latin American economies, such an economic benefit seemed all the more important.

Hong Kong's economy, in particular, was poised to benefit greatly from American tourism. For one, of all the emerging tourist destinations in the Far East and Pacific, Hong Kong suffered from the heaviest trade imbalance with the United States; the 1958 figures placed the deficit at \$268 million.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, Hong Kong consistently ranked alongside Hawaii as the leading recipient of tourist expenditures in the Far East and Pacific. As of the late 1950s the average American was spending \$800 during his trip to Hong Kong, of which \$700 was designated for purchases to be taken home (as opposed to hotels, transportation, entertainment, or food). With this trend only increasing, Hong Kong could theoretically erode a sizable portion of its trade imbalance by simply bringing in more American tourists.<sup>20</sup>

Aside from closing Hong Kong's dollar gap and stabilizing the local economy, Commerce officials saw tourism as a means of eliminating, or at least minimizing, competition from Hong Kong's manufacturing sector. By the late 1950s Hong Kong had developed an impressive textile industry that employed nearly half of the colony's industrial workers. As American importers eagerly purchased the cheaper goods, the stage was set for a clash between Hong Kong manufacturers and the 2.5 million Americans in the U.S. textile industry. London officials, equally concerned about the flood of cheap textiles entering the British market and damaging the economy of

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<sup>19</sup> Checchi and Company, "Pacific Area Tourism Development Project: Field Trip No. 1, Hong Kong (Including Macao)," in Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

Lancashire, had only recently convinced Hong Kong manufacturers to place voluntary restrictions on their exports. Following suit, the Commerce Department and American union leaders started to discuss trade restrictions of their own and there was strong pressure on the Eisenhower administration to take a firm stand against Hong Kong trade practices.

Though the British colony had, for the most part, been an economic ally of the U.S., offering lukewarm support and cooperation in enforcing the economic embargo against the PRC, the conflict over textile exports and rumblings of further trade restrictions – which seemed to be less about Cold War security concerns and more about domestic political pressure – brought latent tensions to the surface.<sup>21</sup> Reaction was swift and fierce from Hong Kong. Industrialists, manufacturers, and colony officials preemptively rejected any additional export restrictions and denied assertions that Hong Kong textiles seriously undermined the American industry. Invoking U.S. containment policy, one editorial noted that Hong Kong had already suffered a great deal by “faithfully observing the trade embargo.” Hong Kong’s garment industry, the article continued, provided subtle support for Washington’s Cold War strategy, serving as an incredible attractant for PRC refugees who comprised a significant portion of Hong Kong factory workers.<sup>22</sup> One Hong Kong resident went as far as linking the Chinese refugee workers to the survival of the free world: “These mill workers are in their own way the hard core of Chinese resistance to the blandishments and brutalities of Communism.”

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<sup>21</sup> Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States*, 200.

<sup>22</sup> “Hong Kong Manufacturers Oppose Limitation of Textile Exports to the US,” *Hua-ch’iao Wan-pao*, 27 January 1959, in General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 4, NARA.

This crucial line of defense, he warned, “ought not to be weakened now by any monetary or commercial considerations.”<sup>23</sup>

But monetary and commercial considerations were certainly on the minds of U.S. officials. In early 1959 Henry Kearns was traveling throughout Asia, attending both the ECAFE meeting in Bangkok and PATA’s conference in Singapore. In light of the ongoing trade dispute, Kearns made a stop in Hong Kong as well. But Kearns’s interest went beyond U.S.-Hong Kong trade. As was already apparent by the late 1950s, Hong Kong was an incredibly appealing tourist destination for American travelers and Kearns – serving as point man for the U.S. delegations in PATA and IUOTO – had been one of the administration’s most dedicated proponents of expanding Far East tourism. To Kearns, the tourism issue seemed to offer a partial resolution to the conflict over textiles. If Hong Kong diversified its export economy in a way that placed more focus and invested more resources into tourism, there would likely be less pressure on American textile manufacturers, who felt they were being undermined by foreign competition.<sup>24</sup> To this end, while in Hong Kong Kearns held several meetings with different representatives of the garment industry to discuss the growing trade dispute. He met, as well, with HKTA executives and other members of Hong Kong’s tourism industry.<sup>25</sup>

In a second trip to Hong Kong in November 1959, Kearns again fused the two industries. In the months before he left Washington Kearns met with representatives from

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<sup>23</sup> Y. B. Low, “Restriction of Hong Kong Exports,” *South China Morning Post*, 17 February 1959, in General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 4, NARA.

<sup>24</sup> British officials were not oblivious to this aspect of tourism. At the 1962 PATA conference, H.D.M. Barton of Jardine Matheson noted that tourism – aside from bringing in hundreds of millions of dollars a year – “seems to be the only important trade in which we can indulge without making ourselves thoroughly unpopular.” Barton quoted in “Conference Charts Goals for Booming Tourist Industry,” *Pacific Travel News*, February 1962.

<sup>25</sup> Address by Henry Kearns to the Committee on Trade and Trade Developments, Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, 6 February 1959, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 4, NARA.

IHC, who briefed the Assistant Secretary of Commerce on the progress of hotels throughout Asia as well as their potential impact on the U.S. and international economy. On his trip he planned to put “additional pressure” on local governments to support IHC projects.<sup>26</sup> Invoking the dramatic increase in American tourism to Hong Kong over the past few years, while trying to downplay the likelihood of U.S. trade restrictions, Kearns announced to Hong Kong reporters that Washington’s goal was “the expansion, not the contraction, of U.S. economic relations with Hong Kong.”<sup>27</sup>

Kearns’s proposal to substitute tourism for textiles was not just a matter of reconciling U.S.-Hong Kong relations with domestic labor concerns. At a more basic level, Kearns was urging Hong Kong manufacturers to recognize the emerging realities in their economy. Tourism, not textile production, was the future of the colony, and Hong Kong workers and government officials needed to embrace that industry. The tourism trade, which Kearns noted had “very important income producing possibilities,” would benefit Hong Kong as well.<sup>28</sup> He made sure to point out that the potential income to be gained from the “American tourist traveling abroad...is potentially greater than that of direct exports to the United States.” The numbers, in fact, already supported Kearns’s argument. By 1958, tourism had become Hong Kong’s largest “export.” In terms of total impact on Hong Kong’s government revenue, tourism accounted for \$67 million (29 percent) while cotton (Hong Kong’s single largest export) earned just over half of that

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<sup>26</sup> Garnett to Gates, “Conversation with Henry Kearns, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for International Affairs,” 1 October 1959, Series II, Box 325, PAA.

<sup>27</sup> Outline of Kearns’s November 19 press conference, in Kearns, “Report of Visit to Hong Kong,” 1959, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 4, NARA.

<sup>28</sup> “Report of Henry Kearns Trip,” General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 4, NARA; “Press Statement of Honorable Henry Kearns, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for International Affairs-USA,” 13 February 1959, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 4, NARA.

figure.<sup>29</sup> Focusing specifically on the United States, American travelers provided Hong Kong with \$33 million a year while all other Hong Kong exports to the U.S. brought in a combined \$36 million.

### III

Offering a stark contrast to Washington's travel policy toward Hong Kong, U.S. officials never anticipated Taiwan tourism to be a major revenue booster. Despite extraordinary gains in tourist numbers in the years after 1957, expenditures remained paltry. Each of the 26,000 international visitors who traveled to Taiwan between 1958 and 1959, for example, spent an average of only \$50 over the length of their stay, totaling just over \$1 million in tourist expenditures for the year. Even taking into account the turnover of tourist dollars, the money generated from international tourism accounted for well under 1 percent of Taiwan's national income.<sup>30</sup> Thus, while Taiwan, like Hong Kong, suffered from a significant balance-of-payments deficit in the post-World War II period, it was direct foreign military and economic assistance, not tourism, that offered the best solution.

Though tourism never allowed Taiwan to close its dollar gap or dramatically diversify its economy, U.S. officials nonetheless saw a place for it in Washington's foreign economic policy. As opposed to using tourism to help wean Taiwan off foreign

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<sup>29</sup> Henry Kearns press release, 17 February 1959, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 4, NARA; Clement, *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East*, 97-98; Checchi and Company, "Pacific Area Tourism Development Project: Field Trip No. 1, Hong Kong (Including Macao)," in Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA.

<sup>30</sup> By 1958, only three of PATA's "destination members" (Hawaii excluded) earned a substantial portion of their national income from tourism revenues. Hong Kong led the field (29 percent), with Tahiti (18 percent) and Fiji (12 percent) following behind. The remaining destinations earned 4 percent or less from tourism. Taiwan, along with Malaya, Cambodia, South Vietnam, Australia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Japan, and South Korea all earned less than 1 percent. Clement, *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East*, 27.

assistance, U.S. officials worked to integrate Taiwan's tourism development into Washington's technical assistance and foreign aid programs.<sup>31</sup> The most dramatic example of Washington's effort in this regard was the development and completion of a Pacific and Far East tourism survey, a joint effort between the U.S. Commerce Department and PATA that would become one of the major government contributions to mass travel.<sup>32</sup>

The need for a comprehensive survey of the tourism potential of the region had been on the minds of travel promoters for some time. Members of PATA frequently voiced concern that they were approaching the problem of tourism development with blinders on, unaware of what work needed to be done and how it could be accomplished. PATA delegates, at their 1956 conference, had first announced "a clear and urgent need" for an independent survey on the region's tourist potential. Two years later, delegates unanimously approved a resolution on the project.<sup>33</sup> In both its scope and its intended impact, the proposed survey was unprecedented. PATA had produced a handful of research and statistics bulletins beginning in 1954, but they did not offer any comprehensive conclusions about tourism in the region nor did they offer a grand strategy for future action. Similarly, some European travel associations had carried out small-scale, regional tourism surveys, but the reports did not dramatically alter government or private tourism policies toward the region.

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<sup>31</sup> The most thorough history of American technical assistance programs is Samuel Hale Butterfield, *U.S. Development Aid – An Historic First: Achievements and Failures in the Twentieth Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004). See also Jacoby, *U.S. Aid to Taiwan*.

<sup>32</sup> At the same time that U.S. officials were moving forward with the Pacific Area Survey, they were also considering a request from the government-based Israel Tourist Corporation to carry out a tourism survey and assistance project. ICA circular, "Information on Tourism," 22 May 1959, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA.

<sup>33</sup> "Sixth Annual Pacific Area Travel Conference," *Pacific Travel News*, February 1957; letter from Kearns to Smith, 27 February 1958, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 4, NARA.

With unanimous support for the survey within PATA, funding became the major obstacle. While the association's budget had risen substantially throughout the 1950s, in 1957 PATA was still a relatively poor organization. Its budget that year, for example, was only \$60,000, almost all of which was dedicated to publicity. Airline and shipping companies, moreover, were "bearing the chief burden" of private advertising for the region and thus could not afford to spend any more money until the Far East became more of a tourist magnet.<sup>34</sup> Considering that a preliminary report by the Stanford Research Institute placed the total cost of a tourist survey at nearly \$250,000, PATA officials were justified in their budget jitters.<sup>35</sup>

To fund the survey PATA officials turned to Washington and U.S. officials quickly warmed to the idea. Most U.S. travel officials pointed to the practicality of the survey. For years, they had complained that the lack of statistics on tourism to the Pacific and the Far East was one of the primary reasons that those regions lagged so far behind Europe and the Caribbean. With the falling prices of air and cruise fares, officials were sure that Americans could afford the trip across the Pacific. In what was by then a commonly cited statistic, a travel consultant for the Commerce Department noted that since Americans were, at that time, spending \$1500 on a trip to Europe, and because the cost of a trip to the Far East was under \$1000, there was "no financial barrier to a vacation in the Pacific area."<sup>36</sup> But without accurate data, it was impossible to track trends, assess the ebb and flow of tourist traffic, and document the economic benefits of

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<sup>34</sup> McClellan to Williams, "PATA's Request for U.S. Government Contribution," 10 April 1957, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 4, NARA; Chafkin to Fitzgerald, "Pacific Area Travel Association," 5 February 1958, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA.

<sup>35</sup> Prentice to Young, 24 September 1957, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA.

<sup>36</sup> Waters to Randall, 11 January 1956, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA.

tourism to specific destinations. The survey seemed especially important in locales like Taiwan, where the local tourism industry was significantly underdeveloped. While officials were yet to be convinced that the survey could actually solve the problems of Taiwan tourism, it would, at the least, bring official attention to those problems and, in the process, publicize tourism on the island.<sup>37</sup>

Beyond its use in compiling statistics, the survey became a sizable component of Washington's technical assistance program. Since 1955 the ICA, which eventually funded the survey, had been looking to fund regional projects that would address economic or institutional development in Asia.<sup>38</sup> The proposed survey project filled that need. By providing host governments with the technical know-how to formulate long-range plans for tourism development, the survey supplemented Taiwan's economic and industrial growth.<sup>39</sup> Members of the Interdepartmental Travel Policy Committee agreed, calling the proposed survey the "most important recent development" in Washington's technical assistance program.<sup>40</sup>

Underscoring this dimension of the survey, ICA drew funds for the survey from the President's Special Fund for Asian Economic Development, a fund that first emerged in the 1954 Mutual Security Act. Ten of the seventeen countries covered by the proposed survey were, in fact, already receiving assistance under the Mutual Security program and

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<sup>37</sup> ICA Taipei to ICA Washington, 20 December 1957, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 211, NARA; State Department to American Embassy Tokyo, "Instructions to U.S. Representatives to the Annual Meeting of the Pacific Area Travel Association, February 13-17, 1956, 31 January 1956, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA.

<sup>38</sup> ICA circular, "President's Fund for Asian Economic Development," 6 December 1955, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA.

<sup>39</sup> Resolution at 7<sup>th</sup> Annual PATA Conference, "Survey Program to Develop Tourist Earnings in Pacific Area Countries," 19 February 1958, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA.

<sup>40</sup> Minutes from U.S. Department of Commerce Interdepartmental Travel Policy Committee, 22 July 1958, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 1, NARA.



U.S. officials saw the project as a means of expanding such aid.<sup>41</sup> The other countries and territories, including Hong Kong, New Zealand, Australia, Tahiti, Singapore, New Caledonia, and Fiji, were not part of the “Arc of Free Asia,” as described in discussions surrounding the Mutual Security Act, and thus were not receiving technical assistance from the United States. Policymakers justified this inconsistency, however, pointing to the regional, interconnected framework of Far East and Pacific tourism. Because the average American traveler visited several countries in the region in the course of a single vacation, the “aid-receiving countries would receive very little benefit from the survey unless an integrated project including most of the countries of the region were completed.”<sup>42</sup>

The presence of non-foreign aid nations in the survey was, however, a sticking point for many U.S. policymakers. It seemed illogical for the U.S. to subsidize tourism development in “relatively wealthy” locales like Australia or Hong Kong. Other individuals voiced criticism over what they saw as governmental favoritism toward the foreign tourism industry. To them, the survey was merely another sign that Washington officials were subsidizing one-way travel *from* the U.S. at the expense of those whose livelihood depended on the domestic tourism market.<sup>43</sup> More generally, tourism still

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<sup>41</sup> Fitzgerald to Smith, “Proposal for Determination to Grant up to \$150,000 from the Asian Economic Development Fund to the U.S. Department of Commerce to Finance Survey of Tourism Potentialities,” 28 May 1958, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA.

<sup>42</sup> Kearns to Riddleberger, 28 July 1959, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA; Fitzgerald to Smith, “Proposal for Determination to Grant up to \$150,000 from the Asian Economic Development Fund to the U.S. Department of Commerce to Finance Survey of Tourism Potentialities,” 28 May 1958, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA; Wilkins to Anton, “Proposal to Finance Survey of Tourism Potentialities in the Free Asia and Pacific Area from Asian Economic Development Funds,” 9 May 1958, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA.

<sup>43</sup> Miami hotelier Samuel Rivkind, for example, was “disturbed” by the Eisenhower administration’s decision to support the PATA project and predicted that such attention to overseas tourism meant “a rather gloomy outlook for South Florida in the immediate future.” Rivkind to Smathers, 9 September 1958, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 3, NARA.

invoked a connotation of recreation and luxury. Despite the overwhelming evidence that international travel could stabilize and stimulate foreign economies, many officials were hesitant to place tourism on the same level as agricultural, industrial, and trade development.<sup>44</sup> As late as March 1958, ICA officials were still debating whether it was even appropriate for their agency to pursue the issue tourism development.<sup>45</sup>

Concerns about the survey, however, failed to halt its momentum. In June 1958 ICA transferred \$150,000 to the Commerce Department.<sup>46</sup> Commerce – which served as the U.S. liaison with PATA – proceeded to negotiate a contract with Checchi and Company, a private economic consulting firm that would actually produce the tourism survey. Following a preliminary stage of data-gathering, Checchi completed an “attitude survey” of 1,500 “upper-income respondents” in U.S. and Canadian cities to determine the interest of North Americans in visiting the Far East and Pacific. Respondents explained their reasons for traveling to the region, ranked their destinations of preference, and assessed their primary concerns. Fieldwork followed, spanning from January 1959 to May 1960 and covering seventeen countries and territories in three phases. The Commerce Department published the completed survey in 1961 and PATA officials presented the results at the following year’s conference.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Wilkins to Anton, “Proposal to Finance Survey of Tourism Potentialities in the Free Asia and Pacific Area From Asian Economic Development Funds,” 9 May 1958, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA.

<sup>45</sup> ICA Director James Smith, in fact, resisted adding tourism to ICA’s agenda for some time, but eventually allowed the PATA-sponsored survey to move forward. Chafkin to Fitzgerald, “PATA Tourism Survey Project,” 6 March 1958, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA.

<sup>46</sup> The total cost of the survey was \$250,000. In addition to the \$150,000 coming from U.S. funds, \$100,000 was to come from PATA delegates and local currencies. Fitzgerald to Smith, 28 May 1958, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA.

<sup>47</sup> Clement, *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East*, 15-17; Henry Kearns to James Riddleberger, July 28, 1959, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA.

Following the completion of the Commerce survey, and indeed in an effort to carry out its recommendations, ICA worked to improve substantively Taiwan's tourism potential. The decision on the part of ICA to move forward with substantive development projects was significant. As mentioned above, there was noticeable hesitation among ICA officials to get too deeply involved in tourism development and many saw the survey as an end in itself. Director James Smith lowered expectations early on; he announced that ICA participation in the survey "would not imply any commitment...in carrying out survey recommendations."<sup>48</sup>

Despite these caveats, in 1961 ICA dedicated around \$1 million to Taiwan for various projects of tourism promotion. The bulk of this, roughly \$925,000 was part of a counterpart loan to fund the construction of the new National Palace Museum in Taipei. U.S. Ambassador Everett Drumright, ICA, and a special committee established by the Nationalist government, led the campaign to secure the loan for the museum. The Palace Museum addressed the lack of manmade, enticing tourist attractions in Taiwan. The collection of nearly 250,000 pieces of priceless Chinese art, which remained mostly hidden in caves near Taichung, could serve as a unique and substantial means of attracting foreign travelers.<sup>49</sup> Based on coverage in travel guides and advertisements, it seemed to do the trick. The Palace collection became a focal point on tourist itineraries; within a few months of opening, three out of four tourists to the island visited the

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<sup>48</sup> Smith, "Pacific Area Travel Association," 6 November 1957, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #411, Box 93, NARA.

<sup>49</sup> Before coming to Taiwan, most of the collection had been in either the National Palace Museum in Beijing or the National Central Museum in Nanjing. After arriving in Taiwan, the bulk of the collection remained in "artificial caves" – temperature-controlled underground vaults – in the suburb of Taichung. Despite its "hidden location," the TTC attempted to publicize the collection in order to draw in tourists. See Henry Lieberman, "Bulk of China's Great Art Works Held in Taiwan by Nationalists," *New York Times*, 22 July 1956; "Out of a Cave in Taiwan," *New York Times*, 9 April 1961; "1959 Pacific Preview," *Pacific Travel News*, January 1959; Cohen, *East Asian Art and American Culture*, 145.

museum. Countless advertisements and every travel guide in the 1960s, moreover, urged travelers to make a visit. *McKay's Guide* noted that the artwork was "worth a trip to Taiwan in itself." A TTC advertisement, listing the reasons that American travelers should visit Taiwan, heralded the collection, "Asia's greatest collection of art treasures." *Pacific Travel News* raved that there were now "243,639 reasons to visit Taiwan."<sup>50</sup>

The remainder of the ICA funds went toward various organizational and promotional matters that would be required to facilitate "the movement and handling of tourists."<sup>51</sup> In 1961, for example, officials provided a \$65,000 loan to the Taiwan Handicraft Promotion Center (THPC), a nascent organization that promoted the Taiwan souvenir and handicraft industry. The THPC worked closely with the Taipei Retail Store and brought truckloads of souvenirs to cruise and air passengers arriving in Taiwan. In "Operation *Kungsholm*," named for the Swedish American Line ship that docked at Keelung, the Retail Store brought in about \$2,000 in one day.<sup>52</sup>

The ICA funding was, in the end, quite puny, especially when compared to military and political aid. By the early 1960s, however, these latter sources of aid were drying up quickly.<sup>53</sup> Taiwan officials hoped their intensified tourist program would attract more Americans to the island and saw ICA development loans as means of

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<sup>50</sup> Alan Nicholls, "Holidays and Travel," *The Age* (Melbourne, Australia), 12 February 1968; Gellhorn, *McKay's Guide* (1965), 344; Taiwan Tourism Council Advertisement, "Come to Taiwan! To Drink Your Tea Straight," *New York Times*, 25 February 1968; "There are 243,636 Reasons to Visit Taiwan....," *Pacific Travel News*, October 1966.

<sup>51</sup> Haraldson to Yin, "Project Approval: FY61 Project 484-95-560 Tourism Promotion Construction of Palace Museum," 22 June 1961, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 265; Sheppard to Hughes, "Tourism Promotion," 27 March 1961, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 265, NARA.

<sup>52</sup> ICA, "THPC Operations," 5 April 1961, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 265, NARA.

<sup>53</sup> Between 1960 and 1965 U.S. officials terminated foreign aid to Taiwan. The ultimate objective of U.S. aid had been to establish Taiwan as a strong, self-sufficient nation capable of holding its own against the PRC. By 1965, Taiwan had joined the ranks of Hong Kong, Japan, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Ceylon as a leading Asian economic power. Jacoby, *U.S. Aid to Taiwan*, 227-31; "Taiwan Prepares to Lure Tourists," *New York Times*, 21 August 1960.

supplementing other forms of U.S. financial support. On top of this, U.S. officials predicted that as recreational tourism to Taiwan increased, it would offer enormous economic opportunities for the island nation. The minor successes of the THPC, for instance, gave U.S. and Taiwan officials confidence that tourism would dramatically boost Taiwan's domestic economy. Citing figures from the Commerce Department survey, moreover, U.S. officials pointed out that drawing in American travelers – through reputable attractions like the National Palace Museum – had the potential to bring in “sizable foreign exchange earnings.” If Taiwan boosted its tourism industry, the government could bring in about \$425 million (multiplier-effect taken into account) in annual national revenue.<sup>54</sup>

While the anticipated economic gains for Taiwan were respectable and not wholly unrealistic, they were still a distant goal. Recognizing that it would many years before tourism revenue ever comprised more than a small fraction of the Taiwan economy, U.S. involvement with Taiwan tourism did “not address a priority activity directly concerned with economic development.”<sup>55</sup> More significant from the perspective of Washington officials were the political and cultural benefits that tourism promotion seemed to offer. Embassy officials in Taiwan “repeatedly emphasized” that the willingness of the Nationalist government to dedicate funding to “cultural and sociological (as contrasted to military) purposes” fit nicely with the 1958 Jiang-Dulles Communiqué, which worked to

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<sup>54</sup> ICA Taipei to ICA Washington, “Tourism Promotion Project No. 95-560 Sub-Project A,” 14 April 1961, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 265, NARA; Sheppard to Hughes, “Tourism Promotion,” 27 March 1961, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 265, NARA.

<sup>55</sup> Sheppard to Hughes, “Tourism Promotion,” 27 March 1961, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 265, NARA.

renounce the use of force in “liberating” mainland China.<sup>56</sup> More importantly, tourism development served as a reaffirmation of the cultural legitimacy of Taiwan and “boost[ed] the world-wide prestige of [the] GRC [Nationalist Government].”<sup>57</sup>

This cultural-political approach to Taiwan tourism applied equally to Hong Kong. Officials hoped to use Hong Kong as a “show window” for American visitors in order to counteract the successful propaganda coming from the PRC and as a portal through which American values and styles could creep behind the Bamboo Curtain.<sup>58</sup> These efforts to build up “Free China” as a counterpoint to the PRC gained even more traction in the 1960s as Mao’s regime moved from its Great Leap Forward to Cultural Revolution, both of which heightened tensions between Washington and Beijing and renewed fears about the future of Taiwan and Hong Kong. Just as policymakers had approached American cultural exchange participants largely in terms of their impact on the “hearts and minds” of their hosts as well as Americans, they saw the increase of recreational tourists in Taiwan and Hong Kong as a passive and non-propagandistic means of spreading the values of freedom, democracy, and capitalism throughout Asia.

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<sup>56</sup> The Jiang-Dulles Communiqué emerged in the context of the 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis. In an effort simultaneously to reinforce Washington’s commitment to Taiwan but sway Jiang away from a military takeover of the mainland, Dulles offered this display of support. In conjunction with the Communiqué, and along the same lines as ICA’s “tourism aid,” USIA stepped up its efforts to make Taiwan the “true representative of the Chinese people.” Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance*, 223-24.

<sup>57</sup> Sheppard to Hughes, “Tourism Promotion,” 27 March 1961, Records of U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, Entry #409, Box 265, NARA.

<sup>58</sup> National Security Council, “U.S. Policy on Hong Kong,” 17 July 1957, *DDRS*.

#### IV

As suggested by the economic, cultural, and political benefits of recreational travel, tourism to the region offered clear possibilities in the realm of direct containment of the Communist regime. Surprisingly, however, explicit efforts to integrate Far East tourism into Cold War strategy maintained a low priority. Washington's interest in promoting tourism to Hong Kong, for example, seemed to be centered more on the emerging trade dispute issue – which only tangentially related to the Sino-American conflict – than it did in undermining the PRC or shaping Hong Kong into an “alternative” China. It is worth noting, as well, that neither Clarence Randall's report nor the Commerce Department's survey located international travel within the context of Cold War containment. Randall, in fact, saw his report as an extension of his previous work within the Eisenhower administration, through which he sought an across-the-board reduction in the trade and travel restrictions that were curtailing the free flow of goods and ideas. It is quite telling that the Randall report concluded with a recommendation to use tourism as a means of *lessening* U.S.-Soviet tensions.<sup>59</sup>

Nonetheless, in 1958 the Eisenhower administration – in an effort to establish tourism as a bulwark against PRC diplomatic recognition – forwarded a resolution in the IUOTO to limit membership only to those nations currently belonging to the UN, a move that would have effectively disqualified the PRC, North Korea, North Vietnam, East Germany, and Outer Mongolia. U.S. policymakers made clear that “keeping the unrecognized Communist regimes...out of international organizations is a foreign policy

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<sup>59</sup> Randall, “Report to the President of the United States: International Travel,” 17 April 1958, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 1, NARA.

matter to which great importance is attached by the President and Secretary Dulles.”<sup>60</sup>

Concurrently, U.S. representatives pushed for admission of Taiwan – already an active member of PATA – to the IUOTO. While the move to bring Taiwan into the international body succeeded, U.S. representatives failed to get any support for the proposal to ban the PRC and other communist nations.<sup>61</sup>

The botched effort was not immediately significant. None of the communist nations had shown any interest in joining the IUOTO and thus the failed resolution was somewhat of a moot point. But State Department officials were concerned that these nations, especially those in Asia, might make moves to enter these forums in the future. To prevent such a development from arising, the State Department provided detailed instructions to U.S. delegates. Should a proposal come forward, the Department proposed an aggressive statement announcing that it was “unthinkable” that an organization like the IUOTO, with its inherent commitment to the objectives of the United Nations, would “even consider an application from a regime which departs drastically from normally accepted standards of international conduct.”<sup>62</sup>

More than anything else, the State Department’s failed resolution highlighted that there was little support for efforts by U.S. or foreign officials to use tourism as a form of containment. Within the IUOTO, many foreign delegations insisted that the forum should remain non-political and therefore should not apply foreign policy considerations to

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<sup>60</sup> Wilcox to Kearns, 15 May 1958, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 4, NARA.

