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The One-and-a-Half Chinas’ Problem: Taiwan and the Origins of Peaceful Reunification, 1978–1988

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The One-and-a-Half Chinas’ Problem
Taiwan and the Origins of Peaceful Reunification, 1978–1988

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“We can do without them [Taiwan] for the time being, and let it [reunification] come after 100 years. Why such great haste?”

—Mao Zedong, November 1973

I. Introduction

Lying just six kilometers off the coast of Mainland China, the island of Kinmen is a historical anomaly—despite geographical proximity to the People’s Republic of China (PRC), it remained defended and governed by the Republic of China (ROC) following the 1949 retreat to Taiwan. The territory is littered with anti-landing spikes, subterranean tunnels, and machine gun nests guarding against an omnipresent threat of invasion from the mainland. The militarization of the island and the coastal panorama of Fujian Province, visible over just a thin stretch of water, evoke an apt comparison to the Korean DMZ. For decades, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) lobbed millions of artillery shells over Weitou Bay and pummeled Kinmen with bombardment, most notably during the First (1954–1955) and Second (1958) Taiwan Strait Crises. The bombardment was of such volume that craftsmen on the island collected the steel remains of artillery shells and began forging them into knives, kickstarting a now iconic industry on an otherwise resource-barren island.2

New Year’s Day, 1979, brought an unexpected jolt to the Kinmen status quo. The guns of the PLA fell silent. Artillery bombardment from the mainland, a near-daily constant for some

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1 Quoted in Zhengyuan Fu, “China’s Perception of the Taiwan Issue,” UCLA Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs 1, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 1996–1997), 326.
2 For an account of Kinmen’s history during this period, see Michael Szonyi, Cold War Island: Quemoy on the Front Line (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), especially Part IV—Demilitarization and postmilitarization.
twenty-five years, ceased altogether. The stillness heralded a new chapter in Cross-Strait relations, one which the residents of Kinmen were perhaps the first to experience first-hand. The cessation of bombardment occurred on the same day as two other important developments. First, the United States reverted formal diplomatic recognition of “China” to the PRC and terminated its official relationship with the ROC. Second, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) promulgated a “Message to Compatriots in Taiwan” that promoted *heping tongyi* (“peaceful reunification”) as the new Party policy towards the ROC.

The rather sudden shift to peaceful reunification had been preceded by thirty years of frozen conflict following the Kuomintang’s (KMT) retreat to Taiwan in 1949. During those years, both the ROC and the PRC sought to recover what they viewed as lost territory—Taiwan in the PRC’s case, the mainland in the ROC’s case. This state of frozen conflict persisted largely because President Harry Truman ordered the United States’ Seventh Fleet into the Taiwan Strait during the Korean War, thereby restraining both sides from reigniting the war. Simmering hostilities punctuated by occasional flare-ups defined the Cross-Strait status quo throughout the next two decades. The PRC instigated the First and Second Taiwan Strait Crises in the 1950s, while the ROC schemed to retake the mainland with the support of the United States. Despite these hostilities, both sides crucially shared the same fundamental position during this era: the

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3 Admittedly, the bombardment of Kinmen had morphed into a purely ceremonial routine following the peak of tensions during the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis. The PLA would shell Kinmen on alternate days of the week, usually with non-explosive propaganda shells, and the ROC forces stationed on Kinmen would return fire on the opposite days of the week. See Szonyi, *Cold War Island*, 76.

division of China into two regimes was but a temporary matter, to be inevitably resolved by an eventual military reconquest of lost territory.\(^5\)

It was during this time that the notion of a peaceful approach to the Taiwan first materialized. Shortly after the First Taiwan Strait Crisis in June 1956, PRC Premier Zhou Enlai introduced *heping jiefang* (“peaceful liberation”) as a new strategy conducive to resolving the Taiwan question. Guidance distributed throughout the Party at the time defined peaceful liberation as “a patiently persuasive, active and multiple influence approach,” whose “key point” was “winning [over] powerful and representative figures in Taiwan.”\(^6\) Deng was an initial proponent of the idea, but the push for peaceful liberation was ultimately supplanted by bouts of revolutionary radicalism—first by the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1958, then by the Cultural Revolution. It fell completely to the wayside until Deng was ensconced as paramount leader during the 3\(^{rd}\) Plenary Session of the CCP’s Central Committee December 1978, at which time the Party endorsed peaceful reunification as the official strategy towards Taiwan.\(^7\)

The shift in strategy accompanied a reprioritization of the Taiwan question. The promulgation of a new constitution in March 1978 included explicit mention of Taiwan as China’s “sacred territory” and of the “great cause of unifying our motherland.”\(^8\) As Deng boldly declared in a speech on January 16, 1980, the return of Taiwan to the motherland was one of the “three major tasks” of the decade, alongside economic modernization and opposition to

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\(^8\) Xianfa pmbl. (1978) (People’s Republic of China).
hegemony. The moment was to be seized and a new course in Cross-Strait relations charted. The next few years would prove pivotal in enacting Deng’s vision and realizing the goal of peaceful reunification.

Yet the bulk of the literature discussing the history of Cross-Strait relations neglects these critical years. Previous studies generally eschew sources from Taiwan and reduce the evolution of peaceful reunification to a chronological analysis of a small set of key speeches and proposals, yielding the impression that the decade from 1978 to 1988 was something of a torpid period devoid of meaningful developments. Many of these studies were published in the 1990s and tend to examine the issue through the lens of international relations theory and current events at the time of publication, rendering their analyses rather outdated and parochial in nature.

Contemporary studies on Cross-Strait relations predominantly focus on the post-1988 period, defined by bilateral diplomatic engagement and accelerating exchanges. A historical examination of Cross-Strait relations during the decade from 1978 to 1988, and specifically, of the origins of peaceful reunification, is sorely needed to enhance our understanding of the relationship’s long-run evolution and its current status quo.

My essay endeavors to partially undertake this historical examination and accordingly update our interpretation of Cross-Strait relations by exploring the origins of peaceful reunification, especially tracing its early evolution from 1978 to 1985. Primary sources from both sides of the Taiwan Strait—especially from the rich repository at the Academia Historica in Taipei—allow me to construct a nuanced and accurate narrative that uniquely incorporates perspectives from both the ROC and the PRC. I make occasional reference to previous studies on

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the matter, but ultimately, the narratives and conclusions presented herein stem almost exclusively from my reading of these primary sources.\textsuperscript{10}

The paradigm shifts in Cross-Strait relations that occurred beginning in 1978 beg several questions. What elements of the current relationship between Taiwan and the Mainland can we trace back to the genesis of peaceful reunification? Was peaceful reunification a genuine proposal on the part of the PRC, and why did the ROC respond as it did? Most importantly, why did the goal of peaceful reunification not succeed in the decade seemingly most conducive to its success? An understanding of the modern Cross-Strait status necessitates a reexamination of the origins of peaceful reunification in a decade defined not by an absence of exchanges, but rather by an evolution of political warfare and rhetoric that engendered a status quo mired in discrepancies—the so-called one-and-a-half Chinas’ problem.

I have organized my essay as follows. Following the introduction in Section I, Section II outlines the PRC’s nascent efforts and the ROC’s contentious “Three Noes” response regarding the initial push for peaceful reunification in 1979. Section III proceeds to explore the emergence of political warfare between the PRC and ROC to advance and resist peaceful reunification, with a particular focus on incipient economic exchanges between the two sides. Section IV traces the evolution of the PRC’s reunification proposals that accompanied this political warfare, the emergence of the “one country, two systems” formula, and the ROC’s responses to these developments. Finally, Section V concludes with ruminations on the PRC’s failure to achieve peaceful reunification, the Cross-Strait modus vivendi, and the enduring legacy of this history.

\textsuperscript{10} See the bibliographical essay for an in-depth discussion on the current state of the literature and my selection of primary sources.
II. Testing the Waters

Initial Proposals and Responses

The PRC’s push for peaceful reunification began in earnest with a blitz of activity in January 1979. Following on the heels of the United States’ switch in diplomatic recognition on New Year’s Day, the Standing Committee of the 5th National People’s Congress promulgated a “Message to Compatriots in Taiwan.” The message embodied the new conciliatory approach adopted by the PRC. Speaking as the “representative of the peoples of the motherland on the mainland,” the message pointed to the growing strength and stature of the motherland as a source of collective pride for all Chinese peoples. It urged Taiwan to establish san tong si liu (“three links and four flows”)—including postal service, transportation links, cultural exchanges, and economic ties—beneficial to both parties and conducive towards reunification. The message also publicly guaranteed that reunification would not entail revolutionary changes to Taiwan’s social, economic, and political systems. It instead framed the issue in an overtly nationalist tone: reunification was a “sacred mission bestowed upon our generation by history,” and no one ought to “go against the will of our people, nor contravene the tide of history.”

