THE CHINA DILEMMA: A STUDY OF THE IDEOLOGICAL ROOTS OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS CHINA DURING THE COLD WAR

Austin Krug

Abstract

This paper investigates the influence of U.S. foreign policymakers' perceptions towards China on policy formulation during the Cold War. The influence of perceptions, especially perceptions surrounding the ideology of combatant states, is especially controversial when looking at the Cold War, a period known for extreme ideological vitriol between the United States and the Soviet Union. Drawing on the literature surrounding the relationship between these two states, I aim to expand the analysis to Sino-American relations. Specifically, I ask what influence did ideology have on U.S. foreign policymakers as they formulated foreign policy with regards to China. In order to understand the influence of ideology on U.S. foreign policy making, I take the perceptions of China–either positive or negative–as my independent variable while using the level of ideological language as my dependent variable. In order to vary the independent variable, I look at the Lyndon B. Johnson and Jimmy Carter presidencies, which respectively came before and after the U.S. opening to China under Richard Nixon. Through an analysis of both public and private documents, my findings suggest that foreign policy makers were not themselves influenced by ideological vitriol, but instead employed it as a mechanism to motivate domestic audiences to support their policies.

Introduction

Despite having concluded many years ago, the Cold War remains a topic of controversy for many historians and international relations scholars. One of the key dividing lines between scholars is the importance of ideology

AUSTIN KRUG is a student of Accounting, Economics, and Chinese
He graduates in May of 2018.
Kogod School of Business (KSB) and College of Arts & Sciences (CAS), American University
Email: ak8331a@student.american.edu

Clocks & Clouds: Journal of National and Global Affairs, 2016, 7 (1): 123-143
<http://www.american.edu/clocksandclouds/>
HBP Publishing <http//www.hbp.com/>

during the period. The two main political and economic ideologies of this period were democratic capitalism championed by the U.S., and authoritarian communism exemplified by the U.S.S.R. Given the nature of such occurrences as the Red Scare and McCarthyism, relatively few scholars debate the reality of ideology influencing public opinion. However, one of the key debates within the scholarly community is whether ideology and perceptions of other countries' ideology influenced foreign policy makers in their decisions. While a substantial amount of literature focuses on the ideological influences on foreign policy between the United States and the Soviet Union, many countries influenced and were influenced by the Cold War. One such country was the People's Republic of China (PROC).[1]

Literature Review

To begin with, ideology played a role in the Cold War as a method of antagonism between the United States and its allies and the Soviet Union and its allies. While there are multiple methods of defining ideology, I use Lorenz Lüthi's definition of ideology as it explicitly applies to the U.S.S.R. and the PRC. She defines ideology "broadly as a set of beliefs and dogmas that both construct general outlines—rather than a detailed blueprint—of a future political order, and define specific methods—though no explicit pathways—to achieve it" (Lüthi 2008, 8). From the Chinese and Soviet Perspective, the overarching ideology was Marxism-Leninism, which "envisioned the communist society as the final objective of history" (Ibid). Capitalism, on the other hand, was a self-serving economic system where everyone was concerned primarily with his or her own interests (Ralston et al. 1997, 180). Scholars throughout the Cold War and into the modern era have hotly debated the influence of ideology on foreign policy. While the majority of scholarly literature on ideological differences focuses on the division between the Soviet Union and the U.S., these arguments can also be applied to China and the U.S. Two theoretical schools dominate the discussion on ideology: constructivism and realism. Constructivists are interested in how an actor's identity influences their threat assessment and actions. Realists, on the other hand, argue that the foremost concern of states is power politics.

Constructivism assumes that the identity of states influences how they perceive threats (Goldstein and Pevehouse 2012, 97). John Lewis Gaddis, one of the foremost Cold War scholars, follows this school of thought by arguing

[1] For clarity, the People's Republic of China will henceforth be referred to as China. When mentioned, the Republic of China (Taiwan) will be referred to as the Republic of China or Taiwan.

that ideology played a pivotal role in determining the actions of the Soviet Union and the United States. Gaddis hypothesizes that the United States, through its liberal democratic capitalistic ideology, maintained positive economic and military alliances, which resulted in its rapid economic growth while maintaining political power (Gaddis 1997, 219-220). The Soviet Union's Marxist-Leninist authoritarian ideology resulted in it being unable to maintain its series of alliances, which resulted in economic and political stagnation (Ibid).

His argument rests on three distinct claims about ideology. The first claim is that economic ideological differences led to the start of the Cold War and the resulting isolation of the Soviet Union. After World War II, as the United States and other Western powers formulated plans for a new international order within the United Nations and Bretton Woods institutions, the Soviet Union viewed capitalism as fundamentally incompatible with Marxism-Leninism (Ibid, 193). As a result, rather than participating in the Bretton Woods regime and the international economic order, the Soviet Union instead relied on economic autarky within the socialist bloc, which restricted its economic development (Ibid). Meanwhile, the U.S. through international trade and cooperation was able to achieve rapid economic growth after World War II (Ibid, 194).

