



Background

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THE LIMITS TO U.S.-CHINA STRATEGIC COOPERATION

INTRODUCTION

U.S.-China ties continue to be based mainly on mutual security advantages. The U.S. Defense Department's FY 1984 Posture Statement declared that one of the national security objectives of the United States is "to build toward a durable strategic relationship with the People's Republic of China." And the Pentagon's FY 1984-85 Defense Guidance portrays China as a U.S. ally in a possible conflict with the Soviet Union, should Moscow invade the Persian Gulf. In much the same way, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger attempted to involve the Chinese in expanded strategic cooperation during his trip to China in September 1983.

The strategic importance of the People's Republic of China (PRC) was also used to explain U.S.-China relations after Secretary of State George Shultz's trip to Beijing in February 1983. Assistant Secretary of State for Asia and the Pacific Paul Wolfowitz listed reasons why China was important strategically to the U.S.:

We no longer have to plan and spend to confront a Chinese threat; our parallel interests in containing the Soviet Union have been repeatedly reaffirmed and we are in fundamental agreement that the Soviets remain the principal threat to the peace of the world; we have common interests in containing not only Vietnamese aggression in Southeast Asia and encouraging a peaceful settlement of the Kampuchean problem based on Khmer self-determination, but also in resisting Soviet aggression in Afghanistan; ...despite problems, East Asia has emerged as one of the more stable and prosperous regions

of the world, with China playing an increasingly responsible regional role.¹

Wolfowitz also might have mentioned that one of the most frequently cited strategic benefits to the United States is that China pins down some 54 Soviet divisions along the 6,500 mile Sino-Soviet border. These divisions otherwise might be threatening U.S. interests in Western Europe or the Persian Gulf.

If Sino-American strategic cooperation is so beneficial, some have asked, can it be formalized? Can China be drawn into a quasi-defense alliance with the United States? Are there not steps Washington can take to improve China's defense capabilities as a counterbalance to the Soviet Union in Asia?

U.S. policy makers must direct their attention to such questions. The answers could provide a clear indication of the limits of strategic cooperation between the two countries. Once these have been recognized, realistic national goals and immediate objectives in U.S. China policy can be set. Otherwise, U.S. leaders will continue to vacillate between undue pessimism and optimism regarding the value of U.S.-PRC relations.

CHINA'S CURRENT FOREIGN POLICY

Fundamental to an understanding of China's foreign policy is an appreciation of Beijing's own agenda in international politics. The Chinese describe their current foreign policy as "independent." As Premier Zhao Ziyang commented on September 22, 1982:

China's foreign policy is a policy of independence and self-determination. We shall never be attached to any big power. We will not play the Soviet card against the United States, nor the American card against the Soviet Union, nor allow any other country to play the China card.

When Secretary of Defense Weinberger visited the PRC last year and hinted at greater strategic cooperation, Chinese leaders reacted coolly. China now perceives its interests to be best served by a flexible policy, somewhat equidistant between Moscow and Washington. This aspect of China's foreign policy, signalled publicly in 1982 by Hu Yaobang, General Secretary of the Communist

¹ Prepared statement of Paul W. Wolfowitz, "Sino-American Relations: Eleven years after the Shanghai Communique," given before U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, February 28, 1983, pp. 1, 3, ms.

Party of China,² is markedly different from the policy of 1978-1979 when Deng Xiaoping called for increased strategic cooperation between China, the U.S., Japan, and Western Europe. The current policy line is also different from that pursued in the 1950s, when China allied itself with the Soviet Union, and contrasts as well with that pursued during much of the 1960s, when Beijing declared a plague on both superpowers.

Valuable insight into the tactical nature of Chinese foreign policy formulation was provided by the Japanese Foreign Ministry in November 1982, when it published a secret Chinese internal document outlining the reasons behind Beijing's decision to begin rapprochement with Moscow. As summarized in the Japanese newspapers Yomiuri Shimbun, the document stated:

