

FROM INSIDE CHINA

· 中国报告系列 ·

# SWORDS OF A RISING POWER

A HISTORY OF THE STRATEGIC  
MISSILE TROOPS OF CHINA

## 大国长剑

徐剑 著

Declan Fry 译

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*With the passing tides of time, all glorious history will be washed away and fade; but so long as the spirit of a nation survives, the legends and songs of its heroes will live forever...*

*I dedicate this book to the thirtieth anniversary of the Second Artillery Corps of PLA!*



## Chapter 1

### The Spirit of a Great Country

***1. With the tension accumulating across the Taiwan Strait, China was on the edge of war. In a speech televised nationwide, President Eisenhower, from American army, threatened to turn Red China into another Nagasaki and Hiroshima.***

*Early winter, 1954. Shilin Official Residence, Yangming Mountain, Taiwan*

Mr Chiang Kai-shek, in his mandarin jacket and unlined long gown, plodded out of the study towards the white-marble semicircle balcony of the presidential villa. Standing by the rail, he looked far into the distance. Across the distant sky, overcast and damp, the setting sun coloured the subtropical forests into an indistinct blood-red haze. A few returning ravens hovered over the coconut grove on the hillside, crowing hoarse and lonely. All these sounds and views gave Chiang, a man with little romanticism and a lifetime of war, a strong sense of melancholy and bleakness. He didn't like the winter on this isolated island at all. There was no discernible reason for it — though perhaps it was because his massive failure in

the mainland was part of the last winter of his life. He extended his eyes as far as he could, over to the other side of the sea, toward his homeland, barely visible through the sea wind and fog. There was a kind of pain and regret in his heart which could never be relieved. He waved his hand gently, and the stolid guard standing beside him came forward and asked, "What instructions does your Excellency have?"

"Go and ask someone to drive off the ravens, their crows are driving me crazy ..."

The secretary of the presidential office on duty had escorted Ye Gongchao, the Foreign Minister of the Kuomintang (KMT), inside. Chiang Kai-shek looked to Ye, and beckoned him to sit down.

"Brother Gongchao, are there any urgent matters?" he asked with some tenderness.

"Your Excellency, I have just received a phone call from the US ambassador Carl Lott Lank. The new Vice-President of the US, Richard Nixon, will visit us in December," Ye Gongchao said, submitting the report of the Foreign Ministry for Chiang's approval.

"Damn it! How much better can the new Eisenhower administration be than the previous Truman one? Upon coming to office, they retreated from Korea. The Americans are not real friends of the Republic of China."

This powerful Chinese man had been a dictator for almost his entire life, but when he interacted with the Americans, he always felt himself disdained, treated like a monkey. He could not forget, before the Dynasty of the Chiang Family collapsed, that Truman had colluded with Acheson to replace him with Li Zongren. And he could not forgive Eisenhower, the previous chief commander of the allied nations, for ending the Korean war and his dream of

gaining the mainland back...

While Chiang Kai-shek read the report of the "Foreign Ministry", he asked in his gentle Zhejiang accent, "Nixon, this 39-year-old vice president... he used to be a senator... and has a young turk background... is he friendly to Republic of China?"

Ye Gongchao answered confidently, "You can put your heart at ease, your Excellency! This man was a lawyer before, and he was famous for assembling lots of votes for Eisenhower in the Southern states. As a strong right-wing person, he is totally unsympathetic to the Red's communism. Not to mention he is a rising new star in American politics, and he's got a promising future..."

"Good. Then we should bet on Mr Nixon. Inform all the relevant departments, and welcome him in accordance with the highest standards as our important guest. Now that the Communist Party of China (CPC) has been aggressive to us, we should settle the Mutual Defence Treaty of the US and Taiwan when the Vice-President visits us."

After Ye Gongchao left, Chiang Kai-shek's prior frustration and melancholy turned to excitement. The news about the upcoming visit of Nixon worked like a stimulant which injected into his enervated political veins.

Within a month, Richard Nixon arrived with his wife.

At the Taoyuan International Airport in Taipei, Mr Chiang personally welcomed the Nixon couple, despite his old age. The First Lady Song Meiling, who still kept her charm, personally acted as the interpreter. All of which indicated how much value Mr Chiang Kai-shek placed upon Nixon's first visit to Taiwan.

Richard Milhouse Nixon, a descendant of an 18<sup>th</sup> century Irishman who followed the gold-digging crowd to the American

continent, was born in the little town of Yorba Linda near Los Angeles in 1913. Although his ancestors had been settled in the American continent for many years, they didn't realise their American dream of becoming farm land owners in the South. As a result, Nixon grew up a poor member of the underclass. He started to make his own way in life quite early, as a janitor and doorkeeper. He completed his study in Whittier College as a part-time student, before studying law at Duke University from 1934 to 1937. No doubt, his experience of struggling as a working-class man formed a solid basis for him to become a major Western politician. During the Second World War he joined the US navy and battled the Japanese fleets in the Southern Pacific tropical forests. After retiring from the army, he committed himself to politics, and was famous for his acute political acumen and great eloquence. He was elected as a Parliament Representative at the age of 34, and became a rising new star who later gained favour with Eisenhower, the five-star general. Nixon was subsequently nominated as the vice presidential candidate of the Republicans in 1952, and gathered a large number of votes for Eisenhower before he took office in the White House. Nixon became the youngest vice president in the US history. He represented the president in handling political issues many times and was trusted and relied upon by the president to a great extent. Even if Nixon has been in the White House for a limited period of time, he knew clearly that, in the eyes of the politicians in the White House and Capitol, Mr Chiang Kai-shek did not enjoy a good reputation; to receive such a grand welcoming ceremony made him confused and uneasy. Still, this did not affect the good feelings he registered at the first sight of this oriental emperor.