The second claim is that the ideological constraints combined with the fundamental inconsistencies within socialist ideology resulted in an inflexible foreign policy within the Soviet Union. The authoritarian mentality derived from the Marxist-Leninist one-party state and best exemplified by Stalin resulted in the Soviet Union employing exploitative practices with other socialist countries in Eastern Europe and East Asia (Ibid, 204). The fundamental result was that socialist countries followed the Soviet Union only out of fear of repression from Stalin (Ibid, 205). When Khrushchev became the leader of the Soviet Union, he was often unwilling to use force to put down insurrections, which resulted in splits within the socialist bloc that undermined the political and economic power of the Soviet Union (Ibid, 206). The third claim is that the ideological inflexibility of the Soviet Union also resulted in the Soviet Union refusing to reform their economy despite its inherent weaknesses (Ibid, 215).

While many constructivist scholars look at the Cold War from the perspective of an ideological battle, realists on the other hand commonly view the period as a balance-of-power struggle between the two world superpowers. Realism is a conglomeration of different policies and beliefs aimed at understanding the world in terms of power politics. Central to realism is the concept of power, which is the ability to influence foreign entities to do

something that they would not otherwise do (Goldstein and Pevehouse 2012, 45). Beyond this broad focus, however, there are multiple different varieties of realism. The two most prominent varieties for analyzing Cold War ideology are neorealism and neoclassical realism.

Neorealism, first articulated by Kenneth Waltz, explains patterns of international events in terms of the international distribution of power (2001, 56). Waltz himself analyzes the influence, or lack thereof, of ideology on foreign policy (Ibid, 112). Waltz argues against ideology from both prescriptive and descriptive perspectives. Prescriptively, Waltz highlights the logical fallacy associated with basing foreign policy on ideology. He argues that ideology should not form the basis of foreign policy because of the impossibility of determining an objective utopian ideology (Ibid). Carrying out any ideological foundation of a state to its logical conclusion will lead to "a perpetual war for perpetual peace" (Ibid, 113). From a descriptive perspective, Waltz iterates the practical difficulties associated with employing ideology as a unifying force by historically analyzing domestic socialist parties during World War I. From this archival research, Waltz concludes that the protection and defense of one's own state supersedes adherences to an ideology (Ibid, 136).

Neoclassical realist Cold War scholars, on the other hand, frequently seek to bridge the gap between constructivism and neorealism. In his review of the literature, Gideon Rose summarizes the fundamentals of neoclassical realism in that neoclassical realists agree with neorealists that a state's foreign policy is driven first and foremost by its position in the international realm (Rose 1998, 166). However, it diverges from neorealism by arguing that state's foreign policy actions are not based on objective power, but rather perceived power (Ibid, 147). They argue that international pressure is translated through intervening variables such as decision-makers' perceptions and domestic state structures (Ibid, 152). As a result, a leader does not have full autonomy to act that neorealists presume, but are limited by the domestic structure of their state (Ibid).

One key debate within the area of neoclassical realism is the influence of perceptions on foreign policy formulation. The usage of perceptions takes on a double-edged characteristic. The neoclassical scholar William Wohlforth uses the case of Khruschev's grandiose claims of Soviet power to display both sides. From the perspective of the U.S., Khruschev's claims and their consequent influence on U.S. foreign policy show that perceived power, even if not a reality, can influence foreign policy (Wohlforth 1993, 181). As a result, from the perspective of the Soviet Union, manipulating perceptions can result in firm power advantages: "Khruschev's efforts to manipulate the metaphor

of power, like Stalin's before him, were doubtless connected to concrete diplomatic and strategic objectives" (Ibid, 165).

Thomas Christensen extends this analysis to the realm of ideology by arguing that the manipulation of ideology can be an effective tool to mobilize domestic audiences: "In order to secure public support for their most basic strategy, the [political elites] may, in certain cases, decide to adopt a more hostile or more ideological foreign policy than they otherwise would prefer" (Christensen 1997, 4). Christensen utilizes this framework in a comparison of Sino-American relations. Specifically, he argues against the realist interpretation of Sino-American relations before rapprochement that occurred in 1972. Realists believe this period of foreign policy was influenced by "the impact of ideological differences, domestic political pressures, and leadership psychology on both nations' policies" (Ibid, 5). However, one of the realities of this period was that the international environment before and after 1972 was remarkably similar. A key question then is explaining this change in policy with no prior change in the international environment (Ibid). While Christensen explores this gap in the literature by arguing that strategic thinking influenced the pre-1972 period foreign relations, I aim to explore this gap looking at it from the continuing ideological influences both before and after 1972. While realists assume that power politics and balance of power dominated Sino-American relations after 1972, my goal is to explore the influences of ideology during this time and contrast it with the pre-1972 environment. In this way, I hope to more concretely flush out the change, if any, which occurred in U.S. foreign policy decision making before and after 1972.

