

**Deng Xiaoping and Jimmy Carter: Technology Transfer and the Origin of U.S.-
China Anti-Soviet Cooperation During the Cold War, 1977-1981**



Sheng Peng
St. Antony's College
University of Oxford

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Dedication

To my parents, who have supported me throughout my studies in different countries and have always encouraged me to look at the world from new perspectives.

Contents

Acknowledgement.....	4
Abstract.....	10
Introduction.....	12
Chapter 1.....	37
Decline of Détente and the Normalisation of U.S.-China Diplomatic Relations	37
Chapter 2.....	76
From Taiwan Relations Act to “One Country, Two System,” Taiwan and Deng Xiaoping’s Unfinished Vision of the Cold War.....	76
Chapter 3.....	114
Jimmy Carter and the failed U.S.-China secret talks on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.....	114
Chapter 4.....	145
Unheard Warnings from Moscow’s and America’s Own Arms Sales to China	145
Chapter 5.....	184
A Gentleman's Understanding: British, French, and German dual-use Technology transfer to China and America’s Dilemma.....	184
Conclusion.....	227
List of Archival Collections and Primary Sources.....	235
English References.....	236
Chinese Reference.....	253
Russian Reference.....	257

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Abbreviation

ABM	Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty
AEC	Atomic Energy Council [ROC]
AH CCCP	Academy of Science, USSR
CBT	Comprehensive Test Ban
CCP	The Chinese Communist Party
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COCOM	Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls
CPD	Committee on the Present Danger
CPSU CC	Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
DDR	Democratic Republic of Germany
DOD	Department of Defence
FCO	Foreign & Commonwealth Office
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
FROG	Soviet 9K52 short range rocket system
ICBMs	Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles
IDB	Institute of Far East [Moscow]
INER	Institute for Nuclear Energy Research [Taipei]
INTERKIT	China Internationale [Moscow]
ISKRAN	Institute for U.S. and Canadian Studies [Moscow]
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
KMT	The Chinese Nationalist Party
KTBT	The Limited Test Ban Treaty
MIRVs	Multiple Independent Re-entry vehicles
NASA	The National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NATO	The North Atlantic Organization
NDSC	The Chinese National Defence and Science Council
NPT	The Nonproliferation Treaty
NSA	National Security Advisor
NSC	The National Security Council
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
RAF	The Royal Air force
ROC	Republic of China
SALT	The Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty
SALT II	The New Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty
SLBMs	Submarine-launched Ballistic Missiles
TASS	Telegraphy Agency of the Soviet Union
TRA	The Taiwan Relations Act
TTBT	The Threshold Test Ban Treaty

Abstract

This thesis studies how Deng Xiaoping's ambition to acquire Western military and dual-use technology had shaped and complicated the beginning of the relationship between the United States and China following the establishment of U.S.-China diplomatic relations in 1979. Based on primary sources from the United States, Europe, the Chinese mainland, Taiwan and Russia, this study argues that acquiring advanced Western military and dual-use technologies was the main reason why Deng Xiaoping initiated anti-Soviet cooperation with the United States, and one of China's main Cold War objectives. Although both United States and China were driven together by their shared anti-Soviet views, there were nonetheless fundamental differences in how the Carter administration and Deng Xiaoping approached their newly forged relations, as well as each side should fight the Cold War versus the Soviet Union.

On the American side, the Carter administration oscillated between the choices of saving détente with the Soviet Union through arms control or using China to put pressure on the Brezhnev regime. Meanwhile, Deng Xiaoping and his comrades were far more interested in using the escalating tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union to access American and Western military and dual-use technologies, through which they would modernize the Chinese army and gain a military advantage over Taiwan. China's ambition to acquire advanced technologies, not only complicated a series of major American Cold War objectives – including cross-strait relations, nuclear non-proliferation, U.S.-Soviet détente and China's role in the European Cold War – but also sowed the seeds of future disputes and confrontations between the United States and China.

Introduction

In September 2014, Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter, the former U.S. President and his wife, returned to China. The intention of the visit, as Carter had always strived for, was to “enhance understanding between [the] two countries.”¹ Yet after all the Carter family had done to improve U.S.-China relations, the trip was completely censored by the Chinese media, Carter’s speech at Renmin University was sandwiched in the middle of an unrelated business conference and Chinese officials moved the former President’s meeting with Chinese scholars from Jiaotong University in Shanghai to a hotel, far away from the students and the public. Finally, on the last night, there was a sense of personal warmth when Carter, now ninety years old, met Deng Xiaoping’s daughter, Deng Rong, and many other formal officials who had worked closely with America during the Deng-Carter years. Together, they reminisced about the “good old days” of US-China relations over dinner. “The former president and his wife were said to be extremely gratified to see so many old friends,” who now, like Carter himself, were all out of office and out of power.²

Carter’s cold reception in China coincided with an overall cooling of U.S.-China relations in the twenty-first century, as the two countries began to see each other increasingly as challenges to their respective security.³ The joint anti-Soviet cooperation between their militaries, which had been the cornerstone of Cold War U.S.-China relations, became a forgotten memory. Instead, their fleets confronted each other

¹“Jimmy Carter Trip Report: Beijing, Qingdao, Xian, And Shanghai, China, Sept. 1-10, 2014,” *The Carter Centre*, 2014 <https://www.cartercenter.org/news/trip_reports/china-2014.html> [accessed 10 September 2019].

²“Trip Report By Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter To China, Sept. 4-10, 2010,” *cartercenter.org*, 2019 <https://www.cartercenter.org/news/trip_reports/china-090410.html> [accessed 7 September, 2019].

³“U.S. Views Of China Amid Trade War Turn Sharply Negative”, *Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project*, 2019 <<https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/08/13/u-s-views-of-china-turn-sharply-negative-amid-trade-tensions/>> [accessed 18 June 2020].

constantly in the South China Sea and military scientists on both sides competed over a new arms race in aerospace. Harvard scholar Graham Allison has called U.S.-China military competition the Thucydides Trap of our century, as the rising power challenging the existing rulers might fuel another conflict of an unimaginable scale.⁴ Furthermore, the unresolved question of Taiwan, left by Jimmy Carter and Deng Xiaoping themselves, remained a dangerous flashpoint.⁵

Technology is at the centre of contemporary U.S.-China geopolitical rivalry. Both countries strove to gain military advantage over each other in a high-tech arms race, and America accused China of stealing secret U.S. military designs and using civilian scientific exchanges to bring a wide range of scientific and engineering knowledge illegally into China. From Obama's cyber-theft agreement with Xi Jinping to the current Huawei controversy under the Trump administration, China's theft of U.S. military technology has gradually developed from a niche security matter to an urgent topic in U.S. public debate.⁶ China's issue of how to break through American technological embargoes and achieve "self-reliance" in key military technologies became increasingly connected with the dangerously militaristic anti-Western and anti-American nationalism promoted by the Chinese Communist Party.⁷ For example, the J-20 fighter aircraft, based on stolen U.S. F-35 and F-22 designs, featured prominently in China Central Television's poorly made, yet extremely popular, propaganda documentary "My Amazing China." The documentary was viewed by 400 million people and ironically presented the new stealth fighter alongside the first Chinese

⁴ Graham Allison, *Destined For War: Can America And China Escape Thucydides' Trap* (London, 2019).

⁵ Richard C. Bush, *Uncharted Strait, The Future of U.S.-Taiwan Relations* (Washington, D.C., 2013).

⁶ FACT SHEET: President Xi Jinping's State Visit to the United States, White House, 25 September 2015.

⁷ Peter Hays Gries and others, "Patriotism, Nationalism And China's US Policy: Structures And Consequences Of Chinese National Identity", *The China Quarterly*, 205 (2011), 1-17.

aircraft carrier, also based on copied Russian design, as symbols of China's "independent" military technological achievements.⁸

The American public were less optimistic. Pundits and both current and retired government officials published book after book warning against the Chinese military's technological progress, arguing that it was all based on stolen Western designs.⁹ In February 2020, the director of the FBI claimed that its agency was investigating over one thousand cases of Chinese theft of advanced U.S. technology "in just about every field."¹⁰ This competition also became more global as American allies became targets of Chinese quests for advanced military and dual-use technology, either through open purchase or by cyber warfare. For example, the U.S. accused China of stealing F-35 designs from its Australian contractor and using them to make the counterfeit copy J-31 in China.¹¹ Meanwhile, European companies conducting business in China found themselves forced increasingly by the Chinese state to hand over their technologies to local Chinese partners.¹²

This thesis examines the very beginning of the technological competition that originated during the Cold War, when the United States and its Western allies willingly handed over military and dual-use technologies to Deng Xiaoping's China – an

⁸ 厉害了我国，CCTV [Our Amazing China, 2008], 2008. Also, "厉害了，我国，累计票房已超过4亿" [Our Amazing China Reaches more than 400 Million Views] CCTV, <http://news.cctv.com/2018/03/30/ARTIN4qiVxZioZHoSs482FIM180330.shtml>

⁹ Michael Pillsbury, *The Hundred-Year Marathon: China's Secret Strategy To Replace America As The Global Superpower* ([Place of publication not identified], 2016), New York.

Also, see,

Robert Stanley Spalding and Seth Kaufman, *Stealth War: How China Took Over While America's Elite Slept* (New York, 2020).

¹⁰ "FBI Says About 1,000 Investigations Open into Attempted Tech Theft By China", U.K., 2020 <<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-usa-china-spying-fbi/fbi-says-about-1000-investigations-open-into-attempted-tech-theft-by-china-idUKKBN2001Z8>> [accessed 16 June 2020].

¹¹ David Morris, "Hackers Stole Restricted F-35 Data From An Australian Contractor", *Fortune*, 2019.

¹² "China's Tech Transfer Problem Is Growing, EU Business Group Says", U.K., 2020 <<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-china-eu/chinas-tech-transfer-problem-is-growing-eu-business-group-says-idUKKCN1SQ0IF>> [accessed 16 June 2020].

unthinkable scenario in the post-Cold War world. The study will look specifically at how access to technology was central to the very beginning of modern-day U.S.-China relations during the Jimmy Carter and Deng Xiaoping years. Both sides believed that giving Western technology to China was essential to winning the Cold War against their mutual enemy, the Soviet Union.

A Different Cold War, from Nixon and Kissinger to Carter and Brzezinski

Nixon and Kissinger were the first American officials to approach China and have the idea of bringing the Chinese out of their self-imposed isolation from the West. They engaged Mao's China in strategic dialogues in order to help the United States end the Vietnam War. They also entertained the idea of using China to counterbalance the Soviet Union.¹³ However, the U.S. and China never had official diplomatic relations during the Nixon-Kissinger years. Cooperation between the two countries in mutual anti-Soviet activities was very limited and remained at a strategic level and mainly revolved around China's role in Indochina.¹⁴ Very few concrete agreements were made with respect to military sales, except in the sale of a civilian inertial guidance system associated with Boeing and Concorde aircraft, none of which were entirely military in nature.¹⁵

U.S.-China relations during the Jimmy Carter-Deng Xiaoping years were different, and both sides had genuine reasons for cooperating in the transfer of military and dual-use

¹³ Chris Tudda, *A Cold War Turning Point* (Baton Rouge, 2012). Also, Margaret MacMillan, *Nixon And Mao* (New York, 2008).

¹⁴ Geoffrey Warner, "Nixon, Kissinger And The Rapprochement With China, 1969–1972", *International Affairs*, 83/4 (2007), 763-781.

¹⁵ NFRUS, 1969-1976 China Volume XVIII, 21.

technologies. Internationally, U.S.-China relations were now operating within a more dangerous world. The U.S.-Soviet arms race was much harder for either side to control, and détente broke down through a new wave of superpower interventions – Soviet intervention in Angola, the proxy war in Somalia and Ethiopia, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Cold War superpower confrontation was consequently far more intense than the seemingly tranquil Nixon-Kissinger years. U.S.-China relations in the Jimmy Carter-Deng Xiaoping years were built, then thrived upon waves of Cold War tensions. China was no longer a strategic partner in a “philosophical sense,” as under Mao and Nixon, but was now a real security partner, a *de facto* ally that deserved broader access to American intelligence and military technology. As observed by Cold War historian Arne Westad, China not only contributed to the fall of détente as Chinese actions, such as the invasion of Vietnam, added to the tensions, but also benefited from it since those tensions forged better U.S.-China relations.¹⁶

In addition to the building global tensions, military technology was evolving that made the superpower arms race increasingly intense, leaving China with little choice but to catch up, taking all the help it could get from the United States and its western allies. For example, during the SALT II negotiations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, the number of nuclear weapons was no longer the only problem; the newer types of nuclear weapons that were quickly emerging from each superpower’s military R&D efforts were now another cause for concern. American cruise missiles, Multiple Independent Reentry Vehicles [MIRVs] capable of evading missile defence systems, first invented by the Americans and then followed by the Soviets, entered the nuclear arms race. There was also a race in tactical and short and medium-range nuclear weapons: new types of intermediate range missiles as led by the Soviet deployment of

¹⁶ Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (New York, 2018), 685.

SS-20 in Europe, fighters, and bombers capable carrying nuclear warheads were all new types of nuclear carriers that complicated arms control efforts. The explosive parts of these weapons, nuclear warheads themselves, were also advancing. They were getting smaller and deadlier: enhanced radiation weapons, now known as neutron bombs capable of killing human beings only and leaving equipment untouched, were being developed and deployed by the United States. In addition, the conventional arms race was also advancing swiftly in the late 1970s, especially in communications and aerospace, which had the potential to alter rapidly the landscape of modern warfare. New types of aeroplanes were entering service, such as the F-16 and F-18, which were not only deployed by America's own military but also exported abroad, fuelling local arms races between proxies. On the Soviet side, the Backfire bomber was entering service and could carry nuclear bombs and nuclear missiles, further blurring the lines between conventional and strategic weapons.¹⁷

The superpower arms race of the late 1970s placed China in a difficult situation. The vast gap between China and the West in modern military science had shown Deng Xiaoping and his military planners the brutal truth that the previous self-isolation and self-reliance model under Mao had failed spectacularly. China was now far behind current leading world standards in military science, even behind Europe and China's neighbour, Japan. This situation made military modernization an urgent task for Deng Xiaoping. However, China faced severe financial and technological strains in the late 1970s, thus, China had to focus on the transfer of those technologies from the West instead of purchasing expensive large items or spending prohibitive amounts of time

¹⁷A contemporary narrative: Wolfgang Kurt Hermann Panofsky, *Arms Control And SALT II* (Seattle, 1979).

Matthew J Ambrose, *The Control Agenda: A History Of The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks* (Ithaca, New York, 2018).

and resources to develop those technologies themselves. The best option left then, was to import some key technologies and try to integrate them with domestic systems, a hybrid approach that would save precious time and money. Deng's trusted general Nie Rongzheng summarized this reality in October 1979: "To rely on import to modernize our military equipment is a pure daydream; we cannot achieve military modernization through purchases alone. Instead, we have to focus on using our own hands and development independently. This does not exclude, however, the import of key technologies. But do not think of buying entire systems: that is daydreaming, we have no such amount of foreign Currency, and the foreigners won't sell everything to us."¹⁸

To achieve his objective, Deng Xiaoping used China's weakness in its development of military technology as a bargaining tool to play American politics, manoeuvring himself between two groups of American policy makers who had contradicting ideas regarding the transfer of technologies to China. For American anti-Soviet hardliners, China's weakness had made U.S. military planners far less averse to China acquiring those technologies than to the Soviet Union doing the same thing; in their minds, China still had a long way to go before it could catch up and pose a potential threat to the United States. On the other hand, for American officials reluctant to sell arms to China for non-proliferation reasons, the Chinese would never completely ruin their arms control objectives, mainly targeted at the Soviet Union, no matter how loudly they protested against U.S.-Soviet arms reduction talks. President Carter himself was very interested in building a long-term relationship with China and willingly threw a few extra military items into U.S.-China diplomatic talks in order to entertain Deng Xiaoping and make China more cooperative in anti-Soviet activities, an offer that Deng had been eagerly waiting for and gladly accepted.

¹⁸ 聂荣臻, 聂荣臻军事文选 [Nei Rongzheng, *Nei Rongzheng Military Papers*] (Beijing, 1992), 552.

The politics of military and dual-use technology transfer also had an indirect but lasting impact on cross-strait relations. They affected Deng Xiaoping's long-term goal of unifying the country with Taiwan. The military technology gap between China and the industrialised West had made Deng Xiaoping increasingly anxious about American arms sales to Taiwan, knowing that Chiang Ching-Kuo's Nationalist army could easily gain a technological advantage over the PLA through Taiwan's better access to western military technologies. A well-armed Taiwanese army would be a nightmare for Deng Xiaoping, who stated repeatedly that unification with Taiwan was one of his most important Cold War objectives. As a result, preventing America from selling weapons, or at least overly advanced weapons, to Taiwan became a second main diplomatic objective in his policy towards the United States. Meanwhile, the Carter administration had to tread carefully in deciding which types of weapons not to sell to Taiwan in order to avoid a diplomatic clash with their new friends in Beijing.

Science and Technology in China under Deng Xiaoping

The China that Deng had inherited from the Cultural Revolution was close to what political scientists would define as a failed state. No other events in recent Chinese history like the Cultural Revolution had done more damage to the Chinese scientific and intellectual community. Mao's idea that intellectuals should learn from the masses had sent vast numbers of Chinese intellectuals, including scientists and engineers to the countryside, while universities and colleges were closed for nearly a decade. In 1977, when universities were finally reopened, only 273,000 new students were admitted, in a country that had 943.5 million population at the time.¹⁹ Besides a shortage of qualified scientists and engineers, China faced the problems of a "non-experts leading experts,"

¹⁹ *New York Times*, "1977 Exam Opened Escape Route Into China's Elite", 6 January 2008.

or, the “Red over Expertise” problem, where politically-appointed Communist Party cadres – who often lacked even high school education, knew next to nothing about science, were running scientific and research institutes and making decisions.²⁰

Worse still were the human costs. An independent study by a Hong Kong-based human rights NGO showed that in the Chinese Academy of Science system alone, twenty three of the seventy academy fellows were persecuted to death by the Red Guards, and another ten committed suicide. Even those who survived suffered severe trauma and humiliation.²¹ Many of those who died were military scientists or scientists involved in military-related fundamental research. Dr. Sun Qimiao, a Chicago and Harvard-trained physicist who contributed to China’s atomic bomb programme, for example, was accused of being an “imperialist walking dog” because of his American study experiences. Dr. Sun was tortured by the Red Guards and died “mysteriously” in Beijing in 1977. Zhou Ren, China’s leading metallurgist and special material expert trained at Cornell University, was persecuted as a “traitor to the nation” because his wife was from an old Manchu noble family. He was beaten to death at seventy-five years old in 1973. Dr. Rao Yutai, trained at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, known as the “father of modern Chinese physics,” was arrested and paraded on the streets from 1966 to 1968, and killed himself inside his apartment at Beijing University. Even Dr. Deng Jiaxian, the much-revered founder of China’s atomic weapons program, nearly died from injuries after being beaten up and tortured under the scorching sun at a nuclear research base.²²

²⁰ Joel Andreas, *Rise Of The Red Engineers: The Cultural Revolution And The Origins Of China's New Class*, (Stanford, 2009), 139.

²¹ "1949年后大陆科学家景况一览" [Survey of Returning Scientists in Mainland since 1949], *Qiushi.Org*, 2012 <<http://www.qiushi.org/index.php?m=content&c=index&a=show&catid=30&id=197>> [accessed 18 June 2020].

²² *Ibid.*

Because of the destruction, Deng Xiaoping faced the daunting task of overhauling China's scientific and R&D efforts for the country's economic and military modernization. However, this was not an easy task. Besides rehabilitating persecuted scientists and putting technocrats back in charge of defence industries, Deng was also racing against time and needed a faster way of catching up with the West. The deteriorating U.S.-Soviet relations and rapprochement with the United States and the West thus provided an unprecedented opportunity for China to catch up with science and technology in the name of mutual anti-Soviet cooperation. Deng was the right Chinese leader to do this since he was a pragmatist at heart and was keenly aware of China's backwardness in comparison to the West. As Deng told a West German delegation in 1978, "Because of the disruption from Lin Biao and the Gang of Four cliques, our country's development has been delayed for ten years. In the '60s there was already a gap, and due to recent advances in the West, our economy is not just ten years behind, but twenty, thirty, and in some places fifty years behind. It is now time for us to learn from the world. Back in the old days, learning advanced sciences and technology from the West was ridiculed as blindly worshipping anything foreign. Now we know that that was a stupid idea."²³

Deng and his Idea of Hegemony

This long-term goal laid the foundation for Deng Xiaoping's engagement with the United States, as well as setting out the differences between the two countries in terms of technological transfers. Deng wanted long-term results that would continue to build up China's military potential long after the Cold War had ended, while Americans

²³ 邓小平讲话实录：会谈卷 [Deng Xiaoping Conversations Records] (Beijing, 2018), 140.

focused on the immediate threat from the Soviet Union and constantly played the “China Card” to counter it. China had a consistent guiding philosophy, while America was driven by events. This is not easily identified merely from diplomatic records, as both sides tended to talk about the Soviet threat and Chinese diplomats revealed little about their long-term ambitions. However, by looking at a much broader range of topics and sources, this thesis argues that Deng Xiaoping had far more complex reasons behind his simple and sometimes even caricaturized anti-Soviet rhetoric, which Americans took readily at face value.

This thesis will show that Deng, despite his pragmatism, shared many of Mao’s world views, similarly believing the world system itself to be a form of oppression and revolution, hegemony and struggle against hegemony. As Americans listened willingly to Deng’s long monologues against world hegemony, they naturally assumed his reference to the world hegemon against which both Americans and Chinese should unite and struggle meant only the Soviet Union. However, this thesis will argue that this was a misreading of Deng Xiaoping’s statements. Deng in fact thought that both the United States and the Soviet Union were imperialistic hegemons, but that the Soviet Union posed a bigger threat that had to be dealt with first. This was reflected not only in his internal speeches, but also in his actions. Deng’s aversion towards U.S.-Soviet arms reduction, his determination to develop an ICBM that could reach both the Soviet Union and the United States, and his long-term scheme to push American influence out of Taiwan were all strong signs that Deng Xiaoping was as suspicious of the United States as he was of the Soviet Union. He chose to work with the Carter administration only in areas that he believed would benefit China’s standing in the world, and rejected many other American proposals which he saw as threatening China’s long-term military

developments – developments that would eventually pose a challenge to the United States.

In Washington, Carter's China Policy became deeply entangled with the escalating U.S.-Soviet tensions in the Cold War and Carter Administration officials increasingly saw Deng Xiaoping just as he wished to be seen: a friend of the West and a reliable ally in the struggle against the Soviet Union. The China experts who advised the National Security Council – Michel Oksenberg and his Fairbank-taught colleagues at Ivy League universities – were trained using materials from the Republic of China period and had no first-hand access to Chinese society, let alone to high politics, after the Chinese Communist Revolution. Their advice had historical erudition but lacked temporal precision. Leonard Woodcock, liaison officer and later ambassador to China, was a typical political appointee who boasted an impressive yet completely irrelevant record as president of United Auto Workers. Most importantly, he was Jimmy Carter's personal friend. Leonard did not speak a word of Chinese, enjoyed too many lavish banquets and heavy drinking sessions hosted by Chinese officials and wrote little to nothing useful about Deng Xiaoping. The entire China team of the Carter administration, this thesis will show, was ill prepared for a deeper analysis of China's long-term Cold War ambitions.

Zbigniew Brzezinski was the Carter administration official who had the strongest impact on America's China policy and pushed for military and dual-use technology transfer to China. He was no China expert at all, despite always claiming to be one and liked to push other experts away when they had different opinions. Brzezinski, a political scientist who specialized in Soviet studies, believed that the Soviet system was

inherently unjust and flawed, and that it could thus be exploited or overthrown. He had already portrayed the Soviet Union in his Ph.D thesis as a prison of nations where multiple oppressed ethnic minorities lived under Russian chauvinism.²⁴ Before entering the Carter administration, Brzezinski had in fact been interested in using Japan as a major counterweight to Soviet expansion in Asia, which entirely ignored Japan's limited post-war security commitment and domestic restraint for such military adventures.²⁵ But one thing that Brzezinski believed from the beginning, and on which he never changed his mind, was that détente was a lie and America should not be friends with the Soviet Union. As early as July 1975, he started advising Jimmy Carter during his presidential campaigns, feeding the presidential candidate with the view that détente with the Soviet Union was an appeasement and was unfair to American interests. For example, Brzezinski wrote to Carter on 31 July, 1975 already, two years before Carter became president, advising him to be more tough in his talks about the Soviet Union during his political campaigns: "I am generally troubled by the way the [Ford] Administration is handling the U.S.-Soviet detente, though on the whole I do feel that it is in the American interest to promote an American-Soviet détente. However, that detente ought to be more reciprocal and it ought to be shaped with clearer American political objectives in mind."²⁶

After being invited to the White House as Carter's national security advisor, Brzezinski's frustration over Japan's limited role in Asian security eventually led him to shift his focus from Japan to China, and he immediately became obsessed with Deng

²⁴ For Brzezinski's analysis on the inherited injustice and oppression of Soviet political system, see Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Permanent Purge: Politics In Soviet Totalitarianism* (Boston, 1956). For Brzezinski's early observation of internal conflicts among socialist countries – including his insight view of the Sino-Soviet split, see Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc: Unity And Conflict, Revised And Enlarged Edition* (Boston, 1967).

²⁵ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Fragile Blossom: Crisis And Change In Japan* (New York, 1972).

²⁶ Letter, Zbigniew Brzezinski to Jimmy Carter, 31 July 1975. Brzezinski Paper, Box 8, Trilateral Commission Files Folder 7/8-75.

Xiaoping's strong anti-Soviet rhetoric. The collapse of détente in late 1978 and 1979 vindicated Brzezinski's view of détente in the White House and further convinced the Carter administration that Deng Xiaoping was an invaluable asset in countering the Soviet Union. This paved the way for America's change of policy and the massive transfer of U.S. and Western technologies to China that followed. The timing was almost perfect: in China, Deng Xiaoping had finally managed to consolidate his power in mid-1978, and the American military assistance arrived just in time to further boost his domestic prestige and to help him fulfil his Cold War ambitions.

Literature Review and Significance

Existing literature on the history of post-Mao period U.S.-China relations has dealt little with China's strategy and vision for the Cold War and is mostly based on American sources. Furthermore, the role that Deng Xiaoping played in this period of U.S.-China relations has not been carefully examined. In consequence, no academic study thus far has studied the role of military and dual-use technology in China's long-term Cold War strategic ambitions, which, this thesis argues, was in fact central to Deng Xiaoping's policy towards the United States.

The role of science and technology in U.S.-China relations also escaped the scrutiny of American policy makers at the time, few of them thinking much of its significance to America's long-term interests. Those who were concerned – non-proliferation officials, or people working on U.S.-Soviet arms reductions – were either ignored or pushed aside in the China policy making process. What was left in the narrative were happy memories of the good old days of U.S.-China cooperation. For example, in Jimmy Carter's memoir, the President himself fondly remembered his negotiations with the

Chinese which led to the normalization of U.S.-China diplomatic relations. “China was one of our few foreign-policy tasks to prove much more pleasant and gratifying than I had expected at the outset of my term.”²⁷ Zbigniew Brzezinski, the U.S. National Security Advisor who was instrumental in pushing through the U.S.-China diplomatic opening, also remembered how the Chinese shared many of his anti-Soviet world views and had great expectations of a future world order maintained by strategic relations between China and the United States.²⁸

This Americentric view also prevailed in early scholarship on the history of U.S.-China relations. For example, the normalization of U.S.-China relations and its following development was remembered in the classic, English source-based study by Robert Rose as a triangular, anti-Soviet strategic alliance and an inevitable outcome of the Cold War.²⁹ A more nuanced study by Rosemary Foot saw anti-Soviet intelligence cooperation, especially the establishment of American listening stations in Chinese Central Asia, as the key to the military relations between the Jimmy Carter administration and Deng Xiaoping’s China, which the author argued had “helped to return the United States to a central place in the global system.”³⁰ What stands out is a journalistic study by James Mann, in which he questioned whether Carter’s China policy was truly sustainable and fully in line with America’s own interests, considering how much it relied on the Sino-Soviet rivalry rather than systematically building a relationship between the American and Chinese peoples. “The administration was responsible for giving a military, anti-Soviet cast to America’s relationship with China,

²⁷ Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs Of A President* (Fayetteville, 1982), 190-216.

²⁸ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power And Principle: Memoirs Of The National Security Adviser* (New York, 1985), 140-50.

²⁹ Robert S Ross, *China, The United States And The Soviet Union: Tripolarity And Policy Making In The Cold War* (London, 1993). For a similar view, also see: Ilpyong J. Kim, *The Strategic Triangle: China, The United States And The Soviet Union* (New York, 1987).

³⁰ Rosemary Foot, *The Practice Of Power: US Relations With China Since 1949* (Oxford, 1997), 140-142

creating ties in which the interests of the Pentagon and the CIA became all important. By the time diplomatic relations were finally established, American and Chinese leaders spent much of the time talking about coordinating actions against the Soviet Union, and about arms sales, technology transfers and intelligence sharing. Questions about the long-term implications of these policies – about what might happen to America and China if the anti-Soviet basis of their friendship collapsed – were swept aside.”³¹ These studies raised interesting questions, yet the question of what China wanted from those kinds of cooperation still remained unclear.

Chinese Communist Party-sponsored scholars were the most eager to write about Deng Xiaoping’s perspective. However, they were overly simplistic in their narratives and tended to be too flattering towards Deng. They also tended to use the Deng-Carter years as an example, or a “gold standard,” to criticise other American presidents who were not as responsive and compliant with China’s demands.³² For example, Ni Shixiong, a professor at Fudan University, claimed that all U.S.-China relations were excellent during those years, and that it was “Deng Xiaoping’s tremendous passion and determination that conquered all differences and promoted the full development of the two countries relations.” Meanwhile, in the more difficult Reagan years, Deng “used a true proletarian revolutionary’s courage and tolerance, calmly turned back the turbulent waves and saved the near-broken U.S.-China relations.”³³

Chinese academia, unfortunately, was saturated with such flattering pieces. Another example was the works of Professor Gong Li, a historian affiliated with the Communist

³¹ James Mann, *About Face: A History Of America's Curious Relationship With China, From Nixon To Clinton* (New York, 2010). 81.

³² One such example, see, 钟文 and 文夫, *邓小平外交风采实录* (Beijing, 2004)..

³³ 倪世雄, *邓小平与中美关系, 毛泽东邓小平理论研究* [Nie Shixiong, “ Deng Xiaoping and U.S.-China Relations, *Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping Thoughts Studies*], 2009, issue 5, 23.

Party School in Beijing and author of a dozen books and articles on Deng Xiaoping's foreign policy. Gong praised the "hard negotiation and unremitting efforts of Chinese leaders" and the foresight of Jimmy Carter, with which they had been able to overcome their "small differences" concerning Taiwan and put U.S.-China relations back on the right course.³⁴ Gong also played the game of using mutual anti-Soviet cooperation during the Jimmy Carter administration as the "gold standard" of U.S.-China relations. For example, Reagan's arms sale to Taiwan was described as a significant retreat from Jimmy Carter's position: "Americans believed they had an advantage in the U.S.-Soviet struggle for world hegemony and started to underestimate China's role in balancing U.S.-China relations and started to ignore China's voices."³⁵ The few surviving memoirs of Chinese diplomats, such as that of Foreign Minister Huang Hua, also had the problem of being overly courteous towards Deng Xiaoping and avoiding discussion of the serious problems underlying U.S.-China relations, on which this thesis will focus. In addition, Hua gave too much attention to ceremonial details, especially the lavish banquets and heavy drinking toasts that he had enjoyed in Washington and dedicated an entire page to Deng's famous tour in Texas where he had played the cowboy. "Deng Xiaoping put the cowboy hat on, sat on a nineteenth-century horse buggy, and rode around the field for an entire loop. He waved his hat at the American audiences in order to pay his respects. This "when in Rome, do as the Romans do" behaviour earned loud cheers and applause from the audiences." Why Deng should do this and what the symbolic meanings were, however, Hua never explained.³⁶

³⁴ Gong Li, "The Difficult Path to Diplomatic Relations: China's U.S. Policy, 1972-1978," in William Kirby and Robert S. Ross, ed, *Normalization Of U.S.-China Relations: An International History* (Boston, 2005), 116-145

³⁵ 宫力, 峰谷间的震荡--1979年以来的中美关系 (Beijing, 1996), 110-112.

³⁶ 黄华, 亲历与见闻: 黄华回忆录 [Experience and Witness: Memoir of Huang Hua] (Beijing, 2007), 255.

Fortunately, this thesis benefits from recent advances in Cold War history. Emerging materials from international archives have revived a series of debates surrounding the superpower arms race and questioned the traditional understanding of China's role in the global Cold War. Betty Glad, writing from the perspective of the U.S.-Soviet arms race, believed that Zbigniew Brzezinski's dominant role in the White House made his policy, especially on China, unbalanced.³⁷ As historians started to examine emerging primary materials from around the world, superpower interventions in the Third World also became a crucial means of understanding U.S.-China relations. Donna R. Jackson, for example, was first to point out that the Soviet intervention in the Horn of Africa was a key moment that led to Carter's decision to recognize the People's Republic of China on the Mainland, at the expense of the Republic of China in Taiwan.³⁸ This overturned the traditional understanding that Carter simply did not put enough pressure on China for a peace guarantee over Taiwan.³⁹ It has also challenged the hypothesis that Carter simply wished the mainlanders and Taiwanese to solve their differences together through America's benign influences on both sides.⁴⁰

In terms of China's role in the overall global Cold War, another multi-archival study by Nancy Mitchell pointed out that Carter's policy was a well-considered strategy to roll back Soviet expansion in the Third World, especially in Angola and the Horn of Africa. This handed America a decisive victory that changed the course of the Cold War.⁴¹ As regards nuclear weapons and non-proliferation, a study by Shane J. Maddock on

³⁷ Betty Glad, *An Outsider In The White House: Jimmy Carter, His Advisors, And The Making Of American Foreign Policy* (Ithaca, New York, 2009), 119-29.

³⁸ Donna R Jackson, *Jimmy Carter And The Horn Of Africa: Cold War Policy In Ethiopia And Somalia* (Jefferson, North Carolina, 2007), 174.

³⁹ Rosemary Foot, "Prizes Won, Opportunities Lost: The U.S. Normalization Of Relations With China, 1972-1979", in *Normalization Of U.S.-China Relations, An International History* (Boston, 2006), 90-105.

⁴⁰ Brian Hilton, "'Maximum Flexibility For Peaceful Change': Jimmy Carter, Taiwan, And The Recognition Of The People's Republic Of China", *Diplomatic History*, 33/4 (2009), 595-613.

⁴¹ Nancy Mitchell, *Jimmy Carter In Africa, Race And The Cold War* (Washington, DC, 2018), 416-18.

America's nuclear policy pointed out that China's nuclear relations with the United States had always been troublesome. China had never wanted to be left behind in weapons development; nor had it wished international nuclear affairs to be dominated by the superpowers.⁴² This thesis will further prove that China's nuclear ambition was one of the main motivations in Deng Xiaoping's quest for Western military and dual-use technologies, as well as a potential source of dispute between American non-proliferation officials and the anti-Soviet hardliners around Jimmy Carter.

Progress has also been made in biographical studies. Brian J. Auten's new presidential biography of Jimmy Carter has recast him as a Cold War warrior who actively engaged in challenges posed by the Soviet Union. In addition, Auten has portrayed a U.S.-Soviet relationship that was fraught with difficulties at the end of détente, setting the background for this thesis.⁴³ There have also been important biographies about the two Chinese leaders who could not agree with each other: Deng Xiaoping and Chiang Ching-Kuo. Their incompatible visions for China set the stage for another of Deng Xiaoping's Cold War goals: to use his relations with the United States to get a free hand in dealing with Taiwan. Former U.S. diplomat Jay Taylor's biography of Chiang Ching-Kuo painted Chiang as deeply anti-Communist and committed to maintaining U.S.-ROC ties and Taiwan's military modernization – a goal that deeply agitated Deng Xiaoping.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, Alexander Pantsov and Steven Levine's biography of Deng Xiaoping portrayed a master political manipulator who was ruthless in domestic political struggles and equally aggressive in pursuing foreign policy objectives. The Deng Xiaoping of 1979 was, the authors wrote, a man who "achieved everything he

⁴² Shane J. Maddock, *Nuclear Apartheid: The Quest For American Atomic Supremacy From World War II To The Present* (Mizzou, Missouri, 2010), 158-159.

⁴³ Brian J. Auten, *Carter's Conversion : The Hardening Of American Defense Policy* (Columbia, 2008).

⁴⁴ Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo's Son: Chiang Ching-Kuo And The Revolutions In China And Taiwan* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2000).

wanted without regard for the many victims left strewn along his path to power. For him the end always justified the means... People were important only as instruments for achieving his goals."⁴⁵ Deng's overall anti-Soviet cooperation with the Carter administration, this thesis will also argue, was a means to achieve his long-term goal of military modernization and gaining control over Taiwan.

Methods and Sources

This thesis will follow the new school of Cold War history using international archival resources to show the difference between China's and the United States' Cold War ambitions.⁴⁶ It will also use the Cambridge School of history and compare the same events through multiple sources in order to find out policy makers' intentions both domestically and on the international stage.⁴⁷ Tracing China's quest for advanced arms and dual-use technologies in both the United States and Europe will better demonstrate Deng Xiaoping's true Cold War ambitions than would a mere reading of his carefully choreographed works and the heavily censored Chinese secondary literature, the latter being a major downfall of many previous studies on Deng Xiaoping and his foreign policy.⁴⁸

This study has been made possible by the opening of a list of international archives. On the American side, the Brzezinski papers at the Jimmy Carter Library [hereafter JCL],

⁴⁵ Alexander V Pantsov and Steven I. Levine, *Deng Xiaoping, A Revolutionary Life* (Oxford, 2017), 356

⁴⁶ Odd Arne Westad, "A 'New', 'International' History Of The Cold War?", *Journal Of Peace Research*, 32/4 (1995), 483-487.

⁴⁷ Quentin Skinner, *Visions Of Politics: Volume I* (Cambridge, 2002).

⁴⁸ For example, Michael Dillon, *Deng Xiaoping, The Man Who Made Modern China* (London, 2015), which was heavily based on Deng Xiaoping's own writings, and David M. Lampton, *Following The Leader, Ruling China, From Deng Xiaoping To Xi Jinping* (Berkeley, California, 2014), based mostly on Deng's interviews with westerners.

the Paul Nitze papers at the Library of Congress, the Barry Goldwater papers at Arizona State University [hereafter ASU] and the Frank Church papers at Boise State University [BSU] provided a detailed debate between Democrats and Republicans on Carter's policy towards both the PRC and the ROC. The Gerard Smith papers at both the National Archive [hereafter NARA] and the Eisenhower Library, and the Herbert York papers at the University of California San-Diego [hereafter UCSD] provided untapped insight into China's rather disruptive role in the U.S. arms control and non-proliferation effort.

The lack of access to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs archive, which closed in 2013, was mitigated using European archives. Most notably, the British National Archive [hereafter UKNA], Le Centre des Archives diplomatiques de la Courneuve in Paris, France [hereafter Archive Diplomatiques] and the Bundesarchiv in Koblenz, Germany, provided detailed exchanges between European and Chinese diplomats regarding arms purchases and technology transfers. They thus opened a new window onto China's effort to utilize its new relationship with America as well as the escalation of tensions in the Cold War to lobby for policies that benefited their own interests, but often contradicted American ones.

Furthermore, the under-explored Taiwanese perspective was accessed through the President Chiang Chin-Kuo papers, President Li Huanchang papers and the ROC Foreign Ministry papers at the Academia Historica in Taipei. Lastly, much under-studied Soviet perspectives were provided through the Institute of the Far East Institute papers at the Russian Academy of Sciences [hereafter IDV ARAH], which hosted the China experts that advised Brezhnev on Soviet China policy.

Those primary sources will be used together with a wealth of secondary literatures, media reports, and memoirs in both contemporary and retrospective contexts and to paint a much more complex and fascinating new picture of America's engagement with China during the Jimmy Carter and Deng Xiaoping years.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 1: SALT II, Third World Interventions and the Normalization of U.S.-China Diplomatic Relations

This chapter re-examines the normalization of U.S.-China diplomatic relations in the context of the two sets of tensions that dominated the Cold War in the late 1970s: firstly, the U.S.-Soviet nuclear arms race as symbolized by the difficulties and opponents surrounding the Second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty, and secondly, superpower interventions in the Third World marked by the Soviet intervention in the Somali-Ethiopian war. This chapter argues that Deng Xiaoping used these two sets of tensions and allied himself with Washington's anti-Soviet hardliners both inside and outside the Carter administration. As a result, Deng was able to push through U.S.-China normalization without making a non-use-of-force assurance on Taiwan as initially requested by the Americans.

Chapter 2: Jimmy Carter and the Failed U.S.-China Secret Talks on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

This chapter studies the secret Comprehensive Test Ban negotiation between the Carter administration and Deng Xiaoping, re-examining this forgotten yet curious episode of U.S.-China nuclear diplomacy in the context of the U.S.-China diplomatic opening. This study shows that China was far more interested in developing its own strategic capabilities than participating in any U.S.-led non-proliferation efforts. Furthermore, China was also able to convince the anti-Soviet hardliners in the Carter administration to help secretly with China's own nuclear tests, all in the name of mutual anti-Soviet cooperation.

Chapter 3: From the Taiwan Relations Act to “One Country, Two Systems” – Taiwan and Deng Xiaoping’s Unfinished Vision of the Cold War

This chapter deals with the second, less successful aim of Deng's policy towards the United States, namely his use of anti-Soviet rhetoric and the U.S.-China opening to gain a free hand on Taiwan. This chapter shows that military and technology transfer played a key role in cross-strait relations; blocking further U.S. arms sales to Taiwan remained a key objective for Deng Xiaoping, as he believed that cutting off U.S. support for Taiwan was essential in forcing Chiang Ching-Kuo to accept the mainland's unification terms. However, Deng Xiaoping's plan was spoiled by Chiang's unwavering anti-Communism and American Congress's continued support for Taiwan, as demonstrated in the making of the Taiwan Relations Act. Being unable to use the anti-Soviet cooperation with the Carter administration to gain a free hand on Taiwan, this thesis argues, remained Deng Xiaoping's biggest disappointment in the Cold War.

Chapter 4: Unheeded Warnings from Moscow and America's Own Arms Sales to China

This chapter examines how China's quest for Western and American military technology contributed to the collapse of the U.S.-Soviet détente. This study especially compares the Soviet perspective with the American by studying the Soviet sinologists that advised Brezhnev on China policy. These Soviet experts saw that Western arms sales to China was not only dangerous to the Soviet Union, but also disruptive to US-Soviet joint arms reduction efforts. This warning, however, was ignored by Carter's Cold Warriors and brushed away by Deng Xiaoping as Soviet propaganda. Instead of listening to the warning from both the Soviet Union and America's own diplomats, the Carter administration allowed American companies to sell weapons directly to China after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, and opened the door for the massive U.S. military and dual-use technology transfer to China at the end of the Cold War.

Chapter 5: A Gentlemen's Agreement: European NATO Members' Dual-use Technology Transfer to China during the Collapse of Detente, 1978-1981

The last chapter studies China's effort to use Cold War tensions to drive a wedge between the United States and its Western European allies in China's procurement of advanced arms and dual-use technologies. Using sources from British, French, and German archives, this chapter reveals that after receiving permission from the American anti-Soviet hardliners in the Jimmy Carter administration, the European NATO members competed with each other – and with the Americans – in exporting weapons and dual-use technologies to the Chinese. The quantity and quality of technologies that the Western Europeans were willing to sell, this study shows, exceeded what the Americans had initially planned based on simple anti-Soviet grounds, and were only

limited by China's own financial capability to purchase them. Anti-Soviet feelings on all sides, this chapter suggests, were again used by Deng Xiaoping to achieve China's long term military and strategic ambitions that extended far beyond the Cold War.

Chapter 1

Decline of Détente and the Normalisation of U.S.-China Diplomatic Relations

Introduction

This chapter investigates how Deng Xiaoping used the escalating U.S.-Soviet Cold War to convince Washington anti-Soviet hardliners, both inside the Carter administration and outside in the Republican Party, to urge President Carter to speed up the negotiation process and normalise U.S.-China diplomatic relations under China's demands. Using previously underexplored sources both from the Jimmy Carter Library and the Library of Congress, this study will show that Deng Xiaoping and other Chinese diplomats played an active – if not aggressive – role in pushing China's agenda in the American domestic political debate over the nature of the Cold War and their nation's role in it. Deng Xiaoping's immediate goal, this study will argue, was not so much to fight the Soviet Union as to remove American influence from Taiwan and open doors for China to access American and Western military and dual-use technology.

Kissinger's Legacy: Détente and its Critics

Before Carter's presidency, Presidents Nixon and Ford had carefully balanced two major foreign policy priorities: maintenance of détente with the Soviet Union and rapprochement with China. During the Nixon years, initiating dialogue with Mao's China was an important step in getting the United States out of Vietnam. The Vietnam War, as observed by historian H.W. Brands, was not just an American war, but also a Soviet and Chinese war. These were North Vietnam's two main supporters, and détente

with the Soviet Union and rapprochement with China were thus both necessary, each step needing to be taken in consideration of the other.⁴⁹ Until 1968, China was the main supporter behind North Vietnam's continued fight against the United States, guided by Mao's anti-imperialist beliefs. Mao actively blocked other socialist countries' attempts to mediate a peace between North Vietnam and the United States.⁵⁰ However, Nixon and Kissinger took advantage of the Sino-Soviet threat, especially the Sino-Soviet border conflicts of 1969, to negotiate with Mao and work out a gradual Chinese disengagement from the Vietnam War, paving the way for America's final withdrawal from the conflict.⁵¹

At the same time, U.S.-Soviet relations were carefully maintained in what Nixon would call "a structure of peace" – the *détente*. At the centre of this policy was the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (henceforth SALT), negotiated by both superpowers between 1969 and its final signing on 26 May 1972 at a summit meeting in Moscow. This treaty maintained the nuclear arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union in a way that subjected each side to the other's nuclear deterrent. The SALT treaty allowed the two countries to achieve a calculated balance in which each side would have the capability to destroy the other country in the event of nuclear war. The end goal was that neither would rationally initiate a nuclear attack on the other in the first place, which, in theory, would also be suicidal for the initiator. From the American perspective, Nixon and Kissinger wished to use SALT to limit the Soviet Union's nuclear ambitions, thus saving the American people from a potentially far more expensive nuclear arms race. They simultaneously wanted the SALT to serve as a "code

⁴⁹ H.W. Brands, "Vietnam And The Origins Of *Détente*", in *The Search For Peace In Vietnam* (College Station, Texas, 2004), 378-379.

⁵⁰ Odd Arne Westad and Sophie Quinn-Judge, *The Third Indochina War: Conflict between China, Vietnam and Cambodia, 1972-79* (London, 2006), 35-56.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 47-50.

of conduct” for peaceful coexistence between the two superpowers. A better U.S.-Soviet relationship based on the SALT would further restrain the Soviet Union from its global adventurism, which was also, on a second front, checked and restrained by the improvement of America’s relations with China.⁵²

However, this ideal détente scenario was far from reality. Using SALT to restrain the Soviet Union was more of an American aspiration than a reality of the Cold War. The Soviet Union saw the SALT as an American acceptance of Soviet nuclear parity, and thus a basis on which the Soviet Union could both solidify its self-imposed, unpopular grasp of Eastern Europe and act further in dismantling America’s global dominance in the third world. In the words of Russian historian Vladislav Zubok, “Both sides viewed détente as managed competition, as a continuation of the Cold War by less dangerous means.”⁵³ America was also seeking advantages outside of détente to regain its lost prestige after Vietnam. For example, America was selling weapons to the Shah of Iran, and backed up Israel at the most critical moments of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. In the words of Raymond L. Garthoff, an American SALT negotiator, “Détente was a more sophisticated and less belligerent way of waging the Cold War, rather than an alternative to it.”⁵⁴

When Jimmy Carter arrived at the White House, he inherited the détente and faced its aspiring promises as well as its difficult realities. As a former nuclear submarine officer and a well-trained nuclear physicist, Carter understood the danger of nuclear war. He was determined to continue the second SALT treaty that President Gerald Ford had

⁵² James Camero, "Moscow 1972", in *Transcending The Cold War: Summits, Statecraft, And The Dissolution Of Bipolarity In Europe* (Oxford, 2020), 83.