Deng Xiaoping followed this message up with his own statements. First, while meeting with a Congressional delegation from the United States on January 9, Deng reiterated assurances that Taiwan would preserve its social system and even maintain its own armed forces after reunification, reportedly stating, “the only thing they [Taiwan] have to do is drop the ROC

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flag.”\(^{12}\) Then, addressing Congress on January 30 while visiting the United States, Deng announced that the PRC “would no longer use the phrase ‘liberate Taiwan’; so long as Taiwan returns to the motherland, we will respect the reality and the existing systems there.”\(^{13}\) The following day, the People’s Daily published a lengthy piece featuring interviews with some of the more than 1,200 Taiwanese “compatriots” residing in Xiamen, a coastal city in Fujian directly across from Kinmen. Those interviewed unanimously expressed fervent support for the “Message to Compatriots in Taiwan.” While being interviewed in his home, one compatriot apparently stood up and stared wistfully out his window, gazing across the sea towards Taiwan, and dramatically proclaimed, “the motherland loves Taiwan, and the children of Taiwan long for their mother!”\(^{14}\)

At the opposite end of that wistful gaze in Taipei, Chiang Ching-kuo did not share the same rosy outlook. The PRC’s new initiative and the sudden shift in Taiwan’s international position was not to be viewed as a golden opportunity for reunification, but rather a grave threat to the very survival of the ROC. Writing to convey New Year’s wishes to his stepmother Soong Mei-ling (also known as Madame Chiang) on January 5, Ching-kuo relayed that he visited his father’s tomb in Cihu to pay respects and pray for guidance in navigating the wake of the relationship change between the United States and the Republic of China. He spoke speculatively and rather unrealistically of an imminent “counterreaction” in the United States that might reverse the derecognition. Chiang capped off his letter with a rather sober message of hope:

\(^{12}\) The National Archives of the UK (hereafter TNA): Foreign and Commonwealth Office (hereafter FCO) 21/1782, pp 97.

\(^{13}\) Quoted in Jun, *Ending the Chinese Civil War*, 32.

\(^{14}\) Huang Hanxing, “Gehai yaowang si qinren – fang juzhu Xiamen shi de Taiwan ji tongbao,” *Renmin ribao* (hereafter *RMRB*), February 1, 1979.
“What this son firmly believes is that our country’s prospects will inevitably recover and be bright once more.”

Chiang, however, was not one to leave the fate of his country to hope and instructed his government to deftly tack course in response to the threat of reunification. Addressing a meeting of the Executive Yuan on January 4, Premier Sun Yun-suan acknowledged that Taiwan faced an “extraordinary situation” following the severance of US-ROC relations: “Starting from New Year’s Day, the Communist bandits have launched a comprehensive United Front scheme against us in the vain hope of deceiving and confusing the eyes and ears of the world’s people, and I hope that their lies will be exposed whenever they arise by the relevant offices.” Stressing the urgency and time constraints of the situation, Sun directed various agencies to adjust their priorities accordingly. He specifically requested that the Ministry of National Defense, Ministry of the Interior, and Ministry of Economic Affairs immediately prioritize developing the defense industry, training civil defense groups, and boosting foreign trade, respectively. A small task force known as the gu guo xiao zu (“Solidify the Country Small Group”) was also formed on January 6, 1979, to coordinate mainland policy across government agencies. These tentative first steps signaled the emergence of a whole-of-government strategy to repel the PRC’s renewed overtures.

Premier Sun then addressed the 17 million people of Taiwan in a television broadcast on January 11, officially disclosing for the first time the developments of early January—namely,
the suspension of the shelling of Kinmen and the CCP’s New Year’s Day message. He publicly reiterated the sentiment conveyed earlier to the Executive Yuan: “Plainly, they seek to induce us to surrender. Peace talk is one of the Chinese Communist tactics for seizing Taiwan by stages and also one of their ultimate approaches for the communizing of all China.” Notably, Sun did not reject reunification in principle. He instead emphasized that “peace and unification have always been the common aspiration of the Chinese people,” but “peaceful reunification” itself was merely a disingenuous propaganda ploy.18

A palpable sense of vulnerability stemming from Taiwan’s sudden isolation from the United States permeated Chiang and the ROC’s initial response to peaceful reunification. The passage of the Taiwan Relations Act on March 29 and the preservation of some form of non-diplomatic relations with the United States provided a sense of respite to those who feared Taiwan’s fate as a sacrifice on the altar of détente. Perhaps buoyed by the success of the act’s passage, Chiang Ching-kuo addressed a meeting of the KMT Central Committee on April 4 regarding the PRC’s peaceful reunification initiative. In this address, the background work done by the “Solidify the Country” Small Group and Chiang’s thoughts on the matter coalesced into a succinct policy prescription: bu jiechu, bu tanpan, bu tuoxie ("no contact, no negotiation, no compromise").19 This san bu zhengce (“Three Noes policy”) offered an inviolable maxim that would define Taiwan’s multifaceted response to the peaceful reunification initiative for the coming decade.

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19 Multiple sources, including official websites of both the ROC and PRC, confirm that Chiang first introduced the Three Noes policy at a meeting of the KMT Central Committee on April 4, 1979. However, I have been unable to source any actual text from this speech, perhaps due to the closed-door nature of the meeting and the sensitivity of the issue.
Disputes in International Organizations

The Three Noes policy, the Taiwan Relations Act, and the overall emergence of a cohesive response to the PRC’s overtures helped stabilize the ROC’s state of affairs. In an interview with *TIME* magazine on May 28, Chiang projected a sentiment of optimism and affirmed that the situation had drastically improved since January. However, stability did not connote victory, and Taiwan’s isolation on the world stage only accelerated throughout 1979 as the PRC capitalized on the US switch in diplomatic recognition to claim status as the representative of “China” in international organizations.

The main dispute that emerged regarding ROC membership in international organizations centered around the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Taiwan’s participation in the upcoming 1980 Olympic Games. Song Zhong, the Secretary-General of the Chinese Olympic Committee, raised the matter at an IOC meeting in Switzerland on March 10. Song invoked the One China principle as the basis for why the ROC could not maintain their own Olympic committee, stating that the issue was an “internal affair” but offering assurances that Taiwanese athletes could still participate in Olympic competitions under the Chinese Olympic Committee.

An initial IOC resolution adopted on April 7 offered recognition to the Chinese Olympic Committee in both Beijing and Taipei. This proposal was summarily rejected by the PRC, as it put the two committees on “parallel footing” and entailed “a creation of ‘two Chinas’ in the IOC.” Negotiations continued until an IOC executive committee meeting in Nagoya on October 25 formulated a resolution that would recognize a separate Chinese Taipei Olympic

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22 TNA: FCO 21/1782, pp 42, 44.
Committee, which would not be permitted to utilize the ROC flag or anthem. The PRC immediately expressed support for the resolution and its “recognition of the Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee as a local organization of China, and its reflection of the fact that there is only one China in the world.”²³ The so-called Nagoya Resolution was then formally adopted by the IOC on November 27.

Numerous other disputes regarding the ROC’s representative status proliferated among more minor international organizations. The PRC left no stone unturned in its quest to recover international recognition and pressed for the ROC’s removal from the International Congress on Archives, the Permanent International Association of Navigation Congresses (PIANC), the International Seed Testing Association, the World Petroleum Congress, and the International Biochemistry Union. Though nowhere near as sensitive or well-publicized as the IOC issue, these minor incidents effectively normalized the dispute resolution process by which a separate, non-national body effectively representing the ROC would be recognized in Taipei. For example, in the case of the World Petroleum Congress and PIANC, the PRC accepted participation of delegates from Taiwan as individuals rather than as representatives from a national committee, while separate recognition for a delegation from the chemical society “located in Taipei” settled the matter at several international science organizations.²⁴

The resolution of these initial international disputes hinted at the emergence of a central contradiction: To what extent would the PRC compromise on the One China policy for the sake of promoting reconciliation and peaceful reunification? The PRC likely calculated that encounters with delegations from Taiwan at the international meetings might offer opportunities

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²⁴ TNA: FCO 21/1785, pp 11, 14.
for realizing the “three links” and promoting peaceful reunification, but evidently the problems posed by this contradiction quickly spilled over into the realm of state-to-state diplomacy. The Japanese Prime Minister Ōhira Masayoshi discussed the issue of relations with Taiwan in a meeting with Premier Hua Guofeng on December 6, 1979. While the PRC would not allow for an active development of relations between Japan and Taiwan, it did concede that a certain element of ziran zeng (“natural growth”) was inevitable due to trade and people exchanges. Reporting back to the Japanese Foreign Minister, the Japanese ambassador relayed Deng Xiaoping’s remarks on the matter at the meeting:

There is no change on Taiwan policy. Our goal is Taiwan's return to the motherland, but we are fully aware of reality in order to achieve this goal. . . . It is fine if various countries continue their investments in Taiwan as they are. There is only one condition: Taiwan is a part of China, a local government. There is no problem in Japan having working relations with Taiwan on a non-governmental level, provided that relations between Japan and Taiwan are not inter-governmental relations. . . . Our hope, rather, is that many Japanese visit Taiwan. We would like to have you cooperate in our nation's reunification. In this aspect, I think that we could have the cooperation of Japan and that of the United States as well.”

In a sense, then, the PRC threw Taiwan a lifeline by not pushing for their complete isolation on the world stage. Deng gambled that the reconciliatory approach would engender encounters and exchanges that might gradually draw Taiwan back into the fold and facilitate reunification. The reconciliatory approach also shifted the narrative in the PRC’s favor and made

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25 WCDA, "Cable No. 2630, Ambassador Yoshida to the Foreign Minister, 'Prime Minister's Visit to China (Ohira – Deng Meeting),’,” December 6, 1979.
it seem that they were the reasonable party, unlike the obstinate ROC and their rejection of any talks or exchanges. Yet by offering a sense of normalcy to Taiwan’s international status, Deng also risked irreparably compromising the One China policy. Much work still needed to be done to resolve such discrepancies, accomplish peaceful reunification within the decade, and avoid any entrenchment of a one-and-a-half Chinas’ situation. Thus, beyond merely propagating the new stance, the PRC required active measures to circumvent the Three Noes policy and directly entice Taiwan into some form of bilateral engagement. An ensemble of institutions and initiatives thereby emerged on both sides of the Taiwan Strait as adversaries engaged in an intense bout of political warfare.