1. The two superpowers--the United States and the Soviet Union--are contending with each other in pursuit of hegemony. Militarily, the Soviet Union stands in an offensive position and the United States is relatively inferior. The potential strength of the United States, however, should not be underestimated.
2. The United States normalized its diplomatic relations with China. But it did so for the purpose of compensating for its military inferiority to the Soviet Union and because it thought that normalization would be of benefit to itself. In deciding on normalization, the United States recognized "one China," but it still continues its commitment to Taiwan. This constitutes an intervention in China's internal affairs and, for the development of U.S.-China relations, it is undesirable for the United States to continue such a policy.
3. The Soviet Union has lately been making overtures to China for a rapprochement. This is also intended for the Soviet Union's own benefit. Although militarily it is relatively superior to the United States, the Soviet Union is isolated internationally and faces economic difficulties domestically and, therefore, it thinks that easing tension with China will be of benefit.
4. In the final analysis, both the United States and the Soviet Union are trying to use China as a card in the process of seeking hegemony. The fact that the Soviet Union desires a rapprochement with China does

² According to documents, Hu Yaobang told the delegates: "We note that Soviet leaders have expressed more than once the desire to improve relations with China.... If the Soviet authorities really have a sincere desire to improve relations with China and take practical steps to lift their threat to the security of our country, it will be possible for Sino-Soviet relations to move towards normalization."

not alter the intrinsic nature of Soviet hegemonism or big-power chauvinism. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union was a friend to China for a long time. An excessive confrontation with the Soviet Union is ill-advised for China as well.

5. China is an "independent, self-reliant" state, free from the control of any other country, and is resolutely opposed to hegemonism. China's three basic lines are economic construction, national reunification through the liberation of Taiwan, and opposition to hegemonism. Of the three, economic construction is the basic line, because there can be no diplomacy without the backing of strength and, to achieve "independent, self-reliant" diplomacy, it is important to build up strength through economic construction.³

Although China's new, independent foreign policy does not constitute a threat to U.S. interests in East Asia or obstruct political, economic, cultural, and other relations between Washington and Beijing, it does have important implications for Sino-American strategic cooperation. While U.S.-Soviet relations have been extremely cool since 1979, Sino-Soviet relations have improved steadily since 1982. The two communist governments have stated their desire to normalize relations and move away from the high level of tension that characterized their relations from the early 1960s. Hu Yaobang in May 1983 said:

China sincerely wishes normalization of relations with the USSR. This meets the fundamental interests of the two countries and also the interests of peace and stability in the whole world.⁴

Similarly, the late Yuri Andropov continued Leonid Brezhnev's policy of seeking improved relations with China. And from all appearances, Konstantin Chernenko intends to pursue the policies of his immediate predecessor.

Although full normalization of Sino-Soviet relations is not likely in the near future, the fact that Beijing is holding periodic, high-level talks with Moscow and making incremental adjustments in its policy toward the USSR reflects the intentions of the PRC to move toward rapprochement. Moreover, it seems apparent that, in terms of reducing the dangerous level of tension on the Sino-Soviet border and thereby indirectly deterring a Soviet attack, Beijing believes much more can be accomplished through diplomacy than through alliances with the West.

³ Yomiuri Shimbun, November 30, 1982.

⁴ TASS, May 15, 1983. See FBIS, Soviet Union, May 16, 1983, p. B1.

This does not mean, however, that Sino-American strategic cooperation is not still useful to the PRC. But it does call into question U.S. assumptions about automatic Chinese support on key issues of conflict between Washington and Moscow. Washington was, in fact, given advanced warning of this when China refused to support Western sanctions against Poland and the Soviet Union in the wake of suppression of Solidarity and the imposition of martial law in Warsaw in December 1981.

China will cooperate strategically with the United States only when such cooperation serves Beijing's interests. Thus, the nature of the Soviet threat to Beijing, as well as the practical extent to which American assistance to China can reduce that threat, need to be reexamined in the light of current PRC thinking.

SOVIET MILITARY THREAT TO THE PRC

The Opposing Forces

China and the Soviet Union long have deployed massive forces along their common border. The following table indicates their relative strengths at the regional level:

USSR and PRC Armed Forces in East Asia⁵

<u>Category</u>	<u>USSR</u>	<u>PRC</u>
Ground Forces		
Personnel	400,000	3,150,000
Infantry Divisions	54	131
Mechanized	54	12
Tanks	12,500+	5,000+
Air Forces		
Bombers	400+	850
Fighters	1,300+	5,100
Ground Attack	800+	500
Naval Forces		
Submarines	120	106
Aircraft Carriers	2	0
Cruisers	12	0
Destroyers	20	10
Frigates	50	30

In addition, Beijing and Moscow aim hundreds of tactical and strategic nuclear warheads at each other. Included in the Soviet arsenal are approximately 50 SS-20 intermediate-range theater

⁵ USSR figures represent the one-quarter of the Soviet's total strength that it displays in the Far East. PRC figures represent all of China's regular forces, some 50 percent of which are deployed in the northern part of the country.

nuclear missiles. Chinese nuclear missiles total just over 100. Most of these are well concealed, thus providing some deterrence against a Soviet first strike.

