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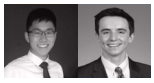
LETTER FROM THE EDITORS



Alongside the growing list of sovereignty disputes and trade concerns, new waves of Sino-American tension are starting to feel worryingly routine. The unprecedented intensity of debate is equally disorienting; from Twitter to Weibo, opinions form and attitudes harden quicker than ever before. The crisis we are facing, in other words, is not just a series of policy disputes, but also a lack of concern for nuance, diversity, and perspective. These trends demonstrate the importance of JOSA's commitment to providing a platform for students and young professionals -- on both sides of the Pacific -- to share their perspectives on Sino-American relations. Today, It is in the same spirit that we are excited to publish JOSA's Summer 2020 Issue, featuring some of the top student voices around the world.

In this issue, you'll read pieces divided into JOSA's three themes of US-China relations: Political Culture, Political Science, and Political Economy and Business.

In Political Culture, Connor Brachtl identifies an unspoken arms race to develop the world's most powerful artificial intelligence, emphasizing the reality of the conflict and addressing the urgent need to de-escalate tensions before dire consequences occur. While the present political culture seems foreboding, history shows that the course of the Sino-American relationship can be changed. Jodi Lessner examines Richard Nixon's rapprochement with China as a consequence of the 1969 Sino-Soviet border clashes and evolving views on how best to contain communism, arguing that this confluence of factors redefined US foreign policy on the containment of communism around the world.

In Political Science, Geoff LaMear approaches US engagement in the 1969 Sino-Soviet conflict as an attempt to balance different diplomatic goals of non-entanglement, de-escalation, and manipulation, deriving valuable lessons for political science on how different actors approach conflict mediation. Another important area of contention between the US and China has been the recognition of Taiwan as its own nation. William Yee analyzes America's shift from a delicate balance of cross-Strait relations to overt displays of support of Taiwan, first by evaluating Taiwan's intentions and China's reactions and then suggesting three options for US policy to maintain this triangular relationship.

In Political Economy and Business, Bailey Marsheck explores the constitutive elements of the Sino-American relationship, particularly in Silicon Valley and Washington D.C., by conducting text analysis of Twitter discussion to nuance our understanding of these actors. Joseph Rodgers, Brian Tripsa, and Benjamin Zimmer review the effectiveness of the Holding Foreign Companies Accountable Act of 2020. They argue that while the legislation raises auditing standards for all foreign companies, the Act is a politically expedient measure that does not sufficiently protect US capital markets.

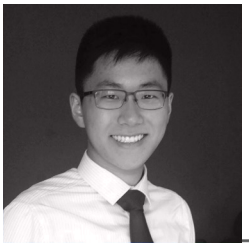
We have been honored to work with inspiring faculty and staff in launching this novel publication. We are grateful to the Institute for East Asian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley (IEAS) for their generous support and invaluable guidance, and to the numerous other leaders from across the country who provided their time and thoughts in shaping our mission and focus.

With warm regards,

Gregory Wong Ethan McAndrews

Editors-in-Chief, Journal of Sino-American Affairs

THE EDITORS-IN-CHIEF



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Political Culture

A Battle of Mutual Undoing: The AI Arms Race

Connor Brachtl
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ABSTRACT: Sino-American competition for economic preeminence has culminated in an unspoken arms race between global superpowers to develop the world's most powerful Artificial Intelligence (AI). Through exploring the economic, political, and military implications of an aggressive approach to AI research, the author emphasizes the reality of the conflict. In this analysis of the U.S.-China AI arms race, the author addresses the urgent need to deescalate tensions before dire consequences occur.

The Great Divergence is a period of history where Western nations overcame globally pervasive growth restraints and boosted ahead of Eastern economies. Scholars argue over the reasons as to why this pivotal shift occurred in Europe and not in Asia, but it is uncontested that technological development, beginning with the Industrial Revolution, was a dominant factor in this disparity of growth. For centuries, China had maintained a powerful position in Eastern Asia as a nation of vast cultural influence and immense wealth. However, the expanding wealth gap between the East and West, external pressures of Western powers seeking access to Chinese markets, and the internal collapse of the Qing dynasty saw the fall of China's ancient ruling system and the eventual rise of the People's Republic of China. China remained an impoverished, war-torn nation until Deng Xiaoping oversaw unprecedented market reform in the late 1970s, which is seen by many as a critical step to catching up with the Western world.

China's rapid modernization has resulted in its relationship with the United States to become more aggressive. As exemplified by the U.S. endorsing China for the WTO and the Trade War, U.S. leaders have labeled China as both a beneficiary and a source of commercial distress. The Chinese government's goals have become more grandiose as its country has grown. After Xi Jinping took control of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 2012, he announced his multi-faceted plan known as the "China Dream" which called for social reform, economic prosperity, and expansion of international influence. Experts perceive this endeavor as an attempt by the CCP to become a nation as great as, or greater than, the U.S.[1] Xi's dream is gradually becoming reality as many of his goals are coming to fruition. However, China's success has not come without dispute. The CCP's efforts to suppress terrorism and ingrain its influence in minority populations have led to human rights tragedies occurring in the Xinjiang Region. The use of military force to suppress Democracy in Hong Kong has attracted impassioned objections from around the world. As it currently stands, China is not only an economic force that threatens the U.S.'s frontrunner position but is also governed by a morally controversial administration.

The economic prosperity of Western nations has far surpassed China's success over the past two centuries. The winds of change are now howling as China continues to grow at a frighteningly exponential rate. Despite seeing the fall of two ruling bodies in the 20th century and being ravaged by war, China has managed to pull itself out of dire straits and become a globally recognized economic powerhouse. Many believe that China's method of artificially stabilizing the exchange rate and other unorthodox policy decisions have precipitated unstable growth cycles which will lead to economic collapse. As the circumstances are now, China may fail to continue its rise on the global stage. However, what if China were to create an invention that could

evolve its growth potential far beyond its current levels in an event comparable to the Great Divergence? This may seem far-fetched, but it is precisely what China intends to do with the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

China's ambition and the U.S.'s caution have culminated in a competition for international preeminence in terms of economic capability, domestic security, and global leadership. At the crux of this competition is an unspoken arms race for creating the world's most advanced AI. The advancement of an AI arms race may bring about globally detrimental effects due to a competitive approach to research and development. International leaders must consider the implications of an AI arms race and potential means to ease the strain of future strife that may arise from this contest. To highlight the gravity of this dilemma, I will explain why I believe an AI arms race is occurring and demonstrate how this race can dynamically transform the global environment. I will conclude by focusing on the benefits of de-escalating the AI arms race, namely preventing future conflicts.

The term "AI" is often met with skepticism due to its connotation with cultural iconography as found in movies like *Terminator* where near-human machines attempt to conquer the world. Scholars tend to butt heads regarding the proper definition of AI, but many have settled on identifying it as "a loosely defined set of technologies that try to mimic human judgement and interaction."[2] For the purposes of this paper, AI is not to be confused with a conscious machine as depicted in science fiction. Instead, the AI which China and the U.S. are vying to create is a device capable of conducting multiple, intelligent processes at once and rivals (if not surpasses) the decision-making abilities of humans.

AI offers immense potential in completely transforming the social landscape by presenting conveniences that will reduce costs for the individual and uplift the general quality of life. Some nations, including the U.S. and China, have already witnessed the social benefits of AI as seen in early models of autonomous vehicles. More importantly, researchers have already begun devising methods as to how AI can be used to reform patient care and medical research. WeDoctor, for example, is an application that seeks to connect China's immense population with the proper medical attention by facilitating health tests such as MRI scans using integrated data intelligence.[3] The use of AI in this instance has generated greater cost efficiencies and opened the door to superior healthcare for rural communities that lack direct access to China's best hospitals. The social benefits of AI are the most readily apparent, but the great importance of the AI arms race is centered in three categories: economy, military, and influence.

The economic benefits for China and the U.S. if they were to possess AI are overwhelming. Marcin Szczepański, a researcher of the European Parliamentary Research Service, expands on this claim: "[AI] can increase the efficiency with which things are done and vastly improve the decision-making process by analyzing large amounts of data". Big data is already making enormous headway and has allowed companies to decrease expenses by as much as 49.2%.[4] Szczepański insists that as AI becomes more advanced and widely accessible to companies, it will "spawn the creation of new products and services, markets and industries, thereby boosting consumer demand and generating new revenue streams"[5] . Heightened efficiency and market creation are extremely desirable boons for nations seeking to push their economic potential to new heights. To put Szczepański's analysis in terms of the Romer model, the creation of famous economist Paul Romer, AI can drastically increase a nation's stock of knowledge and thus multiply a nation's output.[6] China, which is an investment-driven nation known for its manufacturing sector, likely sees AI as advantageous for automating its factories which would allow a far greater portion of its population to attend college and join more profitable areas of the workforce. A competent country with AI technology will possess a competitive advantage in production and be put on a fast track to heightened growth rates.

AI can also evolve how warfare is conducted. The U.S. military is already shifting some of its operations from soldiers physically present in fighter jets to pilots remotely operating drones. Seeing that this shift has allowed the U.S. military to swiftly execute dangerous operations without jeopardizing the lives of American soldiers, further automation of the armed forces is probable. If AI innovation continues to be embraced by the military, AI may be developed to operate war vehicles at a similar or greater capacity than a human or phase out infantrymen with advanced robotic soldiers. Nations that replace their frontline armed forces with intelligent machinery which instantaneously receive orders would ensure a minimized risk to human life and enjoy a newfound tactical edge. The first country to optimize its military power with AI technology has the capacity to build the world's strongest army.

Physical warfare aside, AI will be a potent tool for cyber warfare. William Dixon, head of operations for the Center of Cybersecurity at the World Economic Forum, believes AI attacks will be highly refined but still administered on a wide scale. This is particularly daunting for governments and private firms as there is already a struggle to protect information and fend against hackers. Cyberattacks will only become more sophisticated according to Dixon because "[t]hese malwares will be able to learn the nuances of an individual's behavior and language by analyzing email and social media communications…AI will also be able to learn the dominant communication channels and the best ports and protocols to use to move around a system, discretely blending in with routine activity."[7] Hackers exposed vulnerabilities in the U.S. government's information systems during the 2016 presidential election. As AI continues to develop, cybersecurity officials will experience an unprecedented threat because the U.S. government's digital framework will be further susceptible to exploitation.

The final advantage of acquiring AI is the ability to maximize global influence. China is already making strong headway in this endeavor through the Belt and Road Initiative. By collaborating with resource-rich nations, China has built up a web of allies and trade partners. If Chinese innovators were to be the first to establish an adequate AI, they could commercialize it and build up a marketing system where AI technologies are only compatible with Chinese-made equipment. Consequently, this will establish an international monopoly on AI-related products and cause nations to pledge further patronage to Chinese markets. Furthermore, James Schoff and Asei Ito of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace fear that one risk of China making progress on AI research is the spread of high-tech surveillance and other authoritarian methods of ruling.[8] By possessing desired technologies and having already established relationships with foreign leaders, China can effectively transform its investment partners' governing methods by sharing its AI technologies which are purposed for surveillance and control.

If Xi hopes to reach his bold objectives, AI development is a tangible route to becoming the world's leader in innovation, power, and financial superiority. These qualities are likely sought out by the U.S., but they are not the only reason for its participation in an arms race. If China rises to power and surpasses the U.S., it is questionable that the CCP will use its newfound privileges for benevolent ends. As mentioned earlier, China is no proponent of Democracy and is aggressively expanding its influence in Hong Kong and the Xinjiang Region through technologically advanced authoritarian practices. If China claims dominance in the realms of physical and cyber warfare, develops a competitive advantage in manufacturing, and possesses a network of allied cohorts, the CCP will become a direct threat to U.S. national security. Without equal means to compete with China's technological superiority, the U.S. will essentially be eclipsed by China. Thus, the U.S. is incentivized to invest in AI development to ensure the safety of its citizens while China is incentivized to invest in AI development to push beyond its current limits.

Beyond the benefits of AI development for China and the U.S., there is also official documentation from each nation outlining the importance of AI research. For example, in 2018, the Department of Defense published a report diagramming the various benefits of harnessing AI technology and the immediate need to invest in research. The report contains supposed consequences of authoritarian nations getting ahold of AI first: "[f]ailure to adopt AI will result in legacy systems irrelevant to the defense of our people, eroding cohesion among allies and partners, reduced access to markets that will contribute to a decline in our prosperity and standard of living, and growing challenges to societies that have been built upon individual freedoms."[9] The acknowledgment of these dangers reflects that U.S. officials are already cautious of foreign competition. The seeds of fear are sprouting and the desire to invest in research is growing.

Shortly after this report was published, President Trump signed Executive Order 13859 in early 2019 which featured a cohesive strategy of the U.S.'s approach to AI development. According to the Executive Order, "President Trump launched the American AI Initiative that directs Federal agencies to prioritize investments in research and development of AI. The Initiative focuses Federal Government resources toward developing AI technology and ensuring that the next great AI inventions are made in the United States."[10] The Initiative reached its first anniversary in February and announced in a report how groundwork is being set to make the U.S. the AI hub of the world. The most important point to garner from these documents is that the U.S. seeks to be the leader in AI research and acknowledges the dangers of China or Russia getting ahold of this technology first.

Although the CCP is notorious for neglecting transparency, the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology released the *Next Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan* in 2017 (published before the Department of Defense's report and President Trump's Executive Order). It contains an ambitious three-step strategy that anticipates Chinese researchers making critical breakthroughs in AI theory by 2025 and advanced applications of these breakthroughs by 2030. This report indirectly challenges the U.S.'s objective of becoming the world's leader in AI by stating that China's final step in its strategic plan is to become the global AI innovation center.[11] The U.S. government and the CCP have made it readily apparent that they both are attempting to become the principal developers of AI. In their strategic plans, China and the U.S. have hinted at their desire for gaining the previously mentioned economic, social, and political benefits of being an AI superpower. For these reasons, I believe the race has already begun.

A necessary focus of this argument is to counter any doubt that China can compete with the U.S. in AI research. The U.S. has numerous advantages in this arms race. To name a few, the legally-protected right of freedom of speech gives creativity a proper environment to flourish,[12] the capitalist system with intellectual property protection standards allows creators to profit from their inventions, and the U.S.'s advanced community of research institutes are renowned for their incredible feats. Despite the U.S.'s considerable leverage in this competition, the CCP has its own advantages. Modern China is known for stealing intellectual property and not characterized as a global leader in technological innovation. The notion that China can create an advanced, cutting-edge invention such as AI may seem laughable to some. However, skeptics must be cautious to not underestimate the CCP's current abilities. The CCP has transferred an immense amount of capital to research. Schoff and Ito of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace estimate that China has already surpassed the U.S. as the largest investor in research and development.[13] China's research sector not only has access to unprecedented levels of government funding but also a wide network of raw data created by those connected to Chinese networks. Carl Minzner, Associate Professor of Law at Fordham Law School in New York, believes that the CCP is more authoritarian

than democratic with supreme authority being reserved for the central government.[14] This in turn has resulted in Chinese citizens being denied the right to privacy over their personal data. The CCP has used this to its advantage by creating "mass video-surveillance projects incorporating facial-recognition technology; voice-recognition software that can identify speakers on phone calls; and a sweeping and intrusive program of DNA collection."[15] This comprehensive monitoring system as well as China hosting over 1.39 billion denizens has allowed the CCP to achieve a competitive advantage in acquiring big data which is important for AI research. Furthermore, being a socialist market economy, the CCP has access to the tools and knowledge of its private sector which can aid China's AI research initiative. The autonomy of the central government and its dubious ethical standards allow China to fully employ its available resources in the AI arms race.

There is far too much evidence to refute the claim that China and the U.S. possess the resources and motivation for competing with one another over global dominance in AI research. The notion of an AI arms race is plausible considering the vast incentives for both nations to quickly become the chief AI designers. If an arms race is truly happening, what point has it reached? This is a difficult question to answer but I believe that we are far from the climax. U.S. media outlets briefly reported on a potential AI arms race after President Trump signed the Executive Order, but the momentum for continuous media focus is limited. Chinese media outlets have spoken about the CCP's goals for AI development but have not yet debuted an expansive propaganda campaign featuring competitive themes on this subject. Due to the lack of media coverage on both sides, I believe that the AI arms race is not yet perceived as an urgent situation. Regardless, I believe that as soon as a nation makes a radical breakthrough in its research, the public will become more aware of the race causing the arms race to potentially become politicized.

The prospect of the AI arms race advancing is distressing because propagandizing the development of such a powerful tool is fraught with risk. Experts such as Paul Scharre, Senior Fellow and Director of the Technology and National Security Program at the Center for a New American Security, fear that if the AI arms race becomes politicized and tensions between China and the U.S. escalate, there is a far greater chance that AI will be militarized rather than being used as a tool for socio-economic purposes.[16] As mentioned earlier, AI has the capacity to both uplift the international population and function as a device of war. This dichotomy is comparable to the uses of nuclear fission which can create clean energy or cause a nuclear warhead to detonate. In the past, U.S. leaders chose the former path before pursuing the latter. Nuclear fission was funneled into military efforts, radically transforming foreign conflicts by vastly expanding the destructive potential of war. If AI is developed with militaristic intentions in mind, there is a strong chance it will initially be purposed as a weapon.

Leaders in China and the U.S. have commented on the importance of maintaining safety measures and introduced the question of ethical applications of AI. However, limited evidence shows that these conversations will remain relevant if AI development is further politicized as an arms race. In a report published by Oxford University's Future of Humanity Institute, a model depicting risk-taking behavior shows that "[u]nder the assumption that the first AI will be very powerful and transformative, each [nation] is incentivized to finish first – by skimping on safety precautions if need be."[17] As mentioned earlier, the ethical boundaries of China's legal system when it comes to intrusive data monitoring are less constricting than the U.S.'s. This model shows that if the U.S.'s progress somehow stagnates, it is foreseeable that the federal government will circumvent standards to match China's pace. A potential implication of such a future is the U.S. government infringing upon the right of privacy as ensured in the Bill of Rights via collecting U.S. citizens' data for AI research.

Despite the precarious circumstances, some measures can be pursued to deflate future hostility. The co-creation of AI between China and the U.S. is ideal but may not be viable. Both nations have announced that they seek to be the leaders in AI research, which is a clashing of interests. Also, there may be distrust from the U.S. because of China's notorious reputation for infringing upon intellectual property protection standards. However, this does not mean that they cannot work together in some capacity. An article published by CCTV, a state-owned television network in Mainland China, spoke about the dilemma of the world's superpowers competing to create their own AI: "[i]t is imperative for all countries, especially the U.S. and China, to establish sustainable collaboration in areas such as how to reform their education systems, develop new frameworks around privacy, and form justified ethical rules."[18] Open discourse on the ethical implications of AI and how it should be used allows international leaders to be more transparent with their intentions and concerns. If some pressure is relieved, researchers will not be as impelled to disregard safety measures and the general public will find less reason to be concerned for their well-being. By being open to conversation, the tension in this arms race will be unwound.

Another measure that could curtail future suffering is introducing the discussion of AI regulation at the international level. In "International Cooperation vs AI Arms Race", an essay written by Brian Tomasik, the author suggests that "[i]mproved international institutions like the UN [would allow] for better enforcement against defection by one state."[19] By strengthening intergovernmental bodies such as the UN and establishing a global method of governance for AI use, accountability can be better placed upon any nation which intends to use AI for perverse gains. Many people criticize the UN for not cracking down on unruly practices of certain nations, such as China,[20] and poorly handling international dilemmas like the Rwandan Genocide.[21] For the U.S. and China to be convinced that submitting control to an intergovernmental body is the best option, reform is necessary. Achieving lasting peace through an overarching governing body is improbable but worthy of consideration.

The final and most tangible measure is beginning to draft AI arms control treaties in anticipation of future strife. The true power of AI as a weapon is still unknown. The possible creation of a mechanized army with killing capabilities far superior to that of any soldier is a terrifying prospect. In any case, it is better to prepare for a dark future instead of waiting for it to happen. Perhaps following the example of the treaty signed at the Chemical Warfare Convention, frontrunning nations in the AI arms race can rally behind a treaty that outlaws certain uses of AI. The focus of such a treaty should be on outlawing a nation from programming AI to operate war vehicles and restricting the use of AI as a tool in cyber warfare. By limiting how a nation can employ AI in war, global powers will receive treatise-backed assurance for domestic security which in turn would create a healthier environment for AI development. The only caveat is that an AI arms control agreement requires the cooperation of the world's powers. John O. McGinnis, an expert on international law, believes "the only realistic alternative to unilateral relinquishment would be a global agreement for relinquishment or regulation of AI-driven weaponry… [b]ut such an agreement would face the same insuperable obstacles nuclear disarmament has faced."[22] As precedent stands, the likelihood of a disarmament treaty succeeding is uncertain but is still deserving of consideration.

As shown by current technological trends, academic research, as well as open publications of both China and the U.S., AI is virtually guaranteed to be created in the imminent future. Even if the arms race somehow comes to a halt, policymakers should still contemplate how to minimize future losses. Despite experts' warnings of a global pandemic, the U.S. government was slow to respond to the Covid-19 outbreak. Because American leadership did not acknowledge the severity of the issue, we have experienced great losses. Instead of grasp-

ing for straws when the AI arms race blows up in our faces, we must act now while we have the chance. International leaders need to consider the implications of their actions when moving forward with their AI strategic plans. Compromises must be made on all sides if we are to maintain global peace. The rewards for being the world's AI superpower may be enticing but if China and the U.S. refuse to disengage from the AI arms race, the price may be the mutual undoing of these great nations.

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Containment Without Isolation: How the Nixon Administration's Exploitation of the Sino-Soviet Split Changed the Course of the Cold War and Communist Containment Policy in the United States

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ABSTRACT: Between 1949 and 1972, the United States not only refused to grant the People's Republic of China formal diplomatic recognition, but also failed to pursue any meaningful attempt for rapprochement. This non-recognition was based in a bipartisan Cold War policy that posited that the best way to contain the spread of communism was to deny communist states legitimacy. While Richard Nixon was an early proponent of this form of containment, his beliefs about how to effectively contain the spread of communism dramatically diverged from traditional party thought between his time as Vice President and President, during which American involvement in Vietnam intensified and nuclear nonproliferation talks with the Soviet Union faltered. Recognizing that China's rise was inevitable, Nixon believed that it would be strategic for the United States to position itself as an ally to China rather than to wait for it to become an unstoppable rival.