III. United Front and Strategic Counterrevolution

Institutions of the United Front and Counterrevolution

Throughout 1979 and 1980, the PRC codified its peaceful reunification initiative into a formal apparatus. The most important development was the expansion of United Front work. The United Front had its historical origins in two periods of cooperation between the KMT and CCP, but under Mao it morphed into a political strategy that leveraged various organizations and individuals to enhance the Party’s soft power and support Party aims. After a nationwide work conference and internal deliberation, the Central Committee of the CCP circulated final approval of updated guidelines and tasks for United Front work in the “new historical era” on October 14, 1979. The new guidelines emphasized the shift of United Front work from the Mao-era

26 The First United Front between the CCP and KMT was formed in 1924 to combat warlordism and initiated the Northern Expedition to reunite China in 1926. The Second United Front was formed in 1936 following the Xi’an Incident as an alliance between erstwhile enemies to repel the Japanese invasion.
objectives of “putting an end to the national bourgeoisie and reforming the people of this class” to “the dual tasks” of “realizing the Four Modernizations” and “reunification of the motherland”:

We should fully mobilize the enthusiasms of people from all walks of life who have direct or indirect relations with Taiwan and do a good job in our work of propagandizing, educating, and uniting people from all walks of life in Taiwan, so as to strive for an early return of Taiwan to the motherland and accomplish the great cause of reunification. Those non-Party members with social relations in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, and abroad are generally of the middle- and upper-class with significant local political influence, many of whom are engaged in business and possess considerable financial resources or advanced technology. . . . The hearts and minds of these people face the motherland with an urgent desire to contribute to the Four Modernizations. How to make use of these social relations and introduce advanced technology, equipment, and capital in service of the Four Modernizations is a new topic and field currently facing United Front work.27

To coordinate Party work vis a vis Taiwan, Deng Xiaoping also established the Taiwan Affairs Leading Small Group (TALSG). The TALSG primarily consisted of senior Party leaders from central organs leading work on Taiwan, including the United Front Work Department, the International Liaison Department, and the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation. Though not a bureaucratic organization in and of itself, the TALSG served a critical function as a policy deliberation and decision-making body. Deng Yingchao, the widow of former Premier

27 The Maoist Legacy (hereafter TML), “Zhonggong zhongyang pizhuan quanguo tongzhan gongzuo huiyi wenjian ‘Xin de lishi shiqi tongyi zhanxian de fangzhen renwu’ de tongzhi,” October 14, 1979. The Four Modernizations were four areas of China’s economy targeted for development and modernization: agriculture, industry, science and technology, and defense. They were first announced by Premier Zhou Enlai and later adopted by Deng Xiaoping as a core component of his reforms.
Zhou Enlai, took full charge of the TALSG and quickly became one of the most prominent Party officials working on the peaceful reunification initiative, alongside TALSG deputy head Liao Chengzhi, Marshal Ye Jianying, CCP General Secretary Hu Yaobang, and United Front Work Department head Ulanhu.  

The Party’s United Front work regarding Taiwan comprised a whole-of-government effort that competed in many arenas—such as trade and commerce, overseas Chinese affairs, international organizations, academia, and cultural policy—in pursuit of just about anything that would surmount Taiwan’s Three Noes policy and facilitate reunification. It operated not just horizontally across high-level Party organs and agencies, but also vertically across administrative divisions. The Central Committee instructed Party committees of all provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions (except Tibet) to establish working groups on Taiwan consisting of cadres involved in propaganda, United Front work, overseas Chinese affairs, and local military command. A dedicated staff and special funds were allocated to aid the operation of these working groups. Beyond coordinating efforts, the purpose of these groups was to educate both Party and populace on Taiwan policy, disseminate propaganda, develop links with compatriots in Taiwan, and to receive and resettle those who choose to visit their relatives or return to the mainland.  

Against this comprehensive array of actors and institutions pushing the peaceful reunification initiative, the ROC mustered its own version of a United Front to devise and

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29 TML, “Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu sheng, shi, zizhi qu dui Tai gongzuo renwu he zuzhi jigou wenti de tongzhi,” November 18, 1980.
implement countermeasures. Though the “Solidify the Country” Small Group had taken an early lead on coordinating mainland policy, it became readily apparent that more resources were required to comprehensively counter the CCP’s evolving initiative. In early 1980, Chiang Ching-kuo tapped Wang Sheng, an army general in charge of the General Political Warfare Department, to head a new dedicated office tasked with diagnosing and countering United Front initiatives. This group was dubbed the *Liu Shao Kang* office. Like the TALSG, it served as a high-level coordination and advisory body with no formal command authority, formed by personnel from other offices and included key individuals like KMT Secretary-General Chiang Yen-shih and Premier Sun Yun-suan. The *Liu Shao Kang* office constituted the core of what Thomas A. Marks dubs the ROC’s “strategic counterrevolution,” tasked with solving one existential question: “How, in other words, to make the pieces fit together better so as to turn around a strategic situation which showed signs of becoming another Civil War-like rout?”

**Overseas Chinese, KMT personnel, and the United Front**

The first battleground of political warfare evinced in United Front operations meant to propagate peaceful reunification abroad. In her capacity as chairwoman of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), Deng Yingchao placed great emphasis on outreach to overseas Chinese communities to garner their support. A memo drafted by the “Solidify the Country” Small Group in early 1979 noted with particular consternation speeches made by the PRC’s new ambassador to the United States promoting peaceful reunification to audiences of

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31 Ibid., 263.
Chinese-Americans in Boston and New York; the establishment of a “European Association for the Promotion of Peaceful Reunification” in West Germany; worryingly friendly encounters with communist “bandits” at a business exhibition in Paris; and a dinner attended by ROC passport holders at the PRC ambassador’s residence in Cyprus. Instructions distributed to ROC personnel posted abroad abided by the spirit of Premier Sun’s proclamations and the Three Noes policy: “If the bandits extend an invitation, promptly and forcefully reject them; if the bandits visit, refuse to receive them. . . . Do not approach bandit pseudo-journalists, do not participate in engagements or interviews if invited by bandit pseudo-personnel.”

The new conciliatory line and friendly outreach to overseas Chinese was part of a more expansive policy reform targeting ROC personnel and their families. Instructions from the United Front Work Department issued in January 1979 revised the Party line on former KMT personnel and their families who remained on the mainland after the Civil War’s conclusion in 1949. Previously, such people faced harsh discrimination and were labelled as counterrevolutionaries, especially during the Cultural Revolution. The new instructions acknowledged the errors committed by the Party and ordered immediate vindication of cases, removal of labels, restitution of confiscated property and jobs, and restoration of citizenship rights. The Party formulated this policy as part of the post-Cultural Revolution boluan fanzheng (“bring order out of chaos”) reforms, but clearly kept in mind the optics vis a vis Taiwan and peaceful reunification:

Due to problems in our work, the Party’s policy of “letting bygones be bygones” towards personnel who revolted and surrendered [i.e., KMT personnel] has yet to be truly carried out in

34 Ibid., pp 6, 35.
some areas and departments. Especially during the period when Lin Biao and the Gang of Four ran rampant, the Party’s policy suffered severe damage, and many unjust, fabricated, and misjudged legal cases were created by accusing personnel who revolted and surrendered of *jia qiyi, zhen qianfu* [“false uprising, true concealment”]. Some were beaten to death and tortured to the point of being crippled. . . . These problems had grave consequences, damaged the credibility of the Party, were not conducive to stability and unity, and caused misgivings about the Party’s policies among KMT political and military personnel in Taiwan and overseas.  

A concerted propaganda effort accompanied the shift in the Party line. The *People’s Daily* published several “returning home” articles beginning in 1981 that profiled individuals who chose to resettle in the PRC from Taiwan and overseas. Featured individuals included Xiao Xueliang, the former deputy director of the General Political Warfare Department; former KMT Lieutenant General Geng Youlin (later a member of the CPPCC); and a prominent professor named Ma Bi. These and similar articles emphasized the reintegration of former KMT personnel into Chinese society and their contributions to realizing the Four Modernizations. It was, in effect, a way of circumventing the ROC’s truculent response to peaceful reunification by extolling the new conciliatory line and patriotically appealing to “compatriots” in Taiwan.

Even Chiang Ching-kuo was portrayed favorably as part of the conciliatory push. Writing in 1980, Frank S.T. Hsiao and Lawrence R. Sullivan observed that Party media now depicted Chiang as a “potential contributor” to KMT and CCP cooperation, airing positive speeches by “old classmates” of Chiang’s and no longer accusing him of committing “atrocities” against the

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people of Taiwan. Other members of the KMT elite were similarly targeted by positive messaging to promote reconciliation. These KMT elders, perceived as sympathetic “mainlanders” by the CCP, were regarded as a critical lobby that would repress Taiwan independence sentiments and pressure Chiang to initiate party-to-party negotiations. As Hsiao and Sullivan note, “the KMT’s old guard . . . who are aging and perhaps ready to seek a quid pro quo with the PRC after the passing of Chiang Kai-shek and in the face of their own death, have a compelling reason for seeking minimum contact with the mainland—namely, return to their ‘native places’ [for burial].”