<sup>61</sup> Of the nine voting member delegations, the United States was the lone vote in support, with Japan abstaining. “General Assembly Meeting Set for October: IUOTO Committee Plans for Travel Growth,” 9 June 1958, *Foreign Commerce Weekly*, in General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 4, NARA.

<sup>62</sup> Wilcox to Kearns, 4 October 1958, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 3, NARA.



membership qualifications.<sup>63</sup> Even from Washington's perspective, much of this effort to integrate tourism fully into Cold War strategy was, in the end, largely symbolic. Despite rhetoric to the contrary, most officials recognized that that tourism was not, quintessentially, a "free world" activity. While one could argue that the PRC had a negligible record on tourism, IUOTO members included the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia – both of which had sizeable tourism industries. In the 1950s and 1960s even Taiwan, despite its position on the U.S. side of the Bamboo Curtain, could hardly be called free and democratic. U.S. officials, moreover, seemed to be annoyed with the Nationalist government's obsession with communism and national security in its development of a tourism industry and feared that the Taiwan delegation would bring this baggage into the international tourism forums. Worse yet, Taiwan's recalcitrant position likely would be tied back to the United States, weakening Washington's position in the arena of international travel.

This was not as large a concern within PATA. As mentioned above, the U.S. played a more dominant role in that body and PATA delegates demonstrated a consistent – though perhaps muted – respect for Washington's Cold War strategy. The IUOTO was a different matter. The IUOTO was centered in Europe – both physically and culturally – and while the U.S. continued to serve as the major supplier and receiver of transatlantic tourists, it never achieved a commensurate leadership role in the organization. Such a position gave the U.S. less opportunity to use tourism as a weapon of containment and meant that U.S. officials could not afford any additional drama from the Taiwan delegation. Joseph Rand, assistant to Clarence Randall, pointed out that the top priority of

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<sup>63</sup> "General Assembly Meeting Set for October: IUOTO Committee Plans for Travel Growth," 9 June 1958, *Foreign Commerce Weekly*, in General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 4, NARA.

IUOTO delegates was the advancement of tourism and they were “intolerant” toward political matters such as PRC membership.<sup>64</sup> Even when meeting with IUOTO delegates from “iron curtain countries,” Rand found that discussions were “apolitical” and “confined...to tourism.”<sup>65</sup> Taking a cue from these conversations, Assistant Secretary of Commerce Henry Kearns was certain that a “continuation of the ‘China Position’ [denying the PRC membership in the IUOTO] into another year will bring considerable embarrassment to the United States Delegation and will probably result in a decline in United States influence.”<sup>66</sup>

Washington’s ambivalent approach toward PRC membership highlighted that U.S. tourism policy often diverged from strategic and political objectives of the Cold War. Beyond concerns that a hard line anti-PRC position could sap U.S. influence on international tourism, the proliferation of tourism itself added complexities to Washington’s containment policy. Most broadly, Washington’s approach toward Taiwan and Hong Kong tourism implied that U.S. officials accepted the permanence of the Nationalist government in Taiwan and the seclusion of Western influence on the mainland in Hong Kong. While Nationalist officials were always hesitant to undertake any long-term development in Taiwan because of its implications on the Chinese civil war, U.S. officials were explicitly establishing Taiwan as the economic, military, and cultural home of China.

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<sup>64</sup> Rand, “Report on the Annual Meeting of the International Union of Official Travel Organizations,” no date, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>65</sup> Rand, “Supplementary Report: 1959 Manila UTO Meeting,” no date, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>66</sup> “Report of Henry Kearns Trip to Brussels and Paris October 2-9, 1958,” October 1958, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 3, NARA.

More specifically, tourism and tourism revenue continued to complicate Washington's embargo policy. Tourism, no doubt, worked to strengthen the Hong Kong economy. This, in turn, made the British colony less vulnerable to PRC subversion. When combined with the dramatic increase in tourism, moreover, Washington-sponsored purchase restrictions – though technically detrimental to Hong Kong – actually worked to diversify Hong Kong's domestic economy. In 1950 only 25 percent of Hong Kong exports originated in the colony but by 1962 – due to the continuing inability of colony officials to trade actively with neighboring China or sell PRC-made goods to other nations – around 70 percent were manufactured locally.<sup>67</sup> Beyond diversification, tourism contributed to a third of Hong Kong's non-trade foreign exchange and made the colony an economic dynamo. Taken in sum, the economic vitality in Hong Kong was of great value to the PRC; the idea of undermining the economy of Hong Kong by invasion or absorption seemed counterproductive. Recognizing this symbiotic relationship, Washington officials – despite significant concerns about the long-term prospects of the British colony – consistently believed that the economic and strategic benefits of Hong Kong made a PRC attack unlikely.<sup>68</sup>

These same economic figures that protected Hong Kong from PRC attack also, when viewed from a different perspective, underscored the significant holes in Washington's economic containment policy. The influx of tourists to a destination that maintained such proximity (physical, economic, cultural, and political) to the PRC, threatened to provide unanticipated and undesirable benefits to the Communist regime.

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<sup>67</sup> Tucker, *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States*, 205; Robert Trumbull, "U.S. Curb on China Aiding Hong Kong," *New York Times*, 26 May 1963.

<sup>68</sup> Dillon, comments on DOS staff study on Hong Kong, 16 August 1957, *DDRS*; CIA, "The Outlook for Hong Kong," 25 August 1967, Central Intelligence Agency Freedom of Information Act declassified document, <http://www.foia.cia.gov>, accessed on 19 October 2009.

This would have been true for any vacation destination that bordered the PRC, but Hong Kong was even more of a liability because of its reputation as a “shopper’s paradise.” Every travel brochure and article included an almost obligatory reference to the “24-hour suit shops” and the “duty-free bargains.” Art Buchwald remarked that the tourist received his first fitting by his hotel’s bell captain.<sup>69</sup> Shopping, indeed, was the most popular activity for tourists in Hong Kong with two-thirds of expenditures going to such purchases. According to a 1966 HKTA survey, over 60 percent of tourists admitted to doing nothing on their vacation aside from shopping and eating in hotel restaurants.<sup>70</sup> These figures meant significant expenditures; by the early 1960s American tourists in Hong Kong were annually spending approximately \$30 million on visible purchases alone.<sup>71</sup>

While the Comprehensive Certificate of Origin (CCO) system – which aimed to keep U.S. dollars out of the PRC economy by requiring that American consumers prove overseas purchases did not originate in the PRC – was firmly in place by the time that Hong Kong experienced its late 1950s tourism boom, the dramatic increase in tourism and tourist dollars made it increasingly difficult for U.S. officials to apply embargo policies in an effective way. The CCO process was burdensome. Travel writer Gene Gleason referred to the system as a “recurrent pain in the neck” for American tourists. Some confused Hong Kong shop owners gave up on the CCOs altogether, focusing exclusively on non-American shoppers.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Art Buchwald, “The Struggle for Men’s Backs: Hong Kong Certainly Suits Art,” *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 26 June 1960.

<sup>70</sup> Clement, *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East*, 104; Hazell, *The Tourist Industry in Hong Kong, 1966*, 37.

<sup>71</sup> Ian Stewart, “SRO in Hong Kong,” *New York Times*, 19 June 1960.

<sup>72</sup> Gleason, *Hong Kong*, 291.

U.S. officials and private travel boosters worried that American tourists would follow suit, either violating purchase restrictions or choosing to bypass Hong Kong entirely. To remedy this, the private tourism industry, along with Hong Kong and U.S. officials, worked together to acclimate American tourists to the complex set of restrictions. Eve Meyers, a regular contributor to *Pacific Travel News* toured Hong Kong shops and provided details to travel agents on which shops were conducive to American shoppers. Referring to one promising shop, Meyers noted that American tourists could “go wild as certificates of origin are issued on everything sold there.”<sup>73</sup> In discussions with Hong Kong tourism officials, Kearns urged organizations like the HKTA to further their efforts to make the whole certificate process easier for tourists to comply with and understand.<sup>74</sup> Moving forward with this request, HKTA issued a free pamphlet, “What U.S. Citizens (and Visitors to the United States) Must Know About Buying Chinese-Type Goods in Hong Kong,” which attempted to explain the CCO process.<sup>75</sup> HKTA, moreover, offered its support to any local business willing to comply with the new policies. “An extremely attractive membership seal,” provided by HKTA to cooperative local businesses, allowed tourists to shop with confidence.<sup>76</sup> HKTA’s involvement discouraged tourists, as much as possible, from visiting non-sanctioned shops, many of which sold bogus certificates or convinced naïve shoppers that such documentation was unnecessary.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Eve Meyers, “Hong Kong’s Shops Invite Pacific Shoppers,” *Pacific Travel News*, December 1957.

<sup>74</sup> Clement, *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East*, 104; “Address by Henry Kearns to the Committee on Trade and Trade Developments, Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East,” 6 February 1959, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 4, NARA; Outline of Kearns’s November 19 press conference, in Kearns, “Report of Visit to Hong Kong,” 1959, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 4, NARA.

<sup>75</sup> Dodge, *Poor Man’s Guide*, 236-27.

<sup>76</sup> Clement, *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East*, 103.

<sup>77</sup> “A Practical Guide to Hong Kong Shopping,” *Pacific Travel News*, March 1962.

More than adding paperwork and confusion to the tourism process, the CCO system was not entirely effective. Hefty purchases by large American companies were easy enough to track. In May 1963, for example, the Hong Kong Hilton, which had opened only a month earlier, faced scrutiny from Washington officials over \$100,000 worth of Chinese screens, tapestries, scroll paintings, bronze statues, and other interior decorations – all of which had origins on the mainland of China. Unable to keep the decorations on display and unable to sell them back to the PRC (which would have consequently violated the Trading With the Enemy Act), Hilton executives transferred the items to various warehouses in Hong Kong. To fill the empty wall space, hotel executives looked to local Chinese artisans, “with respectable ideological background,” to create replacements.<sup>78</sup>

But for smaller purchases and for less conspicuous consumers, there were ways to get around the purchase and import restrictions. Customs agents were unlikely to press “average-looking” tourists on their purchases or written declarations. J. D. Chen, a Hong Kong art dealer, boasted that casual tourists had regularly served as “unwitting agents” to deliver restricted goods to the United States without interference from U.S. Customs officials.<sup>79</sup> *Time* magazine noted that British and Italian art dealers often purchased Chinese antiquities in Hong Kong, shipped them to Europe, and then exported them to the United States, all without CCOs.<sup>80</sup> A light-hearted article in the *Washington Post and Times-Herald* approvingly relayed stories about numerous casual violations of the ban. “Congressional, Cabinet and Pentagon wives” had for years been purchasing Chinese

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<sup>78</sup> “Hilton Scraps ‘Illegal’ Chinese Art,” *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 15 May 1963; Hedley Rhodes, “Global Trade: Hong Kong Hilton to Stop Buying Red Goods,” *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 10 July 1963.

<sup>79</sup> “Case of the Runaway Tongue,” *Time*, 28 May 1960.

<sup>80</sup> “The Fragrant Harbor,” *Time*, 21 November 1960.

antiques smuggled out of the PRC into Hong Kong. Other female shoppers – including one “well-known woman member of Congress” – bypassed Customs agents by sending their purchases to friends or storage units outside the United States.<sup>81</sup> American tourists, moreover, soon found that while it was quite difficult to purchase antiques and other Chinese handicrafts in Hong Kong, such acquisitions were simpler in Taiwan, Singapore, or Thailand. These other locales, which often accompanied Hong Kong on the itineraries of American tourists, did not set off the sort of red flags to U.S. Customs officials as did Hong Kong. Alerting travelers to this apparent loophole, travel writer David Dodge noted: “It’s all in the way you handle the shipment.”<sup>82</sup> In general, it seemed that the Treasury Department was far more concerned about large American companies doing business with the PRC, or Hong Kong firms with close ties to the PRC, than it was with individual tourists. To some extent, this approach was logical. On an individual basis, tourists were spending a relatively small amount of money overseas; U.S. officials thus did not see them as a major threat to the embargo. When taken as a whole, however, tourists represented a monumental economic force and their position within the economic embargo would have serious consequences.

More significant than the occasional circumvention of customs regulations, Washington’s general policy of embargo – when applied to tourism – failed to achieve its intended objectives, namely keeping U.S. dollars out of the PRC. While customs restrictions were relatively effective in controlling what souvenirs American tourists could purchase in Hong Kong, there were never any efforts to restrict the tourists themselves. To the contrary, U.S. officials and private travel boosters worked to increase

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<sup>81</sup> Dorothy McCardle, “Trade Embargo Against Red China Stymies Hong Kong Antique Hunting,” *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 29 June 1958.

<sup>82</sup> Dodge, *Poor Man’s Guide*, 11.

the flow of American tourists and dollars into the colony. But certain tourist purchases, outside the jurisdiction of CCO regulations, infused the colony with U.S. dollars that often made their way across the border into the PRC. Around one-third of the food and one-quarter of the water used in hotels, restaurants, and establishments throughout the colony, originated in the PRC.<sup>83</sup> Throughout the 1960s Hong Kong and PRC officials, in fact, worked out an assortment of detailed agreements by which the PRC would provide Hong Kong with around 10 billion gallons of water every year for an annual cost of about \$1.7 million.<sup>84</sup>

The sum of all these purchases and trade amounted to large sums of money. Beijing was earning nearly \$200 million a year through food and textile sales to Hong Kong. By the early 1960s 40 percent of the convertible foreign exchange earned annually by the PRC (between \$400 and \$500 million) and \$200 million in yearly remittances came from Hong Kong alone.<sup>85</sup> This substantial revenue underscores that economic containment was never as airtight as Washington officials anticipated and hoped. Considering that officials in Eisenhower's Council on Foreign Economic Policy justified the economic embargo by pointing to the resulting loss of foreign currency in the PRC, this backchannel of monetary exchange was certainly relevant.<sup>86</sup>

Though American tourism was not the sole factor in this backchannel, it was, nonetheless, part of the formula. Demonstrating this on a small scale, the PRC

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<sup>83</sup> Seymour Topping, "What Goes in Hong Kong? Everything," *New York Times*, 11 April 1965; Rhodes, "Global Trade: Hong Kong Hilton to Stop Buying Red Goods," *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 10 July 1963.

<sup>84</sup> John Rose, "Hong Kong's Water Supply Problem and China's Contribution to its Solution," *Geographical Review* 56, no. 3 (July 1966), 435.

<sup>85</sup> "The Fragrant Harbor," *Time*, 21 November 1960; Trumbull, "U.S. Curb on China Aiding Hong Kong," *New York Times*, 26 May 1963; Seymour Topping, "Unperturbed Hong Kong," *New York Times*, 4 July 1964; Topping, "What Goes in Hong Kong? Everything," *New York Times*, 11 April 1965.

<sup>86</sup> Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 131.



government, working to weaken the embargo through cooperation with Communist banks in Hong Kong, hoarded U.S. \$50 and \$100 bills, which were simpler to use in foreign purchases and overseas government operations. Recognizing that U.S. tourists were partly responsible for the increase in large currency denominations in Hong Kong, the U.S. Navy began issuing the pay of Seventh Fleet sailors (who frequented Hong Kong for leisure) in smaller bills.<sup>87</sup>

## V

Just as touristic images of Taiwan and Hong Kong simultaneously embraced, rejected, and ignored the Cold War, so too did American tourism and U.S. tourism policy work in ways that both facilitated and challenged U.S. foreign policy and, more specifically, Cold War strategy. No matter the destination, U.S. officials considered tourists to be potential agents of foreign policy and hoped that their travels would be conducive with national interests. The inclusion of Taiwan and Hong Kong – both of which figured prominently in Washington’s policy of containment toward the PRC – on one’s itinerary, moreover, gave tourists even less opportunity to ditch the Cold War.

Washington policymakers, tourists, and private travel boosters all recognized the potential economic, cultural, and strategic benefits of American tourism to the Far East. The “overnight” boom in tourism to Hong Kong and Taiwan held out promise to ease balance-of-payments problems, revitalize their domestic economy, and supplement U.S. aid programs. Hong Kong and Taiwan, moreover, served as bastions of capitalism, freedom, and democracy. The mere arrival of tourists to these destinations seemed to reinforce the legitimacy of “Free China” and served as a subtle, yet effective attack on the

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<sup>87</sup> Topping, “What Goes in Hong Kong? Everything,” *New York Times*, 11 April 1965.

political and cultural integrity of the PRC. Through tourism associations, moreover, Washington officials could strengthen their case for marginalizing the PRC – a strategy they pursued simultaneously in the United Nations and other international bodies.

But tourism to these Cold War outposts did not always work the way that U.S. officials had in mind. At the top-level, the Eisenhower administration's efforts to integrate tourism into Cold War containment policy often seemed more symbolic than genuine and officials often approached Taiwan and Hong Kong on their own terms, disconnected from the PRC and the ongoing Soviet-Sino-American conflict. Attempts to build up Taiwan and Hong Kong as crucial bulwarks against Chinese communism, moreover, were not entirely compatible with efforts to attract tourists to the region. The administration often found that their objectives in the region could be served better by downplaying or suppressing Cold War considerations. On top of all this, even though the tourism boom undoubtedly had a positive economic impact on the stability of Hong Kong, it also had the unfortunate consequence of bolstering the PRC's economy.

Government intentions aside, most tourists saw Taiwan and Hong Kong simply as "Chinese" locales and seemed oblivious to their vacation destinations' strategic positions vis-à-vis the PRC. As late as 1964, 30 percent of Americans were not even aware that a communist regime controlled the mainland of China and, of those "knowledgeable" individuals, only 60 percent knew of the existence of "the other" China on Taiwan. These statistics, especially when placed alongside the growing popularity of travel to Taiwan and Hong Kong in the public sphere, further underscore the disconnect between popular

perceptions of the Far East and official Cold War policy.<sup>88</sup> Thus, while Washington officials may have considered it a high priority to make Taiwan or Hong Kong “the Chinese alternative to Communism,” American tourists and travel boosters did not necessarily approach these destinations in this manner.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Survey Research Center, University of Michigan, *The American Public's View of U.S. Policy Toward China: A Report Prepared for the Council on Foreign Relations* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1964), 5, 10.

<sup>89</sup> For official discussion of this objective regarding Taiwan, see NSC Progress Report, “U.S. Policy Toward Taiwan and the Government of the Republic of China, NSC 5503” 3 July 1957, *DDRS*.

## **Ch. 5 – Behind the Bamboo Curtain: The Right to Travel to the People’s Republic of China, 1956-1961**

But somehow it is strange to hear the State Department say /  
you are living in the free world, in the free world you must stay

-- Phil Ochs, “Ballad of William Worthy” (1963)

It is unfortunate that we in the United States have so little opportunity to hear and learn of the developments in the People’s Republic of China. My experience in this country has been an inspiring one which I will share with as many fellow Americans as I can reach.<sup>1</sup>

-- Lorraine Nowacki, member of an American student delegation to the PRC, 1957

Whether it will be possible to devise any effective safeguard against a gradual erosion of all travel restrictions, I rather doubt. However, it looks very much as if we will make the attempt.<sup>2</sup>

-- Ralph Clough, Director of Office of Chinese Affairs, 1957

As the Eisenhower administration worked to promote tourism to Taiwan and Hong Kong, it made efforts to restrain similar developments in the PRC. Travel policy toward “Free China” developed alongside and should thus be seen in the same context as travel policy toward the mainland. In an abstract sense, American travelers seldom drew direct or consequential distinctions between travel to Taiwan or Hong Kong and travel to the PRC. In practice, individuals demonstrated this “right to travel” ideology through protests against travel bans, persistent efforts to establish travel exchanges with Communist China, and bold violations of travel restrictions.

The American public – in both its overwhelming opposition to travel bans and its effort to open the PRC, like the rest of the world, to American tourism – was not entirely

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<sup>1</sup> “Young Americans’ Impressions of China,” (All-China Youth Federation, 1958), in Notebooks: Moscow and China, Box 4, Folder 3, Sally Belfrage Papers, Wagner Archives, Tamiment Library, New York, New York (hereafter SBP).

<sup>2</sup> Clough to Johnson, 18 July 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.

at odds with the Eisenhower administration. Government officials often exhibited a desire to loosen travel restrictions and engage the Chinese in a variant of suitcase diplomacy. In part, this was a modest effort to feel out the Communists and test the waters of U.S.-PRC cooperation. Because travel served simultaneously as an extension of U.S. Cold War politics and an apolitical representation of middle-class curiosity, leisure, and mobility, it gave Washington officials the ability to push Sino-American relations in a direction that was impossible with traditional forms of diplomacy. There was also, no doubt, a belief that moderate, unrequited travel initiatives had the potential to embarrass the PRC and thus advance the objectives of containment. Hovering over all of this was the lingering sense that travel and travel policy were somehow outside the political realm. While Eisenhower officials clearly recognized that they could use travel – or the restriction of travel – as an effective means of containment, there was a noticeable hesitancy to go too far with this sort of strategic and political manipulation. By the late 1950s overseas tourism had become a staple of middle-class living and any government that imposed unwavering restrictions on such an activity seemed anachronistic and totalitarian.

In this context, U.S. policymakers began discussing the idea of re-establishing American travel connections with the PRC almost immediately upon severing those very contacts. Because individuals outside of direct government control played such a significant role in travel, however, a systematic, well-organized approach to travel policy was not always possible. This policy of liberalization, while useful in small, controlled doses, was not a force that could be turned on and off at will. Once it had begun it was difficult to reverse course. When policymakers attempted to hold their ground and use travel as an explicit extension of containment, they found that such efforts were easily

undone. The result was a travel policy – liberalized passport controls, increasingly frequent “exceptions” to travel bans, and relatively light punishments for travel violations – that often ran contrary to military, political, and economic policy in the region.

## I

In 1953, following the conclusion of the Korean War and as Washington officials began to doubt the effectiveness of the U.S. embargo on the PRC, the Eisenhower administration undertook modest efforts to test the waters of improved Sino-American relations. In particular, on the economic and cultural front – travel policy included – Eisenhower was not firmly set on strict and punitive containment. As early as April, Eisenhower was voicing concerns that the U.S. embargo against the PRC was not achieving its intended objectives, and he urged his administration to scale down trade restrictions on China. The hope was both to improve relations with American allies – most of whom were critical of Washington’s economic warfare – and to use the carrot, as opposed to the stick, to drive a wedge between the PRC and the Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup> U.S. officials argued, moreover, that it was not logical to maintain economic pressure on the PRC when the U.S. was pursuing normalized economic relations with Soviet satellites in eastern Europe.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 124-28.

<sup>4</sup> Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the State Department gradually lifted bans on travel to eastern European nations behind the Iron Curtain. As of 1952, the Department banned travel to Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Rumania, and the USSR. At the 1955 Geneva Conference, Secretary of State Dulles announced that the United States was lifting restrictions on travel to the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Rumania. Bans on Hungary returned in 1956, only to be removed permanently in April 1960. In November 1957, in the aftermath of the State Department’s proposal for a newsmen exchange with the PRC, the State Department began easing its restrictions on travel to Bulgaria and Albania, allowing “selected” individuals to make the trip. In May 1959 the Department dropped all bans on travel to Bulgaria and in March 1967 it did the same for Albania. After that point, the only remaining bans on U.S. passports were for the PRC, North Korea, North Vietnam, and Cuba. Drew

The first Taiwan Straits Crisis in 1954-55, however, made these initial moves toward liberalization seem naïve and potentially dangerous; the administration soon reasserted its faith in strict economic warfare. But efforts to reduce the “China differential” remained a top priority for several key officials within the administration. Clarence Randall, who led the administration’s campaign for travel facilitation, saw efforts to restrict American trade as “appalling” and he actively pursued shrinking the embargo.<sup>5</sup> Randall’s attitudes toward trade with the PRC, especially when viewed alongside his dogged efforts to boost international tourism, highlight a significant aspect of Washington’s travel policy. The administration’s encouragement of tourism to Taiwan and Hong Kong emerge less as a means of containing and undermining the PRC and more as a component of general efforts to stimulate international exchange, reduce trade and travel barriers, and promote international stability.

Randall’s influence on Eisenhower was substantial, demonstrated in part by the fact that Randall gained the ire of “die-hards” like Walter Robertson and Henry Luce, who both believed that the path toward liberalization was “utter madness.” Eisenhower, indeed, sympathized with Randall’s approach to China policy. In reference to a reduction in the China embargo, CIA director Allen Dulles was sure he had “heard the Boss say that twenty times”<sup>6</sup> Despite significant support within the White House for an easing of

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Middleton, “U.S. Frees Travel to East Europe as Spur to Amity,” *New York Times*, 1 November 1955; AP, U.S. Eases Travel Ban on Albania, *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 15 November 1957; “U.S. Again Allows Trips to Bulgaria,” *New York Times*, 13 May 1959; UPI, “Hungary Visa Ban Ends,” *New York Times*, 30 April 1960; “Curbs on Travel to Albania Lifted,” *New York Times*, 15 March 1967; Chayes and Schwartz to Rusk, “Regulations on Travel Controls of U.S. Citizens,” General Records of the State Department, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>5</sup> Randall, CFEP Journal, 19 July 1956, Vol. 1, Box 6, CBR.

<sup>6</sup> Randall, CFEP Journal, 22 June 1957, Vol. 5, Box 7, CBR; Randall, CFEP Journal, 4 February 1957, Vol. 3, Box 6, CBR; Zhang, *Economic Cold War*, 127-28.

Sino-American trade relations, the Eisenhower years saw a resurrection of the “China differential.”

There was, however, no commensurate revival of strict travel prohibitions. Once liberalization of travel policy began, it largely moved beyond the control of Washington policymakers and officials found it impossible to return to pure containment. In this way, while the revival of the Trading With the Enemy Act in 1950 and the placement of “permanent” prohibitory stamps on U.S. passports in 1952, signaled a complementary relationship between containment and Sino-American travel policy, U.S. officials never accepted the travel ban as a permanent staple of U.S. China policy nor did they demand consistency in its application as they did with issues like economic embargo, non-recognition, and alliance with the ROC. From the start officials were extraordinarily flexible with the ban and open to significant modification and liberalization. Within only a few years of the conclusion of the Korean War – as U.S. and Chinese officials engaged in diplomatic talks in Geneva – Washington officials embarked on a precarious path toward liberalizing travel policy toward the PRC.

Prior to the August 1955 Geneva Talks, the U.S. ban on travel to the PRC had been largely academic; PRC officials had given no indication that they would accept American visitors even if the State Department had given the go-ahead.<sup>7</sup> In August 1956, however, PRC officials reversed course and offered visas to American reporters from

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<sup>7</sup> The only exception to this was the case of William Jack Ranallo, a United Nations employee who worked with Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld. In 1954 Ranallo served as Hammarskjöld’s guard, valet, and secretary during the Secretary General’s visit to the PRC. The State Department validated Ranallo’s passport but insisted that such a move did not set a precedent for future American travel. Robertson to Dulles, “Policy Concerning Travel of Americans to Communist China,” 18 February 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.



fifteen news agencies.<sup>8</sup> The invitation was part of an attempt by the Chinese to breathe new life into the listless Sino-American talks by increasing the pressure of public opinion on Washington officials.<sup>9</sup> Although Secretary of State Dulles would not alert the American public of the fact until February 1957, PRC officials at the time also implied that the invitations (were they to be accepted) would expedite the release of several American airmen who had been in Chinese custody since the Korean War.<sup>10</sup>

U.S. officials rejected the offer. In public, Eisenhower officials pointed to several related explanations for the decision. Most generally, the United States did not recognize the PRC as a legitimate nation. Though the Korean War had produced a cease-fire in July 1953, a state of quasi-war still existed between the U.S. and PRC, reinforcing the distrust and hostility between the two nations. Because of the years of political and military clashes, the United States had no diplomatic presence in China and could not, therefore, guarantee the protection of visiting journalists. As evidence of the danger posed to visiting Americans, Eisenhower and Dulles consistently pointed to the handful of American prisoners held “unjustly” in Chinese prisons.

