

Nobody consults the Taiwanese

IT WAS HEARTENING to read last week of Henry A. Kissinger exchanging friendly toasts and talk with the Chinese Communist bosses in Peking. That sort of thing worries the Kremlin and encourages more cooperation in Moscow.

What was not so heartening was that our improved relations with Peking are being accomplished without adequate regard for the rights of the people of Taiwan.

CHINA INSISTS that it will not open full diplomatic relations with us so long as we remain committed to preserve the security and independence of the Chiang Kai-shek regime on Taiwan. To ameliorate the abrasion of this issue, Dr. Kissinger subscribed to the following paragraph in the joint communique concluding his visit:

"The United States acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China; the United States government does not challenge that position."

That language is not new. It was lifted word for word from the communique of Feb. 27, 1972, concluding President Nixon's visit to Red China. Too, it accurately reflects the views of both the Mao regime on the mainland and the Chiang regime on Taiwan.

But what about the views of the 15 million people on Taiwan? That is what concerns us.

The deplorable fact is that both Peking and Washington are playing big power games with each other in defiance of their own professed ideals. Both claim to believe in the principle of liberation for oppressed peoples, and neither is honoring it in Taiwan. China wants to annex the island as an indisputed right; we are stuck with out pledge to Chiang.



Nobody, significantly, bothers to ask how the Taiwanese people feel about all this. Since the 16th Century they have successively been under the domination of the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Ming and Manchu dynasties, the Japanese and now Chiang.

Taiwan no more belongs to Red China than it does to Chiang until the Taiwanese freely say so. An honorable solution to the whole mess would be to allow the Taiwanese to vote on three choices — annexation by Peking, continuation of the Chiang regime, or an independent island republic.