

Re-emerging on the International Stage
China's Role in the Creation of the United Nations, 1942 - 1945

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In the spring of 2016, Professor Heidi Tworek led me to this topic when she opened a call to students in her undergraduate history course to pursue archival research in China. I spent a summer in Nanjing, trying to access the archives and find out more about Wu Yifang, the only female delegate in China's delegation to the United Nations Conference on International Organization, and one of only four women to sign the UN Charter. However, access to those documents were restricted, and I ended up broadening the topic under the guidance of Professor Tworek. Since then, she has been an inspiring, supportive and integral part of this research and writing process. I also owe my thanks to Professors Courtney Booker and John Roosa who have led the weekly Honours seminars over the past two years and nurtured the development of the skills necessary to undertake this project.

I would also like to extend my gratefulness to family and friends whose critical but encouraging comments have forced me to refine and improve my work time and again. To my older brother, Derek, whose infinite patience has helped me clarify thoughts and arguments on this topic, I owe a debt of gratitude.

A NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS AND TRANSLITERATIONS

I have chosen to use Hanyu Pinyin instead of the older Wade-Giles system of romanization within this thesis. All names and places will be romanised in Hanyu Pinyin, except for when the names of key figures are more distinctly recognizable in previously romanised forms. In this case, the names of key Chinese figures in this essay – Chiang Kai-shek, V. K. Wellington Koo and T. V. Soong – have not had their names converted to Pinyin. Other names of government officials or key figures have been rendered into Pinyin, with the family name presented first. Where the Wade-Giles spelling remains more common but not crucial, I have chosen to render the names in Pinyin, but have added the Wade-Giles spelling in brackets. For example, the Guomindang (Kuomintang).

Unless noted otherwise, I have translated the archival sources from Mandarin into English.

INTRODUCTION

“China, perhaps more than any other nation, understands the necessity for the success of this Conference.” Thus declared T. V. Soong, Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs and China’s chief delegate at the opening plenary of the 1945 United Nations Conference on International Organization (UNCIO) held in San Francisco.¹ Etched deep into the minds of every delegate at the San Francisco Conference was the conviction that a new international organisation was necessary to create and maintain peace after the ravages of World War II. In an address from Washington the day before, President Harry Truman of the United States emphasized that the delegates were there to be “architects of a better world,” such that “suffering humanity [could] achieve a just and lasting peace.”² With this weighty duty in mind, delegates from fifty different nations worked tirelessly for nine weeks to create the Charter of the new organisation – a “solid structure upon which we can build for a better world.”³

Ever since its inception in 1945, world leaders have portrayed the United Nations (UN) as arising out of the ashes of World War II. Even amid devastating conflict, national leaders believed that an inter-governmental organisation needed to be created after the war to maintain peace and security. Consequently, governments began to plan the UN during the war, culminating in the creation of the organisation in 1945. The outbreak of the Cold War in the nascent years of the UN, however, created cynicism around whether the organisation could fulfil that role, as great power struggles within the UN stalled action on various armed conflicts, such as the Korean War in 1950 and the Arab-Israeli wars in the in the 1960s and 1970s, that

¹ April 26, 1945, United Nations Conference on International Organization (UNCIO) et al., “Documents of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, San Francisco, 1945.,” vol. 1 (W.S. Hein, 1998), 129.

² UNCIO et al., 112.

³ UNCIO et al., 680.

emerged. The spirit of cooperation that had marked the 1945 San Francisco Conference barely outlasted the war.

To understand why the UN was unable to fulfil its objectives, many scholars have used political, legal or economic frames to examine more contemporary issues around the UN. Works that discuss the UN's creation often use it to argue for the author's position on the organisation's continued relevance (or irrelevance) in the world today.⁴ Perhaps as a result, there is little historical research specifically on the origins of the UN. The small extant scholarship focuses on the roles of the three "Great Powers" – the Americans, Soviets, and British – in the creation of the UN.⁵ China, the fourth great power at the UN, barely garners any attention. Yet China's presence as a great power signalled the beginning of a push away from the West in world affairs that would become increasingly evident throughout the twentieth century.

In 1945, the term great power was still largely Eurocentric. Associated first with the five powers of the Concert of Europe – Austria, Prussia, Russia, the United Kingdom and France – it broadened to include the United States and Japan at the beginning of the twentieth century. In surveying the rise and fall of great powers from the sixteenth to twentieth centuries, Paul Kennedy notes that his book is "by definition... heavily Eurocentric," pointing to Western dominance over the term.⁶ Kennedy's conception of a great power draws heavily on military and economic strength, or what Joseph Nye has termed "hard power" – the ability to coerce or pay

⁴ Ilya V. Gaïduk, *Divided Together: The United States and the Soviet Union in the United Nations, 1945-1965* (Stanford, California; Washington, D.C; Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2012), 2.

⁵ See Stephen C. Schlesinger, *Act of Creation: The Founding of the United Nations : A Story of Superpowers, Secret Agents, Wartime Allies and Enemies, and Their Quest for a Peaceful World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2003); Gaïduk, *Divided Together*; Dan Plesch, *America, Hitler and the UN: How the Allies Won World War II and a Forged Peace* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011)..

⁶ Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987), xxi.

someone to do what you want.⁷ Even today, great powers are defined largely by their economic and military capabilities, although there is increasing attention paid to “soft power” – the ability to attract others to your goals through shared values or culture. China in 1945 did not possess military or economic strength on par with the other great powers, and just barely three decades before stood in concert with the smaller powers at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Yet, in 1945, the Republic of China (ROC) was one of the sponsoring members of the UN; this enabled their admission into the Security Council as a permanent member and signalled their membership in the great power club despite their relative military and economic weakness.

How did China come to be one of the sponsoring powers? My thesis seeks to answer this question through examining China’s involvement in the creation of the UN c.1945. Using Chinese primary sources, this project offers an often-overlooked Chinese perspective on the creation of the UN, and demonstrates how China occupied a unique, liminal space in its role as the fourth great power at the UN. China was both economically and militarily weaker than the other Western powers in 1945, but its history as a great empire and its projected future resurgence led to its place at the table. This allowed it, as the only non-Western great power, to build an emphasis on international law into the UN Charter and draw the world’s attention to the growing relevance of Asia on the international stage. Domestically, it signalled China’s recovery of its sovereignty and national autonomy after imperialist demands by Western powers as well as Japan had weakened the country. China's great power status, while mostly in name, allowed it to exercise influence at the UN in 1945 and demonstrates how perceptions of power remain core to the conduct of international relations. However, China's journey at the UN also shows

⁷ Joseph Nye, “Soft Power: The Origins and Political Progress of a Concept,” *Comments and Opinion*, Palgrave Communications, February 21, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1057/palcomms.2017.8>.

how smaller powers can influence international affairs by manoeuvring between larger powers and co-opting their goals. Ultimately, my thesis aims to account for the voices of players apart from the Big Three at the creation of the UN and push back against narratives that paint the UN as primarily an arena for great power politics.

Leading global historian Akira Iriye sees the development of the history discipline as largely nation-centric – built around examining how the nation-state emerged. In nineteenth-century Europe, when history first emerged as a professional discipline, nation states were, after all, the key unit of social organisation. Thus, much of the further development of history has been viewed within that framework. Even as interstate interactions began to increase, Iriye argues that the study of these diplomatic relations continued to be viewed through the lens of the nation state.⁸ Likewise, Glenda Sluga focuses on this relationship in her research in order to “restore internationalism to the history of nations and nationalism,” and demonstrate how throughout the twentieth century some men and women saw international organisations such as the UN as an avenue through which they could “improve their status as national citizens and build an international community.”⁹ Over the last 15 years, the study of international organisations has become an increasingly important field. Studies focus on facets of organised international interactions ranging from early inter-governmental organisations like the International Telegraph Union (ITU), to studies on transnational movements and networks like the international women’s movement to human rights.¹⁰ More recent work has looked at the role

⁸ Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (London: University of California Press, 2002), 6.

⁹ Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 8.

¹⁰ Key works include Iriye, *Global Community*; Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); Akira Iriye, “The Internationalization of History,” *The American Historical*

of international civil society organisations and interest organisations.¹¹ However, the main body of work remains largely focused on the West. Work on international organisations in Asia and Africa continues to be less developed.¹²

This is reflected in current scholarship on the origins of the UN that focuses largely on the Big Three, where three general narratives dominate. First, that American ideas of the post-war order were paramount in the construction of the UN, although these ideas were modified by the objections of other nations – in particular, the Soviet Union.¹³ Within this main narrative, a key study on the creation of the UN is Stephen Schlesinger's *Act of Creation*, where he examines the 1945 San Francisco conference in detail. Published in 2003, Schlesinger asserts that apart from Ruth Russell's 1958 *A History of the United Nations Charter*, it is the first monograph focused on the 1945 San Francisco Conference.¹⁴ He focuses on American government personnel like Secretary of State Edward Stettinius, and Leo Pasvolosky, a man credited with writing much of the framework of the UN Charter. Using mainly American sources, Schlesinger's account privileges the role of the US in the creation of the UN.¹⁵ Robert Hilderbrand, writing on the 1944 Dumbarton Oaks conference, also focuses chiefly on American

Review 94, no. 1 (1989): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr/94.1.1>. For work on the ITU, see Francis Lyall, *International Communications: The International Telecommunication Union and the Universal Postal Union* (Burlington, Vt: Ashgate, 2011). For work on the international women's movement, see Francisca de Haan, *Women's Activism: Global Perspectives from the 1890s to the Present* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013); Glenda Sluga and Carolyn James, *Women, Diplomacy and International Politics since 1500* (London: Routledge, 2015). For work on human rights, see Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005) and Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010).

¹¹ Daniel Gorman, *International Cooperation in the Early Twentieth Century* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

¹² Sunil Amrith and Glenda Sluga, "New Histories of the United Nations," *Journal of World History* 19, no. 3 (2008): 251–74, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jwh.0.0021>.

¹³ See Paul M. Kennedy, *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present, and Future of the United Nations* (New York: Random House, 2006); Schlesinger, *Act of Creation*; Gaïduk, *Divided Together*.

¹⁴ Schlesinger, *Act of Creation*, xvi.

¹⁵ Schlesinger, xviii.

proposals for creating an international organisation that could police the world. His work views China's role as insignificant, portraying the Chinese delegation as secondary to the Americans, British and Soviets.¹⁶ Other works focused on the Dumbarton Oaks and Bretton Woods conferences centre around the American State and Treasury departments, as well as British economists, demonstrating the continued focus on the United States.¹⁷ Ilya Gaiduk, in surveying American and Soviet policies towards the UN using American and Soviet archival sources, discusses its creation with only attention paid to the Big Three – barely mentioning China.¹⁸

Second, scholars highlight the continuities between the League of Nations and the UN, with a focus on European traditions of internationalism that informed the creation of international organisations.¹⁹ Mark Mazower argues that these continuities show how British ideas of internationalism, which underscored the creation of the League of Nations, were more formative in UN's creation than generally perceived.²⁰ Mazower also traces the development of internationalism since the late nineteenth century, focusing largely on Western intellectual history and philosophers like Kant and Bentham.²¹ Linking their ideas to American presidents like Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt, he emphasizes the roles of the American,

¹⁶ Robert C. Hilderbrand, *Dumbarton Oaks: The Origins of the United Nations and the Search for Postwar Security* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 229.

¹⁷ See Benn Steil, *The Battle of Bretton Woods: John Maynard Keynes, Harry Dexter White, and the Making of a New World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); Georg Schild, *Bretton Woods and Dumbarton Oaks: American Economic and Political Postwar Planning in the Summer of 1944*, 1st ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).

¹⁸ In Ilya Gaiduk's *Divided Together*, only the first chapter focuses on the run-up to the creation of the UN and China goes unmentioned in that chapter.

¹⁹ See Patricia Clavin, *Securing the World Economy: The Reinvention of the League of Nations, 1920-1946*, 1st ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Alexandru Grigorescu, "Mapping the UN–League of Nations Analogy: Are There Still Lessons to Be Learned from the League?," *Global Governance* 11, no. 1 (2005): 25–42; Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009).

²⁰ Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, 13.

²¹ See Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2012).

British, and French politicians who envisioned creating a new international organisation on the backs of the old.²² Likewise, Patricia Clavin’s work emphasizes how the UN remained “enslaved” by the history of the League: the UN “remains trapped in the need to refute the charge that it ‘was destined to the dustbin of history and the fate of the League of Nations.’”²³ Finally, a forthcoming book edited by Simon Jackson and Alanna O’Malley examines a “history of internationalism at the League of Nations and the UN,” with a view on the “complex interrelationship” between the two organisations.²⁴

More recently, other scholars have started to push the boundaries of Western conceptions and include studies on non-Western work in international organisations. Tomoko Akami’s work on the League of Nations aims to broaden the discourse by looking at Japanese views of internationalism during the inter-war period.²⁵ Likewise, work by Sunil Amrith on the history of public health and migration that focuses on South and Southeast Asia examines the relationship between the region and international organisations.²⁶

²² See Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*.

²³ Clavin, *Securing the World Economy*, 10.

²⁴ See Simon Jackson and Alanna O’Malley, eds., *The Institution of International Order: From the League of Nations to the United Nations*, Routledge Studies in Modern History (London: Routledge, Forthcoming).

