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Nicholas Autiello's article, "Taming the Wild Dragon: John F. Kennedy and the Republic of China, 1961–63," represents a fresh effort to delve into the links between U.S. domestic politics and Washington's Taiwan policy during the Presidency of John Kennedy. As Autiello points out, much of the existing scholarship on "Kennedy-era China policy" gives insufficient attention to "events in Taiwan" and to the "records of administration thinking on Taiwan" (2). To fill the historiographical vacuum on this subject, Autiello focuses on the Kennedy administration's attitude toward Chinese Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek and the upholders of his cause in the United States. Ultimately, Autiello seeks to provide a new angle of interpretation of Kennedy's Taiwan policy by exploring "how and why domestic political factors figured into" the Kennedy administration's foreign policymaking (3).

Concerning the gap in the current literature identified by Autiello, it is worth noting a couple of article-length studies that focus on Kennedy-era Taiwan policy. For instance, Jean S. Kang weighs both domestic political and external strategic factors to explain Kennedy's rationale for "limited, unwilling, but nonetheless real support for GRC [Government of the Republic of China] mainland recovery efforts."¹ Meanwhile, Charles Pellegrin, in light of bureaucratic infighting over relations with Taiwan and its leader Chiang Kai-shek, explores the increasingly favorable reception of "a more flexible China policy" in the Kennedy administration.² Both Kang and Pellegrin, draw extensively on Kennedy Presidential Library and Foreign Relations of the U.S. (FRUS) documents, as does Autiello. Although these works are not mentioned in "Taming the Wild Dragon," they afford useful points of comparison in examining the influence of domestic factors on the formulation of Kennedy's Taiwan policy.

Autiello's account of Kennedy positions him "as a shrewd manipulator of domestic and international power" (2). His analysis begins with a brief introduction of "three main sources of domestic pressure" against the Kennedy White House, namely pro-Chiang media opinion, former President Dwight Eisenhower, and the pro-Nationalist "China Lobby" (4). He goes on to detail how Kennedy mollified "America's unruly ally without raising the ire of that ally's American supporters" amid two vital conflicts that were boiling across the Taiwan Strait (i.e., Beijing's bid for United Nations membership in 1961, and Chiang's requests for U.S. assent to an invasion of the Chinese mainland in 1962) (10). The article concludes with the implication that "presidential leadership can overcome deeply rooted limitations to the pursuit of the national interest" (19). Essentially, Autiello's interpretation of Kennedy does not appear to deviate much from the so-called Camelot

¹ Jean S. Kang, "Maintaining the Status Quo: U.S. Response to Chinese Nationalist Mainland Recovery Efforts, 1961–1963," *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 15:1-2 (2008): 173-194.

² Charles J. Pellegrin, "'There Are Bigger Issues at Stake': The Administration of John F. Kennedy and United States-Republic of China Relations, 1961–63," in John Delane Williams, Robert G. Waite, and Gregory S. Gordon, eds., *John F. Kennedy, History, Memory, and Legacy: An Interdisciplinary Inquiry*, (Grand Forks: University of North Dakota, 2010), 100-115.

story, which primarily portrays the president as a flawless hero. In Autiello's narrative, Kennedy deftly succeeded in fending off attempts by Chiang, who was "driven by paranoia," to influence U.S. political sentiment and foreign policy "like a jilted lover" (17).

To reinforce the notion of Kennedy as an astute political tightrope walker, Autiello presents three key arguments. First, Kennedy renounced consideration of seating both Chinas in the UN and gave Chiang a private assurance against Beijing's entry, thereby tactically placating domestic U.S. opposition and protecting American prestige in the world. Second, taking into account both the charge of being 'soft on Communism' and the prospect of an unsuccessful operation on the mainland, Kennedy made a temporizing response to the initial blush of Nationalist invasion talk in the spring of 1962. As Autiello puts it, Kennedy's foreign policy calculations at that time "could never be completely separated from politics" (13). Third, as Chiang's insistence on a military offensive intensified in the summer of 1962, Kennedy prioritized strategic considerations over domestic ones and therefore publicly rejected Chiang's continued requests for U.S. participation. Throughout the article, Autiello repeatedly contends that Kennedy's handling of the Taiwan situation was the byproduct of his meticulous juggling between the internal and external priorities.