I argue that the skillful exploitation of the circumstances produced by the 1969 Sino-Soviet border clashes combined with evolving views on how best to contain communism enabled American policymakers to pursue rapprochement with China, thereby redefining American foreign policy on the containment of communism around the world.

INTRODUCTION

At 7:30pm on July 15, 1971, President Richard Nixon stood in a navy suit and matching tie in a television studio in Burbank, California. Flanked by an American flag on his right and a flag bearing the seal of the President on his left, the President addressed the American people, "I have requested this television time tonight to announce a major development in our efforts to build a lasting peace in the world."[1] In the three and a half minutes that followed, Nixon spoke in a steady tone as he read from his handwritten notes. In the coming months, he said, the United States would begin talks with the People's Republic of China to normalize diplomatic contact and seek peace.[2] The reason, Nixon explained, was that, "there can be no stable and enduring peace without the participation of the People's Republic of China and its 750 million people."[3] Halfway through the short speech, President Nixon continued to shock the world by announcing that in the coming months, he would become the first president of the United States to visit the communist nation, thereby ending a twenty year period of studied non-recognition.[4]

In the years following the Second World War, as tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union grew, the United States and its allies looked to Nationalist China to act as one of the world's "Five Policemen" and to take a seat at the Security Council in the newly formed United Nations and serve as a bulwark in the region. In 1949, Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party won a hard-fought civil war against Chiang Kai-Shek and the American-backed nationalist forces for control of the world's most populous country. Although there was not much the United States could have done to prevent Mao's victory short of

full-scale war, the shame of "losing" China and allowing the spread of communism to govern one-fifth of the world's population drove the bipartisan decision to formally refuse to recognize the People's Republic of China as a sovereign nation for the next thirty years; similar to its treatment of the Soviet Union between 1918 and 1933 after the Bolshevik Revolution.[5] Even after the Chinese government announced that it had developed its own nuclear weapons in 1964, the United States refused to recognize the communist nation.[6]

In the years following the "loss" of China, a second "Red Scare" spread throughout the United States, led in Congress by Democratic Representative Martin Dies of Texas and his House Un-American Activities Committee.[7] Initially supported by the Republican Representative from California, Richard Nixon, the cause was later taken up even more brazenly by the Republican Senator from Wisconsin, Joseph McCarthy, who sought to purge former and suspected communists in government service.[8] These anti-communist crusaders did not distinguish between Maoism that centered itself around the plight of peasants and Marxist-Leninist communism centered around workers, but instead characterized communism as a monolithic and tentacular force that would take over Europe and other areas of strategic interest to the United States if allowed to expand.[9] As a result of this characterization, over the next twenty years the United States expanded its nuclear weapons capabilities as a means of protection, containment, and deterrence despite the high costs of an arms race with the Soviet Union and the potential for global destruction.[10]

By 1967, however, one of the early leaders of the Second Red Scare, Richard Nixon, alongside Harvard professor Henry Kissinger, had developed more nuanced views about the containment of communism. It had become clear to them as early as 1956 when disputes broke out between the Soviet Union's Nikita Khrushchev and China's Mao Zedong about the direction of the international communist movement that there was no such thing as a monolithic form of communism that transcended the realities of borders, and the sovereignty of the nation-state.[11] In 1968, Khrushchev's successor, Leonid Brezhnev, announced the Brezhnev Doctrine, which stated that any internal or external threat to socialism or attempts to revert socialist systems to capitalism would be grounds for Soviet intervention given that subsequent unrest was a "concern for all socialist states."[12] The Brezhnev Doctrine and its use to justify the repression of protests in Prague and Budapest signaled to the Chinese Communist Party that ideological disagreements over socialist governance with Soviet leadership could escalate to military conflict.[13]

Although the United States had become increasingly aware of the fissures in the Sino-Soviet relationship throughout the 1950's, it was not until thirteen years later - and only after the United States had embarked on an increasingly unpopular war in Vietnam and saw both the Soviets and Chinese develop nuclear weapons - that American leaders saw an opportunity to take advantage of the growing Sino-Soviet split. This opportunity came in the form of violent border clashes between the Soviet Union and China in 1969 that threatened nuclear war. It was these clashes that ultimately drove the United States, led by Richard Nixon, a new leader with new ideas about how to contain the spread of communism, to begin to initiate a rapprochement with China.

ARGUMENT

This article examines the factors that drove the pursuit of normalized relations with the People's Republic of China during President Richard Nixon's first term from 1969-1973 and how rapprochement with China could and would advance both the foreign and domestic policy goals of the United States. To explain why leaders in the United States government made particular choices, I rely upon National Security Council reports, memorandums of meetings and telephone conversations between President Nixon and top advisors, State Department telegrams, memoirs written by key actors

and advisors, accounts published in national newspapers at the time, as well as supporting secondary scholarly literature. Based on this source base, I argue that skillful exploitation of the circumstances produced by the Sino-Soviet border clashes combined with evolving views within the highest levels of American governmental leadership on how best to contain communism enabled the Nixon administration to pursue rapprochement with China, and thereby create the necessary conditions for détente with the Soviet Union in the future.

Richard Nixon's Foreign Policy and Ideology as a Private Citizen

For seven years, between 1961 to 1968, Richard Nixon was restless. After having lost the presidential race to John F. Kennedy in 1960, Nixon had to figure out how to acclimate from Vice President of the United States to being an ordinary citizen. In his memoir, *RN*, published in 1978, Nixon described the feeling of defeat, "In 1961 I found that virtually everything I did seemed unexciting and unimportant by comparison with national office. When you win, you are driven by the challenges you have to meet; when you lose, you must drive yourself to do whatever is required."[14] After losing California's gubernatorial election in 1962, Nixon was forced to "learn to enjoy heating a TV dinner and eating it alone while reading a book or magazine," and had trouble accepting that his life as a private attorney in California and later New York was comparably fulfilling to working in the White House.[15] Just a year and a half before his defeat in the 1960 presidential election, in July of 1959 Nixon made headlines as a strategic foreign policy emissary for the United States when he had sparred with Nikita Khrushchev, someone he described in his memoir as a "crude bear of a man," at the American National Exhibition in Moscow.[16] In preparation for this important visit with the man who represented the United States' largest rival and threat, Nixon "spent several nights learning Russian words and phrases," and listening to intelligence briefings from the CIA and the State Department on Sino-American policy positions as well as the backgrounds of different Soviet officials who he might come into contact with during his trip.[17] In an exchange that was initially captured by cameras set up in the exhibition's model television studio and was recorded by reporters as it continued into a model of an American kitchen, Nixon told Khrushchev that he must not be "afraid of ideas," and that negotiation was critical to world peace, "When we sit down at a conference table it cannot all be one way. One side cannot put an ultimatum to another. It is impossible."[18] His performance and representation of the United States was met with praise across the country. An article written two days after the exchange in *The New York Times* reported that there was "agreement in Washington today that Vice President Richard M. Nixon has thus far in his visit to the Soviet Union immeasurably advanced his Presidential prospects for the next year."[19]

For Nixon, the replacement of positive press in the international spotlight with the loss of the presidential election and a return to private life was not satisfying. Between 1962 and 1968 Nixon searched for ways to boost his foreign policy credentials and remain in the spotlight as a viable future American leader. In 1962, after having lost the race for governor in California and before moving to New York to work at a private law firm, Nixon decided to try to burnish his credentials as a foreign policy savant by using a family vacation to meet with French President Charles de Gaulle and Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. When his trip was overshadowed by President Kennedy's concurrent state visit to Rome, he was not immediately deterred. Using his firm's international clients as an excuse, starting in 1963 Nixon travelled around the world meeting with "opposition leaders as well as government officials," and making connections with business leaders and politicians in developing countries with geo-strategic value, including Lebanon, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Laos, Pakistan, and Vietnam.[20]

Despite his extensive travels and meetings with people of import, Nixon continued to feel that

he was "treated inappropriately and with condescension" by the State Department, a reaction that would inform his dealings with the Department when he finally became president in 1969.[21] To prove his foreign policy credentials to the experts he believed were discrediting him, in 1967 Nixon put pen to paper and recorded his newly formulated ideas on the future of America's foreign policy in a hotly contested debate: lessening the tensions in relations between the United States, China, and the Soviet Union. Titled "Asia After Vietnam," and published in *Foreign Affairs*, Nixon argued that "Asia, not Europe or Latin America, will pose the greatest danger of a confrontation which could escalate into World War III."[22] In the article, read widely in academic and intelligence circles, Nixon identified China as not only the biggest threat to Asia, but also the world. Unlike the containment policies that dominated the United States' response to the Soviet Union, however, Nixon pushed for direct engagement with China. He emphasized that in order to reach the United States' long-term goals of regional stability and prevent the threat of China from metastasizing, "[The United States] simply cannot afford to leave China forever outside the family of nations."[23]

Aware of the economic, political, and military potential that China exhibited, Nixon called for a new strategy that built upon George F. Kennan's policy of containment: "containment without isolation."[24] In this new version of containment, China would be able to grow without expanding to dangerous proportions that threatened American influence or strengthened Soviet power. While the "world cannot be safe until China changes," if China's rise was inevitable, then it was strategic for the United States to position itself as an ally to China rather than to wait for Chinese leaders to once again return to the Soviet fold.[25] One year later, as Nixon stood at a lectern at the Miami Beach Convention Center in Florida to accept the Republican Party's nomination for president of the United States, Nixon announced the principles of this article in simplified terms for the American public. In his speech, Nixon pledged that the first foreign policy priority would be to end the war in Vietnam.[26] The administration would not stop there, however, as Nixon continued on to advocate that the United States also needed "a policy to prevent more Vietnams," through a new strategy of "internationalism in which America enlists its allies and its friends around the world in those struggles in which their interest is as great as ours."[27] This new policy to prevent more Vietnams - to prevent communism from spreading further - was containment without isolation, the policy he argued for in his *Foreign Affairs* article.[28]

Nixon's willingness to enlist new allies in the containment of communism marked a break from the policies of the Republican party and the Johnson administration. In his acceptance speech Nixon publicly announced that under his leadership the United states would "extend the hand of friendship to all people, to the Russian people, to the Chinese people, to all the people in the world. And we shall work toward the goal of an open world."[29]

Foreign Policy Focus: China

After the 1968 Republican National Convention Nixon did not shy away from his goals to begin negotiations with the United States' communist rivals. In his first inaugural address in January of 1969, Nixon spoke about his desire to form an "open world - open to ideas, open to the exchange of goods and people - a world in which no people, great or small, will live in angry isolation."[30] Nixon announced to the United States' adversaries, a status that China held at the time without formal diplomatic recognition, that "after a period of confrontation, we are entering an era of negotiation. Let all nations know that during this administration our lines of communication will be open."[31] At the time of his inauguration, Nixon had not yet honed in on China as the country to pursue rapprochement with first. While he was aware of China's potential for growth and power, Nixon was a foreign policy opportunist and was open to the idea of negotiating with either or both the Soviet Union and China to achieve his foreign policy goals. As president, Nixon subscribed to an interpre-

tation of the presidency that centralized power in the Executive Office and made redundant the large bureaucracy of foreign service officers within the State Department. Henry Kissinger, Nixon's National Security Advisor, was described as knowing "more foreign leaders than many State Department careerists" in an article published in *Time* magazine in February 1969, and was supposed to serve as both a liaison and a barrier between the Secretary of State and the President.[32] Moreover, when considering the groundbreaking policy efforts towards China that the Nixon Administration would pursue in the coming years, it is important to note that the key actors, Nixon and Kissinger, were operating based almost exclusively with their own expertise and without significant aid from a State Department filled with regional experts.[33] In 2007, the State Department's Office of the Historian hosted a conference titled "U.S.-Soviet Relations in the Era of Détente, 1969-1976," in which historians and American foreign policy experts, past and present, discussed Nixon's "Grand Design" in the "era of negotiations." During this conference, Kissinger admitted to the audience how little advice he received from experts on China, known as the "China Hands." In a conversation with Marc Susser, a historian within the State Department's Office of the Historian, Kissinger told the audience that because nearly all of the China Hands were purged during the McCarthy Red Scare era of the 1950s, there "were very few, I would say none, no senior State Department people, that could come to the attention of the President on China."[34] In fact, besides a few "desk officers," Kissinger stated that the focus of the State Department would have been on the Soviet Union as a result of the Cold War, despite China also acting as a major communist player.[35]

The Shift: 1969 Sino-Soviet Border Clashes

Over 2,500 miles long, China and Russia share a continuous border that stretches from eastern Mongolia to the tip of North Korea. Just north of this border is the Ussuri River, which flows along the boundary between China and Russia before taking a sharp turn eastward into the Sea of Japan. At a turn in the Ussuri River lies a disputed quarter of a square mile piece of land called Damansky Island by the Russians and Zhēnbǎo dǎo by the Chinese.[36]

For decades, this small patch of land was of paramount geostrategic importance, due to its location on the Ussuri river. Control of the island meant an easier route into the warm waters of the Pacific Ocean. Zhēnbǎo dǎo is physically closer to Chinese land than to Soviet land, and beginning in November of 1967, was the site of minor skirmishes between the two countries. In 1969, however, disputes over this small island boiled over into border clashes large enough to merit global attention in the foreign press and ultimately change the course of the Cold War.[37]

On March 2, Chinese soldiers fired shots towards Zhēnbǎo dǎo before launching an ambush of the territory in an attempt to push back Soviet encroachment on the island. This attack, which lasted only two hours, killed thirty-one Soviet border guards.[38] Soviet leaders, fearful that not responding to Chinese aggression would reduce Soviet standing in an increasingly fractured international communist movement, chose to retaliate.[39] Thirteen days later, on March 15, Soviet soldiers attacked Zhēnbǎo dǎo, killing roughly 800 Chinese soldiers and losing sixty of their own.[40] Five months later, on August 13, another skirmish, known as the Tieliekati Incident, on the western border near Xinjiang resulted in the deaths of twenty-one Chinese soldiers and two Soviets.[41] The incident on the Xinjiang border, hundreds of miles away from the Ussuri River to the west, confirmed for policymakers within the United States that the root of the conflict between the Soviet Union and China was not Zhēnbǎo dǎo itself, but was instead a larger conflict between two nations with nuclear capabilities vying for power and influence.[42] This newfound realization countered existing assumptions about Sino-Soviet relations, as well as the idea of supranational communist unity. In a report on the initial clashes sent to President Nixon on March 4, 1969, George Denney from the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research acknowledged that the

Map of the Sino-Soviet border, as well as the location of Zhēnbǎo dǎo / Damansky Island

Figure 1. *Source: The New York Times, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/02/opinion/soviet-russia-china-war.html*

Zhēnbǎo dǎo / Damansky Island in Greater Detail

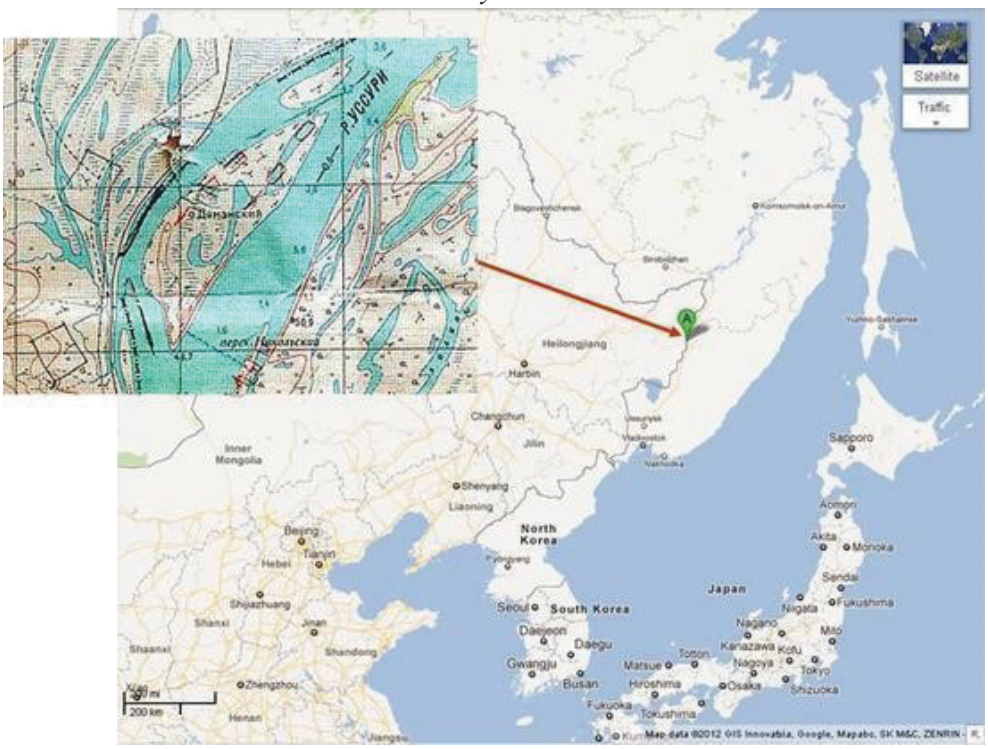

Figure 2. *Source: The New York Times, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/02/opinion/soviet-russia-china-war.html*

events of the border clashes were "symptomatic of the tension in the area," indicating that the fracturing of the Sino-Soviet relationship was already known to the United States.[43] While the border skirmishes may not have been the defining moment of realization for American policymakers that perceptions of an international communist monolith did not match reality, it was the moment of policy reorientation. These border clashes were an unavoidably public display of force, published in the press around the world. They also revealed an opportunity for Nixon to display his foreign policy credentials and his ability to maximize American interests in times of crisis. Thus, from March 1969 onwards, China and the Soviet Union officially became distinct political entities that required different diplomatic approaches to ensure the best possible national security outcomes for the United States.

Short Term: American Realizations and Calculations

In the immediate aftermath of the border clashes in March and August of 1969, policymakers within the United States realized Sino-Soviet tensions could be exploited for American strategic advantage. In the days following the August 1969 skirmishes, the world waited to see if border clashes would escalate into a full-scale war between two nuclear powers. With the possibility of massive conflict between the Chinese and Soviets breaking out at any moment, officials within the State Department and Nixon's White House had to quickly formulate short-term strategies that would ultimately benefit American interests. In a series of reports given to the President, Nixon's National Security Council and State Department claimed that if China and the Soviet Union were to engage in full-scale war, the Soviets would most likely win due to their superior conventional forces and nuclear weapons systems.[44] A Soviet victory would make the Soviet Union stronger and eliminate the potential for China to act as a deterrent against Soviet expansion in the region. President Nixon shared this sentiment, stating in a National Security Council meeting shortly after the August clashes that the United States did "not intend to join the Soviets in any plan to 'gang up' on China."[45]

On August 16, 1969, upon learning about the Sino-Soviet border clashes, Dr. Allen Whiting, a senior advisor to Henry Kissinger and professor at the University of Michigan, sent a top secret memorandum to Kissinger titled "Sino-Soviet Hostilities and Implications for U.S. Policy," that drew upon Whiting's previous experience as the head of the State Department's intelligence division. The memo warned that a Soviet attack on Chinese nuclear facilities would devastate Chinese nuclear capabilities and "increase the bitter hatred and siege mentality with which Chinese are likely to view the world for the rest of this century."[46] In light of this assessment, Whiting proposed three main short-term objectives for the Nixon administration to pursue: (1) deter a conventional Soviet attack on China, (2) prevent the use of nuclear weapons between the Soviets and Chinese, and (3) ensure that the Chinese knew that the Soviet Union was the sole antagonist, and that the United States disapproved of Soviet actions.[47]

Achieving the goals set forth in this memorandum became increasingly important after a meeting on August 18, just two days after its circulation, when the Second Secretary of the Soviet Embassy, Boris Davydov, reached out to William Stearman, a mid-level State Department official, to gauge how the United States would react if the Soviets were to bomb Chinese nuclear facilities.[48] When asked if this question was serious, Davydov continued on to explain the two main benefits of a Soviet strike: the Chinese threat would be eliminated for decades and Mao's government would be discredited, which would serve to strengthen the Soviet Union as the standard bearer of international communism.[49] While State Department and CIA officials took the threat of a strike on China's nuclear facilities seriously, they also questioned whether or not the query was being posed as a means to gauge American perceptions of Sino-Soviet relations and the extent to which the United States would tolerate conflict.[50] In the same conversation Davydov had also asked if "recent US moves to improve relations with the CPR [People's Republic of China] were aimed at an ultimate Sino-American collusion against the USSR."[51] Ultimately, it was judged that the "chances of this particular course of action [bombing Chinese nuclear facilities] are still substantially less than fifty-fifty," and that this would only occur if border clashes escalated dramatically. Thus, it became paramount for the United States' top diplomats to signal disapproval towards the bombing of Chinese nuclear facilities and work to ensure a ceasefire.

Rather than issue a formal answer to Soviet leadership, the United States chose to respond publicly, albeit cryptically. To ensure China was aware of the United States' response to Soviet overtures, the administration began to leak information to the press in the next few days. On August 27, the *New York Times* published

a short article titled "U.S. Aides Discount Reports of Russian Moves on China," that claimed State Department officials were rejecting reports that the Soviet Union had attempted to gauge the level of support Warsaw Pact countries would lend if it were to use conventional military force to destroy the Chinese Lop Nor nuclear weapons facility near the Soviet border.[52] Within a day of the publication of this information, Chinese leaders had fully mobilized the military and placed civilians near the border on alert for a Soviet attack.[53] On August 29, the Moscow bureau chief of *The New York Times* published a cryptic report that "Washington had picked up more reports of Soviet soundings on the possibility of a Soviet strike against China but that the Department was still skeptical that one was likely."[54] On August 31, a follow-up article written by Moscow correspondent Harrison Salisbury confirmed that Moscow had indeed reached out to fellow Eastern bloc states and that Washington "appeared belatedly to be taking more interest in the possible consequences -- not the least of which was the certainty that if Russia and China employ nuclear arms against each other the rain of radioactive fallout will be heavy and inescapable on the North American continent."[55]

Without formal diplomatic relations with China, the White House attempted to send signals to the Chinese government through leaked information published in American media. Leaked and secondhand information, however, tends to result in unclear messaging. Read by Chinese officials, *The New York Times* articles never explicitly stated that the United States was against conflict or that it would not support the Soviets if conflict were to break out. The lack of clarity in government policy stalled rapprochement between the United States and China for months, until Kissinger reformulated American strategy for communications and set up backchannels through Romania and Pakistan to get American messages across. These secretive channels for negotiation would lay the groundwork for the larger, more public negotiations that would follow in the years to come.