⁵³ Vladislav M Zubok, *A Failed Empire, The Soviet Union In The Cold War From Stalin To Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill, 2010), 230.

⁵⁴ Raymond L Garthoff, *A Journey Through The Cold War* (Washington DC, 2002), 284.

started negotiating with the Soviets, and to bring the U.S.-Soviet nuclear arms race under greater control. Carter's campaign notes were filled with thoughts and proposals such as the following: "The ultimate goal of this nation should be reduction of nuclear weapons in all nations of the world to zero. This should be done by carefully controlled public proposals to Russia and other nuclear powers for step by step, carefully monitored mutual reductions." Carter wanted to reduce nuclear weapons carriers on all sides to approximately 1,320 – a drastic reduction from the 2,360 for Soviets and 1,710 for Americans agreed by Nixon in the SALT I treaty.⁵⁵ A religious man, Carter also cited the Bible during the campaign for this noble cause: "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."⁵⁶

However, this was no easy task and Carter was criticised as being naïve and unrealistic both at home and abroad. Carter learned this lesson during his first week in the White House, when he enthusiastically laid out to the Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin his vision to "see the total number of nuclear missiles [on both sides] reduced to several hundred."⁵⁷ From the Soviet perspective, the cut which Carter asked for was too big to be realistic; as a result, the Soviet leadership doubted the American President's sincerity. In addition, the Soviet negotiators fundamentally disagreed with the Americans' proposal to consider their "backfire" Tupolev Tu-22M bombers as strategic weapons. As they argued, these were intermediate range bombers that could not reach the United States. Also unfair on the Soviets was the Americans' insistence that their own cruise missiles were not strategic weapons when they served similar functions to

⁵⁵ Campaign Notes, "1976 Campaign," Stuart Eizenstat Files Box 2, Folder: Arms Control, 2/75-9/76, Jimmy Carter Library [Thereafter JCL].

⁵⁶ Jimmy Carter, *The Presidential Campaign 1976: Volume I-1* (Washington D.C., 1979), p. 695.

⁵⁷ Melissa Jane Taylor and Adam M. Howard, *Foreign Relations of The United States, 1977-1980, Volume VI, Soviet Union* (Washington D.C., 2013), p. 6.

ballistic missiles.⁵⁸ Linguistic differences also caused confusion: cruise missiles are called “winged missiles” in Russian. Brezhnev wrote a frustrated letter on this issue to Carter in February 1977, complaining about the seemingly absurd American position: “What is the difference indeed for people, regarding what kind of missile will kill them—a winged missile or a non-winged missile?”⁵⁹ In addition, it took the Soviet military many years to build up its nuclear force in order to catch up with the United States. The Soviet leaders were thus unwilling to sacrifice their newly gained strategic parity and thought that Carter was using the “radical cuts” approach “as political demagogue and putting propaganda pressure on us.” Carter, they believed, was not serious about achieving these unrealistic goals.⁶⁰

Many American officials also believed that a new SALT treaty would give unfair advantages to the Soviet Union and further Brezhnev’s global ambitions, which were detrimental to American national interest. They were centred around an intelligence project commissioned by the Ford administration, the “Project Team B.” This study, led by the then director of the CIA, George W.H. Bush, and the legendary Cold War hawk Paul Nitze, argued that the Soviets were catching up with America in nuclear weapons. It also stated that the Soviet nuclear strategy was not entirely defensive, as the CIA had previously concluded – a euphemism for saying that the Russians were willing to nuke the United States in the future.⁶¹ Not entirely honest about America’s own

overwhelming nuclear capability, the new analysis was nevertheless leaked to the press

⁵⁸ Erin R. Mahan and Adam M. Howard, *Foreign Relations of The United States, 1969-1976, Volume XXXIII, SALT II*, (Washington D.C., 2013), pp. 665-667.

⁵⁹ The English translation only stated a cruise missile, but the Russian original said “winged missiles.” Letter, Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev to President Carter, February 25, 1977. FRUS 1977-80, Volume VI Soviet Union, 34-35.

⁶⁰ Anatoly Fedorovich Dobrynin, *Moscow’s Ambassador to America’s Six Cold War Presidents* (New York, 1995), pp. 444-445.

⁶¹ “Intelligence Community Experiment in Competitive Analysis: Soviet Strategic Objectives and Alternative View, Report of Team ‘B,’” CIA, December 1976. NS Archive, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//NSAEBB/NSAEBB139/nitze10.pdf>

by the *New York Times* during Carter's election campaign, causing a serious war scare and anti-Soviet sentiment among the conservative wing of Washington's foreign policy establishment.⁶² While the arms control officials at the State Department started arguing for deeper cuts in arms negotiations with the Soviet Union, the right-wing hawks were demanding a bigger, more expensive arms race. Carter, never involved in this study and certainly not a fan of either Bush or Nitze, found it increasingly difficult to deal with the polarised opinions regarding his policy towards the Soviet Union.⁶³

This was the first point at which the U.S.-China rapprochement became closely linked with Carter's Soviet policy in a highly disruptive way, because among the world leaders, Deng Xiaoping was the loudest and most ruthless critic of U.S.-Soviet arms reduction negotiations. He had fiercely criticised every U.S.-Soviet treaty from the Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963 and the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968 to the Vladivostok Accord of 1974. In 1974, Deng attacked the Vladivostok Accord under President Ford with great contempt: "The so-called disarmament, called by both the United States and the Soviet Union, has in fact concealed the danger of a new world war and masked the breakneck military expansion on both sides."⁶⁴ Deng carried this position into the Carter years. For example, Deng's trusted messenger, Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua, warned United States China Liaison Office Director Thomas S. Gates on 14 April 1977 of the danger of believing that arms talks could improve the U.S. position versus the USSR:

⁶² Brian J. Auten, *Carter's Conversion : The Hardening Of American Defense Policy* (Columbia, 2008), 143

⁶³ Anne Nessing Cahn, "Team B: The Trillion Dollar Experiment", *Bulletin Of The Atomic Scientists*, 1993, 22-31.

⁶⁴ 邓小平, "美苏讲裁军越厉害, 越是掩盖更大的扩军", in 邓小平军事文集 III [Deng Xiaoping, "The More Americans and Soviet Talk about Disarmament, the More They Cover Up their Military Expansions," in *Deng Xiaoping Military Papers III*] (Beijing, 2014), pp. 14-17.

“The Soviet Union is trying to squeeze the U.S. out of various areas. Disarmament, detente, and SALT are various forms taken to continue this rivalry. In negotiation each side tries to improve its position. Neither will accept concession or submit to a position of defeat. Disarmament has never succeeded in history. This was the case before the First World War, and the Second World War. It still holds true today. Take the SALT talks for example: since Vladivostok up until now the strategic weapons of the Soviet Union and the U.S. have increased and weapons have become more accurate instead of being reduced and weakened. This is a fact no one can deny. Whether or not the SALT talks between the U.S. and Soviet Union succeed will not alter the basic situation of rivalry between the two countries even if you can reach some agreements. An agreement amounts to just an empty piece of paper.”⁶⁵

Deng had complex, rather cynical and selfish reasons behind his warnings against détente. Firstly, he was unwilling to see the U.S. make peace with the Soviet Union, as a further détente between the two superpowers would allow the Soviet Union to focus its pressure on China. Secondly, Deng Xiaoping needed to present China as an indispensable partner in the global anti-Soviet struggle led by the United States and to use China’s cooperation in fighting the Cold War to bargain with America’s commitment on Taiwan. There is enough evidence to suggest that the last thing Deng Xiaoping wanted at this moment was the Soviet Union and the United States making peace.

For example, Deng’s complex view of détente, the arms races and Taiwan was laid out during the 11th Party Congress, in which he formulated his foreign policy strategies with other leading party comrades: “They praise ‘detente’; the more they praise, the more tension there is. They scream ‘arms reduction’; the more ‘reduction’, the more arms they have. They talk about ‘peace’ every day, but every day they prepare for war.” Comparing the two superpowers, Deng believed that “the Soviet Socialist Imperialists present a bigger danger,” because “in the current U.S.-Soviet rivalry, the Soviet

⁶⁵ Cable, “From PEIKING to STATE,” 14 April 1977. ADD, NARA.
<https://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=84044&dt=2532&dl=1629>

Imperialists are on the advance, and the American Imperialists in retreat.” To counter this threat, Soviet expansion had to be resisted throughout the world from Europe, to Africa, to Latin America and to Japan. China was willing to work with America, because “the difficulty China had with the United States [seemed] to be rather small.” However, there was one condition: “America has to withdraw forces from Taiwan, cut off diplomatic relations with the Jiang [Chiang Ching-Kuo] bandits, and abrogate the so-called America-Taiwan Defence Treaty. We will absolutely liberate Taiwan,” Deng emphasised; “When, how [we deal with Taiwan], this is our domestic policy, no other countries should meddle with it.”⁶⁶

The Japanese Formula: Taiwan and Deng Xiaoping’s Cold War Ambitions

Jimmy Carter had no clear China policy in the early months of his presidency. Politically speaking, he needed some time to distance himself from the secrecy and lack of transparency associated with his predecessor’s China policy. Carter even poked fun of Nixon and Kissinger during his 1976 campaign: “For many nations, we have two policies. One announced in public, another pursued in secret. In the case of China, we even seem to have two Presidents.”⁶⁷ What Carter wanted was “to try to have guaranteed to the People’s Republic of China a continuation of non-interference in the affairs of Taiwan, to have strong trade relationships with Taiwan, and to establish full diplomatic relationships with the People’s Republic of China.”⁶⁸ Therefore, once Carter moved into the White House, he made it clear that improving relations with the Soviet Union was the priority, that China would not be the main focus, and that U.S.-China

⁶⁶ 华国锋 “十一大上的政治报告 [Hua Guofeng, “Report on the 11th People’s Congress,” *China Daily*, 2012 <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/dfpd/18da/2012-08/29/content_15714533.htm> [accessed 9 September 2019].

⁶⁷ Jimmy Carter, *The Presidential Campaign 1976: Volume I-1* (Washington D.C., 1979), p. 110.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 688.

relations should not stand in the way of détente. This view was endorsed by Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. He wrote to Carter in April 1977 that “U.S.-China relations should not be based on mutual hatred towards the Soviet Union,” and “we cannot automatically assume their (the Chinese’s) continued hostility at present levels and there are limits to what we can do to affect their bilateral relations.”⁶⁹

From the State Department’s perspective, taking advantage of the Sino-Soviet split was not just wrong but also unsustainable. For example, Paul Warnke, Carter’s chief negotiator for SALT II, said: “In view of the festering enmity between China and Russia, and if a friend is ‘the enemy of one’s enemy’ do we have to choose one or neither? Or can we try and get along with both?” The answer was clearly no. The U.S. was not to aggravate its relations with the Soviet Union, either “by our own hope” or to “gain Chinese approval.” Instead, “in our dealings with China, common interest must be found beyond a matching distrust of Soviet intentions.”⁷⁰ National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, despite being a well-known anti-Soviet academic before entering politics, also advised caution. He suggested that the US should sound out China’s willingness to give “assurances of non-use of force in the Taiwan Straits as a prelude to normalization.” While U.S. troops levels in Taiwan could decrease, America was “making clear that this in no way reduces the U.S. commitment to Taiwan’s security.”⁷¹

Deng Xiaoping, on the other hand, was laying the domestic and international groundwork for the normalisation of U.S.-China relations. Deng had managed to out-

⁶⁹ "From Secretary Of State Vance To President Carter", 1977, *National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Far East, Oksenberg Subject File*, Box 42, JCL.

⁷⁰ Paul C. Warnke, "Friends, Enemies And Others; Foreign Policy In The Last Quarter Of The Twenties Century, Overview Of Foreign Affairs And Defense Issues, Prepared For Carter/Mondale Policy Planning", 1977, *Cyrus Vance papers*, Box 9, Folder 19, Yale Law School Library.

⁷¹ FRUS, 1977-80, Volume XIII, China, 1-3.

manoeuvre his domestic rivals and became the paramount leader in July 1977. He immediately focused his foreign policy on Japan.⁷² By focusing on Japan instead of the United States, Deng achieved several objectives at once which would profoundly impact his later relations with the Americans. Firstly, as argued by Chinese scholar Niu Dayong, Deng used the immediate Soviet threat to Japanese security to improve relations with Japan. This acted as an insurance to prevent the revival of Japanese militarism, and, in a slightly cynical interpretation, to drive a wedge into Japanese-American relations and prevent Asia from completely falling into the American sphere of influence.⁷³ Most importantly for Deng Xiaoping himself, he had reached a deal with Japanese Prime Minister Fukuda in early 1978, through which the normalisation of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations would be based on Japan's renunciation of their formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan. This not only set a legal precedent for his later, similar dements on America, but also demonstrated to the Carter administration that China was capable of shaping Asian affairs on its own based on China's strong anti-Soviet stance, while America's Asia policy remained unclear. Japanese diplomats, also fearful of the Soviet Union, were enchanted by Deng Xiaoping's strong anti-Soviet views and started to advocate a faster improvement of U.S.-China relations. For example, American diplomat David Arron reported from Japan in 1977 that "the Japanese see the United States as less concerned about their priorities - in particular, stability and security in Asia, the need for widening cooperation with China and the importance of containing increased Soviet military power in the region."⁷⁴

⁷² Alexander V. Pantsov and Steven I. Levine, *Deng Xiaoping, A Revolutionary Life* (Oxford, 2017), 296-306.

⁷³ 牛大勇, "中美解冻关系时对日本问题的考量与角力", 美国研究, [Niu Dayong, "The Considerations and Wrestling of Japanese Question during U.S.-China Rapprochement," *Journal of American Studies*], 5 (2014).

⁷⁴ NSC Weekly Report #35. "From Zbigniew Brzezinski to The President," 4 November 1977, *Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection*, Subject File, Box 41, Folder 10/77-1/78, JCL.

Deng Xiaoping's breakthrough with Japan thus openly demonstrated his anti-Soviet views which were quickly noticed by American anti-Soviet hardliners. As argued by Chinese scholars, with Japan Deng completed the first piece of an anti-Soviet global alliance which he envisioned would eventually include both Europe and the United States - a daring vision very much shared and adored by Washington's Cold War realists.⁷⁵ Furthermore, the attached condition on Japan was also a clear warning to the Americans: if they wanted China's cooperation on the Cold War, Washington needed to concede its relations with Taiwan. This "Japanese formula" would soon be applied to the Carter Administration.

Converging Views Between Washington and Beijing's Anti-Soviet Hardliners

In Washington in 1977, one group of policy makers at the Department of Defence was impatient with Carter's inaction on China. Harold Brown, a former nuclear scientist and now Secretary of Defence, was especially concerned about the expanding Soviet nuclear force versus the lack of progress of the SALT II negotiations. Brown also believed that it should be China – not Japan – with its massive population and industrial potential that could truly help the United States counter the Soviet Union. "In the past six years the building of a new Sino-American relationship has been a central element in Washington's efforts to construct counterweights to and constraints on the Soviets." Secretary of Defence Harold Brown wrote to Carter and Brzezinski on 9 February 1977: "I am concerned that the new Administration, in its first weeks, may be giving the impression that the weight of its national security diplomacy will be cast in the familiar framework of the Western alliance (and Japan) versus the Soviet Union and

⁷⁵ 林晓光, "中日和约的签定与 20 世纪 70 年代的中日关系", 北大亚太论丛, [Lin Xiaoguang, "The Signing of Sino-Japan Peace Treaty and Sino-Japanese Relations in the 1970s," PKU Collected Writings of Asia-Pacific Studies] 10 (2013).

ignoring China.” The defence security urged the exploration of a range of options to improve U.S.-China relations, from arms sales to military contracts, and issued a slightly cynical review of the “feasibility of U.S.–PRC relations as a means of sustaining the Sino-Soviet split.”⁷⁶

The context of Brown’s suggestion was America’s overall real or perceived strategic retreat from the world after the Vietnam War, while the Soviet Union marched into the power vacuum that the America had left, a vision that was widespread among America’s political elite. After all, it had been two decades after J.F. Kennedy’s call to “bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty.”⁷⁷ Carter also believed that the United States should no longer bear the economic and military burdens of unnecessary foreign wars, a view that shared many subtle similarities with the Nixon Doctrine despite Carter’s other anti-Nixon stances.⁷⁸ During his first year as President, Carter considered withdrawing troops from South Korea to avoid another Korean War, this time potentially started not by the North, but by the morally questionable and dangerously militaristic South Korean dictator Park Chung-Hee.⁷⁹ With regard to Latin America, Carter planned to give back the sovereignty of the Panama Canal to Panama, causing an uproar among conservatives who still shared Teddy Roosevelt’s dream of an American Empire. The Panama Canal Treaty, some argued, together with Carter’s unpopular policies with Taiwan and the Iranian crisis, eventually cost him the re-election.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ David Paull Nickles and Adam M. Howard, *Foreign Relations Of The United States, 1977–1980, Volume XIII, China* (Washington D.C., 2013), pp. 26-27.

⁷⁷ John F. Kennedy, "Inaugural Address", 20 January 1961 <<https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/inaugural-address-19610120>> [accessed 7 September 2019].

⁷⁸ Robert S. Litwak, *Détente And The Nixon Doctrine: American Foreign Policy And The Pursuit Of Stability* (Cambridge, 2008).

⁷⁹ Lyong Choi, "Human Rights, Popular Protest, and Jimmy Carter’s Plan to Withdraw U.S. Troops from South Korea", *Diplomatic History*, 41/5 (2017), pp. 933-958.

⁸⁰ For right wing politics during the ratification of the Panama Canal Treaty, see: Adam Clymer, *Drawing The Line At The Big Ditch: The Panama Canal Treaties And The Rise Of The Right* (Lawrence, Kan.,

Outside of the White House, the Cold War hawks associated with the Committee on the Present Danger already started their moves on China. Paul Nitze, for example, who held fundamentally different views from the State Department arms control officials on the SALT II, had failed to secure a job with Jimmy Carter in the new administration. Greatly disappointed but not defeated, he had spent 1977 working for the Committee on the Present Danger to hype up the Soviet threat across the United States – in universities, during community meetings and at policy conferences. Paul Nitze’s grandson remembered with great amusement his grandfather’s strange behaviour during the Carter years:

“Nitze liked to use models to demonstrate Soviet military supremacy. He would carry around re-creations of Soviet ICBMS, ten inches long and black. The American models were five inches long and white. Sometimes, in speeches or meetings, he would arrange the black missiles to point upward while laying the white ones horizontal.”⁸¹

It has previously gone unnoticed among historians that Paul Nitze soon found willing listeners in Beijing. From 24 November to 13 December 1977, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs offered “tourist visas” to Paul Nitze, his wife Phyllis Pratt Nitze, and a few other members of the Committee on the Present Danger and invited them on a three-week grand tour in China. Nitze, retired official in title and military spy in disguise, closely coordinated the tour with the Defence Intelligence Agency at the Pentagon. He toured major cities and industrial centres, and as part of the Chinese male

2008).

For a more positive review on Carter’s Panama policy, see, Robert T. Strong, "Jimmy Carter and the Panama Canal Treaties", *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 21/2 (1991), pp. 269-286.

⁸¹ Nicholas Thompson, *The Hawk And The Dove: Paul Nitze, George Kennan, and The History of the Cold War* (New York, 2010), p. 272.

bonding ritual drank baijiu with Chinese officials at every stop.⁸² Nitze even inspected Chinese military bases, offered advice to Chinese generals and sent back more secret reports to his American generals, before finally having a three-hour meeting with the Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua on 1 December 1977.⁸³ The two immediately formed a friendship over their shared world view that Soviet expansionism was the biggest threat to the world. “The Committee feels the Soviet Union is seeking hegemony over the entire world, including the Asian landmass and the United States,” Nitze told the Chinese, and asked: “What measures should the PRC and the United States take together against the ‘Polar Bear’”? Huang Hua answered: “The most important question is to fight against [Carter’s] appeasement policy, and we must have no illusions about that.” Huang Hua then laid out his conditions both to inform and to influence the American visitor: “‘SALT II’ and all these negotiations are transitory and false... We are prepared to struggle against the Soviet Union ideologically and militarily as well for one thousand years.” Taiwan was the only obstacle lying between the United States and China. Huang then laid out his cards on the table: China could not promise to reunify Taiwan through only peaceful means. “The right road is the use of force, because there is such a bunch of counter-revolutionaries in Taiwan.”⁸⁴

Paul Nitze’s trip was only part of China’s effort to court American anti-Soviet hardliners, and thereby pressurise Jimmy Carter into yielding to China’s demand on

⁸² Heavy drinking and toasting at banquets were frequently mentioned. Personal journal, “Notes, 28 November 1977,” Box 18 Folder 3, *Paul Nitze Paper*, Library of Congress.

⁸³ A curious document at the Library of Congress revealed this was an intelligence gathering mission: “Nitze’s mission with Defense Intelligence Agency,” see “Approval for Travel to Denied Areas,” Department of Defense, *Ibid*.

⁸⁴ Cable, 1 December 1977, PEIKING to STATE, NARA, ADD. <https://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=305371&dt=2532&dl=1629>

In Nitze’s own notes, the version is slightly different from the Department of State copy: “The most important question is to fight against the appeasement trend and fight against the illusion of peace so that people will be rid of any illusions about ‘peace’.” Note, Tuesday 28 November, *Paul Nitze paper*, Box 18 Folder 3, Library of Congress.

Taiwan. Henry Jackson, the leading Democratic Senator known for his strong anti-Soviet views, was also unhappy with Carter's SALT II proposals and repeatedly wrote to Carter expressing that the concessions he had made were unfair and that the "Soviets desire a SALT agreement on terms that they regard as advantageous."⁸⁵ This position was very much shared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who resisted Carter's proposal and openly supported the anti-Soviet position advocated by the Committee on the Present Danger.⁸⁶ Carter, known for his politeness as well as for his stubbornness, would always write back "Scoop, your SALT memorandum is excellent, and of great help to me," and then stay on his own course.⁸⁷ But Jackson, similarly to Nitze, found an audience in Beijing. From 12 to 20 February 1978, Jackson went to China on another typical grand tour filled with sightseeing, lavish banquets and heavy drinking rituals. In Beijing, Jackson met Deng Xiaoping and the two also bonded over their anti-Soviet views.⁸⁸

Deng Xiaoping's partnership with anti-Soviet hardliners on the issues of SALT II had several effects on the later development of the U.S.-China normalisation process. Firstly, when Carter switched to a tougher policy towards the Soviet Union in his second year, "playing the China Card" became an easier and necessary choice. Secondly, since the Chinese always used the "Japanese Formula" and linked Taiwan, U.S.-China normalisation and Soviet threat in one package, it was impossible for Carter administration officials to separate these very different policy issues and not to make a compromise on Taiwan.

⁸⁵ Letter, Henry Jackson to the President, 22 August 1977. Box 40. Folder SALT 8/77-11/77, *Brzezinski Collection*, NSA Files, JCL.

⁸⁶ Memorandum, "Brown Memo to the President on Senator Jackson's Memo," 28 March 1977. Ibid.

⁸⁷ Letter, Jimmy Carter to Henry Jackson, Box 40. Folder SALT, 3/77-4/77, *Brzezinski Collection*, NSA files, JCL.

⁸⁸ Robert G. Kaufman, *Henry M. Jackson* (Seattle, 2000), pp. 379-80.

From Angola to the Horn of Africa, and China's Chance

Sceptics of détente, such as Brown, Jackson, Nitze, Brzezinski and eventually Jimmy Carter himself, had real reasons to question the effectiveness of arms negotiations such as SALT II in limiting Soviet global ambitions. At the beginning of Carter's term in the White House, American officials had already noticed a concerning pattern in Africa and the Middle East while the Soviet Union and its Cuban allies were expanding their influence in these regions. In the Middle East, for example, the Soviet Union had taken advantage of the rising Arab nationalism and anti-American feelings in the wake of the 1973 Egypt-Israeli war to expand Soviet influence among local communists and political elites. The Soviet Union also used Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's perceived betrayal of his fellow Arabs – his decision to pursue a separate peace agreement with Israel in 1977 – to demonstrate to nationalists in the Middle East that only the Soviet Union could be trusted in their national aspirations. As a result, the Soviet Union gained support of Syria and Iraq, where both states became the main recipients of Soviet aid in the Middle East.⁸⁹ The Soviet Union also supported anti-colonialism in the region and became an ally of the nationalist bourgeoisie elite in the former British colony of South Yemen, who now ran the Marxist, pro-Soviet People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. The prospect of South Yemen turning into a Soviet proxy so close to the Red Sea seriously threatened America's access to Middle Eastern oil and became a thorn in the flesh for the Saudis, who were a key ally of the United States in the region. "South Yemen has more arms than the Sheiks of the Gulf," the Saudi Crown Prince Fahd complained to Secretary of State Vance on 14 December 1977. "Suppose that South Yemen attacks one of the Gulf states and that Iraq came to the support of South

⁸⁹ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War, Third World Interventions And The Making Of Our Times* (2005), 250.

Yemen... If such a thing were to happen at a time when the U.S. was incapable of helping Saudi Arabia, the outcome would be terrible.”⁹⁰ The situation would only get worse in 1978, when the Soviet Union firmly established a navy stronghold in the South Yemen Port of Aden and started to deploy cruise-missile attack submarines, amphibious landing ships and guided-missile frigates at the mouth of the Red Sea.⁹¹

Another major conflict in North Africa would finally bury détente and push forward China’s Cold War agenda. Before Carter, in the period from 1973 to 1974, America’s traditional ally, Ethiopia, was suffering from escalating rebellion and devastating famine. In September 1974, the Ethiopian Emperor and friend of the United States, Haile Selassie, was overthrown by a group of military officers who called themselves the Provisional Military Government of Socialist Ethiopia, or the Derg. The Derg were initially supported by students, urban residents and police officers, and collaborated with the other main revolutionary group, the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Party, or the EPRP. However, during the following internal rivalry among different revolutionary groups from 1975, the political struggles turned increasingly ideological and violent. On 3 February 1977, the Marxist-Leninist-inspired Mengistu Haile Mariam murdered forty other political officers who opposed him in a mafia-war-style shoot-out and emerged as the new dictator of the regime. The following year, Mengistu turned his guns on his formal political allies and called for “Death to counterrevolutionaries! Death to the EPRP!” and released a wave of violent purges known as the “Ethiopian Red Terror.” Meanwhile, the opposing EPRP declared that the Derg had betrayed the revolution and began to conduct guerrilla war against Mengistu’s regime. The violence

⁹⁰ FRUS, 1977-1980, Volume XVIII, Middle East Region; Arabian Peninsula, 530.

⁹¹ Memo, Soviet Naval Ships and Arms Shipments at Aden, South Yemen, April 1978 - April 1979, CIA CREST.
<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP79T01819A000100610001-7.pdf>

caused between 55,000 and 150,000 deaths and had a profound impact on the Cold War.⁹²

As Mengistu's faction embarked on a programme of self-proclaimed Soviet-style socialism, the U.S., Ethiopia's traditional ally, was no longer welcome. Ethiopia gradually gained the attention of the Soviet Union and its Cuban ally.⁹³ The Cuban Communist leader Fidel Castro was so impressed by Mengistu and the Ethiopian revolution that he sent a 200 man military mission to Addis Ababa in March 1977, in order to start helping Mengistu build up his army.⁹⁴ Castro setting foot in Ethiopia immediately alarmed the United States intelligence service: it proved that "Mengistu sees clear cut advantages in closer relations with the Soviet Union and other Communist countries," as the CIA reported on 28 March 1977. The report warned that America seemed to be losing its influence in Ethiopia: "The military rulers now concluded that Ethiopia's dispute with Somalia must be handled without assuming direct U.S. involvement... The U.S. rapprochement with Sudan and close U.S. ties with Saudi Arabia and Egypt, together with the regime's view of a growing Arab conspiracy against it, has reinforced the belief that the U.S. is fraternizing with the enemy camp."⁹⁵ The U.S. military was also very disturbed by the presence of Cuban military personnel in Ethiopia. It started to extract its secret communication centres and personnel out of the Kagnew intelligence station in Asmara, then still a part of Ethiopia, both as a

⁹² The current Ethiopian government gives the number to be 55,000, although others connected with the EPRP claimed it to be much higher. Pietro Toggia, "The Revolutionary Endgame Of Political Power: The Genealogy Of 'Red Terror' In Ethiopia", *African Identities*, 10/3 (2012), 265-280.

⁹³ Richard J Reid, *Frontiers Of Violence In North-East Africa: Genealogies Of Conflict Since C.1800* (Oxford, 2011), 174-175.

⁹⁴ Nancy Mitchell, *Jimmy Carter In Africa, Race And The Cold War* (Washington, DC, 2018), 348.

⁹⁵ "The Ethiopian Revolution and its Implications," 28 March 1977, CIA, CIA CREST.
<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP97S00289R000100170015-5.pdf>

precaution and as “a political message to the Ethiopian military regime that we are disengaging from them.”⁹⁶

These precautions could not be taken soon enough. On 19 April, Carter told Brzezinski that the U.S. would withdraw all military advisers and suspend all military aid to Ethiopia, while America and its allies started using military aid to “turn” Ethiopia’s neighbour, Somalia, to their side. The Somalian military dictator, Jaalle Mohamed Siad Barre, they believed, would be a replacement for Mengistu, who had gone astray to the Soviet and Cuban side.⁹⁷ The Carter administration’s decision to switch support from Ethiopia to Somalia was now supported by the UK, France, West Germany and Egypt, and bankrolled by Saudi Arabia, each of which had promised military aid to Somalia as a way to “keep Siad on the Western Hook.” They looked forward to using this aid to create a possible break between Somalia and the Soviet Union. Sadat’s Egypt, in fact, was most eager of all. In June, Cairo shipped two cargoes of arms worth \$21 million in total – paid by the Saudis – and armed 10,000 men in Somalia. Siad, meanwhile, having received a blank cheque from the Saudis, was negotiating arms deals with both the UK and France, and “non-lethal” supplies with West Germany.⁹⁸

However, the Somalian dictator Siad Barre was no easy person to work with. He too had regional ambitions that were out of the West's control. The situation in the Horn was further complicated on 23 July 1977, when Somalia launched a sudden attack on Ethiopian military outposts in the Ogaden desert, just as the U.S. intelligence had feared. Siad Barre had taken advantage of the internal chaos in Ethiopia and launched

⁹⁶ Memorandum, Closing Kagnew Station, NSA, 28 March 1977. NSA Horn Of Africa Files, Box 1, Folder 3/77.

⁹⁷ Mitchell, 271.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 2015, pp. 272, 278-179.

the invasion as part of his grand plan to reunite all the territories of Somali people. These included the Ogaden desert, which was now under Ethiopian control and seen by Siad as a prize that would make him a national hero at home.⁹⁹ The invasion happened at a strange moment for both superpowers and further complicated the picture of the global Cold War. For Moscow and Havana, Siad's attack on a fellow socialist country was both inconvenient and intolerable, especially considering that both Cuba and the Soviet Union traditionally had good relations with both warring parties and had tried to mediate a political settlement on the Ogaden disputes during the first half of 1977, before the war erupted.¹⁰⁰ Castro, however, who had been to Ethiopia and liked what he saw, wished to use Ethiopian revolutionaries as a model to spread communist revolutions further in Africa. In fact, on 7 April, Castro travelled to East Germany and started lobbying for Ethiopia's cause among fellow communist leaders, while at the same time denouncing Siad Barre. Castro complained to East German leader Erich Honecker that his trip to Somalia had been bugged by Siad Barre. He said that the Somalians were being increasingly driven by right-wing politicians and were getting "closer to Saudi Arabia and the imperialists countries," and that "Siad Barre was very arrogant and severe." Mengistu and his revolutionaries in Ethiopia, on the other hand, had welcomed Castro with open hearts. In Castro's words, "I developed the impression that there was a real revolution taking place in Ethiopia... Mengistu strikes me as a quiet, serious, and sincere leader who is aware of the power of the masses." Castro ignored Mengistu's mass murders and showed an appreciation of his bloody methods of obtaining power: "He is an intellectual personality who showed his wisdom on 3 February."¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Gebru Tarake, "The Ethiopia-Somalia War of 1977 Revisited," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (2000), pp. 635-667

¹⁰⁰ Michelle, 280-81.

¹⁰¹ Transcript of Meeting between East German leader Erich Honecker and Cuban leader Fidel Castro, East Berlin, 3 April 1977, Wilson Center Digital Archive.

The Soviet Union was influenced by Castro's revolutionary romance with Mengistu and simultaneously frustrated with Siad Barre's stubborn attitudes towards Ethiopia and flirtation with the West. It now increasingly saw Ethiopia, in the words of the CIA, as "a socialist confederation that could be the central power in northeast Africa and could project its influence into Southwestern Arabia and out to the sea into the Indian Ocean." The Soviets thus leaned more and more towards Ethiopia as they increased military supplies to Mengistu.¹⁰² In a last attempt to restrain Siad, the Soviet Union airlifted around 1,200 Soviet military advisers from Somalia and sent them instead to Ethiopia, taking with them advanced weapon systems such as Styx missiles and some MiG fighters. After the Somali invasion on 23 July 1977, the Soviet Union also suspended delivery of spare parts of military equipment to Somalia.¹⁰³ In August, the Soviet Union gave Siad an ultimatum to withdraw his troops and denied his personal plea for arms assistance during his final, fruitless trip to Moscow with Leonid Brezhnev. Siad ignored this: Ogaden was too important to his national ambitions, the Somalian troops were winning the war and Siad considered Ogaden valuable enough to risk losing Soviet support.¹⁰⁴ Robert G. Patman, a scholar who closely studied the conflict noted that in mid-August 1977, Somalia embarked on a collision course with the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union's top priority was now to strengthen its ties and military position in Ethiopia. Patman noted that, "in late September, Addis Ababa for the first time received substantial quantities of crated Mig-21 jet fighters, Stalin Organs (batteries of 40 122mm rockets mounted on lorries) and new T-55 Tanks," together

<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111844.pdf?v=f309df8815718e8037fc161211b6679e>Also, see mentioning in Michelle, 197.

¹⁰² "Interagency Assessment of the Ethiopian-Somali Situation, 10 August 1977, CIA, CIA CREST. <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP79R00603A002900090005-0.pdf>

¹⁰³ Robert G. Patman, *The Soviet Union in the Horn of Africa: The Diplomacy of Intervention and Disengagement*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, 217

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 286-287.

with South Yemeni troops and growing numbers of Soviet and Cuban military advisers, who “were rushed to the front line.” These supplies, additional troops and military advisers would soon turn the tide of the war.¹⁰⁵

Back to China and the Cold War

The war in the Horn of Africa happened at the same time that the Carter administration was making a major change to its overall defence policy. Earlier in 1977, critics of Jimmy Carter, both inside and outside the Carter administration and including individuals at the Committee on the Present Danger, had said that the Team B study undertaken during the Ford administration was correct, and that the new President could not afford to base his entire Soviet policy on negotiation alone. America, they argued, had to show its strength. The Joint Chief of Staff at the Pentagon, for instance, was eager to join a new space-age arms race and tried to convince Carter to initiate the development of America’s own anti-satellite weapons, instead of using an agreement with the Soviet Union to ban them all together. The Soviet Union already developed anti-satellite weapon, they argued; thus, it was intolerable that Americans did not.¹⁰⁶

Carter also faced pressure from the older generation of Cold War warriors. On 4 August, Secretary of Defence Harold Brown invited six members of the CPD to the White House to explain their view on the Soviet Union to the President. Paul Nitze and his fellow hawks told President Carter that he was on the wrong track to handle the Soviet Union: 1. The Soviet Union would use its nuclear superiority to coerce the United States and its allies; 2. Moscow would bargain in SALT II only to the extent that

¹⁰⁵ Patman, 218-219.

¹⁰⁶ FRUS 1977-80, Volume XXVI, Arms Control, 27.

it faced growing U.S. military capabilities; and 3. Military trends were not in the United States' favour – a fact that would hurt the U.S. in a future SALT III.¹⁰⁷

America's differences with the Soviet Union over the Horn of Africa were compounded by new troubles in the ongoing SALT II negotiations. In 1978, the Soviet leadership, pushed by their military, felt that the treaty negotiations were unfair to the Soviet Union. America's terms of including Soviet "Backfire" bombers as strategic weapons while excluding American cruise missiles from the same category, as well as its strict limitation on Russian heavy strategic missiles, were seen as a trick to preserve American advantages at the cost of Soviet strategic deterrence capabilities. *Pravda* published a flaming editorial blaming all the problems in SALT II on its American opponents, who were composed of "retired high-ranking military personnel, 'theoretical specialists' on the issues of strategy, the organisation of the so-called 'Committee on the existing [Present] danger,' [and] some organs of the press, who are direct agents of the Pentagon and the military-industrial complex." These people, *Pravda* argued, were pushing for new proposals which were meant to give the United States "significant nuclear advantages over the Soviet Union," while the true goal was to "pervert, and defame the Soviet Union." After listing all the new weapon systems that America had developed unilaterally, deployed in "forward bases" along the Soviet border and "aimed at targets inside of Soviet territory," it criticised American cynicism and warned that "there should be no illusions about the fact that the Soviet Union would resort to such restrictions that would give unilateral advantages to the United States."¹⁰⁸ The Soviets, observed by the U.S. ambassador to Bulgaria and a former member of the first SALT negotiation team, were trying to use this article to warn the Americans that if the U.S.

¹⁰⁷ Auten, 165.

¹⁰⁸ "Задача Ограничения Стратегических Вооружений: Перспективы И Проблемы," *Правда* ["The Task of Limiting Strategic Weapons," *Pravda*], 11 February 1978.

didn't cut American cruise missiles during the negotiations, the Soviet Union would be compelled to develop its own, which would further escalate the arms race.¹⁰⁹

This article quickly went viral in diplomatic circles, adding more fuel to the fire in the already deeply troubled U.S.-Soviet relations. Meanwhile, American diplomats were pointing out to the White House that the Soviets were playing the same game: Soviet negotiators were pushing the Sea Launched Ballistic Missiles [SLBMs] to the limit in SALT II, in which America had an advantage, while the Soviet military was hiding the anti-satellite weapons tests which America felt to be highly threatening.¹¹⁰ Neither side in the negotiations, it turned out, was entirely sincere.

It was within this tense atmosphere of summer 1977 that SALT II, the Horn of Africa and China became interconnected. From the Chinese perspective, the conflict in the Horn of Africa presented Deng Xiaoping with the opportunity to convince America that China's warnings about the Soviet Union had always been right, and that China was willing to play its role on America's side of the Cold War. As early as 26 February 1977, Chinese diplomats already started to feed their American counterparts with intelligence regarding Cuba's involvement in the conflict, which confirmed some American anti-Soviet hardliners' worst fears. "A PRC official in an African embassy revealed Somalia and Cuba have signed a defense agreement," Brzezinski wrote to Carter. "PRC officials believed that there are about 700 Cubans in Somalia, and the number of military instructors will increase, and that the training of guerrillas will be more open and on a larger scale."¹¹¹ Earlier in 1977, America and China had been

¹⁰⁹ Raymond Garthoff, *Cruise Missiles: Technology, Strategy, Politics* (Washington, 1981), 353-354.

¹¹⁰ Cable, from MOSCOW USSALTTWO to STATE, 14 February, 1978, ADD, NARA.
<https://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=37788&dt=2694&dl=2009>

¹¹¹ Memo, "Weekly National Security Report 62," 26 February 1977, from Zbigniew Brzezinski to the President. Box 41, Folder: Weekly Reports, 2/77-6/77, *Brzezinski Collection*, NSA Files, JCL.

exchanging information about Cuba's involvement in Ethiopia, while China, according to information shared by Somalian diplomats, had replaced the Soviet Union's role in supplying Somalia with spare parts for its Soviet-made weapon systems.¹¹² It seemed that America and China were gradually taking the same side in the Horn of Africa.

On 23 August, the Secretary of State Cyrus Vance was in Beijing, probing the possibilities of normalising diplomatic relations with China. The trip had yet to define the specific timeline and terms of normalisation, but both sides had reached conclusions on Soviet expansion in the Horn of Africa. Vance said: "We have made basic changes in our approach to our African policy. In Africa, we have opposed interference by outside powers through efforts to encourage African solutions to African problems. Turning specifically to the Horn of Africa, this is an area of obvious strategic importance because of its location on the route through the Canal and leading to the Persian Gulf." In terms of Somalia, Vance told the Chinese Foreign Minister that the United States had already initiated economic aid and military ties with Siad, and that America was working with other allies to provide weapons to Somalia. Vance also showed warned that "Mengistu made a very major and I think dangerous decision when he concluded that he was going to put all of his reliance on the Soviets as a military supplier and I think he is bearing the consequences of that now."¹¹³ During the next day's meeting with Deng Xiaoping, Deng gave Vance a long lecture on the Soviet threat and warned that "the Polar Bear you are confronting is one with wild ambitions – wild ambition to conquer the world and to establish its hegemony over the world." However, what was preventing the United States and China from working together, Deng emphasised, was America's current relations with Taiwan: "It is the United States

¹¹² Cable from SECSTATE WASHDC to AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO, 3 June 1977, ADD, NARA <https://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=127228&dt=2532&dl=1629>

¹¹³ FRUS, 1977–1980, Volume XIII China, 159, 161, 167.

which is occupying Taiwan and it will not do if you try to put equal blame on both side... The issues we are confronting now it is the United States which wishes to control Taiwan and obstruct China from reunifying their own motherland. It is only the United States which owes a debt to China. China owes nothing to the United States.” The measures which America needed to take in order to earn China’s cooperation were “severance of so-called diplomatic relations with the Chiang clique on Taiwan, withdrawal of U.S. forces in Taiwan and in the Taiwan Straits area, and (abrogation of the treaty). That is the short words for the Japanese formula and, to be honest, to agree to use the Japanese formula was a concession for the Chinese to the United State side.” Citing Chairman Mao, Deng asked: “With such a bunch of renegades and counter-revolutionaries on Taiwan, do you think it would be able to be peacefully liberated?”¹¹⁴

Because Vance made no breakthrough on the topic of normalisation, the trip was not well received by the American public, and some of Vance’s opponents inside the Carter administration called it a “disaster.”¹¹⁵ Yet it was on this trip that China confirmed its position on the Horn and laid out its cards on Taiwan. According to Nancy Michelle, a prominent scholar on Carter’s policy in Africa, China’s strong interest in the Horn was also confirmed by the U.S. intelligence. What Huang and Deng did not directly tell the Americans was that China was funnelling arms to Somalia through Pakistan; the CIA later confirmed that “in the second half of 1977, China had sent small arms, ammunition, and anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons to Somalia.”¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 192-204.

¹¹⁵ John H. Holdridge, *Crossing The Divide, An Insider’s Account Of Normalization Of US-China Relations* (Lanham, MD, 1997), 173.

¹¹⁶ Michelle, 285.

SALT II, Horn of Africa, and China: Making the Linkage

Meanwhile, the war in the Horn of Africa had made a dramatic turn and was not going well for Somalia and its America-led supporters. In October, Mengistu flew to Havana to plead for help. The Somalis had gained an initial victory in Jijiga, Eritrea and ninety percent of the Ogaden desert, while Ethiopia had lost four divisions. “In Eritrea, we have lost the countryside; we control only two large towns, and if we lose them we might lose the revolution.” Cuba was not the Ethiopian revolution’s only hope. “Comrade Fidel, the situation is grave,” Mengistu pleaded – and Castro could not refuse him. Meanwhile, Siad had ejected the Soviets from their former base in Berbera and had broken relations, thus also leaving Moscow with no other option but to back up Ethiopia fully. In November, both Cuba and the Kremlin decided that they needed to act immediately in order to save the Ethiopian revolution.¹¹⁷

On 18 October 1977, Anatoly Ratanov, the Soviet Ambassador to Ethiopia, formally announced that the USSR had completely stopped supplying arms to Somalia and was now fully behind Ethiopia. On 21 October, the USSR told President Siad to cut his diplomatic mission to Moscow. On the battleground, meanwhile, the Somali offensive had halted due to over-extended supply lines, resistance from freshly arrived Soviet armoured units and Ethiopian air-dominance by previously purchased American F-5 fighters. The mix of the weapons’ origins only demonstrated the bizarreness of the war and how rapidly alliances had shifted.¹¹⁸

As Ethiopia was winning the war at the end of 1977, the Carter administration found itself with limited diplomatic and military options to change Somalia’s losing situation.

¹¹⁷ Michelle, 350.

¹¹⁸ Patman, 219-220.

From a diplomatic perspective, the Jimmy Carter administration had long believed in letting Africans decide the fate of Africa, and the Carter administration had been trying to mediate a peace settlement in the former British colony, now self-declaredly independent state of Rhodesia. Carter administration officials in charge of African affairs, such as U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Andrew Young, and Secretary of State Vance, thus believed that an American military intervention in Somalia would be out of the question as it would run against African nationalism and U.S. policy in Africa as a whole.¹¹⁹ In addition, the Organization of African Unity meeting on 8 October, which the Carter administration hoped would solve the crisis, adopted the view shared by the majority of African leaders that Somalia's invasion of the Ogaden desert was illegitimate and violated Ethiopia's state sovereignty. Instead of helping the United States, the OAU called on Somalia to withdraw, a position that was supported by the Soviet Union.¹²⁰ These unfavourable conditions for Somalia as well as America's lack of influence had, in Vance's words, offered the Soviet Union "a position to mediate the dispute and to gain substantial additional influence in the Horn."¹²¹ Even the most die-hard anti-Soviet, Secretary of Defence Harold Brown, admitted that the "the Horn is a poor part of the world in which to operate," and that America would have much difficulty maintaining military supplies to Somalia.¹²² Yet neither the United States nor America's allies were capable of turning the tide of the war for Somalia. Even the French, who had long been interested in the region, admitted that Somalia was the aggressor and refrained from sending weapons.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Patman, 228.

¹²⁰ New York Times, "Ogaden Conflict Termed Threat To Africa's Stability", 1977.

¹²¹ FRUS, 1977–1980, Volume XVII, Horn of Africa, 77.

¹²² Ibid., p. 81.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 87.

“The Soviets could not have a free ride”

Carter’s personal relations with Brezhnev also started to decline. Between December 1977 and March 1978, Carter and Brezhnev exchanged a series of letters trying to do some damage control, which mostly ended up in each side blaming the other for being unfair and insincere. Cyrus Vance was sent to Moscow to advance SALT II negotiations and found a frustrated Brezhnev complaining that the U.S. was backstabbing the Soviets by reaching out to the Chinese. “Soviet-American relations must develop without prejudice to the interests of third countries,” the General Secretary said. “It was not in our mutual interest to tolerate attempts by third world countries to undermine the relations between us, or to play on the differences that inevitably arise between us.”¹²⁴

It was “from those troublesome months” that Brzezinski's imaginative mind roamed to China and “started reviewing more systematically the advisability of developing strategic consultations with the Chinese in order to balance the Soviets.”¹²⁵ During a Special Coordination Committee meeting on the Horn of Africa on 22 February, Vance insisted that “he would not put any U.S. troops in Africa.” Brzezinski recommended an alternative: that “we should get the regional powers to act and make the Soviets and Cubans bleed.” If they could not do it, then “with respect to other actions against the USSR and Cuba” America should “consider further steps with respect to space cooperation and technology transfers to the Chinese.” This option was again rejected by Vance.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ FRUS 77-80, Volume VI, Soviet Union, 85.