The Economic United Front

The revised policy and messaging towards KMT personnel constituted only a small part of the PRC’s United Front activities aimed at advancing peaceful reunification. Far more critical to these efforts was an emerging economic united front that sought to circumvent the Three Noes policy by wooing Taiwanese businessmen and encouraging cross-Strait commerce. In part, Deng courted these businessmen to harness their capital in pursuit of the Four Modernizations. Deng also shrewdly recognized that economic interdependence between Taiwan and the mainland would attenuate persistent political disputes and gradually integrate Taiwan within the One China framework.

The main thrust of the PRC’s economic united front aimed to implement economic links by encouraging trade between Taiwan and the mainland. New regulations issued by the PRC’s

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38 Ibid., 799–800.
39 Huang and Li, Inseparable Separation, 108.
Ministry of Trade on May 8, 1979, permitted imports of the best products from Taiwan to the mainland for display and sale—so long as the outer packaging was stripped of any ROC flags and labels—and encouraged its overseas trading companies to resell Taiwanese products at below-market prices. New customs regulations treated Taiwan as a domestic province and removed import and export duties on trade merchandise. The government also instructed officials to prioritize the purchase of products such as electric fans, bicycles, cloth, and black and white TVs from Taiwan over other countries, which could then be sold at marketplaces across China as evidence of trade ties with the ROC. These new incentives induced an astronomical explosion of trade, which grew at an estimated rate of 41,393 percent in 1979, 1,037 percent in 1980, and 61 percent in 1981 from a pre-1979 base close to zero.

To facilitate incipient economic exchanges, the PRC exploited Hong Kong as a locus of indirect trade and a re-exporting hub between Taiwan and the mainland. Trade in 1980 amounted to an estimated $330 million worth of merchandise, about 95% of which flowed through Hong Kong. Taiwan’s exports dominated this volume and consisted of higher-value goods such as textile yarn, cotton, electrical machinery, and television sets, while the PRC tended to export agricultural commodities and specialty goods in return. Officials in Taiwan noted a new dedicated department established by the PRC in Hong Kong to manage direct trade and indirect re-exports (especially through overseas Chinese businessmen), as well as new regulations allowing the Hong Kong branch of the Bank of China to conduct business with Taiwanese banks through foreign intermediaries. For their part, the British government in Hong Kong

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43 TNA: FCO 21/1782, pp 6–7.
acknowledged that the PRC’s efforts in Hong Kong constituted a “united front” but concluded that “China’s purchases reflect genuine needs in the PRC economy and therefore are not guided by political concerns alone. The existence of this transshipment trade (and at rather significant levels) through Hong Kong is indicative of the desire of both China and Taiwan to make use of the bridge the colony affords to make tentative contacts.”

The PRC also instigated a so-called “maritime” united front that targeted Taiwanese fishermen, who were known to facilitate indirect trade by conducting clandestine commerce at sea. United Front guidelines specifically stipulated that “coastal provinces and municipalities should classify work on Taiwan fishermen as an important task, with the navy and relevant military districts coordinating accordingly.” Several fishermen “reception stations” providing relief, resupply, and repair services to Taiwanese fishing vessels were subsequently established along the coast of Zhejiang and Fujian. The propaganda victory from this relatively small effort was immense. Editorials in the People’s Daily waxed patriotic about encounters with Taiwanese fishermen. One article dramatically recounted the rescue of some 20 mainland fishermen by their Taiwanese kin in 1980, while another article told of a group of rescued Taiwanese fishermen who apparently visited historical sites and enjoyed Chaozhou opera in Shantou before sailing back to Taiwan “laden with the friendship of the people of the mainland. . . . Just before parting, their eyes brimmed with tears, and tightly holding the hands of their close relatives on the mainland, they again and again expressed their thanks.”

45 TNA: FCO 21/1782, pp 11.
Taiwan’s Response to the Economic United Front

Such optimism about incipient trade and other exchanges was not reflected in Taiwan’s own government assessments. The ROC’s official position was that reports of increased trade contacts with the mainland were unequivocally false: “We have banned all producers and trading businesses from conducting trade with the communist bandits. To achieve subversive United Front conspiracies against us [the ROC], the communist bandits have not hesitated to employ all kinds of despicable techniques and distorted propaganda, which is one of the tricks used by the communists to deceive the world. Their plot to develop ‘postal service, transportation links, and commercial relations’ [i.e., the three links] against us will never be successful.”

Taiwan’s analysis of the maritime united front reflected the government’s basic logic in adopting a no-compromise position towards the economic united front and all PRC initiatives, even when such initiatives were seemingly benign and reasonable:

[The communists] temporarily withdrew their sinister and militaristic appearance, and now deliberately pretend that it was willing to solve the so-called "Taiwan question" with a "peaceful" and "rational" attitude. They have deliberately manufactured the façade that the situation in the Taiwan Strait is getting warmer by the day, so as to blur the boundaries between the bandits and us, to loosen the vigilance of our soldiers and civilians and their will to fight. Furthermore, they pander to the common tendencies of public opinion in the U.S. and the free world, thereby manufacturing international public opinion and political pressure in order to achieve their dual objectives of enticement and peace.

Unofficially, however, Taiwan’s stringent policy towards the PRC was not entirely watertight. The *New York Times* reported in August 1980 that the ROC Board of Trade surreptitiously cleared Taiwanese traders to engage in indirect trade with the PRC, so long as business was not publicized or conducted overtly.\(^{51}\) Restrictions on traditional Chinese medicine imported from the PRC were also loosened around August 1980, with the Customs Administration of the ROC acknowledging the existence of such imports and choosing to apply the Hong Kong reciprocal tariff rate or the general rate for goods of “unknown origin.”\(^{52}\) Hong Kong businessmen were told by Taiwan authorities that changing package labels to read “Made in Hong Kong” instead of “Made in the People’s Republic of China” (thereby disguising merchandise origin) was no longer necessary to conduct indirect trade. And, when municipal authorities in Beijing debated the riskiness of relying on Taiwan as a supplier of tiles for a building restoration, Taiwan authorities reassured them through contacts in Hong Kong that tile shipments would remain unhampered.\(^{53}\)

Part of this leakiness in Taiwan’s policy can be attributed to the enterprising nature of Taiwanese businessmen capitalizing on the PRC’s new incentives. The ROC recognized that the PRC’s economic united front “takes advantage of the profit-seeking mentality of the ordinary businessmen” to induce trade and foster links.\(^{54}\) The British surmised that among Taiwanese businessmen setting up shop in Hong Kong, the consensus was to “continue to distrust China’s intentions towards Taiwan but not to let that interfere with turning a profit on trade when the

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\(^{51}\) James P. Sterba, “Taiwan-China Trade Growing,” *New York Times*, August 7, 1980. The article also reports that in the “meticulously detailed” trade ledgers of the ROC government, trade with the PRC was labeled under the category “other”—which some economists jokingly called the “People’s Republic of Other.”

\(^{52}\) GSGA, 052-020202-0014, “Xianggang jinkou zhi dalu zhongyao cai ying shiyong zhi shuiwenti.”

\(^{53}\) TNA: FCO 21/1782, pp 9.

opportunity presents itself.” Yet an ideological impetus to tacitly permit incipient trade also existed. The ROC perceived the PRC’s sudden shift to a reform-oriented regime as an ideological weakness and concluded that an exacerbation of pro-reform sentiments might gradually lead the PRC to abandon communism entirely.

To this end, Taiwan’s principles in countering the economic united front included stipulations to “spread the economic ideology of the Three Principles of the People and of the free market, so as to create ideological confusion and destabilize the CCP’s politics and economy at its roots”; and “through Taiwan’s importing of mainland commodities, through academic research, through psychological warfare and propaganda, etc., allowing the people of the mainland to become familiar with Taiwan’s economy, endorse Taiwan’s system, pursue the Three Principles of the People, and abandon communism.” The British put the matter more succinctly: “Although it may appear that the PRC has more to gain politically from this trade, a case may be made that Taiwan also gains politically by advertising the advanced level of its manufactures on the mainland. Chinese end-users may well be asking each other why thirty years of Communist rule has not enabled them to produce enough television sets whereas Taiwan has plenty to export.”

Many “United Fronts”

The PRC’s economic united front simultaneously fulfilled the “dual tasks” by harnessing Taiwan’s capital in service of the Four Modernizations, and thereby also promoting reconciliation and integration conducive to peaceful reunification. The economic united front

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55 TNA: FCO 21/1782, pp 10.
57 TNA: FCO 21/1782, pp 9.
perhaps best encapsulates the interconnectedness inherent to the PRC’s approach on United Front work. However, it was by no means the only initiative launched against the ROC at this time, and in some sense, it is pointless to delineate between separate “united fronts” due to the United Front’s all-encompassing nature. Trade, culture, history, military, religion, and a host of other policy areas all intertwined in service of peaceful reunification, which in turn intertwined with Deng’s goal of realizing the Four Modernizations.