The New Cold War

By February of 1970, the United States was engaged in distinct bilateral backchannels and public negotiations with both China and the Soviet Union in an effort to normalize relations. The goals in these discussions, however, were different with respect to which country was at the table. Talks with the Soviet Union were driven by a desire to limit the production of nuclear weapons and strategic missiles. If successful, the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) would halt the nuclear arms race and limit the production of ballistic missiles capable of striking the territory of the United States or Soviet Union. These negotiations moved slowly, with neither side ready to immediately acquiesce its nuclear weapons and offensive capabilities. Negotiations with China were conducted with broader interests in mind and in a much more secretive fashion, meaning there was more room for failure without public embarrassment. The goals of talks with China stretched beyond nuclear arms limitations treaties, purposed to also achieve economic gains and an end to the war in Vietnam. Nixon and Kissinger were not the first statesmen to notice the positive externalities of the Sino-Soviet split that could be harnessed to pursue national interests and choose to negotiate with the two countries separately. French President Charles de Gaulle, a personal icon of Nixon and someone he had met in his travels as a private citizen, was one of the first to recognize the split and attempt to use it to his nation's advantage.[56] At around the same time that Nixon would have been in contact with him during his personal travels, de Gaulle was reformulating French foreign policy towards the two communist nations as part of a broader effort to revitalize France's global reputation after its defeat in Indochina, its ongoing war for colonial control in Algeria, and its overall decline as a global colonial power. Similar to Nixon's sentiments on China's potential in his 1967 *Foreign Affairs* article de Gaulle also believed in China's capability to dominate East Asia, and strove to be an early ally with the otherwise isolated country so that when this potential was realized, France would be in a position to benefit.[57] While de

Gaulle's goals were not achieved, primarily because of the decades long war in Algeria that subsumed the attention of French foreign policy, de Gaulle's vision and strategic thinking influenced Nixon and acted as inspiration for his foreign policy goals in the years to come.[58] In a meeting in Paris in February of 1969 with de Gaulle, Nixon recounts in his memoir that de Gaulle told him explicitly, "it would be better for you to recognize China before you are obliged to do so by the growth of China."[59]

De Gaulle's beliefs about the inevitability of China's rise are echoed in Nixon's later rhetoric, including in an internal meeting held on July 19, 1971 during which Nixon informed his staff that his motivations for normalizing relations with China were directly tied to his belief in China's untapped capacity for economic and military dominance, "They are not a military power now but 25 years from now they will be decisive … Where vital interests are involved, great powers consult their vital interests - or else they're played for suckers by those powers that do."[60] Evermore concerned about being left behind and marginalizing the interests of the United States in doing so, Nixon sought to pursue a new type of containment with China. A new containment would maximize diplomatic relations with the country while it was still underdeveloped and before China grew to a size that could threaten the interests and power of the United States.

The process of normalizing relations with China also made the realization of short-term goals for the United States feasible. In a response to a National Security Study Memorandum on China Policy published in 1971, Marshall Green, Chairman of the Special Group on Southeast Asia, cited these new opportunities, stating "The shift from alliance to confrontation in Sino-Soviet relations … [has] altered the nature of the game."[61] The Nixon Doctrine signaled to the world that the United States was no longer willing to overtly use military force to fight the spread of communism in foreign nations but instead wished to pursue peace. However, the announcement of these goals rested upon the reduction of possible Soviet or Chinese influence in regions deemed strategic. With tensions running high between the Soviet Union and China over Zhēnbǎo dǎo and a the increasing likelihood of war between the two countries, Nixon and Kissinger believed that they could capitalize on the distractions of the two communist superpowers and reduce costly American military expenditures focused on American defense against a direct attack of American interests levied by one of these two powers. Before the clashes of 1969, U.S. military action was taken with the knowledge that it could invite direct military involvement of Soviet or Chinese forces, making the Cold War hot. This was especially true for Vietnam. After the initial clashes in 1969, however, half of the Soviet Union's military forces and one third of Chinese forces were stationed along their shared border to prevent mutual invasion, leaving Soviet and Chinese military planners less focused on American involvement in the region.[62] As a result, Nixon and Kissinger hoped to use tensions between the Soviet Union and China that were clearly distracting for the leaders and militaries of both nations, to capitalize on economic, military, and domestic opportunities.

Economic Opportunities

Inherent in the tension between the United States and the communist world was the incompatibility between capitalist and communist systems of organizing economies. State-run economies meant closed markets, an antithetical concept to a free market economy that the United States hoped to pursue in a capitalist world order. In addition to the incompatible economic structures was the massive expenditure required to sustain an arms race. As president, Eisenhower had been particularly aware of the amount of money spent and was fearful that these vast sums would not just bankrupt the American economy, but could also cause an intractable and destructive nuclear war. Eisenhower, however, inhabited the early Cold War order that subscribed, at least in part, to the possibility of a Soviet-led international communist order. When considering the costs of the nuclear arms race, Eisenhower

believed that the Soviet Union was engaging in it both as a defensive measure in the case of an American attack, and also an offensive measure designed to bankrupt the United States.[63]

Nixon's foreign policy captured both his experience as vice president under Eisenhower's wariness of the military-industrial complex, and a novel understanding of the international communist movement as a fractured and disparate group rather than a monolithic force. In his 1967 *Foreign Affairs* article, Nixon wrote about the connections between the military and the economy, saying, "military security has to rest, ultimately, on economic and political stability."[64] In the case of the Soviet Union, the United States could limit the arms race and impose restrictions on the development of new ballistic missiles through the SALT negotiations. If both countries agreed to stop developing new and more complicated weapons, the funds that would have gone towards testing or research could be directed elsewhere.

In October of 1973, one year after the SALT I treaty was signed and Nixon had visited China, *Washington Post* columnist and Soviet analyst Victor Zorza published a piece arguing that the main priority of American foreign policy had never been the spread of democracy for the reason of promoting peace. Zorza, known for the controversial yet insightful opinions that he published in his *Kremlinology* column, argued that the United States' foreign policy was driven by profit and economic advantage, "The implied message is that American corporations now stand to make greater profits from a peaceful world than from arms sales, and they will, therefore, see to it that foreign policy of the United States is shaped accordingly."[65] This argument asserts that if arms sales were more profitable than corporate behavior in a peaceful world, then the United States would continue to seek out war in areas that it deemed susceptible to communism and closed markets. The Vietnam War had proven, however, that arms sales and war production could not stimulate an entire economy, and that peace was more profitable in the long term than war. Zorza continued on to write, "There will, evidently, be peace in our time."[66]

This argument was evidenced by lobbying from business leaders looking to expand production into Asia, without the threat of nationalization by left-leaning governments hanging over their heads.[67] Thus, the drive for profit became a motivation for peace as the US had to prove that countries in Asia, and to an extent, China, would be economically safe for private investment.

Military Opportunities

The Sino-Soviet Split offered several distinct opportunities for the United States to advance its military objectives abroad. Prior to the public awareness of the Sino-Soviet split, the united Soviet and Chinese support of North Korean and North Vietnamese aggression towards South Korea and South Vietnam was seen as a manifestation of monolithic communist expansionism.[68] By late 1971, while the United States attempted to negotiate with China, individual aid from both the Soviet Union and China to left-leaning revolutionary movements had increased, as both countries vied to be seen as the leader of the international communist movement and gain the upper hand over one another.[69] As China turned to negotiations with the United States, the Soviet Union repositioned itself with North Vietnamese leadership through increased donations to the war effort against American and South Vietnamese forces in an effort to strengthen its positioning in the region.[70]

However, the United States was also aware that the split could impact its ability to focus on its regional interests. Beyond just exposing the extent to which relations between the Soviet Union and China had frayed, the Sino-Soviet border clashes also exposed the way that claims to territory could be used to the American's advantage. The border clashes along the Ussuri River over Zhēnbǎo dǎo were geographically close to the Manchurian rail lines that the Soviet Union used to supply weapons to North Vietnamese soldiers through China.[71] After ideological conflict arose between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia during the Greek Civil

War in the late 1940s, Yugoslavia stopped giving aid to the Soviet-supported Greek communists, which ultimately contributed to the collapse of the communist insurgency and a victory for the American and British backed forces. This event in history was seen as a potential guiding example of what could be done to aid the American war effort in Vietnam. If relations between the Soviet Union and China were destroyed, then it would be to the advantage of the United States to use negotiations with China to encourage Chinese leaders to deny the Soviets access to the Manchurian rail lines, for the Chinese themselves to stop giving material aid to the North Vietnamese, or for Chinese leaders to encourage North Vietnamese cooperation in ongoing negotiations.[72]

Ending the war in Vietnam was also a priority due to the likely boost in popularity Nixon and the Republicans would receive. As the war in Vietnam dragged on, social unrest and approval of the war worsened. In October of 1965, a Gallup poll showed that 64% of Americans approved of the United States' involvement in Vietnam.[73] Four years later, in 1969, only 39% of the American public approved of the United States' involvement, with 52% stating that entering the war was a mistake.[74] Similarly, in 1966, 35% of Americans approved of withdrawing troops from Vietnam, but in 1970, 55% of the public thought that all troops should be withdrawn by 1971.[75] The ramifications of this policy on the opinions of the American people hung over the heads of the White House and influenced Nixon's decisions about boosting his favorability.

In a press conference held on June 1, 1971, one month prior to the public announcement of talks between the United States and China, a reporter asked President Nixon, "How do you account for the fact that two major public opinion polls now show that about two-thirds of the American public don't believe they are being told the truth about what is happening in the war?" Nixon's response exposed his acute awareness of the negative sentiment towards the war, "I am not surprised by the polls. I think of the people - and the war has been going on a long time - they are tired of the war. We are an impatient people. We like to get results."[76] To Nixon, results in Vietnam meant that fewer people would be drafted and fewer people at home would know someone whose life was at risk for a war with no apparent end. Whereas increased troops had been required in the past to match troop numbers from the North Vietnamese or potential Sino-Soviet involvement, if the Soviets or Chinese were not going to commit their troops to Vietnam due to their positioning along the Sino-Soviet border, the United States could make a more active commitment to bringing troops home.[77] In continuing his response at the press conference, Nixon outlined his goals to "bring all home … in a way that will give the South Vietnamese a chance to avoid a communist takeover, and thereby contribute to a more lasting peace."[78]

At the time of the Sino-Soviet border clashes in 1969, besides wanting to avoid nuclear war involving the United States or one between the Soviet Union and China, the biggest foreign policy focus of the United States was ending the war in Vietnam through "honorable peace."[79] For Nixon, honorable peace contained two interrelated objectives. The first was a withdrawal from Vietnam that would not hand an outright victory to communist forces. Connected with preventing the spread of communism from continuing throughout the region, the second goal was reputational: Nixon did not want him or his fellow Republicans to receive the same "soft on communism" moniker that Truman had received when China became the People's Republic and that he himself had promoted as a member of Congress.[80] The task of completing these two goals successfully, however, proved increasingly difficult as the war raged on with no clear end in sight. Starting in May of 1968, Nixon stopped calling on the campaign trail for a "victorious peace," but instead an "honorable peace," signaling that the United States might not be able to achieve a total victory.[81] The ultimate goal for South Vietnam became much more dynamic as Nixon took office and began leading the United States. Whereas the initial goal of the United States was to guarantee an in-

dependent democratic South Vietnam, it later shifted to letting South Vietnam determine its own political system in the name of preserving self-determination.[82] Nixon was particularly aware as the war dragged on that any settlement in the war would have to be negotiated with the support of larger communist powers with influence over North Vietnamese leaders - leading to a possibility of the Cold War becoming hot.[83] Thus, that was where his attention turned.

Conclusion

At 11:30am, on February 21, 1972, Nixon disembarked Air Force One alone and stepped out onto the tarmac of Beijing Capital International Airport where Premier Zhou Enlai was waiting. The other members of Nixon's entourage, including Rogers and Kissinger, were not allowed to exit the plane until Nixon had shaken hands with Zhou in front of the cameras.[84] This handshake, the first after nearly twenty-five years of stalled relations, marked the beginning of a week in which the two countries would make public steps towards reconciliation. For the next week, Nixon's daily schedule consisted of formal diplomatic meetings in the morning and sightseeing with the press in the afternoons, to ensure that he was recorded as an adept statesmen in a foreign country advocating for the American people.

An invitation given to Nixon and Kissinger to meet Mao in the Imperial City on his first day in Beijing provided the first opportunity for Nixon to meet Mao and discuss their two country's relations.[85] During their meeting Mao indicated to Nixon his perception of the American left and the Democratic party as pro-Soviet, stating he had "voted for you [Nixon] during your last election," because "those on the [American] left are pro-Soviet and would not encourage a move toward the People's Republic."[86] Mao's acknowledgement of the growing divide between China and the Soviet Union and his acknowledgment of Nixon's increased understanding of the issue meant that there was certainly potential for a mutually beneficial negotiation between Washington and Beijing.

The circumstances resulting from Sino-Soviet border clashes allowed for the implementation of Nixon's novel approach to communist containment. The United States did not engineer the violent border clashes between the Soviet Union and China in 1969, nor could it have created the broader set of tensions that characterized the Sino-Soviet split. Nevertheless, leaders in the Nixon administration, including Nixon and Kissinger, did have the strategic foresight to understand that these clashes and enmity that undergirded them posed a unique opportunity for the United States to reduce tensions with its communist rivals and change the course of the Cold War. Without a communist monolith to reckon with, coupled with Nixon's evolving views on how to contain the spread of communism, the only thing left for the Nixon Administration to decide was how best to approach détente in a way that could leverage the best political, economic, and military benefits for the United States.

As negotiations over nuclear weapons development with the Soviet Union stalled and nuclear war between China and the Soviet Union over border skirmishes appeared increasingly unlikely, Nixon and Kissinger continued to engage with China, a country they both believed to harbor immense potential and offered unique opportunities for the United States. Rapprochement with China could help end the seemingly endless war in Vietnam. Diplomatic relations could save the United States money by limiting costs associated with Vietnam, redirecting resources back into the domestic economy, and easing defense structures meant to guard against Chinese expansionism in the region. Most importantly, negotiations with China could lure the Soviet Union back to the table for its own series of negotiations on détente and nuclear non-proliferation agreements.

The idea that negotiations with communist countries could be just as, if not more, of an effective form of containment than military force or non-recognition marked a significant break from previous American Cold War policy, particularly for members of the Republican Party.

The idea of a united communist front spreading a red wave across the world had been disproved. The adaptation of existing policy to this new development would not have been possible without the evolution of views of the previous Cold "warrior" Richard Nixon. Nixon, eager to be considered an authority in foreign policy in the 1960s, when the country had discarded him as a has-been politician after his electoral losses in presidential and gubernatorial races, forced himself to travel around the world and consider new ideas. While it is legitimate to argue that Nixon was not the foreign policy genius that he presented himself as, his skills were not lacking, as made clear through negotiations with China - one of the most significant readjustments of containment theory in the Cold War.

Considering how broadly Nixon's ideological understanding of containment evolved in the span of twenty years, it is unsurprising that he received criticism from more conservative factions of the Republican Party for his actions. What is moderately surprising, however, considering the success that this new understanding had in easing what could have been lethal tensions between the United States and two communist countries armed with nuclear weapons, was the electoral success of these critics, including Ronald Reagan, in the 1980 presidential election. At the time that Nixon and Kissinger were formulating how best to exploit the Sino-Soviet border clashes and announced intentions to visit Beijing before Moscow, the then-governor of California Ronald Reagan and the conservative John Birch Society were some of their staunchest opponents, acting as anti-communist ideologues who believed that giving an inch to the two communist countries would mean losing miles for the United States.[87] This anti-communist ideology manifested itself in 1981 when Reagan assumed the office of the presidency and reentered some of the darkest days of the Cold War since the era of the Cuban Missile Crisis in the early 1960s. Progress for nuclear nonproliferation agreements were discarded and the threat of nuclear war remained high. In his book *Nixon and Kissinger: Partners in Power*, Robert Dallek correctly argues that Nixon and Kissinger's new containment - containment without isolation - was a strategically reimagined attempt to turn the tide of the Cold War in the United States' favor despite objections from members of his own party, "As Nixon and Kissinger tried to make clear to conservatives, their China policy and development of MIRVs [multiple independent reentry vehicles] were fresh means of containing Soviet power, not giving in to it. In short, détente was foreign policy realism which guarded against national devastation and any sort of major Soviet victory in the Cold War."[88] If states are only interested in their own power and security, as realist theory maintains, then ideology should not serve as a hindrance to states acting in their own interests.[89] Thus, when opportunity presented itself for the United States to insert itself between the Soviet Union and China to begin diplomatic negotiations, the Nixon administration could not look away. Although the Administration did not meet its goal of ending the war in Vietnam with peace and honor, domino theory - if one country falls to communism, others around it will fall as well, creating an unstoppable chain of events - did not come to fruition. While causation is impossible to infer, there does appear to be a correlation between the opening of relations with China by the Nixon administration, continued negotiations with the Soviet Union, and the containment of communism for the remainder of the Cold War.

Nixon may not have been a foreign policy genius with a perfectly formulated "Grand Design," but he and his advisors acted strategically when it mattered most. Indeed, his decision to prioritize diplomacy to achieve American goals signaled the importance of negotiation as a tool for positive change to future presidents shaping their own ideas about foreign policy for the years to come.

APPENDIX A - NOTE ON SOURCES

To a greater extent than is usually the case, the existing scholarship on the normalization of

U.S. relations with China reflects the time of authorship, for two reasons. The first is that the opening of relations with China was a remarkable event for which Richard Nixon received substantial credit at the time. Works written closer in time to the U.S.-China rapprochement, such as Schurmann's book, are generally more admiring of Nixon's foreign policy skills than more recent books published after the conclusion of the Cold War and therefore with the benefit of greater hindsight and reflection. Conversely, older books tended to give Henry Kissinger less credit in the creation of this foreign policy than more recent publications. The existing literature on this topic illustrates that perspectives about the Cold War and long-term impact of certain foreign policy decisions differ depending on the context within which they were written.

The second reason why the time of authorship matters more than usual is that the historical record has both expanded and contracted with the passage of time. With regards to access to documents, the record has expanded with more sources (although not all) declassified and available from American, Chinese, and Soviet archives. As time passes, however, it has contracted as key participants die. Therefore, authors of works written closer to the time in question did not have access to the full documentary record but did have access to living participants if they were willing to speak. Authors of more recent works have access to more documents, though much information remains classified, including almost all of Henry Kissinger's personal papers which will not be released until five years after his death.[90] Further complicating matters is the fact that much of the opening to China developed through backchannel negotiations and processes meant to be kept secret not only from the American public but also from members of the Nixon Administration itself. Nixon, Kissinger, and their associates went to great lengths to conduct many of their meetings off the record and to not keep an extensive paper trail for all negotiations. These challenges mean that any serious attempt to answer lingering questions and fill gaps in the literature about the opening of relations between the United States and China must draw on a combination of the existing scholarship, because of the insights from participants still living at the time of publication, and on newly available primary sources recently declassified.

In sum, while there is a large quantity of existing literature published over the past fifty years that discusses the opening of relations between the United States and China, (indeed this thesis is certainly not the first attempt to answer the questions discussed in the following chapters), important facets of these negotiations remain unexplored. Sources published during the Cold War were not only unable to integrate the full range of existing documentation, but also lacked the benefit of hindsight. Conversely, historians publishing works in more recent times may have access to newly declassified information but are unable to ask participants directly involved in the negotiations questions that can reconcile newfound gaps in the literature discovered through the accumulation of time. These gaps in the literature will continue to be filled only as new documents are found and made public, expanding the information available to scholars wishing to build upon the knowledge available about events that not only changed the course of the Cold War, but also foreign relations and diplomatic ties relevant to this day.

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Political Science

With Friends Like These: American Duplicity and Intervention in the Sino-Soviet Conflict

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ABSTRACT: This paper examines the US diplomatic role in the Sino-Soviet conflict in 1969, in which a border dispute almost culminated in nuclear war. I examine the US engagement with both the USSR and China during this critical period and ultimately argue that the US attempted to balance three diplomatic goals: 1) nonentanglement, the desire to keep the US outside the conflict; 2) deescalation, the desire to keep a general war from breaking out and to prevent such a war from going nuclear; and 3) manipulation, the desire to pit the USSR and the Chinese against each other. The US was primarily concerned with staying out of the conflict but had evolving strategies that changed from manipulating to deescalating the crisis. Within the broader theory of crisis bargaining, I also conclude that the prospect of nuclear conflict can induce mediation even among parties with comparatively little at stake in a conflict. Furthermore, this case study indicates that states prefer to align with weaker states rather than with more powerful ones.

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

Nuclear war has reemerged as a topic of interest for both scholars and policymakers. And with it comes a focus on the world's most volatile regions, among which are the Korean Peninsula and Kashmir. Accompanying this is a public and scholarly revisiting of crisis bargaining, particularly instances such as the Clinton administration's role in arbitrating the Kargil War or US-USSR private negotiations during the Cuban Missile Crisis. But what is commonly overlooked in examining the near-misses of nuclear war is one distinctive case: the Sino-Soviet conflict of 1969. The USSR and PRC escalated a decade-long ideological split into a border war that almost turned nuclear. All the while, the US engaged both sides diplomatically from behind the scenes. Initially, the US sought to foment discord between the USSR and China. As the likelihood of nuclear war increased, however, the US pivoted to discourage Soviet escalation by reestablishing diplomatic relations with China. This not only drove up the political costs for military action by the USSR but ensured the fracture of the Sino-Soviet partnership remained permanent.

