



The Issue of the Republic of China's UN Security Council Seat



The Republic of China, led by Chiang Kai-Shek, was a founding member of the UN, joining on the 24th of October, 1945. As a major allied power, it, along with France and the “Big Three”, was given a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Following the end of the Second World War, the tenuous alliance between the Chiang Kai-Shek’s ruling KMT, and Mao’s Chinese Communist Party, broke down, causing a civil war to break out. With Soviet aid, by 1949 the communists were in control of most of China, forcing Chiang Kai-Shek to withdraw the KMT leadership to Taiwan. By the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1950, the Republic of China held only Taiwan and a few smaller islands off the coast of China, while the newly established People’s Republic of China controlled the entirety of the Chinese mainland. The Republic of China continued to hold the permanent Chinese Security Council seat, and an initial attempt by the Soviet Union to hand the PRC the ROC’s Security Council seat was blocked by the USA, in order to keep the seat out of communist hands. In response, the Soviet Union boycotted the UN Security Council, allowing it to vote to send troops to defend South Korea during the Korean War. While occasional air and artillery attacks were launched by both the PRC and the ROC during this period, the situation gradually settled into a diplomatic confrontation, with both governments claiming to be the rightful Chinese government. As a result, both governments

rejected proposals to represent both China and Taiwan as separate entities in the UN. In the years following, an annual vote was called by Albania to expel the representatives of the ROC and to admit those of the PRC. UN General Assembly Resolution 1668 established that a two-thirds majority was needed in order to alter Chinese representation.

For communist bloc nations, such as the USSR, the UN's recognition of the PRC would add another communist voice to the UN Security Council. However, due to the Sino-Soviet split, they are unlikely to push hard on this issue. On the other hand, while America's alliance with Taiwan is one of the strongest in the region, President Nixon's recent steps towards a rapprochement with the PRC and the possibility of a Chinese bulwark against the USSR means that they may choose to allow the vote to go in favour of the PRC. Ultimately, this issue is one largely determined along the ideological lines of the Cold War, and to the extent that the USA and USSR can rally other nations to vote in favour or against.