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<sup>8</sup> The invitation was not a total surprise. Two months earlier officials at the American Consulate in Hong Kong had received word from French newsmen that there was a good chance the Chinese would be issuing invitations to American journalists. Other European news agencies in the area, however, insisted that no such invitations would be issued until progress had been made at the Geneva talks. Shortly thereafter, Henry Lieberman of the *New York Times* insisted that the Beijing government had contacted Reuters regarding the forthcoming invitations and he was convinced that the information was accurate. Lieberman had been in touch with Kung Peng, Director of the Information Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Lieberman was sure that the Chinese were committed to the proposal. Everett Drumright to McConaughy, 22 June 1956, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA; Drumright to McConaughy, 17 July 1956, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>9</sup> Yafeng Xia, “From Antagonists to Adversaries: U.S.-China Talks During the Cold War, 1949-1972,” PhD diss. (University of Maryland, College Park, 2003), 156-57.

<sup>10</sup> American officials first learned of these prisoners in November 1954 when Beijing Radio broadcast that the Chinese were detaining thirteen Americans accused of espionage. Eleven were Air Force men, led by Colonel John Knox Arnold, who had been on a leaflet-dropping mission over North Korea when they were shot down by Chinese forces. The other two men were CIA agents Richard Fecteau and John Downey who had been involved in covert activities in North Korea and the PRC when they were ambushed and captured by Chinese troops. For an overview of these cases, see Ted Gup, *The Book of Honor: The Secret Lives and Deaths of CIA Operatives* (New York: Anchor Books, 2001).

The prisoner issue was, in fact, the explanation that was most tangible to the American people and the administration made it front and center in every public debate over the journalist exchange. It was also the dominant justification in official correspondence and memoranda.<sup>11</sup> The prisoner issue took on renewed significance after Dulles announced, in February 1957, that the Chinese had offered to release the prisoners if Eisenhower agreed to send the American journalists. Instead of taking the offer as an added incentive to send the newsmen to China, Eisenhower and Dulles insisted that such a move would give the PRC undeserved recognition and prestige and that the PRC's quid pro quo bordered on "blackmail."<sup>12</sup>

Despite the way it appeared in the media, the decision to prevent the newsmen from traveling to the PRC was not a knee-jerk Cold War reaction. In a broad sense, the military, economic, and political standoff between the United States and the PRC did not necessarily translate to a denial of travel connections between the two nations. To this end, while Eisenhower and Dulles, in public statements and official policy, voiced unwavering disapproval for the newsmen trip, behind closed doors they expressed far more nuance. A year before the Chinese offer Dulles pondered whether the State Department actually had the authority to deny Americans access to the PRC, and he

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<sup>11</sup> For examples, see Drumright to McConaughy, 7 March 1956, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #46, Box 15, NARA; McCardle to Dulles, 14 August 1956, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA; Sebald to Dulles, "Ambassador Johnson's Views on Possible Travel of American Correspondents to Communist China," 17 August 1956, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA; memorandum of conversation on "U.S. Policy on Visits of Correspondents and Others to Communist China," 2 January 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA.

<sup>12</sup> Press conference of 5 February 1957, John Foster Dulles Papers, Speeches, Statements, Press Conferences, etc, Box 353, John Foster Dulles Papers, MC016, JFD.

acknowledged his discomfort with the “legal basis for denying passports valid for travel to Communist China.”<sup>13</sup>

## II

When Dulles temporarily put aside his uneasiness with travel prohibitions and rejected the Chinese invitation, his concerns were voiced (though more loudly) by large segments of the American population. Liberal groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), along with American journalists, were the most vocal in expressing their outrage over the State Department’s actions. The Writers Guild of America called the ban “censorship” and the American Committee for Cultural Freedom linked the travel restrictions to totalitarianism.<sup>14</sup> Despite this strong, public opposition, the issue remained under the radar of most Americans until a handful of travelers intentionally violated the ban.

There was no cohesive, organized effort to undermine the State Department’s travel restrictions, but the various individuals who did travel in violation of the Department’s ban all shared frustration – to differing degrees – with Washington’s policy. Though these individuals literally circumvented U.S. travel prohibitions, their actions also made sense in the context of U.S. postwar travel policy. As demonstrated through the work with PATA, Randall’s travel report, and congressional initiatives to facilitate tourism, governments around the world – the United States included – worked extremely hard in the years following the Second World War to break down the barriers of international travel. Individual travelers and travel promoters reflected and encouraged

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<sup>13</sup> Dulles, “Memorandum for Mr. Phleger,” 11 July 1955, Series 8, Box 12, JFD.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Pryor, “Writers Protest China Travel Ban,” *New York Times*, 2 April 1957; “China Ban Assailed,” *New York Times*, 11 January 1957.

this liberalization policy, developing a firm belief that all Americans should be able to travel overseas unobstructed. Violation of the State Department's travel ban – though certainly earning the resentment of U.S. officials – was merely an extreme variant of this growing trend.

One of the earliest violators of the travel ban was William Worthy, a young free-lance correspondent, who wrote regularly for the Baltimore *Afro-American* and the NAACP's *Crisis*. On Christmas Eve 1956, shortly after the Chinese invited American journalists to visit the country, Worthy entered the PRC for forty-one days on a Chinese visa. He arrived by plane in Hong Kong and quickly boarded a train to Canton. Two days after Worthy's arrival, correspondent Edmund Stevens and photographer Phillip Harrington – both of *Look* magazine – reached China. The arrival of the three men created a media sensation. Worthy, Stevens, and Harrington were the first three newsmen to defy the administration's travel ban and, in that capacity, transformed the travel issue from one of abstraction to one of immediate and tangible significance.<sup>15</sup>

Stevens and Harrington, who arrived shortly after Worthy, never intended for their trip to take on the significance it did. While the men cannot be taken entirely at their word, they later claimed that their visit to the PRC was an accident. Leaving Moscow on a skiing trip in late December, the men wound up in the PRC shortly thereafter. The publication, a few months following their return, of a seventeen-page news special in *Look* that chronicled – in photographs and text – Stevens and Harrington's trip, seemed to

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<sup>15</sup> The national media offered extensive coverage of the trips of Worthy, Stevens, and Harrington. For examples, see Wilmot Hersher, "Reporter Defies China-Visit Ban," *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 25 December 1956; Warren Unna, "U.S. Reporters in Red China Called Aid to Freeing Americans," *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 30 March 1957; and C.P. Trussell, "Newsmen Cites Pressure by U.S.," *New York Times*, 30 March 1957.

undermine the “accidental tourist” excuse.<sup>16</sup> Nonetheless, from the moment they left the PRC the men were extremely cooperative with U.S. officials and eager to put the incident behind them. Roderic O’Connor, of the State Department Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs, was confident that after the present passport debacle had been resolved, neither Stevens nor Harrington would ever again pose problems for the State Department.<sup>17</sup>

Worthy, who was not associated with the *Look* newsmen, entered the PRC knowingly and with the explicit intention of challenging the administration’s travel ban. According to the editor of the *Afro-American*, who publicly acknowledged sponsoring Worthy’s trip, Worthy had begun planning his visit to the PRC in late 1954. The trip to China was to be the culmination of successful run of journalistic tourism that took Worthy to Bandung in April 1955, to the USSR in July 1955, and throughout Africa in September 1956. In addition to close collaboration with the *Afro-American*, Worthy had been in contact with the ACLU and the organization intended Worthy’s visit to test the tenacity of the U.S. government in upholding its travel ban.<sup>18</sup> Aside from the legal challenge, Worthy insisted that his visit would be useful in disseminating news from

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<sup>16</sup> Edmund Stevens with photographs by Phillip Harrington, “Inside Red China,” *Look*, 16 April 1957.

<sup>17</sup> O’Connor to Thompson, 23 July 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>18</sup> Worthy made no effort to hide his association with the ACLU. He spoke of his cooperation with the organization in several speeches he delivered following his return to the U.S. Aylward to McConaughy, no date, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box, 2, NARA.

behind the Bamboo Curtain and possibly in securing the release of the American prisoners still lingering in Chinese jails.<sup>19</sup>

Because of its “purposeful” nature, Worthy’s visit, in particular, produced a torrent of media coverage and subsequent vitriol from Washington. In addition to regular front-page stories documenting his visit, Worthy’s own reports appeared in the *Afro-American*, the *New York Post*, and CBS news.<sup>20</sup> There was, moreover, extensive positive coverage in the African American press. In an effort to tie Worthy’s actions to the broader civil rights struggles, the *Atlanta Daily World*, for example, criticized the State Department for taking such an immediate and hostile interest in Worthy’s trip while Washington officials maintained such a “hands off policy” when it came to enforcing school desegregation.” The *New York Amsterdam News* insisted that Worthy’s reports were “restrained and circumspect,” noting that Worthy “will not offend the U.S. government insofar as content is concerned.”<sup>21</sup> Worthy, himself, had an extensive background of reporting on African American issues overseas, often suggesting that the socialist model might offer more freedoms for racial minorities.<sup>22</sup> He produced reports on black expatriates living in the Soviet Union, interviewed “died-in-the-wool [*sic*]

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<sup>19</sup> Worthy continued to pursue to the prisoner issue following his return to the United States. in preparation for a newspaper article. He corresponded frequently with family members of the imprisoned men, inquiring about their attitudes toward the situation. Worthy also interviewed State and Defense Department officials on the issue and informed them that he had secured “a large number of...complaints” from family members regarding Washington’s handling of the prisoner affair. See Osborn to Jones, “Interview with William Worthy,” 22 August 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA; memorandum of conversation, “Activities of William Worthy,” 15 April 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA.

<sup>20</sup> According to William Paely of CBS, the network consistently rejected cooperation with Worthy, refusing to make any sort of contractual arrangement with him or provide him equipment for his trip. However, when Worthy informed CBS that he was broadcasting at a certain time from the PRC, CBS opted to pick up and rebroadcast his story. Memorandum of conversation, 4 January 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA.

<sup>21</sup> “Covering Washington,” *Atlanta Daily World*, 5 January 1957; Marguerite Cartwright, “Back Newsman Who Crashed Iron Curtain,” *New York Amsterdam News*, 5 January 1957.

<sup>22</sup> Jinx Coleman Broussard and Skye Chance Cooley, “William Worthy: The Man and the Mission,” *Journalism Studies* 10 no. 3 (June 2009), 390-91.

Southerner” Senator Allen Ellender while both men were visiting Moscow, reported from the Bandung Conference in Indonesia, and chastised the apartheid system of South Africa. In the PRC, as well, Worthy pursued these issues, speaking with an African American GI who had opted to stay in China following the Korean War.<sup>23</sup>

Coming on the heels of the PRC’s invitation to American newsmen, the media frenzy surrounding Worthy, Stevens, and Harrington no doubt placed additional pressure on Eisenhower and Dulles to modify, or at least clarify, Washington’s policy on journalist visits to the PRC. While most in the journalism community criticized Washington’s initial restrictive travel policy, in the end they had acquiesced to the government’s demands. The three visits in late 1956 thus stood out as unexpected acts of defiance.<sup>24</sup> Complicating this was the fact that the three men emerged as mainstream personalities and earned the sympathy of the American public. This was especially significant in regard to Worthy, who became the unofficial spokesman in opposition to the travel bans. Despite being a self-proclaimed socialist, Worthy framed the debate over his trip in terms of the “right to travel” and “freedom of speech” as opposed to explicit criticism of U.S. Cold War policy. Speaking about his trip before an audience at Cornell University, for example, Worthy “made an excellent impression.” State Department

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<sup>23</sup> For examples, see William Worthy, “This is Russia: From Ford to Stalingrad,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, 13 August 1955; William Worthy, “Louisiana Senator Makes Bad Impression In Moscow,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, 1 October 1955; William Worthy, “Fear Grips Rulers Inside S. Africa,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, 29 September 1956; “Mr. Worthy’s Mission,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, 5 January 1957.

<sup>24</sup> Jim Robinson of NBC had planned on visiting the PRC in summer 1956. NBC cancelled these plans, however, upon the announcement from President Eisenhower that such travel was illegal. Though Robinson strongly disagreed with the official travel policy, he demonstrated some ambivalence on the issue, noting, “one does not lightly defy the President.” Armstrong to Lutkins, 22 August 1956, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA. Similarly, the editor of *U.S. News and World Report* refused to allow the magazine’s Far East reporter to travel to the PRC in 1956 due to the “state of war” that existed between the U.S. and China. Statement from Flieger, telephoned to Dulles by David Lawrence, 7 August 1956, Series 2A, Box 5, JFD; Broussard and Cooley, “William Worthy,” 387.

officials even conceded that his account was noticeably balanced and nuanced, especially in regard to his discussion of Beijing's censorship and brainwashing practices.<sup>25</sup>

Adding to this boost of credibility, in March 1957, as officials debated the appropriate response to Worthy's actions, Worthy testified as a witness before the Senate Constitutional Rights subcommittee in an effort to reform State Department travel policy. Missouri Senator Thomas Hennings, who was very critical of the administration's travel policy and its treatment of Worthy, had invited Worthy to speak at the hearing. In this capacity, Worthy was not the focus of vitriol and criticism but instead served as a knowledgeable expert on the topic of passport restrictions. Worthy and other witnesses argued that the visit had not only left Washington's foreign policy undamaged; it actually had furthered U.S. interests in the PRC, specifically in terms of the well-publicized POW issue. Using Washington's own generally liberal policies toward international travel as a basis for criticism, a representative for the ACLU insisted that the State Department travel ban was "anachronistic" in the post-World War II period, when most countries – the United States included – were urging an increase in international travel and a reduction in travel barriers.<sup>26</sup> In this and other settings, Worthy's demeanor helped convince most Americans that government restrictions on travel to the PRC were less a means of containing domestic communism or protecting U.S. interests than they were of denying the freedom of movement.

Washington officials, nonetheless, tried to marginalize Worthy, insisting that his case – which involved an explicit violation of U.S. law – had nothing to do with the

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<sup>25</sup> Aylward to McConaughy, "William Worthy's Visit at Cornell," no date, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA.

<sup>26</sup> "Worthy Before Senate on Friday," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 30 March 1957; Trussell, "Newsman Cites Pressure by the U.S.," *New York Times*, 30 March 1957.



“right to travel” or the continuing debate over the PRC’s open invitation to American journalists. To the chagrin of the Eisenhower administration, however, “to the public [they] were directly related.”<sup>27</sup> Following Worthy’s return, national media agencies increasingly lost faith in the government’s travel ban and amplified their demands for unrestricted travel to China. The *New York Post*, which carried many of Worthy’s stories, called his trip “a mission for the whole American press.” While the *Post* acknowledged that there was likely a legal case against Worthy, “morally, we believe, he has rendered a memorable service.” Edward R. Murrow hailed Worthy’s visit as “an historic event” and he forged a close bond between Worthy and CBS.<sup>28</sup> Based on media coverage, there seemed to be a general consensus that the Worthy case and the ongoing effort to secure a newsmen exchange both placed the U.S. government on the very unpopular side of restricting travel.<sup>29</sup>

More than just a talking point for journalists and liberal critics, mainstream politicians and administration officials, who genuinely desired more information on “current conditions within China,” railed against the travel ban.<sup>30</sup> A healthy majority of the American public, as well, opposed restrictions. Gallup Polls released in 1957 showed that while an overwhelming majority of Americans still opposed seating the PRC in the

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<sup>27</sup> Memorandum of conversation, “Travel of Newsmen to Communist China Meeting,” 28 March 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>28</sup> “A Newspaperman’s Mission,” *New York Post*, 2 January 1957, quoted in “New York Newspaper Applauds Worthy,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, 5 January 1957; Cartwright, “Back Newsmen Who Crashed Iron Curtain,” *New York Amsterdam*, 5 January 1957.

<sup>29</sup> Memorandum of conversation, “Travel of Newsmen to Communist China Meeting,” 28 March 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>30</sup> State Department press release on reporters to Red China, 22 August 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #1336, Box 4, NARA.

United Nations and engaging the PRC in non-strategic trade, 57 percent favored letting newsmen travel to the PRC while only 26 percent opposed.<sup>31</sup>

### III

The public controversy surrounding Worthy's visit sparked a number of other visits to the PRC over the next several years. The increase in unlawful travel, no doubt, posed a significant problem for U.S. officials. Despite Washington officials' frequent protestations to the contrary, the general prohibition on travel to the PRC was intimately connected to Washington's non-recognition policy toward China; while sporadic violations of the travel ban likely would not permanently damage American standing in the region, the steady erosion of restrictions that would result from increased violations seemed to undermine Washington's position vis-à-vis the PRC.

Officials in the Eisenhower administration also deplored the travel violations because they were, as seen in the Worthy case, often associated with liberal political organizations or individuals sympathetic with the Chinese Communist regime. Only a few years after the end of the Korean War and at the peak of domestic McCarthyism, many officials saw these violators as little more than communist dissidents. The characterization was not always hyperbole. In general, Americans who traveled to the PRC in the decades prior to the 1970s were disillusioned, to some extent, with U.S. society and were searching for "political and spiritual alternatives." They were, moreover, fed up with the cursory or hostile treatment of the PRC in the American press

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<sup>31</sup> Gallup Poll #578, 5 February 1957; Gallup Poll #584, 6 June 1957; "Recent Public Opinion Polls on U.S. Relations with Red China," 3 April 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.

and among U.S. policymakers, using their trips to correct misconceptions and showcase Communist reforms in a more positive light.<sup>32</sup>

Several visits by Americans exemplify what sociologist Paul Hollander calls “political pilgrimages” and what historian Brenda Gayle Plummer calls “revolutionary tourism.”<sup>33</sup> In October 1952 Henry and Anita Wilcox circumvented the U.S. travel ban and visited Beijing to attend the Peace Conference of the Asian and Pacific Regions. Along with twelve other members of the American delegation, the Wilcoxes insisted that the United States was engaging in biological warfare in Korea.<sup>34</sup> Seven years later, in the midst of the Great Leap Forward, W.E.B. Du Bois and his wife Shirley, not yet convinced that the socialist experiment in China was a failure, traveled to the PRC. Over the course of a ten-week visit, Du Bois met with Mao Zedong, dined twice with Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai, and wrote rich, laudatory accounts of the “glorious...miracle” of China. He blamed the Cold War – and the West’s consequential fear of socialism – for the inability of Americans to visit the PRC and “learn the truth about the Revolution.”<sup>35</sup> Du Bois, soon to become an official member of the American Communist Party, seemed to relish his emerging status as an American exile and an adopted Chinese, recalling how he spent his ninety-first birthday with Chinese ministers of state, artists, professionals, and other “exiled” fellow travelers such as Anna Louise Strong.<sup>36</sup> Traveling at the same time as Du Bois, former Treasury and International Monetary Fund official Frank Coe

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<sup>32</sup> Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims: Western Intellectuals in Search of the Good Society* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 279-80.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.; Brenda Gayle Plummer, “Castro in Harlem: A Cold War Watershed,” in *Re-Thinking the Cold War*, ed. Allen Hunter, 133-153 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998).

<sup>34</sup> “Germ War Alleged by Passport Loser,” *New York Times*, 27 November 1952.

<sup>35</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois quoted in *W.E.B. Du Bois on Asia: Crossing the World Color Line*, eds. Bill V. Mullen and Cathryn Watson (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2005), 188-89.

<sup>36</sup> Du Bois, “The Vast Miracle of China Today: A Report on a Ten-Week Visit to the People’s Republic of China,” in *W.E.B. Du Bois on Asia*, eds. Mullen and Watson, 188, 195.

traveled to the PRC following a lengthy investigation into his involvement in the Communist Party and alleged espionage activities. Like Du Bois, Coe wrote extensively on the Great Leap Forward and published a favorable overview of his visit in a Beijing periodical.<sup>37</sup>

While these cases strengthened the associations between unlawful travel and communist sympathies, not all American visitors to the PRC were communist, nor were they all intent on promoting their trip as an anti-American political statement. Worthy, for instance, was eager to deny any affiliation with the Communist Party and, when testifying before a Senate Committee, dared senators to ask him the “\$64 question” so he could respond in the negative.<sup>38</sup> Instead, the bulk of these tourists portrayed themselves as curious, nonpolitical travelers, intent on bringing more knowledge of the PRC into their own lives and to the American public.

This was certainly true for a group of American students who, in August 1957, traveled to the PRC.<sup>39</sup> In this case, as well, Washington officials tried to marginalize the students as radical leftists. Such an approach was not entirely surprising. It was following an appearance at the 1957 Moscow Youth Festival that the All-China Youth Federation (ACYF) – a CCP-run organization that aimed to develop national loyalty and international connections among the younger generation – extended invitations for 160 American students to visit the PRC. Spotting an opportunity to travel in this forbidden land, forty-one of the Americans chose to make the trip. Washington officials, who were

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<sup>37</sup> Robert Alden, “Frank Coe Lauds Red China’s Work,” *New York Times*, 21 February 1959.

<sup>38</sup> Unna, “U.S. Reporters in Red China Called Aid to Freeing Americans,” *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 30 March 1957.

<sup>39</sup> The presence of the American students at the Moscow Youth Festival and the subsequent visit to the PRC was extremely well publicized in the U.S. See, Max Frankel, “Fifty U.S. Youth Plan China Tour,” *New York Times*, 10 August 1957; Dana Adams Schmidt, “U.S. Fears Harm in Visits to China,” *New York Times*, 13 August 1957; David Chipp, “41 American Youths Extend Tour to Canton,” *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 28 August 1957.

already frustrated that the students (legally) traveled to Moscow to take part in the Festival, became irate when discovering the students' intention to visit the PRC. In an attempt to undermine the students' credibility, one memorandum noted that while officials "have not been able to establish any direct connection [to communist organizations], it is interesting to note that of those 'students' who continued on into Red China...43 percent claim residence in the Greater New York City area."<sup>40</sup>

Despite these efforts in Washington, the students' visit to the PRC had far more to do with personal curiosity and search for the exotic than it did leftist politics.<sup>41</sup> Most of the students recognized that their Chinese tour could be politically beneficial for the PRC regime but, while motivations behind the visit varied, few made the trip explicitly to challenge or damage Washington's international standing. For American travelers, more so than their European counterparts (many of whom came from countries that recognized the PRC), mainland China carried an air of excitement, adventure, and novelty; this siren call from behind the Bamboo Curtain, no doubt, was incentive enough for many of the students to violate the ban. Peggy Seeger, the half-sister of folk-singer Pete Seeger, considered herself naïve on political issues and made the trip to fulfill her own curiosity.<sup>42</sup> Roderic O'Connor suggested that the "greatest inducement" for travel to the Soviet Union and the PRC, both of which were heavily subsidized by the Moscow and

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<sup>40</sup> O'Connor to Herter, "Students Who Traveled to China," 19 November 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>41</sup> Yale Richmond argues that while politics at the Youth Festival certainly leaned to the left, there was also a great deal of substantive criticism of Soviet policies. American, British, and Israel delegates voiced concerns about human rights and political suppression. Soviet delegates, moreover, expressed a strong eagerness to adopt American cultural practices, ranging from blue jeans to free speech. Thus, while the USSR likely benefited from the Festival in the short run, in the long run these sorts of festivals sowed the seeds of dissidence and reform that would hasten the collapse of the Soviet Union. Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War*, 11-13.

<sup>42</sup> Peggy Seeger, interview by author, 23 September 2008.

Beijing governments, was the “greatly reduced rate of travel costs.”<sup>43</sup> By the time they left, moreover, most of the students in the group had lined up deals with publishers to write articles or books about their trip and thus personal profit and publicity were overwhelming incentives to accept the invitation.

Regardless of their reasons for travel, most of the students saw the trip as a valid and innocuous form of expression; thirty-two of them signed a statement reaffirming their “belief in the right of U.S. citizens to travel,” and maintained that the trip was “consistent with loyalty to our country.”<sup>44</sup> Shelby Tucker, in fact, claimed to be a voice for patriotism and conservative ideology, leading what he called a “rightist faction” within the student group. He insisted he made the trip to demonstrate the freedom of the United States and to rebut any potential anti-American statements coming from the more liberal wing of the student group. To this end, Tucker stood alone in his opposition to hand his passport over to PRC authorities – an act that he believed would have violated U.S. law.<sup>45</sup>

Like Worthy’s visit, the students’ trip to the PRC certainly left an impact on U.S. China policy and Sino-American relations. Both intentionally and unintentionally, the students engaged in a sort of intimate, non-official diplomacy that no doubt complicated the objectives of policymakers back in the United States. The students regularly engaged

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<sup>43</sup> O’Connor to Herter, “Students Who Traveled to China,” 19 November 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in “Defiant Group Leaves for Red China,” *Los Angeles Times*, 15 August 1957.

<sup>45</sup> Many of the students, in fact, worried that by handing over their passport to Chinese authorities – which the Chinese demanded – they would transform their casual violation of the U.S. travel ban into a far more serious crime. Sally Belfrage recalled that Warren McKennan was the most worried since he had been responsible for collecting the students’ passports and delivering them to the Chinese. Belfrage herself seemed to brush off the consequences, noting casually, “we’re all due for a charge of violation of passport regulations.” Six of the students had initially refused to hand over their passports but Tucker was soon the only student to hold this distinction. As a result, Tucker faced constant pressure from Chinese authorities who threatened to remove him from the country if he did not comply. Officials eventually followed through in removing Tucker from the country and in early September he returned to the United States. Notebooks: Moscow and China, Box 4, Folder 3, SBP; Reuters, “Peiping to Oust American Youth if He Won’t Surrender Passport,” *New York Times*, 29 August 1957.

local Chinese in political discussion and they often had to explain American domestic issues such as the civil rights movement and racial segregation. Some of the students, following on the heels of Worthy, met with, interviewed, and relayed information on a handful of the American POWs. The interviews, organized by the ACYF and publicized extensively in American newspapers, provided a rare glimpse at these prisoners and offered the prisoners' families some consolation. The students reported the men in good health, eager for release, and absent of any signs of brainwashing or abuse.<sup>46</sup> The students, moreover, held a lengthy question and answer session with Zhou Enlai. They queried Zhou on the still unsettled newsmen exchange, the imprisonment of American POWs, the remaining Chinese students in the United States, the development of atomic weapons, Chinese admission to the United Nations, and the status of Taiwan. Responding to the group, Zhou noted that the students were "pioneers" and that the task of improving Sino-American relations was not "for professional diplomats alone."<sup>47</sup>

Even upon their return some of the students continued to play up their role as renegade, political tourists. Nina Landau, David Hollister, and Sheila Greenberg gave a series of talks in New York sponsored by the Young Socialist Alliance, promising to divulge the "eye-witness report of the 'forbidden' trip!"<sup>48</sup> Bob Cohen, at the urging of NBC, had filmed much of trip. NBC's "Huntley-Brinkley Report" and "Today Show" ran

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<sup>46</sup> According to Ruth Redmond, whose son Hugh was one of the American prisoners in the PRC, the students' report "confirmed earlier reports that he [Hugh Redmond] had remained 'fanatically American'." Likewise, while Richard Fecteau and John Downey – two CIA agents captured by Chinese forces in the middle of the Korean War – gave positive accounts of the PRC government and criticized State Department policy regarding recognition and travel bans, both stated that there was little effort by Chinese authorities to influence their politics. Though much of their reading material was communist-related, the men also read *Sports Illustrated*, *New Yorker*, and *House Beautiful*. According to the students' report, Downey claimed he was "not a Communist. I guess I'm still a New Dealer." Diary excerpts by David Hollister from 1957 trip to China, Box 24, Folder 13, SBP; Quoted in "Americans Visit 3 U.S. Prisoners in Shanghai; Captive from Yonkers is Cool to Touring Party," *New York Times*, 20 September 1957.

