

2013

H-Diplo

H-Diplo Roundtable Review

www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables

Volume XIV, No. 36 (2013)

17 June 2013

Roundtable Editors: Thomas Maddux and Diane Labrosse

Roundtable Web/Production Editor: George Fujii

Commissioned for H-Diplo by Thomas Maddux

Introduction by Jeremi Suri

Chris Tudda. *A Cold War Turning Point: Nixon and China, 1969-1972*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012. ISBN: 9780807142899 (paperback, \$27.50).

Stable URL: <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-XIV-36.pdf>

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Introduction by Jeremi Suri, University of Texas at Austin

The current foreign policy debate in the United States is saturated with strong opinions about the future of American relations with China. Prominent scholars, including John Mearsheimer and Aaron Friedberg, predict a coming military clash in East Asia.¹ Many former policy-makers, especially Henry Kissinger, point to the growing interests in cooperation and stability on both sides of the Pacific.² This debate presumes close and direct Sino-American contacts of one kind or another in an ever-more saturated East Asian strategic space.

Of course, such an obvious contemporary scene was unthinkable forty years ago, when the United States and the People's Republic of China opened official relations for the first time. My undergraduates are incredulous when I tell them that relations between these two societies were so hostile and isolated that the visit of an American ping-pong team to China in April 1971 was an international sensation. Most Americans at the time never imagined they would visit or do business with the communists in Beijing, Shanghai, and other cities on the mainland.

Chris Tudda's exciting new book explores the "turning point" between 1969 and 1972 when the leaders of these estranged societies began to talk with one another. Again, this 'opening' seems inevitable to undergraduates from the perspective of 2013, but Tudda shows that it was indeed very complicated. First, the U.S. government did not have a clear sense of how to engage Mao Zedong's government, especially during the convulsive chaos of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of 1966-76. Second, the Vietnam War was at best a distraction, and at worst a major irritant, to any Sino-American rapprochement. Third, and perhaps most often overlooked by historians, there were many powerful political opponents of any open relations with the Chinese communists. Conservatives like William F. Buckley condemned recognition of an immoral regime and favored overwhelming support for the island of Taiwan instead.

Tudda's book breaks new ground in offering the most detailed and thorough analysis to date of the internal deliberations within the Nixon administration on how to overcome these barriers to improved U.S.-China relations. The reviewers in this roundtable concur in their praise of the author's detailed and careful use of archival documents, transcripts, and especially the Nixon audio tapes. Tudda employs this material to construct a persuasive narrative of policy debates, adaptations, and actions. He captures the complexity and contingency of American decision-making. He also shows the importance of personalities, including both Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger. The reviewers agree that this is the best

¹ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001); Aaron L. Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011).

² Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: Penguin, 2011).

account we have of the evolution in U.S. foreign policy toward China during the first Nixon administration.

The greatest limitation of Tudda's book is on the 'other' side. He draws deeply on translated primary and secondary works from China, but Tudda does not utilize untranslated Chinese-language materials. Qiang Zhai shows how the source bias in the book distorts the account of emerging relations, particularly surrounding the aims of the Chinese leaders and the role of particular personalities (especially Lin Biao.) Lorenz Lüthi also sees limitations in the book because of the absent Chinese sources, but he describes this as "an insurmountable obstacle" at the present time, and he credits Tudda with "arduously" working to incorporate translated materials.

Doug Macdonald and Christopher Jespersen both question the strong contrast Tudda draws between Presidents Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon. Tudda writes: "Nixon's determination to repair the Sino-American relationship marked a clear change from his four predecessors" (205). Macdonald and Jespersen offer contrary evidence of serious efforts at rapprochement under Johnson, similar Vietnam distractions in both the Johnson and Nixon administrations, and, perhaps most important, the difficulties of dealing with China during the height of the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s. Emphasizing more policy continuity from Johnson to Nixon, Macdonald and Jespersen raise important questions about the singularity of American leadership in the period Tudda covers. Perhaps the opening would have occurred without Nixon or Kissinger. In these terms, Jespersen sees Nixon and Kissinger as "surfers riding a big wave of change" rather than "path breakers."