Research Design

Variables and Hypotheses

In order to more fully research the gap in the literature between the pre-1972 and post-1972 treatment of China, my research explores how U.S. perceptions of Chinese ideology influenced U.S. foreign policy. I selected two cases—the Lyndon B. Johnson and Jimmy Carter presidencies—that stretch between 1963 and 1979 to explore this phenomenon. During this period, both Chinese and American ideology remains the same, so it will be a constant during the research experiment. My independent variable will be the perceptions of China, as either a friend or an enemy. I take this variable as given by the historical record. Specifically, during the Johnson administration, Chinese were supplying Vietnamese communists with weapons to be used against American soldiers, as a result "China and the United States were

each other's most active enemy in the years 1949-1972" (Ibid, 4). The Carter administration came after the rapprochement, which resulted instead in the Chinese being viewed as a friend. My dependent variable is the level of ideological statements in both public and private statements by U.S. officials. I conceptualize ideologically-charged language as language by U.S. officials that explicitly or implicitly referred to the ideological divide between the United States and China. Examples include references to communist subversion or referring to communists in derogatory language.

Although I am looking to explain the influence of ideology, I keep ideology constant throughout the experiment. While I could have chosen my independent variable as ideology and looked at periods before and after Chinese reform and opening up, which was capitalistic in nature, I chose not to. The predominant reason would be that the key focal point identified in the literature review was the rapprochement that occurred in 1972. Chinese transition to a more capitalistic economic model did not start until 1979 (Kissinger 2012, 638-639). As a result, by this time, the United States already perceived China as a de-facto ally against the Soviet Union. Instead, I decided to look at how ideology influenced and permeated the discourse both before and after rapprochement.

From the literature review, I have determined two hypotheses that I plan to explore. The first is:

> (1) Negative government rhetoric will be more pronounced when the U.S. views China as an enemy rather than as a friend.

Within this hypothesis are two potential contradictory hypotheses. The first is the opposite in that negative government rhetoric will be more pronounced when the U.S. views China as a friend rather than an enemy. Intuitively, the thought of any country speaking better of its enemies than of its allies does not make sense, and this argument is not present in any of the major theoretical frameworks on the subject. The second, more intuitive hypothesis would be that the level of ideological rhetoric does not change as perceptions of China change. The second hypothesis is:

> (2) Public statements will contain more ideologically charged language than private statements.

According to the neoclassical framework identified above, the predominant reason would be to use ideology to rally the population against

a common enemy. In my research, I do not study the success of this tactic, but I instead study whether or not U.S. Cold War policymakers employed this tactic. The opposite hypothesis would be that private statements contain more ideologically charged language than public statements. A possible reason would be because the policymakers are more informed about the subject and thus have more biases.

Case Studies and Source Selection

In order to vary the independent variable, I look at two cases: Lyndon Johnson's presidency where China was viewed negatively and Jimmy Carter's presidency when China was viewed positively. I chose these two cases for two fundamental reasons. The first would be the ability to control for several key variables. The main variable I aimed to control by choosing these two presidents was their party affiliation, which is generally indicative of foreign policy choices (Drezner 2013, 143-152). Both Lyndon Johnson and Jimmy Carter are Democratic presidents. The second reason I chose these two presidents is that they vary based on my independent variable: U.S. perceptions of China.

From 1963 through 1969, the Vietnam War—one of the most controversial American wars—raged in South East Asia. Although China's army was never directly involved in hostilities against U.S. soldiers in this conflict, the PROC did provide military supplies to the North Vietnamese communists that were then used to attack and kill American soldiers ("Vietnam War" 2016). As a result, perceptions among Americans were generally very negative towards the PROC during this period. In order to limit the number of documents relevant to my research, I decided to focus on a particular focal point that proved to be the best example of Americans viewing the PROC as an enemy. This focal point would be the Chinese testing of an atomic weapon, which reaffirmed to many Americans that the Chinese were a threat to international stability ("U.S. Relations with China (1949-present)"). Specifically, leaders had earlier debated the necessity of a preemptive strike against China while the Department of Defense argued that this bomb could set the stage for "100 million dead Americans in the event of conflict with China in 1980" (Burr 2014). As a result, this event was the defining moment in Sino-American relations during the Johnson presidency. In 1972, however, positive relations between the United States and China increased substantially with President Nixon's visit to China (Ibid). This visit began a process of gradual thawing of relations between the United States and the PROC. The Carter presidency from 1977 to 1981 witnessed the pinnacle of this thawing of relations with U.S. recognition of the PROC as the authentic government of Mainland

China on January 1, 1979 (Ibid). The focal point within Carter's presidency that best represented American's perceptions of solidarity with China was U.S. recognition of the PROC on January 1, 1979 and Deng Xiaoping's subsequent visit to the United States between January 28, 1979 and February 5, 1979 (Encyclopedia Britannica Online "Deng Xiaoping" 2016).

I explored my dependent variable—the level of ideological rhetoric—by reading two different types of sources. The first type would be public documents of the president of the United States, which I accessed through the HeinOnline's U.S. Presidential Library search engine ("U.S. Presidential Library" 2016). My search parameters were the respective president, either Jimmy Carter or Lyndon Johnson, and "People's Republic of China" or "Peoples Republic of China," which I used in order to limit search results to Mainland China rather the Republic of China. The second type of sources was private documents by the respective presidents' administration, which I found through the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series. This series is a collection of formerly classified statements since released to the public under the Office of the Historian. I focused on sources related to my focal events—China's atomic test and U.S. recognition and Deng Xiaoping's visit—in order to refine my search.