¹²⁵ Zbigniew Brzeziński, *Power and Principle: Memoirs Of The National Security Adviser* (New York, 1985), p. 189.

¹²⁶ Special Coordination Committee, 22 February 1978, Box 11, Folder, Ethiopia-Somalia, 4/77-2/22/78, *Brzezinski Collection*, NSA Files, JCL.

But Brzezinski and his analysts had already decided to make a move. “The Soviets have chosen Africa as their principal focus of competition for the foreseeable future, and we find it difficult to develop appropriate local responses.” Oksenberg and Armacost, the two leading Asian experts on the National Security Council, together wrote to Brzezinski on 22 February: “Our response should not be confined to Africa. Nor should we rely heavily on a linkage with arms negotiations since a SALT II agreement can serve our own interests.” What they wanted to do was to make a daring move to open relations with China as a counter move to the Soviet Union’s seeming victory in the Horn of Africa, and as an effective level to pressure Soviet concessions on the SALT II. Moving closer to China and establishing diplomatic relations with Beijing, they predicted, would “increase Soviet incentives to cooperate with us in other areas, including SALT. It would strengthen China’s commitment to a moderate policy in Asia, thereby limiting further opportunities for the Soviets to translate their growing military power in the Pacific into any significant political influence.”¹²⁷

Brzezinski immediately liked the idea: “The Soviets could not have a free ride in some parts of the world while pursuing détente where it suited them,” and the “Chinese and American relationship bears very directly on the American-Soviet relationship.”¹²⁸ On 10 March, he pointed out to President Carter that the Chinese were sending signals through offering the U.S. Liaison Office a new house in Beijing, allowing Chinese military attachés abroad to interact with Americans. China also “featured Edgar Snow on the front page of *People's Daily* as an American who had contributed to Sino-American friendship.” “I do not mean to suggest that the Chinese have altered their position on Taiwan,” Brzezinski reported to Carter. “Rather, I simply draw your

¹²⁷ FRUS 77-80, Volume XIII, China, 304.

¹²⁸ Brzezinski, 149-150.

attention to indications that the Chinese may prove to be receptive to overtures from us to restore some momentum to the relationship.”¹²⁹ Carter waived his position, knowing well that it would be an unpopular decision with the State Department. Carter announced his decision on 16 March, in his most characteristic way – by a note. In a short notice to Vice President Mondale and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, he wrote: “I’ve decided it would be best for Zbig to go to China—perhaps as early as next month if it is mutually satisfactory with the Chinese. We need to expedite the arrangements and plans.” At the bottom of the page, Carter wrote: “bcc: Dr. Brzezinski.”¹³⁰

On the Sino-Soviet front, U.S. intelligence suggested that the Soviet Union had increased military pressure on China. Soviet troops deployed on the Sino-Soviet border increased from the 1965 level of 130,000 men in fifteen combat divisions to “40 active divisions” with 415,000 men in 1977. Most alarmingly, nuclear cruise missiles – NATO-designated “FROG launchers” – were detected, in addition to nuclear capable self-propelled 230mm and 240mm heavy artilleries deployed against China.¹³¹ The CIA also predicted that Sino-Soviet relations would get no better. A 1977 report on Soviet foreign policy intentions stated that “Moscow sees no prospect of a complete restoration of the relationship of the 1950s... The roots of the dispute are deep, and the U.S.S.R. in its conciliatory approach is not prepared to give up the option of military pressure.”¹³² In February 1978, another comprehensive study by the CIA suggested that “we see no change for better or worse in Sino-Soviet relations forthcoming.”¹³³

¹²⁹ NSC Weekly Report #51, from Zbigniew Brzezinski to the President, 10 March 1978, Subject File, Box 41, Folder 1/78-3/78, *Brzezinski Collection*, NSA Files, JCL.

¹³⁰ FRUS Volume XIII, China, 309.

¹³¹ Memorandum, Recent Soviet Ground Force Activity on the Sino-Soviet Border, 9 November 1977, CIA CREST.

https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000969745.pdf

¹³² National Intelligence Estimate: Soviet Strategic Objectives, 12 January 1977, CIA CREST.

https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0005289044.pdf

¹³³ Memorandum, “Sino-Soviet Relations,” CIA, 27 February 1978, CIA CREST.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP81B00401R002400020022-3.pdf>

The CIA also kept abundant records of Deng Xiaoping that showed him to be the most militant anti-Soviet Chinese politician around. For example, as early as 1963, when Deng was sent by Mao to Moscow, the CIA noted that Deng was one of Mao's chief lieutenants in planning and executing strategy in the anti-Soviet contest.¹³⁴ After Zhou Enlai's death, the CIA correctly reported that if Deng emerged as premier, he would "try to 'operate under the guidelines set down by Mao and Chou, to wit continued hostility with the Soviet Union, emphasis on China's role in the Third World, and restrained manipulation of the U.S. connection.'" ¹³⁵ The presidential intelligence briefing on 18 April 1978, right before Brzezinski's breakthrough trip, suggested that the Chinese give "paramount importance of concern over Soviet intentions." Meanwhile, maintaining links with the U.S. remained "a major foreign policy theme," because the U.S. was the "only country capable of countering the U.S.S.R."¹³⁶ Another report stated that "Peiking [sic] has rejected a number of Soviet overtures for improved relations and polemics between the two sides remain at high level." Meanwhile, Deng was calling for a "united front of Western Europe, Japan, and the U.S and the Third World to contain the USSR"¹³⁷ – a strategy similar to the ones that had been argued by Brzezinski for years, since his Trilateral Committee days.

This combined intelligence from the Soviet Union and China provided a geopolitical background and rationale for Carter's final decision to push for a "fast track" normalisation option with China. With difficulties in SALT II and troubles in the Horn,

¹³⁴ Special Report, "The Men in the Sino-Soviet Confrontation," 5 July 1963, CIA CREST. <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP79-00927A004100040002-3.pdf>

¹³⁵ Memorandum, "State of the World," 12 January 1976, CIA CREST. CIA. <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP83B00100R000100130068-8.pdf>

¹³⁶ Presidential Briefing China - Outline, CIA, 10 April 1978, CIA CREST. <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP83B00100R000100050017-2.pdf>

¹³⁷ Chinese Foreign Policy, CIA, undated but in the 1977-early-1988 Box 8, folder, China [PRC] 10/77-1/78. *Country file*, NSA Files, JCL.

China, with a firm anti-Soviet Deng in charge, suddenly seemed the natural ally to work with.

Deng's "Three Demands" and Carter's Compromise

Chinese diplomats paid close attention to the stalled SALT II negotiations and Soviet interventions in the Horn, and made several moves to show the Americans that they were ready to precede with normalisation talks. Through a meeting with Prime Minister Kriangsak Chamanan of Thailand, Deng passed a note to the U.S. Liaison Office which ended up in Carter's daily report. Deng wrote to the American President using the same tactics of up-tempo Soviet threat: ridicule détente, and blame Americans for meddling in Taiwan:

"In the past, we were enemies and did not have much contact... In 1972, a new situation developed... We signed the Shanghai communiqué and were established semi-diplomatic relations. We share a common point, that is, how to deal with the Polar Bear to frustrate its war designs... We are concerned that some people in the U.S. still have false hopes about detente. Some people in Europe doubt that the U.S. will come to their rescue... Our only difference is Taiwan... The U.S. has accepted that Taiwan is part of China and is willing to withdraw militarily provided Peking will not use force, but we tell them this is our problem. When and how we liberate Taiwan is our own question."¹³⁸

Other anti-Soviet American officials also pushed Carter towards a "fast track" normalisation with China. Harold Brown had already stated in October 1977 that China's view on an anti-Soviet global alliance aligned with the U.S. military's interests.

¹³⁸ Memorandum, "From The Situation Room," 11 April 1978. NSA Files, President Daily Report Files, Box 5. Folder 4/1/78-4/12-78. JCL.

He suggested that the U.S. should invite the Chinese to receive a high level NATO briefing and observe NATO military exercises – a position that Secretary of State Vance would reject.¹³⁹ Now Brown was first to propose that America "activate the Chinese to agitate among the members of the non-aligned movement against the Cubans" in the Horn of Africa – as if China was some kind of magic red button that he could push.¹⁴⁰

With immense pressure to “do something to the Soviets with the Chinese” from within and outside of the administration, China restlessly pushed back in all diplomatic and private channels, asking the Carter administration to cede to its “three demands” on Taiwan. The view that America had to make a compromise gained consensus inside the NSC from March to May 1978, as Carter himself faced increasing public pressure to make a response to the Cuban-Soviet victory in the Horn. For example, on 5 May, the cover page of *New York Times Magazine* published a cartoon of a small, boy-scout-like Carter sitting next to a large, triumphant Brezhnev with the title “Can He Handle Him?”¹⁴¹ On 10 May, under pressure both at home and abroad, Carter finally approved the “fast track” option to normalise relations with China based on China’s three demands: “close down our official representation on Taiwan, terminate the U.S.–ROC Mutual Defense Treaty, and withdraw our remaining military personnel and installations.” The secret memo, approved by Carter, indicated that this move should happen before 1980 and that the timing should be closely coordinated with U.S.-Soviet SALT II negotiations and the US midterm congressional election. This would

¹³⁹ Memorandum, “The People's Republic of China and NATO,” Secretary of Defense, 4 October 1977, Box 8, folder, China [PRC] 10-77-1-78, *Country file*, NSA Files, JCL.

¹⁴⁰ White House Evening Report, 12 April 1978. Folder, NSA files, Staff Material, Horn/Special, Box 6, 2-5/78, JCL.

¹⁴¹ *New York Times Magazine*, Cover page, 7 May 1978.

“demonstrate domestically and abroad that in seeking a SALT agreement with the USSR, we were also taking steps to enhance our strategic position in other ways.”¹⁴²

The compromise was made even before Brzezinski went to China. Meanwhile, to warm up the following negotiations, Brzezinski and Frank Press, the White House science adviser, called in the Chinese Liaison Officer Han Hsu on 15 May and promised to send a large scientific delegation to China and to start cooperating with the Chinese on science and technology.¹⁴³ Deng Xiaoping’s strategy seemed to be working: he was getting not only the American compromise on Taiwan, but also American science and technology.

Brzezinski Goes to China

On 20 May 1978, Brzezinski was in Beijing to make the final deal. “I have come to the People’s Republic of China because President Carter and I believe that the U.S. and China share certain common, fundamental interests and have similar long-term strategic concerns,” he straightforwardly told the Chinese Foreign Minister. “The most important of these is our position on global and regional hegemony. Thus, our interest in relations with the PRC is not tactical in nature but is based on certain long-term and strategic objectives.” China and the U.S. had been allies during WWII and both shared a vision for a pluralistic world, he said; furthermore, the two countries today “should cooperate again in the face of the common threat for one of the central features of our era is the emergence of the Soviet Union as a global power.” He listed new military inventions on both American and Soviet sides, and reviewed trouble spots around the world where the Soviet Union was making dangerous moves: Rhodesia, Angola and the Horn of Africa.

¹⁴² FRUS, Volume XIII, China, 357-365.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 378, 379.

Brzezinski assured the Chinese foreign Minister that Carter was committed to both normalising diplomatic relations with China and confronting the Soviet Union both strategically and conventionally – in other words, the U.S. was fully committed to gaining a technological advantage in the nuclear and conventional arms race with the Soviet Union.

To speak in terms that the Chinese would understand, Brzezinski even showed them a list of five types of still-in-development, top secret American weapons. Four of these, with the exception of the cruise missiles, are curiously still too secret to be shown in the declassified transcripts four decades later. When it came to nuclear weapons, he assured the Chinese that the U.S. had a lead in MIRVs and the total numbers of warheads (120,000 were allowed under SALT II), most of which were “capable of liquidating a city.” “We continue to enjoy significant technological advantages in the strategic area,” Brzezinski bragged to the Chinese. “The Soviet ICBMs are large, but their accuracy is not as good as ours.”¹⁴⁴

The Chinese liked his bravado. The next day, Huang Hua complimented Brzezinski: “I have already read several volumes of your works. It is true that our exchange of views can only succeed.” Huang then warned that “the Soviet Union is the most dangerous source of war” and that “the Soviet Union is seeking strategic superiority over the U.S.,” while SALT II or any agreement reached between the two superpowers “cannot deter the speed of the arms race.” When it came to third world intervention, Huang said: “In Africa the Soviet Union is making infiltration and expansion and making an open challenge to the U.S.” The solution was for the U.S. to “follow the Japanese formula” – to abide by the principles of the Shanghai Communiqué to work with China. “Chairman

¹⁴⁴ FRUS, 1977-1980 Volume XIII, China, 390.

Mao said to Dr. Kissinger,” Hua related, “as long as we do not try to harm you, nor you try to harm us, we therefore can work together to cope with the [Soviet] SOB.”¹⁴⁵

With the groundwork finished by the deputies, Brzezinski laid out all his cards to Deng Xiaoping on 21 May. After complimenting each other on their “straightforwardness,” Brzezinski told Deng directly that he wanted to move normalisation forward: “I was instructed to confirm to you the U.S. acceptance of the three basic Chinese points and to reaffirm once again the five points that were made to you by the previous U.S. Administration.” “The president,” he said, “is prepared to undertake the political responsibility at home of resolving the outstanding issues between us. In our relationships we will remain guided by the Shanghai Communiqué, by the principle that there is only one China and that the resolution of the issue of Taiwan is your problem.” The deal was made, and the two men proceeded to the timely topic of Soviet threat around the world: SALT II was unfair, détente was an illusion, Europe was in danger, and Cubans with Soviet help “are acting aggressively in Ethiopia and Zaire.” Finally, Brzezinski and Deng shared the most recent update on Soviet infiltration in Afghanistan, with Deng predicting that “Afghanistan may become Cuba in the East.”¹⁴⁶

Brzezinski’s trip to China marked both the end of the eight-year-long U.S.-China normalisation process started by Kissinger’s secret trip to Beijing in 1971 and the beginning of a de-facto Sino-U.S. anti-Soviet alliance. This would open doors for the mass transfer of Western military and dual-use technologies to China and change the outcome of China’s Cold War.

¹⁴⁵ Memorandum of Conversation, “Summary of Dr. Brzezinski’s Meeting with Foreign Minister Huang Hua,” 21 May 1978. Brzezinski Collection, Box 9, Geographic File, China [PRC] [5/15/78-5/22/78], *Brzezinski Collection*, NSA Files, JCL.

¹⁴⁶ FRUS, 1977-1980 Volume XIII, China, 432-447.

Conclusion: Deng Xiaoping's Cold War Ambitions

This chapter has demonstrated that China was much more consistent and patient in its approach to the United States than the Americans were in dealing with China. In laying out the “Japan formula”, playing up anti-Soviet détente in American politics and initiating the link between the Horn of Africa and normalisation of U.S.-China diplomatic relations, Deng Xiaoping and his diplomats had been waiting – as well as creating – the momentum for the Carter administration to make a compromise on Taiwan. The Chinese also showed their shrewd understanding of the U.S.-Soviet arms race from both strategic and technical levels, as well as evidencing awareness of their own technological drawbacks in comparison with the two superpowers. It was no coincidence that a liaison officer had arranged a large U.S. technological delegation to visit China during Brzezinski's deal in May 1977, making a trip to organise joint scientific projects and university-to-university collaborations.¹⁴⁷ Deng Xiaoping had also urged Brzezinski on 23 May that China needed America's help in purchasing advanced computers from Japan.¹⁴⁸ After the establishment of U.S.-China diplomatic relations on New Year's Day 1979, Deng Xiaoping would continue to pursue his two main Cold War objectives: further pressuring the Americans to withdraw their support of Taiwan and using mutual anti-Soviet cooperation as an incentive to pursue American military and dual-use technology. Meanwhile, Carter's China policy continued to be troubled by two increasingly incompatible goals: saving the détente with the Soviet Union on the one hand and increasing military cooperation with China on the other.

¹⁴⁷ FRUS, 1977-1980 Volume XIII, China, 379.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 440.

Chapter 2

From Taiwan Relations Act to “One Country, Two System,” Taiwan and Deng Xiaoping’s Unfinished Vision of the Cold War

Introduction

This chapter deals with the second, yet the less successful aim of Deng’s policy towards the United States: his use of anti-Soviet rhetoric and the U.S.-China opening to gain a free hand on Taiwan. Initially, Carter administration’s actions followed Deng Xiaoping’s wishes: Carter Administration cancelled the Sino-U.S. defence treaty as repeatedly requested by Deng before the official establishment of U.S.-PRC diplomatic relations. But after the reaction from U.S. Congress and the making of the Taiwan Relations Act, Deng Xiaoping became increasingly frustrated with America’s continued relations with Taiwan and especially continued U.S. arms sales to the ROC military. Thus, Deng Xiaoping gradually adopted a more subtle policy towards the Taiwanese after 1979 – a “united front” policy aimed to soften Chiang Ching-Kuo’s anti-Communist attitudes and to convince the Taiwanese to start negotiating about unification.

Deng’s united front policy not only faced resolute resistance from Chiang and other hard-line anti-communists in the KMT, but was also disrupted by the new American president, Ronald Reagan’s continued arms sales to Taiwan. This chapter argues, because Deng’s wishes to deal with Taiwan with a free hand were unsuccessful and he had no ways of stopping the Americans from giving Taiwanese arms, Deng’s prior policy of pressuring Chiang Ching-Kuo to the negotiation was no longer sustainable. This difficult situation for Deng Xiaoping, this study suggests, were the precondition to

the later “one country, two system” policy that Deng first tested out on Hong Kong and wished to sell to the Taiwanese. Chiang Ching-Kuo, supported by his mother Madame Chang Kai-shek, however, remained unconvinced and suspicious, and resolutely rejected any calls from the mainland to negotiate. Unification with Taiwan, despite its importance to Deng Xiaoping, remained one of his less successful policy in his overall relations with the United States.

Existing literature on cross strait relations has mostly focused on American side of the story. Rosemary Foot laid the blame on Carter, and argued that the Americans didn’t push Deng Xiaoping strongly enough during negotiations.¹⁴⁹ Brian Hilton argued that Carter had thought naively that under the U.S. influence the PRC would find a peaceful path to solve its differences with the ROC.¹⁵⁰ Scholars sympathetic to the Taiwanese cause, such as Japanese scholar Hidejirō Kotani, argued that it was Chiang Ching-kuo’s unchanging anti-Communist ideology that made it difficult for Americans to deal with the ROC, when the Americans needed the PRC more in the geopolitical struggle against the Soviet Union.¹⁵¹ U.S. diplomat turned historian Jay Taylor took a different approach and focused on Taiwan’s military and economic reforms as a response to its diplomatic isolation.¹⁵² Mainland Chinese scholars, however, tend to downgrade Taiwan’s importance, and see Taiwan’s fate entirely lie in the hands of regional great powers:

¹⁴⁹ Rosemary Foot, “Prizes Won, Opportunities Lost: The U.S. Normalization of Relations with China, 1972–1979,” in William Kirby, Robert Ross (eds.), *Normalization of U.S.-China relations: an International History*, Harvard University Press, 2005, 90-95.

¹⁵⁰ Brian Hilton, “‘Maximum Flexibility for Peaceful Change’: Jimmy Carter, Taiwan, and the Recognition of the People’s Republic of China,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (September 2009).

¹⁵¹ 小古浩志郎 and 陳鵬仁, *蔣經國先生傳* [Koshiro Koshiro an Zhen Pengren, *A Biography of Mr. Chiang-Ching-Kuo*] (Taipei, 1990).

¹⁵² Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo’s Son: Chiang Ching-Kuo And The Revolutions In China And Taiwan* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2000).

Japan, the U.S., and later the PRC - a view that is too simplified and did not offer an clear explanation of Deng Xiaoping's role in the making of Taiwan's' China policy¹⁵³

This chapter will bring all sides of the story together: Deng Xiaoping, the White House, the U.S. Congress, Chiang Ching-Kuo and his Taiwan Lobby, and to tell a much different story of how Deng Xiaoping's initial policy to isolate and pressure Taiwan had initially failed, and thus led to a much nuanced united front approach that was eventually refined into the "One-Country, Two System" policy. This study will show how the Jimmy Carter years was the defining time for both cross-strait relations as well as the Taiwan problem in U.S.-China relations for the next few decades. This Chapter will also pay special attention to Soong Mei-ling, or better known as Madame Chang Kai-shek, who played a key role in strategizing and supporting Chiang Ching-Kuo's uncompromising policy towards Deng Xiaoping's efforts to unify Taiwan.

From Military Pressure to "Message to Taiwanese Compatriots"

Mao's China has never gave up the rhetoric of militarily conquer Taiwan, and unifying Taiwan was one of Deng's main political goals throughout his career. During the unproductive negotiations with the Ford Administration, what to do with Taiwan was one of the main divisive issues between the United States and the PRC. Deng himself told the Associated Press in 1976 already, that "There are many disagreements between United States and China, as well as common languages. The main problem is Taiwan. Our position is clear, to normalize relations with the United States, the Taiwan problem must be solved through the "Japanese model," which meant the United States should withdrew its troops from Taiwan, cancel [U.S.-Sino Defence] Treaty, and cut off

¹⁵³ 王建, 战后美日台关系史研究 1945-1995 [Wang Jian, *Post-War U.S.-Japan-Taiwan Relations*], (Beijing 2013).

diplomatic ties.” And he was willing to wait, “If the Americans are not ready, we can wait for it.”¹⁵⁴

Even during the last years of the Great Cultural Revolution, while the mainland itself was in chaos, the Chinese Communist Party propagandists had not forgotten to attack Taiwan and call for the Taiwanese people to raise up to fight against the corrupted regime of Chiang Ching-Kuo. Taiwanese education is corrupted, and the college graduates cannot get jobs, said *People’s Daily* on February 28, 1976, and “the mass youth and students are waking up, raising up to fight against the anti-revolutionary Chiang-clique’ repression, and to search for the revolutionary truth.” The communist mouthpiece even claimed that “according to some sources, many Taiwanese young students are secretly listening to radio broadcast from the mainland, secretly spreading revolutionary materials to seek the truth of ‘communist’ revolution, and to ever more bravely fight against the Chiang-clique, to liberate Taiwan, and to unify our nation.”¹⁵⁵

Even though the Taiwanese economy was far more developed compared to the Mainland, the PRC propagandists nevertheless pointed out its recent slowdown and predicted that Taiwan’s export-oriented economy and heavy taxes “Qiang Clique has levied on the Taiwanese people” were “appeasing the foreigners and betraying the Taiwanese people, which were cruel crimes to exploit the Taiwanese people and will evoke their opposition.”¹⁵⁶ When Mao died, *People’s Daily* even published forged letters from unnamed “Taiwanese compatriots” who swore to “start a revolution” and to

¹⁵⁴ 邓小平讲话实录: 会谈卷 [Deng Xiaoping Conversations Records] (Beijing, 2018), 95

¹⁵⁵ *People’s Daily*, 28 February 1976, “反动腐朽的教育制度造成严重恶果, 台湾青年纷起反抗蒋帮的摧残” [Counterrevolutionary and Corrupt Education Aausing Serious Damage, Taiwanese Youth Raising Up against the Chiang Clique’s oppression]

¹⁵⁶ *People’s Daily*, 28 January, 1967, “蒋帮媚外卖国台湾经济严重恶化,” [Chiang Clique Selling Out Their Country, Taiwanese Economy is Deteriorating]

“Plant Chairman Mao’s Maoism Revolutionary thought on Taiwanese’s soil.”¹⁵⁷ This propagandist attack escalated after the end of the cultural revolution, and the People’s Liberation Army, after the defeat of the gang of four, openly called Chiang Ching-Kuo a “fascist” for enforcing martial laws in Taiwan, and “Chiang-clique’s persecution of Taiwanese compatriots are getting more frenzied,” which, in light of the “great situation after the defeat of Gang of Four in Mainland, would only encourage more Taiwanese people to raise up and return to the embrace of the motherland.”¹⁵⁸

This propagandist attack on Chiang Ching-Kuo, however, was turned down by Deng Xiaoping in 1978 as the diplomatic opening negotiation with the United States proceeded as he had planned. Unlike Mao, Deng decided to use a smarter approach, instead of attacking Chiang Ching-Kuo with useless propaganda, he wanted to lure Chiang Ching-Kuo to the negotiation table and then force the mainland’s reunification terms on Taiwan, as he had already done with the Japanese and the Americans.

But first, Deng Xiaoping had to keep the Americans from becoming involved in Taiwan at all for his grand plan to work. Deng hoped to succeed by using his leverage with the Carter Administration during the height of the U.S.-China cold war cooperation. As Chinese ambassador to U.S. Huang Cheng stated in the very beginning of U.S.-China normalization negotiations, “No outside power has the right to interfere just as we do not interfere in the internal affairs of others. If it can be solved peacefully, that would be good. But since we see a bunch of counterrevolutionaries on the island, it seems there is no other way than by force. But as to when, it is hard to say.”¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ People's Daily, 17 September 1976, “誓把毛泽东思想伟大红旗插到祖国的台湾岛上 台湾省爱国同胞深切悼念伟大领袖和导师毛主席逝世” [Promise to Plant Maoist Flags On Chinese Taiwan, Taiwanese Patriotism Condole the Passing of Great Revolutionary Leader Chairman Mao]

¹⁵⁸ *PLA-Daily*, August 15, 1978

¹⁵⁹ FRUS, 1977–1980, Volume XIII, China, 22.

The Carter Administration was fully aware of Deng's position. In the memo that led to this meeting, Secretary of States Cyrus Vance wrote to Carter: "The Taiwan issue is a highly emotional, central and pervasive obstacle in the path of full diplomatic relations. The PRC does not expect to obtain Taiwan in the near future, even if we were to cut all our ties to the island at once. Peking currently is not in a position to affect an easy or early military take over. But Peking wants to use normalization of its relations with us to minimize our leverage over Taiwan's future, and to improve its prospects for dealing with Taiwan on its own terms."¹⁶⁰

As U.S.-Soviet relations deteriorated in 1978 and bringing the Chinese on the American side of the Cold War was deemed more urgent by the Carter Administration, Deng Xiaoping knew time was on his side and pushed hard on the Americans to exclude a peace assurance regarding Taiwan when it comes to the normalization of U.S.-China relations. During the secret negotiation between him and Zbigniew Brzezinski that decided the fate of the two nations, he again demanded "How and when they liberate Taiwan is a n internal problem to be solved by the Chinese themselves."¹⁶¹ Deng Xiaoping and the Carter Administration eventually reached a tacit understanding: the Americans would be allowed to issue their wish for a peaceful resolution to the Taiwan question, while the PRC would not give any promise of not to use force. It was the best Americans can do, Cyrus Vance told President Carter, that Deng Xiaoping had agreed

¹⁶⁰ Memo, From Cyrus Vance to the President, 8 February, 1977, NSA files, Country Files, Box 6, folder China 1/2-77, JCL

¹⁶¹ Memo, from Situation Room to Plains, May 28, 1978. Folder China (PRC)2-5/78. Country File, Box 6, JCL

to “not to contradict our statement or make a statement of their own stressing forceful liberation.”¹⁶²

Deng Xiaoping indeed successfully secured his position. On the U.S.-China joint communique on 16 December 1978 that announced the establishment of diplomatic relations, the Carter Administration announced “The Government of the United States of America acknowledges the Chinese position that there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China,” while China made no assurance it would not attack Taiwan.¹⁶³ Having received he wanted, two days later, a triumphant Deng Xiaoping announced during 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China that unifying Taiwan was now officially on his agenda. “With U.S.-China relations back to the normal path, the grand enterprise of returning our holy island of Taiwan back to the motherland is now in front of us.” “The compatriots in Taiwan, Hongkong, and Macau,” the resolution called, “should participate in the enterprise of unifying and building up the motherland.”¹⁶⁴

Reactions from Chiang Ching-Kuo

Observing what just happened in Washington and Beijing. Chiang Qing-Kuo quickly realized that the Carter Administration had betrayed them, and Deng had laid out a big trap for the KMT. On the same day, 18 December 1978 Chiang summoned all key members of the KMT Party in Taipei and laid out his commitment of resisting any attempts of attacks from the mainland Communists. In his speech, titled “Commitment

¹⁶² Memo, Cyrus Vance to The President, 13 June 1978, NSA Country File, Box 8, China (PRC) 6-8/78, JCL

¹⁶³ New York Times, "Text Of President's Statement On Ties With China", 1978.

¹⁶⁴ 中国共产党第十一届中央委员会第三次全体会议公报 [CCP 11th Central Committee Meeting Public Letter], CCP Archive
<http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64168/64563/65371/4441902.html>

and Actions in this Extraordinary Time.” Chiang asked: “Today, because the Americans have betrayed the [Sino-U.S. defence] treaty and established "diplomatic relations" with the communist bandits, which increased the difficulties for our struggles. This is a major historical blow to our national revolutionary struggle, but it will not be the failure of our revolution.” The KMT party, Chiang demanded, must stick to its Three People’s Principle and turn this suffering into victory, while the Americans, by “establishing relations with the communist bandits, is an tremendous threat to the free world, and is especially dangerous to the United States itself... Americans have ignored our repeated warnings, inviting the wolves into their own house, how stupid this is, and how horrifying an action it is, one day, the Americans will regret.” But we should not disappear, Chiang said, The Republic of China and the Americans “share the same values, friendship, and the same faith towards democracy, and will further become even more close and sincere.” Chiang admitted that this was the “most difficult time faced by the KMT party” and “we should not hesitate, be brave, and to face the difficulties, we need to believe that fate is in our own hands, and we will achieve the final victory of recover the motherland.”¹⁶⁵

Chiang’s agent in United States immediately reported the urgency for the KMT to make counter moves in U.S. Congress to counter Carter’s betrayal. “The more Carter stays in office, the worse it would be for our country.” Reported Chiang’s confident Lui Minbo, “since the U.S. Congress is now in session, and legislators such as Senator Barry Goldwater and Representative Lester L. Wolff had shown strong support towards the ROC, we should send people to make donations to them, and ask them to start activities...to win concrete support from U.S. Congress before Deng Xiaoping the

¹⁶⁵ 蔣經國主持中國國民黨第十一屆中央委員會第三次全體會議致詞, 蔣經國總統文物 [Chiang Ching-Kuo Addresses 11th KMT Party Congress, Chiang Ching-Kuo Files], 1978/12/18, 005000001979A, Academia Historica.

Bandit visits the United States, best yet, if we can maintain the clauses of [Sino-U.S. defence] treaty signed by Chiang Kai-shek and President Eisenhower.¹⁶⁶

In Beijing, however, Deng firmly believed that he was on the winning side of the long struggle between the CCP and the KMT and he was very close to achieving his grand vision for China: a modern state with great relations with the West, and finally, unified with both Hong Kong and Taiwan under the rule of the CCP. Before new year's, he asked his two best propagandist writers, Hu Qiaomu from the Social Sciences Academy and Tan Wenrui from *People's Daily's* international department to draft a letter, aimed not just at Chiang Ching-Kuo but also the average Taiwanese people, to convince them that unifying the country was inevitable and time was on the side of the PRC. The soft-spoken tone of the documents, however, could not hide Deng's pride and ambition. In the documents, released on New Year's Day in 1979, promised that the PLA would stop shelling the off-shore KMT-controlled islands, ending the 40-year mutual shelling that has made the Taiwan Strait one of the most dangerous flashpoints in East Asia. Meanwhile, it called out Chiang Ching-Kuo to acknowledge that "in the past thirty years, our [PRC]'s international status has been increased and played an even bigger role in the world. All the people and governments in the world, who oppose hegemony and wish for the peace and stability in Asia and world, have held tremendous amount of hope in us." Thus, unifying Taiwan and Mainland will contribute to "the fate of humanity" and it is "the wish of not just Chinese people, including our Taiwanese compatriots, but the wish of all the peace-loving people in the world." The letter then called for increased communication, family visits, tourism, and the exchanges of

¹⁶⁶ 劉民伯函蔣經國請乘美國國會開會之際派專人赴美並致送參議員伍爾夫等業務費以贏得有利成果, 蔣經國總統文物 [Liu Minbo letter to Chiang Ching Kuo, On Sending consulting fees to Congressman Lester Wolf and gain support during U.S. Congressional Session, Chiang Ching-Kuo Files], 1979/01/18, 005-010502-00024-010, Academia Historica.

academics and the arts. Knowing that Chiang was having problems with the burgeoning independent movements in Taiwan, the letters also said that the PRC also opposed any independent movements in Taiwan and opposing Taiwanese independence movement could be a “base and starting point for our mutual cooperation.” Which, eventually, will lead to the “unification of the motherland” and “the creation of unprecedented glories in the history of our nation.”¹⁶⁷

On 1st January, when both PRC and the United States announced the formal establishment of their diplomatic relations, Deng was jubilant. He boasted to fellow communist party leaders and their supporters at the yearly Political Consulting Conference led by the CCP, that he had achieved all his main political goals: “The domestic construction has now refocused upon our four modernization, U.S.-China relations have been normalized, and finally, the return of Taiwan to the motherland is now on the agenda. Therefore, this new year is an especially auspicious and happy day.”¹⁶⁸

To ensure his policy would succeed, Deng again played the Soviet card with the Americans, hoping they would completely cut off their support towards Taiwan. When Deng Xiaoping met with U.S. Congress delegation led by Senator Samuel Nunn, Deng said that China was not going to make any commitment that ‘ties our hands’. The problem, Deng said, was that if the “Taiwan authorities led by Chiang Ching-Kuo” were promised a peaceful reunification, then they ‘would become reckless and would enter into no talks at all. If China just has one hand this will lead to a settlement by armed force.’ Even worse, Deng warned, what if the Soviet Union gets into Taiwan?

¹⁶⁷告台湾同胞书 [To Taiwanese Compatriots], People’s Daily, 1 January 1979, People’s Daily

¹⁶⁸ 邓小平文选 第二卷 [*Deng Xiaoping Papers, Volume II*] , 154.

“suppose the Soviet Union were to occupy Taiwan. Then I assume the U.S. would not oppose China using force. That is why we cannot bind our hands.”¹⁶⁹

Chiang Ching-Kuo and The Making of Taiwan Relations Act

Ching Ching-Kuo, too experienced in dealing with the CCP, was determined to fight back. On 11th January, Chiang instructed the head of Taipei Legislative Yuan Sun Yunxuan to formally respond that Deng’s open letter was a “united Front conspiracy,” “aimed at confusing the whole world,” and the ceasefire was “aimed at soften up Taiwan’s vigilance,” and whole piece was “the same tricks recycled from 30 years ago.”¹⁷⁰ The next week, Chiang laid out his plans “to fight against Communists bandits’ united front’s policy.” In his plan, Chiang rejected Deng Xiaoping’s call for negotiations and insisted that any prospect of unifying the country should base on KMT’s terms, not the ones offered by CCP. The country could be united under the condition that “everyone has equal rights and the rights to freedom and participation in politics and “based on three-people’s principles rather than communism.” Chiang also pointed out that “negotiation” offered by Deng was “another form of class struggle, and frankly, a way to deceiving us to surrender, a way of using negotiation to finally spread communism all over China, to ask us to abandon our ways of life, our way of freedom, political rights, and to end Chinese people’s last hope of regaining them.” The only way the ROC would accept negotiations, thus, was for the mainland to “abandon Marxist-Leninist thoughts and to stop spreading world revolution, to abandon communist dictatorship and embrace democracy, to disband people’s communes and

¹⁶⁹ FRUS, Volume XIII, China, 706-706.

¹⁷⁰ 徐克礼，贾耀斌，国共两党关系 90 年图鉴，九州出版社，[Xu Keli, Jia Yaowu, CCP-PRC Relations in 90 Years, Jiu Zhou Press], 493.

give properties back to the people,” and finally, “to renounce the use of force to unifying Taiwan and show their sincerity.”¹⁷¹

While Deng Xiaoping visited the United States on his grand 1979 tour and strategized his Cold War visions with the anti-Soviet hardliners in the Carter Administration, Chiang Ching-Kuo too, made his moves to secure Taiwan’s future relations with the United States. He was going to use KMT’s long established personal relations with American Congress to wrestle influences from the White House. On February 2, the same day Deng Xiaoping visited NASA facilities in Houston, Chiang Ching-Kuo was sitting together with a group of U.S. legislators in Taipei led by Congressman John M. Ashbrook, laying out his vision of ROC’s future, a future that would close connected with the American people. “The Congressmen’s visit immediately after Carter cut off U.S.-China [here he meant ROC] relations was a significant gesture which showed the deep friendship between the Chinese people and the American people, and it was an tremendous encouragement for all seventeen million people [in Taiwan] who were fighting against communism in this raging storm.” While Ashbrook promised to make a new legislation in Congress “to facilitate the people’s friendship between the United States and China [ROC].” “The American must be reminded again,” Chiang pleaded the U.S. legislators, that “eight hundred-million Chinese are already suffering under communism and America should not push those free Chinese in Taiwan into the pit.”¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ 遵照蔣經國指示根據孫運璿所發表之對中共最近各種統戰活動的嚴正聲明重擬針對中共和平攻勢我們在海外的說法與做法綱要。蔣經國總統文物 [Under Chiang Ching-Kuo’s Instruction, Sun Yunhuang Publishes Address and Instructions on CCP’s United Front Efforts and Peace Offensive, Chiang Ching-Kuo Files], 005000001013A, Academia Historica.

¹⁷² 民國六十八年蔣經國約見外賓談話紀錄, 一, 蔣經國總統文 [68th Republic Year, Chiang Ching-Kuo Meeting with Foreign Dignities, Chiang Ching-Kuo Files], 005-010303-00001-011, Academia Historica.

Even though Taiwan itself was under military rule and Chiang Ching-Kuo himself had not yet started the political liberation that he was remember in history form the 1980s, Chiang nevertheless decided to play the democracy card and the anti-communist strategy with his American friends. On this, he had helps from his mother. Madan Chang Kai-shek. On 24 February 1979, Madame Chang Kai-shek, telegrammed Chiang Ching-Kuo, saying that she was already in discussion with one of the most anti-Communist Republican Senators, Carter's long-time political rival, Barry Goldwater, on a possible plan to demonstrate that Carter's Taiwan policy was unconstitutional, as "the Sino-American Defence Treaty is not only about Taiwan but also [about] the U.S. Constitution itself."

Goldwater had long been a loyal friend of Taiwan. In 1969, he advocated that the U.S. Congress should withdraw political support and funding to the United Nations to prevent "Red China" from taking over Taiwan's seat. "If Free China's base in the Far East were undermined at the United Nations," he argued, "the world organization would become an instrument for contracting liberty."¹⁷³ When Carter selected half of his senior staff from the Trilateral Commission, signed the Panama Canal Treaty, and started to get close with the PRC, Goldwater firmly believed the whole Carter Administration was a part of the world Communist conspiracy backed by the evil Rockefellers.¹⁷⁴ Taiwan and the U.S.-China Mutual Defence Treaty, he feared, would be the next lamb that those Carter's "trilateral commission boys" will sacrifice. Thus, he wrote in 1977 to the Taiwanese government, both to assure and to promise: "If Carter recognizes the Communist bandits, the President will face enormous opposition."¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Speech, "Red China and the U.N." Box 185, Series: Legislative III, Folder: Legislative Foreign Relations, Red China, 1969. *Goldwater Papers*, Arizona State University.

¹⁷⁴ Robert Alan Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater* (New Haven, 1997), 296-97.

¹⁷⁵ News Clip, Taipei Central Press, Box 421, Folder Jan-July 1977, *Goldwater Papers*.

But Carter went in exactly the way Goldwater was afraid of. When Carter announced his decision to normalize relations with the PRC on 15 December 1979, and the subsequent move to cease official relations with the ROC, letters poured into Goldwater's office from his conservative, anti-communist constituencies.

"How can this President lash us day and night regarding human rights and then totally ignore the human and constitutional rights of our Congressmen who were elected by the people of this country? He has done nothing but uphold and embrace Communism!" wrote Reuben M. Burnham of Sun City, Arizona.¹⁷⁶ Ruth S. Matthews of New York, insisted that Goldwater conduct an "investigation on those criminals."¹⁷⁷ Others had legitimate economic concerns: "China wants us for our technology only. Twenty years from now this country will be flooded with cheap Chinese imported goods. We already suffer from too many cheap Japanese goods and, besides, more imports mean less jobs here in the United States," wrote Gary and Joyce Hawkings of Arizona.¹⁷⁸

Some of those letters, however, was quite delusional and filled with conspiracies. "The Soviet Union was the first to experiment with mind control and drugs... President Carter has revealed he is a puppet of these criminal, [wrote criminals, then crossed off 's'] his urgent attempt to establish a peace deal in mid east [sic]. His SALT deal with the Soviet Union, his lack of action to curb murder, robbery, drug traffic serves this conspiracy... But the Drug Ring in the White House may explain [sic] what is wrong with the Carter Administration." Wrote Ruth S. Matthews of New York,¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ Letter, Reuben M. Burnham to Barry Goldwater. Box 220, Folder: Security of Taiwan, Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Letter, Ruth S. Matthews to Barry Goldwater, Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Letter, Gary and Joyce Hawkings to Gold Water, 16 December 1978, Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Letter, Ruth S. Matthews to Barry Goldwater, Ibid.

It should be noted that the sense of fear was far stronger in Taiwan, a new wave of emigration started as the rich and resourceful started to sell their assets and escaped abroad, fearing an imminent Communist invasion.¹⁸⁰ In this toxic atmosphere, and coordinated by the ROC government, a large public relations campaign had been organized, and letters from Taiwanese-Americans and average Taiwanese citizens poured into Goldwater's and other senators' offices. A joint letter from Taipei University reads: "We are college students of Taiwan, Republic of China. We respect the Americans and consider that Americans are our friends, because both American and Taiwan people are peace, liberty, and righteousness-loving people... We hope all Americans consider prudently this case and urge the President not to be so short-sighted."¹⁸¹ Even middle and high school students were mobilized and sent hundreds of hand-written cards to the senator. "I'm a 15-year-old boy in Taiwan, R.O.C. We are deeply shocked by President Carter's decision to recognize the Red China. I hope you will fight at the Senate for the sake of freedom and Justice."¹⁸² Another girl wrote, "I'm a schoolgirl, I love my country very much. I know she is in danger now. Because President Carter recognized the Red China."¹⁸³

It was under these domestic and international pressures that Goldwater went on a personal crusade with Carter in the ROC's defence. He first attempted to bring Carter to the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, suing the President for illegally abrogating the U.S.-China Defense Treaty with the ROC. The lawsuit would

¹⁸⁰ 鄭佩芬, 近看兩蔣家事與國事: 一九四五~一九八八軼事見聞錄 [Zheng Peifen, *The Two Chiang - Family and Nation: Witnesses from 1945 to 1977*] (Taipei, 2017), 111.

¹⁸¹ Letter, Student of Fu-Jen University, Taipei, to Barry Goldwater, undated, 1979, Box 423, Folder: Constituent Service, 95th Congress, *Gold Water Papers*.

¹⁸² Card, J. Chen, to Goldwater, undated, Ibid.

¹⁸³ Card W. He Lin, to Goldwater, 26 December 1978, Ibid.

drag on for an entire year with no clear ruling, as the district court did not wish to take sides when it comes to foreign policy, fearful of setting a precedents for future political uncertainties.¹⁸⁴ Meanwhile, Goldwater was trying to create new legislation that would secure U.S. commitment towards Taiwan. Goldwater was not alone; many Democrats also had their reasons to fight back Carter's abandonment of Taiwan. Frank Church, the Democratic Party Senator from Idaho, and chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC), was the key proponent among the liberals who pushed back Carter's controversial policy on Taiwan, and a main drafter of the Taiwan Relations Act. Church, in fact, supported Carter's decision to normalise relations with the PRC and advocated for closer U.S.-PRC relations. Yet, Church disagreed with how the President handled Taiwan without close consultation with the Congress. "This final act of diplomatic recognition is the culmination of a series of policy decisions made by three administrations, including those of Presidents Ford and Nixon. In moving to final recognition of Peking as "China," we have at last come to terms with the fact of existence, the power, and the potential of that nation of literally a billion human beings." Church explained to his constituents why he supported the recognition of PRC. However, "the recognition of Mainland China as a fact of life is one matter, the security and well-being of the people of Taiwan is another. I am deeply concerned about the security and future of the Taiwanese. Taiwan has been a good friend, a loyal ally, and a major trading partner. To concede to the reality of recognizing Mainland China does not mean we should turn our back to staunch friends."¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ "Goldwater V. Carter, 444 U.S. 996 (1979)", 1976, U.S. Supreme Court Record, <<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/444/996/>> [accessed 7 September 2019].

¹⁸⁵ Letter, from Frank Church to Howard Luger, January 16, 1979. Box 9, Folder 3, *Frank Church Papers*, Boise State University.

Chiang Ching-Kuo was keenly aware of the politics of U.S. Congress and decided to take it into his advantage. Chiang, however, was afraid that the bill would be too “soft” as the Democrats would not be willing to give Taiwan a much stronger security guarantee as the Republicans had wished. On 2nd April, Chiang reached out to David M. Kennedy, a long time diplomat and now the president of U.S.-Taiwan Business Council, to make sure that Taiwan would keep Republic of China as its official name in the new legislation, and KMT would be able to keep its assets in the United States, even better, there should be a set of mutual institutions to assure the ROC and U.S. relations would go forward in the future.”¹⁸⁶ However, securing a treaty having a similar weight and effect as the former Sino-U.S. defence treaty would not be easy, especially when it comes to security issues. “Carter was surrounded by a group of five anti-Soviet individuals,” another American friend warned Chiang Ching-Kuo, “their attitudes towards ROC have gone too far from those of Nixon and Kissinger, the only thing they wanted to use the Communist bandits to fight Soviet Russia.” While Carter would “veto any bills that brings embarrassment to him or to the PRC,” the best thing the Congress can do is “to put security guarantee towards Taiwan in other different bills such as budget bills and separate arms transfer bills.”¹⁸⁷ In other words, Chiang Ching-Kuo should not be expecting to get the recently invalid Sino-U.S. defence treaty back.

Indeed, it was so. Much of the debate in the U.S. Congress was about American domestic politics - the relations among the presidency, the Congress, and U.S. foreign policy, and the real security needs of the ROC were constantly side-lined. Thus, only a

¹⁸⁶ 蔣經國接見中美經濟協會主席甘迺迪紀（二），蔣經國總統文物 [Chiang Ching-Kuo Meeting Sino-US Business Association President Kenney (Two) Chiang Ching-Kuo Files], 005-010303-00001-012, Academia Historica.

¹⁸⁷ 蔣經國接見美友我人士拜倫提到有關如何使卡特的提案在國會通過及中美談判中的實質問題如 [Chiang Ching-Kuo Meeting American Friend Byron [sic] on How to Allow Carter's Legislation to Pass Through Congress and Other Questions Regarding U.S.-China Negotiations], 005-010303-00001-013, Academia Historica.

few lawmakers lobbied for the position ROC diplomats wanted - a new binding U.S.-ROC security agreement near identical to the U.S.-Sino Defence Treaty. Chiang's special envoy to the U.S. Zhao Shoubo reached the sad observation that the only people in U.S. Congress who fully supported their position were the Republicans like Goldwater, Jacob Javits, Robert Dole, and the Democrat Richard Stone.¹⁸⁸ They proposed that the TRA be legally binding so that when the PRC attacked the ROC, the United States would automatically intervene. However, Liberals like Frank Church wanted the new law to be ambiguous, so it could deter a PRC attack on the ROC, as well as a ROC provocation against the PRC which would drag the United States in a unnecessary war. Jimmy Carter and his Cold War warriors such as Brzezinski and Brown were completely disinterested in fighting a war with Deng Xiaoping, whom they considered a Cold War ally against the Soviets. Carter thus sided with Church, invited him to a White House lunch and pleaded with him to stop the Conservatives from pushing too far on the TRA.¹⁸⁹ The picture got even more complicated when some Democratic congressmen even argued that the U.S. should put human rights regulations into the TRA to moderate KMT behaviour, as they saw the Chiang family as no different from other right-wing dictators who took advantage of American anti-Communist ideology for their own personal political ambitions. Much to Chiang's dismay, Taiwanese dissidents who were persecuted by the Chiang family also jumped into the debate and started their own anti-Chiang Ching-Kuo lobbies.¹⁹⁰

The intricacy of cross-strait politics and the language of such politics were also complicating factors. Many American legislators had a hard time understanding the

¹⁸⁸ 赵守博, 蒋金国与台湾, 相关人物访谈录 (台北, 2010). [Zhao Shoubo, *Chiang Ching-Kuo and Taiwan, An Oral History of Related Figures*] (Taipei, 2010), 252.

