

Maintaining US-Republic of China Alliance via Africa: A Review of the Vanguard Project

Philip Hsiao-pong Liu

ABSTRACT

For a long time, utilizing agricultural know-how as a means of foreign aid had been the major diplomatic mission of the Republic of China (hereafter ROC). The 1960s Vanguard Project—designating Africa as its principal beneficiary—might be the best known of such diplomacy. Previous research on this project usually attributes ROC's rising international status to the success of the Vanguard Project but neglects the involvement of the United States. A few studies do give credit to Uncle Sam in this matter, but depict Washington as only playing a secondary supportive role. Taking into consideration Taiwan's cheap labor, Africa's status during the Cold War era, and Washington's projected "Two-Chinas" diplomatic scheme, this article analyzes and reassesses the functioning and the role of the United States in this venture. The author concludes that in addition to bolstering the reputation of the ROC in Africa, the Vanguard Project also served as a distracter at the time when Washington was covertly courting Beijing.

Keywords: Africa, Vanguard Project, Agricultural mission, Hsi-kun Yang, Public Law 480, Chinese Representation in the United Nations