Empirical Evidence

Lyndon Johnson's Private Statements

Lyndon Johnson's private statements, both those involving the president himself and those involving key members of his administration, that reference the Chinese atomic test focused primarily on the technical capabilities of the Chinese atomic weapons program and the resulting redistribution of international power. One of the key results of the Chinese atomic weapons test was the solidification of the PROC as the governing authority over Mainland China. In a memorandum from Robert W. Komer from the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs McGeorge Bundy, Komer noted that China, in testing an atomic weapon, has affirmed their presence in the international realm. Specifically, Komer argued, "Peiping's test also dramatically underlines that *Red China is here to stay* [emphasis in original]" (*Foreign Relations of the United States* 2008, Document 68).[2] Moreover, because of this increasing presence of China on

[2] On January 1, 1979, the United States government transitioned their method of referring to Chinese places and names from the Wades-Giles system to the Hanyu Pinyin system. All Chinese names before this date in both private and public statements employ the Wades-Giles system. All Chinese names after this date employ the Hanyu Pinyin system. This changeover has resulted in substantial name changes such as

the international stage, the United States must change policy to recognize this new reality and incorporate it into their Cold War framework: "the Sino-Soviet split (which will continue even if in muted form), provides further public justification for dealing with both Communist centers, not only one" (Ibid). Therefore, the dropping of the atomic weapon increased the legitimacy of the Chinese while reiterating that it was now a major player on the international stage.

The increasing prominence of China created two distinct threats to the United States, one technical associated with nuclear weapons and the other geopolitical in nature. The first threat to the United States was that of China's added nuclear capacity. This manifested itself in two distinct ways. The first threat to the United States was direct war with China. Because of China's nuclear test and increasing aggressiveness in Asia, a key concern within the United States government was that these aggressive actions would result in war. In a meeting between Secretary of State Dean Rusk and delegates from Canada on the upcoming vote on UN recognition of China, Secretary Rusk noted, "if the ChiComs [Chinese Communists] continue on their present aggressive course, there will be war in the Pacific" (Ibid, Document 65). Moreover, while Rusk realized that a war between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. was unlikely because of geopolitical considerations of both sides, he was not as sure with regards to China: "Looking ahead we [the United States government] could see the possibility that the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries could work out their problems without war. We are not so sure about Peiping" (Ibid).

The second threat emerged from the destructive capability of the nuclear weapons themselves. While the U.S. government did not believe that China would directly threaten it, they were concerned with the threat of accidental nuclear discharges starting a large-scale nuclear war between the Soviet Union, China, and the U.S. Specifically, Komer in his message to Bundy noted that "the more likely problem [than a Chinese nuclear attack] was that a ChiCom capability might trigger Soviet CD [Civil Defense] or ALCBM [air-launched continental ballistic missiles], which in turn might trigger us [the United States]" (Ibid, Document 51). Not only could China itself potentially trigger the nuclear arsenals of other countries, but the development of Chinese nuclear weapons also created a precedent for other nations to develop them. This precedent would have resulted in other countries potentially trying to acquire nuclear weapons, which would have resulted in additional insecurity

Peiking to Beijing and Teng Hsiao-p'ing to Deng Xiaoping. For additional information, see Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977–1980, Volume XIII, China, eds. Daniel P. Nickles and Adam M. Howard (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2013), Document 161.

in the realm of nuclear weapons. In a presidential meeting with congressional leadership on October 19, 1964, Secretary of Defense McNamar pointed out to the president and the congressional leaders "that there are half a dozen countries which could move rapidly in this [nuclear] direction if they made the political decision to do so, and that the cost of developing a nuclear device was now on the order of $120 million—not a prohibitive figure" (Ibid, Document 6). Therefore, one of the greatest threats of Chinese acquisition of nuclear weapons was that other countries would also be more likely to acquire them, which would further endanger international stability.

While the private statements lack ideological language or language that implies that the policymakers are taking action because of their perceptions of communism, the policy makers do recognize the threat of perceptions in questioning their legitimacy. The third threat that emerged was from the geopolitical strategic decisions the U.S. would have to make in regards with other countries as a consequence of China's rise. As previously mentioned, China's detonation of an atomic bomb reaffirmed in the minds of many leaders that the Communist Party was the official leader of Mainland China and would remain the leader for the conceivable future. While this forced the United States to alter its own perceptions towards China, it also altered the perceptions of many other countries across the world, including some U.S. allies. As a result, the U.S. lost international prestige as its policy of isolating China by refusing to recognize it was ignoring a key geostrategic reality. In a conversation between Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs Harlan Cleveland and Secretary of State Rusk, Cleveland noted that the increasing presence of China, exemplified by the detonation of an atomic bomb, was fundamentally undermining the U.S.'s commitment to defend against Communism: "Many of the relevant political leaders in the world do not favor Chinese Communist influence; they fear it. They do not want Southeast Asia to become a peninsula of China; they just don't believe we [the United States] can prevent that outcome in the way we are trying to prevent it" (Ibid, Document 64). Cleveland further noted, "*what is eroding is not the opposition to Communist China's behavior, but the support of our traditional tactics for dealing with it* [emphasis in original]" (Ibid). As a result of China's increasing prevalence in global society combined with the implicit assent of the majority of leaders to their increasing position, the U.S. feared that their traditional allies would abandon their cause in favor of China.