Improving deterrence has high priority for the Chinese. In March 1983, Defense Minister Zhang Aiping reaffirmed the importance of missile and nuclear programs. The Chinese leadership realizes that they cannot match Soviet missile deployments qualitatively or quantitatively; yet they believe continued research and development in these fields will lead to an adequate deterrence under most conditions.

Included in China's deterrence calculations is the notion that the United States would not stand by idly while the Soviet Union destroyed China. The concept of a U.S. "unofficial nuclear umbrella" over China was articulated by Nixon and Kissinger in 1969, when the danger of a Soviet attack against China was high. Relates Kissinger in his memoirs:

From the beginning Nixon and I were convinced--alone among senior policymakers--that the United States could not accept a Soviet military assault on China--we imposed contingency planning on a reluctant bureaucracy as early as the summer of 1969....⁶

Yet American intervention on a scale sufficient to make any difference in a major Sino-Soviet conflict is likely to win little support from Congress or the American people. Conversely, it is doubtful that Beijing would risk destruction to aid the United States in the event of a major U.S.-Soviet confrontation.

Related to this argument are some poignant realities. Whereas Soviet forces along the Sino-Soviet border and aboard the Pacific Fleet are an awesome offensive capability, China's ground, air, and naval units are essentially defensive. As a result of the mismatch of forces, there is continuing debate over whether the PRC's People's Liberation Army could effectively stop invading Soviet forces by fighting what would essentially be a "People's War." On the other hand, it is doubtful that Moscow would want to occupy China or even to invade the country in depth. Other options available to the Soviet Union include: the destabilization of Tibet, Sinkiang, and Inner Mongolia; a preemptive strike against the PRC's nuclear weapons and production facilities; seizing Manchuria; and nuclear, chemical, or bacteriological assaults against selected administrative and/or industrial centers. These and other Soviet options would severely set back China's development, yet avoid the pitfalls of engaging the USSR in a prolonged guerrilla war in China's interior.

⁶ Henry Kissinger, The White House Years (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1979), p. 764.

Pluses and Minuses of the People's Liberation Army

Given the unlikelihood of U.S. intervention in the event of a Soviet attack against the PRC, the burden of self-defense would fall squarely on the shoulders of the Chinese themselves. Here then is a paradox. The People's Liberation Army constitutes the world's largest land army; it has under its control the second largest navy, and the third largest air force. Yet there is considerable doubt as to how effective a defense this huge force would be. The PLA suffers from serious weaknesses. Among them:

Ground Forces:

- lack of mobility and mobilization;
- poor logistics for sustained offensive operations;
- limited power projection capability;
- obsolescent equipment;
- weak command and control abilities.

Air Forces:

- obsolescent aircraft, avionics, and weaponry;
- insufficient pilot training and low proficiency;
- inadequate communications;
- inadequate engine and aircraft production capabilities.

Naval Forces:

- obsolescent ships, sensors, and weapons;
- extremely limited shipboard surface-to-air (SAM) capabilities;
- limited amphibious lift capabilities.
- limited antisubmarine warfare (ASW) capabilities.

The modernization of the PLA has the lowest priority under the Four Modernizations--major economic development goals introduced by Deng Xiaoping in 1978. This ranking does not please the Chinese military leaders, but seems reasonable, given the need of a modern armed force for strong economic and heavy industry sectors. CIA analysts Sydney Jammes and G. Lawrence Lamborn believe that over the next fifteen years "China will not develop an offensive capability against the USSR," but that "China's defensive capabilities will be significantly improved by 1995 if political stability, economic growth, and scientific and industrial modernization continue unobstructed."⁷

Among the PRC's assets are a dedicated leadership committed to modernization, excellent international credit ratings, availability of advanced technology from abroad, and determination to

⁷ Sydney H. Jammes and J. Lawrence Lamborn, "China's Military Strategic Requirements," in U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee, China Under the Four Modernizations, Part I (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1982), p. 604.

avoid future costly military engagements such as the conflict with Vietnam in 1979. Current obstacles, however, are serious: the low supply of trained researchers and engineers; the extent of China's nonmilitary needs that compete with the military for limited resources; serious technological weaknesses affecting China's ability to produce high quality weapons; severe problems in China's defense industry from basic research to maintenance of finished products; and organizational deficiencies within the PLA.

