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***Updates published on 12 August 2011***

- "Serious Concerns: Discrepancies between Qing’s Citations and Her Sources" by Chen Jian

- Response by Simei Qing, James Madison College, Michigan State University

***Updates published on 30-09-2011, 27-03-2012, and 6-8-2014 available on the H-Diplo Website***

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Introduction by Thomas Maddux, California State University, Northridge

Studies on Chinese-U.S. relations since 1945 have evolved considerably since the early U.S. political battle over “who lost China to communism” to sustained debates concerning the question of whether or not an opportunity for an accommodation between Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Washington under President Harry S. Truman and Secretary of State Dean Acheson was missed. With the end of the Cold War, historians continue to explore the relationship with increasing emphasis by a new generation of scholars with gradual access to Chinese language sources and limited primary documents on CCP policy deliberations on the nature of Chinese foreign policies on issues central to the U.S., most notably Sino-Soviet relations after WWII, the Korean War, and the Indochina conflict. A common theme, as Andrew Rotter notes in his review, is the effort “to explain what went wrong” in the Sino-U.S. relationship. (1)

What is significantly different about Qing’s study, as Rotter points out, is the reinterpretation of U.S.-China relations “using culture as her principal category of analysis, in ways more far-reaching and innovative than have been deployed by other students of the subject.” (1) Qing’s central thesis is shaped by a reliance on culture as the most important category of analysis above ideology, national interests, and domestic politics. Qing proposes to “discover underlying core policy assumptions” by moving beyond “ideological rhetoric or labels, such as liberal capitalism and Marxist socialism” and beyond the “internalized worldviews of individuals … who may not be conscious of the assumptions he or she makes” to patterns of thought over long historical periods. Thus Qing’s “concept of cultural predisposition … encompasses both the moral parameters of the mainstream discourse … and individual worldviews or individuals’ differing interpretation of their cultural heritage.” (pp. 5-6) Why did U.S.-Chinese relations between 1945 and 1960 deteriorate is Qing’s central question and Qing’s thesis emphasizes the impact of overlapping Chinese and American visions of modernity and identity as opposed to conflicts of interest. The U.S. applied a Soviet model of totalitarian communism to China and Mao’s China viewed the U.S. within an imperial model that led to miscalculation, misjudgements, misunderstandings and undermined real opportunities to avoid the conflicts precipitated by the CCP victory in the Chinese civil war, the Sino-American conflict within the Korean War, and even the Vietnam conflict. (pp. 10-32, 294-301)

Qing has provided the reviewers with a challenging study and their assessments reflect the degree to which they accept the cultural analysis and the effectiveness of its application on the major issues in Sino-American relations as indicated below:

1. Most of the reviewers are willing to include cultural analysis as a useful category and recognize that it provides insight on contentious issues in Chinese-U.S. relations

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1 See Andrew Rotter’s review, note one, as well as the sources cited in the other reviews. Qing also refers to the most recent studies in chapter endnotes such as notes 3-8, pp. 309-310, note 1, p. 319, note 2, p. 327, note 1, p. 338, and notes 1-2, pp. 344-345.
both during Qing’s period and at other times. T. Christopher Jespersen, for example, suggests that Qing’s approach and primary research in both relevant U.S. and Chinese archives and published sources has provided new evidence and perspectives on the relationship. (1) Gregg Brazinsky also welcomes Qing’s new conceptual framework as a contrast to past empirical studies and concludes that Qing is successful on some issues. For example, in Chapter Two that focuses on the Truman’s administration’s effort to negotiate a commercial treaty with Chiang Kai-shek’s Kuomintang regime (KMT), Qing effectively emphasizes how the U.S. pressure to apply American economic principles of free markers, reduced trade barriers, and private capital versus government loans, clashed with both KMT views and the perspectives of Chinese reformers as well as the CCP. (1-2) Shu Guang Zhang agrees with Brazinsky and also applauds Qing’s comparison in Chapter One on the origins of Chinese and American visions of modernity and identity. (2) Doug Macdonald, however, who has the most reservations about cultural analysis, suggests that weaker powers will resist the demands of stronger powers: “Would not ideology and power politics offer an equally acceptable, if not superior, explanation of American and Chinese interactions in this case?” (10) Andrew Rotter applauds Qing’s study of “Chinese political economy and diplomacy... [for Qing] treats her subjects as complicated people whose actions cannot altogether be explained with reference to their own, sometimes simpleminded rhetoric. Mao Zedong is no monster in Qing’s account, but a political leader and an agrarian communist trying to figure out on the flow which policies will succeed in China and still comport with his ideological tendencies.” (4)

2. The reviewers also suggest that sometimes Qing’s cultural analysis either does not work or is not adequately developed in specific case studies, such as the Chinese decision to enter the Korean War. As Jespersen and Brazinsky note, Qing disagrees with Chen Jian who suggests that Mao had rejected any accommodation with the U.S. earlier and pushed to take China into the Korean War, and they are not persuaded by Qing’s assessment. In the response to the reviews, Qing does offer an extensive empirical evaluation that makes extensive use of Soviet and Chinese documents.(4-17) Brazinsky also questions the extent of influence that cultural visions of modernity have on relations since the U.S. exhibited more flexibility in dealing with conflicting visions advanced by Taiwan under the KMT, South Korea and Japan. “These disparate visions [in both communist and U.S. alliances] created frictions ... but they rarely caused the kind of protracted hostilities that existed between the United States and the PRC.” (3) Dwight MacDonald disagrees the most with Qing’s assessments and suggests that Qing, by relying too much on Chinese memoirs, tends to place too much blame on the Soviet Union and the United States for Chinese problems.

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3. Zhang has methodological and interpretative concerns on Qing’s study, most notably on Qing’s use of several Western sociological terms that “do not seem to fit Chinese realities” such as a “civil society” or “middle class” during this time period in China, and the absence of sufficient attention to contextual factors, most significantly the Cold War. Zhang suggests that both Mao’s and Truman’s policies “might have little to do with conflicting visions of modernity or identity but stand as fallout of the Cold War power politics.” (2-3) The Cold War could have as much impact as misperception and misjudgement. Rotter, who has contributed a number of important studies that make use of cultural analysis, does question a binary approach in Qing’s analysis with officials being “faced with either one course of action or another” and with binary chapter headings like “Perceptions and Realities.” As Rotter warns, “if there is one thing cultural analysis teaches its practitioners, it is to avoid thinking about the world as cleanly divided between what is believed to exist and what is actually out there” and that “human beings do not always see the world divided into two, giving them a simple choice of either/or.” (4-5) Rotter suggests that this is probably the situation that Mao and his advisers dealt with on sending troops to Korea in 1950 and it was the case with Secretary Acheson’s “ongoing ambivalence about whether to accommodate Communism.” (5) Macdonald advances a more general critique of Qing’s cultural analysis as flawed in both a theoretical and empirical sense. Since a cultural category of analysis does not lend itself to empirical verification for the individual, as Qing notes (pp. 5-6), Macdonald suggests that ideology and power are far more important categories of analysis that may be documented empirically. (1-6) Domestic political considerations would also have to be integrated especially in Washington’s calculations on policy toward the CCP as well as in Mao’s priorities with respect to domestic and foreign policy issues as Qing demonstrates.

4. The reviewers raise more questions about Qing’s assessment of Mao and Chinese policy than they do with evaluations of U.S. policymakers in part because the U.S. archives have been open and many studies completed on the U.S. side. The Marshall mission to China, Truman and Acheson’s efforts to deal with Mao, Taiwan, and the Korean War have been evaluated repeatedly, and Eisenhower and Dulles’ policies and involvement with the Taiwan Strait crises have received extensive coverage. Jespersen and Rotter do note that Qing discusses Ike’s desire to relax trade restrictions on China and see if Mao could be pulled away from the Soviet alliance but Dulles pulled him away with the argument that a hardline approach would have a greater chance of accomplishing the same objective. Zhang suggests that Washington makes effective use of its ideas of modernity and identity as a political instrument, most specifically with U.S. “aid inducement, trade embargo, economic sanctions, and diplomatic efforts to block the PRC’s entry into the UN and other international organizations.” (3)3 Macdonald does question Qing’s depiction of U.S. officials such as George Marshall and State Department China specialists as well as

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Mao’s policies such as the credibility of a coalition regime with a “Third Force” of urban liberals and intellectuals, and representatives from various political groups including capitalists. Macdonald also suggests that Qing’s cultural thesis does not explain the differences between the Truman and Eisenhower administration’s policies on China.

5. The Sino-Soviet relationship also runs throughout Qing’s study as an important third side of the triangular U.S.-Chinese-Soviet relationship during the period under study. Qing could apply the same cultural analysis to this relationship since China has an even more involved relationship with Russia/Soviet Union than with the U.S. Macdonald does challenge Qing’s assessment of the Sino-Soviet relationship as relying excessively on Chinese sources and incorrectly depicting Stalin as opposed to a coalition government in China, Qing’s reliance on Chinese downgrading of Soviet military aid to the CCP, and Qing’s use of Ivan Kovalev, Stalin’s chief official to the CCP, to demonstrate Soviet suspicions of Mao and the CCP. (8-15) In the roundtable response, Qing discusses a number of these issues. (21-33) Qing does provide important assessments on Mao’s reactions to both Stalin and Nikita Khrushchev which tend to reinforce Qing’s emphasis on the importance of Chinese opposition to imperialist type concessions whether it came from Soviet requests in the 1950 alliance treaty negotiations or Khrushchev’s proposal for a joint Soviet-Chinese nuclear submarine fleet in 1958. (pp. 259-268)

6. Qing devotes extensive attention to Chinese domestic and foreign policies under Mao’s leadership especially in the 1950s to the extent that the cultural analysis and thesis tend to be submerged. With the exception of Macdonald, the reviewers welcome this analysis and do not significantly question Qing’s analysis of Mao’s shifts in the Great Leap Forward and commune campaigns, what Qing refers to as the radical populist campaign versus the gradualist political blueprint. (pp. 229-237) An assessment of U.S. views on these campaigns as well as the Hundred Flowers campaign with intellectuals would have strengthened Qing’s thesis on the importance of the different cultural perspectives rooted in the history of both countries.

Participants:


**Gregg Brazinsky** is an Associate Professor of History and International Affairs in the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University. Brazinsky received his Ph.D. from Cornell University is a specialist on U.S.-East Asian relations during the Cold War. His work focuses on the social and cultural impact of the United States on East Asia. His articles have appeared or will appear in *Diplomatic History* and in several edited volumes, and he has published, *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy* (2007) Professor Brazinsky is now pursuing research on several other projects. One is a study of Sino-American competition in the Third World during the Cold War. Another examines the cultural impact of the Korean War in America, Korea and China. He serves as Co-director of the George Washington University Cold War Group.

**T. Christopher Jespersen** is Dean of the School of Arts & Letters at North Georgia College & State University, both a liberal arts institution and one of the nation’s six senior military colleges. He received his Ph.D. from Rutgers University and is the author of *American Images of China, 1931-1949* (Stanford University Press, 1996, with a Chinese language edition from Jiangsu People’s Publishing House expected in 2010), editor of *Interviews with George Kennan* (University Press of Mississippi, 2002), and author of articles on U.S. diplomacy and relations with Asia in edited volumes and professional journals. He has served on the editorial boards of *Diplomatic History* and *Pacific Historical Review.* He is completing a book entitled *Becoming the Redcoats.* In addition to receiving various awards for his teaching, in 2000 he was the recipient of a Meritorious Service Award from the United Negro College Fund.

**Douglas J. Macdonald** has taught at Colgate University since 1987, where in the past he has served as the Director of the International Relations Program. He received his Ph.D. degree from Columbia University. Macdonald’s doctoral dissertation won the Helen Dwight Reed Award from the American Political Science Association for best dissertation in international relations for 1985-1986. It was subsequently published by Harvard University Press in 1992 as *Adventures in Chaos: American Intervention for Reform in the Third World.* He has also published articles in academic journals such as *Security Studies* and *International Security.* From August, 2005 to August, 2007, he served as Visiting Research Professor in National Security Affairs at the Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pa. While there, he published a monograph on Islamist ideology entitled, “The New Totalitarians: Social Identities and Radical Islamist Political Grand Strategy.” In 2007, he received the U.S. Army’s Outstanding Civilian Employee Award. Macdonald is currently working on a long term project on ideology and power analysis, consulting for the US Navy, and editing a book on piracy in Southeast Asia.

**Andrew J. Rotter** (Ph.D. Stanford University 1981) is Charles Dana Professor of History at Colgate University. He is author of a number of books and articles on U.S.-Asia relations, including, *Comrades at Odds: Culture and Indo-U.S. Relations, 1947-1964,* (2000); *The Path to Vietnam* (1987); *Light at the End of the Tunnel,* 2nd ed. (1999), and most recently,
Hiroshima: The World’s Bomb (2008). His latest project is a study of the role of the five senses in imperial encounters in the Philippines and India

Reading Simei Qing’s recent book *From Allies to Enemies* took me a little bit by surprise. During the last decade a generation of young Chinese scholars trained in the United States have used their linguistic expertise and access to newly available materials in the People’s Republic of China to broaden our understanding of Beijing’s relations with the rest of the world during the Cold War. Yet much of this new literature has been highly empirical and focused on presenting the new evidence that has become available in Chinese archives. It has not paid as much attention to devising new theoretical or conceptual frameworks. Qing’s new book stands somewhat in contrast to this trend. While she does use her share of new documents, it is really the conceptual framework that she develops which takes center stage in *From Allies to Enemies*.

Qing brushes aside contentions by other China experts that the roots of Sino-American antagonism lay in ideology or simple calculations of national interest. She argues instead that differing “cultural visions of modernity” were critical to the development of hostilities between Washington and Beijing. Americans, she writes, tended to equate modernization with westernization while assuming that “no middle ground can or should be struck between ... individualism and collectivism.” Chinese on the other hand strove to find a balance between the public and private realms (31). In the American vision of modernity individual freedom and the sanctity of individual rights were seen as the “highest fulfillment of human aspiration” and the “vital foundation for longstanding peace in the world” whereas the Chinese version emphasized “universal peace, justice and harmony.” (31-32). These different cultural visions of modernity caused each side to consistently misinterpret the other’s policies and intentions. In *From Allies to Enemies*, Qing deploys this analytical framework to examine several critical issues and episodes that contributed to the deterioration of Sino-American relations during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations.

Qing’s argument serves her very well in some chapters and at times produces keen insights into the causes of frictions between Washington and Beijing. In Chapter Two, for instance, Qing looks at American economic reconstruction programs in China after World War II. Chinese and Americans, she argues, had very different ideas about the form that economic development in the country should take. Whereas Americans envisioned a “New Deal-style free-market economy,” Chinese reformers hoped to build a “mixed economy” based on Sun Yat Sen’s Principle of People’s Livelihood. Thus, when a Sino-American Commercial Treaty that more closely approximated the U.S. vision of economic development was signed in 1946 it drew widespread criticism from China’s intellectuals as unequal. In this sense, Qing intriguingly connects Chinese Nationalist and Communist criticisms of American foreign policy in ways that have been overlooked by most of the literature on Sino-American relations.

In general, when Qing sticks to discussions of economic policy she is most persuasive – perhaps because it was in the areas of foreign aid, trade relations and industrial policy that
Beijing and Washington most explicitly sought to bring their respective concepts of modernity to fruition. Chapter 8, which covers CCP visions of industrialization during the 1950s, is particularly interesting in this regard. Qing demonstrates that there were in fact two competing economic blueprints that guided Chinese policy makers during the 1950s. One was gradualist and envisioned a long transitional stage for China before its eventual transformation; the other was populist and sought to more swiftly redress socio-economic inequality. From Allies to Enemies demonstrates how the CCP abandoned the gradualist approach for the more radical model during the late 1950s. Ultimately, the author argues, the considerations that fueled economic policy making in Communist China were far more nuanced than the Eisenhower administration -- which simply assumed that Mao was following a Stalinist model -- could appreciate. On these points, Qing’s work helps us to understand both Chinese economic policies and the causes of continuing Sino-American friction during the 1950s with greater clarity than before.

But there are other places where From Allies to Enemies is not quite fully persuasive. In particular, Chapter 6 presents some interesting evidence to challenge the interpretation of China’s entry into the Korean War that has been put forward by Chen Jian and other scholars. Qing argues that Mao’s decision to enter the war was not predetermined by his ideological commitment to see China become the driving force behind a large-scale revolution of the proletariat in Asia. Instead she contends that it was only when U.N. troops moved across the thirty-eighth parallel that Mao decided to intervene. Yet From Allies to Enemies differs with Chen Jian’s respected study, China’s Road to the Korean War, on basic historical facts and does not give a sufficiently detailed accounting of the evidence to conclusively prove its own accuracy. According to Qing, Mao drafted his crucial telegram to Stalin explaining Beijing’s motives for entering the Korean War on the morning of October 2 and only after that attended a Central Committee Secretariat meeting (154-155). Chen Jian on the other hand writes that Mao drafted his lengthy telegram to Stalin “right after the meeting” which occurred at 3:00 PM on 2 October 1950.1 Moreover, according to Chen, Mao demonstrated that he was firmly committed to going to war at the beginning of the meeting when the chairman stated that, “the question is not whether or not but how fast we should send troops to Korea.”2 The relative timing of the meeting and telegram and the nature of the discussions that occurred at the meeting are important to answering the question of when exactly Mao decided to enter the war.

Moreover, Qing’s argument about China’s entry into the war ignores the copious evidence presented by Chen Jian’s study demonstrating that by August and September 1950 Mao already intended to dispatch troops to Korea.3 Of course, Truman’s decision to cross the 38th parallel doubtless influenced the timing of Chinese intervention, but there is still not

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2 Ibid., 173.

3 Ibid., 126-157.
enough evidence to prove that it did anything more than accelerate a process that was already in motion. My point here is not that Chen’s interpretation is unassailable; no work of history ever is. Without having personally examined the primary source evidence, the reviewer is not really in a position to state which interpretation is correct. Nevertheless, the book is disappointing in its failure to more carefully analyze and refute the evidence presented by scholars who disagree with it.

There are also a few larger theoretical questions that Qing’s book raises but does not fully resolve. While the author certainly shows that cultural visions of modernity played some role in turning the United States and Communist China into adversaries, she is not always clear about how much causality they really had. The author brings up but does not fully explore an interesting point at the end of Chapter Two – namely that despite the fact that Taiwan also possessed a vision of modernity that was different from the American one, the United States proved much more flexible in its dealings with Taiwan. For that matter, Americans showed a similar degree of flexibility when dealing with South Korean and Japanese ideas about modernization despite the fact that these ideas differed significantly from their own. Indeed, a broader look at Asia during the Cold War reveals that numerous competing visions of modernity were advanced by a variety of different nations and actors. These disparate visions created frictions both between and within the Free World and the Communist bloc. But they rarely caused the kind of protracted hostilities that existed between the United States and the PRC. *From Allies to Enemies* leaves its readers wondering why contrasting visions of modernity could be reconciled in some cases but not in others. Of course, that would be a difficult question to answer in a book about Sino-American relations. But still, Qing would have benefited from some consideration of the broader Asian context either in the introduction or the conclusion.

Although Qing is not fully persuasive on every point and might have wrestled a bit more with some of the challenging issues that she took up, her book is still a very important contribution to the study of U.S.-Asian relations that should be read by all scholars in the field. *From Allies to Enemies* offers an intriguing new theoretical framework from which to consider the emergence of hostilities between the U.S. and the PRC during the early Cold War. It leaves the next generation of scholars working on Sino-American relations a great deal to think about.

Now we have *From Allies to Enemies* in which Simei Qing tackles Sino-American relations in the wake of World War Two while simultaneously delving into the domestic, cultural, and intellectual foundations of each nation’s policies toward the other one. The relationships that create friends and allies as well as enemies, as Qing and the other authors cited have demonstrated, are so often situational in nature, and with the strength of those bonds, whether they be fraternal and affectionate or whether they turn to anger and open hostilities, dependent on so many different variables. For her part, Qing elegantly lays out a tragedy of Greek proportions. She does so slowly, carefully, and without resort to hype or hyperbole. *From Allies to Enemies* is a cautious book - in all the best ways. Using a wide range of sources in Chinese and English, Qing focuses on perceptions, realities, and the disparities between them in Sino-American relations from 1945 to 1960. Qing revisits old questions and provides new evidence in assessing how the United States and China went from being allies to adversaries so quickly. It is a tragedy as each side misjudged the other’s “domestic conditions and foreign-policy objectives,” and those misjudgments proved fatal.¹

Unlike some authors who have stressed the ideological commitment Mao Zedong and other CCP leaders made to furthering the communist cause internationally through aggressive policies in Asia, Qing emphasizes the caution Mao exercised and cites as key evidence the decision to intervene in the Korean War.² Far from promoting an expanding communist front, Mao made his

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² For an excellent example of this argument, see Chen Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001). Chen argues that despite the reservations expressed by some in the CCP leadership, “Mao’s heart was with intervention.” Not only that, but Mao “used both his political wisdom and authority to push his colleagues to support the war decision.” P. 90.
decision with a great deal of anguish. The Chinese Communists wanted peace, and after so many decades of fighting with the Nationalists, suffering at the hands of the Japanese during World War Two, and civil war between the Communists and Nationalists after the Japanese were defeated in 1945 so did the Chinese people. They needed peace, and the CCP needed peace too to effect reforms and implement desperately needed policies.

Peace was not to happen, however. Mao had not been informed of Kim Il-sung’s decision to attempt Korean unification by military force. Stalin had made that suggestion, or approved of Kim’s wish, and the North Koreans decided to strike. China’s problem was not in the North Korean offensive itself. After all, Mao was preparing CCP forces for the invasion of Taiwan in order to secure the final piece of Chinese territory for Communist rule. Indeed, commander of the Taiwan campaign, Su Yu, recommended on June 23, 1950, that the first assault wave should increase the number of corps involved from four to six.3 The North Koreans crossed the 38th parallel two days later.

Of course, what began as a successful North Korean operation dramatically turned around in September when General Douglas MacArthur daringly landed American forces at Inchon, something which, Qing points out, Mao had warned was a possibility. With the complete military reversal effected by the Inchon landing, Beijing had much to consider. On the one hand, the Chinese were not worried about the South Koreans crossing the 38th parallel. On the other hand, Beijing went to great lengths to distinguish between American and South Korean troops crossing into North Korean territory. With regard to the latter, the issue was an internal affair, and Chinese troops would not intervene. With respect to the former, however, that constituted something entirely different. While Zhou Enlai was telling the Indian Ambassador K. M. Pannikkar that China could not sit idly by and allow the Americans to conquer North Korea, Mao drafted a public statement for Zhou: the “Chinese people love peace. However, to defend peace, we have never feared, and will never fear waging wars of resistance against military aggression.”4 American troops occupying North Korea constituted imperialist aggression from Beijing’s view. And in the background was the recent American assistance to the Nationalists during the Chinese Civil War.