²⁵ Tomoko Akami, *Internationalizing the Pacific: The United States, Japan, and the Institute of Pacific Relations in War and Peace, 1919-45*, vol. 3;3.; (London; New York; Routledge, 2003); Tomoko Akami, “Imperial Politics, Intercolonialism, and the Shaping of Global Governing Norms: Public Health Expert Networks in Asia and the League of Nations Health Organization, 1908-37,” *Journal of Global History* 12, no. 1 (2017): 4–25, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740022816000310>; Tomoko Akami, “The Limits of Peace Propaganda: The League of Nations and Its Tokyo Office,” in *International Organisations and the Media in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Exorbitant Expectations*, ed. Jonas Brendebach, Martin Herzer, and Heidi Tworek (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2018), 70–90.

²⁶ See Amrith and Sluga, “New Histories of the United Nations”; S. Amrith, *Decolonizing International Health: India and Southeast Asia, 1930-65*, Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies Series (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2006); Sunil Amrith and Patricia Clavin, “Feeding the World: Connecting Europe and Asia, 1930–1945 1,” *Past & Present* 218 (2013): 29–50, <https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gts033>.

Finally, scholars have called more attention to how the cooperation between states during World War II shaped ideas of the UN. These scholars see realist impulses in the pursuit of what has often been taken as idealistic internationalism. Historian Dan Plesch argues for greater recognition that the creation of the UN was grounded in a realist agenda of winning the war. He asserts that what is generally taught about the UN today, that it was created in 1945, only after the Allied victory in World War II, allows the UN's creation to be separated from the war. This creates the perception that the multilateralism the UN embodies is a "liberal accessory to be discarded when the going gets rough," when instead, the UN's creation was a realist necessity for the restoration of peace.²⁷ After all, the Declaration of the United Nations was made in 1942 in the thick of war, and records of the war years demonstrate that the UN's creation was a culmination of the war effort by the Allied powers.²⁸ Within his analysis, however, Plesch still focuses largely on the American and British roles in founding the alliance and the UN.

Secondary literature has largely omitted the Chinese role in the creation of the UN. Indeed, Chinese sources have not been consulted in much of the currently available work written in English. Yet even in Chinese historiography about the creation of the UN, there is surprisingly less material than expected, particularly considering the People's Republic of China's (PRC) growing weight in contemporary international relations. The establishment of the PRC in 1949 created a longstanding issue of Chinese representation in the UN Security Council. Until 1971, the ROC represented China on the Security Council, but the PRC was recognised in place of the ROC that year. Thus, most of the small body of work on China's relationship to the UN has

²⁷ See Dan Plesch and Thomas G. Weiss, "1945's Forgotten Insight: Multilateralism as Realist Necessity," *International Studies Perspectives* 17, no. 1 (2016): 4–16, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isp/ekv013>; Plesch, *America, Hitler and the UN*.

²⁸ Plesch, *America, Hitler and the UN*, 138.

focused on the accession of the PRC to the UN, while much of the recent scholarship has looked at the PRC's increased role in UN operations in the post-Cold War era.²⁹ There is little work in English on other aspects of China's early relationship to the UN, apart from a 1959 publication, *China and the United Nations*, by the China Institute of International Affairs.

Scholarship from the PRC which examines this period devotes little detail to the events, instead focusing on how the ROC occupied the Chinese seat at the UN illegitimately until 1971.³⁰ Much like works in English, the story of the creation of the UN is relegated to the introductory chapter of the volume. Other articles focus on the role of the only representative from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), Dong Biwu, at the conference.³¹ The lack of historical attention paid to this period may be due to the lack of political motive on both sides of the Taiwan strait to examine this issue – after all, the PRC need not focus on a period of UN history where they were marginalised; and after 1971, the ROC no longer had much to do with the UN.

²⁹ On the PRC's accession to the UN, see Samuel S. Kim, *China, the United Nations, and World Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979); Peter A. Poole, *China Enters the United Nations: A New Era Begins for the World Organization* (New York: F. Watts, 1974); John George Stoessinger, *The United Nations & the Superpowers: China, Russia & America*, 4th ed., (New York: Random House, 1977); Guozhang Wang, *United Nations Voting on Chinese Representation: An Analysis of General Assembly Roll-Calls, 1950-1971*, vol. 2;2. (Nankang, Taipei, Republic of China: Institute of American Culture, Academia Sinica, 1984). For work on China's increasing presence in UN peacekeeping operations found in both English and Mandarin, see Courtney Jane Richardson, "The Chinese mirror has two faces? Understanding China's United Nations peacekeeping participation," (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2012); Jianlan Zhang, "Guo jia li yi shi jiao xia de Zhongguo can yu lian he guo wei chi he ping xing dong yan jiu [The Study of China's Participation in UN's PKO from the Viewpoint of National Interests]," (MA diss., Xiangtan University 2008).

³⁰ See Xiao-xia Cheng & Yan Zhang, "Zhongguo yu lian he guo – ji nian lian he guo cheng li wu shi zhou nian [China and the United Nations – Commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the UN]," *Fa xue jia* no. 6 (1995): 51-55; Qimei Xie and Xingfang Wang, *Zhongguo yu lian he guo: ji nian lian he guo cheng li wu shi zhou nian* [China and the United Nations – Commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the UN] (Beijing: Shi jie zhi shi chu ban she, 1995).

³¹ See Dezhong Zhu, "Dong Biwu chu xi lian he guo cheng li da hui shi mo [Dong Biwu at the 1945 San Francisco Conference]," *Dang shi tian di* 6 (1996): 23-26.

Due to the relatively scarce secondary source material available, I rely heavily on primary sources – particularly government documents from the ROC archives, such as reports on the conferences and internal communications – to examine the Chinese perspective on the creation of the UN. Located in Taipei, the archives at the Academia Historica and Academia Sinica’s Institute of Modern History have been instrumental to the construction of this project. This project also relies on newspaper clippings, diary excerpts from key Chinese officials during that period, and UN documents about the 1945 San Francisco Conference.

To explore China’s role in the creation of the UN as part of China’s long-term vision to use international organisations to achieve greater national autonomy, my thesis will be structured around three main sections. The first chapter will examine how China became one of the four sponsoring nations of the UN. It will focus on how China fit into Roosevelt’s vision of the Four Policemen and the basis of its claims to great power status, to show how China became one of the four sponsoring nations of the UN. The second chapter then engages with how China portrayed itself as a great power by sending a delegation intended to showcase China as a modern, representative democracy like the other Western great powers. Finally, the last chapter examines China’s push for the codification of international law in their pre-conference peace proposals and contrasts them to the view of the other great powers. Combined with an analysis of the role they played as broker within the Big Four and between the Big Four and the other powers at the conference, it will demonstrate how China ultimately occupied a unique role that straddled the great and middle power divide.

The story of the UN’s creation has been appended to the tale of the two devastating wars of the early twentieth century. Emerging as one of the pre-eminent superpowers after the dust had settled, scholars continue to see the United States as instrumental to the creation of the post-

war world. Realist explanations for the design of the UN focus on the preeminent power of the United States in this era. It was American initiatives, tempered by British and Soviet suggestions, that led to the structure of the UN and the establishment of a whole machinery of other institutions that came to be recognised as being under the UN umbrella. After all, without the involvement of the Americans, there could be no new international peace organisation. One of the vital failings of the League of Nations was the absence of the United States and the Soviet Union. In these conceptions of post-war planning, the contributions of the Big Three—the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union—have been prioritised, and few non-Western views have been taken into consideration. In a purely realist conception of the post-war order where hard power is paramount, there would seem to be no need to discuss the role of the smaller nations within the creation of the UN – only the preponderant power of the United States needs to be considered.³² However, recent studies have pointed to how the creation of the UN “owed much to the work of anticolonial nationalists,” who combined “European social and political thought” with a “cosmopolitan range of political ideas.”³³ This thesis seeks to do likewise through the examination of China’s unique position as the only non-white sponsoring nation of the UN, and call into question the assumption that smaller powers remain incapable within the international system.

³² Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, “Political Approaches,” in *The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations*, ed. Sam Daws and Thomas G. Weiss (Oxford, U.K: Oxford University Press, 2007).

³³ Amrith and Sluga, “New Histories of the United Nations,” 255.

CHAPTER 1: THE FOURTH “GREAT” POWER?

“At the very inception of the idea of the United Nations, President Chiang Kai-shek advocated the early setting up of an executive council of the United Nations, since without such an authority a world order cannot function,” declared T. V. Soong, Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs and China’s chief delegate at the opening plenary of the 1945 San Francisco Conference on April 26, 1945. This was one of China’s first forays onto the modern international scene with the status of a great power. China was determined to make the most of this moment. Yet, China’s inclusion within the great power club in 1945 was called into question both then and now – after all, wartime China was by most counts weak and divided. Even during the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, they had stood in concert with the smaller powers instead of the great, and were not granted a permanent seat in the League of Nations. How, then, did they grow to be the fourth power by the end of World War II?

This chapter examines China’s rise to great power status in 1945. I first outline China’s domestic situation during and prior to World War II, before examining how they fit into Roosevelt’s vision of the post-war order. Then, I analyse China’s own stance on its role in the new global order. Although they had great ambitions, they were simultaneously cognizant of their own relative weakness. Ultimately, I argue that China won its place at the table due to a convergence of Chinese and American interests. While Roosevelt’s vision of the Four Policemen undoubtedly helped to catapult them to great power status, China itself offered compelling reasons about “potential power” and further drew on their World War II contributions to legitimise their place of leadership at the Conference.

China in Turmoil

Soong's opening speech at the San Francisco Conference declared that by 1945, the start of World War II was "universally recognized" to have been when Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931. That forced China into war with Japan, and stripped the country of thirty million people as well as rich deposits of natural resources.¹ However, most historians today date the official start of the war to 1937. By 1945, China had been contending with Japanese aggression for eight years. They had been forced to abandon their capital, Nanjing, in 1938 and retreat inland to Chongqing. Chinese casualties during the war are estimated at between 8 to 18 million, second only to the Soviet Union's estimated 20 million.² The damage to China's economy and infrastructure that they had fought hard to build throughout the first three decades of the twentieth century was also immense –30 percent in the Pearl River Delta, 52 percent in Shanghai and 80 percent of infrastructure in Nanjing, the former capital, was lost during the war.³

Compounding the issue was China's unstable political situation. The challenge of maintaining a unified China had existed since the creation of the first unified Chinese dynasty, the Qin, in 221 BC. For over two millennia, Chinese dynasties rose and fell, cycling between periods of great prosperity and peace, and the chaos of civil war when the country fragmented into separate factions. Indeed, this continued to be the case in the twentieth century. After the messy dissolution of the Qing dynasty into the warlord era, Chiang Kai-shek led Nationalist soldiers in the Northern Expedition to unify China and was judged successful in 1928 after he

¹ United Nations Conference on International Organization et al., "Documents of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, San Francisco, 1945.," 129.

² Rana Mitter, *China's War with Japan, 1937-1945: The Struggle for Survival* (London: Allen Lane, 2013), 6, 397.

³ Mitter, *China's War with Japan*, 6.

had “eliminated, neutralized, or co-opted his most powerful warlord rivals.”⁴ Thus, even during the decade from 1928 to 1937 where there was considerably more peace in the country, the Nationalists found themselves contending with regions that continued to be semi-autonomous under the rule of warlords or provincial military leaders.⁵

In addition, the continued existence of the CCP, although forced to retreat into the countryside during the Northern Expedition, still posed a critical threat to Nationalist rule over the country. While the war with Japan forced the Nationalists and Communists into an uneasy alliance in 1936, it also afforded the Communists the opportunity to regroup and strengthen their domestic position. The alliance between the two parties never truly allowed for cooperation, and tensions between the Nationalists and Communists continually threatened to spill over as various skirmishes between their armies took place even during the war.

It was in this atmosphere that T. V. Soong was appointed Chiang Kai-shek’s personal representative to the United States in the summer of 1940. Stationed in Washington to work on gaining support for China’s war with Japan, he managed to garner substantial loans for the Chinese government to fund the war effort. In December 1941, directly after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, Soong was appointed as Minister of Foreign Affairs and moved to coordinate China’s alliance with both the United States and Great Britain. From 1940, China cooperated closely with the United States in terms of financial and military aid. China’s addition to the Allied Powers was the first step to setting themselves up for great power status, and Soong’s close personal relationships with movers and shakers in the American government predisposed them to view China as key to peace and stability in the Asia Pacific.

⁴ S. C. M. Paine, *The Wars for Asia, 1911-1949* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 57.

⁵ Paine, 64–65.

Roosevelt's Fourth Policeman: China

Many world leaders were concerned with the question of a new international organisation after the failure of the League of Nations to stem the outbreak of World War II. Indeed, the creation of some sort of post-war settlement to maintain peace was far from a new idea – John Ikenberry argues that, since the fifteenth century, great powers often negotiated settlements to reorganize the balance of power in the international system.⁶ After the Napoleonic wars ended in 1815 and the Congress of Vienna was created, great powers began increasingly to utilize institutions to restrain indiscriminate state power.⁷ The post-World War I settlement, the League of Nations, was another step in this direction. However, just two decades later, the world had once again dissolved into widespread war to the dismay of everybody.

The absence of the United States from the League of Nations weighed heavily on American president Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had backed Woodrow Wilson in campaigning for American membership in the League of Nations during World War I.⁸ He was convinced that the rise of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan was linked to the withdrawal of the United States from the world stage.⁹ As a result, even at the start of World War II, Roosevelt was already thinking deeply about the creation of a new, post-war settlement that could help to secure and maintain peace, and commissioned the State Department to work on the issue even before the United States had entered the war.¹⁰ Under the leadership of men like Secretary of State Cordell Hull, Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles, and Leo Pasvolsky, who became a driving force

⁶ See G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001).