During the Nixons' stay in Taiwan, Mr Chiang made time to

accompany them for sightseeing tours around the beautiful island. One evening, in the official residence of the president, Mr Chiang entertained the Nixon couple with a family feast. When he spoke of how the KMT had intercepted Polish commercial boats to China twice, or the shelling of an oil tanker from the Soviet Union to China, Nixon applauded the defeated prior dictator who had dared to confront the Oriental red bloc. But Mr Chiang was not happy at all. He sighed and said, in a dull tone, "Your Excellency, what you don't know is that the Communist Party of China has assembled massive troops and artillery over the areas of Dachen, Yijiangshan Island, Jinmen and Penghu. They intend to destroy us overnight, and our survival depends on the protection of the US. There is an old saying in China, *there will be no intact eggs if the nest has been overturned*. The government of the Republic of China is ready to make counterattacks against the mainland, but without the settlement of the Mutual Defense Treaty with the US, we can't even get started! I am counting on you, Mr Vice-President, to labour this issue, if you would."

With some sympathy and consolation, Nixon said to Chiang Kai-shek, "Your Excellency, put yourself at ease. The Taiwan Strait is of strategic significance to the US in confronting the Reds at the front line — the US government cannot ignore this. I will make a report to the president once I return."

It can be said that, during his political career of more than half a century, Chiang Kai-shek had interacted with many American politicians, but there was always an irreconcilable cultural gap between the Americans and this oriental emperor. The arrogant Western politicians always harboured a sort of "oriental shortsightedness" when they looked to China. There was only one excep-

tion — Richard Nixon. As a result, he had formed a unique bond with Chiang Kai-shek, who was more than 20 years older than him.

During the subsequent few decades of his two terms of vice-presidency and presidency in the White House, he has always been the supporting pillar for the Chiang government, nestled away upon the isolated island of Taiwan. However, although the Chiang government succeeded with Nixon, they failed because of him as well. In the spring of 1972, Nixon flew to Beijing and shook hands with Mao Tse-tung, leaving Mr Chiang alone at the other side of the sea, a stranger to the historic event. Mr Chiang was so angry that he became sick. By the time of 1975, when Mr Chiang passed away, he was still complaining about the betrayal of Nixon. But that is a later story.

#### *Several days later, in the Oval Office of the White House*

Eisenhower, a tall but thin figure, was holding his pipe as he walked into the office. His most capable men in the cabinet, Vice-President Richard Nixon, State-Secretary Dulles and Secretary of Defence Wilson were already sitting there, waiting to meet him. Eisenhower strode to his seat like a soldier, glancing around at his subordinates as he sat down. The subtle smile on his face was filled with solemnity and wisdom.

Eisenhower declared the start of the meeting. He talked briefly about the content of the meeting, then tilted his head to Nixon, sitting to the right side of him, his eyes full of trust and expectation. "Richard, could you please brief us on the current situation in Taiwan..."

While the Vice-President was making his report, Eisenhower would sometimes stand up from his seat and stroll around the room,



sometimes gazing toward the picturesque views of the rose garden outside, sometimes at his cabinet members. This five-star general, elected as the president due to his reputation and character, a man who had successfully directed the Normandy Invasion and ended the Second World War with the allied nations, directed a foreign policy strongly coloured with the brush of anti-communism.

After Nixon's report, Eisenhower stood up immediately from his swivel chair, turned the globe of the world on his table and stared at the maple-shaped China. He said to Dulles, the secretary of state, "John, Taiwan is our unsinkable aircraft carrier at the strait of Malacca. We cannot accept the continuance of the current state of affairs. Talk with the Pentagon and come up with a strategy against China's penetration into Taiwan and Southeast Asia. We have already said that we could not exclude the possibility of using strategic nuclear weaponry during the Korea war, and now we must reiterate this ..."

At the same time, on the eastern coast of the ocean, the people of China had just emerged from the bloodshed of the Korea war, content now to sit beneath the peace of the olive trees, enjoying the serenity and warmth of a peaceful life and nursing the bleeding wounds of the war. However, the US government, which harboured a strong prejudice against red China, and in spite of the shame of the war, had not corrected its view; on the contrary, the US government instigated the Chiang government in Taiwan to make provocations to increase the tension across the strait, fanning the fantasy that they would be able to land on the southern coast of China and recover the lost Chiang Dynasty.

On the June 25, 1950, the Korea War had just begun. Truman, the US president, sent the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet to the Taiwan Strait. The