In the end, Qing describes the Chinese decision to intervene as agonizing. Stalin refused to provide air support. Qing quotes a top aid to Mao, Hu Qiaomu, who, recalling the decision years later, stated, “At the time, the civil war had just ended, we had mountains of problems at home. We did not want a war with the United States. We did not incite North Korea to launch the Korean War.” The final decision, Hu noted, was “extremely difficult.”5

Chen Jian has taken a different approach on this issue. Far from agonizing about the decision, “Mao was inclined to enter the war, and he played a central role at every crucial juncture in formulating Beijing’s war decision.” With so many domestic problems besetting the CCP

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3 Qing, pp. 151-153.

4 Qing, p. 154.

5 Qing, p. 159.
government, why would Mao incline in this direction? Jian argues that Mao saw not only an opportunity to settle what he termed the “Korean problem” but also by driving the Americans from the peninsula to consolidate China’s position in East Asia.6

Qing sees a different debate. Difficult as it was, the Chinese decision greatly changed the dynamics for both the CCP and the Truman administration. American officials had no interest in the agonizing or difficult nature of the decisions made in Beijing. Quite the contrary. They believed the CCP leadership had taken advantage of the opportunity to further communist aims in Asia.

No one saw that more clearly than one of America’s principal cold warriors and Secretary of State for Dwight D. Eisenhower, John Foster Dulles. “For the majority at the State Department, led by Dulles, it was beyond the shadow of a doubt that Beijing was consumed by communist ideological fanaticism.”7 Any thoughts of Mao becoming an Asian version of Yugoslavian leader Josep Broz Tito were dashed by China’s entrance into the Korean War.

Dulles liked containment for the way it ostracized Beijing and put psychological pressure on the CCP leadership in the form of making the Chinese feel “inferior to the civilized world.” Such sentiment, far more than the economic impact of an embargo, for example, meant that collapse was imminent. The Chinese desire to desire to “become respectable in the civilized world” was simply too powerful.8

Qing points to the narrow view of the situation taken by the secretary of state. “Dulles’s totalitarian model of analysis was, however, unable to comprehend the distinctive form of China’s quest for modernity and new identity, which was further confounded by the difficult partnership between the poor peasants and the urban intellectuals after the nationwide land revolution.”9 In short, Dulles did not understand the Chinese position. That’s certainly true enough, but then Qing follows that up by letting Dulles off the hook, so to speak, by citing Robert McNamara as symptomatic of the Kennedy and Johnson administrative officials who were equally deficient in understanding Chinese affairs. Others made the same mistake Dulles did, in other words. Writing three decades after helping make the fateful decisions that plunged the United States into military conflict in Southeast Asia, McNamara fell back on the notion that the purging of the State Department’s China experts during the 1950s left the U.S. government without the expertise needed to provided careful and informed analysis of the internal happenings of the Chinese and Vietnamese governments. David Halberstam certainly did much to propagate this idea, making the likes of John Paton Davies, John Stewart Service, and John Carter Vincent out to be heroic and even romantic figures.10 Certainly their persecution and

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6 Jian, p. 90.
7 Qing, p. 175.
8 Qing, p. 179.
9 Qing, pp. 293-4.
dismissal from service was tragic, not the least for them personally and professionally but also for the nation’s foreign policy bureaucracy. That is not the same thing, however, as insisting that theirs were the only informed voices that could have changed policies and led to more “sophisticated, nuanced insights” into the communist world. As countless other authors have convincingly demonstrated, other sophisticated and nuanced views were available; they were simply ignored by the likes of Robert McNamara who, similarly to Dulles, but from a different political perspective, was no less blind to subtleties within the Chinese or Vietnamese worlds.

At one point, President Eisenhower viewed matters differently from his secretary of state. Whereas Dulles insisted that unmitigated economic, political, and psychological pressure through blockades and non-recognition policies was the only way to get the Chinese Communists to collapse, Eisenhower saw problems with such an approach. First, it would tend to make Beijing more dependent on Moscow, not less, and second, it would force the United States to continue to spend lavishly, both in terms of military hardware and foreign assistance programs. Eisenhower wanted to get the budget under control, and he wanted the United States to begin to stop underwriting the Japanese economy to such an extraordinary degree. Trade with China offered strategic opportunities.\(^\text{11}\)

Whatever Eisenhower’s sympathies, the president was not able to induce change in the way the United States viewed China nor in the way U.S. policies were focused. But that did not mean, as Qing points out, that Eisenhower gave up. To the contrary, the president saw in Japan and America’s Western European allies the opportunity to open trade with China. He lobbied on Britain’s behalf in 1956 – after he was reelected, it should be noted – to liberalize trade with China. Eisenhower faced criticism from Congressional opponents, both Republican and Democratic alike, but Prime Minister Harold Macmillan had his own domestic critics, and the two leaders tried to find an accommodation. As Qing concludes, “With Eisenhower’s quiet yet firm support, American and British experts began talks over revision of the China embargo list.”\(^\text{12}\)

Eisenhower saw his diplomatic room to maneuver narrowed during his second term, and so he gave way to the view held by Dulles in 1958, Qing reports, because of the second Taiwan Straits crisis. Qing summarizes the consequences of his findings with respect to Sino-American relations in the 1950s and their impact on the war in Vietnam roughly a decade later: “it is hard to conclude that the Vietnam War was a necessary war that ‘frustrated China’s ambition to dominate Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific through military force.’” On the contrary, John Foster Dulles’s policies had the opposite of their intended effect and, instead, became self-fulfilling prophecies.

Qing nicely sums up what happened: “Between 1945 and 1960, both China and America, like people on [a] boat, repeatedly failed to reach their intended foreign policy objectives because they persistently failed to understand the ocean of historical currents that deeply underlay the

\(^{11}\) Qing, p. 174.

\(^{12}\) Qing, p. 196.
other side’s core policy assumptions or cultural visions of modernity and identity.” Boats, ocean currents swirling about, and an inability to navigate those waters – they make for helpful visualizations for what happened to China and the United States after 1945. If Christopher Thorne could point to the tensions, disagreements, and hostilities that affected Anglo-American relations in fighting against a common enemy from 1941 to 1945, then Qing certainly has ample material from which to draw in discussing the gulf between the United States and China in the aftermath of World War Two. Thorne’s apt title, “Allies of a Kind,” can be reversed: “kind of allies,” as in they were kind of like allies, but not quite. For American and Chinese policymakers the distance to be bridged was far greater than what the British and Americans faced, and yet as Richard Madsen has astutely noted, when it came to dealing with China, Americans were not entirely grounded in reality. “Key participants in the discussion viewed China as a familiar place, where their fathers and mothers had invested enormous personal effort, there they themselves had grown up, where they had personal friends. Now China was led by people who had expelled the foreign missionaries and often cruelly persecuted many of those who had worked with them.”

In the years after World War Two, the path from allies to enemies was fraught with pitfalls of many different sorts. Simei Qing brings a thoughtful and carefully considered approach to this discussion, and in the end, enriches our understanding of just what happened to cause the United States and China to go from allies to enemies.

13 Qing, p. 298.

Siimei Qing has written a major revisionist work on US-Chinese relations from 1945 to 1960. Its claims to credibility are both theoretical (by using a cultural analytical framework, referred to as Modernity/Identity),¹ and empirical (she challenges the “emerging consensus” of recent decades based on new evidence from Eastern Europe, the former USSR, and the People’s Republic of China that has changed the way we look at the early Cold War.)

The book has serious problems on both grounds. I found the analysis flawed and in places extremely problematical, both theoretically and empirically. The People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) problems in the period 1945-1960, according to the book, were overwhelmingly the result of outside influences, with many leaders of the communist regime actually desiring a multi-party, generally liberal state and individualistic society. It was largely, according to the author’s view, external forces that prevented this outcome. Such an approach somewhat robs the PRC leadership of much of its agency and ability to shape events.² Certainly it is true that they were acting under constraints, including dealing with the external realm, as are all leaders. Yet in my opinion Qing’s account goes too far in belaboring this point and in doing so misrepresents how policies are made.³

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¹ I will use the more general terms of cultural/collective identity analysis. Qing does not make the theoretical distinction between individual identity and collective identity, but overwhelmingly uses the term in the latter sense.

² I would like to thank Bob Jervis for emphasizing this point to me in a characteristically insightful and careful reading of an earlier draft of this review.

³ For an approving argument that diplomatic history has been “modernized” and made more like social history through its “Cultural Turn,” therefore reinvigorating it within the discipline, see Karina Urbach, “Diplomatic History Since the Cultural Turn,” Historical Journal, Vol. 46, No. 4 (December 2003), pp. 991-997. For a defense against some of the issues that I raise in the critique I am making of the “Cultural Turn” here, see Peter Jackson, “Pierre Bordieu, the ‘Cultural Turn’ and the Practice of International History,” Review of International Studies, Vol. 34 (2008), pp. 155-181. These are, in essence, a lack of analytical rigor and on over-emphasis on the role of culture in policy-making. I disagree with Jackson’s analytical solution.
I find Qing’s overall conclusion unconvincing. Qing argues that it is only, or certainly overwhelmingly, the US and the USSR that ruined a liberal vision of the future along social democratic lines envisioned by Mao and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)/PRC. CCP agency in this regard was largely blameless for the events that occurred, and typically confounded by these outside forces beyond its control. This is historical revisionism of a high order, turning much of what is believed about the PRC in the period on its head; unfortunately, it is scholarship of a questionable order.

Theory: The “Cultural Turn” and Causation

To be fair to Professor Qing, in a broader sense I admit to a good deal of skepticism about political analysis concerning specific events and policies based on broad, generalized notions of culture or collective identity. Two other analytical categories used in tandem—ideology and power—offer, in my view, far better means to explain behavior that are consonant with the empirical record. Culture/collective identity analysis is so constructed to allow virtually any interpretation of the empirical record to suffice. Professor Qing does not offer a useful cultural analytical framework for understanding Chinese or, especially, American political behavior.

I view some of these problems, particularly those implying causation, as inherent to such an approach. There is the analytical problem, for example, of explaining variation of results from presumably the same cultural causes. How does one explain a Czar Alexander, a Lenin, and a Kerensky emerging from the same cultural beliefs in Russia? How can one explain the emergence of a Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek), the liberal Hu Shih, and Mao Zedong from a single Chinese culture? Professor Qing recognizes the problem (11) and attempts to solve it by claiming she is only dealing with “mainstream” cultural constructs. But who decides what is “mainstream” and what is not? The czar was “mainstream” in 1890, but not in 1918. Sun Yat-sen was not “mainstream” under the Qing Dynasty, but was

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4 Qing does criticize the attitudes of agrarian-based elements in the CCP for their lack of cosmopolitanism and subsequent negative effects on the alleged liberal order of the 1950s. But external constraints are far more emphasized.

5 Unlike many other scholars, I do not see ideology and power as mutually exclusive, but rather as complementary dialectical motivations for state behavior. Therefore both are necessary for analytical rigor, though using one of the other in a partial analysis is also acceptable as long as it is made explicit by the analyst. As a generalization, ideology deals with political strategy (ends) and power deals with political tactics (means), though there is often a dialectical crossover between the two. But ideology and power both predict behaviors that can be tested against the empirical record to discover when they may or may not be operative – and why. Culture and collective identity do not, except in the most abstract fashion.
so after the Republican Revolution of 1911. How does one explain this change through broad cultural analyses? Has the culture changed, or has the dominant ideology? How does one political belief system go from being peripheral to being “mainstream,” as did Marxism-Leninism in China and Russia? What are the respective roles of purposefully chosen beliefs (ideology), traditions, customs, or just plain “habits of the heart”? How can these cultural characteristics be operationalized in policy research? Is “mainstream” a quantitative or qualitative concept, or both? What is the role of power relations in determining what is “mainstream”?

There is no systematic attempt in this book to explain or address these analytical problems, never mind to solve them. Ideas or behavior that stray from allegedly reigning norms are simply labeled “non-mainstream” and therefore ignored. This framework needs to be much further thought out and explained. Ideological and power analyses have their own mighty analytical deficits, but at least they specify expected behavior that can be usefully tested against their own predictions.

Professor Qing only muddles the issue further when she offers the following formulation for conceptual operationalization of cultural analysis:

> The role of cultural values and beliefs in policymaking is two-fold: they sometimes follow policy decision, functioning as policy justification or rationalization. At other times, however, deep-rooted cultural values may precede the decision, functioning as policy predispositions or policy rationality. (6)

Thus Professor Qing reaches the conclusion that sometimes culture matters as causation and sometimes it does not. But since it is a basic law of empirical analysis that to demonstrate causation the effect must follow the claimed cause, she really is telling us very little about the causal role that culture plays in policymaking, and offers no framework for identifying that role within the a priori (forethought; causal)/a posteriori (afterthought/rationalization) epistemic dilemma. This approach is highly descriptive and not particularly useful analytically. As noted, all analysis of policy motivations faces this fundamental dilemma, but I believe the dilemma is particularly acute in cultural analysis.

Moreover, Qing’s reading in fundamental American cultural artifacts leaves something to be desired because of the range of her causal claims. The Federalist Papers are mentioned briefly, as are a few secondary sources making claims about American culture. One would never know that many of these interpretations (e.g., Louis Hartz) are hotly contested among American intellectual historians and political theorists. Selected quotes from more contemporary thinkers are also briefly referred to in the text. Yet the only original philosophical contribution of the United States to world philosophy, Pragmatism, goes unmentioned, though John Dewey gets one fleeting reference, albeit for his enthusiasm for

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6 Qing makes this statement citing a Robert Jervis article on war and misperception.
socialism in China not for his Pragmatism. Charles S. Pierce and William James, two of the most important American philosophers, are not even mentioned.7

And in a work that seeks to explain behavior through cultural analysis, it is surprising that the role of religion, and in particular Anglo-American Protestant reformism, in shaping the American world view, is absent?8 Indeed, some scholars have argued convincingly that


American Protestant missionary activity had a strong influence on the construction of Chinese secular institutions in some ways.9

Moreover, Qing makes some clearly questionable generalizations flowing from her cultural analysis. For example, she claims that “Wilsonian liberal internationalism” has been the dominant American “vision” of internationalism in the “modern era.” (16) Wilsonianism arguably was not even obviously the dominant American vision in the Wilsonian era. Frank Ninkovich has made a strong case that Wilsonianism is an emergency diplomatic reaction to crises, usually following wars, not the dominant mode of how Americans generally look at the world.10 (Note, for example, the abrupt shift in the policy choices and justifications of foreign policy after 9/11 by the previously “anti-nation-building” Bush Administration to a clearly Wilsonian vision of America’s role in the world. This occurred, of course, after Ninkovich wrote his book, but his pattern appears to fit nicely.)

Clearly Wilsonianism has not dominated American foreign policy for the better part of its history and remains controversial even today.11 There are also strong and influential Realist, Isolationist, and other impulses operating in American politics also, dating at least from Washington’s farewell address. But this kind of ideological complexity within the same culture does not fit Qing’s culture/collective identity claim.

Social Science and Cultural Analysis

The vague, general definitional and conceptual categories used by historians today in the “Cultural Turn” often resemble those of cultural anthropologists and sociologists in the 1940s and 1950s which then operated under the umbrella term, “National Character.” Often emerging from intellectual projects connected with attempts to explain culturally how fascism and fanatical authoritarianism became so popular in Germany, Italy, and Japan in the 1920s and 1930s, they were suffused with analysis of everything from high culture to toilet training.12 Since everything is considered cultural, everything is important to study.


11 For other visions of American foreign policy that compete with Wilsonianism, see the influential Walter Russell Mead and Richard C. Leone, Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World (New York: Routledge, 2002).

12 For an interesting overview, see Marvin Harris, The Rise of Anthropological Theory: A History of Theories of Culture, Expanded Edition (Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2000). My favorite example from the
Over time, many anthropologists and sociologists moved away from this approach for some of the methodological problems noted above in the current usage of cultural analysis.

Political scientists in the 1960s and 1970s attempted to overcome the analytical problems of the lack of precision in cultural anthropology by looking at a subset of “national character” which they called political culture. Instead of trying to explain political behavior from the behavioral signposts of an entire culture, political scientists tried to isolate those cultural artifacts that were meaningful politically, very much including political institutions. Writing in 1976, Yung Wei accurately describes what happened:

Political scientists advocating the study of political culture are very much aware of the problems involved in the study of “national character.” In the study of political culture and socialization they have tried to avoid duplication of the mistakes committed by cultural anthropologists. Yet their effort in this respect has not been completely successful. ...[M]any of the problems and shortcomings of the research conducted on Chinese political culture and socialization have actually reflected and, in some cases, duplicated the problems confronting the cultural anthropologists in their study of national character. ¹³

Many of these problems remain and are duplicated today in historical cultural analysis. Indeed, it is my view that many of them are inherently unsolvable.

The Roles of Ideology and Power Analyses

The selective use of source materials and the generality of analytical categories on the American side in this book raise many of these questions about cultural analysis. Cultural explanations of specific behavior resemble what Giovanni Sartori has called “stretched concepts.” Over time, he argues, analytical constructs get “stretched” to include more information. As they become more abstract, however, they become analytically less valuable. The examples he uses, while placing them in a “ladder of abstraction,” are Public Servant-Bureaucrat-Staff Member. With each descent down the ladder of abstraction, more specificity allows for more analytical rigor and greater measurement. Creating a ladder of

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abstraction for analysis of ideational political behavior, I would list them Culture-Collective Identity-Ideology.  

Although Qing specifically rejects “official” ideology as an analytical category, in my opinion it far better explains the difference among Alexander, Lenin and Kerensky - and Jiang, Hu and Mao - than does a general cultural or collective identity formulation. It still contains the a priori/a posteriori dilemma (it is my opinion that it is ultimately unsolvable), but it solves a lot of other analytical problems that remain in Qing’s analysis. Without a theory of cultural transmission – and, for that matter, partial or mis-transmission – one is left with a passive process of cultural osmosis based on an assumption of a collective ideational impact. With ideology, greater measurement (and therefore testability against the empirical record) is possible because of the volition and agency typically (though not always) involved: political actors choose, explain, and justify (a priori and/or a posteriori) their actions through ideology, to themselves and others. When they do so through cultural explanations we usually call it something else, e.g., nationalism (which is an ideology, not a culture.)

I find, therefore, that cultural analysis is useful only when used in conjunction with other analytical concepts such as ideology and power analysis, and then only peripherally. “Culture matters,” but it is not the most useful analytical construct available when considering foreign policy behavior. It would be unreasonable to require that cultural/collective identity analysis provide the only explanation for events to demonstrate its utility. But it is not unfair to require that it offer sufficient evidence and argumentation, as well as a fair hearing for counter-evidence and argumentation from competing analytical frameworks, to claim to be the most plausible explanation. This it rarely can do. There is nothing in Qing’s analysis of American, Soviet or Chinese behavior in this period that I do not think can be better explained by ideology and power considerations than culture or collective identity. The latter two categories are just too amorphous to be of much analytical use. The analytical use of ideology and power allows for an examination, imperfect though it may be, of the respective roles of agency and structure, while cultural analysis greatly over-emphasizes structure and underrates the value of agency analysis.

A Note on Sources and Evidence

It is clear from the footnotes that one of Qing’s goals is contesting what she calls the “emerging consensus” concerning the PRC in this period, especially the work of Chinese-

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American historian Chen Jian, but also that of Zhai Qiang and others. I am unable to enter into a dispute over Chinese language sources, since it is a language I do not understand. But Qing’s uses of certain types of evidence can fairly be commented on in a review. In particular, I will highlight the following problems: a highly selective, and at times misleading, use of Western translated evidence, especially of Russian sources; an overuse and uncritical acceptance of the memoir literature; and, excessive reliance on selective and controversial sources such as Ivan Kovalev

1) Weak Use of Western Language Sources

Professor Qing does not use some of the latest materials concerning the origins of the Cold War in Asia, especially translated documents from the former USSR published in the West, for example, from edited collections or from rich resources such as the Cold War International History Project.

There are many examples of this failing, but I will only present several in the interest of time and space.

One of the most serious errors in Qing’s argument is on an important topic for her main thesis: that the Chinese communists were open to sharing power, coalition government, and an open society, and that the Soviets were opposed to such arrangements in China. I shall return to this question below in a discussion of the nature of the CCP, but first let me demonstrate how her lack of Western translated documents leaves the analysis flawed.

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16 For example, Alexander Dallin and F.I. Firsove, eds., Dimitrov and Stalin, 1934-1943: Letters from the Soviet Archives (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000). Not only does the correspondence document Comintern aid to the CCP in the 1930s and 1940s, but, among other things, shows Stalin was thinking of communist “regional clusters” as early as the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943. As we shall see, leadership of such a “regional cluster” was offered China in 1949. Ibid., pp-228-229.

17 At http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=topics.home&topic_id=1409. Qing's bibliography of Soviet sources in English consists only of primary sources, and these are chosen narrowly. There are few examples of the rich literature produced by Russian scholars and scholars of the USSR in recent decades. The only primary source for “Russian Archival Documents” is a three volume set of translations by a Chinese editor on the Korean War and published in Taiwan. There are skimpy primary documents from other sources in the footnotes. See p. 383 for the bibliography.
In dealing with the “Third Force” (an amalgamation of mostly liberal political groups allegedly somewhere ideologically between the CCP and GMD), Qing claims that it was Mao’s policy all along to form a coalition government with them after World War II:

Clearly, from Mao’s 1945 work *On Coalition Government* to his 1949 work *On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship*, the CCP’s basic theme stayed the same: building a system of New Democracy in China while continuing the coalition between the CCP and the Third Force. (118)

In Qing’s telling, this policy was strongly opposed by the Soviet Union and helped lead to its profound distrust of the PRC’s ideological purity.

In fact, there is good evidence from Russian sources that the idea of a coalition government in China had been Stalin’s, that Mao’s openness to a coalition government was dependent on his domestic power position, and that Mao had been initially against the idea of a coalition government except as a temporary political tactic to fight the Guomindang. Once victory for the CCP was attained, the Third Force parties would be cast aside in Mao’s formulation.

In a book published in 1998, editor Odd Arne Westad included a document consisting of a cable from Stalin to Mao in April, 1948. It was an answer to two previous cables sent by the Chinese leader on November 30, 1947 and March 15, 1948. In answer to the earlier cables, Stalin noted:

We have doubts only about one point in the letter, where it is said that “In the period of the final victory of the Chinese Revolution, following the example of the USSR and Yugoslavia, all political parties except the CCP should leave the political scene, which will significantly strengthen the Chinese Revolution.”