Taiwan perceived this united front threat on all sides. Beyond merely identifying and analyzing these initiatives, the ROC also undertook proactive measures as part of the “strategic counterrevolution” that essentially constituted its own version of a united front. Some of these countermeasures were pragmatic. For example, in response to the PRC’s effort to “attack our foreign trade and adversely affect our economic, industrial, and agricultural growth,” the ROC instructed various departments to “carry out work to compete against the bandits’ goods” in the United States and set up more supply centers there; monitor the “communist bandits’ conspiracies” in Japan; and expand the operations of newly established trading companies in Europe and the Middle East.58 The Liu Shao Kang Office of the ROC also deftly handled united front issues ranging from managing public relations regarding Taiwan’s bid to host the fifth World Women’s Softball Championship in 1982; to resolving an internal debate over whether to allow Taiwan citizens to visit the mainland.59

Other countermeasures were more ideological and somewhat far-fetched in their goals. The Liu Shao Kang Office initiated several codename projects with various anti-PRC objectives, including Liming, which responded to an increase in PRC students studying abroad by

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59 Marks, Counterrevolution in China, 264–266.
strengthening work with overseas Chinese student organizations and mainland youth; Pingjing, which aimed to control news publicity about Vietnamese refugees being shipped to Taiwan by the PRC; Shangbing, which sought to disrupt foreign military cooperation with the PRC; and Guanghua, which aspired to use psychological warfare to persuade the mainland to abandon communism entirely. The ROC viewed such proactive measures—going beyond merely responding the United Front—as critical to its survival on Taiwan. During these precarious times, the ROC’s “strategic counterrevolution” could brook no compromise in its fight with the PRC’s United Front.

Yet even as the political warfare between United Front and “strategic counterrevolution” continued to play out, the PRC also developed new proposals for peaceful reunification. Deng Xiaoping’s “just drop the flag” approach, though generous, seemed implausible in its sudden emergence and lack of specificity, and the CCP was left seeking some form of breakthrough with the ROC. What followed was an evolution of peaceful reunification that culminated with the proposal for reunification under the one country, two systems framework. Simultaneously, the ROC continued to face the fallout from a deteriorating international position and mounting pressure from the PRC. Thus, the initial positions staked out by the PRC and ROC in 1979 inevitably shifted as the question of reunification festered and political warfare between the two sides intensified.

IV. Visions for Reunification

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By 1981, Taiwan’s Three Noes policy felt increasingly untenable due to its sheer recalcitrance in the face of an onslaught of united front “conspiracies.” Additionally, the international community’s perception of the peaceful reunification initiative soured against Taiwan. The ROC seemed like the unreasonable party in its categorical rejection of PRC proposals for talks. After internal reassessment of mainland policy conducted under the so-called “Third Research Group” (headed by former ROC President Yen Chia-kan), Taiwan altered its position by positing its own conditions for reunification and challenging the PRC’s monopolization of proposals. The new position was publicly introduced at the KMT’s 12th National Congress, convened from March 29 to April 4, which formally relinquished the ROC’s long-stated goal of reconquering the mainland and instead vowed to reunify China under Sun Yat-sen’s Sanmin zhuyi (“Three Principles of the People”). Chiang Ching-kuo’s closing speech to the meeting encapsulated the spirit underlying the revised approach:

This Party [the KMT] will go further in combining the wisdom, willpower, and strength of our compatriots at home and abroad to destroy the Communist Party’s bandit pseudo-regime, carry out the reunification of China by the Three Principles of the People, and fundamentally resolve the China question. . . . Gentlemen, comrades! The ancients have a saying: “The gentleman has far-sightedness, and the scholar of lofty ambitions makes painstaking efforts.” The world situation of today is in a state of rapid upheaval, and the impact of this upheaval on us will only become more severe by the day, especially considering how the turmoil on the mainland has already

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61 See GSGA, 006-010901-00019-004, “Xieren zongtong hou: Sanmin zhuyi tongyi Zhongguo an (yi).”
62 Huang and Li, Inseparable Separation, 113. The Three Principles of the People are minzu (“nationalism”), minguan (“rights of the people,” often translated as “democracy”), and minsheng (“the people’s livelihood,” sometimes translated as “socialism”).
developed to the point where we must expedite the great cause of accomplishing national reunification. Facing this moment of such unforeseen events, bandit turmoil, national difficulty, and increasing Party responsibility, we must all deepen our self-expectations as gentlemen who bear heavy responsibility and men of ambition undertaking the great revolutionary cause.63

With Taiwan now professing an alternative vision for the reunification of China, the PRC developed a more explicit proposal for reunification that maintained the spirit of the “Message to Compatriots in Taiwan” and Deng’s “just drop the flag” approach while clarifying specific policies. Marshal Ye Jianying, in his capacity as Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress, unveiled the framework on September 30, 1981, which consisted of “Nine Principles” that notably placed the CCP and KMT on equal footing and underscored the linkage between Taiwan policy and economic modernization:

1) Proposing “bilateral negotiations on equal footing” between the CCP and KMT to implement the Third United Front and accomplish reunification.

2) Implementing the “three links and four flows” previously outlined in the “Message to Compatriots in Taiwan.”

3) Guaranteeing that Taiwan would become a “special administrative region” with a high degree of autonomy and its own military after reunification.

4) Guaranteeing that Taiwan’s current social and economic systems—including private property rights, business ownership, and foreign investment relations—would remain untouched.

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5) Permitting Taiwan authorities to assume leadership positions in the national political institutions of the PRC.

6) Stipulating that the central government would provide subsidies at its discretion if the local government in Taiwan encountered financial difficulties.

7) Guaranteeing proper arrangements and non-discrimination for those in Taiwan who choose to resettle on the mainland.

8) Welcoming investment from Taiwanese businessmen and guaranteeing their rights and profits.

9) Welcoming suggestions from people and organizations in Taiwan to discuss reunification and other national affairs.⁶⁴

Ye’s Nine Principles had its roots in a previous proposal made confidentially to British intermediaries in Hong Kong on September 16, 1979. While visiting Hong Kong as part of a sports delegation, Vice Premier Wang Zhen referred to four principles regarding peaceful reunification: Taiwan’s social and economic system would be preserved, foreign investment in the province would be protected, and Taiwan could even retain its own armed forces, but Taiwan could not retain any attributes indicating separate nationhood. This was, in effect, a truncated version of Ye’s proposal and a progenitor of the one country, two systems framework. As a British diplomat noted in a cable to the embassy in Beijing, though each of these principles had previously been enunciated separately, “this is the first time, to our knowledge, that they have been conceived as a package.”⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Ye Jianying, “Guanyu Taiwan huigui zuguo shixian heping tongyi de fangzhen zhengce,” XSQTYZX, 143–145. See also Jun, Ending the Chinese Civil War, 32–33.
⁶⁵ TNA: FCO 21/1782, pp 25.
Ten days after Ye Jianying’s speech on October 9, 1981, the CCP hosted a grand commemoration for the 70th anniversary of the Xinhai Revolution, which had been instigated in 1911 by Sun Yat-sen and the KMT. Delivering remarks at the event, CCP General Secretary Hu Yaobang invoked Sun’s legacy and shared Chinese traditions as an appeal to the KMT old guard:

Historically, the KMT and CCP have already cooperated twice. These two cooperations achieved the great causes of the Northern Expedition and anti-Japanese resistance and powerfully advanced our people’s progress, so why can we not now implement a “Third United Front” [i.e., third KMT-CCP cooperation] for the purpose of building a united country? . . . . If we do not solve this difficult problem, and if we continue to allow each other’s strengths to cancel each other out in confrontation, how will we face up to Dr. Sun Yat-sen and the martyrs of the Xinhai Revolution, and face down to compatriots from all walks of life and the future generations on both sides of the Taiwan Strait? . . . . Here, I wish to tell the Taiwan authorities that not only has the mausoleum of Dr. Sun Yat-sen undergone repeated renovations, but also that the tombs in Fenghua [the Chiang’s ancestral hometown] have been restored, the Meilu villa in Lushan [Chiang Kai-shek’s former residence] has been kept in good repair, and the old homes and kin of other senior KMT officials have also been properly arranged. A tree may grow a thousand zhang high, but its leaves return to their roots. Does Mr. Chiang Ching-kuo not have feelings for his native place? Does he not wish to relocate Mr. Chiang Kai-shek’s coffin to their family cemetery in Fenghua?66

Hu capped off his speech with an explicit invitation for several prominent KMT figures—including Chiang Ching-kuo, Sun Yun-suan, Chiang Yen-shih, Madame Chiang, Chen Li-fu, and Chang Hsueh-liang—to visit their hometowns on the mainland. Hu had also previously extended

invitations to attend the commemoration to these same senior KMT figures. The invitations were left unheeded save for one guest named Shen Cheng, who accepted the invitation—with tacit permission from Chiang Ching-kuo—and went on to visit the Chiang family’s ancestral home on the mainland and discuss the possibility of peace talks with Deng Yingchao. Yet, unsurprisingly, Ching-kuo and Madame Chiang both viewed the renovation of their ancestral home and cemetery on the mainland as just another United Front conspiracy designed to weaken resolve.