This analysis raises fundamental questions about whether the opening was really a "turning point." How much of a difference did the actions of the Nixon administration really make? Lüthi sees the impetus for change on the Chinese side, with Zhou Enlai in particular. Jespersen points to structural factors, especially the desire both governments had to limit Soviet power and stabilize Southeast Asia. Macdonald makes perhaps the most interesting argument when he points to pressure from "liberals and a growing number of Americans" for an opening to China. At home and abroad, the politics seemed to point toward rapprochement as part of the Cold War, not an alternative to it.

Despite the four decades of Sino-American relations since the opening, many of the same issues remain. Who exerts the most control over the course of the relationship? American policy-makers and businesspeople, or Chinese leaders and central bankers? Does the structure of the international system encourage economic interdependence or strategic rivalry between these two giants? Do domestic pressures in both societies encourage long-term collaboration or short-term muscle-flexing? Chris Tudda's compelling book and these insightful reviews give us a historical foundation for addressing these crucial questions.

Participants:

Chris Tudda is a Historian in the Declassification and Publishing Division in the Office of the Historian, Department of State, where he researches, compiles, and coordinates the

declassification of manuscripts for the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series. He earned a B.A. from the University of Vermont in 1987 and the Ph.D. from American University in 2002. His first book was *The Truth is our Weapon: The Rhetorical Diplomacy of Dwight D. Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles* (2006). He is currently writing a book on Cold War summitry and researching U.S. policy toward Cyprus during cold war.

Jeremi Suri holds the Mack Brown Distinguished Chair for Leadership in Global Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. He is a professor in the University's Department of History and the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs. Professor Suri is the author of five books on contemporary politics and foreign policy. In September 2011 he published a new book on the past and future of nation-building: *Liberty's Surest Guardian: American Nation-Building from the Founders to Obama*. Professor Suri's research and teaching have received numerous prizes. In 2007 *Smithsonian Magazine* named him one of America's "Top Young Innovators" in the Arts and Sciences. His writings appear widely in blogs and print media. Professor Suri is also a frequent public lecturer and guest on radio and television programs.

Christopher Jespersen is Dean of the College of Arts and Letters at the University of North Georgia. He is author of *American Images of China, 1931-1949* (Stanford University Press, 1996), which was published in Chinese from Jiangsu People's Publishing House in 2010. In addition to editing two books, he has served on the editorial boards of *Diplomatic History* and *Pacific Historical Review*, and published numerous chapters and articles in academic journals and books.

Lorenz M. Lüthi is Associate Professor of History of International Relations, History Department, McGill University, Montreal, Canada. He has authored the *Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton University Press, 2008) and numerous articles on Chinese foreign relations, the Vietnam War, the Non-Alignment Movement, and the Cold War in Europe. He is currently working on a book on the regional Cold Wars in Asia, the Middle East, and Europe in the 1960s and 1970s.

Doug Macdonald is Associate Professor of Political Science at Colgate University where he has taught for twenty-five years, and served as a past director of its International Relations Program. He is the author of *Adventures in Chaos: American Intervention for Reform in the Third World* (Harvard University Press, 1992) and a number of articles in journals and edited collections. His latest article is "Trilateralism and Changing Political Identities in a Post-Cold War World: A Three-Level Game Approach to the Asian Region" (Forthcoming.) He is currently working on articles on the "China Hands" and the Vietnam War and the American election of 1968, as well as a book on ideology and foreign policy and the origins of the Cold War in Asia.

Qiang Zhai is professor of history at Auburn University Montgomery. He received his doctoral degree from Ohio University. His primary field of interest is the history of the Cold War in Asia. He is the author of *The Dragon, the Lion, and the Eagle: Chinese-British-American Relations, 1949-1958* (Kent State University Press, 1994), and *China and the*

Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975 (University of North Carolina Press, 2000). He is currently working on a study of Sino-French normalization.

Review by Christopher Jespersen, University of North Georgia

President Richard Nixon knew that his trip to the People's Republic of China was going to send a powerful message to the American people as well as the rest of the world, but he could not have anticipated that its cultural impact would be such that the television and movie character Mr. Spock would reference it in a conversation with Captain James T. Kirk in the 1991 film *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*. "There is an old Vulcan proverb," Spoke began in answering Kirk's query as to why he had been given the task of working directly with the Federation's arch enemies, the Klingons, on an important and sensitive matter, "only Nixon could go to China." Spock's point was that Kirk was a later-day Nixon, sent on a mission of peace to deal with a longstanding enemy. Coming two decades after the announcement that the staunchly anti-communist Nixon would travel to Beijing to sit down with Chinese Communist leaders Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, *Star Trek's* fun with Nixon's monumental trip spoke to how much it continued to resonate in American popular culture years afterwards.