We do not agree with this. We think that the various opposition parties in China which are representing the middle strata of the Chinese population and are opposing the Guomindang clique will exist for a long time. And the CCP will have to involve them in cooperation against the Chinese reactionary forces and imperialist powers, while keeping hegemony, i.e., the leading position, in its hands. It is possible that some representatives of these parties will have to be included into the Chinese people’s democratic government and the government itself has to be proclaimed a coalition government in
In order to widen the basis of this government among the population and to isolate imperialists and their Guomindang agents.\(^{18}\)

Had Professor Qing been more attentive toward the CCP-USSR relationship in the 1930s and 1940s, and such contemporaneous, ideological and power politics influences, her arguments might carry more weight.\(^{19}\)

Thus Qing’s claim that Mao’s alleged dedication to a coalition government caused great anxiety in the USSR (118) rings hollow. According to the above document, the coalition government had been Stalin’s idea in the first place. Qing has not seriously challenged the “emerging consensus” with her argument which is based largely on theoretical and politically opportune CCP statements typically meant for public consumption, a chief epistemic problem with her entire book. In this reading, Mao generally followed Stalin’s “instructions” on “coalition government,” a very

\(^{18}\)”Telegram, Stalin to Mao Zedong, April 20, 1948,” in Odd Arne Westad, ed, *Brothers in Arms: The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1945-1963* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1998), pp. 298-299. Mao agreed with the instruction on April 26, 1948, see “Telegram, Mao Zedong to Stalin, April 26, 1948,” in ibid., pp. 299-300. The ideological distinction Stalin made was that the “national bourgeoisie” in East Europe had collaborated with the German invader, while that class in China had resisted Japanese invasion. China was therefore at an earlier stage of political development with a “national bourgeoisie” that had not yet been discredited, making a coalition with “progressive” non-communist forces necessary. Once again, ideology and power politics are better analytical tools for explaining Soviet and PRC behavior than supposed cultural influences. See Stalin’s remarks to Liu Shaoqi (Liu Shao-chi) on July 19, 1949, in “Cable, Liu Shaoqi to Mao Zedong,” (19 July, 1949), Cold War International History Project, ID:222128AA-A6B9-1AC7-54BBE3B2132d0939. On the Chinese embrace of the “national bourgeoisie,” see also “Cable, Stalin to Kovalev [to Mao],” (26 April, 1949), in Cold War International History Project, ID: 0E893780-0193-4AD8-8EB4966C1C7A264B.

important issue.\textsuperscript{20} As we shall see, there has been further subsequent contemporary evidence released after publication of Qing’s book that supports the notion that the entire coalition government was a largely a sham from its beginning.

2) Over-reliance on Chinese Memoirs and Sources

Professor Qing extensively uses Chinese memoirs, many of them recent and therefore published decades after the events. Memoirs, of course, are an important element of the historical record. Yet one is reminded of Dean Acheson’s witticism that in any reminiscence the writer and his views never come off second-best. Qing has few such skeptical reservations in looking at Chinese memoirs dealing with the period, and appears to take them at face value, often in opposition to much counter-evidence of a contemporaneous and documentary nature. She also uses abundant Chinese secondary sources to explain non-Chinese behavior. Western sources, or Chinese scholars in the West, are used comparatively sparingly. Even when used, they are used uncritically, as in her usage of President Truman’s memoirs (61).

I do not have the time and space in an overlong review to cite multiple examples in her analysis in this regard. I will therefore concentrate on one important area: military aid to the CCP from the USSR and others after World War II.

Soviet military aid to the CCP has long been disputed, for a variety of reasons. Recent scholarship, the “emerging consensus,” has shown that in fact the Soviets gave large amounts of economic, military and political support to the CCP at crucial times in the 1930s, 1940s, and after, though no one seems to know exactly how much. The usual figures

\textsuperscript{20} As late as September, 1952 Zhou Enlai insisted in a conversation with Stalin that when the USSR told the CCP to do something that they were “instructions,” despite Stalin’s attempt to insinuate the word “suggestions.” When Stalin insisted they were merely suggestions, Zhou insisted that the Soviets could offer them as suggestions but the PRC would accept them as instructions. See “Minutes of Conversation between I.V. Stalin and Zhou Enlai, (09/19/1952),” Cold War International History Project, ID: 5034F50C-96B6-175C-9D78C8E45376FE62.
given are enough arms for 600,000-700,000 men, with tanks, trucks, artillery, etc. captured from the Japanese. Later, the USSR provided military materials made in the USSR.

Qing relies on a single memoir as the source for her aim of turning these figures into a “controversy,” that of Liu Yalou, chair of the joint chiefs of staff of the Fourth Field Army during the civil war. Liu’s recollection, which according to the footnote was made verbally in 1962, is cited from a Chinese collection of documents published in 2000. There is no other evidence offered to corroborate the claim.

Even so, Liu does not deny Soviet aid per se, but concludes that he remembers it not being enough (remember this is at the height of the Sino-Soviet polemics in 1962), and that the North Koreans provided much more aid. Left unquestioned by Qing, among other things, is the question of who exactly provided the equipment to the North Koreans? The USSR had a long history of funneling aid of all kinds through proxies to maintain a “hidden hand.” The hidden hand of Leninist illegal work and deception is not even considered here, even though the CCP were masters at it.

3) Ivan Kovalev

The reminiscences of Ivan Kovalev, at one time Stalin’s chief representative to the CCP, are important elements in the puzzle of the complex relations of the two countries during this period. Qing uses them for making important points about Soviet hostility to and suspicion of the CCP (see especially 124-127, 221.) Kovalev’s reminiscences of Mao’s hostility to the USSR are often implied to be identical to the views of Stalin, or even “Soviet” policy. We should not disregard Kovalev’s views, but surely it is prudent to discount them for reasons I will note below, never mind the decades that had elapsed since the events he discusses.

21 For examples, see Sergei N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai, Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 14; Sheng, Battling Western Imperialism, pp. 106-111; Chen Jian, Mao’s China and the Cold War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p. 31-32. Qing herself uses similar figures, but does not accept them as valid and places the transfer in March, 1946 rather than late 1945. (p. 86)

22 The official cited is Liu Yalou, “Talks at the Meeting on the Writings of Fourth Field Army’s History,” (December 13, 1962), quoted from Liu Tong, “On the Controversy over the Source of the Northwestern Field Army’s Weapons in the Civil War,” in Archival Documents on Party History, no. 4 (Beijing: Zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 2000), pp. 18-19 (as cited by Qing in English translation, p. 325, fn 88.) It is not stated whether Liu Tong and Liu Yalou are related.

23 Qing, From Allies to Enemies, pp. 86, 325 fn. 88.
Kovalev is a poor choice for such an important evidentiary role as used by Qing. First, he was hostile to Mao and close to Mao’s enemy in domestic politics, Gao Gang (Kao Kang). Gao, the “party boss” of Manchuria, was very pro-Soviet (he actually once suggested in 1949 to the Soviets that Manchuria become a Soviet Republic). According to various scholars, Gao was offered up to Mao as a disloyal minion of the USSR. Kovalev, by most accounts, was deeply angry at this action and especially took it out on Mao in his commentaries to the “Center” in Moscow, and certainly decades later, after the end of the Cold War, when he talked to researchers. Kovalev was demoted in his role in relations with the PRC in the early 1950s; Gao allegedly committed suicide in 1954. We are dealing with a deeply alienated witness. That should not lead to an avoidance of his testimony, but one so hostile to Mao and his cohorts has to be used with great caution.

_U.S. Policy during the Chinese Civil War, 1945-1949_

Perhaps Professor Qing’s case for the explanatory value of cultural analysis might have been stronger if it was based on sound empirical analysis. Unfortunately, it is not. This is especially the case in her analysis of the United States. There are many shortcomings of omission and commission in this regard. A major point Qing got right, the US-Economic Treaty of 1946, offered a perfect chance to link cultural tendencies (I would say ideological) to American policies: the tendency of liberals to equate _de jure_ policies with _de facto_ results. The Americans believed that since they were ending the unequal treaties of the past and setting up a _de jure_ equal basis for trade, that the Chinese would see it the same way. But the Chinese, the middle classes not just the elites, saw it as a continuation of unequal relations and became quite agitated over it. But even here it is not clear that it is somehow uniquely Chinese to react that way. Have not many other weaker powers reacted similarly when dealing with stronger ones? Would not ideology and power politics offer an equally acceptable, if not superior, explanation of American and Chinese interactions in this case? Indeed, could it not be said that some weaker powers have had similar worries about China (e.g., post-1975 Vietnam, which has its own long history of “unequal” treatment with China?)

There are other problems with tying postwar anticommunism to American cultural dispositions. Weren’t majorities in Britain, France, Australia, Japan, Thailand, and elsewhere also worried about the possible attraction of communist ideology in the aftermath of World War II? Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) openly declared himself a fascist in the 1930s, and was far more rigidly anti-communist than General George Marshall in 1946. It was Jiang who destroyed any chance of a deal with the CCP to avoid civil war during the Marshall Mission, not the Americans as Qing implies (more on that below.) Was this rigid anti-communism ideological, or somehow Chinese? How can this all be explained culturally? There is no cultural explanation offered in the book.

For Gao and Kovalev’s friendship and the role played by each, see: Goncharov, et. al., _Uncertain Partners_, pp. 18-19, 21, 27-28, 34-39, 68-69, 97, 80, 84.
Following the first, theoretical chapter the cultural construct is applied only haphazardly to the analysis. Moreover, Qing’s analysis is empirically wrong, through both omission and commission, on many questions. She claims that American policy during the Marshall Mission largely ignored the “Third Force” liberals based on US cultural norms; American policy was based on helping them once the fighting broke out in the summer of 1946. She implies that Marshall ended his Mission in July, 1946 (84); he remained until January, 1947. She claims that Acheson’s “enclave” strategy had ended “by 1956” and then had included Vietnam and Taiwan and the entire “perimeter,” blaming the Eisenhower administration and especially Dulles (183); the policy had changed with the outbreak of war in Korea in 1950.

Qing also subscribes to theory of the “China Hands” and their “marginalization.” Yet Marshall essentially adopted the policies advocated by John Carter Vincent and some of the “China Hands” by cutting off military aid to the GMD from August, 1946 to May, 1947 and tried desperately to re-establish contact with the CCP following the outbreak of civil war in the summer of 1946. As is clear from the American diplomatic record, such contacts were extremely rare conspicuous by their absence. Soviet documents published after Qing’s research strongly support that view. As Zhou Enlai told Anastas Mikoyan on February 1, 1949:

> Although we broke relations with the Americans [in late 1946], they time and again attempted to establish contacts through those persons who had something to do with us. But we limited ourselves to hearing about the Americans’ decisions to establish contacts with us.²⁵

This American attempt to maintain contact with the CCP, especially when seen within the context of the arms embargo of the GMD, is essentially what John Carter Vincent and other “China Hands” were advocating at the time (the apparent exception was John S. Service, the most naive and ideological among them, who wanted to back the CCP.) This evidence strongly suggests it was the CCP that refused to negotiate, not the Americans. This was true

²⁵ “Memorandum of Conversation between Anastas Mikoyan and Zhou Enlai (2/1/1949,)” in Cold War International History Project, ID: 0853BAEE-D236-1225-2876322F0694CA30. Zhou undoubtedly was trying to emphasize the independence of the CCP to the USSR, especially following some sharp questioning of Mao by Mikoyan the previous day. (Mao did not attend this meeting.) But there is no empirical or other evidence that I have seen that would call Zhou's statement here into question. Moreover, I have found no record of such contacts in the American archives. I would like to thank Bob Jervis again for helping me sharpen this point.
later under Secretary of State Acheson also.\textsuperscript{26} The embargo policy was instituted directly due to physical attacks on “Third Force” liberals in Kunming in mid-1946, and Marshall informed Jiang Jieshi of this.

Was General Marshall a military hardline backer of the GMD as Qing portrays him, as opposed to the wise “China Hands” such as John Carter Vincent, the head of the China Division at State? Vincent’s advice at the time of the outbreak of civil war in August, 1946, in a memo that Qing cites, was that several months of fighting might have a chastening effect on the hardliners in both the CCP and GMD and bring “wiser counsels” to the fore in both the CCP and GMD. Marshall accepted that advice, but only with the greatest reluctance. As he told an aide at the time, “I probably have not properly represented the interests of the United States. I feel that I am representing the Chinese people.” He then instituted the arms embargo, a policy originating within the State Department and opposed by many in the US military, to try to prevent civil war in China.\textsuperscript{27} The “China Hands” were not entirely marginalized until much later, especially following Truman’s re-election in 1948, after their China policy had manifestly failed.

In a similar vein, Qing accuses the US of ignoring the land reform question because of cultural blinkers, when Marshall made it one hallmark of his bargaining strategy. The Americans were not unaware of the agony of the Chinese peasantry following World War II and even pro-Jiang military hardliners such as General Albert Wedemeyer, albeit under orders from Marshall, berated the GMD for ignoring the political importance of the problem.\textsuperscript{28} In mid-July, 1946, under direct American pressure, the GMD passed a rural reform program calling for land redistribution, reduction of taxes on peasant households,

\textsuperscript{26} See Warren I. Cohen, “Introduction: Was There a ‘Lost Chance’ in China?”, Diplomatic History, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Winter 1997), p. 75. See also the other articles in this symposium entitled “Rethinking the Lost Chance in China” by Chen Jian, John W. Garver, Michael Sheng, and Odd Arne Westad, all of whom place responsibility for the lack of normal relations with Chinese policies, pp. 77-116.

\textsuperscript{27} Quotes from Douglas J. Macdonald, Adventures in Chaos: American Intervention for Reform in the Third World (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 98. As an added critique of the culture/collective identity approach, why was there such opposing positions taken by American diplomats and American soldiers, in general? Weren’t they all Americans? How would this be explained culturally?

and an extension of rural credit to be paid for by the United States. As it was with many such promises for reform, it was never implemented, nor even attempted.  

This coercive bargaining strategy – denying meaningful military aid to foster comprehensive political and economic reform - was maintained by Marshall until May, 1947, when domestic pressures and the beginning of the GMD military collapse altered the policy. Even then, a $500 million loan to China that had been earmarked in 1946 was allowed to expire without a dollar being delivered. As I have argued on H-Diplo in the past, much of the military material that was delivered to the GMD was decrepit World War II surplus and much of it useful only for target practice. The US also convinced allies like Great Britain to stop military aid to the GMD in support of Marshall's efforts in 1946. A few selected quotes from disappointed Chinese liberals who believed that the US could have done more, the only real counter-evidence Qing provides, do not belie this empirical record.  

In November, 1946 General Marshall wired President Truman explaining his bargaining relationship with the GMD:

> I have been very emphatic in stating to [Jiang Jieshi] that it is useless to expect the United States to pour money into the vacuum being created by the military leaders in their determination to settle matters by force, almost 90 per cent of the budget [,] itself highly inflationary, going to military expenditures. Also that it was useless to expect the United States to pour money into a government dominated by a completely reactionary clique [especially the Chen brothers] bent on exclusive control of governmental power.

The president wired back on December 3, 1946 that he was “relying entirely on your judgement [sic] on all China matters.” This is not the policy portrayed in Qing’s book. One might also note the ideological and power politics frameworks that shaped Marshall’s

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29 Macdonald, *Adventures in Chaos*, p. 94. For more detailed evidence of the rural reform program, see Lyman P. Van Slyke, ed., *The China White Paper, August 1949* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1967), p. 229. This is a reissue of the 1949 State Department White Paper explaining US policy in China. Professor Qing cites this source in her book, yet does not even mention these efforts. In my opinion, one can argue that such efforts were inadequate, but one cannot argue convincingly that the Americans were unaware or uninterested in the problem.

30 For the bargaining over reform and the coercive bargaining strategy generally until late 1948, see Macdonald, *Adventures in Chaos*, Chs. 4-5.

31 Both quotes from ibid., pp. 100.
policy references. Many Americans in China at the time believed that an unreformed GMD
government was neither possible nor desirable.

I did not find Qing’s treatment of the Eisenhower period any more nuanced or
sophisticated than her treatment of the Truman administration. Eisenhower is portrayed
as dominated by the Dulles brothers, especially Foster, and something of a well-meaning
bumpkin. Yet I note that I saw no convincing cultural or collective identity explanation
given for the measurable differences in policies between the Truman and Eisenhower
administrations. Once again, the cultural paradigm has great difficulty explaining variation
in beliefs and behavior within the same cultural context. Intra-ideological variations and
varying perceptions of the power shifts involved, on the other hand, explain many of the
changes in policy and attitude from the Truman administration to the Eisenhower
administration. Culture does not.

The Nature of the CCP/PRC At Home and Abroad

In general, Qing's treatment of the CCP/PRC is rather benign. The tens of millions of deaths
of the Great Leap Forward and communes of the 1950s and 1960, for example, are not
analyzed within the context of her cultural framework and rarely referred to except as
"agricultural setbacks" (353, fn 134). But it is in two areas, the nature of the regime and
foreign policy, that her cultural/collective identity analysis is especially weak.

The Nature of the CCP Regime At Home

As we have seen, the idea of including the “national bourgeoisie” and the “Third Force”
liberals into the PRC was apparently Stalin’s, not the CCP’s. Qing takes the public
statements of CCP officials on the nature of the coalition government (institutionalized in
the Political Consultative Conference, or PCC) at face value. She portrays the PRC under the
PCC, at least until 1954, as “the equivalent of a parliament” based on the idea of “long-term
coexistence and mutual supervision” (233.) Following this period there was a struggle
between hard line and soft line factions within the CCP, according to Qing’s account. The
soft line faction initially prevailed, with Mao’s backing, and this led, among other things, to
the “Hundred Flowers Campaign” of 1956, which was a liberalization of intellectual life
throughout the country.

This “gradualist” political blueprint and China’s political reality included the following:

1) Nurturing the complementarity of intellectuals and the
workers/peasants;
2) Constructing unlimited space for the intellectuals’ individual creativity; \(^{32}\)

3) Fostering coexistence between the CCP and the Third Force, or the democratic parties;

4) Teaching the vital importance of constitutional law and people’s congresses in the polity;

5) Condoning supplemental measures: strikes and demonstrations. \(^{(229)}\)\(^{33}\)

As Luo Longji told a Plenum of the PCC in March, 1957, no political order could ever control China’s intellectuals and the historical honor bestowed upon intellectuals in China was being preserved \(^{(239)}\). As a leader of one of the democratic parties reportedly said in 1957, “The blossom spring has arrived; now you can hear the songs of the birds everywhere” \(^{(quoted\ at\ p.\ 241.\)}\)

Other scholars portray the reality for Chinese intellectuals in the 1950s and 1960s quite differently. Q. Edward Wang describes the intellectual atmosphere in 1950s and 1960s China, putting aside the brief respite during the “Hundred Flowers Campaign”:

In the 1950s and 1960s, Chinese historians participated, willy-nilly, in many political campaigns that were aimed to brainwash them into embracing Marxist doctrine. Little time was devoted to serious academic work. In addition, all publications, including scholarly ones, were subjects of political censorship and easy targets in those political campaigns. \(^{34}\)

But, for the sake of argument, let’s accept Professor Qing’s view of a relatively benign intellectual environment throughout the period.

What happened to this democratic, “gradualist,” individualistic, parliamentary PRC, even if it had existed? Had John Dewey and Hu Shih triumphed after all? According to Qing, the “gradualist” demise largely came because the Soviets acted to destroy it.

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\(^{32}\) The PRC, and Qing, attempt to make a distinction between “bourgeoisie individualism” and what went on in the Campaign. I do not see how her formulation here can be seen as anything but that kind of individualism, functionally and institutionally.

\(^{33}\) There are no footnotes provided for this list. It appears to be Qing’s summary.

Although leading his own “liberalization” in the USSR, Khrushchev, according to Qing, became alarmed at the heavy criticism aimed at the USSR in the “Flowers” campaign. The Coalition Government in China had always been a “thorny issue” to the USSR. Khrushchev then enticed Mao, who fully supported the gradualist political blueprint philosophically (249) (although, according to Qing, he was also of two minds about it, apparently Chinese ying-yang cultural norms at work here – the only place they are specifically invoked for a decision), to end the Campaign by offering Mao generous aid in constructing nuclear weapons.

Thus essentially coerced and bribed – and still dominated by Chinese rural elements hostile to the changes and intellectuals more generally, not to mention the fears raised by the Hungarian and Polish explosions of 1956 - Mao ended the campaign and cracked down on the parliamentary democracy he had earlier supported (237-248.) (Though it is never adequately explained why Mao did not return to the “gradualist” approach after the USSR removed the weapons aid and the Sino-Soviet split occurred. It is not clear how this external preferential mechanism works for or against “gradualism.”)

This analysis has many flaws, both conceptually and empirically, as subsequent document declassifications following publication of the book have shown:

1) As noted above, the idea of a Coalition Government had been a Soviet one all along. The CCP, as usual, went along with the idea, and the ideological, not cultural, analysis behind it. It was therefore not a continuous “thorny issue” with the Soviets. The English translation record, as well as the secondary literature by Russian scholars in English, suggests such evidence does not exist or has not been found or released (35)

See Vladislav M. Zubok, A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War From Stalin to Gorbachev (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), pp. 172-177, and elsewhere.


Qing does explain the shifts in policy partially in vague cultural terms, but never explains how or why these occurred for cultural reasons. Here and elsewhere, “cultural analysis” remains almost completely at the descriptive, not an analytical, level. Qing, p. 252.
2) As was suggested by the evidence from 1998 cited above, subsequent declassified documents show that the legitimizing role of the Third Force, democratic elements, and a parliamentary system was a sham government from the beginning. In a February 6, 1949 memorandum of conversations between the CCP and Soviet Politburo Member Anastas Mikoyan concerning post-victory government, Mao is paraphrased making the following comments:

   The state economy will be socialist in character but we are not shouting about this so as not to scare someone away. The state economy will be strengthened because the communists have the power and the army is in their hand.

   Turning to the question of the structure of state power Mao Zedong said that we do not intend to use the parliamentary form. The CCP is leading in the entire country, it has its own military forces. The Guomindang has been destroyed, and the small parties [i.e., the Third Force] have no influence in the country.

   In the future government communists and leftist democrats will take probably 2/3 of all seats. Formally communists will not have that many seats, but in fact the majority of seats in the government will belong to them because a number of seats will be taken by covert communists. The rightist parties will also take part in the government, but in the minority.\[38\]

   Thus according to this subsequent source a crucial number of “Third Force” leaders were, in fact, CCP agents. There was no parliamentary system in China and the entire coalition government idea was a sham and a façade in order to avoid threatening non-communist elements among the “Third Force” into opposition before the CCP could fully consolidate its totalitarian regime.

