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Chiang Kai-shek's Diplomats Abroad
Ambassador Fu Bingchang's Perspective at the First United Nations Peace Conference in 1946 with Reference to the 'Iran Crisis'

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Abstract On 21 December 1945 General Chiang Kai-shek authorised Fu Bingchang, his ambassador in Moscow, to attend the forthcoming 1946 UN Peace Conference in London. Two weeks later, after Fu advised Stalin that he was to attend the conference, Stalin asked Fu to liaise with his leading delegate, A.J. Vyshinsky, and stated further that if the Chinese delegates would cooperate it would be advantageous for both countries. To Fu, the undertone was obvious. Keen to keep Soviet support for Chiang Kai-shek's government on the eve of China's civil war, and the emerging Cold War, Fu had every intention of taking Stalin's advice seriously. But when Iran filed a complaint to the UN accusing the Soviets of continuing their troop presence in Iran as an excuse to meddle in Iran's internal affairs, the Chinese delegation faced a terrible dilemma. Using new and previously unseen records this conference paper uncovers, from a Chinese perspective, behind-the-scenes negotiating between the US, Soviet and Chinese delegates concerning Iran's situation at the first United Nations Peace Conference.

Keywords Fu Bingchang. Foo Pingsheung. Chiang Kai-shek. Iran Crisis. United Nations Peace Conference.

Based on the personal diaries and records of Fu Bingchang, a high-ranking official and diplomat in General Chiang Kai-shek's government, this paper explores Chinese perspectives at the 1946 London Peace Conference with regard to the Iran crisis; a crisis that historians have long viewed as a pivotal event in the Cold War (Leffler, Painter 2005). Fu Bingchang is not a particularly well-known figure in the diplomatic history of Modern China, but significantly, he was General Chiang Kai-shek's last ambassador to Moscow serving in Soviet Russia from 1943-49. As such, Fu's knowledge of Chinese-Soviet and Allied wartime relations made him a key contributor and member of the Chinese delegation (Fung 2012, 195). By the time of

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the peace conference events in Iran had already influenced the formation of the major components of the Cold War: the tendency of Britain and the United States to ally in order to confront widening Soviet influence in strategically important regions of the Near and Middle East (Yegorova 1996, 22). Essentially, the Iran crisis was the result of Soviet support for a minorities Azeri nationalist movement in Iranian Azerbaijan, and Soviet refusal to withdraw their occupation forces as specified by treaty. The roots of the crisis, therefore, lay in great power rivalry and internal Iranian politics (Leffler, Painter 2005, 5). As we shall see later, China's involvement with the Iran debate was also tied to her geopolitical interests.

From Ambassador Fu's diaries we can discover much about the role of diplomacy under Chiang, as well as what it was like to be a diplomat under his regime. Because of China's international standing at the end of the second world war, there can be little doubt that Chiang's diplomats felt disadvantaged when compared with their western equivalents. China, along with America, Soviet Russia and Britain, was officially one of the so-called Big Four nations. But, given her status as the weakest player by far of the Big Four, Chinese diplomats were by necessity accorded a lower status in the diplomatic arena, much like the poor relative. This meant that even the best of Chiang's representatives were not on an equal footing with their counterpart players of the international stage. For example, the US ambassador in Moscow, Averell Harriman, boasted to Fu that he had gone over Foreign Minister Molotov's head on any number of occasions to contact Stalin direct, and in this way he had obtained good results. Ambassador Fu simply did not have that authority (Fu, *Riji* 1945, November 11). Effectively, Chinese diplomats were constrained within the limits of their own country's geopolitical circumstances. A key aspect of this paper therefore is to consider, through the eyes of Fu Bingchang, how Chinese diplomats coped within their constraints and what avenues were open to them when negotiating foreign policy matters. Dittmer, Fukui and Lee (2000) argue that Chinese diplomats were masters of behind-the-scenes diplomacy, achieving goals through informal channels. Informal diplomacy was certainly practised at the peace conference and was endorsed, even encouraged, by Chiang himself. Indeed, Fu's diary illustrates very clearly the way that informal diplomacy was used as a key strategy at the conference–an arena where he and the Chinese team found themselves embroiled in a key international issue with capacity to put China's geopolitical interests at serious risk (Leffler, Painter 2005, 5). The pressure to avert the crisis concerning Iran, therefore, was doubly important for the Chinese delegates. Fortunately for them, Fu's record shows that by the time of the end of the conference the Chinese team was satisfied that in January 1946 they had made a positive contribution to world events without jeopardising their country's interests.