Richard Nixon is largely remembered for three major events during his administration: the first is the Watergate cover-up that brought his second term to a premature end by making Nixon the only president to resign from office. The second was his handling of the Vietnam War by escalating it through savage bombing, by moving the fighting to Cambodia to an unprecedented degree, and finally by signing the Paris Peace Accords on January 27 1973. The third event was his historic visit to the People's Republic of China in February 1972.

It is with regard to China initiative that Chris Tudda brings his scholarly expertise and attention to present a solid, well organized, and clearly written account of Nixon's historic trip to Beijing. Drawing upon archival materials at the National Archives II in College Park, Maryland, including the Nixon tapes and the transcripts from National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger's telephone conversations, Tudda carefully sketches the ebbs and flows of events leading up to Nixon's visit. Just as impressively, Tudda has scoured the secondary literature to flesh out the history by examining the actions and responses from American's allies as well as the Soviets and the Chinese themselves. Deftly drawing from other scholars such as Nancy Tucker, Yafeng Xia, Chen Jian, and Patrick Tyler, among others, Tudda delves deeply into the details of the negotiations on all sides while also maintaining a clear focus on the larger issues. Tudda's conclusions are not earth-shattering; instead, they're carefully honed points of distinction. His work is designed to serve both as a succinct synthesis of the history leading up to and including Nixon's trip while offering fresh insights gleaned from newly available sources. It's a delicate balancing act, but one that Tudda pulls off nicely.

On the matter of America's allies, especially those in Asia, Tudda reminds readers of the impact Nixon's secrecy had upon them. Japanese Prime Minister Sato Eisaku, for example, lost considerable prestige in Japan since it was obvious that he had not been contacted prior to the public announcement. Sato had tied himself closely to the United States, so the failure to be consulted hurt a great deal. Nobuhiko Ushida, Japan's ambassador to the United States, told Under Secretary of State U. Alexis Johnson that Nixon's secret maneuvering had "pulled the rug out from under" Sato's policy of supporting the United

States. Despite this, Tudda points out that Sato offered a statement of support for Nixon and his initiative (103).

In an important contribution to the historical record, Tudda asserts that the triangular diplomacy between the United States, China, and the Soviet Union was more a result of the trip to China than part of the original thinking that went into justifying the trip in the first place. This subtle distinction is significant for a couple of reasons. First, it calls into question notions that Nixon and Kissinger were always far-sighted strategic thinkers. Second, it adds an element to their reputations by pointing to their adaptability as events unfolded.

Tudda addresses the Nixon administration's mania for secrecy and its insistence on maintaining it throughout the discussions prior to the announcement. Nixon insisted on complete control over the process to ensure that the surprise would have the biggest impact, which he anticipated would redound most favorably for his political fortunes. Plus, as Tudda points out, Nixon and Mao shared a common concern: they had to worry about domestic critics of rapprochement: "Nixon had to deal with the pro-Taiwan Lobby. . . . Mao, meanwhile, faced a successor crisis and the lingering effects of the Cultural Revolution that he himself had created" (208). Interestingly enough, and beyond Tudda's scope, is the fact that despite having campaigned against the way Nixon and Kissinger had conducted American foreign policy, Jimmy Carter subscribed to the secret process when it came to announcing the normalization of diplomatic relations in December 1978 for the same reasons as Nixon had: namely, concern over domestic opposition.

Tudda does overreach a bit in some of his conclusions. He asserts, for example, "The success of the trip likely emboldened the Nixon White House's willingness to subvert the law and the constitutional process" (209). That is dubious, and it is something that is not really supported by the evidence. If anything, it was the Vietnam War, and Nixon's obsession with fighting it in a way that would allow him to proclaim victory that led to the greatest of his administration's excesses. The China trip was a byproduct of that secrecy more than it was a causal factor.

Tudda also overstates his argument for Nixon: "Nixon, unlike Johnson, also refused to let the Vietnam War get in the way of rapprochement" (206). In fairness to Lyndon Johnson, as he was escalating the fighting in Vietnam, Mao convulsed China with the Cultural Revolution, which left little opportunity for improving relations with the United States. In other words, Nixon benefited from the timing of his initiative given what was happening in China at the time. That said, it is important to give Nixon credit for recognizing that such an opportunity existed.