3) Scholars have characterized Mao and the CCP leadership as many things over the years, from all sorts of ideological and methodological perspectives, but never can I recall having seen them portrayed as liberal individualists who aimed at “[c]onstructing unlimited space for the intellectuals’ individual creativity.” Admittedly, I may not have sufficient knowledge of the regime’s history, but I would welcome proof of circumstances when it actually actively “condon[ed] supplemental measures: strikes and demonstrations” in any significant way in the 1950s? I am open to possible contradiction on this.

4) The only evidence presented that Khrushchev coerced and bribed Mao into doing away with the liberal “gradualist” program is that the former did

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38 “Memorandum of Conversation between Anastas Mikoyan and Mao Zedong (February 6, 1949),” Cold War International History Project, ID: 0DBB1433-B256-385E-0ABDFB7E848BE486.
complain about criticisms of the USSR in the “Flowers Campaign” and that it was during this period that the USSR offered to help the PRC develop nuclear weapons. Yet correlation does not equal causation, and I find this analytical assertion highly unlikely.

This is a highly questionable portrayal of an essentially liberal CCP and PRC in the 1950s, destroyed only by external pressure and the hostility of the agricultural areas of China who remained committed to authoritarian rule.

**The Nature of the PRC Abroad**

Qing’s portrayal of PRC foreign policy in the 1945-1960 period is also deeply flawed, and, after all, that is the subject matter of the book. Indeed, she believes that the PRC foreign policy’s hallmark was Peaceful Coexistence as articulated by the regime in the 1950s and continuing throughout the period under examination, that is, at least until 1960. But as in other areas, Qing simply takes the most benign possible intentions and public statements of the regime, without deeper empirical analysis, at face value, when there is abundant contradictory evidence that suggests more complexity and nuance, even contradiction. Soviet sources, and those scholars who utilize Soviet sources, are greatly under-represented here. And too often Chinese sources are used to explain Soviet and American behavior when abundant other complementary sourcing is available that often offers better alternative perspectives and contradictory evidence.

The credulity demonstrated in examining the concept of Coalition Government can also be seen in Qing’s treatment of Peaceful Coexistence, which she portrays as the “Guiding Principle” of PRC diplomacy (254-279.) There are abundant quotes from PRC officials to the effect that all they wanted were mutual non-interference in internal affairs and peaceful international relations following Korea. Much is made of the Bandung Conference of 1955 that attempted to set up a racially-based loose confederation of countries made up of the “Afro-Asian Bloc.” This was later to evolve into the more inclusive so-called “non-aligned movement.” There is no discussion at all of the abundantly sourced granting of responsibility for the “Asian Revolution” by Stalin to the CCP beginning with Mikoyan’s visit to China in 1949.39

Most analysts understand that many times political actors double-deal in all cultures, that is, they say one thing while doing another.

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39 Most accounts time this decision to Liu Shaoqi’s visit to Moscow in mid-1949. For example, see Chen, *Mao’s China and the Cold War*, p. 44. New documentation demonstrates the idea was in full bloom at least by February, 1949. ”Memorandum of Conversation between Anastas Mikoyan and Mao Zedong (February 3, 1949),” Cold War International History Project, ID: 0439C523-DDEB-14B2-BB93B23397168402.
Qing is too selectively credulous in choosing which words to question. She concludes at one point that unique Chinese cultural characteristics led the Chinese to eschew maximizing their own advantage internationally “at the expense of other nations”:

> From 1954 to late 1959, this distinctive [cultural] feature of Chinese diplomacy was shown in China’s new foreign policy of peaceful coexistence. Contrary to widespread expectations in Washington, Chinese revolutionaries, following their national victory, did not formulate a policy of exporting revolution (291.)

Yet this unique Chinese cultural perspective apparently could not last long in a world where the Dulles brothers held sway:

> A more isolated China did not become a more tamed or submissive China, as predicted by Dulles. To the contrary, China became more militant. Beijing’s perspective was that from 1954 to the end of 1959, China had walked with one leg, the leg of peaceful coexistence. Now, China would have to walk with two legs. In addition to peaceful co-existence, China must also “actively support the oppressed peoples’ struggles against colonialism and imperialism in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America (292).

There is much evidence that Peaceful Coexistence (which was, by the way, also congruent with the Soviet international line of the time) was a temporary tactic, and when it went wrong from the Chinese view (but not necessarily the Soviet view) it was abandoned. This happened quite quickly.

Moreover, some of Qing’s own evidence suggests that the PRC had been following a revolutionary foreign policy following its victory in the Civil War. She quotes Mao as telling Burma’s U Nu that Beijing’s new policy in 1954 was “to stop organizing the communist branches among overseas Chinese.” The communist organizations that had been constructed were now all being “dismantled.” It was now the “arch principle” of PRC foreign policy to only recognize a government “chosen by its own people” (270-271.)

From Qing’s own evidence, then, it is apparent that the PRC in fact had been organizing and supporting communist branches elsewhere in Asia until 1954. Otherwise, there would have been nothing to “stop.” There is also little discussion of Chinese backing for the invasion of South Korea by the North in 1950, which certainly could have been seen as aiding the spread of revolution in Asia (and was so in Washington), and no mention of the abundant aid given to the Vietnamese insurgents following 1949.\(^{40}\)

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In his excellent 2008 book on the Sino-Soviet split, Lorenz M. Luthi better explains the double-dealing going on during the Peaceful Coexistence period in PRC foreign policy, at least beginning in 1956:

Despite the double crisis in East Europe, the Soviet leader still believed that communists could do well in free elections in nonsocialist countries. According to the Chinese, however, the parliamentary road was revisionist since it rejected “proletarian dictatorship” for “capitalist class dictatorship.” Implicitly, it not only discarded the “sword of Stalin” but also the “sword of Lenin.” But Mao realized that such an absolute rejection would not have popular appeal in the world. The Chinese comrades thus decided to apply “dual tactics”: “From a strategic point of view, [we] should prepare to adopt a policy of violent revolution to seize power, but for the sake of striving for the masses, from a tactical point, [we] should agree to peaceful transition.”

Thus a year after the much-heralded Bandung Conference of 1955, the PRC had abandoned “Peaceful Coexistence” as anything but a tactic in service to broader ideological goals. In the following year Mao clarified the tactical nature of the policy even further when he defended internally the clandestine support for the Indian Communist Party and other communist parties not in power with the argument that communist parties in capitalist states were exempt from the provisions of Peaceful Coexistence.

Thus, even if one accepts Qing’s cultural explanation for a policy of strict non-intervention in the internal affairs of other nations it clearly did not last long. It is apparent that it was quickly overwhelmed by an eclectic mix of ideological and power politics considerations which soon again governed policy. To be fair to Professor Qing, as noted above, several of the primary sources quoted in this review were not available when she was writing, for example, the Mikoyan-Mao discussions of January-February, 1949. Others, such as the 1998 Westad book, a source Professor Qing cites in her text, were available. But the subsequent revelations have even more seriously challenged her thesis. This fact is not meant to criticize her scholarship as much as to warn a potential reader that subsequent information weakens the book’s main argument considerably.

John Garver, Michael M. Sheng, Sergei N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai. There has also been much supportive subsequent research.


42 Ibid., p. 142.
A Final Possible Conundrum – A Self-criticism

A skeptic of this critique of cultural analysis might raise a final point in rebuttal: if the CCP generally accepted Soviet “suggestions” as “instructions,” at least while Stalin was alive, then how could it be argued that the CCP had a good deal of agency in the matter? Even if Qing is wrong about the particular purposes of Soviet policy, does this not show that in fact structures do trump agency in this case?

There may be something to this self-critique, but I do not think it sufficient to rehabilitate the cultural analysis presented here. The CCP and the GMD both emerged from the Chinese culture, yet the CCP generally obeyed “suggestions” from the USSR, while the GMD resisted those of the US. How would cultural analysis explain this? Not very well, to my mind. Pure power analysis also is not especially helpful, as the US was far more powerful than the other three parties to the diplomacy, yet its preferred outcome failed to occur despite much diplomatic effort.

Ideology, on the other hand, does offer us a good explanation. The CCP accepted Soviet direction, as did communist parties from many different cultures, because the Soviets were the leaders of the communist world. Similar ideological goals led to political deference to the center in Moscow as to the means to achieve them. The CCP wanted to follow the direction of the USSR. This does not explain all policy, but it provides an important contextual variable that is often ignored in the dominant materialist biases of many historians and social scientists.

The GMD and US, on the other hand, were largely on different planets ideologically, especially the right-wing of the GMD and the numerous “New Dealers” who still populated much of the US government. Jiang had no interest in fair elections, land reform, “free trade,” a pluralistic political system, or any of the other suggestions that the Americans had for the social and political ills of China. Jiang was not Hu Shih or Wellington Goo, two culturally Chinese men who were ideologically much more liberal.

So Jiang plowed ahead on his own course convinced that the US, as leading members of the GMD repeatedly told General Marshall during his mission, would have to support the GMD for global power reasons. As the Cold War worsened in the 1940s, they came to believe this ever more emphatically. In the event, the vastness of the problems of China, and a GMD so seemingly immune to self-help along ideologically acceptable lines to the US, were so great that Jiang turned out to be wrong. The Americans decided that a US military solution was impossible. And Jiang’s narrowly conceived balance of power assumptions proved to be disastrous to his cause. Power and ideological analysis in this case appears to offer the best explanation.

Even if the cultural/collective identity explanation offers some explanatory value, there are other, more analytically powerful frameworks that have much greater explanatory value. One should look to them rather than the cultural analytical framework offered here. Diplomatic historians might look at previous scholarly experiences with “Cultural Turns” and adopt a more cautious attitude toward their widespread adoption in their field.
The subject of Simei Qing’s book, U.S.-China relations 1945-1960, has hardly been neglected by historians and political scientists. Recent years have seen the publication of a number of exciting new studies, including those by Chen Jian, Michael Hunt, Warren Cohen, Thomas Christensen, and Gordon Chang. These are works by eminent scholars of U.S. foreign relations and of China, most of whom read Chinese and understand the need to emphasize the "bi" in bipolarity, all of whom offer sophisticated interpretations of this most fraught of Cold War relationships. Like Qing, and like all scholars of Germany, the Middle East, and Sino-American relations, they seek to explain what went wrong. So what is new here?

Two things, actually. First, Qing has gained access to Chinese sources that were in many cases previously unavailable to other scholars. Greater openness in Beijing about the recent past has meant that we now know more than ever about what Chinese leaders said to their diplomatic counterparts and to each other during the first fifteen years of the Cold War. Qing has used these records to admirable effect. Second, and more important, Qing seeks here to reinterpret U.S.-China relations using culture as her principal category of analysis, in ways more far-reaching and innovative than have been deployed by other students of the subject. For Qing, culture is part of history, and therefore more durable and influential than relative ephemera such as ideology. Deep in the national soul of China and the United States lie values, assumptions, and attitudes, concerning selves and the world in which they live, that overmatch other factors shaping nations' worldviews and thus direct policymaking. The depth of culture, Qing suggests, is often so great as to render it invisible to outsiders, causing them to fixate instead on what may be little more than rhetoric or whimsy. The result is persistent misunderstanding: our cultural dispositions blind us to theirs and vice versa. Of U.S.-China relations, Qing writes, this is true in particular of three areas. Americans and Chinese have different views of freedom—it’s an individual thing for Americans, a national or collective one for Chinese—different ideas about the most desirable sort of economy (private enterprise versus public welfare, respectively), and different notions about the model polity: American democracy, zealously pursued, versus Sun Yat-sen’s cautious endorsement of gradual transition to democracy following the

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instatement, somehow, of “morality” (27) in China’s citizens. Thus, Qing concludes, “Chinese and American visions of modernity and identity were neither identical with each other nor antagonistic to each other. Rather, they overlapped” (32).

The book is a chronicle of mutual misjudgment that resulted from these abiding cultural connections and disconnections. Qing begins by showing that U.S. relations with the Guomindang (KMT) during and after World War II were plagued by many of the same problems that would bedevil U.S.-PRC diplomacy after 1949. No more than their Communist rivals did Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT leadership wish to throw their country open to full-on American trade and investment, bringing in their wake the privatization that meant chaos to a nation that sought a balanced economy. The disagreement culminated in Chinese opposition to a U.S.-China Commercial Treaty, nevertheless signed in November 1946; the Treaty became a lightning rod for Chinese criticism of American bullying and ignorance of China’s distinct “historical, socioeconomic, and cultural environments,” and revealed that, although the United States and the Nationalist government in China agreed on where the Chinese economy ought ultimately to go, they were at odds over the “blueprint” to be used to get there (55). Misunderstanding also haunted George Marshall’s mission to China from December 1945 to January 1947. Marshall seemed at first an honest broker, and the Communists, pushed by the Soviets to negotiate with the KMT, were willing to enter into coalition with their adversaries. Much to Marshall’s dismay, reactionary “irreconcilables” within the KMT demanded military action against the CCP in Manchuria, and thus subverted any hope of agreement. But the American general’s dismay was never so great that he abandoned the assumption that China must have a liberal democratic form of government, nor did he require of Chiang the reforms that would have been necessary to win the loyalties of China’s peasants, who were far less interested in liberal democracy than they were in a reasonably fair distribution of rural land.

Misunderstandings turned bitter with the advent of Communist government in 1949, though not immediately. Qing sides with historians who believe that both the United States and the CCP wanted to avoid conflict and sought to do so by moving, however gradually, toward trade and diplomatic recognition. President Harry S. Truman and his influential secretary of state Dean Acheson knew that the CCP would not countenance U.S. support for the rump KMT regime on Taiwan and were willing in early 1950 to leave the island to its fate—“reunification” with the mainland. Acheson believed that the United States might induce the Communist government to mimic Josip Tito’s regime in Yugoslavia, weaning the CCP free of dependence on the Soviet Union and thus in some measure undoing the strategic threat to American interests in Asia. Mao, and especially Zhou Enlai, were not necessarily averse to this possibility. They sought to “walk the tightrope” (114) between the socialist nations on one side and the United States on the other, knowing that they needed assistance from the first and protection against the second, and determined above all to incorporate Taiwan, a manifest impossibility if the United States stood in the way. Mao thus made private overtures to the Americans, seeking to demonstrate his diplomatic flexibility, refusing even into 1949 to pull the plug on hopes of accommodation. (Unlike Chen Jian, Qing does not read the 1948 house arrest of U.S. consul Angus Ward as the end of
possible accord, noting documents that indicate Mao’s distress over the situation and the Russians’ amusement over Mao’s distress.)

Alas: accommodation was not to be. It was subverted in the end, and once more, by misapprehensions of the other’s position, often the result of public statements made by those on both sides who were hostile to agreement. Hardliners at the Pentagon never trusted the Chinese Communists and thought that officials in the State Department were naïve to imagine Mao as Tito. (Dean Acheson abandoned hope of wooing the PRC in the spring of 1950.) Extremists in the CCP scoffed at the prospect of getting along with the capitalists. Even after the Americans entered the war in Korea in June 1950, the Chinese held back, only deciding to send troops to the aid of the North Koreans once the Americans had crossed the 38th parallel, and then, lacking substantive Soviet help, only with reluctance. Mao decided that China’s security was at stake, and that his nation must not appease aggressors. He had no interest at this stage in supporting “world revolution,” in Korea or anywhere else.

Choices yet remained, for both sides, during the 1950s. Dwight Eisenhower thought it folly not to allow at least limited U.S. trade with China, and trade between China and Japan. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles saw it differently, through the prism of ideology, and managed to carry most of the administration with him. Two episodes of Chinese shelling of the Taiwan Strait islands Jinmen and Mazu (known in the West as Quemoy and Matsu), while not intended as opening salvos in a war to retake Taiwan, were nevertheless seen in Washington potentially as such, and even Eisenhower hardened his position on the Communist government thereafter. In China, meanwhile, Mao continued to keep options open in the realms of economic and political development and, to some extent perforce, in the realm of diplomacy. The Chinese had success with a “gradualist” mixed economy from 1949 to 1956, only in 1958 moving to a “populist blueprint,” forcing rural reform on behalf of poor peasants and reigniting class warfare with the poorly-named Great Leap Forward. Political blueprints followed economic ones. With a mixed economy came space for intellectuals to discuss the most momentous questions of the day. Mao admonished the Party not to fear “strikes and demonstrations”; remarkably, he added, when confronting student demonstrations, the authorities must “never use guns, never pull triggers, no matter what happens, never shoot” (235-236). But when the Hundred Flowers campaign of 1957 was taken a little too seriously by the regime’s critics, Mao and the Party leadership cracked down, ushering in a period of radical populism that stigmatized intellectuals as “rightists.” These shifts at home had variable impact on Chinese foreign relations. The turn toward populism brought with it (and was in part caused by) greater antagonism toward Nikita Khrushchev’s Soviet Union, a hard line on Tibet, growing impatience with Jawaharlal Nehru and India, and, by 1960, a commitment to North Vietnam that was largely predicated on the felt need to maintain China’s security against the rising U.S. presence in Southeast Asia. If the United States had discarded its Cold War assumptions or seen through its cultural differences with China, Qing concludes, the Vietnam War—again, a misunderstanding—might have been avoided. The book closes with a grandiose flourish having to do with building bridges across differences and “enhan[cing] human civilization” (306), which is inspiring but rather more than Qing’s close analysis of U.S.-China relations over a fifteen year period will bear.
This is a book of serious scholarly consequence. Qing has thought deeply about Sino-American relations. She has read the relevant secondary literature, parsed at least some of the newest work on diplomacy and culture, added in some constructivist international relations scholarship, and, above all, assembled an astonishing array of primary source materials, gathered from archives on three continents. If the account is a bit dense, it properly reflects the difficult and controversial nature of its subject. The project leaves the impression of rigorous industry and thought. More than anyone else before her, Qing has written an account of Chinese political economy and diplomacy that treats her subjects as complicated people whose actions cannot altogether be explained with reference to their own, sometimes simpleminded rhetoric. Mao Zedong is no monster in Qing’s account, but a political leader and an agrarian communist trying to figure out on the fly which policies will succeed in China and still comport with his ideological tendencies. Qing’s careful examination of the relationship between domestic and foreign affairs in China is nuanced yet assured, and her descriptions of the choices faced at various moments by Chinese and American policymakers have the ring of authority.

The Cold War was a time of stark choices, and to the extent Qing’s narrative reflects that truth it does justice to the period. Even so, it seems unlikely that Chinese and American officials were at all times faced with either one course of action or another, and no more. From Allies to Enemies reads like a flow chart fleshed out with words: China could be either gradualist or populist, communist or nationalist, atomistic or organic (whatever is meant by that), while the Americans supported either inducement or containment of the PRC, and either favored trade with China or did not. Qing’s chapter titles are a series of binaries, the most troubling of which is “perceptions and realities.” If there is one thing cultural analysis teaches its practitioners, it is to avoid thinking about the world as cleanly divided between what is believed to exist and what is actually out there. Surely Clifford Geertz, whom Qing quotes approvingly, wants us to understand that culture complicates this apparent distinction. There is implied here a kind of positivism that I suspect Qing doesn’t really mean. That is, if only Americans and Chinese had seen through the smokescreen of rhetoric issuing from both sides (perception), they could have understood exactly what the other side meant (its reality) and thus avoided needless confrontation. If only it were so easy. Rhetoric creates its own realities, while the abstract truth out there is itself elusive, always subject to interpretation, always fraught with emotion, sensation, doubt, and ambiguity.

Culture also teaches that human beings do not always see the world divided in two, giving them a simple choice of either/or. Qing knows a good deal more about Chinese decisionmaking than most of us do, but I would be surprised if Mao, Zhou, and the others thought about whether to send troops to Korea in 1950 solely as a do-it-or-not proposition. The Chinese were concerned about the timing of the intervention. They weren’t sure whether or how to warn the Americans, or how explicit to make the warnings. Since

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Qing is perhaps too willing to soft pedal Mao’s moral failings. For a determinedly anti-Mao view, see Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story* (New York: Knopf, 2005).
Chinese troops would not have Soviet air cover, Mao worried about exposing Manchuria to counterattack. And Mao had to consider the likelihood that his son would be sent to the front, and that he might be killed there—as indeed he was. The split Qing posits between Chinese “gradualism” and “populism” seems too sharp. Enough gradualism, as a means, might enable the unleashing of populism, stirring the masses to punish outspoken intellectuals and reestablishing Mao’s uncontested primacy within the Party. On the American side, Qing misses Acheson’s ongoing ambivalence about whether to try to accommodate Chinese Communism: he was all for accommodation in 1949, but some things happened in early 1950—Qing points, rather surprisingly, to a CIA reassessment of Soviet nuclear capability as pivotal—and, suddenly, Acheson dropped his hope that Mao might become Tito and adopted the containment views of the hardliners. Her policymakers are all so rational, what with their “blueprints” and well considered choices. Binaries also imply equivalency: we assume that both opposed elements in a binary are equal in influence. That is not generally how power works. Urban, “third force” intellectuals in China may have been important enough for the CCP to court in 1947 and 1948, but after the success of the revolution they were writing and speaking out on borrowed time, as Qing’s account demonstrates.

I am sympathetic to culturalist interpretations of international relations. I am impressed and persuaded by Qing’s opening chapter, in which she describes the cultural foundation of Chinese and American thinking about political and economic development and the conduct of foreign affairs. Let me pass on to Qing two basic criticisms I have received for this kind of work. First, culturalism tends to reductionism—that is, it makes truth claims for categories of analysis so deeply buried in individual psychology or social sub-strata that it is impossible to verify, refute, or even descry them. That there is something particular in the way that Chinese and Americans think about issues of political economy is no doubt true, but it doesn’t tell us much specifically about why certain decisions get made at certain times. Second, and the point is related to the first, culture is often represented as so durable as to be intractable. If the Chinese and Americans—and are all Chinese and all Americans alike?—have deeply wrought cultures, how do we explain dissent within each culture or decisions that are reversed over time? Surely Qing would not claim that culture never changed in China. Still, if it does change, what force is strong enough to make it do so? And could that force—circumstance? personality? ideology?—ultimately or at least occasionally prove culture’s master?

With all that said, From Allies to Enemies is one of the most intellectually challenging and stimulating books about Sino-American relations to come out in the past fifteen or so years. In its scholarship, it rivals Chen Jian’s work—indeed, literally rivals it, for Qing frequently takes issue with Chen Jian’s interpretations—and in its methodological ambition it reminds me of Alastair Iain Johnston’s superb Cultural Realism, which I suspect has not found a large enough audience among historians. All of us can eagerly look forward to what Simei Qing produces next.