In addition, an emboldened China would have had additional incentives to engage in conflict with the West: "The Chinese Communist leaders, who are still the veterans of the Long March, have some reason to

believe that their toughness pays off: French recognition, Western trade credits, Khruschev's fall and the political fall out of their own nuclear test all pay witness" (Ibid). The majority of government discourse focused on the geostrategic threats of the China to the United States and its interests. This suggests that the key consideration in the mind of U.S. policymakers is not the ideological implications of communism, but instead is the very real threat of Communist China to their interests in the Asia-Pacific arena.

Lyndon Johnson's Public Statements

Reflecting the administration's private view that the perceptions surrounding China and Sino-American relations were also significant in addition to the technical aspects of China's manipulation of power, the Johnson administration publicly reinforced these perceptions for its own benefit. Specifically, rather than arguing that the ideological debate was between communism and capitalism, President Johnson instead argued that it was between communism and freedom. Moreover, in direct response to the Chinese detonation of the atomic weapon, he also grouped together the Chinese Communists with the Soviet Union Communists. In a statement on October 18, 1964, he discussed both the replacement of Khruschev with Leonard Brezhnev and the Chinese explosion of an atomic weapon in the same speech. He emphasized that, "there has been discontent and strain and failure—both within the Soviet Union and within the Communist bloc as a whole" (Johnson 1963, 1377). This statement applies to the U.S.S.R.'s communists: "We must never forget that the men in the Kremlin remain dedicated, dangerous Communists. A time of trouble among Communists requires steady vigilance among free men" (Ibid). In addition, it also includes the Chinese: "But the Red Chinese kept to their chosen purpose [of nuclear weapons], even as their economic plans collapsed and the suffering of their people increased" (Ibid). The conjoining and mutual overlap of the term communist in regards to the Soviet Union and China stress that, despite the Sino-Soviet split in 1960, the Johnson Administration continued to characterize the Soviet Union and China as virtually the same.

This perception of the ideological nature of China and the Soviet Union, especially when contrasted with Johnson's private statements, reflect the nature that Johnson was using these perceptions to his own advantage by promoting the Soviet Union and China as working together against the United States. Moreover, Johnson contrasts both of these communist powers with the United States: "We [the United States citizens] love freedom and we will protect it and we will preserve it. Tonight, as always, America's purpose is peace for all

men" (Ibid, 1380). Through these ideologically charged statements, Johnson draws a sharp dichotomy between the United States as a freedom and peace loving country and the Soviet Union and China as the communist enemies.

Jimmy Carter's Private Statements

Although Jimmy Carter and Lyndon Johnson are temporally separated by approximately two decades, their decision-making reflects many of the same processes. However, Jimmy Carter's presidency occurs after Nixon's visit to China, which resulted in a very drastic change in perceptions towards China. Rather than China being the enemy, they increasingly started to be seen as a friend. However, the exact nature of this "friendship" takes a very strategic perspective. In looking at the nature of this improvement in relations, the normalization of relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China and subsequently Deng Xiaoping's visit to the United States provides an insightful glance into the new workings of this friendly relationship between the two countries. However, this friendship has underlying roots in the geostrategic environment at the time. Specifically, both the United States and China used the other in order to pursue their geopolitical aims.

Both countries were attempting to use the mutual building up of one another as an effective counterweight against the Soviet Union. A memorandum from Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's National Security Advisor, to President Carter best captures this new relationship. In his words, "We [the United States] have embarked on a course that could have very great international consequences. U.S.–Chinese normalization could open the doors to a political-economic relationship with one-fourth of mankind. It would alter the international balance. Success here would be very much a historic achievement for you [Carter]" (*Foreign Relations of the United States* 2013, Document 118). While these improved relations would have resulted in a safer geopolitical environment between the U.S and the China, it was also designed specifically to serve as a counterweight to the Soviet Union. In a separate memorandum from Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs William Gleysteen to Brzezinski dated June 6, 1978, Gleysteen noted that Brzezinski "implied clearly to the Chinese that there has been a shift in our global strategy since the [Secretary of State] Vance visit so that the competitive elements of our policy *vis-à-vis* the U.S.S.R. now heavily overshadows the cooperative elements" (Ibid, Document 118). As a result, the United States would benefit heavily from this new security arrangement playing Beijing off against Moscow: "It is obvious that continued animosity between Moscow and Peking, coupled with a broadening in the Sino-U.S. relationship,

brings us [the United States] beneficial security and economic dividends" (Ibid, Document 130). Clearly, it was in the interest of the United States to pursue more beneficial relations with China as an effective counterweight to the Soviet Union.

In addition, from the perspective of the Carter administration at least, the Chinese and specifically Deng Xiaoping were pursuing these types of geopolitical arrangements. Like the United States, the Chinese goals were two-pronged: (1) to counter the Soviet Union and (2) to reap economic benefits through a relationship from the West. This decision was the culmination of several decades of division between the Soviet Union and China; however, it wasn't until this time that China fundamentally closed off relations with the Soviet Union to pursue closer relations with the West. In a memorandum from Michel Oksenberg of the National Security Council Staff to Brzezinski dated August 21, 1978, "the Chinese have both nailed the coffin [of Sino-Soviet relations] shut and embarked on a strategy to modernize China by turning to the West. And with that, the Sino-Soviet conflict has entered a new stage" (Ibid). Therefore, the alliance with the Soviet Union no longer benefited the Chinese, so the Chinese found a new strategic partner.