¹⁸⁹ Martin Gold, *A Legislative History Of The Taiwan Relations Act* (New York, 2017), 237-142.

¹⁹⁰ Richard C. Bush, *At Cross Purposes: US-Taiwan Relations Since 1941* (London, 2004), 182-185.

complicated history of U.S.-China relations and the strange concepts of “One China” and “two Chinas.” Senator Richard Stone, a Democrat from Florida and a long-time friend of the ROC, threw out thirty-five questions to the State Department regarding Taiwan’s nuclear problem, Taiwanese properties rights in the U.S., and a range of other difficult questions including “who ... the People of Taiwan [are]” in legal terms, which the Carter Administration officials themselves had never clearly thought about.¹⁹¹ Stone and many other lawyers turned legislators also found it mind-boggling that both governments, the PRC and the ROC, agreed that there is only one China, yet the U.S. government was only allowed to recognize the PRC as the one. Here is a strange conversation between Senator Stone and Herbert Hansell, the unfortunate legal advisor whom the State Department dispatched to the Congress to answer those questions.

“Senator Stone: There is a governing authority [in Taiwan]?

Mr. Hansell: Yes, Sir.

Senator Stone: Could it be properly called a government?

Mr. Hansell: No, sir, not -

Senator Stone: Could it be called a government?

Mr. Hansell: Not for purposes of -

Senator Stone: Teng Hsiao-P’ing called it a government, Why can’t you?

Mr. Hansell: For purposes of U.S foreign relations, we have acknowledged the position of the

Taiwanese themselves that there is one Government of China.

Senator Stone: But not their position that they are it.

Mr. Hansell: Precisely.”¹⁹²

The Congress's polarizing debate on the Taiwan policy greatly confused the future Vice President Joseph Biden, then a 37-year-old Senator from Delaware, curious, outspoken, and fresh on board the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee. On the one hand, Biden was the most hesitant in supporting the TRA, believing that “constructing a web of ties and obligations [with the ROC] would complicate relations with the PRC.” On the other

¹⁹¹ “Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations,” United State Senate, Ninety Sixth Congress, First Session, 1979, *Barry Goldwater Papers*, Box 220, Folder, Congress 1979,.80.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, 89

hand, he “was mystified how the U.S. could withdraw from the Mutual Defence Treaty, but also insist it would not tolerate coercion against Taiwan.”¹⁹³

All the concerns, as well as the confusions, entered into the final version of the Taiwan Relations Act, which according to most studies, had been watered down significantly from the versions that Chiang Ching-Kuo and his Republican Party friends wanted.¹⁹⁴ In terms of the security of Taiwan, the TRA ambiguously said, it is up to the United States “to *consider* any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means, including by boycotts or embargoes, a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States;.” This clause, in the eyes of constitutional scholars, was far too vague and it was nowhere near the binding commitment that Chiang Ching-Kuo had wished. The clause regarding arms sales was also watered down from the original draft - changed from giving Taiwan “advanced technology” into allowing Taiwan to have “sufficient self-defence capability.” However what it means by “sufficient” remains undefined and it would be up to the executive branch to decide.¹⁹⁵ Or, in Steve M. Goldstein and Randall Schriver's words, the TRA was designed to avoid real responsibilities: “In short, the ambiguity in the American relationship with Taiwan, which many in Congress would later condemn, was an integral part of the TRA’s political logic and the key to its passage with bipartisan support.”¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ Martin Gold, *A Legislative History Of The Taiwan Relations Act: Bridging The Strait* (New York, 2017), 64.

¹⁹⁴ David Tawei Lee, *The Making Of The Taiwan Relations Act* (Oxford, 2000).

¹⁹⁵ Richard Bush (2004), 155.

¹⁹⁶ Steven M. Goldstein and Randall Schriver, "An Uncertain Relationship: The United States, Taiwan And The Taiwan Relations Act", *The China Quarterly*, 165 (2001).

Even though the TRA was not binding, and Chiang's KMT regime only received "The Authorities in Taiwan" as an official title instead of "Republic of China" as he wished for in the new legislation, but at least, Chiang was pleased that the U.S. Congress still cared about Taiwan at all. In his interview with *Time* magazine on 3rd May, he said, "it would be a lie to say the change in U.S.-China relations didn't damage the interest of the Republic of China...but we will try our best to face the new challenges." However, he believed that the making of the TRA showed the U.S. Congress "still cared about the security of the people of ROC... and the United State must still pay attention to the security and stability of the ROC." Chiang was confident that the Deng's "four modernization" would eventually end in failure and Deng's slogan of "democratization" was never serious, and there was no way for Taiwan to negotiate with the Mainland, as "contact or negotiation are just tricks used by the Communist bandits to undermine our determination to fight against Communism."¹⁹⁷ The TRA, it seemed, imperfect as it was, had finally offered some comfort and assurances to Chiang after those turbulent months.

Deng Xiaoping's Disappointment and the origin of "One Country, Two System"

For Deng Xiaoping, the Taiwan Relations Act was a major setback of his Cold War ambition, and one of the many frustrations he would have to face with his new relations with the United States when it comes to Taiwan. Even in March, before the legislation passed through U.S. Congress, the Chinese Ambassador Chai Zemin already had a bitter argument with the State Department over the wording of the proposed legislation, insisting that it should not mention any relations between Taiwan and the PRC, as it is an "internal Chinese issue," and he insisted the PRC had the right to take over all ROC

¹⁹⁷ 蔣經國接見美國時代雜誌駐香港主任克拉克, 蔣經國總統文物 [Chiang Ching-Kuo Meeting Times Magazine's Hong Kong Journalist Clark, Chiang Ching-Kuo Files], 005-010303-00002-003, Academia Historica.

properties in the United States. While the State Department tried their best to dodge the responsibilities and to point out they cannot tell the U.S. Congress what to do, and tried to calm the Chinese's temper redirecting the topic towards Cold War anti-Soviet cooperation by promising to "move ahead immediately on the exchange of military attaches." ¹⁹⁸

American Lawmakers Meet Deng Xiaoping

These tricks did not work. When the TRA was finally signed into law by Jimmy Carter on 10 April 1979, Deng Xiaoping was furious. On 19th April, the men who wrote the Taiwan Relations Act, Frank Church, Jacob Javits, and one third of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, flew to Beijing to meet Deng to talk about other much more urgent problems in the Cold War. After all, the Year of Crisis had already begun: SALT II was hanging in the balance, an American Ambassador had just been brutally murdered by Mujahedeen in Afghanistan, and Iran - the cornerstone of U.S. Middle East strategy - was descending into chaos. Even *Times* magazine had a famous cover in January of a Russian bear tearing apart the globe.¹⁹⁹ Deng understood why the Americans came to him and took this opportunity to lay out protests against America's meddling in Taiwan. The Soviets were marching into the Middle East, intervening in Afghanistan, and supporting Vietnamese aggression in Cambodia. Deng said that the United States needed China more than ever. Yet the TRA was standing in the way of U.S.-China Cold War cooperation and the men in the room were responsible. Deng lighted up a cigarette and started his attack:

¹⁹⁸ Cable, SECSTATE to AMEMBASSY BEIJING, 28 March, 1979. ADD, NARA.
<https://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=205535&dt=2776&dl=2169>

¹⁹⁹ Cover Page, *Time Magazine*, 13/3 (1979).

Also, see, Fred Halliday, "The Arc Of Crisis And The New Cold War", *MERIP Reports*, 100/101, 1981, 14.

“To be frank, China is dissatisfied with the Taiwan relations act... The U.S. is interfering in the basic understanding reached during the normalization of relations. In reality, this act has negated the political basis for the normalization of Sino-U.S. relations. I would like to advise the people here to pay attention to these ideas.” Deng made a vague threat: “You must be very cautious about selling arms. Regarding the U.S., you want China not to resort to the use of force in its relationship with Taiwan.”

The conversation became awkward for the Senators. Church thanked Deng for his “frankness.” Javits, who lobbied hard for U.S. military protection of Taiwan back in Washington and now clearly did not want a confrontation with Deng Xiaoping:

“The Congress was not reactionary... we will be diligent in the U.S. Congress to see that no trace of national sovereignty exists in our commercial and cultural relations with Taiwan.”

Deng made sure the Americans understood, and laid out his threatening stance once more:

“China does not agree to the non-use of force. I think the American friends should consider this problem.”

The young Joseph Biden was also sitting in the room, blown away by the confrontation. When Deng suddenly turned to Biden and asked if the United States would sell China F-15s and F16s, the young Senator, like many other legislators, clearly did not wish to bear any more responsibility in foreign policy and politely excused himself: “I’m not the President.”²⁰⁰

Those protests continued through multiple diplomatic channels, in both official and unofficial situations, as U.S. Ambassador Woodcock reported that Deng was very serious about his warnings regarding Taiwan. “Deng made it clear that passage of the

²⁰⁰ Cable, from Beijing to Washington, 21 April, 1979. NARA ADD.
<https://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=13829&dt=2776&dl=2169>

Taiwan Omnibus bill had placed a strain on the new U.S.-PRC relationship and that the U.S. was overloading the circuits by attempting to continue military relationships with Taiwan that were not foreseen in the normalization agreement. Now more than ever is not the time to flaunt our military relationships with Taiwan, and I hope we can curb any tendencies to do so.”²⁰¹ U.S.-China relations seemed to be cooling down after the making of the TRA act. Michel Oksenberg, the top China expert in the White House, too, reported to Brzezinski that the Chinese seemed to grow increasingly suspicious of the Americans. Deng was not getting the key items promised by the U.S., both on Taiwan, and on military technology transfer. “The Chinese press has openly criticized the Carter Administration in terms that it did not use since your visit to China in May 1978. The Chinese believe that we are simply using our relationship with China to improve our relations with the Soviet Union.” While China was unhappy that America seemed to “tolerate inadequacies against the Soviets” on the U.S.-Soviet front, “our bilateral dealing with the Chinese, we have not meticulously met our commitments to them on severance [sic] of our relations with Taiwan... on extension of Most Favoured Nation following the signing of the Trade Agreement, and on expeditious licensing of dual-purpose technology items to the PRC.”²⁰²

On 27 August 1979, Deng again brought up Taiwan with U.S. Vice President Mondale in Beijing. The Taiwanese assets in the United States must to be transferred to the PRC, Deng demanded, and, by shielding his own ambition behind the “Chinese people,” Deng said, “As to your handling problems that come up in your relations with Taiwan, we hope that you deal with these with more prudence. In some cases, if you step over

²⁰¹ Cable, From Beijing to Washington, 25 April, 1979, ADD, NARA.
<https://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=19155&dt=2776&dl=2169>

²⁰² Memo, from Zbigniew Brzezinski, from Michel Oksenberg, 1 August, 1978. NSA Country File, China (PRC) 8-9/79. JCL

boundaries, the Chinese people find it hard to understand. To be very candid, we have been tolerant on some of your actions, but as I said if you go over bounds on certain cases, then it will arouse public opinion and make it very difficult for us to explain it to the people who have resentments in this regard... I trust that the U.S. Government may have noted a sentence in the report to the government made by Premier Hua Guofeng not long ago in which he expressed the hope that the U.S. Government not do anything that would hamper the return of Taiwan to the Motherland.” While Mondale tried to shift the responsibilities to the Taiwan Lobbies and assured Deng Xiaoping that Carter still hold the reins, the impatient Deng complained. “I only want to tell you that in your various dealings with them that it has tended to make Chiang Ching-Kuo very cocky. It has caused his tail to raise very high.”²⁰³

Even though Deng Xiaoping was frustrated with the TRA, he nevertheless had to find another way to deal with Chiang Ching-Kuo. The CIA suggested that the success or failure of Deng Xiaoping’s Taiwan policy was closely connected to his domestic prestige, and the recent making of the TRA had made it even more complex: “Taiwan represents a fundamental issue because it raises questions of sovereignty and legitimacy. A perceived setback on the Taiwan question could gravely undermine Deng's position.” Deng’s action, it suggests, was also closely connected to America’s Cold War strategic interests. “In less adverse circumstances, Deng could manage a retrogression on U.S.-China relations, probably by seizing the initiative to take retaliatory measures against the U.S.”²⁰⁴

²⁰³ FRUS, Volume XIII, China, 941-944.

²⁰⁴ “Deng Xiaoping and the Taiwan Question,” 27 March 1981. CIA CREST.
<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP84B00049R000701970010-2.pdf>

Deng also faced uncertainty that was happening inside Taiwan. Especially now, considering the democratic movements in Taiwan could one day turn into a pro-independence movement, reunifying Taiwan would be much more difficult and unpredictable in a few years' time. In fact, Chiang himself faced the most difficult year of his presidency, both in foreign policy and in domestic politics. Carter's action was already damaging enough for the KMT, in addition, the right-wing, neo-Nazi style KMT conservatives are in fierce opposition with the pro-independence movements, where "radical anti-communists groups such as "Patriotic Martyrs" or "Iron and Blood Patriotic Union" had an increasing voice in society, and those once disappeared mafias that migrated from the mainland were returning. In a rally of those right-wing groups, they called for extermination of "unpatriotic" opponents of the KMT.²⁰⁵ The KMT's own intelligence and security forces were also out of control. On 10 December 1979, KMT security forces cracked down a major pro-democracy protests and arrested several journalists from the journal *Formosa*. The "Formosa incident" created more dissent in Taiwanese society and forever tainted Chiang Ching-Kuo's political legacy.²⁰⁶ Those situations would only get worse throughout the 1980s. In a most notorious case in 1984, KMT military intelligence, the National Bureau of Investigation and Statistics [NBIS] even hired assassins from the Taiwanese mafia "Bamboo Union – Zhu Lian Bang" and murdered Mr. Jiang Nan, a Taiwanese American liberal writer living in San Francisco who had a habit of writing scandalous articles about Chiang Ching-Kuo. To Chiang's embarrassment, the NBIS's direct involvement was caught by the American FBI. Meanwhile, the democratic movements accused Chiang of directing the murder, causing another wave of criticism against Chiang Ching-Kuo and his KMT.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ Taylor, 305

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 306-307.

²⁰⁷ "蔣經國密令暗殺江南" [Chiang Ching-Kuo Ordered the Assassination of Jiang Nan], *Liberty Times*, 2014 <<https://web.archive.org/web/20160418213526/http://old.ltn.com.tw/2004/new/oct/21/today-o3.htm>> [accessed 18 June 2020].

A Softer Approach: Luring Chiang Ching-Kuo to the Negotiation Table

For Deng Xiaoping, Chiang's problems presented an opportunity. Maybe, it was time to promise Chiang Ching-Kuo that he could keep his KMT regime, as long as Chiang admits that Taiwan is a part of the PRC. This idea was first openly expressed in 1979, when Deng met with *Time* Magazine editor Hedley Donovan. "Our policy is reasonable, and it respects the reality in Taiwan. The current Taiwanese regime could keep its power, which means they can keep their own military, as well as trade, business connections, and people-to-people relations with foreign countries. The current policies and ways of life do not have to change, but only under the condition of 'One-China.' This could be solved in the long run. The main body of China should be mainland, and this will eventually be developed. There is only one main demand, one china, not two China, and [we both] love the same homeland."²⁰⁸

This was the beginning of Deng's probe of a new policy to deal with Taiwan, resulting from the failure to stop the making of TRA in the United States. Deng first reiterated his new idea with the visiting Japanese Prime Minister Masayoshi Ōhira on 6 December 1979. In addition to allowing Taiwan to have its own foreign relations, the way of life, and political system – what Deng called "three no-changes," he also promised that Taiwan should be allowed to keep its own military, as long as it enjoys its autonomy as a part of China, which, of course, was represented by the PRC.²⁰⁹

Also, 大公报, "竹聯幫老大揭秘江南案: 蔣孝武代父受過", 2014., [The head of Bamboo Union later confessed that Chiang Ching-Kuo was behind the murder, Chiang Xiaowu Received Blame in place of his Father.] *Takungpao*, 29 June, 2014

²⁰⁸ 邓小平讲话实录: 会谈卷 [Deng Xiaoping Conversations Records] (Beijing, 2018), 161

²⁰⁹ 宫力, 周敬青, 张曙, 邓小平在重要历史关头 [Gong Li, Zhou Jingqing, *Deng Xiaoping at Critical Historical Moments*] (Beijing, 1999), 57-60.

Instead of luring Chiang to negotiations, those announcements ignited another round of long and bitter propaganda fight between those two sides. Deng's new proposal immediately faced resolute rejection from Chiang Ching-Kuo. "Our goal of sustaining our democracy and freedom, of fighting against communism, of recovering the mainland has never changed, and will not change under any pressure." Chiang told the *Washington Post* on 5 April 1980. Further, Chiang assured the Americans that "Taiwan will never reach out to the Soviet Union" as rumoured by Deng Xiaoping, as "not to have any contact with Soviet Russia" remained ROC's national founding principles which "will not change even if America's position has changed," Aware that Deng was using Taiwan's pro-independence movements to put pressures on him in order to force his hands in accepting the proposal, Chiang assured that his regime was secure and he was in no hurry to negotiate with Deng Xiaoping: "Taiwan-Independence members are conducting a lot of propaganda in the United States, they say that Taiwanese societies is in chaos, and Taiwanese aboriginals and those migrated from the mainland [during the civil war] are in opposition with each other. Those are exaggerations, as all citizens of the ROC are born equal." Chiang nevertheless excused his use of martial law, as it was necessary "to face pressure from the CCP, to persecute those who support a takeover or infiltration by the CCP."²¹⁰

Chiang, of course, was exaggerating Taiwan's achievement in democracy. Anxious to prove that he was doing better than the other Asian dictators - South Korea's Park Chung-hee, for example, - One of Chiang's top generals and KMT army's chief "political warfare expert" Wang Shen, invited Dr. Robert Sutter, a Harvard-trained American sinologist who had a stint with the CIA, and now an advisor for the U.S.

²¹⁰ 蔣經國接見美國華盛頓郵報總經理梅耶夫婦, 蔣經國總統文物, [Chiang Ching-Kuo Meeting with Washington Post CEO Mr. and Mrs. Meyer, Chiang Ching-Kuo Files], 005-010303-00004-022, Academia Historica.

Congress to visit Taiwan's secret military camp where political prisoners were held. Many of those prisoners belonged to Chiang's political oppositions who would play a key role in the democratization of Taiwan in the 1990s. "It was like going to the Death Star to see Darth Vader," Dr. Sutter remembered this strange trip with much amusement, "after showing me how comfortably accommodated and how well fed the prisoners were, the general slapped me on the back and said proudly, 'Don't you see? We are not the South Koreans.'"²¹¹

Back to Beijing, Deng did not give up his dream of reunifying Taiwan under his reign. A clearer policy was spelled out, through his trusted general Ye Jian-Ying. On 30 September 1981, the People's Congress published Ye's article, "The Policy regarding Returning Taiwan to the Motherland." The article, did its best to play KMT's uncertain future in Taiwan and Chiang's patriotic sentiment as a fellow Chinese. It called for direct negotiations with the KMT, which framed it as a historical continuity of the two parties' cooperation during the Second World War – a move directly aimed at Chiang Ching-Kuo and his most treasured family heritage as China's war time leaders. The paper called for a "third time of cooperation between the CCP and the KMT" and promised high autonomy of Taiwan, including the rights to have its own military, conduct foreign relations, and to keep its old way of life, as long as Taiwan admit Taiwan is a part of China and oppose the idea of "two Chinas."²¹² This paper would become a blueprint for Deng's "one country, two system" policy, which Deng first proposed to Margaret Thatcher during the negotiation regarding the future of Hong

²¹¹ Robert Sutter, Class note, used with permission, Spring 2013, George Washington University, Washington D.C.

²¹² 叶剑英: 关于台湾回归祖国实现和平统一的方针政策 [Ye Jianyin, On The Policy of Peaceful Reunification with Taiwan] People's Daily, 1981-10-01.

Kong. By which, Deng promised “the city would retain its "capitalist" economy and limited democratic freedoms, but sovereignty would pass to Beijing.”²¹³

Meanwhile, Deng Xiaoping was playing all the cards he had. From Chiang’s letter to his mother, it suggested that Deng Xiaoping, an atheist communist himself, used pro-PRC American Chinese Christians to lobby the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan to promote pro-unification propaganda.²¹⁴ In another case, the CCP was using American-Chinese historians Tang Degang to write patriotic biographies of former KMT leaders, to promote unification ideas.²¹⁵ Madame Chang Kai-shek too, told Chiang Ching-Kuo that Deng was using non-KMT members and pro-independence intellectuals for his unifying Taiwan’s agenda. “Which has surprised and amused Taiwanese non-KMT members and pro-independence conspirators, they [were used to] create wind and waves for [CCP’s] United Front policy, the common people cannot understand the evil and poisonous tricks Deng tries to play in the Cold War... we need to use all kinds of media to inform [the people] about its danger and harm.”²¹⁶

In a most strange episode, Deng reached out to his secret yet not-so-reliable contacts in the United States. Through a Hong-Kong born Chinese American called Eric Hotung, and the conservative anti-Soviet think tank American Enterprise Institute, a message was passed to a retired CIA analyst, Ray S. Cline, who was the head of the Centre for

²¹³ CNN James Griffiths, "The Secret Negotiations Behind The Hong Kong Handover", *CNN*, 2020 <<https://edition.cnn.com/2017/06/18/asia/hong-kong-handover-china-uk-thatcher/index.html>> [accessed 17 June 2020].

²¹⁴ 民國七十三年宋美齡與蔣經國來往電報錄底影, 蔣經國總統文物 [73th Republic Year Song Meiling Letter to Chiang Ching-Kuo, Copy, Chiang Ching-Kuo Files], 005-010502-00010-053, Academia Historica.

²¹⁵ 民國七十四年宋美齡與蔣經國來往電報錄底影印, 蔣經國總統文物 [74th Republic Year Song Meiling Letter to Chiang Ching-Kuo, Copy, Chiang Ching-Kuo Files], 005-010502-00011-035, Academia Historica.

²¹⁶ 民國七十四年宋美齡與蔣經國來往電報錄底影印 (一), 蔣經國總統文物 [74th Republic Year Song Meiling Letter to Chiang Ching-Kuo, Copy (1), Chiang Ching-Kuo Files], 005-010502-00011-050, Academia Historica.

Strategic and International Studies, then still a part of Georgetown University. Cline had some prior connections with the Chiang family, especially with Madame Chang Kai-shek, was one of the many Washington D.C. Kissinger or Brzezinski-Wannabes who dreamed of playing a more grandiose role in the dangerous game of the Cold War. Deng wanted to use this strange connection with Ray S. Cline to tell Chiang Ching-Kuo that the CCP was ready for informal low-profile negotiations with the KMT which would possibly take place in the neutral city of Hong Kong, outside of great powers radar.²¹⁷ This move, however, ruined Cline's career and further angered Chiang Ching-Kuo, as Chiang immediately grew suspicious of his motivations. "From now on, whatever the Communist bandits trying to play with their 'united front game,' your son will not pay any attention and will resolutely reject." Chiang reported to his mother on this person. "Cline trying to drag us and the communists bandits together in Hongkong. After I heard this and immediately decided to not to see him, when he visited [Taiwan] in October. I sent a copy of the communists' plan he left to our friends in the American CIA and they were all shocked, saying this was Cline's own scheming, and the American officials formally responded to our foreign ministry that they had no idea what Cline was doing."²¹⁸ This meeting never took place and Cline was forever banned to see Chiang-Ching-Kuo. Not everyone in DC, it seemed, is qualified to be Kissinger or Brzezinski.

As this strange plan for a first contact had failed, Deng was so eager to put forth his vision for Taiwan, that in the constitutional amendment made in 1982, the new PRC constitution included a clause that, "during special circumstances, the country can

²¹⁷ 涂成吉, 克萊恩與台灣: 反共理想與理性之衝突和妥協 [Xu Chenji, Ke Laien and Taiwan: The Conflict and Compromise between Anti-Communist Inspiration and Rationality] (Taipei, 2007), 309.

²¹⁸ 蔣經國電宋美齡等, 蔣經國總統文物 [Chiang Ching-Kuo Telegram to Song Meilin, Chiang Ching-Kuo Files] 005-010502-00007-046, Academia Historica.

establish special administrative zones, and the policy inside the administrative zones should be decided by the people's congress." Even though the PRC Constitution was never strictly enforced, this new clause nevertheless paved the legal rational, or, another excuse to the creation of "one country two system" policy. Even better, it could be interpreted as a task Deng had left for future generation of CCP leaders.

But for Deng Xiaoping, the future never arrived. The new American President Ronald Reagan decided not to abandon America's security commitment to Taiwan even though he was also interested in anti-Soviet military cooperation with the mainland. U.S. arms flew into Taiwan that year and American firms started co-producing jet fighter with the Taiwanese. The Americans' continued arms sale to Taiwan left Deng in a difficult situation and undermined the leverage Deng had hoped to gain over Taiwan through the normalization of U.S.-China relations during the Jimmy Carter years. As suggested by RAND scholar Michael Chase: "So long as Washington continued to supply weaponry, Beijing believed that Taipei would not be willing to accept unification. So long as Taiwan continued to maintain a separate existence, U.S. actions in the Strait could not be predicted with assurance. So long as U.S. behaviour remained unclear and Chinese forces inferior, Beijing could not resolve the Straits issue and it would challenge Chinese sovereignty."²¹⁹ An unhappy Deng complained to the visiting U.S. Vice President, George H.W. Bush. "We hope that through your visit to Peking we can completely sweep away the shadows and dark clouds existing between us" and demanded a set time limit for phasing out military aid to Taiwan.²²⁰

²¹⁹ Michael Chase, "U.S.-Taiwan Security Cooperation: Enhancing an Unofficial Relationship," in Nancy Tucker, ed, *Dangerous Strait: The U.S.-Taiwan-China Crisis*, Columbia University Press, 2005. 197

²²⁰ New York Times, "Bush Fails To Assuage Peking On Taiwan", 9 May, 1982.

Then, the Reagan administration once more refused to set an end date in future U.S. arms sales to Taiwan in the August 1982 U.S.-PRC joint communique.²²¹ Meanwhile, in secret, the Reagan administration decided to put the responsibilities to the PRC, as their behaviour towards Taiwan will decide how much arms the U.S. would sell to the Taiwanese to maintain their adequate defence. According to a declassified memo for Secretary of State George Shultz and Secretary of Defense Weinberger, “The U.S. willingness to reduce its arms sales to Taiwan is conditioned absolutely upon the continued commitment of China to the peaceful solution of the Taiwan-PRC differences. It should be clearly understood that the linkage between these two matters is a permanent imperative of U.S. foreign policy. In addition, it is essential that the quantity and quality of the arms provided Taiwan be conditioned entirely on the threat posed by the PRC. Both in quantitative and qualitative terms, Taiwan’s defence capability relative to that of the PRC will be maintained.”²²² To quiet the concerns from the U.S. Congress, the Reagan administration also issued a “six-assurances” to the U.S. Congress that their relations with the PRC will not affect their commitment of the ROC:

“We did not agree to set a date certain for ending arms sales to Taiwan”;
 We see no mediation role for the United States” between Taiwan and the PRC;
 Nor will we attempt to exert pressure on Taiwan to enter into negotiations with the PRC”;
 There has been no change in our longstanding position on the issue of sovereignty over Taiwan”;
 We have no plans to seek” revisions to the Taiwan Relations Act
 The August 17 Communiqué [with the PRC], “should not be read to imply that we have agreed to engage in prior consultations with Beijing on arms sales to Taiwan;”²²³

²²¹ “U.S. Conventional Arms Sales To Taiwan 1980-2010 | Arms Control Association”, *Armscontrol.Org*, 2012 <<https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/taiwanarms>> [accessed 17 June 2020].

²²² Memo, “Arms Sales to Taiwan,” White House, 17 August, 1982, Obtained through American Taiwan Institute, <<https://www.ait.org.tw/wp-content/uploads/sites/269/08171982-Reagan-Memo-DECLASSIFIED.pdf>> [accessed 17 June 2020].

²²³ H.Con.Res.88 - Reaffirming the Taiwan Relations Act and the Six Assurances as cornerstones of United States-Taiwan relations. U.S. Congress, Library of Congress.

By which, Reagan Administration will proceed with its relations with Taiwan regardless of the protests from Deng Xiaoping.

But Deng did not want to give up - he still saw unifying the country should be his legacy. If he can't do it, then at least he should set the stage for future generations of communist leaders. On 26 March 1983, Deng carefully chose Professor Yang Liyu, a pro-PRC American Chinese professor who was also Deng's official biographer and told him his plan for unifying the country: "one country, two system." Here Deng tried to ally himself on the same side with the KMT, as he put the Taiwanese separatists as the main enemy, not just of the mainland, but of the Chinese nation.

"If Beijing gave up the possibility of using military force, then China will never be unified; and the military pressure never would be aimed at the Taiwanese people, but rather targeted at the Taiwanese separatists' ambition, and at American's two-china politics." "The key is to unify the country. As peaceful unification is the mutual language between the KMT and the CCP, both wanted to make a contribution to the Chinese nation." Taiwan will keep its own political system, judicial system, military, because "unifying peacefully means the mainland would not swallow Taiwan, nor could Taiwan have eaten up the mainland." However, Deng rejected Chiang Ching-Kuo's idea of unifying the country based on Sun Yat-Sen's "three people's principle," and again suggested direct negotiations, "we should find a proper way for the two parties to sit down and negotiate, to start the third cross-party negotiation...but we cannot let foreigners interfere, that would only mean that China is not independent, and [would] cause many dangers for the future." Deng then invited Chiang Ching-Kuo to negotiate. "We will finish what our predecessor haven't achieved, if they [KMT] can finish this,

the Chiang family and all those who worked for the unification of our motherland will deserve a better place in the history books... We could send people to Taiwan to observe, not necessarily to negotiate., They are also welcome to send people over, we will assure their security and secrecy, I promise, we will not play tricks.”²²⁴

In this message, Deng had cleverly framing “one country, two system” as a way for Chiang Ching-Kuo’s KMT to get rid of its separatists problems, and elevated Chiang into a saviour of the nation, if he had chosen to negotiate with the CCP, while framing the Americans as a danger to the unification of the motherland. In 1984, Deng successfully proposed “one-country two-system” to Margaret Thatcher during the Sino-British negotiations on the handing over of Hong Kong. But Chiang was too shrewd in dealing with Deng Xiaoping and immediately saw that this policy was really aimed at a bigger price, Taiwan. Madame Chiang Kai-shek warned Chiang Ching-Kuo on 2 October 1984, when “one country two system” was most popular among over-sea Chinese communities, as it was seen as a key to solve the century-old problems of unifying the Chinese nation. Madame Chiang told his son that the Chinese CCP was mobilizing Chinese Americans to support those politicians that were pro-PRC as “the Communist bandits promised that they will use only three years to turn all Chinese-Americans ‘from white to red...’ and to sing the same tune as the communists where ‘one-country, two system’ is the way to go. They were using Hong Kong as a case to disarm America’s concern regarding Chinese bandits’ design towards Taiwan.”²²⁵

Supported by his mother, Chiang, again, refused to negotiate.

²²⁴ 邓小平讲话实录, 会谈卷, [Deng Xiaoping Conversations Records] (Beijing, 2018), 226-227.

²²⁵ 宋美齡電蔣經國, 蔣經國總統文物 [Song meiling telegram to Chiang Ching-Kuo, Chiang Ching-Kuo Files], 005-010502-00010-046, Academia Historica.

Conclusion: Taiwan and Deng's Greatest Regret of the Cold War

As Chiang's attitudes remained unchanged and American arms kept flowing to Taiwan under President Reagan's watch, the Taiwan problem continued to hunt Deng Xiaoping throughout the end of the Cold War. In 1989, Deng achieved another major goal of his cold war ambitions when he normalized Sino-Soviet relations with the Soviet Union on his own terms. Yet still, Taiwan remained a lasting regret. He even told Gorbachev that, "There is only one more thing left in my life, and that is the problem of Taiwan, I am afraid that I won't be able to see it myself."²²⁶ In 1992, during his famous Southern Tour that meant to carve "opening and reform" into his and the communist Party's lasting legacy, he nevertheless commented, "I have some contributions, did a few things, but there are still many things I cannot do, do not have the time to do." Which, at least according to the CCP propagandists, meant that he did not have the chance to unify Taiwan.

Even though Chiang Ching-Kuo was much younger than Deng and smoked far fewer cigarettes, he nevertheless passed away in 1988 at the age of 77. Much to Deng Xiaoping's frustration, Chiang remained anti-communist till the very end and never accepted Deng's invitation to negotiate. The following Taiwanese President, Le Deng-hui, was an active pro-independence politician and purchased even more arms from the United States. Eventually, Lee's visit to the United States, seen as a provocation by Beijing, compounded with the CCP's over-acting, caused the dangerous 1996 Third Taiwan Strait Crisis where the PLA fired missiles into the strait and President Clinton intervened with the American fleet. The 1996 Taiwan Strait confrontation further reveals how easy it could be for the United States and China to stumble into a collision.

²²⁶ 邓小平讲话实录, 会谈卷, [Deng Xiaoping Conversations Records] (Beijing, 2018), 53.

As correctly predicted by political scientist Robert Ross, and, "The United States and China will deal with the Taiwan issue well into this [the twenty-first] century."²²⁷

Deng passed away in 19 February 1997, a year after the Taiwan Strait crisis and five months before Hong Kong was formally handed back to the PRC by the British. Just as during the Deng-Carter years, America's continued commitment to Taiwan and the Taiwanese' own opposition towards unification with the PRC continued to trouble Deng and following generations of CCP leaders. As the pro-independence and pro-democracy *Democratic Progressive Party* set up roots in Taiwanese politics and became a real challenge to the KMT, unifying Taiwan under the conditions originally proposed by Deng seemed ever farther away from becoming reality. Unable to make a breakthrough with Taiwan remained Deng Xiaoping's, and to a certain extent, the CCP's greatest regret of the Cold War.

²²⁷ Robert S. Ross, "The 1995–96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation: Coercion, Credibility, And The Use Of Force", *International Security*, 25/2 (2000), 87-123.

Chapter 3

Jimmy Carter and the failed U.S.-China secret talks on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

Introduction

This chapter studies the Carter Administration's failed effort to convince China to support the Comprehensive Test Ban negotiations as a part of the U.S.-led effort to slow the spread of nuclear weapons and to curb escalating nuclear arms race. This study shows that, although America and China had established official diplomatic relations based on mutual anti-Soviet ground, China was far more interested in developing its own nuclear weaponries than participating in any U.S. led nonproliferation efforts. Furthermore, China was also able to convince the anti-Soviet hardliners in the Carter Administration to secretly help with China's own nuclear tests, all in the name of mutual anti-Soviet cooperation.

Scholars have been debating why U.S.-China nuclear nonproliferation cooperation's only started in the second half of the Reagan Administration, but not during the Jimmy Carter years. The predominant view indicates that it took a long time for Americans to engage and to educate Chinese leaders to understand the importance of Nonproliferation.²²⁸ Others have argued that China preferred a more representative nuclear order where second-rate nuclear powers such as China, the UK, and France could have a stronger voice in international nuclear affairs, which led to China's slower

²²⁸Evan S Medeiros, *Reluctant Restraint: The Evolution of China's Nonproliferation Policies and Practices, 1980-2004* (Singapore, 2009), 30; Ann Kent, *Beyond Compliance, China, International Organizations, And Global Security* (Stanford, Calif., 2010). Others argued that China did not believe the effectiveness of CTBT, which was the main reason for rejecting it. See, Wendy Frieman, *China, International Arms Control And Non-Proliferation* (New York, 2004), 39-40.

adoption by U.S.-dominant Nonproliferation institutions.²²⁹ This study, however, suggested that the negotiation failed because Carter's nonproliferation policy, as represented by the Comprehensive Test Ban, was fundamentally at odds with Deng Xiaoping and his fellow comrades' nuclear ambition.

Carter's Dilemma; China and the Question of Nuclear Testing

The Comprehensive Test Ban was one of the two twin pillars of Carter's nuclear policy: First was to slow down the nuclear arms race between the U.S. and the USSR - or, *Vertical Proliferation* - as termed by Carter's own ambassador to the CTB talks Dr. Herbert York. Second part of Carter's nuclear policy was to prevent further spread of nuclear weapons in the third world – or, what arms control expert would conceptualize as *Horizontal Proliferation*.²³⁰ This dual policy was based on two crucial treaties. First, the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty II [SALT II], was intended to limit the numbers of nuclear weapon delivery vehicles owned by, and exclusively within, the two Superpowers – the United States and the Soviet Union.²³¹ Because SALT II did not limit the quality and explosive power of the nuclear weapons carried on those vehicles, thus, the second treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTB], played a complementary role in both halting *Vertical Proliferation* by *slowing* nuclear-weapon-capable nations from testing *newer* nuclear weapons to develop more powerful weapons for their carrying vehicles, as well as stopping *Horizontal Proliferation* by *preventing*

²²⁹ Nicola Horsburgh, *China And Global Nuclear Order: From Estrangement To Active Engagement* (Oxford, 2015), 76-95.

²³⁰ Kosta Tsipis and others, "Thirty-Seven Years Of Nuclear Weapons", *Bulletin Of The Atomic Scientists*, 38/10 (1982), 46-58. Also, Andrew Futter, *The Politics Of Nuclear Weapons* (Thousand Oaks, California, 2015). 70-129. Early study of such concepts, see, Nancy W Gallagher, *Arms Control: New Approaches To Theory And Policy* (Hoboken, 1998).

²³¹ For background of SALTII, see: Strobe Talbott, *Endgame: The Inside Story Of Salt II* (New York, 1980).

ambitious non-nuclear-weapon countries from going nuclear by testing their *first* nuclear weapon. In terms of scope and target countries, The SALT II treaty was a Superpower's agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union, while the CTB would have covered the whole world.

The CTB was designed to achieve two nonproliferation goals. First, it should prevent non-nuclear nations from building their first nuclear weapon. Second, it would prevent countries already had nuclear weapons from testing more powerful weapons and further escalating the nuclear arms race. From China's perspective, however, accepting the CTB would put itself in a dangerous and unequal position, when Americans, whose nuclear arsenals were decades ahead of China's, telling China to stop testing first.

Roland Timerbaev, the Soviet chief delegate to the CTB negotiations, bluntly pointed out the superpowers were only ready to talk about CTB because both sides had already tested enough nuclear weapons: "by 1974 - 1976, after the Threshold Test Ban Treaty [TTBT] was signed... the USA, and U.S.S.R., had already developed too many overpowered nuclear warheads for Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles [ICBMs], Submarine-launched Ballistic Missiles [SLBMs], and Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicles [MIRVs], thus the necessity for [the two superpowers] to further test such overpowered nuclear warheads had already disappeared."²³² China had no such comparable weapons to begin with, thus, Carter faced an unsolvable dilemma: his nonproliferation policy depended on getting China to support a treaty that would damage China's own nuclear potential.

²³² R. М. Тимербаев, *Рассказы О Былом. Воспоминания О Переговорах По Нераспространению И Разоружению И О Многом Другом*, (Moscow, 2007), 81. [R. М. Timerbaev, *Tales of the Past: A Memoir on the Negotiation of Nonproliferation and Disarmament*,] (Moscow, 2007), 81.

In fact, the American debate regarding banning nuclear tests had been always connected to China. The Joint Chief of Staff and the CIA during the first year of Kennedy administration both gave warnings that China would acquire a nuclear weapon as early as 1964 and achieve short range missile capability by the end of the 1970s.²³³ Unwilling to militarily strike China's nuclear facilities,²³⁴ Kennedy, during the 1961 Vienna summit, probed Khrushchev to draft a test ban treaty to prevent China from getting the bomb.²³⁵ However, Khrushchev did not wish to damage Soviet-China relations and deemed a test ban specifically aimed at China to be unnecessary.²³⁶ As Sino-Soviet relations deteriorated, Khrushchev agreed with the Kennedy Administration to use a test ban to stop China from getting the bomb and ceded a major compromise to permit on-site inspections.²³⁷ Kennedy also formally announced his endorsement of a limited ban on nuclear testing on 10 June 1963, hoping that the Soviet Union would have better leverage in forcing China into accepting the test ban treaty.²³⁸

The United States, United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union formally signed the Limited Test Ban Treaty [LTBT] on July 25, 1963, at a time when both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. were pursuing *vertical proliferation* themselves - trying to outmatch each other with ever bigger nuclear tests. Earlier, in 1961, the Soviet Union tested The *Tsar Bomba*

²³³ Edward C Keefer, David W. Mabon and Harriet Dashiell Schwar, *Foreign Relations Of The United States, 1961-1963, Volume XXII, Northeast Asia* (Washington, D.C., 1996).174.

²³⁴ William Burr and Jeffrey T. Richelson, "Whether To "Strangle The Baby In The Cradle": The United States And The Chinese Nuclear Program, 1960-64", *International Security*, 25/3 (2001), 54-99.

²³⁵ Glenn W. LaFantasie and Nina J. Noring, *Foreign Relations Of The United States, 1961-1963, Volume XVIII, Near East, 1962-1963* (Washington D.C., 1994), 150.

²³⁶ Vladislav Zubok, "Look What Chaos In The Beautiful Socialist Camp: Deng Xiaoping And The Sino-Soviet Split, 1956-1963", *Bulletin Of The Cold War International History Project*, 10 (1998), 153-162.

²³⁷ Kendrick Oliver, *Kennedy, Macmillan And The Nuclear Test-Ban Debate, 1961-63* (Basingstoke (GB), 1998), 145.

²³⁸ William Burr and Hector L. Montford, 'The Making of the Limited Test Ban Treaty, 1958-1963,' *NSA Electronic Briefing Paper*, August 2003. https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB94/#29_ Accessed on July 20, 2018.

which equalled 3000 times the destructive power of the Hiroshima bomb.²³⁹ Under such circumstances the LTBT only increased the Chinese leader Mao Zedong's suspicions that the superpowers were utilising double-standards to smother China's nuclear projects while pursuing arms race themselves. On the diplomatic front, Mao issued a three-step response to the LTBT. First, he made a claim for the moral high ground by calling out both the Superpowers' hypocrisy by demanding "all nations, nuclear and non-nuclear," to "ban and destroy all nuclear weapons" and to "outlaw the production, transfer, testing, and storage of nuclear weapons." Then he pointed out that the LTBT would not prevent the superpowers from testing bombs underground while it would hinder other independent, "peace-loving nations from obtaining the weapons to protect themselves."²⁴⁰ Later that year, China issued a series of public statements known as the "Nine Articles of Polemics" which blamed the two superpowers for their using the arms reduction talk to hide the fact that both were, in fact, pursuing arms race and endangering world peace. The Limited Test Ban Treaty, in those polemics, which was presented as "a worthless piece of paper that was never intended to be fulfilled" and a result of Khrushchev's "false belief" that "nuclear weapons could erase the law of class conflict" and his "false hope to maintain world peace" simply by "U.S.-Soviet nuclear cooperation" at the "betrayal of socialism and communism."²⁴¹

²³⁹ Viktor Adamsky and Yuri Smirnov, "Moscow's Biggest Bomb: The 50-Megaton Test Of October 1961", *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, 4 (1994), 19-21.

²⁴⁰ "中国政府关于全面禁止和彻底销毁核武器的声明 [Chinese Government's Statement on The Complete ban and Elimination of Nuclear Weapons]", PRC Ministry Of Foreign Affairs, 2018 <<http://www.mfa.gov.cn/chn/pds/ziliao/wjs/2159/t9002.htm>> [accessed 9 September 2019].

²⁴¹ "在战争与和平问题上的两条路线五评苏共中央的公开信", 人民日报 ["Five Comments to the Soviet Central Committee o the Two Paths of Peace and War, An Open Letter," *People's Daily*] 1963. For Deng's role in the drafting of those statements, see, Alexander V. Pantsov, Steven I. Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 231.

Those polemics' true attention, argued by a Chinese scholar, was to discredit Nikita Khrushchev, whom Mao had blamed for causing the Sino-soviet split.²⁴² What was interesting and relevant, however, was that the person whom Mao had put in charge of drafting that anti-Soviet propaganda, was the future Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping.²⁴³ Three decades later, when Jimmy Carter excitedly told Deng about a brand-new U.S.-Soviet-British joint Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, it immediately triggered the new Chinese leader's unhappy memories.

After President Kennedy's death, China's difficult relations with America's nonproliferation efforts continued into the Johnson Administration. Early in July 1963, De Gaulle suddenly broke Western unity and announced France would formally recognize the People's Republic of China on 27 January 1964, after a series of secret minister-level Sino-French negotiations, mostly based on their common dislike of the LTBT, which both China and France viewed as a superpower conspiracy to prevent the second-tier nations like themselves from developing their own nuclear weapons.²⁴⁴ Then, there was the Chinese nuclear test on October 16, 1964, just a day after the CIA had wrongly assured Johnson that "a Chinese nuclear test probably would not occur before the end of 1964."²⁴⁵

As the Johnson Administration was distracted from test ban issues by the escalating Vietnam War, China was on an all-out race to catch up with the superpowers in nuclear

²⁴² 李丹慧, "走向分裂: 从暗中斗争到公开论战, 1960年代中苏关系研究之二", 史学期刊 [Towards the Split, from intrigues to polemics, 1960's Sino-Soviet Relations, Study 2], 2006, issue 6, 51-67.

²⁴³ Deng was instrumental in Mao's propagandist war against Moscow, see, Alexander Pantsov and Steven Levine, Alexander V Pantsov and Steven I. Levine, *Deng Xiaoping, A Revolutionary Life* (Oxford, 2017), 228-229, 231.

²⁴⁴ Lorenz M. Lüthi, "Rearranging International Relations? How Mao's China And De Gaulle's France Recognized Each Other In 1963-1964", *Journal Of Cold War Studies*, 16/1 (2014), 111-145.

²⁴⁵ FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXX, China, 225.

weapons designs and its delivery capability had begun. On June 30, 1966, China launched its first nuclear-capable ballistic Missile, code-named DF-2 A²⁴⁶ On October 27, 1966, a sister missile carrying a live atomic warhead delivered a fission explosion to the target area which propelled China into the nuclear missile age.²⁴⁷ A year later, in June 17, 1967, ahead of the French *Canopus* Thermonuclear project, China exploded its first Hydrogen bomb, and then together with France, refused to sign the Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] in 1968. By then, America's test-ban centred nuclear policy towards China had fully collapsed.²⁴⁸

Nixon, Ford, and U.S.-China Opening

From the Chinese perspective, the Cultural Revolution, coinciding with the Nixon years, had provided a unique opportunity for China's nuclear weapon development, even if the rest of the society was in chaos. Domestically, political violence had devastated most Chinese scientific research sectors, except one, the strategic sector. This was because China's nuclear programs were located far in the Xinjiang deserts, and were thus physically isolated from the chaos that engulfed Chinese cities. Secondly, several far-sighted PLA generals such as Liu Bocheng, Nie Rongzhen, who hated the Gang of Four, protected the three most crucial strategic projects from the harm of the Red Guards: The nuclear weapon programs, the ballistic missile program, and the nuclear submarine program. Premier Zhou Enlai also managed to personally draft a list of names of scientists working in the nuclear and missiles program, putting more personal weight on the protection of the scientists and their projects.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁶ 奚启新, 钱学森传 [Xi Qixing, Biography of Qian Xuesen] (Beijing, 2019), 381.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, 385.