<sup>47</sup> "Interview with Chou En-Lai," Notebooks: Moscow and China, Box 4, Folder 3, SBP.

<sup>48</sup> Diary excerpts by David Hollister from 1957 trip to China, Box 24, Folder 13, SBP.

footage of Cohen's *Inside Red China* special and Cohen took his film on tour to universities across the country. In all his broadcasts Cohen assured the public that "not a single frame was censored or even seen by the Communists."<sup>49</sup> Despite his claims of objectivity, the general tone of Cohen's documentary was, nonetheless, one of acceptance and admiration.

The political implications of the students' visit also emerged from the fact that their trip was one component of a larger, cultural and touristic "offensive" launched by the PRC government that spanned from 1955 to 1959.<sup>50</sup> As Worthy, Du Bois, and the American students were slipping through the cracks and visiting the PRC in violation of Washington's travel ban, thousands of foreigners from other countries legally toured China. The majority of these visitors were from the Soviet Union and other communist countries. But other tourist delegations – from India, France, Sweden, Canada, Britain, Israel, and Colombia – visited the PRC as well. The number of foreign tourists coming into the PRC was never large. The number in 1955, for example, was around 5,000.<sup>51</sup> The PRC's version of suitcase diplomacy – though quantitatively far smaller than programs in the United States, Europe, South America, and elsewhere in Asia – was, nonetheless, surprisingly effective since the government was able to "control and focus the entire

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<sup>49</sup> See advertisement for Robert Cohen film lecture in *UCLA Daily Bruin*, 1959, in Letters and memorabilia from 1957 trip to China, and from subsequent 1978 reunion trip, Box 24, Folder 12, SBP; "Political Emphasis to Focus on Chinese-Peking Conflict," *The Blue and Grey Today* (Hood College, Frederick, Maryland), February 1965. Cohen also showed his film at the Los Angeles County Museum as part of its "Where in the World" film-lecture series. "Film-Lecture Series Set Tonight," *Los Angeles Times*, 20 October 1960; Robert C. Cohen, *Inside Red China* (original footage 1957; Radical Films, 2002), 39 min., 48 sec; from [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) (accessed 12 February 2009).

<sup>50</sup> The best accounts of international tourism to the PRC during the 1950s are the Richard Walker's very brief *Guided Tourism in China* (Hong Kong: China Viewpoints, 1956); and Herbert Passin's *China's Cultural Diplomacy* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963). Contemporary articles that discussed the boom in foreign travel to the PRC include Tillman Durdin, "Red China Lures Many Foreigners," *New York Times*, 19 August 1957; Seymour Topping, "Red China Seeks to Spur Tourism," *New York Times*, 17 May 1964; "Peking Calling," *Time*, 27 July 1959.

<sup>51</sup> MacGregor, "Foreign Visitors See Peiping's Best Side," *New York Times*, 26 August 1956.



experience.”<sup>52</sup> In a closed society like the PRC, government officials chose who could visit the country, what sights they could see, with whom they could interact, and when they had to return home.<sup>53</sup> Foreign visitors were – in the words of French journalist Jacque Marcuse – VIPPs (Very Important Potential Propagandists). In this context, PRC officials hoped that these travelers would develop and spread sympathy for Chinese international and domestic policies.<sup>54</sup> The resulting images and stories that these tourists produced – in the form of newspaper articles, memoirs, and lectures – thus passed on inaccurate or skewed information to eager listeners back at home.

As this approach suggests, in the PRC there was little distinction between political, propagandistic exchange and recreational tourism. Just months before the students arrived in the PRC, the government-run Chinese Intourist agency had issued an announcement that tourists from all countries were welcome in China. Through Intourist the PRC welcomed, guided, and supervised all sorts of recreational, diplomatic, and cultural delegations. The warm reception that the American students received from Chinese youth as their train pulled into the Beijing Railway Station, therefore, was more likely a calculated effort on the part of the PRC government than it was a spontaneous outpouring of pro-American sympathy.

Almost every visitor to the PRC – regardless of country of origin or motivation for travel – had a similar experience. The cablegram that granted William Worthy a visa, for instance, instructed him to contact Intourist for all his travel and accommodation needs. The official agency oversaw every aspect of Worthy’s visit, including his hotel

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<sup>52</sup> Passin, *China’s Cultural Diplomacy*, 9.

<sup>53</sup> One correspondent, for example, noted that the routine visit to Mao’s birthplace and the chance to talk to one of Mao’s uncles, required “uncles working in shifts.” Quoted in Walker, *Guided Tourism in China*, 6.

<sup>54</sup> Marcuse, *The Peking Papers*, 8.

rooms, tours, transportation, interpreters, and interviews.<sup>55</sup> Lisa Hobbs, an Australian-born journalist for the *San Francisco Examiner*, noted that “[e]very foreigner in China, even paying tourist groups, is there at the behest of the Chinese Government and is regarded as a guest.”<sup>56</sup> The story was much the same with William Kinmond, a Canadian journalist who entered the PRC in 1957. Kinmond recalled “Miss Fen” – “an indefatigable representative of China Intourist” – boarding his train upon arrival in Canton, rushing him to his hotel, and then guiding him on what he referred to as an “ideological tour” of China. Kinmond was, in his words, completely dependent on the Intourist interpreters to the point that they provided “a strange feeling of security” and induced a “state of somnolent happiness.”<sup>57</sup> French journalist Robert Gullain, traveling in China around the same time as the American students, commented that the Bamboo Curtain materialized as a “subtle veil...skillfully and firmly drawn between China and myself.” Gullain recalled that despite the monumental population of China, “I was never left alone to speak with one of them [an average Chinese citizen] without a witness, and if I was, it was a put-up job.”<sup>58</sup>

The students’ association with the ACYF, moreover, was standard for incoming tourists. While Intourist was responsible for all incoming visitors, most tourists received assistance, funding, or supervision from various front organizations that matched their particular group dynamic. W.E.B. Du Bois and his wife, for instance, received joint sponsorship from the Communist People’s Association for Cultural Relations with

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<sup>55</sup> “Why Bill Worthy is in Red China,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, 5 January 1957.

<sup>56</sup> Lisa Hobbs, *I Saw Red China*. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), 9.

<sup>57</sup> William Kinmond, *No Dogs in China: A Report on China Today* (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1957), 19-22, 27.

<sup>58</sup> Robert Gullain, *600 Million Chinese*, trans. Mervyn Savill (New York: Criterion Books, 1957), 40.

Foreign Countries and the Communist China Peace Committee.<sup>59</sup> These organizations often subsidized the visits, assuming that such treatment would result in “a small crumb of favorable comment when they return to their home countries.” William Kinmond commented on the number of “freeloading” tourists in the PRC, noting that of the 300 foreign guests at Beijing’s Chen Men Hotel, he was the only one to pay a bill.<sup>60</sup>

Detailing the level of PRC supervision of tourists, Robert Loh testified before Congress on the means by which the Chinese “hoodwinked” incoming travelers. Chinese officials spent months preparing for individual travelers in order to ensure that the resulting exchange was beneficial to the interests of the PRC. Visitors could see only certain cities, visit pre-selected factories, and reside in exclusive hotels. Though visitors were “nominally” free to choose their activities, in actuality they were “choosing only the places previously designated by the Communists.” Officials selected dozens of “showplaces” – homes of “average” Chinese workers, cotton mills, and universities – in order to be prepared for any “improvised” request on the part of tourists. Loh himself played a role, posing as a token “reformed capitalist” for visitors who were interested in how PRC officials dealt with these sort of ideological dissidents.<sup>61</sup> British journalist Felix Greene, visiting China shortly after the students, for instance, remembered meeting with “Mr. Wang,” a wealthy Chinese businessman, who lauded China’s economic framework and proudly called himself a “Communist capitalist.”<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> AP, “Wife With Dr. Dubois,” *New York Times*, 14 February 1959.

<sup>60</sup> Kinmond, *No Dogs in China*, 170-71.

<sup>61</sup> Robert Loh, “How the Chinese Reds Hoodwink Visiting Foreigners,” House of Representatives, 86<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 21 April 1961.

<sup>62</sup> Felix Greene insisted that the encounter with Mr. Wang was not a matter of staged propaganda, since he met Wang on a train during an unplanned trip to Canton. The similarity of Greene’s account to numerous other stories of Chinese “capitalists,” however, suggests that there was more at work than a mere chance encounter. *Awakened China: The Country Americans Don’t Know* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), 336-39.

The American students, as well, followed a set itinerary during their visit. Like these other “guided tours,” the students visited China’s industrial center in Manchuria, a prison in Shanghai, traveled by train between Canton and Hankow, and, not surprisingly, witnessed the dazzling array of military, cultural, and political delegations at Beijing’s October 1 National Day parade.<sup>63</sup> Few of the foreign visitors to the PRC, however, recognized the restrictive nature of their visits. Three of the American students – Peggy Seeger, Robert Cohen, and Earl Williamson – insisted that the PRC regime did not inhibit their visit. Journalist Lisa Hobbs, likewise, denied any sense of supervision: “I experienced no restrictions as to when and where I wandered. I went for walks at sunup, noon and night – I wandered in and out of markets, poked my nose into backyard factories, mingled with crowds sunning in the park...Not once did I have any reason to believe I was being watched or followed.”<sup>64</sup> Even journalists like Tillman Durdin, writing from Hong Kong on the students’ visit, concurred with this rosy view of Chinese tourism. While some students remained under Communist guidance, Durdin noted, other “individualists” were able to “roam around alone...to find out things for themselves.”<sup>65</sup>

From personal accounts, however, it is clear that their options were limited. The students did not travel to Tibet, forced labor camps, areas ravaged by flood or famine, or regions occupied by ethnic minorities. Because of the language barrier and the omnipresent guides and interpreters, the students interacted with a limited, and highly supervised, segment of Chinese society. Their interview with Zhou Enlai, as opposed to

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<sup>63</sup> This footage can be seen in Cohen, *Inside Red China*. Reinforcing the standardized nature of PRC tourism, the students’ itinerary matched up almost perfectly with that of a group of American POWs, which the Chinese escorted around the country in 1956. William Worthy, “Worthy Visits Prisoners in Red China,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, 26 January 1957.

<sup>64</sup> Hobbs, *I Saw Red China*, 24.

<sup>65</sup> Tillman Durdin, “U.S. Youths Can Learn in China if They Try,” *New York Times*, 1 September 1957; Tillman Durdin, “Peiping Assails U.S. on Newsmen,” *New York Times*, 15 September 1957.

being a significant achievement that proved the visit went far beyond the ordinary, actually highlighted the all too common way in which the tourist's PRC experience was constructed by official opinions, statistics, and anecdotes. As Robert Loh succinctly noted, "whatever the foreign visitors ask, they are bound to hear lies."<sup>66</sup>

Though the experiences and "knowledge" that the American students took from their trip to the PRC were largely constructed and fabricated, to categorize the trip as purely a matter of political propaganda would be too dramatic. As mentioned above, the students did not see themselves as unwilling tools of the Communist regime; instead, they perceived their trip more as a touristic adventure. In this context, despite their confinement by the standard PRC itinerary, the students engaged in recreational sightseeing activities that were common among other tourists in the PRC at the time and would be on the itineraries of American tourists twenty years later, when the PRC fully opened its doors. Like their fellow tourists, the group attended a performance at the Peking Opera, wandered around the Temple of Heaven, took pedicab tours of Beijing, and traveled to a summer resort at Hangzhou.<sup>67</sup> The diary of David Hollister, one of the American students, reads much like a traditional tourist account and exemplifies the recreational nature of the students' visit:

10 a.m. left in bus for Great Wall. Stopped for lunch along the way....From 2 to 3  
clambered up and down Great Wall at a busy spot where much restoring going on. Left at

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<sup>66</sup> Loh, "How the Chinese Reds Hoodwink Visiting Foreigners," House of Representatives, 86<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 21 April 1961.

<sup>67</sup> Chipp, "41 American Youths Extend Tour to Canton," *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 28 August 1957.

3 for Ming Tombs. Saw main Ming Tomb....Return to Peking, arr[ived] around 8 p.m.  
Exhausting ride.<sup>68</sup>

The students' visit, which some U.S. officials legitimately saw as an extension of both leftist politics and national disloyalty and which Chinese officials saw as a means of bolstering PRC propaganda, can thus also be seen in the context of leisure, exploration, excitement, and self-improvement – all of which were motivations behind mass tourism to more traditional locales.<sup>69</sup>

#### IV

The ease by which travel maneuvered between the political and the apolitical, and the ambiguity between subversive travel and innocuous recreational tourism, made it difficult for U.S. policymakers to determine appropriate punishment for violators. Generally speaking, U.S. officials viewed the visits as violations of travel restrictions and thus means of undermining Washington's position and legitimacy in the Far East. Formulating a response to these violations, however, was not so straightforward. Policymakers had to determine whether the loss of prestige the United States would suffer if they backed away from firm travel restrictions was more detrimental than the political headache they would likely encounter if they punished violators too harshly.

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<sup>68</sup> Diary excerpts by David Hollister from 1957 trip to China, Box 24, Folder 13, SBP.

<sup>69</sup> Harvey Levenstein makes a similar argument, pointing to the fact that American tourism to France remained extremely popular throughout the twentieth century despite the perception that France was filled with snobby, anti-American locals. Contemporary politics, Levenstein argues, had less of an impact on tourist patterns than one might expect; instead, the historical Franco-American relationship, along with lingering perceptions of France as the “epicenter of high civilization and sophisticated pleasure,” kept the flow of tourists high. Levenstein, *We'll Always Have Paris: American Tourists in France Since 1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), x.

Setting the stage for this policy decision, State Department officials, upon learning of William Worthy's arrival in the PRC, were convinced that a direct and punitive response was only appropriate. While such a position would likely "arouse strong opposition in journalistic circles," it would also successfully "discourage most if not all of those who would travel to Communist China" and "encourage respect for passport restrictions in general."<sup>70</sup> To this end, the State Department chose to make Worthy's passport valid only for return to the United States and sought to confiscate his passport upon arrival. Several officials, moreover, advocated freezing Worthy's bank accounts and prosecuting him under the Trading With the Enemy Act.<sup>71</sup>

Harsh rhetoric surrounded the students' tour to the PRC as well. The State Department issued a statement defining the trip as "subversive of American foreign policy" and Under Secretary of State Christian Herter made personal phone calls to each student considering the trip, threatening passport confiscation, arrest, high bail, and jail time if they crossed into the PRC.<sup>72</sup> U.S. congressmen followed a similar path of

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<sup>70</sup> Robertson to Dulles, "Travel of American Citizens to Communist China," 27 December 1956, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #1201, Box 1, NARA.

<sup>71</sup> Richard Selby, the American Vice Consul in Budapest, made the first attempt to render Worthy's passport valid only for return to the United States. Following his trip to the PRC, Worthy had arrived in Hungary from the Soviet Union. In two meetings with Selby, Worthy refused to hand over his passport, insisting that he and the ACLU denied the power of the federal government to limit the travel rights of reporters. "Rule Defied on Passport," *Baltimore Sun*, 9 February 1957.

<sup>72</sup> Seeger, interview by author; Schmidt, "U.S. Fears Harm in Visit to China," *New York Times*, 13 August 1957; "Herter's Warnings to U.S. Students on Trip to China," *New York Times*, 14 August 1957.

intimidation following the students' visit, calling several before the House Un-American Activities Committee to defend their actions.<sup>73</sup>

In general, however, the threats issued from inside Washington proved to be bluster. The individuals had clearly violated passport restrictions, the Logan Act, and several Treasury regulations.<sup>74</sup> Based on existing criminal statutes, they could have been fined \$2,000 and sentenced to five years in prison.<sup>75</sup> Roderic O'Connor, however, quickly qualified the severity of the travel ban, explaining that the limitations were meant more to protect American travelers than they were to serve as a basis for punishment.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, despite promises to act otherwise, the State Department never even confiscated the passports of Worthy, Stevens, Harrington, the students, or Du Bois. In regard to Worthy, who posed the most trouble for the Eisenhower administration, officials opted to take the more passive route of allowing his passport to expire and rejecting renewal applications.<sup>77</sup> But even this seemed too harsh for some policymakers. Senator Hennings, for instance, introduced a resolution to put Congress on record as opposing the State Department's decision on Worthy's passport and requesting that Worthy's application be

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<sup>73</sup> Some policymakers felt that punishments for the students should vary depending on their individual motivations for making the visit. Roderic O'Connor noted the difficulty in punishing Shelby Tucker, the head of the "rightist" delegation within the student group, "in view [of his] alleged anti-communist activities...and his apparently sincere but misguided efforts to avoid violating regulations." In the end, however, State Department officials refused to treat Tucker differently than the other students, insisting that to do so would "undermine our whole policy of seeking to prevent travel by Americans to Communist China." O'Connor to Herter, 5 September 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA; Robertson to Dulles, 13 September 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>74</sup> Transcript of informal hearing at Passport Office in regard to William Worthy, 6 May 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA.

<sup>75</sup> Based on Title 18, Section 1544, U.S. Section Code on "Misuse of Passport." Anthony Lewis, "Peiping Lifts Ban on U.S. News Men," *New York Times*, 7 August 1956.

<sup>76</sup> It appears, moreover, that U.S. officials had always intended to approach travel violations in a moderate manner. In August 1955, when officials had discussed the (then hypothetical) possibility of a journalist violating the travel ban, passport confiscation had been the "sole immediate sanction" that officials would pursue. Clough to Robertson, "Travel of William Worthy to Communist China," 26 December 1956, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA; "U.S. is Softening Passport Policy," *New York Times*, 26 September 1957.

<sup>77</sup> "Senate Inquiry to Hear Worthy," *Baltimore Sun*, 23 March 1957.



approved. The State Department, too, muted its response to Worthy. Though Department officials remained steadfast in their opposition to passport renewal, two months after Worthy's return officials they had seemingly abandoned any thoughts of pursuing prosecution.<sup>78</sup> The students, as well, faced some problems getting back into the United States, but once home suffered few major consequences for their transgressions. Even while the students were still abroad, four members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee doubted that officials would mete out any serious punishment, lightly noting that they should be given "a good spanking."<sup>79</sup>

By minimizing the punishment dealt out to these travelers, Eisenhower's State Department began removing the tough exterior of its travel ban. This development was, moreover, somewhat intentional. In a speech to the Advertising Council and Federal Bar Association of Maryland, Roderic O'Connor downplayed the punishments awaiting transgressors, implying that travel violators could, in fact, hold onto their passports if they promised not to breach the travel ban in the future. The *New York Times*, in several news stories, latched on to this "second-chance" principle.<sup>80</sup>

Assistant Secretary of State Walter Robertson railed against O'Connor for this misleading depiction of U.S. policy, but O'Connor's speech accurately described Washington's approach to those who traveled to the PRC in violation of restrictions.<sup>81</sup> When Worthy testified before the State Department's Board of Passport Appeals, for example, officials asked if he would "state under oath that he would live up to the travel

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<sup>78</sup> UP, "Newsmen," 20 February 1957, in General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA.

<sup>79</sup> The senators involved were Hubert Humphrey, Mike Mansfield, Howard Alexander Smith, and George Aiken. Quoted in "Four Senators Hit Students' Trip to China," *Los Angeles Times*, 16 August 1957.

<sup>80</sup> For an example of newspaper coverage, see "U.S. is Softening Passport Policy," *New York Times*, 26 September 1957.

<sup>81</sup> Robertson to O'Connor, "Your Address Before the Advertising Council and Federal Bar Association of Maryland," 28 September 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.

restrictions if his passport were renewed,” implying that promises of good behavior would result in a second chance. In the subsequent letter rejecting Worthy’s application for passport renewal, Frances Knight of the Passport Office cited not only Worthy’s initial travel to the PRC, but also his apparent unwillingness to abide by passport restrictions in the future.<sup>82</sup> Further reinforcing the State Department’s unofficial “second-chance” policy, officials temporarily held the students’ passports after they returned home, but hinted that the students could easily regain them if they swore not to return to the PRC. Stevens and Harrington, both of whom had cooperated with U.S. officials following their departure from the PRC, were also able to reacquire their travel documents. Even Du Bois, despite his impending membership to the Communist Party, retained his passport by signing an affidavit swearing he would not repeat his actions. Among those early violators, William Worthy – who explicitly refused to limit his future travel plans and, in fact, conceded that he would violate travel restrictions again in the near future – faced the most serious problems when he returned.<sup>83</sup> But even in his case, U.S. officials never sought any punitive measures beyond passport confiscation and non-renewal. The same moderate punishment came to Du Bois in 1962 when he violated the terms of his earlier pledge and made another visit to the PRC.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> UP, “Passports,” in General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA; Knight to Worthy, 29 March 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA.

<sup>83</sup> Worthy, indeed, followed through on this promise. In 1961 William Worthy traveled to Cuba without a U.S. passport. In August 1962 a Federal judge convicted Worthy, but the Fifth Circuit Appeals Court overturned the conviction, asserting that an American citizen traveling overseas without a valid passport was not subject to criminal charges. This interpretation was later upheld in *United States v. Laub* (1967), discussed in more detail below. John Scali, “U.S. to Seize Passports of 41 Youths,” *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 19 September 1957; AP, “Newsman Upheld in Passport Case,” *New York Times*, 21 February 1964.

<sup>84</sup> “Negro Scholar Faces Loss of U.S. Passport,” *Los Angeles Times*, 4 November 1962.

The decision not to take punitive actions against these sojourners was a significant move on the part of the State Department, in part because U.S. officials recognized that weak punishments would likely encourage future and more frequent violations. Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs Ralph Clough, for instance, warned Walter Robertson that if Worthy did not receive a harsh punishment, “the ban on travel...will collapse rapidly.”<sup>85</sup> Such advice was not uncommon, pointing to the conclusion that most policymakers either looked forward to that result or were simply unwilling to take the necessary steps to ensure it would not happen.

More striking, in August 1957 the State Department floated its own counterproposal for correspondents’ travel, agreeing to provide representatives from twenty-four news agencies with valid passports.<sup>86</sup> Given the earlier ambivalence of Dulles and other U.S. officials toward the travel ban, along with growing pressure from the American public, the move was not a total surprise. Dulles and others in the State Department had been actively working on the initiative since March; the major sticking point had been devising a means of assuaging the journalism community without completely dissolving the government’s ban on travel.<sup>87</sup>

Aside from developing a compromise that officials felt would satisfy the bulk of the American public while protecting U.S. interests in the Far East, several factors made mid-1957 an auspicious time to make a move. The PRC’s “people diplomacy” – by

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<sup>85</sup> Clough to Robertson, “Travel of William Worthy to Communist China,” 26 December 1956, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA.

<sup>86</sup> In order to be eligible for representation in the PRC, news agencies had to have “demonstrated sufficient interest in foreign news coverage.” Based on feedback from American news agencies, the State Department approved applications for twenty-four agencies. State Department press release on reporters to Red China, 22 August 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #1336, Box 4., NARA

<sup>87</sup> Memorandum of conversation, “Travel of Newsmen to Communist China Meeting,” 28 March 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.

which officials had actively and publicly lobbied for the visits of American newsmen – put serious pressure on the Eisenhower administration.<sup>88</sup> Coupled with this was the vocal domestic criticism that had risen dramatically in the wake of the Chinese invitation. On top of external and internal pressures, the visits and safe returns of Stevens, Harrington, Worthy, and the American students, all of whom came across as relatively harmless and sympathetic, made Washington’s travel ban front-page news and made it more difficult for U.S. officials to defend it as vital to national security.

China watchers within the administration also likely noted that in the early months of 1957, Mao had grown more hostile toward the United States. Stepping up his fight against U.S. aggression and imperialism, Mao’s policies in early 1957 foreshadowed the PRC’s anti-Western, anti-conservative Great Leap Forward, which commenced the following year.<sup>89</sup> For this reason, Washington officials could safely assume that Mao would likely never accept a U.S. travel initiative. By choosing this moment to forward the travel initiative and force the Chinese to make the next move, U.S. officials could take the upper hand and paint the Chinese as the antagonists. To this end, U.S. officials actively encouraged news agencies to take full advantage of the State Department’s new policy and apply for passports valid for the PRC. Not only would this

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<sup>88</sup> Xia, *Negotiating with the Enemy*, 95.

<sup>89</sup> Xia, “From Antagonists to Adversaries,” 160-62.

put added pressure on the Chinese government, it would also directly address domestic claims that the State Department was to blame for the logjam.<sup>90</sup>

From Beijing's perspective, the sudden shift in Washington's travel policy suggested that Chinese efforts to pressure Washington were succeeding and PRC officials proceeded to push the issue further by demanding reciprocity for any travel exchange that took place. When U.S. officials announced that they would agree to "de facto" reciprocity, the Chinese insisted that Washington and Beijing officials sign a formal, "equality and reciprocity" agreement.<sup>91</sup> For the Chinese, the ongoing dialogue was never really about the right to travel or the free exchange of ideas; instead, as historian Yafeng Xia notes, "there was a clear preoccupation with issues of sovereignty and mutual equality." The back and forth on the newsmen was only useful, therefore, if it led to increased respect from the West and resolution of broader issues such as Taiwan and UN membership.<sup>92</sup> In this way, the dialogue on the newsmen exchange reinforced the "fundamental tendency" of the Chinese to bring all international policy questions back to the issues of Taiwan and diplomatic recognition – a development that emerged during

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<sup>90</sup> It was, indeed, difficult for the American public to overcome the assumption that it was Washington's fault that the exchange had failed. In part this was due to a lack of publicity on the part of the State Department. Officials were hesitant to over-publicize their proposal lest Americans see it as a substantive change in policy. On the other hand, without more public attention to the State Department's proposal, most Americans would continue to look toward Washington as the source of the problem. Morton Fried, for example, noted the "public seems largely unaware of the [State Department's] action" before insisting that it was the Chinese, not the Americans who were to blame. Morton H. Fried, "Breaching the China Wall," *Saturday Review*, 19 March 1960; Ernest Fisk to Walter Robertson, 11 December 1958, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #1335, Box 2, NARA.

<sup>91</sup> Ambassador Wang Ping-nan, quoted in Clough to Robertson, "Chicom Statement on Newsmen Issued September 16 at Geneva," 17 September 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>92</sup> Xia, *Negotiating with the Enemy*, 79.

Korean War negotiations at Kaesong and Panjumon and again at the ongoing talks at Geneva.<sup>93</sup>

The Eisenhower administration was only willing to go so far in giving the Chinese the respect they desired. The sudden call for a formal reciprocity agreement signaled to the administration that the Chinese were merely toying with the Americans and that they would continue to push the finish line back farther and farther. Dulles's rejection of Chinese demands for reciprocity, in turn, provided Beijing adequate justification for rejecting Washington's initiative. The *People's Daily* criticized the State Department's travel proposal as a "clumsy deception" and placed the blame for the exchange's failure squarely on Washington.<sup>94</sup> From this point on, both sides recognized that the exchange proposals were unlikely to bear any immediate fruit.

The exceptions that proved the rule were the cases of John Strohm, an agricultural writer and editor for *Ford Farmer's Almanac*, and famed writer Edgar Snow, both of whom received valid passports under the State Department's 1957 proposal. Strohm's opportunity came first. In September 1958, working through the Chinese Embassy in Finland, Strohm received a visa from PRC officials and visited China for three weeks.<sup>95</sup> News of Strohm's admission caught U.S. officials by surprise and set off a wave of

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<sup>93</sup> Chen Jian uses this phrase in reference to Mao's policies during the Korean War. Chen, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 89.