The next major outreach to Taiwan occurred the following year on July 24, 1982, when Liao Chengzhi, a leading Party official on Taiwan, Hong Kong, and overseas Chinese work, published an open letter to Chiang Ching-kuo. Liao addressed the letter to “my brother Ching-kuo” and lamented their lack of contact for thirty-six years since they last met in Nanjing, when Chiang had been tasked with supervising Liao’s imprisonment. Liao utilized much of the same historical rhetoric previously employed by Hu—he recalled the history of KMT and CCP cooperation beginning under Sun Yat-sen, raised the possibility of a “Third United Front,” emphasized the internal nature of the Taiwan question, and lamented Ching-kuo’s unfulfilled filial duties in relocating Chiang Kai-shek’s coffin back to Fenghua.

The ROC labeled Liao’s letter as a plot “designed to advance the United Front and urge peace under the false pretenses of shared historical background and familial ties.” The

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67 Huang and Li, Inseparable Separation, 115–116. Huang and Li describe Shen Cheng as Chiang Ching-kuo’s “eyes and ears with respect to Beijing’s Taiwan policy,” though to the best of my knowledge, Shen’s role as something of a secret envoy did not yield any significant change in Cross-Strait relations.

68 GSGA, 005-010502-00006-040, “Minguo liu shi jiu nian Song Meiling yu Jiang Jingguo laiwang dianbao lu de yingyin.”

government took particular offense at Liao’s “belittling of the significant achievements made by the Three Principles of the People in the past thirty years”; as well as his jab against Chiang’s filial piety, which seemed ironic coming from Liao—a man who “betrayed his family and brought calamity upon the nation, therefore demonstrating his disgraceful and unfilial nature.”

Chiang and his government issued no official response to Liao’s letter, and the publication of the letter was not reported in official Taiwanese media. Instead, the ROC reaffirmed its Three Noes policy and its insistence on unification under the Three Principles of the People. Orders were also issued to redouble propaganda countermeasures by making use of overseas Chinese (especially in academic circles) to criticize Liao’s letter and promote the achievements of the Three Principles of the People.

Though the government made no official response, Madame Chiang took it upon herself to publish a reply to Liao Chengzhi’s letter. Madame Chiang reminded Liao of his father’s service to the KMT and his mother’s ability to speak eloquently on Sun’s Three Principles, stressing the viability of Sun’s doctrine to this day. But, she noted, the adherence to communist dogma on the mainland had led to countless atrocities under Mao—especially during the Cultural Revolution—and thus Liao’s proposal for a Third United Front was nothing but a daydream.

Madame Chiang later vented her frustrations with Liao’s letter in a letter to Chiang Ching-kuo, especially how Liao’s ridicule of the Three Principles of the People was completely at odds with Party media claiming that the Three Principles had already been implemented on the mainland.

71 Ibid.
Like Hu Yaobang’s speech at the Xinhai Revolution commemoration, Liao’s letter also served to emphasize the Party’s historical connections to Sun Yat-sen’s legacy and thereby contest Taiwan’s ideological claim to the Three Principles of the People. Along these lines, a series of editorials were published recounting the history of the first and second cooperations between the KMT and CCP, with a strong emphasis on the roles played by Sun Yat-sen and Liao Zhongkai (Liao Chengzhi’s father) in establishing the first cooperation; and the role played by Soong Ching-ling (the third wife of Sun Yat-sen, Madame Chiang’s sister, and a CCP official) in establishing the second.\footnote{74} However, it was precisely because of this history that Chiang and the KMT viewed the notion of a “Third United Front” with suspicion. Chiang articulated this perspective at a national development seminar in July 1982: “we must always remember that while talk may be a rational way to solve problems in the free world, to the Communists it is another form of war. . . . We have had the bitterest of experiences in this connection. Although there were many causes for the fall of the Chinese mainland, one of the main reasons was the mission of a few politicians and Communist fellow travelers that went to Peking to talk peace with Communists.”\footnote{75}

Further progress was made in providing a legal basis for enacting Ye’s Nine Principles at the fifth session of the 5th National People’s Congress in November and December 1982. This session promulgated a new constitution that contained the same preamble referring to Taiwan as “sacred territory” but now included Article 31, which permitted the state to establish “special


\footnote{75} Quoted in Ralph N. Clough, \textit{Reaching Across the Taiwan Strait: People-to-People Diplomacy} (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), 14.
administrative regions when necessary.”76 In his speech to the National People’s Congress discussing a draft of the constitution, leading Party official Peng Zhen made it abundantly clear that the inclusion of Article 31 was specifically targeted towards the realization of peaceful reunification and the eventual incorporation of Taiwan as a special administrative region in accordance with Ye’s Nine Principles.77 The constitution also removed provisions targeting “landlords, rich peasants, and reactionary” capitalists and restored the position of vice president of the PRC, which was speculated to be reserved for Chiang Ching-kuo in the event of reunification.78

Personal appeals to Chiang and the KMT old guard intensified in 1983. Deng forecast that the next generation of Taiwan’s leaders would be less inclined to reunification and expressed that “it is important to plan ahead and make up our mind to reunify the country sooner, when our generation is still alive.”79 To this end, Deng enlisted intermediaries to convey personal messages to Chiang that appealed to Chiang’s patriotism and impressed upon him the urgency of accomplishing reunification while the elder generation was still alive.80 Deng also posited his own “six conceptions” regarding peaceful reunification in a talk with Professor Winston L.Y. Yang of Seton Hall University on June 26. These conceptions only reiterated previous statements—Taiwan would have its own autonomous government as a special administrative region and maintain its own social systems and military, and reunification would be brought

77 Peng Zhen, “Guanyu guojia de tongyi he minzu de tuanjie,” XSQYTX, 259–262.
79 Quoted in Huang and Li, Inseparable Separation, 126.
80 Ibid.
about by talks between the two Parties on equal footing without foreign interference—but again with a new sense of urgency.\textsuperscript{81}

A talk given by prominent Party leader Chen Yun in December 1983 echoed Deng’s sentiment of urgency:

Although our two sides are quarreling, both of us insist that there is only China, and we oppose Taiwan’s independence. On this point, our two sides are in agreement. In the future, when our [the CCP’s] older generation is no longer with us, those who take over from us will still insist on this position and press on [pursuing reunification]. However, once their [the KMT’s] elders are no longer with us, it is difficult to say whether those who take over from them will adhere to this position—and if they do, whether they will adhere to it objectively.\textsuperscript{82}

The push for one country, two systems: 1984–1985

A final concerted push for peaceful reunification occurred in 1984 and 1985. Buoyed by the success of negotiations with the British for the handover of Hong Kong under one country, two systems, Deng believed he could use the same formula—which had evolved from Beijing’s proposals to Taiwan—to finally “break the deadlock” with the ROC.\textsuperscript{83} This framework, though essentially a consolidation of the past five years of proposals to the ROC, seemed more viable due to its proven success in the Hong Kong case. Editorials in Red Flag, the Party’s theory journal, emphasized that “the successful resolution of the Hong Kong problem indicates that the


\textsuperscript{82} Chen Yun, “Cong guojia minzu de daju chufa shixian zuguo tongyi,” XSQTYZX, 355–356.

Taiwan problem can definitely be solved on the basis of ‘one country, two systems’”; and that the formula provided a basic guarantee that “you will not engulf me, nor I you.” These editorials were accompanied by a propaganda effort lauding the “Hong Kong experience” as conducive towards peaceful reunification and featured positive comments from famous personalities, including some overseas Chinese. The Party also redoubled efforts in implementing Taiwan policy at the provincial and local levels, acknowledging that though significant progress had been made since 1981, much work remained to be done to address the injustices of the Cultural Revolution, fully integrate Taiwan “compatriots,” and thereby facilitate the realization of the Four Modernizations and peaceful reunification.

Yet Chiang and the KMT continued to categorically refuse the PRC’s proposals, using their own proposal for reunification under the Three Principles of People as pretext. This line was reiterated in open letters penned to Deng Yingchao in 1984 by both Ching-kuo and Madame Chiang. Indeed, the ROC’s mainland policy even reverted to a more aggressive stance reminiscent of the hostilities of the Mao era. In January and June 1984, the ROC Army on Kinmen recommenced shelling of the mainland, injuring and killing several fishermen and PLA soldiers. Another incident occurred in 1985, when several mainland fishermen whose boat had broken down too close to Kinmen were massacred by ROC soldiers.

