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"Only Nixon could go to China." We've all heard this phrase, which is used when a leader courageously reverses course and embraces a policy he/she had previously vehemently opposed. It was most famously expressed by Spock (he also humorously called it "an old Vulcan proverb") in the movie *Star Trek VI*, when he described James Kirk's decision to escort the Chancellor of the Klingons, his old enemy, to peace negotiations.[2] In this perceptive article about how, due to a variety of reasons, the Committee of One Million Against the Admission of Communist China to the United Nations (hereinafter The Committee) failed to achieve its goal, Jeffrey Crean has shown the limits of interest group advocacy, especially as both the international consensus and U.S. academic and public opinion against the continued isolation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) waned. The realization of Marvin Liebman, the Committee's leader, that President Richard Nixon was not with him was a bitter pill to swallow. Conservatives, who had once been vehemently opposed to the inclusion of the PRC in the UN, valued Taiwan's independence more than the PRC's international isolation.. At the same time, Crean also demonstrates that Nixon was not as isolated as one might believe. In fact, when the Committee was desperately trying to prevent the admission of the PRC into the UN in 1971, Nixon was already pursuing the rapprochement with the PRC that other politicians, academics, and China experts in the U.S. government had also been advocating since the mid-1960s.

Crean deftly uses Liebman's papers from the Hoover Institution, as well as correspondence from various congressional supporters' papers, including arch-PRC critics Congressman Walter Judd and Senators Paul Douglas and H. Alexander Smith, among others, to describe The Committee's history and lobbying efforts. Initially founded in 1953 by a group of conservatives shortly after the Korean Armistice, when word spread that the PRC would soon be admitted to the UN, Liebman, a public relations specialist, "envisioned making the effort more permanent" after The Committee collected a million signatures in the U.S. and the PRC was blocked from joining the organization in 1954 (376). The Committee subsequently "proved itself capable of spooking and intimidating any potential opposition" to improved Sino-U.S. relations "because it was able to leverage both supportive opinion polls and memories of the McCarthyist 'Who Lost China?' traumas of the early 1950s" (371).

The problem, however, is that as Crean points out, The Committee was lobbying an institution, the U.S. Congress, that did not have any say in the decision to prevent the PRC from joining the UN. That was the UN General Assembly's (UNGA's) call, so Liebman was always operating at a disadvantage, especially as the PRC's international legitimacy began to increase by

[1] The views presented here are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of State or the United States Government.

[2] Shortly before Nixon's visit to China, Senator Mike Mansfield (D-MT) told a journalist "Only a Republican, perhaps only a Nixon, could have made this break and gotten away with it." See "A Size-Up of President Nixon: Interview with Mike Mansfield, Senate Democratic Leader," *U.S. News and World Report*, December 6, 1971.

the mid-1950s after Zhou Enlai's participation in the Geneva and Bandung Conferences caused a sensation. He also suffered from a chronic inability to raise significant amount of money to not only keep The Committee active but to materially affect China policy. Ironically, the mid-1950s would prove to be The Committee's high point of influence just as China's international influence increased. Meanwhile, Albania had continually introduced a Resolution in the UNGA to seat the PRC and expel Taiwan. Each year the vote moved further and further in Beijing's favor, and in 1965, for the first time, the vote ended in a tie. Under UNGA's rules, however, Taiwan could only be expelled by a 2/3 majority (under UNGA's so-called "Important Question" process), which the U.S. had been able to prevent for years.[3]

In addition to its financial difficulties and the changing environment of international politics, U.S. foreign policy had begun to change by the mid-1960s, when Democratic President Lyndon Baines Johnson, reflecting the urgings of academics, some members of Capitol Hill, and some mid-level State Department officials, began to press––tentatively, to be sure––for an improvement in Sino-U.S. officials. Indeed, as early as 1959, Senator J. William Fulbright, the influential Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, had commissioned the Conlon Report, a review of U.S. Asian policy, the recommendations of which Liebman "feared" (380). The Report, prepared by the San Francisco research firm Conlon Associates, advised that the United States move from the isolation of China to a policy of co-existence, assuming of course that Beijing was willing to reciprocate. Various Democratic lawmakers concurred with these recommendations and began to more publicly suggest the U.S. government make the first move to improve relations. In 1966, Fulbright held public hearings and invited academics such as Harvard's John K. Fairbank, the University of California's Robert Scalapino (who wrote the China portions of the Conlon Report), and Columbia's Doak Barnett. All advocated for engagement with Beijing just as, again ironically, PRC leader Mao Zedong plunged China into the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, a decision which resulted in China's self-isolation and made any U.S. entreaties moot.