1 China's International Position

By the time of the conference Fu had been stationed in Moscow for over three years, and in that time he had not set one foot out of Soviet Russia. No wonder he was elated when it was confirmed that General Chiang wanted him to fly out to London and attend the peace conference as vice-chair of the Chinese team. Not only was this his chance to escape Moscow and see Europe; it was a major opportunity to be involved in an event of historic proportions. As the US president, Harry Truman, had pronounced six months earlier in the plenary session in June 1945, "The Charter of the United Nations… is a solid structure upon which we can build a better world" (Truman 1955, 211).

At the time of Truman's declaration Ambassador Fu was satisfied that China's international position was better than it had ever been. The long war of resistance against Japan had been won. China was a member of the Big Four nations, a position that gave her international recognition and a permanent power of veto in the new United Nations Security Council. Fu himself had signed the Moscow Declaration paving the way for China's membership back in October, 1943 (Foo 2011, 111). Further, Fu was satisfied that the Chinese-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance signed in Moscow just five months earlier, in August 1945, gave Chiang Kai-shek a formal guarantee from Stalin that Soviet Russia would not support his enemies, the Chinese Communists, and that to this end there would be a smooth handover by Soviet troops in China's northeast over to Chiang's central government forces (Foo 2009, 203-5). "Things look hopeful", wrote Fu on New Year's day after hearing the BBC's welcome announcement that President Truman's special envoy to China, Ambassador General George C. Marshall, was in Chongqing working strenuously to mediate a peaceful settlement between Chiang's national party, the Guomindang (GMD), and the insurgent Chinese Communists led by Mao Zedong. At the time Fu was hosting Chiang Kai-shek's son, Jiang Jingguo. Jiang had been sent to Moscow by his father to hold exploratory talks with Marshal Stalin on the Soviet handover of China's northeast, and he and Fu had celebrated the New Year together at an all-night private party in one of Moscow's finest hotels (Fu, *Riji* 1946, January 1). Fu knew, having been in attendance already at the first Jiang-Stalin talks starting 30 December, that despite misgivings by Stalin concerning certain "reactionary elements" in the Guomindang, Stalin still supported Chiang's government as the legitimate government of China and felt that cooperation between the Guomindang and the Chinese Communists was feasible and to be encouraged (Fu, *Riji* 1946, January 4). Fu's job had been to accompany Jiang Jingguo during the latter's late night meetings in the Kremlin.

It was at one of these meetings that Fu was able to tell Stalin about his forthcoming mission to London. Stalin replied that he was pleased to

hear of the news and that his own chief representative at the United Nations' conference was to be Andrei Vyshinsky, his vice minister of Foreign Affairs; a man that Fu knew and had had dealings with since June 1944. Andrei Gromyko was to be the Soviet Union's permanent representative to the United Nations. Stalin advised Fu to keep in contact with Vyshinsky and suggested that if the Chinese representatives in London cooperated fully with the Soviets at conference, it would be of great advantage for *both* countries. Stalin's undertone was obvious. With thousands of Soviet soldiers still stationed in China's northeast and clear evidence, from circles in Chongqing and Moscow, that Stalin was still giving support to the Chinese Communists, Fu was well aware that the Soviet leader had plenty of leverage. He took Stalin's advice seriously (Fu, *Riji* 1945, October-December).

2 London

Fu left Moscow for London on 7 January 1946. The conference proceedings began on the afternoon of 10 January and were held in London's Methodist Central Hall of Westminster (Fu, *Riji* 1945).[1] China's ambassador to Britain, Dr. Wellington Koo, (also known as Gu Weijun) headed the Chinese delegation with Ambassador Fu as his vice. The team included China's ambassador to the United States, Wei Daoming, China's representative in Turkey, Dr. P.C. Chang, and the diplomats, George Yeh (also known as Ye Gongchao) and Victor Hoo (also known as Hu Shizi). Altogether, Fu stayed in London for a total of five weeks (Fu, *Riji* 1945, December 21).

