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## **Sino-American Relations: 1949–58 China Assignment**

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But perhaps even he did not realize that in the mid-twentieth century, Australia would become one of the most progressive nations on earth.

MIGUEL A. BERNAD

### SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONS: 1949-58

CHINA ASSIGNMENT. By Karl Lott Rankin. University of Washington Press, 1964. 344 pp.

Much of the material relating to *China Assignment* contains official reports, personal observations and suggestions submitted to the US State Department by the author Karl Lott Rankin who had been assigned as American ambassador to China from the middle of 1949 to the beginning of 1958. The author has systematically sketched the development of American relations with China in that particular period.

When the Chinese mainland fell to Chinese Communist hands, the Republic of China moved its seat to Taiwan. During this critical moment, the State Department became quite confused about its foreign policy insofar as China was concerned. Rankin pointed out a way for American policy-makers which has been proved correct by the passage of time. Antagonistic forces against Nationalist China in the U.S. government notwithstanding, the author was able finally to convince the State Department to advocate a policy of action in favor of the Chinese Nationalist government. This policy was based on the strong belief that to support the government in Taiwan is to create an asset for the American side.

Unlike those so-called "China experts", who misrepresented the Chinese Communists as "agrarian reformers" and who entirely neglected the importance of Taiwan's phenomenal progress through the Land Reform Program pushed through with the help of American economic aid, Rankin, through clear observation and fair judgement, not only was deeply impressed by Taiwan's progress, but also made a series of constructive suggestions for the improvement of the Chinese governmental, economic, and military administration.

In chapter IV of his book, he pointed out that the communization of the Chinese mainland was the result of the interference of the Soviet Union which took unfair advantage of Nationalist China's weakness after eight years of war with Japan by arming the Chinese Communists with weapons seized from the Japanese and thus enabling them to rebel against the Chinese government on the mainland. Rankin tried to take away from the U.S. the responsibility of approving for the Soviets a free hand in Manchuria made during the Yalta conference.

Rankin was the one who, at this critical moment, boosted up the morale and injected hope into the Chinese government and people. He was also the one who formulated the Mutual Defense Treaty between China and the United States which in one way or another prohibited the Nationalist Army to launch a mass counter-attack on the Chinese Communist-held mainland.

However, in the eighth chapter of his book, Rankin, considered projects of trusteeship for Taiwan and any formal steps toward the formation of the "two Chinas" impracticable, as this might serve other than ostensible purposes. Since Rankin was a career diplomat, he served the best interests of his country. He spoke what he believed regardless of the consequences. A diplomatic fighter, he fought against elements of isolationism, defeatism and appeasementism.

What the shape of Sino-American relationship will be in the future relative to other nations in the Western Pacific, seems to remain our dispassionate study. Rankin tried to answer this question by interpreting the American policy of introducing or expanding ideas of democratic government among the Chinese. This, to my mind, is a move to attract wider acceptance and understanding of American methods and ideas, to promote defense capabilities and the well-being of the inhabitants in Taiwan, which is a show-case of democracy set up for Asian peoples to observe, and eventually, to curb Communist expansion in the Far East.

GIDEON C. T. HSU