This crisis serves as a case study with a few distinct advantages for analyzing crisis management. First, the international system was bipolar. Unlike the Kargil War or recent examples of US-DPRK saber rattling, the Sino-Soviet is a historical conflict which took place between a great and near-great power. With the rise of China comes a shift in the international order away from unipolarity.[1] Consequently, as we move towards this change, it bears examining the Sino-Soviet conflict which took place in an international order with two superpowers and a rising regional power. Second, the stakes of the Sino-Soviet conflict mirror that of the most volatile regions today. Just as inadvertent escalation towards nuclear confrontation remains at the forefront of every discussion around India-Pakistan border conflicts, the Sino-Soviet conflict mirrored these risks. Moreover, the risks were increased not just by nuclear arms and the onset of armed conflict but also on the expected changes in the balance of power. Since the Soviets feared China's potential for future growth, this additional destabilizing factor pressured the Soviets into considering a preventative strike. Both analytical advantages prove timely to adjudicating current scholarly disputes as well as current international policy questions, and indicate that this understudied conflict merits reexamination.

Even less well-documented is the role of the US in this conflict. Often the conflict is looked at as a one-dimensional conflict which was solved bilaterally during joint Sino-Soviet talks in Vietnam. Recently declassified archival materials do not bear this out, however. To the contrary, the Soviets viewed US support as indispensable and were willing to compromise to secure this support. Likewise, internal US documents reveal that senior-level officials spent a great deal of time deliberating on the proper US posture to this conflict and that this stance changed as the prospect of a general war became more likely. Even in the supposedly successful bilateral peace talks, all sides feared that this would not be the final resolution and were wary of future hostilities. The US policy during this critical period in 1969 was instrumental in both escalating and ultimately terminating the conflict.

Ultimately, I conclude that the US attempted to balance three diplomatic goals: 1) nonentanglement, the desire to keep the US outside the conflict; 2) deescalation, the desire to keep a general war from breaking out and to prevent such a war from going nuclear; and 3) manipulation, the desire to pit the USSR and the Chinese against each other. From March-August 1969, the US fomented conflict. In August, once the prospect of nuclear war was high, the US attempted to deescalate by pivoting towards China through a series of backchannels. In the broader theory of crisis bargaining, this indicates that the prospect of nuclear conflict can induce mediation even among parties with little at stake in a conflict. Furthermore, it indicates great powers are more likely to balance against great power foes than to bandwagon with them.

In Section II, I examine the existing literature on crisis bargaining. In Section III, I provide an overview of the ideological schism and the major events of the Sino-Soviet conflict along with an overview of current historical interpretations. In section IV, I provide a detailed examination of the US diplomatic engagement during the 1969 Sino-Soviet Border War. Because I use materials from the US State Department's "Foreign Relations of the United States," (hereafter FRUS) in conjunction with supplementary collection from the CIA Reading Room, the scope of the collection used in this paper is more comprehensive than existing scholarly collections such as the National Security Archive.[2] In section V, I summarize my findings and suggest further avenues for research.

SECTION II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Current literature has been extensive in its study of the role of conflict mediation in crisis management. However, current literature still oversimplifies the role of third-parties in mediation. Realist theory typically studies bargaining as a bilateral rather than multiparty approach. Alternative explanations overemphasize the role of nonstate actors in lobbying for peace or tenuously suggest that a cultural affinity explains the decision for a third state to intervene. All these explanations are incapable of fully explaining the case of the US role in the Sino-Soviet conflict. The realist case excels in explaining the early US policy to foment rivalry between the Chinese and the Soviets, but the sudden about-face towards deescalation is only partially explained by this model. The role of nonstate actors is a more tenuous proposition. While the US did have external accountability towards the public, there is no evidence in declassified documents that suggests domestic groups were influential in US decision making during this time period. The cultural affinity argument struggles to have any empirical merit in the case of the Sino-Soviet conflict.

Realist Theories

No examination of realist theory can overlook Schelling's contributions to the theory of conflict resolution. Schelling makes the counterintuitive claim that rather than seeking relative gains, states can coordinate towards a common sense or "natural" resolution to conflict. Schelling does note that this tends to bias towards a conflict resolution that is status quo ante.[3] Schelling, using standard two-player game theory models, does not explore the complexities added by a third player. Consequently,

his examination of the impact of asymmetries among the two players cannot be applied to the Sino-Soviet conflict precisely because it does not include the third player, the US. Furthermore, the embedded assumption in Schelling's model is that the game would be cooperative rather than competitive. Therefore, the applicability is questionable in a system where the Soviets and Chinese operate in zero-sum terms due to the indivisibility of disputed territory.

Also key within realist thought is Glenn Snyder's *Conflict Among Nations*, which is built on an existing body of literature that considers the balance of resolve to be the key variable in international disputes.[4] The balance of resolve model maintains that states' credibility in defending their interests matters more than the balance of nuclear weapons on each side. But Snyder's key contribution to the literature is the argument that the key factor in maintaining resolve is the time horizon on which a nation stakes its credibility. In the anarchic nature of the realist worldview, states must value not just the current stakes but future ones. Snyder's explanation is that states may pursue a settlement independent of the conflict which they arbitrate-- for the purpose of securing a lasting change in diplomatic relations with one of the target states.[5] This argument converges empirically with the historical discussion the US had internally on why to engage China.[6]

The realist discussion as to whether states are more likely to bandwagon with a great power or to balance against the great power remains a contentious topic. While realists like Waltz and Morgenthau assumed that states would naturally balance against great power adversaries,[7] other realists have argued that the far easier mechanism would be to bandwagon with great powers.[8] The China-US-USSR triad provides an excellent test case to adjudicate this dispute. If states balance against the stronger party, we would expect the US to assist China. If states bandwagon with the stronger party, however, we would expect the US to assist the USSR. The question remains why the Chinese and Soviets sought third-party mediation in the first place, rather than continue a bilateral approach to resolve the conflict. In answering this, Michael Butler's large-N analysis determines the factors that influence the likelihood of third-party intervention in international crises and concludes that the onset of military violence is the foremost factor prompting a third-party to intervene. However, he also concludes that regardless of the nature of the dispute, states tend to rely on *realpolitik* when deciding whether to intervene.[9] Consequently, this study's findings lend theoretical credence to the notion that a mix of military escalation and a desire to balance against the Soviets brought the US in to arbitrate.

Alternative Theories

One of the seminal studies on multiparty conflict mediation is Chester Crocker's study.[10] Crocker argues that nonstate actors and states work in concert to mediate peace. However, his study focuses on Africa in the post-Cold War environment. While his case studies are robust, it explains conflict mediation in a system of American unipolarity under which the role of international organizations grew considerably. This study does not translate well to explaining conflict mediation in a bipolar system which was a much harsher environment for NGOs. Nevertheless, the sentiment that nonstate actors influence the decisions has been echoed in several studies since.[11] The examination of the Sino-Soviet conflict consequently presents an opportunity to examine to what extent these nonstate actors play a role in authoritarian regions and in multipolar international disputes.

Finally, some scholars have made the case that cultural affinity explains states' decisions to intervene.[12] This view, while admittedly understudied, lacks the empirical grounding to make it generalizable. Case in point is the Sino-Soviet conflict: The US was not particularly close to the Soviets, but China was even more alien culturally. Moreover, the US engaged China even less diplomatically and economically than the Soviets. Consequently, we would expect the US to either not intervene or to intervene on behalf of the USSR if this cultural mechanism could

explain the onset of third-party intervention.

SECTION III: CONVENTIONAL WISDOM AND BACKGROUND OF SINO-SOVIET CONFLICT

Overview

The Sino-Soviet split initially stemmed from an ideological grievance between Khrushchev and Mao which would intermittently last from 1956-1969. This split was most apparent through soft-power measures such as denunciations and competing for influence among other communist states. In 1969, however, the conflict took on the dimension of a border dispute wherein both sides anticipated the possibility of a general war breaking out.

Current historical thought on the Sino-Soviet conflict itself falls into two camps: the camp which views the US as little more than a Chinese lifeline and a camp which views the US as an instigator. The former ignores the diplomatic engagement of the US prior to August 1969 altogether, and while the latter does explain US behavior during this initial period, it ignores the US role in steering the conflict away from escalation.

Conventional Wisdom on Sino-Soviet Conflict

Conventional scholarly opinion holds that Soviet pressure against China was sufficient to move senior PRC leaders to consider aligning with the US by 1968. Historian William Burr argued that even before the 1969 border clashes, Mao began to "[P]lay the 'American card'" as early as November 1968.[13] Another historical analysis similarly noted Mao's "reevaluating the threats" posed by the US and USSR and argued that Mao needed a lifeline which he found in the US.[14] Prior to aligning with China, according to this narrative, the US had simply stood on the sidelines as its most powerful adversaries attrited one another. And while this does bear some truth when examining the historical record, it oversimplifies the role of the US as simply a lifeline to China rather than an independent actor during the crisis. Nevertheless, the view that the US did not have a diplomatic impact on the Sino-Soviet conflict until August 1969 is commonly held by both US officials and in examinations of the conflict which focus on the ideological clash between Khrushchev and Mao.

A second wing of the historical literature more adequately reflects the crucial diplomatic role played by the US in pushing the USSR to antagonize China. One recent study argued that the US should be viewed as the instigator to the Sino-Soviet conflict. However, this study overemphasizes the role that US nuclear superiority had in creating the initial ideological split between Mao and Khrushchev and ignores the US role during the actual onset of Sino-Soviet hostilities in 1969.[15] This problem is also shared by other examinations of the conflict which document the role of the US during the 1956-1966 period but fail to account for the US role during the Sino-Soviet border war in 1969.[16] Consequently, the current conventional wisdom either overlooks the US role or diminishes the autonomy of the Chinese and Soviets.

Historical Background

With the triumph of the People's Republic of China (PRC) over Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist government in 1949, the US was forced to choose whether to recognize this new government. Contrary to expectations, the US was originally open to engagement and recognition of Communist China.[17] However, the factor which ultimately forced nonrecognition by the US was the PRC's leaning towards the Soviet Union.[18] The Sino-Soviet alliance was almost immediate; within one year the USSR recognized and began strengthening ties with China while affording the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) the same international standing as the parties of Soviet states.[19] More importantly, the Soviet Union provided Mao's government with aid to defend China's peripheries from a perceived American-led threat.[20] The allies were linked in both their security interests and ideology. But this alliance proved to be more precarious as time went on.

Following Stalin's death in 1953, the USSR began a period of de-Stalinization. Khrushchev

had begun pursuing a policy of peaceful coexistence with the West marked by his attendance of a peace summit with Western leaders in 1955.[21] Khrushchev followed this up with a surprise denunciation of Stalin and his purges in 1956.[22] This immediately aroused the suspicion of China, which construed this as an indirect indictment of Maoist purges.[23] Unfortunately for the Chinese, however, the balance of power did not allow them to saber-rattle against a conventionally-superior nuclear-armed state. When the Soviet Union withdrew its assistance for Chinese atomic weapons in 1959 as part of its new policy, China was left to bide its time until the security situation would change in its favor.[24]

The United States was keenly aware of the burgeoning ideological divide between the USSR and China and did not hesitate to exploit this development. The US had tried to break apart the Sino-Soviet alliance since 1950 but had consistently failed.[25] During this split, the US capitalized on the situation to finally drive a wedge between the USSR and the PRC. The Kennedy administration was cautiously optimistic due to Khrushchev's rapprochement attempts and general desire for nonproliferation. President Kennedy was keen on preventing China from achieving nuclear capabilities and in 1963 asked Khrushchev to prevent China's nuclear program before it became operational.[26] Khrushchev refused this request, forcing the Americans to consider how grave of a concern Chinese nuclear proliferation would be and to assess the risks of unilateral action. Fortunately for the Chinese, Kennedy's presidency was shorter than expected, and President Johnson did not consider Chinese nuclear proliferation a grave threat like his predecessor. Ultimately, American indifference and Soviet caution gave China the time it needed to become a nuclear power.[27]

When China was on the verge of developing its nuclear capability in July 1964, Mao took the opportunity to denounce the "degenerate elements" of the "Revisionist Khrushchev Clique" and their associated reforms.[28] China then went on to conduct its first nuclear test by October, establishing itself as a capable rival of the USSR.[29] With its new power status, China was able to challenge the USSR to a greater extent than before. This extended to competing against the USSR for influence over Hanoi's forces in North Vietnam through 1966 and even attempting to pit eastern European communist states against the "revisionist" leaders.[30]

The Border War Begins

On March 2, 1969, the Chinese launched a surprise attack against Soviet forces on Zhenbao Island.[31] The attack was unexpected and unprovoked, despite Chinese claims to the contrary. Historians have generally arrived at two interpretations for China's decision to conduct this attack: Either China was incensed at recent Soviet expansionism and the Brezhnev Doctrine, or China was in need of an external threat in order to unify the country.[32] In either case, Mao had provoked his more powerful neighbor on the assumption that Chinese manpower could overcome the USSR's superior technology.[33] The Soviets were more than willing to test this thesis. Soviet and Chinese forces clashed on a larger scale on March 15, this time with nearly 2000 Chinese soldiers facing a Soviet force constituting at least 50 Soviet tanks with significant air and artillery support. The Soviet counterattack seemed to be more a show of force than anything, as Soviet leaders attempted to contact China for negotiations on March 21 but were denied as Chinese officials severed communication channels with the "revisionists."[34] The Soviets repeatedly threatened the Chinese with their nuclear arsenal, but no major provocations took place between March and August 1969.[35] The Chinese government did note that 429 "incidents" and "provocations" took place between June and July, but most of these constituted small arms fire or intrusions into Chinese territory or airspace.[36] A serious escalation did occur in August, however, when Soviet forces killed 38 Chinese soldiers in Xinjiang.[37] Soviet officials followed this up with threats detailing the USSR's nuclear capabilities in the face of any Chinese aggression.[38] The US took alarm at this development.[39] By September, however, Soviet and Chinese representatives both met in Vietnam and agreed to freeze the status quo until

the border clashes could be resolved through negotiation.[40] While these talks are often looked at as the resolution to this border dispute, the reinitiation of war was only prevented by the diplomatic signaling of the United States in the immediate aftermath of these bilateral talks.

SECTION IV: US DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENT

Overview

The US was faced with a dilemma in 1969. Two major communist powers were engaged in an increasingly tense conflict, one which presented an opportunity for the US to attrite its chief rivals. And the US did strive to capitalize on this rivalry initially, trying to extract concessions by playing each side against the other. But as the level of tension grew in the summer of 1969, American leadership quickly came to the realization that the conflict could escalate to the nuclear realm. This prompted an about-face in US policy, and the US pivoted to pursue a policy of deescalation by which it discouraged Soviet military action through its pro-China signaling. This led the US to eventually form a partnership of convenience with China in the aftermath of the crisis.

US engagement with the USSR (March - August 1969)

The US initially feigned interest in cooperating with the Soviets against China, while privately seeking to exploit the growing rift between the two powers. In May 1969, Jacob Beam, US ambassador to the Soviet Union, reassured Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromkyo that the US was not seeking to capitalize on the Sino-Soviet Split.[41] US National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger privately recommended pursuing precisely that policy, stating, "I basically agree with attempts to play off the Chinese Communists against the Soviets in an effort to extract concessions from or influence actions by the Soviets."[42] This two-faced diplomacy was not lost on Soviet officials, however, who reportedly expressed suspicion of "Sino-American collusion" in June 1969.[43] Despite accurately assessing American deception, Soviet officials seemed desperate for American help in isolating China. In May, Soviet officials indicated an interest in Soviet-American cooperation based on the "long-range considerations" of China.[44] Soviet officials also probed US officials for their assessments of Chinese ICBM capabilities.[45] By July, it seemed that the Soviet desperation had only increased when Soviet officials indicated their willingness to give ground to gain US support. Soviet Foreign Minister Gromkyo expressed the view that the USSR was being pressured on two fronts: NATO from the West and China in the East. In responding to this, he advocated that "restraint, moderation, and flexibility" be shown to the US.[46]

Despite the USSR's consistent attempts to draw the US in against China, American officials maintained their duplicity. During a meeting with Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin in June 1969, Henry Kissinger expressed US willingness to prevent emerging powers from threatening international security, particularly China, and offered the USSR help in dealing with its ally. Dobrynin denied that China was an ally in the first place but expressed interest in a summit to discuss the issue.[47] No action was taken in conjunction with the Soviets following this meeting, however, and Kissinger's feigned willingness to cooperate did not translate to policy. By August, however, Soviet patience with US inaction was wearing thin, and tensions with China were still high, with fears of a nuclear conflict brewing. On August 14, the National Security Council discussed these possibilities, with President Nixon noting that the Soviets were "more aggressive" than the Chinese and Central Intelligence Director Helms noting the Soviets were threatened with losing their first-strike capability.[48] A sudden Soviet inquiry seemed to confirm this fear: Soviet Second Secretary Boris Davydov approached US Special Assistant to North Vietnam William J. Stearman with the question of what the US would do in response to a Soviet strike on Chinese nuclear facilities.[49] Stearman admitted he could not predict the US response but acknowledged that the US would be concerned with escala-

tion dynamics and stay out of such a conflict. Davydov argued that this would keep China non-nuclearized for decades and discredit Maoism, thus advancing US interests. This logic proved little comfort for US officials, who went on alert for any corroborating indicators of a Soviet attack on China.[50] US officials were keenly aware that the Soviets had as many as 30 divisions along the Chinese border and had established tactical nuclear weapon capabilities.[51]

With this potentially nuclear escalation looming, the US no longer operated with the same double-crossing that characterized its diplomatic engagements prior to August 1969. Secretary of State Rogers indicated to President Nixon that while the Soviets may not actually pursue this strike option, the possibility could not be ruled out.[52] It was at this point the administration opted for the option it had been holding in reserve: engaging China.

US initial engagement with China (March - August 1969)

At the start of the Sino-Soviet border clashes in March 1969, the US initially viewed China as categorically anti-American and, for as long as Mao held leadership, impossible to deal with.[53] This view evolved as US officials saw their chance to play the Soviet Union and China against one another. Henry Kissinger put forward that maintaining a balance of power was key, and aligning with the weaker power, China, would be optimal. In order to bring this about, it would behoove the US to soften trade restrictions on China to prevent it from reestablishing friendly relations with the USSR.[54] Despite US officials acknowledging that this could lead to recognizing Communist China,[55] President Nixon accepted this plan and eased trade restrictions on China in June 1969.[56] A National Security Study Memorandum from July similarly touted that maintaining a split between China and the Soviet Union would keep them from cooperating against the US.[57]

By August 1969, however, it became clear that US officials believed that playing both sides was no longer viable in deterring Soviet escalation.[58] The US consequently began to investigate how it could bring China into the fold as a permanent ally. Concerns that a non-isolationist China could pose a threat were quashed as an orthodoxy formed supposing that China would moderate.[59] The question quickly changed from "should the US engage China" to "how should the US engage China."

The US Pivots to China (August - December 1969)

On August 2, President Nixon expressed to Romanian President Ceausescu that he wished to strengthen relations with China. Nixon noted the inevitability of China's rise and suggested that a diplomatically isolated China would be more worrisome: "It is wrong for the Soviet Union to arrange a cabal in Asia against China … If fenced off by others, [China] makes for a terribly explosive force that may destroy the peace." Nixon went on to ask whether the USSR-China split would lead to war but emphasized the US would "will stay out of" the quarrel altogether.[60] The question arises as to why Nixon would approach leaders of a Soviet satellite to indicate his willingness to cooperate with China. It seems that unlike General Secretary Brezhnev, Romanian leaders were more wary of the fallout that could arise from a war with China. Romanian Prime Minister Ion Maurer admitted as much during the meeting with Nixon: "The most serious danger to the world is USSR-China conflict."[61] Consequently, both Romanian and American leaders acknowledged that US engagement with China was necessary for a lasting peace.

The contents of this discussion quickly circulated internationally. Henry Kissinger was confronted by representatives of the Republic of China and lied that Nixon's meeting had not discussed the prospect of engaging the People's Republic of China in talks, and US policy towards China would not change.[62] In reality, several US officials were already focusing on how to prevent a nuclear exchange along the Sino-Soviet border, and these proposals represented substantial departures from then-current US policy. In a top-secret letter to Henry

Kissinger, one State Department official advocated offering China three olive branches: 1) lifting further trade restrictions, 2) ending all intelligence collection on Communist forces in China, and 3) advocating for China at the UN in the event of a Soviet attack.[63] Nonetheless, the plan called for the US to remain neutral militarily if such an attack were to take place.