<sup>94</sup> The report of several American students who met with Zhou Enlai in 1957 demonstrated the official narrative coming from the PRC. In response to questions of whether American newsmen would be permitted into the PRC, Zhou stated that while the State Department had allowed a number of journalists to visit the PRC, U.S. officials had "specifie[d] the duties of these newsmen when they come to China, reaffirm[ing] its hostile policy toward China." Zhou, moreover, laid blame for the failed initiative on the State Department's unwillingness to abide by the "equal opportunity principle" in regard to newsmen exchange. Diary excerpts by David Hollister from 1957 trip to China, Box 24, Folder 13, SBP; "A Clumsy Deception of the U.S. State Department," *People's Daily*, 27 August 1957, in General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>95</sup> Knight to Grant, "Possible Travel of Scholars to Communist China," 6 February 1962, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA; Albert Ravenholt, "U.S. Editor Beats China-Passport Ban," *The Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 12 October 1958; "U.S. Reporter Talks to Peking Leaders," *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 18 August 1960.

speculation. There was disagreement within the State Department over whether the Chinese, when they invited Strohm to visit, knew that he was one of the accredited newsmen. Andrew Berding, of the State Department's Bureau of Public Affairs, was convinced the Chinese saw Strohm as an "agricultural specialist," not a government-approved journalist. But Walter Robertson and others in the Far East Division were inclined to think that the Chinese knew of Strohm's status. PRC officials were, by this point, somewhat familiar with the language of U.S. passports and knew that each passport included clear language prohibiting travel to "Communist China." When the State Department had validated Strohm's passport for travel to the PRC, U.S. officials had stricken the anti-PRC language from his travel papers; this in itself should have been a strong hint that he was one of the State Department-sanctioned journalists.<sup>96</sup>

In summer 1960 Edgar Snow followed suit. Because of Snow's background as a writer sympathetic to Mao's regime, the events leading up to his admission to the PRC caused even more disagreement and confusion in Washington. As Snow recalled, the Eisenhower administration was firmly set against the visit, doing "everything but compel me to go to China illegally, if at all."<sup>97</sup> By the time the State Department floated its own newsmen exchange proposal – a move that Snow criticized as halfhearted – PRC officials were clearly uninclined to allow American journalists to visit. To ease anxieties on the Chinese side and to avoid being completely shut out of the PRC, Snow applied for admission as a "writer," as opposed to a "journalist." To placate Washington officials, Snow sought the support of *Look* magazine, which made Snow its news representative in

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<sup>96</sup> Fisk to Robertson, "Travel of American Correspondents to Communist China," 4 December 1958, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #1335, Box 2, NARA.

<sup>97</sup> Edgar Snow, *Red China Today*, revised and updated version of *The Other Side of the River* (New York: Vintage Books, 1971), 25.

China. “Very grudgingly,” Washington allowed the validation process to move forward. But because of the differing viewpoints from Beijing and Washington – the Chinese seeing Snow as “a-writer-not-a-correspondent” and Washington officials insisting he was “a-correspondent-not-a-writer,” few officials in Washington saw Snow’s visit as a sign of Sino-American cooperation.<sup>98</sup>

Neither Strohm’s nor Snow’s visit was a coup for the Sino-American newsmen exchange. Instead, many U.S. officials saw them as oversights on the part of the Chinese or further evidence that PRC officials would grant entry only to those who were sympathetic to the Communist cause. Nonetheless, between 1958 and the mid-1960s Strohm’s and Snow’s visits were the only ones that materialized out of the Sino-American newsmen exchange proposals. While the State Department renewed its offer in October 1958 and again in 1961 – and even “dared” the Chinese in April 1959 to send their own reporters to the United States – the Chinese continued to object.<sup>99</sup>

Critics on the American side were quick to point fingers. They charged that U.S. officials floated their proposal without a reciprocity clause knowing that the Chinese would reject it.<sup>100</sup> There is no doubt that Washington improved its image somewhat as a result of PRC non-compliance. At a March 1957 meeting on a possible newsmen exchange, for example, Dulles and most of the other participating officials voiced confidence that the Chinese would reject Washington’s pending offer, but noted, “this would be beneficial to us.”<sup>101</sup> To this end, in a call to Roderic O’Connor in late 1958,

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<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>99</sup> “U.S. Dares Peiping to Send Reporters,” *New York Times*, 24 April 1959.

<sup>100</sup> For example, see Dabney to Robertson, 26 November 1958, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #1335, Box 2, NARA.

<sup>101</sup> Memorandum of conversation, “Travel of Newsmen to Communist China Meeting,” 28 March 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.



Dulles suggested State Department officials should “violate our own rules a little by being a little more liberal [with passport distribution].” Since he was confident that the PRC would never grant visas to American visitors, the proliferation of valid passports to “a few people of good repute” would serve only to quiet frustrated would-be travelers and embarrass the Chinese regime.<sup>102</sup> The political benefit of Chinese rejection was still apparent a decade later when Secretary of State Dean Rusk acknowledged that the continuation of “our willingness to promote such contact in contrast to Chinese Communist intransigence has scored heavily for us here and abroad.”<sup>103</sup>

While U.S. officials recognized the political benefit of the unrequited travel proposal, they simultaneously worked to downplay the significance of their offer. There was an overwhelming concern that the American media and PRC officials would exaggerate the significance of the newsmen offer and perceive it as a sudden and dramatic shift in U.S. foreign policy. To avoid this, State Department instructions to USIA officials stated that announcements regarding the proposal “should not be given major emphasis.” The decision to allow American newsmen into the PRC was “in no sense intended to be a step towards the opening of cultural relations,” nor did it imply a change in political recognition, UN membership, or “any slackening of our opposition to the Chinese Communist regime.”<sup>104</sup> In internal memoranda and press statements, officials stressed that the new travel policy was not a sign of “softness” and had less to do with rewarding the Chinese as it did removing “restrictions on Americans’ freedom of

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<sup>102</sup> Telephone call from Dulles to O’Connor, 12 December 1958, Series 2A, Box 9, JFD.

<sup>103</sup> Rusk to Johnson, “Modification of Policy Regarding Travel of Americans to Communist China,” no date, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>104</sup> Lindbeck to Bradford, “American News Representatives Permitted to Visit Communist China,” 22 August 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.

action.”<sup>105</sup> As late as 1965, officials were still keeping information on travel ban “exceptions” out of the press. In one conversation between State Department officials and members of the journalism community, for instance, it was clear that the Department had not sufficiently advertised its recent decision to increase the number of journalists that each authorized newspaper could send to the PRC. To have done so, one State Department official noted, would “be taken mistakenly as a hint that we are loosening our China policy.”<sup>106</sup> The newsmen exchange proposal was, in sum, an “exception” to the rule and thus did not foreshadow substantive changes to Washington’s China policy. Just as angry journalists had earlier insisted that Cold War geopolitics should not interfere with a citizens’ right to travel, so too it seemed that official travel policy should have little bearing on international relations.

The State Department’s travel initiative, however, went beyond political posturing and its significance moved beyond the realm of policy anomaly. In this sense, U.S. officials were not merely toying with the PRC to assuage domestic critics and gain support internationally; the proposal, whether or not it bore immediate fruit, was substantive and consequential, though not necessarily in ways that U.S. officials intended. First, while the newsmen proposal helped calm some domestic critics and pleased most U.S. allies, it created notable tension between the Eisenhower administration, Taiwan officials, and frustrated American diehards. Jiang Jieshi strongly opposed the initiative, arguing that its disadvantages outweighed the advantages. Taiwan officials and most Taiwan newspapers, moreover, feared that U.S. agreement on the

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<sup>105</sup> “Liberalization of Travel Regulations Covering American Citizens,” no date, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>106</sup> Memorandum of conversation, “Travel of American Newsmen to Communist China,” 5 January 1965, General Records of the Department of State, Subject Numeric File 1964-1966, Box 413, NARA.

newsmen issue would lead to future concessions toward the PRC.<sup>107</sup> U.S. officials, similarly, anticipated that the proposal would complicate Washington's position at the ongoing Sino-American talks at Geneva. Coming on the heels of Washington's 1956 pronouncement that it would not allow Americans to travel to China as long as the PRC continued to hold prisoners, the 1957 exchange proposal could be interpreted as a significant step back. The Chinese, Ralph Clough feared, would believe that "time is on their side" and they would continue to hold the POWs as bargaining chips.<sup>108</sup>

Second, some State Department officials considered it a real possibility that the U.S. and PRC would come to some agreement on the newsmen issue and Washington officials took steps toward ironing out the details of such an exchange. Going far beyond public statements of cooperation, State Department officials held countless meetings to discuss the minutiae of how they would select correspondents for travel to the PRC, how the correspondents would get to China, and how long the journalists should be able to stay. This tentative approach applied to the PRC as well. According to one U.S. intelligence report, the Chinese government had gone as far as setting up rooms with journalism equipment in anticipation for the American visitors. Jim Robinson of NBC, as well, noted that the China Travel Service had given him permission to bring all of his

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<sup>107</sup> Murfin to Robertson, "Foreign Reactions to U.S. Announcement Permitting American Newsmen to Travel to Red China," 6 September 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA; "Newsmen in China Opposed by Chiang," *New York Times*, 25 July 1957.

<sup>108</sup> Eisenhower, along with other public officials, had made clear this connection between the remaining prisoners in the PRC and Washington's unwillingness to send American newsmen to China. In a press conference soon after learning of the Chinese proposal, Eisenhower stated that while he desired the free flow of information that would result from American journalists in China, as long as the Chinese were holding hostages, "I simply can't go along with it." Excerpt from Eisenhower Press Conference, 31 August 1956, in General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA; Ralph Clough to U. Alexis Johnson, 18 July 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.

equipment and his Chinese assistant with him to the PRC.<sup>109</sup> Furthermore, in 1958 when the Chinese surprisingly allowed John Strohm into the PRC, it set off a firestorm of debate within Washington over what message the PRC was trying to send. There was little sense of frustration within Washington that the Chinese were actually granting visas to American correspondents; some officials in the State Department's Far East Division, in fact, believed that the decision to let Strohm in the country "indicates a shift of intention" on the part of the Chinese.<sup>110</sup> In 1959, in part to test this hypothesis, the State Department quietly removed from U.S. passports language that PRC officials deemed "insulting."<sup>111</sup>

Finally, U.S. policymakers realized that the decision to allow newsmen to receive valid passports – regardless of Beijing's immediate response – made it inevitable that future liberalization would follow. Even though serious discussions of travel "exceptions" dealt only with newsmen, officials feared that such an exchange would lead to charges of arbitrariness or even legal challenges. Dulles, for one, was aware that it would be difficult to limit travel exchanges to journalists, noting that there was no precedent for allowing only one occupational group to travel to an "off-limits" destination. Writing to *New York Times* editor Arthur Sulzenberger, Dulles continued voicing his concerns, stating that he could see "no valid distinction between

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<sup>109</sup> Armstrong to Drumright, 13 September 1956, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA; Armstrong to Lutkins, "Conversation with Jim Robinson, NBC," 22 August 1956, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA.

<sup>110</sup> Fisk to Robertson, "Travel of American Correspondents to Communist China," 4 December 1958, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #1335 Box 2, NARA.

<sup>111</sup> Washington officials doubted that the unwillingness of PRC officials to admit most Americans was due to "offensive language" in U.S. passports. After all, implicit references to Washington's "2-China Policy" were apparent on U.S. passports when PRC officials admitted William Worthy and the American students. However, in an effort to assuage the American journalism community and further isolate the PRC as the sole obstacle to travel exchanges, the State Department removed the "allegedly offensive phraseology" in the passport validation. Macomber to Bess, 11 December 1959, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #1336, Box 4, NARA.

newsgatherers and those members of other professions who claim a constitutional right to travel.”<sup>112</sup>

This line of thinking, if carried to completion, suggested that once travel reform had begun, further “limiting would be quite difficult.”<sup>113</sup> Walter McConaughy took this even further, arguing that the slightest change in the travel ban would eventually allow Chinese correspondents to enter the United States, which would pose an obvious “security threat.”<sup>114</sup> For Dulles, this unintended side effect of liberalization had been, through mid-1957, justification enough not to allow the newsmen to travel. In the months before the State Department presented its proposal, Dulles routinely implied that he would support the exchange only if the Department could still maintain strict bans on all other travel to the PRC. Eisenhower, for the most part, concurred with his Secretary of State, concluding that Washington should “stick to the line that until the Americans were released we would not permit any Americans to go in.” If the State Department went down any other path, “it would be very difficult to find a stopping point once we started.”<sup>115</sup> Writing a letter to U. Alexis Johnson in Geneva, Ralph Clough summed up the basic approach of the Eisenhower administration. While he agreed with the pessimistic conclusion that the State Department could do little to stop the steady erosion of the ban on travel to the PRC, he insisted that he and other officials were going to make

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<sup>112</sup> “2 Senators Oppose Red China News Ban,” *New York Times*, 25 April 1957; Dulles to Sulzenberger, 30 April 1957, Series 8, Box 14, JFD; Dulles to Bartholomew, 4 April 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>113</sup> Minutes from “Travel of Newsmen to Communist China” meeting, 28 March 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>114</sup> McConaughy to Robertson, “Additional Point for Possible Use with Congress in Support of Travel Ban,” 10 April 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>115</sup> John Foster Dulles, “Memorandum of Conversation with the President,” 22 July 1957, *DDRS*.

an attempt.<sup>116</sup> As would be seen, however, the effort was largely in vain. In loosening restrictions to allow American journalists to receive passports, the State Department was tacitly – though often begrudgingly – allowing for gradual, yet consistent, liberalization of travel policy.

## VI

In the years following the State Department's travel proposal, the unwillingness and inability of U.S. officials to prohibit all American travel to the PRC became far more evident. Almost immediately after the Department shifted its policy on the newsmen, it validated a handful of passports for travel to the PRC. First among these exceptions, in November 1957, was A. L. Wirin, the defense attorney in the sedition case of John and Sylvia Powell.<sup>117</sup> The case of Wirin is especially significant in that U.S. officials had earlier voiced concern that if William Worthy did not receive a harsh punishment for his violation of the travel ban, other Americans – A. L. Wirin first among them – would take advantage of this development.<sup>118</sup> A month later the State Department allowed the relatives of John Downey, Richard Fecteau, and Hugh Redmond – whom the Chinese were holding prisoner – to travel to the PRC to visit their kin.<sup>119</sup> In May 1959 Secretary of State Herter validated a passport for former New York Governor W. Averell

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<sup>116</sup> Clough to Johnson, 18 July 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>117</sup> A U.S. judge, in January 1957, sanctioned the travel of Wirin to the PRC on the condition that he leave his passport in Hong Kong. If the State Department denied his travel, the judge threatened to throw out the case against the Powells. PRC officials, however, refused to allow Wirin into the country unless he was carrying a U.S. passport that had been validated for travel to the PRC. McConaughy to U. Alexis Johnson, 30 January 1957, *FRUS 1955-1957, Vol. III, China Area*, 466-70.

<sup>118</sup> Clough to Robertson, 26 December 1956, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 2, NARA.

<sup>119</sup> Chinese officials had first invited the families to visit the PRC in January 1955 but U.S. restrictions prevented the trips from going forward. The Chinese had not withdrawn the invitation and in November 1957 U.S. officials felt that the situation had changed enough to allow the visit to proceed. Robertson to Dulles, "Travel to Communist China of Relatives of American Prisoners," 16 November 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.

Harriman, who served as a representative of the North American Newspaper Alliance. This last exception, though technically part of the newsmen exchange, signaled that Washington was becoming quite loose with its definition of “journalist.” Most State Department officials, in fact, were unified in their opposition to the idea. Herter, Walter Robertson, and other leading officials, argued that granting Harriman a passport would appear as “a significant step towards a change in the Government’s basic policy towards the Peiping regime.”<sup>120</sup>

Though U.S. officials qualified each of these “exceptions” with predictable assurances that they did not signify a change in U.S. policy toward the PRC, with every additional change to the travel policy, U.S. officials were opening themselves more and more to a wide range of legal, constitutional, and political challenges that would inevitably undermine all remaining travel prohibitions. The decision on Harriman, which critics said violated the spirit of the State Department’s passport policy, immediately set off a wave of other public officials – including a set of U.S. congressmen and a Supreme Court Justice – who desired to travel to China as “newsmen.”<sup>121</sup> U.S. officials, moreover, were very much aware of these consequences as they developed their new passport policies. Referring to the potential visit of A L. Wirin to the PRC, State Department officials noted that “the thin line being held preventing American citizens from traveling [to] Communist China could easily be broken” if Wirin were to make the trip. Wirin’s trip was, in this sense, the “key to Pandora’s Box” in terms of future American travel to

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<sup>120</sup> While Wirin, and the families of Fecteau, Downey, and Redmond were successful in their efforts to enter the PRC, the Chinese opted not to grant Harriman a visa. Hanes to Dulles, “Governor Harriman’s Desire to Visit Red China,” 8 May 1959, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #1336, Box 4, NARA;

<sup>121</sup> James Reston, “China Travel Ban Hits Legislators,” *New York Times*, 10 July 1959.

China.<sup>122</sup> Dulles voiced a similar note of apprehension in regard to the families of the American POWs. Allowing them to visit the PRC, he acknowledged, “would mean another breach in our prohibition of American travel to Communist China” and it “would probably be interpreted in some quarters as the beginning of a softening in our policy.”<sup>123</sup>

This concession of inevitable liberalization did not, however, mean that officials in the Eisenhower administration were eager to open the floodgates of American travel to the PRC. Instead, the administration attempted to control the speed and scope of liberalization by limiting travel to specific, carefully chosen “exceptions.” While travel often escaped the grasp of U.S. policymakers during the Eisenhower administration – as seen with the handful of American tourists who violated the State Department’s travel ban – on the whole Washington officials maintained a degree of control. When habitual traveler, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, for instance, tried to broaden the definition of “journalist” in order to receive State Department permission to the travel to the PRC, Walter Robertson explained that the exception for newsmen was not meant to be “a facade under which the ban on travel by Americans to Communist China could be nullified.”<sup>124</sup> John Hanes, of the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs, made the same judgment when Senator Gale McGee brought up the idea of traveling to the PRC under the guise of a journalist.<sup>125</sup> Though the State Department’s decision to grant Harriman a passport dulled these rebuttals to some extent, on the whole the willingness of Eisenhower’s State Department to ease restrictions on travel to the PRC did not translate

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<sup>122</sup> Memorandum of conversation, 17 January 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 4, NARA.

<sup>123</sup> Robertson to Dulles, 16 November 1957, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>124</sup> Letter from Robertson to Douglas, 13 May 1959, General Records of the Department of State, CDF033.1193, Box 174, NARA.

<sup>125</sup> Hanes to Macomber, “Conversation With Senator Gale W. McGee re Travel to Red China,” 2 June 1959, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #1336, Box 4, NARA



into an eagerness to engage in any sort of organized cultural or educational exchanges with Communist China.<sup>126</sup> One of the primary reasons that State Department officials were hesitant to approve the newsmen exchange in the first place was, in fact, the concern that the Chinese would perceive it or portray it as the commencement of a Sino-American cultural exchange program.<sup>127</sup>

State Department records from the decade or so following the establishment of the PRC are, nonetheless, filled with requests from politicians, business leaders, cultural delegates, and private citizens who desired permission to travel behind the Bamboo Curtain. Ironically, the stimulus for these requests was likely the handful of travel ban violators and the well-known reforms to U.S. travel policy. In addition to Justice Douglas and Senator McGee, journalists Theodore White and John Gunther, Philadelphia Mayor Richardson Dilworth, a group of University of Oklahoma students, and former Senator William Benton, among numerous others, all requested from the State Department valid passports for travel to the PRC. It was in this context, as well, that Robert Breen initiated his failed attempt to bring *Porgy and Bess* to Beijing. For the most part, these would-be travelers cited personal curiosity, a belief that their visit could bring about positive change to Sino-American relations, and an underlying faith in the right to travel. Though most individuals who made these requests received form letters rejecting their proposals,

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<sup>126</sup> In defending the decision to provide Harriman with a passport, especially when faced with an angry Justice Douglas, officials stated that because Harriman was no longer a public official, his status as a news correspondent was more believable. Along these same lines, in late 1958 Walter Robertson seemed open to the idea of allowing former Senator William Benton to travel to the PRC under the auspices of a sanctioned news agency. Memorandum of conversation, "Desire of Justice William O. Douglas to Travel to Communist China," 2 June 1959, General Records of the Department of State, CDF033.1193, Box 174, NARA; Robertson to Berding, "Senator Benton's Desire to Visit Red China," 18 December 1958, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #1335, Box 2, NARA.

<sup>127</sup> "Position Paper: Travel of Newsmen to Communist China," no date, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #48, Box 3, NARA.

U.S. officials, as in the case of the American newsmen, genuinely debated whether to sanction these sorts of cultural exchanges.<sup>128</sup>

## VII

As more and more Americans headed over the Pacific, mass travel became another stage on which to wage the Sino-American conflict. The manner in which U.S. officials dealt with these travelers underscored their ambivalence toward the integration of tourism into Cold War policy. Pre-World War II travel to China – as seen in the prolific writing of Edgar Snow, Agnes Smedley, Graham Peck, and others – had often been a vehicle for leftist politics and officials hoped to eliminate this aspect of tourism in the postwar years.<sup>129</sup> Official support for the International Educational Exchange Program, the funding of luxury hotels overseas, subsidizing air and shipping lines, and participation in international travel associations, were all part of an attempt to liberate tourism from the left and secure its role as a middle-class, mainstream, patriotic pastime.<sup>130</sup> When the State Department combined these “positive” actions with its

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<sup>128</sup> A letter to California dentist, R. Gordon Agnew, regarding his proposed visit to the PRC is indicative of the usual response from the State Department. In this particular case, Acting Director for Chinese Affairs LaRue Lutkins sympathized with Agnew’s interest in visiting the PRC, but was unable to give him approval. He listed the official reasons for denying him permission to travel, including the still-unresolved Korean conflict, Chinese aggression in the Taiwan Straits, lack of diplomatic recognition, the continued imprisonment of Americans in Chinese jails, and the efforts of the Chinese to use cultural exchanges for their own political benefit. He concluded by mentioning that the State Department had only permitted a handful of “exceptions” to the travel ban and those were only made when “compelling consideration of national interest so dictated.” Lutkins to Agnew, 7 April 1959, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #1336, Box 4, NARA.

<sup>129</sup> In 1954 Ambassador Karl Rankin, a conservative supporter of the Nationalist government, made a similar point in a letter to a friend. Commenting on the recent publication of Ted White’s *Thunder Out of China* (1946) and Jack Belden’s *China Shakes the World* (1949), Rankin noted that “the best sellers in recent years seem to have been the products of journalistic pens with...a leftist slant.” Rankin, *China Assignment*, 217-18.

<sup>130</sup> Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 137.

restrictive policy on travel to the PRC, moreover, officials were able to use travel as an effective means of strengthening Cold War containment.

At the same time, Washington officials saw travel to the PRC as a potential mechanism for engaging the Chinese. Unlike modifications to the economic embargo or recognition policy, travel seemed to be a more innocuous arena for reform. Officials could, moreover, relegate potential travel exchanges to the realm of “exceptions” or justify them merely as efforts to bring Americans more information about “forbidden” lands. And because most Americans clearly distinguished these sorts of travel exchanges from other forms of U.S.-PRC interaction, U.S. officials risked less political backlash. These aspects of travel and travel policy – which applied to any nation to which Americans traveled – were especially applicable in regard to the PRC during the Cold War, with emotions running high and domestic and international politics seeming to operate in a zero-sum environment.

But the very uniqueness that gave tourism the potential to build bridges across the Bamboo Curtain also circumscribed U.S. officials, making tourism an unwieldy conduit for foreign policy that easily evaded the grasp of policymakers. Because travel, in the post-World War II period, came to be associated with middle-class values, leisure, and escape, it seemed to operate outside the traditional confines of international politics. Compounding this was the fact that Washington’s efforts to manipulate travel to the PRC emerged alongside – and indeed were a part of – its own campaign to reduce travel barriers. Recognizing this seeming contradiction, many high-level U.S. officials in the Eisenhower administration and Congress were neither confident nor comfortable in their

jurisdiction over international travel, giving the government's travel policy a truly schizophrenic nature.

The American public, as well, latched on to this trend as individual tourists resisted the seemingly politicized travel restrictions. Armed with both a natural curiosity to see the world and the growing affluence to make it happen, tourists wanted (or at least believed they should be allowed) to visit the PRC just as they did other, more traditional, destinations. When a few Americans slipped through the cracks of the travel ban, and returned home to talk about it, the usefulness of the restrictions seemed even more dubious. The general U.S. policy of minimizing obstacles to international travel thus had the unexpected result of strengthening the public's "right to travel" campaign, a trend that gradually moved from liberal, fringe groups to the mainstream. By the end of the Eisenhower administration Americans had come to expect the freedom to travel and they consistently cringed at efforts by the government to maintain controls over their movement.

## Ch. 6 – The “Tourist Problem”: Efforts to Restrain Outbound Travel and the Continued Erosion of the China Travel Ban, 1960-1968

Why do the wrong people travel  
When the right people stay back home?  
What compulsion compels them  
And who the hell tells them  
To drag their bags to Zanzibar  
Instead of staying quietly in Omaha?

-- Noel Coward, “Sail Away” (1962)

Freedom to travel is constantly being eroded around the globe by political restrictions and economic barriers. This freedom does not exist in many lands and is under attack in others, including our own.<sup>1</sup>

-- William D. Patterson, *Pacific Travel News*, 1963

The discrepancy between what I had been led to expect and what I actually saw was at first bewildering and disturbing. No one can be in China for more than a few hours without sensing an almost tangible vitality and enormous optimism.<sup>2</sup>

-- Felix Greene, *Awakened China: The Country Americans Don't Know* (1961)

In December 1964 Dr. Samuel Rosen, a renowned ear surgeon, received word from the State Department that he could travel to the PRC.<sup>3</sup> The State Department's decision was, to some extent, nothing extraordinary. As discussed above, in the decade prior to the Rosen case the Department had allowed a number of Americans to visit the PRC, or at least receive a valid passport. The episode involving Rosen, moreover, ended in familiar disappointment; only a week after sending the invitation the Chinese rescinded the offer.<sup>4</sup> Despite the emerging stalemate and the fact that Washington and Beijing

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<sup>1</sup> William D. Patterson, “Pacific Message,” *Pacific Travel News*, August 1963.

<sup>2</sup> Greene, *Awakened China*, 13.

<sup>3</sup> “City Ear Surgeon Will Visit China,” *New York Times*, 13 December 1964.

<sup>4</sup> Pondering the abrupt cancellation, Washington officials assumed the Chinese were irritated that the State Department – at least through the lens of the American media – emerged as the generous and flexible party

quickly spun the incident in ways that were politically self-serving, the State Department's decision to provide Rosen with a valid passport was significant. Whereas past decisions by the State Department to allow Americans to travel to the PRC always fell under the category of "exceptions," in the case of Rosen, officials made less of an effort to marginalize the travel decision. Instead, a State Department spokesman justified it as a "humanitarian" gesture and defended it as "in the national interest."

By introducing these new standards for travel and by justifying Rosen's trip as being consonant with U.S. interests, the State Department introduced a new phase in travel policy. The legality of Rosen's trip from Washington's point of view opened the floodgates for legal American travel to the PRC. Over the next few years the State Department provided passports for numerous writers, photographers, editors, television commentators, businessmen, and scholars – all of whom were expected to provide the public with "essential information about the restricted areas." By the time the Lyndon Johnson administration left office, the State Department seemed willing to allow – or at least unable to stop – any American to travel to the PRC for any reason.<sup>5</sup>

The Rosen episode suggests that the Democratic administrations of the 1960s, like the Eisenhower administration, attempted to reform travel bans as a means of engaging, and possibly embarrassing, the Chinese. At the same time, they continued to have difficulty defining the limits of those reforms and, subsequently, enforcing compliance to those limits. Adding to the difficulties Kennedy and Johnson faced in establishing a

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in the ongoing dialogue over the Rosen exchange. Twentieth Meeting, United States Advisory Commission on International Educational and Cultural Affairs, 19 July 1966, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #369-C, Box 6, NARA.