From the start of the peace conference, the international arena was very much concerned about the tensions between Soviet Russia and her western Allies over Iran. In 1941, under a wartime agreement with Britain, the Soviets had deployed their troops into northern Iran. British troops (alongside 30 thousand US troops) were stationed in southern Iran. By the terms of a 1942 Tripartite Agreement signed by Britain, Soviet Russia and Iran, Allied occupation troops were to be withdrawn from Iran six months after the end of the war. This arrangement had been useful to the Allies. The foreign troops could safeguard Iran's oil, and they could protect the movement of lend-lease supplies through the Persian Gulf from the United States to the battlefields of the Caucuses and the Ukraine (Scheid Raine 2005, 93). US troops evacuated Iran by 1 January 1946, and British troops would leave by 2 March 1946. Regarding the Soviet troops, their presence in northern Iran had awakened Soviet economic and political interests. By the end of the war, the fact that the Soviet position in Iran had been significantly strengthened gave Stalin grounds to

1 'Invitation to First United Nations Peace Conference', in private possession of the author.

hope that Soviet Russia would manage to enhance her geopolitical and economic standing and interests in the Middle East and he had no intention of withdrawing the Soviet presence (Yegorova 1996, 8). If he could gain access to Iran's oil it would be good for the economy, and good for Soviet prestige (Yegorova 1996, 2; Harbutt 1981, 624). Also, an oil concession in northern Iran would give him an advantage over rivalry with Britain for political influence in Iran. Already, the Soviets had succeeded in reducing the influence of the Iranian army and Iranian administration and cultivated the establishment of the communist-led Tudeh Party (Yegorova 1996, 28). In addition, Soviet troops were supporting and activating a national-liberation movement for a 'minorities' Azeri movement in northern Iran (Yegorova 1996, 9).

The Iranian government did try to bring up the 'Iran question' earlier at the mid-December Council of Foreign Ministers meetings in Moscow, but found themselves unable to do so because the question was not on the agenda. It had been deliberately omitted from the Moscow conference communiqué (*Foreign Relations United States,* hereafter *FRUS* 1945, 512-3). Still deeply concerned about Russia's territorial encroachment, the Iran government resolved instead that they would put forward a formal complaint before the General Assembly of the newly formed United Nations Organization. Their grounds would be that the political independence and territorial integrity of Iran was impaired, in violation of the Charter, by Soviet-inspired developments in Azerbaijan Province (*FRUS* 1946, 289). The Iran government's decision to bring the issue to the United Nations for mediation now meant that Iran's internal affairs were international in character (Yegorova 1996, 15-7). Conference discussion on Iran started 15 January and would draw to a close by the end of the month. Iran's chief conference representative was Seyed Hassan Taqizadeh, Iran's ambassador to London.

3 Iran Asks for Chinese Support

On the first day of discussions, Ambassador Fu noted simply that Ambassador Taqizadeh had outlined the source of Iran's troubles, and had asked delegates to consider a proposal to the Security Council for resolution of his country's delicate situation with Soviet Russia. Three days later, Fu's diary mentions the Iran question again. Ambassador Taqizadeh had approached Wellington Koo and wanted to know if he could rely on Chinese support *were* he to bring up the Soviet-Iran question before the General Assembly. Knowing that support of Iran's request could embarrass the Soviets (and upset Chinese-Soviet relations) Koo advised Taqizadeh not to bring up the issue at this time. Later on in the day, Koo discussed the matter with his team. The situation had to be handled with care, he cau-