Cognizant of this situation from 1978 through mid-1980, Washington and Beijing toyed with the idea of modernizing the PLA with American assistance. The difficulties, however, were formidable. Defense Department document Consolidated Guidance No. 8, estimated that the United States would have to give China \$50 billion in military aid to build the PLA into an effective deterrent against the Soviets. While Congress would probably approve a certain amount of U.S. security assistance to China, it is scarcely likely that it would approve \$50 billion worth.

It is also unrealistic to expect that China could purchase enough technology and weapons abroad to modernize its armed forces. While China is interested in various advanced fighters, antitank missiles, air defense systems, and destroyer modernization programs, few purchases have been made so far. Beijing's economic development needs are too demanding and its foreign exchange reserves too meager to buy its way to a modern armed military force. PLA modernization will thus have to come from within. As Defense Minister Zhang Aiping said in March 1983:

In order to achieve modernization of our national defense, our first task is to develop and produce sophisticated military equipment....

Our country is a big country and it is not realistic or possible for us to buy national defense modernization from abroad...At the outset it is necessary to obtain some technology that can be imported and model some weaponry on that of others. However, if we are content with copying, we will only be crawling behind others and still be unable to attain our anticipated goal. The fundamental way is to rely upon ourselves....⁸

THE PRC VS. THE USSR

The current effort by Chinese and Soviet leaders to ease tensions in PRC-USSR relations should not be seen as a return to normalcy. Historically, Sino-Russian relations have not been good. Geographically, both nations have reason to fear the

⁸ Honggi, March 1, 1983, in FBIS Daily Report China, March 7, 1983, p. K3.

other. The Central Asian frontier, which extends roughly 1,900 miles from Afghanistan to Mongolia, provides access to the heartlands of both the Soviet Union and China. The provinces on both sides of the border are backward in terms of logistical facilities and communications and are sparsely populated by peoples of non-Han Chinese and non-Great Russian stock. The Chinese feel especially vulnerable through Mongolia, which borders China for some 2,500 miles. Mao called Mongolia a "fist in China's back." Important invasion corridors lead east, south, and west into the most strategic regions of Northern China. The fact that the Soviets dominate Mongolia and station large numbers of troops along the Sino-Mongolian border adds immeasurably to Beijing's perception of the USSR threat.

The eastern frontier, largely defined by the Amur and Ussuri Rivers, extends about 2,300 miles. Manchuria is an area of high population, rich in agriculture, industry, and minerals, as are the bordering provinces of the Soviet Union. The region is of great strategic value to both nations. China's administrative and industrial heartland is vulnerable to a Soviet attack through Manchuria, and the strategically important Soviet naval base at Vladivostok and other key facilities are within the range of a Chinese attack from Manchuria.

Their geographic proximity plus the historic tensions between China and Russia intensify other elements of their disagreement. These include fundamental ideological differences, conflicting foreign policies in many areas of the world, intense competition for influence in Asia, racial prejudices, and conflicting national objectives. Although highly subjective, the latter two differences are linked in important ways. The fact that the Chinese and Russians are racially antagonistic adds to the perception of each that the other aims to displace them in Asia. The Chinese long have feared Russian political and territorial expansion, while the Soviets are concerned over possible long-term Chinese demographic and cultural expansion into areas now under USSR control. Given the sense of vulnerability both Moscow and Beijing feel, it is doubtful that either will reduce significantly deployments along their border.

China has posed three conditions for the normalization of Sino-Soviet relations: (1) the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, (2) a major reduction of Soviet forces along the Sino-Soviet and Sino-Mongolian borders, and (3) the withdrawal of Soviet-backed Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea.

From the Kremlin's perspective, these demands affect not only Moscow's strategic posture toward the PRC, but also its strategic relationship to the U.S. In view of current superpower tensions, it may be unrealistic to expect the Soviet Union to pull out of Afghanistan or to end its support of Vietnam. The strategic advantages of access to these countries seem to far outweigh gestures of protest from Beijing. If Moscow withdraws from either country, it will in all likelihood be for reasons unrelated to the conditions set by China.