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87 See GSGA, 020-091209-0002, “Deng Yingchao qi san nian yuandan heping tongzhan gongshi.”
88 Jun, Ending the Chinese Civil War, 71–72.
89 Shi Wenjie, “Feng yongyuan wufa jida de jia shu,” China Times, October 29, 2023. This incident, known as the Shiyu Massacre, has only recently been uncovered due to government investigations.
The one country, two systems proposal did nothing to break the deadlock, as Deng had hoped. An ROC government report analyzing the one country, two systems framework simply came to the same conclusion that had defined Taiwan’s response thus far:

The idea of “one country, two systems” proposed by the Deng faction absolutely arises from the united front against us and is just another application of a united front tactic. . . . It seems that little attention has been paid to the contradictions of “one country, two systems” in the [PRC] pseudo-constitution and the failure of the communist bandits to abide by any agreement or treaty. The people of Hong Kong were powerless to object to it. . . . After the Hong Kong model took shape, the communist bandits used it as pretext to intensify united front attacks against us. Of course, the Guizhou donkey [i.e., the PRC] has exhausted its tricks.90

V. Towards a Modus Vivendi

The remainder of the 1980s witnessed an acceleration towards more open and direct Cross-Strait relations as Taiwan’s Three Noes policy continued to spring leaks. The PRC’s economic united front engendered a surge in commercial exchanges that proved far too lucrative and inevitable for Taiwan to continue to ignore. Taiwan’s exports to the PRC grew at an average annual rate of 26.9 percent between 1980 and 1991, and the value of indirect imports from Taiwan breached $2 billion in 1988.91 The China Airlines Flight 334 incident in May 1986

sounded the death knell for the no contact policy. The pilot of the flight, Wang Xijue, hijacked the plane and grounded it in Guangzhou, forcing Taiwanese authorities to dispatch negotiators to the mainland to recover the plane and its passengers in a blatant violation of the Three Noes policy.92

A flurry of activity in 1987 and 1988 brought a sudden liberalization of relations. In 1987, the KMT lifted both the state of martial law (in place since 1949) and the travel ban to the mainland. Beginning with veterans, travel and people-to-people exchanges across the Taiwan Strait exploded.93 Chiang Ching-kuo’s death on January 13, 1988, brought an end to the heyday of the KMT old guard and ushered in Lee Teng-hui, a native of Taiwan, as KMT party leader and president of the ROC. Lee pushed hard for continued liberalization of Cross-Strait relations, and a host of semi-official institutions promoting rapprochement cropped up on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. Economic exchanges expanded beyond trade to also include investment. Taiwanese businessmen established factories and outposts on the mainland, and by 1991, Taiwan had surpassed the United States and Japan to become the second largest investor in the PRC after Hong Kong.94 In 1992, the first semi-official talks between the two sides finally occurred in Hong Kong, creating a diplomatic basis for continued exchanges and dialogue.

Yet by 1985 the essential contours of the Cross-Strait had already been defined. Despite the trend towards liberalization, Taiwan’s rejection of Deng’s formula for one country, two systems effectively rendered the peaceful reunification initiative dead in the water. Writing in 1986, C. L. Chiou observed that after the concerted propaganda campaign to propagate Deng’s

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92 See Huang and Li, Inseparable Separation, 131.
93 See Clough, Reaching Across the Taiwan Strait, 21–38 passim.
formula and woo Chiang to the negotiating table, “the Chinese Communist policy-making process, which has shown remarkable innovation and initiative in the past few years, has finally exhausted its options and reached a stage where new policies on Taiwan will not be forthcoming for a while.” Indeed, no meaningful alternative framework meant to realize peaceful reunification has since materialized from either side of the Taiwan Strait to this day. The liberalization of relations, explosion in bilateral exchanges, and fluctuations between rapprochement and tension that have occurred in the three decades since 1985 all belie a core reality: the PRC has yet to offer something that the ROC does not already enjoy in the status quo. Thus, beyond appeals to waning nationalism and shared culture, Taiwan had little incentive to engage in the peaceful reunification initiative from the get-go.

The history of Cross-Strait relations and the origins of peaceful reunification during this period imparts three broad lessons that enhance our understanding of the relationship. First, reunification was a very real possibility during the 1980s, not simply because the geopolitical conditions of this decade were conducive to reunification, but more importantly, because the PRC desired it, and the ROC feared it. The extent to which Deng and the CCP prioritized the Taiwan issue evinced in the manifold United Front initiatives and evolving proposals meant to accomplish reunification within the decade. The PRC viewed reunification as an inevitable consequence of history, and thus, peaceful reunification cannot be written off as mere disingenuous talk. Chiang and the KMT evidently treated these overtures as existential threats and took measures to rebut the PRC’s peaceful reunification initiative at every turn. Their insecurity betrays the seriousness of peaceful reunification. Scholars should resist the temptation to look back at this history with incredulity at the prospect of reunification.

95 Chiou, “Dilemmas in China’s Reunification Policy,” 470.
Second, inherent policy contradictions scuttled the ambitions of both sides. The PRC confronted a contradiction between peaceful reunification and the One China policy, and the reconciliatory approaches employed to facilitate peaceful reunification ultimately failed while compromising on the One China policy. In this sense, peaceful reunification was a strategic flop. The PRC shot itself in the foot and was perhaps better served by a more aggressive strategy that uncompromisingly preserved the One China policy. Meanwhile, Taiwan’s efforts to completely shut out the PRC’s peaceful reunification also faltered. The Three Noes policy sprung too many leaks to prove tenable in the long run. The sheer inflexibility of the policy failed against the often-reasonable appeals and enticements presented by the PRC’s United Front, not to mention that the ROC had its own incentives for engaging with the mainland in some capacity. Taiwan was progressively forced to abandon its recalcitrant stance, but by the time liberalization arrived in 1987 and 1988, the peaceful reunification initiative had effectively lost much of its impetus in the mires of repeated rejection and inherent contradiction. These two simultaneous policy failures thus engendered an odd middle-ground outcome between rapprochement and hostility that defines the one-and-a-half Chinas’ problem.

Third, the dynamic political warfare recounted in this essay demonstrates that one cannot write this period off as an aberrant historical blip between 1978 and 1988 that was devoid of exchanges or meaningful developments. Many of the issues and rhetoric that continue to characterize modern Cross-Strait relations first emerged in this decade. The dynamics of this period served as something of a crucible for what has since manifested in Cross-Strait relations, and therefore, scholars should look to this period for the historical origins of the contemporary Cross-Strait *modus vivendi*. 
Today the island of Kinmen feels lulled by decades of peaceful reunification, its frontline status camouflaged by a relatively sleepy, bucolic existence on the periphery of the ROC’s control. The defunct fortifications that litter the territory now serve as tourist attractions. One such attraction, the Hujingtou Battle Museum, allows visitors to peer through tower viewers and gaze at life unfolding around Xiamen. Scanning the coastline, these visitors can quickly spot a Hollywood-esque sign erected in simplified characters on the mainland hillside facing Kinmen: Yiguo liangzhi tongyi Zhongguo (“one country two systems unite China”). Mainlanders with their own pair of binoculars and a discerning eye can observe Taiwan’s response emblazoned in traditional characters on a large wall on Dadan Island, just offshore Kinmen: Sanmin zhuyi tongyi Zhongguo (“Three Principles of the People unite China”). The metaphor all but writes itself. The two sides continue to talk past one another, sticking to slogans that lost any meaningful intent long ago.
Acknowledgments

Writing this senior essay has been a labor of love. I would be remiss not to explicitly thank the people whose support has been most critical along the journey:

My parents, Curtis Miner and Tania Dominguez, for tolerating my intellectual interest in China and Taiwan, and for supporting me in every conceivable way throughout my entire academic career.

My advisor, Professor Odd Arne Westad, who first taught me in the fall semester of my sophomore year, and who has since become my greatest academic influence in college and incalculably guided my development as a historian and thinker. I will cherish the many hours spent in his office discussing China and life in general.

Mr. Michael Meng, the librarian for Chinese studies at Yale, who provided invaluable help in pointing me to sources for this thesis, as well as prior term papers.

The Council on East Asian Studies at Yale University, for graciously funding my travel to access the Academia Historica archives in Taiwan with their Senior Essay Research Grant.

The young lady (whose name I never learned) working at the Taipei Reading Room in the Academia Historica, who warmly welcomed me every day and assisted me in navigating the archive.