US fears were only increased following Davydov's inquiry on the US response to a Soviet strike on Chinese nuclear facilities. This reflected a sustained and deliberate escalation on the part of Soviet officials who considered the Zhenbao Islands attack in March as "the last straw" before China was taught a lesson.[64] The fact that this was done in the face of sustained nuclear threats towards China was not lost on anyone. In the days following this exchange, the US began to signal through a second backchannel that it was willing to cooperate with China. During a conversation with Pakistani President Agha Muhammad Yahya, President Nixon requested President Yahya to pass along US desires for cooperation to Chinese Premier Chou En-lai.[65] Simultaneously, Washington began reaching out to the Chinese Embassy in Warsaw.[66] Nevertheless, despite multiple signals to China that it was willing to reconcile, the US privately planned to continue its policy of military nonintervention if the USSR was to blockade China.[67]

When Moscow and Peking finally entered peace talks in late September, US officials did not assume the crisis had dissipated. To the contrary, US officials assessed that the tentative peace was simply a way for each side to halt the momentum of the crisis. For the Soviets, it was also a game of political theater in which they could use the breakdown of talks as a justification to their allies for resuming war.[68] On September 15, Chinese embassy personnel leaked that the PRC had taken precautions for a nuclear attack on its facilities, indicating that nuclear war was still on the table. Additionally, the Chinese ambassador in Paris said that the USSR was "threatening China with nuclear war" after sending the Deputy Commander of the Soviet Strategic Missile Forces to the Chinese border.[69] Even by late October, the US still assessed that the USSR might use military force against China.[70] As a result, Washington continued its outreach efforts to China. In October, the US offered to move two destroyers out of the Formosa Straits as a show of goodwill towards the Chinese.[71] In the same vein, correspondence among US officials began to challenge the claims of National Security Study Memorandum 63, which suggested perpetuating the Sino-Soviet split was advantageous to the US.[72] The pro-China view quickly manifested itself into established policy. By December, US efforts finally paid off: the Chinese finally reciprocated by releasing American prisoners.[73] US policy had fully pivoted towards establishing friendly relations with China, and for the long term. By 1971, Henry Kissinger visited Beijing, and in 1972 Richard Nixon did the same.[74]

Evaluation

The US policy vis a vis the Sino-Soviet split was dynamic, and revolved around three goals: 1) nonentanglement, the desire to keep the US outside the conflict; 2) deescalation, the desire to keep a general war from breaking out and to prevent such a war from going nuclear; and 3) manipulation, the desire to pit the USSR and the Chinese against each other. The US was primarily concerned with staying out of the conflict but had evolving strategies that changed from manipulating to deescalating the crisis. While from March to August, the US aimed to perpetuate the Sino-Soviet divide to prevent a united anti-American front, this changed when the stakes became nuclear in August 1969. At this point, the US pivoted to supporting China in order to stave off the threat of nuclear escalation. This is not to say the US goal of deescalation was out of benevolence. Correspondence from Henry Kissinger suggests this was motivated by a fear for Americans in Vietnam: "[I]n the event of Sino-Soviet hostilities... the President would immediately ask what to do about Vietnam."[75] Furthermore, there could also be the inevitable spillover effects of a Sino-Soviet nuclear war. As Soviet media ominously reported, such a war would not leave "a single

continent" unaffected.[76] As a result, the goals of nonentanglement and deescalation were closely linked, and the counterfactual remains as to whether the US would have supported China if it did not have troops in Vietnam. What should also not be overlooked is the Nixon administration's prognosis for China, which extended beyond the immediate concerns of the crisis. The nuclear threat explains the immediate impetus for American olive branches but does not explain why the US opted to sustain this in the long-term. President Nixon's conversation with Ceausescu explains this point well: "In 25 years, China will have a billion people... One billion Chinese fenced in is a bomb about to explode."[77] China would only grow in importance, and rather than have it act contrary to American interests, the US capitalized on the temporary crisis to consolidate an advantageous partnership into the future. In doing so, it accomplished Nixon's long-term goal to "pull China back into the family of nations."[78]

The one constant throughout the US mediation in the conflict was the desire to keep the US out of the conflict. Both while manipulating the Soviets and while attempting to reestablish ties with the Chinese, US leaders privately reinforced the idea that US involvement was out of the question. In this, there was rare unanimity: From low-level State Department officials to senior-level staff at the Special Actions Group meetings, virtually all members of the Nixon administration agreed that diplomacy, trade, and intelligence were the only cards the US should be willing to play to entice China. Consequently, the only real decision for US decisionmakers was how to best manipulate the situation while keeping out of a quagmire. The US diplomatic stance shifted from an original attitude of manipulation and duplicity, to one of deescalation through engagement with China.

SECTION V: CONCLUSION

The Sino-Soviet conflict remains understudied, especially the 1969 Border War. Examining US diplomatic engagement during this period allows valuable insight into the role of third-party mediation in crises. Based on the US manipulation of the Soviets and Chinese until August 1969, we can conclude that the US did try to steer the conflict to maximize relative gains, as realist theory predicts. However, contrary to realist expectations, the US then pivoted towards deescalation and reestablishing relations with China. And the documentary evidence strongly suggests that this was the result of two factors: 1) the credible nuclear threats from the Soviet side, and 2) the American expectations of China's future rise.

Soviet officials and Soviet state media repeatedly signaled that they were willing to use nuclear weapons in a counterforce strike on China. One note that should not be overlooked is that, as was discussed in section III, the US initially opposed Chinese nuclear proliferation in the early 1960's. Consequently, this policy reversal is not only a departure from US strategy in early 1969, but a departure from longstanding US policy going back nearly a decade. This US policy reversal indicates that a high likelihood of nuclear conflict can force third parties to abandon their set preferences and instead act to deescalate conflicts.

The US shift towards China starting in June and solidified in August further indicates that great powers are more likely to balance against great power adversaries than to bandwagon with them. As discussed in section IV, the key reason for this was Nixon's feeling that a country of one billion "fenced in" in Asia was a "bomb about to explode." The USSR was superior in both conventional and nuclear terms, and the US decision to side with China came from long-term considerations of how to best weaken the Soviet position. This is best evidenced by Henry Kissinger's pressure on Nixon to curry favor with China economically to permanently bring about a Sino-American partnership at the expense of the Soviet Union.

This analysis of the US diplomatic role in 1969 does offer useful insight into current scholarly disputes, but there remain questions to be answered in future studies. First, future studies

could look at scenarios that remedy the limitations of this study. Since the United States had a vested interest in undermining the Soviet Union, its role as a third-party mediator worked towards this end. Additionally, the US had regional concerns due to its presence in Vietnam and had fears of the spillover effects of a nuclear confrontation. Further research could investigate whether unaffected parties that are truly neutral intervene similarly when nuclear conflict becomes a credible threat. In addition, there remains the question of the generalizability of the results of this analysis. Further studies could look at other nuclear close-calls to determine if third-party mediation is a decisive factor in the resolution of disputes. Finally, just as the US eventually aligned with China, there remains the question of whether third-parties will favor rising powers in order to curry favor from that power down the line. Answering these questions will help further elucidate the relationship between third-party mediation and the resolution of conflict.

NOTES

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2. The body of documents collected was checked against the National Security Archive to ensure full coverage of all relevant documents. I cite additional intelligence documents that are not included as part of the National Security Archive data set. I do exclude documents that fall outside the intended scope of this paper, however.

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5. Snyder, Glenn H.; Diesing, Paul. *Conflict Among Nations: Bargaining, Decision Making, and System Structure in International Crises*. Princeton University Press. 1977. Pp. 184

6. This discussion is expanded on in section IV.

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US-Taiwan-China Relations

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ABSTRACT: Historically, the United States has pursued a policy of "strategic ambiguity" regarding the issue of Taiwan, mostly pursuant to the dictates of the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act (TRA). This vague status quo has enabled the US to maintain a delicate balance amid the long-standing enmity that has endured between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC) since the mid-20th century. However, the Trump administration has recently altered course and adopted more overt displays of support for Taiwan, which threatens to upend the precarious triangular relationship underpinning cross-Strait relations for decades. This policy paper analyzes current US policy in the region and evaluates Taiwan's intentions and China's reactions. This paper then offers three options for US policy: (1) increase support for Taiwan with a free trade agreement, (2) reduce arms sales to Taiwan in an attempt to coexist with China, or (3) retain the status quo of "strategic ambiguity." The third option remains the best pathway forward, as it bears a high likelihood of success and poses the lowest risk to the US.

BACKGROUND: US-TAIWAN POLICY

Since the Carter administration's passage of the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) in 1979, the United States has maintained unofficial relations with Taiwan. On the question of legal sovereignty, the US officially recognizes the People's Republic of China as the sole legitimate and lawful government of China. It has also acknowledged the "One-China policy," the notion that there is but one China, and Taiwan is a part of China.[1] Not only does the TRA continue to provide a legal foundation for the US-Taiwan relationship, it also stipulates other security commitments—most notably, American arms sales to Taiwan, a practice that Beijing has long tried to curb (albeit without much success). Although President Reagan promised in the August 1982 US-China joint communique to "gradually reduce" these sales, the Obama administration reported $14 billion in foreign military sales to Taiwan between 2009 and 2017. As then-Assistant Secretary Kurt Campbell boasted, this represented "the largest amount [of arms sales] in any comparable period" since the signing of the TRA.[2] Nevertheless, much to the ire and dismay of officials in Beijing, American arms sales to Taiwan continue to increase. Moreover, while the TRA does not compel the US to defend Taiwan in case of an attack from China, it does not remove the possibility that it may do so—a policy that has become known as "strategic ambiguity."[3]

While no "official" diplomatic relations exist between the US and Taiwan, there are a myriad of commitments that seek to define and underscore the relationship. Two decades after President Bill Clinton's "Three No's" in 1998,[4] America maintains that it does not support Taiwan independence—however, it also does not oppose it. Yet, US officials also state, to this day, that the United States does not believe Taiwan should be a member of any organization for which statehood is a prerequisite.[5]

However, US-Taiwan policy has undergone significant alterations since the outset of President Donald J. Trump's administration, which has harbored an increasingly hostile attitude towards the PRC. Perhaps uncoincidentally, the President has taken unprecedented and verifiable steps to bolster America's ties with Taiwan. On December 2, 2016, then-President-elect Trump broke decades of US cross-strait diplomatic precedent and conversed via telephone with President Tsai Ing-wen, marking the first time since 1979 that a US president spoke di-

rectly to the president of the ROC.[6] While some pundits deemed the move a blunder by an inexperienced leader, it turned out not to be an isolated incident. Instead, it marked the start of an ongoing movement that seeks to erode the unofficial nature of relations with Taiwan and take steps toward formalization. The 2018 National Defense Authorization Act included language that offered support for naval port calls to Taiwan. A 2019 report by the US Department of Defense labeled Taiwan as a country.[7] Separately, the Taiwan Travel Act encouraged visits between US and Taiwan officials.[8] Later, in March of 2020, Trump signed the Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative Act (TAIPEI) into law, after the bill unanimously passed in both the House and Senate in the fall of 2019. The new legislation seeks to bolster and augment the relationship between the US and Taiwan and advocate for Taiwan's increased participation within international organizations. Perhaps more significantly, the Act calls for the US to contemplate "altering" relations with countries that "take serious or significant actions to undermine the security or prosperity of Taiwan."[9]

ANALYSIS

Current US policy toward Taiwan, as outlined above, has remained inconsistent and somewhat contradictory. Indeed, American strategy toward the island nation of 23 million has long faced pressure to change from elected officials across the political spectrums in Washington, Taipei, and Beijing. Throughout modern history, the nature of the relationships within the strategic triangle between the US, PRC, and ROC has persisted in unremitting flux, and the Trump administration's posture to date remains no exception. This paper analyzes the present situation through two lenses: Taiwan's intentions, as seen through its landslide reelection of President Tsai Ing-wen in 2020, and China's hostile responses to Tsai's assertive stances.

A. Taiwan's Intentions

Taiwan's presidential election on January 11, 2020, was seen by many to be a referendum on the nation's identity, with significant implications for both China and the US. Not only did incumbent Tsai Ing-wen receive the most votes that have ever been cast for a candidate in a Taiwanese election (she won 57.1% of the vote), she also did so by overcoming a Chinese election meddling campaign that included bribing media outlets to promote her opponent, Han Kuo-yu of the Kuomintang (KMT), and spreading misinformation on social media.[10] Indeed, this overwhelming show of support for Tsai Ing-wen by Taiwanese voters at the polls also reflected the murmurings of a backlash against the Communist Party of China (CCP) and its insistence on a policy of "one country, two systems."

Throughout her presidential tenure, President Tsai Ing-wen has refused to concede that Taiwan and mainland China jointly comprise "one China." Notably, she has yet to repudiate the claim either—her ambiguity on the issue of Taiwanese independence aligns with the long-standing notion of "strategic ambiguity" that has long defined US-Taiwan policy. Moreover, the PRC maintains that the "political foundation" for cross-strait relations lies in strict adherence to the "1992 Consensus" and staunch opposition to "Taiwan independence." In contrast to Tsai's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), the KMT has long affirmed the 1992 Consensus, a series of meetings held in November 1992 between organizations representing the PRC and Taiwan, both of which reportedly agreed to verbally confirm that "both sides of the Taiwan Strait adhere to the one-China principle," with the recognition that each side had "its own interpretation" of what that meant. However, Tsai's rhetoric on the issue differs in small, albeit significant ways. First, she has neither endorsed nor refuted the 1992 Consensus to date, instead calling for the sustenance of "both Taiwan's democracy and the status quo of peace across the Taiwan Strait."[11] Herein lies the underlying disagreement: While the PRC believes the 1992 Consensus to be the status quo, President Tsai defines the status quo as "peace." Tsai maintains that Taiwan's government has long refrained from overt provocations against Beijing and merely seeks to uphold democratic

and human rights protections for its citizenry. China, on the other hand, views Taiwan as a renegade province that must be unified by force if necessary. In response to the various coercive forms of pressure that China has exacted upon Taiwan (which will be discussed in further detail later), Tsai has publicly stated that "Taiwan will never surrender to such intimidation."[12]

However, Taiwan remains far from declaring outright independence from mainland China. Indeed, polls of self-described identity among Taiwan natives provide some insight into Taiwan's future intentions. While the percentage of Taiwan's population that identifies itself as "Taiwanese" has doubled to approximately 40% over the past decade, more individuals—including the vast majority of young people—dub themselves as "both Taiwanese and Chinese nationals."[13] In an August 2012 survey, an overwhelming 84% of those surveyed preferred to maintain the status quo; only 7% of respondents called for independence.[14]

B. China's Response

While PRC policymakers do not believe Tsai will unequivocally declare Taiwan independent of mainland China, they allege that she has pursued a policy of "soft independence" by deemphasizing Taiwan's Chinese heritage and identity, a process the PRC dubs "de-Sinicization."[15] In response, the PRC has relentlessly pursued a multivariate pressure campaign to coerce President Tsai into acceding to the one-China principle.

The PRC's persistent fixation with retaking the ROC is nothing new. In 2005, Beijing enacted the Anti-Secession Law, a formal threat to utilize force to unify Taiwan with mainland China.[16] Over a decade later, Chinese sentiment toward Taiwan has mainly remained the same. What has slightly changed is the salience of and rhetoric surrounding this issue, which has struck a much more nationalistic chord. On October 8, 2017, President Xi Jinping stood before the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party in Beijing's vaunted Great Hall of the People and declared, "We will never allow anyone, any organization, or any political party, at any time or in any form, to separate any part of Chinese territory from China."[17] This not-so-subtle jab at Tsai's Taiwan was met with raucous applause.

However, China has not yet launched a full-scale invasion of the island it views to be a renegade province. Nevertheless, there have been increased deployments of PRC military aircraft and warships, occasionally transgressing into Taiwan's Air Defense Identification Zone. Furthermore, the PRC has exerted significant pressure on Tsai's government by establishing diplomatic relations with countries including Panama and Sao Tome and Principe that previously recognized Taiwan diplomatically. At present, 18 nations, including the Vatican City, officially recognize and maintain full relations with Taiwan. Furthermore, China has also blocked Taiwan from partaking in international meetings like those held by the World Health Organization and reduced the number of Chinese tourists visiting Taiwan.[18] Beijing has also insisted that Taiwanese individuals suspected of fraud in foreign countries be repatriated to the PRC, rather than Taiwan; Cambodia, Indonesia, Kenya, and Vietnam have complied with these requests thus far. Ultimately, though, it remains to be seen just how far China is willing to go to attain its desired results. At least for now, it appears that Beijing's ability to achieve its stated goal of peaceful reunification and extract concessions from President Tsai is contingent upon its ability to persuade Taiwan's population to consent.[19]

OPTIONS

1. Increase Support for Taiwan with a Free Trade Agreement

The first option for this cross-strait triangular relationship argues for a strengthened partnership between Taiwan and America against the PRC, which would manifest in the negotiation of a bilateral free trade agreement. Robust ties between the US and Taiwan persisted from the founding of the PRC in 1949 until China's rapprochement with the US in 1972 and subsequent engagement with other countries. The

Trump administration has demonstrated an inclination toward this pathway, with the passage of a series of symbolic albeit significant congressional bills. Indeed, an ideological argument is made—often from conservative US policymakers—for America to strengthen its alliance with Taiwan, which has prospered economically and remains a shining example of successful democratic governance. At present, Taiwan is America's tenth largest merchandise trading partner and its second largest recipient of foreign military sales.[20] From an ideological standpoint, many American policymakers cannot bear to abandon "democratic Taiwan" for "communist China." Now, the US has already taken significant steps to explicitly voice support for Taiwan and bolster its international standing. It helped initiate Taiwan's foray as an "observer" at the World Health Assembly, the decision-making body of the World Health Organization. In the same vein, America has actively pushed for Taiwan's "unofficial" participation in other specialized agencies within the UN. In opposition to China, the US has voiced disapproval toward China's myriad attempts to restrict its involvement with international organizations and to refer to it as "Taiwan, Province of China" in internal communications. Instead, the US has long preferred the moniker "Chinese Taipei."[21]

However, this "increased support" option calls for more explicit and unequivocal support for Taiwan, specifically through the negotiation of a comprehensive US-Taiwan free trade agreement (FTA). President Tsai has expressed fervent interest in this agreement, which would complement the robust trade, investment, and economic history shared between both countries. This trade agreement would encourage Taiwan, which already has one of the world's freest economies, to liberalize further. Total trade between both countries last year amounted to over $56 billion.[22] Annually, Taiwan produces more than $2 billion in intellectual property revenue for US exporters.[23] The American Chamber of Commerce in Taipei has also supported such a proposal. However, experts argue that the economic gains would be modest at best, mostly in the arena of intellectual property protection. After all, extensive trade already flows between both countries, and the tariffs that exist are relatively low. The most significant benefit would be a symbolic one. A bilateral trade agreement with the United States would not only solidify but also elevate Taiwan's international stature, alongside further integrating it into the global economy. This formal document would aid its future quest for international recognition from other countries and help sustain Taiwan's status as a profitable, permanent economic power, rendering Beijing's ardent efforts to exclude Taiwan from international organizations far more difficult. For the US, such an agreement would expand markets for American exports, especially food, which could significantly aid the farmers who suffered from Trump's trade war with China.

The most conspicuous drawback of this option, of course, is that it would needlessly provoke and inflame US-China tensions, which already remain high after both the onset of a trade war and the COVID-19 pandemic. Thrusting Taiwan into the middle of these tensions, as a sort of political pawn, is detrimental to both US and Taiwanese interests in the region. Indeed, such a provocation could severely endanger the collective security of both countries. To assert that Taiwan is dependent on China remains an understatement: The PRC is the island's largest trading partner, accounting for almost 30% of the island's total trade.[24] While the island has continually sought to reduce its economic dependence on the mainland by signing free-trade pacts with other countries (in 2013, Taiwan negotiated a deal with New Zealand, its first with a developed economy), this strategy is likely not sustainable, given China's tremendous influence within the international system.

An FTA with the United States runs counter to China's efforts to constrict Taiwan's international space and presence by seeking to increase the island's economic dependency on the mainland. Thus, Chinese policymakers would likely view this trade agreement as a serious threat and respond with corresponding animosity. It goes without saying, moreover, that the US has

a vested interest in seeking to avoid the ire of Beijing, as President Trump hopes to negotiate a second trade deal. Beyond that, the US-China trade relationship is crucial to the well-being of millions of American workers. In 2015, China accounted for 7.3% of all American exports, purchasing $165 billion in goods and services. By 2030, experts project that US exports to China will rise to more than $520 billion.[25] Put simply, a healthy economic relationship with China, the world's second-largest economy, is too valuable to be jeopardized by a US-Taiwan FTA that promises only mild economic advantages.

2. Coexist with China and Reduce Arms Sales to Taiwan

The second option calls for a concerted American effort to coexist with China and reduce, perhaps even discontinue entirely, its annual arms sales to Taiwan. This option ultimately results in reduced American support for the island. Admiral Bill Owens, the former Vice Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, penned a *Financial Times* op-ed in 2009, wherein he argued that the continuation of arms sales to Taiwan is "an act that is not in our best interest," adding that he believed the TRA to be antiquated legislation.[26] China has often vehemently protested against these arms sales, decrying them to be a violation of the August 1982 US-China joint communique, a Reagan administration document stipulating that the US would gradually "reduce its sale of arms to Taiwan, leading, over a long period of time, to a final resolution."[27] As discussed earlier, it is true that the US has neither decreased nor halted the sale of arms to the island. And to be clear, recent proposals advocating a significant adjustment in US policy toward Taiwan all share an important commonality: None advocate the diplomatic "abandonment" of Taiwan, such as shuttering the American Institute in Taiwan, America's unofficial embassy in Taipei, or reducing the scope of Taiwan's ambassadorial presence in America. Rather, they focus primarily on America's security ties to Taiwan.

Some advocates of reduced arms sales to Taiwan worry that the island could become a potential "flashpoint" that results in armed conflict between the US and China. Beyond the benefits gained by decreasing the chances of conflict with the world's largest standing army and a rising hegemon, a US reduction in support for Taiwan would significantly pave the way for ameliorated Sino-American relations. This modern rapprochement could not come at a more opportune time, especially with the recent outbreak of the novel coronavirus, which is an unprecedented public health crisis that only international cooperation efforts, ideally led by superpowers like the US and China, can resolve.

COVID-19 represents one arena within which both countries can adopt leadership roles and work together. While the two countries remain at odds, they share many similar security concerns. There is absolutely room to set aside ideological differences and collaborate on issues like climate change, nuclear nonproliferation, the Korean Peninsula, international finance, and more. Moreover, American policymakers also recognize that the US and China are increasingly interconnected, with American prosperity largely reliant upon continued economic development in the PRC. The world's two largest economies are also each other's biggest trading partners, with nearly $700 billion in goods and services exchanged between the two nations.[28] However, Taiwan is not the only obstacle to improved US-China relations. Cooperation between the US and China does not remain a high priority of the leadership of either country, who prefer demonizing the other side to drum up domestic political support. As a result, an American attempt to coexist with China at the expense of Taiwan may do little, if anything, to improve Sino-American relations. While there exist some opportunities for international cooperation, many academics believe that Washington and Beijing remain entwined in a great power competition.[29] Chinese leaders, none more so than President Xi himself, continue to brazenly make explicit their revisionist intentions, as seen through the Belt and Road Initiative and China's militaristic expansion in the widely contested South China Sea, among other things. This national desire

to restore the country to a position of global dominance is rooted in an ideology that starkly conflicts with American interests, one that seeks to promote the preservation of territorial sovereignty and subtly undermine the international human rights regime.[30] Put simply, there are important questions to be asked (and answered) about whether the long-term interests of the United States and China can truly coexist.

