Below the Summit:

Cultural and Scholarly Exchange Visits in Sino-American Relations, from Ping-Pong Diplomacy to Normalisation, 1971–1978

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Short abstract

Existing accounts of the US-China relationship of the 1970s have focussed on high-diplomacy conducted during summit visits such as President Richard Nixon's 1972 trip to China. This thesis is a history of Sino-American rapprochement below those summits. It examines the programme of cultural and scholarly exchange visits that, beginning with the ping-pong diplomacy of 1971, helped reacquaint the Chinese and American people after more than two decades of nearly hermetic isolation. This work argues, however, that exchanges did more than this. It posits that these contacts also exerted a powerful influence on the high-level relationship and, indeed, on the negotiations that took place in summit meetings. Exchange visits, as well as the ongoing negotiations around this programme of contacts, were a critical factor in the successes and failures, the progress and setbacks in Sino-American negotiations towards normalisation. The second argument of this thesis is that non-state exchange organisations, as well as individuals connected to these groups, were key actors in the Sino-American relationship. Two organisations are at the heart of the narrative: the National Committee on US-China Relations and the Committee on Scholarly Communications with the People's Republic of China. By focussing on the decision- and policy-making of these two groups, I challenge the extant depiction of the exchange programme as simply representative and derivative of high-level diplomacy. The documentary record shows that both governments were acutely aware of the agency exercised by those connected to the exchange programme and the influence of that programme on the bilateral relationship as a whole. The third argument of this work is that, in recognition of the importance of exchanges, both Chinese and American governments made a concerted effort to control and co-opt these transnational actors, with varying success.

Long abstract

Previous accounts of the US-China relationship of the 1970s have predominantly focussed on the high-level relations between the two country's governments, especially the official diplomacy conducted during summit meetings such as that between President Richard Nixon and Chairman Mao Zedong in 1972. This thesis is a history of Sino-American relations below these summits. It argues that, from 1971 until the end of 1978, this important relationship was equally shaped by moments and developments that occurred below, between and behind the summit meetings of the two nation's leaders.

In particular, this thesis examines the programme of cultural and scholarly exchange visits that, beginning with the ping-pong diplomacy of 1971, helped reacquaint the Chinese and American people after more than two decades of nearly hermetic isolation. However, this work argues that exchanges did more than this. It posits that these contacts also exerted a powerful influence on the high-level relationship and, indeed, on the negotiations that took place in summit meetings. Exchange visits, as well as the ongoing negotiations around this programme of contacts, were a critical factor in the successes and failures, the progress and setbacks in Sino-American negotiations towards normalisation. The condition and course of exchanges and bilateral contacts were shaped by developments in high diplomacy but, in turn, exchanges also influenced governmental contacts. These two tracks of diplomacy were, this thesis shows, mutually constitutive.

Exchanges generally had a positive influence on the high-level relationship. Historians have widely recognised the importance of ping-pong diplomacy in precipitating Nixon's visit to China: that episode was perhaps the example *par excellence* of exchange diplomacy during the Cold War. What has received less attention is how exchanges continued to act as one of the principal means by which both governments maintained and deepened rapprochement in the seven years of faltering negotiations that ultimately lead to the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1978. High-profile visits by athletes, acrobats and musicians in 1972 and 1973 confirmed and cultivated public enthusiasm for

rapprochement, while scholarly exchanges emerged in the mid-1970s as the critical means by which China's scientific and industrial could gain valuable access to American expertise.

Exchange visits did not invariably proceed smoothly, however, and periodic disagreements in exchange negotiations reflected but also intensified friction in diplomatic talks. A cancellation of a high-profile exchange of Chinese performing artists in 1975 rocked President Gerald Ford's already frayed relationship with Beijing, while American resentment at the asymmetry of scientific cooperation emerged as a serious irritant in relations in the second half of the 1970s. Whether for good or ill, this thesis argues that the condition of exchange contacts had an important bearing on the high-level relationship.

The second argument of this thesis is that non-state exchange organisations, as well as individuals connected to these groups, were key actors in the Sino-American relationship. Two organisations are at the heart of this work's narrative. The National Committee on US-China Relations (NCUSCR) and the Committee on Scholarly Communications with the PRC (CSCPRC) were both founded in 1966 and shared the common purpose of encouraging contact and engagement with China among the American population. Throughout this period, these groups were the leading two American organisations in the exchange programme, managing the lion's share of cultural and scholarly exchange visits, respectively. By focussing on the decision- and policy-making of these two groups, I challenge the extant depiction of the exchange programme as simply representative and derivative of high-level diplomacy. Instead, this thesis demonstrates that exchange organisations exercised significant agency, not only in shaping the programmes of contacts they oversaw but, in turn, in influencing the broader relationship between Chinese and American societies and governments.

The significance of non-state, transnational actors was enhanced during this period by the lack of official diplomatic relations between the two governments. A critical, practical reason for both the independence and influence of these transnational actors was Beijing's steadfast refusal of National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger's request that the US government be allowed to directly manage

exchange diplomacy. The Chinese insisted that, until Washington was prepared to recognise the People's Republic, such visits must be arranged by the Chinese and American people, not their governments. Furthermore, the inchoate and febrile diplomatic relationship meant that facilitated exchanges were important events in the calendar of Sino-American relations: thus, a successful visit could offer a fillip to governmental relations, while a bust-up could take a long time to be forgotten. This thesis shows, then, that before normalisation, exchange organisations were at the vanguard of negotiating China and America's transition from isolation to cooperation. In this way, it broadens our understanding of Sino-American history: rather than a relationship determined by a few leaders — Kissinger, Zhou Enlai, Nixon, Mao Zedong, Carter, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Deng Xiaoping — this thesis posits that rapprochement was a far wider interaction between Americans and Chinese both inside and outside of government.

The documentary record shows that both governments were acutely aware of the agency exercised by those connected to the exchange programme and the influence of that programme on the bilateral relationship as a whole. The third argument of this work is that, in recognition of the importance of exchanges, both Chinese and American governments made a concerted effort to control and co-opt these transnational actors. Wary of leaving the exchange programme in the hands of private groups they could not trust and, indeed, influence, the US government worked hard to build a partnership with the NCUSCR and CSCPRC. Meanwhile, the Chinese government's principled insistence on exchange contacts operating on a people-to-people basis did not prevent Beijing from itself seeking to exercise a powerful influence over exchange contacts and striving to shape those contacts to its political and diplomatic ends.

Both the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC were committed to the fundamental objective of improving Sino-American contacts. This concord in long-term mission underpinned a broadly cooperative relationship between the two groups and both governments. Nonetheless, the NCUSCR and CSCPRC were highly conscious of the influence and power afforded to them by their liminal position of distance from, and proximity to, official state diplomacy. Thus, at times, both

organisations took a significantly different approach to negotiating with Beijing than that pursued by the US government and showed themselves adept at using their important role in Sino-American relations and their access to diplomatic influence to further their own goals and the interests of their private constituencies.

This thesis is composed of six chapters. They are organised in chronological order. The first three cover the Nixon years; the fourth and fifth, Ford's time in office; the sixth and final the period between Carter's entry to office and, just under two years later, the final agreement of normalisation.

Chapter 1 analyses developments between Nixon entering office in 1969 and the president's historic visit to China in 1972. It argues that people-to-people diplomacy and actors outside of government made a fundamental contribution to the re-opening of contacts between the two sides that would occur in 1971. It begins by showing that, in the first years of Nixon's presidency, a renewed attempt to build bridges to China was, far from a unique idea of the president's, in fact powerfully advocated for in both private and public by a constituency of Americans organised by and around the NCUSCR. It then traces how Nixon and Kissinger used people-to-people contacts as one of the principal means by which to communicate to Beijing their interest in engagement. Secret backchannels through heads of state were simultaneously pursued but it was ping-pong diplomacy that first broke the ice and this first, historic exchange paved the way for Kissinger and then Nixon's visits. Those visits were the venue for important agreements that initiated a full programme of cultural and scientific exchanges.

Chapter 2 analyses how those agreements began to be realised, arguing that the structure for managing these contacts was, in both its creation and application, a collaborative process between governmental and non-governmental actors. The chapter begins with the first ever official visit by PRC citizens to the US. This return leg of ping-pong diplomacy took place two months after Nixon's February 1972 summit and saw the Chinese table tennis team hosted by their American counterparts and the NCUSCR. This extravagant public event brought the NCUSCR to prominence — not least in the minds of the US government. The visit was ostensibly unofficial but its great import to the

developing rapprochement meant that Washington worked closely with the National Committee to ensure the trip's success. This collaboration was efficacious and, in the wake of the visit, the NCUSCR pitched for itself and the CSCPRC to be given a prominent role overseeing the emerging exchange programme. The NCUSCR's success in making this case was in part due to the group's willingness to recognise and respect the foreign policy implications of that programme. Thus, in the second half of 1972, the US and, subsequently, Chinese governments were convinced that exchanges could and should be entrusted to these independent groups. The next year Washington expanded this formula for managing exchanges through private but cooperative organisations by assisting in the foundation of a third exchange organisation, the National Council on US-China Trade.

The highpoint in the Sino-American relationship during the Kissinger era came in February 1973. In that month, the US and Chinese governments agreed to create "liaison offices", de facto embassies which would bring permanently-stationed officials to each capital, led by a diplomat of ambassadorial rank. Chapter 3 shows that — in cause, conception and execution — the creation of these liaison offices was a direct outgrowth of the exchange relationship. First proposed in a discussion with an NCUSCR delegation, Washington planned for the offices to be staffed by a combination of government workers and representatives from the NCUSCR, CSCPRC and the NCUSCT. This was indicative of the primary purpose the new institutions would serve: to coordinate the growing traffic of exchanges and trade between the two countries. The creation of these de facto embassies increased both governments' involvement in exchanges and the third chapter of this thesis goes on to detail how both the NCUSCR and CSCPRC sought to protect their independence and their influence over the contacts they managed. The deal to create liaison offices was, in retrospect, a high-water mark in rapprochement and the remainder of 1973 and 1974 saw a dwindling of the momentum in Sino-American rapprochement. Chapter 3 concludes by detailing the challenges posed to both the high-level and exchange relationship by Chinese frustration at the US government's failure to quickly finalise normalisation as Nixon had promised it would.

These challenges were not resolved by the end of Nixon's term and greeted Ford when he inherited the presidency in August 1974. Chapter 4 argues that, by the first months of that

administration, Kissinger had been convinced that this downturn in the exchange programme necessitated government intervention. During his November 1974 visit to China, the Secretary of State put significant pressure on Chinese leaders to address declining exchanges. Initially, Kissinger's lobbying had a salutary effect and led, in early 1975, to a "campaign of smiles" from Beijing that briefly revived the exchange programme. However, this was followed, later that year, by a series of more serious conflicts in the exchange programme, with both CSCPRC and NCUSCR exchanges becoming politicised by the Chinese. A firm stance from both groups and support from Washington helped resolve the earlier, more minor of these disputes but could not prevent the cancellation of a high-profile performing arts troupe exchange in 1975. The Chinese had attempted to use the tour to spread violent propaganda about their plans for the conquest of Taiwan and both the NCUSCR and the government decided it was preferable to pull the plug on the tour at the very last minute than to allow such a flagrant politicisation of a cultural exchange. The public fallout from this altercation was exacerbated by growing resentment on both sides about the experience of exchange delegations visiting China, with Americans chafing at the tight controls on their access to Chinese society and their hosts complaining about undiplomatic behaviour on the part of some of their guests. Thus, a year into Ford's time in office, the US government had come to rely on the exchange programme as a source of vitality in a stalled Sino-American relationship — even as they recognised that these contacts could be a source of conflict and further discord.

In spite of the lingering frictions in the Sino-American relationship, Ford was committed to following in Nixon's footsteps and making a summit trip to China. Chapter 5 begins by detailing how he and Kissinger and Ford sought to make the exchange program the means to achieve a successful presidential visit. Initially, Kissinger hoped that salubrious exchange diplomacy could create the positive atmospherics that would underpin a move towards diplomatic normalisation during the president's trip. However, after a frosty visit of his own to China in October 1975, Kissinger ultimately moderated his expectations and instead made seeking exchange agreements the primary means by which to avoid a summit wholly devoid of substance. During a tepid presidential visit, such

deals proved hard to reach but Ford and Kissinger's discussions with Vice Premier Deng did produce at least one accord: that the highest American leaders would work to expedite US science and technology assistance to China. While Kissinger and Ford were prepared to provide this help with little assured return from the Chinese, chapter 5 goes on show that the CSCPRC was simultaneously arguing that the US should seek to extract concessions from Beijing in return for helping to upgrade Chinese science and technology. Meanwhile, the Chinese, deeply disappointed with the outcome of Ford's summit visit, had begun to use the most official form of exchanges — visits to China by congressional delegations — to express their own frustrations with the sitting US government's China policy; chapter 5 concludes by analysing the diplomatic and political implications of these trips.

The sixth and final chapter of this thesis covers the period between President Jimmy Carter's entry to office in January 1977 and the final normalisation deal struck on 15 December 1978. The immobility in high-level Sino-American relations under Ford initially continued under Carter. This diplomatic deadlock stymied a major effort by the CSCPRC to significantly deepen scholarly exchanges through a high-profile June 1977 scientific delegation to China. That visit did, however, prove productive in revealing to Americans the changing winds in China's domestic politics, in particular a newfound desire to rapidly import ideas and technology from the West. Chapter 6 goes on to show how, in 1978, Carter's National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, looked to exploit this opportunity. He did so, first, by campaigning within the US government to ease China's purchase of American technology and, then, by further encouraging Chinese interest in science and technology cooperation through agreements for a deepening of the facilitated exchanges programme and the beginning of more formal government-to-government contacts. Brzezinski's tactic of simultaneously developing diplomatic, strategic and people-to-people facets of the relationship brought an upturn in Sino-American negotiations in 1978, as shown in two highly successful visits, first by Brzezinski himself in May 1978 and, then, by the lead White House science advisor and former CSCPRC chairman, Frank Press, in July. These two visits helped pave the way for the successful normalisation talks of the autumn and winter of 1978, as did adjustments in Carter's China policies — including the

government's approach to the exchange programme — intended to encourage the confirmation of Deng as the new paramount leader in Beijing and thus secure China's opening to America and the world.

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most valuable archival records. Thanks to the many archivists who helped unlock and decipher those and other collections, and to all the individuals that agreed to what were often long oral history interviews that enriched my understanding of this topic and brought the history to life.

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My parents have provided unwavering support for my academic study for as long as I can remember. They have been gracious in accepting that they were wrong that serious study would bring wealth and stability; their excitement at the directions this has nevertheless taken me pushes me to keep going. Julia believed this thesis was worth writing even when I did not. She read it all, draft after draft, and tolerated me building our "holidays" and indeed lives around archival trips and research. Her unwavering support made this work, and many other things, possible — and for that, and so much else, I am deeply grateful.

These many sources of assistance notwithstanding, the remaining errors are of my making.

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List of abbreviations used in the text

ACHK	American Consul Hong Kong
ACDA	Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
ACLS	American Council of Learned Societies
APNW	Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CCAS	Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars
CCPIT	China Council for the Promotion of International Trade
CFR	Council on Foreign Relations
CPIFA	Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs
CSCPRC	Committee on Scholarly Communications with the PRC
DOS	Department of State
FAS	Federation of American Scientists
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
ICA	International Communication Agency
IREX	International Research and Exchanges Board
MDT	Mutual Defense Treaty
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China
NAS	National Academy of Sciences
NCUSCR	National Committee on US-China Relations
NCUSCT	National Council on US-China Trade
NFTNC	Notes from the National Committee
NSC	National Security Council
NSSM	National Security Study Memorandum
NSF	National Science Foundation
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
PRC	People's Republic of China
ROC	Republic of China
SSRC	Social Science Research Council
SSTC	State Science and Technology Commission
STAPRC	Scientific and Technical Association of the People's Republic of China
USCPFA	US China People's Friendship Association
USG	United States government
USLO	United States Liaison Office
USTTA	US Table Tennis Association

INTRODUCTION

Histories of Sino-American relations in the 1970s have been dominated by summitry. President Richard Nixon called his February 1972 visit to China "the week that changed the world". His historic visit had itself been arranged during two previous visits by his National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger, the first a secret trip dramatically revealed by Nixon only after Kissinger had returned home. President Gerald Ford's China policy lacked the theatrics of Nixon's but even he insisted on a summit visit to Beijing. Jimmy Carter did not visit China while in office but the final agreement for diplomatic recognition that he achieved in 1979 was also marked by a summit: Deng Xiaoping's state visit, the first by any Chinese leader to the United States. Historians have been drawn to these summits as moments of drama, big personalities and consequential (if grandiloquent) dialogues. Their studies of the origins, course and consequences of these episodes in high-diplomacy have illuminated how a small coterie of men remade Sino-American relations during the 1970s.[1]

This thesis is a history of Sino-American relations below these summits. It argues that, from 1971 until the end of 1978, this important relationship was equally shaped by moments and developments that occurred below, between and behind the summit meetings of the two nation's leaders. Many of these moments were also visits — but not involving high officials. Before Kissinger's advance party, a visit by American amateur table tennis players began the process of rapprochement and reawakened the American public's interest in China. President Nixon's trip was followed, just two months later, by the return leg of this ping-pong diplomacy — itself perhaps as important as Nixon's visit in terms of confirming American public enthusiasm for rapprochement. Deng's visit of 1979 was preceded, six months earlier, by the largest ever delegation of American scientists to any country, an initiative that helped convince Deng to offer favourable normalisation terms in order to expedite access to American modernisation assistance. In between, many dozens of exchange visits in

[1] Margaret MacMillan builds her lively book around the Nixon summit but she is far from alone in focussing her narrative and analysis on Sino-American summit interactions. Other accounts are discussed later in this introduction. Margaret MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao: The Week That Changed the World* (New York, 2007).

both directions helped reacquaint the Chinese and American people after more than two decades of nearly hermetic isolation.

This thesis argues, however, that exchanges did more than this. It posits that these contacts also exerted a powerful influence on the high-level relationship and, indeed, on the negotiations that took place in summit meetings. Exchange visits, as well as the ongoing negotiations around this programme of contacts, were a critical factor in the successes and failures, the progress and setbacks in Sino-American negotiations towards normalisation. The condition and course of exchanges and bilateral contacts were shaped by developments in high diplomacy but, in turn, exchanges also influenced governmental contacts. These two tracks of diplomacy were, this thesis shows, mutually constitutive.

Historians have widely recognised the importance of ping-pong diplomacy in precipitating Nixon's visit to China: that episode was perhaps the example *par excellence* of exchange diplomacy during the Cold War. But what has received less attention is the continuing influence of people-to-people exchanges on Sino-American diplomatic talks after Nixon's visit and through to the final normalisation agreement of 1978. Having been both cause and consequence of Nixon's visit, the expanding exchange programme was one of the principal means by which both governments maintained and deepened rapprochement in the seven years of faltering negotiations that ultimately lead to the establishment of diplomatic relations.

Exchanges generally had a positive influence on the high-level relationship. The success of the ping-pong visit paved the way for Kissinger and then Nixon to visit China. Subsequently, exchanges cultivated and confirmed American public enthusiasm for this innovation in US foreign policy and provided the public with a substance to accompany the pomp and secret discussions of summits. When high-level relations deteriorated during and after Nixon's removal from office, exchanges offered one of the few areas of Sino-American relations that (at least initially) maintained a level of activity in the face of deadlocked high-level talks. Finally, the intensification of Sino-American science

and technology cooperation in 1977 and 1978 — largely realised through the exchange programme — played a critical role in unlocking a final normalisation deal.

Exchange visits did not always proceed smoothly, however, and periodic disagreements in exchange negotiations reflected but also intensified friction in diplomatic talks. In one instance, a serious confrontation between the two sides occurred in 1975 when a delegation of Chinese performing artists was cancelled at the last minute as a result of Beijing adding incendiary political content to the programme of songs. The fallout from the incident added further strain to the already tense diplomatic relationship under Ford. At other times, tension over exchanges developed gradually. Visits to the PRC were strictly controlled and limited by the Chinese. American individuals and organisations chaffed at these restrictions, particularly as Chinese visitors were afforded great liberties and privileges while in the US. In the years immediately prior to normalisation, American resentment at the asymmetry of the relationship came to a head and seemed to threaten the exchange relationship as a whole, as well as posing an unwelcome irritant in diplomatic ties. Thus, whether for good or ill, this thesis argues that the condition of exchange contacts had an important bearing on the high-level relationship.

Two organisations are at the heart of this narrative. The National Committee on US-China Relations (NCUSCR) and the Committee on Scholarly Communications with the PRC (CSCPRC)[2] were both founded in 1966 and shared the common purpose of encouraging contact and engagement with China among the American population. Throughout this period, these groups were the leading two American organisations in the exchange programme and together managed the lion's share of all delegations and certainly the most important visits in both directions. The NCUSCR had a broad mandate for "cultural" contacts; the CSCPRC oversaw exchanges of scholars and scientists. From an early juncture in rapprochement, both the NCUSCR and CSCPRC would enjoy a privileged role in exchanges after they were designated by both governments as responsible for the programme of "facilitated exchanges". These important contacts were "facilitated" because the two governments

[2] Originally (and much later) the Committee on Scholarly Communications with China.

would, every year, negotiate the overall package of trips, agreeing on the total number of visits, as well as the broad content of these visits (with input from the NCUSCR and CSCPRC).[3] The two groups would then be tasked with independently organising the agreed visits, directly coordinating with counterpart organisations in Beijing. In reality, however, the political significance of these contacts ensured that both governments would continue to take a close interest in facilitated exchanges in a way that they did not with lower profile non-governmental visits. Before normalisation, facilitated exchanges were the most formal contacts in an exchange programme that was ostensibly conducted on a "people-to-people" basis, with the exception of the limited number of official congressional delegations invited to China.

The second argument of this thesis is that these non-state exchange organisations, as well as individuals connected to these groups, were key actors in the Sino-American relationship. I challenge the extant depiction of the exchange programme as simply representative and derivative of high-level diplomacy.[4] Instead, this thesis demonstrates that exchange organisations exercised significant agency, not only in shaping the programmes of contacts they oversaw but, in turn, in influencing the broader relationship between Chinese and American societies and governments. Both the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC were committed to the US government's fundamental objective of improving contacts with China. This concord in long-term mission, however, did not mean that the two groups always concurred about the *means* by which this objective should be achieved, or what compromises the US should be prepared to make towards that end. Thus, at times, both organisations took a significantly different approach to negotiating with Beijing than that pursued by the US government. Moreover, both organisations showed themselves adept at using their important role in Sino-American relations and their access to diplomatic influence to further their own goals. In both cases, the two most

[3] The precise nature of the two governments' involvement in this negotiation was a point of some contention, as discussed in this work.

[4] Such a depiction is explicit or implicit in many of the leading works on Sino-American relations in this period and the memoirs of many of the leading US government officials from that period. See, for example, Patrick Tyler, *A Great Wall: Six Presidents and China: An Investigative History* (New York, 2007); James Mann, *About Face: A History of America's Curious Relationship with China from Nixon to Clinton* (New York, 2000); Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston, MA, 1979); Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (London, 1982).

fundamental objectives shared by both groups were increasing American knowledge of China and the Chinese, in particular through direct personal experience, and increasing access to China for their respective American constituencies.

The significance of non-state, transnational actors was enhanced during this period by the lack of official diplomatic relations between the two governments. A critical, practical reason for both the independence and influence of these transnational actors was Beijing's steadfast refusal of Kissinger's request that the US government be allowed to directly manage exchange diplomacy. The Chinese insisted that, until Washington was prepared to recognise the People's Republic, such visits must be arranged by the Chinese and American people, not their governments. Although Beijing was quite prepared to compromise this principled stance when doing so served their interests, this ostensible position nonetheless meant that the US government was forced to defer to non-governmental organisations for much of the management of exchange contacts.

Furthermore, the inchoate and febrile diplomatic relationship meant that facilitated exchanges were important events in the calendar of Sino-American relations. At a time when governmental contacts took place only a few times a year, people-to-people contacts made up much of the traffic between the two countries: thus, a successful visit could offer a fillip to governmental relations, while a bust-up could take a long time to be forgotten. This thesis shows, then, that before normalisation, exchange organisations were at the vanguard of negotiating China and America's transition from isolation to cooperation. In this way, it broadens our understanding of Sino-American history: rather than a relationship determined by a few leaders — Kissinger, Zhou Enlai, Nixon, Mao Zedong, Carter, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Deng Xiaoping — this thesis posits that rapprochement was a far wider interaction between Americans and Chinese both inside and outside of government.

The documentary record shows that both governments were themselves acutely aware of the agency exercised by those connected to the exchange programme and the influence of that programme on the bilateral relationship as a whole. The third argument of this work is that, in recognition of the importance of exchanges, both Chinese and American governments made a

concerted effort to control and co-opt these transnational actors. Wary of leaving the exchange programme in the hands of private groups they could not trust and, indeed, influence, the US government worked hard to build a partnership with the NCUSCR and CSCPRC. Washington believed that a productive relationship with these two organisations was critical to realising an exchange programme that served American political objectives in the Sino-American relationship while also respecting Chinese ground rules for contacts remaining unofficial. After some initial hesitation, Beijing also agreed to work with those exchange groups that Washington selected — although the Chinese were not above threatening to withdraw this cooperation when they had a point to prove. Thus, the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC gained influence and prominence from their simultaneous distance from, and proximity to, the state.

The NCUSCR and CSCPRC were highly conscious of their liminal position between the private and governmental spheres; indeed, this thesis shows that both groups sought to exploit their importance to both governments and to make the best of the tensions in their role and identity. The NCUSCR and CSCPRC welcomed and sometimes demanded significant government funding of their activities. Both also used their close working relationships with senior US government officials to lobby for the state to represent their interests in negotiations with the Chinese. And, yet, both groups fiercely resisted efforts by either government to dictate or control their activities. Moreover, while pressing the US government to represent them, both organisations also demanded the right to negotiate directly with the Chinese government and used these negotiations to insist that Beijing keep to their commitment that the exchange relationship should be reciprocal and of mutual benefit (the meaning of which was never precisely defined and a further source of constant contestation). The dynamic between state and non-state or transnational actors in exchange diplomacy was not simply one of state power and non-governmental resistance, then; the interests of the two governments and exchanges organisations often aligned and often came into conflict.

THE ROLE OF THE NCUSCR AND CSCPRC IN THE SINO-AMERICAN EXCHANGE LANDSCAPE OF THE 1970S

The NCUSCR and the CSCPRC were founded with two key stated objectives: to expand contacts with mainland China and to push American public opinion towards enthusiasm for renewed engagement with the PRC and away from support for isolating that country. The NCUSCR began as a public education organisation focussed on the second of those goals but after ping-pong diplomacy swiftly began to focus on facilitating exchange contacts. The remit for the contacts the group oversaw was broad: during the 1970s, the NCUSCR sponsored exchanges in the educational, civic, journalistic, cultural and athletic fields, all subsumed under the amorphous category of "cultural" contacts. The group's first exchange was hosting the Chinese ping-pong team in 1972 and later delegations ranged from university presidents to Chinese municipal officials to ballet performers.

The NCUSCR never wholly abandoned its aim of encouraging broad public engagement with China — indeed, the group believed that exchanges were a highly effective way of serving this goal. Thus, members of NCUSCR delegations were actively encouraged to report their experiences in the PRC to their local communities and the organisation oversaw public events, conferences and publications that disseminated first-hand information about China to the broader American public. One of the NCUSCR's greatest assets towards doing so was the network of well-connected Americans it drew together. The group was an invite-only organisation and through the 1970s had only hundreds of members, drawn from the elite levels of American business, academia, the arts, media, industry and public service (serving officials became inactive in the group while they held public office). The group had less than 250 members when it first began organising exchanges in 1971; it had grown to close to 500 by 1978.[5] Efforts were made to represent special interest groups, including religion,

[5] I was granted access to a collection of the NCUSCR's documents held in the organisation's offices in New York. These documents are not catalogued and organised only at document level. They are referenced as "NCUSCR office collection" (NCOC). NCUSCR Annual Report, 1976-77, NCOC; Minutes of 7th meeting of NCUSCR board, 3 June 1971, Folder 67, Box 6, Series 1, Douglas P Murray papers (DPMP), Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC).

youth and Chinese-Americans. Members were carefully chosen, with one of the prime criteria for selection their access to local networks of influence and capital.[6] This was a factor in the selection of delegation participants, too: their "ability to help disseminate their knowledge" after travel to China was an important consideration for the NCUSCR.[7] The NCUSCR's elite and national membership base also equipped the group excellently to host major Chinese delegations, who could be welcomed to events throughout the country organised by prominent local NCUSCR members.

The remit of the CSCPRC was more specific: the group had been founded in order to develop scholarly contacts with Chinese scientists and, up until 1978, practically the sole means with which they did so was through exchange delegations. The CSCPRC consistently expressed interest in organising binational conferences and in encouraging other forms of cooperation and dialogue with Chinese academics but, for the most part, these initiatives made little progress before normalisation. Unlike the NCUSCR, the CSCPRC did not aspire to public prominence, although the group did disseminate information about developing contacts with China into the American scientific community. Moreover, the CSCPRC did not have a public membership as the NCUSCR did: it had been set up as a joint initiative between the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) and thereafter operated from within NAS. Its leadership constituted its membership: its board and a single-digit number of ex-officio members drawn from other organisations that sponsored or otherwise facilitated the work of the CSCPRC. It is noteworthy that there was significant overlap between the individuals that governed the two organisations — for example, the chairman of the NCUSCR held a seat as an *ex officio* member of the CSCPRC.[8]

The budgets of both the NCUSCR and CSCPRC grew substantially between 1971 and 1978 as exchange contacts between the two sides expanded. During the 1971-72 financial year, the

[6] Schoyer to Gilmore, 18 September 1972, Folder 71, Box 6, Series 1, DPMP, RAC.
[7] NCUSCR memorandum, 'Resolutions regarding exchange program policies', 9 November 1973, "CSCPRC – Subcommittee on Exchanges with China", Box 131, A Doak Barnett Papers, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University (ADBP).
[8] Keatley to Sheldon, 7 July 1975, Folder 6360, Box 525, Series 1, Accession 2, Social Science Research Council (SSRC) records, RAC.

NCUSCR had begun to plan its first exchange. That year, the group brought in $310,632 and spent $270,735.[9] In the first full year of exchange contacts — the 1972-73 financial year — the NCUSCR's income rose to $372,873 and expenditures totalled $325,816.[10] That year, the CSCPRC had a budget of $216,185.[11] The NCUSCR's funding rose thereafter (albeit not invariably linearly, reflecting the varying number of exchanges each year). In the 1974-75 financial year, the group's income was $497,663, with $519,148 of outlays, with $519,143 in income and $528,932 in expenditure the following year.[12] Meanwhile, the CSCPRC's expenditure jumped sharply as the number of scientific exchanges rose in the mid-1970s: the group spent $623,175 and $771,660 in the 1973-1974 and 1974-1975 financial years, respectively.[13] By the 1977-1978 year, the NCUSCR brought in $529,972 and spent $466,886, and expected both of these figures to be even higher for the following year.[14] By then, the CSCPRC's budget had already risen to be significantly more than the NCUSCR and it was projected to increase to $1.5 million for the 1978-79 year.[15]

As will be analysed in this thesis, funding from the government was critical to both groups but was never the only source of income for either. In the 1977-78 financial year, the NCUSCR accepted $290,000 from the State Department, more than half of the $493,500 they received in sponsorship.[16] This had climbed significantly from the $75,800 received in the first year that the group received public funding.[17] During that period, government funding had fluctuated depending on NCUSCR activity: it totalled $197,000 in the 1974-75 year but had dropped to $130,000 in 1976-

[9] Provisional statement on income and expenditure for 1971-72, Folder 71, Box 6, Series 1, DPMP, RAC.

[10] NCUSCR Annual Report, 1972-73, NCOC.

[11] Office of the NAS Foreign Secretary to NAS Council Action, 15 October 1972, "1972 – General", CSCPRC papers at the National Academy of Sciences (CSCNAS).

[12] The difference between income and outgoings was settled by drawing on assets accrued in previous years. NCUSCR revenues and expenses, 1974-75, Folder 77, Box 6, Series 1, DPMP, RAC; Report on programs and finances, October 1, 1974-September 30, 1975, Folder 78, Box 6, Series 1, DPMP, RAC.

[13] Keatley to Bundy, 18 October 1973, "1973 – Request for funds", CSCNAS; Keatley, 'Proposal for Partial Support of the CSCPRC', 11 June 1974, "1974 – Request for funds", CSCNAS.

[14] NCUSCR Annual Report, 1977-78, NCOC.

[15] NAS council minutes, 'Report of the foreign secretary', 29 October 1978, "1978 – Student Exchange Program – General", CSCNAS.

[16] NCUSCR Annual Report, 1977-78, NCOC.

[17] Program Report, November 1972-May 1973, "Annual Meeting, NCUSCR, 1973", Box 131, ADBP.

77.[18] The NCUSCR had prided itself on its private fundraising in the 1960s and early 1970s and, as will be discussed, only reluctantly began accepting federal funds. Throughout the 1970s, the group continued to supplement governmental income with donations from large foundations, corporations and individual donors. The CSCPRC was likewise supported with public and private funds: a recipient of philanthropic donations, the group also drew on government income. This came in the form of grants from the federally-run National Science Foundation (NSF) but also in kind: the organisation operated out of the National Academy of Sciences, itself largely government-funded. The group received $100,000 from the NSF in 1972, which increased to $255,000 the following year and then continued to increase thereafter.[19] These figures give a sense of the relationship between the two groups and the government: just as exchanges were a form of diplomacy at once both public and private, so, too, did both groups rely on financial support from government and non-governmental sources. The CSCPRC and, even more so, the NCUSCR remained conscious of the need to maintain a balance between the two in order to maintain their identity as independent groups that were not beholden to government paymasters.

Neither the Chinese nor the American government released statistics regarding the number of exchange visitors that travelled in each direction. The reason for this reflected the nature of each government's approach to diplomacy: the American government did not care to track all the private individuals and groups involved in travelling back and forth between the US and China; the Chinese did, but they kept such information to themselves. It is clear, however, that by the late 1970s, the flows of people were substantial: around 4,000 Americans visited the PRC in 1977 and approximately 10,000 more travelled in the final year before normalised relations. This, however, was an infinitesimally small proportion of those that sought to travel: the NCUSCR estimated that *several*

[18] NCUSCR revenues and expenses, 1974-75, Folder 77, Box 6, Series 1, DPMP, RAC; NCUSCR financial projections, 1977-78, Folder 80, Box 6, Series 1, DPMP, RAC.
[19] Keatley to CSCPRC members, 29 August 1972, Folder 6360, Box 525, Series 1, Accession 2, SSRC records, RAC; Keatley to Bundy, 18 October 1973, "1973 – Request for funds", CSCNAS.

million Americans had applied to visit China between 1971 and 1978.[20] The vast disparity between these two figures was due to the extreme difficulties in acquiring a visa. The Chinese exclusively selected "influential individuals" for early travel, providing papers only to public figures and those with an existing connection to the Chinese government or a recommendation from an organisation with such a relationship (such as the NCUSCR or CSCPRC).[21] Thus, initially, most Americans and practically all Chinese travelled in organised delegations. By the mid- to late-1970s, some Americans were making their way to China more or less under their own steam, with tourism beginning in the wake of Mao's death in 1976. Private Chinese travel to the US was even more limited: by 1975, the NCUSCR believed that only around 190 Chinese had travelled to the US on individual private visits, almost all on commercial business.[22]

In numerical terms, the NCUSCR and CSCPRC only ever facilitated the travel of a minority of the Americans that travelled to China. Both groups dominated contacts in their respective fields, however. As of 1977, the CSCPRC had overseen 90% of the Chinese science delegations to the US and 25% of such trips to China since 1972 (other trips organised between American and Chinese institutions also received guidance and assistance from the CSCPRC).[23] Most of the CSCPRC's delegations had around a dozen participants and by 1978 more than 300 individuals from each country had travelled on CSCPRC organised exchanges.[24] It is harder to assess proportions of cultural exchanges and the NCUSCR ran fewer (but much larger) exchanges than the CSCPRC. However, it is certainly accurate to say that the NCUSCR was directly or indirectly involved in the vast majority of the most high-profile cultural exchanges between the US and China in this period, and had been responsible for a significant portion of the American and Chinese individuals to travel in each direction. Between ping-pong diplomacy and normalisation, the NCUSCR was involved in sending 19

[20] NCUSCR Annual Report, 1976-77, NCOC; NCUSCR letter to members of women's volleyball delegation, 22 May 1978, Folder 91, Box 12, Series 3, Record Group (RG) 4, NCUSCR records, RAC.
[21] Memcon: Yue and Yost, 22 October 1977, Folder 98, Box 13, Series 3, RG4, NCUSCR records, RAC.
[22] 'Exchanges with the People's Republic of China', 21 May 1975, Folder 76, Box 6, Series 1, DPMP, RAC.
[23] CSCPRC paper, 'The importance of expanding US-China scientific and technical relations', 23 March 1977, "1977 – Exchange Agreement – Negotiations", CSCNAS.
[24] CSCPRC memorandum, 'Conversation with Huang Kun-yi', 8 August 1978, "1978 – General", CSCNAS.

delegations to China and receiving 14 in the US.[25] The number of participants in the trips organised by the group during this period together totalled 1,062, more or less evenly split between 538 Americans travelling to China and 524 Chinese to the US.[26]

This thesis does not attempt to offer a comprehensive account of the exchange programme over the eight years examined, nor does it aim to offer an in-depth analysis of all organisations involved in Sino-American exchanges. In 1973, a third major exchange organisation was created in the form of the National Council on US-China Trade (NCUSCT). The NCUSCT's role in rapprochement has recently received greater attention from historians.[27] Exchanges were only part of the trade council's remit, however, and they organised only a single-digit number of exchanges before normalisation, all with a lower profile than the NCUSCR's exchanges. The NCUSCT is not the focus of analysis in this work, although its creation and subsequent programme is discussed in relation and comparison to the NCUSCR and CSCPRC. A fourth important conduit of exchanges were congressional delegations, or CoDels, the only form of official exchanges before 1978. Similarly to the NCUSCT, these play a part in the coming narrative but are not its focus.

Exchange visits between the US and China in this period were not the exclusive purview of the NCUSCR, CSCPRC, NCUSCT or Congress. Myriad American organisations and individuals were invited by the Chinese to visit the PRC and many more successfully applied for permission to travel. Among the more prominent groups that arranged travel to China was the US China People's Friendship Association (USCPFA) and the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars (CCAS). Both of these groups were on the American political (hard) left. Radical political views had been the most important qualification for successful contact with the PRC government before 1971 and, even later into that decade, groups and individuals with political views close to those of the Chinese Communist Party were frequently invited to China. CCAS burnt bright but not for long: after being involved in some of the very first contacts with China, the group broke off contact with Beijing after just a few

[25] Of these, four trips had been assisted by the NCUSCR, rather than directly sponsored.
[26] 'NCUSCR exchanges, 1972-79', 14 September 1979, Folder 16, Box 1, Series 1, DPMP, RAC.
[27] See, for example, Kazushi Minami, 'Oil for the Lamps of America? Sino-American Oil Diplomacy, 1973-1979', *Diplomatic History* (forthcoming) and a book-length project by Mark Christian Talley.

years in protest at the PRC's relationship with the arch-imperialist Nixon. The USCPFA's programme of friendship tours continued throughout the 1970s and rivalled the NCUSCR's programme in numbers but never in size or profile. This thesis consciously focusses on the two politically centrist organisations at the heart of the facilitated exchange programme. One reason for this is that the political views and connections of these two groups meant that they were far more directly connected to American official foreign policy than radical groups who predominantly protested US foreign policy (even if they welcomed Washington's engagement with China). As a study of the diplomacy of exchange contacts, this narrative affords only a subsidiary role to the USCPFA, CCAS and other radical exchange organisations.[28]

Finally, it should be made clear that this thesis is not primarily an analysis of the *experience* of travel to China on exchange trips. Naturally, the course and content of exchange visits in both directions is frequently discussed in the text. This thesis necessarily focusses, however, on how these visits impacted on exchange diplomacy and high-level negotiations, rather than seeking to analyse these trips as lived experience, as performative acts, as representations of modernity or as a liminal space of cultural contact. These visits are ripe for such analysis but the primary objective of this work is to show the interrelation between exchange contacts and official diplomacy; the limits of space thus necessitate that those other facets of exchange contacts are here largely omitted.[29]

HISTORIOGRAPHY

The following section analyses existing historiography relevant to this thesis. It begins with a discussion of studies of Sino-American exchange diplomacy in the twentieth century. I then examine how this transnational diplomacy has featured in general studies of Sino-American relations in this

[28] For more on CCAS see Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars, *China! Inside the People's Republic* (London, 1972); Fabio Lanza, 'America's Asia? Revolution, Scholarship and Asian Studies', in *Asianisms: Regionalist Interactions and Asian Integration*, ed. by Marc Frey and Nicola Spakowski (Singapore, 2016).

[29] I have written on this elsewhere. See, Pete Millwood, 'From Foe to Friend? China Through the Eyes of American Visitors, 1971-78', paper given at Oxford China Humanities Graduate Conference, January 2017.

period, showing that these people-to-people contacts have been overwhelmingly confined to a sub-narrative in these analyses. Finally, I consider the broader historiography of exchange contacts and transnational, non-governmental diplomacy, highlighting a number of critical insights drawn from this corpus of work that inform this thesis.

Sino-American exchange diplomacy

To date, there have been only a small number of short studies of Sino-American exchange diplomacy during the 1970s. Kathlin Smith wrote a 1998 journal article on "The Role of Scientists in Normalizing US-China Relations", which traces the contributions of American scientists — particularly those connected to the CSCPRC — in rebuilding the Sino-American ties. Smith makes the case that, although the condition of the diplomatic relationship determined possibilities for bilateral contacts, once rapprochement began, exchanges and cooperation between American and Chinese scientists were "important factors" in re-establishing the relationship not only between the two country's people but also their governments. Scientists' contributions were partially symbolic — cooperation demonstrated that estrangement was over — but they also made a more active contribution by helping build public support for rapprochement among an influential, elite American community.[30] This thesis strongly supports Smith's analysis and will provide further evidence for this and other contributions that American scientists made to normalisation.

Priscilla Roberts has similarly made the case for the NCUSCR and other "quasi-private institutions" playing an important role in the rebuilding of relations with China. Roberts examines three such American and British civil society organisations that, she shows, all worked closely with their governments towards a mutually held goal of establishing closer ties with the Chinese. In the same edited volume, Federico Pachetti discusses how exchanges overseen by the NCUSCR and

[30] Kathlin Smith, 'The Role of Scientists in Normalizing US-China Relations: 1965-1979', *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 866 (1998), 114-36.

CSCPRC were one means by which Americans developed an understanding of the Chinese economy and its modernisation efforts. This thesis concurs with Roberts's argument that the NCUSCR formed a collaborative partnership with the US government that (generally) allowed both parties to pursue their own interest in an expanded relationship with China. Similarly, I support Pachetti's view that exchanges were an important conduit of information regarding China: exchange visits helped Americans better understand not only the Chinese economy but also that country's scientific establishment, its contemporary culture and its political development. This thesis expands on both of these works: Roberts dedicates only a few pages to the NCUSCR's role in Sino-American relations before 1978; Pachetti makes only periodic reference to the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC.[31]

The exchange diplomacy of the 1970s is also examined in brief as part of several studies of the CSCPRC and NCUSCR focussed on the post-1978 period. Norton Wheeler's study of American non-governmental organisations in China dedicates a chapter to the NCUSCR, albeit with only a couple of pages on the organisation's development over the 1970s before a more substantive discussion of the group's (quite different) activities in the 1980s and 1990s.[32] David Lampton, who himself was president of the NCUSCR from 1988 until 1997, oversaw a CSCPRC-published volume on Sino-American scholarly exchanges between 1978 and 1984 (that originated as an internal organisational report). That volume, like Wheeler's book, makes some reference to the origins of such exchanges before 1978, as does Richard Suttmeier and Denis Simon's joint-authored study on scientific cooperation focussed on the period after normalisation. However, as the final chapter and epilogue of this thesis will show, the normalisation agreement realised in that year significantly altered the exchange landscape; thus, works focussed on the post-normalisation period are necessarily analyses of a quite different relationship to that of the 1970s.[33]

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[31] Priscilla Roberts, 'Bringing the Chinese Back In: The Role of Quasi-Private Institutions in Britain and the United States' and Federico Pachetti, 'The Roots of a Globalized Relationship: Western Knowledge of the Chinese Economy and US-China Relations in the Long 1970s', in *China, Hong Kong, and the Long 1970s: Global Perspectives*, ed. Priscilla Roberts and Odd Arne Westad (Cham, 2017).

[32] Norton Wheeler, *The Role of American NGOs in China's Modernization: Invited Influence* (London, 2013).

[33] David Lampton, Joyce Madancy and Kristen Williams, *A Relationship Restored: Trends in US-China Educational Exchanges, 1978-1984* (Washington, DC, 1986); Richard Suttmeier and Denis Simon, 'Conflict and Cooperation in

Sino-American exchange diplomacy from before the 1970s has also been the focus of a number of studies which primarily focus on China's courting of American radicals and dissidents. Early works by David Caute and Paul Hollander examined the relationship between "fellow-travellers" and the PRC. Although visits by political radicals such as Edgar Snow, Agnes Smedley and the adoptive-American Felix Greene were not exchanges — not least because they were so resisted by the American government that visitors risked being unable to return to the US — the programme of public diplomacy orchestrated by Beijing in this period nonetheless contained many antecedents for the exchange programme of the 1970s. Just like the exchanges of that period, these earlier visits were intended to serve Beijing's foreign policy interests, to positively influence American perceptions of China — and even to prompt a response from the American government. The difference, of course, was the condition of the high-level relationship: during the revolutionary phase of Mao's rule in China, Beijing had little interest in Americans other than those already wedded to the communist cause.[34]

Among those that the Chinese were interested in were African American civil rights activists. Matthew D Johnson and Robeson Taj Frazier have written two recent studies of interactions between the black liberation movement and China. Frazier looks at how the experience of travel to China fuelled the imagination of black radicals and shaped their struggle to influence politics in the US, while Johnson interrogates the motives of both sides in such visits, arguing that African American travellers and the Chinese government had similarly self-serving reasons for engaging in the diplomacy of travel that were at least as important as the stated objective of political solidarity.[35] This thesis does not ignore the legacies of the pre-1971 period but this earlier mode of Sino-American contact is not my focus: while the Chinese government continued to have a lingering relationship with some American

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the Development of US-China Relations in Science and Technology: Empirical Observations and Theoretical Implications', in *The Global Politics of Science and Technology - Vol. 2*, ed. by Maxmillan Mayer, Mariana Carpes, and Ruth Knoblich (Berlin, 2014), 143–59.

[34] David Caute, *The Fellow-Travellers: Intellectual Friends of Communism* (New Haven, CT, 1988); Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba, 1928-1978* (New York, 1981).

[35] Matthew D Johnson, 'From Peace to the Panthers: PRC Engagement with African-American Transnational Networks, 1949-1979', *Past & Present*, 218 (2013), 233-57; Robeson Taj Frazier, *The East Is Black: Cold War China in the Black Radical Imagination* (Durham, NC, 2015).

leftists, this thesis shows that, after 1972, Beijing's focus decisively shifted towards developing relationships with the politically mainstream Americans represented by the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC.

Sino-American governmental relations

This thesis also benefits from an extensive body of historiography on the diplomatic, governmental Sino-American relationship of the 1970s.[36] This thesis broadly complements rather than contradicts this existing scholarship; it builds on this rich diplomatic and international history literature by introducing a transnational, non-governmental facet to our historical understanding of Sino-American rapprochement.

This notwithstanding, one aspect of this existing literature that this thesis does contend with is the pre-eminent importance attributed to the global strategic context and of bilateral security collaboration for first prompting and then maintaining rapprochement. Shared conflict with the Soviet Union certainly motivated initial Sino-American contacts but that shared agenda cannot alone explain the complex evolving condition of ties in the seven years before normalisation. I argue that, while triangular diplomacy was the original and overarching justification for both sides seeking rapprochement, after the Nixon visit Sino-American strategic collaboration became a passive and unchanging factor: both Washington and Beijing reaped significant benefits in their negotiations and competition with the Soviets from the change in status of Sino-American relations from hostile to basically friendly, but, after this switch had occurred, stuttering security collaboration had only a minimal impact on applying further pressure to Moscow.

[36] Among the many notable works, are Harry Harding, *A Fragile Relationship: The United States and China since 1972* (Washington, DC, 1992); Robert Ross, *Negotiating Cooperation: The United States and China, 1969-1989* (Stanford, CA, 1995); William Kirby, Robert Ross and Li Gong, eds., *Normalization of US-China Relations: An International History* (Cambridge, MA, 2007); Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2001); MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao*; Robert Ross and Jiang Changbin, eds., *Re-Examining the Cold War: US-China Diplomacy, 1954-1973* (Cambridge, MA, 2002); Xia Yafeng, *Negotiating with the Enemy: US-China Talks during the Cold War, 1949-1972* (Bloomington, IN, 2006); Evelyn Goh, *Constructing the US Rapprochement with China, 1961-1974: From 'Red Menace' to 'Tacit Ally'* (Cambridge, 2006); Chris Tudda, *A Cold War Turning Point: Nixon and China, 1969-1972* (Baton Rouge, LA, 2012).

This is not a wholly novel argument. It reflects, for example, an important point in Robert Ross's work, *Negotiating Cooperation*. In this study, Ross established that shared fear of the Soviet threat might explain *why* Sino-American rapprochement took place, but does not explain *how* it did.[37] I argue that the exchange programme was one further manner of negotiating cooperation. Ross shows that each side's varying need for security assistance determined their negotiating flexibility and this thesis posits that a similar dynamic was at work in both sides' fluctuating concern for the exchange programme. At a number of points in this period, both Beijing and Washington showed themselves strongly interested in the expansion of certain types of exchanges — the Chinese for delegations that would help develop its science and technology capabilities; Washington for high-profile cultural delegations that would prove to the American public the vibrancy of Sino-American ties — and both used the other's eagerness for exchanges to elicit flexibility in broader diplomatic negotiations.

American historians are not alone in having focussed on strategy, security and high-level politics as the drivers of Sino-American rapprochement; similar questions have preoccupied Chinese historians of Sino-American relations. Chen Jian, Xia Yafeng and Yang Kuisong have all closely examined the motivations of China's leaders for seeking rapprochement and the influence of these men on the process of building a relationship with the US.[38] This thesis does not dispute the close, near total, control that Chen, Xia and Yang contend that Mao, Zhou and Deng exerted over Chinese foreign policy. In fact, it offers a further example of this control in the form of Beijing's close management and frequent interventions in exchange diplomacy. This thesis shows that Americans in the exchange programme exercised considerable independence from government; there is little evidence that their Chinese counterparts enjoyed such autonomy. Indeed, while it is correct to call the NCUSCR and CSCPRC non-state, transnational actors — they worked with but did not serve either the US or Chinese government — there was little distinction between the Chinese government and

[37] Ross, *Negotiating Cooperation*, 1.

[38] Chen Jian, *Mao's China*; Yang Kuisong and Xia Yafeng, 'Vacillating between Revolution and Détente: Mao's Changing Psyche and Policy toward the United States, 1969-1976', *Diplomatic History*, 34/2 (2010), 395–423. Xia also focuses on high-level talks in his comprehensive account of the Sino-American Warsaw talks. Xia Yafeng, *Negotiating*.

exchange-managing organisations based in Beijing. The NCUSCR and CSCPRC's counterparts were, in this period, arms of the Chinese government and foreign ministry and always answered to their political masters.

As Chen, Yang and Xia all themselves argue, a critical factor in the process of rapprochement and in the expanding relationship between America and China during this period was the changing condition of Chinese domestic politics. Li Jie has shown how the Sino-American rapprochement was in part a consequence of the rise in influence of pragmatic forces in China's domestic politics during the 1970s. In a seperate study, Li also argues that the thoroughgoing changes that were initiated by Deng after his return to influence in 1977 were critical to the final achievement of normalisation in 1978. Li shows how Deng's elevation to status as paramount leader and his success in winning the argument for a more wholesale opening of China to the world had a close and interactive relationship with his determination to secure a normalisation agreement.[39]

The exchange programme provides further insight into the role of Chinese domestic politics in Sino-American rapprochement. Exchange delegations were, throughout this period, a critical source of American information about the inchoate state of Beijing's political developments. This was particularly relevant in the wake of Mao's death, when the by-then extensive programme of contacts allowed the US to correctly understand Deng's domestic policies and to adjust US China policy in a way that would exploit the vice premier's priorities in forwarding rapprochement. Chapter 6 of this thesis elucidates how the nexus between exchanges and Chinese domestic politics ultimately helped both sides consummate rapprochement in 1978.

Writing in 1992, Harry Harding provided what is still one of the best holistic studies of Sino-American contact in this period. Harding argued that a secondary but important motivation for both sides seeking rapprochement was restoring the economic and cultural contacts between the two countries that had been suspended during the Korean War. Harding posits that this motivation

[39] Li Jie, 'Changes in China's Domestic Situation in the 1960s and Sino-US Relations', in *Re-Examining the Cold War: US-China Diplomacy, 1954-1973*, ed. by Robert Ross and Changbin Jiang (Cambridge, MA, 2002); Li Jie, 'China's Domestic Politics and the Normalization of Sino-US Relations', in *Normalization of US-China Relations: An International History*, ed. by William Kirby, Robert Ross, and Li Gong (Cambridge, MA, 2007).

influenced Mao and Zhou's decision to seek accord with the US and encouraged Deng's choice to finalise the process of rapprochement through normalisation. The same incentive, Harding suggests, inspired American scholars, former missionaries and businessmen to push for and then support Nixon's engagement with China.[40] My own argument for the interaction between exchange visits, American popular opinion and official US China policy draws upon two innovative works by Richard Madsen and Evelyn Goh. Both Madsen and Goh critically elaborate on Harding's emphasis on the role of civil society in shaping American China policy. Madsen and Goh are both interested in how, in turn, the development of Sino-American rapprochement after Nixon's visit led to changes in both official and popular perceptions of China. Madsen forwards and Goh further develops a "revisionist" reading of 1970s China as a "Troubled Moderniser". They suggest that this particular discourse encouraged Americans both inside and outside of government to embrace the possibility that the bilateral contacts that developed alongside rapprochement could allow America to shape China's modernisation.[41]

My work will expand upon Harding, Madsen and Goh's work both in analytical focus and source material. Goh's analysis is almost exclusively focused on the views and perceptions manifested among elite foreign policy makers and her book mentions the NCUSCR only twice and other exchange and non-government organisations not at all. Madsen pays greater attention to the NCUSCR, the CSCPRC and other lower level organisations but is primarily concerned with how these organisations facilitated the collective experience of discovering China in the 1970s. This is important to this thesis, too, but I also consider the NCUSCR and CSCPRC as influential actors in the development of state-to-state Sino-American diplomacy.[42]

These and other works on US and Chinese international history provide us with a strong understanding of Sino-American governmental negotiations during this period. As discussed, this thesis takes a different direction: rather than focussing on triangular diplomacy, I look at the process of

[40] Harding, *Fragile Relationship*, 4-5.
[41] Richard Madsen, *China and the American Dream: A Moral Inquiry* (Berkeley, CA, 1995); Goh, *Constructing*.
[42] I also expand Goh's narrative, which ends in 1974, up to the normalisation agreement of 1978.

building rapprochement both inside and outside of government. In this way, this work offers a new interpretation of Sino-American relations in this period. This interpretation is, however, one that builds upon the critical insights of previous works and primarily offers greater explanatory and analytical depth to these existing accounts, rather than fundamentally contradicting their conclusions.

Historiography of transnational exchanges as diplomacy

The important nexus between bilateral exchange programmes and diplomacy has increasingly caught the attention of scholars of the Cold War and international historians more broadly. As this literature has developed, a critical understanding of exchanges as a form of diplomacy and cultural contact has evolved. In addition to being a history of Sino-American diplomacy, this thesis is also a further case study of exchanges as a form of diplomacy and transnational interaction.

A limited amount of the international history literature on exchange diplomacy discusses such contacts in the Sino-American context. Paul Kramer and Xu Guoqi both cite educational exchanges with Qing China — primarily the nineteenth-century Chinese Educational Mission and educational exchanges funded through the Boxer Indemnity — as early antecedents of the international student exchanges and migration of the twentieth century.[43] Wilma Fairbank has written on (having herself participated in) another antecedent programme: the educational and technical assistance provided by Washington to Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang regime during China's war with Japan.[44] Sam Lebovic takes up where Fairbank leaves off, discussing the (again, abortive) attempt to make China one of the key nodes for Fulbright scholars after the conclusion of the Second World War. As Lebovic makes clear, exchanges hardly had a chance to get off the ground in the 1940s and, after the victory of the Communists, Washington made clear that it would not truck with the new authorities in Beijing.

[43] Paul Kramer, 'Is the World Our Campus? International Students and US Global Power in the Long Twentieth Century', *Diplomatic History*, 33/5 (2009), 775–806; Xu Guoqi, *Chinese and Americans: A Shared History* (Cambridge, MA, 2014).
[44] Wilma Fairbank, *America's Cultural Experiment in China, 1942-1949* (Honolulu, HI, 1976).

Indeed, exchanges were not seriously restarted until Nixon entered office.[45] In this sense, my study will resume this narrative after the interregnum caused by China's isolation from the West during the 1950s and 1960s.

This thesis will, further, engage with broad questions about the role of transnational exchanges in diplomacy. The term "exchanges" is drawn from my historical sources. But, as Kramer argues in his article on American policy towards international students, the term itself is not unproblematic. "Exchanges" suggests reciprocity. Kramer shows that student migration to and from America has, in fact, been decidedly lopsided: young men and women from a panoply of countries have flocked to American colleges and universities in great numbers, but American students have been historically reluctant to travel to educational institutions outside of Europe.[46] This thesis shows that Sino-American exchanges were similarly unbalanced — although, in this instance, more Americans travelled than hosted. This was just one of the ways that this particular moment in America's transnational interaction with China was unusual. If more Americans travelled to China than Chinese to America, this is not to say that Americans necessarily got the better end of the bargain. Throughout the 1970s, the NCUSCR and especially the CSCPRC complained that quantity did not mean quality: *access* afforded to delegations was not equivalent, with American visitors hamstrung by restrictions while in China. This work shows that terms such as exchange and reciprocity were complex and multi-faceted and not measurable in quotas of visitors alone.

As a form of societal interaction, as well as diplomacy, exchange programmes are an inherently collaborative enterprise between governments and private actors. Often initiated and encouraged by state actors, exchanges rely upon the participation of non-state actors, in both the host and participating country. Even when exchanges are initiated by the state, this does not mean that the government can control these interactions: Deborah Cohn's study of William Faulkner as an American cultural ambassador reminds us that American informal diplomats — even those under

[45] Sam Lebovic, 'From War Junk to Educational Exchange: The World War II Origins of the Fulbright Program and the Foundations of American Cultural Globalism, 1945-1950', *Diplomatic History*, 37/2 (2013), 280-312.
[46] Kramer, 'Is the World Our Campus?', 778.

State Department management — are often unpredictable and resistant to scripting — and, perhaps, are more influential for it. As Cohn puts it, "the challenges of public diplomacy [include] that cultural ambassadors do not stick to a given script, and while their freelancing may prove disastrous, it may also enhance US prestige — even when it is at odds with official messages".[47]

Like other exchanges with the socialist world, Sino-American contacts were more closely controlled by one government than the other: the Chinese counterparts of the NCUSCR and CSCPRC were directly managed by the government and a clear separation between and non-state and state actors only meaningfully existed on the American side. In line with Thomas Risse-Kappen's definition of transnational relations — "regular interactions across national boundaries when at least one actor is a non-state agent or does not operate on behalf of a national government" — this thesis is still a transnational history. But the active role of the Chinese (but also American) government in exchange diplomacy ensures that this is a study that, in the words of Andrew Preston and Doug Rossinow, "takes the nation-state seriously" and recognises that governments and non-state actors are "never sealed off from one another in the modern world".[48]

The collaborative nature of exchanges has, historians have shown, complicated the question of objectives. In his discussion of the Fulbright programme, Lebovic identifies the basic stated motivation behind exchange programmes: the accepted belief that increased contact between peoples is the basis for peace and understanding.[49] A similar motivation is identified by Tomas Tolvaisas for US exchanges exhibits in the Soviet Union in the 1950s and 1960s.[50] This explanation was also espoused by governments and embraced and championed by many of the non-state actors that facilitated Sino-American exchanges, including the NCUSCR and CSCPRC. However, as Lebovic,

[47] Deborah Cohn, '"In between Propaganda and Escapism": William Faulkner as Cold War Cultural Ambassador', *Diplomatic History*, 40/3 (2016), 392-420.
[48] Thomas Risse-Kappen, 'Introduction', in *Bringing Transnational Relations Back in: Non-State Actors, Domestic Structures and International Institutions*, ed. by Thomas Risse-Kappen (Cambridge, 1995); Andrew Preston and Douglas Rossinow, 'Introduction', in *Outside in: The Transnational Circuitry of US History*, ed. by Andrew Preston and Douglas Rossinow (New York, 2017).
[49] Lebovic, 'From War Junk to Educational Exchange', 291-2.
[50] Tomas Tolvaisas, 'Cold War "Bridge-Building": US Exchange Exhibits and Their Reception in the Soviet Union, 1959-1967', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 12/4 (2010), especially 5-6.

Kramer, Cohn, Tolvaisas and Jessica Gienow-Hecht all argue, the reality is rarely so simple. In fact, a more critical understanding of the objectives of exchanges show that these programmes were primarily intended by Washington to serve more conventional US foreign policy interests and political goals. Exchange programmes were, during the post-war era, used to cement relations between the US and already friendly nations, in particular those individuals and groups within these countries that were already sympathetic to American values. In this way, exchanges were generally expected to increase familiarity between those already friendly, not help end misunderstanding between foes. Indeed, Matt Loayza claims, this sometimes *prohibited* programmes from promoting mutual understanding: by only targeting participants already disposed to American principles, the State Department passed up the possibility of ingratiating the US with figures more critical of the American presence in the world.[51]

Both the US and Chinese governments took a similarly instrumental approach to Sino-American diplomacy: this thesis argues that Washington and Beijing utilised exchanges to serve their foreign policy interests and saw exchange contacts first as an aspect of their diplomatic relationship and only second as a broader means of fostering cross-cultural understanding. Non-governmental groups, however, were perhaps sincerer in seeking shared understanding than the two concerned governments. Just as other State Department-sponsored cultural ambassadors were more interested in human connections than promoting American ideology, so, too, were the NCUSCR and CSCPRC genuinely motivated by a desire to build understanding and meaningful connections between Americans and Chinese.[52] This did not mean that either group was naive or that they lacked more pragmatic interests. It does, however, help to explain their ongoing commitment to encouraging contacts with the Chinese in spite of the barriers to such interaction and the lack of immediate returns from what contact existed. As Suttmeier and Simon have argued in relation to the CSCPRC, we can only fully comprehend the motivations of American non-governmental actors if we take seriously

[51] Matt Loayza, '"A Curative and Creative Force": The Exchange of Persons Program and Eisenhower's Inter-American Policies, 1953–1961', *Diplomatic History*, 37/5 (2013), 946–70.
[52] For another example, see Cohn, '"In between Propaganda and Escapism"', 417-20.

their inextinguishable optimism for the benefits of transnational interaction.[53] One reason that such optimism was necessary was that, unlike in other cases of exchange diplomacy, the Chinese and American people were *not* already on good terms: the contacts described in this thesis came on the back of more than two decades of virulent hostility between the two countries and their populations.

Gienow-Hecht offers a further caveat to seeing exchanges as a means of increasing understanding. In her study of symphony orchestras, she posits that exchanges are a form of performance and argues that "presence, visibility … and effective unilateral communication" are at the heart of the objectives of cultural diplomacy.[54] Certainly there was a performative aspect to Sino-American exchanges: both Chinese and American delegations were carefully crafted to project a certain image of the country they represented. That said, the evidence from the American side shows that, in the case of American visitors to China, performance was more unconscious than calculated, reflecting the American confidence in presenting a supposedly unvarnished version of their society to foreign audiences. The NCUSCR perhaps paid more careful attention when representing the US to Chinese visitors: the group invariably thought hard about how to provide visitors with an experience that was "authentic" and indicative of the diversity of American society.

While some cultural exchanges were passive experience for audiences, exchanges were a medium of transnational interaction that were, for the most part, highly active and participatory. Sino-American exchanges as a whole, then, have perhaps more in common with the participatory cultural interaction described by Christina Klein than the unilateral performative described by Gienow-Hecht. Klein's book argues that middlebrow culture during the Cold War provided both symbolic but also genuine opportunities for ordinary Americans to participate in their country's increased engagement with Asia. If consumption of Gienow-Hecht's high culture was a passive experience, Klein suggests that the more prosaic nature of middlebrow culture products assumed that non-elite Americans and Asians could communicate and empathise with one another, through

[53] Suttmeier and Simon, 'Conflict and Cooperation', 143–59.
[54] Jessica Gienow-Hecht, 'The World Is Ready to Listen: Symphony Orchestras and the Global Performance of America', *Diplomatic History*, 36/1 (2012), 17-28.

fictitious works, journalistic reporting or real-life interaction on either continent.[55] Exchanges allowed an even more direct form of interaction between Americans and Chinese — travel to the other's country — but this was experienced only by a select few, typically drawn from societal elites. However, many more middlebrow Americans (as well as comparable sections of the Chinese population) experienced cultural interaction through exchanges by attending exhibitions, sporting competitions and cultural performances organised by the NCUSCR, or by witnessing these events from afar by reading press accounts of the visits or attending the conferences, symposia and public events staged by that organisation with the explicit intention of increasing the number of Americans participating in Sino-American contact.

The burgeoning literature on transnational exchange programmes, then, provides a range of theoretical insights that will underpin the analysis of this thesis. In turn, this study adds a further case-study to this corpus that is unusual yet revealing: few bilateral relationships have been unofficial and yet as important as the Sino-American partnership of the 1970s. As elaborated in the conclusion of this thesis, I argue that the peculiar conditions of Sino-American exchange diplomacy complicate direct comparisons with "normal" exchange interaction but also draw into relief important characteristics of exchange diplomacy and transnational interaction.

SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

The arguments of this thesis are based on novel access to both American and Chinese sources. I draw upon records from more than a dozen archives in the US and China, combining documents from government archives with sources that shed light on the role of the non-state organisations and individuals that are at the centre of this narrative.

A thorough examination of US governmental sources, including many documents only declassified in recent years, underpins the analysis of the official approach to the exchange programme

[55] Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley, CA, 2003), 7.

and the connection between exchange diplomacy and high-level negotiations. In addition to these American documents, this thesis draws upon sources from Chinese government archives, too. The Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive has been closed throughout the period of my research. Until it fully re-opens and declassification efforts reach into the 1970s, our knowledge of Beijing's approach to the exchange programme will remain partial. However, I have benefitted from access to municipal and provincial archives in China and from primary sources published by that country's government, which shed light on high-level Chinese decision-making. This work is primarily an account of the American experience of exchanges with China but this narrative benefits from what documentary evidence is available on the Chinese side to consider more fully the Chinese role in this story.