⁷ Ikenberry, *After Victory*, 4.

⁸ Gaïduk, *Divided Together*, 10.

⁹ David L. Bosco, *Five to Rule Them All: The UN Security Council and the Making of the Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 14.

¹⁰ Bosco, 14.

in the creation of the United Nations, an advisory committee tasked with drafting plans for a new international organisation was founded as early as the end of 1939.¹¹

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941, and Germany's subsequent declaration of war on the United States, Roosevelt's ideas on international organisation became less hypothetical and more practical.¹² These ideas took the form of what he called the Four Policemen. He envisioned the regulation of the world order through the alliance of four great powers: the United States, Great Britain, Russia, and China. While Roosevelt's contemporaries saw him as a committed internationalist who favoured the democratization of the international system, Robert Divine argues that Roosevelt's idea of the Four Policemen was instead a realist conception that spelled the domination of big powers over smaller ones.¹³

The inclusion of China was important to Roosevelt, because his broader vision for the international order rested on what historian Erez Manela has called a "two-fold conceptual foundation." The two parts were Roosevelt's "Wilsonian outlook on the requirements of world order and second, his opposition to colonial empires."¹⁴ Roosevelt was convinced that the existing colonial empires needed to be dismantled to create a stable international order that consisted of self-governed nations.¹⁵ Within that vision, China needed to function as a great power due to its large population, and the inevitable rise of "non-white peoples in world affairs."¹⁶ It was thus crucial to integrate the largest non-White nations into the international

¹¹ Gaïduk, *Divided Together*, 10.

¹² Gaïduk, 11.

¹³ Robert A. Divine, *Roosevelt and World War II*, vol. 1968. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), 58–59.

¹⁴ Erez Manela, "The Fourth Policeman: Franklin Roosevelt's Vision for China's Global Role," in *Kailuo Xuan Yan de Yi Yi Yu Ying Xiang [The Significance and Impact of the Cairo Declaration]*, ed. Sihua Wu (Taipei: Zheng da chu ban she, 2014), 224.

¹⁵ Manela, 224.

¹⁶ Manela, 230.

system to ensure its long-term stability, or risk them becoming revisionist powers that sought to destroy the order from the outside when they became rising powers. Furthermore, Roosevelt saw China as an important “buffer state” between America and Russia that would “line up” on the side of the United States in any conflict with Russia.¹⁷ This explained Roosevelt’s persistence in elevating China into the great power club.

Thus, even during his first meeting with the Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov at the White House in 1941, Roosevelt already outlined his plan for the Four Policemen, who would “maintain sufficient armed forces to impose peace,” to the Soviets. That this included China, but not France, was of great surprise to Molotov – France was, after all, one of the great European powers of old. Furthermore, mutual distrust between Stalin and China’s premier Chiang Kai-shek already existed; the CCP was a strong threat to Chiang’s Nationalist government, and Stalin clearly supported the CCP in hopes that China would emerge from the war as a communist ally.

The British Foreign Office was similarly perplexed by China’s addition to the great power club. Gladwynn Jebb, a career diplomat in the British Foreign Service, never thought that China had “any chance of being a real world power for a very long time.”¹⁸ Churchill’s disdain for China was perhaps even stronger: China was described as a “faggot vote” on the side of the United States in their attempt to “liquidate the British overseas Empire.”¹⁹ Already, Roosevelt had started to lecture Churchill on the coming end of empire in the world, and Churchill was

¹⁷ Justus D. Doenecke and Mark A. Stoler, *Debating Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Foreign Policies, 1933-1945* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 64.

¹⁸ Bosco, *Five to Rule Them All*, 25.

¹⁹ The term “faggot vote” was common during Victorian England and was applied to a voter who voted according to the wishes of the person who bought their vote; Manela, “The Fourth Policeman,” 215.

keenly aware of Britain's frailty.²⁰ Churchill was afraid that a stronger post-war China could threaten key British interests in Asia: the return of colonies such as Hong Kong and Singapore, and the retention of India within the empire.²¹ After all, Chiang had met with Indian leaders Gandhi and Nehru, sympathising with their goals of Indian independence, in direct contradiction to the goals of the British Empire.

Neither the British nor Soviets welcomed Roosevelt's inclusion of China as the world's Fourth Policeman, even though Roosevelt had already begun advocating for China's place among the great powers immediately after the United States entered the war in 1941.²² That China was excluded from the Allied summit in Tehran in late 1943, the first of the Big Three wartime conferences that committed to the opening of a second front against Nazi Germany, was largely due to the objections of the British and Soviets, who still did not see China as a great power. Likewise, China was initially left out of the foreign ministers' summit in Moscow in October 1943 that laid the groundwork for the Tehran conference.

The Chinese government was well aware of its precarious position among the other powers. In summarising the events of the creation of the UN, the ROC government noted that it was American ambassador Cordell Hull's insistence on inviting the Chinese that enabled the attendance of China's ambassador to the Soviet Union at the conference, and the eventual signing of the 1943 Four Power Declaration.²³ Hull's insistence on the inclusion of China had

²⁰ Bosco, *Five to Rule Them All*, 16.

²¹ William A. Stanton, "The Cairo Communique: Its Significance and Influence," in *Kailuo Xuan Yan de Yi Yi Yu Ying Xiang [The Significance and Impact of the Cairo Declaration]*, ed. Sihua Wu (Taipei: Zheng da chu ban she, 2014), 72.

²² Manela, "The Fourth Policeman," 214

²³ Roosevelt and Churchill's Declaration of the Atlantic Charter and its Process 羅斯福邱吉爾共同發表大西洋憲章成立經過及其內容, 14 August 1941, Digital Collections Number 002-020300-00047-001, Academia Historica, Taipei, Republic of China.

exhausted his political capital with the Russians – a decision that Averell Harriman, the incoming American ambassador to the Soviet Union, found perplexing. To obtain the agreement of the Russians, Hull pressured them by implying that the exclusion of China could lead to the channelling of aid away from Moscow to Chongqing.²⁴

The Soviets continued to oppose the involvement of the Chinese all the way until the Dumbarton Oaks conference. Hilderbrand claims that the Chinese delegation clearly played second fiddle to the Americans, British and Soviets.²⁵ The Soviets refused to meet directly with the Chinese, as the Soviet Union had technically not declared war against the Japanese and did not want to be embroiled in the war in the Far East. As a result, the Chinese were relegated to the last part of the conference, meeting with the Americans and British only after the Soviets had spent weeks in negotiations.²⁶ Although the Americans insisted on holding another set of opening and closing ceremonies for this second conference, observers knew that the most substantive issues had already been agreed upon among the Big Three, and China's place at Dumbarton Oaks was marginal.²⁷

Evidently, the inclusion of China as one of the Four Policemen was surprising to the other great powers. However, by the end of World War II, it seemed that China's place within the club was cemented with the creation of their permanent seat on the UN Security Council. How, then, did China justify their own great power status?

²⁴ Manela, "The Fourth Policeman," 219.

²⁵ Hilderbrand, *Dumbarton Oaks*, 229.

²⁶ Hilderbrand, 229.

²⁷ Bosco, *Five to Rule Them All*, 25.

Potential Power? China's Push for Great Power Status

The Cairo Conference of November 1943 between Roosevelt, Churchill and Chiang Kai-shek has been viewed as a first step towards China's renewed global recognition as a great power. William Stanton writes that the Cairo Communique reached at the conference represented a "groundbreaking shift in the power structure of the world."²⁸ It was the first time that China had joined the Western powers at the same table to discuss war strategy, and that Asia was the primary subject of interest. Although China's main aim to increase American and British commitment to the Asian front of World War II was not entirely achieved during the Conference, Chiang was able to receive acknowledgment of Chinese contributions to the war effort.²⁹ This was no small feat, for China's struggle to be recognised as one of the great powers was apparent even during the interwar period.

During the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, Chinese delegates had hoped to regain the territory lost in the nineteenth century through the various unequal treaties forced upon the weak Qing government by Western powers. However, they were thwarted by the lack of recognition of their status, leading to an outbreak of angry protests within China. This culminated in the May Fourth Movement the same year that many came to see as crucial in the birth of the CCP. Chinese diplomats to the League of Nations in the interwar period strove to receive formal legal equality with other states and gain recognition for China's self-assessed identity as a once and future great power.³⁰ The main foreign policy goals of the diplomats at the time were to revise

²⁸ Stanton, "The Cairo Communique," 71.

²⁹ Sihua Wu, Fangshan Lu and Yongle Lin, *Kailuo Xuan Yan de Yi Yi Yu Ying Xiang [The Significance and Impact of the Cairo Declaration]*, (Taipei: Zheng da chu ban she, 2014), 47-50.

³⁰ Alison Adcock Kaufman, "In Pursuit of Equality and Respect: China's Diplomacy and the League of Nations," *Modern China* 40, no. 6 (2013): 607, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0097700413502616>.

the unequal treaties and also gain permanent representation on the League Council, such that they would be seen as equal to the other great powers.

How the Chinese diplomats set out criteria for great power status is telling of how they conceived of China's own place within the world order. Wellington Koo, China's first representative to the League of Nations and later deputy chief delegate of China's delegation to the 1945 San Francisco Conference, frequently asserted that how important a region or country is ought to "rest on its size, population, cultural significance, and economic *potential*, rather than on its *current* economic and military strength (emphasis added)."³¹ Thus, instead of merely focusing on the present, Koo was pointing to a future where China would once again emerge on the world stage as a great power, as had been the case in the centuries before. In this vein, Asian representation was sorely lacking in the League of Nations when the region's population was far greater than Europe and the Americas, and there was a need to restore a balance of powers in the global order. Clearly, this argument coincided with Roosevelt's own hopes for China – that it would one day emerge as the "linchpin in an Asian structure of new self-governing nations."³² Unfortunately for the Chinese, they were unable to achieve these aims during the interwar period at the League of Nations, and it was only during World War II, after recognition led by the United States, that China found its place among the great powers.

How else did China justify their place as a great power? During Soong's speech at the opening plenary session of the San Francisco Conference, he emphasised the "fourteen years of savage warfare" against Japan that China had waged since 1931, where they had "endured every

³¹ Kaufman, 623.

³² Doenecke and Stoler, *Debating Franklin D. Roosevelt's Foreign Policies*, 64.

misery that the aggression of a major predatory power can impose.”³³ China’s badge of acceptance into the great power club rested heavily on their contribution to the war effort, and they did not pass up on any opportunity to impress this upon the world. It was their status as “one of the principal victims of aggression and the earliest victim,” as Soong asserted, that China used to underscore both their determination for the UN to succeed, and their leading role in the creation of the UN.³⁴ Much like the Soviets, who shouldered the largest part of the burden against Nazi Germany, China’s wartime sacrifices were a mark of their great power status. Long before the embers of war had started burning in Europe, China was already facing the heavy onslaught of the Japanese army. The Japanese advance into Nanjing in 1937 was perhaps one of the most brutal in the war – it was marked by harrowing reports from both locals and the many foreign consulate staff in the city of the indiscriminate killing of civilians, looting, and countless reports of rape.³⁵ In the Far Eastern theatre of war, China alone stood against the Japanese.

Even though the Chinese had ambitions to be recognised as a major power, it was evident that they, too, were unclear exactly what this meant. In his diary, Chiang himself acknowledges China’s relative weakness in relation to the other powers. Wellington Koo is also recorded saying to T. V. Soong that he wanted to “put China into the sun, even before she has economic power.”³⁶ Clearly, they were cognizant of their own economic weakness vis-à-vis the other powers. China’s insecurities over their great power position may have led to their continued echoing of American views. In relaying drafts of the 1942 United Nations Declaration, T. V.

³³ UNCIO et al., “Documents of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, San Francisco, 1945,” 129.

³⁴ UNCIO et al., 129.

³⁵ See Mitter, *China’s War with Japan*, 119–40..

³⁶ Sihua Wu et al., *Kailuo Xuan Yan de Yi Yi Yu Ying Xiang [The Significance and Impact of the Cairo Declaration]*, 50.

Soong was anxious to get Chiang's approval as soon as possible. In the telegram from Hu Shi, then ambassador for China in the United States, that conveyed the draft of the declaration, Soong states that the declaration should be "in line with [Chiang's own] wishes" and urged for his quick agreement so that they would not hold up the signing of the declaration.³⁷

Even in the discussion over drafts of the 1943 Declaration of the Four Nations on General Security, it was apparent that the Chinese were hesitant about their own role within the post-war order. In a report to Chiang analysing the differences between the British and American drafts of the declaration, the vice minister of the ROC's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Wu Guozhen, reiterates how he has conveyed the message that "China *hopes* the U.S. will keep us informed of the situation when negotiations with the Soviets begin during the Three Power conference in Moscow, and that if there are any changes, we *hope* to be consulted (emphasis added)."³⁸ Here, it is again evident that China's role was less central within the alliance. While they hoped to be kept informed of the proceedings, there was uncertainty regarding whether their interests would indeed be upheld.

Nevertheless, upon the successful signing of the Declaration, a report regarding the circumstances sent to Chongqing on November 2nd was optimistic. Hull had apparently told the Chinese representatives that despite initial resistance against Chinese participation, Molotov now welcomed the initiative and was in full agreement that China should be included as one of the Big Four. At the signing of the declaration, the Chinese representatives were welcomed by both

³⁷ Hu Shi to Chiang asking for quick approval of United Nations Declaration 胡適電外交部速同意中美英蘇共同宣言簽字俾一月一日發表, 30 December 1941, Digital Collections Number 002-020300-00047-002, Academia Historica, Taipei, Republic of China.