Furthermore, it is important to note that reduced support for Taiwan, ultimately, may be politically improbable. Since the end of the Second World War, the US long served as a beacon of liberalism and freedom, aiming to unabashedly export its democratic ideology around the world. Reducing arms sales to Taiwan, while not remotely close to constituting an abandonment of the island, would likely be seen by political constituencies as a concession—a sign of American weakness. Thus, this option cannot be the best path forward for the US because, given the realities of domestic politics, it would likely not succeed. This second option wholly undermines the grand strategy of democracy promotion that has steered the US into a position of hegemony and remains a core American interest.

3. Retain the Status Quo of "Strategic Ambiguity"

This third option primarily adheres to the precedent established by the policy of "strategic ambiguity" outlined in the Taiwan Relations Act. The landmark legislation dubs the use of force and coercion against Taiwan to be "of grave concern to the United States," although the US expressly promises only "to provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character."[31] This vague and often incongruous policy, while frustrating, remains the best pathway forward for US-Taiwan-China relations. Indeed, many US leaders have abided by this policy option and attempted to steer clear of overt cross-straits conflict. Many policymakers and analysts have publicly stated that Taiwan could possess *de facto* self-determination if it does not try to be recognized with *de jure* sovereignty. As US Representative James Leach of Iowa put it before a hearing of the House International Relations Committee on the 25th anniversary of the TRA, there is greater security for Taiwan in "political ambiguity."[32]

Since the enactment of the TRA in 1979, Washington has remained strongly committed to Taiwan's security, while eschewing an absolute pledge to defend it during wartime. The US has consistently refused to forthrightly state that America will protect the island against any aggressive or militaristic moves by China. To that end, the US has maintained a policy of "dual-deterrence," utilizing an amalgamation of warnings and reassurances to both China and Taiwan, an effort to prevent either from unilaterally altering the status quo.[33] This has allowed the US to act as a sort of arbiter in the region while continuing to strive for a peaceful resolution of this dispute.

The most salient criticism of this option rests on the notion that the TRA is outdated. At the time of its passage, the United States enjoyed overwhelming military superiority over a weak China. However, times have changed. For the majority of its existence, "strategic ambiguity" served as a deterrent given US military dominance. However, China's growing military power calls into question the credibility of this policy's effectiveness. The rapid modernization and technological advancement of the PLA, under supervision from the CCP leadership, exhibit a Chinese desire to mitigate the threats incurred by a potential American intervention.

While these concerns about rising Chinese military strength are certainly valid, the leadership in mainland China would likely be unwilling to launch a full-scale invasion of Taiwan. While China certainly enjoys military superiority in its near abroad with facilities spanning across the South China Sea, the US enjoys robust military alliances with many countries in East Asia—including Japan and South Korea, where it has military bases—alongside port visitation agreements with other nations throughout Southeast Asia. In short, the risk inherent to such an act of brazen hostility is too great for the CCP to bear, a reality that will ensure the TRA remains enough to guarantee the relative

peace of the status quo in cross-strait relations.

Ultimately, despite the well-defined shortcomings of "strategic ambiguity," this option proves to be the best for American interests. During the mid-20th century, the US enjoyed a robust partnership with Taiwan, but only because China was deemed inimical to American policymaking. This Cold War-era foreign policy approach cannot be applied to a modern context, wherein America's ties with both Beijing and Taipei are now closer than ever before. The US shares military intelligence with Taiwan and cooperates with China. The US enjoys a healthy trading relationship with Taiwan and exchanges even more goods and services with China.[34] As a result, the US cannot afford to give overwhelming preference to one side or the other, lest it comes at the expense of America's economy and security. The present status quo, uneasy as it may seem, is and likely will continue to be palatable to US regional interests for some time to come.

RECOMMENDATION

The third option, aiming to maintain the status quo of "strategic ambiguity" as outlined in the Taiwan Relations Act, represents the best pathway forward for American interests. Unfortunately, this option appears unlikely to continue, at least for the extent of President Trump's tenure in the Oval Office. Notably, the president is not alone in his penchant for hostility toward China and progressively more official support for Taiwan. Not only did the TAIPEI Act receive overwhelming bipartisan support, it passed both houses of Congress unanimously, quite a rare occurrence for any piece of legislation in Washington amidst the partisan polarization of today's modern politicking. The overwhelming passage of that bill provides unique insight into the future of US-Taiwan relations. With a storied history of cooperation between both the US and Taiwan, it remains likely that Washington will continue to seize opportunities to meaningfully support Taipei, regardless of the fervent protests that emerge from Zhongnanhai. However, these demonstrable displays of support for Taiwan which elicit ire from CPP leadership serve only to harm US interests in the long run. Instead, it is incumbent upon the US to continue to seek a balancing role between Taipei and Beijing—remaining ambiguous on contentious issues when necessary—and act as an arbiter of stability and peace within the Taiwan Strait. Presently, relations between the US and China stand at a modern-day nadir. By intentionally eschewing conflict with either side, this policy option proves most beneficial to US interests.

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Political Economy & Business

One Country, Two Perspectives? Delineating China-related Interests in Silicon Valley and Washington, D.C

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ABSTRACT: Washington, D.C. serves as the hub for formalized US-China bilateral relations, yet its "China policy" is not deployed in a vacuum. Policymakers are beholden to powerful domestic interests and must account for non-governmental interactions between Americans and Chinese. An alternate fulcrum point of US-China relations is Silicon Valley, an agglomeration of individuals and institutions that predominantly represent private commercial and technological aims. Observers oversimplify the seemingly-contradictory priorities of the two locales, juxtaposing Washington's prioritization of national security with Silicon Valley's pursuit of profit and technological advancement. Is it necessarily true that Washington and Silicon Valley are not "on the same page" regarding the aspects of relations with China they pay greatest attention to? This paper questions common suppositions, examining a unique dataset of tweets from Washington and Silicon Valley to determine the relative interests each locale embodies within online discourse. It corroborates previous conceptions of Washington-Silicon Valley interests to an extent. Yet, there is greater nuance in Washington-Silicon Valley interests than is often acknowledged, indicating potential improvements in US domestic alignment regardless of whether aims towards China be cooperative or competitive.

"When you have a conversation where one party sees China as an emerging national security challenge, and the other sees it as an emerging business opportunity, that's just a fundamental clash of cultures and expectations that is difficult to reconcile, but I also think it's not impossible."[1]
- Christian Brose, Senior Fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, on misunderstanding between Silicon Valley and Washington.

I. INTRODUCTION

Diplomatic ties between Washington and Beijing are the primary nexus of the US-China relationship, granting Washington's policy apparatus the majority of influence over America's strategy towards China. Yet, Washington is not the only major fulcrum point of US-China relations. This paper presupposes that Silicon Valley, America's commercial technology hub, has its own indispensable role to play in the bilateral relationship. Not only have economic strength and innovation capability usurped "hard" military capability as the key determinant of great power competition in the eyes of some, but commercial ties with China have also been imbued with security concerns.

Aspects of Silicon Valley's commercial relationship with China exist outside the context of Washington's diplomatic ties, yet the two are greatly intertwined. Each plays a part in a greater conception of US-China rapport; coordination is necessary to simultaneously advance both Silicon Valley and Washington interests. Not only do the interests of Silicon Valley feed into US domestic politics as they relate to China, but the companies, universities, and research institutions based in Silicon Valley also have their own agency in perpetrating interactions with China that affect the commensurate whole of "responsible cooperation" efforts.[2]

Accordingly, US strategists must account for the degree to which the oft-contradictory institutional aims of Washington and Silicon Valley are either concurrent, contradictory, or somewhere in between. Much attention is paid to how US policy can be strengthened by coordination with allies externally, yet insufficient focus is placed on how China policy can improve through bolstering cooperation internally.

This paper measures differences in emphases expressed by netizens on Twitter, and asks the question: do the topics of Twitter discussion about China originating from Silicon Valley differ from those emanating from Washington? Can their respective foci really be delineated between business and security interests? Up until now, no systematic studies have generated empirical evidence demonstrating a discrepancy in areas of China "focus" between Washington and Silicon Valley. Using text analysis of a unique dataset of tweets originating from both geographic regions, this paper determines that differences in emphasis of Twitter discussion align with common generalizations about Washington and Silicon Valley interests to an extent, but also that there is far more nuance than would appear obvious. While this project is limited in scope by its descriptive nature and stops short of delving into the US political sphere's polarized sentiment, it aims to preliminarily analyze important sub-national pockets of US opinion towards China.

The Silicon Valley–Washington Disconnect

To preface this paper's exploration of Washington and Silicon Valley's respective interests, it is worth discussing the distinctive yet overlapping institutional and historical identities they inhabit. At the risk of considerable oversimplification, Washington is best identified as a political and governmental entity, whereas Silicon Valley is dominated by a scientific and commercial culture of powerful technology companies, start-ups, and research institutions.

Washington is the seat of the federal government. As such, a large portion of its population takes part in the US government's policy-making process. This includes formal cogs of the executive, judicial, and legislative branches alongside different governmental agencies, but also informal participants such as private think tank researchers and lobbyists without an official role in the process. By pursuing governmental ends, Washington focuses on maintaining American sovereignty, ensuring strong national defense, and guaranteeing long-term American economic competitiveness.

Silicon Valley is known as an innovation hub, home to a large number of start-up companies and established technology businesses. Among the tech companies are numerous tertiary firms, renowned universities with strong academic expertise in technology-related STEM fields,[3] and private research labs situated nearby to take advantage of this critical mass of technological expertise. This amalgamation of sectors creates a unique technological ecosystem associated with business and tech interests, one whose pervasiveness affects even private citizens with no direct ties to any one technology-related institution. Instead of pursuing aims pertaining to national governance, Silicon Valley entities generally prioritize a narrower set of objectives including company profits, advancement of new technologies, and organizational autonomy from government regulations.

Conflict between Silicon Valley and Washington is usually reflected in the news media, capturing specific cases of discord between the two domestic hubs rather than methodically analyzing their root causes. In line with categorization of Washington representing political and governance interests and Silicon Valley representing business and technological interests, news outlets relate a contradiction in incentives for the government and private technology companies. Silicon Valley firms prioritize consumer preferences while Washington pursues national interest, which leads to mistrust between tech firms and policymakers in areas such as encryption and data localization regulation.[4]

Tech-focused publications express alarm over the possibility that Washington's regulatory

decisions limit the profitability and maneuverability of Silicon Valley firms, negatively impacting tech ventures and constraining business opportunities.[5] Yet, Washington does so to pursue its own political interests, minding America's technological capabilities and rebuffing strategic competitors. News outlets geared towards the Washington community contend that the actions of Silicon Valley firms greatly undermine Washington's policy effectiveness, especially via hesitance to accommodate growing espionage concerns.[6]

This paper proceeds with a discussion of methodology: first, the creation of a China-related tweet dataset stretching from 2011 to mid-2018, with the majority dating to 2015 and after; and second, the use of topic modeling and creation of "subtopics" to explore how attention toward China-specific issue areas is paid differently between Washington and Silicon Valley. It is followed by a reporting of findings, focusing on discoveries that are non-obvious and pertinent to the synchronicity of respective relations with China for both Silicon Valley and Washington. A final section draws general conclusions and reframes this paper's suppositions.

II. METHODOLOGY

This section addresses the methodology used to generate topic models of Twitter discussions on China emanating from Silicon Valley and Washington, D.C. It outlines the creation of a unique dataset of "China-related" tweets using Crimson Hexagon and analysis of the final dataset through topic modeling and the analysis of subtopics. **Figure 1** illustrates the tweet extraction, filtration, and classification process.

Tweet Extraction

Because this author could not identify any pre-existing dataset of US-based tweets relating to China, strategic keyword selection is used to create a unique dataset of tweets from Silicon Valley and Washington, D.C. The Twitter API's use of "keywords search" to query its tweet archive is a pivotal methodological nuance that shapes the extraction process and, conceptually, the chosen criteria for a "China-related" tweet. The API will extract all tweets containing specific keywords while omitting other posts. Posts that are best characterized as purely-factual are designated as uninformative, as the vast majority are news-related statements of fact that do not sufficiently represent a contribution to ongoing discourse on China. In the first stage of dataset pairing, irrelevant posts are removed at the keyword level, an imprecise method made necessary by the immense number of tweets with the keyword "China." A supervised machine learning classifier is then deployed as a finer paring tool. Analysis of the final dataset is conducted via topic modeling and "subtopic" generation.

One potential concern with using Twitter posts to draw inferences about the cognition and behavior of individuals is the inevitable "response bias." The Twitter user base is non-random and self-selects both their participation on the site and their decision to post about China. An estimated 22% of Americans use Twitter as of 2019;[7] the usage rate is likely even higher in Washington and Silicon Valley due to greater-than-average technology access and use. However, one could argue that the expression of Twitter users closely reflects the views of US political and economic elites with influence on the US-China relationship, since a sizable proportion of public figures have taken to Twitter in recent years to join online policy discourse. While Twitter user representativeness of the larger population is an important consideration, using Twitter posts to draw inferences is still effective for a preliminary analysis.

Distinguishing "China-related" Tweets

Posts mainly addressing aspects of Chinese culture were included in the broader, initial keyword extraction (see **Figure 1**) but were then discarded. For example, a large number of China-related posts express satisfaction with Chinese cuisine. Numerous posts commenting on "that Chinese guy at work," or recounting everyday situations with varying degrees of xenophobia, are also omitted. However, posts about Chinese political leaders past and present, such as Xi Jinping and Deng Xiaoping, are

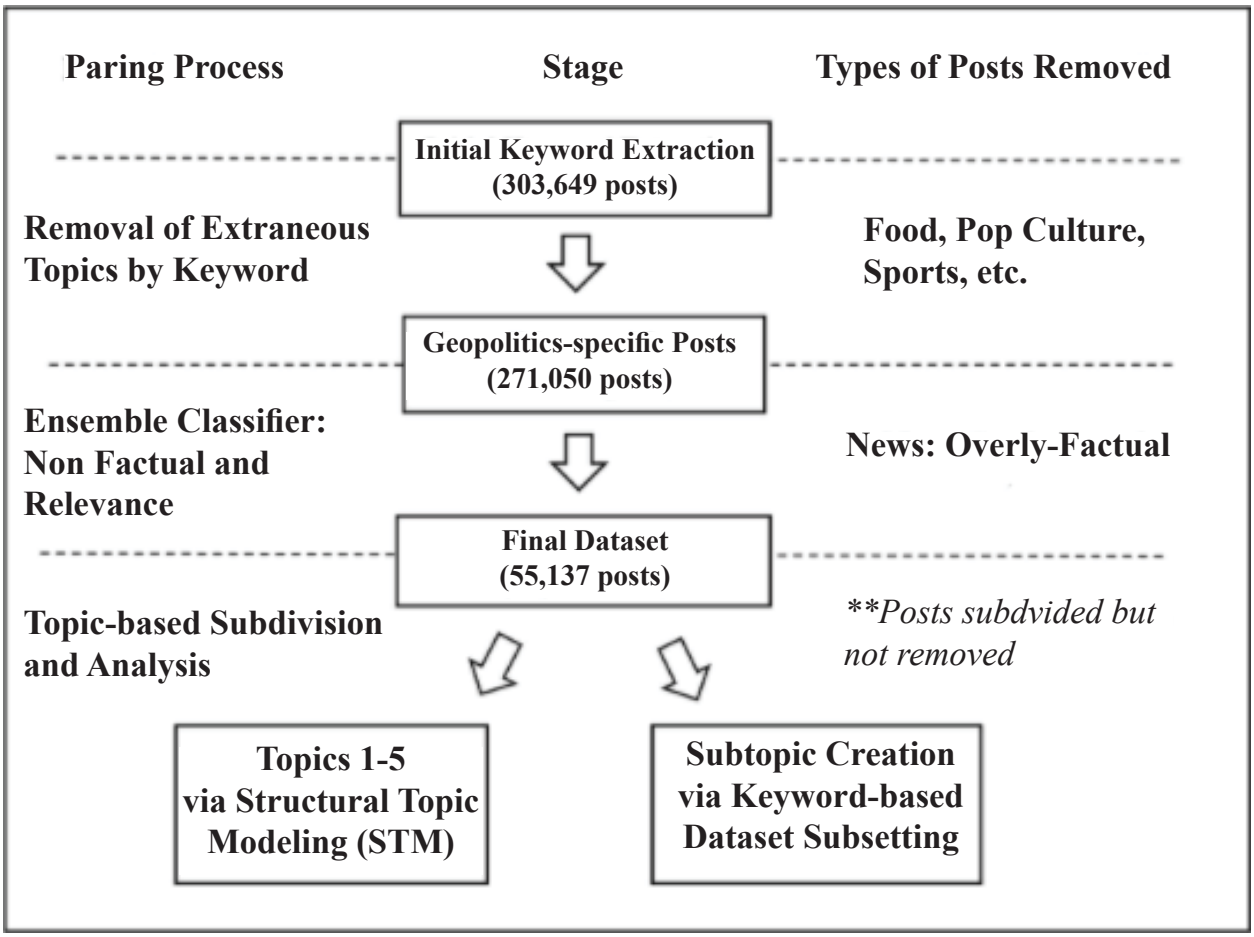

Figure 1. Methodological Progression: Tweet Extraction to Topic Subgroupings

included because they directly reflect on the direction of the Chinese state, party, and government today. As ambiguity in defining "China-related" discourse and an unwieldy number of "candidate" tweets confound the construction of an exhaustive dataset, post collection errs on the side of specificity: it sacrifices a larger dataset size in exchange for a reduction of noise and a sharpening of conceptual clarity.

Classifying Relevance with an Ensemble Model for Supervised Text Classification

Removal by keyword is insufficient to fully omit tweets that don't align with this paper's definition of "China-relevance." In order to weed out posts that are not sufficiently China related, an "ensemble" of classification algorithms is built. Supervised learning classification algorithms require both a labelled "training set," which is used to create predictive models for unlabeled data, and a "validation set," in which model predictions are compared against hand-labelled data in order to evaluate the validity of predictions. After 2,500 posts are hand-coded as "relevant" or "not relevant" to China-related sentiment, the labelled data are used to populate the training set, build classifiers, and test on the validation set.

Ensembling uses several different algorithms in conjunction, yielding greater classification accuracy than possible from the use of just one algorithm.[8] This paper's ensemble model classification is an extension of the data-cleaning process, using supervised machine learning as a more precise instrument. It gives six individual models a classification "vote," rather than using any one model as the deciding classifier. Some previous academic works utilizing ensemble models operate on a "majority vote"

CONCURRING MODELS	COVERAGE	RECALL
N >= 1	1.00	0.79
N >= 2	1.00	0.79
N >= 3	1.00	0.79
N >= 4	0.89	0.77
N >= 5	**0.69**	**0.83**
N >= 6	0.44	0.94

Table 1. Ensemble Model: Recall and Coverage Trade-off
N = The number of models in agreement on classification task

system, classifying in accordance with how the majority of models predicted, or "voted."[9] This paper adopts a slightly more restrictive criterion for a classification of "relevance" due to the complication of the classification task: tweets are only deemed China-relevant if at least five out of six classifiers "vote" in affirmation. Posts that are not sufficiently-certain to be relevant to China, via voting by the ensemble model's individual model components, are discarded. As **Table 1** demonstrates, there is an innate tradeoff between accuracy and dataset size. If only four affirmative votes had been required to trigger a positive classification, more posts would be successfully classified but with lower classification ability. The individual models used are Support Vector Machine (SVM), LogitBoost, Bagging, Random Forest, Decision Tree, and generalized linear model (GLMNET).

It is difficult to settle on an exact measure of accuracy for the tweet relevance ensemble classification. Because this work is concerned with tweets that are classified as "positive" for relevance but not ones deemed "negative," it is most appropriate to use a measure of certainty known as *recall*, defined as "the ability of the model to find all relevant (positive) cases within the dataset."[10] In this experiment, posts were only included when at least five out of six classifiers were in agreement, yielding classifications for 69% of the dataset with a recall of 83%. Thus, the 55,137 tweets analyzed were deemed China-relevant by an ensemble model that correctly identified 83% of all relevant posts when tested on a validation dataset.

Topic Modeling For Topic Breakdown

Topic modeling provides a systematic means for dividing China-related tweets into topic "buckets," or classifications. Unlike supervised classifying methods, topic modeling is unsupervised. "Supervision" refers to the amount of human involvement in the mining process. A computer can effectively sort tweets into topic groups based on their similarity in text composition but lacks the domain knowledge to interpret the commonalities each topic share. Said another way, they can create groups but do not know what each group represents. Luckily, humans excel in the interpretation stage assuming they have relevant domain knowledge.

Topic modeling shares similarities with "clustering," a common text analysis technique in which "documents" such as tweets are grouped together based on some computed similarity in textual contents that is not observed by human users.[11] It attributes each document to a multitude of topics at differing proportions, based on an expectation-maximization (EM) algorithm. However, topic modeling diverges from clustering by providing users some indication as to why documents were

Topic	Percentage of SV Tweets	Percentage of DC Tweets
1. China as a Geostrategic Actor	14%	27%
2. Chinese Political Climate	34%	23%
3. US-China Trade	23%	20%
4. China's Involvement with the North Korean Nuclear Threat	20%	23%
5. Technology and Innovation	10%	8%

Table 2. Topic Prevalence by Locale
SV: Silicon Valley; DC; Washington, D.C.

classified into their respective topics. This information is used to interpret a topic's meaning using domain knowledge. A "Structural Topic Model" (STM) with the parameter of six topics specifically was chosen through trial and error based on which parameters generated a topic set that was most interpretable,[12] though only five topic groups are sufficiently large enough to warrant interpretation.

Interpreting Topic Modeling Results

Topic interpretation is conducted utilizing two topic modeling outputs: "FREX terms" and "indicative posts." FREX terms are the frequently-occurring words most unique to each topic. By noting the words that occur distinctively in one topic grouping and interpreting them in the context of the US-China relationship, it is plain to see what underlying themes distinguish posts from those of other topics. The indicative posts for each topic are considered the "most representative documents for a particular topic."[13] Theoretically, these tweets should be highly suggestive of the topic's unique characterization, as they were assigned the highest proportion of a given topic by the topic modeling algorithm. "FREX" terms and indicative posts for each topic can be obtained via correspondence with the author.