tioned, because Chongqing could not afford to make enemies, even if Iran's situation was a compelling one. Wei Daoming, China's ambassador to the United States, disagreed. In his opinion appeasing the Soviets would not be helpful and Iran was entitled to protect her territorial integrity. Fu must have supported Koo's stance because Wei accused him hotly for being too close to Moscow. Fu counter-argued by pointing out that Chinese interests should come first, and that Soviet appeasement was a policy matter to be decided by the central government alone. He said that they should make every effort to dispel Soviet doubts about China's sincerity of purpose in this matter so as to retain Soviet support for Chiang's government. Perhaps the team was reminded here about Soviet troops still stationed in China's northeast. Further, Fu was concerned that the Soviets might even walk out of the United Nations altogether. He reasoned that the Soviets were already suspicious that the General Assembly was being controlled by Britain and the United States. "This incident would only embarrass them", he said, "and the United Nations could dissolve. The assembly is like a newborn child; if we put too much weight upon it, it could be smothered". Equally, Fu knew that it was vital also to keep on side with China's western allies, especially the United States. China needed US support as a counterbalance to Soviet influence (Fu, *Riji* 1946, January 4). Unable to agree on a joint policy, the team decided to seek guidance from Chongqing. Fu drafted the report. It was approved by all the members and sent promptly off to Chongqing (Fu, *Riji* 1946, January 18). Meanwhile, Koo decided to pursue a diplomatic initiative.

The following day he asked Ambassador Taqizadeh, for the second time, to rethink. He also talked with Britain's foreign secretary, Ernest Bevin, and the US secretary of state, James Byrnes, to see if they might also help to dissuade Taqizadeh. Bevin told Koo that Britain had not wanted Iran to raise the matter in the first place (Britain had her own areas of control to consolidate) but that he would have to approve the case if it were to be mooted before the Security Council. In actual fact, Britain's ambassador to Washington, Lord Halifax, had in early January informed the United States that Britain wanted the US to join with them in urging the Iranian government not to bring the case before council (*FRUS* 1946, 293; 299-301). Secretary Byrnes told Koo that he, also, was not keen for Taqizadeh to raise the issue, thus showing a degree of support for China's position. At the time US policy was still to accommodate the Soviet Union (Harbutt 1981, 623-9), although the official US State Department position was that it would support the Iranians to assure the preservation of the United Nations (Hess 1974, 131), a position that Fu understood, albeit from a different standpoint. Fu wrote, "The Soviet Union fears that Britain and the United States will take advantage of this organization and use it as a tool against them. Why support a tool against oneself? I am pessimistic for the future of the United Nations" (Fu, *Riji* 1946, January 19).

In spite of external pressure to withhold the Iran complaint, on 19 January, Ambassador Taqizadeh requested formally that the Acting UN Secretary General, Gladwyn Jebb, bring the matter to the attention of the Security Council for investigation and recommendation for the appropriate terms of settlement (Fu, *Riji* 1946, January 19; *FRUS* 1946, 304). It was world news. In the US, American newspapers interpreted the Iran dispute as a test for the United Nations (Hess 1974, 132). On BBC radio news bulletins, Fu could hear that the language had changed from "Iran situation" to "Iran dispute", thus escalating the matter. "It's a pity", he noted (Fu, *Riji* 1946, January 21). As a rebuke, the Soviets raised their own grievance to the Security Council contending that "the continued presence of British troops in Greece is fraught with grave consequences for the maintenance of peace and security" (Fu, *Riji* 1946, January 21; *FRUS* 1946, 306).

4 Instructions from Chongqing

On 22 January, the Chinese team received a cablegram from Chongqing: they were to mediate as best they could *outside* the conference. Such vague instructions from Chongqing meant one thing: they would have to work through informal channels to bring about a resolution. It would not be easy. As leaders of their team, Ambassadors Koo and Fu resolved to make every effort to put off the Iran affair in the manner they had been instructed. They started with a charm offensive aimed at the Soviets to reassure them that China was on their side. Wellington Koo would speak to Andrei Gromyko, Russia's permanent representative to the United Nations, and Fu would speak to Vyshinsky. Fu's diary does not record the full extent of their conversations, but clearly from talks with US officials that occurred later, there must have been some discussion concerning a face-saving solution.

Fu describes Koo's talk with Gromyko as having been amicable enough, but not before Gromyko was persuaded that Koo supported him. Gromyko said that he opposed the methods of the Security Council, and claimed that there was nothing to discuss, since by previous agreement Soviet troops had no obligation to withdraw from Iranian territory for six months. Presently this was the month of January and the agreement did not run out until March, therefore this was an empty case. Koo acknowledged Gromyko's point, and the discussion ended with recognition from both parties that Chinese support was solid. Fu's conversation with Vyshinsky was equally supportive. He took advantage of an evening reception at the Savoy Hotel to approach Vyshinsky. In warm tones, Fu explained that the friendship between their two countries was the policy of both Chongqing and Moscow. He assured Vyshinsky that Ambassador Koo was cooperating along those lines and that if there were any issues at all, Vyshinsky could be frank and

honest with him. Vyshinsky replied that he understood this policy and that he would cooperate fully with Ambassador Koo (Fu, *Riji* 1946, January 22).