²⁴⁸ Yafeng Xia, *Negotiating With The Enemy* (Bloomington, 2006), 119-124.

²⁴⁹ 周恩来生平思想研讨会在京开幕 [Zhouenlai' Life and Thoughts Conference Opens in Beijing], 18 February, 1998, People's Daily.

Externally, China's strategic programs benefited from the changing dynamic of the Cold War. The Nixon administration no longer saw China's nuclear program as a threat to U.S. security as much as the Johnson administration did. On January 27, 1969, the CIA, DOD, AEC, and the NSA conducted a joint study which overturned many previous fears and over-estimations of the progress of China's nuclear program. Most importantly, this study suggested to Nixon that China's nuclear arsenal would moderate China's behaviour rather than making China more aggressive as previous administration had assumed. "So long as the Chinese strategic force remains relatively small and vulnerable, a condition which is likely to persist beyond the period of this estimate... the Chinese will almost certainly recognize that the actual use of their nuclear weapons against neighbours or the superpowers would involve substantial risks of a devastating counterblow to China."²⁵⁰

The Sino-Soviet split also led Nixon and Kissinger to see China more as a strategic asset against the Soviet Union, than a problem for America's security. As Kissinger wrote to Nixon, the United States should "work towards putting U.S.-Chinese relations on a more rational and less ideological basis than has been true for the past two decades."²⁵¹ With regard to nuclear weapons, the U.S. intelligence again confirmed the previously suggested opinion that used that China's nuclear weapon program was too small and immature to pose any treat to the United States, and in fact, acquiring nuclear weapons, "not necessarily make China more willing to risk a direct clash with the US; indeed, it is more likely to have a sobering effect."²⁵² Those re-evaluations of China's strategic posture would become the foundation for his later and much more famous

²⁵⁰ National Intelligence Estimate 13-8-69, 'Communist China's Strategic Weapons Program.' Director of Central Intelligence, 27 February 1969, CIA CREST, https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0001098205.pdf

²⁵¹ FRUS, 1969-1976, Volume, XXXV, National Security Policy, 285.

²⁵² FRUS, 1969-1976, Volume XVII, China, Ibid, 23.

1972 secret trip to China and the 1973 U.S.-China opening and provided a rather secure environment for China to continuously pursue its strategic capabilities.²⁵³

The U.S.-China rapprochement, however, did not lead to China's changing perception of U.S.-Soviet led nuclear nonalienation efforts. In fact, in 1969, China had linked U.S.-Soviet arms reduction talks with the ongoing Sino-Soviet border conflicts. According to a recent study, China's top leaders firmly believed that it was not a coincidence that the 1969 Helsinki U.S.-Soviet SALT I negotiation happened at the worst time of the Sino-Soviet split. A recent study based on Zhou Enlai's letters and meetings with foreign dignitaries suggested that, in the Chinese leaders' mind, they firmly believed that the Soviets were trying to use arms reduction to maintain its nuclear hegemony, as well as to collaborate with the American imperialists to put even more pressure on the China.²⁵⁴ Even after Nixon's historical trip to China, Mao and the other top Chinese leaders remained suspicious of U.S.-Soviet arms reduction efforts. In fact the U.S. faced serious criticism from China when it signed the SALT I treaty, Zhou Enlai complained afterward to the U.S. liaison officer that "The Soviet leader's visit to the U.S. enhanced our suspicion that two big powers intend to dominate the world." And Mao, even more doubtful, seriously contemplated the possibilities that the U.S. had betrayed China through its détente with the Soviet Union.²⁵⁵ This study will further show that this kind of suspicion was inherited by Deng Xiaoping and carried into the secret U.S.-China Comprehensive Test Ban negotiations.

²⁵³ For the U.S.-China opening, see, Chris Tudda, *A Cold War Turning Point: Nixon And China, 1969-1972* (Baton Rouge, 2012).

²⁵⁴ Xin Zhan, Prelude to the Transformation: China's Nuclear Arms Control Policy during the U.S.-China Rapprochement, 1969–1976, *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 41, No. 2, 288-304.

²⁵⁵ Ibid

Carter's Nonproliferation Promises, and Deng's Decision to Pursue ICBM Capability

There was another unfavourable development for the Carter administration to bring up the CTB to Deng Xiaoping. When Carter was running a campaign in 1976 based on a nonproliferation- centred foreign policy and entertained about the idea of “encourage the Soviet Union to join us in a total ban of all nuclear explosions for at least five years,” China was already on the verge of having its indigenous ICBM capability.²⁵⁶ It all happened at the same time: In late 1976 Carter was campaigning for the U.S.

Presidency, while Deng Xiaoping was in the process of consolidating his power bases and overhauling China's dysfunctional defence industry, heavily damaged during the Cultural Revolution. General Zhang Aiping, a technocrat who was put in charge of the National Defence Science Committee [NDSC] by Deng, spoke passionately on 24 April 1977 that the State should “cherish and pay special care to the intellectuals working on the frontline of national defence research and development,” whose works were so valuable that they should not be forced into “endless political studies” and manual labour “which wasted valuable time for scientific research.” With those half-starving days during the Cultural Revolution still vividly in his memory, General Zhang commented: “Planting vegetables, raising pigs, cooking meals in mass-canteens should take no more than one-fifth of the intellectuals' time, just to get some relaxation from their brain work.”²⁵⁷

The backdrop of General Zhang's speech was Deng Xiaoping's decision to catch up at full speed with the superpowers with regards to nuclear weaponry, led by his long-standing mistrust of U.S.-Soviet disarmament efforts. On March 12, 1975, Deng stated

²⁵⁶ Jimmy Carter, *The Presidential Campaign 1976: Volume I-1* (Washington D.C., 1979), 815.

²⁵⁷ 张爱萍, *张爱萍军事文选* [Zhang Aiping, *Zhang Aiping Military Papers*](Beijing, 1994), 334.

that U.S.-Soviet disarmament talks were a disguise for military expansionism.

Commenting on the Vladivostok Summit Meeting on Arms Control early in November 1974, Deng said: “Ford and Brezhnev’s agreement was essentially a military expansion pact, not a disarmament pact. They avoided the issue of the quality of the nuclear weapons, thus the number of nuclear warheads agreed in the treaty had increased. Even though the increase in number was small, without the control of their quality, it was essentially a strategic military expansion.” Mindful of the Limited Nuclear Test Ban which Deng had personally criticized during the Mao period, he wrote: “Since 1963 they [U.S.A. and U.S.S.R.] signed three nuclear arms agreements, 1963, 1972, 1974. After each agreement, the nuclear arms race intensified even further – with one specific characteristic, that every time, the Soviet Union raced faster. If the Soviet Union lagged far behind the U.S.A. in 1963, now, the nuclear weapons on both sides are almost equal.”²⁵⁸

Deng’s answer to the U.S.-U.S.S.R. nuclear race was simple: what the Superpowers have, China must also have. Deng immediately appointed the American trained missile scientist Qian Xuesen as the NDSC’s Chief Scientist.²⁵⁹ Dr. Qian was an example of how American domestic politicking and the personal fate of scientists have changed the fate of nations. Qian left China before the eve of Sino-Japanese war, trained at MIT and Caltech as a thermodynamic scientist, and worked in the U.S. Military, NASA, and in the Eisenhower Administration as a top missile scientist, only to be purged – and deported back to China in exchange of American Korean War POWs during the height

²⁵⁸邓小平, *邓小平军事文集 III* [Deng Xiaoping, *Deng Xiaoping Military Papers III*] (Beijing, 2014), 14-17.

²⁵⁹Ibid. 70.

of McCarthyism, and while he was working on America's first generation of intercontinental ballistic missiles.²⁶⁰

In 1955, Qian bought all his missile know-how, and his anti-U.S. attitude back to China. For two decades he successfully worked on a series of short-range ballistic missiles. After he survived the cultural revolution under the Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping's protection, Deng and General Zhang would give Qian his last task: to be the chief scientist on China's first ICBM program, codenamed *Project 718*. The now 68-year old Dr. Qian and General Zhang met in Shanghai on 21 September 1977 and started planning this daunting task. The records showed the scale of the project: eight government ministries, representatives from 27 provinces, 4 universities, 39 factories and 34 research institutes were called in to receive military orders to design, produce, and test China's first ICBM.²⁶¹

Carter's First Engagement with China on Nonproliferation

President Carter was aware of China's post-Mao strategic ambition and the unlikelihood of China signing up to the CTB. He ordered PRM-16 on 25 January 1977 for a comprehensive study of the nuclear test ban. The report was less than optimistic regarding China: "Even after a bilateral/multilateral CTB has been achieved, it is likely that China, France, and perhaps other nations would continue to test. China has accorded high visibility to weapons testing which it has indicated that it would continue and could be expected to severely criticize a CTB as a superpower collusion."

²⁶⁰ Iris Chang, *Thread Of The Silkworm* (New York, 2008).

²⁶¹ 王文华, 钱学森实录 [Wang Wenhua, *Qian Xuesen Chronology*] (Chengdu, 2001), 265.

Regarding China's impact on future U.S.-Soviet negotiations, the report says: "The fact that some nations, particularly China, will continue to develop nuclear explosives would undoubtedly be viewed with concern by the Soviet Union. However, since current Chinese weapons technology is believed significantly inferior to that of the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R., the Soviets would probably be less concerned about a short-term continuation of Chinese testing. In the long term, this situation would be viewed as a serious problem by the Soviets and could even pose a problem for the U.S.A. from the national security standpoint. The result is that an indefinite duration CTBT without periodic reviews is unlikely to be acceptable to Soviets."²⁶²

Despite the warning, Carter was not deterred from giving China a try. On 8 February 8 1977, Carter met with the Chinese Ambassador Huang Zhen, whose previous job happened to be the Chinese Ambassador to France from 1964 to 1971, when China and France sided together against the United States on the Partial Test Ban Treaty. Huang was also to be a personal friend of De Gaulle and had a critical role in convincing France to break the America's technological embargo against China after the Korean War.²⁶³ For a while the meeting was good, cordial, and polite, and they talked about the "traditional friendship between our two peoples," the importance of "the Shanghai Communique," and that timely topic of how much both Americans and Chinese distrusted the Russians. The chemistry was good, until Carter suddenly brought up nonproliferation: "We have offered the Soviet Union a Comprehensive Test Ban treaty. This would be a bilateral agreement with the Soviets. If it can be worked out, then perhaps others such as China or France can consider joining in some form."

²⁶² Chris Tudda and Adam M Howard, *Foreign Relations Of The United States, 1977-1980, Volume XXVI, Arms Control And Nonproliferation* (Washington D.C., 2015), 329.

²⁶³ "Official biography of Huang Zhen," Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PRC, 15 January 2009, Accessed on July 20, 2018.
<http://www.mfa.gov.cn/chn/pds/ziliao/wjrw/lrfbjbztl/t9071.htm>

Those words – “France,” “China” and “Test Ban” must have touched the Chinese Ambassador’s nerve, and the conversation suddenly morphed into the Ambassador’s monologue: how the Soviet can’t be trusted, how disarmament talks with the Russians was an illusion, and how, “In recent years the Soviet Union under the camouflage of détente has been stepping up military preparations for expansion. Not only have the Soviets caught up with the U.S. in conventional forces, but they are seeking overall military superiority... They bully the soft but are afraid of the tough. Quite often they do not mean what they say. They talk disarmament but do the opposite. While they discuss disarmament, they build more weapons ... I would also say a few words about our northern neighbour—a neighbour that is not too far from your country either. We are vigilant and prepared.”²⁶⁴

The Ambassador’s anti-Nonproliferation tune and his hostile attitudes towards any U.S.-Soviet arms reductions talks deeply concerned Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, who oversaw both SALTII and CTB negotiations - both of which became targets of China’s criticism. The next month, Vance went again to see Ambassador Huang, and politely and indirectly probed “the possibility of negotiating for a ban on all tests of nuclear weapons for a limited period, as the President had indicated...” This tactic did not work. No longer dealing with the American President, the Chinese Ambassador went on a full rant. “The PRC has never been interested in the so-called disarmament agreements reached by the Soviet Union and the U.S.,” and China’s consistent policy was to “oppose the nuclear blackmail proposed by the Soviet Union and the U.S., and China will not take part in any of these activities.” Directly pointing out America’s hypocrisy, he said: “The PRC feels that the Soviet Union and the United States have

²⁶⁴ FRUS 1977 – 80, Volume XXVI, Arms Control and Nonproliferation, 22-23.

now conducted enough tests and don't want to allow others to do so." He then used a Chinese idiom to describe the irrationality of a CTB targeted at China: "How on earth could this be reasonable?"²⁶⁵

Nuclear Arms Race and the technical arguments against the CTB

While Carter's diplomacy in China ended up in a dead corner, The British-American-Soviet CTB negotiations from 1977 to the end of 1978 turned into a triangle lover story of cheaters trying to catch the others who also cheated. For example, the British priority at the time was not the CTB but to develop a new type of submarine launched warhead code named "Chevaline" in the fear that a newly installed Soviet anti-ballistic missile defence system [ABM] around Moscow would render UK's already-thin nuclear deterrence against the U.S.S.R. useless.²⁶⁶ Due to the high velocity and high temperature the warheads had to endure before hitting the targets, they could not be guaranteed to work without live nuclear tests.²⁶⁷ In early 1978, Brzezinski reported that the British were still secretly asking the Americans "to conduct one additional test in late autumn of 1978 for their Polaris improvement program."²⁶⁸ In fact, only after having conducted three tests in 1979 and 1980, would Britain fully commit itself to the CTB negotiations.

The Soviets on the other hand, refused having monitoring stations on Soviet territory, citing "trust" would be enough to replace verification, a term never clearly defined.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁵ The English version used in FRUS is 'There is no reason for this under Heaven. which was not entirely correct.' FRUS 1977 – 80 Volume XIII, China, 57-60.

²⁶⁶ DEFE 13/350, PS to S of S, The Case for 5 SSBNs, 19 October 1964, Kew, National Archive. Quoted in, David Owen, *Nuclear Papers*, (Liverpool, 2009), 7-11

²⁶⁷ Peter Hennessy, *Cabinets And The Bomb* (Oxford, 2007). And, John Baylis and Kristan Stoddart, *The British Nuclear Experience: The Role Of Beliefs, Culture, And Identity* (Oxford, 2015).

²⁶⁸ Memorandum, From Brzezinski to President, 'Consultations with Key NATO allies on the Impact of a Comprehensive Test Ban.' NSA *Brzezinski File*, Subject File Box 13. Folder: Comprehensive Test ban, 3-12/77, JCL.

²⁶⁹ Soviet delegation representative, Roland Timerbaev remembered verification should not be necessary because each country should trust each other, building verification would destroy such trust. Of course, Americans did not buy into this argument. Warren Heckrotte, "A Soviet View Of Verification", *Bulletin*

Meanwhile, Americans had clear evidence that the Soviet Union was violating the Limited Test Ban by conducting more than 150 Kilo-Ton tests, throughout the period of the CTB negotiations, which made the Soviet refusal to accept on-site verification measures even more troubling and suspicious.²⁷⁰ In addition, Russian scholars recently revealed that the Soviet military in the late 1970s was so fearful of American's burgeoning computer industry, which would allow the U.S. to use computers to model nuclear testing, while the Soviet Union did not have any comparable technology to do same. The Soviet military thus was also against a full test ban.²⁷¹

While they all cheated, the position on which all three parties had the most similar opinion, was on the Soviet proposal that the CTB should be enforced for three years and would *automatically* self-terminate if the Chinese or the French continued to test their weapons. According to the Soviet proposal's rationale, if the treaty failed, the French and the Chinese – who were most likely to continue to conduct more tests - would be the bad boys to be blamed. The American delegation agreed with a three-year-moratorium but wanted to reserve the right to withdraw *voluntarily* rather than automatically. Based on the American calculation, if the treaty failed after three years, the Russians would be the ones to be blamed - because the Soviets were lagging behind in Multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle [MIRV] technology and would be the one most likely to pull out. The Soviet representative saw right through the American trick, in his memoir, he wrote: “The [American] formula seemed politically motivated. The United States must recognize that the Soviet Union was the party most

Of The Atomic Scientists, 42/8 (1986), 12-15.

²⁷⁰ Memorandum, ‘Soviet High Yield Testing,’ from Cyrus Vance to Dr. Brzezinski, *Herbert York Papers*, Box 59, Folder 4, UCSD.

²⁷¹ Алексей Фененко, ‘Ядерные испытания в системе стратегической стабильности,’ *Международная Жизнь*, МИД, [Aleksei Fenenko, ‘Nuclear Testing and System Strategic Balance’, *International Affairs*, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,] No. 12, 2009. <https://interaffairs.ru/jauthor/material/161>, accessed 20, August 2018.

likely to be put in that difficult position, given the threat posed by continued Chinese testing. Although the Americans would withdraw as a result of Soviet Union's decision to withdraw, it would be the Soviet Union which would shoulder the responsibility for destroying the treaty."²⁷²

More Troubles from the Outside: The French-Chinese Opposition

Observing the negotiation closely and jointly, France and China had no wish to be the scapegoat for such a treaty they deemed to be unfair and not even a part of. Even though Giscard d'Estaing paid more attention to non-proliferation – also due to the 1974 Indian test - than previous French administrations, he and his advisors were also nationalists when it came to nuclear affairs and had no intention of letting the superpowers dictate whether or not France could test nuclear weapons or not.²⁷³ Thus, d'Estaing engaged in a double dealing game with the Americans and the Chinese. On one hand, Giscard d'Estaing promised the Americans that France would do more in promoting international non-proliferation regimes – and indeed achieved certain success in stopping reactor sales to Pakistan - while separately the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs worked with the Chinese against the American monopoly over the CTB.²⁷⁴ As early as in 1977, fearing Carter would start a new round of test ban negotiations, Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua approached the French Ambassador and quickly found out that their two countries were in the same position on the CTB issue.²⁷⁵

²⁷² Cable, GENEVA To SECSTATE, "Soviet Views on Duration and PNE Protocol - Treaty Linkage," 15 Dec 1977, ADD NARA, <https://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=293362&dt=2532&dl=1629>

²⁷³ Bruno Tertrais, "France And Nuclear Nonproliferation: From Benign Neglect To Active Promotion", in *Nuclear Proliferation And International Order* (New York, 2010), 218-219.

²⁷⁴ William Burr, "The United States And Pakistan's Quest For The Bomb", *NSArchive*, 2010 <<https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/nukevault/ebb333/index.htm>> [accessed 17 June 2020].

²⁷⁵ Cable, From Peking LE, to Diplomatie Paris, 'Ministères Des Affaires Étrangères,' 1 March 1977, Asie-Océanie, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques.

Francois de la Gorce, the French representative at the Geneva Disarmament Conference, also reported back to the French MFA on 21 January 1980, that he had concluded that France and China were on the same page regarding nuclear disarmament, after his conversation with the Chinese representative Mr. An Yang. “The participation of China in the Disarmament Committee was the main object of the conversation I had on Friday (January 18) with Mr. An, [China’s] permanent representative to the United Nations. During the dinner I offered to him on his next departure. The words of Mr. An and his colloquies confirmed the position that we know on the convergence of French and Chinese interests (in Nuclear matter in particular) and on the advisability of a close cooperation.” La Gorce also reported that the Chinese were especially concerned about the monopoly of superpowers in nuclear affairs, and they were deeply worried about the ongoing superpower arms race and third world intervention, which would negatively impact the current disarmament process: “My interlocutor stressed the importance of the role (of decision) which belongs to the disarmament committee as a negotiation body. China can, of course, only reject the idea of the privileged responsibility of that two superpowers, from which the committee itself would derive a subordinate role, reduced to the recording of their decisions. The Chinese delegation also attaches great importance to the negotiations on chemical weapons, and they wonder if the next session regarding [chemical weapons] would open at all, particularly given the current state of the American-Soviet relations... Mr. An asserted that the disarmament issues cannot be resolved after the Afghanistan [invasion], as China has thus concluded that, [disarmament] has not taken place.”²⁷⁶

²⁷⁶ Cable, Paris to DSMT Geneva, Ministère Des Affaires Étrangères, ‘Entree De la Chine Au Comité Du Désarmement’ 21 January, 1980, Ibid.

France's sympathy towards the Chinese position was further laid out in another memorandum prepared by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs: "The Chinese, as well as us, think that disarmament is a matter that concerns all". They are opposed to a bipolar conception in which the superpowers would negotiate together deals that other countries would have to follow. The "fundamental issue" the French and Chinese agreed, was "given the enormous superiority both superpowers have, *they should be the ones* substantially reducing their arsenal first. It's only when the disproportion between American and Soviet arsenals and those of the three other powers will have changed, that the latter will consider reducing theirs."²⁷⁷

Besides mutual opposition to the CTB, their shared disdain over U.S. monopoly over international nuclear affairs also bought France and China closer in mutual nuclear cooperation. French source suggested that there was a sense of shared exceptionalism – and entitlement - among the two countries: Both sides felt that since they were already nuclear weapon states, U.S. non-proliferation restrictions should not apply to the cooperation between France and China, they, as nuclear weapon states, could do whatever is best for their national interests. Both sides believed all non-proliferation agreement, international or bilateral, should "reflect the fact that French-Chinese nuclear cooperation is entirely peaceful."²⁷⁸ Another memorandum by the French MFA even suggested, almost with a sense of humour, that "it is of high importance that nuclear collaboration [between France and China] remains exclusively civil and pacific, be totally unsuspecting...." Its military potential has to be kept low-key: "but we need to show that our military cooperation is by no means linked to military activities, which

²⁷⁷ Cable, Ministère Des Affaires Étrangères, Télégramme A L'arrivée, to DSMT Genève, CQ Peking. 20 March, 1980, Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Aide - Memoire, Ministère Des Affaires Étrangères, Paris, 10 October 1978, Ibid.

are developing independently in both countries.”²⁷⁹ It almost sounded like Soviet’s justification for their “Peaceful Nuclear Explosions” and the Americans, of course, did not buy into their tricks. On December 1978 – at the heat of the CTB talks, France agreed to sell China two nuclear plants, the only “safety guarantee” they asked the Chinese was for them to say that they would use it for “electricity generation only.” This position greatly irritated Cyrus Vance, who personally complained to the French Ambassador that France could have asked for firmer, written-down legal safety guarantees.²⁸⁰

The France-China resistance would create a series of problems for York and his British and Soviet counterparts. First, as long as France and China refused to follow the treaty, the treaty signatories would be tempted to quit as well, not to mention the entailed issue of how to enforce the test ban on other non-nuclear states, who would point to France and China as excuses for their own tests. Secondly, since the Soviet Union was attempting to withdraw on the ground of continued French and Chinese testing, the Soviets, complained an American official, “will not move on the crucial details of the verification system until they are assured that we are serious about wanting a treaty that could be continued – as opposed to a mere three-year pause in testing.”²⁸¹ The position was clearly aimed at France and China and turned out to be detrimental to the fate of the CTB negotiations.

Keep the Bomb Underground: Carter Man-to-Man with Deng Xiaoping

²⁷⁹ Aide-Memoire, Ministère Des Affaires Étrangères, Paris, 10 October 1978. Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Cable, Ministère Des Affaires Étrangères, Washington, ‘Objet: Vente de Centrales Nucleaires a La Chine, December 4, 1978, Ibid.

²⁸¹ Memorandum, ‘Comprehensive Test Ban Negotiations,’ From George M. Scignious II, to The Secretary, January 16, 1979. *Herbert York Papers*, Box 29, Folder 5, UCSD.

By the beginning of 1979, Jimmy Carter himself had already given up the hope of convincing China to be a part of the CTB, but at least he still had the hope of pressuring China to be supportive towards the SALT II – the last silver lining before the complete collapse of U.S.-Soviet relations. Unfortunately, Carter used the wrong language. During the first meeting when Deng finally visited Washington after U.S.-China normalization of diplomatic relations, Carter asked if China could support SALTII and “several agreements with the Soviet Union,” noting, “contrary to your own belief, that the Soviets have complied with the previous agreement, including the *Limited Test Ban*, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, SALT I and the agreement reached at Vladivostok.” The word “Limited Test Ban” immediately triggered a knee-jerk reaction from the Chinese leader and Deng went for another monologue: “We are not opposed to negotiations. And we are not opposed to your reaching this or that agreement. At the same time, we believe that such an agreement cannot really restrain the Soviet Union.” Deng told Carter, “And after each agreement, the Soviet Union stepped up its efforts to catch up.... Even if you are able to carry out effective supervision on the question of nuclear weapons, they will still look for loopholes in another direction. For instance, Afghanistan, Iran, South Yemen, Angola, Vietnam, Ethiopia and so on, they constantly engage in such actions. So we repeatedly said that what we really need to do is real, solid, down-to-earth work.”²⁸²

After this exchange, Carter gave up. Instead, the American President took a step back and probed Deng to start with complying with the unwritten norm, or, at least, to stop testing nuclear weapons in the open air. As past presidents tend to forgive close allies’ nuclear weapon ambition as long they kept the program low-key, don’t do open test,

²⁸² FRUS, 1977-1979 Volume XIII, 763-765.

and don't proliferate further.²⁸³ Carter again told Deng: "One other sensitive matter... is the nuclear testing that you conduct in the atmosphere. Each time you conduct a test, the nuclear fallout comes on my people. If it is possible for you to conduct such tests underground as we ourselves do, this will be a very fine announcement that could be made." Deng again brushed the question away, and as a seasoned poker player, used this perfect change to ask American for nuclear testing technologies: "...at the present time we are not able to commit ourselves not to conduct atmospheric test. If we were to talk reasons on this matter, we could say that the Soviet Union and the United States have conducted so many atmospheric tests whereas the number of tests we have conducted is very small... if you are able to supply us with some technical help in this respect, maybe it could be solved easier."²⁸⁴

The very next week, Brzezinski wrote to Jimmy Carter, urging for technical assistance to China to help Chinese test nuclear weapons underground, just like "we have provided such assistance but only to our closest allies, the UK and France."²⁸⁵ The technical assistance must not have worked as smoothly as Brzezinski once hoped. China conducted a one-megaton atmosphere test the next year on 16 October 1980, allegedly, for a new type of ballistic missile warhead.²⁸⁶

Background Pressure: The Collapse of Détente

²⁸³Or Rabinowitz and Nicholas L. Miller, "Keeping The Bombs In The Basement: U.S. Nonproliferation Policy Toward Israel, South Africa, And Pakistan", *International Security*, 40/1 (2015), 47-86.

²⁸⁴FRUS, 1977-1979, Volume XIII, China, 780.

²⁸⁵Carter approved the option of starting 'proceed very cautiously to implement a modest program of cooperation' with China on nuclear test technologies after his summit meeting with Brezhnev. Ibid, 791.

²⁸⁶"Nuclear Explosions 1945-1998", *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*, 2000
<http://www.iaea.org/inis/collection/NCLCollectionStore/_Public/31/060/31060372.pdf> [accessed 8 September 2019]. http://www.iaea.org/inis/collection/NCLCollectionStore/_Public/31/060/31060372.pdf

As negotiations dragged into the closing months of 1978, the American chief negotiator to CTB Paul Warnke was so exasperated with the White House's counterproductive arms control policy that he resigned, specifically citing how Brzezinski's hawkish moves towards the Soviet Union - including his playing of the "China Card" – had made the negotiations impossible.²⁸⁷ Carter then appointed the former weapon designer Herbert York as the new CTB negotiations Ambassador. There was an urgent sense to pursue the CTB this year when newly emerged intelligence suggested that Pakistan, was on its way to developing nuclear weapons: one such piece of intelligence even suggested that "China has almost certainly been involved in some mutually beneficial cooperation with Pakistan, particularly in connection with nuclear power, but the precise nature and extent of this cooperation is uncertain."²⁸⁸ The fear of an "Islam Bomb" in Pakistan pushed the CTB teams to speed up their negotiations. In the British CTB envoy Sir Clive Rose's own words: "If we can get Indian support for a CTB, this will help to alleviate the Pakistani problem."²⁸⁹

However, the negotiations were going nowhere. The Soviets insisted on a "automatic" withdrawal amendment since "few would believe it likely that France and China will stop testing in three years."²⁹⁰ The paranoid Soviet military also opposed having any National Seismic Station [NSS], designed to monitor nuclear test-triggered earthquakes, on Soviet soil, fearing the America-made equipment were essentially spy tools and

²⁸⁷ Robert A Strong, *Working In The World: Jimmy Carter And The Making Of American Foreign Policy* (Baton Rouge, 2000).

Paul Warnke and Walter Pincus, "Pass The SALT: An Interview With Paul Warnke", *The New York Review Of Books*, 1979.

²⁸⁸ CIA National Foreign Assessment Centre office of Political Analysis. 'A Review of the Evidence of Chinese Involvement in Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons Program.' 7 December 1979, NSArhive. <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/nukevault/ebb423/docs/3a.%20Chinese%20involvement%20in%20Pakistan%20nuke%20program%201979.pdf>

²⁸⁹ Cable, From US MISSION GENEVA to SECSTATE, 23-Feb-1979, ADD, NARA, <https://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=98689&dt=2776&dl=2169>

²⁹⁰ Cable, from USMISSION Geneva to SECSTATE, 26-Feb-1979, ADD, NARA. <https://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=100634&dt=2776&dl=2169>

would “not only register earthquakes but also listen to other events and activities.”²⁹¹

The British also refused to have more than one NSS on British home territory and absolutely no NSS on British Overseas islands, a position York believed was “in effect stalling the negotiation.”²⁹² The Russian delegate, on the other hand, sarcastically commented how he was “less concerned about [British] Ambassador Edmonds’s testing his own bomb in some remote places, than about Edmonds’s allowing Ambassador York to test one of his on British territories.” There was also a major misunderstanding between the British and the Americans, despite being allies. In fact, the British cabinet simply did not believe the NSS was an important obstacle to the CTB – contrary to what Dr. York had thought - and blamed the slow negotiation progress on the overall deterioration of U.S.-Soviet relations.²⁹³ By as late as July 1980, the British Foreign Minister, Lord Carrington, still insisted on having only one NSS in Scotland, but no more in dependent territories.²⁹⁴ Thus, the British colonial legacy, strangely, blocked the path of Nonproliferation efforts in the Cold War.

To make things more difficult, on 3 May 1979, Margaret Thatcher’s Conservative government replaced James Callaghan’s Labour. Thatcher was not a fan of the CTB and believed that “if one [NSS] was good enough for Callaghan, one is certainly good enough for me.”²⁹⁵ By the end of the year, the entire negotiation was stalled.²⁹⁶

²⁹¹ Timebaev, 88.

²⁹² Cable, 13 Mar 1979, From US MISSION GENEVA to SECSTATE, ADD, NARA.
<https://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=188318&dt=2776&dl=2169>

²⁹³ A discussion could be seen, in the following report and its attached cable: Memorandum, ‘CTB: Nss on UK Territory,’ J.C. Edmonds, to Cabinet Office, and Ministry of Defense, FC066/1467, UKNA.

²⁹⁴ Memorandum, ‘Comprehensive Test Ban: Prototype National Seismic Station (NSS) on UK Territory,’
 From Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to 10 Downing Street. PREM 19/693, Ibid.

²⁹⁵ CABLE, 27 Sep 1979, From USMISSION GENEVA to SECSTATE WASHDC, ADD, NARA.
<https://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=320364&dt=2776&dl=2169>

²⁹⁶ CABLE, 05 Dec 1979, From US MISSION GENEVA to SECSTATE, ADD, NARA.
<https://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=55475&dt=2776&dl=2169>

The Pentagon Strikes Back and the Final Collapse of the CTB Negotiations

On 22 May 1979, at the most difficult stage of the negotiations, Dr. York received an ominous “Top Secret” instruction from James A. Geocaris, a top lawyer at the office of General Counsel at the Department of Defense: “Nations are bound under international law to obligations and interpretations of treaties to which they explicitly agree” the lawyer explained, therefore “the CTBT could contain a provision allowing nuclear weapons states to experiment up to some specified limit while prohibiting non-nuclear weapons states from experimenting at all” and the DOD should make “a U.S. unilateral statement would provide the United States with good but not indisputable evidence for an interpretation allowing it to conduct experiments.” This is totally justified, because “No authoritative international tribunal exists to halt U.S. experiments while the international legal dispute occurs.” Meanwhile, another special statement should be made to prevent others from following the American example: “We could avoid the legal effect of our unilateral statement stopping us from disputing the right of non-nuclear weapons states to experiment up to the level specified in our unilateral statement by making a statement that allows nuclear weapons states to experiment but prohibits non-nuclear weapons states from doing so.”²⁹⁷

In other words, the Pentagon would test nuclear weapons as it wished, and the CTB should prevent everyone from testing nuclear weapons *but not* the United States. This instruction represents the American Military-Industrial Complex’s unilateralism in the most cynical form. York’s dilemma, as aptly put by his Soviet counterpart was “being a

²⁹⁷ Legal Memorandum, Department of Defense, Office of General Counsel, May 22, 1979, *Herbert York Papers*, Box 59, Folder 9, UCSD.

person who makes nuclear materials for the bomb but at the same time tries to protect the world from the same bombs.”²⁹⁸

Lying behind this Pentagon memo was an increased sense of urgency for nuclear tests within the U.S. military. As U.S.-Soviet relations deteriorated, domestic liberal support for a CTB was also losing to the side which argued for preparation for a nuclear war.²⁹⁹ For example, the U.S. Navy pressed Carter on a series of new nuclear tests: The admirals first wanted to test a nuclear warhead used for the SM-2 Air-defence missiles, which Carter rejected, fearing violation of the ABM treaty. Then they asked to test a new type of “ammunition” codenamed “KNIGHTHEAD” or, a type of “insertable nuclear components for naval weapons” which would “permit conventional use of firing positions and magazine storage currently reserved for nuclear weapons use.” An educated guess suggested that, the only navy ships capable of firing large-enough calibre shells for both conventional and nuclear warheads were the four ancient Iowa-class fast battleships ordered before, and built during, America’s entry into WWII, which still managed to stay in service as a quantitative answer to the swelling Soviet Fleet.³⁰⁰ Carter, a navy man himself, could not resist the temptation and checked the “approve” box and signing with a “J.”³⁰¹ Thus, with a stroke of his pen, Jimmy Carter the Nonproliferation President have approved American military’s own nuclear testing plans, which, to a certain extent, justified China’s accusation that the United States was

²⁹⁸ Timebaev, 91.

²⁹⁹ Soviet and UK position did not change till the end of 1980, While the U.S.S.R. team blamed Americans for fooling them into believing the UK was more flexible than it was. Cable, From US MISSION GENEVA to SECSTATE, 2 July 1980, *Herbert York Papers*, Box 57, Folder 10, UCSD.

³⁰⁰ The 16-inch main gun from the four Iowa-Class battleships remain in service were the weapon in US navy capable of firing nuclear projectiles. According to official history by US Navy Institute. Norman Polmar, Robert S. Norris. See, Norman Polmar and Robert S Norris, *The U.S. Nuclear Arsenal A History Of Weapons And Delivery Systems Since 1945* (Annapolis, MD., 2009). 238.

³⁰¹ FRUS, Volume XXVI, Arms Control and Nonproliferation, 375-377.

interested in using the CTB to ban other countries from testing, but not those of their own.

The negotiation went nowhere throughout the latter half of 1979 and was essentially stalled in 1980. On 11 November 1980, Carter lost his ill-fated presidential re-election bid. A week after Reagan's victory, the Soviet negotiators understood there was no point to negotiate with the Carter administration anymore and simply told York's lame-duck American delegation that they had no new proposal for the time being until the next American administration is in office.³⁰² The newly elected President Ronald Reagan wanted to build up America's nuclear arsenals first before engaging negotiation with the Soviets. Following this "Negotiation from Strength" strategy, Reagan formally ended the CTB talks on July 19, 1982, declaring that United States will no longer continue negotiations "because of the need to keep testing new nuclear weapons."³⁰³ As the superpowers rushed into a new round of nuclear arms tests, the CTB negotiations came to an end.

In retrospect, the CTB negotiations had no impact on nuclear tests activities by the superpowers. The United States tested 15 nuclear weapons in 1979, and 14 in 1981. Soviet Union had 31 tests in 1979 and 24 in 1980, and the British, working on their Javelin program, tested one in 1979 and 3 in 1979. Curiously, France, an opponent of the CTB, "only" tested 10 in 1979 and 12 in 1980, while China, the most antagonistic of all towards CTB negotiations, was the most reserved: only one in 1979, 3 in 1980, and another one in 1981. All nuclear powers, with the United States and the U.S.S.R.

³⁰² Cable, From USMISSION GENEVA to SECSTATE, 12 Nov 1980, CTB Negotiations: U.S.S.R. Plenary Statement, *Herbert York Papers*, Box 58, Folder 14, UCSD.

³⁰³ Judith Miller, "U.S. Said To Decide Against New Talks To Ban All A-Tests", *New York Times*, 1982.

far more than the others, continued to test nuclear weapons in large quantities well after the end of the Cold War.³⁰⁴

Conclusion: Nuclear Weapons and Deng's Ambition Beyond the Cold War

On 8 May 1980, a Chinese navy fleet of 18 ships sailed across the South-China Sea and crossed the equator. The last time a Chinese warship had gone this far, was the great treasure fleet led by the legendary Admiral Zheng He of Ming Dynasty, in the 15th century. The modern fleet was not meant to show off the Ming Empire's wealth like that of the past, but to guide and monitor China's first ever ICBM test. When the missile was successfully launched and landed in the water near Australia, Deng Xiaoping was jubilant, and Premier Hu Yaobang, remembered in history as a liberal in Chinese history, jumped up and shouted: "We won! We won!"³⁰⁵ Ignoring the CTB negotiations, in October 1980, China tested a one-megaton warhead to make this ICBM fully functional. Because France and the UK had not, and would never, develop comparable long-range missiles, China had finally made its leap into the exclusive three-member only ICBM club, side by side with the Superpowers.

China's pursuit of ICBM and related nuclear tests could be read as an extra layer of nuclear deterrence for Deng Xiaoping's global alignment with the West at the fall of détente. Those rapidly acquired strategic capabilities also explained why, China was much more comfortable joining a series of nonproliferation talks with the United States in the late 1980, when China already acquired ICBM capabilities and tested, proven nuclear warheads. It was not those international liberal institutions that ensured China's

³⁰⁴ "Nuclear Explosions 1945-1998", *In*, 2000.

<https://inis.iaea.org/collection/NCLCollectionStore/_Public/31/060/31060372.pdf> [accessed 17 June 2020].

http://www.iaea.org/inis/collection/NCLCollectionStore/_Public/31/060/31060372.pdf

³⁰⁵ Xi Quxin, Biography of Qian Xuesen. Pp.458-460.

sense of security – as American liberals had hoped.³⁰⁶ Nor was it because, as the conservatives had fantasized, that Ronald Reagan was a better dealmaker in handling China.³⁰⁷ Rather, those new strategic weapons provided China with enough strategic confidence, therefore, joining such liberal internationalist institutions could no longer damage its deterrence capability.

However, such capabilities also raised a profound question regarding Deng Xiaoping's cold war ambition: was a Chinese ICBM capable of reaching everywhere – Soviet Union, United States, and Europe included, necessary for Deng's Cold War diplomacy, when China already had intermediate-range missiles powerful enough to hit the Soviet Union? Let us end the chapter with a speech, given by Deng's most trusted wartime comrade, then Vice Premier in charge of defence Wang Zheng, on the exact date of China's first ICBM test:

“The international situation was turbulent. One, was the Iranian Crisis, another, was Afghanistan, and there was Vietnam [Sino-Vietnam war], troubles in the Middle East. In particular, the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, which further exposed the Soviet Socialist Imperialists' ambition for expansion and exposed its global strategy of hegemony. Soviet Socialist Imperialists threatened us with military force, placed millions of troops along the Sino-Soviet border, and severely threatened our development and security. In this international situation, we have to enhance our national defense, and the successful testing of [DF] 5 missile meant a lot. First, it is a blow to the imperialists' nuclear blackmail and expansive ambition. Our ICBM can reach any place in the Imperialists' country, and if they dare to use nuclear missiles against us, they will have to consider the consequences.”

³⁰⁶ US wanted China to accept international nonproliferation practices and norms was a major reason for the 1985 US-China Nuclear energy cooperation agreement. See Qingshan Tan, “U.S.-China Nuclear Cooperation Agreement: China's Nonproliferation Policy,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 29, No. 9. (Sep.1989). PP. 870-882.

Also, see “Nuclear Energy Cooperation with China - Hearing before the Special Subcommittee on U.S.-Pacific Rim Trade of the Committee on Energy and Commerce House of Representatives, Ninety-Ninth Congress, First Session,” September 12, 1985, Committee on Energy and Commerce, U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington DC, 1986.

³⁰⁷ For Reagan Administration's nuclear diplomacy towards China, see, Evan S. Medeiros, “A Gradual Engagement: China and the Nuclear Non-proliferation,” *The Evolution of China's Nonproliferation Policies and Practices*, 1980-2004, National University of Singapore, 2009. Pp. 30-96

However, there was another layer of meaning to the Vice Premier's speech:

“Our procession of the ICBM is also a tremendous support to the anti-hegemony struggle by the world's people and nations who were invaded and abused by imperialism. This test was the first trial, and after its success, we will mass produce, and equip our army with it, thus we shall possess a strong strategic defense force, increase our military's fighting capability, and the prestige of our nation and our army.”³⁰⁸

From Anti-Soviet Socialist Imperialism, to anti-hegemony in the third world, somehow, the old General's words foresaw China's rapid reverse from a close alliance with the United States during the late Cold War, to a much more independent, slightly pro-Russian grand strategy in the post-Cold War world. Despite the fact that, at the moment, China was on the American side of the Cold War, Deng Xiaoping still considered acquiring advanced nuclear weapon technology as the most secure way of guarantee China's future security, a priority that was far more important than nonproliferation cooperation with the United States. The Carter Administration's CTB talks with China failed because, much to the dismay of American officials, Deng Xiaoping and his comrades was determined to achieve independent ICBM capabilities to prepare for the uncertain future even beyond the Cold War.

³⁰⁸ 陆其明, 范敏若, 张爱萍与两弹一星 [Lu Qiming, Fan Minruo, PLA Press, Zhang Aiping and Liangdan Yixing], (Beijing, 2011), 394. Lu Qiming, Fan Minruo, PLA Press, *Zhang Aiping and Liangdan Yixing*] pp. 394.

Chapter 4

Unheard Warnings from Moscow's and America's Own Arms Sales to China

Introduction

This chapter looks at another under-studied aspect of China's quest for western military technology – the Carter Administration's decision to transfer American military technologies directly to China and how it affected the larger global Cold War and escalated tensions in U.S.-Soviet relations. This study especially compares the Soviet perspective with American perspectives by studying the Soviet sinologists that advised Brezhnev on the Soviet Union's China policy. Those experts foresaw that Western arms sales to China were not only dangerous to the Soviet Union, but also to any future U.S.-Soviet joint arms reduction efforts. This warning, however, was ignored by Carter's Cold Warriors and brushed away by Deng Xiaoping as Soviet propaganda.

It was highly likely, this study also discovers, that Carter's anti-Soviet hardliners had already come up with the idea of directly transferring military and dual-use technology to China even before the U.S.-China diplomatic opening in early 1978, and about a year before Deng Xiaoping and his Comrades had dreamt about purchasing weapons straight from the U.S. arsenals. This chapter thus suggests, unlike European arms sales to China, in which the Chinese played a much more active role in opening the doors to European market, America's arms sales to China were more of a "pleasant surprise" that the Carter Administration offered to Deng Xiaoping based on its own calculation that those sales would discipline the Soviets during the rapid fall of U.S.-Soviet relations. As a result, during and after 1979, the most difficult years of U.S.-Soviet détente, America's arms sales to China gradually picked up pace against objections

from both the Soviets and Carter's own diplomats. In the end, American arms sales to China did not achieve the goal of putting pressure on the Soviets to make them "behave" better. Instead, they became a major tension point in U.S.-Soviet relations and further contributed to the fall of détente in the later stage of the Cold War.

Moscow's China Watchers and the U.S.-China Opening

It should be noted that the first major study that tapped Soviet sinology was a 1974 Georgetown PhD thesis written by Robert Gates, future Director of the CIA under H.W. Bush, and Secretary of Defense under G.W. Bush and Obama, who himself played a key role in U.S.-China military cooperation against the Soviet Union during the Jimmy Carter years. Gates argued that Soviet sinologists and their publications provided a unique window into the Soviet Union's otherwise non-transparent policy-making process towards China. Western policy makers should not just read the propagandistic Soviet press, Gates argued, but should also dig into Soviet academic works that provided the theoretical groundwork for Soviet foreign policy. Gates traced back the origin of Soviet policy on China to Soviet sinologists' view of China as Asiatic feudal states combined with Maoist expansionism, as manifested – from the Soviet perspective – in China's inability to manage a modern economy during the Great Leap Forward, and China's border conflict with the Soviet Union during the Cultural Revolution. This understanding provided the theoretical background for Brezhnev's hard-line and uncompromising policy towards China during the earlier days of the Sino-Soviet split.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁹ Robert Michael Gates, "Soviet Sinology: An Untapped Source For Kremlin Views And Disputes Relating To Contemporary Events In China" (unpublished Ph.D., Georgetown University, 1974).

Another scholar, Gilbert Rozman, already in 1983, noted the close link between Marxist ideology and Soviet policy towards China. "Perceptions of China are a serious matter in the Soviet Union. They matter because Soviet policy towards China was highly ideological and it depended a lot on whether or not the Soviet leaders believed that China was following "the correct" path of socialism as set out by the Soviet Union itself: "If China is increasingly abandoning its socialist system and moving closer to the capitalist world in international affairs, Soviets might see little prospect for better relations. On the other hand, if the basic features of the Soviet system are reappearing in the post-Mao reforms and an independent foreign policy is evolving, the prospects of wooing China might appear attractive – even if the courtship is not expected to be short or easy."³¹⁰

Indeed, following the Kremlin's official lines and an "orthodox" interpretation of Marxism and Leninism, the Soviets saw China's economic opening as a betrayal of socialism, and China's military cooperation with the West as a mortal threat to the Soviet Union and the socialist world. Thus, the Soviet perspective fiercely collided with Deng Xiaoping's and the American anti-Soviet hardliners' policy of arming China to contain the Soviet Union, which further amplified tensions during this late stage of the Cold War.

The Soviet scholars were led by Oleg Borisovich Rakhmanin, First Deputy Head of the CPSU Central Committee's International Department who oversaw the Soviet Union's policy towards socialist countries. He was further supported by Mikhail Sladkovskii, the director of Far East Institute at the Soviet Academy of Sciences, and Sergei

³¹⁰ Gilbert Rozman, "Moscow's China-Watchers In The Post-Mao Era: The Response To A Changing China", *The China Quarterly*, 94 (1983), 215-2

Tikhvinsky, director of the Soviet Union's Academy of Foreign Affairs, as well as other sinologists in those institutes. Those scholars dominated the Soviet academic and policy debates regarding China and formed the intellectual and theoretic foundation for Brezhnev's uncompromising policy towards Deng Xiaoping. The Soviet China scholars, in fact, were the antithesis of Brzezinski – equally confident in their own theories, equally serious about implementing them in the real world. Just as Brzezinski believed the United States should lead the struggle against the Soviet Union for the free world, Sladkovskii believed that only the Soviet Union could lead the socialist world in the struggle against the imperialists and considered China had deviated from the correct path set out by the Soviet Union, whether it was during Mao's political campaigns, or during Deng's flirtation with the West.³¹¹ China, it turned out, was as much a security concern as an intellectual challenge to policy makers in those two great powers who had very different visions of the Cold War.