Perhaps the single most important set of new sources deployed in this thesis are the records of the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC. These records are not wholly unused: a number of historians have produced articles and book chapters that have benefitted from access to records from these two groups, as previously discussed in the historiography section. However, no study yet exists that makes a thorough use of these records to analyse the role of these two groups in Sino-American diplomacy in the 1970s. One reason for this is that neither organisation has a formal archive or even a single archival repository (yet). I have accessed NCUSCR records at the Rockefeller Archive Center and through access granted to the organisation's records within their still-functioning offices. I have used CSCPRC files held at the organisation's previous home, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), at the George Washington University's Gelman Library and among the records of one its parent organisations, SSRC. I have consulted further NCUSCR and CSCPRC sources held among private papers, including those of Doak Barnett, Douglas Murray and John Fairbank.

This documentary source material is enhanced by a number of oral histories I have conducted with influential figures that served in the American government and the organisations that managed exchanges, as well as with some of the earliest participants in exchange visits to China. My understanding of the experience of participation in exchanges has been further enhanced by extensive

use of a range of accounts written and recorded by exchange visitors to the PRC during this period, some published, either as books or in newspapers, and others drawn from visitors's personal papers.

The analysis of these sources draws on transnational, international and diplomatic history methodologies. Preston and Rossinow have argued that there is much overlap between these fields. "At their most fundamental level, both international history and transnational history focus on topics that both cross and transcend national borders. The key difference between them is that, while international history privileges relations among states, transnational history examines relations among peoples below the state level."[56] Recognising the productive overlap between these fields, this thesis declines to privilege either relations among states or between people; instead, it examines the interactive connection between these two tracks of diplomacy. In doing so, it seeks to follow in the vein of transnational-international history work highlighted by Preston and Rossinow, that "arranges a complex matrix of narration and analysis that locates people amid a dense array of forces — institutional and cultural, official and unofficial".[57] In doing so, I am also drawing on insights from scholars of China's foreign affairs. Anne-Marie Brady has persuasively argued that the Chinese term *waishi* (外事) has a different, broader meaning than its typical English translation, "foreign affairs". Brady argues that *waishi* incorporates not only the actions of governments but also of citizens. It includes a range of interactions with the outside world, whether these take place within China or outside the country's borders.[58] This work similarly avoids a sharp distinction between official and unofficial (or informal) diplomacy, preferring to emphasise the continuum and connections between interactions between governments, their citizens and foreign actors.

[56] Preston and Rossinow, 'Introduction', 4.
[57] Ibid., 12.
[58] Anne-Marie Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China: Managing Foreigners in the People's Republic* (Lanham, MD, 2003), xii.

OUTLINE

This thesis is composed of six chapters. They are organised in chronological order. The first three cover the Nixon years; the fourth and fifth, Ford's time in office; the sixth and final the period between Carter's entry to office and, just under two years later, the final agreement of normalisation.

Chapter 1 analyses developments between Nixon entering office in 1969 and the president's historic visit to China in 1972. It argues that people-to-people diplomacy and actors outside of government made a fundamental contribution to the re-opening of contacts between the two sides that would occur in 1971. It begins by showing that, in the first years of Nixon's presidency, a renewed attempt to build bridges to China was, far from a unique idea of the president's, in fact powerfully advocated for in both private and public by a constituency of Americans organised by and around the NCUSCR. It then traces how Nixon and Kissinger used people-to-people contacts as one of the principal means by which to communicate to Beijing their interest in engagement. Secret backchannels through heads of state were simultaneously pursued but it was ping-pong diplomacy that first broke the ice and this first, historic exchange paved the way for Kissinger and then Nixon's visits. Those visits were the venue for important agreements that initiated a full programme of cultural and scientific exchanges.

Chapter 2 analyses how those agreements began to be realised, arguing that the structure for managing these contacts was, in both its creation and application, a collaborative process between governmental and non-governmental actors. The chapter begins with the first ever official visit by PRC citizens to the US. This return leg of ping-pong diplomacy took place two months after Nixon's February 1972 summit and saw the Chinese table tennis team hosted by their American counterparts and the NCUSCR. This extravagant public event brought the NCUSCR to prominence — not least in the minds of the US government. The visit was ostensibly unofficial but its great import to the developing rapprochement meant that Washington worked closely with the National Committee to ensure the trip's success. This collaboration was efficacious and, in the wake of the visit, the NCUSCR

pitched for itself and the CSCPRC to be given a prominent role overseeing the emerging exchange programme. The NCUSCR's success in making this case was in part due to the group's willingness to recognise and respect the foreign policy implications of that programme. Thus, in the second half of 1972, the American and, subsequently, Chinese governments were convinced that exchanges could and should be entrusted to these independent groups. The next year Washington expanded this formula for managing exchanges through private but cooperative organisations by assisting in the foundation of a third exchange organisation, the National Council on US-China Trade.

The highpoint in the Sino-American relationship during the Kissinger era came in February 1973. In that month, the US and Chinese governments agreed to create "liaison offices", de facto embassies which would bring permanently-stationed officials to each capital, led by a diplomat of ambassadorial rank. Chapter 3 shows that — in cause, conception and execution — the creation of these liaison offices was a direct outgrowth of the exchange relationship. First proposed in a discussion with an NCUSCR delegation, Washington planned for the offices to be staffed by a combination of government workers and representatives from the NCUSCR, CSCPRC and the NCUSCT. This was indicative of the primary purpose the new institutions would serve: to coordinate the growing traffic of exchanges and trade between the two countries. The creation of these de facto embassies increased both governments' involvement in exchanges and the third chapter of this thesis goes on to detail how both the NCUSCR and CSCPRC sought to protect their independence and their influence over the contacts they managed. The deal to create liaison offices was, in retrospect, a high-water mark in rapprochement and the remainder of 1973 and 1974 saw a dwindling of the momentum in Sino-American rapprochement. Chapter 3 concludes by detailing the challenges posed to both the high-level and exchange relationship by Chinese frustration at the US government's failure to quickly finalise normalisation as Nixon had promised it would.

These challenges were not resolved by the end of Nixon's term and greeted Ford when he inherited the presidency in August 1974. Chapter 4 argues that, by the first months of that administration, Kissinger had been convinced that this downturn in the exchange programme necessitated government intervention. During his November 1974 visit to China, the Secretary of

State put significant pressure on Chinese leaders to address declining exchanges. Initially, Kissinger's lobbying had a salutary effect and led, in early 1975, to a "campaign of smiles" from Beijing that briefly revived the exchange programme. However, this was followed, later that year, by a series of more serious conflicts in the exchange programme, with both CSCPRC and NCUSCR exchanges becoming politicised by the Chinese. A firm stance from both groups and support from Washington helped resolve the earlier, more minor of these disputes but could not prevent the cancellation of a high-profile performing arts troupe exchange in 1975. The Chinese had attempted to use the tour to spread violent propaganda about their plans for the conquest of Taiwan and both the NCUSCR and the government decided it was preferable to pull the plug on the tour at the very last minute than to allow such a flagrant politicisation of a cultural exchange. The public fallout from this altercation was exacerbated by growing resentment on both sides about the experience of exchange delegations visiting China, with Americans chafing at the tight controls on their access to Chinese society and their hosts complaining about undiplomatic behaviour on the part of some of their guests. Thus, a year into Ford's time in office, the US government had come to rely on the exchange programme as a source of vitality in a stalled Sino-American relationship — even as they recognised that these contacts could be a source of conflict and further discord.

In spite of the lingering frictions in the Sino-American relationship, Ford was committed to following in Nixon's footsteps and making a summit trip to China. Chapter 5 begins by detailing how he and Kissinger and Ford sought to make the exchange program the means to achieve a successful presidential visit. Initially, Kissinger hoped that salubrious exchange diplomacy could create the positive atmospherics that would underpin a move towards diplomatic normalisation during the president's trip. However, after a frosty visit of his own to China in October 1975, Kissinger ultimately moderated his expectations and instead made seeking exchange agreements the primary means by which to avoid a summit wholly devoid of substance. During a tepid presidential visit, such deals proved hard to reach but Ford and Kissinger's discussions with Vice Premier Deng did produce at least one accord: that the highest American leaders would work to expedite US science and

technology assistance to China. While Kissinger and Ford were prepared to provide this help with little assured return from the Chinese, chapter 5 goes on show that the CSCPRC was simultaneously arguing that the US should seek to extract concessions from Beijing in return for helping to upgrade Chinese science and technology. Meanwhile, the Chinese, deeply disappointed with the outcome of Ford's summit visit, had begun to use congressional delegations and more informal visits by politicians outside of office to express their own frustrations with the sitting US government's China policy; chapter 5 concludes by analysing the diplomatic and political implications of these trips.

The sixth and final chapter of this thesis covers the period between President Jimmy Carter's entry to office in January 1977 and the final normalisation deal struck on 15 December 1978. The immobility in high-level Sino-American relations under Ford initially continued under Carter. This diplomatic deadlock stymied a major effort by the CSCPRC to significantly deepen scholarly exchanges through a high-profile June 1977 scientific delegation to China. That visit did, however, prove productive in revealing to Americans the changing winds in China's domestic politics, in particular a newfound desire to rapidly import ideas and technology from the West. Chapter 6 goes on to show how, in 1978, Carter's National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, looked to exploit this opportunity. He did so, first, by campaigning within the US government to ease China's purchase of American technology and, then, by further encouraging Chinese interest in science and technology cooperation through agreements for a deepening of the facilitated exchanges programme and the beginning of more formal government-to-government contacts. Brzezinski's tactic of simultaneously developing diplomatic, strategic and people-to-people facets of the relationship brought an upturn in Sino-American negotiations in 1978, as shown in two highly successful visits, first by Brzezinski himself in May 1978 and, then, by the lead White House science advisor and former CSCPRC chairman, Frank Press, in July. These two visits helped pave the way for the successful normalisation talks of the autumn and winter of 1978, as did adjustments in Carter's China policies — including the government's approach to the exchange programme — intended to encourage the confirmation of

Deng as the new paramount leader in Beijing and thus secure China's opening to America and the world.

CHAPTER ONE

Before the summit:

Ping-pong diplomacy and the origins of Sino-American rapprochement, 1971-1972

In early 1971, the director of New York's prestigious City Center of Music and Drama wrote a letter to Beijing inviting a group of Peking opera singers to New York. The letter was speculative and its author, Norman Singer, was surely unsurprised when the Chinese turned down his request. The language of their response, however, must have distinguished the correspondence from his usual contacts with New York high society. "Our model dramas", the Chinese informed him, "are specially prepared for the appreciation of our working people, not for our enemy and money-scented capitalists like you." During China's twenty-two years of hermetic isolation, attempts by Americans inside and outside of government to foster cultural contacts had often received testy responses. Singer could hardly have predicted, then, that, less than two years later, he would be sitting aboard a Chicago-bound coach listening to 40 visiting Chinese acrobats engage in a back and forth sing-along, trading "Beijing, Mighty City" for their host's "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot", rounded off by a rendition of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" from an accompanying State Department security detail.[1]

The transformation in Chinese attitudes to people-to-people diplomacy had been so drastic in those two years that, when the acrobats' tour materialised, the government of the People's Republic publicly but unconvincingly claimed that the original response received by Singer had been a forgery. This shift in Chinese attitudes was closely connected to the sea-change in high-level Sino-American relations, realised over the course of visits to China by National Security Advisor Kissinger and by President Nixon. However, this chapter argues that the starkly different condition of people-to-

[1] 'China's Acrobatic Diplomats', *Newsweek*, 1 January 1973.

people contacts that emerged in 1972 was not just a *consequence* of this changed government-to-government relationship but indeed an important *cause* of the transformed Sino-American relationship. I show that the exchange programme that began spectacularly with the ping-pong diplomacy of April 1971 was closely and interactively related to developments in high-level Sino-American negotiations. Progress in the diplomatic relationship opened new space for exchange contacts, but exchange contacts played a critical role in precipitating this high-level progress.

In this first year of renewed contact between the US and China, exchanges and people-to-people contacts played a critical role in Sino-American relations in three ways. First, people-to-people contacts were an effective backchannel for the American and Chinese leaderships communicating to one another their interest in rapprochement before high-level talks began. At the same time, as they passed secret messages through third parties, the American government announced the removal of restrictions on Sino-American travel and trade, while Beijing took care to show favour towards individual Americans that it came into contact with. This signalling, I show, made a critical contribution to the successful reestablishment of meaningful diplomatic dialogue between the two sides.

Second, the burgeoning exchange programme, which began with ping-pong diplomacy but soon included an array of contacts, was the primary means by which both sides sought to create tangible, public outcomes from summits otherwise dedicated to secretive talks and pomp. The US government successfully lobbied their Chinese counterparts to utilise exchanges as a means of thickening a bilateral relationship between the people of their two countries after 22 years of hostility and isolation.

One of the reasons that Washington did so was because exchanges served a third purpose: helping to build popular American domestic support for rapprochement among a public that was still divided on the issue of China policy. Domestic consumption of rapprochement was at the forefront of Nixon and Kissinger's mind but it was also, increasingly, a concern of Chinese leaders, who similarly

recognised that their interests were served by bolstering popular support for the Sino-American relationship, in China and in the US.

The first argument of this chapter, then, is that, in these three ways, exchanges made a critical contribution to the opening stages of rapprochement. The second is that the non-state actors that led exchange diplomacy exercised significant agency in fulfilling this critical role. In exchange diplomacy, both governments were as often reacting to initiatives originating from below as they were managing contacts from above. This began even before ping-pong diplomacy: academics from outside of the Nixon administration advocated, both publicly and privately, for a range of steps that could break the ice with the Chinese. That the government adopted practically all of these measures as they sought to re-open contacts demonstrates the influence of these suggestions. Subsequently, the beginning of exchange contacts from ping-ping diplomacy onwards placed exchange participants and organisations at the heart of the process of rebuilding a relationship with the Chinese. Though not agents of their government, the Americans involved in these contacts were nonetheless seen as important representatives of their country and its new approach to China. In this way, American organisations and individuals involved in the exchange programme were among the foremost actors in realising and shaping Sino-American rapprochement.

These two arguments are made over the course of four chronological sections. The first examines the non-governmental roots of Nixon's early steps to opening rapprochement with the Chinese. The second deals with backchannel diplomacy leading up to the ping-pong breakthrough. The third examines the expansion of exchanges from that visit until the conclusion of the Nixon summit. Finally, a fourth section analyses the governmental negotiations over exchanges that took place during the Kissinger visit of October 1971 and Nixon's summit trip in February 1972.

I: THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ROOTS OF NIXON'S BACKCHANNEL DIPLOMACY

Restarting Sino-American people-to-people contacts was, even before the sensation of ping-pong diplomacy, the primary means by which Americans inside and outside of government sought to begin rapprochement with the PRC. This policy originated before Nixon entered office and, as this section shows, was, by 1969, being advocated publicly and privately by many outside of government. Indeed, this section argues that the idea for many of Nixon's early attempts to catch the attention of Chinese leaders originated from non-governmental actors. These proposals became reality between 1969 and 1971 both because of Nixon's personal interest in beginning rapprochement and in recognition of dissipating American public support for a policy of isolating China.

Government-imposed barriers to contact and travel

Negotiations over exchanges had been a focal point of Sino-American negotiations for more than a decade before Nixon entered office. During the early rounds of the Sino-American ambassadorial talks that began in 1955, the PRC suggested inviting American journalists to travel to China, a proposal welcomed by American news organisations before the Eisenhower administration and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles threatened severe fines for any bold enough to accept Beijing's invitation. A further offer to receive American scientists was made by Beijing but ignored by Washington. This dynamic was reversed after 1957, when the US unilaterally changed its position on Americans travelling to China: thereafter, it was the US side that repeatedly made offers of restarting contacts — often the very same proposals that the Chinese had previously made — only to be spurned by the other side.[2] By the time President Lyndon Johnson was in office, this had become a constant but ineffective US tactic in the stalled talks between the two sides. In spite of the lack of progress, these

[2] Brown to Stone, 23 April 1971, "POL Chicom-US 4/1/71", Subject Numeric Files, 1970-73, Political & Defense (SNF1970-73PD), Record Group 59: Records of the Department of State (RG59), US National Archives, College Park, MD (NACP).

repeated American statements had made it clear to the Chinese that the US would welcome a resumption of people-to-people contacts as a first step towards rapprochement.

Nixon's entry to office did not initially alter the American negotiating position in the ambassadorial talks. A month after his inauguration, the president approved Kissinger's recommendation that the US side continue to make proposals for beginning exchanges and make clear to the Chinese that Washington was willing to open negotiations over other issues. This stance had not previously elicited progress and it did not now.[3] Indeed, during his first year in office, Nixon adopted a conservative China policy: a March 1969 proposal for removing all remaining government restrictions on travel to China by the newly appointed Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, John Richardson Jr, was declined as prematurely ambitious.[4] Nixon was to make a great fanfare about his later decision to remove this travel ban, enacted through an initial slight easing of restrictions in July 1969 and an eventual ending of all restrictions in March 1971. The State Department's internal communications make clear, however, that this was a public relations move: even before the first removal of restrictions, in practice the US government had been validating the passports of "virtually anyone" wishing to travel to China for anything more consequential than tourism. More than 300 prospective visitors, including congressmen, journalists, academics and medical scientists, had received US government authorisation to visit the PRC since 1957. Only a fraction of these had been able to visit China — but this was due to Beijing's refusal to grant them entry.[5]

Recommendations for rapprochement from outside of government

Historians have largely accepted Nixon's portrayal of the decision to begin ending the embargo on the PRC and signalling his willingness to negotiate with Beijing as a bold and novel initiative originating

[3] *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1969-1976*, Volume XVII, China, 1969-1972, ed. Steven E Phillips (Washington, DC, 2010), Document 6.
[4] *FRUS*, Vol. XVII, Document 19.
[5] Ibid., Document 18.

from the White House. Margaret MacMillan and Jonathan Pollack, among others, both find the origins of rapprochement in the president's individual search for a way to reverse America's imperial overstretch under Lyndon Johnson.[6] Yang Kuisong and Xia Yafeng report that Mao himself even subscribed to this view, with the chairman saying in 1970 that Nixon's decision showed that he "had dared to adopt the policy of rapprochement with China" and that doing so was "defying the political climate and sentiment in his country".[7] In fact, however, the removal of restrictions on trade and travel with China was, far from an audacious shot in the dark, a policy change that had been advocated for several years by a range of influential individuals and organisations concerned with China policy.

This had hardly been done quietly, either. Two months into Nixon's term, a "national convocation" on China policy had been held in New York by the NCUSCR, nearly three years after the group had been founded to increase public knowledge about contemporary China and, less officially, to lobby the American government to end its policy of isolation towards the PRC. The meeting attracted 2,500 attendees, from corporate businessmen to high school students, as well as 200 journalists; the Hilton hotel where it was hosted claimed they had never held an event with more press coverage.[8] The national convocation was merely the largest of more than 130 seminars and 100 radio and television spots organised by the NCUSCR during its first half decade.[9]

Similarly to previous NCUSCR events, the meeting was carefully tailored for an audience drawn from the mainstream American public and from policymaking circles. Virulent anti-communist conservatives such as Congressman Walter Judd and Maoist sympathisers like Felix Greene were shunned equally, while a State Department representative was invited to speak. In the convocation's dinner address, Senator Ted Kennedy called for the "customary bag of liberals' demands for

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[6] See, for example, Margaret MacMillan, 'Nixon, Kissinger, and the Opening to China', in *Nixon in the World: American Foreign Relations, 1969-1977*, ed. by Fredrik Logevall and Andrew Preston (Oxford, 2008); Jonathan D Pollack, 'The Opening to America', in *The Cambridge History of China*, ed. by Roderick MacFarquhar and John K Fairbank (Cambridge, 1991), 405. Other scholars have recognised a role for pressure for rapprochement from outside the White House. For example, David Perlmutter, *Picturing China in the American Press: The Visual Portrayal of Sino-American Relations in Time Magazine, 1949-1973* (Lanham, MD, 2007), 189; Tyler, *Great Wall*, 58-9; Goh, *Constructing*.

[7] Yang and Xia, 'Vacillating', 404; Huang Hua, *Memoirs* (Beijing, 2008), 219-223.

[8] 'The China Talkers and the Absentees', *Washington Post*, 23 March 1969.

[9] Handler to Kissinger, 7 June 1972, "1972 - Exchange Program - Proposed", CSCNAS.

exchanges, [and] ending bars on travel and nonstrategic trade" as a precursor to more fundamental shifts in the US China policy.[10] The huge turnout for the convocation was, the newspaper reported, "evidence … that American public opinion on China has outrun American policy", something also demonstrated by a Gallup poll from two months prior that recorded that a majority of Americans favoured the US "going along" with the PRC being seated at the UN if this was voted for by other countries.[11]

In addition to this role shaping public discourse on China, leading members of the NCUSCR had a direct input into Nixon's China policy through correspondence and meetings with government officials. The most notable of these was a day-long consultation between five academics and Kissinger, which included more than an hour with Nixon himself.[12] A Doak Barnett, Edwin Reischauer and Lucian Pye were three of those at the meeting; all were board members of the NCUSCR, with Barnett the then chairman of the organisation.[13] These meetings took place at the same time as extensive consultations on China policy within the government that reached many of the same conclusions as these academics. It is difficult, therefore, to assess the relative impact of these or other suggestions from outside of government. Nonetheless, the congruence between the ideas forwarded from these non-governmental sources and the actions carried out by the administration are striking. In October 1969, Barnett and two other colleagues wrote to encourage Kissinger to remove American warships from the Taiwan Straits, relax trade restrictions and establish a new communication channel with the Chinese beside the Warsaw talks.[14] A month later, patrols of the Taiwan Straits ended; three months later, trade in the areas advocated in the letter were permitted; a year later, the US established a backchannel with the PRC through Pakistan. The origins of all of these initiatives is

[10] NCUSCR Program Summary, 1968-69, NCOC.
[11] The NCUSCR's rise was simultaneous to the precipitous decline of the most prominent non-government voice on China policy of the 1950s and early 1960s, the pro-Chiang Kai-shek Committee of One Million. In the week that the NCUSCR was staging the national convocation, the ever more incredibly named Committee of One Million closed its offices in New York and arranged for phone calls to the organisation to be redirected to its director's personal telephone. 'China Talkers', *Washington Post*; Stanley Bachrack, *The Committee of One Million: 'China Lobby' Politics, 1953-1971* (New York, 1976); Perlmutter, *Picturing China*, 189.
[12] This was not the first time that NCUSCR-affiliated staff had met with the president to advise on China policy: they had done so in 1968 with Johnson, too.
[13] Barnett to Roehrich, 5 February 1981 [*sic*], "Kissinger, 1968-81", Box 106, ADBP.
[14] Barnett to Nixon, 9 October 1969, "Kissinger, 1968-81", Box 106, ADBP.

complex, with many proposals for "bridge building" dating back at least as far as the Johnson administration.[15] Together, however, the evidence of the dialogue between America academics and policymakers is another reminder that Nixon and Kissinger should be credited more for the execution than the invention of the initiatives that began rapprochement and that, even before the earliest signalling to Beijing, voices from outside of the White House and the State Department had contributed to policymaking towards the PRC, often at the behest of the government.[16]

II: PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE DIPLOMACY AS BACKCHANNEL

This section analyses how both Chinese and American governments sought to use their attitudes towards the other's people as a subtle backchannel to indicate their interest in beginning rapprochement. Washington looked for signals in the Chinese response to American efforts to begin people-to-people interaction but was frustrated by Beijing's insistence that negotiations over Taiwan precede the bilateral contacts sought by the US government. The US government responded directly to this Chinese request to negotiate over Taiwan while simultaneously continuing to make clear that it favoured beginning people-to-people contacts at the same time as high-level talks. This, I argue, ultimately contributed to the decision by the Chinese leadership to spectacularly re-open contacts in the form of ping-pong diplomacy of April 1971.

Mixed messages from Beijing through the people-to-people channel

If the Nixon White House was using a more favourable attitude to people-to-people contacts to indicate its willingness to begin serious high-level talks, it was also reading Chinese intentions through their attitude to Americans outside of government. Nixon had ordered the US ambassador to Poland,

[15] Michael Lumbers, *Piercing the Bamboo Curtain: Tentative Bridge-Building to China during the Johnson Years* (Manchester, 2008).
[16] Reischauer to Kissinger, 6 January 1969, "Nixon, 1968-71", Box 106, ADBP.

Walter Stoessel, to inform the Chinese diplomatic corps in Warsaw that Washington wanted to resume talks. Stoessel did so on 3 December 1969 and six days later Beijing released two American citizens arrested in Chinese waters after their yacht had lost its course. State believed this was a direct result of the Stoessel contact and thought that "the Chinese were anxious to have their action observed".[17] This analysis was correct: the release of the yachtsmen, and the decision to directly inform the American Embassy in Warsaw of their release, had been ordered by Zhou and approved by Mao.[18] Five weeks later, the Chinese agreed to re-establish more immediate communication by restarting the Warsaw talks.

The State Department also sought to gauge Beijing's attitude by speaking to Americans that had been in direct contact with the Chinese leadership. It was to this end that Harry Thayer, a senior State Department officer, interviewed one of the few Americans that had been allowed to travel to the People's Republic, the black civil rights leader Robert F Williams. Williams had fled to China from 1966 to 1969 in the face of FBI charges. He had enjoyed close access to the PRC leadership: he claimed responsibility for Mao's endorsement of the non-violent civil rights movement and had spent more than two hours with Zhou immediately before he left China.[19] Though personally sceptical of Williams's reliability, Thayer passed on his comments that the Chinese felt "insulted" by the selective nature of the scaling back of travel restrictions — perhaps contributing to the government's abandonment of the remaining restrictions on travel less than nine months later. In his work on black radicals's contacts with China, Robeson Taj Frazier wonders how influential Williams's comments were.[20] Thayer's disdain for his partiality suggests they were limited, though the sheer scarcity of first-hand accounts of the Chinese leadership ensured that he nonetheless drew up a thorough eight-page record of the meeting for extensive internal circulation.[21]

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[17] Cline to Rogers, 9 December 1969, "POL Chicom-US 7/1/70", SNF1970-73PD, RG59, NACP. Xia Yafeng concurs with this reading of China's actions. Xia, *Negotiating*, 144.
[18] Zhou Enlai, *Nianpu: 1949-1976*, ed. by Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi (ZGZYWXYJS) (Beijing, 1997), III, 336-74, December 1969 entry; Mao Zedong, *Nianpu: 1949-1976*, ed. by ZGZYWXYJS (Beijing, 2013), VI, 274.
[19] Williams had also made a brief trip to China in 1964.
[20] Frazier, *East Is Black*, 195–7.
[21] Report on conversation, Thayer and Williams, 12 January 1970, SNF1970-73PD, RG59, NACP.

In different ways, then, both the release of the American yachtsmen and Williams's comments encouraged the Nixon administration to further their China policy initiatives. Nonetheless, Beijing continued to limit Sino-American people-to-people interaction, pending political concessions on the fundamental issue of Taiwan from Washington.[22] Perhaps reflecting the resentment at the partial travel ban reported by Williams, the Chinese had only welcomed a lone American visitor — John Stiven Strong — in the four months following Washington's relaxation of its travel restrictions in March 1970. Strong was the grand-nephew of the American Marxist Anne Louise Strong, who had lived in China and died in Beijing in 1970, and, in a similar mode to those few Americans that had been invited to the PRC in the 1960s, had been granted a visa as a reward for his and his family's political views.[23]

The Chinese made similarly cynical use of Nixon's efforts to restart Sino-American trade. The PRC was quietly increasing their purchases of a range of American goods, from vegetable oil to advanced electronics. They were doing so, however, in ways that concealed their involvement, buying under the table in Hong Kong or through Japanese or European suppliers, and refusing to acknowledge that American products were reaching China. Meanwhile, the mainland authorities warned Hong Kong distributors of PRC-manufactured goods that if they were publicly found dealing with US firms they would be harshly sanctioned by Beijing.[24] The Chinese government's initial response to Nixon's relaxation of trade and travel restrictions, then, was an inversion of what the White House sought to achieve. The US government held little hope of material gain from trade or any substantial increase in travel to or from China but hoped that even subtle changes would have a political and symbolic importance. The PRC, meanwhile, cynically exploited the relaxations to serve its immediate commercial and ideological interests while refusing to do so in a way that would dilute its position that the US must negotiate on Taiwan in order to resume any level of contact. While

[22] American Consul Hong Kong (ACHK) to Department of State (DOS), 21 July 1970, SNF1970-73PD, RG59, NACP.
[23] ACHK to DOS, 21 July 1970, "POL Chicom-US 7/1/70", SNF1970-73PD, RG59, NACP; American Embassy Tokyo to DOS, 19 June 1970, "POL Chicom-US 6/1/70", SNF1970-73PD, RG59, NACP.
[24] ACHK to DOS, 21 July 1970, "POL Chicom-US 7/1/70", SNF1970-73PD, RG59, NACP.

Beijing was prepared to occasionally release an imprisoned American or two, they opted to limit their signalling to their own chosen initiatives, rather than publicly embrace the openings offered by Washington.

Frustration at Beijing's subversion of American public diplomacy initiatives encouraged Kissinger and Nixon to simultaneously seek a secret high-level backchannel with the Chinese. However, while the White House used both the Warsaw talks and third parties to communicate that the US was prepared to negotiate political questions, the American side did not abandon their previous position that exchange contacts were important and should resume. At the 20 February 1970 meeting in Warsaw — the 136th, and, it turned out, last — the Americans directly responded to Chinese reluctance to engage in exchanges, arguing that the US and China "can and should" move forward on bilateral issues "simultaneously" with talks on Taiwan.[25] This was the first articulation of what was to become the core of America's policy towards exchanges in 1970 and into the future: that bilateral contacts were a parallel track in the Sino-American relationship that should move forward alongside diplomatic negotiations, rather than subsequent to political talks as Beijing demanded. It was also the basis of the emerging broader US position that any visit by an American official representative to China — suggested by the Chinese in this meeting — could not simply be to discuss Taiwan but must also include a broader range of issues, including renewing people-to-people contacts. In time, both of these strategies would bring success, but there were limited hints of this before the drama of ping-pong diplomacy.

The misread Edgar Snow message

Before that breakthrough, however, there was one final signal sent through people-to-people contacts, that has subsequently become the subject of intense historical comment — and been misunderstood. Kissinger claimed in his memoirs that the Chinese decision to grant American journalist Edgar Snow a

[25] 20 February 1970 talks, in 'A Résumé of the Warsaw Talks, 1955-1970', 12 October 1971, "POL Chicom-US 4/1/71", SNF1970-73PD, RG59, NACP.

long interview with Mao and to publicise this contact with a picture of Snow and the chairman on the front of *The People's Daily* was a piece of subtle Chinese diplomacy lost on thick-headed Americans like himself.[26] Certainly this was intended to be a signal from the Chinese: Mao told a personal aide that the publicity of the meeting was to test American interest in opening contacts with the PRC.[27] Kissinger alleges that he was ignorant of this signal until several months after it took place and Harding is one of a number of distinguished historians who repeats the idea that the State Department did not report on the meeting until April 1971.[28] This, however, is contradicted by at least three long memoranda circulated within that department in late December 1970 and early January 1971. These memoranda analysed in detail the possible implications of both the content and symbolism of Mao's meeting with Snow. As they had over Williams's testimony and the release of American yachtsmen, government analysts diligently attempted to understand the meaning of changing Chinese behaviour towards American citizens.[29] Chris Tudda claims that the arrival of two of these three memoranda on New Year's Eve meant that Secretary of State William Rogers missed them.[30] This does, not, however, explain how a third memorandum, entitled "Did Chou tell Edgar Snow anything new about Taiwan?" and signed off by senior China watcher William Gleysteen, fell under the radar after arriving on 4 January 1971.[31]

A simple reason that Mao's most important message to Snow — that Nixon himself would be welcome to come to China — was missed by Kissinger and others is that the journalist kept it to himself. Snow's talks with Zhou earlier in December included other suggestions that Beijing was open to talks with the US and accounts of these discussions were immediately published abroad and

[26] The Chinese record of Snow's interview with Mao on 18 December 1970, including the invitation to Nixon, is at Mao Zedong, *Waijiao Wenxuan*, ed. by ZGZYWXYJS (Beijing, 1994), 592-4.
[27] Xu Guoqi, *Olympic Dreams China and Sports, 1895-2008* (Cambridge, MA, 2008), 134.
[28] Kissinger, *White House Years*, 702–3; Harding, *Fragile Relationship*, 39, 394. A similar claim is reported in Brady, *Making*, 177–9. For the original picture, see *Renmin ribao*, 25 December 1970.
[29] For examples, see ACHK to DOS, 31 December 1970, "POL 1 Chicom 6/1/70", SNF1970-73PD, RG59, NACP; ACHK to Secretary of State, "POL 2 Chicom 9/1/70", SNF1970-73PD, RG59, NACP; and Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), 'Did Chou tell Edgar Snow anything new about Taiwan?', 4 January 1971, "POL Chicom-US 1/1/71", SNF1970-73PD, RG59, NACP.
[30] Tudda, *Turning Point*, 62.
[31] INR, 'Did Chou tell Edgar Snow anything new about Taiwan?', 4 January 1971, "POL Chicom-US 1/1/71", SNF1970-73PD, RG59, NACP.

included in the State Department's analysis.[32] Snow's long account of his talks with Mao, however, was rejected by *The New York Times* and took four months to appear in *Life* magazine. Chen Jian suggests that this delay was in part because, fearing the domestic consequences of Mao's criticism of Cultural Revolution excesses in the interview, Beijing initially prevented Snow from publishing a full account.[33] Mao should further shoulder the blame for mistakenly believing that Snow worked for the CIA.[34] In fact, either as a result of the Chinese insistence on secrecy or because of Snow's own resentment from years of suspicion from American officialdom, the journalist did not even reveal the chairman's invite when he was eventually, belatedly interviewed by the CIA in Geneva.[35]

Tyler and MacMillan both suggest that a critical reason for this missed connection was the government's lingering suspicions of left-wing Sinophiles such as Snow.[36] This prejudice unquestionably existed, similarly influencing the scepticism with which Williams had been treated. Yet the State Department nonetheless recognised that the journalist must be taken seriously, as "Peking considers Snow an important vehicle for carrying Chinese views … to the West".[37] What is in fact a much more likely explanation is that the *known* content of Snow's contacts with the Chinese were hardly news to the US government. Undisclosed to the public though this was at the time, the 20 February 1970 meeting in Warsaw had included a PRC suggestion that the US send a senior minister or presidential envoy to China.[38] Snow was only one of the multiple channels in which the Chinese suggested that a dialogue begin, and, whether Rogers saw the memoranda about the journalist or not, he (not to mention Kissinger) would already have been aware that the Chinese had recommended the resumption of dialogue at a high-level.

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[32] ACHK to DOS, 31 December 1970, "POL 1 Chicom 6/1/70", SNF1970-73PD, RG59, NACP.
[33] Chen, *Mao's China*, 257.
[34] Brady, *Making*, 177; Tyler, *Great Wall*, 83; Xu, *Olympic Dreams*, 124.
[35] That Snow was interviewed by the CIA is reported by Tyler, based on correspondence with Snow's late wife. Tyler, *Great Wall*, 86. Robert Keatley also repeated the claim that Snow was interviewed by the CIA in an interview I conducted with him. Keatley met Snow before he himself traveled to the PRC later in 1971. Interview with Robert Keatley, Washington, DC, 2 September 2015.
[36] Tyler, *Great Wall*, 86; MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao*, 172.
[37] ACHK to DOS, 31 December 1970, "POL 1 Chicom 6/1/70", SNF1970-73PD, RG59, NACP.
[38] 'A Résumé of the Warsaw Talks, 1955-1970', 12 October 1971, "POL Chicom-US 4/1/71", SNF1970-73PD, RG59, NACP.

Thus, the historical significance of the journalist's interaction with Mao is not primarily as a missed signal to American leaders but instead the beginning of the Chinese government's public efforts to signal to the Chinese and American *people* that the diplomatic hostility between Beijing and Washington was easing. Judged by this criterion, it was more effective: Snow's *Life* article, when it eventually came out, stoked American public interest in China, while Chen Jian recalls that, as an 18-year-old educated youth in Shanghai, he and his friends had all recognised that Mao's meeting with Snow was significant, even if they were unsure as to its precise meaning.[39]

The Chinese government's efforts to use Edgar Snow as a signal to their American counterparts, then, had been only a mixed success. This was a mirror of the uneven record of concurrent American efforts to show their own desire for high-level talks through people-to-people diplomacy. By April 1971, the Nixon administration had gradually responded to suggestions from inside and outside of government to remove restrictions placed on travel and trade between the US and China. This was, alongside the resumption of the Warsaw talks and opening of secret backchannel contacts, one facet of a tripartite strategy to begin the process of rapprochement. No immediate Chinese response was received to the repeated efforts by the US to encourage the resumption of people-to-people contacts before April 1971. Nevertheless, surely partially in response to two years of American initiatives and encouragement, it was through the medium of people-to-people contacts that Mao and Zhou chose to take the first major step towards rapprochement, the invitation for the American table tennis team to tour the PRC.

III: EXCHANGES BEGIN: PING-PONG DIPLOMACY

The sensational tour by the American ping-pong team of China between 12 and 24 April 1971 is the most documented event in Sino-American people-to-people diplomacy. As soon as the possibility of the visit became clear, American news organisations clamoured to secure coverage and one of the

[39] Chen, *Mao's China*, 255-6.

team, George Brathwaite, travelled around the PRC laden with four cameras, each from a different news organisation.[40] The visit has hardly received less attention from historians. It is the centrepiece of Nicholas Griffin's bestselling 2014 book and features heavily in Xu Guoqi's recent account of the role of sports in twentieth-century Chinese diplomacy. The tour has also been the focus of much Chinese-language scholarship, including Qian Jian's dedicated study *Little Ball Moves Big Ball*.[41]

Given this extensive coverage, it is unnecessary to provide here another detailed account of the specifics of the trip. Instead, this section provides a different perspective on the visit. The undeniably remarkable character of the event has led historians to consider it as exceptional and in isolation, as a brief moment where Sino-American people-to-people contacts precipitated changes in the high-level diplomatic relationship. In fact, ping-pong diplomacy was just one (important and dramatic) act in the longer trajectory of developing transnational contacts and their interrelation with high-level diplomacy. Continuities and connections, then, exist between the visit and the antecedent initiatives described in the previous section, as well as with subsequent developments in Sino-American people-to-people contacts: this section analyses these links and legacies. One such critical link was between the ping-pong visit and the beginning of the NCUSCR's exchange programme. This section details this connection and shows how the gathering prospects for exchanges in the wake of the ping-pong visit provoked jostling among exchange organisations for sponsorship from the American government.

By late 1970, the signals described in the previous section had confirmed to both Beijing and Washington that a rapprochement was possible. At this point, the Chinese shifted their preference away from high-level backchannels and decided instead to take a decisive step in the people-to-people channel. Having pulled out of the Warsaw talks in June 1970, Beijing also suspended the Pakistani backchannel in February 1971 in protest at another American escalation in Southeast Asia.[42] While

[40] Nicholas Griffin, *Ping-Pong Diplomacy: Ivor Montagu and the Astonishing Story behind the Game That Changed the World* (London, 2014), 207.
[41] Griffin, *Ping-Pong Diplomacy*; Xu, *Olympic Dreams*; Qian Jiang, *Xiao qiu zhuandong da qiu: 'Pingpang waijiao' muhou* (Beijing, 1997).
[42] Mao, *Waijiao wenxuan*, 584.

Beijing objected to the US presence on their southern border, Chinese leaders still believed the country could balance the more serious threat to its north. Mao and Zhou, then, turned to the only remaining channel of communication available to them — people-to-people contacts — in order to kick-start rapprochement.

In April 1971, Mao and Zhou decisively reached out to the US. The Chinese table tennis team's contact with their American competitors in the world championships in Nagoya was, we now know, authorised by the highest leaders in Beijing. Chinese sources show that, even before the team had travelled to Japan, Zhou had briefed officials that the American team might be invited to China soon. Mao and Zhou's close personal involvement in the decision for the Chinese team to travel and be involved in the championships — including a last minute telephone call from the chairman with the final authorisation — has been well documented.[43] Once both teams were in Nagoya, pleasantries were exchanged between some of the Chinese and Americans in the practice hall and the breakthrough followed when Glen Cowan boarded the Chinese team bus and was greeted by the senior Chinese player Zhuang Zedong, who presented him with a magnificent silk scroll depicting the Huangshan mountains. The invitation for the team to visit China after the championships came shortly thereafter (in spite of objections from within the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) that the team should not precede further American leftists).[44] The close involvement of the Chinese leaders in the initiative continued into the Americans' stay in China: Zhou personally organised the team's itinerary, specially opened the then-closed Forbidden City for the team and even munificently ordered that the Americans should be allowed to win a few of the matches with their Chinese opponents.[45]

Although the US government had no comparable involvement in orchestrating the ping-pong initiative, the White House wasted no time responding to Beijing's action. On 14 April, the day that Zhou personally welcomed the team to China, Nixon announced further relaxations of the restrictions on contacts between the two sides, promising to expedite visas for groups of Chinese visitors and

[43] Qian, *Xiao qiu*, 127-8. For Zhou's personal involvement, see Xu, *Olympic Dreams*, 128.
[44] Yang and Xia, 'Vacillating', 404-5.
[45] Chen Dunde, *Mao Zedong Niksesong Zai 1972* (Beijing, 1988), 124.

permitting trade in a host of new goods.[46] The president also encouraged the Democratic Senator Mike Mansfield to accept an offer of travel to China that had arrived while the ping-pong team was in the PRC and discussed with Kissinger using the senator to pass a message to the Chinese leadership.[47] The White House, then, was continuing to make eager use of the people-to-people channel until, soon after the ping-pong visit, Kissinger was unexpectedly invited to China, creating the possibility of a direct high-level dialogue.

The importance of Zhou's invitation to Kissinger was in what it did not say: the Chinese had dropped the condition that talks be confined to American withdrawal from Taiwan. The invitation was the ultimate proof of the success of both sides' efforts to build rapprochement through people-to-people signals and initiatives. Without access to still-unavailable Chinese high-level documents it is impossible to know the exact connection between American efforts to encourage travel and trade contacts, the ping-pong visit and the ultimate invite issued by Zhou. Nonetheless, it is clear that, on both sides, changing official treatment of the other side's citizens had acted as an important channel for both leaderships to communicate, initially supplementing, and subsequently substituting for, avenues of high-level backchannel contact. Nixon successfully indicated to the Chinese his interest in engagement through signalling in Warsaw, secret backchannels, and the successive ending of the travel and trade embargo on China. After Ambassador Stoessel's reestablishment of contact in Poland, the Warsaw talks had returned to tepid interchanges. Subsequently, the Pakistan backchannel had confirmed that the very highest leaders on both sides were considering negotiations. When both channels were temporarily broken off after American military actions in Southeast Asia, Mao's decision to restart people-to-people contacts via ping-pong diplomacy — and the Nixon administration's rapid embrace of this — immediately anticipated the invite of a high-level policy

[46] *FRUS*, Vol. XVII, Document 116.
[47] Mansfield's visit ultimately took place in April 1972, having been deliberately delayed by the White House once Nixon expected himself to go to China. Don Oberdorfer, *Senator Mansfield: The Extraordinary Life of a Great American Statesman and Diplomat* (Washington, DC, 2003), 315, 348. For an account of the visit, see Michael Mansfield and Hugh Scott, *Journey to the New China: April-May 1972* (Washington, DC, 1972).

maker to the PRC. Rapprochement could not have been achieved through people-to-people contacts alone; however, it would not have been achieved without them.

Early exchanges: the NCUSCR and CSCPRC prepare

Though ignorant of Kissinger's invitation, the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC had rushed to welcome the ping-pong team's visit to China and to use the visit as the basis for beginning wider contacts. Most significantly, the NCUSCR had facilitated an invitation for the Chinese to send their own team for a return leg in America in the near future. The US team had decided even before they entered the PRC that they wished to invite their hosts to come to America and had sought a sponsor that had the organisational and financial resources to host a high-profile athletic exchange. US Table Tennis Association (USTTA) president Graham Steenhoven had contacted the NCUSCR from Hong Kong and the group's board soon agreed to co-host and fund the visit if the Chinese accepted the invitation.[48] Steenhoven's decision to contact the NCUSCR, and not another American exchange organisation, can be considered in retrospect both recognition and cause of the group's prominence: Steenhoven chose the NCUSCR because of its established public profile, but the group's future role in exchanges would be built on their experience of hosting the Chinese team.

The Chinese agreed to travel to the US but did not commit to a date; the visit would ultimately be delayed — partially for political reasons — until April 1972. Nonetheless, their acceptance of the invitation was one of a number of signs that exchanges were finally taking off. Journalistic contacts were re-established through the first ping-pong visit itself: a trio of American journalists accompanied the team, the first mainstream journalists to visit the PRC since its founding, and in the month that followed Robert Keatley of the *Wall Street Journal* and Tilman Durdin of the *New*

[48] Jan Carol Berris, 'The Evolution of Sino-American Exchanges: A View from the National Committee', in *Educational Exchanges: Essays on the Sino-American Experience*, ed. by Joyce Kallgren and Denis Simon (Berkeley, CA, 1987), 81; interview with Jan Berris, New York, 15 August 2015.

York Times both travelled to China individually.[49] Meanwhile, scientific exchanges began when Ethan Singer and Arthur Galston became the first American scientists to visit the PRC on 10 May 1971. Chinese leaders told Galston that his visit would be the first of many and that Beijing would now host American visitors with a broad range of political persuasions.[50]

The prospects for intensifying exchanges seemed all the greater when, on 15 July 1971, Nixon made his sensational announcement that Kissinger had completed his secret visit to the PRC and that he himself would follow early the next year. In practical terms, Kissinger's first visit to China had little direct impact on developing exchanges. The trip was brief and, in the interests of secrecy, Kissinger was accompanied by only a skeleton staff. His talks with Zhou were dedicated to pleasantries, broad strategic dialogue and drawing up arrangements for a second Kissinger trip and the subsequent Nixon summit. There were too few Americans in the party for counterpart talks between mid-ranking officials, which would become the key medium for high-level negotiations of exchanges during future trips. All the same, during his talks, Kissinger applauded the first cultural and journalistic visits by Americans to China.[51]

In the wake of Nixon's announcement, both the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC began making practical plans for exchanges, with both groups expecting to have an important role in these contacts. The NCUSCR and the CSCPRC saw their role as one of collaboration with the government. Even at this early stage, both organisations recognised the mutually enforcing relationship between progress in high-level and people-to-people contacts, and acknowledged that this connection meant that the White House would take an active interest in exchanges. The government, then, would be a critical friend for these exchange organisations to cultivate. It was in the interests of doing so that the NCUSCR added a programme assistant, Jan Berris, to their staff. Berris was a former foreign service

[49] *Notes from the National Committee* (*NFTNC*), Vol. 1, No. 3, Summer 1971; Ann Keatley to Handler, 21 July 1971, "1971 – General", CSCNAS; interview with Robert Keatley.
[50] Nonetheless, Beijing's decision to invite Galston first may have political: the American scientist had become critical of his government's foreign policy after discovering that his doctoral research on soya bean fertilisers had, without his knowledge or consent, been used as the basis for the development of the notorious defoliant Agent Orange. Record of meeting between Arthur Galston and members of the CSCPRC, 9 June 1971, "1971 – General", CSCNAS; Arthur Galston and Jean Savage, *Daily Life in People's China* (New York, 1973).
[51] *FRUS*, Vol. XVII, Document 143.

officer who had just completed a stint as Assistant Cultural Attaché at the US Information Agency in Hong Kong; hiring her strengthened the NCUSCR's familiarity with the government bureaucracy and the people within it.[52] Both the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC already boasted boards of directors of blue-ribbon figures with close contacts to government.[53] For example, Barnett, Alexander Eckstein and John Fairbank all held senior positions at both organisations — Barnett and Eckstein had both chaired the NCUSCR — and all enjoyed personal access to Kissinger. Moreover, the CSCPRC benefitted from further contacts with government through its august parent organisations, NAS, ACLS and SSRC.

Neither organisation relied passively on these contacts to guarantee government favour, however. The two groups wasted little time before using their access to the corridors of power to lobby both the State Department and the White House to support them as conduits of exchanges. The CSCPRC arranged for the chairs of NAS, ACLS and SSRC to jointly write to Rogers just days after the ping-pong team had returned asking State to use the Warsaw channel to propose the CSCPRC as a point of contact for scholarly exchanges.[54] That same month, Barnett also sent a letter to Kissinger that argued that it was of "great importance" which American organisations oversaw burgeoning exchanges. Barnett correctly predicted that the Chinese would not yet be prepared to engage in government-to-government exchanges and thus made the case for the American government identifying "responsible non-partisan" groups to manage contacts. He explicitly advocated for the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC, claiming that both organisations were the most prominent in their respective fields — a tenuous assertion at this stage, at least in the case of the CSCPRC. His letter's repeated references to the "non-partisan" and reliable nature of both organisations, however, revealed that he also believed their mainstream, politically centrist position made them a preferable choice for the role, irrespective of their prominence.[55]

[52] Eckstein to NCUSCR members, 25 August 1971, "National Committee – General Correspondence – 1969-71", Box 130, ADBP.
[53] Brown to Handler, 8 February 1972, "1972 – General", CSCNAS.
[54] Handler, Riecken and Burkhardt to Rogers, 20 April 1971, "1971 – General", CSCNAS.
[55] Stover to NCUSCR board, "National Committee – General Correspondence – 1969-71", Box 130, ADBP.

Entreaties from such self-styled "responsible" groups were ensured a favourable hearing due to the government's concerns that the ground game of exchange diplomacy was largely — perhaps dangerously — outside of their control. While Kissinger and the State Department could promote exchanges in the abstract to the Chinese, they had no way of managing the mechanics of such visits. An internal memorandum sent in May had explicitly suggested that it "should … be US policy to try to move our [exchange] contacts more into a governmental plane or to involve the government in some appropriate way in people-to-people contacts". The government had sought to do so during ping-pong diplomacy: they had rapidly organised visas for the team's travel to China and lent official support to a reciprocal visit by the Chinese to the US, while Nixon had personally received USTTA president Steenhoven upon his return from China. [56] Through these actions, the White House not only publicly signalled its approval of the trip but also reminded the group that, while they travelled as private citizens, they also acted as representatives of their country.[57] The dangers accompanying wholly unofficial exchanges were advertised by the persistent Chinese preference for inviting political radicals to China. Of the limited number of Americans to travel to China in 1971, the vast majority were drawn from left wing and anti-government American organisations. Black militants travelled in delegations from the Black Panthers and the Black Worker's Congress, while other critics of US domestic and foreign policy visited in delegations from the Puerto Rican nationalist group the Young Lords, the pro-Beijing US China People's Friendship Association and the anti-Vietnam war group the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars.[58]

In ping-pong diplomacy, the first major breakthrough in Sino-American rapprochement was achieved. The public spectacle of the American table tennis team's trip to China powerfully announced — to the American government, to the American and Chinese publics and to hostile foreign governments — that rapprochement was possible. This beginning of exchange contacts had long been sought by the US government but the manner in which such contacts began — the

[56] 'Nixon Gets Briefing on China Visit', *United Press International*, 22 April 1971.
[57] *FRUS*, Vol. XVII, Document 129.
[58] *NFTNC*, Vol. 2, No. 1, November 1971.

impromptu invite to the American ping-pong team and direct Chinese approaches to Americans critical of their government — posed a dilemma to Washington. How could they encourage this form of Sino-American interaction and yet ensure that it served their foreign policy ends? This puzzle was to occupy the government in the months and years to come and both the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC were swift in identifying the government's quandary as their opportunity.

IV: EXCHANGES AT THE SUMMIT:

KISSINGER AND NIXON NEGOTIATE BILATERAL CONTACTS

The government was given its best opportunity yet to establish its influence over the exchange programme when Kissinger made his second visit to China, arriving on 20 October 1971. In his talks with Chinese leaders, Kissinger took a personal interest in selling the benefits of expanding the programme of exchanges to Zhou, intending to "meet … head on" the resistance that the Chinese had showed on this issue to date. He used his opening statement to articulate for the first time two arguments that would become the bedrock of the official American rationale for exchanges in negotiations with the Chinese. First, Kissinger told Zhou that the US "considered progress in these fields not as a substitute for fundamental agreements but rather to give impetus to them".[59] The head of the Asian Communist Affairs desk at State, Alfred Jenkins, further elaborated this position in his counterpart talks with Xiong Xianghui, a leading Chinese foreign affairs advisor. Jenkins argued that bilateral contacts would not be a diversion from the tough negotiations over Taiwan and other issues. Instead, they would offer a concurrent avenue for publicly demonstrable progress in the relationship that would, in turn, produce momentum towards further agreement over the fundaments of Sino-American diplomatic relations.[60]

[59] *FRUS*, Vol. XVII, Documents 164 and 129.
[60] *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976*, Volume E-13, Documents on China, 1969-1972, ed. Steven E Phillips (Washington, 2006), Document 39. For an account from the Chinese perspective, see Wei Shiyan, 'Jixinge di er ci fanghua', in *Xin Zhongguo waijiao fengyun*, ed. by Waijiaobu waijiaoshi bianjishi (Beijing, 1990), III, 59-71.

Kissinger's second rationale for agreements over exchanges and other bilateral contacts: was that they "would keep off balance those who wished to see the new US-China dialogue fail".[61] This elliptical comment was likely intended, in part, to encourage Chinese awareness (if not paranoia) of American domestic enemies of rapprochement and, in addition, as an allusion to the Soviet Union; certainly Kissinger later advocated exchanges as a means to publicly demonstrate to Moscow the vitality of rapprochement. In the trip's counterpart talks, however, Jenkins confined this argument, for the moment, to domestic politics. He argued that greater contacts "can help us, I know, and possibly you in the People's Republic, to convince those who would detract from our present course that acceptable movement is possible and can be mutually profitable". Jenkins stressed that, for the American government, "it isn't easy to cope" with the level of domestic resistance to the new China policy.[62]

Kissinger was pessimistic about how persuasive these arguments had been with the Chinese. In his post-trip report to Nixon, he said that the Chinese had only "unenthusiastically" agreed to a reference to promoting exchanges in the draft communiqué to be made public after the president's trip.[63] However, the detailed record of the summit, as well as the developments of the months to follow, suggest a different interpretation. Kissinger also reported that the Chinese "showed almost no interest in arms control [and] airily dismissed the subject of trade". This was true: these two issues were the other items tabled in Jenkins's several meetings with Xiong and his colleagues, yet took up almost none of the negotiating time. Xiong had specifically said he was "not interested" in even discussing trade, reflecting the May 1971 politburo decision not to resume trade before progress on Taiwan was made.[64] Xiong had, however, spent hours discussing exchanges, both in the abstract and in practical detail. He was consistently welcoming and interested in the long list of 25 proposals for exchanges provided by Jenkins and explicitly stated that modest cultural and scientific exchanges

[61] *FRUS*, Vol. XVII, Document 164.
[62] *FRUS*, Vol. E-13, Document 39.
[63] Repeated Chinese references to this part of the communiqué in the years that followed suggest that, if the Chinese were not enthusiastic in 1971, in the years to come they certainly came to be. *FRUS*, Vol. XVII, Document 164.
[64] Xia Yafeng, 'China's Elite Politics and Sino-American Rapprochement, January 1969-February 1972', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 8/4 (2006), 17-21.

could commence.[65] Kissinger had told Zhou that he hoped that these three issues would be considered in sum, as together "the total of [the issues] we believe would be important to symbolize the new approach in our relationship".[66] It seems, then, that when reflecting on the outcome of the talks, Kissinger failed to separate Chinese disinterest in trade or arms control negotiations from the meaningful progress in negotiating exchanges.

Perhaps, too, Kissinger's conclusion reflected Chinese resistance to agree to specifically *government-to-government* exchanges. Jenkins repeatedly made clear Washington's preference for "semi-official" contacts organised at as high a level as possible: "For us it would unquestionably be easier, simpler, and perhaps more reliable and managable [*sic*] if there were some type of government-to-government arrangement".[67] Xiong, however, insisted that exchanges must be on a people-to-people basis.[68] Kissinger would have been, like Jenkins, frustrated that the Chinese were preventing the US government from playing the direct role in exchanges that Washington had identified as important to their effective contribution to US China policy. Nonetheless, to understand this as a Chinese prohibition of *all* exchanges would be a mistake.

There was one particular point made by Zhou that further helps explain Kissinger's pessimism about the exchange programme. Zhou and Xiong both strongly objected to the recent tour of the US by a table tennis team from Chiang Kai-shek's Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan. The group — all purportedly Christians — had been invited by the evangelical Presbyterian and anti-communist Carl McIntire and had arrived in the US in August for a two-month tour.[69] Zhou claimed that the visit had prevented Beijing's plans for the visit of its own team at that time. Xiong used the counterpart talks to elucidate the Chinese anger. The tour of the Taiwanese team had been a *political act*, Xiong averred. Kissinger's aide, John Holdridge, protested that the government had nothing to do

[65] *FRUS*, Vol. E-13, Documents 39 and 43; Memcon: Holdridge, Jenkins, Solomon and Zhang, 4:10pm, 21 June 1971, NLC-2-6-17-7-6-1, Jimmy Carter Library, Atlanta, GA (JCL).
[66] Memcon: Kissinger and Zhou, 20 October 1971, NLC-26-17-7-2-5, JCL.
[67] *FRUS*, Vol. E-13, Document 39.
[68] Ibid., Document 43; Memcon: Holdridge and Zhang, 4:10pm, 21 June 1971, NLC-26-17-7-6-1, JCL.
[69] 'Free Chinese table tennis team to visit Peru, US', *News from China*, 23 July 1971, Folder 288, Box 30, Series 9, RG4, NCUSCR records, RAC.

with the tour and that the visit had been arranged by the domestic enemies of rapprochement that Jenkins had previously spoken of. But Xiong insisted that the issuing of visas to the team made Washington culpable.[70] (Later, during the Nixon summit, Marshall Green of the State Department admitted to Xiong that this had been an "error".[71]) Kissinger concluded from the exchanges that the continued presence of an ROC embassy in Washington would prevent not only official visits by Chinese leaders to the US but also the expansion of exchanges and trade.[72]

The radical moment in exchange diplomacy and the government's resolve

In fact, in the months and years to come, the Taiwan issue was to play a more complex, if always important, role in influencing exchanges. Kissinger was certainly correct that this was a sensitive subject for the Chinese; even before Kissinger's October visit there had been suggestions that contacts between Americans and Taiwan might hamstring exchanges with the PRC. In spite of repeated attempts by the CSCPRC to establish a working relationship with Beijing, the Chinese initially cooperated only with a competing American scientific group, the Federation of American Scientists (FAS).[73] Chinese leaders had informed Galston and another scientific visitor in October that a key reason for this was the links between the CSCPRC's parent organisation, NAS, and Academia Sinica on Taiwan.[74] The Chinese were acutely sensitive towards this issue in the wake of the ROC's ejection from the UN, which Zhou feared would stoke the Taiwan independence movement.[75] Kissinger was only partially right on the influence of the Taiwan issue on exchanges, then: lingering ties between American society and the island had, so far, prevented contacts being developed with some American organisations — but not with all.

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[70] *FRUS*, Vol. XVII, Document 164.
[71] *FRUS*, Vol. E-13, Document 91.
[72] *FRUS*, Vol. XVII, Document 164.
[73] Memcon: Lao, Brown and Keatley, 24 August 1971, "1971 – General", CSCNAS.
[74] Meeting between Galston and CSCPRC members, 9 June 1971, "1971 – General", CSCNAS; 'Scientists Vie For Peking Trip', *Washington Post*, 18 November 1971.
[75] Zhou, *Nianpu*, III, 494, 10 November 1972 entry.

FAS was also preferable to Beijing on account of its greater distance from the American government. Set up by scientists who had been involved in the Manhattan Project in order to lobby for nuclear disarmament, the organisation had a history of criticising American government policies. The organisation lacked privileges afforded to NAS as a semi-official body, such as tax-exempt status.[76] This had not been lost on the Chinese who, during Kissinger's October visit, had asked pointed questions about the level of government funding NAS received.[77] In November, Chinese leaders told the visiting American scientist Victor Sidel that a relationship with a group that Beijing saw as more official than not would have to wait until after normalisation.[78] This was an early example of a tactic that the PRC would employ right up until 1978: holding out the prospect of comparably official exchanges until the high-level negotiations over rapprochement were complete, or at least further developed.

There were already, then, multiple American organisations vying to manage Sino-American exchanges. In addition to the competition between these two scientific groups, other organisations vied for a piece of the small but growing exchanges pie. The student group CCAS was in late 1971 organising a second trip for its members, while the Quaker group the American Friends Service Committee had sent its leaders to China in the autumn and was planning a future trip by a larger group. The Committee for New China Policy, an academic pressure group sympathetic to Beijing, was putting together a delegation that ultimately travelled in January 1972.[79] The determinant factor in which organisations the Chinese chose to cooperate with continued to be political: not only was FAS favoured over NAS but the radical CCAS sent two full delegations before the NCUSCR was involved in a single exchange, while the Committee for New China Policy was invited before comparable academic organisations that did not parrot Beijing's propaganda line.

The longstanding Chinese practice of inviting American political radicals to the PRC had been intended to promote a favourable view of the Chinese revolution among the American populace

[76] Stone to Handler, 19 November 1971, "1971 – General", CSCNAS.
[77] *FRUS*, Vol. E-13, Document 43.
[78] 'Scientists Vie', *Washington Post*.
[79] *NFTNC*, Vol. 2, No. 1, November 1971, and Vol. 2, No. 2, February 1972.

and to ferment domestic revolution in the US.[80] However, the Chinese politburo had, in May 1971, judged that it was unlikely that there would be a revolution in the US in the foreseeable future.[81] Beijing's lingering preference for radical groups, then, was no longer intended to create revolutionary change in the US but instead primarily to maintain political pressure on the American government to continue to revise its China policy. This approach did so in two ways: it dangled the prospect of exchanges with more mainstream groups if there was further progress in diplomatic negotiations, while also continuing to empower groups within the US that had been the most consistent and vociferous voices in favour of rapprochement and Beijing's broader foreign policy.

Exchange diplomacy at the Nixon summit

The Nixon summit provided an opportunity to persuade the Chinese away from patronising the White House's domestic enemies and towards expanding exchanges that would win support for rapprochement among the mainstream American public. The US side tabled the development of exchanges as a critical objective of the summit even before the president's arrival. During the final preparatory trip to China in January 1972, General Alexander Haig, Kissinger's deputy, made the case to the Chinese that, in light of the "major problem" of US domestic opposition to rapprochement, Nixon was concerned that the summit "succeed in both fact and in appearance". Towards this end, Haig said "we would hope" that there "might be some strengthening of the positive aspects of the Joint Communiqué" including "something that would give an immediate sense of accomplishment as a result of the visit, such as increased scientific or cultural exchanges".[82]

Exchanges were a key topic in the counterpart talks between Rogers and his Chinese interlocutors. These talks have been largely remembered as the kids' table discussions of the Nixon summit, a sideshow to give Rogers face while Nixon and Kissinger discussed the real matters of

[80] Frazier, *East Is Black*; Johnson, 'Peace to the Panthers'; Hollander, *Political Pilgrims*.
[81] Yang and Xia, 'Vacillating', 405.
[82] *FRUS*, Vol. XVII, Document 183.

importance with Mao and Zhou.[83] The calculated exclusion of Rogers from the meeting with Mao was, of course, a major slight, but in fact the record of the counterpart talks suggest that much of the summit's substantive negotiations happened at Rogers's table. While Nixon and Kissinger talked in philosophical terms with the chairman and crafted a new discourse of strategic cooperation with Zhou, Rogers and his State Department colleagues negotiated initiatives dismissed by Haig and Kissinger as "appearance". In fact, however, agreements for greater exchanges and trade won by State constituted the only substantive announcements included in the Shanghai Communiqué that capped Nixon's visit: no other aspect of that milestone document led directly to tangible changes in Sino-American interaction, even if the sum of Kissinger's carefully crafted rhetoric was an important public confirmation of Beijing and Washington's decision to reach a strategic marriage of convenience.[84]

The Chinese were more forthcoming in these counterpart meetings than they had been when Kissinger had visited in October 1971. Foreign Minister Ji Pengfei revised the PRC refusal to begin trade, agreeing to "carry out a very limited amount … on a non-governmental basis" before normalisation. On exchanges, the Chinese expressed interest in an array of potential sporting exchanges, including of basketball, tennis, badminton and gymnastics delegations. Ji also said that a group of Chinese doctors were interested in travelling to the US.[85] In a meeting with Nixon, Kissinger and Zhou, Ji summarised, "We have … reached the common view that these matters [exchanges] should be developed gradually and progressively. At the beginning our quantity may not be very large but that will be developed very progressively".[86]

The Chinese ostensibly stuck to their previous line that all exchanges must be on a people-to-people basis. However, they also offered a significant addendum to this principle, now saying that both governments "should assist in the process of improving people-to-people contacts". Rogers

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[83] Gao claims that the decision to exclude Rogers was Zhou's decision, in protest at the State Department's loyalty to Taiwan. Gao Wenqian, *Zhou Enlai: The Last Perfect Revolutionary: A Biography*, trans. by Peter Rand and Lawrence Sullivan (New York, 2007), 18.

[84] For a discussion of the discursive purpose of these and other Sino-American summit meetings, see Goh, *Constructing*.

[85] *FRUS*, Vol. E-13, Document 91.

[86] *FRUS*, Vol. XVII, Document 183.

welcomed this and the US side lobbied the Chinese to consider some form of mutual permanent presence in each other's capital to provide just such government assistance with exchanges and trade. This idea, briefly mooted before, was resisted by the Chinese at this stage but would later be accepted in the form of the establishment of liaison offices in 1973.[87]

Recognising that the Chinese now saw some level of government coordination of exchanges as preferable, on the morning of the final day of the visit, Rogers made a decisive intervention intended to bolster American governmental influence over exchanges. Ji had previously asked for a recommendation for the best group for coordinating exchanges and now Rogers explicitly sponsored the NCUSCR. The question of which exchange organisation the government should lend its authority to had received Kissinger's attention before the visit, with the NCUSCR proposed to Kissinger by his closest aide, Winston Lord.[88] Ji was initially hesitant to Rogers's suggestion, responding that the Chinese were hesitant about working with the group, fearing that if they did so "other friendly organizations will be unhappy". Jenkins responded that the exchange programme needed a "central organisation to help on the mechanics of visits" — or else a government body would be required.[89]

From the earliest beginnings of rapprochement, developments in people-to-people contacts had been interactively connected with the unfolding high-level rapprochement between the US and China. This had been aptly demonstrated in the wake of ping-pong diplomacy: this breakthrough exchange visit had augured Kissinger's invitation to the PRC. In turn, the success of Kissinger's visit and the announcement of a forthcoming presidential summit had precipitated a broader expansion of exchanges. The US government welcomed this and sought to use exchange contacts as public evidence of the still secretive contacts it was developing with the Chinese leadership. However, the government was simultaneously frustrated by the Chinese resistance to official involvement in the exchange programme and concerned that Beijing dealt only with leftist organisations that were the White House's domestic opponents. Concurrently being lobbied by mainstream exchange

[87] *FRUS*, Vol. E-13, Document 92.
[88] Lord to Kissinger, undated, "China trade/exchanges – February 2, 1972-4 July, 1973", Box 93, Kissinger Files – Country Files – Far East (HAKCFFE), Richard Nixon Library, Yorba Linda, CA (RNL).
[89] *FRUS*, Vol. E-13, Document 107.

organisations to assure them a greater role in Sino-American contacts, the government used the venue of the Nixon summit to make a strong intervention in favour of the Chinese expanding exchange contacts with the NCUSCR. On the back of the success of that summit, the NCUSCR would move into the limelight of the exchange programme, bringing not only public prominence but greater attention from the White House.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that people-to-people contacts were central to the early moves in rapprochement and to the realisation of the Nixon summit. In lieu of other means of communication, both Washington and Beijing had sought to indicate their interest in rapprochement through their approach to the other country's citizens. Beginning in 1969, Nixon had authorised the piecemeal lifting of the embargo on commerce and contacts with the PRC. While the PRC initially resisted this invitation for broader contacts between the Chinese and American people, Beijing concurrently showed a respect and cordiality towards ordinary Americans not seen since the earliest days of the PRC. These two trends converged in the sensation of ping-pong diplomacy, the first major breakthrough in relations between the US and the PRC.