³⁸ Wu Guozhen to Chiang Reporting on British Amendments to the Four Powers Declaration 吳國楨呈蔣中正英國修正四強宣言文稿, 8 October 1943, Digital Collections Number 002-020300-00047-008, Academia Historica, Taipei, Republic of China.

Eden and Molotov. China had finally received acceptance into the great power club and stood on equal footing with the other powers, receiving recognition for their twelve bitter years at war with the Japanese.

Conclusion

China's place as one of the Big Four at the 1945 San Francisco Conference came as a surprise to other world leaders, perhaps chief of all, the other great powers. After all, China during the war was viewed as weak and impotent. Forced to retreat from their capital in 1937, they were heavily reliant on American aid to fund the war after 1940. Yet, it was also China that laboured against the superior army of the Japanese practically alone from 1937 until 1941, when the United States finally officially entered the war against the Axis powers.³⁹ It was thus based primarily upon the war effort that China advanced their claim to great power status, aided by intellectual arguments over the need to consider China's large population and economic potential. The relationship that they had built with the United States during the war was also instrumental to their cause.

While China's place was hotly debated, France did not face the same opposition despite having been occupied for four years during World War II. While David Bosco outlines how the French needed British sponsorship to persuade the other great powers that they were worthy of a permanent seat on the Security Council; however, other studies rarely problematize France's position as a great power.⁴⁰ In part, this was because France was not present as a sponsoring power – they had refused the invitation as their amendments were not presented alongside the

³⁹ Mitter, *China's War with Japan*, 6.

⁴⁰ Bosco, *Five to Rule Them All*, 26–28.

Dumbarton Oaks proposals.⁴¹ However, France had also been one of the great powers since the 1815 Concert of Europe, and was central to the League of Nations alongside Britain. Possessing their own colonial empire, France was weakened, but nonetheless still commanded respect.

On the other hand, China's unstable domestic situation continued to hinder true recognition of their great power status. While diplomats like Wellington Koo argued that it was China's potential power, and not their current status that needed to be recognized, this was not entirely the most convincing argument to other nations. At the end of World War II, China continued to be held together by an unstable alliance between the Nationalists and the Communists, which soon boiled over into yet another civil war once their common enemy, the Japanese, were defeated.

While the domestic tensions explained China's continued perceived weakness, they also gave increasing impetus to China's desire to achieve significance on the world stage. If the Nationalist-led government was able to portray itself and be recognised as a great power on the international stage, would they not also be able to re-inspire flagging confidence in the Nationalist government and come closer to winning the battle of public opinion against the Communists? These considerations weighed heavily on Chiang's mind as he pondered whom best to send to San Francisco.

⁴¹ Schlesinger, *Act of Creation*, 64.

“The Government of the Republic of China has sent a representative delegation to this conference. The composition of the Chinese delegation is something unique in our history... Our delegation, just as yours, represents many shades of opinion and different walks of life.”¹

Wellington Koo, 18 May 1945

CHAPTER 2: PORTRAYING A MODERN CHINA – THE CHINESE DELEGATION

China’s inclusion as one of the great powers was a hard-fought, but welcome development for the Chinese. They had managed to project a facet of themselves as a great power both internationally and domestically through their role as one of the four sponsoring nations of the UN. However, they were still seen as a “lesser” great power to other observers due to their flagging military and economic strength. This chapter will analyse how China attempted to project themselves as a true great power through their people – the Chinese delegation at the 1945 San Francisco Conference.

The Chinese government was represented by ten delegates at the San Francisco Conference; however, they brought with them a large attaché of ninety personnel in total.² While the delegation was made up of members from different political parties, the majority of the delegation was either from the Guomindang (Kuomintang), or had close affiliations with the Nationalist government – these included the chief delegate T. V Soong, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Wellington Koo, Chinese Ambassador to the Court of St James; Wang Chonghui, secretary general of the Chinese Supreme Defence Council; Wei Daoming, Chinese Ambassador to the United States; Hu Shi, former Chinese Ambassador to the United States and close associate of Chiang; and Hu Lin, chief editor of the newspaper *Da Gong Bao*, which was seen to

¹ V. K. Wellington Koo, *The Conference and China*, Speech (San Francisco, 1945), Commonwealth Club of California records, Hoover Institution Archives, <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/760>.

² UNCIO et al., “Documents of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, San Francisco, 1945,” 23-27.

be closely affiliated with the Nationalist government. Also represented on the delegation was Li Huang of The Young China Party; Zhang Junmai of the China Democratic Socialist Party; Wu Yifang, the first female university president in China and member of the People's Political Council; as well as Dong Biwu, a main member of the CCP.³

How did Chinese political leaders decide whom to send to the conference? Key to their decision was a keen awareness that they had to project an image of themselves as a democratic and modern great power. The Chinese government knew that appearances at UNCIO mattered, thus they composed a delegation that reflected that understanding. They did this in three main ways: sending men of diplomatic importance, creating a multi-party delegation, and including a female delegate.

China's Leading Diplomats: T. V. Soong and Wellington Koo

The two most senior members of China's delegation, T. V. Soong and Wellington Koo, were crucial to the prestige of the delegation at the UNCIO. Stationed in Washington and London respectively during the war, both men were familiar with navigating the international stage. Much like how Stalin had toyed with removing Molotov from the delegation to display his displeasure with the other great powers, China knew that sending their leading diplomats would be essential to enhancing the standing of the Chinese delegation as well as of the Conference. As a result, they had to include two of their most eloquent and experienced spokesmen.

T. V. Soong did not begin his career as a diplomat. After graduating from university in America, Soong returned to China to start his career in the trade and banking circles in 1920. A man close to Sun Yat-sen and the Guomindang, Soong was appointed Minister of Commerce in

³ UNCIO et al., 23-27.

1925 as part of the national government stationed out of Canton, before becoming Minister of Finance in 1928 when the Nationalist government reunified China.⁴ His sister's marriage to Chiang Kai-shek tied him even more closely to the centre of power. Throughout the next few years, Soong filled a variety of governmental posts before resigning in 1934 to establish the China Development Finance Corporation.⁵ In 1940, he was abruptly sent to Washington to act as the personal representative of Chiang Kai-shek. Soong was tasked with winning the support of Roosevelt and the American government to obtain aid so the war against Japan could continue.⁶

The United States in 1940 advocated a policy of isolationism and Roosevelt continued to promise the American people that the administration would not join the war.⁷ Despite the publicised isolationist outlook of the United States, Soong was remarkably successful in his mission and was able to negotiate substantial loans for the Chinese government over the next four years. Initially acting outside of the purview of the Chinese Embassy in America until he was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1942, he cultivated close relationships with powerful politicians and celebrities in the United States through social events like parties and bridge sessions.⁸ Perhaps most important was Soong's close relationship to Roosevelt. After the failure of the 1943 Quebec Conference, a secret military conference between America, Great Britain and Canada, to discuss anything substantial about the Pacific theatre of war, Soong met privately with the President to discuss the war effort and China's role in the alliance of the great

⁴ Tai-Chun Kuo and Hsiao-ting Lin, *T. V. Soong in Modern Chinese History* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2006), 26.

⁵ Kuo and Lin, 26.

⁶ Kuo and Lin, 5.

⁷ Tai-Chun Kuo, "A Strong Diplomat in a Weak Polity: T. V. Soong and Wartime US–China Relations, 1940–1943," *Journal of Contemporary China* 18, no. 59 (2009): 220, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670560802575994>.

⁸ Kuo, 220.

powers.⁹ There, he gained Roosevelt's agreement that China, Burma and Thailand would remain under Chiang's control as supreme commander of the China theatre, with the Nationalist government controlling all lend-lease materials.¹⁰

While Soong saw the use of the media and the cultivation of public relations as vital to gaining support for the Chinese war effort, he also knew it was important to create personal connections with important American personnel.¹¹ Indeed, his success at creating influential personal networks that reached far into the United States government was the subject of envy by both American and Nationalist officials.¹² Nonetheless, his efforts were instrumental to China's growing prominence in American circles, and by the time of the 1945 San Francisco Conference, Soong was seen as "one of China's most eloquent and powerful spokesmen."¹³

Wellington Koo was likewise a distinguished diplomat, who had represented China on the world stage for more than three decades by the time of the 1945 San Francisco Conference. This was no easy feat for a country that was imploding while struggling to gain recognition of their sovereignty on the international stage. Born in 1888, Koo was raised in a divided Shanghai where Imperialist powers had extracted treaties from the weak Qing court that granted their citizens extra-territoriality. Many Chinese were "regarded as second-class citizens" within the city, which only served to inflame patriotic fervour in Koo and his fellow countrymen.¹⁴ Educated at St. John's College, an American-missionary run school that was one of the most prestigious schools in Shanghai during the early 20th century, Koo's education was conducted in

⁹ Kuo and Lin, *T. V. Soong in Modern Chinese History*, 14–15.

¹⁰ Kuo and Lin, 14-15.

¹¹ Kuo and Lin, 16.

¹² Kuo, "A Strong Diplomat in a Weak Polity: T. V. Soong and Wartime US–China Relations, 1940–1943," 229.

¹³ Edward R. Stettinius Jr, *Lend-Lease, Weapon for Victory* (New York: The Macmillan company, 1944), 109.

¹⁴ Jonathan Clements, *Wellington Koo: China* (London: Haus Pub, 2008), 4.

English with a focus on Western history and sciences.¹⁵ He then attended Columbia from 1905 to 1912, graduating with a PhD in international law with a dissertation focused on “The Status of Aliens in China” shortly after the 1911 Xinhai Revolution that overthrew the Qing dynasty.¹⁶ He was immediately asked to return to China and serve as English secretary to China’s new president – Yuan Shikai.¹⁷ However, unitary control over the new Republic was a foregone dream, and China devolved into a series of warring factions. In this environment, Koo was sent back to Washington as China’s envoy, where he fostered a close relationship with American President Woodrow Wilson.¹⁸ In 1919, when he was sent to the Paris Peace Conference to plead China’s case, this relationship thrust him into the limelight and he emerged as one of his country’s “most outspoken and eloquent champions.”¹⁹

However, in the two decades that followed, Koo’s diplomatic career became increasingly rocky. Versailles was a failure for the Chinese, who refused to sign the Treaty as they had not managed to regain the German concessions of Shandong – it was instead passed to the Japanese, who seized it as part of the spoils of war. Despite the failure at Versailles, Koo was nonetheless seen as a national hero for his efforts on the Shandong issue.²⁰ Still, Koo’s career as a diplomat continued to be hampered by China’s domestic situation, as other powers scoffed at how he represented a government that controlled barely half of China.²¹ After 1924, Koo allied himself

¹⁵ Stephen G. Craft, *V.K. Wellington Koo and the Emergence of Modern China* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 8–10.

¹⁶ Wolfgang Saxon, “V.K. WELLINGTON KOO DIES; A FORMER PREMIER OF CHINE,” *New York Times*, October 16, 1985, National edition.

¹⁷ Craft, *V.K. Wellington Koo and the Emergence of Modern China*, 28.

¹⁸ Clements, *Wellington Koo: China*, 4.

¹⁹ Clements, 4.

²⁰ Craft, *V.K. Wellington Koo and the Emergence of Modern China*, 59.

²¹ Craft, 61.

with Zhang Zuolin, a powerful warlord from Manchuria who had moved to control Beijing.²² Chiang Kai-shek and the Guomindang government thus branded him a traitor when they came to power in 1928, and a warrant issued for his arrest forced him into two years of de-facto exile.²³

Koo came out of his exile in 1931 when the Japanese invasion of Manchuria convinced Chiang of the Nationalist government's need for Koo's expertise in diplomacy.²⁴ Chiang realised that one of the only avenues China had to deal with this invasion was through the League of Nations, as China could not yet go to war with Japan's more advanced army.²⁵ Koo's intimate familiarity with the League could help China navigate the processes required to make the League intervene on China's behalf. Despite the League's adoption of the Lytton Report, that denied Japan's claim of their invasion of Manchuria, the League ultimately did not have the power to cease Japanese aggression and Japan simply left the league in 1933.²⁶ Nonetheless, Koo's work at the commission and within the League bolstered China's position during World War II.²⁷

Koo's expertise in diplomacy, international organisations and international law placed him as one of the premier representatives who could boost China's status on the international stage. His preference for international law and expertise in the area was instrumental at the 1944 Dumbarton Oaks meetings, and helped to shape China's emphasis on codifying and using international law to resolve conflict during the 1945 San Francisco Conference.

²² Clements, *Wellington Koo: China*, 117-118.

²³ Clements, 121.

²⁴ Stephen G. Craft, "Saving the League: V.K. Wellington Koo, the League of Nations and Sino-Japanese Conflict, 1931-39," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 11, no. 3 (2000): 92, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592290008406172>.

²⁵ Craft, 92.

²⁶ Pasha L. Hsieh, "Wellington Koo, International Law and Modern China," *Indian Journal of International Law* 56, no. 3 (2016): 320, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40901-017-0054-7>.

²⁷ Hsieh, 320.