<sup>5</sup> Memorandum for Secretary of State, "Application of Dr. Norman Auburn of Validation of Passport for Travel to Albania and China," 15 February 1966, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 2, NARA.

usable travel policy, dramatic international economic changes suddenly threw doubt on the long-standing assumption that outbound American tourism was a positive phenomenon. Faced with the unenviable choice of risking U.S. economic stability or actively inserting the federal government as an impediment to international travel, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations embarked down a shaky and ambiguous path. The manipulation of travel as a foreign policy tool was not an exact science; just as Kennedy and Johnson would struggle to limit travel to the PRC, so too did they find that curtailing recreational tourism overseas was not entirely feasible.

## I

In May 1960 Assistant Secretary of Commerce for International Affairs Bradley Fisk testified before Congress on the “tourist problem.” While he recognized the “infinite cultural value of travel,” Fisk questioned the economic logic behind continued federal promotion of outbound tourism. For one, foreign economies were improving; it no longer seemed necessary to use outbound American tourism as an economic stimulus for foreign nations. More significantly, as American tourists – and with them the American gold supply – continued to flow overseas, the international balance-of-payments problem began to reverse itself and U.S. officials faced potentially deleterious deficits. As of 1959 the U.S. was facing an annual \$3.7 billion trade deficit.<sup>6</sup>

The outward flow of tourists, of course, was not the only factor in this economic shift; non-military foreign aid, in the form of technical assistance and development loans,

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<sup>6</sup> Bradley Fisk, “Statement Before Senate Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee,” May 2-3, 1960, 86<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, in General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 5, NARA.

for example, annually added \$500 million to this imbalance.<sup>7</sup> But the “tourist deficit” was a major part of this overall shortfall. Hovering around \$1 billion dollars in 1959, the difference between U.S. expenditures overseas and expenditures spent by incoming tourists to the United States rose to \$1.7 billion in 1963 and to \$1.9 billion in 1966.<sup>8</sup> Even as U.S. commercial exports rose and government expenditures fell in the mid-1960s – the combination of which led to an improvement of the balance-of-payments problem over 1960 figures – consistently heavy overseas tourist spending offset any positive trend.<sup>9</sup> As a result, nearly every memorandum on the balance-of-payments issue, from Eisenhower through Johnson, expounded the disparity between inbound and outbound travel as a major factor in the deficit and highlighted it as a logical place to cut costs.

This objective of slowing the outbound stream of tourists or, at the least, bringing more foreign tourists to American shores, was not easily achieved. In an ironic twist, the success that the Truman and Eisenhower administrations and industry leaders had in promoting and expanding American tourism overseas now meant that the domestic American tourism industry was woefully inadequate. This state of affairs had, throughout the 1940s and most of the 1950s, been acceptable since economic realities demanded that international tourism be largely a one-way process. With relatively weak economies in postwar European and Asian nations, there had been little demand for international travel to the United States.<sup>10</sup> Clarence Randall, moreover, had consciously ignored the domestic tourism market, noting that encouraging tourism *to* the United States would merely mean

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<sup>7</sup> Report to National Security Council, “Status of the Mutual Security Program as of June 30, 1959,” 30 October 1959, *DDRS*.

<sup>8</sup> *Hearings Before the Special Subcommittee of the Committee on Banking and Currency*, House of Representatives, 88<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 30 November 1964; The Cabinet Committee on Balance of Payments to Johnson, “Second Phase of the 1967 Balance of Payments Program,” 12 January 1967, *DDRS*.

<sup>9</sup> Dillon to Johnson, “The U.S. Balance of Payments Situation,” 5 January 1965, *DDRS*.

<sup>10</sup> Endy, *Cold War Holidays*, 185.



“less correction of the [payments] imbalance.”<sup>11</sup> By the end of Eisenhower’s second term, however, the international economic climate had changed dramatically and the weak American tourist industry became a liability.

Despite these economic considerations, efforts to use federal funds to lure foreign travelers to the United States ran into significant political opposition. Numerous congressmen saw the campaign as a waste of taxpayer money. Randall argued it was “not a proper function of Government” to support the *domestic* tourism industry. Using government money in this way, he noted, would “not only be in conflict with our basic concept of free enterprise but would be unfair to other segments of American industry who likewise are engaged in foreign trade.” Less diplomatically, in his private journal, Randall wrote that the domestic tourism industry would receive the money “over my dead body.”<sup>12</sup> Limited in his options and facing budget shortfalls, Eisenhower fell back on symbolism and declared 1960 “Visit the U.S.A. Year.” But due to fiscal concerns in Congress and the White House, Eisenhower paradoxically coupled this declaration with a 40 percent cut in the Commerce Department’s Office of International Travel.<sup>13</sup>

Eisenhower’s domestic tourism program was, at best, a limited success. Under government supervision, and with the assistance of the private National Association of Travel Organizations, officials sent thousands of travel portfolios – containing pertinent information on the United States for potential foreign visitors – to overseas posts and travel agencies. Private tourism companies, including American Express and Trans

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<sup>11</sup> Randall, CFEP Journal, 5 November 1957, Box 7, Vol. 6, CBR.

<sup>12</sup> Randall, “Report to the President of the United States: International Travel,” 17 April 1958, General Records of the Department of Commerce, Entry #176, Box 1, NARA; Randall, CFEP Journal, 5 November 1957, Box 7, Vol. 6, CBR.

<sup>13</sup> Horace Sutton, “Why They Don’t Visit the USA,” *Saturday Review*, 15 October 1960.

World Airlines, stepped up their own promotional campaigns, sending multilingual brochures and films overseas to stir up excitement about visiting the United States.

But U.S. officials, despite their role in initiating tourism programs in the Caribbean, Europe, and Asia, seemed unfit for the task of reversing the direction of tourist traffic. The *Saturday Review* – which provided a leading voice in encouraging an expanded domestic tourism industry – criticized the government campaign as a “lukewarm national effort” and a “dismal failure.”<sup>14</sup> Entry and exit policies for visiting tourists – which U.S. officials had consistently encouraged foreign governments to liberalize – remained fairly restrictive in the United States. Rumors also circulated that U.S. Customs agents treated incoming foreigners poorly, asking rude and inappropriate questions and encouraging unnecessary delays.<sup>15</sup> As noted by John Houser (who had recently made the move from Hilton to American Express), the primary success of the “Visit the U.S.A.” campaign was the rapid recognition among Washington officials that the United States was woefully behind other countries in terms of its domestic tourism program.<sup>16</sup> Reflecting the consistent obstacles facing the domestic tourism industry, 1960 saw one of the lowest numbers of foreign visitors to the United States of the previous decade.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> “The U.S.A. as a Touristland,” *Saturday Review*, 9 January 1960; Sutton, “Why They Don’t Visit the U.S.A.,” *Saturday Review*, 15 October 1960.

<sup>15</sup> Several U.S. Senators, testifying before the Senate Commerce Committee in February 1961, recounted stories of humiliation, delays, and unfairness toward incoming tourists. A State Department questionnaire for incoming tourists, which asked whether individuals were visiting the United States for “immoral purposes,” caused significant outcry. In response, the Department scrapped the questionnaire in March 1961. UPI, “Senators Decry Tourism Policy,” *New York Times*, 3 February 1961; Alfred Krusenstiern, “U.S. Drops ‘Immoral Purpose’ Part of Query Put to Would-Be Visitors,” *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 6 March 1961.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Sutton, “Why They Don’t Visit the U.S.A.,” *Saturday Review*, 15 October 1960; Horace Sutton, “The Administration and the Traveler,” *Saturday Review*, 7 January 1961.

<sup>17</sup> Sutton, “The Administration and the Traveler,” *Saturday Review*, 7 January 1961.

Eisenhower left office with the tourist problem still lingering. As the balance-of-payments problems worsened during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, top-level approaches to international tourism became more aggressive. Kennedy – who sought to implement Eisenhower’s largely symbolic attempt at attracting foreign tourists – scored an early victory in 1961 with the establishment of the U.S. Travel Service. The government-run travel agency had been in the works for several years; New York Senator Jacob Javits had first introduced the idea in 1954 but was unable to bring it to fruition. The Service, located within the Commerce Department and headed by former Pan Am executive Voit Gilmore, worked closely with PATA, the National Association of Travel Organizations, and the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) in “selling” the United States to foreign tourists, disseminating literature with the Service’s “Travel a New World” slogan. At the same time, the Service worked with the domestic tourism industry and service sector in an effort to make travel to the U.S. less burdensome. In an article in *Pacific Travel News*, Gilmore presented his new office as a logical means of both increasing dollar holdings and “broaden[ing] the avenues of friendship and understanding with the rest of the world.”<sup>18</sup>

Even with the new Travel Service, however, efforts to bring more foreign travelers to the United States were not entirely effective. Numbers for incoming travelers did increase. The 331,000 visitors that came to the United States during the first half of 1963, for example, marked a 50 percent increase over the 1961 figures. These increases, however, were not large enough and officials worried that such gains could not be maintained indefinitely.<sup>19</sup> Again, funding was the primary issue. Policymakers were

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<sup>18</sup> Voit Gilmore, “United States Joins the World Travel Fraternity,” *Pacific Travel News*, January 1962.

<sup>19</sup> “Funds for U.S. Travel Service Tied to World’s Fair Success,” *New York Times*, 26 August 1963.

unwilling to increase the Service's initial \$3 million budget, a figure that already fell far short of the tourism budget for nations like Canada and Greece.<sup>20</sup> On top of this, outbound travel simply remained too popular. Kennedy and Johnson tried to counter this by increasing the number of charter flights to the United States and encouraging airlines to offer discounted prices on incoming flights.<sup>21</sup> While these measures had some effect and inbound numbers continued to increase, they were still dwarfed by the millions of Americans headed overseas.

With inbound tourism remaining woefully inadequate, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations addressed the other side of the equation, working to discourage American travelers from leaving the country. To this end, the administrations promoted a voluntary, "See America First" approach. In a January 1, 1968 speech on the balance-of-payments crisis, in which Johnson laid out his goal of lowering the tourist deficit by \$500 million, Johnson asked Americans "to help their country in this situation by deferring any travel outside the Western hemisphere that is possible to defer." He repeated this appeal two weeks later in his State of the Union Address.<sup>22</sup> Implicit in this approach, as journalists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak noted, was convincing Americans that "it's chic as well as patriotic to see America."<sup>23</sup> Teaching by example, Lady Bird Johnson, along with other White House wives, took a well publicized two-day "Landscapes and Landmarks" tour of Virginia, in a joint effort to promote domestic tourism and Johnson's highway-

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<sup>20</sup> The Cabinet Committee on Balance of Payments to Johnson, "Second Phase of the 1967 Balance of Payments Program," 12 January 1967, *DDRS*.

<sup>21</sup> Califano to Johnson, "Status Report on the Balance of Payments Program," 10 January 1968, Johnson Library, White House Central File, *DDRS*.

<sup>22</sup> "The President's News Conference at the LBJ Ranch," 1 January 1968, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson*, Vol. XXXVI.

<sup>23</sup> Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, "Inside Report: See America First," *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 2 January 1964.

beautification program.<sup>24</sup> Doing his part, Horace Sutton joked that the 1964 World's Fair, held in New York, offered "tourists" a chance to see the world without leaving the country. With exhibits from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Switzerland, Israel, Argentina, and other countries, Americans could experience the "world tour" without having to boil drinking water or learn a new language.<sup>25</sup>

While reducing the number of outbound American tourists was crucial to resolving the balance-of-payments crisis, the Johnson administration recognized that such moves were politically risky and quite unpopular among the American public. The "See America First" campaign, however, offered a tourist-friendly approach to the balance-of-payments crisis. Americans did not have to cancel their vacations or choose between patriotism and personal recreation; they merely had to change their destination, to replace the Eiffel Tower with the Grand Canyon. But the voluntary approach was not wholly effective. Members from Johnson's cabinet, for instance, acknowledged that while the President's appeals "may have some restraining effect on tourism abroad this year...it is difficult to see how we can approach the targeted savings on travel expenditures without taking some further measures before the tourist season is in full swing."<sup>26</sup> Indeed, policymakers in the 1960s took more punitive, aggressive action to combat the troubling deficits. Kennedy, in a drawn-out and highly controversial move, trimmed the duty-free exemption for tourists from \$500 to \$100 (a "whopping curtailment" according to the *Saturday Review*).<sup>27</sup> Johnson institutionalized this approach, assembling a Tourism Task

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<sup>24</sup> "Nation: A Chance to Roam," *Time*, 21 May 1965.

<sup>25</sup> Horace Sutton, "Of All Places: To See the World, See Flushing Foist," *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 1 March 1964.

<sup>26</sup> Fowler, "Memorandum for the President," 10 April 1968, *DDRS*. Rusk and McNamara, as well, doubted the efficacy of a "voluntary program." See Joe Califano to President Johnson, "Status Report on the Balance of Payments Program," 10 January 1968, Johnson Library, White House Central File, *DDRS*.

<sup>27</sup> Horace Sutton, "Strange Customs for the Natives," *Saturday Review*, 9 September 1961.

Force in 1967 with the goal of “restrain[ing] American travel outside the western hemisphere.”<sup>28</sup> He made clear that if American travelers did not voluntarily give up their vacations, or change the venue to the western hemisphere, he would absolutely pursue legislative tactics.<sup>29</sup> Following up on this promise, Johnson proposed a number of tax increases, including a 40 percent surtax on plane and ship tickets, a 20-30 percent tax on overseas tourist expenditures, and \$8-10 tax per tourist for every day spent overseas.<sup>30</sup>

As could have been anticipated, this approach to international tourism was not without its critics. Numerous travel writers, U.S. policymakers, and foreign officials decried these attempts to limit international tourism. The *Saturday Review* led the way, launching regular attacks at the prohibitive measures. Editor William D. Patterson branded travel “one of modern man’s basic freedoms” and suggested that the ability to “freely leave one’s country and return...should be officially written into the charter of human freedoms.” To Patterson, the right to travel, which was consistently under attack behind the Iron Curtain, was now at risk within the United States. Moderate “restrictions” such as passport and visa requirements, along with more directly prohibitive measures such as travel taxes and travel bans, amounted to nothing less than an assault on human liberty. In another article, in light of the UN’s proclamation that 1965 was “International Cooperation Year,” Patterson thought it ironic and maddening that the U.S. government was “stifling one of the most basic contemporary expressions of cooperation: world travel and tourism.” While the dollar-gap was a legitimate problem, Patterson insisted, “a

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<sup>28</sup> Barr to Johnson, “Tourism Measures,” 5 January 1968, *DDRS*.

<sup>29</sup> “The President’s News Conference at the LBJ Ranch,” 1 January 1968, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson*, Vol. XXXVI.

<sup>30</sup> Califano to Johnson, “Status Report on the Balance of Payments Program,” 10 January 1968, Johnson Library, White House Central File, *DDRS*. Johnson’s proposed move would have been a rejection of a policy that had been in place for a decade. In October 1956 Eisenhower had eliminated a 10 percent tax on all American travel from the United States to any location more than 225 miles away.

‘Yankee Stay Home’ policy would work even more seriously against the national interest.”<sup>31</sup>

International travel forums, as well, reacted unfavorably toward U.S. efforts to reduce the outward flow of tourists. Hawaii Governor William Quinn, speaking at the 1961 PATA conference, optimistically predicted that the Eisenhower administration (in its final days) would not stand in the way of Americans traveling overseas. To act otherwise, Quinn noted, “would constitute a complete reversal of U.S. foreign policy.”<sup>32</sup>

Other PATA delegates – forecasting some of the initiatives of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations – worried that U.S. officials would either urge American travelers to “voluntarily boycott carriers of other nations” or use federal fiscal policies, such as decreasing duty-free allowances, to discourage overseas travel.<sup>33</sup> When Johnson eventually went forward with his travel tax proposal, delegates at PATA’s 1968 conference in Taipei unanimously adopted a resolution denouncing the initiative.<sup>34</sup>

Executive director F. Marvin Plake announced his own concerns that the U.S. balance-of-payments problem – “an acute malady which might easily spread in pandemic proportions throughout the world of travel” – would result in a constriction of American outbound tourism. He insisted (somewhat accurately) that American travel overseas was not “the prime culprit for this [trade] imbalance.” Plake contended that outbound tourism, in fact, worked to stimulate the U.S. economy by strengthening its international consumer base and profiting U.S.-based tourism companies. Instead of restricting outbound

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<sup>31</sup> Patterson, “The Pacific Message,” *Pacific Travel News*, August 1963; William Patterson, “Keeping Faith with the Traveler,” *Saturday Review*, 18 September 1965.

<sup>32</sup> “10<sup>th</sup> PATA Conference,” *Pacific Travel News*, February 1961.

<sup>33</sup> Speech by President of Japan Air Lines, Seijiyo Yanagita, at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual PATA Conference, quoted in *Pacific Travel News*, February 1961; speech by editor of *Asia Magazine*, Adrian Zecha at 11<sup>th</sup> Annual PATA Conference, quoted in Ian Stewart, “Auditing Pacific Tourism,” *New York Times*, 4 February 1962.

<sup>34</sup> Frederick Andrews, “Travel Tax Plan Scored by P.A.T.A.,” *New York Times*, 3 March 1968.

tourism, he suggested that the United States “join the travel industry of the world” in making the country more attractive to potential visitors.<sup>35</sup>

In a slightly different approach, foreign governments subtly challenged the shifting U.S. policy merely by expanding their own international tourism programs. Following the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual IUOTO Conference in Manila, Philippines President Carlos Garcia, for example, announced that 1961 would be “Visit the Orient Year.”<sup>36</sup> The proposed campaign – supported by seven nations in the Far East including Taiwan – respectfully mimicked Eisenhower’s prior announcement on U.S. domestic tourism. The proposed campaign, moreover, pursued the very objectives that Washington officials, years earlier, had encouraged. Asian governments promised to step up their efforts in minimizing bureaucratic red tape, increasing restaurant and hotel facilities, modernizing airports and harbors, and developing effective advertising campaigns.<sup>37</sup> Garcia did not intend his proposal to cause a confrontation between the U.S. and the Far East; instead, he saw his move as a natural outgrowth of the region’s steadily expanding tourism industry. When U.S. policymakers in the early 1960s suddenly shifted gears, hoping to replace American travel overseas with foreign travelers visiting the United States, Garcia and other Asian tourism officials understandably cried foul.

As exemplified by these concerns, anxiety surrounding Washington’s travel restrictions was especially high in the Far East. As mentioned above, Americans made up a far greater percentage of travelers to the Far East than they did travelers to Europe. Fluctuations in the U.S. economy, or legislation that dissuaded Americans from traveling or making purchases overseas, thus had a relatively larger impact on Far East

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<sup>35</sup> F. Marvin Plake, “Pacific Message,” *Pacific Travel News*, September 1966.

<sup>36</sup> Farolan to Eisenhower, 15 June 1960, Box 11, JR.

<sup>37</sup> “Final Communiqué – Oriental Tourist Commissioners’ Conference,” 8 July 1960, Box 11, JR.



destinations. As early as 1962 officials in Hong Kong and Japan – travel destinations that appealed to American bargain-hunters – said they were feeling the impact of Kennedy’s reduction of the duty-free allowance.<sup>38</sup>

The immediate and international backlash against Washington’s travel reforms seemed to pay off. Partly as a response to these persistent critics, U.S. officials toned down their rhetoric and backed off of several “anti-travel” initiatives. But Washington’s awkward position in the 1960s on the tourism front was not only a matter of public relations. From an economic perspective, such restrictions laid the groundwork for retaliatory action from other nations, which would likely neutralize any positive impact. As Horace Sutton pointed out: “We can scarcely ask other countries to lift their [duty-free] limits when we have just lowered ours.”<sup>39</sup> For many officials and private individuals, furthermore, there was something unseemly about a government discouraging its citizens from traveling. Despite clear evidence showing that tourism was a crucial factor in international money flow, most Americans and many U.S. officials continued to approach it as a recreational activity essential to all middle-class Americans. This prevailing connotation meant that U.S. officials were either unable or unwilling to turn travel into a policy issue.

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<sup>38</sup> The accuracy of this assertion is not clear. A 1959 survey conducted by the Bureau of Customs found that fewer than 18 percent of international U.S. travelers exceeded \$200 in duty-free purchases. Less than 10 percent exceeded \$500. Based on these numbers, the reduction of the duty-free limit to \$100 was unlikely to have had such a disastrous and immediate effect. In Hong Kong, however, shopping comprised the bulk of most tourists’ vacations. According to the Department of Commerce survey, the average American in 1958 was spending between \$700 and \$800 on purchases over the length of their trip. Sam Pope Brewer, “Tariff Proposal Draws Criticism,” *New York Times*, 7 February 1961; Clement, *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East*, 99; *Hearings Before the Special Subcommittee on Tourism of the Committee on Banking and Currency*, House of Representatives, 88<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, November 30, December 1, December 2, 1964; “Soaring Visitor Totals Mark 1962 as Another Record Year for Pacific,” *Pacific Travel News*, November 1962.

<sup>39</sup> Sutton, “Strange Customs for the Natives,” *Saturday Review*, 9 September 1961.

Responding to the intense criticism from many Americans and exemplifying this disconnect between tourism and national policy, Voit Gilmore distributed a series of explanatory editorials to national newspapers and trade papers, including PATA's *Pacific Travel News*. "If you're staying at home because you think your government doesn't want you to spend your vacation in another country," Gilmore announced, "you can start traveling right now!" Gilmore brushed aside criticism of the recent reduction of duty-free limits to \$100, noting that the prior increase to \$500 had always been intended as a short-term, temporary measure. A reduction in the duty-free allowance, moreover, was technically not a restriction on travel, but merely a restriction on purchases. Though Gilmore acknowledged that official travel policy had begun focusing more heavily on bringing foreign visitors to the United States, he insisted it was not a signal that traveling overseas was somehow "unpatriotic." He defended Washington's "anti-travel" policies as moderate and justifiable and he pointed readers toward simultaneous government actions such as the Commerce Department's recent publication, *The Future of Tourism in the Pacific and Far East*, as evidence that Washington officials still encouraged two-way travel.<sup>40</sup>

## II

The continued difficulty that Washington officials faced in curtailing or redirecting travel had repercussions that moved beyond economic deficits. For many of the same reasons that U.S. officials found it so hard to discourage American tourists from traveling overseas, the remaining restrictions on travel to the PRC – which had faced

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<sup>40</sup> Voit Gilmore, "Travel Now, Says Official," *Los Angeles Times*, 11 March 1962; Gilmore, "United States Joins the World Travel Fraternity," *Pacific Travel News*, January 1962.

steady erosion since the mid-1950s – became more and more difficult to maintain.

Activists who had challenged the “anti-travel” policies that Kennedy and Johnson applied to recreational tourism, now aimed their arguments at bans on travel behind the Bamboo Curtain.

Consistent efforts to overturn the travel ban raised concerns in Washington. Chief among these was that as U.S. officials liberalized passport policy, they risked allowing critics of the United States to travel to the PRC in a relatively unsupervised manner. Though this concern was muted somewhat by the fact that the Chinese had allowed few Americans actually to enter the PRC, policymakers logically assumed that the Chinese would tend to grant visas to leftist or otherwise sympathetic travelers. The visits of W.E.B. Du Bois, the American students, and Edgar Snow – all with personal invitations – seemed to back up this assumption. If Washington were to expand the field of legal travelers, or potentially eliminate travel restrictions altogether, officials anticipated it would merely give the Chinese more opportunity to pick and choose. Thus, as Christina Klein writes, “travel...became a contested political terrain.”<sup>41</sup>

But in the United States travel became a substantial constitutional issue as well. Starting near the end of the Eisenhower administration, in response to several cases involving individuals violating U.S. travel laws, along with efforts of Congress and the White House to curtail travel rights for certain groups of Americans, the federal courts entered the “right to travel” debate. The first major development in this regard came in 1958 when the Supreme Court determined in *Kent v. Dulles* that the State Department could not deny passports to members of the Communist Party. The Eisenhower administration, as would be expected, vehemently opposed the decision. Speaking to

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<sup>41</sup> Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 135.

Congress in the days after the ruling, Eisenhower insisted that the inability of the State Department to control the issuance of passports was contrary to “the orderly conduct of our foreign relations and...maintenance of our own national security.” Warning that the present legal environment “exposes us to great danger,” Eisenhower urged Congress to grant the Secretary of State additional powers in order to counteract the *Kent* decision.<sup>42</sup>

Despite Eisenhower’s efforts, following *Kent* it became harder and harder for the federal government to maintain any travel restrictions; while the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations scored some minor constitutional victories on the passport front, on the whole the federal courts worked to weaken government restrictions. The last significant rulings on the issue exemplify this trend. *United States v. Laub* (1967) and *Lynd v. Rusk* (1968), taken in sum, wholly decriminalized “illegal” travel. In *Laub* – which involved several dozen American students who visited Cuba in defiance of U.S. prohibitions – the Supreme Court ruled that while the State Department could continue to print travel restrictions in U.S. passports, those restrictions were not criminally enforceable. Since the students all possessed valid U.S. passports – though not valid for travel to Cuba – they could not face prosecution. A year later, in the *Lynd* decision – which involved a Yale University professor’s “peace mission” to North Vietnam – the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia acknowledged that while the State Department could prohibit the use of passports in travel to particular areas, it could not prohibit the travel itself.<sup>43</sup> The State Department, moreover, could no longer deny passports to individuals on the basis of the traveler’s refusal to abide by travel bans in the

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<sup>42</sup> “Message from the President of the United States Transmitting Certain Recommendations Relating to Passports,” House of Representatives, 85<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 7 July 1958.

<sup>43</sup> The ruling of the Court of Appeals remained definitive after the State and Justice Departments chose not to appeal the case to the Supreme Court. John W. Finney, “U.S. Will Give up Passport Penalty,” *New York Times*, 28 March 1968.

future. Taken together, the federal courts were allowing Americans – with or without valid U.S. passports – to travel to “off-limits” locales without fear of punishment.<sup>44</sup> In other words, the fate that had awaited William Worthy, W.E.B. Du Bois, and other travel ban violators of the 1950s – namely confiscation of passports and rejection of renewal requests – was no longer a possibility.<sup>45</sup> A 1968 *New York Times* headline succinctly interpreted the ruling: “Now You Can Travel Anywhere.”<sup>46</sup>

Even in the rare cases in which the Supreme Court ruled in favor of federal restrictions, there was an underlying current of resignation to the inevitability of free travel to the PRC. In *Zemel v. Rusk* (1965), for example, the Supreme Court ruled that the Secretary of State could impose restrictions “when in can be demonstrated that unlimited travel to the area would directly and materially interfere with the safety and welfare of the area or the nation as a whole.”<sup>47</sup> While the tumult of the PRC during the Cultural Revolution may have met this standard, by the end of the 1960s such an argument – especially when paired with later court rulings – seemed to lose credibility. Several top-level State Department officials pointed out that while foreign visitors in the PRC were not entirely safe from detention or harassment, there was no indication that the removal of passport restrictions would aggravate this national security threat. Pointing to the past decade of gradual liberalization, moreover, officials noted that, generally speaking, the U.S. government and the American public “do not really consider the risks of American

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<sup>44</sup> Kreisberg to Green, “Status of Travel Controls Regulations,” General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 1, NARA.

<sup>45</sup> Between 1960 and 1968, the State Department revoked the passports for an estimated 336 persons. Of these, 103 had traveled to the PRC, 192 to Cuba, 40 to North Vietnam, and 1 to North Korea. Finney, “U.S. Will Give Up Passport Penalty,” *New York Times*, 28 March 1968.