It would be difficult for the Soviet leaders and their China-watchers to forget that originally in the 1950s, it was the Soviet Union that industrialized and militarized the Chinese economy. Deng Xiaoping himself had in 1949 already said that he fully supported Chairman Mao's policy of "leaning to one side" towards the Soviet Union in order to receive military advantages and break the Western imperialists' embargo on the Chinese communists during the civil war.³¹² According to a Chinese study, the Soviet Union provided 300 million U.S. dollars' worth of industrial and military equipment to China in the form of low-interest loans during the signing of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty in 1950, and from 1951 to 1955, a further 1.7 billion roubles' worth of loans to

³¹¹ For his ideas on China and the Soviet model, see, М. И Сладковский, *Китай—Основные Проблемы Истории, Экономики, Идеологии* (Moscow, 1977) [M. I Tikhvinskii, *China - Fundamental Problems in History, Economics, and Ideology*]. Also see his memoir, М.И. Сладковский, *Знакомство С Китаем И Китайцами, Москва* [Acquaintance with China and the Chinese], 1984, 3-21. (Moscow, 1984)

³¹² *Deng Xiaoping Papers*, Volume I, 134

China, which were mostly used to purchase heavy industrial and military equipment.³¹³ During the first “five year plan,” 44 out of the 150 industrial projects supported by the Soviet Union were military projects.³¹⁴ The flow of military and dual-use technologies, including nuclear weapon technologies, ran steadily from the Soviet Union to China until the Sino-Soviet split.³¹⁵

During the Sino-Soviet split, when China and the Soviet Union had border clashes and traded emotional polemics, one of the main objectives of Brezhnev’s China’s policy was to contain China within the socialist world and to stop the flow of technologies from other socialist countries to China, as better technology, mobility, and training were the main advantages that the Soviet army had over China’s numerical superiority.³¹⁶ Thus, China’s quest for additional foreign military technologies had already been a highly sensitive issue for Brezhnev’s regime and his China experts in the years of the Sino-Soviet split. They believed that a China hostile towards the Soviet Union and armed with advanced weapons could be highly dangerous not just for the Soviet Union itself, but also for all the other socialist countries. For example, Oleg Borisovich Rakhmanin warned in 1969 that China, despite its failures elsewhere, was “successfully developing relations with Japan and West Germany in particular in the economic and scientific-technological area.” Rakhmanin hinted at the “grave danger of a possible future bloc China-Japan-West Germany that might be joined by the United States.”³¹⁷

³¹³ 张柏春, 苏联技术向中国的转移 [Zhang Bochun, USSR Technological Transfer to China](Jinan, 2004), 2004.

³¹⁴ Ibid 75

³¹⁵ Liu Yanqiong and Liu Jifeng, "Analysis Of Soviet Technology Transfer In The Development Of China's Nuclear Weapons", *Comparative Technology Transfer And Society*, 7/1 (2009), 66-110.

³¹⁶ Elizabeth Wishnick, *Mending Fences: The Evolution Of Moscow's China Policy From Brezhnev To Yeltsin* (Seattle, 2001), 30.

³¹⁷ Notes from a Conversation Between Comrade Rakhmanin and Comrade Bruno Mahlow on Chinese Leadership and the Situation in China, 06, October 1969. WWODA.

A few years later, this concern turned into a real danger when U.S.-China rapprochement became a reality. In 1974, Rakhmanin already feared that after suffering a defeat in Vietnam, the U.S. under Nixon would play the China card: “The USSR attaches great significance to the victory of the Vietnamese nation. The U.S. influence has been seriously undermined. We predict that the U.S. will try to exert influence through its allies, for example, Japan, as well as through the PRC. They will also like to play in a ‘triangle’”³¹⁸ By 1975, Rakhmanin concluded that China was not only in an ideological struggle with the Soviet Union, but also “seeking allies among the imperialist forces and China's further militarization.”³¹⁹

Mao's death in 1976 did not ease the Soviet China-watchers' fear. Mikhail Sladkovskii, another influential sinologist and close friend of Rakhmanin, and the director of Far East Institute at the Soviet Academy of Sciences, watched the power struggle in Beijing anxiously. To their great disappointment, the new Chinese leader, Deng Xiaoping, continued Mao's anti-Soviet foreign policy and pushed China even closer towards the U.S. under Jimmy Carter. Deng not only stuck to pro-American and anti-Soviet rhetoric but also used Mao's own words to justify his actions. After the CCP's 11th Party Congress, Deng openly spoke of “fulfilling Mao's will and continuing his revolutionary line,” and using “Maoism” as the ultimate philosophy to guide China's further development.³²⁰ A frustrated Sladkovskii sent a depressing report to the Central Committee, describing his disillusionment with the post-Mao Chinese leadership:

<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110261>

³¹⁸ Note from the Eighth Meeting of the Deputy Heads of the CC International Departments of Eight Parties in Ulaanbaatar Devoted to the Struggle with Maosim, June 1974, WWCD. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113240>

³¹⁹ Informational Note from the Talks in the CC CPSU, January 1975, WWCD. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113674>

³²⁰ *Deng Xiaoping Papers*, Volume II, 179.

“During the 11th [Chinese Communist] Party Congress, the Chinese changed from fighting two fronts – USSR and the U.S. – into blockades with all forces, whoever they can exploit – against the Soviet Union, under the disguise of fighting against [Soviet] Superpower hegemony... The 11th Congress preserved all the basic Maoist ideological and theoretical concepts, as well as [Mao’s] evaluation of international conditions.”³²¹

Sladkovskii was not alone in his view. For example, Vitalli Fedorovich Feoktistov, the ideological secretary at IDV, reached the same conclusion. After tea-leaf-reading the 11th Congress documents, he concluded that the new Chinese leadership under Deng Xiaoping and Hua Guofeng was still Maoist at heart: “There is serious infighting between factions amidst an economic crisis... and self-contradictory ideological policies among the current [Chinese leaderships]. On the one hand, they separated Maoist Thoughts from Marxism-Leninism expressions; on the other, they still used Maoism as the basic foundation for party and state.”³²² Soviet scholars could not be sure if Deng was sincerely trying to inherit Mao’s ideas or just using different interpretations of Mao to justify his own policy, but for their own convenience, they often picked the first interpretation, and Deng Xiaoping’s continued anti-Soviet rhetoric and behaviour further validated their concerns.

Deng Xiaoping’s economic policies also became a target of attack. For example, after the 11th CCP Congress’s 3rd Plenary Session, Deng tried to use Mao’s work to justify his Four Modernizations policy as a convenient way to appease those stubborn followers of Maoism within the CCP. Deng thus said that it was Mao’s true intention – obviously misinterpreted by the Gang of Four – that China’s revolutionary path should

³²¹ “Отчет, [Report]” 27 September 1977. Fond 1970, Opis 2, Dela 10. АПАН.

³²² “Маоистская Концепция при ‘Продолжения Революции Диктатуре Пролетариата,’ [Maoist Concept of Perpetual Revolution of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat]” 1 February 1978, Fond 1970, Opis 2, Dela 10. АПАН.

be based on “practice and reality.” Following this logic, Deng’s market reform would thereby be something Mao’s previous followers should have tried already - if they had read Mao’s work correctly. The Soviet expert at IDV seized upon such a report from the *People’s Daily* and blasted Deng Xiaoping for continuing Mao’s revisionist course and betraying the Soviet model of economic development. The Soviet argument was, evidently, that Mao’s outdated, and wrongful idea was still being used by Deng as the guiding principle of the Chinese Communist Party.

Soviet scholars also argued that “practical experience” - instead of the divine principles of Marxism and Leninism developed by the Soviet experts themselves - had become the foundation of Chinese ideology. IDV scholars, citing Soviet ideological head Mikhail Suslov’s “Scientific Socialism,” in which only the Soviet model of socialism was correct, concluded that the Chinese leadership was “in a deep crisis of ideology,” because Deng was on one hand “apologetic towards Maoism,” but on the other had “discarded all socialist theories...and replaced them with his nationalistic and hegemonic clause of ‘seeking truth through practice.’”³²³

Thus, a combination of the anti-Soviet rhetoric coming out of the post-Mao Chinese leadership, Deng’s flirtation with the Carter Administration’s anti-Soviet members, and Deng’s betrayal of the Socialist path of development, seemed to confirm the Soviet China watchers’ biggest fear: China under Deng Xiaoping was still hostile towards the Soviet Union and kept deviating away from the “true” socialist path as represented by the Soviet Union. Those analyses, however problematic they were, were used by Soviet

³²³ “Новое Свидетельство Продолжения и Усугубления Кризиса Идеологии Маоизма в КНР, [New Evidence of Continuation and Exacerbation of the Crisis of the Ideology of Maoism in China],” Fond 1970, Opis 2, Dela 11, 30 August, 1978, ARAH.

sinologists as a theoretical justification for the future anti-Chinese policy of the Brezhnev regime.

The Unsolvable China Problem in U.S.-Soviet Relations

The Soviet leadership, therefore, had a very different view towards post-Mao China than the Carter Administration, and U.S.-China opening increasingly became a fraught topic in U.S.-Soviet talks. From the American perspective, the Carter Administration was aware of Soviet sensitivities on any potential U.S.-China military cooperation. Already in May 1977, the U.S. State Department's non-proliferation experts advised Secretary of State Vance, for his upcoming arms reduction talks with the Soviets, "[t]o reject Soviet contentions that the West is abetting Chinese militarism," and "to avoid linkage between China and U.S.-Soviet arms limitations." Instead, they encouraged Secretary Vance to say first that "our objective in seeking normalization with PRC is peace in Asia," and second that, "[our] purpose is not anti-Soviet," and "our objective is not defined by China's opposition to detente."³²⁴ Jimmy Carter himself tried to assure Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko in September (when rumours of a U.S.-China diplomatic opening were in the air after Vance's trip to Beijing) that, "we are striving to normalize our relations with China not for the purpose of creating a kind of alliance with it against the Soviet Union but for strengthening peace, developing trade and other relations with that country." Gromyko, however, was not convinced:

"Now about China. From the point of view of the international situation and also of the broad interests of the USA and, of course, the Soviet Union, we believe it is correct to

³²⁴ Cable, from Washington to Paris, ADD NARA
<https://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=111599&dt=2532&dl=1629>

emphasize that it would have been a great mistake if a dirty game had been played here, the open or secret collusion against the Soviet Union, against its interests. Because sooner or later it would have become known and the appropriate consequences would follow, including those in the area of the US-Soviet relations. We would like to hope that the USA does not intend to play the Chinese card against the Soviet Union.”³²⁵

However, behind the Soviets’ back, Zbigniew Brzezinski had already thought about bypassing NATO’s embargo system against communist countries, the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls [COCOM] system, in order to supply military equipment to China as early as 5 April 1977. This action would allow the Soviet Union to pay for its third-world adventures and punish the Brezhnev regime on its lack of progress on the SALT II, which, in Brzezinski’s mind, was all the Soviet Union’s fault. Just a few months into the White House, when the Carter Administration started to formulate its long-term China policy, Brzezinski immediately asked the Policy Reviewing Committee to “undertake a broad review of our policies toward sale of defence-related technology and equipment to the People’s Republic of China.”

Specially, Brzezinski provided five tasks:

- “1. Identify U.S. interests and objectives in facilitating or impeding the flow of the different types of defense-related technologies and equipment to the PRC.
2. Review current PRC technology levels, needs, and interests by principal sector (i.e., computers, aircraft, machine tools, metallurgy, communications, petroleum exploration, etc.)
3. Assess how technology transfers and purchase of equipment might affect the development of these sectors.

³²⁵ Record of Conversation between Soviet Foreign minister Gromyko and President Carter, 23 September 1977, WWCD
<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111256>

4. Discuss the state of existing legislative and regulatory restrictions, including export controls administered by Commerce and State as well as the COCOM structure and procedures.

5. Consider alternative courses of unilateral and/or multilateral (COCOM) action on these issues.”

Most curiously, this was the moment when Deng Xiaoping was preoccupied with U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and the Chinese had no clear idea whether the U.S.-China opening talk would proceed further at all. In addition, there is no evidence to suggest that Chinese officials at the time had even mentioned their interest in purchasing U.S. arms yet. Jimmy Carter also thought it was too early to bring up this issue. The President wrote on the memo: “probably should point out that PRC has requested no arms sales.” Zbigniew Brzezinski, it seems, was imagining things far ahead of his time.³²⁶

It appears that time was on Brzezinski’s side. The situation started to change gradually throughout 1977, and into the next year. “Blessed” with the Horn of Africa crisis, U.S.-China normalization talks were set into regular pace. China started signalling that it was interested in military cooperation with the Americans and the purchase of U.S. technologies. In January 1978, for the first time, the Chinese military allowed a U.S. Air Force plane to land in the Chinese province of Guangdong to pick up a visiting Congressional delegation, an unprecedented gesture to the U.S. military establishment and a hint of China’s openness to further, more sensitive military cooperation.³²⁷

Simultaneously, Chinese officials expressed to the U.S. Department of Energy the idea of purchasing American petroleum technology and “items under COCOM” restrictions.³²⁸ In less than two years’ time, those carefully choreographed gestures and probes would turn into full-scale military cooperation and technological transfers.

³²⁶ FRUS, Volume XIII, China, 69.

³²⁷ Armacost Evening and Weekly Reports Files, Box 1 1-2/78. 3 January 1978 JCL

³²⁸ Ibid, 4 January 1978

Carter's anti-Soviet advisors, on the other hand, were thinking much faster than the Chinese had acted. As U.S.-Soviet relations deteriorated, Zbigniew Brzezinski suggested to Jimmy Carter on 23 March 1978, that it was the Soviet Union that endangered world peace, and that a strong relation with China could bring back peace: "We must recognize the reality that in recent years the Soviets have frequently disregarded our concerns and our warnings (continued use of Cuban proxies, military action in Ethiopia, the build-up of Yemen against Saudi Arabia, exploitation of Cuba in NAM (Non-Aligned Movement) and elsewhere." The crisis, Brzezinski said, demanded quick U.S. actions in China, as,

"China is a neighbour of Afghanistan and a country with one-quarter of the population for the world. There are those who tend to view our relations with China through the prism of our relations with the USSR. This is not wise. The U.S. has long had a deep interest in China and a high regard for the Chinese people. Closer U.S.-Chinese relations is a central U.S. goal. We feel that a strong, productive, and stable China can play a great role in preserving peace in Asia and throughout the world over the next century."³²⁹

On 14 June 1977, unsatisfied with the speed of U.S.-China normalization talks, Brzezinski suggested once more to Carter that the U.S. should give China weapons and dual-use technologies to sweeten the talks. More specifically, America should first, "tacitly permit Third Country sales of defense equipment and technology to China," and second, "enhance China's own intelligence capability vis-a-vis the Soviets through sale

³²⁹ NSA Country Files, BOX 83, Folder USSR 3/20-31/80, March 25, 1980, Zbigniew Brzezinski to the president.

of intelligence-related technology.” Finally, the U.S. should “sell weapons and military technology to China which would enhance Chinese defensive capabilities vis-a-vis the USSR, such as “anti-tank missiles or over-the-horizon radar.” Carter must have felt both intrigued and concerned. He wrote a question mark on the first suggestion, wrote “only on an individual case basis” on the second, and wrote “no” on the third.³³⁰

Brezniski, however, was less concerned about damaging U.S.-Soviet relations than the rest of the administration. His Asia experts also supported dual-use technology transfer to China as a way to seal the deal on diplomatic normalization. On 24 March 1978, Michel Oksenburg and Michael Armacost suggested that Brzezinski encourage the Chinese to purchase U.S. technology on his upcoming trip to China: “The Chinese would have been encouraged to make substantial purchases of equipment and technology from the U.S. The purchases could embody dual-purpose technology, the license for which would require presidential approval.”³³¹ On 21 May 1978, Deng Xiaoping carefully probed Brzezinski about whether China’s attempted purchase of Japanese and European computers and an American infrared scanning device failed due to a U.S. licensing restriction. “Perhaps,” Deng asked carefully, “I think you have the fear of offending the Soviet Union. Is that right?” Brzezinski seized the opportunity to show that he was the man to talk to when it came to technology transfers. “I can assure you that my inclination to be fearful of offending the Soviet Union is rather limited,” he bragged to Deng Xiaoping. “The problem that you mention, however, has its roots in our relationship with the Soviet Union. The origin of these restrictions is our policy toward the Soviet Union and other communist countries that at one time were closely associated with the Soviet Union. The policy is therefore a legacy of the past, and the

³³⁰ FRUS, 96.

³³¹ Memo, From Michel Oksenburg, Michael Armacost to Zbigniew Brzezinski, 24 march, 1978. Armacost Chron File, 3/22-31/78. Box 6

rules are not sufficiently flexible and elastic to recognize the new existing political realities.” Brzezinski promised Deng that he was personally interested in those cases, and bragged again, “As far as being afraid to offend the Soviet Union, I would be willing to make a little bet with you as to who is less popular in the Soviet Union - you or me.”³³²

In Moscow, the prospect of future U.S. arms sales to China had become a major Soviet concern. On 23 May 1978, at exactly the time when Brzezinski was in China on his grand deal-making trip, Sladkovskii, citing this trip, advised the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee that the Soviet Union should continue its confrontational policy towards China: “The 1977 leadership change [in China] in essence allowed Beijing to openly coordinate with the [American] imperialists, use propaganda to attack other socialist countries, to stir up anti-Socialist, anti-revolutionary forces.” Sladkovskii was convinced that “Beijing’s close relation to the West, NATO, under the guise of ‘mutual security’ is a growing threat to world peace.” To fight back “Maoism”, his report argued, the “Marxist-Leninist Party” -meaning the Soviet Communist Party - “had to get serious in fighting Maoists for the hope of internationalism, uniting the front of all brotherly parties.”³³³ Brezhnev too, was convinced that “Carter is not simply falling under the usual influence of the most shameless anti-Soviet types and ringleaders of the military-industrial complex of the U.S.A., but is intent upon struggling for his election to a new term as President of the U.S.A. under the banner of anti-Soviet policy and a return to the ‘Cold War.’” He told the Soviet Communist Party

³³² Ibid 440-441.

³³³ “Материалы к Вступительному Слову при Открытии Конференции по Проблемам Маоизма, [Conference Opening Material on the Problems of Maoism]” Fond 1970, May 23, 1978, Opis 2, Dela 10, АРАН

Central Committee, “The current creators of American policy, it seems, have already found a common language with the aggressive anti-Soviet rulers of China, who, as it is known, declare peace and detente to be a fraud, and war to be the single realistic prospect.”³³⁴

On 7 July 1978, when there were enough rumours that U.S.-China normalization of diplomatic relations was inevitable, the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs held an emergency meeting with both sinologists and Americanists from the Institute of Far East, the Oriental Institute, the Institute of U.S.A. and Canada to determine what the Soviet Union should do regarding a possible new U.S.-Chinese military alliance against the Soviet Union. Many prominent figures in the Soviet foreign policy establishment were present, including G. A. Arbatov, who was working on the SALT II treaty, bureaucrats from the Communist Party Central Committee and Foreign Ministry, and the usual top academics in China studies.

In the opening report, the head of the China Department of the Institute of Oriental Studies, L. P. Delyusin said: “Mao’s close associates are out, but the new leadership’s anti-Soviet voice did not reduce, on the contrary, it had increased globally... China increased its fight in foreign policy, its fight against the Soviet Union.” The report warned that the Soviet Union should not be misguided by Deng Xiaoping’s opening and reform policy, because a stronger China would be even more dangerous for the Soviet Union. The report further lamented: “The Chinese Communist Party brought China out of chaos into great order, which is to create a new and rich China...This action is to fulfil the true, not fake, testimony of Mao...The current leaders are using American

³³⁴ Speech by L.I. Brezhnev to CPSU CC Poliburo, 08 June 1978, WWCD, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111257>

technological potential to sever the same anti-Soviet goal...Brzezinski had nothing new [known for his Russophobia in the USSR], Carter is a [liberal] ideologue...The Americans are using China to blow pressure on the Soviet Union.”

One attendee after another spoke of China’s betrayal of socialism. The only person who dared to disagree was a talented young scholar from the American and Canadian Institute named Vladimir Petrovich Lukin, who would later become post-Soviet Russia’s Ambassador to the United States in 1992. Lukin was trained in both economics and sinology and was at the time the protégé of the institute’s director, Georgy Arbatov.³³⁵ In this meeting, Lukin suggested the elder scholars that China’s post-Mao stabilizing political condition might be a good thing. “There were two models [in China]: the Soviet Model, now forgotten, and the Cultural Revolution Model, but now a third,” Lukin suggested. “Maybe it is better than before - as politics is now less brutal, could this be a positive sign, could this emerge as a positive system in China?” The question was quickly brushed away by B. N. Zanetin: “China, under the Maoist, is a combination of Left-Wing small bourgeoisies and militant nationalist, the testament would be this relationship with the U.S.A. against the Soviet Union – according to Cannon of Mao – Unite with those who are against the main enemy.” “Americans are realists,” added T.A. Trofimenko, “playing the balance of force on anti-Soviet ground.”³³⁶

Stretch Détente to the Limit: China’s War with Vietnam and SALT II

³³⁵ For these connections, see, Георгий Арбатов, “Владимир Петрович Лукин, Политик с Чистыми Руками, *Мая Эпоха В Лицах И Событиях*”, in *К 80-Летнию В. П. Лукина, Я Не Первый Воин, Не Последний* [Georgy Arbatov, “Vladimir Petrovich, Politician with Clean Hands,” in *on V. P. Lukin’s 80th Birthday, I am not the First Warrior, not the last*. (Moscow, 2018), 75.

³³⁶ “Стенограмма: Внутренняя Политика Китая и Американо-Китайские Отношения [Transcript: Domestic Politics of China and Sino-US Relations],” Fond 2021, Opis 1, Dela. 88. Институт США и Канада [Institute of USA and Canada], ARAN.

Throughout late 1978, at several of their regular vodka-and-caviar-filled “casual lunch talks,” Soviet Ambassador Dobrinin privately expressed to Brzezinski his Moscow boss’s displeasure at America’s handling of China. For example, in one of those unofficial meetings on the eve of U.S.-China normalization, Ambassador Dobrinin told Brzezinski frankly that he did not believe Brzezinski’s claim that the U.S.’s move to “establish diplomatic relations with China has no other purpose but to promote the course of world peace.”³³⁷ On 14 August 1978, the pair of heavy-drinking policy makers met again and Dobrinin pointed out that “the Soviet leadership feels rather emotional about the [U.S.-Soviet] relationship.” Citing Brezhnev’s earlier complaints to Carter, Dobrinin lamented that “the correspondence between the two leaders has not filled the void.”³³⁸ Without being specific, he let Brzezinski know that U.S.-Soviet relations had deteriorated that year and that the Soviet leader knew Brzezinski was the person most accountable for this failure.

With the U.S.-China diplomatic opening in motion, the Soviet leadership’s biggest concern was upcoming military cooperation between two of its greatest enemies. In fact, this cooperation had already started quietly before the formal U.S.-China opening. On 11 December 1978, a Chinese space delegation arrived in the United States and Brzezinski urged President Carter to hand the Chinese a new communication satellite as a welcoming gift, which could both “broadcast colour TV all over China,” and, if the President decided for a more advanced model - which Brzezinski enthusiastically recommended - be capable of “two-way mobile voice communication of military significance.” This policy was supported by the technocrats in both the U.S.

Department of Defense and NASA. However, the American technocrats were still

³³⁷ FRUS, Volume XIII, China, 495

³³⁸ Cable, Zbigniew Brzezinski, to Cy Vance. 14 October, 1978. NSA Office File, Subject File, BOX 6, Folder Backchannel Messages: Africa 4/77-11/78. JCL

slightly wary of letting the Chinese learn all their secrets. Thus, they recommended to the President that America should directly put an already in-orbit satellite under Chinese control “as opposed to letting the Chinese see us put the satellite together or letting them have a copy to toy around with.”³³⁹ In the delicate game of technology diplomacy, no one wanted to show all their cards.

The Soviet leadership must have sensed such disturbing activities, just as had been predicted by the Soviet China-watchers. Brezhnev wrote to Carter on 27 December 1978, warning of such actions:

“On our part, we have already drawn the attention of a number of states allied to the U.S. to the acuteness of the question of arming China. So far, they are slow about giving official replies which is evidently not coincidental. Meanwhile the time runs and the things move in the direction of concluding concrete deals for deliveries of weapons to China, including the transfer of sensitive technology. It should be obviously clear to you that intentions of the U.S. allies consider possibilities of appropriate reaction on our part. Indeed, the question here is of arming a country with the biggest ground forces, a country whose leaders proclaim for all to hear the inevitability of a new world war and are driving in practice at unleashing such a war.”

However, Brzezinski wrote the following message on the letter before handing it to the President: “It is noteworthy that the Soviet Union *armed* China when China was hostile to the U.S., and it has ignored all your expressions of concern regarding Cuban and Soviet arms in Africa as well as elsewhere.” He suggested that the U.S. should offer

³³⁹ Memo, From Mike Oksenberg, to Brzezinski, PRC Meeting on US-China S&T. 11 December 1978. Brzezinski Collection, Box 24, Meeting PRC 82, 12/12/78. JCL.

Brezhnev “an ambiguous answer” and insist that each state has the right to “acquire defensive weapons.”³⁴⁰

For Brzezinski, as expressed in a January memo to President Carter prior to Deng Xiaoping’s visit, arms sales to China should be a pillar of building a long-lasting relationship with China:

“Our common concern with the Soviet Union, however, is an insufficient basis on which to build a long-term relationship with China. More positively, we want to build a durable relationship based on (1) extensive commercial, scientific, and cultural relations; (2) shared views on world affairs, exploiting parallel interests on specific issues like Indochina, the Middle East, and Korea, and (3) weapon deployments that are aimed at our common adversary rather than at each other.”

Brzezinski further argued that selling arms to the Chinese was important, because “our effort to attain security in a world of diversity parallels the current Chinese desire for a stable, non-hegemonical world order.” Thus, “[w]e have no interest in a Sino-Soviet accommodation secured through Chinese submission to Soviet pressure. That is why we have an interest in a strong, secure, and peaceful China and why we are willing to acquiesce to limited Western European arms sales.”³⁴¹

Carter was not entirely sure if directly giving military technologies to China was such a great idea. Especially when the U.S.-Soviet relationship was at a crucial point, and SALT II was still hanging in balance. There was too much at stake and it would be rather counterproductive if U.S. arms sale to China damaged the precious U.S.-Soviet détente. Nevertheless, Carter mused that there should be other ways to arm the Chinese, well, as long as America was not directly involved. On 6 February 1979, under the White House’s direction, the U.S. State Department decided to allow U.S. allies to sell

³⁴⁰ FRUS, Volume XIII, China, 505.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

weapons and dual-use technologies to China first, no longer requiring the cumbersome COCOM reviews: "We have told the Allies that if they want our views on particular sales they should come to us bilaterally at the highest political level, rather than through COCOM." Meanwhile, to evade responsibilities and possible Soviet accusation, the policy instructed that "Allies should not necessarily expect an opinion from us before their own plans on a particular case have taken shape."³⁴² The leading country of COCOM had now resigned its responsibility, and China was a free-for-all market for European arms dealers.

For the Soviet China-watchers, it could not be a coincidence that shortly after Deng Xiaoping's visit to the United States, Chinese forces invaded Vietnam, a fellow communist country and a key ally of the Soviet Union. They concluded that America's black hands must have been involved. The immediate report to the Central Committee called the war an undeniable proof of the "deep-rooted expansionism of Chinese leadership's history," whose eventual goal was to "fight against the international communist movement, and to take control of South East Asia with the support of the Americans."³⁴³ Similar reports flew to the Central Committee throughout 1979. For example, on 10 September 1979, Sladkovskii wrote a long polemic against the Chinese, citing mostly Marx, Lenin, Chinese newspapers, himself, and fringe Western radical left-wing writers such as Roger Garaudy and Masaxica Suganxma to give his report an appearance of international authority. The whole of Chinese foreign policy now, he argued, was a result of "bourgeoisie and revisionists' attempts to exploit Maoism to undermine the international revolution moment, and to discredit the idea of Scientific

³⁴² "Memo: Third Country Sales to China" NLC-21-15-10-23-6 JCL CREST.

³⁴³ "К Вопросу о Вооруженной Агрессии Китая Против Социалистической Республики Вьетнам [To the Question of Armed Aggression of China against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam]," Fond 1970 Opis 2, Dela 18, 21 February 1979, ARAH.

Socialism and Proletarian Internationalism.”³⁴⁴ In addition, the Institute of Far East scholars prepared a 90-page report for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Central Committee forecasting China’s dangerous future goals:

1. Strategic Goal: Transform China into an economically and militarily powerful nation, capable of becoming a hegemon in Asia, and later in the world.
2. Tactical Goal: Hit the Soviet Union and Other socialist States
3. Strategic Allies: Imperialism
4. Base for Realization of Strategic Goal: Build up nuclear rocket potentials in China, build up military-political alliance with imperialist powers and create what Beijing’s slogan would deem a “United front” with multiple regional powers in the fight against the Soviet Union and other socialist states.³⁴⁵

On the diplomatic front, Soviet Union’s relations with China was stuck in the perpetual polemics and China’s war with Vietnam and military cooperation with the United States had greatly frustrated the Soviet Union. On 17 October 1979, after ten years of interruptions, the Soviet Union and China had finally started vice-minister-level talks on bilateral relations as a first attempt to end the Sino-Soviet split. The Soviet Union was represented by Vice Minister Leonid Fedorovich Ilyichev and China by Vice Minister Wang Youping. Yet despite the attendance of these seasoned diplomats, the meetings failed to yield any concrete results. The Soviet side refused the Chinese delegation’s demands to reduce Soviet troop deployment along the Chinese border, and to withdraw Soviet occupation forces in Mongolia and, to cease their military aid to Vietnam.³⁴⁶ A Chinese diplomat who attended those meetings remembers how pointless the discussions were: the Soviets pretended their one-million-strong military presence near the Chinese border was “entirely harmless,” while the Chinese insisted that the

³⁴⁴ “Критический Анализ Буржуазных и Ревизионистских Точек Зрения Относительно Китайской Модели Социализма, Неприменимости в Условиях Китая Принципов Марксистско-Ленинского Научного Социализма [A Critical Analysis of the Bourgeois and Revisionist Points of View Regarding the Chinese Model of Socialism, the Non-Applicability of the The Principle of Marxist-Leninist Scientific Socialism in China],” 10 September, 1979, Fond 1970, Opis 20, Dela 19, ARAH.

³⁴⁵ “К Оценке Современного Китая [On the Assessment of Modern China],” Fond 1976, Opis 2, Della 20.

³⁴⁶ С. Л. Тихвинский, *Китай В Моей Жизни* (Moscow, 1992) [S. L. Tikhvinskii, *China in my Life*], 192.

Soviet military threat was an “objective fact.” The Soviets insisted that China should make a move first to improve its relations with the Soviet Union, without promising any concrete policy change on the Soviet side.³⁴⁷ These difficult negotiations yielded no result, and on December 3rd both sides decided that they had had enough and postponed the talks to 1980, which were further delayed after Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 and were not resumed until 1982, with Deng Xiaoping adding the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan as another of his demands.³⁴⁸

Curiously, Chinese and Russian scholars interpret these meetings quite differently. Chinese scholars have attributed the failure of those talks to the Soviet Union’s incapability of appreciating China’s fear of Soviet military deployment along the Chinese border, including military build-up in Mongolia and military assistance to Vietnam.³⁴⁹ Conversely, Russian scholars tend to blame Deng’s “hostile and negative” attitudes towards the Soviet Union during the negotiations—a position that they find “directly drawing from the arsenal of Maoism.”³⁵⁰ But nevertheless, this impasse in Sino-Soviet relations added to Deng Xiaoping’s bargaining power with the United States, and he just demonstrated that China would not give in under Soviet pressure.

China’s continued confrontation with the Soviet Union certainly gained the attention, and to a certain extent, the approval of the Carter Administration, as Brzezinski

³⁴⁷ 孙其明, 中苏关系始末 (Shanghai, 2002) [Sun Qiming, *Sino-Soviet History from Beginning to End*], 644.

范振水, 王幼平同志回忆 1979 年中苏国家关系谈判, (Beijing, 1996) [Fan Zhenshui, *Comrade Wang Youping remembers the 1979 Sino-Soviet negotiations*], 149-150.

³⁴⁸ 孙其明, (2002), 657.

³⁴⁹ 牛军 “‘常化’问题的缘起” in 沈志华, 中苏关系史纲 (Beijing, 2007) [Niu Jun, “Origin of Sino-Soviet Rapprochement, in Shen Zhi Hua, *Survey of Sino-Soviet Relation*], 465.

³⁵⁰ Ю. М. Галенович, *От Брежнева и Мао Цзэдуна до Горбачева и День Сяопина* (Moscow, 2012) [Ю. М. Galenovich, *From Brezhnev and Mao Zedong to Gorbachev and Deng Xiaoping*], 165.

continued to persuade the President to use China to put pressure on the Soviet Union. Prior to the Carter-Brezhnev SALT II summit, Brzezinski listed all the Soviet activities that endangered American interests, and argued that they existed because the Soviets “do not want our economic and technological might mobilized against them. They do not want us to move closer to China.” Brzezinski contended that America should move closer to China as “a reaction to Soviet insensibility to our concerns in such areas as the Middle East, Southern Africa, Vietnam, or Cuba.” America’s relations with China, he intimated, should therefore be a part of “major, comprehensive, and matching efforts” to meet “Soviet military build-up, both strategic and conventional” which “has gone beyond the point of legitimate defense needs.”³⁵¹

With Western arms sales and technology transfers to China now compounded with China’s war with Vietnam, Brezhnev concluded that the way American militarists handled China had increasingly become a major difficulty in U.S.-Soviet relations. Not surprisingly, the following SALT II Summit was shrouded in tension and frustration. While the Americans complained about the recently discovered Soviet brigade in Cuba, the Soviets complained about China, all on top of their existing disagreement over which side should keep more and better nuclear weapons. The Soviet delegation was shocked to learn that the Americans were passing their negotiation records to the Chinese, who were known for their hostility towards U.S.-Soviet-led arms reduction efforts. This was unacceptable to the Soviet side, and an angry Gromyko told Vance:

“[N]ow on top of all this [disagreement] there is the question of your transfer of information about the progress of negotiations on SALT to the Chinese leadership. On what basis did you do this? We did not agree you should do

³⁵¹ FRUS, 1977-1980, Volume XI, Soviet Union, 571, 572.

this... What advice could the Chinese given you as for the negotiation on SALT. Perhaps only one piece of advice: damn the agreement on SALT.”³⁵²

In another meeting between President Carter and Brezhnev, China again became a major point of disagreement, and in the eyes of Soviet leader, a major obstacle in arms reduction, no matter nuclear or conventional. China’s continued nuclear testing was endangering non-proliferation, Brezhnev complained to Carter, and China’s refusal to join the chemical weapon ban negotiation was setting a dangerous precedent. “[W]hat kind of an agreement would that be without the participation of China? Could one really agree to a situation in which the Chinese alone would have a free hand to manufacture chemical weapons?” In Southeast Asia, too, China was the main destabilizing factor: “The threat to peace came from China, which had already carried out blatant aggression against Vietnam and which was now openly threatening to teach Vietnam a new lesson.”³⁵³

Even though the SALT II treaty was signed, the two sides parted with suspicion and mistrust. Aside from the fact that SALT II was not ratified by the U.S. Congress, the American and Soviet disagreement on China had widened, as their face-to-face meeting had only confirmed how much they diverged. “There is nothing wrong with opening diplomatic relations between the U.S. and China,” Brezhnev told the Bulgarian dictator Todor Zhivkov, “but the whole thing is taking a negative turn. In my letter to Carter I made it clear that it is unacceptable to import anti-Soviet contents in American-Chinese

³⁵² https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/carterbrezhnev/docs_salt_ii/V-52%20Transcript%20of%20Conversation%20Between%20Foreign%20Minister%20Gromyko%20and%20Secretary%20of%20State%20Vance,%20May%2031,%201978.pdf

³⁵³ FRUS, 1977-1980, Volume XI, Soviet Union, 608 - 612

cooperation. There is no doubt that Beijing and Washington are using their connections to put pressure on the Socialist countries.”³⁵⁴

Killing Détente: Afghanistan and Jimmy Carter Sells Weapons to China

The Soviet Union soon stumbled on its own mistake and offered the American anti-Soviet hardliners more reasons to arm the Chinese. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 led to a major overhaul of American export control policy. The sources at the Carter Library, although only the tip of the iceberg, suggested that U.S.-China military cooperation immediately picked up steam in January 1980. As a result, previously restricted American military technologies started to flow into China in massive quantities, while remaining out of the Soviet Union’s touch. For example, on 6 January 1980, Under-Secretary of Defense Dinnen frankly told the Chinese Assistant to Chief of Staff Liu Huaqing that the Department of Defense was ready to work around the Department of Commerce’s regulations to give China military hardware and technologies that “we would not want to sell to the Soviet Union,” including NASA’s LANDSAT earth-monitoring satellite which served both military and civilian purposes. Liu, known as the main proponent of China’s military modernization under Deng Xiaoping, was highly impressed and immediately booked further meetings with the Department of Defense.³⁵⁵

Two days later, on 8 January 1980, MIT-trained technocrat and Secretary of Defense Harold Brown landed in Beijing to see Deng Xiaoping, his favourite conversation

³⁵⁴ Minutes of Conversation, Todor Zhivkov - Leonid Brezhnev, 13 January, 1979 WWODA
<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113584>

³⁵⁵ Memorandum, “Meeting between Dr. Gerald P. Dinnen, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, and Liu Huaqing,” Assistant to Chief of General Staff. NSA Staff Files, Far East, Box 69. Folder 1/80. JLC

partner regarding anti-Soviet activities.³⁵⁶ The two men boasted about the achievement of U.S.-China normalization and the “strategic advantages” of this new relationship. Brown, probably with a sense of satisfaction, was glad to see Brezhnev foolishly invade Afghanistan, which finally vindicated his anti-Soviet views. “Soviet behaviour in the last year or more – use of Cuban and Vietnamese proxies for military purposes in the Third World – has had an effect on U.S. public opinion...But most of all, events in Iran and Afghanistan have crystallized in the U.S. mood,” Brown told Deng. He boasted: “We were increasing our defense budget and we will increase more. We have accelerated our plans to have rapidly deployable military forces. We have planned to increase arms supply to Pakistan.”

Deng gladly agreed, and he suggested that the U.S., Europe, China, and even Japan, should build up a global alliance to counter Soviet expansion. China, of course, would play its part to relieve America’s military burdens. “On other occasions I also said that increasing Chinese military capability will help maintain peace and resist Soviet hegemony. I even said that according to our American friends there are one million Soviet troops in the east which we don’t think are directed solely against China. If we could pin down two million Soviet troops, what harm would that do?” Afghanistan is now the key to halting Soviet expansion, Deng said: “The Afghan people have been fighting fiercely against Soviet aggression. We must turn Afghanistan into a quagmire in which the Soviet Union is bogged down for a long time, engaged in guerrilla warfare.” This statement was music to Brown’s ears. He responded, “Our actions will have that effect, but we must keep our intentions confidential.”³⁵⁷

³⁵⁶ George C. Wilson, “Brown Going To China; Afghanistan On Agenda”, *The Washington Post*, 1980.

³⁵⁷ “Memorandum of Conversation with Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping, Assistant to Chief of General Staff.” NSA Staff Files, Far East, Box 69. Folder 1/80. JLC.

The same month, an early warning radar system – used to detect incoming hostile airplanes and ballistic missiles – was delivered to China. It was a clear reward from the U.S. military establishment to Deng Xiaoping for his anti-Soviet views. The delivery triggered a wave of sensations in Washington D.C. and curious journalists grilled the Department of Defense spokesperson for questions. Did this mean China was now a U.S. ally? Would more military hardware be sold to the Chinese? Was the long-established COCOM system now officially defunct? How would the Soviet Union react and did this mean that détente was already dead? The Department of Defense spokesperson, with a poker face, tried his best to pretend that this was not a military sale.

“Question: “Early warning radar is clearly military, so does that mean you have altered your position from the dual use concept?

Spokesperson: Well. We really can’t be specific about radar as you have indicated. But I could just simply point out that there are radars. For example, which are used for air traffic control and we use those now for air traffic control and for tracking military targets.

Question: But you don’t call them early warning radar.

Spokesperson: We don’t call those early warning radar.

Question: But the statement says early warning radar. You are clearly trying to make a point here that this is equipment whose primary use is military as opposed to civilian.

Answer: Well, it’s equipment that is also suitable for military use. That’s right.”³⁵⁸

A Step Too Far? Unheard Warnings from both Moscow and Washington

The Soviet Union, by contrast, received the opposite treatment. A coordinated effort to embargo military and dual-use technology to the Soviet Union had begun. Pushed hard by the Carter Administration, French President Giscard d'Estaing promised that “France will not transfer military relevant high technology to the Soviets.” Although, still fearful of the Soviet, Giscard d'Estaing admitted: “To do more concerning normal commercial transactions would be difficult. And France will maintain most of its bilateral relations

³⁵⁸ Transcript, Department of Defense, 16, January 1980. JCL Crest Files: NLC-21-15-11-28-0.

with Moscow in order to keep channels communication open to the East.” The Americans were still not satisfied, and told the French that “[a]ny business-as-usual attitude toward the Soviet Union on France's part would inevitably affect our public opinion and be exploited by Moscow.”³⁵⁹ Later in October, the U.S. State Department pressed West Germany to withhold computer sales to the Soviet Union in which the computers’ “disk drives in the proposed transaction is five times greater than that approved for production by any communist country.”³⁶⁰ The gesture was clear: China would get more and the Soviet Union would get less.

Soon a U.S.-Chinese led global anti-Soviet network was formed, bankrolled by the House of Saud, guided by American-British intelligence, and supported by the French through their former North African colonies.³⁶¹ The network stretched from French North Africa to the desert in Chinese Central Asia, right under the Soviet Union’s belly. Robert Gates, now with his PhD degree in hand and working as an intelligence officer at the CIA, was sent to China by President Carter to build American missile monitoring stations to spy on the Soviets in those deserts, replacing the same ones lost in Iran during the Iranian revolution.³⁶²

On Afghanistan, the anti-Soviet hardliners in Beijing and Washington also found a trusted proxy in the Pakistani General-President-Dictator Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, a terrifying man known for his fondness of playing golf - an extravagant sport in South

³⁵⁹ Memo, From Brzezinski to White House Situation Room, Brzezinski Collection, Box 20, Folder Alpha Channel (1/80-3/80), JCL.

³⁶⁰ Memo, from Tim Deal to Brzezinski, 16 October 1980. Brzezinski, Collection, Box 24, Folder Meeting, 10/80-1/81, JCL.

³⁶¹ Alexandre de Marenches and Christine Ockrent, *The Evil Empire: The Third World War Now* (London, 1988).

³⁶² Robert Michael Gates, *The Ultimate Insider's Story Of Five Presidents And How They Won The Cold War* (London, 2008), 135-168.

Asia - and hanging his political opponents, including the previous president whom he overthrew. General Zia-ul-Haq was on the Carter Administration's own sanctions list due to his horrendous human rights violations, drug-trafficking crimes, and attempts to build nuclear bombs, all of which were quickly forgiven by Brzezinski and Brown.³⁶³ Soon, knock-off copies of Soviet weapons of dubious origins, mostly Czech and Chinese, started to flow into Afghanistan through Zia-ul-Haq's drug trafficking networks.³⁶⁴ A concerning report also emerged from a Canadian newspaper that the Afghans were purchasing U.S. arms through a Chinese middle man using heroin, which then became a serious issue for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency. "Chinese men in Pakistan, first identified as 'Hong Kong Chinese heroin dealers' later turned out to be 'Chinese army officers and instructors' sent by the Beijing clique. Their aim was to train the so called 'Afghan rebels' in subversion and mass murder. In either case, the Afghan rebel heroin is now reportedly reaching the streets of U.S. cities in massive quantities."³⁶⁵

Brzezinski, however, was eager to meet those dangerous rebels. In February 1980, an excited Brzezinski flew to the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Stepping out of a helicopter wearing a Top-Gun-style wind jacket and aviator sunglasses, the fist-waving Brzezinski, a devoted Polish Catholic, rallied before a group of bemused – and possibly confused – Afghan Islamic fundamentalists fighters: "That land over there is yours, you will get it back one day, because your fight will prevail, and you will have your homes and mosque back again, because your cause is right, and God is on your side."³⁶⁶

³⁶³ Dennis Heves, "Mohammad Zia Ul-Haq: Unbending Commander For Era Of Atom And Islam", *The New York Times*, 18 August, 1988.

³⁶⁴ Only a few books shed light on this strange episode; for a recent one, see: Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History Of The CIA, Afghanistan, And Bin Laden, From The Soviet Invasion To September 10, 2001* (New York, N.Y, 2005).

³⁶⁵ CIA Crest File, RDP90-00845R000100120026-6.

³⁶⁶ Documentary Film, *Cold War, Soldiers Of God* (CNN, 2019).

Brzezinski and Brown's hard push towards closer military ties with China in a region known for violence and organized crime deeply troubled U.S. arms control officials. What if American or Chinese weapons passed to those places and fuelled future crimes? Were there any assurances that the Chinese would not further proliferate sensitive American technologies to other bad guys? For example, the arms control officials at the State Department, led by Gerard C. Smith, had been trying hard to isolate Pakistan in order to stop its nuclear program.³⁶⁷ With China and U.S. hardliners openly cooperating with the Pakistanis, the U.S. government's biggest nightmare was about to happen: Pakistan getting away with building its bomb while the Russians were giving the Indians nuclear warranties against the Chinese and Pakistanis. Nuclear proliferation, the U.S. feared, might - and indeed would - go wild in South Asia.³⁶⁸

Conventional proliferation experts at the U.S. Department of Defense also feared that China would pass those weapons to other countries, where they could end up in the hands of notorious terrorist groups, as the Chinese themselves had a very relaxed or near non-existent export control safeguard policy. On 28 March 1980, the Defense Intelligence Agency issued a warning of possible Chinese knock-off copies of Soviet shoulder-fired anti-air missiles – similar to the Stringer missiles that the Reagan Administration later passed to the Mujahidin – ending up in the hands of international terrorists:

“The Chinese have apparently completed development of a Soviet SA-7/Grall-type shoulder-fired surface-to-air missile (SAM) and are offering for export... [T]o date there have been no known foreign contracts for Chinese SA-7's.

³⁶⁷ Working Notes, May 1, May 2, May 4, July 26, Folder: August - Sept 1979, Box 55, Gerard Smith Paper, Eisenhower Library

³⁶⁸ Working Notes, “Pakistan,” April 21. Ibid.

However, if the Chinese are producing this weapon and their arms sales policies remain lax, it is possible these weapons would eventually find their way into hands of international terrorist groups. It is also likely that Chinese-backed insurgent groups in Kampuchea, Laos, and Afghanistan will receive them.”³⁶⁹

American diplomats who were interested in repairing relations with the Soviet Union also disagreed with Brzezinski’s policy of playing the China card, fearing it would only make the Soviets more reckless. On 8 February 1980, U.S. Ambassador to Moscow Thomas J. Watson cautioned Secretary of State Vance that U.S.-Soviet relations were on a highly perilous course, as U.S. policy was giving “the old men in the politburo” the wrong impression that U.S. wanted confrontation with the Soviet Union. Watson’s report pointed out the dangerous possibility that “the Soviet leader would conclude that the U.S. must be taught a more powerful lesson by being forced to back away from nuclear confrontation as they USSR did in 1962.” As “[s]ome Soviet leaders are wanting such a confrontation [with the U.S.] and they may feel if a confrontation must come it should be sooner rather than later. We should not give Moscow grounds to believe that the U.S. follows a policy of trying to destroy, fragment, or overthrow the Soviet regime.” To avoid this, the report urged that the U.S. should take measures immediately:

“Stop further moves toward China for the remainder of this year because (a) such moves could strengthen inclinations in Moscow to seek a confrontation with us sooner rather than later; and once played, China cards lose their usefulness as leverage and become excuses for Soviet counteractions. We should also obviously not do anything constructive with China when relations (with Soviet) improve, since such action by us would jeopardize hopeful movement back toward detente.”³⁷⁰

³⁶⁹ Memo, DIA Defense Intelligence Notice, JCL CREST File, NLC-21-15-12-4-5.