In 1967, Nixon himself made a splash when his seminal article, "Asia after Vietnam" appeared in the influential journal *Foreign Affairs*. In addition to previewing the policies he would adopt when he was elected President in 1968––providing the strategic rationale for turning the war in Vietnam over to the South Vietnamese so U.S. forces could withdraw (his policy of 'Vietnamization') and also calling for Washington's Asian allies to assume more responsibility for their own defense (the 'Nixon Doctrine')––the former Vice President called for the United States to "urgently come to grips with the reality of China."[4] The man who had made his reputation hunting Communists in the U.S. government during the 1940s had now *joined* liberal academics and lawmakers in calling for a new relationship with China. Amazingly, the former head of the conservative group Young Americans for Freedom, Tom Huston, sent Liebman a copy of Nixon's article, but completely misunderstood what Nixon was advocating (369, 394). Meanwhile, in 1970, the Albanian Resolution received a simple majority for the first time at UNGA. Once the U.S. national tennis team visited Beijing to play the PRC team––a visit often described as an act of 'Ping Pong Diplomacy'––in April 1971, Liebman realized that the writing was on the wall. Two months later Nixon announced his second "Shock," that National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger had secretly visited Beijing and met with Zhou Enlai. In October, Kissinger publicly visited Beijing just as the vote in UNGA on Chinese representation came to a head, Taiwan was expelled, and the PRC took both the UNGA and Security Council seats.

This is a very important article that deserves a wide readership. It fits neatly into the recent historiography not only of U.S.-China relations, but also the scholarship on the relationship between the Committee and policymakers. Crean's research reinforces the claims that Mara Oliva has made in her 2018 book, *Eisenhower and American Public Opinion on China*, that despite public and scholarly calls for negotiations with the PRC, Eisenhower maintained, and even hardened, his stance

[3] For a good discussion of the "Important Question" issue, see Rosemary Foot, *The Practice of Power: U.S. Relations with China since 1949* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 37-43.

[4] Richard M. Nixon, "Asia after Vietnam," reprinted in *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, vol. I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1969-1972 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2003), 10-21.

against Beijing.[5] The Committee had the ear of powerful politicians for a long time, as Nancy Tucker, Noam Kovachi, and Michael Lumbers have noted, but this article is the first in-depth examination of the Committee.[6] Crean notes, correctly, that in my earlier book about Nixon's rapprochement policy, I "ignore[d] the interest group entirely, indicating its slide into irrelevancy" (373).[7] I wish I could pretend that I just did not have enough room in my book to discuss The Committee, but in fact, I had never heard of it except in my readings of other books about U.S. China policy during the 1960s.[8] My book was about policymakers pursuing national interests as they saw them, and I did not even think to examine interest groups and their role in the remaking of U.S. China policy. "Nixon is With Us on China" reminds historians like me about the importance of grass-roots advocacy and how citizens can impact foreign policy, even if they do not always achieve their goals.

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[5] Mara Oliva, *Eisenhower and American Public Opinion on China* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

[6] See Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *The China Threat: Memories, Myths, and Realities in the 1950s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), Noam Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated: China Policy During the Kennedy Years* (Westport: Praeger, 2002), and Michael Lumbers, *Piercing the Bamboo Curtain: Tentative Bridge-Building to China During the Johnson Years* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008).

[7] Chris Tudda, *A Cold War Turning Point: Nixon and China, 1969-1972* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press (2012).

[8] See Lumbers, *Piercing the Bamboo Curtain*, who notes that Johnson feared The Committee's power.