Autiello's explanation of Kennedy's open and persistent refusal to support a Nationalist invasion does not address the president's embattled position at home following the failure of the Bay of Pigs. When expounding Kennedy's rationale for this change, Autiello states, "By this point, the administration never discussed politics when it formulated policy" (17). However, both General Maxwell Taylor's paper, to which Autiello refers, and other FRUS documents indicate that the Kennedy administration continued to invoke the Bay of Pigs experience or the risk of escalation to all-out war from the spring of 1962 onward.³ A careful examination of these documents suggests that even though Kennedy's aides did not directly bring up domestic politics, that does not mean that they did not consider any probable domestic impact of an unsuccessful invasion attempt that would be reminiscent of the Bay of Pigs. At this point, therefore, one can raise the question of whether domestic and international politics are utterly separable from each other.

One would also have wanted to read more about the domestic political circumstances surrounding Kennedy's decision to dissociate Washington from any Nationalist invasion effort. In order for Autiello's reasoning that "the national interest reigned over domestic politics and ideology" (18) to be convincing, it is necessary to demonstrate the existence of pro-Chiang domestic political pressures calling for a U.S.-sponsored invasion of the Chinese mainland. "Taming the Wild Dragon" lacks a detailed account of the policy positions and activities of such political forces sympathetic to Taiwan's cause, however, particularly in the discussion of Chiang's continued push for an offensive against mainland China. Moreover, Autiello paints the national politics of U.S. Taiwan policy with a broad brush without precisely delineating between Nationalist invasion advocates and Taiwan defense proponents. This eventually precludes further analysis of any possible political accommodation between Kennedy and some, if not all, of Washington's Taiwan sympathizers, who were committed to Taiwan's defense but at the same time uncertain about the likelihood of a successful invasion.

These potential weaknesses do not diminish the overall quality of the article's research. The strength of "Taming the Wild Dragon" lies in its recounting of the Kennedy administration's decision to temporize with Chiang and his American supporters in the spring of 1962. To illustrate the reasoning of Kennedy's staff, Autiello brings into his narrative the voices of politician-diplomats, such as Assistant Secretary of State Averell Harriman and UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson, along with intelligence analysts such as Roger Hilsman, Director of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), and Ray Cline, CIA Chief of Station in Taiwan. Such attempts to convey the administration's strategic assessments of Taiwan's

³ Paper Prepared by the President's Military Representative (Taylor), 20 September 1962, in Edward C. Keefer, David W. Mabon, and Harriet Dashiell Schwarn, eds., *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter *FRUS*), 1961-1963, vol. XXII, Northeast Asia (Washington, D.C., 1996), doc. 153; Memorandum From the Ambassador to the Republic of China (Kirk) to President Kennedy, 29 March 1963, *FRUS*, vol. XXII, doc. 172; and Memorandum of Conversation, 11 September 1963, *FRUS*, vol. XXII, doc. 186.

security situation are, of course, not new in the study of the Kennedy presidency.⁴ Here Autiello refreshingly asserts that the major point of contention at the time concerned the likely political costs and risks of waging an attack on mainland China. Most importantly, Autiello accentuates Stevenson's concern that Chiang's offensive "might [result in] 'the Democrats being labeled the only party in history to LOSE China twice'" (13). The Kennedy administration's sensitivity to the possible domestic consequences of a U.S.-backed offensive again reaffirms the inseparable relationship between domestic politics and foreign policy.

Overall, Autiello offers a glimpse into critical aspects of the political alignment between Washington's anti-Communist conservatives and liberals in the early 1960s. While focusing almost exclusively on Kennedy's policy toward Taiwan, this article can also serve as a case study showing how domestic considerations were factored into the calculus of foreign policy decision-making in the Kennedy White House. In this respect, "Taming the Wild Dragon" will pique the curiosity of a broad audience of students, scholars, and all those interested in the study of the Kennedy administration.

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⁴ See, for example, Noam Kochavi, *A Conflict Perpetuated: China Policy during the Kennedy Years* (Westport: Praeger, 2002), 114-116.