Having precipitated the subsequent trips of Kissinger and then Nixon, people-to-people contacts provided the earliest substantive agreements between the two sides, with a pledge to begin exchanges included in the Shanghai Communiqué. Indeed, along with the gradual restarting of trade, exchanges were the only public evidence of the changed Sino-American relationship beyond the pomp and pageantry of Nixon's trip: the discussions of grand strategy that dominated Kissinger and Nixon's discussions with Zhou and Mao were important to the construction of the secretive relationship between those leaders but were unknown to all but a tiny coterie of staff. As the following chapters will show, the rapid expansion of exchanges from 1972 captured the American imagination as effectively as Nixon's week in China.

This period shows the critical role and influence played by those outside of the American government in beginning rapprochement with the PRC. The changes in the Sino-American relationship that culminated in the Nixon summit were not simply the result of secretive communications from heads of state to heads of state. In fact, many of the signals Nixon used to show his interest in negotiations with the Chinese were recommended by academics and others outside of the White House and State Department, both in private briefings and in public forums. By travelling to China in April 1971, the American ping-pong team — without any coordination from their own government — achieved in a week what the White House's backchannels and posturing had failed to in two and a half years, finally moving Sino-American contacts beyond signals and into face-to-face engagement. The PRC soon opened talks with American leaders, yet exchanges remained at the forefront of building a broader relationship with the PRC: 1971 saw the first delegations of scientists, students, Sinologists and journalists travel to China. Many of the individuals and groups orchestrating these contacts were *not* endorsed by Washington — indeed, many were publicly critical of the Nixon administration. The government was initially impotent to prevent Beijing patronising Nixon's domestic enemies and grew increasingly alarmed that an important aspect of the Sino-American relationship, and a potential determinant of progress in high-level negotiations, was developing outside of its control and in a direction contrary to its objectives.

The Chinese government's patronising of groups on the political left was also at the expense of mainstream organisations that were interested in building links with China. Both the NCUSCR and CSCPRC initially struggled to gain a foothold in the exchange programme, frustrated by being cold-shouldered by the Chinese because of their close links with government and, in the case of the CSCPRC, with Beijing's rival regime in Taipei. The US government had, by 1972, begun to pressure their Chinese counterparts to begin working with Washington's preferred exchange sponsors but Beijing had initially resisted this suggestion. Both American exchange organisations and the US government knew that 1972 was a critical moment in exchange diplomacy: the remainder of that year

would see a forceful push by both governmental and non-governmental actors to shape the dynamics of the exchange programme as precedent became practice.

CHAPTER TWO

Ping-pong, precedents and proposals: The NCUSCR, CSCPRC and the shaping of the exchange programme, 1972-1973

"We have received the two letters you sent us on behalf of the American Council of Learned Societies", the letter began. "We the Chinese people are very dubious about your purpose and intention of you sending the two letters to us. … The aggressive ambitions and schemes of the United States can never be concealed before the devil-finding mirror of Mao Tsetung thought. Here we would solemnly warn you that if you dare to play any schemes or tricks, we will certainly smash your dog head. Long live down with US imperialism! Long live Mao Tsetung Thought!" Received in July 1972, more than a year after ping-pong diplomacy and some months after Nixon's visit to China, the letter was another bellicose response to a US proposal for Sino-American cooperation little different to that received by Norman Singer in 1971. Thus, while exchanges between the American and Chinese people had been successfully restarted since that year, there remained significant resistance within Chinese society to the opening to America.[1]

Frederick Burkhardt, a senior board member of the CSCPRC and the chairman of ACLS, was the recipient of the note, sent in response to his own letter to Guo Moruo, the distinguished head of CAS. Its content was all the more alarming to Burkhardt as he received it at a critical juncture in the development of the CSCPRC's relationship with the Chinese. The group's effort to begin exchanges and scientific cooperation with CAS and other Chinese organisations had, by the summer of 1972, barely gotten off the ground and both the CSCPRC and its US government backers were earnestly

[1] *FRUS*, Vol. XVII, Document 248.

lobbying the Chinese to stop working with politically radical American scientists and instead cooperate with the more mainstream American scientific organisation. Burkhardt's belligerent rebuttal revealed the magnitude of the task of convincing Mao's China to deal primarily with a group based out of NAS, Washington's most austere scientific institution.

Over the course of 1972, doing so became urgent. As Sino-American exchanges began in earnest that year, Americans inside and outside of government knew that the precedents set for the programme would shape the nature of those contacts for years to come. Indeed, this chapter shows that, in the year following the Nixon summit, the fundamental structure of the exchange programme for the remainder of the pre-normalisation period was negotiated; ultimately, the pattern of contacts agreed in 1972 remained largely unchanged for the next six years. This structure was created both through government-to-government negotiations over the principles that would manage exchanges and by the practical application of these principles to the growing number of Sino-American exchanges. Moreover, it was not only the approach of the two governments to exchanges that needed to be negotiated but also the relationship between these governments and the American organisations that were the facilitators of the programme.

Having already been endorsed during the Nixon summit, it was in this period that the NCUSCR, and along with them the CSCPRC, made a successful bid to be recognised by both governments as the primary American coordinators of exchanges. By 1973, not only had the flow of exchanges expanded exponentially but a pattern of close coordination between the American government and these two exchange organisations had been established. Simultaneously, Beijing had, primarily as a result of pressure from the highest parts of the American government on their Chinese counterparts, reluctantly accepted both organisations as Washington's nominees for managing exchanges and begun to cooperate with them accordingly. This Chinese acceptance came as Beijing abandoned its previous insistence on exchanges as an exclusively non-governmental form of interaction; now, the Chinese began to advocate a strong role for the two governments in supervising a programme nonetheless run by independent groups. Developments in exchanges in 1972 and early

1973, then, demonstrate how people-to-people contacts were recognised by both governments as too important to the Sino-American relationship to be free of government influence and control, while also elucidating how exchange organisations responded to the threat and the opportunity posed by government attention.

The primary argument of this chapter, then, is that the structures and agreements that would underpin the exchange relationship were created through a collaborative process between government and non-governmental actors. In spite of the US government's desire to regulate exchange activity, the ground rules for these contacts were not imposed from above. Instead, the NCUSCR and CSCPRC created a charter for Sino-American exchange diplomacy — a joint "position paper" — that defined the role of those two exchange organisations and the obligations, freedoms and privileges they would have in their relationship with both the US and the Chinese governments. State power was important to this process: the US government embraced this position paper. But persuading Beijing to agree to its contents required lobbying from both the non-state organisations and their governmental backers. Thus, in 1972 a condominium over the US-side of the exchange programme emerged under the joint management of these two politically centrist, socially elite organisations and the US government — although not without first inspiring resistance from some within these groups and the broader private sector who opposed this development.

The second argument of this chapter is that exchanges continued to play an important role in rapprochement even as high-level contacts intensified. Initial people-to-people contacts had helped precipitate the first visits by Kissinger and Nixon but, even after these important meetings, much work needed to be done to broaden rapprochement beyond bi-annual convivial visits by American leaders. 1972 saw one particularly critical moment in this process: the first official visit of PRC citizens to the US in the return leg of ping-pong diplomacy. This and other visits were, I show, important early tests of rapprochement: both governments, as well as their non-governmental hosts, took a keen interest in ensuring their success, which would further confirm the viability of a renewed relationship between the American and Chinese people as well as their governments.

This chapter is composed of three sections. The first details how the gathering pace of exchanges — in particular the first Chinese exchange delegation to the US — prompted the US to devise and then implement strategies for enhancing their influence over exchanges. The second section elucidates how the NCUSCR and CSCPRC successfully convinced the American and, then, Chinese governments to recognise them as the chief clearing houses for the exchange programme and considers the implications of that change for these transnational and ostensibly unofficial contacts. The final section analyses the creation of a third prominent American exchange organisation, the National Council on US-China Trade, arguing that this development both revealed and deepened the US government's desire to create a system of influence over exchange contacts.

I: PING-PONG DIPLOMACY'S RETURN LEG:

THE FIRST CHINESE EXCHANGE DELEGATION TO THE US AND WASHINGTON'S STRATEGY TOWARDS EXCHANGES

This section details how, in the wake of the Nixon summit and the Chinese encouragement of exchanges that took place during that trip, the US government sought to devise a strategy that would ensure that the exchange programme served the same foreign policy interests that Nixon's visit had. Aware that the Chinese did not want Washington to exercise direct control over exchanges, the US-government instead sought to use indirect means and influence to more subtly protect these interests. The NCUSCR quickly emerged as the linchpin of this strategy and the return leg of ping-pong diplomacy — the visit of the Chinese team to the US — provided an opportunity to test this strategy. The government sought to work closely with the NCUSCR, the hosts of the visit, and the success of that collaboration, in spite of significant challenges, indicated the viability of the government's approach and the value of the NCUSCR.

A strategy for exchange diplomacy: National Security Study Memorandum 148

Negotiations during the Nixon summit had confirmed Chinese enthusiasm for the steady expansion of the exchange programme. In the wake of this breakthrough, the administration sought, for the first time, to draw up an explicit, coherent strategy to its approach to exchanges. This strategy was embodied in National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) 148, a study of how Washington should approach both exchanges and trade with the PRC, which was discussed at a meeting chaired by Kissinger in March 1972. He stressed to his colleagues the importance of the political connection between exchanges and trade and the Sino-American diplomatic relationship: "The President has a personal interest in this and what is most important is that we don't defeat our other, larger purposes in developing contacts with the Chinese" — the strategic and political value of the relationship. Kissinger wanted the US to take the initiative; if Washington did not form a coherent strategy the Chinese would keep the ball in their court by only granting *ad hoc* approval for individual exchanges. Richardson, State's senior figure on exchanges, added that the government was seeking to affirm Chinese interest in exchange: "we are starting a learning process in which we are trying to show the PRC that exchanges through responsible structures are in their interest as much as in ours".[2]

The critical issue for the US government was how to promote contacts in a manner in keeping with the people-to-people parameters insisted on by Beijing but that also allowed for the control and moderation Washington deemed crucial to ensuring that the programme remained beneficial to diplomatic rapprochement. Oversight was intended to prevent embarrassing incidents but also to afford the government control over who led exchanges. Discussing the plan to manage both exchanges and trade through "umbrella organisations" — non-governmental groups that would coordinate contacts in lieu of direct government involvement — Kissinger insisted that, "with an umbrella organisation, we must have control, or there will be an emphasis on those groups sympathetic to the new left". Exchanges were, then, political — not only in their interrelation to

[2] Memcon: Senior Review Group meeting on NSSM 148 and NSSM 149, "China trade/exchanges – February 2, 1972-4 July, 1973", Box 93, HAKCFFE, RNL.

foreign policy, but also to American domestic political divisions.[3] Kissinger feared that Beijing's preference for contacts with radical groups would continue and that exchanges would bolster those organisations' political platform. Kissinger's clear-cut comment made explicit what was frequently but obliquely referenced when the government expressed, both to the Chinese and in internal memoranda, its preference for "responsible" or "broad based" exchange organisations.

The linchpin for the strategy of ensuring control of exchanges was the NCUSCR. At the March meeting, Kissinger reaffirmed that the government should continue to endorse the NCUSCR to the Chinese and agreed with Richardson that this strategy should be expanded, with the government identifying other politically reliable organisations to manage those exchanges that fell outside of the NCUSCR's purview of cultural contacts. Richardson added that, having endorsed the NCUSCR, the government needed to ensure that the organisation followed the government's strategy: "Our interest now is to try to structure the program of the National Committee". The primary means of doing so would be "indirectly" channelling government funds to the NCUSCR — and, it was implied, using these funds to shape the organisation's approach to exchanges.[4]

One final US government objective for the exchange programme, considered earlier but now more fully articulated, was influencing domestic public opinion. The week that changed the world had given Nixon an opportunity to speak directly to the Chinese populace when his banquet toast was printed unedited in the pages of *The People's Daily*. Exchanges were one of the few other means through which US leaders could have communication with the Chinese populace that was not directly mediated by the Beijing government and NSSM 148 included among the objectives of exchanges: "to develop favorable attitudes toward the United States among PRC elite groups". The memorandum predicted that Washington would not be alone in using exchanges for propagandistic purposes: Beijing was expected to use contacts with the American people to attempt to undercut US public support for the government's relationship with Taipei and to promote popular sympathy for Chinese foreign

[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.

policy goals.[5] However, with a strictly limited number of delegations going between the two countries, the exchange programme would, for the time-being, have only a limited impact on public opinion in the US or China. The spectacle of ping-pong diplomacy had awed the American public — a Gallup poll conducted weeks after the visit had shown a marked improvement in American impressions of the PRC and greater desire for engagement with Beijing — but a deeper transformation of perceptions would have to wait for a further intensification of contacts.[6]

The return leg: the Chinese table tennis team visits America

In the meantime, the government would have its first, best opportunity to put into practice its framework for managing exchanges through the most high-profile exchange since ping-pong diplomacy. The reigning world champion table tennis team arrived in Detroit on 12 April for a strongly anticipated twelve-day tour.[7] Washington saw the visit as a critical moment in the developing rapprochement and believed the success or failure of the trip would be seen as indicative of the progress of Nixon's overall China initiative. Internally the government concluded that the visit must proceed "flawlessly" and that any "untoward incident could have major international repercussions".[8] The visit had such a high profile that it was even seen as impacting on triangular diplomacy with the Soviet Union. Hopes for the success of the tour notwithstanding, the White House insisted the visit must be wrapped up at least a month before Nixon's upcoming visit to the Soviet Union for fear that a prominent public advertisement of rapprochement soon before the summit would poison the mood in Moscow.[9]

[5] *FRUS*, Vol. XVII, Document 217.
[6] Zhaohui Hong and Yi Sun, 'The Butterfly Effect and the Making of "Ping-Pong Diplomacy"', *Journal of Contemporary China*, 9/25 (2000), 429-48.
[7] NCUSCR Annual Report, 1971-72, NCOC.
[8] Scali and Solomon to Haig, 23 March 1972, "China trade/exchanges – February 2, 1972-4 July, 1973", Box 93, HAKCFFE, RNL.
[9] Scali to Kissinger, 10 March 1972, Ibid.

In order to guarantee its smooth running, the White House insisted on a direct role in the preparation and execution of the tour. Nixon appointed John Scali as his personal representative during the visit. Scali had been a noted ABC journalist who had, at the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis, secretly acted as a White House go-between with a KGB colonel. Nixon had made him a presidential foreign policy advisor in 1971. Scali had a multifaceted role during the ping-pong tour, with his duties beginning more than a month before the Chinese arrived. His most significant contribution was arranging government security to protect the delegation, paid for with federal funds appropriated by Congress. Scali had lobbied hard to have armed Secret Service men accompany the team, but ultimately had to make do with unarmed State Department and CIA security personnel.[10] Although this disappointed Scali, staff at the NCUSCR later reflected that these highly-trained and experienced government professionals had made an immeasurable contribution to the success of the visit, not only by protecting the Chinese team but also by expertly managing the on-the-ground logistics of the tour.[11]

The need for security to protect the visit was real. Latent Chinese fears of what they believed to be a domestically violent society were stoked when, before the visit, the Christian virulent anti-communist Carl McIntire had threatened to trail the group and protest at the team's every stop, as well as hinting that he would repeat the previous trick of inviting a ROC ping-pong team to tour the US at the same time as the PRC team.[12] The Chinese government repeatedly and directly asked their American counterparts to ensure the team's safety, eventually prompting Kissinger to promise Huang Hua, Beijing's first UN Ambassador, that the American government would do "everything behind-the-scenes" to ensure their safety.[13] Kissinger's assurances were not enough to dissuade the Chinese from sending undercover armed security among their accompanying journalists: at one point, a supposed

[10] Scali to Haig, 3 April 1972, "China trade/exchanges – February 2, 1972-4 July, 1973", Box 93, HAKCFFE, RNL; Schoyer to John W Makely, 29 June 1971, Folder 289, Box 30, Series 9, RG4, NCUSCR records, RAC.
[11] Interview with Berris, 15 August 2015.
[12] *FRUS*, Vol. XVII, Document 217.
[13] Ibid., Documents 217 and 220.

Xinhua News Agency reporter took his coat off to reveal a pair of revolvers.[14] During the very first exhibition match, at Detroit's Cobo Hall, protestors unfurled a banner that read "Send us our POWs not Ping-Pong players", threw hundreds of anti-communist leaflets, and, in a particularly gruesome moment, hurled dead rats at the Chinese — one with a red coat emblazoned with Kissinger's name.[15] Demonstrations at another game in Maryland were so significant that a local section of US Route 1 was shut down for two days following the game, only being re-opened after the National Guard had been deployed.[16]

Nonetheless, this genuine security problem also provided an opening for the government to insist on a role in the trip that even Scali admitted would be so significant as to be of "legitimate concern" to the USTTA and the NCUSCR.[17] Over the course of the visit, Scali and his colleagues in Washington showed they were not beyond using the apparent security concerns to meddle in the tour: with Winston Lord's approval, Scali sanitised the team's visit to Detroit by cancelling a scheduled visit to a hospital with a heroin clinic that was located "in the ghetto area". Though he supposedly did so "on security grounds alone", the government's internal communication over the decision makes clear that the White House was primarily concerned that the NCUSCR was offering too honest a depiction of the problems of American society. Indeed, the tour's diversion was ordered in the face of protests from the "liberal wing" of the NCUSCR.[18]

In spite of the demonstrations, the tour was a notable success. Both governments were grateful that the Chinese team had returned home safe, and encouraged by the warm reception given by the majority of the American public. Eckstein publicly admitted that the tour had not been free of controversy but said that it was nonetheless "remarkable" how well received the Chinese guests had been, given that "only a few years ago many American considered citizens of the People's Republic of

[14] Griffin, *Ping-pong Diplomacy*, 244.
[15] Ibid., 245.
[16] Ibid., 249.
[17] Scali and Solomon to Haig, 23 March 1972, "China trade/exchanges – February 2, 1972-4 July, 1973", Box 93, HAKCFFE, RNL.
[18] Lord to Kissinger, 13 April 1972, Ibid.

China their enemies".[19] The Chinese had been acutely anxious about how the team would be treated by the American public and had considered the visit a test case for the suitability of sending further delegations to the US.[20] On the back of the trip's success, the Chinese confirmed their interest in expanding exchanges and proposed dates for the next delegation, of Chinese doctors. The NCUSCR, too, was relieved to have successfully managed the visit, with Eckstein noting (privately, this time) that it was a "miracle of some kind" that the trip had gone as well as it did given that the Chinese had provided only four-weeks' notice and the group had never before organised an exchange.

Eckstein and his colleagues at the NCUSCR concluded that a significant factor in the visit's success had been government involvement and personally thanked Kissinger for arranging this assistance.[21] Scali had likewise found the National Committee competent and easy to work with — far more so than USTTA president Steenhoven, with whom both Scali and the NCUSCR had become exasperated by the tour's end.[22] An important legacy of the visit, then, was an intensification of the mutual trust between the NCUSCR and the government. This helped allay the fears expressed by Kissinger and his government colleagues in March that an exchange programme outside of the government's control might threaten US foreign policy interests. Instead, it seemed that in the NCUSCR the government had found the "umbrella group" it was looking for. It would not be long after the conclusion of the visit that both sides agreed to a closer ongoing collaboration and the beginning of government funding for the NCUSCR's exchange programme. However, if Scali's occasional meddling in the ping-pong visit had provoked misgivings from some within the NCUSCR,

[19] Alexander Eckstein, 'Ping Pong Diplomacy', *New York Times*, 20 August 1972

[20] Chinese sources suggest that even cadres in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sincerely believed their own propaganda that American was a hostile, dangerous place. During a different visit a month later, a small group of visiting Chinese officials met every evening while in the US to discuss the hazards and challenges they had each faced that day and how they might overcome them in the future. Ding Hong et al., 'A report on escorting the giant pandas to the United States' (author translation of "关于护送大熊猫去美国情况的报告"), 6 May 1972, "98.2.89", Beijing Municipal Archives, PRC.

[21] Eckstein to Kissinger, 13 June 1972, "National Committee – General Correspondence – 1972", Box 130, ADBP; interview with Berris, 15 August 2015.

[22] Lord to Kissinger, 13 April 1972, "China trade/exchanges – February 2, 1972-4 July, 1973", Box 93, HAKCFFE, RNL.

a more permanent government role in financing and overseeing exchanges was certain to evoke stiffer resistance.

II

WE WILL "SMASH YOUR DOG HEAD":

THE BACKROOM BATTLE FOR THE NCUSCR AND CSCPRC

In the half-year that followed the return ping-pong tour the NCUSCR looked to turn the success of that exchange into the basis for the group assuming a pre-eminent position in Sino-American exchange relations. They would do so through a key policy document, drawn up in collaboration with the CSCPRC, that described a structure for managing exchanges with China that deliberately appealed to the US government. This joint position paper recognised Washington's desire to regularise these contacts, bring them largely under the control of trusted, "responsible" organisations and protect the government's foreign policy interests in the exchange programme. The US government was easily convinced by the proposal but more resistance was mustered by Beijing and by Americans in the NCUSCR and among the broader American exchange community. In the face of this resistance, the NCUSCR's core leadership successfully pulled strings and rank to realise their vision of the group's pre-eminent role in exchanges.

The formulation of the NCUSCR and CSCPRC joint position paper

Just three days after the ping-pong tour formally concluded, while the Chinese team were still relaxing in Los Angeles before their return home, the NCUSCR held its third roundtable meeting on exchanges. These meetings had acted as a forum for the organisation to coordinate with other individuals and groups involved in American exchange diplomacy with China and the wider world. During this discussion, an agreement was reached between the NCUSCR and their counterparts from the CSCPRC, as well as the US Advisory Commission on International Education and Cultural Affairs

and the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), the organisation that oversaw exchanges with the Soviet Union. It was agreed that, following the meeting, the NCUSCR and CSCPRC should together make a landmark proposal on behalf of the private sector for the creation of a framework to manage the exchange programme.[23] This proposal was to become the foundation stone of the NCUSCR and CSCPRC's shared strategy towards exchanges, an influential document that established the principles that both organisations sought to impose on these contacts into the future. It was also a manifesto for the two groups taking a shared leading role in overseeing exchanges, ahead of all other private sector organisations. The final paper was sent to Kissinger and the State Department in early June, at a critical moment in the development of exchanges: after the first visit of a Chinese exchange delegation to the US but before the back and forth of exchanges had been regularised. The NCUSCR and the CSCPRC knew, just as Kissinger and the government did, that "the future pattern of exchange relations will be strongly influenced by the principles and arrangements governing [these] early visits".[24]

In light of the influence of this position paper as a framework for the role of the private sector in Sino-American exchanges, it is worth briefly summarising its key points here. The paper covered three issues in the exchange programme: the role of exchange organisations such as the NCUSCR and CSCPRC; the relationship between these organisations and the American and Chinese governments; and the function of the US government in exchanges. The paper stated that no single American exchange organisation should have a monopoly over exchanges. This notwithstanding, it also suggested that the leading organisations in managing exchanges must be "responsible and non-political". These groups should behave in a way that would encourage the "confidence of the US Government", but they must retain operational independence from official oversight. Meanwhile, the government would play a role in facilitating exchanges not only by funding exchange organisations but also by using their influence with Beijing to push for an active, reciprocal exchange relationship. This

[23] *NFTNC*, Vol. 2, No. 3, July 1972; *CCAS Newsletter*, January 1973
[24] Handler, Burkhardt and Tyler to Kissinger, 7 June 1972, "1972 – Exchange Program – Proposed", CSCNAS.

would entail not only delegations travelling in both directions, but also American organisations being assured a meaningful role in shaping exchanges, for example by recruiting Americans to travel to China rather than simply arranging the travel of individuals invited by Beijing.[25]

The paper was drafted jointly by the leading figures of the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC and they did not hide their light under a bushel.

> In 1966, two organizations were formed that we believe are especially qualified to accept the coordinating role just described: The National Committee on United States-China Relations and the Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China. The two committees … share a mutual wish to increase understanding and strengthen ties between the peoples of China and the United States. We are confident that the membership and staff of both committees have the expertise required to carry out effectively the varied and complex tasks of this mandate.

Not only does this passage make explicit the NCUSCR and CSCPRC's joint bid to manage exchanges, it also alludes to their "mutual wish" of strengthening ties with Beijing — or, in other words, furthering the government's objective of building Sino-American rapprochement. This point is further underlined by one of the arguments made in favour of giving the NCUSCR a central role in exchanges: that the organisation had, through its education programme, already "contributed in a major way to creating the climate of public opinion that made possible this reassessment of US policy toward China". In other words, the NCUSCR promised it would use a privileged role in exchanges to continue to build support for this American foreign policy objective.[26]

The central role of the NCUSCR in the recent Chinese table tennis tour meant that the organisation could also point to its "invaluable" experience when making a case for its continuing role overseeing exchanges. The case for the CSCPRC was much weaker. The paper suggested that the planned visit of Chinese doctors "could indicate" that Beijing was willing to work with NAS, whose Institute of Medicine had been agreed as a co-host, but the authors had to admit that this only *implied* that they would also work with the CSCPRC, another organisation connected to NAS but not

[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

expecting a role in receiving the Chinese physicians.[27] In fact, the CSCPRC had still had no effective communication with the Chinese; in contrast the FAS were, at the time that the paper was being drafted, enjoying a state banquet in Beijing hosted by Zhou Enlai as part of a four-week tour of the country.[28] That the CSCPRC was nonetheless proposed to jointly manage exchanges demonstrates that the recommendations forwarded in this position paper were *not* a codification of how the exchange programme had evolved in the 15 months after ping-pong diplomacy but instead a deliberate attempt by the NCUSCR and CSCPRC to remake the landscape of exchanges into the form presented in the position paper before initial trends became permanent.

The US government enthusiastically received the position paper, including the decision to nominate both the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC. Richardson at State commended both organisations for "an impressive and responsible piece of work [that] will be immensely helpful to us in future planning". He also informed the two organisations that State believed the Chinese were moving towards accepting the proposed central role of the NCUSCR and, albeit more slowly, the CSCPRC.[29] Kissinger called the paper an "outstanding job", praising its value in defining the relationships both between the government and the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC but also between the two groups.[30]

There are a number of reasons that explain the NCUSCR's and the government's decision to work closely with the CSCPRC, in spite of that group's difficulties in establishing a working relationship with the Chinese. The first was practical: the NCUSCR knew it could not feasibly oversee all exchanges and the CSCPRC's interest in scholarly contacts seemed compatible with the NCUSCR's focus on cultural exchanges. Prudently, as it was to turn out, the NCUSCR also believed that there should be at least two exchange organisations involved in managing such contacts in case the relationship between one organisation and Beijing temporarily (or otherwise) broke down; an alternative avenue for exchanges might preserve the programme as a whole. This proved prescient:

[27] Ibid.
[28] Brown to Kissinger, 10 March 1972, "1972 – Exchange Program – Proposed", CSCNAS; *NFTNC*, Vol. 2, No. 3, July 1972.
[29] Richardson to Handler, Burkhardt and Tyler, 16 June 1972, "1972 – Exchange Program – Proposed", CSCNAS.
[30] Kissinger to Handler, Burkhardt and Tyler, 10 July 1972, "NCUSCR, General Correspondence, 1972", Box 130, ADBP.

just such a situation was to occur two years later.[31] The decision was, however, also a reflection of political and social inclinations and connections. There were many close personal relationships that bridged the senior leadership of the two organisations, and between the leadership of both organisations and the government. The broader organisational makeup of the CSCPRC was very similar to the NCUSCR: both were groups made up of socially elite, established figures, often from academia, interested in engagement with the PRC but with little ideological sympathy towards that country's government.

To the US government, the makeup of the organisations — in particular their centrist political stance — and their shared enthusiasm for playing a constructive role in building rapprochement were more important than the quality of either group's existing relationship with the PRC government. Indeed, Beijing's lingering preference for sponsoring leftist, radical organisations that were opposed to much of Washington's agenda made it *more*, not less, likely that the US government would intervene to sponsor the NCUSCR and CSCPRC: if it did not do so, it seemed that there was a strong possibility exchanges would remain outside of government influence and provide a political platform for the White House's domestic opponents. Officials in Washington were determined that they — and not the Chinese — would decide which American organisations oversaw exchanges.[32]

THE POSITION PAPER: FROM PROPOSAL TO POLICY

The government's praise for the position paper forwarded by the NCUSCR and CSCPRC was not empty: the recommendations of the document were rapidly incorporated into government policy towards exchanges, almost without modification. As part of the preparation for Kissinger's next visit to Beijing, to take place 19-23 June, Richard Solomon, a National Security Council (NSC) staff

[31] *CCAS Newsletter*, January 1973.
[32] *FRUS*, Vol. XVII, Document 248.

member, recommended to Kissinger that he propose to the Chinese that the management of exchanges be regularised in exactly the manner proposed in the position paper and that people-to-people contacts be brought under the supervision of the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC. The precise wording of Solomon's recommendation closely mirrored that of the position paper: the government was effectively adding its letterhead and authority to the plans drawn up by the NCUSCR and CSCPRC.[33]

The proposals of the position paper were central to the extensive negotiations over exchanges during Kissinger's visit. Both sides reflected positively on recent milestones in such contacts: the Chinese ping-pong visit; a first congressional delegation to China; the imminent visit of Chinese doctors to the US. Sino-American trade contacts had finally restarted, as well.[34] Jenkins and Holdridge wasted little time before repeating their case for a more formalised exchanges programme — and linking this to the prospects for the high-level relationship. "This way — and this is an important point — at a time when it might be necessary to make some fundamental decision (affecting our relationship) it would be useful if we had a mechanism through which Mr Kissinger could put exchanges under rather tight White House control."[35] Jenkins added that there were "at least two organizations with the experience and resources to be helpful perhaps primarily behind the scenes", the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC. The US government had not only accepted the joint position paper, they were placing significant pressure on their Chinese counterparts to do so too.[36]

The initial Chinese reaction to this pressure was mixed. Jenkins's counterpart, Zhang Wenjin, recognised that negotiating exchanges piecemeal caused problems but argued this was the price of the lack of normal relations between the US and China. Beijing did, however, abandon their insistence on exchanges being free of government influence, instead proposing a "double track basis" (later also referred to as a "dual track approach") whereby exchanges would be managed at *both*

[33] Ibid., Document 229.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Brackets in the original text. Memcon: Holdridge, Jenkins, Solomon and Zhang, 10:05am, 21 June 1972, NLC-26-19-1-47, JCL; Memcon: Holdridge, Jenkins, Solomon and Zhang, 4:10pm, 21 June 1971, NLC-26-17-7-6-1, JCL.
[36] *FRUS*, Vol. E-13, Document 144.

people-to-people and government-to-government levels. The two governments should consult with one another so as to "insure [*sic*] the success of the visits" and give "encouragement and assistance to the non-governmental institutions" involved in exchanges. Nonetheless, the PRC did not yet agree to the *means* by which this government influence should be imposed: Zhang said that the PRC had "taken note of such organizations" as the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC, but promised only to let the US "know whether we can have direct or indirect contacts with these organizations you have mentioned".[37]

The lukewarm Chinese reaction to the American endorsement of the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC during Kissinger's visit did not dissuade Washington from its sponsorship of the groups. Instead, the White House turned to pressuring other Americans to recognise the need for the two groups to take the lead in exchanges. A week after Kissinger's return to the US, Lord met with Jeremy Stone, who had just returned from China as leader of the FAS delegation. In the face of Lord's browbeating, Stone agreed to cooperate with the CSCPRC but warned that, although the Chinese had clearly understood Washington's preference for the CSCPRC, Beijing was still resistant to dealing with NAS or its subsidiaries because of the contacts between the National Academy and Taiwan, something that was also repeated to CSCPRC board member Fairbank while he was in China in August.[38] A month later, Fairbank's fellow board member Burkhardt received his incendiary letter from the Beijing Red Guards in which they told him they would "smash your dog head" if he continued his efforts to build academic links with CAS.[39]

Chinese actions as well as rhetoric indicated that Beijing was continuing to ignore the American recommendation that they use the NCUSCR and CSCPRC as the primary channels for exchanges. In the run up to Kissinger's visit, the Chinese had received both Stone's FAS group and a second CCAS delegation and, even after his trip to Beijing, the PRC requested that FAS receive a group of Chinese scientists without CSCPRC involvement and arranged an exchange of journalists through Thomas Manton's America-China Relations Society. Holdridge considered Stone reliable

[37] Ibid.; Memcon: Holdridge, Jenkins, Solomon and Zhang, 10:05am, 21 June 1972, NLC-26-19-1-47, JCL.
[38] Lord to Kissinger, 29 June 1972, "China trade/exchanges – February 2, 1972-4 July, 1973", Box 93, HAKCFFE, RNL; Keatley to CSCPRC members, 29 August 1972, "1972 – General", CSCNAS.
[39] Keatley to CSCPRC members, 29 August 1972, "1972 – General", CSCNAS; *FRUS*, Vol. XVII, Document 248.

enough, but complained to Kissinger that the Chinese decision to arrange a visit directly with FAS was "effectively undercutting" the CSCPRC and that FAS also lacked the "staff, funds and experience" to guarantee a successful visit. An exchange with the radically left America-China Relations Society was even less acceptable: "Manton is definitely not one in whom we could have confidence", Holdridge wrote.[40] His organisation was a mouthpiece of Beijing's more radical foreign policy pronouncements and had been an enemy of the NCUSCR since it first rose to prominence.[41]

Beginning in late August, the government took a number of measures to make clear their resolve to have the CSCPRC and NCUSCR at the heart of the exchange programme. Stone had asked the government to provide State Department security for the FAS-sponsored visit of Chinese scientists, as they had for the Chinese table tennis visit. Kissinger had also been consulted by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund on whether the foundation should fund the visit. Security and funding was now withheld — unless the CSCPRC were brought in as co-hosts. Meanwhile, Washington's support of both the CSCPRC and the NCUSCR was publicly reaffirmed in what the government called a "laying on of hands" meeting between their management and Kissinger, intended to make clear to the Chinese — but also to all other American exchange organisations — that the government would do all it could to place those two groups at the head of the exchange programme. Kissinger also made plans to confront Ambassador Huang in Paris about whether threatening to smash the dog head of leading American scientists was really the most expedient way of promoting the principles of cooperation enshrined in the Shanghai Communiqué.[42]

Kissinger was saved the trouble of doing so by Huang himself indicating that the Chinese had bowed to American pressure. In early September, Huang wrote to Burkhardt claiming that the letter had been a fake — effectively conceding that its content was inappropriate, if not quite apologising. Simultaneously, the Chinese accepted the CSCPRC as co-hosts, alongside their NAS colleagues, for the delegation of Chinese doctors due in October and also made the CSCPRC co-hosts, alongside

[40] *FRUS*, Vol. XVII, Document 248.

[41] de Keijzer to Schoyer, undated (circa mid-1971), Folder 284, Box 30, Series 9, RG4, NCUSCR records, RAC.

[42] *FRUS*, Vol. XVII, Document 248.

FAS, of the visit of PRC scientists scheduled for November.[43] Huang explicitly told Kissinger that this change had been made because "the US side has recommended the US Committee on Scholarly Communication with the PRC as an organization for regular reception of visiting Chinese science and scholarly delegations". Gratefully, Kissinger responded by promising to ensure that, now that the CSCPRC were co-hosting, the government would make the "maximum effort" in contributing to security and other arrangements.[44] On the same day, Nixon agreed to personally receive the Chinese doctors, in order to "demonstrat[e] to the Chinese that such high-level treatment and interest in their visits here is possible, when they are willing to deal with our preferred institution for scientific-technical exchanges".[45] It had taken some time, but the sustained American pressure for the Chinese to embrace the government's preferred exchange organisations had finally been effective. This was a significant victory for both the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC — but also for the US government. Washington knew that, with the two groups in charge, they could be at ease; these responsible groups could be trusted to cooperate closely with the government and to ensure that the exchange programme complemented, rather than contradicted, Washington's overall China policy.

Resistance to the position paper from outside of government — and the NCUSCR's response

It was not only the Chinese government that resisted the emerging partnership between the government and the NCUSCR and CSCPRC. This developing collaboration, embodied in the joint position paper, was controversial with parts of the American private sector, too. Most notably, a fierce debate took place among the NCUSCR's board about whether the group should abandon its role as a public educator to become an organisation dedicated to overseeing quasi-official exchanges in close collaboration with the American government. Concurrently, a rival exchange organisation —

[43] Ibid.
[44] *FRUS*, Vol. XVII, Document 253.
[45] David to Nixon, 19 September 1972, "China trade/exchanges – February 2, 1972-4 July, 1973", Box 93, HAKCFFE, RNL.

CCAS — decried the NCUSCR and CSCPRC's rise to prominence and protested the government's intervention in supposedly people-to-people exchanges.

The debate over the NCUSCR's future role first played out over the issue of government funding. The original initiative for this financial support came from the State Department.[46] Discussed internally in the aforementioned NSSM 148 in March, funds were offered to the NCUSCR by Richardson at the group's annual meeting of members in May.[47] The suggestion immediately provoked unease within the NCUSCR. While the position paper had made clear that the group expected to work with the government, the organization still did not want to become beholden to the state. Chairman Eckstein warned internally, "let us move very cautiously on the State Department fund".[48] He worried that government funding would hurt the group's ability to continue to fundraise from charitable foundations and the private sector, and might lead Beijing to shun the NCUSCR for being too close to government, just as they had previously resisted working with the CSCPRC. Eckstein pushed the NCUSCR's staff to exhaust all possible sources of private foundation support before turning to public money.[49] Others in the group used board meetings and other forums to voice concerns that the offer of government funds was part and parcel of the government's efforts to extend its influence over the exchange programme.[50]

Nonetheless, there was a case for accepting government money, even if it came with strings. The NCUSCR knew that it was in the midst of a budget crisis: Eckstein admitted to Kissinger that the organisation was facing "serious financial problems".[51] For all its success as an act of public diplomacy, the Chinese ping-pong team's visit had been a financial disaster. The NCUSCR had declined to sell exclusive broadcasting rights and had deliberately kept ticket prices low in order to bring the tour to

[46] Office of the [NAS] Foreign Secretary to NAS Council Action, 15 October 1972, "1972 – General", CSCNAS.
[47] *NFTNC*, Vol. 2, No. 3, July 1972; Lockwood to Eckstein, 17 May 1972, "National Committee – General Correspondence – 1972", Box 130, ADBP.
[48] Emphasis in the original.
[49] Eckstein to Case, 25 May 72, "National Committee – General Correspondence – 1972", Box 130, ADBP.
[50] Which is not to say that the government was directly attaching conditions to such funding. Lockwood to Eckstein, 17 May 1972, "National Committee – General Correspondence – 1972", Box 130, ADBP.
[51] Eckstein to Kissinger, 13 June 1972, "National Committee – General Correspondence – 1972", Box 130, ADBP.

as large and broad an audience as possible.[52] As a result, revenue from the visit totalled little more than half of the nearly quarter of a million dollars the National Committee had spent.[53] By the time of Richardson's offer of government funds in May, the NCUSCR's funds would only support the organisation for another six weeks.[54] Moreover, by June, the NCUSCR had learned of the Chinese switch to a "dual track approach" of permitting a government role in exchange diplomacy — including their assent to the State Department funding exchanges.[55] When Eckstein's appeals for greater funding from charitable foundations fell on deaf ears the following month, the NCUSCR board bowed to circumstance and agreed to appeal to the State Department for funding.[56] That financial year, the group would receive $75,800 from the government; five years later, yearly government funding for the group had risen to $290,000.[57]

The internal debate over taking government funding occurred alongside broader and more fundamental protests about the NCUSCR's efforts to place itself at the centre of the exchange programme. Discontent at this proposed course existed inside and outside of the group. Many NCUSCR members continued to see the group as a broad church of volunteers interested in China policy and enthusiastic about encouraging others to share this interest, not a proxy arm of the State Department. Concerns about the group's direction had been circulating since the Chinese ping-pong visit and the position paper brought this resentment to a head.[58] That document also sparked protests from outside of the NCUSCR. CCAS published a long and well-informed attack that alleged that the two groups were pushing "to have the US government designate them as the two major conduits for such [exchange] activities" and were proposing to work only with "appropriate" other exchange organisations that met their own preferences. The NCUSCR and the CSCPRC "have moved quietly in

[52] Schoyer to Joint Committee [organising the ping-pong visit], 16 August 1971, Folder 289, Box 30, Series 9, RG4, NCUSCR records, RAC.
[53] Schoyer to Boggan, 5 December 1972, Folder 288, Box 30, Series 9, RG4, NCUSCR records, RAC.
[54] Schoyer to Barnett, 1 May 1972, "National Committee – General Correspondence – 1972", Box 130, ADBP.
[55] Barnett to The Files, 26 June 1972, "NCUSCR, 1972", Box 130, ADBP.
[56] Barnett to Pye and Eckstein, 31 July 1972, Ibid.
[57] Program Report, November 1972-May 1973, "Annual Meeting, NCUSCR, 1973", Box 131, ADBP; NCUSCR Annual Report, 1977-78, NCOC.
[58] Lockwood to Eckstein, 17 May 1972, "National Committee – General Correspondence – 1972", Box 130, ADBP.

small committees over the summer and fall of 1972 to set themselves up as the major semi-official conduits for exchanges without wide consultation with other organisations, especially those which are younger, more radical, and less powerful". The allegations were hard to deny. After all, the proof was in the pudding: "So far they have not hesitated to sponsor or co-sponsor every major Chinese group coming to the US".[59]

When the NCUSCR board learned that the paper had been sent to the government without even a show of consultation within the group, they called an emergency meeting and forced a retraction and reassessment of the document. Board members not involved in the paper's preparation listed a host of specific complaints but also objected to the very nature of the document. The paper had been deliberately written as a policy document — with specific, prescriptive language about how to manage exchanges — and then treated as such: it was quickly prepared by a small number of staff and then immediately sent to the government. That process and wording had been the very quality that had made the paper so acceptable to Washington but this was also what alerted others within the organisation of its authors' larger intentions: to transform the organisation into a professional and well-funded outfit capable of managing an important part of the Sino-American relationship, in collaboration with the government.[60]

In response to these objections, the core leadership of the NCUSCR — Eckstein, Murray, Barnett and a handful of others — made a show of consultation. They reassessed the paper as the board requested but made only superficial changes. Wording on the National Committee's specific exchange mandate were diluted and plans for a large, standing committee of NCUSCR and non-NCUSCR members that would manage exchanges were dropped; instead that role was given to a small in-house subcommittee. This change reduced the profile of exchanges within the NCUSCR but the importance of the subcommittee was indicated when Eckstein resigned as National Committee

[59] *Committee on Concerned Asian Scholars (CCAS) Newsletter*, January 1973.
[60] Barnett to Pye and Eckstein, 31 July 1972, "NCUSCR, 1972", Box 130, ADBP.

chairman in order to lead it.[61] From the outset, the committee tasked with reviewing the paper took a "cautious and delicate" approach and, most importantly, did nothing to question the proposed close partnership with the CSCPRC — and the US government. CCAS's complaints were ignored: the revised paper made no mention of any exchange organisation other than the CSCPRC. CCAS were quite right to suspect that the government and the NCUSCR wanted to shut out radicals from exchange contacts.[62]

The review of the paper, then, was an act of pretence to win internal support. In a propagandistic move worthy of their Chinese counterparts, the committee now even claimed that "it was noted that … both the Chinese and US governments *apparently* expect the National Committee to assume a leading role in the development of people-to-people exchanges" — without mentioning that the NCUSCR had lobbied extensively for such a role.[63] The show of consultation was sufficient: the revised position paper was approved at a November board meeting. This was a turning point for the group. Its core leadership had forced through changes that would ensure the NCUSCR became an organisation dedicated to exchanges; three years later the group would sell its public education arm to the Asia Society and dedicate all its efforts to managing exchanges, the role it continues in today.[64]

By the final months of 1972, then, the close collaboration between the NCUSCR, CSCPRC and the US government envisioned in the June joint position paper had become a reality. Opposition within the NCUSCR had been overcome and government pressure on the Chinese had paid off: in November, Holdridge wrote to Kissinger to report that an acceleration in the pace of exchanges — now largely under NCUSCR and CSCPRC management — was one important indicator of an intensifying Sino-American relationship.[65] Over the course of 1973, it would become clear that the

[61] 'US-China Exchanges: The National Committee's Role', 11 October 1972, "CSCPRC – Subcommittee on Exchanges with China", Box 131, ADBP; Record of 1st meeting of NCUSCR ad hoc committee on exchanges, 26 September 1972, "CSCPRC – Subcommittee on Exchanges with China", Box 131, ADBP.
[62] Barnett to Pye and Eckstein, 31 July 1972, "NCUSCR, 1972", Box 130, ADBP.
[63] Emphasis added. Record of 1st meeting of NCUSCR ad hoc committee on exchanges, 26 September 1972, "CSCPRC – Subcommittee on Exchanges with China", Box 131, ADBP.
[64] *CCAS Newsletter*, January 1973.
[65] Holdridge to Kissinger, 13 November 1972, "China – General, June 23, 1972-October 1973", Box 98, HAKCFFE, RNL.

NCUSCR and CSCPRC had successfully manoeuvred themselves to the forefront of the exchange programme just as contacts began to rapidly expand; it would soon be easy to forget how hard won this pre-eminence had been.

III: DEEPENING EXCHANGES AND THE FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON US-CHINA TRADE

As Nixon took his oath of office for his second term, exchange contacts between the US and China were rapidly accelerating: the NCUSCR was involved in further spectacular public exchanges; the CSCPRC received Beijing's blessing to begin their own involvement in scientific and scholarly contacts with the Chinese; and a desire to promote Sino-American trade in Beijing, the US private sector and the White House led to the formation of the National Council on US-China Trade in May 1973. This section analyses these developments and argues that, while the US government welcomed these developments, they also worked carefully to ensure that the government maintained an influence over this expanding form of Sino-American interaction, in particular by closely managing the creation of this third leading American exchange organisation.

1973 began well for both the CSCPRC and the NCUSCR. The success of the CSCPRC's co-hosting of Chinese doctors and scientists, in October and November respectively, had persuaded Beijing to agree to the CSCPRC single-handedly overseeing the visit of an American medical delegation to China in June 1973. This was the group's first involvement in American travel to China, coming after a hundred American scholars had already travelled to China in the two years prior under different banners. Meanwhile, the NCUSCR had hosted their second exchange, which had rivalled the ping-pong trip for glamour: the Shenyang acrobats performed 18 sold-out shows beginning with an opening night at the Chicago Lyric Opera House described by one critic as "thrilling, delightful, charming, artful, amazing and joyful". A capacity audience of 3,000 spectators gave the Chinese

performers a standing ovation and five curtain calls.[66] In total, 45,000 spectators saw the troupe perform over the tour, with thousands more watching a special colour television broadcast on ABC.[67] The acrobats had won respect for their behaviour between performances, too. They played baseball and frisbee — a new American craze — and gave impromptu performances to bedridden Americans in hospital; they raced around the Indianapolis 500 racetrack and even swapped their props for brooms to sweep their stage themselves when American stagehands refused to work overtime. The political importance of this fourth Chinese delegation to the US was underscored by a trip to the White House and a luncheon on Capitol Hill with recent China visitors Senators Mike Mansfield and Hugh Scott.[68]

Less dramatic but of perhaps greater significance was the concurrent visit of the NCUSCR's most senior staff members to the PRC. The delegation spent three hours with the Chinese vice foreign minister, Qiao Guanhua, as well as having multiple meetings with the NCUSCR's counterpart organisations: the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the All-China Sports Federation and the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT). The NCUSCR concluded that, "Both the extraordinarily warm reception and the substance of the discussions made the visit a remarkably fruitful and successful experience". Upon their return, the NCUSCR rapidly sought to capitalise on Chinese enthusiasm and reach agreement for a full programme of ongoing exchanges, pushing the US government to make this one of the objectives of Kissinger's planned February 1973 trip to Beijing.[69]

A suggestion made to the NCUSCR during this trip rapidly led to a significant new development in the landscape of the exchange programme. Beijing remarked approvingly on expanding Sino-American trade — valued at $96 million in 1972 — but was also conscious that American products were selling twice as fast as Chinese exports. A CCPIT official had asked the NCUSCR in August 1972 if they might be able to help organise a trade exhibition that would promote

[66] 'China's Acrobatic Diplomats', *Newsweek*, 1 January 1973; *NFTNC*, Vol. 3, No. 2, February 1973.
[67] NCUSCR Annual Report, 1972-73, NCOC.
[68] *NFTNC*, Vol. 3, No. 2, February 1973; 'China's Acrobatic Diplomats', *Newsweek*.
[69] Program Report, November 1972-May 1973, "Annual Meeting, NCUSCR, 1973", Box 131, ADBP.

Chinese wares to American buyers and, by the time the group travelled to China at the end of the year, the NCUSCR had begun to draw up plans with American businessmen.[70] Unbeknownst to the NCUSCR, these efforts were coeval with other private and governmental American plans to promote greater trade with China. By late 1972, a scheme to establish a third significant Sino-American exchange organisation, intended to promote commercial contacts, was coalescing. A coterie of business executives had approached the Nixon administration for support in establishing a trade promotion group that would, like the NCUSCR and CSCPRC, be private but work closely with the government in managing an important aspect of the Sino-American relationship.[71]

In fact, the Nixon administration had internally discussed the formation of such a group just a month after the president's February 1972 visit to China. From these earliest discussions, Kissinger had been clear that he wanted the government to take the lead in forming such a group, rather than allowing the initiative to be driven by the private sector.[72] When the White House learned of the proposal from Wilson, Theroux and other businessmen in October, Kissinger instructed the Department of Commerce to encourage the scheme — but to shape it, too. Thus, the government agreed to give its support to the creation of a private trade council, if the group accepted official guidelines for its format and function. One of the five guidelines explicitly stated that, "given the highly politicized nature of China's foreign trade" the council "will maintain a close relationship with interested government agencies".[73] By January 1973, Kissinger's aides reported that, "To control [private] pressures, and sustain USG[overnment] influence over the evolution of Sino-US trade, we have taken steps — with your approval — to form the National Council for Sino-American Trade".[74]

The American government's desire to oversee the creation and then running of the group was not intended to completely curtail the independence of the group, however. Instead, as with the

[70] Kissinger to USLO, 14 February 1974, "China trade and exchanges – July 5, 1973-February 28, 1974", Box 93, HAKCFFE, RNL; NCUSCR Annual Report, 1972-73, NCOC.
[71] Eugene Theroux, 'The Founding of the Council', *The China Business Review*, July-August 1993; interview with Eugene Theroux, Washington, DC, 21 September 2015.
[72] FRUS, *Vol. XVII*, Document 217.
[73] Lynn to Kissinger, 1 October 1972, "China trade/exchanges – February 2, 1972-4 July, 1973", Box 93, HAKCFFE, RNL.
[74] Holdridge to Kissinger, 3 January 1973, "Visit to the PRC – Feb 1973 – Briefing Book", Box 98, HAKCFFE, RNL.

NCUSCR and CSCPRC, the council would be afforded significant operational independence within the (in this case, explicit) ground-rules established by its government backers. The NCUSCR and CSCPRC were, indeed, specifically made the model for the proposed trade council and its relationship with the government, with Holdridge suggesting that the new group would operate "on the same pattern of 'people-to-people' contacts that we have evolved with the Chinese in the culture and scientific exchange areas".[75] Discreet support for the council from Washington suited Chinese preferences, too: PRC leaders had chosen to discuss the possibility of more active promotion of trade with the NCUSCR, not with Kissinger or other US officials, to whom the Chinese had previously downplayed the prospects for trade and certainly stated that government involvement in commercial contacts would be inappropriate.[76] The White House recognised Beijing's reluctance for trade to take on an official or political character and this encouraged the decision to support an ostensibly private trade council.[77]

When the NCUSCR learned of the separate efforts to create a council that would meet many of the same demands it had sought to address, the group voluntarily scaled back its own plans to promote Sino-American trade. The NCUSCR now threw its organisational resources behind the creation of what was, on 31 May 1973, christened the National Council on United States-China Trade.[78] The NCUSCR advised on the group's activities and seconded a member of staff to work within the organisation in the run-up to its launch conference.[79] The NCUSCR did not completely cease advising American businessmen — such consultations helped solicit valued corporate donations — but in general adopted the same close working relationship with the new NCUSCT that it had

[75] Ibid.
[76] See, for example, Zhou's talks with David Rockefeller. Zhou, *Nianpu*, III, 601-2, 29 June 1973 entry; David Rockefeller, *Memoirs* (New York, 2002), 249.
[77] Holdridge to Kissinger, 18 January 1973, "Visit to the PRC – Feb 1973 – Briefing Book", HAKCFFE, RNL.
[78] The group continues to exist to this day, having changed its name to the US-China Business Council.
[79] Program Report, November 1972-May 1973, "Annual Meeting, NCUSCR, 1973", Box 131, ADBP.

already cultivated with the CSCPRC, seeking collaborations with the Council and promoting the sister group's activities, rather than competing for clients or audience.[80]

The NCUSCT's May launch meeting was a success. Representatives from 500 American businesses attended, powerfully demonstrating a strong private interest in access to the Chinese market at a time when total trade, while growing, was still less than the total sales of the JC Penney department store.[81] It was the prospect of future trade that animated the new NCUSCT membership body, then, not the reality of current transactions; American businessmen were again slack-jawed about cracking the mythical China market.[82] The NCUSCR had already experienced this unbridled hunger for doing business with the Chinese: Pan American World Airways, American Express and Holiday Inn all provided generous sponsorship of the group's events long before China allowed American flights into the country, credit card transactions or foreign-owned hotels.[83] One NCUSCR staff member recalled that a Holiday Inn executive manically accosted a Chinese official about how his company wanted to open a hotel in every Chinese city — a proposition that seemed ridiculous then (but prescient now).[84]

Beijing signalled their approval of the creation of the group by having a senior diplomat, Han Xu, attend the launch.[85] The significance of this was not lost on the attending businessmen: taking Han's appearance as an indication that the new group might have the ear of the Chinese government, most firms paid the substantial membership dues there and then.[86] Han may well have been encouraged by the enthusiasm of the businessmen. He was also, however, angered by a speech by the ranking US official present at the event, State Department undersecretary for economic affairs William Casey. Casey spoke of expanding trade with Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan straits and

[80] Minutes of 23rd meeting of NCUSCR board, 29 October 1973, "23rd meeting – Board of Directors – October 29, 1973", Box 131, ADBP.
[81] Theroux, 'Founding the Council'.
[82] Ibid.; interview with Theroux.
[83] Schoyer to the Joint Committee [organising the ping-pong visit], 21 June 1971, "National Committee – General Correspondence – 1969-71", Box 130, ADBP.
[84] Interview with Berris, 15 August 2015.
[85] Solomon to Kissinger, 1 June 1973, "China Exchanges, May 16-June 13, 1973", Director's Files of Winston Lord (DFWL), RG59, NACP.
[86] Theroux, 'Founding the Council'; interview with Theroux.

drew a parallel between his audience and a forthcoming ROC trade mission to the US. As soon as he learned of Casey's comments, Kissinger cabled an apology to Han and his Chinese colleagues, assuring them that the remarks had not been cleared with his superiors. The quarrel, however fleeting, was a reminder of the political sensitivity of commercial contacts with China — and of why Kissinger and his aides had worked hard to keep the NCUSCT closely under government watch.[87]

The establishment of the NCUSCT was a further notable step in Sino-American rapprochement, a public demonstration that this new diplomatic relationship brought with it novel possibilities for American commerce. For the US government, the formation of a public trade council acted as a means by which quietly executed and still limited commercial transactions could be converted into public political support for the Sino-American relationship. From its first inception, Kissinger had wanted the council kept under as close a watch as possible. Thus, unlike the privately founded NCUSCR and CSCPRC, the NCUSCT's very creation was a public-private partnership, in which non-governmental interest was encouraged but also moulded and directed by the government. The group would be run without day-to-day government involvement, but Kissinger and his colleagues, citing the political importance of the Sino-American trade relationship, had preserved a governmental stake in the group's activities.

CONCLUSION

The year that followed Nixon's summit trip to China saw a maturation and regulation of the Sino-American exchange programme proposed in the Shanghai Communiqué. In the wake of Nixon's trip, exchanges continued to be at the heart of rebuilding a broader Sino-American relationship, with the high-profile visit of the Chinese table tennis team to the US another media extravaganza that caught public attention just two months after the Nixon summit and re-confirmed that reacquainting these two long-estranged societies would be possible and popular. The success of that trip had been a result

[87] Solomon to Kissinger, 1 June 1973, "China Exchanges, May 16-June 13, 1973", DFWL, RG59, NACP.

of the working partnership between the government and the NCUSCR. Both parties concluded from the tour that the other had provided an invaluable contribution that they could not themselves: the NCUSCR valued the government's logistical assistance, while Washington was grateful for a non-governmental host that was still sufficiently competent to execute an ambitious exchange. An important legacy of the visit, then, was the emergence of a partnership between the NCUSCR and the US government.

This success notwithstanding, the Chinese government continued to show a preference for groups on the political left at the expense of mainstream organisations that were interested in opening contacts with China. The return ping-pong trip had confirmed that American pressure had won Chinese agreement to work with the NCUSCR but the CSCPRC remained shut out of all involvement in exchange visits until late 1972. Both organisations responded to this challenge by playing to their strengths, leveraging their reputation for political reliability and their close personal and social connections to the US government to appeal to the highest levels of the bureaucracy for not only funds but also favour. The joint position paper put forward by the two organisations suggested to the government a ready-made structure for exchanges designed to appeal to the government's desire to ensure that exchange contacts were managed by those committed to Washington's foreign policy goals for the Sino-American relationship. This ploy worked and in turn the American government intensified its efforts to convince Beijing to accept not only the NCUSCR but also the CSCPRC as the primary managers of the exchange programme.

The restricting of exchanges proposed by the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC in the joint position paper had initially been resisted by the Chinese and by recalcitrant members of the NCUSCR and CCAS. The government's support for the expanded role of the two organisations was enough to clinch the matter, however, and, by the end of 1972, resistance to this expansion had been overcome and a condominium over exchanges had been formed between the US government and these two organisations. Soon after, the creation of the NCUSCT — a move foreseen and shaped by the government but arising from private initiative — completed the process of creating a framework for

exchanges that were managed by private groups but in close collaboration with the government. This, then, was a consequential moment: the exchange programme would expand exponentially in the next six years, and throughout this time the NCUSCR, CSCPRC and NCUSCT would continue to work hand in glove with the US government, together seeking to use the exchange programme as a crucial means of furthering and deepening the Sino-American relationship.

CHAPTER THREE

Downhill from here?

The establishment of liaison offices and the false dawn in exchange diplomacy during Nixon's second term, 1973-8 August 1974

Two months before Nixon resigned the presidency, Kissinger delivered a speech to a dinner hosted by three organisations: the NCUSCR, CSCPRC and the NCUSCT. The Secretary of State could not help but be defensive. The Watergate scandal had sapped the vitality of the Nixon administration and the enervation had even spread to Nixon's boldest foreign policy initiative: the rapprochement with China. "Despite periodic accounts of supposed ups and downs in our bilateral relations [with China], there should be no doubt in anyone's mind that, from the United States' point of view, we remain firmly on course." Kissinger was suitably complimentary about his hosts. The three groups were firmly established as the leading American private organisations involved in people-to-people contacts with China, with the NCUSCT having been added to the previous duopoly when it was created — partially at Kissinger's initiative — a year prior. As a result of their combined work, the Secretary of State said, "some of our country's most talented and influential men and women have achieved a far greater understanding of the people of China and their goals. Through this process of understanding, immeasurable strength has been added to the fundamental tenet of our policy: … the normalization of relations with China".[1]

This rhetoric could be attributed to good manners and better sense: as shown in the preceding two chapters, the NCUSCR and CSCPRC had worked efficaciously to re-open links with China's government and people since the first resumption of contact through the ping-pong diplomacy

[1] Kissinger's speech to NCUSCR, CSCPRC and NCUSCT dinner, 3 June 1974, "Spring 1974 Board Meeting", Box 131, ADBP.

of 1971; Kissinger knew he owed their staff his thanks. However, this chapter will argue that there was much truth in the Secretary of State's lofty words. Nixon's (truncated) second term in office saw a swift expansion in the cultural, scholarly and commercial exchanges overseen by these three groups, vastly increasing the number of Chinese and Americans who had participated and who supported this new relationship. Thus, Kissinger could convincingly claim that "no policy of this Administration has had greater bipartisan support than the normalization of relations with the People's Republic".[2]

But exchanges had done more than simply build popular support for policies defined by Nixon, Kissinger and their Chinese counterparts. As this chapter will show, these transnational contacts had also underpinned political and diplomatic progress in the relationship. The creation of "liaison offices" in May 1973 marked the zenith of Nixon and Kissinger's push for rapprochement, the closest that either man would come to realising their long-sought goal of formally re-establishing diplomatic relations with the PRC. This chapter demonstrates that, in conception and realisation, this achievement was deeply connected to exchange contacts: mooted in Beijing's talks with the NCUSCR, the offices were designed to facilitate exchanges and trade.

The first and most important argument of this chapter, then, is that the critical role played by exchanges in diplomatic rapprochement in 1971 and 1972 continued into 1973 and beyond. Its second argument is that the continuing political importance of these contacts prompted renewed US government interest in establishing greater official control over exchanges and exchange organisations — and that this ambition was, in turn, met with resistance from non-state actors reluctant to surrender agency to the government. The White House's intent was encouraged by Beijing's decision to negotiate a first full package of exchanges directly with US officials during Kissinger's February 1973 visit to China. Having previously set out the terms of their cooperation with the government in the joint position paper of 1972, the NCUSCR and CSCPRC found themselves having to stand firm to both Washington and Beijing in order to win the right to directly negotiate and defend their own interests when planning exchanges.

[2] Ibid.

Similarly unwilling to accept a passive role in diplomacy with China were American politicians outside the executive branch. In 1973, Senator Warren Magnuson led the third congressional delegation to the PRC on a visit that starkly revealed that official exchanges were as challenging to control as private exchange groups. Kissinger had worked hard to prevent the delegation negotiating substantive aspects of the Sino-American relationship but this tactic backfired when Magnuson, frustrated by his interlocutors' unwillingness to talk shop, behaved appallingly and repeatedly insulted his Chinese hosts. Magnuson's loose talk even contributed to the cancellation of Kissinger's planned visit to Beijing in July 1973.

In spite of the major success of establishing liaison offices in May 1973, the final year of Nixon's time in office saw a serious downturn in both the high-level and exchange relationships. There has been much historiographical discussion about the causes of this sudden reversal in Sino-American diplomacy. Three causes have been cited: Chinese dissatisfaction with continuing Soviet-American détente; domestic turmoil in Beijing and Washington; and the failure of the US government to curtail its relationship with Taiwan. The third argument of this chapter is that negotiations over exchanges provide significant (and to date largely overlooked) evidence that the third of these factors — the continuing US-Taiwan relationship — offers the most convincing explanation for Sino-American setbacks. Exchange diplomacy, then, helps elucidate why Nixon was unable to fulfil normalisation before his ignominious resignation from office.

These arguments are made over the course of five sections. The first section argues that the agreement to establish liaison offices that was made in February 1973 was in large part a consequence of the gathering pace of people-to-people relations. Liaison offices promised greater government oversight of exchanges, as did Beijing's decision to present the first full programme of exchanges directly to their official US counterparts during Kissinger's February visit. The second section of this chapter traces the reaction of the NCUSCR and CSCPRC to this growing governmental influence over exchanges, showing that both groups asserted their organisational independence in negotiations

with American and Chinese officials and rejected a role as passive facilitators of an exchange programme which they could not themselves shape.

This chapter's final three sections cover a number of escalating challenges to the exchange programme and, in turn, high-level relations that began in July 1973. Section III covers Senator Magnuson's disastrous visit during that month. The fallout from that trip helped precipitate the cancellation of Kissinger's own planned July 1973 visit and began a period of decline in both high-level and exchange relations. Section IV shows that Washington responded to the early stages of this downturn by seeking to use government authority to reinvigorate exchange contacts and, in turn, rejuvenate the diplomatic relationship. Section V examines in detail the causes of what, by 1974, had become a crisis: it argues that evidence from the exchange relationship shows that the primary cause of decaying rapprochement was Beijing's anger at the ongoing, deepening relationship between Washington and Taipei.

I: THE ROLE OF EXCHANGE DIPLOMACY IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LIAISON OFFICES

The founding of the NCUSCT in May 1973 had won political capital from people-to-people commercial relations. This section argues that, in a comparable dynamic, the concurrent establishment of so-called "liaison offices" in Washington and Beijing was a major political and diplomatic breakthrough that was achieved largely on the back of non-governmental contacts. Existing historiography has recognised that the agreement to establish these *de facto* embassies, reached in February 1973 and executed in May of that year, was a critical development in the Sino-American relationship, a way-station between initial rapprochement and the final normalisation deal. However, this historiography has also portrayed the agreement as solely or primarily the product of momentum in government-to-government relations, as a prize offered to Kissinger by the Chinese for the

diplomatic progress of 1971 and 1972.[3] This section argues that, in fact, the liaison offices were as much the product of growing people-to-people relations as they were salubrious governmental negotiations and were, in addition, intended to have as their primary function the continued facilitation of such contacts.