As tweets are extracted using a self-selected keyword criterion, the results are biased to reflect the researcher's imagination of China-related terms. The topic composition is similarly biased, as topics are generated based on the relative "importance" of certain terms within the dataset, often the same terms chosen as selection keywords. Yet, the data are still useful for exploring differences in discourse on China among the posts that are captured. This piece focuses on the comparative frequency of topic occurrence between Washington and Silicon Valley. Differences in topic occurrence are reflected by a concept termed relative interest: a locale's perceived attention towards a specific China-related topic or aspect, quantified by the share of total Twitter expression the topic embodies, in comparison with the share of expression the same topic encompasses in the other locale. If Silicon Valley has a relative interest in a certain topic, that topic dominates conversation in Silicon Valley more than it does in Washington, occupying a greater proportion of all China-related discourse from Silicon Valley's Twitter users.

Flushing out the important concept of relative interest, especially in distinguishing it from a locale's *overall interests*, requires previewing some of this paper's eventual findings. It is extremely likely that all the topics mentioned are scrutinized by residents of both Silicon Valley and Washington to some degree, implying overall interest on part of both locales. However, since human attention and bandwidth is limited by nature, the allocation of

one's focus has ramifications for policy prioritization. A strong analog for relative interest in the field of economics is the concept of *comparative advantage*. While only either Silicon Valley or Washington can have greater relative interest in a specific topic assuming that their attentions are not allocated identically, both or neither can hold an overall interest.

Consider Silicon Valley's relative interest in technological matters and relative disinterest in general human rights infringement pertaining to China. It would be misleading to characterize Twitter users in Washington as disinterested in technology's impact on the US-China relationship, as analysis shows that many individuals living and working in Washington are extremely vocal about technology and its uses. Yet, it is also the case that Silicon Valley shows greater relative interest in technology within this paper's tweet dataset. The overall interest in technology appears to be high in both locales, yet Silicon Valley appears relatively interested, making Washington necessarily *relatively disinterested*. This relational insight would hold even if both areas had little overall interest in technology. The opposite case is also true for human rights in China, for which Silicon Valley holds a relative disinterest in conjunction with Washington's relative interest. This is to say nothing about overall interest, which lays outside the scope of this analysis. It would be erroneous to draw the conclusion that Silicon Valley netizens have demonstrated a lack of regard for Chinese human rights concerns. Put cautiously, attention is simply focused elsewhere, making human rights less salient a concern (and thus, a relative disinterest) in Silicon Valley compared to in Washington.

Subtopic Analysis

In order to deepen understanding of differences in Silicon Valley and Washington areas of focus on China, analysis grounded solely at the "topic"-level is too vague; one needs to consider smaller post groupings of greater topic specificity. To this end, this author generates "subtopics" through strategic keyword search within the final dataset, creating manual subsets. A negative subtopic *difference value* indicates that a subtopic is a Washington relative interest, denoting discourse on this matter represents a greater proportion of China-related Twitter discussion in Washington than it does in Silicon Valley. Subtopics with positive difference values, in comparison, are Silicon Valley relative interests. Larger values indicate larger interest polarity towards one locale, while difference values near zero correspond to very comparable relative interest levels in both Silicon Valley and Washington.

III. KEY FINDINGS

This paper's findings are mostly consistent with common characterizations of Silicon Valley and Washington interests: Silicon Valley is primarily preoccupied with technological and commercial happenings while Washington minds national security interests and geopolitics. A greater proportion of Washington Twitter discourse is about multilateral diplomacy and China's role in curbing North Korean aggression. Conversely, Silicon Valley expresses greater interest in China's climate-related role and technological matters that do not impinge on security or strategic considerations. However, a closer examination also identifies unobvious patterns of China discourse, demonstrating the perils of oversimplification. There are areas of technology relating to China that Washington focuses more on than Silicon Valley does. Concomitantly, there are specific areas of interest relating to security, Chinese domestic politics, and human rights that dominate Silicon Valley's attention more than Washington's. A few non-intuitive findings are covered in the following section.

Silicon Valley's Interest in Chinese Political Affairs

Does Silicon Valley devote more attention to Chinese political affairs than Washington? According to this paper's topic modeling exercise, 34% of all Silicon Valley posts are best attributed to Topic 2, "Chinese Political Climate," compared to only 23% of Washington posts. This would initially appear to be a startling result

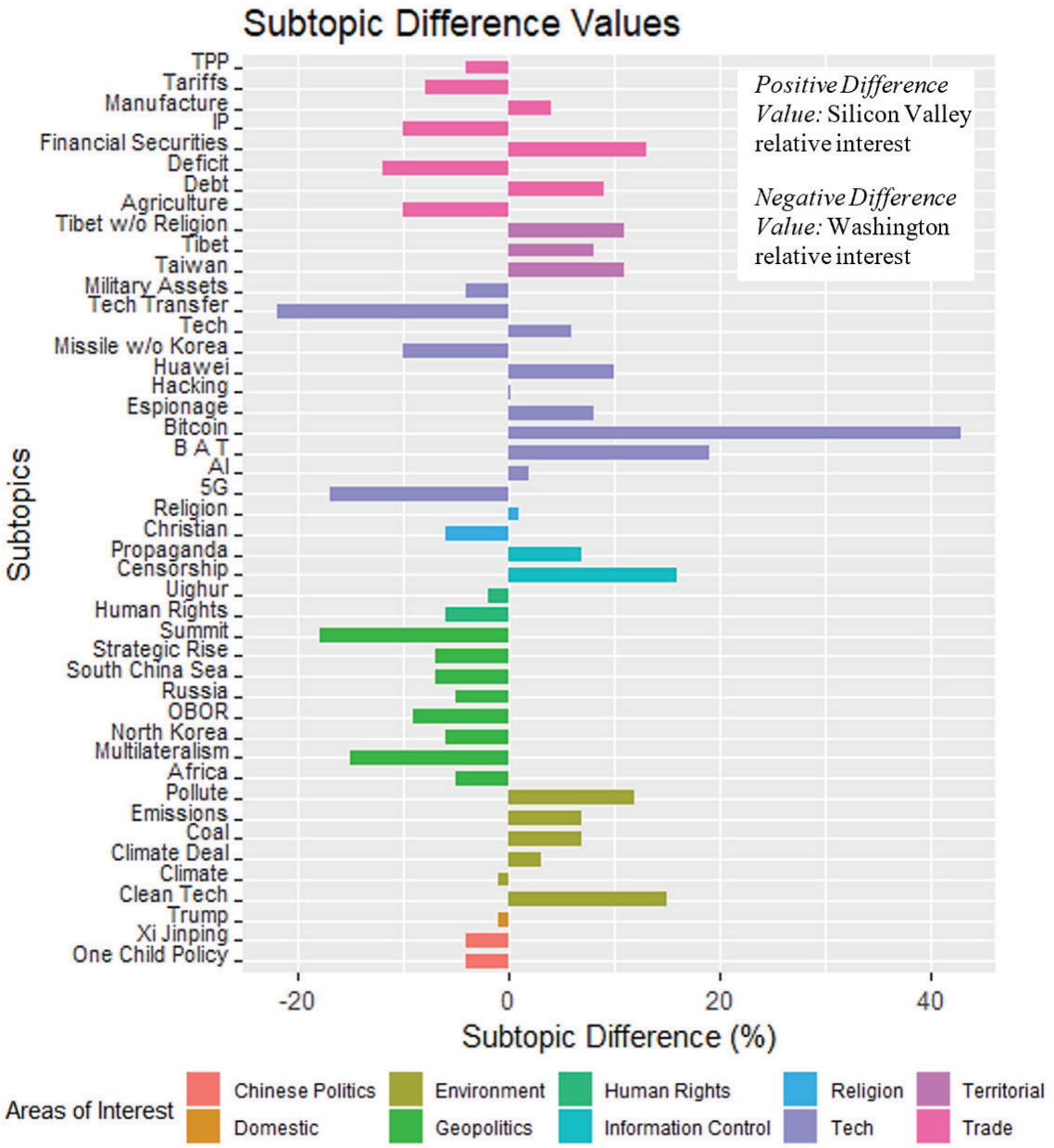

Figure 2. Subtopic Difference Values by Area, All Subtopics

based on a general understanding that Washington is more invested than Silicon Valley in matters such as political ideology and human rights. A number of subtopics, shown in **Figure 3**, help to elucidate this enigma by subdividing posts concerned with political affairs. It becomes clear that while Silicon Valley has a relative interest in specific instances of Chinese ethnic persecution and information control, Washington has a relative interest in broader Chinese domestic human rights and governance concerns. Perhaps most notable is Silicon Valley's comparative focus on matters of ethnic identity or contested territorial sovereignty, meaning references to Taiwan and Tibet within China-related Twitter discourse. These posts generally oppose China's claims to Tibet or Taiwan, condemning perceived Chinese subversion of Tibetan society or mainland aggression towards Taiwan. Tibet and Taiwan constitute a larger portion of China-related tweets from Silicon Valley than

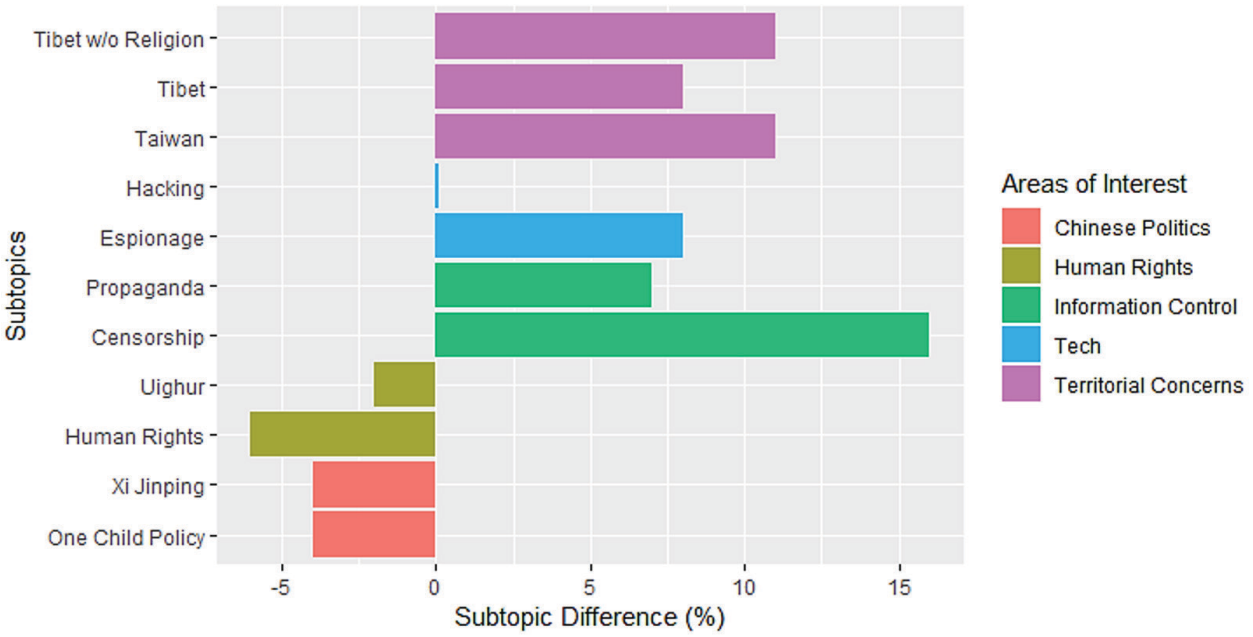

Figure 3. Topic Prevalence by Locale
**Positive values indicate subtopics recieve greater emphasis in SV vs. DC*

from Washington. Plausibly, the larger number of China-related areas of concern in Washington may lead discussion of Tibet or Taiwan to be partially *crowded out*; they remain important issues despite their lesser salience.

Demographics and idiosyncratic pockets of international activism likely play a role. Silicon Valley is a major settlement destination for Taiwanese immigrants,[14] bringing China-Taiwan relations to the forefront of political discourse and activism. Chinese treatment of Tibet also receives an outsized share of attention from Silicon Valley compared to other human rights issues, as Silicon Valley's liberal community have treated the matter with a special emphasis. A culture of support for Tibetan exiles has sprung up in the San Francisco Bay Area, supported by community organizations and local temples. Although religion could be thought to play a role in Silicon Valley's concern with Tibet, removing mentions of Buddhism from the Tibet subtopic doesn't change its polarization towards Silicon Valley (see **Figure 3**). Washington remains a strong activist for both Taiwan and Tibet, but discussion of these issues are drowned out amid a myriad of human rights concerns and local interest groups.

As an information-reliant economy, Silicon Valley takes great interest in Chinese censorship. Discussions of technology and data are simply more salient in the lives of Silicon Valley residents. For most of Silicon Valley's renowned tech companies, data are a main source of profit. By allowing users free access to their services, they monetize user data to sell targeted advertising placements. Firms such as Amazon use large datasets to train and improve their artificial intelligence algorithms. Thus, issues regarding the flow of data and information access are likely to often manifest within Twitter expressions of Silicon Valley netizens. Silicon Valley has been especially attuned to Chinese censorship concerns due to high-profile incidents involving Google and Facebook, who have sought to enter the thriving Chinese domestic market and have been rebuffed.

In recent years, the US intelligence community has come to focus on industrial espionage in Silicon Valley. While operations spearheaded by institutions such as the FBI and CIA are headquartered in Washington,

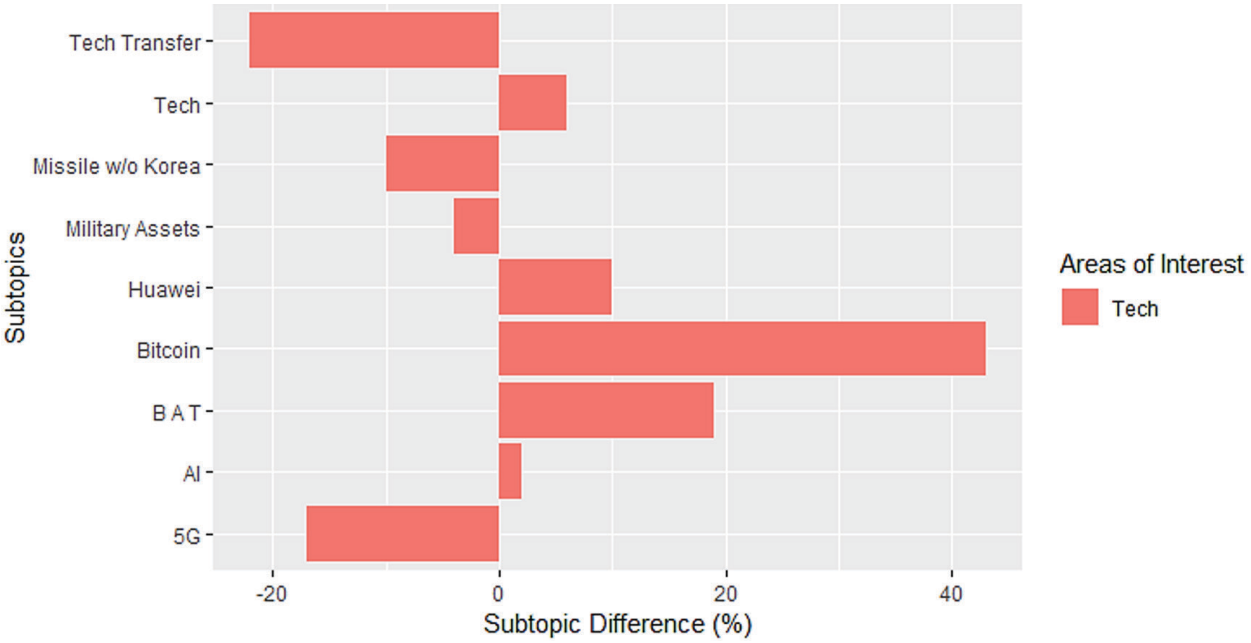

Figure 4. 'Technology and Innovation' Subtopic Grouping

the necessarily-tightlipped nature of intelligence likely precludes frequent Washington discussion of espionage on Twitter. When Washington residents do speak of Chinese information control, they tend to focus on Chinese hacking of US institutions, which carries both strong strategic implications and is politically advantageous to reveal to the public.

Washington has a decisive relative interest in issues pertaining to internal Chinese affairs. This is likely because Washington institutions possess an innate preoccupation with Chinese politics and human rights, a curiosity less native to Silicon Valley. Take, for example, Chinese treatment of Uighur Muslims clustered primarily in the country's northwestern regions. While doubtlessly alarming, internal human rights violations have minimal direct effect on either Silicon Valley or Washington. Yet, both the Uighur and general human rights subtopics are attributed to Washington relative interest. This is likely due to the unique plenitude of human rights organizations in Washington, which have made it a priority over the last few decades to publicly uphold the universality of certain human rights, at least in rhetoric. Washington took a particular interest in the Xinjiang issue after a highly-publicized Human Rights Watch report on the Chinese oppression of Uighur Muslims was released, introducing a "Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2018" bill to formally condemn Chinese actions. Though Silicon Valley corporations also engage in social responsibility, they are less focused on human rights promotion outside of the US. Silicon Valley appears interested in how the byproducts of Chinese policy affect its own interests, rather than being interested in the Chinese policy process itself.

Topic Variation on Technology and Innovation

While discourse in Silicon Valley, given its characterization as a world innovation leader and technology hub, is unsurprisingly more attuned to technological matters, issues of technology vary in importance to Washington depending on their perceived geopolitical implications. Although technology serves as a valuable means to reach Washington's various governmental ends, technology is often an end in itself for Silicon Valley. This is the case for Silicon Valley's vast research endeavors through science and innovation-focused universities, firms, and private research labs.

Washington's interest in technology is greatest in sub-sectors with strong strategic implications for the United States and its place in the global pecking order. This is the case with tech transfer, invoking Washington's concerns over its eroding innovation advantage as American technologies are adopted by Chinese firms through legitimate means such as collaboration and illegitimate means such as technology theft or forced transfers. While it is often Silicon Valley firms and research institutions who are having their technology transferred or stolen by China, Washington's greater relative interest appears to stem from the role of technology transfers in trade policy, a major point of disagreement with China. Cutting-edge technology also plays an integral role in upgrading or augmenting a country's military capabilities. As the underwriters of America's dominant global military power, Washington pays close attention to any technology with the potential to upset the status quo. China, as a rival looking to build out its military capabilities, is near the top of the list of countries whose military advances the US is closely monitoring. Subtopic findings mirror results of topic modeling demonstrating Washington's greater preoccupation with strategic concerns: related subtopics such as missiles (even without mention of North Korea) and military assets are Washington relative interests. Meanwhile, Silicon Valley has little interest in abstract, forward-looking matters of defense.

Technology-related areas of greater relative interest to Washington reside at the intersection of military and economic insecurity. Converging economic and military rationales appear to be the reason for Washington's greater concern with 5G telecommunications technology development. As of 2019, the US government is actively working to keep Chinese telecommunications company Huawei from deploying new 5G networks in the US and is encouraging allies to do the same. While the goal of the policy is to restrict Huawei's market access, its calculus is heavily military in nature. AI also encompasses a surprising amount of Twitter discussion in Washington, though not as much as in Silicon Valley. It has strategic implications in its own right, often referred to as a key component in the future of US-China competition by renowned AI experts such as Kai-Fu Lee.[15] The technology's strategic relevance ensures that Silicon Valley's relative interest is rather slight compared to many other technological areas. On the other end of the spectrum are technologies of strong relevance specifically to the business and tech ecosystems but with little military import, such as bitcoin and Baidu-Alibaba-Tencent (BAT). They are of far greater concern to Silicon Valley.

Diverging Foci on US-China Trade Concerns

Discussion of US-China trade encapsulates terms of bilateral trade and the ongoing US-China trade war, shifts in the American agriculture industry, and national industrial policy. While Silicon Valley tweets appear to express a slight relative interest in trade matters based on topic modeling, it would be misleading to claim that Washington is less interested in the US-China commercial relationship. Exploration of subtopics is essential for a more nuanced unpacking. One matter of note is that discussion of the US-China trade relationship may have changed substantially post-2018, as commentary on Trump's handling of the trade war has come to dominate most other topics of discourse.

For Silicon Valley firms, China is an essential consumer market. Thus, the overarching conditions of US-China trade significantly impact the volume and modes of commercial interactions conducted with China. Although Washington doesn't share the same degree of reliance on China at the level of the individual institution, it is a key decision-maker when it comes to trade agreements undergirding trade between American and Chinese firms.. Conditions of trade, such as tariffs and trade deficits, are primarily Washington topics of discussion despite their implications in Silicon Valley, because Washington holds negotiation authority and final say in trade matters. As a result, Washington retains relative interest in most trade issues (see **Figure 5**).