From the perspectives of U.S. policymakers, Deng Xiaoping largely drove this process on the Chinese side. Although Deng was still the vice-premier, he was the de-facto head of the Chinese government after the conclusion of the meeting of the politburo. Deng's power led the Acting Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research John Marks to comment in a briefing to Secretary of State Cyrus Vance that Deng "Teng Hsiao-p'ing [Deng Xiaoping…] is clearly now the person with whom the U.S. needs to deal directly concerning the issues between us [the U.S. and China]" (Ibid, Document 160). Deng recognized the geostrategic reality that he faced: "[Deng] believe[d] diplomatic relations with the US are central to thwarting Soviet and Vietnamese pressures on China. They [were] also important in gaining easier access to the capital, expertise, and technology of the U.S. and its allies" (Ibid). Through these statements, both representatives of the U.S. and of the PROC formulated foreign policy with their primary focus being their geostrategic concerns, especially with regards to the Soviet Union. When considering China, an authoritarian and communist country, and the United States, a capitalistic democracy, wanting to cooperate on their foreign policies with the intention of limiting the Soviet Union, another communist power, then ideological considerations do not seem to be a key factor.

However, despite the fact that ideology does not play a prominent role, the question remains whether ideology played a role at all. The answer

again appears to be that ideology and non-strategic words and actions were a method to arrive at the correct geostrategic balance. Because of the desire to improve relations, the usage of ideologically charged language that was prominent in President Johnson's statements is absent. In its place has been the glossing over of strategic differences and the promotion of cultural and scientific ties between the two countries. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Richard Holbrooke, in negotiations with the Chinese, argues:

> We [the United States] believe that although there may be differences on some issues between us we have many areas where we have common views and objectives, and we have many common interests. And we hope that consultations, exchanges, discussions—all will lead to more and more common ground between our two countries (Ibid, Document 117).

Moreover, these closer ties were encouraged through non-military, non-diplomatic means such as science expeditions. Halbrooke adds: "I think that visits by Dr. Schlesinger and by Dr. Press and other distinguished scientists would be very useful and productive in the relations between our two countries" (Ibid). Therefore, while the primary focus of the discussions within the U.S. government about China and between the U.S. and Chinese focused on geostrategic and geopolitical aims, these external factors that Constructivists prize also played a role in achieving these broad aims by improving relations between the two countries.

Jimmy Carter's Public Statements

Jimmy Carter's public statements surrounding the normalization of relations with China and Deng Xiaoping's subsequent visit also followed the trend of diplomatic talks between the United States and China in that they glossed over the institutional differences between the two countries. In the signing ceremony recognizing the establishment of Sino-American ties, Carter reiterated the strong historical background of the Sino-American relationship by referencing the Chinese-American population: "Almost 700,000 American citizens trace their roots to China. There are strong bonds of blood kinship and history between the United States and China" (Carter 1980, 1773). Moreover, Carter argued that the United States and China have been friends for many

years. In remarks after announcing the intended treaty between China and the United States, Carter noted: "the American and the Chinese people had a long history of friendship," which suggested that the Chinese should be seen as brothers and kin rather than as the enemy (Carter 1978, 2265).

Despite Carter's attempts to downplay the differences, he still recognized the reality that relations between the United States and China had been very poor since Communist takeover. These strained relations have even led to the potential for war. In a statement welcoming Deng Xiaoping to the United States, Carter iterated that "for the past century and more, our relations have often been marred by misunderstanding, false hopes, and even war" (Carter 1979, 190). Carter recognized that the United States and China had had very tense relations, including during the Korean War when U.S. forces directly combated Chinese forces or in the Vietnam War where China supplied forces hostile to the United States. Interestingly, Carter emphasized that these are mistakes and "misunderstandings," suggesting that publicly at least Carter wanted to recognize that the pre-existing relations were not driven by rational thought, but instead were driven by a lack of information or experience on the part of policymakers on both sides of the Pacific. In other respects, Carter emphasized publicly the United States was avoiding pursuit of a realist framework. In a Question and Answer session on July 11, 1978, Carter states: "I think it would be a serious mistake for ourselves, for the People's Republic of China, for the Soviet Union, to try to play one against another […] We would never use China as a lever against the Soviet Union. I think the Chinese people would resent it very deeply, and I think the Soviet Union would also" (Carter, 1263). By consistently emphasizing publicly that the U.S. is not pursuing a strategic framework in developing its relations with China, Carter suggested that speaking in realist terms would be unattractive in the public's eye, and instead used other means of arriving at the same conclusion, which is a balance of power.