As detailed in chapter 1, Kissinger had never been more than half-hearted about encouraging truly non-governmental ties between the US and China. Chinese insistence (as well as the reasoning of his aides) had ultimately forced the National Security Advisor to accept that early contacts between the American and Chinese peoples would have to be on an unofficial basis. Nonetheless, Kissinger and his advisors had believed that, as rapprochement continued, the most important of these contacts could be brought under formal governmental control, with the State Department and White House negotiating the most significant exchanges directly with Beijing. By January 1973, Holdridge was becoming increasingly frustrated that this has not yet happened. While there was "substantial movement" in non-governmental contacts there had been "largely inaction" in negotiating officially-sponsored exchanges: the Chinese continued to ignore governmental requests to directly coordinate sports and artistic exchanges and to arrange a hoped-for trip by a delegation of American state governors.[4]

The US government, then, had no choice but to continue to pin its hopes for a politically constructive exchange programme on the three exchange organisations with which it held sway: the NCUSCR, CSCPRC and the soon-to-be established NCUSCT. It was in the context of the continuing central role of these private groups that the idea of creating liaison offices resurfaced in late 1972. First mentioned during internal US government discussions as early as 1969, the possibility of Sino-American diplomatic representation in the two capitals that was permanent and yet less formal than an embassy had been debated by the Chinese politburo in 1971.[5] The US side had first raised the idea in

[3] See, for example, Tyler, *Great Wall*, 152–4; Barbara Barnouin and Yu Changgen, *Chinese Foreign Policy during the Cultural Revolution* (London, 1998), 111.
[4] Holdridge to Kissinger, 18 January 1973, "Visit to the PRC – February 1973 – Briefing Book", Box 98, HAKCFFE, RNL.
[5] Yang and Xia, 'Vacillating'.

bilateral talks during Kissinger's first, secret visit to Beijing in November of that year but the Chinese had responded that it was not yet time for such a significant political step.[6] The possibility of an ongoing American presence in Beijing resurfaced when, during the NCUSCR's staff visit to China in December 1972, the Chinese mentioned to the National Committee the Chinese practice of establishing unofficial trade offices with countries they did not yet have official diplomatic relations with. The group's leaders quietly communicated the suggestion to officials in Washington, thus prompting a renewed push by the US government to establish an ongoing diplomatic presence in the two capitals.[7]

This representation was conceived of primarily as a means to facilitate people-to-people contacts. Internally, the NSC — channelling Kissinger's preference for secretive contacts — hoped that permanent representation might be in the form of an "official presence of low visibility". This could take the form of a number of US government employees working from within the embassy of an ally, such as the United Kingdom. But Holdridge admitted to Kissinger that the Chinese conceived of a liaison office as a means to support trade and exchange activity — hence their decision to resurrect the proposal in talks with the NCUSCR. Given this, Holdridge recommended to his boss that Washington should found their case for the offices on the basis of growing commercial and exchange contacts between the two societies. Indeed, powerful proof that the US government expected the offices to exist primarily to facilitate people-to-people contacts was found in Holdridge's expected staffing arrangement: an office made up of a combination of State Department specialists on cultural and economic affairs alongside representatives from the NCUSCR, CSCPRC and NCUSCT.[8]

Kissinger perceived that the rationale of facilitating people-to-people contacts was only a pretence for the deepening of the governmental relationship. He said as much to Zhou during his February 1973 visit to Beijing: "we should also maintain *the fiction* that [each liaison office] is also dealing with the Commerce Department and with cultural groups. But certainly we would envision

[6] *FRUS*, Vol. XVII, Documents 22 and 164.
[7] Holdridge to Kissinger, 18 January 1973, "Visit to the PRC – February 1973 – Briefing Book", Box 98, HAKCFFE, RNL.
[8] Ibid.

that the chief of your liaison office would have the right to contact the State Department, and that this would be his normal contact for routine business".[9] To Kissinger, if exchanges and trade provided public justification for liaison offices, their true function was to allow continuous high-level diplomacy that had, to date, only been possible through high-level trips and backchannels. Zhou, however, presented the offices differently, skirting Kissinger's talk of governmental contacts and stating, "But of course through the Foreign Ministry we will arrange for your liaison office to have communications with the Foreign Trade Ministry, cultural organizations and also people's organizations — organizations similar to what you have as the National Committee on Chinese-US Relations [*sic*] and the scientific organizations". For the Chinese premier, the facilitation of these contacts was no mere pretence.[10]

This was but one moment in 1973 in which Kissinger's rhetoric suggested that he and the highest Chinese leaders were continuing to deepen a special, secret diplomatic understanding to which all other aspects of the relationship were subservient. But in fact, as Zhou's comments indicated, the substance of the Sino-American relationship was by this time as much based on cultural, scholarly and commercial people-to-people contacts as it was secret, high-level pacts. Although Kissinger spent much of 1973 attempting to deepen the relationship through more extensive security collaboration — an effort that culminated in his disastrous November 1973 visit that shook the high-level relationship — the original geo-political motivation for Sino-American contact had, by that year, ceased to provide impetus or momentum to negotiations. Both the PRC and the US had benefitted from their strategic realignment but, as the Nixon summit receded into the past, it became necessary to put meat on the bones of this positional realignment: an ongoing diplomatic relationship between the two sides demanded more than biannual connivances and grandiloquent toasts.

Chinese approval for this institutionalisation came from the very top. On 17 February, Mao was more explicit than Zhou, telling Kissinger that the longevity of the Sino-American relationship

[9] Emphasis added.
[10] *FRUS, 1969-1976*, Volume XVIII, China, 1973-1976, ed. David P Nickles (Washington, DC, 2007), Document 10.

depended on increasing exchanges and trade. Mao argued that if his people learned the English language and interacted with Americans they would continue to support rapprochement, regardless of who led their countries. Zhou subsequently told Kissinger that Mao had thus personally approved institutionalising the relationship through the creation of liaison offices.[11] In keeping with Mao's comments, the February visit saw the Chinese approve a full programme of exchanges to be overseen by the NCUSCR and CSCPRC. As Holdridge had hoped, there was a clear connection between this future exchange activity and the establishment of the liaison offices needed to facilitate such contacts. The visit's final communiqué announced: "The two sides agreed that the time was appropriate for accelerating the normalization of relations. … They agreed on a concrete program of expanding trade as well as science, cultural and other exchanges. To facilitate this process and to improve communications, it was agreed that in the near future each side will establish a liaison office in the capital of the other".[12]

This was a critical moment in the transition from isolation to normalisation in the Sino-American relationship. Kissinger was not completely mistaken in seeing this as an agreement to deepen government-to-government interchange: the communiqué stated that the liaison offices would also "improve communications" between the two sides and, to Washington's surprise, the Chinese agreed to the offices being staffed wholly by government employees. Seeking to maximise the political capital gained from this forward step, Nixon appointed the most senior diplomat possible — David K E Bruce — to head the new liaison office in Beijing; the Chinese reciprocated by naming the similarly well-heeled Huang Zhen. Thus, the liaison offices helped enable a constant dialogue at a high political level.

Nonetheless, in a way not adequately recognised in the historiography, this critical step was directly and deeply connected to growing people-to-people contacts. It had been no accident that the suggestion for liaison offices had first resurfaced in a meeting between the Chinese and the NCUSCR.

[11] Kissinger to Nixon, 24 February 1973, "HAK China Trip – February 1973 – Memcons & Reports", Box 98, HAKCFFE, RNL.
[12] Joint US-PRC communiqué issued on establishment of liaison office, 22 February 1973, "1973 – General", CSCNAS.

The Chinese clearly conceived of the liaison offices primarily as a means to facilitate the growing volume of exchanges and trade and Kissinger's advisors also expected such an outcome — hence the suggestion that the NCUSCR, CSCPRC and NCUSCT would help staff the offices. Mao's personal approval had further elevated the formality of the offices but, as will be shown below and in future chapters, both the Beijing and Washington offices spent the majority of their time dealing with people-to-people contacts.[13] The establishment of liaison offices, then, was a major political achievement in the Sino-American relationship that came about *as a result* of people-to-people contacts and *in order to deepen* such links: the two tracks of high-level and people-to-people diplomacy were, in early 1973, clearly and productively connected.

II: THE NCUSCR AND CSCRPC'S FIGHT FOR ORGANISATIONAL INDEPENDENCE IN EXCHANGE DIPLOMACY

Both the NCUSCR and CSCPRC naturally welcomed the intensifying exchange activity evident before Kissinger's February visit and then emphatically confirmed by the agreements during those talks. In 1973, both groups sought to use the gathering momentum to expand and professionalise as organisations and to offer greater opportunities to their constituencies. Concurrently, the establishment of liaison offices and the Chinese decision to negotiate a package of exchange proposals directly during Kissinger's February visit reignited concerns among both groups that Washington might seek to make the two groups supplicants in a government-led exchange programme that was private and unofficial only in name. The tension between the recognition by both organisations that greater exchange activity necessitated state support and their shared desire to nonetheless maintain meaningful control over their exchange activities played out over the course of 1973 and culminated in a strong push by both groups to assert their right to control the exchanges under their management.

[13] Certainly this was the view of the second chief of the US liaison office, George H W Bush. George H W Bush, *The China Diary of George H W Bush: The Making of a Global President*, ed. by Jeffrey Engel (Princeton, NJ, 2008).

The CSCPRC's role in receiving two scientific delegations in autumn 1972 had prompted the organisation to make preparations for a substantial role in future exchanges. Hopes for future contacts were encouraged by the Chinese invitation for the CSCPRC to send a delegation of its board and staff to China to work out future collaboration. To accommodate this expected activity, in February 1973 the group drew on $150,000 of new government funding to expand its small staff, of which only Ann Keatley, the group's executive secretary, was a full-time staff member.[14] Having been buoyed by its own staff delegation to China, the NCUSCR was simultaneously making personnel changes that reflected growing ambition. For the first time, the group named a non-academic as president, announcing in May that they had appointed Charles Woodruff Yost, an experienced and well-connected diplomat who had served as Nixon's first ambassador to the UN and held three ambassadorships under Eisenhower.[15]

Kissinger's February visit confirmed that the CSCPRC and NCUSCR's efforts to gear up for greater exchanges had been necessary. During the talks, the Chinese had presented the US side with a list of specific exchange proposals for the remainder of 1973.[16] Both sides now expected that the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC would oversee the majority of these contacts and the Chinese reaffirmed their confidence in the two groups and the "special efforts" that both had made to facilitate exchanges to date. Beijing proposed sending eight groups to the US and receiving seven. Among the delegations agreed between the two governments were athletics groups, journalists, a range of scientific delegations, the Philadelphia Orchestra and an exhibition of Chinese archaeological treasures. Having expected to negotiate only a general agreement to accelerate exchanges, the American side had been pleasantly surprised that the Chinese had instead opted to lay out detailed proposals for the coming year.[17]

[14] Todd to Harris, 5 February 1973, "1973 – General", CSCNAS.
[15] Minutes of annual members meeting of NCUSCR, 16 May 1973, "23rd meeting – Board of Directors – October 29, 1973" [*sic*], Box 131, ADBP.
[16] Ultimately, this ambitious programme would be stretched out over 1973 to 1974.
[17] Keatley to CSCPRC members, 5 March 1973, "1973 – General", CSCNAS.

Beijing's approach, while pleasing to the American government, created what Eckstein called a "dilemma … in the relationship between the National Committee and the US government". Keatley noted a comparable problem from the CSCPRC's perspective, specifically that, "The visit resulted in more direct US government involvement in exchanges". Beijing had opted to bypass private involvement in drawing up exchange plans, presenting their official counterparts with a pre-determined programme. Although the NCUSCR had provided some of the suggested delegations to the Chinese during their staff delegation and both groups had inputted into the "avalanche" of proposals put forward by the US government, these had been transformed by the Chinese from speculative possibilities into a set agenda.[18] The government-to-government agreement of this first full package of exchanges came at the same time as the announcement of plans to create government-staffed liaison offices and alongside the ongoing official involvement in the formation of the NCUSCT. It was clear that, whether or not they had actively sought to negotiate the exchange package, US officials were now more closely involved in the exchange programme than ever before. This was surely another pleasing outcome from a highly successful visit for Kissinger.

Both the NCUSCR and CSCPRC acted quickly to reassert their independent status within the exchange programme but without sabotaging the working relationship with both governments necessary to undertake a vastly expanded programme of contacts. Two issues mattered most to both groups. First, who would determine the content of the exchange programme; second, who would negotiate the exchange programme with the Chinese government. Both groups wanted their government to talk to Beijing only in generalities and to support the two private organisations in their negotiations over the number, content, timing and other specifics of the programme. Above all, the two organisations demanded they be free to select the delegations they would send to the PRC.[19]

The US government was little concerned about the content of exchanges. What Washington cared about was the political fact of such contacts. This, perhaps, had been why they provided such a

[18] Minutes of annual members meeting of NCUSCR, 16 May 1973, "23rd meeting – Board of Directors – October 29, 1973" [*sic*], Box 131, ADBP; Keatley to CSCPRC members, 5 March 1973, "1973 – General", CSCNAS.
[19] Ibid.

large number of proposals to the Chinese — and why they had not questioned any of the specifics of Beijing's proposed programme. This indifference posed just as large a problem to the NCUSCR and CSCPRC as would have outright hostility. US officials had been delighted that the Chinese had been as forthcoming as they were: 15 exchanges, whatever their content, would be a powerful, public message of the vitality of the new Sino-American rapprochement and would surely help to build popular support for the high-level relationship. The challenge this posed for the NCUSCR and CSCPRC was that the government was thus disinclined to push the Chinese on the content of this programme: the government would rather lump the NCUSCR and CSCPRC with unwanted exchanges than risk the Chinese striking delegations off the list altogether.[20]

In the wake of Kissinger's February visit, the NCUSCR made clear that it was not prepared to make a similar sacrifice. While agreeing to undertake much of the agenda proposed, the group declined to sponsor two proposed delegations earmarked for NCUSCR management and insisted that each exchange proposal should be worked out through direct talks between the NCUSCR and the Chinese government.[21] Likewise, the CSCPRC made their own support for the programme conditional. While agreeing to prepare for a first scientific delegation expected in the US in April, Keatley and Barnett, vice chairman of the CSCPRC, said that the group would "hesitate" to commit to helping with other delegations until the Chinese had received a CSCPRC staff delegation. Such a visit would provide the CSCPRC the chance to negotiate directly with the Chinese and in particular to make the case for the organisation sending delegations "of special interest to American scholars", rather than accepting Chinese diktat on the scientific delegations it wanted to host.[22]

The State Department's initial response to the two groups was that the government did not plan to stop negotiating specific exchanges with Beijing. Richardson at State welcomed more input from the two groups on the content of exchanges and said that the Department "sympathised" with their concerns — but he also made clear that the government had shown considerable favour in

[20] Keatley to CSCPRC members, 5 March 1973, "1973 – General", CSCNAS.
[21] Minutes of annual members meeting of NCUSCR, 16 May 1973, "23rd meeting – Board of Directors – October 29, 1973" [*sic*], Box 131, ADBP.
[22] Keatley to CSCPRC members, 5 March 1973, "1973 – General", CSCNAS.

elevating the two groups to the position of importance they now enjoyed. That assistance, then, had come at the price of the government reserving the right to pull rank over the negotiation of the exchange programme.[23]

Rebuffed by Washington, the CSCPRC took the fight to the Chinese. In a 9 May proposal sent to the Scientific and Technical Association of the People's Republic of China (STAPRC), the CSCPRC stated, as they had to their own government, that the organisation's cooperation in hosting exchanges was "on the condition that there be established a general reciprocal arrangement allowing the CSCPRC to sponsor groups to visit China", a point reinforced when the CSCPRC arrived in Beijing a month later.[24] This hit on an issue that would remain a source of tension in scholarly exchanges until 1979. The CSCPRC leadership pointed out to the Chinese — as tactfully as possible — that, while their scientists would gain a great deal from visiting the high-tech facilitates in the US, the Americans that would gain most from access to China were not physical scientists but instead social scientists and humanities scholars. This was the one matter of substance that Zhou himself was involved in negotiating during this visit. The premier made clear to the CSCPRC leadership that China was not yet ready to receive American social scientists. While Zhou cited lingering disruption to China's universities caused by the Cultural Revolution, other Chinese negotiators made clear another critical reason for this: in spite of the "great political development" that was the recent establishment of liaison offices, the lack of formal diplomatic relations necessarily brought limitations to exchanges. The Chinese, then, held out this most desired scholarly contact as an incentive for the CSCPRC and American scholars more broadly to encourage Nixon to consummate the rapprochement that he had begun.[25]

Limits remained, then, on the content of the scientific exchange delegations that the Chinese would permit. This notwithstanding, the CSCPRC's visit did much to resolve the tensions created

[23] Ibid.
[24] Emphasis in the original. 'Report on Exchange Discussions', 15 May-15 June 1973, "1973 – International Relations – Visits: Com Visit on Scholarly Exchanges" [*sic*], CSCNAS; Keatley to CSCPRC members, 5 March 1973, "1973 – General", CSCNAS.
[25] 'Report on Exchange Discussions', 15 May-15 June 1973, "1973 – International Relations – Visits: Com Visit on Scholarly Exchanges" [*sic*], CSCNAS.

during Kissinger's visit. Not only had the organisation witnessed up close Chinese enthusiasm for the "rapid expansion of scholarly exchanges", but the very fact of direct talks with the Beijing government had allayed fears that the group would have no involvement in the process of formulating the exchange programme. Although the Chinese had resisted accepting certain types of American scholars, they had been receptive to the CSCPRC nominating delegations to send to China and to these matters being resolved outside of formal government channels.[26] The CSCPRC's pointed comments to the Chinese about the dynamic of negotiating exchanges benefitted the NCUSCR, too: by September, the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs (CPIFA) assured NCUSCR vice president Murray that the CPIFA would work closely and directly with the NCUSCR when organising exchanges and also made clear that the NCUSCR could now expect to conduct most of its exchange talks directly with PRCLO in Washington.[27]

The CSCPRC's efforts had, then, ensured that the Chinese government was acutely aware that both private organisations demanded to be treated as autonomous from Washington. The two group's efforts had made an impression on the US government, too. On 30 July, Solomon had written to Kissinger that, "American academics involved in facilitating … exchanges — particularly those in the scientific community … feel that the US Government has not pressed Peking sufficiently in terms of American interests in these exchanges". If Solomon knew of these tensions, he did not wholly accept the viewpoint of the two groups. The CSCPRC and the NCUSCR were due for a meeting with State the following week, and Solomon assured Kissinger, "I will attend the meeting in an effort to keep the participants sensitized to the *larger interest that is being served by exchange programs*, and to discourage any uncoordinated approaches to the PRC Liaison Office".[28] The political benefits of the exchange programme, and their role in building a relationship with the Chinese government, trumped, in the government's eyes at least, the immediate concerns that the groups harboured. Nonetheless, the very fact of the meeting between the government and the two groups demonstrated

[26] Ibid.
[27] Murray to The Record, 28 September 1973, "23rd meeting – Board of Directors – October 29, 1973", Box 131, ADBP.
[28] Emphasis added. *FRUS*, Vol. XVII, Document 45.

that the US government, too, recognised the need to accommodate the NCUSCR and CSCPRC's concerns.

Kissinger's February 1973 Kissinger visit had both moved the exchange programme forward and challenged the dynamic between state and non-state actors established in principle in 1972. The Chinese proposal for the first full exchange programme made during the meeting promised the exchanges that the NCUSCR and CSCPRC had long hoped and planned for. But it also posed a dilemma to the two groups. Having successfully sold their usefulness and reliability to the US government in the joint position paper, the CSCPRC and the NCUSCR now had to show that a close working relationship with the government did not mean they would accept becoming supplicants — even if governmental support was critical to facilitating their growing role in contacts with the Chinese. Thus, a CSCPRC memorandum affirmed that "The CSCPRC is not, and does not intend to operate as, a branch of the federal administration" but simultaneously acknowledged that governmental support was critical not only financially but also in providing the "public recognition of the CSCPRC as a private organization which can carry out exchanges effectively.[29] The two groups thus sought to walk a slim line between cultivating government encouragement of their role in the exchange programme and avoiding any official presumption that they would do so without looking to their own interests. Such were the fine margins in this facet of the Sino-American relationship, at once unofficial and of great importance to both governments.

III: THE MAGNUSON TRIP AND THE CONTRADICTIONS OF CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATIONS

The manner in which the programme of exchanges for 1973 had been agreed had, then, revealed a tension and latent friction between the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC and the two governments. This section covers a more immediate conflict, not in the facilitated exchanges overseen by those two

[29] 'Report on the CSCPRC visit to China, May 15-June 15, 1973', "1973 - Inquiries", CSCNAS.

groups but instead in the burgeoning programme of official congressional delegations to China. The third such delegation was led by Senator Warren Magnuson and travelled to China in July 1973. This ill-fated exchange was crisscrossed with moments of painful drama and these agonising interchanges further elucidated the tension, if not contradiction, between Kissinger's desire to maintain close, almost total, control over both private and official exchanges and the need to broaden the range of participants in the Sino-American relationship beyond the highest Chinese and American leaders.[30] The fallout from the tense visit reached into high-level relations: days after the trip's conclusion, Zhou wrote to Kissinger effectively cancelling his next scheduled visit to Beijing.

The first official, congressional exchanges had occurred in 1972, with Senators Mansfield and Scott visiting China in April of that year and Congressmen Ford and Boggs following in June. These early visits had been significant moments in the developing rapprochement and, considered as a whole, highly successful: the American representatives had left China deeply impressed by the country and had subsequently acted as influential advocates for the new relationship with Beijing, their efficacy enhanced by their distance from the executive branch.[31] Nonetheless, these early visits had also shown that official exchange diplomacy might not be without risk. Ford had angered Zhou by publicly repeating a number of the premier's more sensitive comments to the media: the congressman had revealed that the Chinese now supported the US security treaty with Japan and the presence of American troops in East Asia as means to limit Soviet influence in the region. Mansfield was a consummate diplomat, considered by Nixon for the first secret visit to China, but even he had stepped on toes when he insulted the deposed leader and former king of Cambodia, Norodom Sihanouk, by referring to him as provisional head of state while in exile — when the king believed that he was still the actual head of state.[32]

[30] The exchanges were considered official as they were arranged directly between the two governments, without the involvement of non-governmental organisations.
[31] Mansfield and Scott, *Journey*; Hale Boggs and Gerald Ford, *Impressions of the New China: Joint Report to the United States House of Representatives* (Washington, DC, 1972).
[32] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 10.

In this way, the two visits had revealed problems with the two primary purposes of official exchanges. These visits were intended, on the one hand, as a form of public diplomacy, through which opinion shapers would be sold a favourable image of the PRC and the value of the new Sino-American rapprochement. Indeed, this explained why Zhou had told Ford about Beijing's change in heart about a strong American presence in the region: the premier was presenting the PRC as a cooperative partner in American global efforts to resist the Soviets, rather than as the implacable enemy of US power in Asia that China had been in the 1960s. Zhou's comments had impressed the congressman — and this was exactly why he had shared the information with the press. Ford's action suggested that politicians outside of the executive branch might be less inclined than Kissinger and Nixon to gratefully receive Chinese assurances without revealing them to their domestic constituencies. Similarly, Mansfield's poorly chosen words had led Zhou and Kissinger to comment that official exchanges might not be suitable for substantive political talks. "Mansfield looks very earnest but perhaps he is not very mature politically", Zhou had commented. Kissinger agreed: "Yes … and we don't want him involved in political negotiations … he has no standing with us on political problems".[33]

Perennially disinclined to have anyone other than himself talk shop with the Chinese, Kissinger thus worked to ensure that official exchanges, while important to the public presentation of rapprochement, should not be an arena for political negotiation. This approach was further reflected in Kissinger's preparation for Magnuson's visit in July 1973. Magnuson had a keen interest in China, not least because his home state was at the forefront of developing American trade with the country, being home to Boeing and many of the farmers that had begun to sell wheat to the Chinese. Magnuson's delegation included four senators and as many congressmen but Kissinger ensured that none of them were briefed on the current state of high-level negotiations before arriving in China. The National Security Advisor even moved to prevent US Liaison Office (USLO) chief Bruce passing information to Kissinger's own NSC staffer, Solomon, while he was accompanying the delegation,

[33] Ibid.

wary that the information may then find its way to the rest of the group. Kissinger clearly wished to prevent any possibility that Magnuson and his colleagues would weigh in on sensitive discussions with the Chinese leadership.[34] Kissinger and Bruce, mindful of the experience of the Ford delegation, had also put pressure on Magnuson and his colleagues not to reveal the contents of their discussions with the Chinese to the press.[35]

Kissinger's attempts to prevent the possibility of controversy during the visit proved woefully inadequate. Jenkins had been on Kissinger's first, secret visit to China and was now one of the senior-most American officials serving at USLO. He reported to Kissinger that Magnuson had, throughout the trip, shown "unbelievable insensitivity", and described an "avalanche of gaucheries and worse" from the senator before summarising that Magnuson "proved to be impressively accomplished at downright inventive ineptitude".[36] Perhaps Magnuson's most ignorant moment had been when he has asked the Chinese vice foreign minister Yang Wenjin how Chiang Kai-shek had fled to Taiwan during the Chinese civil war. "Had it been by boat?" "No", responded Yang, "it was by American airplanes".[37] Meanwhile, Magnuson's wife told Mao's niece, vice foreign minister Wang Hairong, that the best ambassadors the US could send to China would be washing machines and electric irons "to ease the burden of your people".[38]

Magnuson's constant improprieties were in large part a result of the senator's frustration at the limited political importance afforded to his delegation. As might have been expected from Zhou's reflections on the previous two congressional delegations, the Chinese were careful to limit the official, political recognition of the group. Bruce reported that Magnuson "was disgruntled by not being received on arrival by more high-ranking officials, by being [interviewed] at the airport by only one journalist, by the party being lodged in the Peking Hotel instead of a government guest house, but above all, which became a recurrent theme, not having an appointment with the Prime Minister". The

[34] Kissinger to Bruce, 3 July 1973, "China Exchange [*sic*] – June 14-July 9, 1973", Box 95, HAKCFFE, RNL.
[35] Bruce to Kissinger, 6 July 1973, "China Exchanges, June 14-July 9, 1973", DFWL, RG59, NACP.
[36] Jenkins and Holdridge to Kissinger, 20 July 1973, and Jenkins to Kissinger, undated, "China Exchanges, July 10-October 31, 1973", Ibid.
[37] Bruce to Kissinger, 8 July 1973, "China Exchanges, June 14-July 9, 1973", Ibid.
[38] Solomon to Kissinger, 18 July 1973, "China Exchanges, July 10-October 31, 1973", Ibid.

senator had complained that his time was "wasted in idle sight-seeing instead of discussions in matters of substance" and that this suggested that Chinese officials did not recognise the importance of Congress.[39]

Magnuson berated Qiao Guanhua so thoroughly about not being granted a meeting with Zhou — telling him that his trip would be "useless" if he did not see the premier — that eventually the Chinese relented and granted the senator an audience. Magnuson wasted no time showing the premier that this had been a mistake: in the most damaging moment of the trip, Magnuson patronisingly told Zhou he should "be patient" over the US bombing of Cambodia while Congress worked to tie the hands of the White House. Zhou pointed out that it was hard for the Chinese to tell Sihanouk to remain serene while his country was under attack but tried to move the conversation past the sensitive subject. Magnuson, however, repeatedly interrupted the premier and irritated him further by asking when he planned to make a state visit to the US. The usually implacable Zhou was "visibly angered" and snapped that he could not do so while the Chiang Kai-shek clique maintained an embassy there.[40]

The contradictions at the heart of the developing official exchange programme were drawn out in the discussion between Magnuson and Zhou. The Chinese premier complained that Magnuson had travelled to see China, not negotiate over Cambodia.[41] But of course to Magnuson the exact opposite was true. He had entered the Senate in 1944 and, early in his term, had risked the fire of McCarthyism to advocate engagement with the newly established PRC. He had not come to China expecting a jolly. Magnuson's comments to Zhou were patronising in tone but meant in good faith: given Beijing's vocal opposition to US involvement in Southeast Asia, Magnuson expected praise for Congress's (ultimately successful) efforts to force Nixon's extrication from the conflict. Herein, then, lied the tension. Both Chinese and American leaders wanted senior American politicians of the stature of Mansfield, Ford and Magnuson to visit the PRC to build political support for Nixon's bold but controversial re-opening of contacts with Beijing. And yet neither Kissinger nor Zhou were prepared

[39] Bruce to Kissinger, 8 July 1973, "China Exchanges, June 14-July 9, 1973", Ibid.
[40] Solomon to Kissinger, 18 July 1973, "China Exchanges, July 10-October 31, 1973", Ibid.
[41] Bruce to Kissinger, 6 July 1973, "China Exchanges, June 14-July 9, 1973", Ibid.

to grant these prominent figures the negotiating power they would expect given their stature. The Chinese had tried to involve the Magnuson delegation in talks with the trade, public health and tourism ministries but the group had shown themselves uninterested in what they saw as minor issues. Kissinger, Zhou and Mao wanted to broaden the number of American politicians participating in rapprochement but these participants were not content to be kept on the side-lines: they demanded a meaningful role in the high politics of Sino-American relations.[42]

We lack the Chinese documentation to thoroughly assess Beijing's reaction to the visit but we do know that just two days after Magnuson's delegation departed China, Kissinger received a message from Zhou that condemned the US bombing of Cambodia in such incendiary language that it forced the US to postpone Kissinger's forthcoming visit to China. No future date was provided and ultimately the National Security Advisor would not travel to Beijing for another five months. As Kissinger's trips were typically twice-yearly, the July visit had effectively been cancelled.[43] Solomon, Jenkins and Holdridge certainly thought it was no accident that the cancellation had occurred so soon after the Magnuson visit. Kissinger told his advisors that this was a "stupid point" and that Zhou's decision must reflect something more fundamental.[44] As ever, the National Security Advisor believed that Zhou and Mao were motivated only by changes in the geostrategic situation and would be unmoved by the flotsam of day-to-day Sino-American interactions, particularly those outside of the high-level dialogue. Undoubtedly, the note was more than simply a reaction to Magnuson's behaviour: as will be discussed below, Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev's visit to Washington, the seeming renewal of official US ties with Taiwan and domestic criticism of Zhou's foreign policy leadership all provided further context.[45] Nonetheless, the timing of the premier's letter and its focus on the Cambodian issue — an issue previously skirted by the Chinese in their dialogue with Kissinger

[42] Solomon to Kissinger, 18 July 1973, "China Exchanges, July 10-October 31, 1973", Ibid.
[43] The visit is not mentioned in Zhou Enlai's "chronicle" (年谱, or *nianpu*). The chronicle is not comprehensive, but other comparable visits are mentioned in the text. Zhou, *Nianpu*, III.
[44] Memcon: Kissinger, Scowcroft, Lord, Solomon et al., 19 July 1973, "China Exchanges, July 10-October 31, 1973", DFWL, RG59, NACP.
[45] Zhou, *Nianpu*, III, 601, 25 June 1973 entry; Frederick Teiwes and Warren Sun, *The End of the Maoist Era: Chinese Politics During the Twilight of the Cultural Revolution, 1972-1976* (White Plains, NY, 2007), 87–92.

— strongly suggested that Magnuson's behaviour had at least been the straw that broke the camel's back.

Zhou's response to the Magnuson delegation was revealing of both the tensions and the stakes involved in official exchanges. Kissinger had entreated the premier not to let unpredictable congressmen impact on the diplomatic relationship and the White House had done all it could to isolate the delegation from high-level contacts, with not a little help from the Chinese. This had backfired. Magnuson refused to be satisfied with glad-handing and was enraged at being kept at arm's-length. Kissinger and Zhou wanted to have their cake and eat it, to bring powerful political figures to Beijing but then treat them as private citizens. But even when both sets of leaders sought to limit the political importance of exchanges, those involved in those contacts could find a way to make their presence felt — for better or worse.

IV: THE END OF THE PARTY:

RAPPROCHEMENT'S LOSS OF STEAM

In September 1973, the Philadelphia Orchestra travelled to China in what was the largest and most successful exchange delegation to the country since contact had been resumed. The visit capped 10 remarkable months in unofficial exchange diplomacy, with the equally prominent Shenyang acrobatics tour and the NCUSCR's first staff delegation to China being followed by the proposal and implementation of a full programme of contacts that culminated in a rich musical finale. By that time, the NCUSCR had co-hosted delegations of gymnasts and journalists and was playing a crucial mainstay role in Sino-American cultural contacts: while specialised US organisations such as the American Society of Newspaper Editors — the co-hosts of the Chinese journalists — were suited to hosting or sending a delegation in their field, only the NCUSCR provided consistent institutional expertise and support to a broad range of cultural and athletic exchanges in this period.

In retrospect, however, the orchestra's tour of China can also be seen as the bookend of this initial honeymoon in exchange contacts. By the final months of 1973, Chinese displeasure with the US government and its approach to both Sino-American high-level relations and the Soviet Union had begun to impact upon exchanges. This section shows that Washington identified the connection between slow progress in high-level relations and fading momentum in exchange contacts. This not only prompted American officials to show renewed vigour in inserting themselves into exchange negotiations but also led to the first deployment of a strategy by which the US government would seek renewed expansion of exchanges as the foundation for improving the overall Sino-American relationship. As both this and the following chapter will argue, this approach would, through 1974 and 1975, become a critical plank in US China policy.

The Philadelphia Orchestra's China visit

It would have been hard to foresee a downturn in Sino-American contacts during the thrill of the Philadelphia orchestra's visit to China. The 130-strong party was in the country from 12 to 23 September, giving six concerts in Shanghai and Beijing under the direction of the noted Hungarian-American director Eugene Ormandy.[46] The new USLO chief Bruce concluded that the "Entire Peking visit was [a] resounding success" and Kissinger called the trip "triumphal". Many of the Americans in the orchestra, include Ormandy himself, had called the visit the "highlight of their career", while the Chinese seemed "equally pleased".[47]

One particular highlight of the performances had been the collaboration between the American orchestra and the Chinese pianist Yin Chengzong. Yin performed his Yellow River Concerto with the orchestra during three of the performances. The NCUSCR's Murray reported that "everyone" had been "immensely impressed" by Yin, a "world class pianist". *New York Times* critic

[46] NCUSCR Annual Report, 1972-73, NCOC.
[47] Bruce to Kissinger, 20 September 1973, "China trade/exchanges – February 2, 1972-4 July, 1973", Box 93, HAKCFFE, RNL; Kissinger to Ormandy, 26 October 1973, Folder 126, Box 16, Series 3, RG4, NCUSCR records, RAC.

Harold Schonberg — the first music critic to win a Pulitzer and a specialist on pianists — described Yin as the finest new talent he had seen in five years. So impressed were the Americans that USLO and some of the Philadelphia Philharmonic wanted to make plans, right there and then, for Yin to tour the US.[48] Prospects for that and other visits seemed bright, and the orchestra's visit to China proved that, with the NCUSCR's assistance, the US could stage high-profile exchanges as efficaciously in the PRC as they did back at home.[49]

Once the dust had settled following the excitement of the visit, however, the future looked less bright. After Zhou's acerbic letter had forced Kissinger to cancel his planned July visit, there had been some indication that tensions at the high-level, as well as in Chinese domestic politics, were impacting on people-to-people contacts. In 1972 and 1973, a debate emerged between the STAPRC's Zhou Peiyuan and the radicals Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan on whether China should again reorient its scientific research towards theoretical enquiry and away from the applied science of the Cultural Revolution. Zhou Peiyuan was backed by Zhou Enlai and enjoyed significant prestige: an internationally renowned theoretical physicist before the 1949 revolution, Zhou had earned his master's and doctoral degrees in the US in the 1920s and had conducted research at Princeton under Albert Einstein in the 1930s. He had been appointed to a succession of important posts after the establishment of the People's Republic, including head of China's most prestigious academic institution, Peking University. Washington noted that this debate was having an impact on the exchange programme: visits by American scientists in autumn 1972 had been criticised by the radicals but in contrast Mao's meeting with visiting Chinese-American physicist Yang Zhenning in July 1973 indicated that the chairman might favour the Zhou-Zhou line.[50]

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[48] Murray to The Record, 28 September 1973, "23rd meeting – Board of Directors – October 29, 1973", Box 131, ADBP.

[49] The NCUSCR was not formally a sponsor of the tour but provided significant advice to the Orchestra's own staff, both before and during the visit. Crucially, the group had also acted as liaison between the Orchestra and the PRC Mission to the UN. Murray to The Record, 28 September 1973, Folder 126, Box 16, Series 3, RG4, NCUSCR records, RAC.

[50] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 45; Solomon to Kissinger, 24 July 1973, "China Exchanges, June 14-July 9, 1973", DFWL, RG59, NACP; Teiwes and Sun, *Maoist Era*, 58–59.

Beyond tea leaf reading, what was indubitable was that by September there were no visible public exchanges in either direction planned to take place until at least late 1974, if not 1975. The Chinese had only reconsidered an initial decision to cancel two of the three scholarly visits planned for the autumn of 1973 when pressed and were still refusing to agree to dates for many of the exchanges suggested during Kissinger's February 1973 visit. While further scholarly delegations were expected to continue into 1974, Lord warned Kissinger that only the high-profile, nationwide exchanges overseen by the NCUSCR would provide public proof of continuing forward momentum in Sino-American relations.[51] The government consistently attached greater political importance to the public exchanges undertaken by the NCUSCR: scholarly exchanges typically involved a dozen or so participants who might, in visiting a number of sites, interact with a few hundred Americans; a successful cultural exchange such as the Shenyang acrobatic tour would be directly experienced by tens, even hundreds, of thousands of Americans.

Putting exchanges on the table during Kissinger's November 1973 visit

The uncertain prospects for exchanges came at a bad time for the government. In a separate memorandum that looked forward to Kissinger's delayed visit to China — now planned for November — Lord posited that the visit came at a "watershed" moment in Sino-American relations. "We are now at an ambiguous and fragile stage where if we do not go forward, we may go backwards." Lord argued that "the overall political momentum was jeopardized" by a combination of uncertainty over the prospects for the exchange programme and fiery rhetoric from the Chinese leadership, which, having already delayed Kissinger's visit, was now giving an embattled White House a further public relations headache.[52] These were manifestations of growing Chinese scepticism about the rapprochement. After the high-water mark of the establishment of liaison offices in May 1973,

[51] Lord to Kissinger, 26 September 1973, "China Exchanges, July 10-October 31, 1973", DFWL, RG59, NACP.
[52] Lord to Kissinger, 11 October 1973, "Kissinger Trip to Peking – Nov 1973 Papers", Box 91, HAKCFFE, RNL.

Beijing had become sceptical of the ability and willingness of the US to act as a reliable strategic partner. Brezhnev's visit to Washington that same month had resulted in the Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War (APNW), a pact that seemed to provide the Soviets with a freer hand to clash with China without risking American involvement. Beijing began to fear that Nixon and Kissinger had got what they needed from the Chinese and might now fail to come through on promises to finalise the process of normalisation. Meanwhile, clouds gathered over the White House as the Watergate scandal cost Nixon his attorney general in October and forced the president to protest "I'm not a crook" in November. Even if Kissinger was willing, the Chinese perhaps doubted whether the now-Secretary of State would be able to make the hard decisions necessary to move the relationship forward.[53]

The slowdown in the high-level relationship was a cause of problems in exchanges; simultaneously, the deteriorating diplomatic relationship gave the condition of people-to-people relations greater significance to the overall relationship. The next section of this chapter will detail how the Chinese would use exchanges to make clear their dissatisfaction with the deadlock in political negotiations; the stuttering momentum in 1973 was an earlier indication of their suspicions even before Kissinger's November visit. If Beijing was trying to tighten the screw on their American counterparts by limiting exchanges, Washington was seeking to reverse this logic: the US government hoped that judicious intervention in exchange negotiations might push the Chinese to agree to book further high-profile exchanges and that this agreement would in turn offset some of the difficulties in the high-level relationship.[54]

Thus, government-to-government negotiation of exchanges was made the second-most objective of Kissinger's November trip, behind only discussions of possible next steps towards normalisation. In addition to pushing for "visible evidence of progress … in the exchange programs" that would "sustain public interest in the relationship", the government expected to press for

[53] Gao, *Zhou*, 238; Yang and Xia, 'Vacillating', 410–412.
[54] Solomon to Kissinger, 28 September 1973, "China Exchanges, July 10-October 31, 1973", DFWL, RG59, NACP.

"extended-time substantial scientific contacts". Never missing a chance to extend greater state control over such contacts, Kissinger's guidance stated that, if Beijing was pliant, deeper exchanges could be "on the basis of formal, government-to-government agreements".[55]

The attention paid to exchanges during the visit brought a measure of success. The trip saw agreement in principle of 20 further exchanges for 1974. Washington's particular push for high-profile public exchanges brought Chinese agreement to finally consent to receive a group of American state governors and to send a group of Chinese mayors to the US, as well as to tentatively schedule a fourth congressional delegation for the summer of 1974. It was by no means a total victory. The Chinese had demurred on setting up longer term scientific cooperation and the planned programme was still in an embryonic stage: while topics had been sketched out, dates had not yet been set — in the event, it would take some time before Beijing proffered such information.[56]

The US government knew that, by again negotiating the exchange package directly with the Chinese, it was undermining the hard bargaining performed by the CSCPRC and NCUSCR to guarantee their position in negotiating the exchange programme. Sensitive to the concerns of the two groups, Washington had been careful to solicit their input to those exchanges that were proposed and to clearly support these suggestions rather than passively accepting Chinese proposals: the higher profile visits proposed by the US side were based on ideas put forward by the NCUSCR.[57] More influential in limiting the resistance from the two groups were their own concerns about the draining momentum in the programme. In this context, the government's intervention was quietly but gratefully received: as prospects dwindled, the NCUSCR and CSCPRC now considered it better to have a full package of exchanges negotiated through the government than to be without those contacts. The optimism and confidence of a year earlier had encouraged the two groups to push back against creeping government involvement in exchange diplomacy at a time when the roles of the two

[55] 'Scope analysis: Sustaining the momentum of US-PRC normalization', 1 November 1973, NLC-26-16-2-7-7, JCL.
[56] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 62; Murray to NCUSCR Exchanges Committee, 2 January 1973 [*sic*, likely typographical error, should read 1974], "CSCPRC – Subcommittee on Exchanges with China, 1972-1974", Box 131, ADBP.
[57] Ibid.

groups were being defined; the downturn in relations beginning in 1973 altered the dynamic between the government and these private organisations. As the following section will show, by 1974 both groups had bigger problems than the principle of who would propose and agree specific exchanges.

In a number of ways, the US government's reaction to the outcome of the November 1973 visit was overly optimistic, perhaps to the point of delusion. As will be discussed below, Kissinger mistakenly believed that Zhou and perhaps even Mao had shown flexibility on key diplomatic negotiating points. The exchange agreements proved a false dawn, too: many of the delegations agreed to during the visit — especially the most desired high-profile trips — would be delayed long into or even beyond 1974. Nonetheless, a dynamic had emerged. For the first but not last time, the government had identified flagging exchanges as a matter of concern. It had done so particularly in the context of a concurrent — indeed, connected — slowdown in high-level relations, which had made any decline in exchange activity all the more worrying. Thus, the government had entreated their Chinese counterparts to agree to a move lively programme of contacts — which the government hoped would form the basis for agreements in other areas of the relationship, too. Chinese responsiveness to this tactic in the wake of the November visit helped make this tactic a mainstay of the Nixon and then Ford approaches to both transnational and high-level facets of the Sino-American relationship.

V: A FALSE DAWN: THE EXISTENTIAL THREAT TO THE NCUSCR IN THE AFTERMATH OF KISSINGER'S NOVEMBER 1973 VISIT

The course, outcomes and legacy of Kissinger's November 1973 trip have been the matter of substantial discussion in the existing historiography, as well as a matter of uncertainty among historical actors. This uncertainty has primarily arisen as a result of the stark contrast between Kissinger's initial assessment of the visit and its subsequent consequences. Kissinger immediately hailed the visit as "a positive success on all planes" and for nearly two years he and his colleagues would use the discussions

conducted during the trip as the basis for seeking deeper Sino-American ties and a normalisation deal before the 1976 US election.[58] In spite of this optimism, no substantial progress followed the meeting; instead, almost all aspects of the official and people-to-people relationship would suffer serious decline in 1974 and into the Ford presidency that began on 9 August of that year. Was this downturn in spite of the visit? Or because of it? Were Sino-American setbacks a result of larger contextual factors — in the domestic politics of both countries, or the Cold War geostrategic balance of power — or a result of more immediate causes in the relationship between the two countries?

This section will argue that evidence from the exchange programme suggests that we should reconsider the possibility that this downturn was not an inevitable by-product of a larger context— geostrategic or in domestic politics — but instead the result of avoidable disagreements in bilateral negotiations, in particular over the status of Taiwan. While not denying the accompanying importance of a broader Cold War and domestic context, this section will posit that the deep conflict that emerged in exchanges in 1974 is powerful and unambiguous evidence that American actions and policy towards Taiwan were the chief point of division between the two sides in that year.[59] This section further shows that the crisis at the NCUSCR caused by the marked decline in exchange activity encouraged the group to call on the US government to more forcefully involve itself in negotiations with the Chinese over exchanges. This confirmed the already emerging trend detailed in the previous section and reversing the group's previous reluctance to encourage direct government-to-government exchange negotiations.

Missteps and misperceptions during Kissinger's November 1973 visit

Three factors had emerged in 1973 that contributed to tension in the relationship during and after the Kissinger visit. As previously mentioned, Chinese domestic politics were disrupting Sino-American

[58] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 62.
[59] For a detailed analysis from the Chinese perspective, see Teiwes and Sun, *Maoist Era*, especially 125-134. Among those that have closely examined the geopolitical causes of this downturn are, Yang and Xia, 'Vacillating', 412–4 and Goh, *Constructing*, 236–251.

relations, in particular the exchange programme. Second, continuing Soviet-American détente clearly concerned Beijing. Finally, Beijing was becoming increasingly frustrated at the continuing relationship between the US government and Taiwan.

Beijing had been indicating its frustration even before Kissinger's November visit. On 24 September, Zhou had met the esteemed *New York Times* foreign affairs columnist C L Sulzberger. Zhou had told Sulzberger that, while it was claimed that any deal to establish diplomatic relations necessitated action on both sides, in fact the only remaining sticking point was the US government's relationship with Taiwan. This was significant not because of the terms employed by Zhou in stating that Taiwan was an internal matter for the Chinese — the premier merely stated, in no uncertain language, the long-held Chinese position — but because Beijing was re-emphasising that Washington's relationship with Taipei was the critical barrier to progress on normalisation.[60]

In spite of this, Kissinger believed that the visit had been a success in resolving Sino-American tensions over triangular diplomacy and over Taiwan. The Secretary of State saw his visit as a further mutual affirmation of the compatible world views of the two sides: to Nixon he listed this as the first positive outcome of the visit.[61] Kissinger also believed that Zhou was genuinely considering a suggestion of greater Sino-American security cooperation — the establishment of a hotline between their capitals and Chinese access to American satellite intelligence — offered as tacit compensation for the APNW agreement with the Soviets.[62] The Secretary of State attached great importance to the discussion of Taiwan in both the agreed communiqué and his conversations with Zhou. He told Nixon, "the most significant development of the visit … is the breakthrough proposed by Chou on Taiwan that requires only that the 'principle' of one China be respected as we normalize relations". Kissinger spent much time turning over in his mind Mao's allusions to Moscow re-establishing diplomatic relations with the US in the 1930s even though a number of Baltic states within the Soviet

[60] For the Chinese account, see Zhou, *Nianpu*, iii, 629-30, 24 September 1973 entry. For Sulzberger's write-up of the conversation, see 'Love and logic in China', *New York Times*, 7 October 1973.
[61] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 62.
[62] Teiwes and Sun, *Maoist Era*, 129–31.

Union continued to have ambassadors in Washington. Was the chairman suggesting a possible parallel situation in Sino-American diplomacy?[63]

There has been some historiographical debate as to whether this perceived flexibility in Mao and Zhou's negotiating line on Taiwan ever, in fact, existed. Harding sees in American accounts of Zhou's statements the same subtle difference in presentation of the Taiwan issue that Kissinger did and Ross also concludes that the trip was a success and might have anticipated a breakthrough in normalisation talks.[64] Frederick Teiwes and Warren Sun have meticulously reconstructed internal discussions in Beijing over normalisation negotiations and believe that Mao would never have meant to imply any wavering from the so-called "Japanese formula": American withdrawal of military personnel and diplomatic recognition from Taipei, as well as Washington's abrogation of its Mutual Defense Treaty with the Kuomintang regime.[65] Gao Wenqian has also argued that Zhou would not have deviated from this policy without the chairman's express consent given Mao's personal commitment to it, citing as evidence the premier's failed attempt to consult with the chairman late in the night after his discussions with Kissinger.[66]

A concurrent reading of the American and Chinese sources available suggest that Kissinger misread the talks in relation to both Taiwan and the strategic situation. While the Secretary of State believed that his talks with Mao and Zhou had shown that "We share essentially the same views about the Soviet strategy", the Chinese record is less flattering. Stating explicitly that Mao was "unhappy" with Kissinger's comments, that record also reveals that, a few months later, Mao recalled that, in three hours with Kissinger, he had only one thing to say to him: "watch out, the polar bear is after the US!"[67] Similarly, the Chinese record is clear that the only wavering on Taiwan's status in

[63] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 62. In fact, the Soviet Union had already established diplomatic ties with these Baltic States, which further complicates establishing the meaning of Mao's allusion. Kissinger argues in his memoirs that Mao got his facts wrong but did intend to suggest a possible alternative solution to the Taiwan question. Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 691–2.
[64] Harding, *Fragile Relationship*, 51; Ross, *Negotiating Cooperation*, 74.
[65] Teiwes and Sun, *Maoist Era*, 125–8.
[66] Gao, *Zhou*, 241.
[67] ZGZYWXYJS, *Mao Zedong zhuan*, ed. by Pang Xianzhi and Jin Chongji (Beijing, 2011), II, 1670; *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 62.

normalisation talks came from Kissinger, not Zhou or Mao. That record presents Mao's statements as unambiguous and any playing down of Taiwan's importance primarily as a means to end Kissinger's speculation of applying anything other than the Japanese formula as the basis for normalisation. It also shows that Kissinger's vagueness concerned Mao.[68] Kissinger's optimism, then, seems to have been misplaced from the beginning and his attitude towards both the Soviets and to Taiwan seems to have alarmed his Chinese interlocutor.

The consequences of the 1973 visit for Sino-American exchanges

Beyond the question of the causes of Kissinger's positive assessment of the visit is that of its consequences. Soon after his return, Kissinger and his staff began to reorient their negotiating strategy based on the belief that Zhou and the agreed communiqué offered greater room for manoeuvre on Taiwan. Taking their lead from their boss, in January 1974 Kissinger's advisors sent him a memorandum that sketched out plans for devising a normalisation deal that would allow Beijing to "plausibly maintain that we are adhering to the principle of one China" but would in fact involve a continuing official or quasi-official relationship with Taiwan. Such a possibility was particularly attractive at a time when the fallout from Watergate made unpalatable any deal that appeared to abandon a longstanding American ally. Washington made a watered-down version of US withdrawal from Taiwan the basis of the negotiating strategy for Kissinger's next visit to China.[69] Ultimately, that trip would not take place until November 1974 but this interregnum did not lead to an abandonment of this approach. Indeed, both Kissinger and his staff maintained confidence that this flexibility existed until well into 1975, as discussed in chapter 4.[70]

[68] ZGZYWXYJS, *Mao Zedong zhuan*, II, 1669. See also Mao, *Nianpu*, VI, 503–4, 12 November 1973 entry.
[69] Hummel and Lord to Kissinger, 28 January 1974, "China Exchanges, November 1, 1973-March 31, 1974", Box 96, HAKCFFE, RNL.
[70] Lord and Solomon, 'People's Republic of China', 15 August 1974, "China Exchanges, August 9-December 31, 1974", DFWL, RG59, NACP.

Whether by design or neglect, Washington's search for a formula that would allow a robust relationship with Taipei to continue after normalisation was accompanied by an immediate expansion in that relationship. On February 15, the White House announced their surprise decision to appoint the experienced diplomat and former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Leonard Unger as ambassador to the Republic of China. Unger's appointment came on the back of the opening of two new ROC consulates in the US in late 1973. Indeed, Zhou had protested both that appointment and US assistance to the ROC's construction of a F5E fighter plane assembly plant during Kissinger's November trip.[71] In the months to come, the Chinese used multiple channels to express that they were "disturbed" by these developments and were again leaning towards the need for violent reunification with the recalcitrant Chinese province.[72]

Further evidence for the importance that Beijing continued to attach to the issue of Taiwan was provided in 1974 by the exchange programme, and in particular China's treatment of the NCUSCR. By March of that year, that group was in crisis. The Chinese had not agreed to host any further delegations under NCUSCR-auspices since the Philadelphia orchestra's visit in September 1973 and had only consented to send a single group of its own to be hosted by the NCUSCR, a troupe of *wushu* performers that combined the previously agreed martial arts and dance troupes.[73] The dwindling level of exchange activity had prompted Eckstein to write a stark letter to the senior-most NCUSCR figures. Eckstein complained of an "untenable" situation: the group had grown to have an annual budget of nearly half a million dollars but increasingly "has very little *raison d'être*". Eckstein went as far as to recommend that the NCUSCR "ask in effect the Asia Society to take over the National Committee and its operations".[74] Not everyone at the organisation favoured such drastic action — certainly not yet — but, in July 1974, Murray admitted to Yost that "we all know [that] the National Committee's continuing viability is seriously in question". The NCUSCR had been made by

[71] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 56.
[72] Lord and Hummel to Kissinger, 12 April 1974, and INR, 'Peking Changes Taiwan Line', 2 April 1974, "China Exchanges, April 1-August 8, 1974", Box 96, HAKCFFE, RNL.
[73] *NFTNC*, Vol. 4, No. 4, October 1974.
[74] Eckstein to Blumental, Barnett, Gilmore, Oksenberg, Pye and Scalapino, 5 March 1974, "General Correspondence, 1974", Box 131, ADBP.

the need for a non-governmental organisation to host and organise cultural exchanges. Now, with little such exchange activity to speak of, the group was quickly losing public credibility and heading towards financially insolvency. It could not stagger on long without the chance to send Americans to China.[75]

The cause of the deadlock was soon made clear to the NCUSCR. Shortly after receiving his copy of Eckstein's letter, Doak Barnett met with Ji Chaozhu, a counsellor at PRCLO. Ji complained about a recent NCUSCR newsletter that had advertised a Taiwanese opera delegation that was travelling to the US. He charged that the NCUSCR was promoting exchanges with not one China, but two. Ji told Barnett, "I do want to emphasize that some things affect exchanges adversely … for many years our positions were basically different on the question of Taiwan … But this changed with the Shanghai Communiqué. We agreed then to operate … on the principle that Taiwan is a part of China. We insist on maintaining the principle".[76]

The Chinese underscored their displeasure with the NCUSCR by contrasting it with the CSCPRC. Unlike the NCUSCR, the CSCPRC had no shortage of work. Since 1973, the organisation had sent seven delegations to China and received another nine.[77] The Chinese made clear why they were favouring the CSCPRC: Ji's PRCLO colleague, Zhang Zhixiang, told a CSCPRC staffer, "we very much appreciate the *name* of your Committee".[78] Referring to the "direct" reference to the mainland regime in the CSCPRC's name, Zhang continued that it was "unlike other organizations who have a somewhat hazy, vague and misguided policy on the so-called two China question. You know we cannot deal with such organizations".[79]

Chinese displeasure with the NCUSCR's stance towards Taiwan came as a surprise to the group: since its inception, the organisation had adopted a studied silence on the One China question. Long before Nixon had secretly contacted the Chinese, the NCUSCR had publicly advocated

[75] Murray to Yost, 26 July 1974, "Subcommittee on Exchanges with China, 1972-1974", Box 131, ADBP.
[76] Memcon: Barnett and Ji, 14 March 1974, "PRC Liaison Office, 1971-77", Box 107, ADBP.
[77] Funding proposal to Charles F Kettering Foundation, October 1974, "1974 - Request for Funds", CSCNAS.
[78] Emphasis added.
[79] Berris to The Record, 27 March 1974, "General Correspondence, 1974", Box 131, ADBP.

beginning engagement with Beijing — but had been careful to simultaneously avoid any advocacy of an end to contacts with Taiwan. In his complaints to Barnett and in a meeting with the State Department, Ji admitted that the Chinese had at first tolerated the NCUSCR avoiding a firm stance on the US relationship with Taiwan but claimed that, as exchanges were now maturing, this had become a barrier to cooperation.[80] However, it seems far more likely that, rather than any change in the status of the NCUSCR, it was instead the concurrent expansion of the US government's links with the island that explained Beijing cold-shouldering the NCUSCR. The Chinese government was punishing the group in order to register its discontent with the organisation's ultimate backers in the State Department and the White House. The Chinese might not have appreciated the NCUSCR's decision to publicise a tour by Taiwanese opera singers, but what they really objected to was the White House's vacillation over severing ties to the ROC government. Two months later, the PRC Foreign Minister Qiao Guanhua and Vice Premier Li Xiannian made explicit what they had implied to the NCUSCR, telling a visiting American delegation that there could be no further development of exchanges or trade until the Taiwan issue had been resolved.[81]

The NCUSCR bore the brunt of Chinese government frustrations in 1974. Beijing's enthusiasm for expanding exchanges had ended when the Chinese realised that the greater exchanges Washington entreated Beijing to agree to in 1973 were intended to offset a lack of diplomatic agreement, rather than accompany further progress. The Chinese claimed their neglect of the NCUSCR was because of the ambiguity in the group's position on Taiwan. While it was true that the group had declined to adopt any single position on the One-China question, the true target for Beijing's ire was the US government. Public, cultural exchanges under NCUSCR auspices were targeted because Beijing knew that US officials cared most about such exchanges: Kissinger's trip had demonstrated that a lack of high-profile exchanges would catch Washington's attention and would hurt the US government in domestic politics. While the CSCPRC's apolitical and comparatively low-

[80] Ibid.
[81] NSC to Kissinger, 23 May 1974, "China Exchanges, April 1-August 8, 1974", DFWL, RG59, NACP.

profile scholarly exchanges were left mostly unmolested (in spite of the more substantial links between NAS and Taiwan), the most high-profile contacts agreed during Kissinger's November 1973 visit were, to the government's frustration, indefinitely shelved.[82]

China's domestic infighting and the exchange programme

In spite of the wealth of evidence that the Chinese were dissatisfied with the outcome of the November visit and were losing patience with US vacillation over Taiwan, Kissinger refused to question his conclusion that the trip had been a success and doggedly continued to believe in the validity of the underlying assumption of the government's approach: that Zhou and Mao had indicated flexibility about the US continuing its presence on the island post-normalisation. Instead, Kissinger and his advisors looked to Chinese domestic politics to explain the deadlock over exchanges and in the relationship more broadly.

There is no denying that aspects of the exchange programme were politically controversial in Mao's China. Such contacts involved granting access to Chinese society to the former arch enemy of the revolution and tested the flexibility of cadres who had long been inculcated with the need to resist America and Americans.[83] Nonetheless, the tension surrounding exchanges was not constant in this period and was connected to tides in China's elite politics. The summer of 1973 had seen a Chinese unified front in welcoming exchanges: Jiang Qing and other radicals had attended a Sino-American basketball match, with Mao's wife doting on the visiting Americans and presenting them with token gifts of jasmine petals.[84] We now know that this was explicitly ordered from above: Mao had demanded that the radicals get in line behind the chairman's policies, including rapprochement.[85] However, in late 1973 and particularly into 1974, the Criticise Lin Biao, Criticise Confucius (*pi Lin pi*

[82] Solomon to Kissinger, 25 January 1974, "China Exchanges, November 1, 1973-March 31, 1974", DFWL, RG59, NACP.
[83] For details on how the rapprochement was portrayed to the Chinese populace, see document A98-2-703, 7 January 1972, Shanghai Municipal Archives, PRC.
[84] USLO (Bruce) to Kissinger, 20 June 1973, "China Exchanges, June 14-July 9, 1973", DFWL, RG59, NACP.
[85] ZGZYWXYJS, *Mao Zedong zhuan*, II, 1655.

Kong) campaign led to significant renewed strife in Beijing's politics, referred to by some as a "second Cultural Revolution".[86] This campaign soon began to impact on cultural contacts with the outside world: by February, France, Germany and Algeria had all been forced to cancel cultural delegations to China after Beijing placed excessive restrictions on their content or simply failed to respond to communications.[87]

Nonetheless, the Chinese domestic context, while not irrelevant to the downturn in exchanges, provided an all too easy explanation to Kissinger and his colleagues for why the November visit had not been followed by a further improvement in relations with Beijing. From January 1974 onwards, China's ideological campaigns were being used by Solomon as explanation for Chinese reluctance to move exchanges forward.[88] In February, the cancellation of a planned visit by the deputy Secretary of State, Kenneth Rush, was also attributed to domestic disruptions.[89] By April, Beijing's internal politics was cited as one key reason for the overall lack of immobility in the relationship. By then, Kissinger's advisors had admitted that, alongside Chinese domestic politics, American policy towards Taiwan was an irritant in relations with the Chinese.[90] Nonetheless, in late May, the same officials continued to present China's domestic turmoil as the primary impediment to progress in the relationship — and continued to mistakenly assert that "our friends" Zhou and Mao were still inclined to show flexibility on Taiwan, even if they were under by pressure from other Chinese actors.[91] Desperately, a dying Zhou used a brief meeting with visiting Senator Henry Jackson in the final month of Nixon's term to again pass on the message that the only point of conflict between the US and the PRC was the issue of Taiwan.[92]

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[86] The term "second Cultural Revolution" is used by Teiwes and Sun, among others. Teiwes and Sun, *Maoist Era*, 111.
[87] USLO (Jenkins) to Kissinger, 5 February 1974, "China – Liaison Offices", Box 99, HAKCFFE, RNL.
[88] USLO to Kissinger, 28 January 1974, "China trade and exchanges – July 5, 1973-February 28, 1974", Box 93, HAKCFFE, RNL.
[89] Kissinger to USLO, 14 February 1974, Ibid.
[90] Lord and Hummel to Kissinger, 12 April 1974, "China Exchanges, April 1-August 8, 1974", DFWL, RG59, NACP.
[91] Hummel, Lord and Solomon to Kissinger, 24 May 1974, "China Exchanges, April 1-August 8, 1974", Box 96, HAKCFFE, RNL.
[92] Zhou, *Nianpu*, III, 672, 5 July 1974 entry.

The point, then, is not that Washington's assessments of the causes of Chinese behaviour were wholly inaccurate. Certainly, Beijing's domestic tumult of late 1973 and early 1974 was a challenge to high-profile exchanges (although the continuation of scientific contacts at this time suggests that the Chinese leadership was perfectly willing to support those exchanges from which it, and not Washington, primarily benefitted). It is worth recognising, however, that the narrative of China's domestic enemies of rapprochement provided a convenient catch-all explanation — perhaps excuse — for the emergence of serious problems in exchanges and the broader relationship that did not necessitate hard thinking about how US government policy was alienating the Chinese. As the next chapter will show, Kissinger avoided facing up to this reality and recognising the depth of Chinese displeasure over continuing ties between the US and Taipei well into Ford's term in office.

An earlier realisation for the government was that, whatever its cause, the alarming downturn in exchanges must be arrested. Kissinger looked to use an April meeting with Qiao and the recently rehabilitated Deng Xiaoping to push the Chinese to allow exchanges to get back on course. Meanwhile, the government began increasing the funds it provided to the beleaguered NCUSCR, supplementing its annual support with a further $50,000 for the *147ushu* troupe visit.[93] Neither pressuring the Chinese nor funding the NCUSCR amounted to more than palliative care, however, and by the final days of the Nixon administration, the NCUSCR was demanding more than financial support from the government. A memorandum that was sent to John Richardson at State, as well as Lord, Hummel and Solomon — the full roster of high-level officials responsible for exchanges — made clear that, among the organisation, "There is a strong feeling that the time has come for the US Government to bring [the NCUSCR's] concerns officially to the attention of the Chinese, and to insist upon several prerequisites for a viable educational and cultural exchange programme under National Committee auspices". There was a certain ring of desperation to the note, including its call for a "bare minimum" of three to four exchanges in each direction under NCUSCR control per year. Murray, the memorandum's author, used the final sentence of the letter to warn the government that, if they were

[93] Lord and Hummel to Kissinger, 12 April 1974, "China Exchanges, April 1-August 8, 1974", DFWL, RG59, NACP.

unable to elicit Chinese responsiveness to the NCUSCR, "we should seriously consider, as a future option, liquidation and the transfer of our educational and exchange function to other organizations and agencies".[94]

At the point of Nixon's resignation from office, then, the Sino-American exchange relationship was imperilled. The NCUSCR's programme of high-profile contacts were the most politically important of exchanges; a programme of quiet scholarly contacts alone would have far less public and political significance. The fundamental cause of Beijing's cold-shouldering of the NCUSCR was Chinese anger at the continuing official US relationship with Taiwan. Chinese officials in Beijing and Washington repeatedly made clear to the NCUSCR and the US government that the downturn in the exchange programme was punishment for the US reverse course in its triangular relationship with Taipei and Beijing. Washington blamed setbacks to both exchanges and high-level relations on concurrent political disruption in Chinese domestic politics. In fact, however, this context was of only limited significance in comparison to actions within the government's control. Thus, exchange diplomacy helps elucidate a longstanding point of confusion in Sino-American relations under Nixon: it was US ties with Taiwan, not the Soviets, that were at the root of the downturn following the November 1973 visit.

CONCLUSION

The importance of the exchange programme in the Sino-American relationship seen in 1971 and 1972 continued during Nixon's second term in office. This was most apparent in the February 1973 agreement to establish liaison offices in Washington and Beijing. The most consequential agreement reached between Nixon's summit visit of 1972 and the normalisation deal of 1978, this achievement was deeply connected to the exchange programme. Having resurfaced in a conversation with the

[94] Eckstein to Richardson, 6 August 1974, and Murray to Yost, 6 August 1974, "CSCPRC – Subcommittee on Exchanges with China, 1972-1974", Box 131, ADBP.

NCUSCR, the rationale for the creation of these *de facto* embassies was facilitating growing people-to-people contacts, most prominently exchanges and trade. The offices were envisaged as collaborations between the government and exchange organisations and, although ultimately their form was more official, their function continued to revolve around the relationship between the Chinese and American people at least as much as their two governments.

Exchanges had an ongoing importance beyond this single development. The spectacular successes of the Shenyang acrobatic tour of the US and the Philadelphia Philharmonic Orchestra's visit to China were public reaffirmations of rapprochement, while the intensification of scientific contacts in this period increased Beijing's stake in a diplomatic relationship that would become of increasing importance to China's scientific and technological development. Even when exchanges went badly they mattered. The horror-show of Magnuson's visit to China was the first (but not the last) Sino-American exchange to implode; the scandal had a serious political consequence in triggering Zhou's decision to all but withdraw their outstanding invitation for Kissinger to return to Beijing. Moreover, when public exchanges dwindled in 1974 their absence was powerfully felt not just by the NCUSCR but by the US government, too.

Nixon's second term saw the US government respond to both challenges and opportunities in exchanges by seeking to expand its involvement in people-to-people contacts. The White House worked to ensure that an initiative from the US private sector for the formation of a Sino-American trade council was encouraged — but only on the condition that the group recognise that the government must, because of the political nature of commercial ties with Beijing, have some oversight of the organisation. Kissinger demanded similar control over the official exchange programme that took US congressional representatives to the PRC: he discouraged Zhou from engaging in political negotiations with visiting senators and congressmen, restricted access to the information that might enable these delegations to pursue such talks and tried to prevent discussions becoming known to the press. The Chinese similarly showed their interest in a more direct governmental role in arranging exchanges when they presented Kissinger with a fully formed programme of exchange contacts for

1973 during his visit in February of that year. Kissinger rapidly welcomed the possibility that, as he had long hoped, the exchange programme could be negotiated in high-level talks and then simply implemented by private organisations.

This expansion of state influence over the exchange programme provoked a forceful reaction from private actors in people-to-people relations. American executives accepted the government's interest in the National Council on US-China Trade but nonetheless worked to develop their own direct relationship with Chinese authorities and to build a wide constituency and power base within the US business community. Both the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC mounted a concerted effort to show Washington and Beijing that they would not consent to a passive role in exchanges: the two groups demanded that they be allowed to negotiate the content of the visits that they were expected to fund and organise and further insisted in these talks that exchanges must serve their public constituencies as well as both governments' political objectives for the programme. Senator Magnuson bucked the restraints placed on him by both the White House and the Chinese and demonstrated that American politicians outside of the executive branch would, whether higher authorities liked it or not, think and speak for themselves when asked to participate in Sino-American diplomacy. These reactions impressed both governments and forced them to adapt how they approached the exchange relationship and those involved in its implementation.

Close examination of the exchange programme helps explicate outstanding historiographical questions about Sino-American relations under Nixon. The downturn in both governmental and people-to-people relations following Kissinger's November 1973 China visit is a case in point. Existing accounts have explained the deteriorating relationship as a result of a Chinese leadership incensed by Soviet-American collusion or distracted by internal political feuding. Such factors provide context to the downturn, but evidence from the exchange programme suggests that the critical factor in faltering ties lay in the conflict over Taiwan. Historians that have accessed only the high-level US diplomatic record have accepted Kissinger's explanation that the trip was a success that suggested the possibility for a normalisation deal that would preserve a quasi-official US-Taiwan relationship. They

therefore conclude that the consequent decline in relations must have been caused by factors outside of Washington's control. In actuality, however, deeper scrutiny of that record and Chinese sources, combined with greater attention to evidence from the exchange relationship, demonstrate that Beijing was clear and consistent in expecting Kissinger to keep to his word and end any official connection between Washington and Taipei. It was US backtracking on that pledge that led the Chinese to escalate their rhetoric but also, more consequentially, to sabotage public exchanges, on the basis that such visible proof of Sino-American amity was inappropriate at a time when closed-door discussions were anything but friendly. In bad times as well as good, then, Beijing sought to use exchange diplomacy to communicate to seemingly deaf-eared Americans. The Chinese could only hope that Ford might be more attuned to the message than Nixon and his deputies had proved.