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Scholarly attention to the U.S.-China relations during the heyday of the Cold War remains persistent. Taking advantage of new sources that have become available in the past decade, such undertakings constitute an important part of the “new history” or “international history” of the Cold War. If the earlier efforts focused more on cross-examining the policy thinking and/or making of Washington and Beijing (Chen Jian, Michael Sheng, Odd Arne Westad, Yafeng Xia, Qiang Zhai, and Shu Guang Zhang), recent publications show a much needed and appreciated interest in exploring innovative conceptual frameworks, with which to bring to the fore some of the unresolved issues, historical and theoretical alike. Qing’s long expected From Allies to Enemies stands out in the latter development.

Like many others, Qing sets out to explain the intricate origins of U.S.-China confrontations. Differing from the conventional conviction based on national-interest conflict and ideological rivalry, she has invoked the misperception argument. The transition from WWII allies to Cold War enemies of the US and China, she asserts, was shaped largely by “the fallout from counterproductive foreign policies on both sides”, “the bitter fruit of repeated misjudgments of each other’s intentions”, and “the fatal consequences of an illusion – the perceived incompatibility of national interests and [moral] principles” (2). It is not surprising when she finds that policy makers of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations consistently misperceived China’s policy intentions and acted out persistently on the basis of inaccurate assessments of China’s realities, especially in dealing with the much studied crises in Korea, the Taiwan Strait, and Indochina. What, however, should intrigue her readers more is how she has methodologically tackled the misperception-and-misjudgment issue: she examines U.S. China policies “from both the inside out and the outside in”, or as outcomes of a dynamic interactive as well as a “discourse” process.

With an in-depth analysis of the China policy debates within U.S. administrations, Qing not only double-checks U.S. interpretations of Chinese intentions against China’s “actual” foreign-policy objectives but more importantly, traces how Chinese follow-up actions were further incorporated into the earlier perception and judgment. Here, she has effectively reconciled the earlier theoretical hypothesis (Robert Jervis and Deborah Larson) on cognitive distortion – the interpreting of new evidence in a distorted way so as to conform it to those deep-seated analytical boxes in one’s head -- to recently available historical evidence. The book, indeed, is full of details on how “specific analytical categories” functioned to help American officials select, filter, evaluate, and interpret the information pertinent to China’s foreign policy goals and domestic realities.

Neither is it surprising when Qing argues that “U.S.-China interactions were taking place between countries whose historical evolution, cultural heritages, and social constituencies and positions in the world economy were vastly divergent” (298). What deserves notice is Qing’s attempt to break new methodological grounds by looking at the impact of these divergent visions of modernity and identity on U.S.-China diplomacy. In addition to shaping
how data and information pertinent to the other side’s policy intentions were cognitively processed, she points out that these different visions “helped establish the different moral/political parameters of the mainstream foreign-policy debates on both sides” (301). Qing is at her best in comparing and contrasting the origins of Chinese and American visions of modernity and identity as well as identifying how conflicting visions and divergent expectations began to strain the U.S.-Nationalist China alliance in the immediate post-WWII years. Within this framework, her account on the challenges that Washington and Nanjing (Nationalist China’s capital) encountered in negotiating a Sino-American commerce treaty in 1945-1946 (47-51) and the failure of the Marshall mission (76-84) presents truly new and refreshing insights.

A methodologically innovative study such as Qing’s is not without methodological as well as interpretative concerns. First, while crossing the disciplinary boundaries, there is always a need to be cautiously critical of the concepts that may make perfect sense in one field but not necessarily the other. Historians are becoming worried and indeed wary about taking for granted the concepts and theories that “behavior scientists” or cultural theorists have ingrained but which often seem irreconcilable to historical evidence and have thus ventured to reconcile them. Qing’s profound knowledge of sociology is evident in her attempt to establish an analytical frame of reference; yet, some of the Western concepts that she employs do not seem to fit the Chinese realities. It is still debatable, for example, whether or not there was ever a “civil society” or a “middle class” in China during the period under examination and, if so, how best to characterize them, let alone to trace their impact on foreign-policy making. Also, “cultural vision” remains a vague and slippery concept. Sociologists are probably able to conceptualize it in an absolute sense; diplomatic historians would have difficulty in reconstructing it in a foreign-policy analysis. Even the most comprehensive internal policy debate documents will not warrant a causal (from vision to policy proposition) analysis—few such linkages can be identified from the book’s case analysis.

Second, an “inside-out-and-outside-in” examination would have been a lot more effective if contextual factors were not overlooked. There can be little doubt that U.S.-China relations in the late 1940s and the 1950s could not have played out in a political vacuum but were consistently confined in the Cold War structure. Downplaying the importance of the Cold War context, a look from “the outside in” might run the risk of reducing a complex phenomenon to a preconceived interpretation. There is reason to argue that Mao’s “intermediate zone” theories (developed in the late 1940s and the mid-1950s) and subsequent decisions to challenge the U.S. in Korea, the Taiwan Strait and Indochina, and Truman’s “wedge strategy” first through economic inducement and then trade embargo might have little to do with conflicting visions of modernity or identity but stand as fallout of Cold War power politics. In taking the Cold War context into account more rigorously, one may pause to think further whether or not U.S.-China policies could have been less “counterproductive”. Should misperception and misjudgment of each other’s intentions contribute to the persistent deterioration of Chinese-American relations, the Cold War structure would equally be to blame.
Third, a comparative effort would have been far more effective if there was no significant imbalance in the bilateral archival bases. Comparing U.S. sources of the late 1940s and the 1950s, the Chinese “archives” are still significantly incompatible and, thus, should be treated with more care than otherwise when reconstructing “actual” Chinese objectives or “realities”. Without the advantage of looking at, for example, recently available PRC foreign ministry archives covering 1956-1960, ministries of railway administration and foreign economy documents, and the considerable amount of material opened by the key provincial and municipal (Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou) governments, Qing’s efforts to reconstruct the policy thinking of the CCP/PRC related to modernity and identity are at least handicapped. The above-mentioned and other archival holdings might suggest a different pattern than what she has developed in the book. Beijing’s foreign economic relations with the Soviet Union, East Europe, North Korea, Vietnam, Mongolia as well as with the industrial countries and non-communist nations in Asia and Africa in the 1950s, for example, might shed a different light.

Finally, a study of this scope and nature might inspire further efforts if it asked a different research question: Can the ideas of modernity and identity be a political instrument in international relations? It may, one can boldly assume, if it is targeted at a nation that aspires to build a modern state and acquire a new identity of a first-class citizen of the world. As an integral part of its “soft power”, Washington was keen in promoting worldwide the American experiences of modernity in political democracy, economic build-up, and social development. Its economic and diplomatic statecraft in the form of either inducement or punishment, for example, represents such a foreign-policy behavior. It would have been surprising if the Truman and Eisenhower administrations did not employ, consciously or subconsciously, such political instrument toward China – in fact, they did with aid inducement, trade embargo, economic sanctions, and diplomatic efforts to block PRC’s entry into the UN and other international organizations. These policies, as my *Economic Cold War: America’s Embargo against China and the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1949-1963* (2001) shows, were by no means counterproductive but had accomplished the targeted objectives (forcing a Sino-Soviet estrangement). One should then ask further: Was the idea of modernity and identity conceived of as a strategic asset? How did such thinking get transmitted into foreign policies? How were their effectiveness evaluated and subsequent policies adjusted? What did the interactive or intercoursive process look like? More importantly, what if any implications can one derive? Such an undertaking might pave the way toward a paradigm shift in international history of the Cold War.

Qing’s *From Allies to Enemies*, without doubt, is a welcome addition to the flourishing literature on the Cold War international relations in general and the U.S.-China relations during the Cold War in particular. Its methodological venture will hopefully inspire more and more innovative efforts toward approaching the Cold War from an international history perspective.
I am grateful to Professors Greg Brazinsky, T. Christopher Jesperson, Andrew J. Rotter, and Shu Guang Zhang for their warm compliments on my book and thoughtful suggestions for improvements. And I appreciate and have taken seriously Professor Doug MacDonald’s comprehensive comments and critiques.

In the following, I will first respond to their questions with respect to my methodological approach, then their questions regarding my historical narratives, particularly on the Korean War, the Soviet military aid to the CCP in the civil war, and the conceptual origins of “coalition government” in postwar China. These three historical questions, in my view, concern two primary issues in U.S.-China diplomacy; that is, how to evaluate China’s domestic conditions and assess China’s foreign policy intentions.

I. Methodological Approach

1. Regarding Contemporary Cultural Analysis

The key difference between a contemporary cultural analysis and a traditional one is that the former no longer talks about “national character” or “collective identity” as a sweeping analytical unit, without profound internal differences, as Professor Doug MacDonald assumes. Instead, contemporary cultural analysis focuses on moral order, which is defined in terms of the mainstream moral parameter, or outermost moral boundary of the mainstream discourse and policy debates.¹

By focusing on “moral order” or the mainstream parameters, contemporary cultural analysis allows a broad enough conceptual space for conflicting or competing political, economic, and cultural factions or intellectual trends to co-exist within the mainstream parameters in each society. It also provides sufficient conceptual space for individuals’ different interpretations of politics, economics, culture, and world order inside and outside the mainstream parameters of each nation. As anthropologist Clifford Geertz emphasizes, “We must descend into detail, ...to grasp firmly the essential character of not only the various cultures but the various sorts of individuals within each culture, if we wish to encounter humanity face to face.”²


Thus, by applying the concept of “moral order” or the “mainstream parameters” to the study of international relations we can reach two goals simultaneously: one is to examine vastly different views in policy debates within the mainstream parameters; the other is to further explore the intriguing question of whether these deeply divergent opinions also share some common “blinders” in foreign policy debates, or whether the outermost boundaries of the mainstream debates at a specific time could implicitly limit foreign policy options and block out better foreign policy choices.

Furthermore, contemporary cultural analysis also focuses on deep-seated assumptions within the mainstream parameters, which may be defined in terms of analytical categories or “boxes” in our heads when selecting and analyzing information in policy debates. In this regard, the emphasis on deeply ingrained, yet rarely examined assumptions in contemporary cultural analysis is entirely consistent with the major concerns in cognitive psychology.3

According to cognitive psychology, we do not usually select information objectively, even when we intend to do so. Instead, we select information, subconsciously as well as consciously, according to preexisting categories or “boxes” or images in our heads. As Richard Immerman emphasizes,

“Cognitive psychologists uniformly agree that new evidence will always be interpreted to conform to those deep-seated analytical boxes in our heads. If it is consistent with them, we will accept it; if inconsistent or ambiguous, we will discredit, distort, or ignore it. This tendency is most pronounced when the belief is deeply felt and deeply held. Our values are hierarchically ordered, and our beliefs are interconnected to form a system; when incoming information is so discordant that we cannot ignore it, we will revise our least fundamental notions before even questioning our core assumptions. Our most highly valued beliefs are thus minimally disconfirmed in policymaking process.”4

In my book, I argue that issues of both the invisible mainstream moral boundaries and deeply embedded analytical categories or “boxes” in our heads have a profound impact upon how one perceives other nations’ foreign policy intentions and domestic conditions. And these assessments and evaluations, whether accurate or mistaken, would of course shape our convictions on how to defend national interests and moral principles in foreign policy debates.

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This is by no means to advocate cultural determinism. The nature of the world economic system, the position of a nation within the world economic system, its domestic societal composition, and domestic politics, as well as its cultural heritage are crucially important in shaping mainstream discourse boundaries and deep-seated assumptions at a specific time in each nation, as I emphasize in the concluding chapter.

In short, methodologically, my book focuses on the question of why policymakers and the general public in China and American could unintentionally and repeatedly narrow policy choices, engender counterproductive policy results, and hurt both respective peoples’ long-term interests in U.S.-China diplomacy during this period, when China and America transformed their relationship from allies, to adversaries, and to enemies in fifteen years.

2. **Regarding the Ideology-Power Paradigm**

I respectfully disagree with the dichotomy Professor MacDonald draws between a culture-power paradigm and an ideology-power paradigm. In my view, this is a false dichotomy. I prefer not to see culture and ideology as divided into two separate, disconnected compartments. What I argue in my book is simply that when we discuss a nation’s “official ideology” or ideological rhetoric, we need to take into account its cultural as well as political and economic contexts wherein an ideology and in particular, an imported ideology, is interpreted in an indigenous environment or a specific “time and space.”

For instance, in the Taiping peasant rebellion of the 1850s, the peasant rebels imported a foreign religion – Christianity – as their official ideology. When foreign missionaries poured into their capital, Nanjing, they quickly realized that these rebels were not only much more egalitarian, but also much more nationalistic, and much more hostile to the Western powers’ China policies, than the Manchu dynasty had ever been. And in the Chinese Republican Revolution of 1911, Dr. Sun Yat-sen and other Republican revolutionaries imported a Western ideology – democracy and Republicanism – as their official ideology. However, their interpretations of democracy, freedom, market economy, and world order, were anything but identical with America’s at the time, as I discuss in the book.

Thus, in my book I argue that to understand a country’s official ideology and its impact on domestic and foreign policies, one should not ignore the indigenous milieu which helped shape its interpretations. In this sense, I further argue that an “informal ideology,” which takes into account indigenous interpretations (competing interpretations, of course), as
defined by Michael H. Hunt and Steve Levine, is much more important in assessing its implications for a nation’s foreign policy underpinnings.

Therefore, the question here is whether we should separate the interpretations of an ideology from the indigenous historical, economic and political as well as cultural settings. Professor MacDonald seems to assume that there is indeed a universal interpretation of any ideology, such as socialism and capitalism. Should this be true, the mainstream of America and that of Continental Europe would have identical interpretations of capitalism and the market economy. As we know, this is simply not the case. The European Union has a social market economy, while the United States has a free market economy.

3. Regarding the Cold War Ideological Framework

Whether modernization in the developing world should be identified with Westernization is still a controversial issue today. In fact, since the 1890s, to reform China in the image of America, or to Americanize China, was a persistent dream of many missionaries and progressive reformers as well as policymakers in the United States.

Thus, in U.S.-China diplomacy during the Cold War, not only China’s political or foreign policy affiliations, but at a deeper level, the question of China’s modernity and identity, were primary concerns of American policymakers. China’s modernization drive in both

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6 For a pioneering study of the role of culture in interpreting an ideology, see: Frederic Wakeman, Jr., History and Will: Philosophical Perspectives of Mao Tse-Tung’s Thought (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973).

Nationalist China and the People’s Republic was perceived to have important implications for China’s foreign policy directions. And there seemed to be only two choices for the Chinese people – either the American model or the Soviet model.

This Cold War ideological framework brought about enormous damage to U.S.-China relations, as I discuss in detail in the book. I agree wholeheartedly with Professor Shu Guang Zhang that to go beyond the ideological framework of the Cold War should not mean that we need to ignore the greatly detrimental impact of the Cold War framework on these two peoples. To the contrary, it should mean that we need to further examine the mainstream parameters and analytical categories or entrenched “boxes” in our heads in the policy and public debates of the Cold War. We need to learn from historical lessons on the origins and evolutions of U.S.-China confrontations in this period. As Albert Einstein emphasized, “The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.”

II. Historical Narratives

1. The Korean War: Did the 38th Parallel Matter? Issues of Nationalism and Internationalism in China’s Intention to Join the War

Both Professor Brazinsky and Professor Rotter thoughtfully urged me to clarify the major differences between my arguments and Professor Chen Jian’s, and in particular, to address Chen’s key thesis that the 38th parallel did not matter in Beijing’s strategic planning and final decision to enter the war from July through early October 1950. Here I will follow their wise advice to do so.

There are three major differences between my research findings and Professor Chen’s with respect to Beijing’s strategic intentions before and during the Korean War.

First, what was Beijing’s approach to the Korean civil war in 1949 and 1950, prior to the outbreak of the Korean War? Chen Jian’s argument is that Mao Zedong actively encouraged Kim Il Sung, the communist leader of North Korea, to launch an offensive campaign against the South throughout 1949 and up to the outbreak of the Korean War. This was because, Chen claims, when Mao went to Moscow to negotiate a Sino-Soviet alliance treaty, he and Stalin arranged a division of labor in the world communist movement. While Moscow was to focus on Europe, Mao would lead the promotion of communist movement in Asia. His


9 For Chen Jian’s arguments on the Korean War, see: Chen Jian: “The Sino-Soviet Alliance and China’s Entry into the Korean War” (CWIHP Working Paper 1); and *China’s Road to the Korean War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).
major historical evidence is that from July 1949 to April 1950, Mao twice sent soldiers of Korean origins in the People's Liberation Army (PLA), fully armed, back to North Korea.

However, in my research I have found that none of the declassified Russian or Chinese documents can substantiate Professor Chen’s argument. To the contrary, these documents indicate clearly that while Mao supported, in principle, Kim’s military reunification campaign in the Korean civil war, Mao’s major fear throughout 1949 and before May 1950 was that North Korea was too weak to withstand an offensive campaign from the South. Mao was also concerned that in an offensive campaign by the North, the United States might intervene in the war. Should this happen, the situation could be highly detrimental to the security interests of North Korea.

Most of the following Russian and Chinese archival documents I read through in my research but did not quote, because I thought at the time that their subject matter did not fall sufficiently within the focus of my book, and would have added greatly to its already considerable length.

In the beginning of 1949 the Soviet embassy in North Korea began to report to Moscow about rapidly increasing violations of the 38th parallel by the South. On February 3, 1949, Soviet ambassador Shtykov warned that North Korea did not have enough trained personnel, adequate weapons and munitions to rebuff intensifying incursions from the South. Meeting with Kim II Sung in the Kremlin on March 5, 1949, Stalin also showed his concerns about growing pressure from the South in the vicinity of the 38th parallel, and stressed repeatedly to Kim that "The 38th parallel must be peaceful. It is very important."10

On April 17, 1949, on behalf of Stalin, Foreign Minister Vyshinsky sent a telegram to ambassador Shtykov, highlighting, again, the possibility that the South might attack the North: “According to recent intelligence reports, we estimate that the American troops will withdraw from South Korea in May, and move to an island near Japan, thus South Korean troops would be able to launch its offensive campaign. “In June the South might launch a surprise attack against the North, aiming to eliminate North Korea by August 1949.”11 The Soviet ambassador confirmed that a large-scale war was being prepared by Seoul “with the

10 :“Stalin’s meeting with Kim Il Sung,” 3/5/1949; CWIHP Virtual Archives, Collection: The Korean War; with permission of Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington D. C.

help of Americans”, and again raised alarm about “the inability of North Korean troops to withstand the aggression.”

In early May 1949, Kim Yi – head of the North Korean General Political Department – visited Beijing, and requested, on behalf Kim Il Sung, the return of soldiers of Korean origins in the PLA, who had joined the CCP force in the Chinese civil war. Mao and the CCP leadership immediately agreed. Mao said they should return fully armed, with all the heavy weapons, to defend North Korea against an attack from the South. Meanwhile, Mao also “persuaded the Korean comrades not to launch a preemptive attack against the South, because it might cause the United States to intervene,” and the CCP troops were now moving to the south of the Yangtze, and thus “would not be able to give effective support to Korean comrades.”

On September 3, 1949, Kim Il Sung proposed to Moscow a plan of military reunification. On September 24, 1949, the Soviet Politburo rejected this plan, concluding that such a plan “might give the Americans a pretext for all kinds of interference in Korean affairs.”

Kim Il Sung then appealed to Mao and the CCP leadership to support his plan. On October 21, 1949, Mao informed Stalin of Kim’s request and the CCP leadership’s view that this plan should not be implemented under the current situation. On October 26, 1949, Molotov drafted a telegram for Stalin to reply to Mao’s telegram:

“We agree with your view that at present, the Korean People’s Army should not (yet) launch an offensive campaign. We have also pointed out to Korean friends that their offensive campaign should not be implemented, because militarily and politically this offensive campaign is not ready.” (“yet” was added by Stalin on the draft)


14 “Politburo decision to confirm the following directive to the Soviet ambassador in Korea, Sep. 24, 1949,” CWIHP Virtual Archives, Collection: The Korean War.

On November 5, 1949, Stalin sent a telegram to Mao: “We support your view on the Korean situation. We will continue offering our advice to Korean comrades according to the spirit of your suggestion.”

On November 15, 1949, one month after the establishment of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), Zhou Enlai candidly told Soviet ambassador N. V. Roschin that his primary concern was “the financial and economic difficulty” the new China was facing. Domestic economic recovery would become the “key factor” in “safeguarding the fruits of the revolutionary victory” in the new China. At this critical moment, Zhou emphasized, if China had to be involved in a war, it would be a “fatal blow” to the Chinese economic recovery.

On December 16, 1949, Mao arrived in Moscow to negotiate a new Sino-Soviet Alliance Treaty, to replace the previous one signed by Stalin and Chiang Kai-shek in 1945. At his first meeting with Stalin on the night of his arrival, Mao started the conversation with the following statement:

“The most important question at the present time is the question of establishing peace. China needs at least a period of 3-5 years of peace, which would be used to bring the economy back to pre-war levels and thus to stabilize the country....With this in mind the CC CPC [Central Committee of the Communist Party of China] entrusted me to ascertain from you, comrade Stalin, in what way and for how long will international peace be preserved.”

Clearly, for Mao and the CCP leadership, to consolidate the CCP’s political power and to safeguard the revolutionary victory, their primary concerns at that time were the recovery of the economy, which demanded a peaceful environment.

Thus, throughout 1949, Beijing and Moscow took a similar position on the Korean situation: North Korea should concentrate on defending itself against a possible attack from the South, rather than launching a military reunification campaign in the Korean civil war.