Finally, moving from recognizing and limiting the reality of the past century of tense relations between the United States and China, Carter also challenged the ideological dichotomization seen in President Johnson's statements by arguing that ideological differences, rather than being a source of fear, could be a source of strength. Carter explicitly recognized that ideological differences can help both the United States and China: "Our histories and our political and economic systems are vastly different. Let us recognize these differences and make them sources not of fear, but of healthy curiosity; not as a source of divisiveness, but of mutual benefit" (Carter 1979, 190). Therefore,

by recognizing these differences, both nations could have benefited rather than being limited in relations through the ideological language of the past. Carter also specifically noted the mechanism by which these different ideologies can mutually benefit both nations: "As long as we harbor no illusions about our differences, our diversity can contribute to the vitality of our new relationship. People who are different have much to learn from each other" (Ibid) Therefore, these differences can be sources of strength for both sides. More than that, however, the key component according to Carter is that both sides recognize these mutual differences and do not hold unrealistic expectations about the other side.

Comparison Between Jimmy Carter and Lyndon Johnson

Through the private sources, the Carter and Johnson administrations both focused on the realist, geopolitical implications of the Sino-American relationship. Johnson and his staff emphasized the danger of China's acquisition of an atomic weapon to the security of the United States. Rather than viewing the Chinese as evil just because they are communists, the Johnson administration appeared to view them in more of a power related scenario where Chinese acquisition of this powerful weapon posed a threat to the stability of the United States. The Carter administration continued to view the decisive importance of the Sino-American relationship as a strategic counterweight against the Soviet Union. Similar to the Johnson administration's internal rhetoric, private documents within the Carter administration also lacked a focus on ideological differences between the United States and China and instead viewed the strategic component as more valuable.

In their public rhetoric, the situation is very different which reflects the difference in the independent variable. When China assisted the North Vietnamese Communists, then the United States consequently viewed China as an enemy. In this environment, Lyndon Johnson strategically employed ideological language and the dichotomization between freedom and communism to motivate the public against the Chinese communists. This facilitated U.S. foreign policy by encouraging the public to support any retaliatory acts the United States took against China. In the case of Jimmy Carter, the situation is very different. As China was now viewed as a friend, especially after the Sino-Soviet split and Nixon's visit to China, the public rhetoric of Jimmy Carter took a very different direction. Recognizing that Johnson's rhetoric paints a negative picture of China, Carter could not only ignore the ideological differences between the U.S. and China, but he had to

cast them in a new light. This necessity led him to emphasize the fact that the ideological differences between the two countries can be a source of strength rather than weakness. While this is the exact opposite reaction of President Johnson, the motives are the same throughout: they are both using ideological rhetoric to influence the mindsets of their constituents to support their policies. As a result, Constructivist argument that ideological influences impact foreign policy decisions of decision makers seems to not hold. Moreover, this portrayal of relations in an ideological suggests that the policymakers did not have autonomy in foreign policy making, but instead were limited by the non-strategic thinking of their constituents, which trends against the neorealist explanation. In comparison, the neoclassical realist perspective that the government focused on geopolitical aims while the president used ideology to motivate the masses to support the government seems to hold true.

In response, the evidence appears to support both of my hypotheses. My first hypothesis was that negative government rhetoric would be more pronounced when the U.S. viewed China as an enemy rather than as a friend. Both presidents support this hypothesis within the context of the public statements. When China was viewed as an enemy during President Johnson's administration, Johnson employed strong rhetoric contrasting the Chinese and Soviet Communists with the free people of Western Europe and the United States. During Carter's administration, on the other hand, Carter goes to great lengths to downplay the importance of the ideological differences between the United States and China. Rather than being negative or even neutral, Carter's administration displayed positive rhetoric regarding the different ideologies of the U.S. and China. My second hypothesis was that public statements would have more ideologically charged statements than private statements. The evidence also supports this hypothesis. Statements pertaining to ideology—both negative for President Johnson and positive for President Carter—played a substantial role within their public statements; however, there is a paucity of ideological language on private statements. Instead, the majority of the language focused on the strategic and power relations between the United States and China. As a result, the realist argument appears to hold sway given the available evidence surrounding these two presidencies.

Alternative Explanation

Although the evidence appears to support my two hypotheses, there are also alternative explanations and variables that could influence the findings. The first would be the influence of the president himself and whether

he had diverging views or perceptions from his advisors. The majority of private statements within the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series are not from the President himself, but instead focus on different key figures within the Executive Branch of the United States Government. They are primarily conversations between key officials, such as the national security advisor and the secretary of state, and between the State Department and overseas ambassadors. By arguing that the views of these key officials are indicative of the views of the presidential administration, I hold the unitary actor assumption, which treats states as a single entity. Therefore, the views of these key actors would thus be the same as the president. However, as with all assumptions, it may not be realistic. One avenue for future research on this topic would be to explore the perceptions of Presidents Johnson and Carter themselves. This research can be conducted either through diary analysis or through unprepared statements with reporters.