CHAPTER FOUR

Familiarity breeding contempt?

Quarrels and strife in bilateral exchanges during the first year of the Ford presidency

The Watergate scandal that dragged Nixon from office in August 1974 was the greatest challenge to Sino-American rapprochement since the disgraced American president had first renewed contact with China. Both sides feared that Nixon's ouster could have profound consequences for their fragile reconciliation, which was still strongly reliant on personal relationships and secret promises. If Watergate proved that the US government was one of laws and not of men, could the personal diplomacy conducted during Nixon and Kissinger's visits to China survive where Nixon had not?

Gerald Ford, Nixon's successor, had no intention of reneging on the commitments of his predecessor but the legacy of the scandal enfeebled his presidency and curtailed his room for manoeuvre in foreign policy, especially towards China. This might have been less debilitating had it not been for Beijing's increasingly fitful domestic politics. By the time the new American president entered office, Kissinger's favoured interlocutor, Zhou Enlai, had been stripped of all real power. Fellow centrist Deng Xiaoping may have returned from internal exile shortly before Ford's inauguration but he was watching his words and looking over his shoulder — at times literally — such was his fear of falling foul of the radicals that came to be condemned as the Gang of Four.

Global politics had also shifted since Nixon entered office and now posed barriers to progression in Sino-American relations. Most critically, the final death throes and collapse of South Vietnam in the first half of 1975 — in the face of which Ford was embarrassingly powerless to act —

rendered unacceptable abandoning Taiwan, another small Asian anti-communist ally.[1] Moreover, America's lingering détente with Moscow was increasingly attracting Beijing's ire. In November 1974, Ford travelled to Vladivostok, just dozens of miles from Chinese territory, to agree further arms limitations with the Soviets. This incensed the Chinese, who accused the US not only of failing to stand up to Soviet expansionist ambitions but indeed "climbing on Chinese shoulders" to reach agreements that freed Moscow to dedicate itself to a clash with the PRC.

American policymakers were acutely conscious of the potentially severe consequences of allowing rapprochement to disintegrate. Ford and his advisors, whatever they might say to dispel Chinese recriminations, continued to perceive détente with Moscow as dependent on robust relations with Beijing. Even if American enthusiasm for agreements with the Soviets was mellowing, Ford and Kissinger knew they could not afford to have collaboration with the Soviets give way to unfettered competition. Meanwhile, on the home front, souring perceptions of Sino-American relations made it more difficult to justify the political compromises necessary to sustain ties with an ideological foe. The US government thus knew it needed to at least *present* rapprochement as robust, to both domestic and foreign audiences, however strained secret negotiations became.

This chapter argues that, during the first year of Ford's time in office, his administration increasingly looked to the exchange programme as the primary means by which they could seek to overcome these myriad challenges and, if not make meaningful progress towards normalisation, at least protect agreements already achieved and preserve positivity in diplomatic negotiations — and the public presentation of those negotiations. Kissinger's hopes that the Chinese would meet him halfway on a softer normalisation deal that would preserve a US-Taiwan relationship post-normalisation were curtly rebuffed during his November 1974 visit to Beijing and, in the face of this, he was forced to reluctantly accept that it might only be possible to advance what the Secretary of State considered "symbolic" aspects of the relationship, chiefly the programme of exchange visits. In the months that followed, Washington took as one of the foremost objectives of their interactions

[1] 'Ford considering full relations with Peking; faces problem', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 21 May 1975.

with the Chinese the intensification of bilateral contacts and exchange ties. In this way, this chapter posits that this period further evidences the important relationship between high-level Sino-American diplomatic talks and the condition of bilateral ties: enervated high-level contacts led Washington to pay greater attention to people-to-people contacts.

This chapter further argues that, in the year after Nixon's resignation, this dynamic relationship was also at work in another direction: as the importance of active lower-level bilateral ties to high-level diplomatic talks increased, so, too, did the danger that disagreements and conflicts over exchanges would in turn disrupt the overall condition of the Sino-American relationship. It was with great alarm that the White House found its plans for deeper bilateral ties being derailed by a series of rows over exchanges, manufactured by Chinese interlocutors towards their own political ends. Thus, in spite of the greater attention paid to exchanges by the American government, the first year of the Ford period was characterised by an upsurge in conflicts over exchanges. Occurring at a time when exchange diplomacy and other bilateral ties were the most active and visible aspect of Sino-American relations, these quarrels posed a serious threat to an already weakened rapprochement — a fact belatedly recognised by the highest leadership in Beijing, too.

The third contention of this chapter is that disputes over exchanges reflected and necessitated an assertive and interventionist role from both Chinese and American governments in the people-to-people exchange programme. On the one hand, the Chinese government continued to express its dissatisfaction with stalled diplomatic talks through their treatment of exchanges. The cold-shouldering of the NCUSCR in 1973 and early 1974 was followed by a brinkmanship that threatened to sabotage a number of high-profile exchange visits. On the other, the White House refused to be a passive observer to quarrels over exchanges, instead taking an active and committed role in attempting to resolve conflicts between American non-government organisations and their Chinese counterparts in the hope that this would avoid fallout that would spread into the diplomatic relationship. Thus, the separate but related decision by the American and Chinese governments to

further politicise the exchange programme meant that deliberations over visits came to function as an arena for negotiation and conflict between Washington and Beijing beyond static diplomatic talks.

The first section of this chapter begins with the state of play in the exchange programme as Ford entered office. After an acceleration of exchanges after Nixon's 1972 visit, the Chinese had in 1974 put a brake on the highest profile of exchanges — those overseen by the NCUSCR — punishing the group for the White House's seeming retreat from previous promises regarding the US relationship with Taiwan. Concerned by this development, and by Beijing's refusal to offer any compromise in normalisation talks, Kissinger used his November 1974 visit to Beijing to press the Chinese to pay greater attention to the exchange programme. The second section of this chapter shows that, by early 1975, the Chinese were heeding this call and were showing renewed enthusiasm for exchanges with a "campaign of smiles" that restored some momentum and optimism to its relationship with the NCUSCR and to the exchange programme as a whole.

This upturn was challenged, however, by a series of disagreements over cultural exchanges that culminated in the public cancellation of a major exchange visit and a furore that drew attention to the lingering diplomatic disagreements between the two countries. These conflicts are the subject of the third section. The fourth and final section looks at a further source of tension over exchanges: the growing friction between the expectations of American exchange participants and the sensibilities of their Chinese hosts. Lingering limits placed by the Chinese government on scientific and scholarly cooperation frustrated American organisations and individuals involved in exchanges, while the unpredictable, uncontrollable behaviour of American visitors alarmed their hosts and provided unwelcome embarrassment amid already fraught bilateral talks. By the end of Ford's first year in office, the State Department had recognised that exchanges could be a source of acrimony and had begun to take steps to use its influence to mitigate this.

I: "WHERE DO WE STAND?":

RAPPROCHEMENT'S CONDITION UPON FORD'S ENTRY TO OFFICE

Gerald Ford had initially been a sceptic of rapprochement: like many in the Republic party, he had remained suspicious of Red China even after Nixon re-opened contacts with Beijing.[2] It was his participation in only the second congressional exchange delegations to mainland China that changed Ford's mind. The report Ford wrote with his travelling companion, Democrat House Majority Leader Hale Boggs, argued that China no longer posed a threat to America or to the world but was instead "a land of vast human and natural resources". "[P]erhaps the most vivid [impression] of our journey [was] the reality of China's colossal potential … this sense of a giant stirring, a dragon waking … the clean streets, the friendly and hardworking people, the rich agricultural areas and the throbbing industrial cities are testimony to the successes of the New China in welding a nation out of the chaotic post-war period". They concluded, "we hope … that our journey will contribute in a small way to a normalization of US relations with China".[3]

Ford and Boggs had visited China just four months after Nixon, at the height of the honeymoon in Sino-American relations that followed the president's trip. But in the months after Ford had replaced the disgraced Spiro Agnew as vice president in October 1973, rapprochement had frayed. In July 1974, as Nixon was refusing to turn over the Watergate tapes, the National Security Council was preparing a memorandum entitled "Where Do We Stand in Asia?". This broad assessment of American policy towards Asia lamented that momentum towards normalisation had faltered. The men that had pioneered rapprochement had become politically impotent: Nixon had been lampooned; Kissinger's national influence had waned with détente's dwindling popularity; Zhou was terminally ill and, though the US was unsure of this at the time, in political disgrace. William R Smyser, the author of the memorandum and one of the aides aboard the plane that had taken Kissinger

[2] Tyler, *Great Wall*, 185.
[3] Boggs and Ford, *Impressions*, 1-12.

on his first, secret trip to China, concluded, "our initial objective of normalising relations without substantial adverse impact at home or in Asia will be difficult and perhaps impossible to reach".[4]

Upon taking his oath of office, Ford was eager to reassure the Beijing leadership that he and his White House nonetheless remained committed to rapprochement. Within hours of his inauguration, he called in Huang Zhen, head of PRCLO, to reaffirm American commitment to the Shanghai Communiqué.[5] An important aspect of that communiqué had been the pledge by both sides "to facilitate the further development of [people-to-people] contacts and exchange … in such fields as science, technology, culture, sports and journalism". Ford has made clear his own personal support for this aspect of the Sino-American relationship after his 1972 visit to the PRC, reporting to Congress that, "Among the activities which holds [*sic*] the most promise for developing understanding between our two countries is people-to-people contact and exchanges". The congressman had made clear why he believed exchanges were important: "the exchange of people … can be a bridge to better mutual understanding and improved political relations".[6]

Ford's recommendation had initially been enthusiastically embraced. By the end of September 1974, the NCUSCR had expanded significantly. In the 1973-74 fiscal year, the organisation tallied a record income of $470,000 for the previous fiscal year, employed a permanent staff of 13 and boasted an invited membership of 434 influential Americans, up from just 60 when the organisation was first established.[7] One recent example of a high-profile Chinese delegation hosted by the National Committee was a troupe of performers of *157ushu*, a collection of traditional Chinese martial arts. The delegation had boasted 44 performers and had cost a total of $150,000.[8] They had arrived in June 1974 and toured the country from Hawaii to New York, performing to 15 sell-out audiences before a special show for the president and Kissinger in the White House's Rose Garden.[9]

[4] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 85 (editorial note). Also, interview with Smyser, Washington, DC, 12 August 2015.
[5] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 85 (editorial note).
[6] Boggs and Ford, *Impressions*, 8-11.
[7] NCUSCR 1974 Annual Report, NCOC. Membership figures for 1966 at Madsen, *China and the American Dream*, 47.
[8] *NFTNC*, Vol. 4, No. 4, October 1974; Minutes of 25th meeting of NCUSCR board, 16 May 1974, "Spring 1975 Board Meeting" [*sic*], Box 131, ADBP.
[9] *NFTNC*, Vol. 4, No. 4, October 1974.

Since the 1972 visit by the Chinese table tennis team, the NCUSCR had hosted five major delegations from China, sent six to that country, and provided close assistance (short of formal sponsorship) to a further five exchanges.

Meanwhile, the CSCPRC, sent three delegations of Americans and received two Chinese groups in just the first three months of Ford's time in his office. Including these delegations, the CSCPRC had, since 1972, sent a dozen groups to China and received a further 14. In those first three months, Senators William Fulbright, Henry "Scoop" Jackson and former vice president Hubert Humphrey had also all travelled to China on congressional delegations.[10] Trade, too, had rapidly expanded, partly thanks to the work of the NCUSCT. One of the first memoranda Ford received from Kissinger celebrated that Sino-American trade for 1974 would overtake that between the US and the Soviet Union.[11] The final figure for the year totalled $922 million.[12]

These successes notwithstanding, the slowdown in high-level Sino-American talks Smyser had pessimistically identified had also impacted upon the exchange programme. 1974 had been a frustrating year for the NCUSCR, which had failed to convince the Chinese to accept a delegation to travel to China under their auspices since August 1973. The National Committee was suffering as a result of an emerging trend in China's exchange diplomacy: a willingness to politicise exchanges and its relationship with the organisations that oversaw them. Beijing was frustrated by American reluctance to follow up on earlier promises and finalise a normalisation agreement — as many other Western countries had promptly done after resuming contact with Beijing — and the Chinese government was punishing the NCUSCR in order to register its discontent with the organisation's ultimate backers in the State Department and the White House. By Ford's entry to office, the State Department was beginning to conclude that the American government would need to actively use its diplomatic influence to reinvigorate bilateral contacts. That, or find a strategy for resolving the fundamental problem behind dwindling exchanges: the deadlock in normalisation negotiations.

[10] Ibid.
[11] Kissinger to Ford, 15 August 1974, "China Exchanges, 9 August 1974-31 December 1974", DFWL, RG59, NACP.
[12] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 108.

II: FROM KISSINGER'S BITTER VISIT TO A "CAMPAIGN OF SMILES"

As Ford was making his assurances to Huang Zhen, Kissinger concerned himself with searching for just that. In his preparations for his first visit to China after the presidential transition, the Secretary of State picked over what he and his staff believed to have been elliptical but meaningful comments made by Mao and Zhou during his most recent trip to the PRC, in November 1973. Zhou had seemed to be entertaining Kissinger's suggestion of greater Sino-American security cooperation and had also agreed to a communiqué which said that normalisation could occur once the US recognised the "principle" of One China. Meanwhile, Mao had alluded to Moscow re-establishing diplomatic relations with the US in the 1930s even though a number of Baltic states within the Soviet Union continued to have Ambassadors in Washington.[13]

The Secretary continued to muse on these statements in spite of signs from the Chinese that, if there had been any flexibility in 1973, by the following year, there was not. In October 1974, Foreign Minister Qiao specifically told Kissinger that Mao's comments on the Baltic states had no relevance to normalisation negotiations and that, if the US wanted a normalisation deal, it would have to be on the basis of the Japanese formula.[14] Lord, Solomon and Hummel had also collectively argued to their boss that comments by Deng and Qiao had indicated that Beijing was in no position to take a liberal interpretation of the "principle of One China" and instead was expecting unilateral American accommodation on this.[15]

Ignoring this, Kissinger used the first full day of talks during his November visit to ask the Chinese to agree to a normalisation deal "on *substantially* the Japanese model".[16] Searching for some flexibility that might allow him to sell an agreement to the American public and Congress, Kissinger

[13] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 87.
[14] Ibid.; INR, 2 April 1974, 'Peking Changes Taiwan Line', "China Exchanges, 1 April 1974-8 August 1974", Box 96, HAKCFFE, RNL.
[15] Hummel, Lord and Solomon to Kissinger, 25 May 1974, "China Exchanges, April 1-August 8, 1974", DFWL, RG59, NACP.
[16] Emphasis added.

suggested that the Chinese make a statement promising that the PRC would only pursue peaceful reintegration with Taiwan and that, after normalisation, the US be allowed to maintain a liaison office in Taipei like the one it had established in Beijing. Deng was Kissinger's main interlocutor during this trip and was instantly dismissive of the US suggestion: China would not entertain Kissinger's "imaginations", which constituted a "One China and One Taiwan" policy.[17] Deng's blunt response did what Kissinger's aides could not and finally convinced the Secretary of State that he had been labouring under an illusion. With three more days of talks ahead, and with no prospect of getting any closer to a normalisation deal, Kissinger belatedly recognised that the visit must be used as a platform to negotiate aspects of the Sino-American relationship other than normalisation.

The case for doing so had been made within the US government before Kissinger had arrived in Beijing. A month before the Secretary's trip, George Bush had been briefed by Solomon and Deputy National Security Advisor General Brent Scowcroft on what he could hope to achieve once installed in Beijing as the new USLO chief. Solomon told Bush that, at the conclusion of Kissinger's previous November 1973 visit, both sides had agreed to broaden the functions of the liaison offices — but that few subsequent steps had been taken since.[18] Upon his arrival in Beijing on 21 October, Bush had become rapidly convinced that exchanges and trade were the most active and vigorous aspect of the American presence in the Chinese capital, boasting a vitality that had been sapped from normalisation talks.[19]

Bush also concluded that the government could do more to facilitate these contacts. As the NCUSCR's toils suggested, exchanges were not free of problems: USLO had received "clear hints" that the Chinese were delaying an overdue visit by the Chinese trade promoter, CCPIT, to the US as a result of "political considerations". Recognising this, Bush began using his frequent dispatches to Kissinger to argue that, if political problems such as the Taiwan issue could not be easily resolved, the

[17] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 94. Deng also referred to the possibility of Kissinger's proposed compromise as a figment of the American imagination in his discussions with a delegation from the American Society of Newspaper Editors. Deng Xiaoping, *Sixiang Nianbian*, ed. by ZGZYWXYJS (Beijing, 1998), 19-20, 2 June 1975 entry.
[18] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 86.
[19] Bush, *China Diary*, 64-5.

government should be doing more use its influence to cultivate other aspects of the relationship. On the eve of the Secretary of State's arrival in Beijing, Bush made the case that Kissinger should use his visit to push the Chinese to commit to a date for the CCPIT trip, as well as to agree to further exchanges for the remainder of 1975. Counselling that the American government should be "mindful of the symbolic as well as the potential trade value" of such contacts, Bush argued that if Kissinger could convince the Chinese to these exchanges, it would give "tangible evidence of further progress in the US-China relationship".[20]

Rebuffed by Deng in normalisation talks, Kissinger quickly made achieving such tangible evidence the chief objective for the remainder of his time in Beijing. Kissinger had already defensively returned to the topic of exchanges in his first meeting of the trip:

> On the bilateral issues, if I could perhaps say one word … bilateral exchanges and cultural agreements are essentially a symbolic aspect of our foreign policy, of our political relations, and therefore we will deal with them in this context. Frankly I am indifferent as to whether … one [exchange] group more or less goes back and forth between the United States and China. We should use these as a symbol of our overall relationship. So when you want to settle [these issues] … we are prepared. … The advantage of discussing them while I am here is that the complexity of the issues tends to increase by the size of my staff, and on this basis you and I and the Foreign Minister can talk and we can cut through the complexities somewhat more rapidly.[21]

Two days later, after Deng's stinging refusal to consider the Secretary of State's normalisation proposal, Kissinger could no longer afford to be aloof. He made explicit to Deng that he hoped the Chinese would reconsider their previous stance that the expansion of exchanges would have to wait until normalisation, requesting that they consider "changing the pattern" of exchanges, "so that every year is not like the last year" — a period that had seen the virtual cessation of the public exchanges that Kissinger and the White House most valued. Doing so "could be quite helpful" and would avoid "expos[ing] our relationship to unnecessary speculation in the US to see if any special progress ha[d] been made". Deng promised to think over the Secretary's suggestion.[22]

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[20] Bush to Scowcroft, 20 November 1974, "China Exchanges, 9 August 1974-31 December 1974", DFWL, RG59, NACP.
[21] Ibid.
[22] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 98.

In the weeks before the visit, Kissinger had claimed Bush and other colleagues that he was unconcerned by increasing public commentary that Sino-American relations had cooled, whether this speculation came from the American press or the diplomatic community in Beijing.[23] Jeffrey Engel argues that this was reflective of Kissinger's general lack of concern with the public consumption of the relationship: what mattered to the Secretary of State, Engel states, was the content and atmospherics of his personal conversations with Chinese leaders, not the press speculation that followed these secretive exchanges.[24] However, historians such as Mario Del Pero and Dominic Sandbrook have depicted Kissinger in a different light, arguing that, whatever he might say to the contrary, the Secretary's actions exposed his consistent, acute consciousness of the public perception of American foreign policy.[25] Kissinger's behaviour during the November 1974 visit lends weight to Sandbrook and Del Pero's interpretation: although the Secretary of State would clearly have preferred to discuss grand strategy, when that failed he quickly turned to protecting the public presentation of his visit.

American official pressure on the Chinese over their neglect of the exchange programme predated Kissinger's intervention: at the beginning of November, Bush had harangued Zhou Qiuye, the vice president of CPIFA and a key organiser of much of the exchange programme, over China's shunning of the NCUSCR. Bush specifically told Zhou that Beijing's renewed preference for encouraging exchanges only with the more politically radical "friendship groups" "hurt the policy" of building rapprochement through Sino-American people-to-people contacts. Zhou conceded that the PRC would not "exclusively" deal with the friendship groups. "He got the message I am sure", Bush reported to his diary.[26] The ambassador's actions seem to have had some effect: immediately before Kissinger arrived in Beijing, the NCUSCR had received the "decidedly heartening" news that PRCLO had finally ended their silence on NCUSCR-sponsored exchanges and confirmed a package of trips for

[23] Bush, *China Diary*, 65-6, note 40.
[24] Ibid., 89. For Bush's quite different view on this, see Ibid., 36-7, note 74, and page 47.
[25] Mario Del Pero, *The Eccentric Realist: Henry Kissinger and the Shaping of American Foreign Policy* (Ithaca, NY, 2013); Dominic Sandbrook, 'Salesmanship and Substance: The Influence of Domestic Policy and Watergate', in *Nixon in the World: American Foreign Relations, 1969-1977*, ed. by Fredrik Logevall and Andrew Preston (Oxford, 2008), 85-106.
[26] Bush, *China Diary*, 43-44.

the year ahead. While Kissinger was in Beijing, Yost was writing to the Committee's board to let them know that the Chinese had agreed to the NCUSCR overseeing a total of five exchanges, including three American delegations to the PRC. This still fell "considerably short" of a full programme, but was nonetheless the first time the group had been offered a package response to their proposed delegations — previous exchanges had been organised piecemeal — and was the first sign that the Chinese were prepared to start bringing the organisation in out of the cold.[27]

A campaign of smiles

This slightly earlier breakthrough notwithstanding, it was in the weeks that followed Kissinger's trip and his entreating of Deng that exchanges significantly picked up. Soon after Kissinger returned to Washington, the PRC did just as Bush had hoped and provided the NCUSCT with a date for CCPIT's first visit to the US. The Chinese also told the trade council that they would send a delegation of textile specialists — their first ever industry-oriented commercial delegation — as soon as the following month.[28] Huang Zhen had recently been allowed by Mao to return to the US to resume his role as head of PRCLO, having previously been called back to defend rapprochement from charges made by the radicals in the Chinese leadership. On his return journey, he stopped-over in San Francisco to arrange for an extension of a tour of Chinese archaeological artefacts to include an additional two months in the Bay Area. The US had long been angling for this but the Chinese had hitherto refused; this reversal was acknowledged as significant.[29] Beijing had even resolved a number of trade disputes by generously overpaying American farmers to compensate for cancelled deals, while the veteran Chinese ambassador to the UN and later foreign minister, Huang Hua, had called the state

[27] Yost to NCUSCR board members, 26 November 1974, "General Correspondence, 1974", Box 131, ADBP.
[28] Solomon to Kissinger, 27 January 1975, "China Exchanges, 1 January 1975-31 May 1975", DFWL, RG59, NACP.
[29] Memcon: Xie and Nichols, 28 January 1975, "People's Republic of China (PRC) – Exchanges (exchange programs)" folder 2, Box 8, National Security Council East Asia and Pacific Affairs Staff Files (NSCEAPASF), 1973-76, Gerald Ford Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

governors — to whom Deng had eight months earlier frostily sworn off further expansion of exchanges — for a lunch with warmer atmospherics.[30]

By February 1975, Kissinger's aides were describing this as a "campaign of smiles" that was expected to last until the proposed visit of the US president to China planned for the winter.[31] Receiving an NCUSCR-organised delegation of American university presidents later that month, Deng explicitly abandoned the line that further exchanges were predicated on progress in negotiations, saying that "there are still problems — for instance, Taiwan — and because of this, the development of diplomatic relations will be slow but this should not hinder the growth of exchanges between our two countries … the development of scholarly communication between the two countries is in conformity with the wishes of our two peoples".[32]

Kissinger's powers of persuasion aside, there are a number of other factors that help to explain the change in the Chinese attitude towards exchanges. One was the evolving domestic political situation in Beijing: the Fourth National People's Congress had been held in January and had reaffirmed China's commitment to Sino-American rapprochement.[33] However, Kissinger was overly optimistic about the outcome of the Congress, misperceiving that it would mark Zhou's return to active duty and the elevation of the premier to "the role of Mao".[34] In fact, within a month, State Department intelligence noted that Zhou had in fact receded even further into the background: the main beneficiaries of the meeting had been Deng and the leftist radical and later Gang of Four member Zhang Chunqiao.[35]

Zhou's demise and Zhang's ascent hardly suggest that domestic politics were fundamental to the change in Chinese attitude to exchanges, then. Another factor was continued American

[30] Solomon to Kissinger, 7 February 1975, "China Exchanges, 1 January 1975-31 May 1975", DFWL, RG59, NACP.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Memcon: Deng and Heyns, 26 February 1975, "World Affairs Delegation: Meeting Reports" [*sic*], Box 15, Series 3, RG4, NCUSCR records, RAC.
[33] Documents of the First Session of the Fourth National People's Congress of the PRC (Beijing, 1975).
[34] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 103.
[35] DOS intelligence memorandum, 'The Chinese Leadership after the National People's Congress', 13 February 1975, "PRC" folder 5, Box 6, NSCEAPASF, 1973-76, GFL. Mao had personally approved Deng's return to a central role the previous October. Zhou Enlai, *Nianpu*, III, 677, 4 October 1974 entry.

government lobbying in the wake of the Kissinger visit: in late December, Assistant Secretary of State Philip Habib had, on the Secretary's orders, visited Han Xu, the deputy head of PRCLO, to pull the Chinese up on their continuing public complaints about progress in Sino-American relations made to the press and to exchange visitors. Habib had rebuked the Chinese that "the appearance of pressure complicates the process of ensuring public support for what needs to be done", a reference to the withdrawal of American official support for Taiwan. He called for Beijing to take a more positive approach to the public presentation of Sino-American relations.[36] A month later, Habib happily reported that the upturn in exchanges had been accompanied by an end to Chinese whining about the condition of the relationship, suggesting that Beijing was now prepared to join the US in putting their best foot forward when it came to the public appearance of rapprochement.[37]

A further factor in explaining the Chinese about-face towards exchanges is that Beijing was just as disappointed with Kissinger's watered down normalisation proposal as he was with the Chinese refusal to themselves make compromises. The complete deadlock in normalisation talks during the November visit — the communiqué that followed the trip was the first to fail to make any reference to progress in normalisation negotiations — showed to the Chinese, just as much as it did to the Secretary, that if there was no room for meaningful negotiation on the hard points of normalisation, renewed efforts to expand bilateral contacts might be the only way of preserving some level of activity in Sino-American relations. Beijing had used exchange diplomacy to exert pressure on the US government to continue to work towards normalisation and, yet, the Chinese had no interest in allowing a complete and public disintegration of rapprochement: doing so would only embolden Moscow and the Taiwan lobby in the US.

The improvements in exchange diplomacy and broader bilateral relations were the first green shoots in Sino-American relations since the shock of Nixon's resignation. Kissinger's attempts to present the Chinese with agreeable suggestions in political negotiations had failed. In response, the

[36] Bush, *China Diary*, 122, note 66.
[37] Solomon to Kissinger, 27 January 1975, "China Exchanges, 1 January 1975-31 May 1975", DFWL, RG59, NACP.

American government — including, eventually, the Secretary of State — had turned to the exchange programme as an area where continued measured progress could help to preserve the outwards appearance of an active relationship and maintain a purpose to high-level discussions that would avoid rapprochement disintegrating. In the three months after Kissinger's November 1974 visit to Beijing, the Chinese had begun to show themselves responsive to this initiative and the continuation, and at times further development, of the exchange programme was to be a pattern throughout the Ford administration — albeit not one without further disruptions and challenges.

III: A DIFFERENT DANCE:

SQUABBLING AND SUBTERFUGE IN THE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME AND THE CANCELLATION OF THE PERFORMING ARTS TROUPE

The greater attention paid to people-to-people contacts by Chinese and American foreign policymakers during and after Kissinger's visit was not enough to prevent exchanges from simultaneously acting as a source of conflict. Indeed, during Ford's first year in office, disputes relating to exchanges became a serious distraction from attempts by both sides to restore momentum to the Sino-American relationship. In part, this was a further manifestation of the Chinese government's resentment over deadlock in high-level talks and a continuation of the cold-shouldering of exchanges in 1974. However, the most important of these disagreements followed the Chinese leadership's decision to reinvigorate exchanges in early 1975 and there is a range of circumstantial evidence that suggests that these disruptions may have been the result of diverging approaches to Sino-American diplomacy within the Chinese government. Officials and administrators on both sides attempted to mitigate the fallout from such contretemps but could not stop public disagreements undermining the positive publicity that exchange diplomacy was intended to bring to the Sino-American relationship: if exchanges were increasingly important proof of the vitality of contacts

between America and China, then, by the same measure, the stakes in disagreements over people-to-people contacts were raised, too.

As we have seen, by 1974 the CSCPRC was enjoying a favoured position with the Chinese *vis-a-vis* their sister organisation, the NCUSCR. Yet, this did not dissuade Beijing from picking their first fight of the Ford era over a CSCPRC delegation scheduled to travel to China in October of that year. Just hours before this group of American language experts were set to take off from San Francisco, Xie Qimei, the go-to contact at PRCLO for both the CSCPRC and the NCUSCR, informed the CSCPRC that one member of the delegation would not be welcome on the trip. Professor Frederick Mote's invitation was rescinded on account of his having "carried out illegal activities of gathering intelligence" whilst in China in the 1940s. Mote had previously worked for the Office of Strategic Services, the wartime precursor to the CIA and, after the establishment of the PRC, the Communist press had accused him of smuggling radios to a pair of Catholic nuns in 1945, something he vehemently denied.[38]

What was at stake in this disagreement was not just whether a professor would miss his chance to see Communist China, but instead an important principle of the exchange programme that dated back to the 1972 joint position paper: that each side would choose themselves who would be sent as part of a delegation. If the CSCPRC were to omit Mote, the Chinese — negotiators acutely conscious of past precedent — might begin to exclude further individual members of future delegations sent not only by the CSCPRC but by other American organisations, too. Although the CSCPRC initially wavered, Keatley successfully pushed for a firm stance and was supported in this by the State Department and the NSC. Keatley thus informed Xie that the CSCPRC considered Mote's exclusion a "grave matter" and that the delegation would not leave the US unless the Chinese reconsidered their request.[39]

[38] Keatley to The Files, 15 October 1974, "1974 – General", CSCNAS.
[39] Ibid.

Xie's response was to refuse to convey this message, and to tell Keatley she would be wise not to send it herself, either. This was a remarkable reaction from a counsellor at the Liaison Office: typically, even the head of PRCLO — who held ambassadorial rank — presented himself as little more than a conduit of instructions between Americans and the Chinese government. The US's own Liaison Office in Beijing cabled a few days later with a possible explanation for Xie's behaviour: Zhou was incapacitated with sickness and the foreign minister, Qiao, was in New York at the UN. USLO thought that the Public Security Bureau had most likely cooked up the controversy without the knowledge, much less the support, of the Chinese MFA. Xie, who was later revealed to be linked to, if not employed by, Chinese intelligence, seemed to be acting on less than official instructions, hence his refusal to have Keatley communicate with the Chinese capital.[40]

Further evidence that the dispute may not have been approved by the PRC leadership was provided by an unexpected reversal in the Chinese position: five days after their first meeting and a day after the delegation's scheduled departure, Xie unexpectedly reversed course and told Keatley that, while the Chinese stood by the accusations, if Mote had "changed his hostile attitude" towards the PRC, he could go on the trip. Having consulted with Solomon and USLO, Keatley agreed to the exchange going ahead: the full delegation arrived in China on 16 October, one week late.[41]

The Mote dispute would seem small fry in comparison to the clashes with the Chinese over exchanges in 1975. The first of these was a series of headaches surrounding the tour of Chinese archaeological artefacts, scheduled to begin in March 1975 and stay in the US for more than seven months. The tour was designed to be conspicuous: the vast collection of relics included artefacts from China's pre-history through to the Yuan Dynasty of the thirteenth and fourteenth century. It was also inherently politically sensitive. The Cultural Revolution had given Mao's regime an international reputation as vandals of China's ancient civilisation. This was an opportunity for China to show that it

[40] Interviews with Douglas Murray, New York, 9 September 2015, and Berris, 15 August 2015.
[41] Keatley to The Files, 15 October 1974, "1974 – General", CSCNAS.

could still unearth, preserve and exhibit its historical treasures: all the objects had been excavated since the founding of the People's Republic.[42]

The first hiccup in the tour was a planned press preview at the National Gallery of Art, a stone's throw from Capitol Hill. The Chinese had welcomed the fanfare but had asked that journalists from Israel, South Vietnam and South Korea be barred. The gallery had predictably balked at this request and when the Chinese refused to budge the entire event was called off.[43] After the artefacts had gone on display in Washington, PRCLO contacted Laurence Sickman, the Director of the Nelson Gallery in Kansas City, where the relics would soon be displayed for nearly two months. The Chinese now demanded that, while the tour was in Kansas City, the gallery close its permanent collection of Chinese items, the majority of which had been imported from China before the establishment of the People's Republic.[44] As they had with the CSCPRC and the Mote dispute, the State Department made clear to Sickman they would support him rejecting the demand outright. Sickman stood firm — and, again, the Chinese backed down.[45]

The performing arts troupe dispute

The Chinese would not be as cooperative in their next clash over exchanges. The day before Sickman informed the State Department that the Chinese had relented, Kissinger, who was in Egypt negotiating the spoils of the Yom Kippur War, was telegrammed about a late change to the plan for a visit of a famous performing arts troupe to America. The group comprised some 80 musicians, singers and dancers, including the famed pianist Yin Chengzong, who had memorably performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra during their tour of China in November 1973 and was fulfilling an invitation to

[42] NSC to Rockefeller, 25 March 1975, "PRC – Exchanges (exchange programs)" folder 8, Box 8, NSCEAPASF, 1973-76, GFL. The tour eventually received a staggering two million visitors while in the US. NCUSCR Annual Report, 1974-75, NCOC.
[43] NSC to Rockefeller, 25 March 1975, "PRC – Exchanges (exchange programs)" folder 8, Box 8, NSCEAPASF, 1973-76, GFL.
[44] Bush to Kissinger, 12 March 1975, "PRC – Exchanges (exchange programs)" folder 4, Ibid.
[45] Memcon: Sickman and Zinoman, 14 March 1975, Ibid.

travel to the US made during that visit; it was to be the largest delegation to travel in either direction since that visit.[46] But just three weeks before the group were set to arrive, the Liaison Office had informed the NCUSCR of an additional song to be performed by the visitors, entitled "Compatriots of Taiwan, Our Flesh and Blood" and including the lyrics, "Liberate Taiwan, unite our motherland! The flood of revolution cannot be impeded".[47]

Having only recently rebuilt their working relationship with the Liaison Office, the NCUSCR's board was reticent about having a major set-to with the Chinese; as the CSCPRC and Sickman had done before, they called the government for help. The National Committee was further encouraged to do so by indications that PRCLO was acting on instructions from above. Art Rosen had recently concluded a 29-year career at the State Department to become third in charge at the NCUSCR under Yost and Murray. When he reported the NCUSCR's concerns to Xie, the counsellor had spoken as if he was reading from instructions, stating that Taiwan was an integral part of China and it was "only natural" for the troupe to express their feelings towards the island. This was, he said, in the spirit of the Shanghai Communiqué and the song could not be withdrawn or modified. It was clear to the NCUSCR that this was no confusion: the Chinese were purposefully seeking confrontation.[48]

Habib and Lord argued to Kissinger that the government had to be firm where the NCUSCR could not be. Following on from the State Department's success in getting the Chinese to back down over the Mote and Nelson Gallery disputes, Kissinger's advisors believed that the Chinese suggestion was a further ploy to test the US. The late inclusion of the song, after most of the troupe's programme had been mutually agreed, was "obviously deliberate" and the Chinese had, since the government had raised its concerns, escalated the inclusion of the song to a "matter of principle".[49] Moreover, though organised by the National Committee, the exchange was not a wholly private

[46] 'Tour by Chinese Troupe Ended on Taiwan Issue', *New York Times*, 28 March 1975.
[47] Berris to The Record, 23 May 1975, Folder 76, Box 6, Series 1, DPMP, RAC.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Gleysteen to Kissinger, 13 March 1975, "PRC – Exchanges (exchange programs)" folder 6, Box 8, NSCEAPASF, 1973-76, GFL; Berris to The Record, 23 May 1975, Folder 76, Box 6, Series 1, DPMP, RAC.

affair: the profile and size of the delegation had necessitated Congress again appropriating federal funds to pay for official State Department security to accompany the performers across the country.[50] Habib and Lord believed that, "If we acquiesce on [the] Taiwan item, we are quite certain it would create [a] minor storm affecting the exchange program and possibly normalization … adverse consequences could well extend beyond exchanges programs to more substantive aspects of our relationship". Kissinger's advisors were, in particular, concerned that a less than robust response would draw public criticism of America's China policy at a time when the press was already voicing suspicions regarding Washington's resolve in its Asia policy. They further worried that rewarding Chinese misbehaviour would only empower those leaders and cadres that sought to pressure — rather than persuade — the US towards compromise in negotiations.[51]

In Beijing, Bush concurred that the dispute had likely been caused by a faction within the MFA looking to cause trouble. But the Liaison Office chief argued that, for this reason, the US should try to offer a compromise that could give more moderate Chinese leaders a means of climbing down from the dispute without humiliation.[52] A compromise deal — approved by Ford himself, such was the importance attached to the matter — was thus presented to the Chinese: the tour could go ahead if the PRC agreed to substitute the original song for one with lyrics that "expressed feelings of brotherhood for the people of Taiwan" but stopped short of calling for "liberation".[53]

The formal response from PRCLO suggested that behind the scenes the balance of forces — and with them PRLCO's orders — had changed. It was too late to save the tour, but where just days before the Chinese had spikily insisted that the dispute was over China's sacrosanct internal affairs, now they were unexpectedly relaxed and cordial and downplayed the cancellation's significance.[54] It appeared that leaders in the Chinese capital were regretting having sabotaged the tour: the first public

[50] Yost to Hollis, 17 April 1975, "General Correspondence – 1975", Box 131, ADBP.
[51] Gleysteen to Kissinger, 13 March 1975, "PRC – Exchanges (exchange programs)" folder 6, Box 8, NSCEAPASF, 1973-76, GFL.
[52] Bush to Kissinger, 20 March 1975, Ibid.
[53] Memcon: Han and Habib, 25 March 1975, "PRC – Exchanges (exchange programs)" folder 5, Box 8, NSCEAPASF, 1973-76, GFL.
[54] Ibid.

comment came some six days later and was a low-key remark buried among coverage of the concurrent — and uncontroversial — visit of Speaker of the House Carl Albert and House Minority Leader John Jacob Rhodes to China.[55] Deng also took care to tell Albert and Rhodes that he believed that neither side wanted to step backwards in people-to-people relations.[56] An official PRC public statement on the dispute further stressed the Chinese government's continued support for the exchange programme as a whole, and within days Beijing was demonstrating this by being forthcoming and accommodating in making arrangements to receive a large delegation of track and field athletes in May.[57]

Among the Chinese leadership there had probably been a measure of tacit acceptance of brinkmanship in negotiations over exchanges: pushing American patience on bilateral contacts was part of the broader pressure being exerted on Washington over its failure to move towards a normalisation agreement. The flashpoint in the performing arts troupe again revealed Beijing's particular concerns: an incendiary reminder about the PRC's plans for Taiwan was a response to Kissinger's backtracking on the US relationship with the island. The exchange programme had thus become another realm of negotiation and contestation and the Chinese were seeking to create tension in cultural exchanges which would push Washington to be more flexible in other aspects of its relationship with Beijing. There is some evidence this was successful: in the wake of this series of exchange fiascos, American negotiators trod carefully in other bilateral talks for fear of igniting another public controversy.[58]

Nonetheless, and in spite of repeated warnings, it came as a shock to the Chinese that the State Department had been prepared to pull the plug on such a high-profile exchange visit. When Habib made clear to Han Xu that the US government would rather cancel the tour than allow the

[55] Bush to Kissinger, 3 April 1975, Ibid.
[56] Deng, *Sixiang Nianbian*, 11–12, 1 April 1975 entry.
[57] ACHK to Kissinger, 3 April 1975, "PRC – Exchanges (exchange programs)" folder 5, Box 8, NSCEAPASF, 1973-76, GFL; Ingersoll to USLO, 5 April 1975, "PRC – Exchanges (exchange programs)" folder 7, Box 8, NSCEAPASF, GFL. The delegation ultimately totalled 94 people, including 64 athletes, and was witnessed by an estimated 250,000 Chinese spectators. NCUSCR Annual Report, 1974-75, NCOC.
[58] Harding to USLO, Beijing, 11 April 1975, "PRC – Exchanges (exchange programs)" folder 7, Box 8, NSCEAPASF, 1973-76, GFL.

incendiary song to be performed, PRCLO deputy chief suggested that Habib might want three more days to make a final decision. Habib was blunt: "Mr Ambassador, you don't understand. I'm giving you a formal reply now. Tomorrow I will inform the National Committee [that the tour is cancelled]".[59] Bush similarly reported that, in the wake of the cancellation, his interactions in Beijing indicated that the Chinese had now realised that they had "badly miscalculated" and wanted to drop the issue as soon as possible. Nancy Tang was an influential figure in the MFA, an alternate member of the Central Committee and a confidant of Mao — but also a regular, friendly contact for Bush. In the wake of the cancellation, she told a USLO staff member that the US "had been causing us some trouble lately". Bush concluded that the cancellation had led to recriminations in Beijing: "we suspect a few people may have been burned by their advice on this one".[60] Once it had become clear to the Chinese that they had bitten off more than they could chew, the top leadership in Beijing moved quickly to limit their exposure to the diplomatic repercussions resulting from the row.

If the leadership in Beijing was now downplaying the issue, it appeared that in Washington some Chinese officials were still agitating to embarrass the US. A protest against the cancellation had been staged by the US-China People's Friendship Association, an ostensibly independent organisation that was in fact financially dependent on Chinese government support and acted as the vehicle for inviting left-wing Americans to China and advocating Beijing's views to the American public. At the protest, the offending song was performed by singers who claimed to hail from Taiwan, one of whom said after the performance that the US government's actions were "doing violence to the spirit of the Shanghai Communiqué".[61] The Friendship Association had also leafleted those queuing to see the Chinese archaeological exhibition at the National Gallery with a flyer stating that the cancellation of the troupe's tour should be blamed on a clique of Americans who wanted to perpetuate American domination of Taiwan.[62] We do not have the Chinese government documents that could confirm the

[59] Memcon: Habib and Han, 23 March 1975, "PRC – Exchanges (exchange programs)" folder 6, Ibid.
[60] Bush to Kissinger, 3 April 1975, "PRC – Exchanges (exchange programs)" folder 5, Ibid.
[61] Berris to The Record, 23 May 1975, Folder 76, Box 6, Series 1, DPMP, RAC.
[62] "Phil L" [*sic*] to Harding, 1 April 1975, "PRC – Exchanges (exchange programs)" folder 5, Box 8, NSCEAPASF, 1973-76, GFL.

level of government coordination of these activities but what is stark is the contrast between the continuing inflammatory behaviour of Chinese cadres in Washington and the prevailing cooler heads in Beijing. It is possible that there were divergent views within the Chinese government on how to respond to the disagreement. Alternatively, this could have been another instance of the duality of Chinese policy towards the US: cool-headed pragmatism among Beijing's top diplomats paired with a lingering revolutionary zeal expressed in people-to-people contacts (encouraged, no doubt, by the politically radical Americans involved in the USCPFA).[63]

A month after the cancellation, an incident on the border with Canada underlined both the close relationship between China's diplomats abroad and the USCPFA and the latter's predilection for incendiary behaviour. After a US customs officer in Vermont found $70,000 that originated with a Chinese diplomat at the PRC's embassy in Ottawa, the Canadian government discovered that a Chinese diplomat had been funnelling cash to Canadian and American revolutionary Marxist-Leninist-Maoist groups previously connected to the Friendship Association. Ottawa expelled the diplomat and the impropriety made the front page of Toronto's *Globe and Mail*. In the wake of this further minor scandal, Kissinger's advisors warned the Secretary that the USCPFA's actions over the previous months suggested that it was not content with simply trying to undermine the NCUSCR's planned exchanges but was indeed "actively trying to build itself up as a mass-based alternative" to the National Committee.[64]

Whether it was the government, the NCUSCR or the CSCPRC, in the six months after Ford entered office Americans were clearly negotiating with inconsistent and unpredictable interlocutors at PRCLO. Until the relevant Chinese archival sources are made available we can only speculate as to the reasons for the often-abrupt changes in Chinese attitude that could resolve disputes as suddenly and unexpectedly as they created them. What we can say for certain is that PRCLO actively sought to disrupt exchanges, towards political and perhaps diplomatic ends. After the politicking eventually

[63] Yang and Xia, 'Vacillating'.
[64] American Embassy Ottawa to Kissinger, 6 June 1975, "PRC" folder 5, Box 6, NSCEAPASF, 1973-76, GFL; *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 108.

forced the cancellation of the performing arts troupe visit, the MFA in Beijing was prompted to walk back from its previously combative approach to exchange negotiations to minimise the impact of the abandonment of the tour on public perceptions of the Sino-American relationship.

The State Department had recognised this danger and had sought to use its influence and authority to prevent Chinese *diablerie* from damaging the exchange programme and, in turn, the condition of high-level contacts between Washington and Beijing. The extensive involvement of the American government in these disputes further evidences how Washington saw these people-to-people visits not as unofficial contacts irrelevant to high-level relations but instead an important facet of the Sino-American relationship that was closely connected to diplomatic ties and too consequential to be left to the non-governmental organisations that were ostensibly responsible for exchanges.

IV: AMERICANS WILL BE AMERICANS, YOU WILL "HAVE TO LEARN THAT": EXPECTATIONS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS IN THE EXPERIENCE OF THE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

The temporary confrontations that had culminated in the cancellation of the performing arts troupe were not the only source of discord in the exchange programme during Ford's first year in office. Americans were increasingly complaining about the administration of the exchange programme, both by US organisers and Chinese hosts. Applications for visits to China were far outstripping available places, and those that did get to travel bristled at the tight restrictions placed on them while there. At the same time, Chinese hosts were growing angry at supercilious commentary by visitors on their system of government. These tensions were different to the immediate crises over the archaeological and performing arts troupe tours that the State Department had scrambled to resolve but their detrimental influence on the bilateral relationship was not ignored by either the American or, indeed, the Chinese governments: both worried that these frictions reflected more fundamental and structural contradictions in Sino-American contacts that could not be resolved at the negotiating table.

Enthusiasm among the American population for participation in the exchange programme had not waned in the years after Nixon's opening. The government continued to be bombarded by appeals from individuals and organisations, from White House interns to the Harlem Globetrotters, for sponsorship of their applications to travel to the PRC.[65] By 1975, the National Committee was responding to at least 20-30 separate requests a week from organisations asking for help arranging a visit.[66] Only a small selection of the proposed visits came to fruition, and increasingly those not selected were crying foul about being overlooked. In a meeting with Richardson, who remained the senior State Department officer responsible for exchanges, a Chinese-American academic, Albert H Yee, accused unsupervised "quasi-government committees" of packing delegations with amateur scholars who knew little about China and who were chosen by their friends on the selection boards. Yee claimed that the government should take more responsibility for the "unknown sum" of public money that had funded the committees, particularly "since the [exchange] agreement is the one tangible element of contact between Americans and people in the PRC".[67] Yee was not alone in making these complaints: Alfred Senft, a professor of medical sciences at Brown University, told the CSCPRC he found it "disturbing" that delegation members were often close personal friends and frequent collaborators, "so that it seems that a cozy relationship is more evident than an even-handed choice of representatives".[68]

The lucky few who were selected to travel to the PRC had high expectations: many early reports from exchange visitors were giddy with praise of the experience and of the country, and this only fuelled hyperbole surrounding travelling to China. But as the numbers of those travelling on exchanges increased so, too, did complaints. American scholars were not used to the kind of constraints the Chinese routinely imposed upon guests. Requested itineraries were modified, with no explanation provided. Participants were ostensibly granted permission to interact freely with ordinary

[65] Hasenkamp to Kissinger, 11 November 1974, "PRC – Exchanges (exchange programs)" folder 1, Box 8, NSCEAPASF, 1973-76, GFL; Greeson to Les Janka, 26 February 1975, "PRC – Exchanges (exchange programs)" folder 3, Box 8, NSCEAPASF, 1973-76, GFL.
[66] NCUSCR Annual Report, 1974-75, NCOC.
[67] Yee to Richardson, 5 November 1974, "1975 – Inquiries", CSCNAS.
[68] Senft to Smith, 12 February 1975, "1975 – General", CSCNAS.

Chinese, but these interactions were in reality no less planned than any other aspect of their rigidly organised trips. In July 1975, the CSCPRC prepared a paper for Kissinger that reflected on the exchange programme to date. In it, they admitted that, although the "get-acquainted period" of exchanges had been important and a limited success, it had nonetheless revealed significant problems in contacts with China. They included Chinese refusal to allow scholars to conduct field work or collect their own data, the reluctance to admit groups of social scientists into China, and the truncated length of exchanges.[69]

The Chinese might have been more willing to grant exchange groups a longer leash if the visitors of the mid-1970s could be counted on to be as unfalteringly adulatory and well-mannered as the ideologically sympathetic guests of the 1960s had been. Particularly troublesome to the communist government was the tendency for those social scientists that did travel to China to remind their Chinese counterparts that the political system they advocated had consistently persecuted them. Similarly unwelcome was public commentary about political instability in the PRC by American academics after they returned from China.[70] Some causes of friction were less high-minded: during the apolitical visit of the American track and field team in May, a final banquet had been disrupted not only by heckles from a raucous audience but also by a fistfight between two US athletes. While their hosts politely attributed this to American unfamiliarity with the properties of Chinese liquor, Richard Baum, a political scientist and deputy leader of the delegation, forthrightly told the press what the Chinese should conclude: that Americans will be Americans — and that Chinese hosts "will have to learn that".[71]

These problems were worsening over time and the two sides were moving in opposite directions. In the early days of rapprochement, both sides had been careful to select Americans visitors from those who had a longstanding affiliation with China or who appreciated the diplomatic

[69] CSCPRC paper, 'The future of academic exchanges with the PRC', June 1975, "1975 – Report for Secretary of State", CSCNAS.
[70] CIA Intelligence Information Cable, 'Views of the PRC concerning stalemated relations with the United States', 24 May 1975, "PRC" folder 7, Box 7, NSCEAPASF, 1973-76, GFL.
[71] 'How to See China on $0.00 a Day', *Los Angeles Times*, 3 June 1975.

importance of their visit. But, as some of the initial euphoria of renewed contact faded and exchange participants were necessarily drawn from a broader field of candidates, visitors were not satisfied with staying quiet as they were lectured on the great achievements of the communist regime. Concurrently, the resurgence of radical leaders in Beijing that had begun in the summer of 1975 — itself in part a backlash against the increase in China's contacts with the outside world — was further encouraging a hostile reaction to any foreign criticism, however tempered, and made it more difficult for even sympathetic Chinese interlocutors to grant the kind of freedoms that Americans were pushing for.[72]

The enduring contradictions in the exchange programme between the PRC and the US were mirrored in China's contacts with other Western countries. Canada had normalised relations with Beijing in October 1970, before Kissinger's first secret visit and earlier than most of America's allies. Thereafter, the Canadians had significantly expanded their bilateral contacts with China. Ottawa's formal relations with the PRC meant that exchanges were managed on a government-to-government basis, but this had not made them free of controversy. A visit by the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra planned for the spring of 1974 had fallen victim to the Criticise Lin Biao, Criticise Confucius political campaign, being cancelled just weeks before the orchestra's expected departure as a result of that movement's hostile reaction to Western cultural influences.

Moreover, Canadian exchange participants were just as wont to complain about their treatment while in China as their American cousins: more than a third of the first cohort of Canadian students to travel to the PRC on extended student exchange pulled out and returned home, disappointed with the experience of studying on the mainland.[73] Bush met one of the returning Canadian students over drinks and found them "thoroughly disillusioned, highly critical of the Chinese".[74] Meanwhile, other Western countries were, like American exchange organisations, were frustrated at their inability to convince the Chinese to agree to scholarly exchanges that were more

[72] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 112.
[73] Berris to The Record, 28 May 1975, "General Correspondence – 1975", Box 131, ADBP.
[74] Bush, *China Diary*, 79.

than whistle-stop tours of the PRC: the United Kingdom (UK), West Germany and Sweden had all normalised relations years prior but had failed in efforts to convince the Chinese to participate in deeper research and study collaboration.[75]

That Americans were not alone in their frustrations over people-to-people contacts with the Chinese was little consolation to the US government. The State Department was no more willing to accept the long-term tensions over exchanges than they had been the rows over the archaeological exhibition and performing arts troupe. Instead, the government took an active stance in attempting to prevent the problems that maligned exchanges and, in turn, jeopardised the broader Sino-American relationship. State Department staff had already grown so concerned by the unreliable behaviour of unofficial people-to-people envoys that they had taken to meeting with visitors both before and after trips in order to remind them that exchange programmes had a larger, political purpose that would be undermined by overly vocal criticism of their hosts either in China or upon their return.[76] They had also begun to insist on government oversight while delegations were in China. During the planning for the NCUSCR's November 1974 university presidents delegation, William Hitchcock, the second-most senior official at State's Department of Educational and Cultural Affairs, had fumed at the NCUSCR about the decision not to invite State to send an escort on the trip. "Don't all your participants understand that this is a gov't [*sic*] facilitated exchange and that we're supporting you and it?"[77]

Now, Bush proposed even closer government supervision. USLO had decided that henceforth all delegations be chaperoned by a foreign service officer sensitive to the "policy implications of any problems that might arise". The USLO chief asked that the State Department make sure "that the National Committee and CSC[PRC] be told at as high a level as necessary that USG [the US government] deems it essential that USG escort be assigned to each delegation". Previously, exchange delegations had been used as a vehicle to give first-hand experience of the PRC to Foreign

[75] Handler, Sheldon and Lumiansky to Kissinger, 11 July 1975, "1975 – Report for Secretary of State", CSCNAS.
[76] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 45.
[77] Note signed "D" (likely Douglas Murray), undated, circa June 1974, Folder 130, Box 17, Series 3, RG4, NCUSCR records, RAC.

Service Officers who had studied China and Chinese but had no chance to visit the mainland. Now Bush argued that accompanying officers should be selected on the basis of their aptitude for a managerial, political role. Better official oversight would, Bush claimed, avoid the kind of "very serious" incidents that had plagued exchanges in the previous year, that "could and should have been avoided".[78]

CONCLUSION

In the first year of the Ford presidency, the White House sought to make the exchange programme and other people-to-people contacts a critical means by which to achieve agreements in Sino-American relations short of normalisation. Deadlock in normalisation negotiations was proving to be debilitating to the high-level relationship and exchanges acted as a means by which Washington could continue to show their interest in maintaining rapprochement until circumstances for political talks were more favourable.

This was a fundamental shift in the focus of the relationship. Nixon and Kissinger had conceived of China as a strategic counterweight to the Soviet Union. As earlier chapters have shown, Nixon had not neglected the importance of developing bilateral contacts with the PRC but until the president's resignation the highest leaders in Washington believed that they were constructing a "tacit alliance" of security collaboration with Beijing. Under Ford, the American government's primary method for what Ross terms "negotiating cooperation" with the PRC was changing from strategic cooperation to the broadening of the bilateral relationship with the Chinese government and population.[79] In the face of Chinese refusal to compromise in normalisation negotiations, Kissinger increasingly recognised exchanges as a means to circumvent gridlock in these negotiations. His

[78] Bush to Kissinger, 11 April 1975, "PRC – Exchanges (exchange programs)" folder 7, Box 8, NSCEAPASF, GFL. Bush's recommended changes had been implemented by 1976, at the latest: see the account of Senator Hugh Scott's ill-fated visit to China in chapter 5 and Gates to Kissinger, 13 July 1976, "Memorandums", Subject Files, 1969-1978, RG59, NACP.
[79] Ross, *Negotiating Cooperation*.

acceptance of this alternative tactic was reluctant and belated and the Secretary of State was not quickly convinced by all of the arguments made within the US government about the benefits of expanded exchanges. However, Kissinger did believe that exchanges were important to presenting Sino-American relations as robust and a continuing success, both to Soviet leaders and the American public. Under Ford, the need to maintain the *impression* of an active relationship was an important motivation for the State Department imploring their Chinese counterparts to take bilateral relations seriously and at least allow Sino-American relations to retain a veneer of vitality. The need to keep up appearances was also the cause of handwringing when public falling-outs occurred in the exchange programme.

The series of minor crises that erupted from the exchange programme demonstrate that Ford and Kissinger were not completely in control of American foreign policy towards China. Nixon and Kissinger had conducted political negotiations with the Chinese leadership primarily through personal visits to Beijing and via a tiny coterie of handpicked deputies. This continued into Ford's presidency. However, the government's efforts to more closely connect the people-to-people relationship with the high-level relationship increased the influence of actors outside of the core of foreign policymaking, be they politicking Chinese officials in Washington or unpredictable American delegations visiting the PRC. In this sense, as the White House's China policy became less active it had to become more reactive: the China hands at the State Department — Lord, Solomon, Habib and, in Beijing, Ambassador Bush — spent much of their time during the Ford presidency dealing with the implications and consequences of the actions of those outside their control or even influence. The lower level Chinese officials that oversaw exchanges did not always show themselves to be the consummate diplomats that Kissinger found Zhou to be; American academics and athletes were not always as deferential to Chinese hosts as the Secretary of State.

By the end of Ford's first year in office, the challenges to the exchange programme caused by these non-elite actors had convinced the State Department that American government influence should not only be used to promote exchanges but also to protect them. US officials in Washington

and Beijing were increasingly assertive in using what power they had over both American exchange participants and their Chinese counterparts to resolve conflicts and contradictions that would undermine the positive contribution of exchanges to Sino-American contacts.

These altercations posed a significant challenge to Ford's attempts to preserve rapprochement. With diplomatic negotiations stalled, the realm of exchanges became a politicised arena in which the Chinese chose to agitate and voice their dissatisfaction at the inertia of the relationship. In 1974, the PRC had frozen out the NCUSCR, the most politically important American group for organising exchanges, in order to protest Washington's continuing relationship with Taiwan. The following year, the Chinese indulged in brinkmanship that ultimately (and perhaps inadvertently) sabotaged a major exchange visit. The increased significance given to exchanges as a bellwether for the condition of the overall relationship elevated the importance of these disputes, which threatened to further damage the already ameliorated Sino-American diplomatic relationship. Both sides ultimately sought to avoid this: the US government worked feverishly to defuse disputes, while the Chinese showed, in compromising over early disagreements and attempting to repair the damage done by the cancellation of the performing arts troupe, that they valued the ongoing exchange programme, even if they were prepared to use it to exert pressure on their American counterparts.

Public quarrelling notwithstanding, the White House's attempt to make an active exchange and bilateral contacts programme the basis for preserving rapprochement had borne some fruit during Ford's first year in office. Kissinger and the State Department had convinced the Chinese to renew its contacts with the NCUSCR and to propose a more active programme of exchanges for the remainder of 1975. In the run-up to Ford's planned presidential visit for December of that year, both sides doubled down in their efforts to create the conditions for a successful summit on the back of energetic people-to-people contacts. Not since the American ping-pong team had travelled to China in 1971 had the Sino-American diplomatic relationship relied so heavily on the programme of exchange contacts.

CHAPTER FIVE

Beyond Ford's failed summit:

Technology transfers, exchange diplomacy and the origins of the final normalisation deal, 1975–1977

President Ford smiled at Deng Xiaoping across the negotiating table. It was the third day of the president's visit to China and a pained silence had fallen over the cavernous Great Hall of the People. "So, do you think we have come to the end of our discussion?", Deng asked. The two men were only an hour into their first discussions of the day but both sides knew there was nothing more to negotiate. "The only apprehension that I have, Mr Vice Premier, is that we have gotten along so well that we have not had to take as much time this morning as we anticipated", Ford meekly responded. Kissinger attempted to fill the void with small talk but this soon petered out. Finally, Deng found a solution: "We still have some time left … Perhaps we can chat about Tibet". And so — at length — the vice premier explained to only the second sitting US president to visit China how the CCP had rescued Tibet from the "very cruel oppression" imposed by the lamas. "They had very many varieties of torture", Deng explained, "and they did not reproduce the human race".[1] This was, then, a far cry from the week that changed the world. Indeed, such had been the severity of the decline in Sino-American relations from Nixon's disgrace to the winter of 1975 that Ford's December visit had almost been called off. Ford left office with the US no closer to a normalisation deal than they had been in 1974; if anything, years of immobility in negotiations made such an agreement seem out of reach.

[1] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 13.

When considered on a different scale, however, Ford's final year and a half in office saw significant positive developments in Sino-American relations. Ford and Deng's stalled conversation had been immediately preceded by a different interchange. Fishing for possible agreements that could be reached during the summit, Ford and Kissinger, in a remarkable exchange, talked Deng through the "informal" means by which the president and his Secretary of State could provide the Chinese with computer technology far more powerful than anything Washington sold to Moscow, in flagrant contravention of restrictions implemented by the US and its allies on the supply of weaponisable technology to communist countries.[2]

The transfer of advanced technology from the US to China was a standout feature of the Sino-American relationship after Deng's rise to paramount influence in 1977 and 1978.[3] This chapter shows, however, that Chinese interest in American science and technology began *before* Deng's final ascent to power. This was evident in both high-level discussions and in the exchange programme. From 1975 onwards, that programme was increasingly dominated by the issue of science and technology sharing — or, more specifically, American assistance to developing China. Alongside the aforementioned high-level discussions of this issue, an ongoing negotiation took place between the CSCPRC and the group's counterparts in Beijing over the terms under which this cooperation should take place.

This chapter argues that American governmental and non-governmental actors took different approaches to the issue of science and technology sharing with the PRC, and, in particular, the question of how to connect this cooperation with the broader bilateral relationship. Ford and Kissinger were enthusiastic about providing this assistance to the Chinese as a means to improve the atmospherics of what was, in this period, a tense high-level relationship. They placed few explicit conditions on this assistance, only asking that the Chinese recognise that it represented the favour that Washington showed towards Beijing (and, implicitly, over Moscow). In contrast, the CSCPRC

[2] Ibid.
[3] See chapter 6 and also Enrico Fardella, 'The Sino-American Normalization: A Reassessment', *Diplomatic History*, 33/4 (2009), 545-78; Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* (Cambridge, MA, 2011).

adopted a more hard-nosed strategy, seeking to leverage Chinese desire for access to US expertise and technology to achieve the ambitions of the group's constituency of American scientists in their relationship with the Chinese. The CSCPRC demanded "reciprocity" for the access they provided to American expertise — and were prepared to curtail this provision if the Chinese did not provide commensurate benefits.

Neither strategy was to prove immediately successful. The Chinese resisted both soft and hard approaches to linking American science and technology assistance to political aspects of the relationship, refusing to provide concessions in other areas of the diplomatic or exchange relationship in recognition of American assistance. However, in the years following Ford's departure from office, the Carter administration was able to powerfully link American science and technology assistance to the diplomatic relationship in order to achieve a normalisation agreement. This chapter demonstrates that this strategy was already being deployed by Americans outside of government as early as 1975 and suggests that its success in 1978 was in part a result of pressure applied, and incentives first offered, during Ford's time in power. In this way, this chapter offers two concurrent characterisations of the Ford period in the Sino-American relationship: as a period of insipid high-level relations that limited the exchange relationship, but also as a transition period in which the Sino-American cooperation over Chinese modernisation — so critical in the period after Mao's death — began to emerge.

This chapter further argues that the increasing attention paid to exchanges by the Ford administration that had begun in 1974 intensified in this period. By the summer of 1975, Kissinger's advisors warned him that there was little chance of a major political agreement during the presidential summit planned for the end of that year. In response, the US government further developed their strategy of seeking agreements on people-to-people relations, in particular the exchange programme, to offset high-level deadlock. In spite of strong lobbying of Beijing from the US government, as well as the NCUSCR and CSCPRC, Ford's summit saw no major development of exchanges and instead 1976 became another trying year in exchange contacts — not just for the NCUSCR but increasingly for the CSCPRC, too. A vigorous reaction from both groups and from the American government — as well

as concurrent changes in China's domestic politics — ultimately won a far more favourable package of exchanges, announced in the final weeks of Ford's time in office.

This chapter has five sections. The first three sections examine the American government's efforts to make exchanges the basis for a successful presidential summit in December 1975, charting the development of this strategy from the summer of 1975, through Kissinger's ill-fated October visit and concluding with the December presidential summit and Ford and Kissinger's offer of technological assistance to Deng. These three sections simultaneously analyse the role of the NCUSCR and CSCPRC in this approach, showing how lobbying from both groups further encouraged the government to prioritise the expansion of bilateral contacts in the Sino-American relationship. The fourth section contrasts Ford and Kissinger's ready willingness to provide technology to Beijing at little cost with the CSCPRC's attempt to leverage demonstrable Chinese interest in US scientific and technological knowledge and expertise to better serve that organisation's American constituents. The fifth and final section details how, and with what consequences, visits by American politicians from outside of the executive branch — from Senators Scott and Mansfield to Nixon and his family — were politicised by the PRC in 1976.

I: THE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF US STRATEGY TOWARDS FORD'S CHINA SUMMIT

Ford's first year in office had seen a slowdown in Sino-American rapprochement. Against a backdrop of stalled high-level talks, the broader bilateral relationship between the US and China had taken on a greater significance. Yet, increased attention from foreign policy makers did not guarantee success and both people-to-people contacts and the high-level diplomatic relationship had been rocked by a series of minor crises in Sino-American exchanges, the most dramatic and public of which was the cancellation of a visit by a Chinese performing arts troupe in April 1975.

This cancellation was the most significant sign of the Chinese willingness to express their frustrations regarding lacklustre high-level diplomacy in the public forum of exchanges. Since Nixon's fall, both the American press and the Soviets had speculated that Sino-American relations had frayed; the Chinese had kept the pressure up on Washington by coyly refusing to give their support to the upbeat public statements suggested by Kissinger. The Chinese pursued a similar strategy towards exchanges. Aware that the quality and atmospherics of people-to-people relations influenced public appraisals of the relationship as much as statements by ranking leaders, Beijing attempted to increase pressure on Washington by limiting the bilateral relationship. In the 16 months before November 1975, the NCUSCR did not receive a single Chinese delegation. The group had never waited so long to receive Chinese guests since its involvement in exchanges had begun in 1972.[4] Meanwhile, Sino-American trade for 1975 had fallen by half from its high point in 1974.[5] In July, Deng used a meeting with American newsmen to tell a *Wall Street Journal* reporter explicitly that Beijing would not relent in its restrictions on people-to-people contacts and trade until the Taiwan issue had been settled — on Chinese terms.[6]

It was in this context that Ford planned for his summit visit to China — only the second American presidential visit to that country in history. Limited in what was expected to be possible in high-level talks, Kissinger and his aides thus made the objective of the trip to find agreement on a range of "small, matched concessions to provide an aura of success"; deals on exchanges, trade and other contacts would be chief among these.[7] This "aura of success" would be important to maintaining an effective Sino-American relationship in the face of domestic criticism and foreign scepticism. The passivity of US China policy was not only frustrating the Chinese — who had been led to believe that normalisation would occur soon after the 1972 election — but also sapping American domestic support. Moreover, floundering rapprochement emboldened the Soviets, who could be content that

[4] NCUSCR Annual Report, 1974-75, NCOC.
[5] *NFTNC*, Vol. 5, No. 2, July 1975.
[6] Kissinger to USLO, 6 June 1975, "PRC" folder 10, Box 6, NSCEAPASF, GFL; Deng, *Sixiang Nianbian*, 19–20, 2 June 1975 entry.
[7] Habib, Gleysteen and Lord to Kissinger, 4 August 1975, "China Exchanges, January 1-31 May 1975", DFWL, RG59, NACP.

the Americans were having just as much trouble dealing with their new Chinese friends as Moscow had in the 1950s. Increasingly, then, the Ford administration was as concerned with the public presentation of the Sino-American relationship as it was with the content of discussions with the Chinese.