Two days later on 24 January, Vyshinsky sent a long statement on the Iran question to the president of the Security Council, Norman Makin. In it, Vyshinsky categorically refuted the allegation that Soviet officials had interfered with the internal affairs of the northern districts of Iran – and denied that the Iran government had made efforts to enter into negotiations with the Soviets on this question. Then the tone changed. The statement pointed out that relations between the Soviet Union and Iran could, and should, be settled by means of *bilateral* negotiations. He stated that in view of this, the Soviet delegation regarded the appeal of the Iranian delegation to the Security Council as devoid of any foundation, and that they were opposed to the consideration of the Iranian appeal (*FRUS* 1946, 24). The same day, a senior advisor to the US delegation recorded a conversation he had had with US secretary of state, James Byrnes. Byrnes had informed the advisor that when a state files a complaint, that state is entitled to a hearing in the Security Council; but the entitlement policy was not intended to preclude a recommendation by the Security Council that *bilateral* negotiations, for example, between Soviet Russia and Iran, be attempted first – so long as the Security Council was kept closely informed (*FRUS* 1946, 309).

5 Talking with the Americans

On 26 January, the Chinese saw a chance to pursue their diplomacy a step further. Ambassador Koo met with the new US ambassador to the United Nations, Edward Stettinius Jr. According to Fu's record, Stettinius wanted the Iran crisis settled, and he proposed to Koo a tripartite discussion between Britain, the US and the Soviet Union on the matter. Koo disagreed, saying it would embarrass the Soviets. Instead, Koo hoped that Stettinius would ask the Iran government to hold *bilateral* talks with the Soviets – something that had been mooted by the State Department two days earlier (*FRUS* 1946, 309). This would be a face-saving solution for the Soviet Union, and was consistent with the statement on Iran that Vyshinsky himself had put forward two days previously. Koo offered to smooth the way forward by broaching this strategy with British representatives ahead of time. With that, Stettinius replied that if Britain would agree, he would speak with the Soviets (Fu, *Riji* 1946, January 26).

A memorandum by Stettinius of this exact conversation is held in the Foreign Relations United States (*FRUS*) record, but it differs slightly from Fu's version in terms of what he had agreed with Koo. In his memo Stettinius observed, correctly, that Koo was "very anxious to have the complaints before the Security Council handled in a manner that would not

cause ruffled feelings". Stettinius recorded that Koo had informed him that the Soviets were willing to negotiate *bilaterally*, but that they were firmly opposed to the Security Council's passing of any resolution of any kind. Stettinius acknowledged Koo's alternate plan to hold bilateral talks, with the Security Council stating in public that they were "delighted the two governments were willing to negotiate". Koo suggested this could be followed up later with a statement to the effect that the Security Council would be kept informed of the progress, thus negating the need for a formal resolution. Stettinius then wrote that he had refused to make a commitment to Koo because of his confidence and respect for the Security Council. In fact he would only drop the matter if the Iranians themselves asked that it be dropped, and that they be given a chance to negotiate with the Soviets (*FRUS* 1946, 316-7). Thus Stettinius put the bilateral decision squarely in the hands of the Iranian delegation. As will be seen later, Ambassador Koo immediately took his cue from Stettinius as the opportunity he was looking for to seek out Iran's cooperation for a bilateral solution to be followed up by a Security Council statement, as per his discussion with the Soviets. As Chongqing had advised, Koo was working strenuously behind scenes with all parties. Interestingly, the mood of the Chinese team was noted. At a House of Commons lunch hosted by the British foreign secretary, Ernest Bevin, Fu found himself sitting next to Sol Bloom, a US Republican senator. Bloom advised Fu not to give any concessions to the Soviets (Fu, *Riji* 1946, January 26).

