This is the first of three chapters that analyse the connections between legitimacy and power, and seek to demonstrate the erosion of international and domestic support for America’s China policy. It presents an analysis of the evolution of the American position on the representation of China at the UN. This started as a determination to exclude the People’s Republic of China (PRC) when it was first proclaimed as an independent state in 1949, in favour of retaining the pro-American Republic of China (Taiwan). The period from 1951 to 1960 was one when the US managed to block debate on the question of PRC representation; after this, until 1971, the UN gradually enlarged and US interests became less guarded, so that in 1971 the PRC was finally admitted to the UN. The different sections of the chapter examine, in turn, the PRC’s objectives in becoming a member of the UN, the American attitude to the PRC and the impact on this of the Korean war, and shifts in international attitudes to the US position on the PRC. The final section discusses the impact of China’s entry to the UN on America, and notes that while Washington’s PRC exclusion policy had first led the US to suffer serious erosion of its international legitimacy, that erosion did cease, and the presence of the PRC in the UN began to bolster certain American interests.