At the end of July, Solomon wrote to Kissinger proposing an array of public actions that would signal to the Chinese the American desire for some return to momentum in high-level discussions and demonstrate to domestic audiences that Sino-American relations remained genial. Five of the six proposals were directly related to the exchange programme. The most notable steps were personal presidential receptions for the high-ranking delegation from CCPIT — which the Secretary of State and Bush had successfully lobbied the Chinese to send — and a group from STAPRC. Together, these actions would signal that the president maintained a continuing personal interest in the exchange programme.[8]

It was not only the American government that was paying attention to the presentation of the Sino-American relationship to the American domestic audience. The summer of 1975 saw an increase in Chinese efforts to use the exchange programme to court opinion shapers in the US.[9] Unlike the Ford administration, however, Beijing was not seeking to assure the American public that Sino-American relations were robust. Instead, the Chinese were seeking to build pressure on the US government from below in the hopes that this would further encourage Washington to show flexibility in their negotiations with the Chinese. In a return to tactics deployed in 1971 and 1972, the Chinese made use of what Kissinger called "a bit of nose-thumbing" by channelling greater resources to the USCPFA, which would in turn parrot Beijing's complaints about American foot-dragging in normalisation negotiations.[10]

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[8] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 116; Memcon: Ford and STAPRC delegation, 27 September 1975, [unmarked folder, likely China Exchanges, July-Sept 1975], DFWL, RG59, NACP; *NFTNC*, Vol. 5, Nos. 3 & 4 [*sic*, one issue], Winter 1975.

[9] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 112.

[10] Kissinger to Ford, 11 October 1975, "China Exchanges, October-Dec 1975", DFWL, RG59, NACP; Minutes of the USCPFA steering committee, 22 October 1975, Folder 4, Box 14, US China Peoples Friendship Association records, New York Public Library Archives & Manuscripts Division, New York.

China's public relations initiatives were also defensive. The renewed domestic sympathy for Taiwan that threatened Ford politically was also of concern to Beijing. Critics of the PRC, such as Senator Barry Goldwater, were working closely with ROC diplomats to argue to American audiences that rapprochement had proceeded as far as was necessary for US interests.[11] The PRC government sought to counter this, using public platforms such as the activities of the USCPFA to argue that the US government was caving to Taiwanese pressure and betraying the Shanghai Communiqué by increasing military aid to Taiwan, allowing the ROC to open new consulates in the US and encouraging the expansion of trade with the island. Paul Lin, a respected academic at McGill University who was secretly an influential member of Beijing's intelligence network in North America, was recognised by Washington as an important, if unofficial, spokesperson for the Chinese government. At one USCPFA meeting, Lin directly addressed the causes of renewed American interest in Taiwan. He attributed growing sympathy for Taiwan to giveaways from the ROC government to American businessmen and presented the reversals in US official policy as Kissinger's appeasement of domestic critics of his foreign policy failures elsewhere.[12]

The Chinese may have been better served cultivating public opinion through promoting greater people-to-people interaction, rather than berating their critics through slavish mouthpieces. Indeed, by 1975, American desire for more access to Chinese society was strongly evident. Both the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC were hoping that new forms of exchange with China could soon begin. To date, all exchange visits had been limited in length to just a few weeks. Now, both groups proposed research trips that would last months if not years, and also sought Beijing's agreement for the beginning of new types of exchange, in particular student exchanges and language training

[11] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 121.
[12] Berris to The Record, 22 May 1975, "General Correspondence – 1975", Box 131, ADBP. Paul Lin's full identity was confirmed to the author by a number of oral history sources. For Washington's knowledge of Lin's closeness to the Chinese government, see American Embassy Tokyo to DOS, 19 June 1970, "POL - Chicom - 6/1/70", SNF1970-73PD, RG59, NACP.

programmes.[13] The NCUSCR and CSCPRC recognised that they would need Washington's assistance in persuading Beijing to agree to these significant developments and these joint efforts ensured that these desired new exchanges made it on to Washington's list of agreements to be sought during the Ford summit.[14]

A certain deepening of ongoing exchanges had already begun by the second half of 1975. Knowing the difficulties that would be faced persuading the Chinese to agree to long study visits, the NCUSCR and CSCPRC were both simultaneously seeking greater substance to those exchanges that were already taking place. One successful example was a delegation on the subject of world affairs sent to China by the NCUSCR and the influential New York-based think tank, the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). The group would travel in October, led by the vice chairman of the CFR and chairman of the Rockefeller Foundation, Cyrus Vance — who would, a year later, become Jimmy Carter's first Secretary of State. NCUSCR president Rosen had successfully persuaded the Chinese to allow the delegation to forego the usual whistle stop tours of Chinese cities in favour of an extended stay in the capital that would allow "detailed, substantive" discussions with a range of Chinese leaders.[15] The delegation was granted a long discussion with Deng and further meetings with Acting Foreign Minister Han Nianlong and Vice Minister for Foreign Trade Yao Yilin in which the state of rapprochement in its multiple facets was discussed at length.[16]

Talks with Deng were cordial and the vice premier and Vance debated critical issues of foreign policy — Soviet-American détente, relations with Japan and Korea, arms limitation — in a manner that anticipated their discussions after the American became Secretary of State. Nonetheless, Deng took the chance to ask Rosen directly why the NCUSCR had "refuse[d] our cultural troupe the right to sing a song that the people on Taiwan were our sisters and brothers?". The vice premier added

[13] Minutes of 28th meeting of NCUSCR executive committee, 29 May 1975, "Board of Directors Meeting, 10/28/75" [*sic*], Box 131, ADBP; Sheldon, Lumiansky and Handler to Kissinger, 11 July 1975, 'The future of academic exchanges with the PRC', "1975 – Report for Secretary of State", CSCNAS.
[14] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 112.
[15] Rosen to Hsieh [Xie], 5 September 1975, Folder 110, Box 15, Series 3, RG4, NCUSCR records, RAC.
[16] Minutes of 27th meeting of NCUSCR board, 28 October 1975, "Exec Comm Meeting, 2/13/1976" [*sic*], Box 131, ADBP; *NFTNC*, Vol. 5, Nos. 3 & 4 [*sic*, one issue], Winter 1975; Memcons: delegation meetings with Han Nianlong, and Yao Yilin, October 10 and 9, respectively, Folder 113, Box 15, Series 3, RG4, NCUSCR records, RAC.

that he hoped "it does not reflect … a retreat of the entire United States government from the Shanghai Communiqué". Rosen responded by making clear that the NCUSCR did not speak for the government and in turn pressing Deng regarding the cancellation of an NCUSCR delegation of mayors. Why, Rosen pressed, had the Chinese had refused to allow the mayor of San Juan to visit China? The Chinese had claimed that the cancellation of their performing arts troupe was an interference in their country's internal affairs. Was this protest against the status of Puerto Rico not just as much of an interference in America's own domestic matters? The bickering only ended when Vance intervened.[17]

Certainly, then, NCUSCR exchanges were enjoying greater access — whatever that access was used for. The CSCPRC was simultaneously pushing the American and Chinese governments to faciliate substantive scientific exchanges, too. A twenty-page memorandum sent to Kissinger by the heads of the CSCPRC's three sponsoring organisations — NAS, SSRC and ACLS — forcefully made the case that scientific and scholarly cooperation must now evolve beyond the current "get-acquainted period" if the exchange programme was to retain the support of the American academic and commercial communities that hosted Chinese visitors. The group pushed for scientific exchanges to include opportunities not only for brief meet-and-greets but also working academic seminars on specific subjects, week-long collaborative workshops and channels for continuing contact and cooperation in research after each side had returned to their home country.[18]

The chief purpose of this CSCPRC memorandum, however, was to push the government to support the group's efforts to end the imbalance in the number of scientific delegations in each direction. While the NCUSCR was struggling to convince the Chinese to send delegations to the US, the CSCPRC was having the opposite problem: persuading Beijing to receive American scientific groups. This imbalance seemed designed to hurt both groups: the NCUSCR relied on high-profile Chinese visits to the US to raise revenue and its profile, while the CSCPRC was increasingly

[17] Memcon: Deng and Vance, 11 October 1975, Folder 113, Box 15, Series 3, RG4, NCUSCR records, RAC.
[18] CSCPRC paper, 'The future of academic exchanges with the PRC', June 1975, "1975 – Report for Secretary of State", CSCNAS.

struggling to convince American institutions to host Chinese guests when they had fewer opportunities to send their own researchers to the PRC. The Chinese government insisted that it was honouring the principle of reciprocity in exchanges as the *total* number of all types of exchanges in both directions was equal. This argument won some sympathy with Beijing's official equivalents in Washington, who similarly saw the exchange programme as a holistic package of contacts. The CSCPRC was becoming increasingly frustrated with this governmental stance, however, and argued to Kissinger that the policy not only limited the quantity of exchanges, but also curtailed their quality: the group continued to clash with the Chinese over access to China for social scientists and the CSCPRC argued that Beijing found it easier to rebuff American requests for such delegations when there was a limited number of total academic visitors to China.[19]

The CSCPRC believed that the second half of 1975 was a propitious moment to push for changes in the exchange programme. The CSCPRC would have a chance to negotiate directly with STAPRC vice chairman, Zhou Peiyuan, during that group's trip to the US, before the government had their own crack during the Ford summit.[20] The CSCPRC also believed their leverage over Beijing was increasing as a consequence of growing Chinese desire for American science and technology knowhow and equipment. The period after Mao's death, and, in particular, following Deng's return to power and prominence in 1977 and 1978 — is often considered the beginning of China's opening to the world and rapid modernisation. However, recent scholarship has shown that the year and a half-long period following Deng's rehabilitation in the summer of 1974 can be characterised as a dress rehearsal for the period after Deng achieved ascendency in late 1978. During that time, the vice premier began trialling many of the policies that would be adopted during the reform and opening-up period.[21] The Chinese approach to science and technology cooperation with the US adds further, significant evidence to this assertion. The CSCPRC memorandum to Kissinger argued that Beijing's approach to

[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Vogel, *Deng*, 120–58.

exchanges in 1974 and 1975 "indicates great interest in American advanced technology".[22] The CSCPRC had not been alone in noticing this trend: the majority whip, Senator Robert Byrd, had led a congressional delegation to the PRC in August and reported to Ford that, whereas he was given the impression that broad commercial trade with China would continue to be limited, there was already discernible Chinese interest in American scientific and technology cooperation.[23]

The CSCPRC believed that American technology and expertise should not be given away cheaply. In terms that anticipated debates over the Sino-American cooperation that would emerge over the coming decades, the CSCPRC recommended that the US contemplate "how … exchanges affect immediate propriety [rights], as well as long-term economic interests; in what areas would it be in our national interest to transfer technology to China, thus permitting China to accelerate development; and what … the relationship between foreign policy interests served by exchanges and economic interests affected by these programs [are]".[24] The growing assertiveness within the CSCPRC was in contrast to the government's stance. The State Department counselled the group to tone down its needling of the Chinese, arguing that the months before the presidential summit were a poor time to pressure Beijing — a logic in reverse to the group's own belief that the visit posed just the moment to speak frankly to the Chinese.[25] Thus, at this stage, the CSCPRC only stated that it would "consider carefully" continued requests for American technology. These requests would try to be met as they had been before, although the group might countenance suggesting that the Chinese make use of "commercial channels" for some requests — in other words, asking the Chinese to begin paying for the technology and expertise they were currently enjoying access to for free. It would not be long,

[22] CSCPRC paper, 'The future of academic exchanges with the PRC', June 1975, "1975 – Report for Secretary of State", CSCNAS.
[23] Memcon: Ford and Senator Byrd CoDel participants, 8 September 1975, [unmarked folder, likely "China Exchanges, July-September 1975"], DFWL, RG59, NACP.
[24] CSCPRC paper, 'The future of academic exchanges with the PRC', June 1975, "1975 – Report for Secretary of State", CSCNAS.
[25] Keatley to Sheldon, 21 November 1975, Folder 6371, Box 527, Series 1, Accession 2, SSRC records, RAC.

however, before the CSCPRC would be advocating a far more direct approach to leveraging Chinese desire for American technology.[26]

The Chinese approach to science and technology exchanges revealed Beijing's continued calculated, even cynical, approach to exchanges and people-to-people contacts. The Chinese government had curtailed exchanges and attacked the US government in public forums in order to further express their discontent with continuing (if not deepening) American support of Taiwan and seeming disinclination to make the sacrifices necessary for a normalisation deal. For similarly political reasons, the PRC played hardball with the US government's favoured exchange organisations and showed favour to rival groups situated on the political left (and in Beijing's pocket). Yet, concurrently the Chinese were pressing for maximum advantage in scientific exchanges, using the collaborative programme of contact to gain access to American universities and advanced industry. The CSCPRC believed this presented an opportunity for the US to seek Chinese concessions towards American interests in exchanges. They had sought their government's support in doing so, arguing that Ford's planned summit provided the ideal venue for doing so.

II: "OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHINA HAS COOLED":

KISSINGER'S OCTOBER 1975 VISIT TO BEIJING

While the CSCPRC grew increasingly confident of the leverage the US had in negotiations over exchanges, Kissinger remained doubtful. The "campaign of smiles" that had begun 1975 had petered out by the second half of that year. In October, Kissinger's aides again complained that a number of new exchange controversies — including the aforementioned cancellation of an NCUSCR-sponsored delegation of American mayors for political reasons — were "increasingly destructive of our efforts to

[26] CSCPRC paper, 'The future of academic exchanges with the PRC', June 1975, "1975 – Report for Secretary of State", CSCNAS.

build the psychological foundations for cooperation on the international front".[27] Over the autumn of 1975, Kissinger was gradually persuaded that the Sino-American relationship had to rest on more than simply security collaboration — because the American people believed it did.[28] As Mario del Pero has shown, in the later Ford years, Kissinger became entrapped by his own doublespeak.[29] In this case, Nixon and Kissinger's public assurances that China was *not* a "card" to be played — that there was inherent value to building contacts with 800 million Chinese — had made this so: the American public now expected something that looked like a normal bilateral relationship with Beijing. Under sustained pressure from his aides, and in the face of unrelenting Chinese intransigence in high-level talks, Kissinger accepted that his trip to the PRC in October must include some attempt to resolve headaches in people-to-people relations and to seek renewed accord about the value of the exchange programme.[30]

During that trip, while the Secretary of State loftily discussed Soviet aggression with Deng, Habib met his Chinese counterpart to discuss exchanges. The talks made little progress and Deng made clear to Kissinger why. "On these questions … we proceed from political and strategic considerations to deal with … bilateral relations." The Chinese had retreated to their line — adopted intermittently, but not consistently, since 1971 — that high-level agreements must precede the further development of people-to-people contacts.[31] Kissinger's proposals for just such high-level agreements were rejected out of hand, too. Deng condemned as "not yet realistic" the proposed American draft communiqué to be signed during Ford's visit and showed little interest in the minor rhetorical concessions on Taiwan that the US offered as a bargaining chip.[32]

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[27] Habib, Lord and Solomon to Kissinger, 6 October 1975, "China Exchanges, October-Dec 1975", DFWL, RG59, NACP.
[28] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 113.
[29] Del Pero, *Eccentric Realist*.
[30] Habib, Lord and Solomon to Kissinger, 18 September 1975, "China Exchanges, October-Dec 1975", "China Exchanges, October-Dec 1975", DFWL, RG59, NACP.
[31] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 121.
[32] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 125; Habib, Gleysteen and Lord to Kissinger, 4 August 1975, "China Exchanges, January 1-31 May 1975", DFWL, RG59, NACP.

It was in response to this stonewalling that Kissinger heeded his aides' call to again forcefully push the Chinese to cooperate over exchanges. In a meeting with Deng and Qiao, Kissinger explained to the Chinese why the US was attaching such significance to exchanges:

> We think it is important to show some vitality and forward movement in our bilateral relationship. We believe … that China, having survived 2,000 years of its history without extensive contact with the United States, may manage to stagger on for many more years without extensive exchange between our various cultural troupes … But to us that is not the issue. To us the issue is how to be in the best position to resist hegemonial [Soviet] aspirations in the West as well as in the East. And if that is the case, it is important that we show some movement in our relationship. It is difficult to gain public support for what may have to be done if China is not an important element in American consciousness, and it cannot be unless there is some improvement in our bilateral relationship. … if there is an inequality in American public consciousness between relations with China and the Soviet Union, it is because nothing very substantial is happening in our relationship.[33]

Perceiving all aspects of rapprochement through the lens of joint resistance to Moscow, Kissinger was arguing that, if the Sino-American security and political relationship was to be preserved, public support for ties to China must be buttressed with meaningful people-to-people activity. Kissinger even hinted at a triangular diplomacy in people-to-people contacts: an allusion to comparative "public consciousness" of Soviet-American people-to-people relations was intended to convince the Chinese that they should not get left behind in this area of the relationship any more than in the realm of strategic cooperation. It was a telling exchange, even if it engendered little immediate response from Deng.

Kissinger's October trip was the bitterest he experienced during his time in office. The Chinese proposal for a draft communiqué for the Ford summit was a bellicose document straight out of the Korean War or Cultural Revolution; Qiao said the Chinese would rather have no communiqué than meet the US half-way.[34] Kissinger's demarche on exchanges had similarly brought little effect. A further blow was dealt to the NCUSCR during Kissinger's visit when the Chinese stated that, because of the lack of progress in the high-level relationship, both exchanges as a whole and those in each individual field for 1976 should remain at the *actual* level of 1975: in the NCUSCR's case, just three

[33] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 121.
[34] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 126.

exchanges. The Chinese had originally agreed to five cultural and educational exchanges to be conducted through the NCUSCR in that year but the cancellations of the performing arts troupe and the delegation of mayors had meant that only three had in fact taken place. Beijing now insisted that this lower figure of three exchanges be the ceiling for the year ahead — and, it was implied, for all future years before serious progress towards normalisation was achieved. This new restriction on contact amounted to both a recognition and a protest by the Chinese at what they saw as the worsening overall relationship.[35]

In the days after his return, Kissinger revised down the administration's already modest expectations for the forthcoming presidential summit, talking down the likelihood of agreements in people-to-people contacts. For the first time, he admitted to Ford: "our relationship with China has cooled".[36] USLO chief Bush had been present for the querulous behaviour of the Chinese and was so despairing of Chinese obstinacy that he asked Kissinger if it was not too late just to call off the president's trip.[37]

The ongoing limits placed on cultural and educational exchanges by Beijing again seriously threatened the NCUSCR's ability to remain a going concern. Upon hearing that the Chinese would limit the group to three exchanges in the coming year, the executive committee of the NCUSCR ordered that "every effort should be made to conserve financial resources". A revised budget for the year was drawn up and the group would lay off some of its already limited number of staff. While sympathetically offering to help the NCUSCR raise funds, the State Department was frank about the future prospects for exchanges: the government made clear that they did not believe the high-level progress that the Chinese were insisting on could be made until after the 1976 election. State thus urged the NCUSCR's leadership to press back against the Chinese before the reduced exchange activity became an accepted reality; the group resolved to warn the Chinese that reduced activity would be read by the domestic American audience as proof of a setback in Sino-American relations.

[35] Minutes of 29th meeting of NCUSCR executive committee, 28 October 1975, Folder 78, Box 6, Series 1, DPMP, RAC.
[36] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 126.
[37] Bush to Kissinger, 5 November 1975, "China Exchanges, October-Dec 1975", DFWL, RG59, NACP.

Privately, however, neither the State Department nor the NCUSCR held out much hope that they could dissuade the Chinese from their restrictive stance.[38]

Kissinger's October trip revealed a fundamental contradiction between the approach of the two governments to exchanges and people-to-people contacts in the run up to and course of the Ford summit. As Kissinger had explained to Deng, the US government believed that the barriers posed to substantive agreements in high-level relations demanded greater cooperation in other facets of the relationship, including exchanges. Deepening or at least sustaining people-to-people contacts would prevent the overall relationship, including the high-level diplomatic relationship, from breaking down as a result of the deadlock in negotiations towards normalisation. Such a breakdown, Kissinger argued, would not be in the interests of either side. Beijing saw the situation differently. They blamed the US for the stagnated high-level relationship and argued that Washington "owed them a debt" for decades of illegitimate support of the Kuomintang, which they claimed amounted to interference in Chinese internal affairs. Payment of this debt should come, Beijing argued, in the form of American compromise on the issue of Taiwan.[39]

The Chinese either failed to comprehend or refused to acknowledge that Ford's lack of domestic political capital had narrowed his room for manoeuvre in normalisation negotiations. Beijing thus saw people-to-people contacts not as an opportunity to paper over cracks in the high-level relationship but instead as another means by which to heap pressure on Ford to make the sacrifices necessary to move towards normalisation or, at the very least, to stop the trend towards renewed American links with Taiwan that had emerged since 1974. Thus, at the very same time that the US government was seeking new agreements and avoiding conflicts in exchange diplomacy, their counterparts in the PRC were deliberately reducing and undermining exchange activity.

In spite of this contradiction, Kissinger and the Ford administration, lacking alternative options, did not wholly abandon their plan to seek common ground over exchanges during the

[38] Minutes of 29th meeting of NCUSCR executive committee, 28 October 1975, Folder 78, Box 6, Series 1, DPMP, RAC.
[39] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 152.

presidential summit, instead merely moderating their expectations for this gambit's success. After his visit, Kissinger told Ford that, though he was confident that the Chinese did want the visit to go ahead, he was much less certain that his efforts to convince Deng of the necessity "to show concrete progress in our bilateral relations".[40] A fortnight before Ford departed for China, Kissinger suggested to Ford that during the trip he should "[b]riefly touch on bilateral relations in a relaxed fashion" and argue to the Chinese that a lack of progress on such issues "will lead much of the world to believe our relationship is stagnating, which is not in the interests of either of us". "Thus, we believe the most realistic approach to your trip to Peking is that of a sustaining visit, an effort to maintain what has been a useful dialogue on world issues and a symbolic relationship of strategic value to both sides." This was to be a very different affair to the week that changed the world.[41]

III: THREE DAYS THAT CHANGED LITTLE:

FORD IN CHINA, DECEMBER 1975

Ford's visit took place between 1 and 5 December 1975. Ford's cabinet reshuffle — later remembered as the Halloween Massacre — had cost Beijing allies among the administration: Kissinger's loss of his National Security Advisor hat diluted his role; Bush was pulled out of Beijing to take over the CIA and, most importantly to the Chinese, the cold warrior James Schlesinger was fired as Secretary of Defense. Beijing had recognised this weakened their hand and, in the month after the reshuffle, did everything they could to ensure that the summit went ahead.[42] Nonetheless, the Chinese desire for the summit to take place was not enough to prevent the visit from being insipid from beginning to end.

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[40] Scowcroft to Ford, 21 October 1975, GFL, available online at https://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document/0331/1553941.pdf. Accessed 4 October 2017.
[41] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 132.
[42] Bush to Scowcroft, 21 November 1975, "China Exchanges, October-Dec 1975", DFWL, RG59, NACP.

Correctly foreseeing how difficult negotiating a communiqué would be — ultimately none was agreed — Kissinger again tried to convince the Chinese of the value of reaching agreements over bilateral and exchange contacts. The Secretary of State tried to tempt Qiao with the possibility of American purchases of Chinese oil or perhaps access to American exports of "equipment of a special nature".[43] Kissinger seemed to be, by this stage, casting about for any area of possible agreement. Counterpart negotiations on exchanges had again failed to make progress: the final Chinese proposal for the package of exchanges for the coming year included a total of 17 exchanges, with 12 of these to be managed by the CSCPRC. The Chinese had not changed their mind about reducing the role of the NCUSCR, insisting on their previous limit of three exchanges for that organisation. Similarly, they had not rectified the imbalance in the direction of CSCPRC exchanges, proposing seven Chinese delegations travel to the US and only five be received in the PRC.[44]

Kissinger further entreated Deng, stressing to the vice premier that the American public expected the summit to lead to progress in bilateral relations. This was not mere rhetoric: an indicative article published on 3 December in the *Christian Science Monitor* was entitled "What Ford can ask from China" and argued that, although it was clear even before the summit that Ford would not be able to find agreement with the Chinese on Taiwan, progress on exchanges should be possible. This was necessary, the author argued, because "it is disturbing to many Americans that, after three years, exchanges have reached a plateau and a low plateau at that".[45] Nonetheless, Deng still did not budge, telling Kissinger again that, "Logically speaking, the argument about expanding exchanges before normalization is not tenable".[46]

On the final morning of negotiations, the president himself took off where Kissinger had left off, imploring Deng: "I would hope that in our own relations, Mr Vice Premier, we could move in a broadening sense, as friends, in the direction of trade relations, and educational and cultural exchanges. They are very meaningful … in the support that comes from the American people for the

[43] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 135.
[44] Berris to Rosen, Yost and Barnett, 13 January 1976, "General Correspondence – 1975" [*sic*], Box 131, ADBP.
[45] 'What Ford can ask from China', *Christian Science Monitor*, 3 December 1975.
[46] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 135.

forward movement of our overall relations". Deng rebuffed Ford, referring him to the discussions during Kissinger's frosty October visit. The president continued, "But I would reiterate, Mr Vice Premier, how it is beneficial for us to expand the visits and exchanges from our country to yours and your country to ours … It is a step that strengthens the ties between our two countries".[47]

Deng seemed embarrassed by the persistence. He may have intended his next comment to push Ford on the defensive; he might have been trying his luck in light of the munificent mood of his guests. Were there not, Deng asked, some advanced computers "of a speed of 10 million times" that the US could not agree to supply to China?[48] Deng knew perfectly well why the US had previously not agreed to sell such computers to China: PRC officials had been complaining for several years about Cold War export controls restricting their purchase of American technology. The most recent Chinese request to purchase top-end American computers had been declined by the US government on 23 September.[49] Kissinger admitted that it was difficult for Washington to sell more powerful technology to Beijing than they would Moscow, but he said that the US would nonetheless be willing to provide computers of "considerable quality". Deng was intrigued. He said nothing more about such transfers requiring further political progress and instead placed the burden on the US: "we do not think it matters if perhaps you at the present will find it difficult to proceed; it would not be of very great consequence". Ford reaffirmed, "Mr Vice Premier, in principle we would be very anxious to be helpful in the computer area, and I think we can be … I think with the overall attitude that we have, progress can be made".[50]

Ford and Kissinger wanted to make clear that this was no false promise. Briefing documents drawn up for the summit make clear that, as far back as October, the White House had been considering bending their own export controls in order to be able to negotiate the sale of the

[47] Ibid., Document 137.
[48] Ibid.
[49] DOS paper, "PRC Economics and Trade Relations", undated, "19-23 October 1975 – PRC Briefing Book for China – Bilateral Issues (1)", Box 21, Trip Briefing Books and Cables of Henry Kissinger 1974-77 (TBBCHAK1974-77), GFL.
[50] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 137.

advanced technology that Beijing had been seeking to buy.[51] Extraordinarily, the two men now carefully explained to Deng how China could circumvent US export controls. Deng should drop his insistence on "trade channels" and have PRCLO chief Huang Zhen tell the State Department what they needed. The Secretary of State would then talk to the company in question himself and they would find a computer that met Chinese requirements but also had "technical differences" that would allow the US "to preserve the principle with the Soviet Union". The president added his approval: "The Secretary has suggested the better procedure for the handling of the matter, and I would like you to know, Mr Vice Premier, that we are very anxious to be helpful in this area. If we follow the right procedure it makes it very possible that we can cooperate".[52]

Ford's personal involvement in this initiative was remarkable. The president had added his own approval to the flagrant undermining of Cold War export restrictions that were enshrined in both treaties with Western allies and in American domestic law. This was the final culmination for the White House's six-month search for some agreement of substance during the presidential summit. The Ford administration's strategy of focusing on developing bilateral contacts and the exchange programme in lieu of political negotiations towards normalisation had brought only minimal success. Kissinger's attempt to prime the Chinese for a qualitative improvement in bilateral relations — an agreement on the claims and assets issue, the beginning of direct air and sea links, or the beginning of qualitatively deeper exchanges — had been abandoned after the Secretary of State's acrimonious visit. Even the more limited objective of an agreement to expand ongoing exchange contacts had not been achieved; neither Kissinger nor Ford could get past Deng's stonewalling on the need for political progress before a deepening of other aspects of the relationship. The vice premier had at least shown interest in American computer technology but this was hardly in line with the original objective of

[51] A discussion of this issue had been in Kissinger's briefing materials for his October preparatory visit. DOS paper, "PRC Economics and Trade Relations", undated, "19-23 October 1975 – PRC Briefing Book for China – Bilateral Issues (1)", Box 21, TBBCHAK1974-77, GFL. Similar notes are found in the briefing materials for Ford's December summit. See DOS paper, "PRC Economics and Trade Relations", undated, "28 November-7 December 1975 – Far East Briefing Book – Peking – Bilateral Issues – Scowcroft's Copy", Trip Briefing Books and Cables of President Ford, 1974-77, GFL.

[52] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 146.

finding public proof of cordial relations: the bending of US export laws ensured that this tacit agreement would not be publicly announced as an outcome of the summit.

Why, then, were Kissinger and Ford effusively enthusiastic about providing this assistance? In large part, it seems that both men were relieved to have the Chinese show interest in any American suggestion. Kissinger in particular had become exasperated with the patent uninterest shown by the Chinese in meeting after meeting and to proposal after proposal. At least the discussion of technology transfers provided some substance during a summit that was dedicated almost exclusively to symbolism: normalisation talks had not progressed an inch, no communiqué was to be issued and, immediately after this discussion, Ford and Deng's talks gave way to the vice premier's lecture on Tibet. The US government had long identified Chinese interest in American technology as one of Beijing's objectives in rapprochement.[53] Now, it seemed that where Deng refused to seriously negotiate over aspects of the bilateral relationship, he was at least prepared to work with the Ford administration to gain access to American technology. He sought to keep the tone of the meeting tepid, but the vice premier's interest in the offer was real: the Chinese made at least two more attempts to buy advanced computers from the US in 1976 and ultimately, thanks to State Department pressure, were approved to buy a system from the Control Data Corporation in the autumn of that year.[54]

This transfer of computer technology was an important early step in a new direction in Sino-American relations. During the Ford summit, Kissinger and Ford had given away a promise to help increase access to US technology for free in the hopes that this might restore momentum to the relationship. Perhaps, too, they had been suckered by Chinese insistence that the US owed China a debt: where the Ford administration was hamstrung on the political issue of Taiwan, it could at least tide Beijing over with technical assistance. The Chinese desire for high technology, however, also

[53] Lord and Solomon, 'People's Republic of China', 15 August 1974, "China Exchanges, August 9-December 31, 1974", DFWL, RG59, NACP.
[54] Habib and Greenwald to Kissinger, 10 May 1976, "1974-78 NSD 246 and 247", Subject Files, 1969-1978, RG59, NACP; Aubert to USLO, 21 October 1976, "China, unnumbered items (36) 12-29 October 1976", Box 6, Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, 1974-77 (KSWWOF1974-77), GFL.

suggested that the US might soon regain some leverage over Beijing: science and technology cooperation was the one area of the relationship that the Chinese wished to expand irrespective of political progress. This had been further shown in the exchange package the Chinese had proposed, in which comfortably more than two-thirds of the delegations would be focused on science and technology. Ford and Kissinger had decided that an already fraught summit was not the time to play hardball with Deng over China's desired technology assistance but, as the following section will show, there were other Americans who were insisting that the Chinese should pay a higher price for valuable American expertise and hardware. It took time for such thinking to spread to the White House, while Deng's second purge from office briefly tempered Chinese interest in American science and technology. Following Deng's return to power in 1977, however, the US government was to show itself far more adroit at turning the Chinese tactic of linking cooperation in bilateral relations to high-level negotiations back on Beijing; as the following chapter will argue, it was this strategy that ultimately unlocked the ultimate prize of normalisation.

IV: THE TOUGH SELL:

THE CSCPRC TAKES A HARD-NOSED STRATEGY TO SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION

The strong Chinese interest in American science and technology that Deng had shown during the Ford summit was already well-known to the CSCPRC. After initial teething problems developing exchanges with the PRC in 1971 and 1972, the CSCPRC had witnessed a steady increase in Chinese desire for cooperation. By 1975, Chinese hunger for access to American expertise had made the CSCPRC by far the most active American exchange organisation: that year the group was involved in 12 exchanges, two more than 1974, at a time when the NCUSCR's figures for the same years were three and two exchanges respectively in those two prior years. It had also, however, created its own problems: this extensive programme of visits had stretched CSCPRC resources and tested the

enthusiasm of American organisations for assisting China in what seemed to be lopsided collaboration. In 1976, these tensions came to a head and the CSCPRC pushed back against the Chinese, threatening to curtail their cooperation in science and technology exchanges if Beijing did not respond to the desires of Americans involved in the exchange programme. This hard-nosed approach put the CSCRPC, for the first time, at odds with the US government's approach to the exchange relationship: the government was sympathetic to the group's demands but resistant to any action that might further threaten the exchange relationship and its symbolic role as evidence of continuing rapprochement. In spite of the resistance from both Beijing and Washington, the group demonstrated its independence by refusing to back down from its demands. This did not immediately elicit Chinese compliance but, by the end of 1976, the number of scientific and technological exchanges in each direction had been rebalanced, finally resolving a longstanding cause of resentment among the CSCPRC.

If the decision by the Chinese government to curtail cultural and educational exchanges threatened the NCUSCR's financial viability, the simultaneous expansion of scientific and technological exchanges caused no lesser problems for the CSCPRC. Already in July 1975, the group had informed Kissinger that the rapidly growing number of Chinese delegations to the US was stretching both their financial resources and the enthusiasm for hospitality among host American institutions; any further increase in contacts would require a significant expansion of the group's budget, personnel, and, likely, its domestic constituency. Nonetheless, the CSCPRC remained enthusiastic about expanding and deepening exchanges — on the condition that any expanded programme address longstanding American requests of the Chinese.[55]

A measure of progress towards this had been achieved during the STAPRC visit to the US led by Zhou Peiyuan in September 1975. Zhou had (at least ostensibly) agreed to the longstanding request that exchanges begin to move away from "survey visits" — the whistle-stop tours that moved from city to city every couple of days — and towards longer stays at a smaller number of locations that would facilitate deeper collaboration. The CSCPRC was also heartened that in a number of research

[55] CSCPRC paper, 'The future of academic exchanges with the PRC', June 1975, "1975 – Report for Secretary of State", CSCNAS.

areas, such as agriculture and seismology, the desired ongoing, frequent and meaningful scholarly cooperation was indeed taking place by 1975.[56] The CSCPRC was primarily concerned with the Sino-American contacts that it oversaw itself but the group also took an interest in scientific cooperation not under its auspices. Senior members of both the CSCPRC and the NCUSCR thus noted approvingly the experiences of two Chinese-American scientists. Yang Zhenning was a physicist at Stony Brook University in New York, a member of the NCUSCR and the 1957 recipient of the Nobel prize in physics. Yang had been one of the very first American scientists to travel to the PRC in summer 1971 and, by 1976, had made five further trips to collaborate with Chinese colleagues.[57] Similarly, Man-Chiang Niu of Temple University had made annual summer visits to the Chinese Academy of Science's Institute of Zoology beginning in 1973.[58]

These positive developments notwithstanding, the CSCPRC was deeply frustrated at continuing Chinese obstinacy in other areas. The two main points of conflict remained Beijing's refusal to permit social science and humanities delegations into China and to equalise the number of scientific delegations travelling to and from China. The CSCPRC had proposed a number of possible social science and humanities delegations for 1976 but the STAPRC had not agreed to receive a single one.[59] CSCPRC frustration at restrictions on subject matter was nothing, however, compared to the group's exasperation with the ongoing struggle over imbalances in exchange traffic. By January 1976, the Chinese had sent 21 delegations to be received by the CSCPRC and accepted only two-thirds as many, 14.[60] This imbalance had been widening over the past three years and had now reached a stage where an internal document went as far as to say that the Chinese approach to contacts was threatening to become "mutually exclusive with the purpose for which [the CSCPRC] was established", namely expanding mutually beneficial bilateral scientific cooperation.[61]

[56] DeAngelis to Handler, 8 January 1976, "1976 – Exchange Agreement – Negotiations", CSCNAS.
[57] *NFTNC*, Vol. 2, No. 1, November 1971; and, Vol. 6, No. 1, April 1976.
[58] *China Exchange Newsletter* (*CEN*), Vol. 3, No. 5, November 1975, and Vol. 4, No. 5, October 1976.
[59] DeAngelis to Handler, 8 January 1976, "1976 – Exchange Agreement – Negotiations", CSCNAS.
[60] Press to Han, 8 January 1976, "1976 – Exchange Agreement – Negotiations", CSCNAS.
[61] CSCPRC, 'Discussion of 1976 Exchange Negotiations', 30 January 1976, Ibid.

The strong feelings of the CSCPRC leadership were further stoked by greater demands that the Chinese had simultaneously placed on their American hosts — even while they continued to limit US access to the PRC. In response to the CSCPRC's request for lengthier stays for delegations at each site in China, the STAPRC had enthusiastically asked that their own research delegations be allowed to spend longer at the American academic institutions that they visited.[62] Critical to this issue was the increasing focus on US high technology among the delegations proposed by the Chinese. By 1976, half of the delegations the PRC had sent to the US had been concerned with advanced technology, in subjects such as telecommunications, petrochemicals, mining, and agricultural mechanisation that all had direct, practical application to China's development and modernisation.[63] The high-level delegation of STAPRC staff led by Zhou Peiyuan had, in recognition of its status, even been allowed access to the most cutting edge of American technology, visiting institutions focused on thermonuclear fusion, high-energy astrophysics, aerodynamics and oil and petroleum geotectonics.[64] The STAPRC had shown a clear preference for visiting commercial firms and industrial laboratories and expressed such limited interest in pure academic research exchange that the CSCPRC had begun to wonder whether many of the delegations received even fell within the purview of a scholarly group.[65] Indeed, both the CSCPRC and the US government were quietly beginning to wonder if the Chinese were not simply using this access to steal American industrial and commercial secrets. For example, the Chinese had begun to make extensive use of American agricultural mechanisation techniques — an area which had seen close Sino-American scholarly collaboration — without even acknowledging the origins of the methods used.[66]

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[62] *CEN*, Vol. 4, No. 2, April 1976.
[63] CSCPRC, 'Discussion of 1976 Exchange Negotiations', 30 January 1976, "1976 – Exchange Agreement – Negotiations", CSCNAS.
[64] *CEN*, Vol. 3, No. 4, September 1975.
[65] CSCPRC, 'Discussion of 1976 Exchange Negotiations', 30 January 1976, "1976 – Exchange Agreement – Negotiations", CSCNAS.
[66] USLO to Kissinger, 11 October 1975, [unmarked folder, likely "China Exchanges, July-Sept 1975"], DFWL, RG59, NACP; CSCPRC paper, 'The future of academic exchanges with the PRC', June 1975, "1975 – Report for Secretary of State", CSCNAS.

The CSCPRC believed that these increased demands, while burdensome, also presented an opportunity. The group consciously moved towards a confrontational position based on a belief that it could hurt the PRC if it placed restrictions on Chinese delegations to the US comparable to those Beijing forced on those travelling to China.[67] After the lacklustre Chinese package proposal for exchanges in 1976 had been revealed at the Ford summit, the CSCPRC chair, Massachusetts Institute of Technology geophysicist Frank Press, wrote to Han Xu, the deputy head of PRCLO. Press forthrightly explained that the CSCPRC "finds it increasingly difficult to operate" within the structure of exchanges insisted by the Chinese: "Industrial organizations, universities, and individual scientists are reluctant to continue serving as hosts to visiting Chinese guests, frankly questioning a program in which they invest time and effort and see lessening opportunities for reciprocation". Press argued that it was "imperative" that the Chinese agree to receive two more CSCPRC sponsored delegations to bring the total number of groups sent and received into equilibrium.[68] Hoping for a positive response, Press did not make explicit in that letter the CSCPRC's "back-up position": "that we will allow in only as many groups as the Chinese allow to go to China".[69]

While the CSCPRC waited to see how Beijing would respond, they had to deal with resistance to this offensive stance at home. The government, as we have seen, shared much of the CSCPRC's frustration at the barriers Beijing placed on deeper cooperation. Nonetheless, Washington also believed the CSCPRC was picking a fight at an inopportune time: the disputes of 1974 and 1975 notwithstanding, exchanges were one of the few areas of the relationship that continued to publicly symbolise rapprochement. The CSCPRC position threatened this by risking a reduction in the total number of delegations travelling back and forth in the hopes of improving its individual organisational position. Even before negotiations with the Chinese had been concluded, it was made clear to Keatley that State was "somewhat unhappy" with the CSCPRC's planned stance.[70]

[67] DeAngelis to Handler, 8 January 1976, "1976 – Exchange Agreement – Negotiations", CSCNAS.
[68] Press to Han, 8 January 1976, Ibid.
[69] DeAngelis to Handler, 8 January 1976, Ibid.
[70] Press to Handler, 22 January 1976, Ibid.

Nonetheless, the government's response to the CSCPRC's assertiveness was remarkably mild. While the State Department made clear to Keatley and the CSCPRC that their approach to the issue was not that which the government would have chosen, the government also stated that it respected the independence of the group and that it would do nothing to prevent them having a free hand in their negotiations with the Chinese.[71] This support was testament to the close trust that had been developed between the CSCPRC and its government backers. While the government was reluctant to see the exchange programme suffer any further disruption at this delicate time, they believed it was more important to support their most favoured scientific exchange organisation in its struggle with Beijing. The State Department knew, too, that the CSCPRC was quite right that the health of exchanges could not be sustained if the American scientific, academic and commercial communities that hosted visitors were alienated.

The Chinese response was less sympathetic. PRCLO and Zhou Peiyuan refused two CSCPRC requests for an increase in the number of delegations to China from five to seven, pushing the CSCPRC to make good on its threat: the group told their Chinese interlocutors that they would postpone two of the PRC's delegations — on mining and agriculture — until 1977.[72] For now, the Chinese did not blink.

However, when the package of exchanges for 1977 was announced, it seemed that the CSCPRC's tough approach towards the Chinese had borne fruit — eventually. In February 1977, the CSCPRC announced that the Chinese had agreed to a full — and balanced — programme of six delegations in each direction, a seemingly minor but nonetheless significant switch from the previous ratio of five to seven in Beijing's favour.[73] The following month, the NCUSCR reported the even more welcome news that the Chinese had proposed that in 1977 the group would oversee a total of seven cultural and educations exchanges — more than twice as many as 1976. NCUSCR president

[71] CSCPRC, 'Discussion of 1976 Exchange Negotiations', 30 January 1976, Ibid.
[72] Keatley to Handler, 23 January 1976, and Press and Keatley to Zhou Peiyuan, 23 January 1976, Ibid.
[73] *CEN*, Vol. 5, No. 1, February 1977.

Rosen described the offer as "far beyond expectations and far beyond our present budget capacity". It was, he said, "the kind of challenge we have all been hoping for".[74]

Only still-inaccessible Chinese documents from the STAPRC, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other central decision-making bodies can reveal the role of the lobbying by the CSCPRC, as well as the NCUSCR and the US government, in this decision. Certainly, there were other factors at work. Mao's death on 9 September 1976 enthroned Hua Guofeng, who immediately purged the political radical Chinese leaders condemned as the Gang of Four. That coterie of far-left leaders had spent the previous decade decrying interaction with all that was foreign and had served as a perennial counterweight to those in Beijing that sought to expand contacts such as the Sino-American exchange programme. Hua quickly committed his government to greater openness to the outside world; a more active programme of exchanges was a natural corollary of this.[75]

What is beyond doubt, however, is that the CSCPRC had successfully established the terms on which expanded contacts would take place. Over the next two years and beyond, Hua and subsequently Deng would both seek to use scientific and technological cooperation with the US as an important input to the Four Modernisations programme. The CSCPRC had, through tough bargaining and a readiness to curtail exchanges, ensured that this would be a more balanced and mutually beneficial partnership than the lopsided interaction of the mid-1970s. The CSCPRC's uncompromising stance influenced the US government's approach to scientific cooperation, too. The CSCPRC's insistence that the US held a strong hand in negotiating exchanges was in contrast to the Ford administration's willingness to provide advanced computer technology to the Chinese for free. The Ford administration tolerated the CSCPRC taking a starkly different approach to negotiating cooperation with Beijing and made only a muted protest about the group's willingness to risk confrontation with the Chinese, in spite of official fears that this could further unravel bilateral relations. Nonetheless, the government was not, in 1976, convinced that this tactic would force

[74] Rosen to NCUSCR board of directors, 10 March 1977, "NCUSCR, 1976-77", Box 131, ADBP.
[75] Vogel, *Deng*, 188-190.

Chinese compromise and itself had no appetite for the further conflict in high-level relations that a more hard-nosed governmental approach to bilateral cooperation might bring. In the two years that followed, however, the Carter administration showed itself far more adept at following the CSCPRC's lead and using the carrot of science and technology cooperation to induce concessions from the Chinese. One important reason for this was that Carter selected two of the CSCPRC's most senior figures, Frank Press and Ann Keatley, to serve as senior science advisors. As the following chapter will show, under Press and Keatley, the Carter White House deployed the CSCPRC's negotiating strategy to unlock the biggest prize of all: normalisation.

V: CUTTING THE NOOSE, CUTTING THE KNOT:

POLITICISED EXCHANGE VISITS BY THOSE IN AND OUT OF OFFICE IN 1976

A breakthrough in negotiations between American exchange organisations and the Chinese had to wait, then, until 1977. Progress in government-to-government talks was no more forthcoming. During Ford's final year in office, domestic distractions to both governments became more acute: Ford faced a serious primary challenge from Governor Ronald Reagan and Beijing rocked after the deaths of Zhou and, then, Mao. The only notable episodes in Sino-American relations during 1976 arose from visits by politicians outside of the executive branch to China.

As the White House withdrew from assertive foreign policy making, senators and congressmen sought to take the initiative which they believed that the White House lacked and open direct negotiations with Beijing. The Chinese government actively encouraged the participation of politicians outside of the executive branch in Sino-American relations throughout 1976, maintaining the flow of congressional delegations and targeting a number of former (and, perhaps, future) American leaders. Beijing used these visits to vehemently make the case for the US breaking with Taiwan and finalising the normalisation process. The rhetoric they deployed to do so alarmed their guests. Nonetheless, by the time of Ford's defeat in the November general election, Beijing had

successfully convinced many of those it had hosted to privately and publicly make the case that the next administration should promptly seek to reach a final deal with the PRC to establish diplomatic relations.

The second half of 1976 saw three high-ranking congressional delegations travel to China. In July, Senate Minority Leader Hugh Scott returned to China, having previously led the first congressional delegation to the PRC in 1972. Scott's travelling companion on that earlier trip, Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, separately revisited the PRC in September 1976 before another six senators travelled together in November led by Senator Carl Curtis.[76]

Congressional delegations to China were regular but not so frequent that a place on them was not prized — both as the means to see the elusive Middle Kingdom, and as an indication of the guest's relative importance among peers.[77] Beijing perceived an opportunity in the strong interest of American congressmen to visit the PRC. During the tense negotiations of Kissinger's October 1975 visit, both sides had agreed to maintain a rate of one congressional delegation a year travelling to China.[78] That the actual figure for 1976 exceeded this several times over was revealing of Chinese willingness to allow a greater number of exchanges when doing so served their interests, rather than just those of American non-governmental organisations or the US government. Beijing did not want the Ford administration to draw benefit from these contacts and the Chinese did not arrange these additional congressional delegations through the White House. Indeed, when, in January 1976, Kissinger's aides suggested a date for the officially-arranged annual congressional visit for the coming year, they found that their suggestion of an April date had been pre-empted by Beijing having already independently invited a congressional group for that month.[79]

The Chinese were organising other visits without the American government's involvement or approval, too. In December 1975, an ailing Zhou received as one of his final foreign guests Julie

[76] *NFTNC*, Vol. 6, No. 4, December 1976.
[77] See, for example, lobbying by Senator John Sparkman in April 1976. Solomon to Friedersdorf, 27 April 1976, "April 28-30, 1976", Box 41, NSCEAPASF, GFL.
[78] Memcon: Han, Lord, Gleysteen and Solomon, 30 January 1976, "China Exchanges, October-Dec 1975", DFWL, RG59, NACP.
[79] Kissinger to USLO, 31 January 1976, Ibid.

Nixon Eisenhower, the former president's daughter, and her husband, the equally blue-blooded David Eisenhower. The couple were afforded many privileges, including a meeting with Mao.[80] More controversially, Beijing showed further appreciation for the Nixon family by receiving the former president himself in February 1976. The trip had been arranged behind the back of the Ford administration when PRCLO head Huang Zhen had secretly travelled to Nixon's California home in August 1975.[81] The visit was calculated by Beijing to publicly contrast the dramatic breakthroughs in Sino-American relations achieved under Nixon with the slowdown in governmental relations under his successor. In a cutting dismissal of Ford's summit trip of December 1975, an internal Chinese publication claimed that Nixon's visit was "the most noteworthy event in US-PRC relations since the establishment of liaison offices in 1973".[82]

In fact, the White House's reaction to the trip was more complex. On the one hand, the government recognised that Nixon's travel had been an embarrassing reminder of lacklustre Sino-American ties and shared Beijing's view that it had hurt the president politically. On the other, Solomon read the trip as a reassuring indication of continuing Chinese interest in rapprochement: Beijing would hardly have bothered to bring Nixon and his significant secret service detail over to the PRC if Chinese interest in rapprochement had truly soured.[83]

Scott's congressional delegation to China in July had the formal approval and support of the White House that unofficial trips by the Nixon family lacked. Yet, this approval did not prevent the Republican Senator's trip from offering a far more serious challenge to Sino-American ties than that of Nixon's tourism. Senator Scott made his return to China on a presidential plane and bearing a letter of introduction from Ford.[84] In spite of the air of formality this lent to the envoy, Gates, the new USLO chief, had been careful to warn Scott that this was not a favourable moment for discussing matters of substance with the Chinese. Ignoring this warning and spurned on by his companion Robert Barnett,

[80] ACHK to Kissinger, 3 January 1976, Ibid.; *NFTNC*, Vol. 6, No. 1, April 1976.
[81] Solomon to Kissinger, 23 August 1975, "August 1975", Box 40, NSCEAPASF, GFL.
[82] Solomon, 'Evening report – PRC', 22 June 1976, "June 10-29, 1976", Box 42, NSCEAPASF, GFL.
[83] Solomon, 'Briefing Item', 23 February 1976, "February 1976", Box 41, NSCEAPASF, GFL.
[84] Solomon to Scowcroft, 22 June 1976, "May 27-28, 1976", Box 41, NSCEAPASF, GFL.

the director of the Asia Society and brother of Doak, Scott had self-importantly (and incorrectly) informed Zhang Chunqiao that the letter from Ford afforded him personal authority to negotiate on Sino-American relations, including the status of Taiwan.[85] Zhang's response to Scott's attempt to re-open talks over the status Taiwan was stark: he made clear that there would be no negotiation with the US over the island and that the renegade province could *only* be liberated by force. In what Scott later described to Ford as a "chilling" comment, Zhang went as far as describing Taiwan as "a noose around the neck of the United States" — and threatened that, if the US did not take it off, the Chinese army would gladly "cut it off".[86]

In pushing the Chinese on the Taiwan question Scott was only doing what dozens of senators and congressmen thought the executive branch should be doing. A groundswell of public opinion had risen up in 1975 and 1976 that held that the Ford administration was letting the Chinese off when it came to Taiwan. This was powerfully demonstrated in August 1976 when, much to the discomfort of the White House, the Republican Party added to its official party platform for the coming election support for "the freedom and independence of our friend and ally, the Republic of China".[87] Under this pressure, Ford himself even publicly (and incorrectly) implied that the Shanghai Communiqué had included a commitment by China to use peaceful means to reunifying the country.[88] The Chinese had not failed to notice the renewed support for the ROC among both "official and non-official" spokespeople.[89] Thus, for the same reason that Scott felt confident taking a forthright position on the issue, the Chinese found themselves compelled to bite back fiercely against this reverse tide in public discourse.

The Scott incident was a further example of the unresolved contradiction, present throughout both the Nixon and Ford years, between the White House's desire to broaden political support for the

[85] Gates to Kissinger, 13 July 1975, "Memorandums", Box 4, Subject Files, 1969-1978, RG59, NACP.
[86] Bush to Kissinger, 14 July 1976, "China, unnumbered items (31) 12-14 July 1976", Box 6, KSWWOF1974-77, GFL.
[87] A copy of the official platform is available at: http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25843. Accessed 4 October 2017.
[88] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 157.
[89] Ibid., Document 152.

Sino-American relationship and at the same time preserve complete central control over negotiations with the Chinese. Sending senators and congressmen to be lavishly received by the Chinese was expected by the White House to dispel lingering images of the PRC as a revolutionary ideological foe. After all, Ford knew from his own 1972 visit to China that this method worked.[90] Kissinger had further exacerbated this tension since Nixon's resignation: in his attempts to find some kind of flexibility in normalisation negotiations the Secretary of State had used these visits as a way of testing the water for future negotiating positions. In 1975, the State Department had briefed politicians travelling to China with novel formulations on the Taiwan problem to slip into conversation to measure the Chinese response.[91] Simultaneously, Kissinger would personally tell the Chinese that these same delegations had no authority to negotiate, thereby distancing himself from any adverse reaction from Beijing. The passivity of US China policy since the Ford summit meant that Scott himself had not been tasked with sounding his interlocutor out on Taiwan but it was unsurprising that the Chinese eventually reacted angrily to propositions which contradicted Beijing's firmly stated stance on the island.

Scott's comments were also a consequence of the unresolved tensions in the PRC's approach to congressional delegations. These had been revealed in the Magnuson delegation of 1973, analysed in chapter 3, and had changed little by 1976. The Chinese remained keen to receive prominent American politicians in order to bypass the executive branch and directly press other influential figures in Washington to support closer ties with the PRC. However, they continued to refuse to conduct serious negotiations with these visitors, instead presenting a one-way monologue of self-justification. Scott proved no more willing than Magnuson to passively absorb this propaganda without himself being afforded a voice in talks. Indeed, this dynamic had become more incendiary since 1973: Scott was a long-time collector of Chinese art and a more sensitive visitor than the patronising

[90] Boggs and Ford, *Impressions*. This is also discussed in chapter 3.
[91] Talking points, drafted by Brooks, included in materials for 22 July 1975 meeting, "1973 Briefing" [*sic*], Subject Files, 1969-1978, RG59, NACP.

Magnuson. That he nonetheless fell afoul of the Chinese was due to the frustration — felt by Scott and Beijing equally — with the deadlock in high-level negotiations.[92]

Zhang's anger at Scott's comments did not stop the Chinese courting of American politicians. In the same month that Scott was in China, the PRC invited the out-of-work Schlesinger to take a tour of China's defences on its border with the Soviet Union, something even Kissinger had not been allowed to see.[93] This was a further stunt to rile the Ford administration and it worked magnificently: Kissinger called the planned visit an "outrage". It was surely, he told Gates, intended solely to create anti-Ford publicity.[94]

Divisive as its planning was, in the event, Schlesinger's visit became symbolic of continuing Chinese commitment to rapprochement. The day after the former Secretary of Defense arrived in Beijing, Mao died. One of the first priorities of Mao's immediate successor, Hua Guofeng, was to affirm his commitment to Sino-American rapprochement. Thus, as the American of greatest political stature in China at the time, Schlesinger was invited to personally view Mao's remains lying in state. The former Secretary of Defense was even (almost certainly disingenuously) told that Mao had been personally aware of Schlesinger's presence in China in the days before his passing.[95]

Ford's promised sale of computers to China came the month after Mao's death and was the only notable step forward in the relationship during 1976. In May, the Burroughs Corporation had again been denied permission to sell an especially powerful computer to CAS. Kissinger had personally encouraged Burroughs's chairman, Ray MacDonald, to appeal a previous denial but the export administration review board had again blocked the sale. The State Department decided that this was not a fight it could win: the Chinese had specifically requested the most powerful computer manufactured by the company and considerably less advanced technology had recently been denied to

[92] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 150.
[93] Barnes to Scowcroft, 30 July 1976, "PRC" folder 14, Box 7, NSCEAPASF, GFL.
[94] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 153.
[95] USLO (Dean) to Kissinger, 11 September 1976, "China, unnumbered items (34) 1-29 September 1976", Box 6, KSWWOF1974-77, GFL.

the Soviets.[96] Three months later, however, State was able to force through the sale of a different computer model from the Control Data Corporation intended for seismic oil exploration.[97] In a meeting at PRCLO, the Chinese were told in no uncertain terms that agreeing to the sale had been "exceptional" and a direct result of the agreement made between Deng and the president. "We hope", Assistant Secretary of State Arthur Hummel said, "that the Chinese side realises that the sale of sophisticated computer systems such as this Control Data Computer presents us with certain administrative difficulties".[98]

In spite of this success, Kissinger had abandoned hope of moving relations forward before the election. In October, he admitted to Qiao's face that, "speaking frankly, there has been a certain deterioration in our relationship" since the president's visit. The Secretary lamented that it was a "mistake" for there not to be more active bilateral relations. "Whose fault is it?", asked Qiao. "Frankly, it depends on your viewpoint," Kissinger argued, "if you say there can be no progress in this area until normalization, then the fault lies with us. But if you say that we need to progress in this area to create the basis for normalization, then we both have responsibility".[99]

In 1976, with the pressure of a forthcoming presidential visit behind them, both Chinese and US governments had abandoned any hope of achieving an immediate breakthrough in either the high-level or the people-to-people relationship. The White House knew that, in an election year, they would struggle to publicly defend even what had already been given to Beijing, far less the further compromises needed for a normalisation deal. Both sides looked to a more distant future when immediate domestic distractions in both countries would rescind. Thus, Beijing actively courted American politicians out of office. Such individuals might serve in a future administration; at the least, they could be convinced to lobby for an American foreign policy that leaned towards China's side. The invective aired by the Chinese to these visitors showed Beijing's frustrations with the Ford

[96] Habib and Greenwald to Kissinger, 10 May 1976, "1974-78 NSD 246 and 247", Subject Files, 1969-1978, RG59, NACP.
[97] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 152.
[98] Aubert to USLO, 21 October 1976, "China, unnumbered items (36) 12-29 October 1976", KSWWOF1974-77, GFL.
[99] *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 157.

administration's China policy but the active programme of political visits in 1976 was also proof of the PRC's more fundamental underlying commitment to rapprochement with the US. Thus, the programme of congressional delegations helped preserve the broad Sino-American rapprochement even as Kissinger's talks with the Chinese descended into resentful squabbling.

The contact between the Chinese government and American politicians outside of the executive branch also had the effect — in spite of efforts by both governments — of forcing a dialogue on the issue of Taiwan. Beijing's suspicions over American intentions towards the island had been heightened by the political rhetoric of the election year and the PRC pulled no punches in their efforts to prevent the political grandstanding of one year becoming official policy in the next. As the NCUSCR had earlier found out, Kissinger was wrong to downplay the importance of this issue to the Sino-American relationship: Taiwan was critical to the PRC's dealings with Americans, both in and out of government. This confrontational approach to these exchanges worried leaders in Washington but nonetheless had Beijing's desired effect: though shaken by Zhang's acerbic rhetoric, Scott returned from China newly conscious of the naivety of the belief that the US could maintain active relations with regimes on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. His report to the Senate, submitted in early 1977, argued that the US "should press ahead with the process of cutting the Gordian knot" with Taiwan — consciously or unconsciously continuing Zhang's motif of ties to be severed — and soon after the November election he publicly advocated that the new administration should finalise normalisation where Ford had not.[100]

Meanwhile, the Ford administration similarly worked towards long-term goals in Sino-American relations by exerting strong, unceasing pressure — not on Beijing, but instead within the US government, to secure bureaucratic authorisation for the sale of high-technology to the PRC. One motive for doing so was defending the American credibility already being questioned by the Chinese: Ford and Kissinger had personally promised Deng that they would enable these purchases and, at a time when the US government struggled to fulfil other commitments to Beijing, it was seen as

[100] Hugh Scott, *The United States and China: A Report* (Washington, DC, 1976); 'Hugh Scott Says He Urged Ford to Cut Taiwan Tie', *New York Times*, 18 August 1977.

essential that this pledge was met. Another incentive was the American belief that Chinese domestic politics were at a critical, protean stage. When the final sale of computers took place, Deng had again been temporarily removed from office but American analysts remained convinced that any post-Mao leadership would be impelled to seek rapid modernisation of China's economy and thus to seek help from outside. Signalling American willingness to provide such help would embolden Hua or any other Chinese leader towards such a policy — as well as wedding them to rapprochement with the US and its concomitant benefits. This turned out to be a sound investment: although Ford would leave office before it paid dividends, the following chapter will show the success that the next administration would have in leveraging access to American expertise and technology in seeking political breakthroughs. As this chapter has argued, this was not a post-1978 policy: it begun under Ford and was pursued before Deng's return to prominence in 1978.

CONCLUSION

The deadlock in high-level Sino-American negotiations that had begun with Nixon's disgrace continued throughout Ford's time in office. One of the most important consequences of this was the further growth in the importance of other aspects of the Sino-American relationship, in particular the exchange programme. During Ford's first year in office, both sides had paid greater attention to exchange contacts as an alternative arena of cooperation, negotiation and, sometimes, contestation in their relationship. This process intensified during the remainder of Ford's time in office. Critically, the US government placed agreement regarding exchanges and bilateral relations at the core of their strategy for creating the conditions for a successful presidential visit to China in December 1975.

Kissinger was the principal interlocutor tasked with implementing this strategy. He was a reluctant advocate of such an approach and, at least initially, continued to see exchange contacts as valuable only in supporting and symbolising what he believed was the real substance of Sino-American dialogue: mutual security cooperation. This was primarily due to the Secretary of State's conception

of the mechanism by which the Sino-American relationship functioned: Kissinger strongly believed that the Chinese were invested in their relationship with the US because of their fear of the Soviets. Kissinger could not comprehend that, given that the animosity between Moscow and Beijing remained, the Chinese might pull out of rapprochement.[101]

The final year of the Ford administration showed the limits of Kissinger's view — as well as of any historical interpretation of Sino-American relations in this period dependent on strategic cooperation. Kissinger was right that little had changed in Sino-Soviet relations since rapprochement had begun five years prior. Similarly, while the Chinese fumed at continuing détente, Soviet-American relations had not qualitatively changed since 1972 and 1973, either. The decline of détente under Ford may have released some of the pressure on Beijing to work to avoid a superpower condominium but the enervation of Sino-American relations in the mid-1970s was not primarily the result of altered triangular diplomacy. Instead, Chinese leaders' ire at the US was the consequence of their frustration with the stalling of the development in the two-way relationship. Mao and Zhou had not foreseen that the road to normalisation would be so long and, in spite of Mao's allusions to waiting a hundred years to settle the score with Chiang, that Washington's official relationship with Taiwan would linger on — and even be revived.

Kissinger ultimately did throw his weight behind convincing the Chinese to consent to agreements in bilateral and people-to-people relations, primarily over exchanges.[102] In his October 1975 visit and Ford's summit the following December, he repeatedly pressed his Chinese interlocutors to allow to agreements in these areas. That his efforts failed was primarily a result of Chinese intransigence towards any aspect of Sino-American relations run out of the White House at a time when Beijing was deeply unimpressed by Washington's reluctance to compromise in high-level diplomatic negotiations. This notwithstanding, developments after Ford left office suggest that Kissinger might have had more success if he had been more assertive and less apologetic. Carter and

[101] See, for example, Habib, Lord, Solomon to Kissinger, 6 October 1975, "China Exchanges, October-Dec 1975", DFWL, RG59, NACP.
[102] Ibid.

his National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, would show in their first two years in office that a strategy of leveraging people-to-people cooperation to unlock diplomatic concessions could bring success. Kissinger and Ford did not even attempt this. At a time when the CSCPRC was playing hardball with Beijing (albeit with mixed success), the American government meekly asked Beijing to agree to the cultural exchanges desired by Washington without even considering linking this request to expanding provision of American scientific expertise and high-technology. This assistance was deeply desired by the PRC and yet the US government extracted no cost, political or otherwise, for its delivery.

Stalemate in high-level relations did not mean that the final year and a half of Ford's time in office saw no significant developments in people-to-people and bilateral relations. Washington may have given American technology away cheaply but Kissinger and Ford did take a first step towards politicising US assistance to Chinese modernisation by introducing this topic into high-level talks at the Ford summit. The Chinese resisted discussing this issue at such a level precisely because they knew that a day might come when a canny American negotiator called in this debt. Beijing's silent acceptance of US governmental favour in licensing technology exports, as well as their deepening cooperation with the CSCPRC as a source of American know-how, increased the amount owed. Moreover, a number of specific proposals for how to further develop the exchange programme first proposed by the Ford administration and by the NCUSCR and CSCPRC were to be realised soon after Carter entered office, some in the very first months of the new administration.[103] These future agreements would not have been realised when they were had it not been for repeated American requests for such agreements made in late 1975 and 1976.

Enervated high-level Sino-American relations had another important consequence: they (further) shifted the initiative for the shaping of American China policy away from the officials that oversaw the government-to-government relationship and towards those outside of the executive branch that believed that they could more effectively deal with Beijing. In 1975 and 1976, two groups

[103] See, for example, those discussed in relation to the Ford summit at USLO to Kissinger, 11 October 1975, [unmarked folder, likely "China Exchanges, July-Sept 1975"], DFWL, RG59, NACP.

of such actors were notable for their particular assertiveness: the CSCPRC and American politicians on the Hill. The CSCPRC's aggressive attempts to improve access to the PRC for the US academic community demonstrate that American exchange organisations were far from supplicants of official foreign policy: the group's unsentimental strategy towards their Chinese interlocutors was pursued in spite of resistance from their traditional institutional (and financial) supporters in the State Department. Meanwhile, American politicians from outside of the executive branch sought their own independent negotiations with the Chinese. Scott's endeavours ended in fiasco but his efforts nonetheless showed again that, when the White House found its China policy lagging behind public expectations, actors outside the executive branch would take the initiative.

The period between the Ford summit of December 1975 and Carter's inauguration on 20 January 1977 was, in many ways, a transitional moment in Sino-American relations. Critical elements of the relationship that emerged in this period — above all, active and deepening scientific and technological cooperation — would rapidly develop during Carter's time in office and soon play an important role in the political relationship between the two governments. Nonetheless, at the end of 1976, American expectations for the near future of both high-level and people-to-people relations with China were low. In October, the NCUSCR had not even been certain that the yearly government-to-government negotiation of an exchange package would take place, fearing that for the first time since the signing of the Shanghai Communiqué exchanges would not continue to be endorsed at an official level.[104] In fact, change was just around the corner. In the final weeks of 1976, the Chinese had proposed a significantly expanded package of trips and, as Carter entered office, the NCUSCR, the CSCPRC and the State Department were all busy making plans for what was due to be the most active year in exchange contacts yet. It was a decidedly positive omen for what might be achieved in the broader Sino-American relationship during the new president's time in office.