Andrew DeWeese, for being my thesis companion along this journey studying China, with whom I could always commiserate about deadlines and procrastination, and whose comments on a draft of this essay were of enormous help. I look forward to the next year we will spend in Beijing, you as a Schwarzman Scholar, I as a Yenching Scholar.
Mr. Youming Che, under whose tutelage my study of the Chinese language in high school blossomed into an intellectual passion that has gone on to define my time in college and shape my career aspirations. I will forever treasure your memory and honor your legacy.
**Abridged Chronology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 1, 1979</td>
<td>United States switches diplomatic recognition to the PRC and terminates official relations with the ROC. CCP promulgates the “Message to Compatriots in Taiwan.” PLA bombardment of Kinmen ceases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 6, 1979</td>
<td>ROC forms the “Solidify the Country” Small Group to coordinate mainland policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 11, 1979</td>
<td>Premier Sun Yun-suan addresses the people of Taiwan on the New Year’s Day developments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 29, 1979</td>
<td>The Taiwan Relations Act is passed in the United States Congress, preserving non-diplomatic relations with the ROC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 4, 1979</td>
<td>Chiang Ching-kuo outlines the Three Noes policy at a KMT Central Committee meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 8, 1979</td>
<td>PRC’s Ministry of Trade permits imports of products from Taiwan for display and sale on the Mainland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
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<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 14, 1979</td>
<td>Central Committee of the CCP issues final approval of updated guidelines and tasks for United Front work in the new historical era.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 27, 1979</td>
<td>IOC adopts the Nagoya Resolution, creating a separate Olympic committee for “Chinese Taipei.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 29–April 4, 1981</td>
<td>KMT convenes its 12th National Congress, relinquishing the goal of reconquering the mainland and instead vowing to unite China under Sun Yat-sen’s Three Principles of the People.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 9, 1981</td>
<td>Hu Yaobang speaks at the commemoration for the 70th anniversary of the Xinhai Revolution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 24, 1982</td>
<td>Liao Chengzhi publishes his open letter to Chiang Ching-kuo urging reunification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 4, 1982</td>
<td>CCP adopts a new constitution which includes Article 31, allowing the PRC to establish special administrative regions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 26, 1983</td>
<td>Deng Xiaoping posits “six conceptions” for reunification with Taiwan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1984</td>
<td>After years of negotiation, agreement is reached between the UK and the PRC over Hong Kong’s handover under one country, two systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 3, 1986</td>
<td>Wang Xijue hijacks China Airlines Flight 334, forcing the ROC to dispatch negotiators to the PRC in violation of the Three Noes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 15, 1987</td>
<td>KMT lifts martial law on Taiwan, in place since 1949.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2, 1987</td>
<td>ROC officially lifts travel ban to the mainland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 13, 1988</td>
<td>Chiang Ching-kuo dies.</td>
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</table>
## Appendix of Chinese Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Term</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heping tongyi</td>
<td>和平統一</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heping jiefang</td>
<td>和平解放</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San tong si liu</td>
<td>三通四流</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gu guo xiao zu</td>
<td>故國小組</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bu jiechu, bu tanpan, bu tuoxie</td>
<td>不接觸，不談判，不妥協</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San bu zhengce</td>
<td>三不政策</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ziran zeng</td>
<td>自然增</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu Shao Kang</td>
<td>劉少康</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boluan fangzheng</td>
<td>拨亂反正</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jia qi yi, zhen qianfu</td>
<td>假起义，真潛伏</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liming</td>
<td>黎明</td>
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<td>Pingjing</td>
<td>平靖</td>
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<td>上兵</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guanghua</td>
<td>光華</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanmin zhuyi</td>
<td>三民主義</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yiguo liangzhi tongyi zhongguo</td>
<td>一国兩制統一中國</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanmin zhuyi tongyi zhongguo</td>
<td>三民主義統一中國</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Abbreviations used in Notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RMRB</td>
<td>Renmin ribao (People’s Daily)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSGA</td>
<td>Guoshiguan (Academia Historica) archives, ROC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TNA</td>
<td>The National Archives of the United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCO</td>
<td>Foreign and Commonwealth Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XSQTYZX</td>
<td>Xin shiqi tongyi zhanxian wenxian xuanbian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCDA</td>
<td>Wilson Center Digital Archive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TML</td>
<td>The Maoist Legacy database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FBIS</td>
<td>Foreign Broadcast Information Service</td>
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</table>
Bibliographical Essay

My journey in exploring this thesis topic began over the summer months of 2022, when I was studying Chinese at the International Chinese Language Program in Taipei as a Richard U. Light Fellow. My experience there, especially witnessing the fallout from then-Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi’s visit in August, made me worry about the pernicious level of misunderstanding regarding Taiwan and Cross-Strait relations. I resolved then to write a senior thesis that would employ my Chinese language and historiographical skills to dispel misconceptions and promote a more nuanced understanding of the issue.

My past classwork in HIST 309J: Uses of the Past in Modern China (taught by Professor Denise Ho) inculcated in me a deep fascination for the legacies of the Mao era and the extent of reform implemented during the 1980s under Deng Xiaoping. My research for the seminar’s final paper uncovered revisionist articles published by the People’s Daily in the 1980s portraying the KMT in a positive light rather than as the traditional enemy of the CCP. Adopting a conciliatory tone, these articles discussed the reintegration of former KMT personnel into post-Cultural Revolution Chinese society, the history of the First and Second United Front cooperations between the KMT and CCP, and generally appealed to a sentiment of collaboration in service of national prosperity.

Though I wound up exploring a tangential topic regarding rehabilitations and intellectual policy for my final paper, I kept a mental bookmark of this research, eventually returning to it in Spring 2023 as I formulated initial guiding questions for my thesis. I thought about how the articles I had seen in the People’s Daily might fit into a larger ongoing initiative against Taiwan, and whether the prospect of peaceful reunification was a genuine one at this time. I set about
scouring the Yale library database for secondary literature discussing Deng’s Taiwan policy and Cross-Strait relations in the 1980s.

In combing through the secondary literature, I discovered several salient deficiencies. First and foremost, the period from 1978 to 1988 remains heavily overlooked. Coverage of this decade is generally limited to a broad survey of relevant policy developments (e.g., the 1979 Message to Compatriots in Taiwan, Ye Jianying’s Nine Points, the August 17 Communique, and key speeches by Deng Xiaoping) without delving into detailed analysis of a wider initiative on Taiwan—which I suspected existed after reading those People’s Daily articles. The conventional narrative treats this period as something of a dead zone in exchanges and instead looks to the post-1988 (after Lee Teng-hui’s ascension to leadership in Taiwan and the lifting of the travel ban) or post-1992 (after watershed negotiations between the PRC and the ROC) eras as the beginning of meaningful developments in modern Cross-Strait relations.

Second, many of the secondary sources that do examine the period from 1978 to 1988 in significant depth are rather outdated—having been published in the 1980s and 1990s—and are dominated by discussions framing Cross-Strait relations within international relations theory and the role of the United States. Many of these works also frame their analyses in light of current events at the time of publication and heavily rely on newspaper publications as primary sources. While such analyses are undoubtedly valuable for many scholars, I personally found them constrictive and lacking in terms of historiography.

Third, no secondary source I encountered substantially discussed China’s United Front activities vis a vis Taiwan or attempted to incorporate Taiwan’s perspective into analyses of Cross-Strait relations at this time. As I later discovered by combing through the Academia Historica archives, both of these aspects constituted an integral and deeply fascinating part of the
history of this period. It was also surprising to me that almost none of the works I surveyed made use of the Academia Historica archives, whose holdings offer unparalleled insight into the ROC’s actions and perspectives on Cross-Strait relations.

The dearth of secondary literature presented both an obstacle and an opportunity. On the one hand, I had few works to guide me in my research and framing. Lacking definitive works and surveys, I instead had to piece together the history of this period by consulting a patchwork of sources—which, as previously mentioned, was not many. On the other hand, the very lack of secondary literature offered a unique chance to construct an original narrative from the ground up and thereby meaningfully contribute to the discussion on Cross-Strait relations.

To construct this narrative and to ensure an ample supply of sources in the absence of substantial secondary literature, I necessarily turned to archival research. With the mainland still closed off due to COVID-19 restrictions in 2023, I applied for grant funding from Yale’s Council on East Asian Studies to pursue the necessary archival research in Taiwan. I preliminarily browsed archive databases online, including the Academia Sinica, the KMT Party Archives, and the National Archives Administration. Ultimately, I determined that the archives of the Guoshiguan (Academia Historica) would contain the most fruitful sources pertaining to my specific interests in Cross-Strait relations—namely, the ROC’s assessment of the PRC’s multifaceted peaceful reunification initiative and commensurate countermeasures.

I visited the Academia Historica almost every day for two weeks and conducted (by my estimates) some 60 hours of archival research there, reading through about 160 volumes ranging from 60 to 400 pages in length. The material I perused included foreign ministry cables, government memos, newspaper clippings, intelligence reports, and meeting notes. In reading these materials, I was struck by the inherent insecurity and obstinacy of the ROC’s response to
the PRC’s peaceful reunification initiative. Any action perceived as hostile to the interests of the ROC was deemed a conspiratorial “united front” instigated by the “bandits” on the mainland. This also led me to realize that the superficial public rhetoric on peaceful reunification from both the ROC and PRC belied a surreptitious and far more interesting dynamic of political warfare.

I therefore set three guiding objectives for my thesis. First, I would help cover the critical gap in historical writing on the decade from 1978 to 1988. Second, I would explore the evolution of the peaceful reunification initiative, with a focus on the United Front activities meant to accomplish that goal. Third, I would extensively feature the ROC’s side in my coverage.

To supplement the rich sources from the Academia Historica and offer coverage of the PRC’s perspective, I gathered other materials from the People’s Daily archive, the Maoist Legacy database, and various edited volumes officially published by the CCP. Unless otherwise specified, translations of Chinese documents used in my thesis are all my own. Primary documents from the Wilson Center Digital Archives and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office files at the National Archives of the United Kingdom provided further perspectives and analyses from third-party diplomats and observers. Each source came with its own inherent biases, and I have endeavored not to present any single document as irrefutable truth. I instead approached each source on its own terms, allowing the biases to speak for themselves (which I believe enriches the analysis) and crafting a historical narrative in the aggregate of many perspectives and many documents. I selected secondary literature mainly to contextualize specific aspects of Cross-Strait relations I wished to examine in my thesis, including book excerpts and journal articles discussing emerging economic relations and party institutions of the KMT and CCP. Ultimately, as I express in the introduction of my essay, the narratives and conclusions I present stem almost exclusively from my reading of the archival sources and primary documents.
Inevitably, the constraints of time and space prevented me from pursuing other sources and strands of inquiry. I would have very much appreciated the opportunity to explore the holdings at the Hoover Institution (especially the Wang Sheng diaries and the KMT party archives) and archives in mainland China, as well as delving deeper into the seemingly endless repository at the Academia Historica. The periodization of my essay also suffered, as I did not have space to discuss the years spanning 1985 to 1988 in as much detail as I would have liked. Much remains to be explored in the history of Cross-Strait relations, especially given the present significance of the issue. Yet I suppose this is the tragedy of any history project. There will always be another lead to pursue, another source to consult, another dimension to be scrutinized, perhaps best saved for another, more expansive project—which I hope to eventually pursue in future work on Cross-Strait relations.
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