Soviet leaders have indicated a willingness to discuss mutual reductions along the Sino-Soviet border as a means of improving relations between the two countries. There is, however, evidence suggesting resistance to this among the Soviet military, who warn against the long-term Chinese threat and look with concern at possible Sino-American military cooperation. Given the powerful voice Soviet military leaders have in such affairs, it would appear that any USSR troop reductions along the border would be minimal. Such a policy would be consistent with the current building program for facilities to maintain forces there permanently.

THE U.S. FACTOR

From Moscow's point of view, U.S. forward deployments in East Asia pose a serious threat to USSR security. Current force strengths of the two countries in the Pacific region are approximately:

U.S. AND USSR ARMED FORCES IN EAST ASIA

Category	<u>U.S. West Pac.</u>	<u>U.S. East Pac.</u>	<u>U.S. Total</u>	<u>USSR</u>
Ground Forces				
Divisions	1 2/3	2 2/3	4	54
Tanks	190	135	325	12,500+
Air Forces				
Bombers	14	0	14	400+
Fighters	425	300	725	1,300+
Ground Attack	425	300	725	800+
Naval Forces				
Submarines	10	31	41	120
Aircraft Carriers				
Attack	3	3	6	0
Helicopters	2	6	7	1
Cruisers	4	10	14	12
Frigates	11	27	38	50

And the United States is of course seriously concerned about the Soviet military buildup in East Asia--not as a threat to China, but to its own interests. Undersecretary of Defense Fred Ikle told Congress in June 1982:

During the past decade and a half, the Soviets have taken disturbing steps to improve their military capabilities and expand their influence throughout the region. These efforts continue unabated, and five years from now the threat will be even more dangerous.⁹

⁹ Prepared statement of Fred Ikle, "Soviet Challenges in the Pacific and U.S. and Allied Responses," given before U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, June 10, 1982, p. 2 ms.

Among Ikle's concerns:

- The approximately 54 Soviet divisions deployed along the Sino-Soviet border, plus an additional 120,000 Soviet troops facing Southwest Asia, and more than 100,000 conducting combat operations in Afghanistan. The equipment used by these forces is rapidly being modernized.
- The more than 3,000 combat aircraft stationed in the four easternmost military districts of the USSR. These forces have been upgraded significantly with the newest Soviet aircraft, such as the Foxbat interceptor, Flogger fighter, Fencer fighter-bomber, and the supersonic Backfire bomber. In each of the last two years, the Soviet replacements of Far East fighter and interceptor aircraft with new generation aircraft have far exceeded the number of fighters in the entire U.S. Pacific Air Forces.
- Deployment to Asia of approximately 150 SS-20 missiles.
- The growth and modernization of the Soviet Pacific Fleet, now the USSR's largest fleet containing roughly one-third of all Soviet submarines, one-fourth of all principal surface combatants, and one-third of all naval aircraft.

In addition to these deployments, the Soviet Union has dramatically improved its geostrategic position through the acquisition of basing rights at Danang, Cam Ranh Bay, and other facilities in Vietnam. These provide the Soviets with a vital sea link from Vladivostok to the Indian Ocean and beyond. They also enhance the Soviet Union's ability to interdict free world shipping in sea lanes throughout Southeast Asia.

When asked whether the United States could defeat the Soviet Union in a war in the Western Pacific, Admiral Robert E. J. Long, former Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. forces in the Pacific, responded: "I no longer believe the margin we need still exists. It's frankly too close to call."

It is apparent, therefore, that a large percentage of Soviet deployments in the Far East are targeted on the United States and its forces, not on the PRC. This means that, regardless of the state of Sino-Soviet relations, the Soviet force structure in the Far East will remain at roughly its current level. Some ground forces may be moved from along the Sino-Soviet border, but these reductions would probably be symbolic only, because of Moscow's distrust of long-term Chinese intentions in the border regions and concerns over the powerful U.S. threat to the Far Eastern provinces.

FUTURE U.S.-PRC RELATIONS

The above considerations seem to prompt answers to the questions posed.

1. Can Sino-American strategic cooperation be expanded?

Militarily speaking, strategic cooperation probably cannot be significantly increased. The reasons are in large part political. Beijing has chosen to normalize relations with Moscow. Given Soviet sensitivity to possible Sino-American military-strategic cooperation, any move in that direction by Beijing would likely spur Moscow to tighten, not relax, its ring of containment around China. At this stage of its modernization, the PRC needs a stable and peaceful environment. For this reason alone, the Chinese leadership is unlikely to jeopardize its domestic programs by deliberately increasing tensions with the Soviet Union.