On January 30, 1950, twenty days after Secretary of State Dean Acheson’s speech at the National Press Club on the Truman administrations’ new “defense perimeter” in the Western Pacific and new military strategy toward Taiwan as discussed in detail in my book, and on the same day when Stalin agreed to Mao’s request to return Soviet naval base in

16 Ibid.


18 “Conversation between Mao and Stalin, 12/16/1949,” CWIHP Virtual Archives, Collection: Sino-Soviet Relations.
Port Arthur to China, he also sent a telegram to Soviet ambassador Shtykov in Pyongyang, indicating, for the first time, he was willing to reconsider the Korean situation.\(^\text{19}\) Stalin wrote:

> “I understand the dissatisfaction of Comrade Kim Il Sung, but he must understand that such a large matter in regard to South Korea such as he wants to undertake needs large preparation. The matter must be organized so that there would not be too great a risk. If he wants to discuss this matter with me, then I will always be ready to receive him and discuss with him. Transmit all this to Kim Il Sung and tell him that I am ready to help him in this matter.”\(^\text{20}\)

At that time, Mao was still in Moscow in the course of negotiating a new alliance treaty. According to Mao, Stalin never mentioned his possible change of mind at the meetings. Six years later, on March 31, 1956, during Mao’s conversation with Soviet ambassador Pavel Yudin, Mao raised this issue. As Yudin recorded,

> “On the Korean question, when I (Mao) was in Moscow (in Dec. 1949-Jan. 1950) we came to an understanding about everything. The issue was not about the seizure of South Korea, but about the significant strengthening of North Korea. But subsequently Kim Il Sung was in Moscow, where some kind of agreement was reached, about which no one considered it necessary to consult with us before hand. It should be noted, said Mao Zedong, that there was a serious miscalculation in the Korean War about the supposed impossibility of intervention of international forces on the side of South Korea.”\(^\text{21}\)

Dr. Evgueni Bajanov, Director of the Institute for Contemporary International Relations at Russian Foreign Ministry, explained why Stalin did not inform Mao at the time:

> “According to all available data, Stalin never mentioned to the Chinese guest his decision to launch an attack on the South while Mao was in Moscow. Stalin did not consult Mao in advance because he wanted to work out the plans for the Korean War himself without Chinese interference and objections and then present Beijing with a fait accompli when Mao would have no choice but to agree ….”

Based on declassified Russian documents, he further explored the motivation behind Stalin’s decision not to consult Mao in advance:

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\(^{19}\) For possible reasons why Stalin changed his mind, see my book’s discussions.


\(^{21}\) “Telegram from P. Yudin on meeting with Mao Zedong, 4/20/1956,” CWIHP Virtual Archives, collection: The Korean War; by permission of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, D.C.
“While in Moscow Mao insisted on the liberation of Taiwan. Stalin was negative to the idea. It would be hard for Stalin to convince Mao in Moscow to help the Koreans before the Chinese had completed the reunification of their own country.”

In April 1950, for the defense of North Korea, Mao and the CCP leadership sent back, once again, soldiers of Korean origins in the PLA, fully armed, to North Korea. Thus, from July 1949 up to April 1950, altogether over 30,000 Korean soldiers in the PLA returned to their native land.

Not until May 13, 1950 did Mao first learn about Stalin’s changed plan in Korea, when Kim Il Sung told Mao in Beijing. Mao’s surprise was shown vividly from the exchanges of telegrams between Stalin and Mao Zedong. After Kim told Mao that Stalin had agreed to the military reunification plan on May 13, Mao immediately sent Zhou Enlai to the Soviet embassy as soon as the meeting was over, shortly before midnight, to inquire whether Stalin had indeed changed his mind and supported the plan. As ambassador Roshchin reported to Stalin:

“Today on May 13, at 23 hours 30 minutes Chou En-lai paid a visit to me and, following the instructions of Mao Tse-tung, let me know the following....

In the evening comrade Mao Tse-tung has had a meeting with them (Kim Il Sung and minister of foreign affairs of North Korea). In the conversation with comrade Mao Tse-tung the Korean comrades informed about the directives of comrade Filippov ....that North Korea can move toward actions; however, this question should be discussed with China and personally with comrade Mao Tse-tung.

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23 According to the Chinese and Russian archives, the exact numbers of these returning Korean soldiers were as follows: in July 1949, two divisions (10,821+10320), and in March-April 1950, 14,000 soldiers. Headquarters of the PLA Northeast Region ed., The War of Liberation in Northeast of China (Shenyang, October 1949); and “Telegram from Liu Shaoqi to Mao Zedong regarding Kim Il Sung’s agreement to receive Korean soldiers in the fourth field army, Jan. 22, 1950); quoted from Jin Dongji (Republic of Korea): “On the Conspiracy Theory in the Study of the Korean War,” in Contemporary China Studies. No. 2, 2006; p. 112.
In connection with the abovementioned, comrade Mao Tse-tung would like to have personal clarifications of comrade Filippov on this question.”24

On the following day, Roshchin delivered Stalin’s reply. Stalin confirmed that he had indeed approved Kim’s plan, because of “the changed international situation,” a statement on which he did not elaborate. The “final decision,” the message said, should be made between Kim and Mao.25

Mao implied to Kim that his plan might need to be postponed, since the situation was not yet “ripe” for such a military campaign. Mao emphasized that foreign powers might intervene in this plan, since “South Korea is so close to Japan.” Should Americans intervene, Mao said, the war would become “a protracted one,” which would be highly detrimental to the security interests of North Korea. Kim Il Sung assured Mao that the reunification war could succeed in a very short time. Moreover, he emphasized that Stalin was “confident” America would not intervene.26

According to Stalin’s suggestion, Kim did not inform Mao of the specific schedule of North Korea’s military campaign. Thus, after Kim’s departure, Beijing continued or, more accurately, speeded up its preparations for the upcoming Taiwan campaign.27

On June 23, 1950, Mao ordered the transfer of four more corps from Shanghai areas to the Taiwan Strait region, now altogether 16 corps, for the Taiwan campaign. This was just one day before the outbreak of the Korean War.28

Second, after the outbreak of the Korean War on June 25, 1950, when did Mao and the Beijing leadership decide to enter the war? Did the 38th parallel matter in Beijing’s strategic planning and decisions to enter the war?

Chen Jian’s argument is that the 38th parallel did not matter. He believes that since Mao had already pushed Stalin to change his mind about the war in 1949 and early 1950, and

24 “Telegram from Roshchin to Stalin on Question of whether or not can take action, 5/13/1950,” CWIHP Virtual Archives, Collection: The Korean War.


28 Liu Wen: Su Yu Zhuan (Biography of Su Yu) (Beijing: Dangdai zhongguo chubanshe, 2000), pp. 220-222. Su Yu was the Commander-in-Chief of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Taiwan Campaign at the time.
attempted to use the Korean War to achieve his ambition of making China the center of an Asian communist revolution, he actively prepared to dispatch Chinese troops to Korea, long before MacArthur's troops crossed the 38th parallel, and even before MacArthur's Inchon landing in mid-September.

On the other hand, my argument is that right after the Korean War broke out, Beijing's strategic planning was intimately tied to its strategic assessments of the Truman administration's intentions in the war. Beijing particularly focused on the question of whether the American troops would cross the 38th parallel. Thus from the beginning, Mao and the Beijing leadership set down the precondition or the "bottom line" for China's entry into the Korean War. That is, should the American troops cross the 38th parallel, Chinese troops would join the war.

The following are the major declassified Russian and Chinese documents that may show clearly the motivations behind Beijing's strategic planning to send troops to Korea in July, August and September 1950.

On July 2, 1950, at his meeting with Soviet ambassador Roshchin, Zhou Enlai informed him of Beijing's assessments of the Truman administration's intentions in the war. Among 120,000 American troops in Japan, 60,000 of them could be deployed in Korea, he said. These American troops could land on the southern ports of Pusan, Mokpo, and Masan, etc., then march toward the north. In this regard, he particularly quoted Mao as saying that it would be possible that American troops were to land on Inchon, or a nearby port, to threaten the rear area of North Korea. Thus, on behalf of the CCP leadership, Zhou Enlai set down the precondition for China's entry into the war:

"If the American troops do not cross the 38th parallel, the Chinese troops will not cross the Yalu. However, should the American troops cross the 38th parallel, the Chinese troops would enter the war." 29

29 "Telegram from Roshchin to Stalin, 7/2/1950," in Bai Zhouxuan ed., Selected Russian Archival Documents on the Korean War, January 1949-August 1953 (Seoul: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Korea). In 1994, Russian President Yeltsin sent part of the Soviet archival documents on the Korean War to then South Korean President Kim Young-Sam. Bai Zhou-xuan, officer of East European Division at South Korean Foreign Ministry, edited and translated these documents, and had it published in South Korea. Part of this collection has been translated and published in China. See: Qi Dexue: Juren de jiaoliang (Rivalry of Titans) (Shenyang: Liaoning renminchubanshe, 2010), p. 68. Also see: Qi Dexue: "Four Myths about the Korean War," 5/21/2010, sina.com (This article concisely introduced recently declassified Russian, South Korean, as well as Chinese archival documents on the Korean War.)
Three days later, on July 5, Stalin reaffirmed Zhou’s emphasis on the crucial importance of the 38th parallel in China’s participation in the war. Stalin wrote:

“We consider it correct to concentrate immediately 9 divisions on the Chinese-Korean border for volunteer actions in North Korea in case the enemy crosses the 38th parallel.”

On July 8, General Douglas MacArthur was appointed as Commander-in-Chief of UN troops in Korea. On the same day, the Chinese North East Border Defense Army (NEBDA) was established. As Mao later told the USSR Central Committee delegation three years after the war ended,

“After the war broke out, we first transferred three corps, then two more, altogether five corps, to deploy them along the Yalu river. That was why, when the enemy crossed the 38th parallel, we were in a position to send our troops to Korea. Otherwise, if we had made no preparations at all, the enemy could have quickly marched over.”

In late July 1950, when the major force of the North Korean troops all concentrated in the southern end of the Peninsula, Beijing headquarters’ concern was rapidly deepened. For instance, on July 26, Deng Hua, commander of the NEBDA 13th corps deployed along the Yalu border, warned that:

“Given the much extended battle line of the North Korean People’s Army into the deep south, a danger is now looming larger than before. That is, MacArthur’s troops might take advantage of their superior air and naval power to stage a landing operation on the east or west coast in the middle of the Peninsula…. And it would be extremely difficult for the North Korean People’s Army to prevent the trinity of American air, naval and ground forces from a landing operation, due to its much weaker naval and air force, as well as the small number of its ground forces staying behind in the rear area.”

A week later, on August 4, 1950, at the CCP Politburo meeting, Mao Zedong concurred with Commander Deng’s concern and formally suggested the probability that MacArthur’s troops might launch a landing operation and expand the war to the north of the 38th parallel. Mao said,

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“Should MacArthur’s troops cross the 38th parallel, should American imperialists win the war, it would become arrogant and threaten us. We cannot afford not to help North Korea, we must help North Korea…..We cannot afford not to speed up preparation now.”33

On the following day, the CCP Central Military Committee sent a telegram to Gao Gang, Commander-in-Chief of the Northeast Military Region, stipulating that “NEBDA must complete its preparation to enter the war by the end of August.”34

In fact, Mao’s and Commander Deng Hua’s assessments of the strategic intention of MacArthur’s troops were widely shared among ranking military officers. On Aug. 23, the officers in the PLA Joint Chiefs of Staff War Room came to a conclusion that MacArthur’s troops were to land on Inchon, to cut the Peninsula right in the middle, aiming to circle the North Korean troops in the southern end, and to cross the 38th parallel. Zhou Enlai agreed with this conclusion, and immediately reported to Mao in the same night.35 Around the same time, Chinese intelligence reports piled up on Mao’s desk: the U.S. First Marine Division in Japan was preparing for a landing operation in Inchon or a nearby port.36

Thus, throughout July, August and early September 1950, at his meetings with North Korean representatives in Beijing, Mao Zedong warned three times about the probability of American troops’ Inchon landing. “There might be two developments in the Korean War,” Mao emphasized. One was the complete victory of the North Korean People’s Army,” while the other was a “protracted war” in Korea. Should there be the second development, Mao particularly emphasized, MacArthur would strengthen the defense of Daegu, Pusan, to distract all the force of the North Korean People’s Army in the southern end. But MacArthur’s strategic goal was to launch a landing operation, close to Pyongyang, in the rear area of the North

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33 “Mao’s talk at CCP Politburo meeting, 8/4/1950,” in Pang Xianzhi and Li Jie: Mao Zedong yu Kang Mei Yuan Chao (Mao Zedong and the Korean War); Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe (Chinese archival and documents publisher), 2000; p. 5.

34 “CCP Central Military Committee’s telegram to Gao Gang, 8/5/1950,” in Pang Xianzhi and Li Jie: Mao Zedong yu Kang Mei Yuan Chao (Mao Zedong and the Korean War); Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe (Chinese archival and documents publisher), 2000; p. 5.

35 Zhou Enlai Nianpu (Zhou Enlai Chronicle) (Beijing: Chinese Archival Documents Publisher); p. 126; see also Lu Jiandong: “Questions about Lei Yingfu’s memoir on the Korean War,” in Dang de wenxian (Journal of CCP Archival Documents”), No. 2, 2001; p. 88.

Korean army, and then to cross the 38th parallel. Thus Mao suggested that Pyongyang should pay serious attention to the second development, and ensure sufficient defense force in the coastal rear area, and in particular, to build up the defense of those areas on which MacArthur was most likely to launch a landing operation, such as the Inchon-Seoul region.37 As Mao wrote in his draft telegram to Stalin (unsent),

“When comrade Kim Il Sung visited Beijing in May of this year, we told him that he needed to pay serious attention to the possibility that foreign reactionary troops might invade North Korea (in his military reunification campaign). During mid-July, late July and beginning of September, we three times told Korean comrades that they should pay attention to the danger that the enemy might land on Inchon-Seoul area, to cut off the retreat routes of North Korean troops fighting in the southern end. Therefore we suggested that the Korean People’s Army should make full preparation to retreat timely back to the North, thus to protect the major force of the Korean People’s Army, and to win the final victory in a prolonged war.”38

On Sep. 15, more than 70,000 of MarArthur’s troops landed on Inchon. Five days later, on September 20, Zhou and Mao sent Kim Il Sung a telegram, which said:

“We estimate that the enemy’s strategic goal is to cut off the transportation between north and south of the Peninsula, and to close in to the 38th parallel. The Korean People’s Army must try its best to safeguard north of the 38th parallel, which would be the foundation of a prolonged war of national defense.”39

In the night of September 29, Zhou Enlai reported to Mao Zedong that MacArthur’s troops had already announced they would “march toward north of the 38th parallel.” Zhou warned: “There is no defense force in the north of the 38th parallel. This is a very dangerous situation. It is entirely probable that the enemy force could directly march on to Pyongyang.” Mao drafted a public statement, which he asked Zhou to make the following day: “Chinese people love peace. However, to defend peace, we have never feared, and will

37 Bai Zhouxuan: Selected Documents of Soviet Archives on the Korean War (1/1949-8/1953), (Seoul, South Korea Foreign Ministry); Qi Dexue: Juren de jiaoliang (Rivalry of Titans) (Shenyang: Liaoning renminchubanshe, 2010), pp. 68-9.

38 “Draft telegram from Mao Zedong to Stalin, 10/2/1950,” (this telegram was never sent out; the original copy is now in the First Chinese National Archives in Beijing); quoted from Pang Xianzhi and Li Jie: Mao Zedong yu Kang Mei Yuan Chao (Mao Zedong and the Korean War); Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe (Chinese archival and documents publisher), 2000; p. 7.

never fear waging wars of resistance against military invasions.” It particularly emphasized: “Chinese people will never tolerate military aggression. Neither will Chinese people allow imperialists to invade our neighbors.”

Thus, contrary to Professor Chen’s argument, recently declassified Russian and Chinese documents all indicate with crystal clarity that the 38th parallel did matter in Beijing’s strategic assessments of the Truman administration’s intentions in the war and its subsequent strategic plannings to join the war in July, August and September 1950.

Third, what was the intention of Zhou Enlai’s urgent message of October 3, 1950 to the Truman administration with regard to China’s precondition to send troops to Korea?

In Chen Jian’s work, the sequence of events in October 2-October 3, 1950 was that in the afternoon of October 2, the CCP Central Committee Secretariat meeting made the final decision to join the war in Korea; and after the meeting, Mao sent his telegram to Stalin, pledging China was to send troops to Korea immediately. One day later, on October 3, Zhou Enlai sent his message to the Truman administration regarding the crucial importance of the 38th parallel for China’s participation in the war. Since Zhou’s “urgent message” of October 3 was sent after Mao and the CCP leadership had already made the final decision to join the war, this message on the 38th parallel should be regarded as simply a propaganda campaign to rally the people domestically and internationally, to justify China’s entry into the Korean War.

However, according to the declassified documents in the Chinese, Russian and American archives, the sequence of events in October 2-October 3 was entirely different from the picture portrayed above. Here is what emerged from the archival documents in Beijing, Moscow and Washington:

In the early morning of October 2, before Mao attended the CCP Central Committee Secretariat meeting, he had written a draft telegram to Stalin, pledging China was to join the war, based on his assessment that MacArthur’s troops would soon cross the 38th parallel. But Mao never sent this draft telegram to Stalin. After he had drafted this telegram, he attended the Central Committee Secretariat meeting in the afternoon of October 2, wherein most participants did not agree to dispatch Chinese troops to Korea right away. Thus, after the meeting, Mao did not send out his draft telegram. Instead, he sent a different telegram to Stalin, which said China would not send out troops to Korea for now. This was not Beijing’s final decision, Mao said. The final decision would be made at the CCP Central Committee.

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Committee meeting. That is why there is no time stamp on Mao’s draft telegram of October 2 in the Chinese archives. Neither is there a copy of this draft telegram in Stalin’s file. Instead, Mao’s telegram to Stalin after the Secretariat meeting, signed by Mao on October 2 and received in Moscow on October 3, has been declassified in the Russian archives.  

More importantly, in the early morning of October 3, 1950, after Mao had sent the telegram to Stalin stating that China was not to join the war right away, Zhou Enlai met with the Indian ambassador K. M. Panikkar, asking him to send an urgent message to the Truman administration. Zhou’s message said, “The American troops are trying to cross the 38th parallel, to expand the war to the north.” Zhou emphasized: “If the South Korean troops crossed the parallel, the Chinese troops would not intervene,” since it was still an “internal matter” in the Korean peninsula.” However, Zhou repeatedly emphasized:

“Should American troops cross the 38th parallel, we would not sit idle. We would intervene. China would send troops to North Korea.”

The State Department received Zhou’s urgent message on Oct. 3, 1950, which has been declassified in the National Archives of the United States. (I discuss in detail in my book why the China Desk and the Truman administration decided to regard Zhou’s message as a “bluff.”) On Oct. 5, 1950, Chinese intelligence reports indicated that the U.S. troops were to cross the 38th parallel. The majority of the Beijing leadership quickly concluded that China must join the war. On October 7, when MacArthur’s troops crossed the 38th parallel, Mao formally informed both Kim Il Sung and Stalin of Beijing’s final decision: to send troops to Korea. On day later, on October 8, Mao ordered the establishment of the Chinese People’s Volunteer Army to join the Korean War.

As Peng Dehuai, Commander-in-Chief of the Chinese Volunteer Army in Korea told his aides in private: “As soon as American troops crossed the 38th parallel, I knew we would be compelled to enter the war.” And at his meeting with the USSR Central Committee delegation three years after the war ended, Mao Zedong talked about the “bottom line” of China’s entry into the

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41 “Ciphered telegram from Roshchin in Beijing to Filippov [Stalin], 3 October 1950, conveying 2 October 1950 message from Mao to Stalin,” CWIHP Virtual Archives, Collection: Korean War.


44 “Records of Peng Dehuai’s conversations with his aides”, 2/11/1955; in Pang Xianzhi and Li Jie: Mao Zedong and the Korean War (Beijing: Chinese archival and documents publisher, 2000); p. 11.
Korean War. This "bottom line" was "whether American troops would cross the 38\textsuperscript{th} parallel." He emphasized,

"Should American troops intervene, and not cross the 38\textsuperscript{th} parallel, we would not intervene. However, should they cross the 38\textsuperscript{th} parallel, we would enter the war, we would send our troops to Korea."\textsuperscript{45}

It is important to note that this focus on the 38\textsuperscript{th} parallel after the onset of the Korean War was, in turn, closely connected with the CCP’s distinctive construction of “proletarian internationalism” or “revolutionary internationalism” at the time, as I discuss in chapter 5 ("Two Sides of One Coin: The CCP’s Policies toward the Soviet Union and the United States"). That is, in the CCP’s interpretation, nationalism or patriotism on the one hand and revolutionary internationalism on the other, were not mutually exclusive, but mutually complementary. When MacArthur’s troops crossed the 38\textsuperscript{th} parallel, a tipping point of the delicate balance between the defense of China’s national independence and revolutionary internationalism seemed to be reached. Beijing made its final decision to enter the war.

A decade later, at the height of the Vietnam War, Hans Morgenthau recorded his conversation with a high-ranking CIA officer about the US-China confrontation in the Korean War:

“It was not necessary in 1950 to have technical intelligence as to the intentions of China. One needed only to take a look at the map and another brief look at Chinese history in order to realize that no Chinese government able to help itself would countenance the approach of a potentially hostile army to the Yalu.”\textsuperscript{46}

In retrospect, Morgenthau’s and this CIA officer’s assessment was right on target. Twice since the 1890s, up to the 1940s, China was invaded through the Korean peninsula. This historical memory has been deeply ingrained into China’s national consciousness ever since modern times.

It is therefore clear that Allen Whiting’s major argument in his “thesis of the 38\textsuperscript{th} parallel,” namely, if MacArthur’s troops had not crossed the 38\textsuperscript{th} parallel, the US-China military

\textsuperscript{45} “Mao Zedong’s conversation with USSR Central Committee delegation, 9/23/1956,” in Pang Xianzhi and Li Jie: \textit{Mao Zedong and the Korean War} (Beijing: Chinese archival and documents publisher, 2000); pp. 7-8.

confrontation in Korea could have been avoided, as he first proposed in 1960, can now be more solidly substantiated by declassified Russian and Chinese documents.47

The Korean War suddenly erupted, and the Sino-American military confrontation became a tragic reality. With China’s entry into the war, many State Department officers at the China Desk became the hapless prey of McCarthyism, because of their support of a new economic strategy toward the CCP, and a new military strategy toward Taiwan, as I discuss in the book. Unfortunately, their nuanced analytical paradigm, underestimating the power of nationalism as the dynamic force driving Beijing's foreign policy, and Beijing’s distinctive interpretation of “revolutionary internationalism” at the time, fell short of offering an accurate assessment of Beijing’s intentions in the time of crisis.

With China sending its troops to Korea, the majority in Washington became further convinced that Beijing was more ideological, more loyal to the Soviet Union than the State Department and President Truman had ever understood.

According to Robert L. Suettinger, former deputy national intelligence officer for East Asia, a major shortcoming in America’s China policymaking in the early Cold War was “overestimating the importance of ideological solidarity.... within the Communist Bloc at least during the 1950s.”48

From this perspective, after the Korean War, a more rigid, narrowly defined ideological interpretation of Chinese foreign policy intentions did contribute to an increasingly counterproductive American policy toward China and Southeast Asia by the end of the 1950s. It became much harder for policymakers and the mainstream public to evaluate Chinese foreign policy objectives, which eventually paved the path for the US-China confrontation in Vietnam in the 1960s, as discuss in the book.