<sup>46</sup> John W. Finney, “Passports: Now You Can Travel Anywhere,” *New York Times*, 31 March 1968.

<sup>47</sup> Heymann to Kreisberg, 27 September 1966, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 2, NARA.

travel serious enough to outweigh the benefits of opening a wide and mutually profitable range of peaceful contacts between the U.S. and Communist China.”<sup>48</sup>

Faced with an unfriendly court system and vocal opponents to the government’s remaining travel bans, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations picked up where Eisenhower left off. By 1962 many State Department officials, particularly those within the Far Eastern Bureau, were pushing for a removal of all bans on travel to all communist countries, with the exception of Cuba. Averell Harriman, Roger Hilsman, Marshall Green, and James Thomson, among others, led the way in pushing for a relaxation in U.S. travel policy.<sup>49</sup> To these officials, travel to the PRC did not appear to present significant risks to American security. The absence of travel, moreover, sapped the United States of a “valuable contact between decent elements in China and the outside world.”<sup>50</sup> Other Kennedy insiders, including Adlai Stevenson and William Bundy, offered more qualified support for these changes, viewing them less as a step toward rapprochement and more as a means of strengthening containment.<sup>51</sup> As part of this move to eliminate travel restrictions, top-level Kennedy officials began discussing the possibility of carving out a travel policy exception for scholars and other “deserving” applicants.

While many in the State Department remained supportive of the proposal throughout Kennedy’s tenure, the idea of allowing scholars to visit the PRC – much like the newsmen exchange proposal – was rife with legalistic complexities. Determining what groups would receive valid passports was sure to bring charges of arbitrariness or

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<sup>48</sup> Bundy, Belman, and Watson to Rusk, “Removal of Travel Restriction to Mainland China – Action Memorandum,” 6 March 1968, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 1, NARA.

<sup>49</sup> Michael Lumbers, *Piercing the Bamboo Curtain: Tentative Bridge-Building to China During the Johnson Years* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2008), 38-39.

<sup>50</sup> Chayes and Schwartz, “Regulations on Travel Controls of U.S. Citizens,” 28 June 1963, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>51</sup> Lumbers, *Piercing the Bamboo Curtain*, 89-90.

prejudice. As Lindsey Grant of the Office of East Asian and Pacific Affairs noted, “such a policy would be legally unenforceable.”<sup>52</sup> Also on the minds of policymakers was the possibility that the Chinese would use the change in policy to offer visas only to “sympathetic” visitors. Articulating these concerns in provocative fashion, Frances Knight, the vehement anticommunist head of the Passport Office, predicted that Chinese officials would use scholars’ visits for propagandistic purposes. Referencing Edgar Snow, whose visit to the PRC was legal under the newsmen exchange, Knight sarcastically asked: “What value did the American public gain by his ‘objective’ reporting of events in China?” Under any new exception for scholars, Knight was sure that individuals like Owen Lattimore – who she derisively lumped in the same category as Snow – would find their way into the PRC, providing more psychological advantage for the Communist regime.<sup>53</sup>

Kennedy and Secretary of State Dean Rusk, on the whole, agreed with the spirit of Knight’s concerns and they denied any sort of dramatic elimination of travel bans. Despite hopes and expectations from many liberals – who saw in the youthful JFK a rejection of the unhelpful containment policies of Truman and Eisenhower – Kennedy developed an increasingly strict posture toward the PRC. His personal anticommunism, fears of being labeled “soft” on foreign policy, the PRC’s 1962 border war with India, and Chinese officials’ determination to secure a nuclear weapon, kept Kennedy from making any sudden moves toward travel reform. On top of this, because the Chinese had made no indication that they would allow large numbers of American travelers into the

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<sup>52</sup> Grant to Lyerly, “Request for Passport Validation for Communist China – Dr. Joel Fort,” 12 July 1963, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>53</sup> Knight to Grant, “Possible Travel of Scholars to Communist China,” 6 February 1962, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA.

country, a change in policy in Washington would have had no practical effect.<sup>54</sup>

Eisenhower had come to this realization as well, but whereas his administration used it as justification to weaken travel restrictions – as a means of embarrassing the Chinese – Kennedy instead saw it as yet another reason not to rock the boat. In the end, while Kennedy renewed the newsmen exchange proposal in 1961, he hesitated to venture much further in this direction. Thus, as historian James Giglio notes, “Kennedy’s China policy represented no appreciable departure from Eisenhower’s.”<sup>55</sup>

### III

Kennedy’s tentative approach to travel, like much of his foreign policy, carried over into the Johnson administration. Even with consistent prodding from the Far East Bureau, the new President was hesitant to weaken travel bans any further. In part this was a matter of loyalty – both political and personal – to the Kennedy legacy. But Johnson’s tentativeness also stemmed from a genuine concern that travel reforms would intimate a “softening” of U.S. China policy. Especially after 1964, in the wake of France’s recognition of the PRC, Washington officials wanted to avoid any misunderstanding.<sup>56</sup>

Despite these concerns, the Johnson administration showed more willingness than his predecessor to engage in suitcase diplomacy – a trend that became more noticeable following the 1964 presidential election. The December 1964 decision to authorize passports for Dr. Samuel Rosen and his wife, on the grounds of humanitarianism and

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<sup>54</sup> Rusk, “Memorandum for the President: Policy Toward Communist China,” 22 February 1968, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 1, NARA.

<sup>55</sup> James N. Giglio, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1991), 237-38.

<sup>56</sup> Memorandum of conversation, “Restrictions on Travel by U.S. Newsmen to Communist China,” 21 March 1964, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA.



national interest, was a case in point. The administration immediately tried to marginalize the decision, stating that it was no different from earlier authorizations of travel on “national interest grounds.” But officials struggled to find examples of when the federal government had done this in the past. In a memorandum answering anticipated questions from the press, State Department officials pointed only to the 1954 case of William Jack Ranallo, a United Nations employee who had accompanied Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld on a mission to the PRC, and the 1957 case of lawyer A.L. Wirin. These cases – the first of which involved a UN mission and the second of which was necessary in order to prevent a sedition case from being thrown out of court – seemed to be on an entirely different level than the Rosen case. The importance of Rosen’s trip, as stated by U.S. officials, was that he was a world-renowned ear surgeon who was on a multi-country tour demonstrating his method for relieving deafness.<sup>57</sup> While it was not a total stretch to locate such a mission within the “national interest,” U.S. officials had, from 1949 onward, routinely turned down proposals that closely resembled Rosen’s. Thus, despite the best efforts of the Johnson administration to downplay the decision, it seemed to foreshadow further erosion of the travel ban.

Reinforcing the significance of the Rosen decision, beginning in 1965 the Johnson administration made a series of explicit liberalization gestures. That autumn the State Department used its new “humanitarian” standard to validate passports for doctors and members of the health field.<sup>58</sup> The following July it added professional reporters, scientists, scholars, and representatives of the Red Cross to the list of those who would receive consideration for passports on an “ad hoc” basis. In addition to these groups,

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<sup>57</sup> “Press Guidance: Travel of Dr. and Mrs. Rosen to Communist China,” 11 December 1964, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>58</sup> Thomson to Bundy, “Medical Travel: The End in Sight,” 28 December 1965, *DDRS*.

moreover, the State Department created a “discretionary category” of writers, athletes, businessmen, artists, and other professionals – all of whom could easily fit within the “national interest” rubric.<sup>59</sup> In a sign that the State Department intended to approach these categories very broadly, one of the first people to receive a passport under the new policy was William Miller, an industrialist from Rhode Island who, according to a Department spokesman, would be traveling as a “tourist,” not a businessman.<sup>60</sup>

As Johnson’s State Department distributed valid passports to more and more groups in the mid-1960s, officials recognized that it was increasingly difficult to claim that unrestricted travel to the PRC would be detrimental to U.S. interests. While only around 200 individual Americans had, as of 1966, received valid passports to the PRC, “literally tens of thousands of individuals could qualify if they chose to apply.”<sup>61</sup> Even Secretary of State Rusk – who was the most vocal and influential voice in the Johnson administration in favor of maintaining travel restrictions – noted in 1968 that an official policy of granting passports to “anyone who applies” would not be extraordinarily risky or controversial. In light of the gradual liberalization on the travel policy front that had taken place since the mid-1950s, a more dramatic and official move would “merely ratify what we have in fact been doing on individual applications for some time.”<sup>62</sup> True restrictions on passport validation were a thing of the past and officials conceded that the gradual liberalization that had taken place since the end of the Korean War rendered any effort to stop travel to the PRC a waste of time. Officials, moreover, recognized that all

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<sup>59</sup> American Embassy Taipei to State Department, “Travel to Restricted Areas,” 8 July 1966, *DDRS*.

<sup>60</sup> Heymann to Moyers, “Press Release on Travel Exceptions,” 30 July 1966. *DDRS*; John W. Finney, “U.S. to Let Some Tour in Red China,” *New York Times*, 17 July 1966.

<sup>61</sup> Bundy to Rusk, “Removal of Passport Restrictions for Travel to Communist China,” no date, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 2, NARA.

<sup>62</sup> Rusk, “Memorandum for the President: Policy Toward Communist China,” 22 February 1968, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 1, NARA.

remaining travel restrictions merely provided the PRC with potential material for propaganda. Chinese officials allegedly told foreign visitors that the U.S. was “attempting to dictate...who they [the Chinese] may invite to their country.”<sup>63</sup>

The fact that Beijing was not likely to reciprocate on the travel front, moreover, gradually emerged as an added incentive for ending travel restrictions. Returning to the methodology of the Eisenhower administration, Rusk justified the government’s liberalized policy, noting, “[t]he practical effect [of a U.S. travel policy change] will almost certainly be nil.”<sup>64</sup> By the end of the Johnson administration, U.S. officials had settled on this type of “dare” diplomacy, offering validated passports – still on a case-to-case basis – to nearly anyone with a desire to travel to the PRC. Even when the Nixon administration took this policy one step further in July 1969 – offering “automatic [passport] validations” for “certain categories of persons” – officials were still less than hopeful about Chinese acceptance.<sup>65</sup>

Johnson’s approach to travel for scholars, in particular, is telling. As Frances Knight had predicted, as Washington officials modified the standards for determining legal travel to the PRC, Owen Lattimore applied for a valid passport. Lattimore – whose expertise on Chinese affairs and run-ins with Joseph McCarthy were well known throughout Washington – had been in contact with Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai and other PRC officials for some time in search of an invitation. In the early 1960s he had begun teaching at Leeds University in England and hoped his affiliation with a British school –

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<sup>63</sup> Bundy to Rusk, “Removal of Passport Restrictions for Travel to Communist China,” no date, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 2, NARA.

<sup>64</sup> Rusk, “Memorandum for the President: Policy Toward Communist China,” 22 February 1968, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 1, NARA.

<sup>65</sup> Kreisberg to Taylor, 5 August 1969, General Records of the Department of State, Subject Numeric File, Box 361, NARA.

which was “in favour of a considerable increase in the development of cultural relations with China” – would boost his chances in getting support from both Beijing and Washington.<sup>66</sup>

In early 1965 Lattimore initiated discussions with Averell Harriman and received a “fairly encouraging” response. Because of Lattimore’s reputation within Washington as a communist sympathizer, however, the general consensus was to reject his travel bid. In the margins of a memorandum on travel for scholars, Marshall Green of the Far East Bureau scribbled: “we cannot possibly make a humanitarian or national interest justification for Lattimore – of all people!” Lindsay Grant, of the newly formed Office of Asian Communist Affairs, nonetheless, knew that U.S. travel policy was growing steadily less restrictive and he was aware that Lattimore was just as likely as any American to receive a valid visa from the PRC. If the situation became “really troublesome” and State Department officials felt compelled to grant a passport to Lattimore, they could avoid the implication that Lattimore’s trip was in the national interest by encouraging him to acquire the accreditation of a news agency. This move, Grant noted, “would convert him to a ‘journalist’ for our purposes.”<sup>67</sup>

Despite this lax approach, Johnson officials stayed clear of any blanket repeal of the travel ban. While the inclusion of “tourists” and certain scholars on the list of those who could receive a valid passport for the PRC implied that Washington officials had ended their effort to control which individuals traveled behind the Bamboo Curtain, the administration simultaneously clung to its new validation standards. In all passport

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<sup>66</sup> Lattimore to Zhou, 12 March 1964, Box 15, Owen Lattimore Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Lattimore to Hang Hsiung-wen, 19 February 1965, Box 15, Owen Lattimore Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>67</sup> Grant to Green, “Travel: Owen Lattimore,” 14 May 1965, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA.

applications – be they from doctors, scholars, businessmen, or recreational tourists – Washington officials demanded that the potential traveler demonstrate the visit “would serve the national interest of the United States.”<sup>68</sup> This approach served two primary roles. First, it afforded U.S. officials the ability to reject those applicants whose presence in China would be distracting or detrimental. Second, these standards allowed officials to maintain – as they had done throughout the 1950s – that legal travel to the PRC still proceeded on a case-by-case basis and did not signify a broader change in U.S. China policy. Thus, in spite of the nuanced approach toward travelers, by which the standards of national interest and humanitarianism remained purposefully vague and elastic, the Johnson administration was not willing fundamentally to eliminate the State Department’s right to pick and choose.<sup>69</sup>

This decision to maintain control over passport distribution was especially important to hardliners in Congress and abroad. Anticipating criticism from conservative policymakers at home, a State Department “talking points” memorandum insisted: “This is not softness; it is a step toward a less timid policy in the struggle of ideas.”<sup>70</sup> Taiwan officials, as well, showed concern. When the story of Samuel Rosen’s trip first broke, Samson Shen of the ROC Embassy in Washington “urgently” requested a meeting with State Department officials. The change in policy, and the fact that it occurred just before the UN General Assembly was to debate PRC membership, had set off alarms in Taipei. Shen wanted assurances that the travel policy decision did not foreshadow larger shifts in

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<sup>68</sup> American Embassy Taipei to State Department, “Travel to Restricted Areas,” 8 July 1966, *DDRS*.

<sup>69</sup> Hilsman to Manning, “Revision of Travel Regulations,” 19 December 1963, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA; Bundy to Rusk, “Travel of Scholars and Representatives of Humanitarian Organizations – Action Memorandum,” 16 June 1965, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>70</sup> “Liberalization of Travel Regulations Covering American Citizens,” no date, General Records of the State Department, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA.

U.S. China policy.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, while Taiwan officials recognized that the travel of a few Americans to the PRC was of little significance in and of itself, they feared that “people in the Far East...might see in it a dilution of American firmness toward Communist China.” Meeting with Taiwan’s Defense Minister Jiang Jingguo in September 1965, on the eve of changing passport restrictions for doctors, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs William Bundy insisted the decision “did not represent a change in actual practice.” From President Johnson’s perspective, Bundy continued, the “humanitarian considerations...should be separated from political problems.” Going even further, Bundy suggested the move might have the effect of strengthening the U.S. position vis-à-vis the PRC.<sup>72</sup>

The initiatives of the Johnson administration – especially in the context of the subsequent era of Sino-American rapprochement – have been a point of contention among diplomatic historians. Historian Michael Lumbers, among others, has recently used Johnson’s reforms on travel policy as a means of arguing that LBJ deserves some of the credit for “opening” China.<sup>73</sup> This is a legitimate argument. Especially in comparison to Kennedy’s largely static China policy, Johnson’s State Department showed flexibility and nuance as it expanded the numbers of individuals who could legally visit the PRC. While the Johnson administration never went as far as allowing all Americans to visit the PRC *without* the approval of the State Department – a move finalized by its successor – Johnson oversaw a period in which practically anyone who applied for a valid passport

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<sup>71</sup> Grant to Green “Your Appointment with Minister Shen,” 14 December 1964, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>72</sup> Memorandum of conversation, “U.S. Policy on Travel to Communist Countries; Current U.S. Thinking on Outer Mongolia; Chinese Representation Issue at UN; U.S.-GRC Consultation and the August 6, 1965 Sea Clash Between GRC and Chicom Naval Units,” 26 September 1965, *DDRS*.

<sup>73</sup> Lumbers, *Piercing the Bamboo Curtain*.

would receive one. This was, moreover, part of Johnson's larger strategy of pursuing "containment without isolation" – a moderate effort to engage the PRC while still remaining loyal to the Nationalist government in Taiwan.<sup>74</sup> Despite this significant liberalization policy, Johnson was not the earliest president to embark down this road. More notable – because of the timing – was the Eisenhower administration's precedent of establishing "exceptions" to the travel bans. The moves of the Johnson administration, therefore, did not represent an early incarnation of rapprochement as much as they reinforced the gradual inability and unwillingness of the State Department to enforce bans on travel to the PRC.

Regardless of whether Johnson's policies signified a precursor to rapprochement, his moves on travel did not lead to a huge influx in American travelers to the PRC. This was due primarily to the negative response coming out of Beijing. Chinese officials consistently maintained that until the Taiwan issue was resolved, no improvement could be made to Sino-American relations. More dramatically, the Cultural Revolution – which emerged alongside the Johnson administration's modest efforts to reduce travel restrictions – was, by its definition, an anti-Western, radical movement; until its conclusion there was little chance that the PRC would open its doors to outsiders. Thus, in a development that closely resembled the Eisenhower administration's unsuccessful newsmen initiative, in the mid-1960s valid U.S. passports were somewhat meaningless without a corresponding PRC visa.

The case Supreme Court Justice William Douglas offers one example. In 1966 the State Department finally granted permission for his travel to the PRC – an event that

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<sup>74</sup> Warren I. Cohen and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, eds., *Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World: American Foreign Policy, 1963-1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 105.

marked the culmination of fourteen years of failed efforts to go behind the Bamboo Curtain. Despite Douglas's consistent and vocal opposition to Washington's China policy, State Department officials readily placed the Justice within the "public affairs" category of the new travel policy and approved his trip. The widely publicized, and frequently maligned trip collapsed, however, when Chinese officials announced that they had never invited Douglas to visit, nor would they consider the possibility.<sup>75</sup>

In the context of the Cultural Revolution, moreover, it was not only potential American visitors who were denied access. Thousands of European, Latin American, Canadian, and Japanese tourists – all of whom had received valid visas from Beijing – found they were no longer welcome to enter the PRC.<sup>76</sup> Educational and cultural exchanges to and from the PRC also declined rapidly in these years, due to "excessive preoccupation with 'Cultural Revolution' at home [and] excessive proselytizing for the 'Cultural Revolution' by [CCP] personnel abroad."<sup>77</sup> Those foreign travelers that remained in China throughout the Cultural Revolution, moreover, recalled a distinct and unfortunate shift in the attitudes of Chinese tourism workers. In what can best be described as PRC-Western tensions playing out at the grass-roots level, a CIA intelligence report described the changed demeanor of waiters, hotel staff, and store clerks:

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<sup>75</sup> AP, "Douglases Leave on Honeymoon," *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 17 July 1966; AP, "Justice Douglas's Trip to Peking is Approved," *New York Times*, 22 July 1966; AP, "Chinese Laugh at Douglas Plan," *Washington Post and Times-Herald*, 24 July 1966.

<sup>76</sup> Seymour Topping, "Peking Restricts Foreigners' Trips," *New York Times*, 12 July 1966.

<sup>77</sup> Hughes to Rusk, "Educational and Cultural Exchanges Between Communist and Noncommunist Countries in 1967," 31 May 1968, General Records of the Department of State, Subject Numeric File, Box 360, NARA.



The waiters at the Friendship and Hsin Chiao Hotels, in contrast to pre-Cultural Revolution days, did not show normal courtesies to foreigners. Orders were not readily taken and delivered quickly....In January 1968 one ambassador and his first secretary who were dining at the Hsin Chiao Hotel complained of the cold to the waiter. The waiter huffily answered that foreigners were always complaining of the cold when it wasn't cold at all. He pulled up both sleeves, flexed his muscles, said "I don't feel the cold" and walked away.<sup>78</sup>

#### IV

The PRC, nonetheless, did not stay entirely closed off to travelers. At the same time that the Supreme Court whittled away at the State Department's travel policy and as the Kennedy and Johnson administrations offered modest reforms, Beijing welcomed around 10,000 tourists and businessmen, most of whom came from communist or "friendly" nations.<sup>79</sup> Scattered among these travelers were a handful of high profile American and Western visitors. The number of these latter travelers, as mentioned above, remained small. In a move that confirmed U.S. officials' earlier suspicions about Beijing's entry procedures, PRC authorities hand-selected only a few – who seemed to demonstrate sympathy with the PRC – to enter the country. Despite the small numbers, these travelers – like those Americans who violated travel bans in the 1950s – complicated U.S. policy toward the PRC. For one, these trips took place alongside Kennedy and Johnson's own liberalization policies and thus hastened the erosion of U.S. travel bans. In addition, the bulk of these travelers held the Chinese Communist regime in

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<sup>78</sup> CIA, "Conditions in Peking: Presence of Army and Security Personnel, and Treatment of Foreign Diplomats," 19 March 1968, *DDRS*.

<sup>79</sup> "What the U.S. Knows About Red China," *Time*, 20 May 1966.

high esteem and disseminated positive reports on the PRC to the American public and media.

Felix Greene, a British subject who maintained permanent residency in United States, traveled to the PRC five times (once with his American wife) in the 1950s and 1960s by use of his British passport.<sup>80</sup> Like William Worthy and many other Western intellectuals traveling to China in these years, Greene claimed his trip would contribute to American knowledge of China. The “prevailing assumptions and apprehensions generally prevalent in the United States,” Greene maintained, depicted a China far different from the one he actually visited. It was, moreover, Washington’s travel policy – which Greene called a “wall of ignorance and fear” – that contributed to these skewed perceptions.<sup>81</sup> Though he justified his trip as a defense of U.S. strategic interests, Greene clearly traveled to China more out of personal curiosity and admiration for the PRC than he did concern for U.S. foreign policy objectives.

Greene’s ability to bypass travel prohibitions caused divisions within Washington. While punitive action was, for the most part, off the table (because he traveled legally with a British passport), U.S. attitudes toward Greene’s visit closely resembled those directed at American scholars and other intellectuals who were itching to travel to the PRC. State Department officials had few nice words for Greene. Following Greene’s third trip to China in 1964, Philip Heymann of the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs referred to Greene as a “sower of dissention” and Harald Jacobson of the Office

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<sup>80</sup> According to U.S. intelligence, Felix Greene, with the assistance of the China Travel Service, slipped Mrs. Greene through the PRC border at Hong Kong. When British officials asked why they had only received one passport, Chinese officials allegedly responded, “They forgot, we guess.” American Consulate General Hong Kong to State Department, “Debriefing of Morris R. Wills,” 19 November 1965, *DDRS*.

<sup>81</sup> Greene, *Awakened China*, 13-14, 27.

of Asian Communist Affairs called him a “crypto-Communist.”<sup>82</sup> John Holdridge, Chief of the Political Section at the U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong, was slightly more positive but still noted that Greene’s “judgment...remains colored by the flattering treatment he received and the desire to be a middleman for a ‘misunderstood’ China to what he considers a dangerously misinformed American public.”<sup>83</sup> These officials all represented a significant faction within Washington that worried Greene’s frequent (and unimpeded) visits to China would both reinforce the inability of Washington to control travel and provide the pro-PRC viewpoint with a degree of legitimacy.

But other policymakers approached the Greene case with less anxiety. Part of this was a matter of calculus. Considering that Washington officials had been loosening U.S. travel restrictions for years, there was little chance they could stop a journalist with credentials and a British passport from visiting the PRC. Attempting to do so would have merely weakened U.S. officials’ argument that it was Beijing, not Washington, that was hindering travel exchanges. This sense of resignation continued as Greene left the PRC and tried to regain entry into the United States. As a permanent U.S. resident who traveled to an off-limits destination, Greene was required to acquire a new immigration visa before re-entering the United States. But officials hesitated to give Greene any trouble in acquiring his documents, arguing that such a move would merely make Greene’s case a “cause celebre.”<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Jacobson to Bundy, “Re-entry of Felix Greene into the United States,” 22 November 1965, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA; Heymann to Under Secretary of State, 15 December 1966, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>83</sup> Holdridge to Grant, 2 January 1964, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>84</sup> Jacobson to Bundy, “Re-entry of Felix Greene into the United States,” 22 November 1965, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA

Other policymakers went even further, leaning on Greene for intelligence on the PRC that could not be gathered from outposts in Hong Kong or Southeast Asia. During a lunch with Lindsey Grant, Greene cited figures he had gathered while visiting an operating hydroelectric plant sixty miles west of Lanzhou – a “useful item of information,” according to Grant.<sup>85</sup> More comprehensively, after returning to the U.S. in 1964, Greene offered to sell a copy of his documentary (about 12,000 feet of color film) to the State Department or the CIA. Response was mixed. Marshall Green of the Far Eastern Bureau saw Greene’s footage as highly “manipulated” and thus of little intelligence value. By purchasing the film, moreover, U.S. officials would basically be “subsidizing the distribution of something very close to straight Chinese Communist propaganda.”<sup>86</sup> Far East Asian expert Robert W. Barnett disagreed, arguing that while much of Greene’s footage had been “staged” and was “highly selective,” such considerations did not detract from “the desirability of having at hand recent pictorial evidence of what [Greene’s] Communists hosts wanted him to see.” Averell Harriman, as well, did not see why there was “such a fuss” about Greene’s film and he insisted that CIA officials seriously consider making the purchase.<sup>87</sup>

The story was much the same with Lisa Hobbs, an Australian native who worked in the U.S. for the *San Francisco Examiner*. In 1965 she used her Australian passport to visit the PRC. Hobbs noted that the U.S. officials she dealt with in Washington “gave me nothing but encouragement.” With limited intelligence on the PRC, U.S. officials saw

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<sup>85</sup> Memorandum of conversation, “Felix Greene’s Trip to Communist China,” 18 February 1964, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>86</sup> Green to Harriman, “Mr. Felix Greene’s Film on Communist China,” no date, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>87</sup> Barnett to Harriman, 1 June 1964, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA; Barnett to Green, 1 June 1964, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA.

Hobbs one of the “few sources of direct information...for keeping in touch with developments within China.”<sup>88</sup> Though there is no evidence that officials used Hobbs’s reports directly, policymakers in Washington certainly relied on this sort of casual intelligence from tourists in the development of foreign policy. This sort of intelligence gathering was seen in the transition years of 1949-50 as U.S. officials called on American scholars in the PRC to provide insight on the new regime. This tactic was still used in the late 1960s. In 1968 NSC official Alfred Jenkins, for instance, complained about a lack of intelligence on the PRC, in part because “the populace is shunning travelers.”<sup>89</sup> Those Western correspondents who were more critical of the PRC, in particular, were of special interest to U.S. officials. One Norwegian journalist, who voiced skepticism of China’s “guided tours” and detailed cases of political indoctrination throughout the country, for example, caught the attention of policymakers. John Holdridge, at the U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong, requested copies of any articles that the journalist might produce.<sup>90</sup>

While the reports of these Western travelers, when filtered through the U.S. intelligence apparatus, could be of use to government officials, it was an entirely different story when these travelers disseminated reports of their trips directly to various channels of the American public and media. Regardless of the destination, travel tended to boost one’s sympathies with the host country. This was especially noticeable in regard to the PRC. Much of the original drive to visit the PRC in the 1950s and 1960s derived from Washington’s prohibition of travel and its generally hostile demeanor toward Mao’s government; those that actually made the trip, therefore, carried with them resentment

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<sup>88</sup> Hobbs, *I Saw Red China*, 3.

<sup>89</sup> Jenkins to Rostow, “Developments Behind the Reinforced Bamboo Curtain,” 19 November 1968, *DDRS*.