As the informal diplomacy continued in London a new political development in Iran changed everything. On 27 January a new premier, Ahmed Qavam, was appointed to office by the Majlis, Iran's national assembly (Westad 2006, 61-4).Qavam, an astute politician with a record for political radicalism, was well known to be a friend of the Soviet Union, and his timely assumption of power on this date coincided with the all-round agreement to hold bilateral talks between the Soviets and Iran. Naturally, with Qavam's appointment, Soviet Russia had her ally and a face-saving solution. In a message to Wallace Murray, the US ambassador in Iran, Secretary of State, Bynes, wrote: "If the new government in Tehran agrees to enter into direct negotiation with Russians on the matter, its hand will be greatly strengthened by the fact that its case is pending before UNO. I insisted in London that Iran should have a full hearing" (*FRUS* 1946, 317). Murray's response was that if the Soviets had really wished to settle the dispute by legitimate bilateral negotiations it had had ample opportunity before now to initiate such negotiations (*FRUS* 1946, 319). That day in London, Vyshinsky thanked Ambassadors Koo and Fu for their help in solving the difficult situation (Fu, *Riji* 1946, January 27).

6 Iran's Complaint

The Security Council met twice to discuss Iran's complaint – first on 28 January, and then on 30 January. Newspapers around the world announced the onset of a major crisis as the wartime coalition, already fragile, seemed to be dissolving (Scheid Raine 2005, 93-5). As the first case since the founding of the organization Iran's complaint excited worldwide attention, and as the organization members filed into the Central Hall, journalists and photographers spent over an hour jockeying for the best camera shots. When all was ready, Ambassador Taqizadeh took his place in front of the council and outlined the points of his case. Fu noticed that Taqizadeh's tone was temperate, showing that he wanted to enhance Soviet-Iranian relations. Vyshinsky spoke next, sounding equally confident and with an equally moderate tone. He acknowledged Iran's new Soviet-friendly government, and said that Moscow was in direct contact with Tehran, therefore, the Security Council had no reason to consider the Iran case further (Fu, *Riji* 1946, January 28). So ended the first meeting.

After lunch, Ambassador Taqizadeh and his deputy, Mr. Kazemi, met with US officials. Taqizadeh told them that he had indeed received authority from his government to open discussions freely with Vyshinsky, but that he did not believe his government would negotiate directly with the Soviets in Tehran. Therefore although he still wanted bilateral talks, he wanted to keep the negotiations firmly under the jurisdiction of the Security Council. To this effect, Mr. Kazemi told the US officials that Ambassador Koo had already agreed to draft a statement and raise it to council. That said, Kazemi felt it would be better if the United States could do it instead (*FRUS* 1946, 320-1). Clearly, Ambassador Koo had taken the opportunity presented to him earlier by Stettinius to negotiate with the Iran team a bilateral solution under Security Council's jurisdiction. This had enabled the US to support a bilateral solution, and the Iranians could now use China's backing to strengthen their position and get full US agreement. With Iran's full backing, the US also had a face-saving solution. Later on in his rooms, Fu wrote, "The reason for Taqizadeh's change in attitude is that the new premier, Qavam, has a history of understanding with the Soviets, therefore Vyshinsky thinks there is a better chance of negotiating directly with the Iran government. We Chinese, who feared most that this issue would have an adverse impact upon the UN itself, tried our best to mediate. According to their positive attitudes it is possible that our efforts achieved something" (Fu, *Riji* 1946, January 28). As far as Fu was concerned, the team's efforts through informal channels had smoothed relations and contributed towards a more positive environment, and he thought it important enough to record.

7 The Final Meeting on Iran

On the morning of 30 January, before the final meeting on Iran, US officials met in preparation for the afternoon (Fu, *Riji* 1946, January 28-29). They had with them Koo's draft proposal outlining a bilateral solution with Security Council oversight. Koo's proposal was described as a "poor statement" and so a new one was drafted by an American policy advisor for Stettinius to use. As in the Chinese draft, the US agreed to bilateral negotiations between the parties so long as the Security Council was kept informed. A US advisor was sent out to seek Ambassador Taqizadeh's approval. Taqizadeh agreed with the US statement, but asked that it be approved first by Ambassador Koo. In seeking China's endorsement, the Iranians recognized the Chinese contribution and wanted to keep the Chinese involved. Ambassador Koo was in full agreement with the American statement (*FRUS* 1946, 322-4).