Professor MacDonald emphasizes that my chapter on the Marshall mediation in China fails to point out two key issues. First, the Chiang Kai-shek government consistently rejected U.S. policy suggestions to implement important reforms, particularly the land reform. Thus, while American policymakers were concerned about progressive land reforms in postwar China, the Chiang Kai-shek government refused to listen to American recommendations, which led to the failure of Marshall’s “coercive diplomacy” toward the Kuomintang (KMT). Second, and more importantly, the USSR gave the CCP huge military aid, while the Truman administration mounted an arms embargo against the KMT; and only when the CCP had already won a decisive national victory in 1947, did the U.S. lift the arms embargo. Professor MacDonald’s conclusion seems clear: during the civil war the CCP had superior military power built up by Moscow.

Since these issues constitute two of the major themes of the chapter on the Marshall mediation, I would like to respond to them here.

First, the peasant issue and the land reform in postwar China:

In comparing Meiji Japan’s reform and that of the late Manchu dynasty in the late 19th century, or why one succeeded in bringing about initial industrialization, while the other failed, leading comparative sociologists in the United States particularly emphasize that the Meiji government could collect enough rural revenues to launch the incipient industrialization. The late Manchu government, on the other hand, was able to collect merely 2.4% of the total national revenue. Most of the national revenues were held in the hands of the landed elite. Accordingly, “so long as the landlords controlled a majority of the agricultural revenue, the Chinese state could never smoothly transfer agricultural accumulation to industrial investment.”  

Interestingly, in explaining why China could not follow the Soviet path of workers’ revolution in big cities, or the French path of middle class revolution in urban areas, or the Japanese path of the Meiji restoration, Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and many of the first generation of the CCP leaders came to a similar conclusion from different angles in the 1920s: the Chinese landed elites were too powerful. Thus the Chinese revolution must first of all mobilize the poor peasants through land reform, before it would be possible to employ the means of social revolution to reach the goal of national liberation and industrialization. As Zhou Enlai wrote in 1951,

“For the past one hundred years all modern Chinese reformers were trying to find a way to end the age of national humiliation. But they all failed. China was neither able to abolish the landed aristocracy through a French-style revolution, nor able to

begin her industrialization through a Japanese-style constitutional monarchy. Why? Because China’s landed elite was too powerful. The landed elite accounted for 10% of [the] rural population...It was the Chinese Communist Party who first saw the intimate connection between national liberation and social revolution and was determined to carry out a social revolution to achieve national liberation and industrialization.”

It was precisely because of the CCP’s land reform program that Dr. Sun Yat-sen wanted to build a coalition between the KMT he had founded and the newly founded CCP in the early 1920s. Dr. Sun knew the KMT’s power base was in urban centers, and the CCP’s was in rural China; thus he said the KMT would need the CCP’s organizations in rural villages to implement the land reform, without which, he feared, there would be no genuine democracy in China. This was a conviction he had held after the failure of the 1911 Republican revolution he had led.

With Dr. Sun’s death in 1925, and in particular, with the CCP-KMT split in 1927, the Chiang Kai-shek government no longer put land reform at the top of its agenda. As I discuss in the book, a major weakness of the Chiang Kai-shek government during 1927–1945 was that it had neglected the land reform in rural China. During the civil war, the Chiang Kai-shek government did intend to carry out land reform, at a minimum, to undermine the CCP’s appeal in rural villages. However, it failed to do so.

Thus, the question of why U.S. “coercive diplomacy” toward the KMT did not work may be better phrased in a different or more relevant way: why could not the Chiang Kai-shek government implement a land reform program even when it intended to do so?

In the second National Archives of China in Nanjing, I read many KMT military officers’ field reports to the Chiang Kai-shek government during the civil war. These reports vividly described the frustrations experienced by KMT officers in their attempts to implement rural tax reduction programs. As they found out, as soon as they drove out the Communists, “the landlords came back and began their revenge against the poor peasants who had obtained their land under the Communist rule.” In my book, I quote from Colonel Liao Jiwu’s report to the KMT Defense Ministry, which said

“In the areas we just took back from the Communist hands, the landlords not only stopped implementing the KMT Government’s order of a 25% reduction of the poor peasants’ rural tax, but also forced the poor peasants to pay back all the tax refunds they had received from the Communists. To return to the landlords all the benefits they had received under the Communist rule, some of them had to sell all their farming equipment, others simply escaped from their homes and became

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bandits.”

The Colonel emphatically warned that these were not “isolated phenomena,” but widely existed, and worse, were supported by the local governments after the CCP troops were expelled. According to KMT military officers’ reports, most of the local governments under the KMT were “either controlled by landlords themselves,” or controlled by those who had “very close ties with the landlords.”

The point is: implementation of land reform or reduction of rural taxes in China at the time was not dependent only on executive orders: Chiang Kai-shek issued several of them in the civil war. It mainly depended upon a powerful organization in rural villages, which was capable of breaking up the landed elites’ resistance. In rural China, the CCP had employed such an organization since the 1920s, while the KMT did not. Thus, it was illusionary to hope that the Chiang Kai-shek government, after expelling the CCP, could carry out the land reform. In other words, in postwar China, a Chinese government excluding the CCP, became in itself a guarantee for the failure of the land reform program in rural villages.

As I discuss in the book, the Far Eastern Bureau at the State Department seemed to see the connection between the CCP and the land reform, thus insisting upon a coalition government including the KMT, the CCP (as junior partner), and the Third Force. Then the new coalition government should immediately begin to relieve “the rural devastation” as the first step. In contrast, the other perception in the Truman administration was that the CCP was the USSR’s tool and puppet. Thus a democratic China composed only of the KMT and the Third Force, without the CCP, would be acceptable. This view prevailed in the Truman administration, thus President Truman set down a confidential “bottom line” for the Marshall mediation in China.

When the Truman administration acquiesced in expelling the CCP from the coalition government, it also unintentionally caused the Chiang Kai-shek government to lose the very institutional mechanism or the organizational power to carry out land reform in rural China.

I might be wrong here, but it seems to me that Professor McDonald supports the theory that a representative, democratic government including the KMT and part of the Third Force, without the CCP, could have been the best solution in postwar Nationalist China, only if the Chiang Kai-shek government could have obeyed U.S. suggestions to implement the land reform and other reforms in postwar years. My question here is: Given the evolution of the KMT’s domestic policies between 1927 and 1945, and after the Chiang Kai-shek government expelled the CCP from the coalition government in 1946, how could his

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government ever have had the institutional mechanisms to implement even rural tax reduction programs?

Second, what was the role of Soviet military aid to the CCP in the Chinese civil war (1946-1949)?

Professor MacDonald’s criticism here goes far beyond his misinterpretations of my major arguments and the different statistics in Soviet and Chinese archives regarding Soviet military aid to the CCP in the civil war. His major thesis is that the USSR gave the CCP huge military aid, while the Truman administration mounted an arms embargo against the KMT, which determined the outcome of the CCP-KMT civil war.

The important issues MacDonald raises are about how to explain the rapid collapse of the Chiang Kai-shek government, or how to interpret the Chinese reality in the civil war years. These issues deeply divided the Truman administration and the American public back then, and again, deeply divide American academia today.

To understand the Soviet military aid policy toward the CCP and that of the Truman administration toward the KMT in post-WWII years, one needs to understand, first of all, the Yalta Agreement on China between Stalin and President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR). The Yalta system with respect to China provided the broad strategic framework for both Moscow’s and Washington’s military aid policies to China in the postwar years.

*The Yalta Agreement on China (Feb. 1945)*

In the Yalta agreement on China, the U.S. was to recognize Soviet “special interests” or “special influence” in north of the Great Wall and in particular, in Manchuria. In return, the USSR pledged to recognize the Chiang Kai-shek government as the only legal national government, and to abide by the U.S. “Open Door” policy in China, including Manchuria. In a similar fashion, Stalin and Churchill reached an agreement on Greece: Greece would be the “sphere of influence” of Great Britain and West. As it was known, Moscow did not give any military aid to the Greek communist guerilla forces in the Greek civil war, although the Greek communist fighters repeatedly appealed to Moscow before their demise in 1949.

Based on the Yalta agreement, Moscow and the Chiang Kai-shek government signed the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance on Aug. 14, 1945. As Lyman Van Slyke writes, “Chiang got what he wanted” -- Moscow’s “promise to give moral support and military aid entirely to the National Government as the central government of China.” But “the price

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52 For instance, Professor MacDonald assumes that I regard George Marshall as a “hardliner,” and all the statistics regarding the Soviet military aid to the CCP as “invalid.” I regret that he misinterpreted my arguments in the chapter on the Marshall mediation.
was high,” particularly in Manchuria: “Russia thus returned to a position more advanced than any she had held under the tsars prior to the Russo-Japanese War.”

The Yalta system on China, as State Department officers put it, was meant to achieve two goals at once: the predominance of American power and “equilibrium” between the USSR and the U.S. in China. For Moscow and Washington, this arrangement in China could best serve their respective interests in East Asia at the time. The devastating losses of the Soviet Union in WWII made it necessary for Moscow to avoid a military confrontation with the United States in the postwar era. For President Roosevelt, as well as for President Truman, the top priority of American national interests in the postwar era would be Western Europe and the Middle East, and behind this top priority, East Asia, and finally, Latin America. Thus, to preserve America’s predominant power, neither FDR nor Truman wanted to consume America’s resources in a military showdown with the USSR over China in the post-WWII era.

Mao Zedong commented on the Yalta agreement with respect to China in his conversation with the Yugoslavian Communist Alliance delegation on Sep. 24, 1956:

“Stalin had meetings with Roosevelt and Churchill, decided to send China to America, to Chiang Kai-shek. At the time, materially and morally, particularly morally, Stalin did not support us, but supported Chiang Kai-shek. This decision was made at the Yalta Conference in 1945.”

*Soviet Military Aid to the CCP in the Civil War*

On Sep. 30, 1945, the U.S. marines landed on Tianjin, a port city close to Beijing; and on Oct. 1, the marines landed at port Qinhuangdao, the fortress gate of Manchuria. What Stalin feared most in Manchuria was U.S. troops landing there, which would pose, in Moscow’s view, a direct security threat to the Soviet Union’s Siberian region. Moscow decided to arm the CCP troops in Manchuria to counter American power. During that time, the CCP Northeast Bureau received from the Soviet Red Army a battalion of airplanes, 50 tanks, and

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several hundred of various kinds of cannons, as well as rifles and ammunition from Japanese military warehouses in southern Manchuria.\textsuperscript{55}

But in November 1945, the Chiang Kai-shek government and the Truman administration made strong protests to Moscow on its policy of arming the CCP force in Manchuria. To avoid a showdown with the U.S., Moscow quickly reduced the level of arms support it provided. When the CCP troops entered Manchuria in November, the first ones received weapons and ammunition, yet later ones obtained little. That is why CCP military officers’ memoirs portrayed very different experiences in their encounters with the Soviet Red Army in Manchuria in postwar years.\textsuperscript{56}

In February 1946, the U.S. made public the secret Yalta agreement on China and Manchuria, and the Chiang Kai-shek government immediately led an anti-Soviet campaign in urban centers. In March, Churchill made his “Iron Curtain” speech. Moscow changed its position again on arming the CCP troops in Manchuria. According to the Soviet archives, on May 28, 1946, the Soviet army in North Korea sent the CCP northeast field army 82 light machine guns, 32 heavy machine guns, 430,000 bullets, and 10,000 trunks of dynamite, as well as large quantities of electronic materials. By August 1946, both the Soviet Red Army in North Korea and the North Korean People’s Army sent to the CCP northeast field army tens of thousands of rifles, and over 1,000 machine guns. The largest shipment at this time was several hundred railroad cars of ammunition.\textsuperscript{57} Meanwhile, with the Yalta agreement in mind, Moscow warned repeatedly that the CCP troops must not advance toward south China.\textsuperscript{58}

Therefore, on the one hand, Moscow was willing to offer military aid to the CCP’s troops in Manchuria whenever possible. On the other hand, the USSR did not give large-scale military aid to the CCP’s troops within the borders of China. Stalin feared this could induce the U.S.


\textsuperscript{56}Yang Kuisong: \textit{Mao Zedong’s Feelings of Gratitude and Resentment toward Moscow} (Nanchang: Jiangxi renminchubanshe, 1999); and Liu Tong: \textit{Record of the Civil War in the Northeast China} (Beijing: Sanlianchubanshe, 2005), pp. 56-62.

\textsuperscript{57}While these statistics are still controversial among the Chinese scholars, I would like to assume their authenticity here for the following discussions.

\textsuperscript{58}Zhongyang wenxian yanjushi ed., \textit{Chronicles of Peng Zhen}, (Peng Zhen was the head of the CCP Northeast Bureau at the time), (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxianchubanshe, 2009).
to send troops to China, and even drag the USSR into a military confrontation with the United States.

In early 1949, when Mikoyan visited Xibaipo, Mao’s and Zhou’s talks with Mikoyan vividly illustrated Moscow’s military aid policy in the Chinese civil war. On Feb. 4, 1949, Mao thanked the Soviet Union for its military aid to the CCP troops in Manchuria. According to Mikoyan’s memorandum, Mao said:

“Since 1947 Lin Biao has also often requested Moscow to provide aid in this or that question. I, Mao Zedong said, gave instructions to Gao Gang, that everything we take from the USSR must be paid back and that, moreover, the shortage of these or those materials at the expense of the Guomindang areas [must] be solved. The Chinese comrades must rationally use the aid of the Sov[iet] Union. If there was no aid on the part of the Sov[iet] Union, Mao Zedong stressed, we would hardly be able to achieve the current victories. This does not mean, however, that we must not rely on our own forces. But one cannot help but take into account the fact, Mao Zedong said, that the military aid of the Sov[iet] Union in Manchuria, which makes up one fourth of all your aid to us, plays a fairly substantial role.”

On the other hand, at his meeting with Mikoyan on Feb. 1, 1949, Zhou Enlai introduced the general conditions of CCP’s weapons and ammunitions. According to Mikoyan’s record, Zhou said:

“Talking about the PLA arms, Zhou Enlai said that they do not have a unified rear and unified logistics (intendance) but they plan to put things in order here. First and foremost they will begin with the unification of the war industry, which has only grown since 1948....

Zhou said, ‘we manufacture bombs, shells, explosive substances, mountain cannons, machine guns, shrapnel.... In comparison with the previous years, production of ammunition increased by 50%. We receive some things from North Korea....’

The UNRRA [United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration],--- Zhou said, ‘we received from it merely 2% (50 thousand tons) of all its supplies to China. In spite of this we received many valuable goods. The ammonia fertilizers supplied by the UNRRA were used by us to produce ammunition.’

Furthermore, Zhou said, “Jiang Jieshi’s fleet...is composed of 271 ships presented to
China by the USA.” And Mikoyan commented: the CCP did not have even “a single
navy vessel.”

In fact, as Mao told Mikoyan on January 30, 1949, due to a lack of infantry weapons and
ammunitions, the PLA had to delay its military campaign several months to April to cross
the Yangtzi river and to take Nanjing, the Capital of Nationalist China. The CCP would need
three more months “for accumulation of cartridges and shells from current production,
since there is little in reserve,” Mao stressed.

On April 21, 1949, the PLA used wooden boats to cross the Yangtzi River, breaking through
the KMT’s defense line of the navy, the airforce as well as the army, and occupied Nanjing.
One month later, the CCP sent general Liu Yalou to Moscow, to discuss about the Soviet aid
in building the CCP’s first airforce. And two years later, in the heat of the Korean War,
Moscow agreed to help the CCP build its first naval force.

U.S. Military Aid to the Chiang Kai-shek Government in the Civil War:

In his excellent study *Arming the Free World*, Chester J. Pach, Jr. points out that “In the first
two months after V-J Day, military lend-lease amounted to some $430 million, more than
half the value of wartime arms aid. This timely and extensive material assistance, along
with troop support and transportation aid, enabled Nationalist forces,” concentrated in
South China at the end of WWII, to take over “ports and cities in the North before
Communist forces could arrive.”

From January to June 1946, he further enumerates “U.S. help in building up Chiang’s air
force of eight and one-third groups.” Under lend-lease and surplus property arrangements,
the Truman administration transferred “$40 million worth of air force equipment and
provided training for approximately 3, 500 Chinese pilots and technicians.” As Pach
emphasizes, “Bolstered by approximately $700 million in lend-lease aid in the year after

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61 “Memorandum of Conversation between Anastas Mikoyan and Mao Zedong, 1/30/1949,” CWIHP Virtual Archives, collection: Sino-Soviet Relations.


the Japanese surrender, the 3-million-man Nationalist army was superior to the Communists in manpower, equipment and training.”

By the end of June 1946, the Chiang Kai-shek government decided to ignore Marshall’s mediation, and launched a large-scale offensive campaign against the CCP-controlled areas. At the time, “Kuomintang leaders believed that they could achieve an easy military victory over Mao’s forces even if, as T. V. Soong,” the Finance Minister, “once boasted to Forrestal, the United States withdrew its troops from China.”


On July 29, 1946, Marshall arranged “for the imposition of an embargo on private and governmental transfers of combat equipment to the Nationalists.” The “larger objective” of the Marshall mediation in China, according to John Carter Vincent, director of the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs at the State Department, was “to contain Russian influence” and to maintain “Soviet-American equilibrium in East Asia.” Accordingly, the United States “could most effectively contain Russian influence in China for the time being by minimizing its own involvement in the civil war.” Moreover, a large-scale civil war, he feared, “might cause the collapse of the National government for economic reasons.”

Moreover, in Marshall’s mind, military aid should be employed as a bargaining chip with the Chiang Kai-shek government in his mediations. Since his offer of military aid to “induce a settlement” failed to work, Marshall now hoped that “the withholding of such assistance would force the Nationalists to compromise.”

In her excellent study on the CCP-KMT civil war, Susanne Pepper has detailed discussions about the U.S. embargo and analyzes in depth the reasons why it again failed to compel the Chiang Kai-shek government to change the course. As she points out,

“Nevertheless, the embargo, partially lifted in October and rescinded entirely in May 1947, exemplified the constraints built into Marshall’s mission by his country’s China policy. The ban came too late to have any restraining influence on the government’s war plans or the course of the negotiations…..Indeed, any utility it might have had in this respect was almost immediately undermined by the August decision to sell $900 million worth of war surplus property to the government. Yet anti-Communist critics in the U.S. would soon seize upon the embargo as an important issue in their attack on U.S. China policy, claiming that the consequent

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64 Pach, p. 84.
65 Pach, p. 84.
67 Pach, p. 85.
shortage of munitions was a crucial factor in the defeat of the government's armies.”

In fact, during the ten-month embargo, Vincent repeatedly warned that “It would be manifestly unrealistic to withhold armed aid from National Gov forces, if such action condemned them to a degree of military anemia which would make possible a successful offensive by Communist forces.” Thus, he cautioned that “This situation will take the most careful day to day watching.”

Military Situation in China during the U.S. Arms Embargo

In mid-October 1946, the KMT troops defeated the CCP’s force and occupied Zhangjiahou (Kalgan), widely regarded as the key fortress city linking the north and south of the Great Wall in north China.

On March 18, 1947, the KMT troops occupied Yanan – the CCP’s headquarters since 1935. Afterwards Mao and the CCP leadership did not have a stable base for their headquarters until May 1948, when the CCP leadership settled down in Xibaipo village of Hebei province.

On March 18, 1947, Chiang Kai-shek inspected Yanan. “The psychological impact” domestically and internationally was indeed “tremendous,” reported John Leighton Stuart, American ambassador in China at that time.

The lift of U.S. Arms Embargo (5/29/1947)

By early April 1947, Vincent already considered an end of the arms embargo. He urged Secretary of State Marshall to “approve the sale of the surplus cartridges as an exception to the embargo.” At the end of April, Marshall authorized the U.S. marines to give to the Nationalists 6,500 tons of ammunition. On May 29, 1947, Marshall formally lifted the

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68 Susanne Pepper: “The KMT-CCP Conflict 1945-1949,” in John King Fairbank and Albert Feuerwerker ed., The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 13, Part 2; p.736. Here “the August decision” in Washington was referred to the agreement between the U.S. and the Chiang Kai-shek gov.: in August 1946, “after the KMT offensive against the Communist area had already begun, the Americans concluded yet another agreement authorizing the sale on credit of U.S. $900 million worth of war surplus property to the KMT gov for a net sum of $175 million.” Due to the embargo, “This ‘civilian-type’ property included small ships, vehicles, construction materials, air force supplies and material, and communications equipment.....”

69 Pach, p. 162.

70 Pach, pp. 165-6. For the domestic and international contexts in lifting the embargo, see Pach, pp. 163-4.
embargo and declared that the Chiang Kai-shek government should have “normal access to the American arms market.”  

In late July 1947, as Pach points out, “Marshall approved Patterson’s recommendation and allowed the advance from government inventories to the Nationalists of 6.5 million rounds of .50 caliber ammunition in return for the Nationalist purchase of equivalent supplies to be manufactured by Olin Industries.” And in the spring of 1948, Marshall also agreed to lift the restrictions on the sale of U.S. government surplus, enabling the Chiang Kai-shek government to “purchase, between Dec. 1947 and May 1948, $95 million worth of ground and air force supplies for a trifling $6 million.”  

On April 3, 1948, President Truman signed into law The China Aid Act, which authorized $338 million in economic assistance and $125 million for use “on such terms as the president may determine.” In May 1948, the Chiang Kai-shek government informed Washington that it wished to use the entire $125 million grant for the purchase of military supplies.  

As George F. Kennan, director of PPS at the State Department, later recalled, “deterioration of the situation in China did not strike us as fatal, in itself, to American interests.” It was due to the following considerations: “China’s lack of industrial development and its inability to project military power beyond the Asian mainland, and on a belief that the Soviet Union would have severe difficulty maintaining its influence over a Chinese Communist regime.” And the CIA concurred: “from the point of view of containing the U.S. S. R. and eventually redressing the balance of power,” a poverty-stricken China would not help Moscow. “Acute political and economic disorganization would prevail in China for many years, thereby preventing the consolidation of Soviet power.” Thus, “maintenance of effective U.S. control of the Pacific would afford a sufficient safeguard.”  