³⁷⁰ Cable, Moscow to Washington, 5 February 1980. Brzezinski Collection, Box 20, Alpha Channel (1/80-3/80) JCL

An unsatiated Brzezinski intercepted the report, warned both State and Defense Departments of leaks, discredited the report in the comment section, then forward it back to both agencies: “The cable contains some rather extraordinary statements, which I hope will not be taken seriously by anyone here,” he stated. It seemed that Watson’s words had touched Brzezinski’s ego as the sole authority on China policy. Thus, he judged the Ambassador to “need some clarification” on “[w]here the president stands” on those issues, almost as if he himself was playing the President when it came to America’s China policy.³⁷¹

In June 1980, Brzezinski and Watson stood together before Jimmy Carter as the President finally gave Ambassador Watson his belated “clarification” on his China policy. “All the actions we have taken toward China are based on our desire to improve relations with that very important country,” Carter told the Ambassador. “[W]e are not normalizing our relations with the Chinese just in order to hurt the Soviets.” Ambassador Watson, however, was not convinced: “I am no historian, and Dr. Brzezinski certainly knows more about the subject than I do, but it seems to me that the Chinese have a tendency to jump around from bed to bed. And I think we ought to make sure that they are lashed down to our bed before we undertake actions which we might regret later on.” Brzezinski, though, brushed the question away: “You have to remember that we are very sexy people.”³⁷²

The intensified U.S.-China military cooperation did not escape the Soviet Union’s scrutiny. A vicious circle soon started to spin out of control as the Soviet China-watchers again found fresh arsenals with which to denounce Deng Xiaoping – and

³⁷¹ Memo, “Embassy Moscow’s Analysis of U.S.-Soviet Relations, 8 February 1980, Brzezinski Collection, Box 20, Alpha Channel (1/80-3/80) JCL

³⁷² FRUS, 1977–1980, Volume XIII, China, 1114.

block other more moderate academics' attempts to advocate a more realistic, friendly approach to China. Citing U.S. Secretary of Defense Brown's visit to China, the Foreign Ministry scholar Tikhvinskii argued that a global conspiracy against the Soviet Union was being orchestrated by the Americans and the Chinese. "China went on the provocative path of smashing together an anti-Soviet front, joining the league of Carter's threatening anti-Soviet military-political blockade with the sole purpose of destroying political detente." Brown's visit, he wrote, was evidence of "Beijing using the tension in South East Asia to help Americans to expand its military influence in the region...and to use closer Chinese-American military relations to modernize China's military forces, now armed with new American equipment and technologies." The report concluded that the situation was dangerous for the Soviet Union: "Carter has adjusted China's position in the strategy of American global imperialism...There might be a new alliance in formation around the Near East, consisting of the U.S., China, Pakistan, and depending on the circumstances, it might also include Turkey and Bangladesh."³⁷³ The sinologists at the Far East Institute also rewrote their conclusions in the new version of the "China After Mao" annual report. Now, in 1980, China's foreign policy goal was no longer "Establishing Chinese Hegemony in Asia," as they had believed a year earlier, but rather "Establishing Chinese Hegemony in the Entire World." The "Maoist Chinese" were now "the enemy of USSR, all socialist countries, and all progressive forces in the world."³⁷⁴

In both Washington and Moscow, dissident voices existed on all sides. Just as some Americans diplomats questioned Carter's approach to China, not all Soviet sinologists

³⁷³ "Новая Фаза в Блокировании Китая и США - К Визиту Министра Обороны США в Пекин, [New Phasing in US-China Bloc - on the Visit of U.S. Defense Secretary in Beijing]" January 14, 1980. Fond 1970, Opis 2, Ed 25, ARAN.

³⁷⁴ "Китай После Смерти Мао Цзэдуна [China after Mao Zedong]," Fond 1970, Op 2, Ed 26. ARAN

followed Rakhmanin's and Sladkovskii's views on China. Vladimir Lukin, the young China expert and economist at the Institute of Canadian and American Studies [ISKRAN], published an insightful article titled "Washington-Beijing: Quasi-Alliance?" in 1979 at the institute's own Journal, *U.S.A.-Economics, Politics, Ideology*, which was known for its tolerance of more creative political views. Lukin correctly debunked the Rakhmanin's and associated scholars' view that "China was on its way to forming a military alliance with the United States, and that there was no hope for improving Sino-Soviet relations." This was not true, Lukin argued, as the U.S. and China faced far more problems themselves and could find no easy solutions in the long run. First, China was opposed to American disarmament efforts and to SALT II, which "fundamentally diverged from the vast majority of states in the world." Furthermore, how could the Chinese leadership who was still interested in Mao's vision of world struggle, Lukin asked, possibly be a part of the American vision of collective security? How could China's "desire to expand its sphere of influence in Asia" be compatible with America's strategic influence in Asia, which, thus far, "was maintained by the U.S. 7th fleet?"³⁷⁵

Later, in 1981, citing the Republican Party's close connection with Taiwan and new president Ronald Reagan's criticism of Carter's abandonment of the ROC in Taiwan, Lukin predicted in his personal journal that "Beijing will not be able to swallow the bitter pill of 'Two-Chinas' and will exclude the possibility of ruining its relations with the new Republican Party government, if the U.S. decided to renew military ties with Taiwan...Under the friendship and harmony, there are always boiling and difficult

³⁷⁵ В. П. Лукин, "Вашингтон - Пекин: Квазисоюзники?", *США - Экономика, Политика, Идеология*, [V. P. Lukin, "Washington-Peking: Quasi-Alliance?" in *USA-Economics, Politics, Ideology*], 12, 1979, 50-55.

strong feelings, ready to surface at any moment.”³⁷⁶ “The Taiwan problem,” Lukin further predicted, “was for Deng a question of national symbol and a criterion of patriotism,” while for the Americans, Taiwan was “a part of their Pacific Ocean strategy.” Thus, “the Taiwan crisis will not emerge on its own, but more as a symptom of other much bigger chronological problems on both sides.”³⁷⁷ This paper was never published before the end of the Soviet Union, as Lukin was ahead of his time. Only in 1985 would he and his boss Georgy Arbatov go to China on Gorbachev’s orders to find out what really happened with Deng Xiaoping’s opening and reform. This truth-finding trip would contribute to Gorbachev’s much-belated decision to improve relations with China and learn from China’s economic reforms.³⁷⁸ However, in the meantime, U.S. arms sales to China continued to poison U.S.-Soviet relations, and Sino-Soviet confrontation would last until the Gorbachev years.

Conclusion: Path of No Return

Despite objections from Carter Administration’s own officials and warnings from the Soviet Union. U.S. arms sales to China moved on with full speed in 1980. In May, the State Department added an additional six military systems to the sales beyond those previously discussed, ranging from a “surveillance radar” to an “air navigational system” to a “mobile tactical reconnaissance facility.”³⁷⁹ In the following days, the list kept growing longer and longer. “H.R. 30 Air Defense Radar, Aircraft equipment – Temperature sensors, pressure sensors, pilot-static tubes, Air ATA sensors.”³⁸⁰ Even a

³⁷⁶ Unpublished Works, “США - КНР Призраки и Политика, 1981,” [USA-PRC Illusion and Politicking] Lukin Papers, 385-382.

³⁷⁷ Unpublished Works, “О Современном Этапе Американо-Китайских Отношений [About the Modern Phase of U.S.-China Relations],” 1981, Lukin Papers, 385-398.

³⁷⁸ The New York Times, “Peking Criticizes U.S. On Taiwan Arms Sale”, 17 July 1983.

³⁷⁹ Action Memorandum, NLC-21-15-12-19-9. JCL CREST FILE

³⁸⁰ NLC-21-15-12-26-6, Ibid.

“Boeing 737-200 as troop transport” was included in the sales.³⁸¹ Most items in the list were high technology parts that could be integrated into China’s outdated systems to give the Chinese an advantage - or at least a chance - to counter the weapons made in the Soviet Union. This was an early sign that Western weapon systems were gradually overtaking the Soviet systems in the beginning of the Computer Age. It was also a signal that the Chinese military planners were fully aware of the newest developments in Western military science, and they were determined to keep up, taking advantage of the fall of U.S.-Soviet relations.

The Chinese were certainly encouraged by the American change of policy. On June 14, 1980, the advance team before General Geng Biao’s visit to the United States told Ambassador Woodstock that the “PRC was viewing this preliminary trip as a shopping visit.” They were interested in “a variety of American weapons and technology including tanks, APCs, communications equipment, Rockets, the F-1” and they would “like to have the same arms relationship with the United States as Egypt,” another of America’s cold war allies.³⁸² Thus, in 1980, there was a rather bizarre sight in the United States: military delegations from both the PRC and ROC in Taiwan visited American military sites, checking out weapons and making deals. For example, a week after General Geng Biao was in the United States buying radars, another Taiwanese delegation arrived in the U.S. to test F-104G fighters. The Taiwanese hoped they would deter future air attacks from the mainland, which were most likely to be perpetrated using Chinese J-8 fighters upgraded by the Americans or J-7 tactical bombers upgraded by the British.³⁸³ While Brzezinski and other anti-Soviet hardliners were urging President Carter to approve weapon delivery to the PRC, diplomats sympathetic

³⁸¹ NLC-21-15-12-22-5, Ibid.

³⁸² Cable, From Beijing to SECSTATE WASNDC NLC-21-15-12-13-5, Ibid.

³⁸³ DIA Defense Intelligence Notice, 13 June 1980, NLC – 21-16-3-6-2, Ibid.

towards Taiwan were also urging the same president to speed up delivery of heavy artilleries to the Taiwanese army to help with “modernizing their obsolescent artillery forces...which are consistent with our policy of making available equipment to meet Taiwan’s legitimate defense requirements.”³⁸⁴ Ironically, the cross-strait arms race followed the arms race patterns between China and the Soviet Union, and the American companies made a beautiful profit from both.

Was America’s arms sale policy towards China sustainable? In retrospect, it certainly was not. This policy ended abruptly in 1989 after the Tiananmen Square Massacre, and without the mutual anti-Soviet foundation, U.S.-China military relations turned from cooperation into competition and, in recent years, confrontation.³⁸⁵

This study has shown that American policy makers, led by Brzezinski and Brown, simply wished to use arms sales to China to “punish” the Soviet Union, which made the policy entirely dependent on Soviet behaviour, and lacked any long-term strategic thinking about this policy’s impact U.S.-China relations in the long run. These U.S. policy makers also failed to consider the Soviet perspective, which saw U.S.-China military cooperation as highly disruptive towards both immediate U.S.-Soviet arms reduction efforts, as well as détente with the West. As U.S.-China relations entered uncharted waters in the 21st century, there was a much belated call in the U.S. for China to join U.S.-Russia arms reduction talks. In retrospect, it was the Americans and their NATO allies who armed the Chinese in the first place, in spite of China’s hostile view towards non-proliferation and arms reduction.³⁸⁶ But for the time being, Deng

³⁸⁴ Memo, From Warren Christopher, to The President, 16 May 1980. NLC-2-16-3-12-5, Ibid.

³⁸⁵ Yoram Evron, "The Enduring US-Led Arms Embargo On China: An Objectives–Implementation Analysis", *Journal Of Contemporary China*, 28/120 (2019), 995-1010.

³⁸⁶ Frank Rose, "Bringing China Into The Fold On Arms Control And Strategic Stability Issues", *Brookings*, 2020 <<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/09/25/bringing-china-into-the-fold-on-arms-control-and-strategic-stability-issues/>> [accessed 18 June 2020].

Xiaoping once more utilized anti-Soviet rhetoric to achieve another of his Cold War goals: access to American military and dual-use technologies to modernize the Chinese military. Yet, Deng Xiaoping was not entirely satisfied, there were still items on the shopping list that he could not acquire from the Americans, either because prohibitive price, opposition from nonproliferation officials, or because of American's refusal for the total transfer of technological know-hows. Thus, Deng Xiaoping decided that he would play the same game again in a much bigger arena: he would go to America's allies in Europe, and he was determined to get everything he wanted there.

Chapter 5

A Gentleman's Understanding: British, French, and German dual-use Technology transfer to China and America's Dilemma

Introduction:

This chapter examines another understudied aspect of U.S.-China relations under the Jimmy Carter administration: the transfer of military technologies from American allies in Western Europe to China during and after the U.S.-China opening, and how those transfers played a central role in Deng Xiaoping's overall Cold War strategy. This study showed that the Jimmy Carter administration's decision to relax military technology export control towards China under mutual anti-Soviet ground resulting in unexpected consequences. Firstly, Western Europeans, especially the British and the French, and less so the Germans - asserted their autonomy in trading with the Chinese. Secondly, the hardline anti-Soviet officials in the Carter Administration were far more interested in arming the Chinese to counter the Soviet Union than fulfilling the COCOM system's original intention of limiting western military technology to the Communist bloc. As a result, the quality and quantity of the weapon systems and technologies that the Western Europeans and China were willing to trade eventually became a matter for Western Europeans themselves to decide – a situation that was capitalised upon by Deng Xiaoping and his fellow comrades, whose long-term military ambition reached far beyond the Cold War.

However, these Western European-Chinese military exchanges did not go unnoticed under the watchful eyes of the American officials who had concerns over the proliferation of western military technologies into Communists countries - China

included; they were also closely tracked by the Soviet China-watchers around Brezhnev, who were even more suspicious - if not paranoid - of China's long-term strategic goals. As a result, European arms sales to China not only became a potential contention point between U.S.-European relations, but also further complicated the already difficult NATO-Soviet relations within the context of the collapse of the detente.

Literature and Background

The study of European-China relations during and after the U.S.-China opening, as well as China's own opening and reform, is an emerging but still relatively under-studied topic of Cold War history.³⁸⁷ However, very little has been written on security cooperation, especially Western European arms and dual-use technology transfer to China as a result of American officials' relaxation of restrictions (if not direct encouragement to disregard them).³⁸⁸ Political scientist David Shambaugh, for example, briefly mentioned those arms sales as China's "window shopping" trips in the West, as a metaphor to illustrate the lack of fruitful results due to China's limited financial capability to purchase large items and a much stronger desire to acquire the means of production that the Europeans were more hesitant to hand out.³⁸⁹ Nevertheless, a reexamination of this aspect of European-China studies during the global Cold War as informed by fresh new archival materials provided a unique opportunity to understand

³⁸⁷ Angela Romano and Valeria Zanier, "Circumventing The Cold War: The Parallel Diplomacy Of Economic And Cultural Exchanges Between Western Europe And Socialist China In The 1950S and 1960S: An Introduction", *Modern Asian Studies*, 51/1 (2016), 1-16.

Martin Albers, *Britain, France, West Germany And The People's Republic Of China, 1969-1982* (London, 2016).

Martin Albers and Zhong Zhong Chen, "Socialism Capitalism And Sino-European Relations In The Deng Xiaoping Era, 1978-1992", *Cold War History*, 17/2 (2017), 115-119.

³⁸⁸ Oliver Bräuner, "Beyond The Arms Embargo: EU Transfers Of Defense And Dual-Use Technologies To China", *Journal Of East Asian Studies*, 13/3 (2013), 457-482.

³⁸⁹ David L Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems, And Prospects* (Berkeley, 2004).

both the Europeans' dedicated position on how to manage their own relationship with China under the influence of two superpowers, as well as the special importance of Western Europe in China's long term strategic goals, even beyond the Cold War.

Origin of Western Embargo on China

Western European military sales to China have always been connected to the ups and downs of U.S.-China relations and the tensions of the global Cold War. The American-led trade embargo against the Communists countries originally targeted the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites and was placed in November 1949, during the aftermath of the Berlin blockade crisis and with the founding of COCOM, such that the executive branch was empowered by the U.S. Congress to deny aid to any countries who export strategic goods to the Soviet Bloc. Because the Western Europeans needed U.S. aid, especially the Marshall plans for post-war recovery, COCOM, enabled the U.S. to essentially gain control over what Western Europeans were allowed to export to the Soviet bloc and, as one scholar had argued, "institutionalized the economic dimension of the Cold War."³⁹⁰

The embargo expanded to the Chinese mainland following the Communists' victory in the Chinese civil war in 1949, North Korea's attack against South Korea on 25 June 1950, and finally, the Chinese troops' entry into the Korea War in October 1950. Those events rapidly shifted the Truman administration's appreciation of the gravity of their East Asia strategy, and American officials started to systematically consider using the trade embargo to fight their Cold War in East Asia. By 1952, another export control body, the CHINCOM, was established to regulate all western export towards the PRC,

³⁹⁰ James Libbey, "Cocom, Comecon, And The Economic Cold War", *Russian History*, 37/2 (2010), 133-152.

and it functioned under the already-established structure of COCOM, whose headquarters were in Paris. Because American officials believed that the Chinese economy was far more backwards than the Soviet economy, the CHINCOM had even stricter control compared to the COCOM, under the rationale that “embargoing the very basic commodities, such as raw rubber or railway lines, would hamper the Chinese economy more significantly than, for example, stopping sophisticated equipment flowing to the USSR.”³⁹¹

The Americans’ embargo, however, did not work as well as expected. China’s intervention in the Korean War, from the Soviet perspective, boosted China’s strategic importance in the Soviet Union’s overall Asia policy. Massive Soviet economic assistance arrived in China in 1951 as the Soviet Union replaced the West as China’s source of industrial and strategic goods.³⁹² Additionally, the Korean War was the seminal event that led to the Soviet Union’s decision to industrialize China. Chinese records show that from 1950-1953 alone, the Soviet Union helped China with 47 major military and industrial projects, and exported 46.9 million rubles worth of industrial equipment to China. Meanwhile, 2,938 series of scientific and technological publications were given to Chinese institutions free of charge.³⁹³ Alongside massive amounts of aid, approximately 12,284 non-military Soviet experts worked in China from 1949 until the Sino-Soviet split in 1960, training an entirely new generation of Chinese scientists and engineers, and playing an important role in China’s modernization process, rendering the U.S. trade embargo useless.³⁹⁴ Ironically, when the Soviet Union tried to enforce their own embargo against China during the long Sino-

³⁹¹ Frank Cain, "The US-Led Trade Embargo On China: The Origins Of CHINCOM, 1947–52", *Journal Of Strategic Studies*, 18/4 (1995), 33-54.

³⁹² Zhihua Shen and Neil E Silver, *Mao, Stalin And The Korean War* (London, 2012), 178-200.

³⁹³ 沈志华, 中苏关系史纲 [Shen Zhihua, Survey of Sino-Soviet History](Beijing, 2007), 158 – 159.

³⁹⁴ Zhihua Shen and Danhui Li, *After Learning To One Side* (Washington, D.C., 2011), 118.

Soviet split, American, and especially Western European arms sales and technical assistance provided by the U.S. and especially Western Europe to China after the U.S.-China opening in the late 1970s would cause the Soviet leaders great pain - not unlike the way that Soviet assistance to China in the 1950s had upset the Americans.

The European Backdoor

The U.S. trade embargo against China also caused unease among its Western European allies. The British, in particular, felt it was unfair that the British Hong Kong also had to follow the CHINCOM and COCOM regulations when it came to the port city's trade with the Chinese mainland. With even basic commodities such as rubber and fuel being restricted, the embargo severely damaged the economies of Hong Kong and that of the British Empire. "Hong Kong must trade with the mainland to live," the British foreign secretary Herbert Morrison complained to the Americans in U.S.-British-French talks in September 1951. The Americans, however, were less sympathetic, as the Defense Department under George Marshall believed that Hong Kong "was not strategically important in the defense of the West" in their undeclared war against communism, and the U.S. Congress, now dominated by right-wing Republicans, called the trade between mainland China and the West, such as those that occurred through Hong Kong, as 'trading with the enemy behind the back of the US.'³⁹⁵

The Chinese leaders, especially Zhou Enlai, knew that the British had a weak spot in Hong Kong and strove to drive a wedge between the UK and the United States in the embargo against China. According to scholars of UK-China relations, Zhou employed the strategy of "Gege Jipo," which was understood as "striking at the weakest link, then

³⁹⁵ Frank Cain, "The US-Led Trade Embargo On China: The Origins Of CHINCOM, 1947-52", *Journal Of Strategic Studies*, 18/4 (1995), 33-54.

the next weakest link, one at a time, to break the embargo.” Indeed UK-PRC trade talks continued behind the Americans in Geneva throughout the 1950s, and by 1954, China was already the third-largest trading partner of the U.K. inside the socialist bloc, only behind the USSR and Poland.³⁹⁶

British-Chinese trade reached into strategic field during the Sino-American rapprochement, and the UK remained a “weak spot” of the COCOM system indeed. The British Cabinet Secretary John Hunt in 1974 even convinced Kissinger to allow the British to sell China the Spey 202 military jet engines and its production line outside of the COCOM system, in a semi-secret manner. Because of Kissinger’s interests in improving relations with China, this sale went through despite facing strong joint opposition from the U.S. Commerce, State, and Defense Departments, who argued that it would severely damage the COCOM system and boost Chinese military capability far beyond what they deemed necessary.³⁹⁷ Indeed, scholars also argued that this sale reduced the prestige of COCOM and further inspired other nations to follow suit and bypass COCOM to sell similar weapons to China, which in retrospect marked the beginning of the demise of the COCOM system.³⁹⁸ The warnings turned out to be right, as even now, Chinese tactical bombers equipped with those British engines and armed with anti-ship missiles have patrolled the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea, posing a real challenge to the American 7th fleet. While back in the Cold War, the British would continue to act on their own into the Carter-Deng years, this study examined the

³⁹⁶ Chi-Kwan Mark, *The Everyday Cold War: Britain And China, 1950-1972* (London, 2017), 186.

Also see,

Shu Guang Zhang, *Beijing's Economic Statecraft During The Cold War, 1949-1991* (Washington, D.C, 2014).

³⁹⁷ Frank Cain, *Economic Statecraft During The Cold War* (London, 2007), 177-178.

³⁹⁸ 黄文江, “国际关系, 商贸机会, 科技转移对 1975 年中英“斯贝 202”发动机专利合同及其时代意义的解读, 外交评论”, *外交评论*, [Huang Wenjiang, “International Relations, Trade Oppotunities, and the interpretation of the British Spey 202 Engine Trehcnology Transfer to China in 1975,” *Foreign Affairs Commentary*] Issue 1, (2010), 78-87.

decision behind U.K. Prime Minister Callaghan's controversial decision to promote the sale of 300 Harrier jump-jet fighters, and possibly its entire production line to China, only to be turned down because the Chinese lacked the cash to pay for it. Blessed by the U.S.-China opening, the military hardwares that American allies were willing to give China seemed only to be limited by what China could afford to buy.

France remained the biggest challenge to the COCOM structure, largely due to the nationalistic, and - from the U.S. perspective - the unpredictable policy of De Gaulle. China and France already had plenty of business deals through the unofficial diplomatic channels established in 1955 in Geneva.³⁹⁹ France was also the first of the major European powers to establish full diplomatic relations with China in 1964, far ahead of West Germany in October 1972, and also ahead of UK, which only had formal recognition of each other since 1950, but no ambassador until March 1972. France's good foreign relations with China further facilitated the growth of France-China trade during the earlier stages of the Cold War. De Gaulle was described by a scholar as being more interested in using this connection with China to revive France's great power status in Southeast Asia and was "playing Cat-and-Mouse with allies" when it came to dodging pressures from the anti-PRC stance of the Kennedy Administration.⁴⁰⁰ American knew that France remained a weak spot in its embargo on China, as the CIA had warned in 1963 that France could easily evade the COCOM by rerouting the direct trade between France and China into a proxy route between French African colonies

³⁹⁹ Angela Romano, "Waiting For De Gaulle: France's Ten-Year Warm-Up To Recognizing The People's Republic Of China", *Modern Asian Studies*, 51/1 (2016), 44-77.

⁴⁰⁰ Garret Martin, "Playing The China Card? Revisiting France's Recognition Of Communist China, 1963-1964", *Journal Of Cold War Studies*, 10/1 (2008), 52-80.

and British Hong Kong.⁴⁰¹ Colonial legacies, strangely, played handily into the economic games of the Cold War.

France was also a particularly weak spot for the American embargo against China in the nuclear realm. During the earlier stages of the Cold War, France and China often worked together in opposing American led-nonproliferation efforts such as the limited test ban of 1963 and the proposed comprehensive test ban during the Carter Administration.⁴⁰² The U.S.-China rapprochement under Carter encouraged France to upgrade its nuclear cooperation with China from a diplomatic relationship to a full cooperation. In 1977, France already prepared to sell nuclear reactors with integrated American technologies to China, which soon became a dilemma for American nonproliferation officials and trade embargo experts.

The only complying follower of the American embargo against China, it seemed, was West Germany, although this was the result of the complicated relations between West Germany and China. In 1969, at the height of the Sino-Soviet split, Mao had already placed both German states in the “intermediate zone” in his geopolitical view of the Cold War, which, in his mind, should not be controlled by either superpower.⁴⁰³ Based on this philosophy, China under Mao tried to drive a wedge between the Democratic Republic of Germany [DDR] and the Soviet Union, and between the Federal Republic of Germany [FRG] and the Americans. This policy, however, was not well received in West Germany, where the Ostpolitik conducted by Willy Brandt was more focused on

⁴⁰¹ Memo, Gaullist France and Communist China, 23 October 1963, CIA CREST, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP79R00904A001000020021-8.pdf>

⁴⁰² William Burr, "The Limited Test Ban Treaty - 50 Years Later: New Documents Throw Light On Accord Banning Atmospheric Nuclear Testing", *Nsarchive2.Gwu.Edu*, 2020 <<https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/nukevault/ebb433/>> [accessed 18 June 2020].

⁴⁰³ 毛泽东, "中间地带有两个", in *毛泽东外交文选* [Mao Zedong, "On the Two Intermediate Zones," in *Selected Mao Zedong Papers*] (Beijing, 1994), 506-509.

keeping the peace with the Soviet Union, thus incompatible with China's radical anti-Soviet position.⁴⁰⁴ This comparatively more difficult political situation, scholars of Sino-German relations argued, contributed to the low level of Sino-FRG trade during the Mao years, and the West German politicians' fear of provoking the Soviet Union continued to play into the Deng Xiaoping period. The West Germans, unlike other Europeans, never directly challenged the COCOM regulation when it came to doing business with China.⁴⁰⁵

However, keeping sales within the COCOM limit did not mean that FRG did not offer China crucial, dual use technologies under the guise of civilian technological exchanges. This study suggests that the West Germans were in fact in secret competition with the French in a nuclear reactor sale to China. Meanwhile, the Chinese under Deng Xiaoping used all means necessary - including gifting two giant pandas to the Berlin zoo - to smooth their relations with FRG in order to purchase technologies and allow Chinese scientists to be trained in the FRG.⁴⁰⁶ In fact, because those deals were not sensitive enough to require the Americans to directly intervene, they tended to work much more smoothly than those between other Western European nations and China. This was also due to the far larger number of Chinese scientists being trained in Germany as well as the much broader scope of technological exchange between FRG and China. By the 1980s, German scholars found that the Federal Republic of Germany, together with Japan, hosted the largest numbers of Chinese scientists and technical experts, second only to the U.S itself. West Germans, even within the broadly

⁴⁰⁴ Bernd Schaeffer, "Ostpolitik, 'Fernostpolitik,' And Sino-Soviet Rivalry, China And The Two Germanys", in *Ostpolitik, 1969-1974: European And Global Responses* (Cambridge, 2019), 127-147.

⁴⁰⁵ Martin Albers, "Business With Beijing, Détente With Moscow: West Germany's China Policy In A Global Context, 1969-1982", *Cold War History*, 14/2 (2013), 237-257.

⁴⁰⁶ Frank Bösch, *Zeitenwende 1979 Als Die Welt Von Heute Begann* (Munich 2019), 172.

defined COCOM limit, played arguably the biggest role in the general modernization process in post-Mao China.⁴⁰⁷

U.S.-China Opening and a New Era of Opportunities for Western Europe

As early as April 1977, even before the normalisation of U.S.-China diplomatic relations, Berzinski, the die-hard anti-Soviet in the Carter Administration, had already thought about seriously reviewing the possibility of selling U.S. arms to China, as well as lifting U.S. restrictions on American allies' defence-related sales to the Chinese, in order to give them an advantage against the Soviet Union.⁴⁰⁸ Meanwhile, the top Chinese leaderships too, realized that they now had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get whatever western technology they could. The Vice Premier Hua Guofeng, for example, emphasised the special timing of China's relations and the West, again utilising Mao's three-world theory:

“The development of international politics demands us to seize this opportunity. The Second World [Europe] have a strong urge to establish better relations with us to make business... Even the Americans wanted to do business with us. So are the capitalists in Europe, Japan, and North America, who have seen the good situation in our country, and are competing with each other to propose big business deals. Such a great situation is unprecedented since the founding of the PRC. This situation, however, has raised a question for us: [we] must be good at using this momentum on the basis of independent development to absorb foreign technology and capital, to speed up our development, to catch up with the world standard... if we are not good at exploiting this great international situation, then that would be a mistake. [Because] we must understand that the Americans and Soviets are competing furiously for global hegemony, one day there will be war, not to mention the Soviet Revisionists still want us dead. Facing such dangers, we must plan well and prepare for the worst; we might be living in peaceful times now but we must think of the dangers, to hurry up our development before the war arrives, to prepare for everything, and to have no disillusionment.”⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁷ Also see, Martin Alber (2014), 254.

⁴⁰⁸ FRUS, 1977-80, Volume VIII, China, 69.

⁴⁰⁹ 华国锋等中央领导同志在中央工作会议上的讲话等 [Hua Guofeng and Other Central Party Leaders' Speech], File Number: SZ 1- 4- 791, Hubei Provincial Archive

This perspective was fully supported by Chinese military leaders. General Zhang Aiping, a technocrat in the army who had just being appointed by Deng Xiaoping as the director of National Defence R&D Council, also believed that China now had one and probably the only chance to catch up with the West militarily by getting military technologies from the Westerners themselves. In the Council's first conference, he said,

“Science and technology were developing extremely fast in recent decades. But, we were disrupted by the Gang of Four... and now stuck on the path and not moving forward, and the gap between us and the developed country is even bigger. Thus, we have to rush up and to catch up with... Now, we have the plan, till the year 1985. No matter it is in strategic or conventional weapons, we have to catch - or to be close to the level of where Americans and Soviets have now. We ask all our comrades to increase our study of basic [scientific] knowledge, and to bring in advanced foreign expertise. We don't have to walk the paths that the Americans, Soviets, British, and French had once walked. To choose a “short-cut” is entirely possible. From what we know, the Americans are already working on the third generation of nuclear weapons. We have to catch up and surpass them, but it does not mean we have to follow them always. It is totally possible to take their advanced stuff over, and build our own based upon them, and even surpass them.”⁴¹⁰

This study will thus trace some of China's earliest attempts to acquire military or dual-use technologies from Western Europe, and how that simultaneously created a dilemma to American policy makers and caused tension between the Soviet Union and the West.

Case I: British Harrier Sale to China

The Chinese had always wanted a better jet fighter than what their current soviet-made jet fleet could offer, so what they could not receive from the Americans, they tried to get from America's European allies. As previous chapters have shown, Deng Xiaoping tried to get F-16s from the Americans multiple times and had consistently been rejected.

However, a UK intelligence report in 1978 stated that China was trying to use licensing

⁴¹⁰ 张爱萍, 张爱萍军事文选 [Zhang Aiping, Zhang Aiping Military Papers], (Beijing 1994) 335.

agreements and other means to evade COCOM restrictions, and was attempting to purchase Harrier jets from the British, Mirage fighters from France, and Viggen bomber-fighters from Sweden - all of which are comparable alternatives to the F-16s the Americans refused to sell.⁴¹¹

The Chinese has long wanted to purchase the Harrier fighters and already raised the issue to the British in 1972, testing the goodwill of the West from the earliest years of U.S.-China rapprochement, but negotiations had slowed down due to the internal chaos in China during the Cultural Revolution and the British fear of disrupting detente with the Soviets.⁴¹² But in 1977, the Chinese raised the question to the British again when Chinese Foreign Trade Minister Li Chinag visited the UK and specifically asked for a purchase of 70 or more Harrier jump jets.

This request, which was also repeated through other channels, caused heated internal debates among top British officials. On the supporting side, for example, Sir Percy Cradock, British Ambassador to China, believed that the deal made sense, since China needed a credible defence against the Soviets, and “we have so much of what the Chinese want.” It was a good business opportunity, and the UK should take advantage of the “warming of Sino-British relations” to approve the sale and “It would have a very damaging effect if we were now to refuse to consider further orders.”⁴¹³ The Department of Industry also supported the sale, believing the large Chinese order would give significant financial relief to “the most depressed industries, notably steel plants

⁴¹¹ Intel, Overseas Economic Intelligence Committee: China: Future Import Policies, 22 August 1978, DEFE11/977, UKNA.

⁴¹² Policy Paper, Harrier for China, FCO to 10 Downing Street, 1 Jan 1973, FCO1H/1003, UKNA. The folder also contains other internal British discussion on the 1972-1973 proposed harrier sales to China, where mostly had negative responses.

⁴¹³ Cable, from Peiking, 23 October 1978. DEFE11/977, UKNA

and power plants.” A deal with China, the Secretary of Trade and Industry Eric Varley believed, would open the door to China’s raw materials and give the UK an edge in ongoing trade competition with France and Germany.⁴¹⁴

However, other officials such as Foreign Secretary David Owen and Prime Minister Callaghan were quite concerned about violating the COCOM procedure and facing the rage of the Soviets, as a threatening letter from Brezhnev to Callaghan on European arms sales to China was leaked to the press. Thus, they decided to consult the Americans, as they had created COCOM and were the deciding factor in NATO-China military cooperation. However, when the British Defence Secretary Fred Mulley consulted his American counterparts led by Harold Brown - in accordance with NATO COCOM procedure - the Americans only pushed the decision back to the British. Brown, another anti-Soviet hardliner in the Carter Administration who had been decisive in pushing through the normalisation of U.S.-China diplomatic relations based on mutual anti-Soviet grounds, was glad to use the British to arm the Chinese. However, Brown surmised that the Americans should not be the ones to face the Soviet Union’s blame, as Americans still required Soviet cooperation in a series of issues related to detente and disarmament. In addition, the Americans should not be responsible for the unpleasant consequences such a deal would cause in U.S.-Taiwan relations, since the Harriers, according to the British, “had just enough range” to reach Taiwan. “For political reasons, primarily connected with US/Soviet relations, the US would not sell weapons, even defensive ones, to China,” Brown told Mulley, “but they did not propose to lead an arms blockade against China which could only benefit the Soviet Union.” Americans “therefore, put no pressure on their friends not to sell arms to

⁴¹⁴ From Eric Varley, to Prime Minister, Defense Sales to China, 30 November 1978, UKNA, FCO IH/1003.

the Chinese, but considered that we should be careful about what items we were willing to sell.”⁴¹⁵

Getting no clear answers from the Americans, the Callaghan government turned to fellow NATO allies, hoping first to gain their support on the Harrier deal, and secondly to shoulder responsibilities together in the face of possible hostile Soviet responses. Comically, when all COCOM member states officials were called into London on November 17 for a special meeting to discuss the British Harrier exports to China, it turned out that every member state was planning their own military sales to the Chinese, with some deals more visibly military-related than the others. Additionally, each member state was also looking for innovative methods to evade COCOM restriction and dodge Soviet retaliation. The Italians and Dutch were trying to sell China missiles, drones, and naval ships, said the report, while Germans and Japanese "would not sell to the Chinese weapons suitable for making war" but the Chinese were nevertheless interested in “acquiring modern technology of all types, including items covered by the industrial list of embargoed items”- items that the Japanese and Germans were happy to see to be exempt from previous restrictions. The French did not even bother to attend the meeting, because, according to separate reports, they were determined to sell to the Chinese nuclear reactors and a large amount of other grey-area items that the French themselves had defined to be non-COCOM related.

Facing the same delicate situation in which no one wished to take any more responsibility than the others, the COCOM members unanimously agreed to the British proposal of a “no comment policy” at the end of the meeting. This meant that each

⁴¹⁵ Transcript, “Record of a discussion between the Secretary of State and the United States Secretary of Defence at the Palais D’Egmont, Brussels, on 18th October 1978 at 2pm.” 2/2580, DEFE11/977, UKNA.

government should take their own decisions regarding what to sell to the Chinese, and when an issue had to be brought to the COCOM meeting to be examined - a step that would not always be entirely necessary - other member states would enjoy the right to “not make any comment” of objection and just let the specific sale pass quietly.⁴¹⁶ This “No Comment” agreement was, according to the Foreign Office, a “gentleman's understanding.”⁴¹⁷

A variety of British domestic factors also pushed towards a positive decision. In the U.S. market, for example, the U.S. Air Force already developed F-15, the U.S. Navy was focused on purchasing carrier-based F-18s, and only the U.S. Marine Corps needed to import the Harriers from the UK as a short-distance air support aircraft. Thus, the Harrier filled only a very specific and small role in the American market. The trade unions, afraid that the U.S. Marine Corps would not buy enough Harriers needed to sustain the production line, argued that the UK should sell them to the Chinese instead, as it would maintain “over 10,000 jobs” in this country.⁴¹⁸ Others, however, had doubts. Lord President of the Council Michael Foot was especially concerned about the repercussions on U.K.-Soviet relations, and the much bigger questions of China and its future relations with the United Kingdom. “Are we really convinced that China has become the progressive, peaceful power that is now represented to us?” he asked the Prime Minister. “If it is, why should the sale of military equipment be so important to them as a test of our intentions? It would appear from this that China will be seeking to

⁴¹⁶ Cable, from TELNO to Bonn, Defence Sale to China, 17 November 1978. FCO 14/1003, UKNA.

⁴¹⁷ For the FO comment on the agreement and the French decision to not attend the meeting, see, Letter, Defence Sales to China, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 23 November 1978, G G H Walden, to 10 Downing Street, FCO 14/1003, UKNA

⁴¹⁸ Letter, Roy A Grantham to James Callaghan, 21 August 1978, UKNA, FCO21 / 1629, Ibid.

dictate to us the terms on which they are prepared to trade with us generally - and if that is the case I certainly do not believe that we should accept it.”⁴¹⁹

Dedicated Relations with Americans

For those who wished the deal to go through, everything seemed to look brighter into the end of 1978, when U.S. and China had announced they would normalise their diplomatic relations in the new year. First, the Callaghan government received notice from all other COCOM members except Portugal, whose representative casually skipped the COCOM meeting, that those represented will pose no objection to the sale.⁴²⁰ To pacify the American doves who were concerned about detente with the Soviets and the safety of the Taiwanese, the British officials in Washington, D.C. assured U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance that the version of Harriers that the UK was contemplating to sell to the Chinese was the 18-year old version that are in service with RAF and “not the advanced version we were working on with the Americans.”⁴²¹ But in front of the Chinese, the British never mentioned that the proposed Chinese version of the Harrier was outdated, at least according to available records. Instead, British officials and arms dealers used every opportunity to convince Chinese officials that they “have an advanced aerospace industry” and that when it comes to airplanes, military or civilian, it is best to buy Made-in-Britain.⁴²²

⁴¹⁹ Letter, Micheal Foot to PM, 4 August 1978, Ibid.

⁴²⁰ Memorandum, UK/Chinese Trade and Harrier, Foreign Office, 10 Jan 1979, UKNA, FO21/1630

⁴²¹ Telegram, Washington to FOC, 4 Dec 1978, Ibid.

Another attached document, dated back in 1972, already stated that the Harrier in fact was already 10 years old.

⁴²² Department of Trade to Prime Minister, Trade with China, 20 December 1978, FO21/1630, Ibid.

Chinese pilots were even allowed to enjoy a test-fly in the UK, though no visible record was found because British officials were so anxious to prevent any photos from being taken, in case they leak to the media.⁴²³ Everyone, it seemed, had a little game to play

With the change in U.S.-China relations, British officials, such as the Private Secretary to the Prime Minister, no longer saw the U.S. as an obstacle preventing the British from doing business with the Chinese like in the old days, but rather as potential long-term competitors. Thus, the UK determined that they should give the Chinese the Harriers, as “we have something special to offer to the Chinese, and the Harrier is unique.”⁴²⁴ China too, started to play the Westerners against each other and dropped hints on multiple occasions that British fighters, in fact, were not that unique. “China cannot wait,” said an official through a secret channel in Hong Kong, “[and] there are always the U.S. and others who could move in if Britain was not prepared to supply.”⁴²⁵

To convince the British to make the offer, the Chinese, through multiple channels, played up the Soviet Threat rhetoric. One of the key Chinese officials who was engaged in this rhetoric was the vice premier Li Xiannian, one of the earliest economic reformers advising Deng Xiaoping, who had a keen interest in bringing in foreign expertise in modernizing China. Li was engaged in foreign trade even before the Cultural Revolution and had already noted in 1959 the necessity of bringing in foreign experience from both socialist and capitalist countries to modernize Chinese industry, a surprisingly open-minded position to have during that close-minded age.⁴²⁶ During the

⁴²³ Telegram FCO to Peiking, "Your TELNO 500 of 11 August: Harrier" 24 August 1978, FOC, 24 August, 1978, PREM16/1546, Ibid.

⁴²⁴ Letter, Andrew Duguid, to PM, UK/Chinese Trade in Harriers, 2 December 1978, UKNAFCO 21/1630, Ibid.

⁴²⁵ Telegram, Far Eastern Department to FCO Visit by Mr. Li Ch'iang: Harriers, 22 December 1978, Ibid.

⁴²⁶ 李先念, 李先念文选 [Li Xiannian, Li Xiannian Papers] (Beijing, 1989), 238.

Great Leap Forward, he was one of the few top Chinese leaders who dared to tell Mao that his agriculture policy was wrong and was causing starvation.⁴²⁷ Li then served as finance minister and play a key role in stabilizing the country's finance during the end of the cultural Revolution. Now, Li Xiannian oversaw financial reforms and foreign trade issues under Deng Xiaoping. As a plain-spoken person, Li was unsatisfied with the old Soviet model of Chinese economy, where, in his own words, "old heavy industries' fat asses are sitting in other's [modern industries] seats." Li tried his best to redirect financial resources in importing foreign technologies into those modern industries.⁴²⁸ He once half-joked about his experiences in dealing with foreign trade delegations: "The advanced sciences and technologies we can master now is not just not enough, but seriously not enough... But foreign businessmen are clever; negotiating with them is hard work."⁴²⁹

In July 1978 such a delegation of British Labour party MPs led by Lord Goronwy Roberts arrived in Beijing, and Li offered them a heavy dose of Maoist-style monologue on the Soviet threat to Europe as an excuse regarding why the British should sell the Chinese Harrier fighters: "In the Russian vocabulary, peace means war, disarmament means the build-up of arms and detente means tension," and "the European Security Conference was a sham" which was "immediately followed by the Cuban action in Angola, and the Horn of Africa." China would not retreat in front of Soviet pressure, nor will it surrender in times of war, Li assured his British guests. "China was an ardent lover of peace. But what could she do if the Russians wanted war? China would fight back, even at the expense of 200 million, 300 million, or half her population; there would still be 400m left." After those exaggerations, Li switched

⁴²⁷ Ibid, 257.

⁴²⁸ Ibid, 325.

⁴²⁹ Ibid, 315.

to the real topic that if the British would agree to sell some Harrier fighters to China. Even better, if they would give China the entire production line as well. “The difficulty was that if China should buy 200 planes and they were destroyed in war, she would need to manufacture replacements. China might initially wish to buy Harriers,” Li said, “and then acquire the right to manufacture them herself.” Li, however, did not receive a definite answer.⁴³⁰

Complications and Delay

The Harrier sale negotiation was complicated by several factors in 1979. British Aerospace, it turned out, was also selling the Harriers to India, a country China with whom it had gone to war 15 years ago and still had not resolved a border dispute. The Chinese also had to swallow a bitter deal that the Indian version of Harrier was at least 10 years more advanced than the Chinese version. As a non-aligned country and one that was outside of the COCOM restriction, the India deal also had far fewer strings attached regarding how India would use the Harriers and what additional weapons could come with it.⁴³¹ It was not that simple for China, for whom each attached weapon system needed special clearance from other COCOM members, and the Americans specifically. Moreover, when the Chinese requested a type of cluster bomb - BL755 - to be used to attack concentrated Soviet tank columns, numerous defence and foreign service officers raised humanitarian concerns, saying that those weapons could also be used to kill protestors (however unlikely).⁴³² Considering the fact that anti-armour warfare was the key reason why the Chinese needed to deploy Harriers along the Sino-

⁴³⁰ Telegram, R.C. Samuel, to Lord Goronwy-Roberts, [date sanitized, but from the content it should be from June] 1978], FCO21/1629, UKNA.

⁴³¹ Memo, Sale of Sea Harrier to India, 25 April, 1979. FCO, FCO21/1722, UKNA.

⁴³² Memo, Arms sales to China: Harrier and BL 755, Defence Department, 9 August 1979, FCO21/1723, UKNA.

Soviet border in the first place, the British refusal to sell the BL755 greatly disappointed the Chinese.⁴³³

It was also during these negotiations that Chinese forces invaded Vietnam in February 1979. This sudden attack turned the Harrier sale into a public relations crisis for the Callaghan government, who spent the entire previous year trying to convince fellow NATO partners - and themselves - that after Mao, China was turning into a peace-loving country. Prime Minister Callaghan and his cabinet members had to try their best to dodge awkward questions from the media and their opposition, who used the UK-China military connection in the wake of the Sino-Vietnamese war to question the government's moral standing in the upcoming 1979 parliamentary election. For example, David Owen was grilled by BBC Radio 4:

BBC: "If the Labour Government is returning in the next election, will it consider its position please regarding selling of arms to China in view of the Viet Nam campaign, and some disquiet in the minds of some British people?"

David Owen: "It is not always a decision whether you are to sell arms; it is also a question of whether you refuse to sell arms to people who ask you to... in this case, I think we are selling defensive weapons to a country that has requested it..."

BBC: "You know, at the same time we are selling jump jets, China has become an aggressor."

David Owen, "Yes, and I think it is a very bad way of solving border disputes... [but] we must take account of the border disputes which has long been part of the history of that region."⁴³⁴

The Labour Party's own international affairs committee was also concerned.

Considering China had just attacked Vietnam, asked MP Tony Benn in an emergency

⁴³³ Chinese response, see, Memo, BL 755 for China, Ministry of Defence, 11 July 1979, FCO21/1722, UKNA.

⁴³⁴ Transcript, FCO, 8 March 1979, FCO21/1722, UKNA.

meeting on the Harrier sale, “No one could say that there would not be another cultural revolution in a few years and the Harrier jets would not be used against Hong Kong.”⁴³⁵

According to a contemporary account, the Chinese attack on Vietnam was such an embarrassment to Callaghan that he had to withdraw the permission to sign the Harrier deal from the British delegation, who were in China at the same time to finish up the final negotiations.⁴³⁶

China’s New Strategy: Technology Acquisition over Hardware

Although the green light for the Harrier jet deal was indefinitely postponed, real change was also coming from the Chinese side. Throughout late 1978 and 1979, the Chinese had been re-evaluating their modernization priorities. Acquiring technologies became much more urgent than purchasing large items of military hardware that are expensive to acquire and even more expensive to maintain. Li Xiannian himself spoke of the mistakes of wasting precious foreign reserves in importing products, rather than buying the means of production, in a special State Council meeting on technological transfer from the West, when he laid out the new focus:

“First, if we can make them ourselves, even if the quality is not as good as foreign-made, we will make it ourselves and gradually improve it. Second, if we can import the technology and make the equipment, then we don’t buy the equipment; third, if we can buy key components and make up the rest ourselves, then we don’t buy the entire set of equipment. Fourth, if we have to buy the entire set, then we will try to make some part of it that fits the standard. Fifth, systematically import equipment and technology... and gradually produce our own versions. Sixth, if the project is too big or too complicated,

⁴³⁵ Memo, Labour Party International Committee, 13 February 1979, FCO21/1722, UKNA.