[104] Minutes of 29th board meeting of NCUSCR board of directors, 7 October 1976, "NCUSCR, 1976-77", Box 131, ADBP.

CHAPTER SIX

The final push:

Sino-American science and technology cooperation

and diplomatic normalisation,

20 January 1977-15 December 1978

On 6 October 1976, China's radical quadrumvirate, the Gang of Four, were arrested in Beijing. Less than a month later, Jimmy Carter won the 48th US presidential election. Neither event had been foreseen: Mao's loyalists had been predicted to continue to exert influence beyond the chairman's death; Ford's incumbency had been assumed to have given him the edge over the little-known Georgian governor. However, the unexpected changing of the guard in both Beijing and Washington was to have a profound impact on Sino-American relations. The Gang of Four was, in the short term, replaced by Hua Guofeng but their downfall soon cleared the way for the return of Deng and placed China on a course for closer engagement with the outside world. Equally importantly, this chapter will argue, Carter's election brought new thinking to America's China policy that would ultimately help craft the final normalisation deal that had eluded Kissinger.

Nowhere was the effect of this new thinking more acutely felt than in exchange diplomacy. The primary argument of this final chapter is that exchanges played a critical role in the achievement of the final political agreement of the rapprochement process. In 1977 and 1978, it became clear to policymakers in Washington that Chinese leaders and in particular Deng were urgently seeking access to US technology and knowledge in order to expedite China's modernisation. This interest had been manifested most consistently through the exchange programme. The Chinese had, since the mid-1970s, been seeking to use exchanges as a means to gain access to American scientific expertise — to such an extent that American institutions worried that valuable industrial secrets were being

transferred to China for little in return. Carter's advisors, most importantly National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, worked to facilitate this access — but to also extract a price in return. Thus, from late 1977, Brzezinski advertised to Deng and the Chinese the assistance the US could provide to China's modernisation — through sales of technology and the transfer of human knowledge — if Beijing was prepared to allow normalisation negotiations to move forward.

This chapter demonstrates that this strategy was highly successful and analyses how the prospect of access to US science and technology assistance was the most important variable in determining why Carter succeeded where Kissinger, Nixon and Ford had failed: finalising a normalisation deal. The Chinese had long impeded a deepening of the exchange relationship because rapprochement remained incomplete; they were still doing so in the first half of 1977. Brzezinski successfully identified a resolution to this deadlock. Whereas Kissinger and Ford had used the 1975 presidential visit to push exchanges ahead of political talks, Carter's National Security Advisor more effectively *combined* a simultaneous push to upgrade people-to-people relations with sincere intent to accompany this with progress in diplomatic negotiations towards normalisation.

To be sure, changes in China's domestic politics provided traction to Brzezinski's strategy; a similar approach would not have worked as well before Mao's death and Deng's return. A crucial final ingredient in Brzezinski's final push for normalisation was his sensitivity to these changes, and his willingness to encourage and manipulate them. In 1978, Brzezinski oversaw the careful adjustment of US policy in order to encourage a victory for Deng and his programme of rapid modernisation through opening to the world. Exchanges and science and technology cooperation were critical means in this effort. The very fact of deepening Sino-American cooperation seemed to confirm the validity of Deng's arguments for tilting towards the West and the US to expedite modernisation and thus won the vice premier support from his colleagues. The manner in which this assistance was provided was carefully calibrated to maximise the domestic favour Deng would gain from its provision, too.

The second argument of this chapter is that both the origins and the execution of this successful strategy owed much to the CSCPRC and its previous negotiations with the Chinese. As

discussed in chapter 5, that organisation had pioneered the idea of squeezing the Chinese for their desired access to American expertise. In 1977, the group articulated a more developed version of this strategy which appears to have acted as a partial blueprint for Brzezinski and the government's own approach of making exchanges a core part of a normalisation strategy. In implementing the strategy, the CSCPRC and the government worked hand-in-glove. After the Chinese rebuffed a formal agreement to deepen the exchange programme in 1977, the CSCPRC combined incentives and pressure to support and underpin Brzezinski and the government's own argument that the US could do much to facilitate Chinese modernisation — if Beijing made concessions in return. When the Chinese showed themselves convinced, the CSCPRC was at the heart of establishing and enacting a second phase in Sino-American exchanges, encompassing both deeper non-governmental contacts and, for the first time, government-to-government exchanges.

These two arguments are made over the course of three sections. The first section analyses developments in both exchanges and high-level negotiations in the first nine months of the Carter administration, showing that, although this period appeared to be one of stagnation, in fact the breakthroughs of 1978 were in many ways prefigured by developments in 1977. The second section outlines Brzezinski's novel strategy for achieving normalisation. It shows how Brzezinski responded to the initial stages of China's opening up and, in particular, how he sought to accrue negotiating capital by facilitating sales of US high-technology to Beijing while simultaneously showing his intent to reach a normalisation agreement. A third and final section analyses the endgame of Sino-American normalisation negotiations. It begins with the visit of Carter's chief science advisor, Frank Press, to Beijing. Press successfully negotiated the beginning of government-to-government exchanges but his visit also led to a great expansion of the exchange activity overseen by the CSCPRC and the NCUSCR. China's push for rapid modernisation, then, was increasingly dominating the Sino-American relationship. It was also the foremost issue in Beijing's domestic politics in 1978 and the section concludes by analysing how Washington successfully adapted its China policy, including

towards the exchange programme and science and technology sharing, to ensure a domestic triumph for Deng — and a normalisation deal on American terms.

I: ONE STEP BACKWARDS:

VISITS TO BEIJING BY THE CSCPRC AND VANCE IN THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF CARTER'S PRESIDENCY

Carter ultimately achieved great success in upgrading both the political and exchange relationship between the US and China. This outcome seemed unlikely in 1977, however. The Carter administration initially showed an indecisiveness towards US-China relations that suggested that the slowdown of the Ford years would continue under the new president. This section analyses developments in both the high-level and exchange relationship in the first nine months of the new administration. It details how Carter's recruitment of senior individuals from the leading exchange organisations provided continuity in Sino-American relations between the Kissinger and Carter eras and offset initial uncertainty concerning the new administration's China policy. Subsequently, it details how the CSCPRC sought to effect a deepening of the exchange programme and thus to respond to complaints from the US academic community about Beijing's exploitation of American hospitality through the exchange programme. Overall, this section argues that, although these early initiatives failed to achieve a breakthrough in either high-level or exchange relations with the Chinese, much of the negotiating strategy of both the CSCPRC and the Carter administration that would later prove so successful was anticipated by the approach developed during this first phase in Carter's term.

Change and continuity during the Carter transition

As discussed in chapter 4, one of Ford's very first actions upon entering the White House was to affirm his commitment to Sino-American rapprochement as it had been constructed under his

predecessor. Carter, in contrast, showed no haste in making such a commitment. Indeed, the president-elect initially caused alarm among the Chinese when he called Chiang's regime on Taiwan "China" in a *Time* magazine interview and pledged to maintain the island's independence from the PRC.[1] The uncertainty surrounding these questions of policy were compounded by a practical problem: establishing what had already been agreed with Beijing. The secrecy of the Nixon years continued long after the president's exit from office, with Nixon initially refusing to hand over to the Carter staff the records of his negotiations with the Chinese. He only relented in March 1977, after the new administration had threatened to sue.[2]

The challenges posed to rapprochement by these policy and practical uncertainties were offset by a continuity in personnel between the Kissinger and Carter years. A remarkable number of Carter's China team already had direct experience of dealing with the PRC — through the medium of the exchange programme. Kissinger's replacement, Vance, had first travelled to China as head of the NCUSCR world affairs delegation in October 1975. In his first meeting with foreign minister Huang Hua, Vance recalled how that trip had strongly shaped his understanding of the PRC. Another of Carter's cabinet appointments, Michael Blumenthal, had even closer links with the NCUSCR. Blumenthal's family had fled to Shanghai during the Second World War, where he had lived under Japanese control in the Shanghai ghetto. The Chinese he had learned there, including the Shanghai dialect, had been one reason for him being selected to chair the NCUSCR from 1973 to 1975. He was still on the board of the group when Carter made him his Treasury Secretary.[3] Other NCUSCR members to be appointed to Carter's staff included Michel Oksenberg, who became lead China advisor to the NSC, and Leonard Woodcock, Carter's choice to head up USLO in Beijing.[4] The rotating door between the NCUSCR and governmental relations with the PRC swung in the other direction, too. Oksenberg replaced Richard Solomon and Woodcock took up the post held by Thomas

[1] *FRUS, 1977-80*, Volume XIII, China, ed. David P Nickles (Washington, DC, 2013) (*FRUS*, Vol. XIII), Document 2; Brzezinski to Carter, 4 February 1977, "MR-NLC-98-215", Box 40, China Vertical File (CVF), JCL.
[2] Lipshutz to Carter, 4 March 1977, NLC-39-A-38-10-1-8, JCL; Tyler, *Great Wall*, 235-7.
[3] *FRUS*, Vol. XIII, Document 2; *NFTNC*, Vol. 7, No. 1, March 1977.
[4] All NCUSCR members appointed to government office became temporarily inactive within that group while in public service.

Gates and previously by George Bush; in turn, Solomon, Gates and Bush all became NCUSCR members soon after leaving office.[5]

The number of Carter appointees drawn from the higher ranks of the NCUSCR powerfully demonstrated the nexus between that group and official China policy. Ultimately of even greater significance, however, was Carter's recruitment from the CSCPRC. Carter made the chair of that group, Frank Press, his lead science advisor and director of the White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy. Press was one of the brightest lights in American science: he had discovered how to measure earthquakes out at sea and designed the seismographs that American astronauts had placed on the moon. He was also an effective political operator. Seismology was the key to monitoring underground nuclear tests and Press had cut his diplomatic teeth clashing with Soviet nuclear specialists during the 1958 disarmament talks in Geneva, aged just 33. Press took with him into the White House Ann Keatley, his closest colleague at the CSCPRC. Keatley had served as staff director of that group since the early 1970s, taking up the role when that was the only full-time staff position at the group. Together, these two hires anticipated the central role that China would play in Carter's science policy and the critical role that science policy would have in Carter's China policy. As will be discussed below, the hiring of Press and Keatley also transferred years of experience of negotiating scientific cooperation with the Chinese into the White House. It would be little surprise, then, when the government adopted a similar strategy in their negotiations with the Chinese as the CSCPRC had in its years under Press and Keatley's leadership.[6]

While the government internally debated what approach to take in its dealings with Beijing, the NCUSCR was enthusiastically rebuilding its exchange relationship with China, finally rebounding after the perilous years of 1975 and 1976. The seven planned exchanges for 1977 constituted the largest annual package of contacts the group had ever overseen. Barnett commented to NCUSCR president Rosen that the programme was "certainly the most encouraging development affecting the

[5] NCUSCR Annual Report, 1976-77, NCOC.
[6] *CEN*, Vol. 5, No. 1, February 1977; 'President's Science Adviser: Frank Press', *New York Times*, 19 May 1977.

National Committee for a very long time".[7] The programme was notable not only for the number of exchanges but also the substance of many of the visits. In May, the NCUSCR would send a delegation of rising stars in American politics to China and in September a delegation of state-level education officials would follow, on a visit supported by the US Department of Education. In return, the Chinese would send a group of academics from their universities in November that, even in early 1977, was anticipated by Rosen as "a significant new departure" in the exchange programme, involving as it would leading officials from China's educational sector.[8] A third delegation of NCUSCR staff was scheduled for October, suggesting that the Chinese were expecting to negotiate further developments in the exchange relationship. Most significantly of all, the most prestigious of the Chinese organisations involved in the exchange programme — the CPIFA — was set to make its first ever visit to a foreign country when it was received by the NCUSCR in June.[9]

The CSCPRC, too, had a full programme planned for 1977. Six groups would travel in either direction in the year ahead, finally bringing the number of delegations the group were permitted to send to China in line with the number they were asked to receive.[10] The CSCPRC had been deeply relieved to resolve the question of parity: Robert Lumiansky, president of the American Council on Learned Societies, told the *New York Times* in June 1977 that the group had come close to pulling out of the exchange programme altogether before the Chinese had finally addressed the CSCPRC's complaints.[11] No sooner had this issue been put to bed, however, than another problem arose that similarly posed a fundamental challenge to science and technology exchanges. As discussed in chapter 5, the laboratories and universities that hosted Chinese scientific visitors were, by 1977, growing weary — not to mention suspicious — of repeated Chinese visits to their facilities at a time when Beijing refused to receive comparable delegations. The patience of key American hosts — MIT, the National Bureau of Standards, AT&T's Bell Laboratories — had been so exhausted that they were

[7] Barnett to Rosen, 15 April 1977, "NCUSCR, 1976-77", Box 131, ADBP.
[8] Rosen to NCUSCR board of directors, 10 March 1977, "NCUSCR, 1976-77", Box 131, ADBP.
[9] NCUSCR Annual Report, 1976-77, NCOC.
[10] *CEN*, Vol. 5, No. 1, February 1977.
[11] 'China Rebuffs US Bid to Widen Scholarly & Scientific Visits', *New York Times*, 29 June 1977.

considering ending their support for exchanges with the Chinese if the CSCPRC could not leverage greater and more correlative access to China for American researchers.[12]

The CSCPRC was deeply sympathetic to this pressure from the American scientific community and in 1977 again sought the qualitative deepening of the exchange programme that would provide stretched American hosts with benefits commensurate to their contributions to the exchange programme. As well as seeking to reduce the non-academic content of visits to China, the CSCPRC was also intensifying its efforts to begin ongoing research collaboration. The group took heart from the recent success of James Andreasen, an aquaculturalist who worked on the US government's hydroelectric dams, in initiating an exchange of fish specimens with CAS in October 1976.[13] However, the Chinese remained suspicious collaborators: seed samples taken to China by a 1976 CSCPRC wheat studies delegation had been largely destroyed by their Chinese hosts because of their (likely unfounded) fears of smut fungus spore contamination, while other scientific delegations were often kept away from the Chinese specialists they would benefit most from meeting.[14]

The CSCPRC visits a changing China

A changing political climate in Beijing seemed to suggest that the Chinese might indeed agree to deeper scientific cooperation. Exchanges were an important source of American information about the evolving condition of Beijing's politics after Mao's death. The very first moments of the Carter era begun with a positive signal: members of an NCUSCR gymnastics delegation were provided with radios tuned to the Voice of American to listen as the election results came in, in spite of the Chinese government's ban on that station within its borders. During the same visit, an accompanying State

[12] DeAngelis, CSCPRC press release on interdisciplinary delegation to China, June 1977, "1977 – Visits – Committee Visit on Scholarly Exchanges", CSCNAS.
[13] *CEN*, Vol. 5, No. 1, February 1977.
[14] 'President's Science Adviser', *New York Times*. For more details on Chinese concerns about the risks of contamination from American smut fungus, see document B135-4-649, Shanghai Municipal Archive; DeAngelis, CSCPRC press release on interdisciplinary delegation to China, June 1977, "1977 – Visits – Committee Visit on Scholarly Exchanges", CSCNAS.

Department representative was permitted to spend hours wandering around Shanghai photographing the big character posters that accompanied China's own political changes of late 1976.[15]

These indications of political loosening were accompanied by encouraging signs of Chinese interest in scientific modernisation through interaction with the outside world. Even as the CSCPRC were being frustrated by limits placed on their access to Chinese science, the Chinese showed themselves increasingly interested in themselves obtaining new knowledge from outside. A delegation from Rockefeller University in May 1977 invited the Chinese to reverse the dynamic of exchanges and to ask questions of their visitors, rather than give a one-way monologue. Frederick Seitz, the president of the university, was overwhelmed with the response: "Whereas … this procedure would not have been very fruitful two years ago, it turned out to induce a much livlier [*sic*] discussion in the present climate which seems to represent something in the nature of substantial thaw. In fact, by the time our journey ended in Canton many of the conversations took the form of normal scientific exchange".[16] The CSCPRC had earlier taken heart from a Beijing radio broadcast of a speech by Zhou Peiyuan that had criticised the Gang of Four's obstruction of science and technology research and recalled Mao personally receiving Chinese-American scientist Yang Zhenning during a 1972 exchange. The CSCPRC had noted changes in Chinese actions as well as words: the PRC was increasing the number of young scientists it was sending to be trained in Western countries such as the UK and West Germany. The US looked a good candidate as a further a site for such training: China's scholarly exchange relationship with America was already one of its most active, even when compared to countries that had established formal diplomatic relations with Beijing.[17]

It was against this seemingly propitious backdrop that both the CSCPRC and the US government sought to achieve a significant advancement in scientific exchange relations during the CSCPRC's June to July visit to China. The ambition of the delegation was indicated by its composition: the presidents of the CSCPRC's three parent organisations — NAS, ACLS and SSRC —

[15] de Keijzer, 'US gymnastics delegation to China', 1 January 1977, "NCUSCR, 1976-77", Box 131, ADBP.
[16] Seitz to Handler, 1 June 1977, "1977 – General", CSCNAS.
[17] CSCPRC paper, 'The importance of expanding US-China scientific and technical relations', 23 March 1977, "1977 – Exchange Agreement – Negotiations", CSCNAS.

all travelled, with NAS head Handler agreeing to lead the delegation after personal urgings from Vance, Brzezinski and Press. Keatley told Handler that the visit had "implications … for the broader country to country relationship" and that US governmental support for the visit would "send a political signal to the other side".[18] Handler and his colleagues used the visit to propose exchanges of up to three months in length, the beginning of student exchanges and the intensification of ongoing research collaboration. In their proposal of these changes, the leaders of the delegation told Zhou Peiyuan, "Both the American public and our scholarly community *expect* that US-Chinese scholarly relations will be expanded in scope and made more intensive as a result of the [CSCPRC] visit".[19]

In many ways, the CSCPRC visit offered further grounds for optimism about China's scientific opening to the world. Handler and the head of SSRC, Eleanor Sheldon, wrote to Vance that they had witnessed a "renaissance" in the five universities and 20 research institutes they had visited. "By the end of our visit we became convinced that China's current internal priorities are conducive to establishment [*sic*] of significant new relationships with the United States and other foreign countries in fields of science and technology."[20] However, the main objective of the visit had not been achieved: the Chinese had rejected the CSCPRC proposals for deepening exchanges. While the atmospherics of the visit as a whole had been positive, the exchange negotiations themselves had been "tense and strained", coloured by the continuing stasis in normalisation negotiations. Handler had found it "extraordinarily difficult to get [the Chinese] even to discuss the relatively simple matters we had placed before them", with the talks "dominated by repeated reference to the failure of the United States to implement the Shanghai Communiqué". Vice Premier Ji Dengkui had "repeatedly referred, rather harshly" to the issue of Taiwan and "explicitly stated" that any expansion of scientific cooperation would have to wait until normalisation.[21]

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[18] Keatley to Handler, 9 March 1977, and Keatley to Handler, 21 March 1977, "1977 – Visits – Committee Visit on Scholarly Exchanges", CSCNAS; Handler to Seitz, 12 April 1977, "1977 – General", CSCNAS.
[19] Emphasis added. Handler and Sheldon to Zhou Peiyuan, 4 May 1977, "1977 – Visits – Committee Visit on Scholarly Exchanges", CSCNAS.
[20] Handler and Sheldon to Vance, 5 August 1977, Folder 6372, Box 527, Series 1, Accession 2, SSRC records, RAC.
[21] Handler to Panofsky, 27 June 1977, and Handler and Sheldon to Vance, 5 August 1977, "1977 – Visits – Committee Visit on Scholarly Exchanges", CSCNAS.

Vance steps back

The attempt by the CSCPRC and their government backers to reach new agreements over exchanges had, then, been scuppered by China's dissatisfaction with the high-level political relationship. To Handler, it seemed clear that the Chinese were loath to sign any agreement before the arrival of Vance on his own trip to China a month after the CSCPRC delegation arrived home.[22] Indeed, the tough treatment of the CSCPRC was likely intended to encourage that group to push the US government to move away from the ambiguous statements on US China policy made by Carter after his electoral victory. If so, Beijing's tactic worked. Soon after returning from the visit to China, the CSCPRC leadership lobbied Vance and the State Department, channelling the pressure that the group was feeling from both Beijing and the American scholarly community on to the government. The CSCPRC made clear that the more substantive exchanges the government knew American scientists desired were predicated on Washington convincing Beijing of its commitment to Sino-American rapprochement.[23] Moreover, this private lobbying was accompanied by ACLS leader Lumiansky going public regarding the "tough" and "blunt" communication from Beijing and the reality that the exchange relationship could not move forward without political progress first. To be sure, Lumiansky spoke to the press in part to protest the Chinese position, but criticism of the Sino-American relationship in the *New York Times* was far more likely to be a source of disquiet for Washington than for Beijing.[24]

The CSCPRC response to Chinese intransigence was not to simply pass the buck to the US government, however. Handler told Vance that the most important outcome of the CSCPRC trip had been that the US side had been able to "state clearly" the problems in the exchange programme and how the CSCPRC wanted the Chinese to respond to these issues. "The Chinese were informed firmly" that repeated survey visits to institutions such as MIT and Bell Laboratories "are becoming a burden" and that continued access to these institutions would only be possible if China agreed to longer stays

[22] Handler to Seitz, 1 June 1977, "1977 – General", CSCNAS.
[23] Handler and Sheldon to Vance, 5 August 1977, Folder 6372, Box 527, Series 1, Accession 2, SSRC records, RAC.
[24] 'China Rebuffs US', *New York Times*.

for a smaller number of its scientists, which would be better suited to truly collaborative research. The CSCPRC had also hinted to the Chinese that the US was wise to the true purpose of increasing Chinese requests to see America's best high-technology facilities. Handler dismissed Chinese claims that survey delegations were primarily to promote binational friendship: this was "fatuous when we receive delegations concerned specifically with 'hematite ore dressing' or 'advanced drilling technology'".[25] This was not idle talk: in the months after the visit, as it became clear that the Chinese would not soon respond to the CSCPRC's proposals for upgrading exchanges, Handler internally pushed for the CSCPRC to begin restricting the topics of Chinese exchange delegations to academic subjects alone, "avoiding any visits concerned with advanced technology".[26] Handler hoped that these restrictions would act as a "nudge, to remind them of what it is they seek from this country and that they can be denying themselves while they deny us".[27]

Handler and the CSCPRC believed that, over time, these new restrictions would hurt the Chinese and prompt a change in Beijing's approach to exchanges. More immediately, it was hoped that Vance's August visit would begin to remove the political barriers that the Chinese cited as blocking expanded exchanges. Carter had briefly considered using the Vance trip to make a significant push for a quick normalisation deal and the Secretary of State even carried with him a draft of the communiqué that would announce the agreement, ready if negotiations were successful. However, an unexpected breakthrough in the talks over the Panama Canal treaties had meant that the president had, at the last minute, rescinded these instructions. Instead, he ordered Vance to put forward the maximum version of the US normalisation terms — including the US being allowed to maintain governmental representation in Taipei — and was unsurprised when the Chinese were unimpressed.[28]

[25] Handler and Sheldon to Vance, 5 August 1977, Folder 6372, Box 527, Series 1, Accession 2, SSRC records, RAC.
[26] Handler to Sheldon and Lumiansky, 15 September 1977, Ibid.
[27] Handler to Branscomb, 22 November 1977, "1977 – Exchange Agreement – Negotiations", CSCNAS.
[28] Cyrus Vance, *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America's Foreign Policy* (New York, 1983), 79–82; Deng, *Sixiang Nianbian*, 69, 24 August 1977 entry.

Vance also used the trip to respond to pressure from the CSCPRC and affirm US governmental support for an expansion of the exchange relationship. Vance again recounted his own NCUSCR-sponsored visit to China in 1975 to underline how important he personally considered the exchange programme to be and stated that the US government "want to make it clear that we favour" the push by the CSCPRC and the NCUSCR for more substantive exchanges, adding that the Carter administration "continue[s] to endorse warmly the work of these two committees". Foreign Minister Huang Hua, however, responded that, given that no agreement to move normalisation negotiations forward had been made, "The level and scope of exchanges we have achieved so far perhaps will remain for some years to come".[29]

Vance's visit to the PRC has been remembered as a failure: historians such as Harding have concurred with Deng's judgement, made shortly after Vance left, that the visit was a "step backwards".[30] In his memoirs, Huang similarly suggests that Beijing was unmoved by the position put forward by the Secretary of State.[31] Certainly the visit did not lead to an immediate breakthrough in the exchange programme: the NCUSCR's staff travelled to China in October and had their own efforts to expand the exchange programme rebuffed, with the Chinese saying that "present US-China relations" meant that exchanges should remain at the level of the previous year.[32] This notwithstanding, Brzezinski had noted that Deng had made no comment when Vance stated that the US would continue to provide Taiwan with arms after normalisation.[33] Enrico Fardella argues that this "loud silence" suggested for the first time that the Chinese might ultimately accept a post-normalisation US-Taiwan relationship that would meet the terms Carter had internally set out before Vance departed.[34]

[29] *FRUS*, Vol. XIII, Document 43; Huang, *Memoirs*, 344-6.
[30] Deng, *Sixiang Nianbian*, 72, 10 September 1977 entry; Harding, *Fragile Relationship*, 75.
[31] Huang, *Memoirs*, 344-6.
[32] Memcon: Hao and Yost, 22 October 1977, Folder 98, Box 13, Series 3, RG4, NCUSCR records, RAC.
[33] Brzezinski to Carter, 25 August 1977, "Armacost Chrono File, 8/16-25/77", Box 4, National Security Affairs – Staff Material – Far East Files (NSASMFEF), JCL.
[34] Fardella, 'Sino-American Normalization', 551.

The trip also provided further evidence of the growing Chinese interest in making science and technology cooperation central to its relationship with the US. Bei Shijiang, who had lead the PRC's first science exchange delegation to the US, was seated with Vance on the head table at the opening banquet, as was Zhou Peiyuan. This honour reflected their historic role in Sino-American exchanges but also was a hint at China's vision for the future of the relationship. Indeed, China's science diplomats had by no means made their final contribution to building the relationship with the US: Zhou Peiyuan and Fang Yi, the vice president of CAS who had recently been elevated to China's politburo, were, in 1977, meeting with a growing number of Chinese-American scientists on visits to China.[35]

In the wake of Vance's visit, Deng made explicit what had been implied by these courtesies, telling the NCUSCR delegation that "We must make things foreign serve China" and that "We [the Chinese] lag behind", "especially in science and technology". The PRC must "absorb the advanced experience" of other countries, Deng said.[36] Indeed, the NCUSCR delegation had seen evidence that this change in policy was already having tangible effects: during a visit to a petrochemical works, a lunch announcement in English revealed the presence of "foreign experts" at the site.[37] In response to Deng's enthusiasm, Yost promised that the US was prepared to help: "We … think that exchanges can make more of a contribution … in the transfer of science and technology". Deng expressed "our thanks" for the efforts that the NCUSCR was making in encouraging greater science and technology cooperation, including at the governmental level.[38]

In both high-level and people-to-people relations, then, the dramatic breakthroughs of 1978 were anticipated and precipitated by developments in 1977. Accounts of Carter's achievement of normalisation by Harding, Fardella, Ezra Vogel and others all attach great importance to the visit of Frank Press to China in July 1978 in precipitating a final normalisation deal; this chapter will echo and

[35] Bullock to CSCPRC members, 1 September 1977, Folder 6372, Box 527, Series 1, Accession 2, SSRC records, RAC.
[36] Memcon: Deng and Yost, 23 October 1977, Folder 98, Box 13, Series 3, RG4, NCUSCR records, RAC.
[37] NCUSCR report on visit to Beijing General Petrochemical Works, 21 October 1977, Folder 98, Box 13, Series 3, RG4, NCUSCR records, RAC.
[38] Memcon: Deng and Yost, 23 October 1977, Ibid.

deepen this analysis in arguing for the critical contribution that visit made to the final agreement.[39] It should, however, be recognised that many of the necessary conditions for a government-sponsored breakthrough in exchange negotiations — and, with them, normalisation talks — were present in 1977. Just as the Vance visit *could* have been the site of a major breakthrough had US domestic politics been different, so, too, could the important CSCPRC June 1977 delegation have kick-started deeper scientific cooperation between the US and China. The content of the proposals made during the visit were almost identical to those that would be signed by the CSCPRC and the Chinese in the immediate wake of Press's visit one year later. That these agreements were not made in June 1977 was for two reasons: first, the Chinese were not yet convinced that the US government had "made up its mind" to push the political relationship forward; second, China's domestic campaign for rapid science and technology modernisation through opening to the outside had, in 1977, begun but not yet reached the crescendo of the following year.

The further significance of the 1977 CSCPRC visit and this early period in the Carter era is in prefiguring an important aspect of the normalisation strategy that was adopted by the administration in 1978. As will be discussed below, Brzezinski described, in both contemporary documents and his published memoirs, how his normalisation strategy constituted a tripartite emphasis on people-to-people and bilateral relations, strategic cooperation and normalisation negotiations.[40] The vast majority of initiatives in the first basket concerned science and technology cooperation: cultural relations overseen by the NCUSCR deepened during this period but did not offer Beijing the material incentive to closer ties that American science could; trade recovered but the biggest ticket sales were the result of technology sharing agreements.[41] Evidence from the CSCPRC strongly suggests that much of the playbook that Brzezinski and the government followed in seeking an increase in science cooperation was based on plans drawn up by that organisation in preparation for their 1977 China visit. In particular, a CSCPRC working paper written in March 1977 argued that an expansion of

[39] Harding, *Fragile Relationship*, 96; Fardella, 'Sino-American Normalization', 554, note 27; Vogel, *Deng*, 324.
[40] Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Advisor 1977-1981* (London, 1985), 199; Oksenberg to Brzezinski, 26 June 1978, "China (PRC), 1978/6-8", Box 8, NSAZBMCF, JCL.
[41] CIA report, 'US-China Trade Relations', 30 September 1977, NLC-6-8-4-4-9, JCL.

scientific exchanges would act as a signal to "both domestic and foreign audiences" of the shared Sino-American commitment to a deeper relationship — a reference to American public opinion but also to the Soviet Union. This was the very same logic that Brzezinski, Press and Oksenberg would present in the run up to and during the Press delegation.

The CSCPRC even *expected* that the government would follow their lead: the paper argued that a push for an expansion in exchanges "would be valuable at this stage in which formulas for the establishment of diplomatic ties are being studied".[42] The overlap and influence between the CSCPRC's strategy towards negotiations with the Chinese and the government's own approach should come as little surprise given Press and Keatley's previous role in the CSCPRC, as well as the exceptionally close relationship that both individuals continued to have with the group after they entered government service. Nonetheless it is a powerful reminder of the critical role that exchange organisations outside of government played in laying the groundwork for political breakthroughs in the Sino-American relationship in the 1970s, not least the final normalisation deal of 1978.

II: TWO STEPS FORWARD:

BRZEZINSKI'S NORMALISATION STRATEGY AND BEIJING VISIT

Even if the developments of the first nine months of Carter's term ultimately prefigured progress, this was hard to discern in the wake of Vance's 1977 visit. This section details how, in the nine months that followed that unsuccessful trip, Brzezinski sought to devise a more efficacious strategy for realising normalisation. In late 1977 and early 1978, he saw an opportunity for the US to increase its leverage with Beijing by incorporating modernisation assistance — technology sales and knowledge transfer through exchanges — into normalisation negotiations. A downturn in Soviet-American relations and Beijing's continued domestic re-orientation further contributed to a propitious climate

[42] CSCPRC paper, 'The importance of expanding US-China scientific and technical relations', 23 March 1977, "1977 – Exchange Agreement – Negotiations", CSCNAS.

for progress towards an agreement. Brzezinski was provided the opportunity to exploit these circumstances and test out his new approach during a May 1978 visit to Beijing, a visit that helped set up a final push for normalisation.

The customer is right?

Washington debates technology sales to China

Brzezinski had concluded from Vance's trip and his discussion with Deng that there was now a leader in Beijing who might be persuaded to accede to Washington's ideal conditions for normalisation. In the wake of the trip, the National Security Advisor and his staff identified an opportunity for the US to show their interest in working with Deng, as well as to increase their leverage in normalisation negotiations: facilitating Chinese access to US technology. Washington was already acutely aware that the Chinese were utilising scientific exchanges as one way of accessing US technology — not least as a result of the CSCPRC's vocal concerns about the burdens this placed on American industry. Beijing was simultaneously showing intensifying interest in purchasing the physical technology they witnessed during these exchanges. In an October memorandum to Carter, Frank Press linked these two developments and made the case that the US government should encourage and respond positively to Chinese interest.[43]

As discussed in chapter 5, Chinese attempts to buy US technology had not been without problems. Deng had, in 1975, complained to Ford and Kissinger that the US government had thwarted Chinese attempts to buy "computers of a speed of 10 million times", prompting Ford and Kissinger's remarkable intervention that resulted in the sale of two powerful CDC Cyber 172 computers to Beijing.[44] This intervention had only encouraged Chinese interest in further purchases — and further complaints about the restrictions that delayed or prevented them. By 1978, the

[43] *FRUS*, Vol. XIII, Document 64.
[44] Ibid.; *FRUS*, Vol. XVIII, Document 137.

Chinese were awaiting a US government decision on granting export licenses to 30 different high-technology items, including the brand-new IBM 370/138 computer and an infrared scanner intended for oil prospecting that the Chinese had agreed to buy from the Daedalus company some two years earlier.[45]

In both of these cases, as in others, the federal government was internally split on whether it was advisable to sell the technology to the Chinese. The sale of powerful American technology abroad — particularly to a communist country — was subject to strict controls at a domestic and international level during the Cold War. The "dual-purpose" nature of many of these items — they were ostensibly being sold for civilian use but could easily be repurposed for military application — ensured that any sale had to be approved by a litany of federal agencies. In the case of the IBM computer, the departments of State, Commerce and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) had all approved, but Energy and Defense were dragging their feet; any sale required unanimous approval (or, exceptionally, a personal intervention by the president with a public justification for sale).[46]

In late 1977, Press and Brzezinski's chief China aide, Oksenberg, made the case to Carter that expediting technology sales would have a number of advantages. First, it was in the US interest to encourage Chinese modernisation. For example, improving China's natural resource extraction capabilities could help with the global energy crisis that dogged Carter's America.[47] This modernisation would, in turn, bolster Chinese resistance to the Soviets. Second, loosening restrictions on sales would remove an irritant in Sino-American negotiations and signal Washington's desire to work towards normalisation. Finally, Press channelled his background at the CSCPRC in arguing that, "Perhaps [the] most important [objective] is establishing long-term ties between China and American

[45] The IBM 370/138 had only been released in late 1976. *FRUS*, Vol. XIII, Document 64; Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 200.
[46] *FRUS*, Vol. XIII, Document 64.
[47] For concurrent Chinese interest in Western knowledge in this area, see Deng, *Sixiang Nianbian*, 97, 20 December 1977 entry. For more on encouraging Chinese energy extraction, in particular its oil reserves, see Minami, 'Oil'.

industry, as well as our scientists and engineers".[48] Such links would, like the exchange programme, build sustaining ties between China and America's societies, as well as more immediately aiding in creating a public lobby for normalisation. As Oksenberg articulated in 1978, "we seek an expanded [bilateral] relationship both as part of the process that will facilitate normalization and because of their intrinsic merit [*sic*]".[49]

In the wake of Vance's unsuccessful attempt to reach a normalisation deal while in China, the Secretary of State's colleagues — Press, Oksenberg and Brzezinski — pushed for the administration to shift its stance on technology sales. In response to Press's October memorandum, Carter agreed for his science advisor to work with Brzezinski and others to expedite licensing decisions.[50] This resulted in an important meeting on 31 January 1978 between Brzezinski, Vance and Secretary of Defense Harold Brown.[51] Vance was the sceptic in the room. The Secretary of State did not object to all technology sales to China, but he was dubious that, even after such transfers, the Chinese would become a major strategic power capable of offsetting Soviet strength. Furthermore, he protested that transfers of the most powerful technology would undercut the administration's strategy of maintaining détente towards Moscow. Technology sales would, then, anger Washington's Cold War adversary without offering any substantial help in dealing with the possible consequences of this anger.[52]

Vance's objections were not enough to prevent the establishment of a small committee of four NSC and State China hands — Oksenberg, Richard Holbrooke, Morton Abramowitz and Benjamin Huberman — that would seek out pending purchase applications to be expedited. This meeting also secretly changed the terms by which the top levels of the administration would assess export applications. Brzezinski reported to Carter that, because superior Soviet technology meant that Moscow could more easily put dual-purpose technology to military ends, he, Brown and (reluctantly)

[48] *FRUS*, Vol. XIII, Document 64; Oksenberg to Brzezinski, 17 February 1978, NLC-15-41-10-4-5, JCL.
[49] Oksenberg to Brzezinski, 26 June 1978, "China (PRC), 1978/6-8", Box 8, National Security Affairs – Zbigniew Brzezinski material – Country Files (NSAZBMCF), JCL.
[50] *FRUS*, Vol. XIII, Document 64.
[51] Oksenberg to Brzezinski, 17 February 1978, NLC-15-41-10-4-5, JCL.
[52] Ibid.; Vance, *Hard Choices*, 78; Breck Walker, '"Friends, But Not Allies"—Cyrus Vance and the Normalization of Relations with China', *Diplomatic History*, 33/4 (2009), 583.

Vance had agreed that the US should begin to "take into account the capability, inclination, and consequences of Moscow and Beijing diverting a dual-purpose item from civilian to military use" when considering a sale. "Under this revised criterion, *which we would not intend to make widely known in the bureaucracy*, we would have somewhat greater flexibility in expanding exports to the PRC."[53] This new policy laid the foundation for a significant expansion of such sales in the months and years to follow.

A window of opportunity and Brzezinski's tripartite strategy

By the spring of 1978, the White House was, on the back of its efforts to expedite Chinese access to American technology, beginning to consider another tilt at normalisation. Earlier that year, the Chinese had sent a number of backchannel signals that hinted they might be amenable to renewed talks. February had seen Edgar Snow again featured on the front page of the *People's Daily*, a tried and tested sign of Beijing's interest in Sino-American friendship, while Deng had personally relaxed visa restrictions on families divided between the US and China.[54] Three further developments encouraged a serious effort to realise a deal: first, the opportunity presented by China's ever-more urgent desire to acquire foreign assistance for its modernisation efforts; second, developments in the domestic politics of both countries; and, third, renewed Soviet global Cold War aggression that alarmed both Washington and Beijing and pushed them closer together.

In March, China's Central Committee called the country's first national science conference since 1950, an event of grand scale attended by China's top leadership and a staggering 6,000 scientists, researchers and cadres. Hua told the largest ever assembly of China's scientists that science and technology was the most important of the Four Modernisations and that the PRC could only catch

[53] Emphasis added. Oksenberg to Brzezinski, 17 February 1978, NLC-15-41-10-4-5, JCL.
[54] Deng, *Sixiang Nianbian*, 97, 20 December 1977 entry; Oksenberg to Brzezinski, 16 March 1978, "China (PRC), 2-5/78", Box 8, NSAZBMCF, JCL.

up to the West in this area through greater interaction and exchanges with the outside world.[55] Brzezinski noted Deng's opening speech, too, in which the vice premier had said that science and technology was the "crux" of successfully modernising China. Brzezinski wrote to Carter that, "After 20 years in search of a distinctive path to modernity, the Deng-administered regime appears to be joining the rest of the world".[56] Unbeknownst to American observers, Deng had also made an important practical step towards his modernisation goals when, on 15 March, he gained Politburo approval to create a select group of leaders to manage imports of foreign technology into China.[57]

Scientific exchanges offered further evidence that China sought greater cooperation with the US. While the CSCPRC's June 1977 visit had not led to a formal agreement to deepen exchanges, the pressure put on the Chinese in the run up to and course of that visit had nonetheless had positive repercussions for the exchange programme. Three months after the CSCPRC delegation returned to the US, the new director of the CSCPRC, Mary Brown Bullock, reflected that the six groups that the organisation had sent to China in 1977 had been provided with programmes "far superior to those arranged in previous years". As the CSCPRC had requested, sightseeing had been minimised and substantive scientific discussions maximised. Many more of the American requests for content had been honoured, while the Chinese had also made their own encouraging changes: two delegations had been involved in joint seminars with their professional counterparts in China, which had included "extended, prolonged discussions [in which] every effort was made to facilitate serious, non-political inquiry".[58]

China's desire to use their contacts with the outside world to expedite their modernisation efforts were, then, finally motivating Beijing to add greater substance to exchanges. Chinese interest in utilising exchanges to accelerate its development were not confined to contacts with the CSCPRC. The NCUSCR received a November 1977 higher education-focused delegation that they had expected

[55] Memcon: Huberman, Gleysteen, and Jiang, 21 May 1978, "MR-NLC-98-215", Box 40, CVF, JCL; Deng, *Sixiang Nianbian*, 110–13, 18 March 1978 entry.
[56] Brzezinski to Carter, 7 April 1978, "Weekly Reports, 53-60", Box 41, Zbigniew Brzezinski collection (ZBC), JCL; *CEN*, Vol. 6, No. 2, April 1978.
[57] Li, 'China's Domestic Politics', 80.
[58] Bullock to Handler, 25 October 1977, "1977 – General", CSCNAS.

to be made up of administrators; in fact, however, the Chinese sent a group of their senior-most Western-trained scientists, who used the trip to study American scientific institutions for insights on how to improve China's largest universities.[59] Similarly, a January 1978 delegation of Chinese petroleum experts hosted by the NCUSCT acted both as a shopping trip for high-end American technology and as a chance for knowledge transfer between US experts in oil extraction and their Chinese counterparts. The importance Beijing attached to this delegation was indicated by the inclusion of Li Renjun, the vice minister of the state planning commission, the highest ranking Chinese government official to have ever visited the US.[60]

Beijing's domestic priorities, then, seemed to suggest that the Chinese might be enticed by another push to expand Sino-American cooperation and political contacts. Simultaneously, the American domestic political concerns that had hampered the Vance trip had now been resolved: the two Panama Canal treaties passed the Senate in March and April. Indeed, there were growing signs of political pressure for Carter to move the relationship with Beijing forward: Senator Jackson returned from a congressional delegation in February commenting that he had "detected a new spirit in China" and that he believed that the administration should dedicate more time to solving outstanding differences with the PRC.[61] Carter knew, however, that any normalisation deal would still have critics as well as supporters: the ROC government continued to invest heavily in lobbying, even targeting Carter's hometown of Plains, Georgia, and public opinion was strongly against any deal that sacrificed Taiwan to establish relations with Beijing.[62] The administration hoped that the technology sales it was seeking to make might help with this: Oksenberg co-authored a paper that proposed that, as normalisation talks moved forward, the Chinese should be encouraged to make major technology

[59] *CEN*, Vol. 6, No. 2, December 1977; Bullock to Handler, 2 December 1977, "1977 – Visits – General", CSCNAS.
[60] Other than to attend the UN. *CEN*, Vol. 6, No. 2, December 1977.
[61] Statement by Senator Henry Jackson, 22 February 1978, "Armacost Evening and Weekly Reports File, 1978/7-8", Box 1, NSASMFEF, JCL.
[62] 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), 610–2; Harding, *Fragile Relationship*, 68; Far East (Oksenberg) to Brzezinski, 7 August 1978, "Armacost Evening and Weekly Reports File, 1978/7-8", Box 1, NSASMFEF, JCL.

and grain purchases that would be announced in the run up to the announcement of the deal, "demonstrating to the US public the tangible benefits to be derived from normal relations".[63]

Finally, Soviet actions persuaded the administration, including Carter himself, to make another push for normalisation. By the spring of 1978, the president was questioning whether he should remain committed to détente — for it seemed that Moscow certainly was not. 1977 had seen the stationing of SS-20 missiles in Europe, continued Soviet and Cuban involvement in Angola and massive Russian intervention in the Ethiopia-Somalia conflict. In April 1978, the Soviet backed *coup d'état* in Afghanistan caused further, serious alarm in Washington.[64] From the beginning of 1978, Brzezinski, a Cold Warrior from the start of the administration, pointed to China as an opportunity for the US to offer a firm response.[65] Carter indicated his support for Brzezinski's case when, in February, he ended a dispute that had been rumbling on since November between his National Security Advisor and the Secretary of State by allowing Brzezinski to accept an invitation from Beijing for him to travel to China.[66] The more confrontational Cold War policy that Carter swung towards in 1978 gave the hard-nosed Brzezinski greater prominence within the administration — most consequentially in the administration's China policy.

Keen to exploit his newfound influence over China policy, Brzezinski and his NSC staff set out a strategy and timetable for seeking a normalisation agreement. One of Brzezinski's conclusions from the Vance visit had been that it had been naive for the administration to think it could reach a quick deal with Beijing on normalisation without developing other aspects of the relationship.[67] The National Security Advisor and his closest staff thus developed a tripartite strategy designed to first gain Chinese trust and, then, Beijing's agreement to normalise relations. Oksenberg and Michael

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[63] Oksenberg and Armacost to Brzezinski, 24 March 1978, "Armacost Chron File, 3/22-3/1978", Box 6, NSASMFEF, JCL; *FRUS*, Vol. XIII, Document 84.

[64] Walker, '"Friends, But Not Allies"', 588; Odd Arne Westad, 'The Fall of Détente and the Turning Tides of History', in *The Fall of Détente: Soviet-American Relations during the Carter Years*, ed. by Odd Arne Westad (Oslo, 1997), 28.

[65] Brzezinski to Carter, 13 January 1978, "Weekly Reports, 42-52", Box 41, ZBC, JCL.

[66] Brzezinski to Carter, 9 February 1978, Ibid.

[67] Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 201.

Armacost, Brzezinski's two China advisors on the NSC, wrote to him in March on how to respond to the newfound Soviet aggression. They argued that, "a strengthened China connection — including formal diplomatic relations, expanding exchanges and trade, and fuller strategic consultations — is the most effective card we have, and the sooner we play it the better".[68] A later memorandum from Oksenberg laid the plan out more systematically: "Our relations with China consist of three dimensions: (1) the global, strategic; (2) the diplomatic, in which normalization is the key issue; and (3) the bilateral, commercial, cultural, scientific, and technological. We are committed to advancing our relations with China in all three dimensions".[69] The strategy was not to be kept secret from the Chinese, and Brzezinski personally told Deng of it during his May visit.[70] That the US would seek to advance all three areas of the relationship simultaneously was critical. The CSCPRC's June 1977 visit had confirmed (again) that the Chinese would not agree to major advances in people-to-people contacts without political progress, while Kissinger's attempts in the mid-1970s to build the relationship almost solely around strategic cooperation had similarly fallen short.

Indeed, the link between the historical record of success and setbacks in the Sino-American relationship since 1971 and the strategy adopted by the NSC is not simply analytical: Brzezinski and Oksenberg actively sought to learn from what had and had not worked under Kissinger. Oksenberg led a systematic review of all negotiations held during the Nixon and Ford administrations and used this "in developing the conceptual framework" for Carter's China policy.[71] In planning Brzezinski's visit, one important conclusion made by the NSC staff was that Kissinger had been wrong to think that geopolitics was the only determinant of the health of the relationship. "In addition to global affairs, domestic conditions in both countries and the climate of the bilateral relationship — the rhetoric each had been using about the other, the state of the trade relationship, the tone of cultural and scientific exchanges — shaped the atmosphere and substance of [each] visit." Given this conclusion, Oksenberg told Brzezinski to take heart as, "Not since 1973 has the bilateral relationship been as satisfactory".

[68] *FRUS*, Vol. XIII, Document 84.
[69] Oksenberg to Brzezinski, 26 June 1978, "China (PRC), 1978/6-8", Box 8, NSAZBMCF, JCL.
[70] *FRUS*, Vol. XIII, Document 110.
[71] Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 198.

The positive developments in the exchange programme that had occurred since the CSCPRC June 1977 visit had been accompanied by an upturn in trade, as well as growing tourism.[72] The one exception was the lingering Daedalus export case, which was, by May, coming to a head. In April, Chinese technicians had arrived in Michigan to begin training with the equipment and Oksenberg warned Brzezinski that rejecting the sale would now lead to a "strongly negative" reaction from the Chinese that could have a significant impact on the relationship.[73]

One final ingredient in the NSC strategy that emerged in the spring of 1978 grew out of the ongoing efforts to expedite Chinese access to technology. By April, the CIA was becoming more confident in its reading of the political developments in Beijing that had followed Mao's 1976 death. An April paper from the agency argued that China's drive for modernisation had led to a deeper connection between that country's internal political objectives and its foreign policy. The PRC was allowing more tourism, the CIA posited, principally in order to gain foreign currency. In turn, Beijing was seeking to improve relations with the West in order to have the opportunity to spend these earnings on technology. The Chinese leadership was entertaining more foreign visitors than ever before, particularly Western businessmen and journalists, in the hopes that this would rebound positively on both popular and governmental perceptions of China in the visitors's host countries. All of these actions were being taken on the basis that the success of domestic economic modernisation rested on China's access to foreign expertise and equipment. Critically, the CIA concluded that Washington need not be confined to crossing its fingers and hoping that such encouraging developments continue: "Some options exist for the United States and others to influence the pace and scope of this change".[74] Such thinking was not limited to those on the government payroll: the CSCPRC had already themselves concluded that, "It is important for the CSCPRC and the NAS to

[72] *FRUS*, Vol. XIII, Document 106.
[73] Ibid.; Oksenberg and Huberman to Brzezinski, 8 May 1978, NLC-6-8-6-5-6, JCL.
[74] CIA report, 'China and Global Issues', April 1978, NLC-26-49-7-2-1, JCL; Deng, *Sixiang Nianbian*, 55, 90, 92–3, 26 July, 29 October 1977 and 17 November 1977 entries.

acknowledge and nurture these new directions in Chinese intellectual life" and thus provide what support they could for the Chinese continuing to open up to the US and the outside world.[75]

Brzezinski agreed. Shortly after receiving this CIA brief, the National Security Advisor created a memorandum for Carter from analysis originally drafted by Oksenberg. Brzezinski told the president that the policy challenge the US faced in dealing with China was to "respond effectively" to the opportunity presented by China's turn to the West. Brzezinski believed this was as much about personnel as policy. A China under Deng's leadership would be one that would continue to seek rapid modernisation, continue to open to the outside in order to do so, and, thus, continue to be a close partner of the US. Brzezinski made clear that Washington should not be sentimental or naive about Deng's approach. "Make no mistake", he warned, "[D]eng is no 'Western sophisticate.' He is Chinese to the core. But he recognizes the advantages for China of a strengthened Western connection".[76] Encouraging Deng's continued rise, and exploiting his yearning for Western knowledge and technology, would become the final ace in Brzezinski's hand as he pushed for normalisation.

Brzezinski's Beijing trip

Brzezinski would arrive in China in May. He took as a gift a piece of the moon retrieved by US astronauts and this symbol of American scientific prowess anticipated a critical theme of the trip.[77] Efforts to use the visit to deepen Sino-American scientific cooperation had begun even before the National Security Advisor arrived in Beijing. A week before he had set off, Brzezinski had arranged a meeting in Washington with Han Xu and Frank Press in which the Americans made the case to Han for "a very high-level delegation of scientists and engineers — all high-level governmental and policy administrators — to China", to follow in the wake of Brzezinski's trip. Han promised to pass on the suggestion to Beijing but offered the usual reservation that, "The crux of the matter is that the US side

[75] Bullock to Handler, 25 October 1977, "1977 – General", CSCNAS.
[76] Brzezinski to Carter, 7 April 1978, "Weekly Reports, 53-60", Box 41, ZBC, JCL.
[77] *FRUS*, Vol. XIII, Document 111.

must also act according to the Shanghai Communiqué" before such governmental cooperation could begin.[78]

When Huberman and Gleysteen resumed these discussions in Beijing the tone of this meeting was very different. Brzezinski had already told Deng that the US had "made up its mind" to reach a normalisation agreement — a statement that had energised the Chinese negotiators — and now Jiang Nanxiang, the vice chairman of the State Commission on Science and Technology, listened intently to Huberman's detailed suggestions for Press's proposed visit. In response, Jiang spoke at length about how the recent National Science Conference opened "brighter prospects … for further exchanges" with the US, a clear indication that the Chinese were sincerely considering the proposal.[79]

Indeed, the Chinese used the trip as an opportunity to make their own case for intensifying other aspects of Sino-American science and technology sharing. During Ford's summit visit to Beijing, Deng had claimed that the issue of technology sales should be kept out of political talks — even if he had then coyly pushed the president to allow Chinese purchases. The Chinese had, to date, generally limited themselves to low-level complaints about sales restrictions and had avoided raising such complaints in high-level talks, conscious that doing so might suggest that greater access could bring a quid pro quo on Beijing's part. This ceased to be the case during Brzezinski's visit. The growing urgency of Beijing's desire for US technology led Chinese interlocutors from Deng down to actively press for a change in Washington's policy. Jiang stated to Huberman that a denial of the license for the Daedalus sale would "inevitably give rise to speculation on our part" that Washington continued to prioritise its relationship with Moscow over that with Beijing. Jiang added more positively, and for the first time explicitly, that, "New measures adopted by the US side towards [technology sales] will be welcomed by us".[80] Similarly, when Brzezinski encouraged Deng to allow greater bilateral exchanges, contacts and trade, the vice premier argued that, in fact, the US was limiting such contacts, too, through its barrier to technology sales. Deng even complained that, following Ford and Kissinger's

[78] Keatley had drawn up the proposals for the delegation based on a major internal government study. *FRUS*, Vol. XIII, Document 105.
[79] Memcon: Huberman, Gleysteen, and Jiang, 21 May 1978, "MR-NLC-98-215", Box 40, CVF, JCL.
[80] Ibid.

pledge during the presidential summit, the US government had continued to block technology sales. He concluded, "You have told us that you will reconsider this question. That is fine".[81]

These complaints suggested that Brzezinski's strategy of incorporating Chinese desire for American modernisation assistance had potential. Beijing's hunger for American technology was palpable, not only in Deng's remarks about sales of equipment but also through the encouraging reaction to American proposals for an increase in bilateral cooperation, both at a government-to-government and people-to-people level. As planned, these suggestions had been accompanied by simultaneous progress on the other two fronts identified by the NSC: Brzezinski had stopped short of negotiating normalisation terms but had repeatedly told Deng that the US had "made up its mind" to strike a deal and informed him that USLO chief Woodcock was ready to begin serious negotiations from June, while, in the strategic relationship, Brzezinski had successfully convinced Deng to support American initiatives to counter Soviet global aggression, for example by improving relations with India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).[82]

Beginning in late 1977, Brzezinski and his staff had paid close attention to the Chinese interest in rapid modernisation and opening to the world that was demonstrated in the changing Chinese approach to exchange contacts and by political events in Beijing. The National Security Advisor had adjusted US policy to respond to these changes, first by beginning a push to allow more Chinese purchases of US technology and, then, by showcasing the expertise the US could channel to China through government-to-government and further people-to-people exchanges. Brzezinski's trip had built on this growing momentum: the Chinese had responded favourably to proposals for deeper scientific cooperation and had welcomed Brzezinski's suggestion that normalisation negotiations could begin in earnest. The strategy that Brzezinski and the NSC were formulating looked to be a winning one.

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[81] *FRUS*, Vol. XIII, Document 110.
[82] Ibid., Document 111; Brzezinski to Carter, 11 September 1978, "China MR-NLC-98-215 [3]", Box 41, CVF, JCL; Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 215.

III: PROMISE FULFILLED:

THE FRANK PRESS TRIP, GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT EXCHANGES AND NORMALISATION

Brzezinski returned to Washington to a jubilant welcome from Carter. His successful visit began the final phase in Sino-American negotiations towards normalisation. This section argues that the most important variable that determined the Carter administration's success in finally reaching the deal that had eluded Nixon, Kissinger and Ford was the successful exploitation of the exchange programme and bilateral cooperation as a means of eliciting political progress and negotiating flexibility from Beijing. This strategy worked because it was employed at a time of flux in Chinese domestic politics and this section also details how Washington directed its promotion of science and technology cooperation to bolster Deng's domestic position in the leadership struggle of 1978. These two strategies were closely connected, as demonstrated by the near-simultaneous achievement of a major upgrade in the bilateral exchange relationship, Deng's victory in his domestic political struggle and a final normalisation settlement.

Frank Press's China July 1978 visit

In the weeks after Brzezinski returned to Washington, his staff worked quickly to address the Chinese complaints about technology sales aired during the visit and to capitalise on Chinese receptiveness to the Press visit proposal. On 1 June, Oksenberg again complained to Brzezinski that, in spite of months of diligent effort, only limited progress had been made in the NSC's efforts to facilitate greater Chinese technology purchases. "I feel as if I am dealing with an interminable bureaucratic morass", Oksenberg told his boss. Brzezinski had convinced the Secretary of Energy, Schlesinger, to drop his department's objections to the Daedalus sale but ACDA were still objecting for fear that it would hurt the SALT talks that were, after all, that department's main business. Not wanting to lose momentum

after Brzezinski's visit, Oksenberg told his boss, "If we do not have an adequate resolution of this issue by the afternoon, we will begin to set in motion the process for obtaining a favourable decision on political grounds. This will require your intervention at frankly political cost to you". Brzezinski had significant influence within the Carter administration but he lacked Kissinger's peerless authority; his efforts to advance normalisation were thus as much about navigating internal bureaucratic barriers as convincing the Chinese.[83]

In his memoirs, Brzezinski suggests that one way that he successfully did so was cultivating allies within the bureaucracy, citing Frank Press as a key example.[84] In fact, the former CSCPRC-head had his own longstanding motivations for fostering Sino-American relations and seems to have needed little convincing about the merits of pushing for normalisation in 1978. Certainly, however, Brzezinski and the NSC sought to reap maximum political capital from Press's trip to China. Brzezinski met with the delegation before their departure to make clear his personal approval not only of the visit but also the specific proposals for closer scientific and technical cooperation that would be made in Beijing. He told the group that the visit was "so important" to "the process that will facilitate normalization".[85]

Another objective of the Press visit was to forcefully confirm American interest in assisting Deng's modernisation efforts. Brzezinski's briefing of the delegation stressed that "we note China's current drive for modernity — a development we welcome" and impressed upon them that, "We have a positive and mutually beneficial role to play" in those efforts.[86] Indeed, the confidential planning paper that Oksenberg prepared for Brzezinski on the subject of the visit informed the National Security Advisor that the proposals that had been drawn up by Keatley, Press and the NSC were deliberately targeted to respond to the priority areas identified by Deng and Fang Yi during the National Conference on Science and Technology and were consciously intended to confirm to Deng's

[83] Oksenberg to Brzezinski, 1 June 1978, "China (PRC), 1978/6-8", Box 8, NSAZBMCF, JCL; Oksenberg to Brzezinski, 2 June 1978, NLC-26-1-3-5-4, JCL.
[84] Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 226.
[85] Oksenberg to Brzezinski, 26 June 1978, "China (PRC), 1978/6-8", Box 8, NSAZBMCF, JCL.
[86] Ibid.

political audience that his policy of reaching out to the West would bring a positive response and tangible results. It is important to remember that, in 1978, the rapid and seemingly inexorable modernisation of China that we have witnessed over the past 40 years was not inevitable — indeed, it seemed an unlikely outcome given the PRC's stuttering development to that point. Brzezinski was sympathetic to Oksenberg's analysis that Deng's opening to the West could be as fleeting as previous periods of openness in Chinese modern history — and could be followed by a subsequent xenophobic turn inwards. Oksenberg believed that, perhaps, the US could mitigate chances of such an outcome. "These xenophobic phases [in modern Chinese history] have always been detrimental to US policy interests in East Asia … one cannot help but wonder whether a forthcoming Western response to this most recent Chinese turn outward might not reduce somewhat the amplitude in China's cyclical pattern of development."[87]

Finally, Brzezinski and Oksenberg saw an anti-Soviet aspect to the trip. The Chinese had surprised everyone but Brzezinski in opting to receive the delegation to come in July rather than August.[88] The key reason behind this decision was that Press was set to travel to Moscow later that month. Beijing would like to "stick its finger in Moscow's eye" by hosting Carter's science advisor as the head of the largest ever delegation of American science personnel just weeks before Press arrived in the Soviet Union.[89]

The trip's primary objective was finding agreement for the beginning of systematic government-to-government exchanges. Since 1977, direct government involvement in exchanges had been gradually increasing. Departments of the federal government had begun to directly fund individual exchanges, in addition to State's continuing support of the overall budgets of the CSCPRC and NCUSCR. The government had also begun adding their own specialist personnel to CSCPRC visits, with Department of Agriculture staff being involved in a June 1977 delegation, while

[87] In an oral history interview, Brzezinski was careful to make clear that he was no more certain than Oksenberg that Deng would get his way in shaping Chinese domestic politics and transforming China. Interview with Zbigniew Brzezinski, Washington, DC, 19 January 2010; Oksenberg to Brzezinski, 30 June 1978, "China (PRC), 1978/6-8", Box 8, NSAZBMCF, JCL.
[88] Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 226.
[89] Oksenberg to Brzezinski, 30 June 1978, "China (PRC), 1978/6-8", Box 8, NSAZBMCF, JCL.

government institutions such as the National Bureau of Standards were receiving a growing number of Chinese delegations. Most significant of all, in May 1978, the Department of Energy had, alongside the NCUSCT, hosted the first ever Sino-American government-to-government exchange in the form of a group of high-ranking Chinese specialists on oil.[90] The Chinese had permitted these piecemeal changes even as they had maintained that it was as yet premature for the beginning of full-scale official exchanges negotiated directly between the two governments. The Press trip sought to test whether the Chinese could be persuaded to sign agreements that would formalise government involvement and management of exchanges and that would therefore significantly upgrade the level of bilateral cooperation between the two governments.

This did not mean, however, that the US government expected or desired an end to the "facilitated", quasi-official exchange programme overseen by the CSCPRC and the NCUSCR. In fact, plans for government-to-government exchanges were intended as an expansion of the existing exchange programme. Indeed, the briefing material prepared by Oksenberg for the group stated explicitly that the primary purpose of the trip was to, "Encourage an expanded science and technology program with China at all levels, *particularly recognizing the important role to be played by the facilitating organizations*".[91] Thus, the specific proposals made by Press were for cooperation in agriculture, resource exploration, seismology, high-energy physics, public health and space — all but the last of which had been foci for the CSCPRC's exchange programme. Likewise, Oksenberg instructed Brzezinski to "emphasize" to the Press delegation that, as the CSCPRC had long been arguing, "the S&T [*sic*] relationship we seek with China must be mutually beneficial and reciprocal".[92]

The Chinese response to the Press visit further confirmed Brzezinski and the Carter administration's belief that deeper science and technology cooperation could trigger a closer overall relationship. Soon after the delegation returned home, a PRC embassy official in a third country told their American colleague that Press's delegation had been considered in Beijing to have been a "major

[90] NCUSCR Annual Report, 1976-77, NCOC; *CEN*, Vol. 5, No. 1, February 1977, and Vol. 6, No. 2, December 1977; 'US-China scientific relations advance', *Chemical & Engineering News*, 16 May 1977.
[91] Emphasis added.
[92] Oksenberg to Brzezinski, 30 June 1978, "China (PRC), 1978/6-8", Box 8, NSAZBMCF, JCL.

success", both in terms of encouraging further science and technology exchanges and in moving towards normalisation. The official said that the trip had made the Chinese aware both of the need "to improve the flow of S&T [*sic*] information by increasing the amount of information coming in and upgrading the quality as well". The official indicated that the Chinese knew the most expedient way to do so: there was a "need to turn to the US, as the technological leader of the world, to increase and upgrade the technological info coming into China". The official had said that the delegation had been taken as an important sign in Beijing that the US government was sincere in moving rapidly towards normalisation and confirmed that, as a direct result of the visit, Sino-American exchanges would presently increase.[93]

The floodgates open for facilitated exchanges

Press's delegation thus achieved its immediate objective: beginning a programme of government-to-government exchanges to supplement the contacts that were already taking place below the state level. In analysing the connection between high-diplomacy and the exchange relationship in Sino-American relations it is important to note that, after years of insisting that deeper exchanges must follow normalisation, in fact, Beijing agreed to a substantial enhancement of that programme *before* normalisation was assured. Three formal agreements on government-to-government exchanges — on agriculture, space technology, and student and scholarly exchanges — were all signed in the months between the Press visit and the final normalisation deal.[94]

It was not only the new programme of official exchanges that benefitted from the Press trip. The CSCPRC sent another staff delegation to China in August 1978, which received a very different reception to that which travelled in May 1977. "Almost their first official words to me were that they now agree to end the period of 'scholarly tourism', and begin more substantive scholarly encounters",

[93] The Situation Room to David Aaron, 28 July 1978, NLC-1-7-3-41-5, JCL.
[94] *CEN*, Vol. 6, No. 5; Smith, 'Role of Scientists', 128.

Bullock reported. The Chinese gave "due recognition" that the leadership of the CSCPRC had been pushing for such a change "for years" and now stated explicitly that, "We quite agree, after six years experience [*sic*], that there is a need to deepen scientific exchanges. We quite agree to turn our scientific tourism into a more substantive exchange program".[95] Bullock reported that the Press trip "had made a deep impression on Chinese scientists and their institutions, not just in terms of initiating new governmental programs but in strengthening ties with the American scholarly community". At every banquet and institution — even those in far-flung Harbin — the Chinese made reference to "a new era in Chinese-American scholarly relationships, a new sense that it would be possible to embark upon a wide variety of scholarly projects". Bullock concluded: "There was no question but that Frank Press's trip had reaffirmed a central role for the CSCPRC and the NAS in substantive scholarly exchanges".[96]

The US government, too, expected the CSCPRC to continue to play a central role in scientific and scholarly contacts with China. Although Kissinger had always harboured an interest in bringing exchanges directly under the government's control, when the Carter administration was given the option of doing so it instead opted to continue a public-private partnership in exchange contacts. The government certainly increased their involvement in such contacts from late 1978 — but they simultaneously asked both the CSCPRC and the NCUSCR to expand their activities, too. Indeed, the CSCPRC were also asked by the government to play a central role in facilitating the new officially-sanctioned exchanges. Press himself approached the CSCPRC in late August to ask the organisation to act as a conduit of information to the American academic community about the new programme of student and scholar exchanges. Two weeks later, an Inter-Agency Task Force set-up to initiate these new educational exchanges requested that the CSCPRC prepare a tender proposal to go a step further and manage the selection and sending of American students and scholars to China.[97]

[95] Bullock to Handler, 11 August 1978, "1978 – General", CSCNAS; CSCPRC memorandum, 'Conversation with Huang Kun-yi', 8 August 1978, "1978 – General", CSCNAS.
[96] Bullock to Handler, 11 August 1978, "1978 – General", CSCNAS.
[97] Handler to Press, 18 September 1978, "1978 – Student Exchange Program – General", CSCNAS.

