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ANNA CHENNAULT

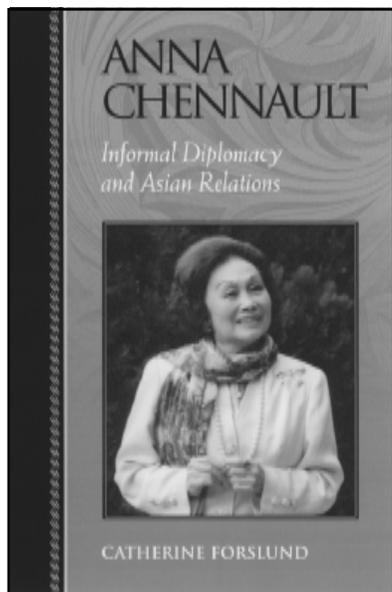
Informal Diplomacy and Asian Relations

By Catherine Forslund, Rockford College

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She held few government posts, yet she was a strong influence on the course of U.S.-Asian relations in the last half of the twentieth century. She earned the respect of and held the ear of presidents and cabinet members in a time before women were generally accepted in such circles.

The Chinese-born wife of General Claire Chennault of World War II Flying Tigers fame, Anna Chennault was a leader in America's informal relations with East Asia from 1950 to 1990. Informal diplomacy—exchanges between citizens of different nations outside of official institutional apparatus that seek to influence events or governmental attitudes—is an increasingly important avenue of international relations in the modern age. Professor Catherine Forslund's new book, *Anna Chennault: Informal Diplomacy and Asian Relations* examines Chennault's unique, multifaceted career as an exemplar of American informal diplomacy during the post-World War II era.

Chennault carved a name for herself in her own right in this

arena, establishing herself in Republican party politics, the international aviation industry, and in Washington and Asian social circles following her husband's 1958 death. She used her contacts on both sides of the Pacific to achieve informal diplomatic goals that coincided with American national policy: protecting "free" Asian nations from communism and expanding American influence in Asia. Later, Chennault directed her energies toward building ties between Taiwan, China, and the United States.

The book presents a new analysis of Anna Chennault's role in the "October Surprise" of the 1968 presidential election. In addition, Forslund demonstrates how Chennault used gender as an advantage in the male-dominated worlds of foreign relations, politics, and business.

A fascinating look at a woman before her time, this new book is an informative and engaging account of the complex nature of U.S.-Asian relations, diplomatic processes, and the role of women in foreign affairs.

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