⁴³⁶ David Crane, "The Harrier Jump-Jet And Sino-British Relations", *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, 8/4 (1981), 227-250.

we can then hire foreign experts to help us design and build and help us to manage and teach us the technology [to build them].” The end goal, he suggested, is to save money and to eventually learn to produce locally inside China.⁴³⁷

Thus, price and the possibility of bringing the Harrier production line became a contention point during the 1979 set of negotiations, and the Chinese felt they were paying too much for too little.⁴³⁸ During a British Aerospace delegation’s visit to China, the Chinese frankly told the British officials that they could not accept the fact that the Americans are paying less for a more advanced version of the Harrier, while the Chinese had to pay more for a watered-down one.⁴³⁹ The Americans also reported a change in attitude from the Chinese’s arms acquisition policy in 1979. “Despite a flurry of speculation last fall that China would become a major arms buyer, China appears still to be studying what it should do in view of its domestic priorities and limitations. We expect that the Chinese will continue to examine closely the foreign arms market, but to take some time before concluding significant agreements, if any. China probably will opt to acquire only technology and samples to evolve Chinese-modified weaponry which can be produced in quantity.”⁴⁴⁰

The negotiations slowed down significantly in the 1980s, while another important factor made the Chinese change their mind. The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 completely changed the way Carter administration’s military export policy operated towards China. Now, seeing China as a potential ally in the Cold War, U.S. officials quickly came to the realization that it was far more convenient to allow U.S.

⁴³⁷ Li Xiannian, *Li Xiannian Papers*, (1989), 333.

⁴³⁸ Memo, Defence Sales to China: Harrier, FCO, 12 July 1979, FCO21/1722, UKNA.

⁴³⁹ Memo, BL 755 for China, Ministry of Defence, 11 July 1979, UK NA FCO21/1722, UKNA.

⁴⁴⁰ Memo, 7/30/79, Department of States, NLC-21-15-10-14-6, JCL CREST.

companies to sell weapons to the Chinese. Why let the Europeans make all the money when Americans can do the business themselves and put pressure on the Russians at the same time? In January 1980, Harold Brown, the nuclear-physicist-turned U.S. Secretary of Defence and another key architect behind Carter's China Policy, flew to Beijing with a newly sanctioned list of defence-related items - a new "Made-in-America shopping menu" for the Chinese military. From aviation equipment, targeting electronics, and trainer simulator for pilots, to military satellites and radars, the U.S. Secretary of Défense kickstarted the unprecedented and unique (if not strange) degree of U.S.-China military cooperation that characterised this period of Cold War.⁴⁴¹ "China may have had second thoughts about making an agreement with the UK for the Harrier ground-attack aircraft for both operational and economic reasons," observed the Americans. "The Chinese continued to emphasize the acquisition of electronics, components, manufacturing processes, and test equipment that will improve their ability to develop and produce sophisticated military hardware." For example," they recently signed an agreement with Pratt and Whitney of Canada to obtain the technology to manufacture the PT-6 Turboshift engine that they have installed on Chinese-made MI-4 Helicopter[s] and possibly on a new helicopter."⁴⁴²

Initially, the British were often concerned about America's China embargo would kill the Harrier negotiation. In fact, it was the opposite: it was American arms dealers' competition that contributed to the unhappy ending of the proposed deal. Soon, US defence firms started selling helicopters and aviation equipment to the Chinese, and teamed up with Chinese state-owned aerospace firms to modernise existing Chinese

⁴⁴¹ Memorandum, "DOD Briefing on Sales of Military Technology to China," Department of Defence, 20 January 1980, NLC 21-15-11-28-0, JCL CREST.

⁴⁴² Memo, China: Military Modernization Efforts, NLC-21-16-11-9-1, JCL CREST.

fighters - a much cheaper and effective alternative to buying the Harriers.⁴⁴³ Even though the British Harrier sale came to an unsatisfying end, more doors in the West opened to China.

Case II: French-German Competition in Nuclear Reactor Sale to China

On 15 October 1979, Chairman Hua Guo Feng started his 22-day European tour in Paris and made headlines across the world. It was, according to the *New York Times*, “the first time in its 4,000-year history [that] China's leader has ventured out to Western Europe.” Hua, as reported, was on a mission to seek European help in modernizing China’s industry and militaries.⁴⁴⁴

It had great symbolic significance that Hua chose Paris as his first stop. After all, France was the first Western European country to give full diplomatic recognition to the PRC in 1964.⁴⁴⁵ This was an act, humorously described by the witty and sarcastic American diplomat-historian Warren Zimmerman, who was an foreign officer in Paris at the time, as De Gaulle’s attempt “to demonstrate an independent foreign policy (vis-a-vis the US)” and had more to do with “French pride and France's image of itself as a world power.” Zimmerman thus concluded, “France, as the maverick and independent member of the West, was the logical target of China's preliminary and instant step into the world stage.” On a more practical note, he reported that China would like to give the French “preferential trade treatment in return for arms sales and weapons technology.”⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴³Crane, Ibid.

⁴⁴⁴ “Hua Guofeng In West Europe Stressed A New Pragmatism”, *New York Times*, 11 November 1979.

⁴⁴⁵ Angela Romano, “Waiting for de Gaulle: France’s ten-year warm-up to recognizing the People’s Republic of China,” *Modern Asian Studies* 51, 1 (2017), 44–77.

⁴⁴⁶ Cable, Paris to SECSTATE DC, 14 October 79. JCL, NLC-21-15-11-24-4. Zimmerman later served as the US Ambassador to Yugoslavia and was also known for his book on the American-Spanish war. Warren Zimmermann, *First Great Triumph: How Five Americans Made Their Country A World Power* (New York, 2004).

One specific technology Hua wished to purchase from the French was two units of Framatome nuclear reactors capable of generating 900 MW electricity. It was a controversial yet important business opportunity for the French, and the deal would be worth 5.2 billion francs in cash, or 5.3 billion if the Chinese needed to take out loans. The formal request, according to French sources, had already been forwarded by the Chinese ministry of commerce a year earlier in December 1978.⁴⁴⁷

The French-China reactor talks alarmed American officials on two different, but related grounds. First, those reactors were not entirely French, as they had incorporated patented U.S. technologies in their use of uranium, which can produce plutonium as a by-product and be used in atomic weapons. Thus, they were considered strategic goods under COCOM regulations and were not supposed to be sold to Communist countries. Secondly, the deal ran against the Carter administration's overall arms control and nonproliferation principle that no Western country should facilitate the spread of nuclear technology, especially those that have potential military uses. Thus, this sale was extremely problematic.

Even in 1977, when the first time rumors about the French-Chinese deal surfaced. Cyrus Vance wrote to Berzinski that those French reactors would allow China to access fuel process technologies they did not yet process, and it was likely that they could pass it to the Pakistanis, who already asked for similar technology from the French and had been rejected. "We [US] have, of course, a strong interest in encouraging Chinese cooperation on non-proliferation in general, including safeguards as a condition of any

⁴⁴⁷ Memo, Communiqué au Cabinet Du Ministre du Commerce Extérieur et au Cabinet du ministre de L'industrie, 17 August 1979, Folder 10-11-5, Archives Diplomatiques Paris.

supply the PRC might undertake.”⁴⁴⁸ Throughout late 1977 and 1978, the Americans repeatedly expressed their concern to the French, and asked the French to acquire a safeguard assurance from the Chinese that they would only use those reactors for peaceful purposes and would not pass its secrets to the others, especially with the specific clause that, “the materials produced [from the reactors] shall not be used by the PRC for explosive and military purposes.”⁴⁴⁹

However, records suggested that the French diplomats knew from the beginning of their negotiations with the Chinese that any reactor the French sold to China could be used to make the atomic bomb, but they chose to ignore it. As early as November 1975, a delegation from the French nuclear establishment led by Jean Teillac, a well known nuclear physicist and later the French representative to the European Organization for Nuclear Research, conducted a two-week inspection tour in China as the icebreaking trip to future French-Chinese nuclear corporations. Teillac and his team inspected most major Chinese nuclear facilities, from uranium mines to nuclear power plants and research institutes. The tour was so detailed that the Chinese insisted that the French should not publicly disclose any portion of it. In the final report to French Ministry of Energy and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Teillac warned that he had reached “near-conviction” that China’s nuclear activities were meant for military purposes, because the “the existence of plutonium production for military purposes... had followed a similar path to that of France” in both “the production of fissile materials” and “the plutonium extraction” processes. The overall picture also tipped off the French scientists because there are far more activities “linked to the nuclear fuel cycle, to a

⁴⁴⁸ Memo, Vance, to Brzezinski, 14 July 1977. NSArchive <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB114/chipak-4.pdf>

⁴⁴⁹ This message was passed through multiple channels. For Example, at the French Embassy in Washington DC. Cable, AmaFrance Washington to Diplomatie Paris, “Exportations de Centrales Nucléaires vers La Chine,” 4 July, 1978. Folder 10.11.5, Archives Diplomatiques Paris.

scale compared to other big countries”, and the “lack of dynamism for other activities such as reactors and laboratories.” Teillac concluded, “This contrast can be explained only by a high strategic [military] priority given to the former [plutonium production], over the latter [research and electricity generation].”⁴⁵⁰

“Exclusively civilian and peaceful, be totally free from any suspicion”

However, the priority of the French expedition was not to judge whether or not China’s nuclear activities were military or civilian in nature. Instead, Teillac’s team was highly interested in China’s large uranium resources, and the possibility of selling French nuclear reactors to China in exchange. Their Chinese counterparts, too, were interested in such exchanges, as “they don’t exclude the possibility of selling raw material in exchange, oil for example, but no uranium for now.” At the end of their expedition, the French delegation even had a meeting with Hua Guo Feng, who lectured them on the imperialists [Americans] and imperialists socialists [Soviet Union]’s monopoly on nuclear affairs, and why China and France, then quoting from Mao’s little red book, “need to rely on their own strength in the face of hegemony of the two superpowers.”⁴⁵¹ Upon receiving the report, the Secretary General entirely ignored the fact that French-Chinese nuclear cooperation might not be peaceful, but pushed ahead for another meeting, with a focus on “exports of sensitive materials” and “the confidential openings of the Chinese authorities on [French] reactors.”⁴⁵²

The French interest in Chinese uranium sources continued in 1976 and 1977, prior to the formal Chinese request for those two Framatome reactors. In fact, French scientists

⁴⁵⁰ Memo, “Mission en Chine (9 au 24 Novembre 1975), Secrétariat à l’Energie Atomique,” 11 December 1975, Folder 10-11-9, Archive Diplomatique Paris.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid

⁴⁵² Memo, “Pour M. Le Secrétaire Général, service des affaires Scientifiques,” 16 December 1975, Ibid.

worked all over China and helped the Chinese in surveying uranium deposits. For example, the French geologists delegation wrote back an enthusiastic report after their visit in November 1976, saying, “China has great potential in uranium resources (perhaps a million tons).. They are “investing heavily into them [extractions]” and quoting the Chinese counterpart, “could be able to sell soon.” This is a signal that “the Chinese are starting to be more open to French-Chinese cooperation and says the French should seize the opportunity.”⁴⁵³

Thus, the French had a far more substantial interest in getting Chinese uranium and selling reactors to the Chinese than telling the Americans all the inconvenient secrets about China’s nuclear program. It was no wonder that the French officials, especially those at the MFA, decided to play a cat-and-mouse game with the Americans - one that the Chinese were happy to play along. On 9 October 1978, President d’Estaing’s confidante, Secretary General Jean François-Poncet, whom soon to be pointed as the next Foreign Minister, reached a gentleman’s agreement with the Chinese ambassador that France did not care what China would do in the military aspect of nuclear affairs, but as long as both France and China pretend their cooperation was peaceful, he would give the Farmatone deal the green light. François-Ponce, in a humorous way, said,

“The nuclear cooperation between France and China is moving in a satisfactory direction... We certainly know that everything that is nuclear has a political aspect to it, because the atom has both civil and military applications. France, however, does not intend to do anything in its foreign policy which may appear to contribute to the development of nuclear weapons. As both of our countries are both nuclear weapons states, it is of the utmost importance that our nuclear collaboration, which is exclusively civilian and peaceful, be totally free from any suspicion. This is why we believe that an intergovernmental agreement should accompany the eventual contract between the industrialists, an agreement designed to demonstrate the peaceful character of the French-Chinese nuclear cooperation... in doing so, we have no intention of preventing the development of China’s activities in the military nuclear field. We do not intend to ask China

⁴⁵³ Cable, Ambassadeur de France a Pekin to Paris, “Mission de géologues français de l’Uranium en Chine”, 18 November 1976, Asie-Océanie, Folder 10-11-5, Ibid.

the type of guarantees we ask other Framatome customers. But we want to show that our nuclear cooperation is in no way related to the military programs which are being developed independently in each of our countries.”⁴⁵⁴

No wonder why French officials were acting suspiciously in the U.S. a week before a testimony to the U.S. Congress on American permission for the French sale. “De Laboulaye [the French ambassador] came in today,” noted an American nonproliferation official. “He said that he had authority from Paris to say that it was all right to pass the substance of the Framatome proposed deal to the [U.S.] Congress... [for a final review].” But the French government did not want any text of the Chinese-French letter to go to the Congress. “It was pretty much the same as I [the American] had seen before,” promised the French Ambassador. “It talked about pacific uses, physical security.”⁴⁵⁵

West Germany Jump into Sale and Jimmy Carter’s Dilemma.

The Americans, and to a lesser degree, the French, also faced another complication: The Chinese also engaged in parallel negotiations with the Federal Republic of Germany [FRG] on possible reactor purchases.

German records suggested that the Chinese had already informed FRG officials in December 1977 of their interest in purchasing a nuclear reactor. Both sides began to consult one another every month, including a high-level visit of Gu Mu, Deng’s top economic aide, to the German Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Otto Graf Lambsdorff. However, those negotiations were also delayed due to the uncertainty caused by the COCOM regulations, where the ultra cautious Germans had to consult

⁴⁵⁴ Memo, “Audience de L’Ambassadeur de Chine: Coopération nucléaire franco-Chinoise,” 9 Octobre 1978, Asie-Océanie, Folder 10-11-5, Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ Note, December 18, Gererd Smith Files. Folder French-China, RG 59, UD-07D 106, NARA.

with the Americans separately at each step.⁴⁵⁶ Not having nuclear weapons themselves and not wishing to anger either the Americans nor the Russians, The West German officials, treated the water much more carefully than the French. How to make a responsible deal became a central theme in FRG's internal discussion. Even the energy sector's worker's union, which had a financial interest in the sale, wrote a carefully phrased letter to the State Secretary Haunschild that the reactor sales should only go ahead when "taken into the political consequences of China's role as a nuclear-weapon state" and "after [the FRG had] fully explored the opinion and received acceptance from friendly countries within the COCOM structure."⁴⁵⁷

China, too, was concerned about German conditionalities, and tried to use their current negotiation with the French to argue for "equal treatment." This complex picture was laid out in a memo from FRG Finance Minister Karry to Foreign Minister Genscher on 15 July 1978, in which Karry reported that Xie Peiyi, the Chinese Commissar on Foreign Investment and Import-Export had told him and other FRG officials that the Chinese have to "give it a second thought, considering the FRG was in the complete opposite position to France who had no attached conditions [to the sale]." He was also concerned that "the delivery of reactors from Germany to China could only be possible if China subjected itself to supervision by the International Atomic Energy Organization's control in Vienna, while the delivery of French reactors had no such attached conditions." In addition, "German reactors would be subjected to COCOM conditions, while the French ones would not have to." The report concluded that the Chinese wanted the Germans to "do it like the French - export the reactors without any

⁴⁵⁶ Memo, KKW-Export nach China. Der Bundesminister für Bildung und Wissenschaft, Record Number: B196/56091. BArch Berlin.

⁴⁵⁷ Letter, Dr. Sutholt, Dr. Frewer, to Herrn Staatssekretär, 16 August, 1978, Record Number: B196/56091. BArch Berlin.

different or additional restrictions,” a position that the rule-bound Germans found both incomprehensible and impossible for them to match. It was also from this conversation that the FRG officials realized that the French were out-smarting them. “French sales in principle should also be like the case in Germany - to be subject to COCOM reviews. It is thus in our opinion that the French must have gotten some leeway from their direct negotiations with the Americans. FRG so far hasn’t done anything similar to it [talk to Americans], but should do it soon and do it craftly.”⁴⁵⁸

Conclusion and aftermath

A comparison of documents in Paris, Bonn, and Washington showed a strange dynamic in the last few months of 1978 surrounding China’s reactor purchase. The Chinese were hacking prices with the French, citing that they could go to the Germans at any moment. Meanwhile, the Germans, especially the energy union representatives, watched the more advanced French-Chinese negotiation with both jealousy and anxiety, then used the fact that China was indeed talking to their French competitors as an excuse to press their own officials to approve the sale.⁴⁵⁹ In Washington, meanwhile, the Carter administration officials tried their best to keep the French-German competition under control. On 6 December 1978, the French embassy finally reported to the U.S. State Department that they obtained a written, albeit vague assurance from the Chinese that those reactors would be used for “peaceful purposes” and the French firm would “minimize any transfer of technology beyond that needed to ensure the safe operation of the reactor.” In addition, “the manufacturing technology will not be transferred, and there will be contractual provisions against replication or subsequent retransfer technology.”

⁴⁵⁸ Memo, “Bezug von Kernkraftwerken durch die Volksrepublik China,” Der Hessische Minister für Wirtschaft und Technik, 25. 7. 1978, Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ Memo, “Gespräch von Herrn M mit dem KWU-Vorstand am 18.9.19, 30 September 1977, Bonn. Ibid.

Taking this assurance into consideration, while also taking into account that the French reactors contained U.S. technology, the Carter Administration determined that it still had some legal control over what China could do with the French reactors, contrary to China getting reactors from “a West German firm which does not have any licensing agreement with US firm.” Finally the State Department decided that it would prefer the French to lead the sale, rather than the Germans.⁴⁶⁰ On 18 December, Gerard Smith and Assistant Secretary Pickering dumped the White House’s decision on the poorly informed Congress during a testimony in a passive-aggressive manner. “The significance is that the French had obtained from the PRC at our behest ...A government-to-government peaceful uses assurance... and minimum subsequent transfer from the PRC [to third countries], and the fact that the West Germans would likely make the sale, without any U.S. involvement, if we were to deny it to the French.”⁴⁶¹ Without much choice, the Congressmen “gave no sign they would object” but “said they wished they had been consulted earlier.” On 25 December, Pickering formally delivered the green light to the Framatome vice president Yves Girard, who was in DC eagerly waiting for the Americans’ final decision. The French, it seemed, had finally secured a great business deal with China.⁴⁶²

In 1979, the French reactor sales suffered a similar fate as the British Harrier deal - not only were the talks stuck on pricing issues, but China also wanted the transfer of technologies related to the reactors that the French were unwilling to give.⁴⁶³ Instead of

⁴⁶⁰ Telegram, 6 December, 1978, SECSTATE to WAHDC to AMEMBASSY Paris, French Nuclear Reactor Sale to the Peoples Republic of China. Gerard Smith Files, RG 59, UD-07D 106, NARA.

⁴⁶¹ Note, Non-Proliferation Discussion with Congress, Ibid.

⁴⁶² Telegram, SECSTATE WASHDC to AMEMBASSY Paris, Peking, “Discussions with French on Framatome Sale to the PRC.” 25 December 78. Ibid.

⁴⁶³ Telegram, Peiking to Paris, Centrales Nucléaires. 17 August 1979, Asie-Océanie, Folder 10 11.5, Archive Diplomatique Paris.

purchasing two commercial reactors, the Chinese in 1980 started a different negotiation and started to ask for just one experimental reactor, with the transfer of a large list of associated technologies. This strategy, turned out, worked for both sides and was far more economical and beneficial in the long-term to China.⁴⁶⁴ Sixteen years later, this new project finally bore fruit, as China fired up the new French-Chinese joint build reactors in Daya Bay in 1996, after having the French train a new generation of Chinese nuclear experts.⁴⁶⁵ This cooperation continued far beyond the Cold War, as demonstrated by the Taishan nuclear power plant that opened in 2018 and was powered by two new French designed reactors. The opening ceremony was lavishly laid out and symbolically praised in the Chinese press as a sign of China's ability to win friends in the West in the face of the escalating U.S.-China trade dispute and a new round of U.S. technological embargo on Chinese firms.⁴⁶⁶

European Arms Sale to China and the East West Detente

From a Cold War perspective, the above-mentioned European technology transfer negotiations with China also coincided with the Soviet Union's re-evaluation of its Asia strategy in the face of rapid U.S.-China rapprochement. It seems that the Soviet Union's own containment policy against China was also failing on the European front in addition to the American and the Japanese fronts. What China was doing in Europe only confirmed Brezhnev and his foreign policy analysts' fear that the Americans were arming the Chinese to encircle the Soviet Union. The director of Far East Institute,

⁴⁶⁴ Telegram, Peiking to Paris, Projet de Centrale Électrique Nucléaire de Canton. 4 June 1980, Asie-Océanie, Folder 10 11.5, Archive Diplomatique Paris.

⁴⁶⁵ S. Charbonneau, "Framatome Contribution To Chinese NPP Development And Standardization, Conference Record", *Inis.Iaea.Org*, 1996 <https://inis.iaea.org/collection/NCLCollectionStore/_Public/29/035/29035049.pdf?r=1&r=1> [accessed 8 September 2019].

⁴⁶⁶ Shunsuke Tabeta, "China Launches French-Designed Next-Gen Nuclear Reactor", *Nikkei Asian Review*, 2018 <<https://asia.nikkei.com/Economy/China-launches-French-designed-next-gen-nuclear-reactor>> [accessed 8 September 2019].

Sladowskii, Brezhnev's top China advisor, painted a grim picture in his 1978 report: "The opposition force against the Soviet Union in East Asia now included the USA, Japan, South Korea, and the extremely anti-Soviet China... Carter was playing the China card when he said America had parallel strategic interests in Asia, which was intended to incorporate China's anti-Soviet principles under the guise of collective security."⁴⁶⁷ In terms of China's relations with Europe, according to Sladkovskii's opening address to the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee's special meeting on China, the purpose was to "allow Beijing to coordinate with the imperialists, to use anti-Soviet propaganda to attack socialist countries... and to get close to NATO. China's new relationship with Western Europe, under the guise of 'mutual security' is now an emerging threat to the Warsaw Pact."⁴⁶⁸

Dealing Another Blow to the Détente

Furthermore, Brezhnev's advisors were especially disturbed by China's purchasing weapons from NATO countries, which they saw as a larger and deeper conspiracy of China trying to ally itself with the military industrial complex in Western countries. In a joint report by the American and Canadian Studies Institute and the Far East Institute, the Soviet experts on both Chinese and American politics agreed that the current trade and economic cooperation between China and the West "cannot just be seen as China's way to get technologies, weapons, or means of production, but also as China's attempt to mobilize anti-Soviet resources in capitalist states, in the form of [China's] support of NATO." Americans, of course, were the mastermind behind the conspiracy.

⁴⁶⁷ Memo, Sladokovskii, "Политическая ситуация в Азии и Проблемы Коллективной Безопасности" [Political Situation in Asia and the Problems of Collective Security], 7 February 78, Fond 1970, Opis 2, Delo 10. APAN.

⁴⁶⁸ Memo, Sladokovskii, "Материалы к Вступительному Слову при Открытии Конференции - По Проблемы Маоизма" [Materials on Opening Speech for the October Conference - On the Problems of Maoism] 21 March 1978, Fond 1970, Opis 2, Delo 10. APAN.

“Brzezinski had nothing new, he was trying to arm the Chinese to put pressure on the Soviet Union.”⁴⁶⁹ On 20 November 1978, the Soviet ambassador’s political counsellor Dolgov delivered Brezhnev’s personal letter to the British Foreign Office, intended for the PM. It was unclear whether Callaghan had read the letter, since George G. Walden, Secretary at the Foreign Office shovelled him out, saying, “U.K.’s relations with China were not directed at any third country.” But the letter, preserved in the FO files, showed Brezhnev’s frustration:

“Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

I am addressing you on a major issue which is not only important for a due mutual understanding in our bilateral relations, but also transcends them and has a direct bearing on the problems of detente and maintaining peace. This issue is military sales to China. You would probably share the view that the question of supplying arms to this or that state can not be considered in alienation from the policy of this state. This is yet more so with regard to China, whose leadership is advocating war and is doing so openly, in front of the very eyes of everybody...Recently one can however hear statements about a possibility to postpone the war...but in fact, Peking leaders applaud to any aggravation of international tensions and where they can they provoke and cause them, and on the contrary, anything that benefits detente is anathema to them. How can one turn a blind eye to that?”

Then, Brezhnev talked how there is no clear distinction between "defensive" and "offensive weapons," therefore,

"China, having as it is one of the biggest armies in the world, takes a stand against disarmament, has not signed a single treaty concerning disarmament and makes a stake on further growth of arms of its own." Thus, "military deliveries to China.. must be stopped, and stopped in time, without delay."⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶⁹ G.A. Arbatov, L.P. Delyusini, L.P.Delyusiny, “Внутренняя Политика Китая и Американо-Китайский Отношения,” [Internal Politics of China and U.S.-China Relations] 7 July 1978, Fond 2021, Opis 1, Delo 88. АРАИ IDV.

⁴⁷⁰ Attachment, in “Defense Sale to China.” 20 November 1978, DEFE11/977, UKNA.

It seemed, from Brezhnev's perspective that two of Soviet Union's most evil enemies, the Maoist-Revisionist China and the Imperialist-Militarists in NATO were forging an anti-Soviet alliance in a nightmarish scenario.

However, Deng Xiaoping and his comrades argued exactly the opposite: the Soviet Union, not China, was the evil revisionist that needed to be contained. Or, as Deng famously said before his later 1979 trip to the US, "If we really want to be able to place curbs on the polar bear, the only realistic thing for us is to unite."⁴⁷¹ In Europe, too, Chinese top officials and diplomats also engaged in a similar polemic against the Soviet Union in order to get the weapons that the Brezhnev warned Europeans not to sell. The Chinese Foreign Minister, for example, told Prime Minister Callaghan during the Harrier sale negotiation that "the Soviet Union talked about detente, disarmament and economic cooperation in Europe but at the same time was extending her influence in the black areas and in the countries peripheral to Europe. If a crisis came about or if an emergency arose, China feared that the West would find itself in a situation in which it wanted to resist the Soviet Union but could not do so." The Prime Minister, in return, "expressed he had similar concerns."⁴⁷²

France, too, became a battleground of opinions between the Chinese and the Soviets. This was despite the fact that the French was driven much more so by their desire to become an independent nuclear power alongside both of the superpowers, a view that was very much shared by their Chinese partners. For example, internally the French complained among themselves about America and their COCOMs, and how the

⁴⁷¹ Harry Harding, *A Fragile Relationship: The United States And China Since 1972* (Washington, 2000), 90.

⁴⁷² Transcript. Chinese Foreign Minister Call on the Prime Minister: 11, October 1978," FCO, 12 October 1978. DEFE11/977, UKNA.

“United States’ excessive insistence on the question of controls could lead to China preferr[ing] the German partners.”⁴⁷³ Meanwhile, they fondly recalled France and China’s shared special status as nuclear weapon states and cited it as a reason why China should stick with the French on nuclear matters.⁴⁷⁴ In a bid to both inform and influence, Chinese diplomats, too, told the Germans that they should not expect the Chinese-French negotiations to be slowed down by COCOM restrictions. “Why [should we care] about the COCOM?” said the Chinese. “China and France will not let their nuclear cooperation be influenced by the superpowers.”⁴⁷⁵

It was the Carter administration, however, who faced the strongest pressure from the Soviet Union on European arms sales to China, as Brezhnev and his advisors saw America’s black hands behind every European arms delivery- small and large, real or imagined - to China. NATO arms sales to China turned out to be a major contention point in U.S.-Soviet relations. In 1977, the U.S. Liaison Office in Beijing had received multiple visits from anxious Soviet diplomats trying to confirming rumours, mostly picked up from Hong Kong street tabloids that NATO were selling weapons or military-related technologies to the Chinese. In 1977, the Americans could still pretend those rumours were unsubstantiated and send the curious Russian visitors away: “The U.S. has no plans to sell weapons to the PRC, while, in any case, PRC probably would not wish to buy weapons from the U.S.” was the standard response.⁴⁷⁶ But a year later, as additional evidence confirmed those tabloid rumors to be real, the Soviets decided to bring the issue to the highest level of U.S.-Soviet relations.

⁴⁷³ Telegram, Peking to Paris, Entretien Avec M. Woodcock-Exportation de Centrales Nucleaires vers la Chine.” 26 July 1978, Asie-Oceanie, Folder 10-11-5, Archive Diplomatique Paris.

⁴⁷⁴ Telegram, Paris to Peiking, Ventes de Centrales Nucléaires A la Chine, 23 October 1978. Asie-Oceanie, Folder 10-11-5, Archive Diplomatique.

⁴⁷⁵ Cable, from Paris, to Bonn, Frankreich-Vr China. 26 October 1978. Record Number: B196/56091, BArch Berlin.

⁴⁷⁶ USLO Peking to SECSTATE WASHDC, 08 June 1977. NLC-21-15-10-17, JCL CREST.

By late 1978, western arms sale became a major tension point between United States and the Soviet Union. On 30 September 1978, the Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko protested in front of Jimmy Carter that he had noted reports “appearing from time to time in the press to the effect that China intended or had already begun to purchase large quantities of arms from various countries, perhaps from some of the U.S. allies and perhaps from the United States as well... If something like this was indeed taking place, it would be a very major problem that could seriously impact the relations between our two countries.”⁴⁷⁷ Brezhnev himself was even more direct in a message that intended to pressure the U.S. to induce American allies from selling weapons to China, Brezhnev wrote to Carter that “a number of US allies are preparing—and this is an open secret—deals for deliveries of arms and transfer of technology to Peking,” where “it is well known that the U.S. has not the least role to play.” It was a dangerous move on the U.S. side that could only lead to Soviet actions to further arm itself, Brezhnev argued, and as a result, “there can hardly remain any doubts that contributing to the armament of China does not strengthen but, on the contrary, erodes trust in our relations which is being built with such difficulty.”⁴⁷⁸

However, arming the Chinese was exactly what American hardliners wanted. The Americans should not bow to the Soviet pressure, Brzezinski commented on the version of Brezhnev letter he sent to Carter, because if they do so, “we would be engaging in [a] blockade of China to the benefit of the Soviet Union, and this would destroy the chances of any collaborative US-Chinese relations.”⁴⁷⁹ The warning of the Soviet officials, thus, fell on deaf ears. The crisis of 1979 only vindicated the American

⁴⁷⁷ FRUS 1977-1978 Volume VI, Soviet Union, 469.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid, 503.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid

hardliners' view that arming China was the right choice. The discovery of Soviet brigades in Cuba, the worsening crisis in the Horn of Africa, and finally, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan only propelled the United States into a new era of close military cooperation with China. As more green lights were signalled to allow European arms sales to the Chinese, American companies themselves also received permission from the White House to join the competition.

On 6 January 1980, a week after the Afghanistan invasion, a delegation of U.S. Defense officials, led by Ambassador George Seignious, the director of Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, arrived in China and met with General Liu Huaqing, Deng Xiaoping's second-in-command of the PLA, also remembered in China as the father of China's modern navy. Seignious told the Chinese that times had changed "since the days when COCOM was formed," and that "we have been considering on a case by case basis the transfer of technology to China which we would not provide the Soviet Union."⁴⁸⁰ At the same time in Washington, Secretary Brown told visiting Chinese Vice premier Gen Biao, another one of Deng's trusted general-turned-politicians, that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan required a new level of strategic cooperation between the U.S. and China, such that the "tightening up of technology transfers to the Soviet Union and high-technology sales" would "also take place at the same time [as] technology transfers to the PRC are moving in the reverse direction."⁴⁸¹ It seemed that the anti-Soviet American hardliners too had ignored their own regulations and reached their own "gentlemen's understanding" with China.

⁴⁸⁰ NSA Staff Material -Far East, Sullivan Subject files, Box 70, Folder Brown Tril 1/80, JCL

⁴⁸¹ NSA Staff Material -Far East, Sullivan Subject files, Box 70, Folder Gen Biao visit, June 10, 1980, JCL

Conclusion and Further Studies

With a clear greenlight from the White House, Europeans opened up their market to the Chinese. Largely due to U.S. initiatives, the 1980s marked a turning point in China's industrial, and specifically military development, where China enjoyed unprecedented access to western technologies until the George H.W. Bush administration again renewed the military embargo after the Tiananmen tragedy in 1989.⁴⁸² Even after that, some scholars argued, dual-use technologies from Europe - British fighter engines and French nuclear secrets, for example, still managed to flow into China, under the Americans' nose.⁴⁸³

As this study has demonstrated, despite the fact that the Europeans were willing to make wholesale deals, China's acquisition of military hardware and dual-use technologies from Europe was limited by China's financial capability to pay, as seen in the case of the proposed British Harrier sales, and China's shift of strategy from purchasing a large quantity of Harriers to acquiring the technology and means of production itself. It was also strained by the unwillingness of some European countries to break the COCOM structure, as in the case of the Germans. Despite few concrete results, the intensive negotiations among the Americans, Europeans, and the Chinese during the cases studied, as well as the internal debates occurring inside the three European nations above, have provided a unique window into this period of special European-China relations. These cases demonstrated that the willingness of the Europeans to sell Chinese weapons and dual-use technologies could go beyond what the Americans had initially wished. China, although severely limited by its financial

⁴⁸² Zuoyue Wang, "The Cold War and the Reshaping of Transnational Science in China," in Naomi Oreskes and John Krige, *Science And Technology In The Global Cold War* (Cumberland, 2016), 343-463.

⁴⁸³ Susan Lawrence, "New Cracks In The Alliance: The U.S. Is Desperate To Convince The EU That It Should Keep An Arms Embargo Imposed On China After Tiananmen Square 15 Years Ago; Europe Says That Times--And China--Have Changed", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 167/32 (2004), 24-26.

capabilities, nevertheless demonstrated a strong desire to acquire western military technologies that indicated long-term strategic ambitions that went far beyond the scope of the Cold War.

This study has also pointed out a new set of Cold War tensions, namely that European arms sales to China, and indeed the very expectation of it, already caused great alarm among Soviet officials and might have been an important but overlooked source of East-West tension during the last days of detente, especially from the perspective of American-Soviet relations. However, the European-Soviet perspectives are still under-explored. Was China genuinely interested only in European technologies, or did Deng Xiaoping and his comrades have a larger design of creating an anti-Soviet web that could also include the Europeans, just as Brezhnev and his advisors had feared? Was China more interested in becoming one of the preeminent military powers itself, with or without the necessity of the Cold War?

Conclusion

Technology Transfer and Cold War

This thesis told the story of how Deng Xiaoping used U.S.-China mutual anti-Soviet cooperation to achieve his long-term strategic ambitions of acquiring U.S. and Western military and dual-use technologies. But how close was Deng Xiaoping at achieving his goals at the end of the Cold War? If compared to where China took off at the end of the Cultural Revolution, access to the West indeed speeded up China's military modernization and allowed the PLA to acquire modern western weaponries that they would never be able to develop themselves in such short amount of time. A study by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute tracked down an impressive list of major conventional weapons and weapon components China managed to get from America and America's allies during the last decade of the Cold War, many of those were used for reverse engineering, or already came with blue prints for domestic production. The list includes:

From Canada: 5 Challenger transport airplanes.

From France: a total of 71 variety of helicopters, AIFV armoured vehicle turret upgrade, 5 set of Rasit E radar systems. A-5K avionics upgrade for ground attack airplanes, 96 HOT -2 anti-tank missiles. The Chinese also successful copied the French AS-365 Dauphin-2 helicopter and made its own version, Z-9.

From Germany: 4 helicopters, V-P diesel engines for tanks.

From Israel: variety of avionic system, in-flight refuelling assistance system, tank gun control systems, and a verity of electronics for missiles and electronic warfare.

From Italy: 40 A-244 S launchers and torpedoes, and avionics.

From the UK: 200_ F-7m avionics for fighters. AIFV turret, and custom-designed turret upgrade for Chinese T-59 tanks – the same tanks that ran over protesters in Tiananmen square in 1989. Ship-board radio systems. 4 105-mm tank gun as samples for reverse engineering, those too were used on Chinese tanks, 1 Watchman radar, and Sea Skimmer target drones.

Consider the “honeymoon” Deng Xiaoping enjoyed with the Carter Administration, it was not strange that the list from the United States remained the longest: 9 Bell 212 helicopters, 3 Citation II transport planes, 24 s-70C helicopters. 9 Bell 206B helicopters. And a list of upgrades for tanks, airplanes, and LM2500 gas turbines that powered modern Chinese fighter jets that constantly faced off against US Seventh Fleet. 2 L-100-30 Hercules transports, 2 an/tpq-37 artillery locating radars.⁴⁸⁴ The U.S. also managed to design China’s J-8II fighter jet. Not long after Cold War, one of those fighter jets, armed with Israeli-designed missiles ironically also based on American designs, collided against an American EP-3 surveillance plane in 2001, triggering a wave of anti-American protests fuel by Chinese state-controlled media.⁴⁸⁵

The picture, however, became less clear when it takes into consideration of America’s continued arms sales to Taiwan throughout the 1980s, which significantly complicated Deng Xiaoping’s other goal of putting enough pressure on Chiang Ching-Kuo to force him to accept Deng’s “One Country, Two systems” demand. U.S. government’s officially licensed arms sale agreement with Taiwan raised from 487 million USD in

⁴⁸⁴ Bates Gill and Taeho Kim, *China’s Arms Acquisitions from Abroad A Quest for ‘Superb and Secret Weapons,’* Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 1995, 42-43

⁴⁸⁵ A full report can be seen: CRS Report for Congress, *China-U.S. Aircraft Collision Incident of April 2001: Assessments and Policy Implications*, Library of Congress, 2001. On Z-9 Helicopter, see, *Chinese Access to Dual-Use and Military Technology*, Joint Economic Committee April 24, 1998, US Congress, 109.

early 1980 to about 518 Million USD at the end of the Cold War. In addition, U.S. private companies did even better, private company sales increased from 210 million USD in 1980 to 452 million USD in 1990.⁴⁸⁶ The Reagan Administration, observed by scholar of U.S.-Taiwanese relations, John Copper, learned to play the Chinese politics exactly as Deng Xiaoping played American politics in the Carter years. On one hand, Reagan signed the 3rd U.S.-China joint communique in 1982 to promise “to reduce gradually its sales of arms to Taiwan,” essentially giving a vague and non-binding assurance to the PRC as a way to boost Deng Xiaoping’s domestic prestige when Deng was purging his conservative political enemies within the Party, as well as to prevent Deng Xiaoping from getting too close to the Soviet Union when Brezhnev expressed Soviet Union’s interests in improving Sino-Soviet relations. On the other hand, much to Deng’s frustration, the Reagan administration continued to sell arms and transfer military technologies to Chiang Ching-Kuo in order to maintain the military balance at the Taiwanese Strait. “President Reagan was apparently convinced that Deng needed the United States and that he was a friend.” Observed Copper, “Yet Reagan did not want to betray Taipei. He privately wrote a memo saying that the United States should restrict arms sales to Taiwan only as long as a cross-strait balance of power was preserved. The memo was placed in a National Security Council safe for future presidents to read.” As a result, Taiwan managed to acquire F-104 interceptors, a more advanced version of F-5 fighter jets, and C130 transports from the United States which they could not get from the Carter Administration.⁴⁸⁷ Those weapons posted a significant challenge to the much more outdated Soviet jet fleet maintained by the mainland. And continued U.S. arms sale to ROC further nullified the advantages the

⁴⁸⁶ U.S. Conventional Arms Sales to Taiwan 1980-2010, U.S. Arms Control Association, October 2012 <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/taiwanarms>

⁴⁸⁷ John F. Copper, *Playing with Fire: The Looming War with China over Taiwan*, Praeger Security International, 2006. 43-44

PRC had gained from its own arms and dual-use technology purchase to the present day.

What threatened China's accusation of Western military and dual-use technology the most was the end of the Cold War itself. The Cold War's end not only withdrew the mutual anti-Soviet rationale that initiated and sustained those arms sales and technology transfers, but also made the public in the West more provocative in challenging those policies, especially after the Tiananmen Massacre. From London, Brussels, to Washington, people questioned the wisdom of arming China, as the West seemed to be moving forward out of the shadows of Cold War, while China Communist Party-dominated political system itself was stuck in the Cold War, refusing to accept change.

The American policy, too, changed with the end of the Cold War. On 19 May 1989, Command Ship of U.S. Seventh Fleet *Blue Ridge*, escorted by missile Cruiser *Sterett* and frigate *Rodney M. Davis* sailed into the port of Shanghai with the newly appointed U.S. Ambassador to China James Lilley on board. The idea of this trip, planned just one day after Gorbachev's visit to Shanghai, was to remind the Chinese that U.S.-China military ties remained strong and the two countries still shared a common ground in resisting the Soviet Union.

But the world was now different, and so were Deng Xiaoping's priorities. Deng, at this moment, no longer saw the Soviet Union under the new leadership of Gorbachev as a mortal threat as he did when he faced the stubborn Brezhnev. He and Gorbachev were about to normalize Sino-Soviet relations – a final step to make China an equal with its old-time northern rival. Simultaneously the Chinese Communist Party now faced

unprecedented domestic challenges as students and average citizens were taking to the streets in main Chinese cities, demanding political reforms, some even demanding that Deng to step down. Yan Jiaqi, a prominent intellectual at the protest, for example, even wrote a famous article criticizing the Party's corruption and calling Deng "The Last Emperor of China."⁴⁸⁸ This, of course, was something Deng could not tolerate. Even worse, from Deng's perspective, some moderate Communist Party members seemed to be sympathetic towards the students. The USS *Blue Ridge* sailed into Shanghai exactly at this fateful moment when hundreds of thousands of Shanghai's citizens were protesting on the streets.

Even though the U.S. captains tried their best to ask U.S. sailors to stay away from the demonstrators, the protestors managed to surround the wives of those Americans, telling them their political demands and admiration of America. "It is overwhelming and very interesting,' one of the sailor wives said "This is history being made."⁴⁸⁹ While American navy commanders met with Chinese PLA delegations and reiterated their seemingly outdated commitment to confronting the Soviet Union, the new American Ambassador, James Lilley, already realized major changes were about to happen to China and to U.S.-China relations. To get a closer reading to China's domestic situation, Lilley travelled to Beijing, dressed incognito as a tourist, and mingled with the student protesters on Tiananmen Square. "Making sure to keep my identity as the American ambassador secret, I engaged students in conversation, querying them about their hopes and dreams for China... They were determined to rid China of corrupt rulers and practices of nepotism in the government. They wanted a better China, but not necessarily a non-communist China." Lilley remembered, "Above

⁴⁸⁸ "告诉你一个真实的六四天安门事件 [Telling you the True Tiananmen Incident]," Radio Free Asia, 2009 <<https://www.rfa.org/mandarin/yataibaodao/64-06032009120239.html>> [accessed 21 June 2020].

⁴⁸⁹ United Press International, "U.S. Navy vessels make rare Shanghai stopover" May 19, 1989

all, in those early weeks I saw a protest movement, not a call for democracy. The students were not yet asking the Chinese Communist Party to give up power.”⁴⁹⁰

However, Deng Xiaoping and his comrades thought otherwise. Recently declassified documents showed that Deng Xiaoping’s close circles of comrades firmly believed the protest was a Western conspiracy orchestrated by the CIA. The United States was supporting “subversive forces” behind the protesters to overthrow the Communist Party. To justify his decision, Deng had allegedly said: “two hundred dead could bring 20 years of peace to China.”⁴⁹¹ Immediately after Gorbachev left China. Deng Xiaoping, Li Peng and the other hardliners gained control of the Party, they sacked the moderate Premier Zhao Ziyang, and sent in the 27th Army into Beijing, lying to the confused soldiers that they were about to encounter violent counterrevolutionaries and they should show them no mercy. The Army shot their way from the suburb into Tiananmen Square and violently crushed the protestors, killing students, average citizens, and even other PLA soldiers who happened to be supporting the students on the square.⁴⁹² All this happened under the watch of the international press who were initially there to cover Gorbachev’s visit.⁴⁹³ Overnight, the Tiananmen massacre destroyed Chinese Communist Party’s image in the West.

American public opinion now turned against China and President George H.W. Bush’s China policy. Why would the U.S. government still sell arms to a regime that just killed

⁴⁹⁰ James Lilley R. *China hands: nine decades of adventure, espionage, and diplomacy in Asia*, Perseus Book, 2004, 298

⁴⁹¹ China: UKE Beijing to FCO "Chinese Internal Situation," 20 May 1989, Prime Ministerial Private Office files, Margaret Thatcher Foundation.
<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/149469>

⁴⁹² 自由亚洲电台, 天安门事件的历史见证, [Radio Freedom Asia, Tiananmen’s History Witnesses], (Tai Pei, 2014).

⁴⁹³ CIA Research Paper, *The Road to the Tiananmen Crackdown: An Analytic Chronology of Chinese Leadership Decision Making*, September 1989, Confidential, Declassified on March 2000, accessed through, National Security Archive. <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB47/doc13.pdf>.

its own people?⁴⁹⁴ The U.S. Congress soon worked out a new bill reversing all military cooperation with China, banned “arms sales, U.S. satellite exports and police equipment” to China and called for “an end to all nuclear cooperation.”⁴⁹⁵ In that year, the European Council for Ministers too called for arms embargo against China. Bureaucratic and inefficient as always, the EU decided for “individual state” to form their own policy thus left many loopholes for China to exploit in the future.⁴⁹⁶ In 1992, embroiled in a conflict with Pro-Taiwan groups in Congress and facing pressure from Texas’ own defence industry workers. President George H.W. Bush delivered his final blow to the post-Tiananmen U.S.-China relations. In September Bush announced he would approve the U.S. Company General Dynamics to deliver 150 F-16 aircraft to Taiwan. An act, he claimed, would save more than 3000 jobs in Texas.⁴⁹⁷ The sale gave a major boost to Taiwanese military’s air advantage against the mainland, which further delayed, if not crushed, Deng Xiaoping and his followers’ dream of unifying Taiwan. The sale triggered rounds of protests from the Communist Party. Curiously, in the Communist Party’s new propaganda campaign against the United States, the Americans, not the Soviets, were now the “hegemons” that “interfered with domestic Chinese politics” and “disrupt the peace across the Taiwan-Strait” that needed to be condemned and struggled against.⁴⁹⁸ As a new round of tensions began between U.S. and China, and the Chinese military increasingly turned towards post-Soviet Russia for

⁴⁹⁴ Robert L. Suettingers, *Beyond Tiananmen: The Politics of U.S.-China Relations 1989-2000*, Brookings Institution Press: Washington DC, 2003, pp. 87.

⁴⁹⁵ Conferees Approve Sanctions on China, Washington Post, November 8, 1989

Also see,

Richard Bush, 30 years after Tiananmen Square, a look back on Congress’ forceful response, 29 May 2019. Brookings.

⁴⁹⁶ EU arms embargo on China, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 20 November 2012

⁴⁹⁷ Asia: Taiwan's Triumph, Economist, 2, 1992.

⁴⁹⁸ “就美国政府决定向台湾出售战斗机一事发表严正声明 [Serious Proclamation regarding U.S. Jet Sales to Taiwan] ” 5 September 1992, *People's Daily*.

arms and dual-use technologies.⁴⁹⁹ The history of Cold War U.S.-China military cooperation soon became buried in the memories of Cold War.

⁴⁹⁹ Siemon T. Wezeman, "China, Russia and the shifting landscape of arms sales," SIPRI. 5 July 2017

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