Being Representative and Democratic: China's Multi-Party Delegation

Apart from these two stalwarts, China's delegation was rounded out by eight other delegates. However, China's unstable domestic political climate made deciding who would represent the country at the San Francisco Conference a thorny affair. The continuing rivalry between the Nationalist and Communist parties remained the most pressing issue that influenced debates over the composition of China's delegation. The breakdown of the Second United Front, created in 1936 to unite the two sides against the Japanese, had already come to a head in early 1941 with the New Fourth Army incident, where a force of roughly 80,000 Nationalist troops clashed with the CCP-controlled New Fourth Army of 9,000, of which only 2,000 escaped.²⁸ Both sides continued to struggle for dominance over parts of China not controlled by the Japanese, and this conflict inflamed tensions within the People's Political Council, the wartime parliament of China. By 1945, the enmity between the two parties had only grown. Configured into their struggle for hearts over the domestic population was a keen sense that gaining international support for their respective causes would be crucial.

How the domestic struggle was viewed on the international stage greatly worried the Chinese. In a letter to Chiang regarding the selection of delegates for the Conference, Zuo Shunsheng, a member of the Young China Party, made this clear by asserting that being able to present a united front through the exclusion of CCP delegates would benefit China's

²⁸ Rana Mitter provides a good overview of the incident in his book, *China's War with Japan, 1937-1945: The Struggle for Survival*, (London: Allen Lane, 2013), 224-227. For more on the Second United Front and the Chinese Civil War, see Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), which also includes extensive bibliographical information on more sources.

international image.²⁹ The inclusion of CCP delegates could be a cause for worry if they decided to take the opportunity to lobby for their cause and sway the international community to their side.³⁰ Indeed, detailed in Chiang's diary was his discontent with the CCP for agitating to be represented on the delegation to San Francisco.³¹ Chiang and other political leaders saw the internal strife in the domestic scene as negatively impacting the Nationalist government's international reputation. As such, he was initially adamant against allowing Communist representation at the conference. Chiang was incensed that the CCP had "immediately [begun] a campaign to demand to be represented at the San Francisco Conference under the pretext of 'democracy', in order to weaken the position of our government on the international stage."³² One of the key figures in the CCP's diplomatic efforts, Zhou Enlai, had written personally to the United States Ambassador Patrick J. Hurley to call for the inclusion of at least three members of the CCP on the Chinese delegation: himself, Dong Biwu and Qin Bangxian.³³ Chiang responded with anger to Zhou's request, arguing that the Conference was "between the governments of different nations, and not between the different parties," before claiming that Hurley sided with Chiang's stance on the matter.³⁴

Sources published in the PRC reveal a different picture, with Hurley described as being sympathetic to the CCP's arguments. It was Hurley's "understanding of the domestic situation" that led him to convince Roosevelt to write to Chiang and ask that the various parties be evenly

²⁹ Zuo Shunsheng to Chiang Kai-shek requesting the inclusion of CCP members in the delegation to San Francisco 國民參政會參政員左舜生函國民政府主席蔣中正為舊金山會議請派共黨參加為代表, 21 March 1945, Digital Collections Number 001-063130-00002-013, Academia Historica, Taipei, Republic of China.

³⁰ Zuo Shunsheng to Chiang Kai-shek.

³¹ Chiang Kai-shek, *The Diary of Chiang Kai-shek*, 20 February 1945.

³² Chiang, 20 February 1945.

³³ Zhu Dezhong, "Dong Biwu Chu Xi Lian He Guo Cheng Li Da Hui Shi Mo [Dong Biwu at the San Francisco Conference]" *Dang Shi Tian Di* 6 (1996): 23.

³⁴ Chiang, *Diary*, 20 February 1945.

represented during the conference.³⁵ The United States' eight-member delegation consisted of members from both the Republican and Democratic parties, although leaning more towards the left. Likewise, the United Kingdom's delegation had representatives from the Conservative, Labour and Liberal parties.

Chiang eventually decided to create a multi-party delegation upon Roosevelt's advice.³⁶ However, this was buttressed by his argument that Hurley, too, agreed with his stance of not allowing party politics to interfere with the selection of delegation members. Evidently, Chiang's main reason for creating a multi-party delegation was that even the United States and Britain, among other countries, had created multi-party delegations. China could paint themselves more favourably on the international stage if they followed this example, and ultimately this could aid the reunification effort with the Nationalist government at the helm.³⁷ As a result, Chiang wrote to Roosevelt, emphasising fair representation on the delegation: out of the ten member delegation, the CCP and the other two opposition parties each had one representative, with three representatives being unaffiliated, leaving the Guomindang with only four representatives.

Indeed, Zuo Shunsheng also pushed to include delegates from the CCP, as he agreed that the exclusion of them would not reflect well on China. Furthermore, the CCP delegates were sent as part of China's delegation and if they revealed any signs of internal conflict at the event, they would be subject both domestic and international criticism, thus restraining their actions at the conference.³⁸ As a result, the CCP found itself with one delegate – Dong Biwu. His inclusion was later highlighted once the Chinese seat was handed over from Taipei to Beijing, and sources

³⁵ Zhu, "Dong Biwu," 24.

³⁶ Chiang, *Diary*, 26 March 1945.

³⁷ Chiang, 26 March 1945.

³⁸ Zuo Shunsheng to Chiang Kai-shek requesting Communist Presence at San Francisco, 21 March 1945, Digital Collections Number 001-063130-00002-013, Academia Historica, Taipei, Republic of China.

coming from the PRC emphasize his role at the conference with little regard paid to the other members of the delegation.

Clearly, many concerned parties within China were highly conscious of the optics of the whole exercise and knew that the perceptions on the international stage were important not only for their international standing, but also to stabilising the country's domestic situation. As a result, Wang Shijie, head of the publications department, submitted a report to Chiang regarding what the information policy at San Francisco should be. Within the document, Wang explicitly spells out suspicion that Communist representatives would use the platform to “destroy the government's prestige” and had already secretly telegraphed key officials in America to warn them against giving Communist representatives a voice.³⁹ Wang was particularly concerned that overseas Chinese in America would respond to the agitations of Communist representatives and be misled by their statements.⁴⁰

Female Representation at the UN

China's concerns over projecting themselves as a forward-looking, modern power may also have figured into the decision to include a female member in the delegation: Wu Yifang. Prior to announcements over who would be on the Chinese delegation, Alice Paul of the World Women's Party wrote to express her admiration for the Chinese government for being the only country at Dumbarton Oaks to have a female translator, and hoped that they would continue to take a leading role in recognising the equality of women by allowing for more women to

³⁹ Wang Shijie to Chiang Kai-shek for Approval of Media Policy 中國國民黨中央執行委員會宣傳部部長王世杰呈總裁蔣中正為遵諭擬具舊金山會議之宣傳辦法三項乞鑒核示遵, 18 March 1945, Digital Collections Number 001-063130-0002-009, Academia Historica, Taipei, Republic of China.

⁴⁰ Wang Shijie to Chiang Kai-shek.

participate at the San Francisco conference either as delegates or staff.⁴¹ The inclusion of women in the delegation could help China project themselves as a representative and progressive power.

Wu's role as China's only female delegate came to be significant: out of the eight women present at San Francisco as official delegates, Wu was also one of only four women to sign the United Nations Charter in 1945. The other seven women present at the conference in the capacity of delegates were Virginia Gildersleeve, dean of Barnard College at Columbia University (United States); Bertha Lutz, a biologist and politician (Brazil); senator Isabel P. de Vidal (Uruguay); MP Cora Casselman (Canada); and the feminist Minerva Bernadino (Dominican Republic). Great Britain sent Labour MP Ellen Wilkinson and the Conservative MP Florence Horsburgh as assistant delegates.⁴² Representing seven different countries, the work of these women helped to shape the creation of the UN Charter. Other significant women at the conference included Jessie Street of Australia, who was present at the conference as an advisor.⁴³

Why was Wu chosen as the female delegate to San Francisco? One of the key reasons was her familiarity with America and international politics. Born in 1893 in Hubei province to a scholar-official family which had lost much of their prestige, strong emphasis was placed on Wu's education as a child. Family tragedies disrupted her education when she was sixteen, but five years later in 1914, she found work as an English teacher in Beijing. In 1916, she was admitted to Ginling Women's College as a special transfer student, where her stellar academic achievements and leadership qualities led to her election as the first president of the newly

⁴¹ World Women's Party requests Ms. Yan Yaqin at San Francisco as a translator 外交部函國民政府文官處為世界婦女會致電舊金山會議請派顏雅卿女士出席工作譯文, 2 April 1945, Digital Collections Number 001-060200-00011-008/9, Academia Historica, Taipei, Republic of China.

⁴² World Women's Party requests Ms. Yan Yaqin at San Francisco as a translator.

⁴³ Helen McCarthy, *Women of the World: The Rise of the Female Diplomat* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), 155.

formed student council. After graduating from the college in 1919 as part of the school's first class, Wu served as an interpreter for visiting American guests. Her English skills were widely praised, and she was recommended for further studies in America. She was awarded the Barbour Scholarship, and in 1922 headed to the University of Michigan to further her studies in biology.

As a key figure in Chinese higher education, heading Ginling Women's College for 23 years as the first female university president in Chinese history, Wu had also represented China on the international stage in this capacity. She maintained extensive connections with various Christian and educational organisations in the United States as part of her role. At the same time, she was also active in politics as part of the People's Political Council. The combination of these two factors led her to be chosen as part of diplomatic missions to America, first in 1943 during the war, and later in 1945 when she was chosen as the sole female delegate in China's delegation to the San Francisco Conference.

In 1943, Wu was sent on a mission to the United States to publicize the status of the war in China and pave the way for post-war negotiations. Government documents show that this initial mission was taken under other pretexts, one of which was preparations to improve educational standards in China after the war, as the Chinese government had not wished for the true purpose of the mission to be revealed.⁴⁴ The 1943 visit also allowed her to be acquainted with Virginia Gildersleeve, the only female delegate in the American delegation.⁴⁵ Interestingly,

⁴⁴ 020-050211-0003, Institute of Modern History Archives, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Republic of China.

⁴⁵ Newspaper article, Da Gong Bao, undated.

the Chinese government is said to have followed the example of Gildersleeve's appointment, a head of a women's college, and thus appointed Wu, who held a similar role in China.⁴⁶

Apart from her leading role in education, Wu was also involved in politics within China. She had been appointed to the People's Political Council since 1938 and was part of the executive committee during its second session. Her skill at chairing the meetings was noted by Wang Shijie, a key Guomindang official who served as secretary for the Council, in his diaries.⁴⁷ In this capacity, she agitated for improvements in the status of women, one of which was an appeal to the government to legislate against discriminatory hiring practices that disadvantaged women in the workforce.⁴⁸

Her pioneering work in the Chinese women's movement was referenced in an interview before she left for the San Francisco Conference. When Wu was asked about how she felt being selected as the only female delegate for China, she responded by downplaying the differences between gender, claiming that "regardless of gender any delegate would have their strengths and weaknesses."⁴⁹ However, Wu nonetheless reportedly said she hoped that more women would eventually be recognized as capable within society, and not just have her name come up as a symbol for women's empowerment in the China.⁵⁰

However, Wu remained somewhat of a moderate feminist at the conference itself, balancing her role between two main schools of thought about protecting the rights of women in

⁴⁶ Torild Skard, "Getting Our History Right: How Were the Equal Rights of Women and Men Included in the Charter of the United Nations?," *Forum for Development Studies* 35, no. 1 (2008): 44, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08039410.2008.9666394>.

⁴⁷ Wang Shijie, *The Diary of Wang Shijie*. See entries for March 5, 1941 and October 30, 1942.

⁴⁸ Second Historical Archives of China, Fonds No. 34, File No. 174, Nanjing, People's Republic of China.

⁴⁹ Newspaper article, *Da Gong Bao*, undated.

⁵⁰ *Da Gong Bao*.

the Charter. Some feminists felt that the emphasis on protective legislation for women workers by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) furthered the idea that women were a group that needed to be “protected” and thus undermined the message of women as self-governing individuals; this led to push back from ‘equal rights’ feminists such as the British Six Point Group and the American National Women’s Party.⁵¹ The tension between those who wanted to claim distinctive rights for women and those who stood for “complete equality” was apparent in how the American, British and Canadian delegates opposed the creation of a separate Commission on the Status of Women in 1945.⁵² Gildersleeve was wary of the “old militant feminism” that highlighted women’s issues at the conference.⁵³ Likewise, Ellen Wilkinson of Great Britain responded sharply to reporters who tried to present her as part of a “united front of women” – she wished instead to be recognized as a delegate appointed on her own merits, so that she would not be confined solely to issues in the “women’s field” at the conference.⁵⁴

Other women delegates like Bertha Lutz, Minerva Bernadino and Jessie Street held a different view and saw the internationalization of women’s issues as crucial to the conference. Jessie Street, the Australian delegate, campaigned for the inclusion of Article 8 that stipulated equal opportunities for male and female employment at the UN.⁵⁵ Street felt this was crucial to ensure the participation of women in the UN, as women had been excluded from occupying

⁵¹ Marilyn Lake, “From Self-Determination via Protection to Equality via Non-Discrimination: Defining Women’s Rights and the League of Nations and the United Nations,” in *Women’s Rights and Human Rights: International Historical Perspectives*, ed. Patricia Grimshaw and Katie Holmes (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), 257–58.

⁵² Lake, 265.

⁵³ Glenda Sluga, “Spectacular Feminism’: The International History of Women, World Citizenship and Human Rights,” in *Women’s Activism: Global Perspectives from the 1890s to the Present*, ed. Francisca de Haan (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013), 45.

⁵⁴ Sluga, 46.