<sup>90</sup> American Counsel General Hong Kong to State Department, “Norwegian Journalist’s Trip to Communist China,” 5 June 1964, General Records of the Department of State, Subject Numeric File 1964-1966, Box 413, NARA.

toward the U.S. government and a heightened desire to prove Washington officials wrong. As Paul Hollander notes, this “blend of attitudes...rarely stimulates the exercise of critical faculties.”<sup>91</sup>

Indeed, most of the ensuing reports – coming in the form of films, travelogues, speeches, and memoirs – depicted the PRC in a positive light. Travelers held up the PRC as a “virtuous underdog,” exaggerating the nation’s progress and glossing over obvious flaws.<sup>92</sup> Travelers also tended to locate in China the antithesis of everything they disliked in the United States. China’s quaint technology reminded them of “the good old days” in the United States when rural self-reliance had reigned supreme. In the 1960s, when bureaucracy came under fire in the U.S., Western travelers saw in the PRC’s Cultural Revolution a purer and less cumbersome system of political rule. And the modest, puritan nature of China was a welcome divergence from the hedonistic, materialistic culture back at home.<sup>93</sup> Thus, in terms of their impact on public perceptions, there was little differentiation between legal and illegal travelers to the PRC. Worthy, Du Bois, the American students, and other travel ban violators were no doubt part of this phenomenon; while they aimed differing levels of criticism toward Chinese brainwashing, political suppression, censorship, and violence, on the whole they left the PRC with a positive impression of the country.<sup>94</sup>

If these positive reports had been limited to the individual traveler, the impact on U.S. foreign relations and public opinion would have been negligible. The discourse on the

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<sup>91</sup> Hollander, *Political Pilgrims*, 286.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 286-87.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, *Political Pilgrims*, 299-312

<sup>94</sup> This characterization of American perceptions of the PRC challenges the conclusions of Harold Isaacs. In his classic work, Isaacs labels the 1949-1970s period as the “Age of Hostility.” During this period Americans associated mainland Chinese as a cruel people. Isaacs, *Scratches on Our Minds*, 71, 107-08.

PRC, however, quickly took on a larger role. Just as Christina Klein notes how travel guides and travelogues shaped American knowledge of “Free Asia” and reinforced the Cold War consensus, so too did they contribute to Americans’ awareness of and sympathy with events behind the Bamboo Curtain. Highlighting this point, Morton Fried, in a *Saturday Review* article, noted that laudatory reports, films, and speeches from travelers (both lawful and unlawful) returning from the PRC, was one of the primary means by which Americans learned about Communist China.<sup>95</sup>

Felix Greene, in particular, returned with an increased admiration for the PRC and a commensurate desire to make his views heard. While in the country he held intimate meetings with leading PRC officials and he was confident that the country was in better shape than in years past. “Living conditions, food supplies, supply of consumer goods, and the general attitude of officials and the people” had all shown considerable improvement.<sup>96</sup> “No one,” Greene announced, “can come away from a visit to China today without being impressed, even overwhelmed, by the experience.” The “freedom” and “dignity” by which Chinese propagandists defined the PRC were, according to Greene, genuine expressions of the Chinese people. The U.S. policy of supporting Jiang Jieshi and designating Taiwan as the true China, on the other hand, was a “mistaken and detrimental” policy.<sup>97</sup>

In between trips to the PRC, Greene toured the United States, sharing his experiences and these personal assessments with local radio shows, civic groups, and college audiences. He published four travelogues/monographs on the PRC by 1973 and

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<sup>95</sup> Fried, “Breaching the China Wall,” *Saturday Review*, 19 March 1960.

<sup>96</sup> Memorandum of conversation, “Felix Greene’s Trip to Communist China,” 18 February 1964, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>97</sup> Greene, *Awakened China*, 388-91.

showcased the premier of his feature-length documentary “China” – the result of the footage Greene had offered to U.S. officials – at Carnegie Hall in May 1965. After showing in New York theaters for five months, it started runs in Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and other major U.S. cities. Parts of the film, moreover, were shown on British television and his interview with Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai broadcast in the United States.<sup>98</sup>

While positive reviews of the film described it as a “shattering eye-opener,” more common were reviews that pointed out its extreme biases.<sup>99</sup> William F. Buckley, Jr., in a particularly scathing review, commented that Greene’s next project could depict “Hitler Germany...as a wildly exciting place to live in – full of energy and joy!”<sup>100</sup> Critics of Greene’s writing, as well, pointed to his explicit bias. Commenting on Greene’s travelogue *Awakened China*, journalist Tillman Durdin, himself a vocal critic of Washington’s China policy, questioned the author’s generally unqualified admiration of the PRC and noted the book was “simply not a balanced and objective work.”<sup>101</sup>

Lisa Hobbs was somewhat more evenhanded, detailing her disgust at some of the anti-American propaganda she encountered. Critiquing Felix Greene and other “journalists who had claimed that communism had changed China from top to bottom,” Hobbs insisted that they “were guilty...of optimistic exaggeration.” On the streets of China, she wrote, “there was no immediate evidence of radical social change.”<sup>102</sup> On the whole, however, Hobbs, as well, presented a laudatory account of the PRC. The standard

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<sup>98</sup> Memorandum of conversation, “Felix Greene’s Trip to Communist China,” 18 February 1964, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 3, NARA.

<sup>99</sup> “Documentary on Peking,” *New York Times*, 10 May 1965; A. H. Weiler, “The Screen: A Documentary on China,” *New York Times*, 26 May 1965.

<sup>100</sup> William F. Buckley, Jr., “Just Think – No Flies in China,” *Los Angeles Times*, 4 June 1965.

<sup>101</sup> Tillman Durdin, “A Balance Weighted to the Left,” *New York Times*, 10 September 1961.

<sup>102</sup> Hobbs, *I Saw Red China*, 13-14.



of living for the nation's masses, she wrote, was surprisingly comfortable and cities were filled with "masses of adequately fed, warm, and cleanly dressed people whose general demeanor is one of dignity and confidence." "[U]nder the Communist regime," Hobbs concluded, "the masses of China are not only better off than they were before, but also have freedoms that they never before experienced."<sup>103</sup> Her story, too, quickly left its impact on the American public. Hobbs's travelogue, *I Saw Red China*, proved a hit among American audiences, spending three weeks on the *New York Times*' best-seller list and earning accolades from Pearl Buck and William O. Douglas. In the promotion of her book, moreover, Hobbs served as a regular guest on local and national radio and television programs.

## V

While the activities of these Western travelers signified the ways in which continued travel to the PRC was starkly politicized, the gradual erosion of restrictions also had the opposite effect. As travel behind the Bamboo Curtain became more acceptable and more common, it lost some of its political edge. In a sense, travel to the PRC began to lose its place in the Sino-American rivalry and more closely resembled recreational tourism to popular destinations around the world.

These developments, which began under Eisenhower and continued modestly during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, emerged more fully upon Richard Nixon's entry into the White House. In March 1969, Secretary of State William Rogers, extended the general ban on American travel to the PRC. Though the move reinforced Washington's strict travel policy, Rogers opted for a six-month, as opposed to a one-year,

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 209, 211-12

extension. The move was a not so subtle sign that the new administration intended to make a thorough review of the State Department's travel policy.<sup>104</sup> Confirming these assumptions, in the summer Nixon made official many of the changes that his predecessors had initiated. Students, teachers, and other scholars could now receive "automatic validation" for travel to the PRC, as opposed to the previous system in which their cases were reviewed (almost always favorably) on a case-by case basis.

Nixon, moreover, modified the Comprehensive Certificates of Origin (CCO) regulations, allowing American travelers to purchase and bring home up to \$100 worth of Chinese-made goods.<sup>105</sup> The decision had implications in both Hong Kong and the PRC. In Hong Kong, the move freed the American tourist of the inconvenience and stigma associated with souvenir purchases. U.S. officials were aware that it would also likely stimulate tourism to the British colony and possibly encourage more overseas spending. If every American tourist spent the full \$100, Hong Kong would net nearly \$20 million more in tourist expenditures.<sup>106</sup> Addressing this possibility, Secretary of State Dean Rusk – who had tossed around the idea in the final days of the Johnson administration – noted that while he supported the removal of CCO restrictions, it was likely to have "some balance-of-payments implications in the current situation."<sup>107</sup> Moving beyond the economic repercussions, the modification of purchase restrictions seemed to move the

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<sup>104</sup> The Nixon administration re-extended the travel bans again in September 1969, though a State Department spokesman noted that the restriction was "little more than a relic." Official removal of all bans on travel to China came in March 1971. AP, "Curb On Traveling to 4 Red Countries Extended 6 Months," *New York Times*, 15 March 1969; Peter Grose, "U.S. Acts to Relax Curbs on China Travel and Trade," *New York Times*, 22 July 1969.

<sup>105</sup> National Security Decision Memorandum (NSDM) 17, "Relaxation of Economic Controls Against China," 26 June 1969, National Security Institutional Files, Box H-208, Richard Nixon Presidential Library, Yorba Linda, California.

<sup>106</sup> Ian Stewart, "Hong Kong Stocks Up for U.S. Shopping Spree," *New York Times*, 3 August 1969.

<sup>107</sup> Rusk, "Memorandum for the President: Policy Toward Communist China," General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5409, Box 1, NARA.

region's tourism further outside the framework of the Cold War. For American tourists to Hong Kong, the CCOs were the most blatant reminder of Sino-American tension and the most explicit effort on the part of Washington officials to link travel policy to the larger strategy of containment. The policy change had a similar symbolic effect in regard to the PRC. Because the modified customs restrictions applied only to "noncommercial" goods, it was not likely to have a large, direct economic impact. American businesses still could not conduct trade with the PRC and since few American tourists could visit, there would be no one to take advantage of the new regulations. Despite this, the initiative was symbolic and significant; it intimated that U.S.-PRC tourism was likely in the near future and a modification of purchase restrictions was one step toward facilitating that development.

The private tourism industry, as well, began operating under the assumption that American tourism to the PRC would emerge in the short-term. In early 1970 Pan American Airways officials first brought up the idea of initiating service to Shanghai "in the not too distant future."<sup>108</sup> Working through contacts with the Chinese that had developed in the 1940s, when Pan Am still flew into Shanghai, airline executives hoped to discover where the PRC regime stood on the issue of resuming air connections.<sup>109</sup> The incident brought immediate criticism from Taiwan officials, who pointed out that resumption of service to the PRC would violate the spirit of U.S.-Taiwan civil aviation agreements. Though U.S. officials assuaged the Nationalists with promises to follow the

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<sup>108</sup> State Department press conference, 19 February 1970, in General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5412, Box 8, NARA.

<sup>109</sup> Memorandum of conversation, "Civil Air – Pan American Airways Plans to Sound Out Chicoms on Reestablishment of PAA Service to Shanghai," 14 March 1970, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5412, Box 8, NARA.

provisions of the joint agreements, the Nixon administration showed remarkable indifference toward the “unofficial contacts or soundings” of Pan American.<sup>110</sup>

The mutterings of Pan American – in combination with the visits to the PRC of the American table tennis team and President Nixon – were enough to light a fire under the U.S. travel industry. Adding to this was the fact that other airlines from non-communist nations began bringing tourists to the PRC. By 1973, Pakistan International Airlines flew to Beijing, and both Air France and Ethiopian Airlines flew to Shanghai.<sup>111</sup> Anticipating an imminent opening for American tourism, travel agencies, tour organizers, and cultural exchange organizations began developing itineraries and signing up potential travelers.<sup>112</sup> The excitement was somewhat premature, as Pan American – the first U.S. airline to establish routes to the PRC – did not commence U.S.-PRC flights until August 1979. But even the rumors of air travel between the U.S. and the PRC altered the tone of the travel debate; the question changed from whether the United States should support such contact to when those contacts should commence.

The American public seemed eager to spur this along, showing an “insatiable curiosity” about recreational tourism to the PRC. Aiming to fill this need, in 1972 Eugene Fodor published his guide to Beijing, the first such travel guide to be published in the United States since the establishment of the PRC. While most Americans still could not travel there – a fact that Fodor’s *Peking* mentions in its early pages – the first U.S. edition of the book sold out quickly, signaling an eagerness among the American public to vacation behind the Bamboo Curtain. The contents of the guide were a fascinating mix of

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<sup>110</sup> Memorandum of conversation, “GRC Views on Sheet Glass and PAA Plans for Mainland Service,” 26 February 1970, General Records of the Department of State, Entry #5412, Box 8, NARA.

<sup>111</sup> “Tourism to China: ‘Yes, We Have Hotels,’” *Asia Travel Trade*, June 1973, in Series II, Box 600, PAA.

<sup>112</sup> Joel Glass, “Welcome to China?” *New York Times*, 12 July 1970.

caveats for traveling in “totalitarian” China – with its guided tours and government-run travel service – and detailed lists of restaurants, shopping, museums, and hotels. Absent from the guide were any suggestions that tourism to the PRC posed any particular dangers or that choosing the PRC as a destination somehow violated Western values or threatened the future of Washington’s Asian allies.<sup>113</sup>

## VI

Washington’s difficulties in ensuring that the right sort of people traveled abroad, and only to the right places, underscored that tourism, like all forms of foreign relations, had flaws. Making this form of foreign relations even more difficult to manage, most Americans and many U.S. officials continued to categorize tourism as an apolitical activity – a form of recreation on which the federal government had no claim. Considering the significant potential impact of tourism on the international economy, political relationships, and public perceptions, this disconnect was bound to cause problems.

This “tourist problem” was clearest in the enormous gap between American expenditures overseas and foreign expenditures in the United States. Due to years of success in building up tourism industries in Europe, Latin America, and the Far East, the domestic U.S. industry was woefully inadequate. As long as the United States enjoyed a balance-of-payments surplus, this reality of one-way tourism was acceptable and even beneficial. When the economic climate changed at the end of the Eisenhower administration, however, the lack of inbound tourists became a crisis in the making.

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<sup>113</sup> Odile Cail, *Fodor’s Peking* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1973), x, 7.

In regard to the PRC, the “tourist problem” metastasized differently. As opposed to contributing to the balance-of-payments deficit, the ongoing debate over the “right to travel” – played out in Congress, the federal courts, and American popular culture – led to further erosion of Washington’s travel bans and introduced more challenges to U.S. China policy. As was true during the Eisenhower administration, liberalization of travel restrictions was, in part, the intention of Kennedy and Johnson officials. By increasing the number of individuals who could legally visit the PRC, the White House during the 1960s attempted simultaneously to quiet domestic protest, test the waters of Sino-American accommodation, and score political points against the Chinese regime.

On all fronts of the “tourist problem,” the Kennedy and Johnson administration walked a fine line between prohibiting travel completely and endangering U.S. national interests. Efforts to discourage Americans from traveling overseas for recreation had only minor successes and the administrations soon resigned themselves to the fact that such outbound travel was inevitable. Kennedy and Johnson had notably more control over American travel to the PRC. Fearing both the political and international repercussions of eliminating the ban completely, neither Kennedy nor Johnson was keen on making any bold moves on the travel front. They made modest concessions to domestic activists, but explicitly refused to go all the way. In their trepidation, they were, ironically, assisted by the fact that PRC officials – in almost all cases – refused to grant American travelers necessary visas.

But in a pattern that should have been familiar to U.S. officials, travel was not a foreign policy tool that the government could turn on and off as it pleased. With the window for legal American travel opened a bit wider, and with the numbers of Western

travelers in the PRC increasing, Washington officials faced the problem of travel slipping beyond their control. Leftist scholars, critical journalists, and provocative filmmakers all made their way to the PRC, often to the consternation of U.S. officials at home. Possibly more significantly, by the end of the Johnson presidency and the start of Nixon's, even private American tourists were able to travel to the PRC. With the gradual emergence of recreational travel – which still maintained a connotation of apolitical leisure – tourism to the PRC was becoming less a political issue and more of a mundane reality.

## Conclusion

### I

The development of suitcase diplomacy was a clear feature of U.S. foreign relations but one that few diplomatic historians have explored. The reasons are understandable. The image of a tourist – playing shuffleboard on the deck of a cruise liner, freely spending cash on predictable souvenirs, and imposing his camera on the local residents and scenery – does not instantly evoke thoughts of high-level diplomacy. Outwardly tourists seem, instead, to be trivial, though at times burdensome, outsiders – neither a true representative of their home culture nor an integral part of the society in which they are visiting. But considering that tourism today comprises the largest industry in the world and that, alongside war and natural disaster, serves as a primary stimulus for international migration, tourism should be of utmost interest to scholars of international and diplomatic history.<sup>1</sup>

Suitcase diplomacy, aside from being a crucial factor in economic, political, and cultural exchange, is also worthy of exploration because of its unique qualities as a form of foreign relations. An anecdote from the U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong underscores these distinctive characteristics. In July 1967 the U.S. Consulate General in Hong Kong sent a hurried telegram to the State Department in regard to a “People-to-People” student delegation that was set to arrive. Standing in the way of this visit, the riots that erupted over tensions between Communists, pro-Nationalists, and British officials, continued into the summer months. A week before the students were to arrive, Chinese Communists

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<sup>1</sup> Engerman, “Research Agenda for the History of Tourism.”



killed five members of the Hong Kong police and injured twelve others.<sup>2</sup> U.S. officials in Hong Kong, obviously flustered over the recent events, informed the State Department that they would not be able to put together a “meaningful program” for the students. If the group wanted to visit Hong Kong “as tourists,” however, Consulate officials had no objection.<sup>3</sup>

As the Hong Kong riots demonstrated, tourism was not entirely immune to the violence and tensions of the Cold War. Making this point more explicit, on the eleventh day of the Hong Kong riots, rowdy crowds gathered just outside the Hong Kong Hilton. Despite calls for the rioters to disperse, one member of the crowd shattered a large plate-glass window in the Hilton coffee shop, bringing shards of glass down on diners inside.<sup>4</sup> Travel writer Hudson Strode, visiting Hong Kong at that time, wrote of the Chinese Communist “scare tactics” and recalled an incident soon after his arrival in which a “Communist agent” was chased and apprehended by Hong Kong police.<sup>5</sup> Vacations thus often had a way of butting up against Cold War realities. This was not only a matter of outright violence. Tourists to Taiwan in the 1950s and 1960s recalled seeing giant posters of President Jiang Jieshi with slogans about retaking the mainland. Tourists to Hong Kong, who spent the bulk of their vacations shopping, were reminded of the Cold War every time they had to fill out a CCO for their purchases.

Though occasional outbursts of chaos or more subtle reminders of U.S.-PRC conflict were regular features of the tourist experience, the fact that tourism to Hong

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<sup>2</sup> “Four in Hong Kong Killed in Clashes,” *New York Times*, 10 July 1967.

<sup>3</sup> American Consulate General Hong Kong to State Department, “People-to-People Student Delegation,” 16 July 1967, General Records of the Department of State, Subject Numeric File, Box 316, NARA.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Mohr, “A Noisy Standoff,” *New York Times*, 22 May 1967.

<sup>5</sup> Hudson Strode, *Ultimates in the Far East: Travels in the Orient and India* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1970), 94-95.

Kong continued in the midst of the riots – though government-sponsored tours could not – highlights how recreational travel could bypass much of the fear and violence of the Cold War. Strode, despite warnings from friends about the “dirty water and bombing” that would await him in Hong Kong, made the trip. He wrote about the visit in his travel guide: “we decided to chance uprisings and sporadic bombings – in which no white persons had been killed, only unfortunate Chinese.”<sup>6</sup> A HKTA survey found that most tourists were only “slightly inconvenienced” by the ongoing riots.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, a CIA intelligence report noted that while tourism had been “temporarily curtailed to some degree...it is still difficult to get reservations at first class Hong Kong hotels.”<sup>8</sup>

On a broader scale, cruise ships had, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, served as a means of seeing China without encountering the military realities of the country. Even as more American tourists flew to their destination and stayed in local hotels, tourism still seemed to provide a buffer to the outside. Western-style hotel rooms and restaurants served as “imperturbable oases” in the midst of unfamiliarity and potential danger.<sup>9</sup> Popular advertisements showed serene landscapes and bustling marketplaces, or simply focused on the luxury ships and airplanes that would take tourists on their vacation. Government officials and private travel boosters, moreover, worked to increase security, develop uniform travel itineraries, and encourage locals to treat tourists with respect – all of which meant that the tourist vacation was a comfortable, though not necessarily genuine, representation of the host country. Thus, in a task that only tourism could accomplish, the Cold War somehow faded to the background.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>7</sup> Rich, “China in a Gray Flannel Suit,” in *Fodor’s Guide to Japan and East Asia 1968*, 479.

<sup>8</sup> CIA, “The Outlook for Hong Kong,” 15 August 1967, *DDRS*.

<sup>9</sup> “The Great Hotels: Imperturbable Oases in a Clamorous World,” *Fortune*, November 1967.

The way by which U.S. officials in riotous Hong Kong easily transformed the incoming student delegation into “tourists,” moreover, highlights the fluidity of these categories of travel. Despite the habit of scholars to isolate “tourists” from “travelers” and “travelers” from “adventurers,” U.S. foreign policy has shown that, on the ground, these distinctions made little difference. To U.S. officials, recreational tourists served the same purpose as cultural delegations, though they likely required less attention. All visitors – whether they traveled as recreational tourists, curious scholars, or part of a government-sponsored exchange program – served as potential agents of U.S. foreign policy. U.S. officials, as long as they were able, consequently offered abundant support and guidance. Even from the perspective of travelers themselves, distinctions were ambiguous and self-serving. While many Americans refused to view themselves as “tourists” – with all the negative connotations that term carried – they still overwhelmingly sought out hotels, restaurants, and attractions that offered familiarity and comfort.

Suitcase diplomacy’s ability simultaneously to persevere in unstable climates and blur the lines between various forms of travel, makes it an extraordinarily complex addition to an understanding of how foreign relations develop and how they correspond to geopolitical realities. In addition, suitcase diplomacy contributes to several areas of the vast historiography of Cold War diplomacy and, specifically, Sino-American relations. First, between 1949 and 1968 travel, because it both reinforced and transcended Cold War divisions, served as a unique component of Washington’s China policy. The complicated way by which U.S. officials ended American travel to the PRC in the wake of the Communist takeover and then increasingly revived travel contacts in the years that followed, demonstrated that they saw the benefit of subtle Sino-American contact.

Successive administrations used travel as a politically safe way of testing Sino-American relations or as a means of embarrassing the Communist regime without the fear of upsetting Cold War allies or hardliners at home. At the same time, however, U.S. officials were never able to harness fully this style of foreign policy. Small cracks in travel prohibitions – brought about by Americans traveling in violation of the passport restrictions, foreigners traveling legally to the PRC, and State Department officials making modest reforms – resulted in a steady erosion of the ban on travel to the PRC that proved impossible to stop.

Even in regard to Taiwan and Hong Kong – the governments of which maintained close allegiance to the United States – tourism was only partly integrated into Washington's Cold War arsenal. The expansive International Educational Exchange Program and Washington's tangible influence on PATA were two of the most blatant examples of how tourism could be an effective resource for Cold War containment. An examination of travel periodicals and travel guides, however, reveals that tourists were not entirely eager to become spokespeople for Washington's policy nor did their motivations for travel always match up with the official agenda. Escape, leisure, and exoticism, more than the spread of democratic ideals and Western values, dominated the travel discourse. This disconnect reared its head quite clearly when U.S. officials, facing a deleterious balance-of-payments deficit in the early 1960s, attempted to scale back outbound tourism for the sake of the national economy and, tangentially, U.S. dominance in the Cold War. Unable to convince Americans to give up this activity – which many now believed was a right – Washington officials had to seek out other ways to stop the outward flow of U.S. dollars. The fact that travel policy – both intentionally and

unintentionally – could follow a different trajectory than other components of U.S. foreign policy, underscores the complexity of post-World War II international affairs and the need for diplomatic historians to approach the period with a broader lens.

Second, by questioning the Cold War's exclusive hold on the post-World War II period, suitcase diplomacy expands the international approach to diplomatic history. Previous works in this vein have urged historians to move beyond the bipolar framework of the Cold War and thus examine a wider set of international actors. By examining the policies and strategies of Third World or smaller European powers – which pursued non-alignment or sought to play each camp off of the other – these works show that looking only to superpowers and bipolarity is not sufficient. Along these same lines, non-state actors deserve a central position in this narrative. Beyond a corporatist approach, which examines how private business and special interest groups collaborated and influenced government policy, a focus on non-state actors also suggests that “ordinary people” were, in and of themselves, engaged in international relations and therefore worthy of study.<sup>10</sup>

Suitcase diplomacy takes the international methodology one step further. In addition to examining the unique objectives and contributions of governments other than the United States and the Soviet Union, and placing travel writers, airline executives, and tourists at the center of the historical narrative, suitcase diplomacy locates themes and international trends that do not immediately relate to Cold War rivalries. Mass tourism, escapism, engagement, consumerism, economic growth, and cultural exchange – all of which developed in the decades following World War II – helped to shape the international landscape and thus deserve the attention of diplomatic historians.

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<sup>10</sup> Michael Hunt, “The Long Crisis in Diplomatic History: Coming to Closure,” *Diplomatic History* 16 (Winter 1992), 115-140.

Third, suitcase diplomacy redesigns the geography of Sino-American histories. Too often, diplomatic historians have cast off Taiwan and Hong Kong as part of a “sideshow” or explored them only in the context of U.S.-PRC relations. An examination of tourism to the region, on the other hand, forces Taiwan and Hong Kong to the forefront. To tourists, Taiwan and Hong Kong appeared not as counterpoints to the PRC, but as attractive destinations in and of themselves that fulfilled Americans’ desires to experience a “Chinese” vacation. Washington officials, as well, regularly approached these destinations on their own terms. Tourism’s contributions to international cultural exchange, technical and foreign assistance, balance-of-payments problems, trade disputes, and economic diversification – though all tangentially related to the Cold War and U.S.-PRC geopolitics – demonstrate that the place of Taiwan and Hong Kong in the postwar world was not solely linked to the affairs of their larger, Communist neighbor.

More than just central actors in the history of Sino-American relations, Taiwan and Hong Kong also functioned as a “Free China” unit, of sorts, in regard to American travel. Whereas Taiwan and Hong Kong played dramatically different roles in terms of U.S. economic, political, and military policy, on the travel front the two were quite compatible. Tourist itineraries for the Far East rarely included only one destination; instead, American travelers usually made the rounds, visiting several Asian locales in the course of their trip. Hong Kong was an attraction in and of itself, but Taiwan travel boosters proudly played up their country as an inexpensive, and attractive, add-on. Tourists, moreover, associated Taiwan and Hong Kong as *the* “Chinese” destinations, a label that brought the two regions together in the minds of Americans. U.S. officials, as well, saw the two destinations as being linked. The structure of the International

Educational Exchange Program, in particular, which regularly sent participants back and forth from Taiwan to Hong Kong, saw those destinations as equally and uniquely integral to the task of destabilizing the PRC. By holding up both Taiwan and Hong Kong as legitimate outposts of Chinese culture, moreover, Washington officials reinforced their bonds to one another and their significant position in international relations.

## II

Writing on the state of diplomatic history as a scholarly field, Michael Hogan laments how, “to the extent that diplomatic history itself has spawned fresh ideas and ways of thinking, it has done so largely in work that deals with the twentieth century and especially the Cold War.” The fact that *America in the World* – Hogan’s collection of historiographical essays covering the period of 1941 to the present – is more than twice the length of his counterpart collection that covers the 150 years prior to World War II, underscores his point and is suggestive of the state of the field.<sup>11</sup> The focus of this dissertation, to some extent, adds yet another study to the cluttered historiography of the Cold War. At the same time, however, this work suggests that in addition to expanding the scope of diplomatic relations beyond the temporal confines of the familiar post-World War II landscape, historians need to rethink the nature of that landscape itself. With the Soviet-American conflict past, it is time to reconsider the character of the postwar period and offer fresh perspectives on the place of Cold War in historical studies.

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<sup>11</sup> Michael J. Hogan, “Introduction,” in *Paths to Power: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations to 1941*, ed. Michael J. Hogan, 1-7 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

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