

**U.S. CHINA POLICY IN THE LATE 1920s:
THE INFLUENCE OF CONGRESS, NEWSPAPER
COMMENTARIES AND PRESSURE GROUPS
(MISSIONARIES AND BUSINESSMEN)**

Wei Liang-tsai

The late 1920s saw China plagued by both Chinese war lords from within and imperialist Powers from without. In order to save the country from debacle, Dr. Sun Yat-sen led the Nationalist Revolution. Both war lords and imperialist Powers did all they could to prevent him from realizing his goal.

Fortunately, the United States, then influential among the Powers, was sympathetic toward Chinese and their nationalist aspiration. The U.S. Government's attitude evidently reflected that of the American people. In the late 1920s, Congress and newspapers were the two major spokesmen for the American people and thus both played an important role in forming the U.S. foreign policy. On the other hand, American missionaries and businessmen, two of the most important pressure groups, also showed strong concern over the Chinese problem because of their respective interests in China.

Based on the study of government documents, newspaper commentaries and other sources, this article finds that in the late 1920s the U.S. Congress, newspapers and missionaries were sympathetic toward the Chinese nationalist aspiration while American businessmen took an opposite position out of the fear of losing the privileges they already enjoyed in China. Fortunately, the Coolidge Administration, persuaded and supported by Congress, newspapers and protestant missionary organizations, was to resist the pressure from other foreign Powers and American diplomats and businessmen in China, and signed a reciprocal tariff treaty with the Chinese Nationalist Government in July 1928, less than two months after the completion of the Northern Expedition, and thus laid the

cornerstone of the cordial Sino-American diplomatic relations in the next half century.