The final meeting on Iran was long and drawn out. It took four hours of passionate discussion by all sides to reach a unanimous resolution. Taking Fu's record again, Ambassador Taqizadeh spoke first. He said he would not oppose direct negotiations with Soviet Russia so long as those talks were managed, supervised and reported to the Security Council. Vyshinsky appeared unhappy. He could not agree on those conditions, he said. It would damage the dignity of the Soviet Union as well as the conference. Britain's foreign minister, Ernest Bevin, intervened. He accused the Soviets, among other things, of violating the 1942 Tripartite Treaty. Furthermore, Bevin said that he wanted to keep Iran's case on the agenda. With such an atmosphere, the Chinese team foresaw a deadlock. Ambassador Koo spoke up. "Whether or not the case remains on the agenda is irrelevant", he said. "The General Assembly welcomes the agreement to negotiate; the General Assembly would accept and hear the case if there is no result and one of the parties proposes at a later date to the General Assembly. Therefore the Chinese commission suggests the debate of this issue is not necessary". According to Fu, Ambassador Koo's intervention seemed to have a calming effect. On the quiet, one of the Chinese delegates, Victor Hoo, crept out of his place to ask US aides if they would approach Bevin and Taqizadeh personally with a quiet word. The result was positive. Bevin agreed to drop his insistence that Iran's complaint stay on the agenda in his draft statement. Fu recorded that Bevin laughed and then said, "I am the most conciliatory person in the room". Vyshinsky answered, "Unless there is a hothead out there who wants to stop us from achieving a good result, I emphatically answer to Mr. Bevin, yes" (Fu, *Riji* 1946, January 28).

At last the resolution was adopted, and with it the United Nations met its first test as the world's authority in disputes. Once again, Fu's entry for the end of the day indicates the satisfaction of the Chinese team. "Our efforts at mediation in the Iran affair have achieved some success at this

early stage, and we can compliment ourselves" (Fu, *Riji* 1946, January 28). Upon reflection, Fu had recognized in his diary that Vyshinsky would calculate on a successful bilateral solution based on Iran's new Soviet-friendly government under Qavam. Therefore although Fu put resolution of the issue squarely down to Iran's change of government, he was still confident that Chinese efforts to mediate between the parties had yielded a positive outcome and fostered a better understanding between the Powers (Fu, *Riji* 1946, January 28-29).

To weigh up Chinese perspectives at the peace conference it would be fair to conclude that Ambassador Koo's attempts, with the backing of Fu, his deputy, did bring about a good result for the Chinese. Their charm offensives ensured that there would be no misunderstanding between Moscow and Chongqing. Koo's strenuous efforts as a third-party negotiator alongside the US, the Soviets and the Iranians helped to mollify and smooth the way towards a better understanding between the parties. Iran made full use of the Chinese intervention, and even asked US officials to seek Chinese endorsement for their Security Council statement. By early 1946, Cold War divisions were already becoming apparent. Stettinius was right when he noted that Wellington Koo was concerned about causing ruffled feathers. Fu had had a clear warning from Stalin himself to work closely with Vyshinsky and to cooperate fully. It suited Chiang Kai-shek to have Fu keeping up good relations with the Soviets, because he needed Soviet as well as US support. Although China's position as the weakest player of the Big Four nations placed limits on the power of Chiang's diplomats, he encouraged them to use their negotiating skills behind the scenes. Informal diplomacy based on friendly, but persuasive, tones was a reasonable option. Chiang had given his diplomats exactly the same instructions when Fu was in Moscow months earlier at the negotiating tables of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty (Foo 2011, 188-208).

In the end the Soviets did withdraw their forces by spring 1946, and Iran was able to assert control over Azerbaijan by the end of the year. The United States dropped the matter in May, and the upshot was that the crisis ended and the US solidified her position in Iran. Thus the United States achieved its first diplomatic victory of the Cold War (Hess 1974, 117), a victory made just a little bit easier from behind the scenes by Ambassador Koo and his team. Ambassador Fu left London on 23 February in order to attend the Second National Government's Plenary Conference in Chongqing, where he spoke in detail about China's diplomatic role at the 1946 Peace Conference (Fu, *Riji* 1946, February-April).

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