Comparison of Military Power between the CCP and the KMT in the Civil War  

Clearly, during the Chinese civil war, neither the U.S. nor the USSR gave as much military aid as the KMT and the CCP desired. But because of the much superior economic and military power of the U.S. in the postwar years, the U.S. military aid to the Chiang Kai-shek government was much larger than that of the USSR to the CCP.
That was why General Wedemeyer, one of the most ardent advocates of more U.S. military aid to the KMT, in his China trip in July 1947, “angrily dismissed as ‘child-like’ and ‘naïve’ Chinese efforts to plant evidence purporting to show that the Soviets were rendering assistance to the Chinese Communists.” He surely believed that “the Soviets were backing the Communist war efforts”, but he did not believe Soviet military aid was as large as the Chiang Kai-shek government wished him to believe. For the same reason, General David G. Barr, Commander of the Army Advisory Group in China (AAG) since November 1947, and another most ardent advocate for more military aid to the Chiang government, reported on November 16, 1948 that “the KMT government forces has not lost a single battle” since his arrival “for want of equipment.” 76

Throughout the civil war, the Chiang Kai-shek government had an airforce and a naval force, while the CCP had none of these. The KMT troops also had more advanced weapons and ammunition than the CCP had. This was a simple fact, which, in internal talks, Chiang Kai-shek himself candidly acknowledged. For instance, in his speech to KMT’s high ranking military officers on Feb. 5, 1948, Chiang emphasized that the CCP’s military victory was not brought about by its superior military power:

“What are the strengths of the Communist bandits? You military commanders in the frontline all know: one is their capability of concentrating five even ten times more troops to eliminate our one division or one regiment in every battle; the other is their fast movement from one area to another. They could often walk several hundred miles in one night. These two strengths are what you generals have most worried about, most feared about. According to my study, these two strengths could be successfully dealt with....

In reality, all the transportation lines and equipments have been in our hands. We have trains and cars on land, ships on sea and rivers, and airplanes in the sky. On the other hand, the Communist bandits only have a few railway lines to use in the northeast, in other areas they have no modern transportation equipments at all....Because the Communist bandits have moved back and forth rapidly without any regularity, and always chosen the roads no one has ever walked, to defeat them, our troops must not rely on the modern transportation equipments....” 77

One month later, Chiang again compared the KMT’s military power with the CCP’s at another speech to the KMT’s high ranking military officers on March 4, 1948,

76 Pach, pp. 171, 191-2.

“We just suffered a big setback at the Yinchuan battle in Shanxi province: one division, three brigades, were all wiped out by the Communist bandits. One year ago, in January 1947, the 26th division was defeated in Zaozhuan area of Shandong province. Lots of chariots and cannons were captured by the Communist bandits. Soon after in April, the 25th corps suffered a huge loss in Shandong province, three divisions with complete American equipments, were wiped out.

After those losses, I initially thought that the military power of the Communist bandits, after getting all the new weapons to arm their troops, might be equal to ours. However, surprisingly, these communist bandits’ equipments not only remained the same as that of last year, but even worse than last year. When we attack Yimeng mountain area of Shandong province, I had thought that the Communist bandits would use, for sure, chariots and heavy cannons they captured from our troops to resist our attacks. But we later found out that they did not use these new weapons at all. Clearly, while our loss was huge, the Communist bandits have not been able to take advantage of our more advanced weapons they captured. This is some thing we can feel a bit of comfort.

In many battle fronts, these communist bandits still only have mountain guns and field guns, and use mortars as major offensive firepower. Thus we can see clearly that the Communist bandits are still short of knowledge and technology. Although they got our advanced weapons, they don’t know how to use them. Therefore their military equipments have not been strengthened.”

*Dual Polarization between the Nationalist State and the Chinese Society in the Civil War*

In her pioneering study of the Chinese civil war, Susanne Pepper particularly emphasizes that:

“The weaknesses of the KMT government were readily apparent to all observers; only the strength of the Communists was not. The voices of the American Foreign Service officers, who tried to explain this towards the end of the Second World War, were silenced after the Hurley affair. Meanwhile, the antipathy towards the presumed threat seemed to preclude even the serious contemplation of it, relegating that exercise to the forbidden zone of subversive activity. The most basic failure of the Americans, therefore, was to deny themselves the ability to consider on any terms other than their own the nature of the Communist-led Chinese revolution.

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Hence they could not estimate that the Communists might prevail, much less grasp the reasons why.”

The objective of my chapter on the Marshall mediation was to try to address the major concerns in America’s China policy debates in post-WWII years, to find out which side of the debates might have had a better understanding of the Chinese reality, and to further explore whether there were some kind of “cultural blinders” which prevented both sides of the debate from seeing the whole picture across the Pacific at the time. I do not mean that I presented the “whole picture.” But I was convinced during my research that the dual polarization between the Nationalist state and Chinese society deserves more systematic exploration. In my view, the state-society relationship in China at the time cannot be fully understood or explained solely within the ideological framework of the Cold War, or the ideological struggle between the Soviet model and the American model during that period.


Regarding the concept of “coalition government,” Professor MacDonald’s major critique is that from the beginning, Mao’s idea of “coalition government” was a sham, since it originated from Stalin, and was used by Mao only to win the CCP’s victory in the civil war, as shown clearly by Mao’s letter of November 30, 1947 to Stalin. In other words, Professor MacDonald seems to be convinced that Mao’s notion of “coalition government” was dictated by Stalin, and therefore can best be explained as an example of Mao’s or the CCP’s obedience to Moscow, within the framework of ideological and power rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States in the Cold War.

In the following I will first address Professor MacDonald’s question concerning the conceptual origin of the “coalition government,” and then Mao’s telegram of November 30, 1947 to Stalin.

First, Stalin’s concept of coalition government and Mao Zedong’s during 1945-1947

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As leading Soviet scholars across a wide range of the ideological spectrum in the United States well know, Stalin’s idea of “coalition government” underwent a profound change in the post-WWII years, and the turning point was 1947. Before then, his concept of “coalition government” was a “progressive bourgeois democracy.” That is, in the post-WWII era, a communist party in Europe and Asia should put down arms, and join a coalition government led by a bourgeois party in the country.80

Thus, in the postwar years, Stalin’s notion of “coalition government” in China was that the CCP should give up its armed forces to join a coalition government led by Chiang Kai-shek’s KMT as a junior partner. In fact, this was the Yalta Agreement between Stalin and FDR on Nationalist China, as discussed above in the part on Marshall mediation.

The CCP was familiar with this idea, since it was precisely the same idea of “coalition government” Stalin had applied to the first United Front between the CCP and the KMT in the 1920s. But after the first CCP-KMT split in 1927, the CCP suffered enormously in the subsequent “white terror,” and as a result, its land reform campaign ended in failure. For both the CCP rank-and-file and its new leadership, the failure of the land revolution in the 1920s could be mainly attributed to the CCP’s surrender of its armed force to Chiang Kai-shek’s government. Thus when the landed elites returned with arms and retaliated against the poor peasants and local CCP organizations, the CCP could do little at that time.

Thus in 1945, when Stalin urged the CCP to give up its arms and to join the Chiang Kai-shek government, the CCP leadership had second thoughts. In his report “On Coalition Government” at the Seventh Party Congress in April 1945, Mao emphasized,

“Some people tell the Communists: you submit your arms, we will give you freedom. According to this idea, a political party without armed force should have freedom in China. From 1924 to 1927, the Chinese Communist Party indeed had only few arms. However, when the Chiang Kai-shek government decided to carry out a policy of purge and massacre, its promise of freedom for the Communists was gone altogether. The Chinese Democratic League and the genuine democracy advocates within the KMT certainly don’t have their armed force right now, but they don’t have freedom either. In the past eighteen years, under the rule of the Chiang Kai-shek government, workers, peasants, students and all the people who have pursued progressive reforms in cultural, educational, industrial fields, have not had arms at all, and they have not had freedom either.”

Mao particularly emphasized: “To fight for a people’s army is the responsibility of the entire Chinese people.” Without a people’s army, there could be no land reform and other progressive reforms in Nationalist China, “there can be nothing for the Chinese people.”

That was why Yanan insisted upon turning its armed force over to a new coalition government, composed of the KMT, the CCP, and the Third Force, rather than to the existing Chiang Kai-shek government, as discussed in the book. When the civil war loomed large in China, Stalin again warned the CCP not to let a full-fledged civil war take place, which, he feared, could eradicate the CCP completely and even drag the USSR into a military showdown with the US.

It was against this context that Mao proposed the “Intermediate Zone Theory” and “People’s War Theory” in mid-1946, as discussed in detail in the book. “The intermediate zone referred to the developing countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Mao’s major hypothesis was twofold. First, the United States would not fight a third world war with the Soviet Union until it could control the intermediate zone and that the U.S.-USSR relationship would continue to be dominated by rivalries and compromises in the post-World War II era. Second, Moscow’s compromises with the United States did not require the revolutionary forces in the intermediate zone to make similar concessions in their domestic struggles. On the contrary, the more resolute their revolutionary struggles became, the more unlikely it was that a third world war, sparked by the United States and the USSR, would ever take place.” And in the “People’s War Theory,” Mao emphasized that “Of course, the atom bomb is a weapon of mass slaughter, but the outcome of a war is decided by the people, not by one or two new types of weapon….Take the case of China. We have only millet plus rifles to rely on, but history will finally prove that our millet plus rifles is more powerful than Chiang Kai-shek’s airplanes plus tanks.”

Stalin frankly acknowledged he had been mistaken about the CCP’s strengths when he talked with Bulgarian and Yugoslav leaders in February 1948 (before the split of Stalin and Tito in June). Stalin said,

“I had initially doubted whether the Chinese Communists could ever succeed. I suggested to them that they should reach a provisional agreement with Chiang Kai-shek. They only agreed to our suggestion in form; and in reality, they continued pursuing their own policy – that is, to mobilize the Chinese people at grassroots levels. Afterwards, they openly told us, ‘We will continue our fight, because the people support us.’ We said, ‘alright, if you think it is necessary to

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do so.' Obviously, they have very solid base of support in China. On this question, they were right, and we were wrong.”

It is therefore inaccurate to identify Stalin’s concept of “coalition government” with Mao Zedong’s during 1945-1947.

Second, 1947 as a turning point: Stalin’s changed concept of “coalition government” and Mao’s response (1947-1949)

Stalin’s idea of “coalition government” underwent drastic changes in late 1947. Prior to 1947 Moscow consciously tried to contain social rebellion at grassroots levels within the framework of coalition governments led by bourgeois parties in Europe and Asia. As Zbigniew Brzezinski observes, there had “existed a good deal of popular support for radical social change in Eastern Europe before 1947:"

“To the peasants, prospects of land reform held out a vision for the fulfillment of their most cherished dream, and one much too long denied ... To most people in war-devastated East Europe, rapid economic reconstruction was the most vital issue, even more so than politics. And to a majority of them state planning appeared necessary and logical.”

In mid-1947, with the proposal of a Marshall Plan in Western Europe, Moscow perceived an urgent security need to strengthen its “buffer zone” in Eastern Europe. Stalin was convinced that through a social transformation in this region, the USSR could guarantee a strategic buffer between itself and the Western capitalist countries.

Thus in late 1947 Stalin proposed that it was time to transfer from a coalition government led by the bourgeoisie to a proletarian dictatorship or communist party’s one-party government in Eastern Europe. According to Stalin, this idea of a “new people’s democracy” had the following key components:

i) The implementation of the theory of Communist Party’s supremacy and the assertion of the dictatorship of the proletariat;

83 “Kelarov's notes on Soviet, Bulgarian, and Yugoslav leaders' meeting, Feb. 10, 1948,” in Shen Zhihua ed.”

Selected Documents of Soviet Historical Archives, Vol. 24; (Beijing: Social Science Documentary Chubanshe, 2002); p. 231.

ii) The intensification of class struggle between workers and bourgeoisie;

iii) The carrying of class struggle into the countryside, to break the resistance of peasants, particularly the more prosperous ones, to the socialist transformation of agriculture, without which socialist industrialization was impossible;

iv) The launching of rapid and large-scale industrialization of each People’s Democracy in Eastern Europe.  

On November 30, 1947, Mao sent Stalin a telegram, claiming that should the CCP win its “final victory of the Chinese Revolution” in the civil war, it would “follow the example of the USSR and Yugoslavia,” to end the coalition between the CCP and the Third Force, and to have “the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

Now the question is: did this telegram represent a real shift in the CCP leadership’s conviction about its “united front” policy between the CCP and the Third Force? Or, was it a tactical move at a critical moment of the civil war, after the CCP headquarters retreated from Yanan? This question may be better answered by Mao’s reports on the CCP’s “united front” policy within the CCP leadership immediately after he had sent the telegram to Stalin, followed by another telegram to Stalin on the same issue three months later.

On December 25, 1947, less than one month after he had sent this telegram to Stalin, Mao gave his speech on the “Current Situation and Our Task” to the CCP Central Committee meeting. In this internal speech, he reiterated the thesis of his report “On Coalition Government” at the Seventh Party Congress in April 1945. In contrast to Stalin’s call for a “dictatorship of proletariat,” Mao emphasized that the CCP’s primary goal was to establish a “democratic coalition government” after the civil war. And in contrast to Stalin’s call for an intensification of the class struggle between workers and bourgeoisie in urban centers, Mao stressed that the CCP must not repeat its “historical mistake” in its “anti-national bourgeoisie” policy in the early 1930s. According to Mao, the CCP’s “big mistake” in 1931-1934 was “to pursue short-sighted workers’ welfare programs,” such as “demanding exorbitant labor conditions, exorbitant income tax for the wealthy, and encroaching the interests of industrial and commercial communities in land reform campaigns,” which jeopardized the economy, isolated the CCP, and eventually caused great dissatisfaction among workers and peasants, as well as bitter opposition from the national bourgeoisie.

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85 Ibid., pp. 84-104.

86 The original copy of Mao’s telegram has not been found in the Chinese archives. And its full text has not yet been declassified in the Russian archives. The quote is from Stalin’s reply of April 20, 1948; CWIHP Virtual Archives, collection: Sino-Soviet Relations.
Thus Mao concluded with a call for a new industrial policy in urban centers: "Our work must aim to the development of production, the prosperity of the economy, and to take into account both public and private interests, as well as to achieve a balance between workers' interests and capitalists'.”

On March 15, 1948, Mao sent another telegram to Stalin, saying that in the aftermath of the civil war, the CCP was to establish a national government which would include "representatives of the liberal bourgeoisie." This was, of course, a mild statement about the CCP’s decision to return to the concept of coalition between the CCP and the Third Force not only in the civil war, but after the civil war as well.

On April 20, 1948, Stalin replied to these two telegrams from Mao Zedong. As Professor MacDonald quoted from the letter, Stalin said he did not agree with Mao’s view in the first telegram, and emphasized that the CCP should continue its cooperation with the Third Force, to expand the CCP’s power base in China.

However, Professor MacDonald did not quote the full text of Stalin’s letter. In the second part of the letter, Stalin said he agreed with Mao’s view expressed in the telegram of March 15 about the coalition government after the civil war.

"Second, the answer to the letter from Comrade Mao Zedong from 15 March 1948.... We agree with all the conclusions given by Comrade Mao Zedong in this letter. We consider as absolutely correct Comrade Mao Zedong’s thoughts concerning the creation of a central government of China and including in it representatives of the liberal bourgeoisie."  

Why Stalin advocated the idea of Communist-one party rule in Eastern Europe after 1947 while supporting the concept of coalition government in China is not my major focus here. My point is: Professor MacDonald seems to focus exclusively on Mao’s telegram of Nov. 30, 1947, and disregards entirely Mao’s other telegram of March 15, 1948. Should we fully consider these two telegrams and Mao’s speeches to the CCP leadership in this period, it would be hard for us to come to the conclusion that on the question of a “united front” between the CCP and the Third Force, Mao and the CCP leadership were solely following Stalin’s orders in post-WWII years.

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89 “Stalin’s telegram to Mao Zedong, April 20, 1948,” in CWIHP Virtual Archives, collection: Sino-Soviet Relations, with permission of Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington D. C.
Finally, and more importantly, Professor MacDonald and myself may have profoundly different views regarding the conceptual origins of building coalitions between the urban elites and the workers/rural peasantry in China. From Professor MacDonald’s perspective, apparently this was an issue of Cold War power politics. As Moscow’s puppet, the CCP faithfully followed Moscow’s dictates on this issue. Thus, this issue can be fully explained and understood within the framework of ideological struggles between the Soviet model and the American model in the Cold War. On the other hand, from my perspective, since the late 19th century and through today, balancing the competing demands and aspirations of the urban elites and workers/rural peasants to forge a stable coalition between urban China and rural China, has been the most daunting challenge to China’s agonizing quest for modernity and a new identity. This was true not only in the Chinese revolution, but is also equally true in China’s modernization. As I argue in the concluding chapter of my book,

“Clearly, a major challenge to China’s continued quest for modernity and identity, as in the twentieth century, is how to bring rural and urban China, or villagers and intellectuals/entrepreneurs together. Without integrating the liberal ideals of individual civil and political rights into the Chinese mainstream discourse, the knowledge and talents of urban China could never be fully released and China’s search for modernity would never be complete. It is also clear, on the other hand, that without the enthusiastic participation of the rural population, which has demanded greater economic prosperity and social and economic justice, China’s economic reform and political democratization could only be a façade, a sham.”

III. Constructing a Win-Win Relationship between the Chinese and American People

The current U.S.-China relationship has great potential to develop into closer cooperation in the future; but it also has a huge potential to be dragged slowly into repeated security dilemmas, and eventually future confrontations. At this historical juncture, what the Chinese and American people decide to do may have a long-lasting impact upon the evolution of this still fragile relationship in the 21st century.

Could the Chinese and American people, through building much closer economic ties, gradually build a win-win relationship in the 21st century? The answer is: Not yet. What has prevented these two peoples from exploring all opportunities for much closer economic cooperation? Mutual fears and suspicions, which have implicitly narrowed the mainstream parameters of public and policy debates, and made few expansions of the Cold War analytical categories or “boxes” in heads on both sides of the Pacific.

For instance, in current economic difficulties, some Chinese students have wondered whether a group of American political and economic elites manufactured this financial crisis, intended to devalue tremendously the U.S. treasury bonds, to further press China to

90 Qing, p. 303.
appreciate its currency, to make Chinese savings evaporate, and to eventually slow down China’s industrialization drive. On the other hand, some American students have pointed to Deng Xiaoping’s talk on Chinese foreign policy strategy two decades ago as clear evidence that China has had a well-thought-out plan or conspiracy for purchasing American Treasury bonds, to eventually control America.

What they have referred to is Deng Xiaoping’s talk in 1990, in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Deng Xiaoping used the Chinese idiom “韬光养晦, 有所作为” to express his ideas. In a New York Times’ English translation, Deng’s expression is translated as follows: “hide your capabilities and bide your time. Do not claim leadership.” This English translation, if not examined in a Chinese cultural context, and if combined with initial American fears and suspicions of the Chinese intentions, could easily engender a dark picture of China’s strategic objective. As some students in Michigan have argued, given the “sneaky, dark character” of Beijing’s strategic intention in the post-Cold War world, how can the Americans ever trust the Chinese in any kind of long-term economic cooperation?”

However, if Deng’s talk on Chinese foreign policy is viewed in the Chinese cultural and economic as well as political contexts, its intended meaning should become clear. The I-Ching, or the Book of Change, which is the foundation of the Chinese civilization, first emphasized the paramount importance of contributing to world peace without claiming world leadership. In the first chapter of I-Ching, “the principle of heaven,” the discussion is about the rise of a dragon from a weak position on the ground to a most powerful position in the heavens through six different stages.

In each stage, I-Ching teaches how the dragon should behave, or what strategy the dragon should take for further development. In one of these stages, for instance, the dragon begins to grow fast, yet encounters huge setbacks. I-Ching teaches that the dragon should lay low, to concentrate on recovering or accumulating strength quietly. And in the sixth stage, the dragon finally rises to the heavens. Right here lies the most important teaching of I-Ching. Here I-Ching teaches that the dragon faces two choices in the heavens, with two opposite consequences. One choice is to fly alone, becoming arrogant; then the result is “regret.” Why “regret?” Because the dragon would fall from the heavens to the ground, to start all over again. The other choice, I-Ching says, is for the dragon to help others to rise to the heavens, flying together as a group, without claiming any leadership. Then what is the result? I-Ching says the result is “fortune.” Why “fortune?” Because by helping others to fly to the heavens and by not claiming leadership, the dragon would not fall from the heavens. Instead, he and the group will be flying together in the heavens for long time to come.

At the age of 70, Confucius said he wished he could live 50 more years, just to study I-Ching. Based on I-Ching, Confucius particularly emphasized that hegemony is a path of self-destruction; thus he championed persistently the ideal of the great commonwealth as the ultimate goal of humanity. And Lao Zi, founder of Chinese Taoism, and another faithful disciple of I-Ching, emphasized the similar theme in his Tao te Ching.
If Deng's strategic thinking in 1990 is examined in the Chinese cultural, economic and political contexts, its intended meaning is clearly not a well-thought-out plan to undermine and eventually dictate to the United States, to make China the new hegemon down the road. Deng's intended meaning is, as Deng himself repeatedly emphasized, that China should not claim leadership, either in difficult times, or in the future when China becomes a powerful nation. Instead, China should focus on its modernization drive at home, spreading wealth among its 1.3 billion people, from the coastal to the inland areas, and should try its best to bridge the gap between global North and South, contributing to a new world economic and political order, without claiming any world leadership.

The point here is that if China and America want to establish much closer economic cooperation, as the French and German pioneering reformers were determined to do after WWII, the Chinese and American people will need to do much, much more. However, precisely because the Chinese and American people do not belong to the same civilization, this kind of dialogue between civilizations at much deeper levels, can release unimaginable creative power for both the Chinese and American people, to build a much greater human civilization in the future.

The US-China relationship is surely one of the most challenging relationships in human history. Because it is not just about the extremely complex interactions between these two nation-states, but to a great extent, it is also a manifestation of the competing needs, demands and distinctive characters between global North and South, global East and West. These two peoples need to build a comprehensive win-win relationship based on equality, healthy competition, and genuine cooperation, no matter how long it might take. In doing so, the Chinese and American people not only can best serve their own long-term interests, but more importantly, can contribute to a much greater world society in the future.

In concluding, I would like once again to express my deep gratitude to H-Diplo Roundtable editors Professors Thomas R. Maddux and Diane Labrosse, and to this excellent group of scholars at the roundtable discussion. I was deeply impressed by their enlightening comments, and greatly inspired by their brilliant critiques and suggestions. While my views may differ from Professor MacDonald’s, I do respect his work and his serious criticism of my book. And I wish I could have the time and space to respond to all of his questions. I am truly grateful for what I have learned from all of the scholars’ reviews. I hope this vibrant exchange of ideas at the roundtable may engender more discussions and debates in the study of U.S.-China relations, American-Asian relations, and U.S. foreign policy toward the developing world.