A second alternative explanation would be the underlying nature of the independent variable in my research, which is the perception of China as either a friend or an enemy. Throughout this analysis, I took as given that during the Johnson administration the administration viewed China as an enemy. I based this conceptualization on the fact that the U.S. was currently engaged in the Vietnam War and the Chinese were assisting the other side. However, a key limitation to the argument that ideology does not have a noticeable impact on foreign policy is how exactly these perceptions of China as a friend or enemy came into being. One alternative explanation could be that the U.S. engaged in Vietnam for ideological reasons and the Chinese engaged in it for ideological reasons as well, and the U.S. officials formulating foreign policy were taking these ideologies as given and then formulating responses based on them. An alternative explanation would be that, in overt ways, the U.S. foreign policy makers did not take into consideration ideology, but in psychological, cultural, and societal ways they were shaped by the ideology of their time. Although the exceptionally few instances of foreign policymakers taking into consideration ideology when formulating policy argues against this theory, further research on the topic would be necessary to elucidate the influence of underlying societal and cultural perceptions on influencing foreign policy makers. Possible research could compare U.S. foreign policy in the Cold War in what is perceived as a very ideologically charged time period with a similar time period lacking the ideological language. If the realist argument is correct, the foreign policies should be exactly the same. If ideology does have an influence, then the foreign policies would differ.

Conclusion

Relations between the United States and China took a variety of different forms in the 20th century. From ally in World War II to enemy at the start of the Cold War and then back to friend at the end of the Cold War, a thorough analysis of Sino-American relations would be a tall order; however, my research on two select historical events from this time period suggests that the foreign policymakers prioritized strategy over ideology. By analyzing both the public and private rhetoric of the Johnson and Carter administrations, I tested two hypotheses. The first hypothesis is that negative government rhetoric will be more pronounced when the U.S. viewed China as an enemy rather than as a friend. The presence of negative ideological rhetoric when viewed as an enemy and positive ideological rhetoric when viewed as a friend supports this hypothesis. The second hypothesis is that public statements will have more ideologically charged statements than private statements. Given the focus of the private statements on analyzing the technical and geopolitical implications of China and the focus on public statements for gaining support for U.S. foreign policy, the evidence supports this hypothesis as well. While the Cold War ideological divide between communism and capitalism appeared to fade out with the decline of the Soviet Union, a thorough understanding of the influence of ideology on foreign relations formulation and perceptions of foreign relations formulations, and the divide between the two, remains important to understand. This is because the ideological influences on foreign policy may still exist, but in less overt forms. The reality of present-day Sino-American relations is that China remains a communist power. Although numerous scholars and foreign policy analysts differ in how communist China actually is, understanding how ideology and perceptions of that ideology influence foreign policy is important for contemporary understanding of Sino-American relations.

Works Cited

Burr, William. "China's First Nuclear Test 1964—50th Anniversary." Washington: The National Security Archive. http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/nukevault/ebb488/.

Carter, Jimmy. "Diplomatic Relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China - Address to the Nation - December 15, 1978." Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States 1978 (1978): 2264-2266.

Carter, Jimmy. "Interview With the President: Question-and-Answer Session with West German Reporters." *Public Papers of the President of the United States* 1978 (1978): 1258-1263.

Carter, Jimmy. "United States-People's Republic of China Agreements - Remarks at the Signing Ceremony - September 17, 1980." Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States 1980 (1980): 1771-1774.

Carter, Jimmy. "Visit of Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping of the People's Republic of China - Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony - January 29, 1979." Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States 1979 (1979): 189-191.

Christensen, Thomas J. 1996. *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

"Deng Xiaoping," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2016. http://www.britannica.com/biography/Deng-Xiaoping.

Drezner, Daniel W. "Rebooting Republican Foreign Policy." *Foreign Affairs* 92 1 (2013): 143-152.

Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume XVIII, China, 1973-1976. Edited by Daniel P. Nickles and Edward C. Keefer. Washington: Government Printing Office, 2008.

Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977-1980, Volume XIII, China. Edited by Daniel P. Nickles and Adam M. Howard. Washington: Government Printing Office, 2013.

Gaddis, John Lewis. 1997. *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Goldstein, Joshua S. and Jon C. Pevehouse. 2012. *International Relations*. Boston: Pearson Longman.

Johnson, Lyndon B. "Radio and Television Report to the American People on Recent Events in Russia, China, and Great Britain - October 18, 1964." Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States 1963 (1963-1964): 1377-1380.

Kissinger, Henry. 2012. *On China*. New York: Penguin Group.

Lüthi, Lorenz M. 2008. *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Ralston, David A., David H. Holt, Robert H. Terpstra, and Yu Kai-Cheng. 1997. "The Impact of National Culture and Economic Ideology on Managerial Work Values: A study of the United States, Russia, Japan, and China." *Journal of International Business Studies* 28 (1): 177-207

Rose, Gideon. Oct. 1998."Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy." *World Politics* 51 (1): 144-172.

"The Third World." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. 2016. http://www.britannica.com/topic/Third-World. (Accessed: February 3, 2016)

Waltz, Kenneth N. 2001. *Man, the State, and War*. New York: Columbia University Press.

"U.S. Relations with China (1949-Present)," Council on Foreign Relations, n.d. (Accessed: 29 March, 2016). http://www.cfr.org/china/us-relations-china-1949---present/p17698

"U.S. Presidential Library," HeinOnline, n.d. http://www.heinonline.org/HOL/Index?collection=presidents&set_as_cursor=cler

"Vietnam War," Encyclopedia Britannica Online, 2016. (Accessed: March 28, 2016). http://www.britannica.com/event/Vietnam-War/Tet-brings-the-war-home.

Wohlforth, William. 1993. *The Elusive Balance: Power and Perceptions During the Cold War*. Ithica: Cornell University Press.