⁵⁵ Karen Garner, *Shaping a Global Women’s Agenda: Women’s NGOs and Global Governance, 1925-85* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 141.

various positions as laws did not specifically state the eligibility of women. Bertha Lutz of Brazil, who had also pushed strongly for the inclusion of Article 8, further argued that the assumption that the term ‘men’ also included women often precluded them from taking part in public affairs.⁵⁶ It was thus important that explicit mention was made of the status of women in the founding documents of the UN. Wu found herself walking a moderate line between the two groups, supporting references to women in the Charter when it seemed appropriate, but not when it seemed “funny.”⁵⁷ However, alongside Gildersleeve, Wu opposed the creation of a commission on the status of women, proposed by Bertha Lutz, under the Commission on Human Rights.⁵⁸ Evidently, Wu did not want to push too strong a feminist agenda during her time at the conference. Perhaps, much like the rest of the Chinese delegation, she saw her role as more of a mediating presence.

Conclusion

The Nationalist government carefully selected delegates as another means through which China could project itself as a great power on the international stage. Like the other great powers, they were aware of the optics on the international stage. The inclusion of distinguished diplomats like Soong and Koo who were familiar with the West, and who had decades of experience navigating international negotiations, were essential for the delegation to be taken seriously. However, not only did the Chinese wish to appear as “democratic” as the other great powers by allowing for a multi-party delegation, they were also one out of seven countries to include a female delegate. These were both claims to China’s membership in the great power club as a modern, democratic and forward-looking power.

⁵⁶ Garner, 141.

⁵⁷ Skard, “Getting Our History Right,” 42, 49.

⁵⁸ Skard, 53.

Yet, did the actions of the delegation and the delegates themselves at the conference serve to validate this role? The next chapter will examine what China did at the conference – the role they played as mediators within the Big Four and between the Big Four and the other powers, as well as their priorities at the negotiating table – and demonstrate that despite achieving great power status in name, they were ultimately still straddling the great and middle power divide.

CHAPTER 3: BETWEEN GREAT AND SMALL – CHINA’S LIMINAL ROLE

China’s involvement in the creation of the UN in 1945 was viewed as instrumental to both international and domestic power projections. This chapter will examine what China did at the conference – their priorities at the negotiating table as well as the role they played as mediators within the Big Four, and between the Big Four and the other powers – to demonstrate that despite achieving great power status in name, they were ultimately still straddling the great power and middle power divide. China’s emphasis on international law was informed by their desire to institute a rules-based order where great power prerogatives could be limited; however, the possession of the veto nonetheless impressed upon the minds of the smaller powers that China was distinct from the rest. Through comparing China’s role to other self-proclaimed middle powers like Australia and Canada, this chapter demonstrates how China occupied a unique space between the greater and smaller powers. While at San Francisco, China did not act like the other great powers in their emphasis on what had to be included in the Charter and the role they played during the conference itself. Could they then be considered as middle powers, like Canada and Australia, at the 1945 Conference? To evaluate this, a definition of the term must first be set out.

The term middle power emerged in contemporary usage towards the end of World War II and was used primarily by the Canadians and the Australians, who hoped to define for themselves a “distinct role” in the post-war order.¹ Robertson points to how it moved from being used primarily in the press as a novel term in 1945, to academia a year later in an essay by Lionel

¹ Jeffrey Robertson, “Middle-Power Definitions: Confusion Reigns Supreme,” *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 71, no. 4 (2017): 357, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2017.1293608>.

Gelber entitled “Canada’s New Stature.”² Adam Chapnick defined middle power status as hierarchical: based on the UN charter which distinguished the great powers from the small by the veto. However, because of how the Cold War had provided the international community with an extra tier of superpowers (the United States and the Soviet Union), Britain, France and China had thus become middle powers.³ Other scholars have disagreed, and instead devised other ways of defining middle power status, which fall into three main categories: functional, capacity-based and behavioural. However, each category remains unable to fully account for what the term means. For one, functional definitions remain imprecise as they are always in flux; capacity-based definitions based on indicators may seem more precise, but measurements of capacity likewise suffer from the same challenges as measuring power differentials; and behavioural definitions are tautological.⁴ However, as Robertson suggests, perhaps a more pragmatic approach to defining what middle power status is may be more useful – what are middle powers in a set context?⁵

As this chapter will demonstrate, China occupied a unique space as one of the “lesser” great powers in 1945. Unlike Australia or Canada who had positioned themselves as middle powers, China had been designated a great power from the outset with their position as one of the sponsoring powers. As one of the sponsoring powers, China was a key participant in all the exclusive Executive and Steering Committee meetings which set the agenda for the conference. Furthermore, their permanent seat on the Security Council and the veto, which Australian and Canadian delegates vehemently objected to, made the difference even more stark. In this context,

² Robertson, 357.

³ Adam Chapnick, “The Middle Power,” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 7, no. 2 (1999): 78, <https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.1999.9673212>.

⁴ Robertson, “Middle-Power Definitions,” 362–63.

⁵ Robertson, 366.

China obviously did not occupy the same position as these self-proclaimed middle powers. However, China also continued to play second fiddle to the other powers in the Big Four, as their military and economic position was more comparable to the middle powers than the accepted "great" powers. This was apparent in the attitudes they took towards negotiations, and their relative lack of insistence for their amendments, which they often dismissed to present a united front to the rest of the delegations. Thus, I argue that China straddled the divide between great and middle, allowing them to play the role of broker at the conference. On one hand, China was forced to be more conservative with their proposals as part of the sponsoring nations. However, cognizant of their own role, they also pushed for provisions to safeguard the rights of smaller nations.

In this chapter, I first examine China's post-war planning priorities and proposals for the UN Charter. As the only non-white, Asian nation with a permanent seat on the Security Council, China pushed for racial equality, the safeguarding of territorial independence, and greater cultural exchanges. Above all, in trying to protect their interests both before the conference and at the negotiating table, they pushed strongly for the codification of international law within the Charter. I shall then turn to look at instances where the Chinese intervened among the Big Four, before examining the role they played in the greater General Assembly as mediator. While China had limited success in shaping the Charter to their wishes, they were still able to safeguard key national interests – chief of all, the recognition of their sovereignty over China.

China's Post-war Plans

Chinese planners had already begun research on the creation of the post war order even prior to the 1945 Conference. In a lengthy document from 1944, they laid out a detailed plan on the areas they thought needed to be addressed and assigned foreign ministry staffers to

investigate these issues in detail. Seven key areas were accounted for in their plan: (1) the creation of an international peace organisation; (2) the issue of Japan; (3) the issue of Germany, Italy and other Axis Powers; (4) the issue of territorial adjustments; (5) foreign policy issues by country (the Soviet Union, United States, United Kingdom, Dutch East Indies, Indochina, India and the Concessions); (6) international economics and; (7) European politics.⁶ At the top of their list was the question of an international peace organisation and how it would be constructed, pointing towards its importance. Yet, it is also telling that research on the international peace organisation constituted only one area among the seven, with the other country or region-specific areas holding the bulk of the work. Evidently, the primary concerns of the government were the immediate post-war settlements.

Nonetheless, the Chinese developed a detailed plan regarding the international organisation in time for the 1944 Dumbarton Oaks meetings. Like the other powers, China was keen to ensure that the new international organisation had enough “teeth” to prevent conflict.⁷ As such, they hoped that an International Security Force could be created – in the case that it was not feasible, there should at least be an International Airforce that could enforce peace should conflict occur. While this did not come to fruition, China was nonetheless satisfied with the creation of the Security Council, which had the authority to enforce peace and security. This contrasted with the failure of the League in creating a clear mandate for the League’s Council and Assembly, that had thus caused China’s plea to the League to check Japanese aggression in 1932, to be “shuffled back and forth” between the two bodies.⁸ With the Security Council, such

⁶ Post-war International Planning Items 戰後國際政策研討事, 3 February 1944, Digital Collections Number 020-019906-0041, Academia Historica, Taipei, Republic of China.

⁷ Kennedy, *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present, and Future of the United Nations*, 27.

⁸ Koo, *The Conference and China*.

situations could hopefully be avoided in the future. Like the other great powers, the Chinese saw their permanent seat in the Council as necessary. Here, the Chinese stood behind American instead of British proposals.⁹ In discussing voting procedures, it seems that even at this juncture although the Chinese did not propose veto power, they instead specified that for any motion to pass, the great powers must have voted with the majority.¹⁰

Evidently, China's positions on key issues tended to dovetail with American proposals. On the issue of regional organisations, which was an area of debate between the great powers, the Chinese took the view that setting up regional organisations within the UN was not advisable.¹¹ In a speech to the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco, Wellington Koo further elaborated on this stance as avoiding arrangements that would weaken the world organisation and create regional power blocs that could once again create instability in the world system.¹² This echoed American fears that regional arrangements would destabilize the new organisation by devolving power from the UN.¹³

The Chinese also felt that territorial integrity and political independence had to be plainly guaranteed for all members of the new organisation. This was in clear opposition to the British position that it was not necessary to have these explicitly protected within the Charter.¹⁴

⁹ T.V. Soong to Chiang on Main Issues of the San Francisco Conference 外交部部長宋子文呈軍事委員會委員長蔣中正為擬具出席舊金山聯合國全體大會各種問題方案請示 17 March 1945, Digital Collections Number 001-063130-00002-007, Academia Historica, Taipei, Republic of China.

¹⁰ Chiang Kai-shek to H. H. Kung 蔣中正電孔祥熙中國基本態度與對重要問題立場修正點轉知中國代表團, 18 August 1944, Digital Collections Number 002-020300-00047-060, Academia Historica, Taipei, Republic of China.

¹¹ T.V. Soong to Chiang on Main Issues of the San Francisco Conference, 17 March 1945, Digital Collections Number 001-063130-00002-007, Academia Historica, Taipei, Republic of China.

¹² Koo, *The Conference and China*.

¹³ Schlesinger, *Act of Creation*, 39–40.

¹⁴ T.V. Soong to Chiang on Main Issues of the San Francisco Conference, 17 March 1945, Digital Collections Number 001-063130-00002-007, Academia Historica, Taipei, Republic of China.

Informed by their own struggles against imperialist powers to protect their sovereignty during the last century, China also pushed for a clause on racial equality in the Charter. Perhaps most importantly, their desire to institute a more regulated international order informed their impulse to enshrine international law within the Charter.

Focusing on International Law

China's strong belief in the use of international law to regulate the international order was a key difference from the proposals of the other great powers. At Dumbarton Oaks, the Chinese met separately with the Americans and British only after discussions among the Big Three were completed. There, one of the main points they focused on was getting agreement about the place of international law in the resolution of conflicts.¹⁵ This was a strengthening of their positions during the interwar period when they were at the League of Nations.¹⁶ The initial proposal for the Charter by the Chinese delegation in August 1944 included a section about the establishment of an "International Law Codification Commission," with the mandate "(A) To study problems of international law, and to propose conventions relating thereto; (B) To codify existing international law".¹⁷

Only three Chinese amendments to the Dumbarton Oaks proposals were accepted: "the... mention [of] international law, education, and cultural affairs" within the United Nations Charter.¹⁸ China had initially offered three other points that should be enshrined in the charter: ensuring the territorial integrity and political independence of all the member states, defining the

¹⁵ H. H. Kung to Chiang Kai-shek 孔祥熙電蔣中正美英接納中國提處理國際爭議應重正義國際公法等建議, 3 October 1944, Digital Collections Number 002-020300-00047-076, Academia Historica, Taipei, Republic of China.

¹⁶ Kaufman, "In Pursuit of Equality and Respect," 628.

¹⁷ Kaufman, 628.

¹⁸ Schlesinger, *Act of Creation*, 160.

term “aggression”, and the creation of an international air force.¹⁹ These, however, were not taken into consideration, and Soong noted in a report to Chiang that as those suggestions had already been dismissed, it would not be wise to press for the inclusion of these points during the conference as there was a need to present a united front to the rest of the delegations.²⁰ In essence, the only Chinese amendments accepted by the other great powers were focused on international law: that the resolution of international disputes should be according to international law, and that international law be codified.²¹

Why was a focus on international law important to China? Scholars in international relations have argued that it has come to be seen as part of the arsenal of middle power tools. In various texts, some defining characteristics of middle powers include their tendency to favour multilateral cooperation, respect for international law, and participation in international organisations.²² Eduard Jordaan argues that middle powers “view international law as instrumental to securing their interests,” as it makes global interactions more predictable.²³ In large part, one could argue that instituting a properly codified, rules-based order evens the playing field for both middle powers and great powers. Thus, the Chinese emphasis on the primacy of international law within the post-war order could be attributed to their position as a “lesser” great power.

¹⁹ T. V. Soong’s report to Chiang Kai-shek, 17 March 1945, Digital Collections Number 001-063130-00002-007, Academia Historica, Taipei, Republic of China.

²⁰ T. V. Soong’s report to Chiang Kai-shek. 17 March 1945.

²¹ T. V. Soong’s report to Chiang Kai-shek, 17 March 1945.

²² See A.F. Cooper, *Niche Diplomacy: Middle Powers After the Cold War*, Studies in Diplomacy (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1997), 185; A. Hyde-Price, *European Security in the Twenty-First Century: The Challenge of Multipolarity*, Contemporary Security Studies (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2007), 52.

²³ Eduard Jordaan, “The Concept of a Middle Power in International Relations: Distinguishing between Emerging and Traditional Middle Powers,” *Politikon* 30, no. 2 (2003): 169, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0258934032000147282>.

