

THE CHINA BLOC AND THE TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION'S CHINA POLICY

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Abstract

Although the pro-Nationalist congressmen were highly visible and vocal in the Truman period, they were rather peripheral to the actual making of the administration's China policy. Every important decision related to China was less a response to the pro-Nationalist critics than a product of the administration's own view of U.S.-China relations and its own calculation as to how best to use limited resources to block the global Soviet advance.

Four factors explain why the pro-Nationalist legislators failed to exercise significant influence over the administration policy-making. In the U.S. constitutional structure, the President and his advisers can better undertake foreign policy initiatives, leaving Congress to react to those initiatives. As a minority in Congress, the China bloc seldom received its colleagues' substantial support in requesting for China aid. To a degree the China bloc lawmakers shared the Truman administration's view toward America's role to contain communism in Asia and Europe. Their disputes with the administration were fundamentally over the State Department's relative neglect of communist threat in Asia. The China bloc's cause was further weakened by the Nationalist military incompetence as well as by the corruption of its leaders.