The initiative for the CSCPRC having such a critical role in this programme came from the government, not the CSCPRC. Indeed, Bullock revealed to her Chinese counterparts that the organisation was in fact more interested in the growing exchanges of scholars than student exchanges.[98] Accordingly, the CSCPRC's tender proposal for managing these contacts made clear that, as the group had been asked by the government to perform this function, the CSCPRC was not expecting to draw on any of its own funds to support the new programme. Instead, the group asked the government for $287,000 in funding just to cover the CSCPRC's own costs in managing the programme during the year ahead; further federal funds were also expected to cover the stipends and travel costs of Americans travelling to China. The CSCPRC could do so because they knew that, by 1978, they had become invaluable to the exchange programme: only they had the institutional knowledge accrued from managing the exchange of many hundreds of American and Chinese academics. The close relationship that the government and the CSCPRC had mutually developed since 1972 made it natural that, when the Chinese finally allowed exchanges to become more official, the government would turn to the CSCPRC to take up a new but nonetheless familiar role in facilitating these contacts. This new role would also facilitate the wider transmission of this institutional knowledge into the American academic community.[99]

The remainder of 1978 saw a reversal of the longstanding dynamic of negotiations between the CSCPRC and NCUSCR and the Chinese government: where before, it had almost always been the US exchange organisations pressing Beijing to agree to greater contacts, now the Chinese proposed to both groups an expansion of contacts that stretched their organisational capacity. For example, Beijing wanted to rapidly expand the exchange of scholars and in October agreed terms with the US government to do so. The CSCPRC would manage these contacts and during the group's August visit, Huang Kunyi, who represented both the STAPRC and the Chinese government State Science and Technology Commission (SSTC), made clear that Beijing wanted to send as many scholars as possible

[98] CSCPRC memorandum, 'Conversation with Chien Hao', 11 August 1978, "1978 – General", CSCNAS.
[99] Handler to Press, 18 September 1978, "1978 – Student Exchange Program – General", CSCNAS; CSCPRC paper: 'Students exchanges with the People's Republic of China: A statement of capabilities and management options', 23 July 1978, Folder 6374, Box 527, Series 1, Accession 2, SSRC records, RAC.

to the US, at any expense. Bullock, impressed by the newfound Chinese impatience, cautioned Huang that she could not produce "some magic number" of how many researchers American universities could absorb, emphasising that each individual academic must be matched with an appropriate American colleague.[100] The Chinese were equally anxious to begin student exchanges. Jian Hao, another SSTC representative, revealed to Bullock that his ministry was under great pressure to rapidly expand exchange contacts in order to serve the ambitious domestic development agenda that was being set by Deng. The SSTC had initially proposed sending as many as 500 students by the very next month but admitted that they simply could not find enough suitable students in such a short space of time.[101] Exchanges that directly served China's modernisation were certainly Beijing's priority in 1978 but the NCUSCR was also adjusting to Beijing's newfound enthusiasm for expanding contacts. Rosen told the organisation's board that, in the negotiations for the 1979 programme of cultural exchanges that began in September 1978, "we could find the Chinese asking for greater Committee involvement in exchanges than we are at this stage prepared to undertake effectively".[102]

Washington sponsors Deng during the normalisation endgame

The immediate tangible success of Brzezinski's tactic of encouraging an expansion of science and technology exchanges and cooperation at the same time as pursuing normalisation negotiations emboldened the Carter administration, which now believed that a final deal might be in sight. Brzezinski and his advisors believed, however, that there needed to be a further, final aspect to a successful push for normalisation: an adjustment of US policy to influence Chinese domestic political outcomes. The benefits that had been won from the Press trip indicated that, at this sensitive moment of rapid change in Beijing's politics, the determinants of success in normalisation negotiations were not limited to the issues discussed in Woodcock and Huang Hua's talks in Beijing. Chinese interest in

[100] CSCPRC memorandum, 'Conversation with Huang Kun-yi', 8 August 1978, "1978 – General", CSCNAS.
[101] CSCPRC memorandum, 'Conversation with Chien Hao', 11 August 1978, Ibid.
[102] Rosen to NCUSCR board, 7 September 1978, "NCUSCR – Board Meeting, 1978", Box 131, ADBP.

realising an agreement with the US now appeared to be at least as motivated by the beneficial effects this would have on their domestic modernisation as they were the PRC's international security. Thus, in the seven months between Brzezinski's visit to Beijing and the final normalisation deal, the White House adjusted its policy in order to encourage a political victory for Deng and his policy of modernisation through opening to the West. The US believed that doing so would not only ensure the realisation of the most favourable possible normalisation deal but would also ensure deeper and more harmonious future cooperation between the two countries, both at a governmental level and in people-to-people relations.

Beijing's internal politics had long influenced Sino-American contacts, something that had been frankly admitted by the Chinese during Brzezinski's trip. Jiang Nanxiang recounted to Huberman that the Gang of Four had opposed international scientific cooperation as "following the slavish comprador philosophy" and gave an account of when, in 1974, Jiang Qing had successfully sabotaged the purchase of an American colour television plant by claiming that the American supplier's courtesy gift of glass snails was a calculated insult intended to mock the slow pace of China's economic development. "They made use of this incident to put a lot of labels on the persons concerned and such an act was absurd and silly."[103] By 1978, Beijing's politics were, however, having a salutary, not suffocating, influence on the Sino-American relationship. Huang Hua recalls in his memoirs that Deng was pushing for improvements in ties with Washington in 1978 at least in part because "this was … necessary with regard to the economy".[104] Li Jie, a Chinese historian with close access to party records, has persuasively argued that, because "the United States was clearly the main sources of advanced ideas and technology" for China's modernisation drive, "the smooth normalization of relations [became] a key component in China's opening to the world".[105]

From August 1978, the White House developed a clear sense that it could and should seek to influence Chinese domestic politics. Oksenberg wrote to Brzezinski on 11 August that, "We are …

[103] Teiwes and Sun, *Maoist Era*, 163.
[104] Harding, *Fragile Relationship*, 349.
[105] Li, 'China's Domestic Politics', 82.

beginning to get enough feel, after 18 months of watching Chinese internal developments, to crank the domestic element into the formulation of our China policy". Oksenberg and the CIA believed that Deng was in a strong position but still faced tough opposition, both in terms of his personal authority and the policies he was seeking to promote. The White House resolved to do all they could to firm up Deng's position and made a number of adjustments to US policy in late 1978, the most immediate of which related to the exchange programme and the transfer of technology. Oksenberg highlighted to his superiors that the Chinese were impatient to begin student exchanges — but that this new programme could revive xenophobia in Beijing. The NSC advisor argued that, "How we handle the student exchange program should take into account Teng's vulnerabilities. We want to make sure that the Chinese students are qualified and that the program entails reciprocity, but the way we achieve these objectives must not intrude on Chinese definitions of sovereignty".[106] This comment came at the same time as the CSCPRC was worrying about the possibility of the Chinese sending scholars and students who had not developed sufficient linguistic or other abilities to be effective participants in the exchange programme. The CSCPRC also continued to be concerned that the Chinese were again requesting greater access to American facilities without making adequate assurances about loosening restrictions on American research in China.[107] Oksenberg thus resolved to push the CSCPRC and other parts of the US government to take a light touch on both of these issues, at least until Deng was securely enthroned. Oksenberg also highlighted a potential sale of an advanced satellite to the PRC as another means of assisting Deng, pointing out that he had shown "desire for a rapid decision on a significant event of symbolic importance which should rebound to [his] credit".[108]

Soon after Oksenberg passed these recommendations to Brzezinski, they were approved by Carter and, by October, the administration had acted on Oksenberg's recommendations to expedite student exchanges and the satellite sale. Richard Atkinson, the head of the National Science Foundation and one of the senior figures on the Press visit, received Zhou Peiyuan that month and

[106] *FRUS*, Vol. XIII, Document 128; Far East (Oksenberg) to Brzezinski, 7 August 1978, "Armacost Evening and Weekly Reports File, 1978/7-8", Box 1, NSASMFEF, JCL.
[107] CSCPRC memorandum, 'Conversation with Chien Hao', 11 August 1978, "1978 – General", CSCNAS.
[108] Brzezinski to Mondale, 18 August 1978, "China (PRC), 1978/6-8", Box 8, NSAZBMCF, JCL.

formally signed the agreement to begin student and scholar exchanges, while Robert Frosch, the head of NASA and another member of the Press group, invited the Chinese to send a space delegation to the US to discuss the satellite sale.[109] The ultimate package offered to Beijing for that sale included two powerful satellites and the launching and ground stations needed to put the technology into orbit. Beijing paid the eye-watering sum of nearly half a billion dollars for this equipment, the equivalent of the total yearly income of more than 3 million Chinese.[110] These decisions fitted within pre-existing Carter administration policies — expanding exchanges and facilitating China's technology purchases — but were pushed through with added urgency in order to secure Deng's position.

By November, Brzezinski's now four-part strategy — simultaneous attention to bilateral relations, strategic cooperation and normalisation talks, all adjusted to suit Chinese domestic politics — was ushering in the beginning of a new era in Sino-American relations. Exchanges and bilateral contacts were exploding. The CSCPRC estimated that 1978 had seen a year-on-year *tripling* of the number of total exchanges between the US and China, with many of the American visitors to China being provided unprecedented access.[111] Meanwhile, the largest ever cultural troupe to be sent by the PRC to any country had been received by NCUSCR. The delegation of 150 performers from the Performing Arts Company of the PRC had arrived on two of the Boeing 707s previously sold to the Chinese for an "enormously popular" tour co-hosted by the New York Metropolitan Opera House.[112] The visit was just one of nine NCUSCR-sponsored exchanges for the year, just one short of the number for the previous two years combined. Meanwhile, the Daedalus company's equipment had finally been approved for sale and the Chinese had been persuaded to make the large grain purchases that, it was hoped, would help make normalisation attractive to US domestic audiences.[113] American

[109] *FRUS*, Vol. XIII, Document 144.
[110] Ibid., Document 165. Chinese gross domestic product (GDP) data taken from: http://data.stats.gov.cn/english. Accessed 19 September 2017.
[111] *CEN*, Vol. 6, No. 5
[112] NCUSCR Annual Report, 1977-78, NCOC; NCUSCR 'Program Summary: January-June, 1978', "NCUSCR – Board Meeting, 1978", Box 131, ADBP.
[113] Brzezinski to Carter, 11 September 1978, "China MR-NLC-98-215 [3]", Box 41, CVF, JCL.

businesses reported unprecedented interest in trade from their Chinese counterparts, including in sectors long eyed by corporate America, such as China's off-shore oil reserves.[114]

As Brzezinski had predicted, normalisation negotiations were simultaneously proceeding apace. A key meeting occurred between Carter and PRCLO chief, Chai Zemin, on 19 September, in which the president made clear that the US would continue its full "commercial contacts" — in other words, arms sales — to Taiwan after normalisation. Chai protested — but did not rule out proceeding towards agreement.[115] Following this meeting, Woodcock made rapid progress in his negotiations with Huang in Beijing: in early November, he proposed a draft communiqué to be issued if a final deal could be reached.[116]

In Washington, however, Oksenberg paid attention to other developments in the Chinese capital. On 15 November, he reported to Carter that internal domestic developments there had "heated rapidly". Deng was on the offensive, seeking to side-line the leaders that had supported his second purge in 1976. Oksenberg thought the vice premier was likely strong enough to do so but he noted that he had overextended himself before. "Teng has many balls in the air at the moment, and it would be dangerous for him to drop any of them." Oksenberg counselled that the US should not leave the outcome to chance: "Since coming to Washington, I have deliberately refrained from making suggestions to you about ways to influence Chinese internal politics. We are now, however, faced with a situation where the stakes are high and it is important to us that Teng should win."[117]

Building on the success of the effective steps taken from August through October, Oksenberg now suggested further policy adjustments to ensure Deng came out on top. The first action he suggested again related to Deng's desire to gain access to Western technology. The administration was already at full tilt when it came to providing American assistance but now Oksenberg recommended that the government use its influence with European countries to ensure that Deng was given access to

[114] Oksenberg and Huberman to Brzezinski, 31 August 1978, NLC-26-53-5-10-9, JCL; Brzezinski to Carter, 11 September 1978, "China MR-NLC-98-215 [3]", Box 41, CVF, JCL.
[115] Memcon: Carter and Chai, 19 September 1978, "China MR-NLC-98-215 [3]", Box 41, CVF, JCL.
[116] Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 230; Huang, *Memoirs*, 349–50.
[117] Oksenberg to Brzezinski, 8 December 1978, "China (PRC), 1978/12", Box 9, NSAZBMCF, JCL. See also Vogel, *Deng*, 229–40.

their technology, too. Thus, in November, Carter agreed to help guide the sale of a French nuclear reactor to China through the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls, or CoCom, the Western bloc organisation tasked with enforcing an embargo on arms and weaponisable technology to communist countries. Oksenberg even suggested that the administration leak its involvement in the sale to garner credit from Beijing. Such was Washington's belief in the importance of Deng's triumph that Oksenberg even suggested that the US adjust its approach to normalisation talks to ensure he was not unseated. He warned that, "With a leadership struggle in a fairly acute phase, the Chinese may find it difficult to take hard decisions", most likely a reference to Chinese assent to US arms sales to Taiwan post-normalisation.[118] Oksenberg did *not* suggest that the US change its position on this important issue, but this recommendation may explain why the US side was so careful about how this most painful issue was negotiated: after Carter had made clear the US position to Chai, the US side deliberately avoided discussing arms sales in negotiations with anyone but Deng, and was ambiguous and circumspect even in those talks. Fardella even goes as far to argue that Brzezinski deliberately kept Chai in the dark about the unchanging American position until the very last moment (although the National Security Advisor's memoirs deny that this was his intention).[119]

One last policy adjustment made by the Carter administration in the weeks before the ultimate deal was to consciously pass over an opportunity to promote human rights in China. In November, the Democracy Wall Movement had begun and, on 1 December, Brzezinski was informed that, among the posters erected, there were a surprisingly large number of references to the West, to human rights and to Western-style democracy.[120] A week later, Carter was informed that several posters had hailed Carter's human rights policy and one in particular had directly called on the president to "pay attention" to the issue in China. Washington, however, decided that their relations

[118] Oksenberg to Brzezinski, 15 November 1978, "China (PRC), 1978/6-8", Box 8, NSAZBMCF, JCL; Vance, *Hard Choices*, 117.
[119] Fardella, 'Sino-American Normalization', 568; Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 230–1.
[120] NSC East Asia to Brzezinski, 1 December 1978, "Armacost Evening and Weekly Reports File, 11-12/78", Box 1, NSASMFEF, JCL.

with Beijing — and perhaps Deng's domestic position, too — were too fragile for Carter to respond to this appeal and the administration avoided any public comment that might "praise popular aspirations".[121] Deng's desire for a relationship with the US was, perhaps, one cause of the protests: the vice premier had loosened political restrictions in 1978, in part to improve China's image in the West.[122] But the same prospects for normalisation that pushed Deng to allow dissent simultaneously discouraged Washington from adding their support to the protests. Thereafter, once normalisation had been secured, Deng showed less tolerance of dissent, crushing the movement in 1979.

CONCLUSION

Normalisation was agreed on 15 December 1978. The strong and mutually affirming link between Deng's rise and the normalisation deal was underlined by the almost simultaneous achievement of this diplomatic deal and the confirmation of Deng as China's next paramount leader, which occurred at the Third Plenum of the 11th Congress of the CCP, held between the 18th and 22nd December. The plenum firmly committed the PRC to Deng's policies of rapid modernisation through opening to the outside world — marking the beginning of the Reform and Opening period — but it also lauded Deng's approach to foreign policy as "correct and successful". Over the second half of 1978, the Carter administration had contributed to Deng's victory, using the Press visit as the launching point for an effort to convince the Chinese government that America could and would provide the means to make Deng's radical policies a success. Washington had simultaneously pushed forward normalisation negotiations, seeking to secure the best possible deal for the US while also conducting negotiations in a manner sensitive to Deng's domestic needs.

The final agreement was a personal triumph for Deng and a success for Carter. The US had successfully exploited Deng's enthusiasm for agreement in order to elicit flexibility on the most

[121] Oksenberg to Brzezinski, 8 December 1978, "China (PRC), 1978/12", Box 9, NSAZBMCF, JCL.
[122] CIA report, 'Human rights in the East Asia-Pacific region', 31 August 1978, NLC-28-17-15-10-6, JCL.

crucial and sensitive of issues, the continued US relationship with Taiwan. Deng finally consented to re-establish relations in spite of knowing that Washington would cease to sell arms to Taiwan for only a short one-year grace period. The American commitment to Deng was not total, however. The White House immediately made the normalisations terms public, in the full knowledge that doing so would hurt Deng. Thus, the US commitment to Deng's domestic position was never enough to warrant compromise of the substance of the agreement, or, indeed, the Carter administration's own domestic interests.[123]

Deng tolerated this because he knew that the relationship with the US was at the core of his political agenda. In the short term, a normalisation agreement was a feather in his cap that helped swing his contest with Hua Guofeng for supreme leadership in Beijing. More important, however, was the long term: Deng's plans for Reform and Opening rested on access to foreign capital and expertise and he knew that the US would be the most important source of both. Indeed, in many ways, it already was: by 1978, Sino-American trade was again climbing to new levels, while numbers of science and technology exchanges had soared and were accompanied by intense Chinese interest in purchasing US technology.

This deepening interaction between the two countries had begun before a normalisation deal had been struck. Chinese appetite for the products of American science had been strongly evident as early as 1975. By 1978, this desire was brazen. That the Chinese had agreed to shelve their previous precondition that normalisation precede an intensification of bilateral cooperation and the beginning of government-to-government exchanges proved what the CSCPRC had been arguing since the Ford administration: that US scientific expertise afforded significant leverage in Sino-American negotiations. After Brzezinski's visit, normalisation talks had proceeded in tandem with negotiations to facilitate this cooperation but Beijing's impatience to secure access to US science and technology was critical to emboldening Washington to set forth strong normalisation terms and then to Deng's decision to compromise on previously sacrosanct Chinese conditions for diplomatic recognition. Thus,

[123] Brzezinski to Woodcock, 15 December 1978, "China MR-NLC-98-215 [3]", Box 41, CVF, JCL.

where cultural exchanges had kick-started Sino-American rapprochement, in 1978, scientific contacts made a crucial contribution to the finalisation of that process in normalisation.

EPILOGUE

Sino-American exchanges in the post-normalisation era

Normalisation had a profound effect on the Sino-American exchange programme. The unusual characteristics of exchanges from 1971 to 1978 had been a result of the unique relationship between the Chinese and American governments: a partnership both intense and important but also unofficial and incomplete. This had made the informal diplomacy of the NCUSCR, the CSCPRC and their Chinese counterparts of great consequence and ensured that exchange organisations were recognised by both governments as key players in the relationship. Both groups celebrated normalisation, a political goal they had consciously contributed to since the mid-1960s. But the formalisation of Sino-American diplomacy ties also posed a challenge to the two groups: how to find purpose and support now that the artificial, political barrier to government-orchestrated contacts had been removed. This epilogue briefly considers the landscape of the exchange programme as and after normalisation was realised. It argues that, in spite of the changes in the political relationship, there were as many continuities as there were changes between pre- and post-normalisation exchanges, at least in the immediate wake of the upgrading of the official relationship.

EXCHANGES AND THE STATE

The most important change in the exchange programme to occur post-normalisation was the beginning of major direct involvement of the government in the programme. As early as 1977, there had begun to be a gradual increase in government participation in exchanges, particularly through the inclusion of government employees from both sides in trips. This had intensified in the wake of the Press trip of July 1978. Nonetheless, the array of formal government-to-government exchange agreements that began to be signed in late 1978 afforded the government, for the first time, the role

of official sponsors and organisers of exchanges. This was a function that had, on the US-side at least, previously been the almost exclusive domain of private organisations (with the exception of congressional delegations and a very small number of other officially-sponsored exchange delegations). However, as has been argued over the course of this thesis, this was not a change from the government being uninvolved in exchanges to being deeply involved; instead it was only the manner of involvement that changed. Both governments had *always* been deeply involved in exchanges since 1971; the difference had been that the US government and, at least ostensibly, the Chinese government had exercised this influence unofficially and out of sight. From late 1978, both governments could be explicit and public about the role they played in exchanges.

This led to a recasting of the formal definition of the exchanges overseen by the CSCPRC and the NCUSCR. Since 1972, the exchanges overseen by the two groups had been classed as "facilitated exchanges". Although the Chinese maintained that contacts arranged through the two groups and the NCUSCT were with the American people, their use of the term "facilitated exchanges" was a reminder that, in fact, Beijing (and Washington, too) saw these exchanges as more than unofficial contacts but instead a programme that was facilitated by official actors. Revealingly, in 1978, the Chinese explicitly stated that they considered contacts with the two groups to now be "people-to-people" contacts. In doing so, Beijing effectively relieved the organisations of their previous government endorsement and re-categorised them alongside the growing number of private organisations involved in exchanges.[1]

As was already clear in the second half of 1978, however, this more direct government involvement did not end the role for the CSCPRC and NCUSCR in exchanges. Shortly after normalisation took place, Brzezinski wrote to Yost, saying, "I recognise that your Committee has legitimate questions to ask concerning your role in the post-normalisation period". But Brzezinski went on to assure Yost that, "if anything, the opportunities for your organisation to play a vital role in

[1] CSCPRC memorandum, 'Conversation with Chien Hao', 11 August 1978, "1978 – General", CSCNAS.

Sino-American relations will expand".[2] Indeed, in the late 1970s, 1980s and even into the 1990s, both groups increased their exchange activities. (The NCUSCR continues to be involved in Sino-American people-to-people contacts to this day, although formal exchanges were wound down in the 1990s as private travel to China became commonplace. The CSCPRC closed its Washington office in 1996, although a scholar exchange programme continued out of ACLS and a Beijing office.[3])

Both groups continued their facilitation of exchanges with enthusiastic government support. In January 1978, the NCUSCR board decided to remove a previous restriction on the proportion of the organisation's budget that could be drawn from public funds and thereafter government financing of the group continued until the late 1990s.[4] In the 1978 financial year, 56% of the NCUSCR's budget came from government sources, with the new federal International Communication Agency (ICA) providing $290,000 of direct funding and a further $25,500 being given by the Office of Education towards an educational exchange. As the group expanded its activities for the year ahead, it expected to increase its direct support from the ICA to $360,000.[5] Wheeler's study of the NCUSCR in the 1980s and 1990s states that government funding for the group continued, growing in real terms into the 1980s and amounting to 25-30% of the NCUSCR's budget in that period. This public support dropped off only in the 1990s, when other sources of support to the group grew substantially.[6] The CSCPRC likewise continued to receive substantial government support, through the National Science Foundation but also through direct funding, including (but by no means limited to) the funding secured to oversee the student exchange programme. The vast expansion of scientific and technical

[2] Brzezinski to Yost, 9 January 1979, Folder 15, Box 1, Series 1, DPMP, RAC.
[3] For the NCUSCR's continuing activities, see https://www.ncuscr.org; for the CSCPRC see: https://library.gwu.edu/sites/default/files/grc/CSCPRC.pdf and https://www.acls.org/grants/Default.aspx?id=522. All accessed 4 October 2017.
[4] Minutes of 31st meeting of NCUSCR board, 16 January 1978, "NCUSCR – Board Meeting, 1978", Box 131, ADBP; Wheeler, *American NGOs*, 30; interview with Jan Berris, New York, 27 August 2017.
[5] NCUSCR 'Program Summary: January-June, 1978', "NCUSCR – Board Meeting, 1978", Box 131, ADBP.
[6] Wheeler, *American NGOs*, 30.

contacts that the group would oversee from 1979 meant that the group's budget was estimated to balloon to $1.5 million for that year, a significant portion of which was met by the state.[7]

THE PLURALISATION OF EXCHANGES

Another important change that began in 1977 and 1978 but intensified after normalisation was the decentralisation and pluralisation of exchange organisations. Between 1971 and 1978, the majority of exchanges had been organised by a small number of organisations and institutions on both sides. On the Chinese side, the STAPRC, CPIFA, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and a small number of other government-run, Beijing-based organisations had managed exchanges centrally. The US side of the exchange programme likewise had strong central organisation: as has been shown, the NCUSCR, the CSCPRC and the NCUSCT managed the most high-profile exchanges, with only the USCPFA offering a competing set of regular contacts (and of a much lower political profile). This notwithstanding, exchanges *could* be arranged directly with other American organisations and, during the 1970s, the Chinese negotiated *ad hoc* individual or occasional visits with American companies, professional societies, research institutions or public figures in a way that, before 1978, was impossible in the other direction. (Often these groups would then turn to the NCUSCR or CSCPRC for advice or funding, even as they coordinated their visit directly with the Chinese.)

This relatively streamlined system was atomised on both sides beginning in early 1978. From China's March 1978 National Science Conference onwards, institutions throughout the PRC were permitted to begin negotiating exchange contacts directly with American groups without necessarily coordinating with the central government.[8] In turn, this helped precipitate a similar de-centralisation on the US side. Stanford University was the first US university to directly agree an exchange programme with the Chinese, signing a deal to swap students and scholars with CAS and other

[7] NAS council minutes, 'Report of the foreign secretary', 29 October 1978, "1978 – Student Exchange Program – General", CSCNAS.
[8] Smith, 'Role of Scientists', 128.

Beijing-based institutions. The agreement was negotiated by Douglas Murray, the former NCUSCR vice president, in September 1978 and Stanford received their first students from the PRC a month later. By the end of the year, Temple University and Berkeley also had Chinese scholars working on their campuses.[9] This was only the beginning of a process that would see a huge expansion in the number of students and scholars participating in a multitude of American academic programmes over the following decades and continuing today.

The pluralisation of exchange organisations and the accompanying loosening of restrictions of travel to China that occurred in 1978 might, like the government expansion into exchanges, have spelt the end for the NCUSCR and CSCPRC's prominent role. Previously, both groups had derived power, support and responsibility from their roles as gatekeepers to access to China and had specialised in overseeing a limited number of carefully planned exchange delegations formed of leaders hand-picked from their respective fields. As individual travel and a greater array of organised trips were increasingly practicable, the two groups appeared to have been deprived of their *raison d'être*. However, in the event, both the CSCPRC and the NCUSCR responded rapidly to the changing exchange environment, expanding and diversifying their programmes to find a purpose in a post-normalisation landscape where they were no longer privileged gatekeepers to China. As discussed in chapter 4, the opaque process by which the CSCPRC selected participants in its exchanges had been a source of criticism and, for the 1979 programme, the organisation began for the first time directly soliciting applications for participation in their exchanges. The organisation also branched out beyond its previous role as a facilitator of exchanges: the CSCPRC's programme for 1979 included not only exchange delegations that were the groups mainstay but also a reciprocal travelling lecture programme, the aforementioned longer-term exchanges of researchers and students and two bilateral symposia, one in the US and another in China.[10]

[9] *CEN*, Vol. 6, No. 5; interview with Douglas Murray, New York, 9 September 2015.
[10] *CEN*, Vol. 6, No. 5.

The scholarly contacts overseen by the CSCPRC were likely to continue to benefit from institutional oversight; the NCUSCR's programme of more amorphous cultural contacts seemed more directly threatened by an opening China. Tourism to the country had begun to rapidly expand in 1978, when Western cruise ships began docking in China for the first time since 1949.[11] One of the NCUSCR's responses to opportunities for tourism was to introduce "members' trips" — essentially small, high-end tour groups organised by the group in collaboration with the China International Travel Service, or *luxingshe*. However, take-up for this new initiative was low and, although the NCUSCR ran two such groups in 1978 and three in 1979, the group decided against diverting significant energy towards on-demand delegations.[12] Indeed, it seemed that the NCUSCR's best chance for finding a continuing purpose as travel to China became easier was to stick to what it already did best. The PRC Performing Art Company delegation of 1978 — a trip suggested in 1973 but delayed in 1975 as a result of the Taiwan song bust-up — had acted as a potent and timely reminder that, even as small-scale tourism to China became easier, it took significant expertise to pull off a high-profile cultural exchange visit. The NCUSCR also enjoyed the connections to help finance such a delegation of 150 Chinese: the group arranged for the National Endowment of the Arts to underwrite the exchange to the value of $100,000, and negotiated sponsorship from Coca-Cola, Pan American Airways and the Bank of America. Substance was added through professional exchanges with American performers at the Juilliard School of Music and the American Ballet Theatre School; some stardust sprinkled in meetings at Universal Studios in Hollywood and with President Carter.[13] In the years to come, the organisation continued to focus on being a leading American organisation for just such high-profile, high-quality visits, both in the cultural sphere but also increasingly on civil society and political topics.[14]

[11] *NFTNC*, Vol. 7, No. 1, March 1977.
[12] Minutes of 32nd meeting of NCUSCR board, 5 July 1978, "NCUSCR – Board Meeting, 1978", Box 131, ADBP; 'NCUSCR exchanges, 1972-79', 14 September 1979, Folder 16, Box 1, Series 1, DPMP, RAC.
[13] Minutes of 31st meeting of NCUSCR board, 16 January 1978, "NCUSCR – Board Meeting, 1978", Box 131, ADBP; NCUSCR Annual Report, 1977-78, NCOC.
[14] Wheeler, *American NGOs*.

RECIPROCITY IN EXCHANGES

During the first seven years of exchanges, a number of irritants had emerged in the exchange relationship which had prevented the deepening of the relationship and had, at times, bred resentment. Some of these issues were resolved or at least ameliorated in 1978; others, however, continued to linger. Perhaps the most fundamental source of acrimony in the exchange programme was the lack of equivalence and reciprocity in the programmes offered by both sides: as we saw in chapters 5 and 6, the CSCPRC came close to pulling the plug on scientific exchanges over perceived Chinese exploitation of technical cooperation, while chapter 4 detailed American resentment at the draconian controls on cultural exchanges that contrasted with the great freedom afforded Chinese visitors.

This issue was not resolved in 1978. In fact, people-to-people contacts became even more lop-sided after normalisation, with significant numbers of Chinese students and scholars travelling to the US to benefit from the country's education system, with only a handful of Americans being received in the other direction (to speak of only one aspect of disparity). However, the *tension* created by this imbalance was significantly reduced in 1978 by Beijing's newfound upfront recognition that the issue existed. Previously, Beijing had insisted that cultural and scholarly contacts *were* reciprocal and that a balance in the overall number of delegations in both directions constituted equality. The Chinese maintained this stance even as they asked for ever larger numbers of delegations to be received in America's most advanced laboratories and factories while they simultaneously refused access to China for the scholars that would gain most from travel to the country. In August 1978, however, the Chinese came clean, asking Bullock, "In your opinion, does [the programme of scholarly contacts] need to be balanced?"[15] Beijing was frank in admitting that it knew that it would gain more from scholarly contacts than it could give. This recognition was not merely rhetorical. In a significant change in policy, from 1978 the Chinese offered to pay for all the costs of aspects of the exchange

[15] CSCPRC memorandum, 'Conversation with Huang Kun-yi', 8 August 1978, "1978 – General", CSCNAS.

programme that were not wholly reciprocal: if the US agreed to train more students and young researchers, or if the Americans agreed to send a greater number of senior academics to pass on their knowledge to the Chinese, Beijing would gladly foot the bill.[16]

The Chinese were now candid about the reasons for the imbalance in the programme: they told their American counterparts that the conditions of Chinese laboratories were still not of a standard that would allow the Chinese side to productively receive a larger number of American scholars. Beijing promised to take in as many students and scholars as it could and also showed a willingness to remove some of the restraints on those American academics it did receive, in particular the social scientists that had been earnestly but ineffectively pushing for access throughout the decade. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences had been established in 1977 and the CSCPRC welcomed a delegation from that organisation to the US the year. In turn, Beijing received a delegation of American specialists on the Han dynasty in October 1978. These exchanges were encouraging indications that Beijing's longstanding reluctance to engage in cooperation in the humanities and social sciences was waning.[17]

The US accepted the unbalanced nature of the relationship that emerged after normalisation when, in 1979, the American government agreed to grant an unlimited amount of visas for Chinese who were accepted onto bona fide university programmes in the US, irrespective of the numbers of students and scholars the Chinese side accepted.[18] The government knew that, in doing so, they would surrender the bargaining chip of reciprocity, a tool powerfully wielded by the CSCPRC and, then, the government itself in the run up to normalisation. However, Carter's administration concluded that the benefits of allowing Chinese unfettered access to the US university system — not least in accruing political and personal goodwill with Beijing — outweighed this cost.[19] It was a decision that paved the way for deep collaboration between the two societies and removed a source of

[16] *FRUS*, Vol. XIII, Document 144; *CEN*, Vol. 6, No. 5.
[17] CSCPRC memorandum, 'Conversation with Huang Kun-yi', 8 August 1978, "1978 – General", CSCNAS; CEN, Vol. 6, No. 5.
[18] Lampton, Madancy and Williams, *Relationship Restored*, 70.
[19] Author unknown, 'Position Paper: Security and Technological Transfer', circa September 1978, NLC-26-52-2-1-3, JCL.

tension that had strained the relationship in the 1970s. The vast flows of Chinese to the US that occurred in the 1980s and thereafter simply could not have been on the basis of like-for-like reciprocity. Perhaps, then, there was no point in labouring such a point — although, nearly 40 years hence, it seems that perhaps the Chinese did rather better out of the bargain.

TAIWAN AND EXCHANGES AFTER NORMALISATION

The most longstanding and fundamental barrier to greater exchanges — American ties to Taiwan — was, in 1978, effectively resolved. Beijing had objected not only to the US government's continuing connection to Taipei but also to the deeper links between the two societies, as exemplified by their objections to contacts between NAS and Taiwanese scholars and to the NCUSCR's coverage of cultural links between the US and the island. Chinese resentment at these links had been the cause of the slow start to the CSCPRC's exchange programme with the Chinese and the freezing out of the NCUSCR in the late Nixon years and beginning of the Ford administration. Normalisation, of course, helped defuse this issue. But, already earlier in 1978, the Chinese suggested that their anxiety about the issue had eased. In her August 1978 meeting with Jian Hao of the SSTC, Bullock asked whether the Chinese might be interested in international symposia jointly hosted by CAS and NAS. Jian "immediately asked" whether NAS continued to have a relationship with counterparts in Taiwan, and if these contacts were under a "formal agreement". Bullock said that NAS had not ended its relationship with counterparts on the island and asked if that would prevent such cooperation between the two academies. "[I]n the past that was the case, but now I am not entirely sure", Jian replied.[20]

Just as Carter and Brzezinski made clear in their political negotiations that the US government would maintain contacts — not to mention arms sales — with the ROC after normalisation, so, too, did Bullock make explicit to Jian that NAS, and many of the American universities the Chinese were increasingly working with, would continue their programmes with

[20] CSCPRC memorandum, 'Conversation with Chien Hao', 11 August 1978, "1978 – General", CSCNAS.

Taiwan. "China would be unrealistic [to] think otherwise."[21] Jian moved the conversation on, but the symposia were agreed just a few months later and would begin in 1979, without NAS ending its ties to Taiwan.[22] The Taiwan issue had never been clear-cut: the Chinese had initially refused to work with NAS at all due to the organisation's links with Taiwan, but had soon developed a productive relationship with the group. In the wake of normalisation, the Chinese diluted their position yet further and *de facto* accepted that American institutions could build exchange relationships with both Chinas.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION AFTER NORMALISATION

A longstanding concern on the American side, which had grown more acute in the years before normalisation, had been China's desire to gain access to America's technological and commercial secrets through the exchange programme. The significant expansion of exchanges and cooperation from 1978 necessarily increased the risks of the Chinese exploiting these contacts to upgrade their industry on the cheap (even if the concurrent spike in Chinese purchases of American technology assuaged the US business community). Farsighted American officials recognised that there were longer-term risks to charitably assisting China's modernisation: Oksenberg reminded Brzezinski in June 1978 that the PRC considered the US a long-term adversary. The NSC staff member stopped short of stating that the US should in turn see China in the same way, but he did argue that the US should "not … play Santa Claus" when it came to exchanges.[23]

The government took the risk of intellectual property theft seriously, and linked this commercial risk to national security concerns. A government paper from the autumn of 1978 outlined the government's plans to respond to the heightened risk of espionage brought by the greater number of exchanges that would follow normalisation. The COMEX — committee on exchanges — system

[21] Ibid.
[22] *CEN*, Vol. 6, No. 5
[23] Oksenberg to Brzezinski, 30 June 1978, "China (PRC), 1978/6-8", Box 8, NSAZBMCF, JCL.

would advise on the intelligence and counter-intelligence implications of the exchange programme, with membership of the committee being granted to representatives from the CIA and the departments of Defense, State and Commerce. The committee could wall off certain laboratories to exchange scholars or place restrictions — for example, banning access to computer production facilitates — on individual scholars under suspicion. COMEX sought to work not only with government agencies but also with private organisations involved in exchanges, an arrangement that worked well in the case of contacts with the Soviets and was expected to be transferrable to the expanding relationship with the Chinese.

The still-classified authors of this paper admitted frankly: "We are well aware of the intense sensitivity in the academic community towards the intrusion of security agencies into scholarly activity" and sought to avoid adverse reactions that could endanger the exchange programme or have "even larger political concerns".[24] This concern was well-placed: within a year of the new counter-intelligence measures being introduced, the FBI was causing alarm by hassling American hosts of even seemingly-mundane Chinese delegations, for example, a group on women's issues.[25] The commercial implications of the knowledge transfer that occurred through exchanges have also become more intense in recent decades, with some Americans actively questioning the wisdom of the US having offered such large-scale assistance to China's modernisation.

The final two chapters of this thesis argued that technology transfers were a critical part of the intensifying scientific and technical cooperation between the two sides, beginning in 1975 and particularly in 1977 and 1978. This continued to be the case beyond normalisation. However, it is critical to recognise that, even into the 1980s, the physical transfer of technology was no replacement for the continuing transfer of knowledge and expertise through the exchange programme. One reason for this was the continuing limitations on technology transfers beyond normalisation. Brzezinski had won the bureaucratic battle to expand Chinese access to technology, but even he believed in limits to

[24] Author unknown, 'Position Paper: Security and Technological Transfer', circa September 1978, NLC-26-52-2-1-3, JCL.
[25] Edward Friedman (signed "Ed") to Rosen, 10 July 1979, "Civic and world affairs delegation", Box 12, Series 3, RG4, NCUSCR records, RAC.

sales.[26] Normalisation would not remove these barriers and, however congenial the political relationship was, the US government would remain reluctant to permit the sale of the most advanced and sensitive technology to China (although the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 further eased restrictions on Chinese access to weaponisable technology).[27]

Even if the Chinese had been provided unrestricted access to US technology, the Chinese knew that their contacts with US academics and researchers were of great significance to their modernisation efforts; human knowledge was at least as important as hardware. During their isolation from the global scientific community during the Cultural Revolution the Chinese had missed out on the advances brought by the information revolution and significant advances in management science.[28] Thus, from the mid-1970s onwards, one of China's priorities for scientific cooperation had been studying American management and human research techniques.[29] This technology could not be sold in a box and instead Chinese learning from the US was achieved through exchanges and initiatives such as the National Center for Industrial Science and Technology Management Development, established in Dalian in 1979 and staffed by both Americans and Chinese.[30]

THE CONTINUING IMPORTANCE OF EXCHANGES IN BUILDING UNDERSTANDING

Certainly, then, there remained ongoing tensions in the exchange programme, even as other longstanding irritants were resolved. These irritants did not, however, prevent exchanges continuing to serve an important and constructive role in the Sino-American relationship after normalisation. This thesis has made the case that the unique conditions of the diplomatic relationship between China and the US between 1971 and 1978 gave the exchange programme a greater significance than might

[26] *FRUS*, Vol. XIII, Document 144.
[27] Mann, *About Face*, 110–11.
[28] Suttmeier and Simon, 'Conflict and Cooperation', 145.
[29] NCUSCR Annual Report, 1977-78, NCOC; *CEN*, Vol. 6, No. 5; USLO to SOS, 18 November 1978, NLC-26-24-7-5-4, JCL.
[30] Lampton, Madancy and Williams, *Relationship Restored*, 64–66.

have been the case in less unusual circumstances. Nonetheless, true "normalisation" of the Sino-American relationship could not be achieved with a pen stroke. Exchanges continued to serve a critical role in building understanding between the peoples of those two countries, long isolated from one another and having only begun the process of again becoming reacquainted by 1978. Indeed, it is important not to overstate how familiar Chinese and Americans were in 1979. Great strides had been made in the preceding eight years — perhaps most importantly through exchange contacts — but much remained to be done.

Reducing mutual ignorance was one important continuing function of exchange organisations; another was managing and resolving conflict in the relationship. In spite of the abundant mutual goodwill in 1978, exchanges in that year came up against similar challenges to those that had rocked the relationship in years gone by. An NCUSCR volleyball delegation in June 1978 was one such example. Tensions over a delay in granting a visa to a coach who was an Israeli citizen had boiled over when the men's coach had called a press conference in which he said that the trip had been disrupted by the political "whims" of the Chinese. A *New York Times* story quoted the coach as saying the Chinese "shenanigans" were "a slap in the face", leading a PRCLO official to tell the NCUSCR of "his extreme displeasure". The public controversy resulted in a rescheduling and downsizing of the delegation — though not a full cancellation.[31] The NCUSCR's careful diplomacy in this and many other cases ironed out many such controversies (usually before they made it into the papers) and the value of having experienced organisations that enjoyed the trust of their Chinese colleagues continued to be proven beyond the 1970s. Indeed, Sino-American high diplomacy was itself not without controversy after 1979 and, at times of conflict between the two governments and people, exchange organisations, first among them the NCUSCR, became important mediators, brokers and communicators on a larger scale. The origins of this important role lay in the relationships that were carefully built in the 1970s.[32]

[31] Berris and Henderson to The Record, 23 June 1978, "Women's volleyball delegation", Box 12, Series 3, RG4, NCUSCR records, RAC.
[32] Wheeler, *American NGOs*, 35–7.

CONCLUSION

In Sino-American exchanges, then, for all the change caused by normalisation, much remained the same. Diplomatic recognition allowed a full range of government-to-government contacts in a way that had not been possible under the ground rules of the pre-normalisation relationship. But both governments had bent those rules since the very beginning of exchange diplomacy and had, as this thesis has shown, involved themselves closely in the exchange relationship. Normalisation merely brought the intense role of the state in exchange contacts above board. Moreover, by 1979, exchanges and contacts between the two societies had developed too much to be exclusively managed by the government. Kissinger had wanted to bring exchanges in-house during the early 1970s and this might have been possible when yearly exchanges were numbered in the single- or low double-digits. By 1979, the government was neither able or inclined to manage the many dozens of groups travelling backwards and forwards. This meant that the public-private partnership over these contacts that had emerged early in the 1970s continued beyond 1979. Indeed, the CSCPRC and NCUSCR found themselves in high-demand as one of the few American organisations with institutional experience of overseeing exchanges; both groups thus continued to be trusted by both governments (and paid by their own) to continue on in a similar, expanded role in people-to-people relations into the 1980s and beyond.

Certainly, normalisation ended any exclusivity over exchanges that the NCUSCR, CSCPRC and a small number of other exchange organisations had exercised in the 1970s. However, this did not threaten the two groups in the way that it might have done at an earlier point in time. Before normalisation, the total number of yearly exchanges (at least the most important contacts within the facilitated exchanges programme) had been fixed — and at a low number. This forced the two groups to directly lobby the Chinese government to agree to contacts within their programmes, cultural or academics. After normalisation, not only did the number of exchanges increase, but the possible Chinese partners did, too. Thus, the fiercely fought issue of reciprocity in numbers and content

effectively evaporated in 1978. With diplomatic relations established, the Chinese wanted to send ever growing numbers of their people to the US. After initial hesitation, the US let them. The Chinese were slower in opening up their own country but this was no longer primarily a matter of principle but of capacity. The people-to-people relationship that emerged in the 1980s, then, was not the tightly controlled and structured programme of contacts of the 1970s.

Normalisation reduced other strains in the relationship, too. This thesis has shown that, contrary to Kissinger's account, the issue of Taiwan was, throughout the 1970s, a major source of conflict in the relationship and a continual barrier to the expansion of the exchange programme. The US government's change in official recognition from Taipei to Beijing naturally reduced Chinese sensitivity on this issue and led the Chinese to turn a blind eye to societal contacts between Americans and the Chinese on Taiwan that they would have previously spotlighted. Other sources of tension in the exchange relationship became more acute after 1979. American resentment at China's exploitation of exchanges to gain access to US technology on the cheap increased though the 1980s and 1990s when, as expected, this access expedited the PRC's modernisation efforts and rendered China a future competitor of the US. When such tensions appeared to materially threaten the relationship in the 1990s, the most fundamental continuity in the exchange landscape before and after normalisation was drawn out: the important role of those contacts in enabling dialogue and building understanding between the two sides. Exchanges had helped reacquaint the Chinese and American people in the 1970s. In the 1980s, 1990s and into our present century they helped deepen that connection and offset resentment caused by other facets of the two country's interactions. Critically important in the 1970s, Sino-American exchanges continued to be of significance to the diplomatic relationship long after normalisation.

CONCLUSION

The final agreement of normalisation made in 1978 again brought into relief the close connection between the exchange programme and the US government's campaign to achieve normalisation. Brzezinski, in league with Press and his allies at the CSCPRC, had reversed the longstanding dynamic of American desire for exchanges and Chinese pressure for US commitments in diplomatic negotiations. Now it was Deng and Beijing that wanted to thicken the Sino-American people-to-people relationship and begin governmental exchanges, as a means of gaining access to the knowledge and technology that could expedite Chinese modernisation. Washington was happy to oblige — after all, for years the White House had been pushing for the expansion of both unofficial and official exchanges. But Brzezinski took a leaf out of the CSCPRC's book and demanded a price for this assistance. Normalisation would open the gates for a flow of American goods and ideas into China and Carter and his National Security Advisor drove a hard bargain that convinced Deng to accept all of the president's conditions for normalisation. The Chinese consented to Washington's demands: that the US be allowed to formally cancel the MDT rather than abrogating the treaty, unilaterally state US hope for a peaceful resolution to the Chinese civil war and, most crucially, continue to sell arms to Taiwan — thus preserving American influence over the outcome of that conflict.

Exchanges, then, helped unlock the final prize of normalisation. That prize would not have been in reach had it not been for the positive influence of that programme at earlier junctures. Under Nixon's watch, people-to-people diplomacy had been used by both sides to indicate their initial interest in rapprochement. The breakthrough of ping-pong diplomacy had taken Sino-American contact from backchannels to the front of Americans's newspapers and attention. In the wake of Nixon's trip, exchanges — of acrobats, orchestras, and athletes — had provided a direct, personal experience of rapprochement to many of the Americans who had watched the president's summit from afar. These early exchanges had also confirmed what Nixon could only suspect: that decades of

hysteria about a red, yellow peril were over and that Americans were prepared to make friends of a people who had been viewed with more suspicion than any other Cold War foe.

Without exchanges, rapprochement might not have survived until Carter's term. Nixon's resignation had rocked the Sino-American relationship and Kissinger and Ford were impotent in their efforts to restore momentum to high-level negotiations during the truncated term of Nixon's successor. The White House had fixed on exchanges as a sustaining tie that might obfuscate the stale diplomatic talks that plagued Ford's time in office. The Chinese were wise to this tactic: Beijing knew that the US was using exchanges to puff Sino-American relations after Nixon's fall — and, therefore, that imperilling the programme would increase pressure on Washington. This explains the Chinese decision to, first, cold-shoulder the foremost US exchange organisation and, then, sabotage individual exchanges in plain view of the American public (and, indeed, observers in the Soviet capital). But exchanges, for the most part, continued and the specific targeting of the NCUSCR and its programme of cultural relations at a time when scientific contacts remained unmolested suggested that the Chinese had found their own uses for those exchanges managed by the CSCPRC. This was powerfully confirmed to the American government when, during Ford's lacklustre summit to China, Kissinger found talk of technology transfers to be the only topic to catch Deng's attention. The Republicans were not to survive long enough in office for Ford and Kissinger to work out how to turn this Chinese interest into leverage but their Democratic successors would not miss the trick.

Exchanges, then, exercised a powerful influence on the Sino-American diplomatic relationship. It could be tempting to consider the quality of people-to-people contacts as merely representative and derivative of high-level talks. Certainly, there was a connection between the two and, naturally enough, salubrious diplomatic talks eased contacts between the two peoples just as deadlock in normalisation negotiations strained the exchange programme. But causation ran in both directions. Consider an alternative outcome to a number of critical moments. A first ping-pong visit that had been publicly decried in the US would have cooled Nixon's enthusiasm for extending the olive branch to Beijing — an initiative he was never certain would win public approval. A calamitous

return visit by the Chinese team might similarly have dissuaded Beijing from seeking a broad re-opening of Sino-American relations. The cessation of exchanges under Ford would likely have taken the final wind out of rapprochement's sails and removed the last substance in an enervated relationship. Carter and Brzezinski's 1978 push for normalisation may well have proved as ineffective as Vance's tepid 1977 visit had it not been for Washington's bargaining chip of US scientific and technological assistance to China. In all these moments and more, exchanges were the difference between make and break in the Sino-American relationship. A full understanding of the success, failures and course of the Sino-American relationship in the 1970s thus requires understanding this second track of diplomacy.

Exchanges, then, were an important, independent variable in the condition of the relationship. This was the case, not least, because they were overseen by organisations and individuals outside of the control of the high-level leadership of both countries. The NCUSCR's first contribution to rapprochement was to coalesce American public opinion around the view that the longstanding containment of China had to make way for a policy of engagement. Having encouraged and demonstrated a public enthusiasm for a change in policy, leading figures at the NCUSCR helped to realise that change by privately briefing Nixon and his advisors on how to indicate to Beijing an American interest in resuming contact. Perhaps the most critical contribution the group made to rapprochement was arranging and successfully hosting the first visit of PRC citizens to the US in ping-pong diplomacy's return leg. This trip showcased and confirmed the critical and unique role that the NCUSCR would play in rapprochement: a private organisation sufficiently unofficial to satisfy Beijing's refusal of government-run exchanges and, at the same time, competent, cooperative and committed to the same objectives as Washington in the new relationship with the Chinese.

The CSCPRC played a quieter role in the first years of exchange diplomacy. It took time to convince the Chinese to deal with a group run out of the National Academy of Sciences, an institution both physically and institutionally closer to government than the heavily privately funded, New York-based NCUSCR. In a way that was not true of the National Committee, the CSCPRC owed their

privileged position in exchange contacts to sponsorship from the government (and the NCUSCR). However, as a new phase of exchange diplomacy dawned after Deng's first, temporary return to power in 1974, the CSCPRC gained in confidence as it oversaw a successful and ever-growing programme of scientific contacts. The group demonstrated its independent agency by expertly managing Chinese ardour for access to American expertise and high-technology — at a time when government policy towards assistance to China brought little benefit to the US. Pulled in different directions by their constituents in the American scientific community and their counterparts in Beijing, the CSCPRC indulged Chinese requests for extensive access to America's technological crown jewels — the labs at MIT, the cutting-edge technology at AT&T, the government's finest minds — but never ceased reminding the Chinese that, through their requests, they were drawing their account into debit. By avoiding parsimony, the CSCPRC facilitated a grander bargain whereby their constituent's much-desired access to China's people and culture was won not by point scoring but through political progress. The CSCPRC saw this bigger picture before the government did and, by working hand-in-glove with Brzezinski and donating their most experienced talent — Press and Keatley — to government service, they made an immeasurable contribution to moving both the diplomatic and people-to-people relationship to a higher stage under Carter. The CSCPRC thus helped initiate the deep, substantive cooperation between the academic and scientific communities of the US and China that it had sought since 1966.

Throughout the long road to normalisation, the NCUSCR, the CSCPRC and many other individuals and groups involved in the exchange programme were, then, powerful allies in Washington's campaign to consummate rapprochement with the Chinese. Both groups were independently minded but never truculent in their dealings with either government. From an early stage in the exchange relationship, the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC made explicit that they were not prepared to act as supplicants. If they were expected to manage and organise exchange visits, those contacts must be those that the two groups and the American constituencies they represented most desired. Thus, throughout this period, the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC expected their government's

support — financially and politically — but insisted that they should be free to negotiate directly with the Chinese. Moreover, they did not truck interference in the content of exchanges from either government and showed, on multiple occasions, that they would not permit periodic Chinese attempts to politicise these contacts to their own ends. The important cooperation offered by both organisations was always conditional.

Both governments knew this. Beijing had defined the dynamic of Sino-American exchange visits of the 1970s by insisting that even the most significant of these contacts be conducted on a people-to-people basis. While this decision guaranteed a critical role for organisations such as the NCUSCR and CSCPRC, it quickly became clear that neither government intended to stay aloof from these politically important contacts. Instead, the Chinese quickly offered a critical caveat: a core of exchange contacts should be *executed* by private groups but *facilitated* by both governments. This position allowed not only for the direct negotiation of a yearly package of exchange contacts between government representatives but also encouraged Washington's existing predilection to intervene in the exchange programme. Ping-pong diplomacy had made Kissinger nervous: he was convinced that the American athletes would upset his carefully crafted backchannel signals to the Chinese leadership.[1] Having been taken off guard by that event, the US government resolved to thereafter proactively involve itself in people-to-people diplomacy. Washington wanted the return leg of ping-pong diplomacy to be successful — and did not leave the outcome to chance. The success of that exchange — achieved in part through low-key but critical behind-the-scenes support from the government — provided officials with a precedent to build upon. Critically, that exchange was the foundation for the government's decision to work closely with the NCUSCR, a commitment that would continue throughout the decade.

A framework for public-private cooperation over exchanges was established in 1972 and 1973, with the government endorsing the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC and then a third, commercially-focussed exchange organisation, the NCUSCT. The government was unwavering in continuing this

[1] Interview with Berris, 26 August 2017.

early commitment to these groups throughout the period until normalisation. When contacts proceeded painlessly, the State Department was content to take a back-seat, providing funding and encouragement to these organisations but leaving them to work with the Chinese and the American public to promote rapprochement. However, the government did not sit idly when the exchange programme was not serving this purpose. In the first years of exchanges, this meant Washington lobbying hard for Beijing to end its preference for patronising groups on the political left in favour of the mainstream organisations — the CSCPRC and NCUSCR — that had government approval. Under Ford, this government activism took the form of efforts to defuse repeated clashes and ongoing friction between these groups and their Chinese interlocutors. Finally, under Carter, the White House threw its weight behind the CSCPRC's efforts to deepen scientific and technological cooperation with China, incorporating a longstanding goal of that private group into official policy towards Beijing. Thus, the US government consistently demonstrated that they recognised that the exchange programme was too important to the diplomatic relationship to be left solely to private actors.

The Chinese government was no less interested in the exchange programme than Washington. Beijing claimed that exchanges were a matter for the American and Chinese people — but there is, of course, no private realm in a communist society, nor any separation between the personal and political. Thus, the PRC used exchange contacts to reach out to the US — its people and its government — in two legs of ping-pong diplomacy and, soon after, through an expanding programme of exchange contacts that grew as rapprochement initially blossomed. The Chinese surprised their American counterparts by agreeing to the establishment of liaison offices, an act that recognised the development of both the people-to-people and high-level relationship. Thereafter, however, Beijing's frustrations with the failure to quickly finalise normalisation led the Chinese to disrupt the exchange programme and to politicise its relationship with the NCUSCR. A similarly cynical approach to exchanges was also seen in China's use of its contacts with the CSCPRC to gain access to American science and technology on the cheap. Exchanges were not wholly instrumental to

the PRC — the country's leaders repeatedly made clear that there was fundamental value in reacquainting the Chinese and American people — but they were no less connected to Beijing's foreign policy making than Washington's.

KISSINGER'S VISION OF RAPPROCHEMENT

In his memoirs, as well as his meetings with the Chinese, Kissinger often derided exchange diplomacy as a sideshow that bore little relevance to the inner workings of rapprochement.[2] Nixon's right-hand man did not bother to hide his smugness at having graduated from being an academic advising policymakers from the ivory tower to being at the core of decision-making and this coloured his dealings with those that sought to influence Sino-American relations from outside of government. Kissinger always presented rapprochement as driven entirely by two factors: the global, geostrategic balance of power and the secretive negotiations he and Nixon had conducted with China's very highest leaders. He did so because he believed that he and the American government could control these variables. Thus, in Kissinger's reading, the rapprochement with Beijing had been effected solely by him, Nixon, Mao and Zhou. It had been these men that had perceived the opportunity of triangular diplomacy and then exploited that opening through carefully orchestrated conversations during summit trips.

Kissinger's vision of rapprochement through triangular diplomacy was a powerfully effective one — initially. The consciously non-ideological approach that he and Nixon adopted allowed them to identify the opportunity to powerfully shift the global balance of power through just a few short visits to China. However, this fundamental change could only be effected once; no matter how regular Kissinger's calls on the Chinese leadership were, none would ever have the impact that the president's first, ground-breaking visit had. It took Kissinger some time to recognise this reality. As the

[2] Bush to Scowcroft, 20 November 1974, "China Exchanges, 9 August 1974-31 December 1974", DFWL, RG59, NACP; Kissinger, *White House Years*, 705.

relationship lost momentum in 1973 and 1974, Kissinger dismissed as "stupid" any suggestion — even from his own advisors — that the relationship was influenced by influences and actors outside of his grasp.[3] He reacted to this slowdown by attempting to intensify security collaboration with the Chinese and, when this only made matters worse, repeated like a mantra his belief that Beijing would not pull away from rapprochement so long as the Soviets continued to threaten China and the US was able to offset this challenge.

The limitations to Kissinger's approach to China policy are illuminatingly described in a memorandum between two of the Ford Foundation's leading staff on China policy. The note was written while President Ford journeyed back from China after his 1975 summit trip, at the half-way point between Nixon's historic summit visit and the final normalisation deal — but at the nadir in Kissinger's campaign to achieve this goal.

> China Desk people [at the State Department] are also extremely unhappy with the way exchanges are developing. … The key to the problem, so it seems, is Mr Kissinger. As seen by those at State who should know, Kissinger's policy of rapprochement with the PRC was designed simply to serve his policy vis-a-vis the Soviet Union.… because of his basic motivations, Kissinger is intent on keeping up appearances regardless of realities, an approach that the China specialists agree is bad for us as well as for the Chinese. [This] behaviour will most surely change when Kissinger leaves.[4]

This quote reinforces what was shown in chapters 3 through 5 of this thesis: that Kissinger was unwilling or unable to recognise that he and Nixon's initially brilliant approach to dealing with the Chinese had come unstuck for the same reason it had initially worked — because of its instrumentality. As shown in the following quote from Kissinger — taken from his talks with Deng in China in November 1974 — the Secretary of State believed that the quality of all aspects of the Sino-American relationship derived from the condition of his personal connection with the Chinese leadership.

> On the bilateral issues, if I could perhaps say one word … bilateral exchanges and cultural agreements are essentially a symbolic aspect of our foreign policy, of our political relations, and therefore we will deal with them in this context. Frankly I am

[3] Memcon: Kissinger, Scowcroft, Lord, Solomon et al., 19 July 1973, "China Exchanges, July 10-October 31, 1973", DFWL, RG59, NACP.
[4] Finkelstein to Bresnan, 12 December 1975, Folder 6371, Box 527, Series 1, Accession 2, SSRC records, RAC.

> indifferent as to whether … one [exchange] group more or less goes back and forth between the United States and China. We should use these as a symbol of our overall relationship.[5]

This thesis has made the case that Kissinger's view of Sino-American diplomacy was incomplete. Rapprochement cannot, this work shows, be fully understood with reference only to summitry, secret talks and strategic strengths and weaknesses. The slowdown in the diplomatic relationship in the mid-1970s revealed that security cooperation was an insufficient foundation for ties between the two countries. The Chinese expressed their preference for an alternative repeatedly and clearly: the US should consummate the relationship and normalise its diplomatic ties with Beijing on China's terms. This, however, was not seriously considered as a possibility by American leaders during the course and aftermath of Watergate. Thus, a diplomatic relationship that had begun with a ping-pong trip became conditioned as much by the ups and downs of exchange contacts as it was Kissinger's flaccid negotiations in Beijing. Spectacular visits such as that by the Philadelphia Orchestra offered some of the vitality that high-level talks lacked, while confrontations such as the performing arts troupe dispute or the Magnuson and Scott congressional delegations offered the public glimpses into the fissures that had emerged in the secret talks between the two country's leaders. The final proof of Kissinger's failure of vision came in 1977 and 1978: Carter and Brzezinski did what Kissinger refused to and recognised the totality of the relationship. Their holistic approach of treating exchanges as not simply symbolic but indeed a substantive aspect of the US relationship with China's leadership helped realise the normalisation deal that Kissinger could not.

EXCHANGE DIPLOMACY AS TRANSNATIONAL, DIPLOMATIC HISTORY

There is a broader implication to the limit of Kissinger's realist view of Sino-American relations. Kissinger believed that the transnational facets of the Sino-American relationship had no bearing on

[5] Bush to Scowcroft, 20 November 1974, "China Exchanges, 9 August 1974-31 December 1974", DFWL, RG59, NACP.

the high-diplomatic. In arguing against this, this thesis not only offers a counter-narrative about the US-China relationship in the 1970s but also makes a broader case for the relevance of transnational history to diplomatic history. Thus, this thesis offers a further case-study in harmony with a chorus of historians who argue for the synergy between these two sub-fields. Some eight years ago, Thomas Zeiler observed that diplomatic and in particular international history has enthusiastically embraced transnational history and, in doing so, brought new life to what many saw as a tired field.[6] This thesis draws on the insights made and cited by Zeiler to show that a truly holistic picture of the Sino-American relationship in the 1970s is both a diplomatic history and transnational history simultaneously. Transnational actors helped develop the relationship between the Chinese and American people and also their governments, while the actions of the two governments not only created the possibility of people-to-people connections but also actively influenced these interactions: explicating either relationship cannot be done without proper attention to the other.

Transnational historians have often sought to write histories that shed light on the non-state actors too often overlooked in classical diplomatic histories. This thesis is just such a history: an argument for the role of exchange organisations as leading agents of rapprochement. However, this work also shows that transnational history ignores the state at its peril. Judging by the example of Sino-American relations in the 1970s, transnational actors were, I would argue, far less able than some transnational historians to ignore the state. As Zeiler argues, "Studying discourse is fruitful, but the state is relegated to a secondary role in … history at the peril of losing a sense of the nature of power, who captures it, who loses it, and how it is deployed". Zeiler cites diplomatic history and its methodology as having relevance to transnational history: "by investigating both private and public archives, and nation-states as well as transnational exchanges, [diplomatic historians] appreciate how power functions at home and abroad".[7]

[6] Thomas W. Zeiler, 'The Diplomatic History Bandwagon: A State of the Field', *The Journal of American History*, 95/4 (2009), 1053.
[7] Ibid., 1056.

The importance of power and the question of who wields it is borne out in the case study offered by this thesis. Exchanges were moments of cross-cultural communication, performance and learning. But they were also a form of diplomacy. The visits overseen by the NCUSCR, CSCPRC and other exchange organisations had a direct bearing on the high-level Sino-American diplomatic relationship. Both governments knew this and their concerted efforts to shape the exchange programme towards their foreign policy ends highlights the importance that these contacts had on the government-to-government relationship. In turn, the NCUSCR and CSCPRC — but also their rivals at CCAS or the USCPFA — knew that the US and Chinese governments exercised a powerful influence over non-governmental contacts. The NCUSCR and CSCPRC worked tirelessly to preserve their independence of action from both governments and to protect the interests of their members and broader public constituencies. But in order to do so they had to build effective relationships of trust with both governments because ultimately their core objective — facilitating contact with China — relied on cooperation with the two governments. Thus, this work simultaneously demonstrates the influence of non-governmental, transnational actors on official talks and shows the impact of state actors on transnational interactions. In doing so, it posits that there is great analytical value in connecting our transnational and diplomatic histories.

Of course, the circumstances of Sino-American diplomacy in the 1970s were unique and perhaps peculiar. The narrow relationship between the US and Chinese societies in that decade afforded great power to each government to control flows between their two countries. This might be considered unusual. As is the case with so many historical innovations, the recent predilections of transnational history are in part a representation of our present: a post-Cold War world where, having helped topple communism in Eastern Europe and spark a global environmentalist movement, transnational actors now seem to move fluidly between highly integrated societies (even if they, too, still pay close attention to government policy).[8] Thus, transnational history, with its focus on the person, idea or object in motion, often focusses on flows that seem relatively unencumbered. But,

[8] For how the present reality of transnational actors influences our analysis, see Risse-Kappen, 'Bringing Transnational Relations Back in', 3-4.

historically, contacts between societies have not been wholly free; for as long as states have exercised control within their borders, they have likewise aspired to control what passes across those borders. Even within the time frame of this thesis, broad contacts between free societies were the exception, not the norm. Socialist countries across the world controlled their people's contacts with the outside world just as Beijing did; authoritarian states that sided with the US in the Cold War also sought to set the parameters for transnational influence on their societies. The power that the US and Chinese governments were able to wield over exchange contacts was, then, significant — but not unique. I suspect, therefore, that the vast majority of transnational organisations in history were deeply concerned with their relations with the state: they would, it seems likely, have recognised that a combative relationship with a state could prevent them exercising agency and a very effective relationship with states could enhance their agency.

LESSONS FOR NOW?

Contemporary Sino-American relations have entered a period of uncertainty and friction as China's rise challenges unquestioned American global hegemony. In the face of this renewed tension between the two countries, people-to-people relations may again take on a pre-eminent importance — and may prove to be the clinching argument for cooperation instead of conflict. The connections between the two societies are now on a scale that would have been unimaginable in the 1970s.[9] Millions of Americans and Chinese have travelled between the two countries; many thousands have made lives that span the two; academic cooperation is now deep and constant; trillions of dollars are invested and earned as a result of economic connections. These people-to-people connections offer a powerful argument against any conflict that would endanger them (although history has proven that arguments against conflict, however compelling, do not always prevent it).

[9] Even architects of normalisation such as Brzezinski could not envisage the development of the relationship that would follow. Interview with Brzezinski.

Nonetheless, people-to-people contacts are no simpler now than they were in the 1970s — and, as this work has shown, familiarity can breed contempt. Since the Tiananmen massacre of 1989, Americans have been deeply, bitterly disappointed that China's opening to the world that began in the 1970s has not been followed by an opening of their society to liberal values.[10] Chinese that have travelled to and lived in America have not always come away convinced of that society's virtues (even if many have, often voting with their feet by staying permanently in the US).[11] Likewise, economic interaction has bred resentment: Donald Trump was but the most recent presidential candidate to highlight the apparent costs of China's economic rise to the American economy.

The 1970s contains lessons for this critical moment. The most important of these is that the relationship between the people and societies of these two countries is both deeply important and closely connected to the high-level relationship. This thesis has shown that neither the transnational nor diplomatic aspect of the relationship determines the other. This was certainly the case in the 1970s; it is also true today. What this suggests is that we are mistaken if we think that the economic and societal interconnectedness of the two countries will determine cooperation at the diplomatic level but that we are right to take heart that the deep, broad connections between the Chinese and American people can have a positive — perhaps corrective — influence on strained diplomatic ties.

As this thesis shows, people-to-people interaction is no more straightforward than official diplomacy. Nor is it always a source of shared understanding; it can also offer an irritant in relations between societies and governments. Thus, just as it may not be enough to rely on Sino-American societal connections to prevent conflict between the two governments, so, too, is it not sufficient to blindly promote greater transnational interaction in the interests of improving and sustaining the relationship. The lesson from the experience of the NCUSCR and the CSCPRC in the 1970s is that mutual understanding does not come automatically and instead requires hard thinking and hard work. Often those two groups had the most powerful influence on the relationship when they were prepared

[10] See, for example, Madsen, *China and the American Dream*; Miriam London, 'The Romance of Realpolitik', in *The Broken Mirror: China after Tiananmen*, ed. by George Hicks and Asai Motofumi (Harlow, 1990).
[11] R David Arkush and Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Land without Ghosts: Chinese Impressions of America from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the Present* (Berkeley, CA, 1989).

to leverage the trust they had built over years of cooperation in order to speak frankly to their Chinese counterparts. If we wish to protect and promote Sino-American relations through contemporary transnational interactions we need, then, to work through difficulties and misunderstandings in the relationship just as much as we celebrate successes to date. We should do so honestly: as other historians of cultural diplomacy have recently shown, the best people-to-people diplomats are those that speak truthfully, about both their home and host countries.[12]

[12] Cohn, '"In between Propaganda and Escapism"', 420.

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