Politically, Sino-American strategic cooperation is valued by both Washington and Beijing. Both want the Soviet Union to be uncertain about their intentions but not so threatened as to pursue military solutions. In a political sense, the United States and the PRC can cooperate on a wide range of international issues, particularly in Southeast Asia and potentially in Korea. In other areas of the world, however, disagreement is more likely, because the PRC defines itself as a developing nation whose interests coincide with those of the Third World while it views the U.S. as an "imperialistic," "hegemonistic" superpower. Political strategic cooperation can be increased, but only incrementally and under limited circumstances.

2. Can China be drawn into a defense alliance if the United States so desires?

For a number of reasons this appears improbable. First, China is seeking more normal relations with the USSR. A defense alliance with the United States would destroy this hope and might well lead to a serious deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations. Second, few Americans would be willing to go to war to help China fight the Soviet Union. Similarly, PRC intervention on behalf of the U.S. would be unlikely unless PRC interests were directly threatened. Third, a defense alliance with China would carry the risk of severe USSR reprisal but not add to American security. There is little more the PRC can do to counterbalance the Soviet Union in Asia, and the United States already benefits from current efforts. And the situation is unlikely to change, no matter what the United States does. Fourth, a Sino-American defense alliance would signal a major departure from the U.S. strategy of maintaining a defensive perimeter in East Asia centered on Japan and other U.S. allies, notably the Republic of Korea and the Philippines. Such a shift would cause great concern among U.S. friends in Asia and precipitate substantial diplomatic difficulties.

3. Can the United States improve China's defense capabilities, thereby increasing the PRC's value as a counterweight to the Soviet Union in Asia?

Over time, the U.S. probably can do a great deal to help China modernize the PLA. But the U.S. contribution will be

constrained in varying degrees by: (1) congressional opposition to major military assistance programs; (2) limited availability of China's foreign exchange reserves; (3) the sheer magnitude of the modernization effort required; (4) political opposition in Beijing to close military relations with the United States; (5) the difficulty the PLA will have in absorbing the advanced technology central to modern Western armaments; and (6) the concerns of many U.S. allies in Asia who oppose large-scale U.S. military sales to the PRC.

Following Secretary Weinberger's trip to Beijing in September 1983 and Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige's earlier visit in June, the PRC was placed in export-controls category "V," a category that includes only friendly allied nations. Hence, dual-use technology, which can be applied to civilian or military purposes, now will be sold automatically to Beijing if it so requests, unless the U.S. government puts a hold on a particular item. Weapons still must be approved on a case-by-case basis, but restrictions are far more relaxed than heretofore. It is notable that Sino-American relations have warmed considerably following the mid-1983 decision by the Reagan Administration to permit these changes in the sale of high-technology items to the PRC.

It would seem, therefore, that the U.S. contribution to China's defense capabilities may be significant at the industrial-technological level, but that the limited quantities of weapons sold would have little impact on the strategic balance of power in East Asia. Moreover, any increase in China's defense capabilities would likely be countered by further Soviet force enhancement in the region. Thus, U.S. efforts to improve the PRC's defense would probably not greatly increase Beijing's counterweight value, but might have a profound regional effect where the balance of force structure is crucial, as in the Taiwan Strait area.

In sum, the fundamental national security interests of both the United States and China are well served by normalized Sino-American relations. Yet the allure of strategic cooperation with the PRC--like the image of one billion Chinese consumers for American products--should not be allowed to distort reality. The PRC is unwilling to enter into a strategic alliance with the United States, and such an alliance would not significantly enhance U.S. security interests. Both sides, however, should remain ready to cooperate when their mutual interests are threatened.

Since Marxist-Leninist theory advocates contradictory tactical maneuvering to achieve the long-range goals of the Party, the various zig-zags that have been witnessed in China's foreign policy can be expected to continue, as PRC leaders perceive the shifts in the "correlation of forces" both internally and internationally.

Given these realities, the U.S. has no choice but to downgrade plans for strategic cooperation with the People's Republic of China. U.S. security policy in Asia should be based on strength and the support of traditional allies, not on perceptions of China as an ally vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. The possibility for PRC contributions to U.S. security interests will continue and should be taken advantage of when appropriate. Likewise, there is much the United States can do to enhance PRC security without increasing the threat to America's friends in Asia. But the limits of strategic cooperation must be realized clearly. It is to be ardently hoped that the age of myth in U.S.-PRC relations has ended.

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