This reasoning informed Koo's thinking at Dumbarton Oaks, where he argued that the Charter should have "some reference . . . made to a body of law or specific principles of justice as criteria for the settlement of disputes between nations," in order to "reinforce confidence in the new organization, and give assurance to smaller states that the world body was not intended to become merely an instrument of power politics."²⁴ He further argued that through the General Assembly, international law should gradually be codified such that it could "further provide the world organization with a kind of legislative function."²⁵ Finally, much like what he argued at the League two decades earlier, Koo believed that the "world court [should] be granted compulsory jurisdiction over peaceful disputes," and that this should be written into the UN Charter.²⁶ What was even more surprising was that they wanted to have the UN Security Council "become the supreme arbiter of intractable legal disputes between states", suggesting that they viewed the lack of legal authority, and not just enforcement, as one of the greatest flaws of the League that had to be rectified.²⁷

In the past, the League did not have the legal authority to supersede other arrangements nor uphold decisions made by its legal body, the Permanent Court of International Justice. In their proposals for the UN Charter, the Chinese delegation hoped to resolve these issues. First, they proposed that "member states shall mutually agree that all obligations or understandings existing among them and contrary to the provisions of the Charter should be abrogated by virtue of the Charter," asserting that no other sorts of agreements could be considered superior to the

²⁴ Quoted in Hilderbrand, *Dumbarton Oaks*, 237.

²⁵ Hilderbrand, 237.

²⁶ Hilderbrand, 238.

²⁷ Kaufman, "In Pursuit of Equality and Respect," 629.

authority of the UN, which had not been the case for the League.²⁸ Second, when discussing the relationship of the UN Security Council to the International Court of Justice, the Chinese delegation proposed an amendment that read: “If any party to a dispute fails to comply with the judgment of the international court of justice, the Security Council may [. . .] take such action as it may deem necessary to give effect to the judgment.” T. V. Soong, who together with Wellington Koo represented the ROC at this discussion, reportedly added, “We want the Security Council to follow and carry through the judgment of the Court.”²⁹

In trying to rectify the legal weaknesses of the League in the UN, Chinese diplomats sought to remove what they viewed as one of the major obstacles during the interwar period to creating an equitable international legal system, and thus to the ability of states to interact on a free and equal basis. Their aim for the UN was apparently not just to put China in a position of power, but also to improve and clarify the hierarchy of international institutions in the new era. The codification of a legal system could even the playing field in the post-war order, forcing even the great powers to play by the same rules as the smaller powers. That China had yet to be viewed as an equal to the other three great powers both because of their precarious domestic political situation, as well as their status as a non-white nation, could have informed their desire for a more equal, laws-based system.

The other great powers were wary of subjecting themselves to international jurisdiction and finding their options limited through accepting China’s proposals on international law. When

²⁸ “Tentative Chinese Proposals for a General International Organization (23 August 1944),” *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1 (1944), 718-728.

²⁹ T. V. Soong, “Minutes of the Meeting of the Four Ministers for Foreign Affairs (May 3, 1945),” in *Feng Yun Jihui—Song Ziwen Yu Waiguo Renshi Huitan Jilu, 1940–1949 (A Gathering of Talents—T. V. Soong: Selected Minutes of Meetings with Foreign Leaders, 1940–1949)*, ed. Jingping Wu and Tai-chun Kuo, Hoover Institution and Fudan Univ. Modern China Research Series: Leadership and Archival Documents. (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2010), 454.

a U.S. senator objected that “the effect of this amendment would be to give the Security Council power to enforce the decisions of the world court,” and together with other members of the American delegation rejected this amendment, the Chinese delegation reserved the point.³⁰ The final version, codified in Article 94 of the United Nations Charter, softens the language somewhat from the Chinese proposal, but still empowers the UN Security Council to oversee the enforcement of Court decisions: “If any party to a case fails to perform the obligations incumbent upon it under a judgment rendered by the Court, the other party may have recourse to the Security Council, which may, if it deems necessary, make recommendations or decide upon measures to be taken to give effect to the judgment.”³¹

Great power disapproval of enshrining too much in international law was also evident in their objections to revision of the Statute of the International Court of Justice. A telegram dated April 26th, 1945 from Wang Chonghui, who was China’s representative to the Committee of Jurists, detailed how the change from optional to compulsory jurisdiction was favoured by the majority, but opposed by the Big Three.³² The matter was thus referred to the General Assembly and then further tasked to a subcommittee for discussion. The statute was eventually modified to state that the Court’s jurisdiction was contingent upon the consent of the parties, except those who had made prior declarations accepting compulsory jurisdiction. Voting on the issue had not initially obtained the two-thirds majority needed for this to pass, but upon a second round of voting, the two-thirds majority was obtained with several delegates asserting they only voted this

³⁰ Soong, “Minutes of the Meeting of the Four Ministers for Foreign Affairs (May 3, 1945).”

³¹ UN Charter, Article 94.

³² Wang Chonghui to Chiang Kai-shek on Important Points for Drafts of ICJ Statute 國防最高委員會秘書長王寵惠電軍事委員會委員長蔣中正為電陳法家委員會所擬國際法院規約重要各點, 21 April 1945, Digital Collections Number 001-063130-00004-010, Academia Historica, Taipei, Republic of China.

way to avoid an impasse.³³ China's desire to strengthen the place of international law within the UN was not entirely successful. But it showed how China used law to try to constrain great powers and safeguard its national interests. These often coincided with middle powers and made China a surprisingly key mediator between nations in San Francisco.

Mediating: China Bridges the Divide

This section outlines how China played an important mediating role during the 1945 San Francisco Conference. Current studies focused on the Conference itself are not plentiful, and those that exist currently barely mention Chinese input during the nine weeks in San Francisco. Nonetheless, as the large volumes of telegrams and reports located in ROC government archives suggest, outside of the general plenary sessions China took turns to chair on a rotating basis with the other great powers, China was also a key participant at the Big Four meetings. As one of the four sponsoring nations, China's chief delegate, T. V. Soong (later replaced by Wellington Koo when Soong returned to China to deal with matters at the end of the war), was ensured a seat on the more exclusive committees in the conference: the Executive and the Coordination Committees. This gave China the influence to decide on the direction of the conference alongside the other great powers. Corresponding with China's emphasis on international law, China was one of six countries represented on the Advisory Committee of Jurists.

The bulk of documents on the Conference in ROC archives are daily telegrams sent mostly in Koo's name from San Francisco back to the Chongqing government, which report in detail the occurrences at the various meetings during the conference. However, these reports largely do not go into detail about individual delegates, instead speaking on an impersonal, per-

³³ UNCIO et al., 397.

country basis. Despite the lack of personal detail, it is evident within these reports that contrary to Schlesinger's claim that the Chinese were "too preoccupied with the conflicts and turmoil at home to help out," the Chinese played an important intermediary role both within Big Four meetings, and between the great powers and the smaller powers.³⁴

How did China aim to position itself in relation to the other great powers? A telegram from Chiang to H. H. Kung that lays out the basic attitudes and positions of the Chinese delegation towards the planning for an international organisation demonstrates this clearly: Chiang urged them to emphasise the equality of positions among the Big Four. Evidently, China hoped to be treated as equal with the other great powers. However, this emphasis on ensuring equality correspondingly showed China's preoccupation with their status, and perhaps demonstrated a grudging acknowledgment of their own relative weakness in relation to the other powers. More telling was the fourth item on the list – on matters of disagreement between the great powers which were not of vital importance to Chinese interests, China would adopt the same positions as the US.³⁵ This demonstrates how China saw the US as its strongest patron within the organisation and knew that aligning itself with them would be important. Nonetheless, this did not stop China from mediating during disputes among the Big Four.

In one of the earliest disputes during the Big Four meetings, China intervened between the Americans and the Soviets as they battled over the appointment of chairpersons in the sixteen work committees. The admission of Ukraine, Belarus and Argentina to the conference as official delegates was one of the issues that had to be decided at the opening of the Conference. During

³⁴ Schlesinger, *Act of Creation*, 171.

³⁵ Chiang Kai-shek to H. H. Kung, 18 August 1944, Digital Collections Number 002-020300-00047-060, Academia Historica, Taipei, Republic of China.

the Yalta Conference in February 1945, Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill secretly agreed to allow the Soviet Republics of Ukraine and Belarus a seat at the conference in exchange for two more seats for the United States. This was seen as a controversial agreement and a “moral blemish” to the American public.³⁶ Stalin’s demand was backed by his desire to have more countries within the General Assembly that could side with the Soviets, and Churchill agreed as he was mindful of the many dominions within the British Empire.³⁷ Roosevelt also approved, seeing it as one of the ways he could ensure Soviet participation in the UN – in exchange, he proposed two more votes for the United States as well, that would come from Latin America.³⁸ However, Roosevelt’s sudden death right before the start of the San Francisco Conference left the situation unresolved as Truman was not privy to this bargain, and took a harder stance on the issue. Thus, wrangling over the place of Ukraine, Belarus and Argentina at the conference needed to be resolved within the first few days of the Conference. Things were complicated by the Soviets, who were deathly set against the admission of Argentina, as they had remained neutral with pro-Nazi leanings during the war, in contrast to Belarus and Ukraine who had contributed much to the war effort against the Axis.

It was in this atmosphere that squabbling over the place of these three countries occurred, and after they were finally admitted, the Big Four continued to bargain over their roles at the conference itself. The Soviets pushed for Ukraine to chair a committee and Belarus to be rapporteur; however, the Americans would only accept in exchange for chairperson status to also be granted to Argentina – something the Soviets refused to agree to. As a result, the Chinese intervened to suggest allowing both to take charge over two “unimportant committees.” This

³⁶ Plesch, *America, Hitler and the UN*, 176.

³⁷ Schlesinger, *Act of Creation*, 59.

³⁸ Schlesinger, 59.

solution was met with agreement from both the British and the Americans; however, discussions continued to stall as no agreement could be reached over what constituted an “unimportant committee.”³⁹ Two days later, however, the Chinese delegates were asked by the Soviets to intervene once more and offer a solution to the issue so the conference could continue, and thus they met with the Americans in secret to finally resolve the issue.⁴⁰

On the contentious issue of the voting procedures within the Security Council and the veto power, telegrams from the delegation sent back to Chongqing highlighted how the Chinese delegates were tasked with representing the four sponsoring members to explain the rationale for the voting procedures in face of vehement objection from the smaller powers.⁴¹ China again spoke on behalf of the great powers on the issue of whether the General Assembly could reject Security Council reports.⁴² Here, Wellington Koo responded that if the ability to reject Security Council reports was included in the Charter, this would weaken the power of the Security Council and sow discord between the two bodies. He also remarked that language which “would make the Security Council appear subordinate to the General Assembly” should be avoided within the Charter, as the Security Council held the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.⁴³ These instances demonstrate China’s role as an intermediary between the great powers and the smaller powers during the conference.

³⁹ Wellington Koo to Foreign Ministry, 29 April 1945, Collection Number 11-11-02-02-017, Academia Sinica Institute of Modern History Archives, Taipei, Republic of China.

⁴⁰ Wellington Koo to Foreign Ministry, 1 May 1945, Collection Number 11-11-02-02-017, Academia Sinica Institute of Modern History Archives, Taipei, Republic of China.

⁴¹ Wellington Koo to Foreign Ministry, 19 May 1945, Collection Number 11-11-02-02-017, Academia Sinica Institute of Modern History Archives, Taipei, Republic of China.

⁴² Wellington Koo to Foreign Ministry, 9 June 1945, Collection Number 11-11-02-02-017, Academia Sinica Institute of Modern History Archives, Taipei, Republic of China.

⁴³ UNCIO et al., “Documents of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, San Francisco, 1945,” vol. 5 (W.S. Hein, 1998), 509.

Conclusion

With their focus on international law, China differed largely from the other great powers who did not wish to give international law a special place in the charter. The respect for international law was, likewise, viewed as one of the principles that middle powers tended to hold to. The Chinese emphasis on the promotion of educational and other forms of cultural cooperation, as well as the important role they played in pushing for the establishment of an interim International Health Organisation alongside Brazil, also came to demonstrate their middle power leanings. Although at this point China was yet to be a great power by most economic and military standards, they continued to see themselves as the world's oldest continuous civilisation, and took pride in the sophistication of their intellectual, moral and spiritual culture. This perhaps contributed to their desire to take a lead in promoting educational and cultural cooperation as a further claim to great power standing. Meanwhile, spearheading the establishment of an International Health Organisation allowed them another area in which they could establish their leadership. Finally, China often mediated in the disputes between the US and the USSR, and were relied upon to interpret between the great powers and the other powers – today, these functions are understood by international relations theorists to often be fulfilled by middle powers.

Ultimately, however, China remained a permanent member of the UN Security Council, which was a great power prerogative. Furthermore, their status as one of the sponsoring nations allowed them to set the agenda for the conference, not only with their presence at exclusive committee meetings, but by the very fact that Chinese proposals were incorporated into the working draft of the Charter discussed at San Francisco itself. Taken in conjunction, China evidently assumed a unique role that straddled the divide between the great and small powers.

“We are confident that, with faith in the future and with the same spirit of cooperation as has guided us in our deliberations here in the Golden City, lasting peace and continued prosperity will be within the gift of the new Organization to the whole world.”¹

Wellington Koo, 26 June 1945

EPILOGUE: CHINA AFTER SAN FRANCISCO

“Cooperation [was] the happy keynote of the conference,” Wellington Koo noted in the Chinese delegation’s closing speech at the United Nations Conference on International Organisation on the morning of June 26, 1945.² The close of the Conference had nonetheless been delayed multiple times due to continued disagreements over the veto power, but after nine weeks of intense discussions, where no detail of the Charter was left unscrutinised, the delegates departed from the Conference with a finalised document in hand. The structures of the new world organisation were now largely complete, but the journey was not yet over – the Charter still had to be ratified by each individual government before the UN truly came into existence.³ As a result, continuing to drum up support for the organisation was important, and the closing ceremony was a spectacle, with rousing speeches by each delegation. Even until the very end, the optics of the whole exercise remained vital to the success of the organisation.