There is an interesting distinction between

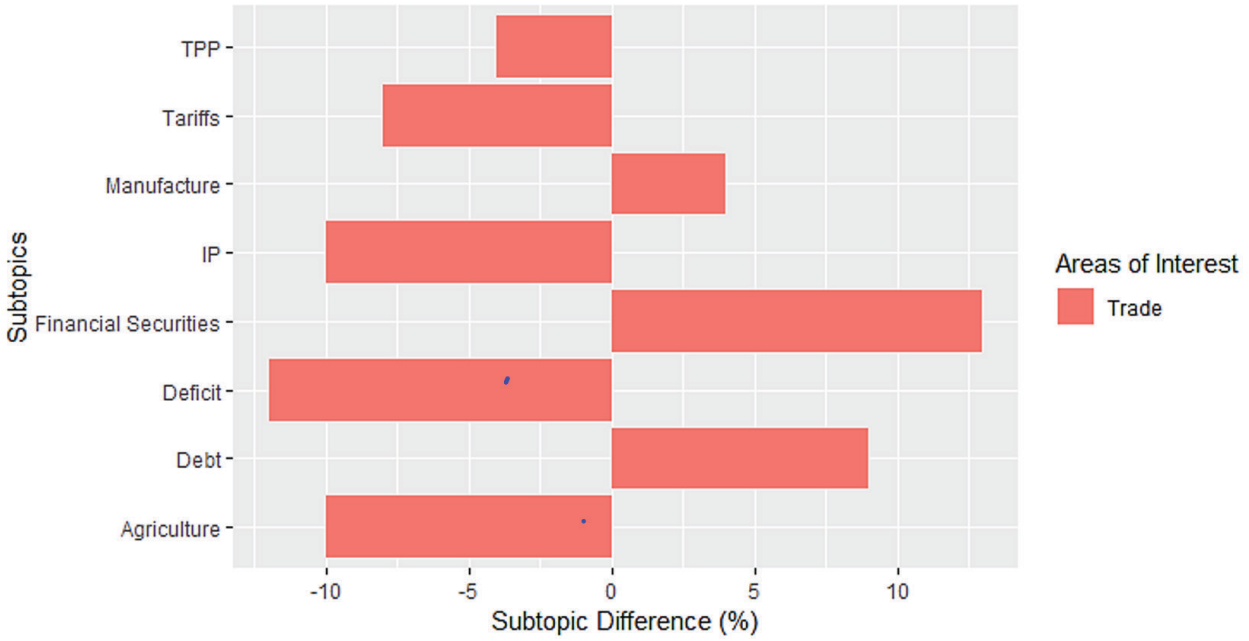

Figure 5. 'Trade and Economics' Subtopic Grouping

deficits, which are mentioned much more frequently in Washington-based tweets, and debt, which is mentioned much more frequently in Silicon Valley-based tweets. One possible way to explain this seeming contradiction is by understanding the differences in debt and deficit implications for the US. Most economists believe that a bilateral trade deficit with China simply matters little; it is a macroeconomic measure for understanding flows of the US economy in aggregate. Yet, deficits have become a fixation point in Washington as an emblem of unfair Chinese trade policy towards the US. Deficits have also become a huge rallying cry for former-candidate-now-President Donald Trump, yet mean little to an individual Silicon Valley firm and its balance sheet.

Debt in the context of the US-China relationships, however, has greater implications for individual firms and can be interpreted two ways. One is as American national debt, of which the Chinese held about $1.5 trillion in June 2017. Its implications are mostly on the national economy centered around Washington policy, but it has become a salient issue in all parts of the country. The other interpretation is of Chinese debt. US debt is not a target of Washington's ire to the extent that deficits are, as it reflects negative savings rates in the US economy and cannot be linked closely to Chinese industrial policy or financial manipulation. Yet as a business and financial hub, Silicon Valley is full of investors whose financial success would be affected by excessive debt levels, which could lead to the potential collapses of the American or Chinese financial systems. The assertion that Silicon Valley is more preoccupied with matters of financial investment is supported by Silicon Valley's strong relative interest in the financial securities subtopic. In sum, it appears that Silicon Valley has a relative interest in China-related debt but relative disinterest in economic deficits, because debt is meaningful to Silicon Valley while deficits have little practical effect outside of political rhetoric.

While Washington expresses greater concern over agricultural matters, Silicon Valley appears more interested in manufacturing. This likely corresponds to industries of economic importance to each locale. While much of the American workforce has transferred away from agriculture, farming represents a traditional pillar of the US economy and a strong political lobby with subsidy concerns relating to

China. Silicon Valley lacks strong agricultural interests, yet its firms are reliant on manufacturing sold in China or on manufacturing done in China itself. The proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership also received far more attention in Washington. Even though the unsuccessful TPP trade agreement carried broad ramifications for Silicon Valley businesses, it was a much larger area of focus in Washington where the American position was negotiated domestically, igniting partisan debate. Similarly, tariffs and intellectual property concerns regarding China alter dynamics of doing business for Silicon Valley firms, but receive more attention in Washington, where debates surrounding these issues regularly occur between political parties and different government arms. These policymaking preoccupations are not reflected in Silicon Valley, though its firms and residents are impacted by these same policies.

IV. CONCLUSION

No matter one's stance on relations between two of the world's greatest powers, the US and China, American interests will be best served through policies buoyed by domestic cohesion. When American "China watchers" speak in broad strokes about ideal or necessary courses of action, they bias their conceptions of American interests towards those constituted by Washington. Washington-based diplomatic, foreign affairs, defense, and economic establishments are the primary interlocutors in the formal US-China relationship, but remain far from the only US sub-groups with consequential ties to China. As long as divergent domestic agendas undermine policy effectiveness and cloud American intentions, reconciling US interests will remain an important step towards a more effective and coherent American strategy.

Silicon Valley, with its technology-based economy and deeply liberal demographics, shows a *relative interest* in, or comparatively greater preoccupation with, topics and subtopics related to technology, commerce, and treatment of specific Chinese ethnic groups. Washington's relative interests lie broadly in areas of national security and human rights, the issues of Taiwan and Tibet notwithstanding. The locales are split on economic matters, with Silicon Valley taking a firm-oriented view and Washington minding the US economy on a macro-scale.

Washington institutions more or less share the same overarching goal: the broad minding of American interests, with individual and institutional motives doubtlessly interspersed. Silicon Valley, in comparison, has no such shared vision. Institutions naturally agglomerate around Silicon Valley for its wealth of technology expertise, powerful networks, and other benefits best realized at scale. So, while Silicon Valley interests related to China pertain to technology or trade as a result of the locale's many high-tech endeavors and businesses, its calculus stems from an aggregation of individual interests, rather than cohesive institutional goals as seen in Washington. As Silicon Valley lacks the cohesive commitment to "China watching" and concern for the US in broad terms, both of which Washington possesses as a result of its institutional mandate, Silicon Valley-based netizens appears to embody a narrower focus on China, demonstrating relative interest only in matters with direct implications for Silicon Valley. In turn, Washington takes relative interest in topics with longer-term, abstract ramifications for US national success.

Final Thoughts

Though this paper's demonstration of differences in expression about China between two powerful US locales has academic merit in its own right, it carries ramifications for domestic policy cohesion by shedding light on areas of mutual interest that are unobvious. While Washington often focuses on Chinese financial liberalization and regulations limiting foreign ownership of ventures in China, it may field additional Silicon Valley support by concentrating on the Chinese system of information control that fundamentally limits an American tech firm's access to the Chinese market. Supporters of Tibet congregated in Silicon Valley can look for ways to collaborate further with the Washington human rights es-

tablishment, which shares their root concerns about Chinese oppression of religious minorities such as the Uighur Muslims. Coordination and discussion between the two hubs must be more intentional, acknowledging that areas of differing interests regarding China should be navigated strategically to minimize inherent rivalry between private and public US stakeholders. As of now, they stand divided.

While these potential areas of cooperation may have limited feasibility, they provide a starting point for greater Washington–Silicon Valley collaboration in creating a broader China strategy. US tech companies seek Chinese venture funding, but the US government uses CFIUS to block Chinese investment; official US government statements condemning Chinese censorship practices are undermined by the willingness of American tech companies to subject their products to Chinese regulations. The less the interests and consequent actions of the American government and tech industry are aligned on China, the more they limit each other from a strategic and commercial standpoint.

NOTES

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An Act of Oversight: The Holding Foreign Companies Accountable Act and Sino-American Relations

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ABSTRACT: In May 2020, the United States Senate unanimously passed the Holding Foreign Companies Accountable Act. In theory, the act extended the oversight capabilities of the Public Companies Oversight Accountability Board to companies listed on American capital markets. Although the bill enhances auditing standards for all foreign companies, it is a direct broadside against Chinese firms for decades of financial malpractice and fraudulent practices. The passing of the act is a politically expedient measure which does not go far enough in protecting American capital markets. The act may also embolden China to simply re-list companies on other public exchanges throughout the world.

INTRODUCTION

In May 2020, the United States Senate unanimously passed the Holding Foreign Companies Accountable Act. In theory, the act works to enhance the punitive powers of the Public Companies Oversight Accountability Board, a private nonprofit board which oversees public companies listed on American stock markets under the discretion of the SEC. Though the bill raises auditing standards for all foreign companies, it is a direct broadside against Chinese firms as a consequence of decades of financial malpractice and fraudulent practices. Passing the bill, although politically expedient, does little to strengthen the protections of American capital markets and may embolden China to simply relist fraudulent companies on other exchanges.

Our analysis will be broken down into five sections. The first section will briefly analyze the threat of Chinese fraudulent practices. Second, this paper will turn to an analysis of the Holding Foreign Companies Accountable Act and its impact on capital markets. Third, this paper will show how the bill fits into President Trump's grand strategy relating to China. Fourth, this paper will analyze how the bill will impact Sino-American relations. Finally, this paper will conclude by discussing the potential political impacts of the HFCAA and possible future actions by China and the United States in response to the bill.

A Brief History of Chinese Fraud

Between 2007 and 2010, 157 Chinese companies went public on American stock markets using reverse mergers.[1] This is a process in which a private company buys a majority stake in a shell company and uses the merger to take over the shell's ticker. This process was attractive to Chinese companies because it is cheaper and quicker than pursuing an Initial Public Offering (IPO). In short, Chinese companies were able to quickly list on American markets with minimal auditing requirements.

Chinese companies also tend to favor well when pursuing a reverse merger since they tend to be "better capitalized, have more operating cash flow, and are more likely to be categorized as a growth or mature stage firm."[2] Chinese companies also tend to have lower leverage, meaning they are trading with their own assets over trading with credit, than their American counterparts before starting the reverse merger process to list on American stock exchanges. Therefore, a majority

of Chinese companies' stature improves after completing the reverse merger process.[3]

Though many Chinese companies saw positive results after completing the reverse merger process, some were not as they seemed. For instance in 2010, investment research firm Muddy Waters released a damning report on the Chinese company Orient Paper. The report accused the firm of overstating its revenue by 40%, overvaluing their assets, and overstating their gross profit margin.[4] Just two years later, Orient Paper agreed to settle for $2 million in a class action settlement.[5]

Orient Paper, however, was not the first or only Chinese company to settle. In 2010, China Shenghuo Pharmaceutical holdings also settled a class action lawsuit for $800,000.[6] In the two years following these settlements, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) launched fraud investigations and halted the trading of 41 Chinese companies. By 2011, at least 33 class action lawsuits had been filed against Chinese companies who went public via reverse merger.[7] These companies "effectively defrauded investors of close to $34 billion by systematically misreporting their financial assets on official SEC filings."[8]

Despite a rash of strong action by the SEC and several class action lawsuits, Chinese companies still pose a variety of threats for investors. After completing an upsized IPO process, China-based Luckin Coffee disclosed that "it may have inflated revenues and expenses by hundreds of millions dollars."[9] On June 23, 2020, Luckin Coffee received a delisting notification from NASDAQ after failing to file its annual report. [10]

Such high profile frauds make it increasingly difficult for Chinese companies to be successful on the American capital market. Shares of 29 Chinese companies listed on the New York Stock Exchange since 2017 have fallen an average of 16%. Chinese companies listed on the NASDAQ exchange have fallen an average of 29%.[11] Lack of quality control makes distinguishing fraudulent Chinese companies from those with real assets all but impossible since American capital markets have yet to create a robust auditing system capable of distinguishing fraudulent companies before they list.

The Holding Foreign Companies Accountable Act

On May 20, 2020, the United States Senate passed the Holding Foreign Companies Accountable Act (HFCAA) which amends the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 to strengthen the punishment for not adhering to Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (PCAOB) auditing standards. The bill, originally proposed by co-sponsors Republican Senator John Kennedy of Louisiana and Democratic Senator Van Hollen of Maryland on March 28, 2019, passed unanimously.

The new bill requires issuers—public companies who want to list—to notify the U.S. SEC about their relationship to a foreign government, and more specifically that they are not owned or controlled by a foreign government. An issuer must make this evident in the PCAOB by approving the corporation to audit their company's reports. Previously too many companies, especially from China, were unknowingly dismissed from marked inspection by the PCAOB due to foreign legislation denying these rights, but this bill *requires* all foreign entities to adhere to this process. If the board is unable to inspect the issuer's public accounting records for three consecutive years, the issuer's securities can be *banned* from trading on U.S. capital markets, including stock exchanges like the NASDAQ and the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) and other forms of over-the-counter trading of securities. Following the probation, if the company retains approval from the SEC of being a registered public accounting firm, the Commission will end that probationary period. If a non-inspection year occurs following the end of a firm's initial probation, the securities will then again be barred from trade on national exchanges. Finally, after a 5-year period from when the Commission imposes a prohibition from a non-inspection year that the firm certifies to the SEC that it is a registered accounting firm,

the commission will end that prohibition.[12]

In seeking to address the issue and protect American capital markets, the Senate, through the HFCAA, voted to expand the PCAOB's auditing and punitive powers. PCAOB was created on July 30, 2002, through the Sarbanes-Oxley Act in order to register and inspect public accounting firms that conduct audit reports; simply put, an audit on an audit. Though PCAOB is overseen by the SEC, the board is a private non-profit that enforces compliance of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act; registers public accounting firms; establishes auditing, quality control, and other standards relating to public company auditing; and conducts investigations and disciplinary proceedings of registered companies.[13] Though the company can enact punitive measures on public companies, these sanctions must be approved by the SEC, making the process cumbersome and inefficient.

Though this bill targets all foreign companies, particular notice is placed on those from out of China. For non-inspection years, foreign entities of securities must disclose a number of items: the percent of shares owned by governmental entities, whether there is a compelling government interest in the company, information related to board members who are associated with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and if the articles of incorporation of the issuer contain ownership from the Chinese Communist Party.[14]

Reverse mergers, particularly involving Chinese companies, have been at the forefront of state manipulation of capital markets for political benefit. For example, 11% of all class action lawsuits filed against securities in 2011 were against Chinese-owned companies for misrepresentation of financial information, including mitigating debts and losses and exaggerating revenues in financial statements.[15] After China was admitted into the World Trade Organization (WTO) on December 11, 2001, Senator Kennedy remarked they "started cheating December 12."[16] Secrecy laws in China make performing audits, even under the new HFCAA, difficult. Under Article 177 of the Securities Law of the People's Republic of China, no China-based company can provide an investigator or enforcement body from overseas with any information without expressed approval from the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC).[17] Though this can create a myriad of issues, Muddy Waters Founder and CIO Carson Block stated that "not one PRC national has ever been materially punished"[18] despite a variety of allegations and lawsuits. More than 224 US listed companies are located in regions or countries where PCAOB cannot easily audit them, with an increasing number of these companies existing in China. Therefore, they cannot be legally punished due to the Communist Party's law. Since PCAOB cannot easily access the information to effectively audit companies in China, and Chinese nationals accused of committing fraud are not materially punished, Senator Kennedy, along with his colleagues, seek to enhance the punitive power of PCAOB to compel Chinese companies to provide more accurate and complete information if they wish to remain on American capital markets.

Now, this bill will not only impact the stock market, its effects will also reach individual Americans. For example, the bill increases oversight over investor protection and national security, "making it stand as an almost bipartisan vote as Democrats and Republicans make their China hawk bonafides known to constituents."[19]

With the two largest economies battling over auditing rights and protection of its markets, a lot is at risk on both ends. For good companies, as Baidu CEO and Co-Founder Robin Li highlighted, "there are many choices of destinations for listing, not limited to the United States.[20] With several profitable Chinese companies, such as Baidu, Alibaba, JD.com, and Tencent under threat of possible delisting from American stock markets, major firms could be moved to domestic exchanges in Shanghai or Hong Kong, potentially weakening the U.S. economy. This has already happened in the case

of Chinese billionaire Jack Ma's technology and financial services giant Ant Group. To avoid New York's tightening grip on Chinese listings, Ant Group is hedging its bets to seek investors closer to home by listing on Shanghai's STAR market and Hong Kong's $5 trillion stock market. Moreover, the Chinese Foreign Minister said this could cause a new "cold war," if China takes reciprocal action, since companies such as Apple already have a large manufacturing presence in China. With its passing in the Senate, the HFCAA could be yet another litmus test in a string of tough actions on China by the Trump Administration and possibly have an impact on other areas of the Sino-American relationship.

HFCAA Within Trump's China Strategy

The Holding Foreign Companies Accountable Act is a major step toward cracking down on illegitimate foreign companies, especially from countries such as China which have a noted history of systemic accounting issues stretching several decades. Although this has been an issue for a long time, the passage of the HFCAA at this moment may increase tensions in an already strained relationship. But if this has been an issue for years, why has Congress not taken action until now?

The HFCAA is yet another manifestation of the Trump Administration's hard stance on China. As a presidential candidate, Donald Trump marketed a nationalist policy of "America First," which demurred key trade agreements but more broadly sought to reemphasize America's status as the world's lone superpower. Allies and adversaries were both targets of the Trump Administration, but Trump's strategy has emphasized punishing China for its political and economic transgressions.

First, the Trump Administration seeks to punish China for perceived political miscalculations. Beijing's human rights abuses in imprisoning thousands of Uighur Muslims in the Xinjiang province have attracted much of the world's concern and attention, but few nations outside of the United States have taken action. Additionally, the Trump Administration and many members of Congress have criticized the new national security law targeting Hong Kong that, in the words of President Trump, replaced the "One Country, Two Systems" model with "One Country, One System."[21] Consequently, the U.S. has sanctioned Chinese officials involved in both incidents in addition to a paramilitary agency allegedly involved in interning Uighurs in Xinjiang.[22] These issues and the resulting sanctions have drawn ire from both sides, and escalated relations to a point where Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi accused the U.S. of attempting to create a "new Cold War."[23]

Second, The Trump Administration has especially been tough on China concerning economic issues. Citing unfair trading practices and intellectual property theft, Trump imposed tariffs on $34 billion worth of Chinese goods, sparking a trade war which has seen tit-for-tat measures enacted since Trump entered office, including tariffs as high as 25% on $200 billion worth of Chinese goods.[24] A key figure contributing to the Trump Administration's claim of unfair trade deals is the wide trade deficit with China which was approximately $347 billion in 2016, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.[25] After several rounds of negotiations, Chinese and American diplomats reached a Phase One trade agreement in late 2019 to eventually lower tariffs, boost U.S. imports, and strengthen intellectual property rules. The trade agreement was a large victory for the Trump Administration and the deal remains intact for now. However, relations between the United States and China soured in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic as President Trump and his team have argued that China purposefully attempted to cover-up the outbreak and origins of the deadly virus. Likewise, Trump has said that there is no "phase two" agreement on the horizon as Beijing's phase one promises remain to be seen.

Between the combination of the Trump Administration's prioritization of issues with China and the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, the perfect political storm has been created. In an extremely polarized Washington, policy toward the People's Republic seems to be

the one issue that garners bipartisan support. In a Congress and a White House that encourages the castigation of China, an American foreign policy is formed void of any regard for the escalation of bilateral relations.

The HFCAA and the Future of Sino-American Relations

The accumulation of multiple political and economic issues as well as ideological rancor have incited distrust in America and the People's Republic. The latest manifestation of this was President Trump's recent executive order banning Chinese-owned TikTok and WeChat have hit home for over a billion Chinese users prompting many beyond the boundaries of the CCP to believe that America is resentful of Chinese economic success.[26] Parent companies ByteDance and Tencent are some of the golden calves of the Chinese tech market, and despite the national security issues surrounding their respective apps, they see the Trump Administration's actions as anti-Chinese. The HFCAA only adds to this narrative as these measures have irrevocably altered relations between the two largest economies. Reaching a consensus on future issues will be futile, and retaliation over current sticking points will further exacerbate the relations between the two countries if neither side seeks a course correction.

Conventionally held as the bastion of bilateralism, consulates play a large role in promoting a healthy relationship between countries. The closure of the Houston and Chengdu consulates accented the suspicions in both nations thus hindering the availability of diplomatic services such as the issuance of visas.[27] This proves that each nation is alienating the other, and the HFCAA is no exception. The act multiplies the number of hurdles it takes to break into American stock markets making the notion of a successful Chinese company in American more of a delusion. The Trump Administration's hard stance on China has set a precedent that will likely to reverberate through subsequent administrations as relations will be impossible, or at the very least, extremely difficult to repair. Furthermore, economic relations have experienced a downturn due to relations and the COVID-19 pandemic. A report by the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations found that China's direct investment into the U.S. fell to its lowest level since the Great Recession, from $5.4 billion in 2018 to $5 billion in 2019.[28] The most resilient sectors to this decline are those with low political and regulatory risk. This implies more stringent regulations, such as those enacted by the passing of the HFCAA, will take a massive toll on Chinese firms. Venture capital (VC) firms, startups, and other investors have all gawked at an increasingly unstable and regulatory quagmire that once was one of the most robust trading partnerships in the world. The report detailed that VC firms, for instance, invested a measly $5 billion in Chinese startups in 2019 compared to $19.6 billion the year before. Despite the good intentions underlying the passage of the HFCAA, the compiling risks Chinese companies encounter are persuading many to look inward and at other markets outside of the U.S.

Conclusion: The Future of the HFCAA

In the coming weeks, the HFCAA is likely to meet opposition from both domestic and foreign audiences. On Wall Street, lobbyists who desire to continue to profit from Chinese listings oppose the legislation. Despite President Trump's desire to deregulate various aspects of the economy, he is expected to sign the bill into law if it passes the House of Representatives. However, the Trump Administration has proposed a stronger set of regulations that specifically target Chinese companies forcing them to comply with U.S. auditing standards by 2022 or be delisted.[29]

The bill also comes at a time where punitively punishing China is politically expedient. The Chinese government is likely to reconsider its direct influence on the corporate governance of Chinese firms and can either withdraw the state's influence from firms to allow their continued listing, covertly seek to continue its control, or decouple its listings from American exchanges in favor of moving them closer to home. Beijing

is likely to seek relisiting of companies removed from American stock exchanges on exchanges closer to home, such as Shanghai or Hong Kong, which will allow the state to maintain control over certain aspects of the company.

Between ending preferential treatment of Hong Kong and worsening American-Sino relations, Chinese companies could view the passage of the HFCAA as a final straw to escape to the mainland. An exodus would harm American stock exchanges and bolster Chinese exchanges in Shanghai and Hong Kong. The White House's new policy toward Hong Kong could be just what China needed to end its masquerade of manipulation and remake Chinese exchanges into state-controlled financial and commerce centers.

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