

A Questionable Basis for Foreign Relations

By Fulton Lewis Jr.

There was one disturbingly sour note in the evolution of events leading up to Secretary Dulles' present mission of reassurance to Chiang Kai-shek in Formosa.

It was a dispatch from Taipei, regarding a statement by the official spokesman for the Nationalist government foreign ministry, Dr. Kiang Yi-seng, about a New York Times editorial of October 16, which urged that the Nationalist offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu be turned over to the Communists.

Dr. Kiang told reporters:

"Naturally, we are very concerned over the Times editorial because of the weight of any opinion expressed by that newspaper."

It was given wide circulation in the Formosan press, but little if any in this country. This is unfortunate because the statement points up a dangerous infestation of cultism with which the entire U. S. foreign policy determination process is becoming involved.

As a newspaper, the New York Times admittedly is a worthy and commendable publication. This, however, does not bestow any omniscience--and certainly no omnipotence--upon the individuals who devise the editorial policy of the newspaper, nor upon those literary architects who peck out the hawkings of its editorial columns.

There is no special bestowal of Divine guidance upon my esteemed colleague, Arthur Krock, nor upon Publisher Arthur Hays Sulzberger.

A Dangerous Myth

Yet this, in effect, is the myth that the Foreign Service fraternity, ever susceptible to fad-ism, is in the course of manufacturing.

In Munich, recently, I inspected the news-gathering facilities of Radio Free Europe. Here each morning for one hour, a special leased teletype line from New York City transmits the news and views of the New York Times and the New York Herald Tribune, particularly the musings of their pundits. The Europe editions of these two publications are clipped daily, as if from Holy Writ. Other leading American newspapers are ignored.

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Practice Spreading

This same system pervades, also, the operations of the United States Information Agency and the field informational functions of the State Department Foreign Service.

Thus, in the end, it is through the peculiar intellectual grist-mill of the editors of the New York Times and the New York Herlad Tribune that's ground the sustenance upon which American foreign relations must live.

And because this is the doctrine of the American personnel who have daily personal contact with other governments in the continuing business of diplomatic intercourse, the myth is transmitted to them, also. It is a myth that somehow, Mr. Sulzberger and his particular troupe of trained seals are all-knowledgeable and somehow unaffected by the collateral interests.

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 22.

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