While China was an unlikely candidate for great power status prior to the 1945 San Francisco conference, its permanent seat in the UN Security Council cemented their place alongside the other veto powers. The convergence of American desires for stability in the Pacific and China’s own aspirations towards resurgence on the world stage had propelled them to a

¹ UNCIO et al., “Documents of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, San Francisco, 1945,” vol. 1 (W.S. Hein, 1998), 661.

² UNCIO et al., 661.

³ Heidi Tworek, “The Road to Ratification of the UN Charter - United Nations Foundation,” United Nations Foundation Blog, July 21, 2015, <http://unfoundationblog.org/the-road-to-ratification-of-the-un-charter/>.

leading role in the post-war order. China thus utilised its newfound role to build safeguards for its interests into the new organisation – it hoped to impose the rule of law on international conduct, and thus pushed for the codification of international law within the Charter. As the only non-white, Asian nation with a permanent seat on the Security Council, China pushed for racial equality, the safeguarding of territorial independence and greater cultural exchanges. Perhaps above all, Chinese leaders hoped that their central role in the new order could help to stabilise the volatile domestic situation at home.

While the conference was ongoing, China continued to be at war with the Japanese. This led to T. V. Soong's early departure from the conference in May, and even by the time the conference close on June 26, China continued to be more concerned with the war effort. While entries in Chiang's diary from June 25 to 28 mention the successful conclusion of the 1945 Conference, most of each entry continued to focus largely on drafting an agreement with the Soviets that would allow the Soviets to finally enter the war against the Japanese.⁴ Central to Chiang's concerns were that Japanese arms should not be surrendered except to the Communists and their allies. Even after the surrender of Japan on September 2, 1945, China continued to be embroiled in conflict as the end of World War II marked the open resurgence of war between Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government and the CCP. During World War II, sporadic fighting between the two parties had occurred, but hostilities resumed in earnest in October 1945.⁵ Although a peaceful solution was pursued by the United States and others in the international community, the four years that followed showed how negotiations between the Nationalists and the Communists could not work, and that a military solution was the only way for a decisive

⁴ Chiang Kai-shek, *Diary*, 25-28 June 1945.

⁵ S. C. M. Paine, *The Wars for Asia, 1911 – 1949*, 239.

victory. In 1949, the CCP triumphed and Chiang's Nationalist government was forced to retreat to the island of Taiwan. This heralded the birth of the People's Republic of China, and the start of an era where two different governments fought to claim the title of the legitimate China on the international stage. Chiang's hopes of leading a unified China into the post-war era were dashed.

Mao Zedong, Chairman of the CCP and the newly established PRC, demanded China's seat at the UN in 1949. However, most of the members of the UN, including the United States, sided with the Nationalists and rejected the PRC's claim.⁶ Over the next two decades, the ROC continued to hold China's seat at the UN and on the Security Council, enjoying the support of most of the UN member states. This started to change in the 1960s as "the birth of a new nation became virtually a monthly event," and the superpowers began to compete for the favour of these newly decolonized nations.⁷ The winds of change were hard to ignore within the UN General Assembly as membership expanded from 51 states in 1945 to 127 states in 1970.⁸ To the detriment of the ROC, many of the new members were sympathetic to the PRC, who had positioned themselves as vanguards against the imperialism of the Great Powers: the United States and their allies, as well as the Soviet Union.⁹ By then, the UN had already been seen as an institution of American policy, particularly due to the Korean War.¹⁰ As tensions within the UN

⁶ Angela Torelli, "The Costs of Realism: The Nixon Administration, the People's Republic of China, and the United Nations," *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 19, no. 2 (2012): 158, <https://doi.org/10.1163/18765610-01902001>.

⁷ John George Stoessinger, *The United Nations & the Superpowers: China, Russia & America*, 4th ed. (New York: Random House, 1977), 27.

⁸ "Growth in United Nations Membership, 1945-Present," August 6, 2015, <http://www.un.org/en/sections/member-states/growth-united-nations-membership-1945-present/index.html#1970s>.

⁹ Samuel S. Kim, *China, the United Nations, and World Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 90.

¹⁰ Stoessinger, *United Nations and the Superpowers*, 27.

moved from being solely East-West to becoming more North-South, there was greater support for the PRC's claim to China's seat on the UN.

From 1951 to 1960, the issue of Chinese representation was put under the moratorium device, where voting on the issue was continually postponed at each session.¹¹ However, as membership of the UN General Assembly expanded, the United States saw support for their position fall sharply. In 1960, only 42 percent voted to further postpone the issue, spelling the end of this strategy.¹² From 1961 to 1970 a new approach was implemented – making the issue of Chinese representation an “important question.” Under Article 18 of the UN Charter, this made a two-thirds majority necessary before resolutions on the issue could be successful.¹³ Over the next ten years, the Nationalist government was able to maintain their seat in the UN through this strategy. This changed dramatically in 1971, and the ROC unceremoniously lost both their permanent seat on the Security Council, and at the UN.

The existence of two governments fighting to represent China on the international stage has complicated the historicizing of China's relationship to the UN. Within the PRC today, there seems to be little interest in examining China's actions in 1945, as these were actions taken by men and women who were associated with the Nationalist government. Out of the ten delegates, only two continued to remain in the PRC after 1949 – Wu Yifang and Dong Biwu. Despite Wu's close relationship to Soong Meiling, Chiang Kai-shek's wife, she refused the offer to flee to Taiwan and instead remained as President of Ginling Women's College in Nanjing. She

¹¹ Guozhang Wang, *United Nations Voting on Chinese Representation: An Analysis of General Assembly Roll-Calls, 1950-1971* (Taipei: Institute of American Culture, Academia Sinica, 1984), 36.

¹² Wang provides a detailed study and analysis of voting behaviour in his work.

¹³ Stoessinger, *United Nations and the Superpowers*, 42.

continued to be active in government after 1949, rising to become vice-governor of Jiangsu Province. Meanwhile, Dong took on various appointments in the Central Government.

Three of the other delegates spent their final years in the United States. After 1949, T. V. Soong retired from public service and moved to New York. He spent most of the rest of his years in the United States before his death in 1971, barely half a year before the PRC replaced the ROC at the UN. Wellington Koo, meanwhile, continued to serve as Ambassador to the United States until 1956, after which he retired from diplomatic service and moved to the United States. That same year, he became a judge of the International Court of Justice, before retiring in 1967 in New York City. In the immediate aftermath of 1949, Zhang Junmai of the China Democratic Socialist Party left China for India, where he taught at Calcutta University and Delhi University, before heading to America in 1951 and accepting an appointment at Stanford University in 1955.

Apart from Hu Lin, chief editor of the newspaper Da Gong Bao, who passed away just four years after the San Francisco Conference, the remaining delegates lived the rest of their lives in Taiwan. Wang Chonghui continued to remain in service of the Nationalist government now in Taiwan until his death in 1958. Likewise, Wei Daoming continued to be in government, serving as the ROC's Foreign Minister in the 1960s until his resignation in 1971. Hu Shi, former Chinese Ambassador to the United States and close associate of Chiang, followed the Nationalists to Taiwan and went on to become the third president of Academia Sinica in Taipei from 1957 until his death five years later. Li Huang of the Young China Party also decided to leave the Mainland for Taiwan and continued to chair the Young China Party which remained one of the legitimate parties in Taiwan despite the period of martial law, where opposition parties were outlawed until 1987. For many of China's delegates to the San Francisco Conference, 1945 represented their pinnacle on the international stage. Likewise, after 1945, the ROC found

themselves following a downward trajectory, until they were unceremoniously expelled from the UN in 1971.

In contrast, the PRC started to emerge as a great power since 1971. Today, their seat on the UN Security Council and their status as a great power no longer faces the same amount of scrutiny that it did in 1945. According to the criteria Wellington Koo defined to assess the status of a country – their size, population, cultural significance, economic and military strength – the China of today pulls ahead. China is among the top four largest countries by total area, the world's most populous country and the second largest economy by nominal GDP behind the United States. China's immense economic growth, and the amount of international trade it commands, has decisively placed it at the centre of the world economy. Today, China remains one of the longest uninterrupted civilisations in the world, a fact they burnish proudly and try to harness as soft power. Likewise, China's military capabilities are also rapidly growing as they build increasingly modern and sophisticated weapons, while creating military bases overseas. Roosevelt's vision of China being the linchpin in Asia has rung true. China today is not afraid of acting assertively on the world stage. In sharp contrast to 1945, China no longer faces the same doubts over its great power capabilities.

In an obvious difference from 1945, China today must instead battle with perceptions that it may be behaving too assertively on the international stage. This is demonstrated by the Chinese anxiety about naming their current upward trajectory in the global order: originally termed a "peaceful rise" under President Hu Jintao in 2003, Chinese think tanks began to debate the merits of the term "rise," before coming to the conclusion that it may make their neighbours

uneasy and perhaps “peaceful development” would be a better reflection of China’s pacifist nature.¹⁴

Nonetheless, much like in 1945, China still hopes to use multilateral organisations to further their own agenda and increase their influence on the world stage. In his address during the 19th Party Congress, Xi Jinping noted that China would continue to “take an active part in reforming and developing the global governance system,” pointing to China’s desire to move from being a participant in multilateral organisations to once again being a leader within them.¹⁵ This shift is undergirded by China’s rapid economic and social development that has created a change in perceptions within China itself, allowing China to assert itself more strongly on the world stage. Current rhetoric from the 19th Party Congress has made it clear that it wishes to take its place on the world stage as a “responsible power”. This is evident in their creation of new international initiatives that place them at the centre, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and BRICS. China’s continued visibility on the international stage also lends it domestic credibility.

Today, fears abound about what a resurgent China will do to challenge the liberal world order that has been in place since 1945, of which the UN and its component organisations remain a central part. Perhaps what could reassure observers is that China has continually sought to increase their participation within the UN. One key example remains their increasing contributions to UN Peacekeeping Operations. China contributes the largest number of troops in UN Peacekeeping Operations out of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council,

¹⁴ B R Deepak, “From China’s ‘peaceful rise’ to ‘peaceful development’: The rhetoric and more,” <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/node/1102>

¹⁵ Xinhua News, “Full text of Xi Jinping's report at 19th CPC National Congress,” *Xinhua*, November 3, 2017. http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/special/2017-11/03/c_136725942.htm

with the majority of Chinese troops stationed in peacekeeping operations in Africa.¹⁶ Likewise, China has now also become “one of the most influential actors in the international heritage movement” driven by UNESCO.¹⁷ China had 50 sites listed on the World Heritage list in 2016, second only to Italy (51), and had 43 more sites on the tentative list.¹⁸ Evidently, China is still engaging heavily with the UN and its member organisations, and continuing to see them as crucial to its place on the international stage.

Do the events in 1945 continue to have a bearing on China today? China’s permanent seat on the Security Council remains an obvious legacy of San Francisco and the lead-up to the 1945 Conference. The Chinese delegation’s efforts to elevate China to great power status in 1945 allows it to fully embrace that role as the world’s second most powerful country today. Looking at these developments through this lens brings us back to realist conceptions of the UN that see it primarily as a vehicle for great power politics. In 1945, China stood on the boundary between great and small, its nominal great power status allowing it to exercise some influence but ultimately still not possessing enough clout to shape things entirely to its wishes.

However, China’s journey to 1945 also reminds us that it was not only the great powers who made an impact on the world stage. China’s work at the conference demonstrates how smaller powers could pursue their own ends with support of greater powers when their goals converged. Without American support, the Chinese bid for greater national autonomy would not have been as successful. This allowed it the power to direct agendas at the conference and ensure

¹⁶ UN Peacekeeping, “Troop and Police Contributors – November 2017,” accessed December 18, 2017, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>.

¹⁷ Robert J. Shepherd, “UNESCO’s Tangled Web of Preservation: Community, Heritage and Development in China,” *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 47, no. 4 (August 8, 2017): 557, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2017.1296174>.

¹⁸ Shepherd, 557.

that its proposals were, at the very least, heard. Furthermore, China's own cognizance of its unique position informed their push to protect the rights of smaller nations through enshrining international law and ensuring racial equality. Although its role as part of the vanguard Big Four constrained some of its proposals, China ultimately was able to safeguard their key concerns. Perhaps most importantly for China, its new recognition as a great power finally restored its sovereignty, which had been steadily chipped away since the beginning of the nineteenth century by the forces of Western imperialism. Although it was not Chiang's Nationalist government that emerged at the helm after 1949, China's journey to great power status in 1945 was part of what allowed it to reassert its national identity on the world stage in the latter half of the twentieth century.

The international system today is increasingly complicated by the growing number of players. Instead of being limited to states, international civil society organisations such as non-governmental organisations and international businesses play a progressively more important role. China's journey at the UN demonstrates one facet of the complex interplay between individual actors and the international stage – while actors reinforce their own power through gaining international recognition, it is also their inherent power that accords international recognition. The perceptions of power and the optics of the international stage are perhaps core to the abilities of actors to achieve their aims. Today, as power is increasingly diffused throughout the international system, being able to manoeuvre between conflicting interests and convince others to support the same goals remains one of the most important lessons that China's journey to the UN in 1945 demonstrates.

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