Of all the work in the secondary and primary sources that Tudda has done, it is his use of the tapes, he asserts in the preface, that makes his work stand out: "The tapes are an important, and yet until now, heretofore unused, source for historians who have examined the Nixon-Mao rapprochement" (ix). The redundancy of "yet until now" and "heretofore" is unfortunate, especially since the book is largely clean from such linguistic indelicacies; but in this instance, the redundancy speaks to a larger issue that plagues the work. Namely,

Tudda argues that Nixon's visit was path breaking, a true "turning point" in the Cold War. In this regard Nixon and Kissinger become the brilliant geo-strategic thinkers who re-oriented American diplomacy.

Another way to look at events, however, is to see Nixon and Kissinger, and Mao and Zhou Enlai, not as path breakers, but as surfers riding a big wave of change. Their genius came not from having created the wave but in recognizing it and riding it so expertly. In other words, they did not change things through the force of their actions so much as they recognized that changes were happening, and they worked to harness those changes to best suit the needs of their countries.

Tudda teases at this kind of interpretation. In his conclusion, for example, he quotes one onlooker to Nixon's return from China as saying that it was like "seeing the astronauts coming back from the moon" (202). And indeed, that quote is apt for many reasons. Just as the lunar landing did much to acknowledge the existing relationship between the earth and its nearest celestial neighbor (but nothing to change it), so too did Nixon's 1972 visit to China acknowledge the obvious without fundamentally altering the relationship itself. Or as Tudda notes, "Each side had determined that its security required better relations." (203) It was later that the nature of U.S.-China relations would change so drastically as the seeds planted by Nixon's trip began to sprout in so many economic, cultural, and political ventures.

The larger issue raised by Tudda's account is whether the trip itself represented a true turning point in the Cold War, that is to say whether the trip fundamentally changed the structure of the Cold War, or whether it was more symbolic of changes that had already occurred. Tudda argues that Nixon, unlike his predecessors in the White House, but very much like Captain Kirk, 'boldly moved' to effect a new relationship with the world's most populous nation, one that Nixon told White House visitors in 1971 would become a world power in the twenty-first century because of its people and their energy. Nixon was certainly shrewd, and, at times, could think very broadly and strategically, and he was spot on when it came to understanding China's growing importance in the twenty-first century.

What Tudda emphasizes from start to finish, however, is the mutual nature of the relationship, of how Nixon and Mao, both of whom recognized the changes that had occurred in the landscape, sought to address those changes through better relations with each other. In that regard, Tudda has done a valuable service to the story of the Sino-American rapprochement. He brings a balanced understanding to events, one supported by careful and thorough scholarship.

In his conclusion, Tudda asserts that all the presidents since Richard Nixon "have followed his policy and have helped to ensure Taiwan's territorial integrity whenever the PRC has periodically threatened to use force against the island" (204). While that may be technically true, it leaves out the critical role Congress has played in supporting Taiwan. That, of course, is really outside the focus of Tudda's tightly focused and carefully argued work. The significance of Nixon's trip is undeniable: Mr. Spock will confirm that any Vulcan knows that.

Review by Lorenz M. Lüthi, McGill University

A *Cold War Turning Point* is a meticulously researched and very readable analysis of Sino-American rapprochement between 1969 and 1972. Chris Tudda exploited U.S. archival sources, including the so-called Nixon tapes, French primary documents, and published translations of materials from China, the former Soviet Union, Pakistan, Romania, and East Germany. The resulting narrative provides a plethora of detail as well as crucial new evidence, but also great insight into the thinking of the Richard Nixon-Henry Kissinger team. The book clearly supersedes Margaret MacMillan's *Nixon and Mao*, which engages occasionally in orientalism and uncritically adopts some of the Chinese Communist myths about Sino-American relations, and adds new aspects to Xia Yafeng's *Negotiating with the Enemy*, which, in fairness, has a different focus in terms of period. The strength and great value of Tudda's book rests in his solid and exhaustive mining of U.S. sources. The author chose well just to focus on the story itself instead of including long flashbacks, as MacMillan did. As a result, the book is mostly about the American side, which, given the difficult source situation for the Chinese side, does not undermine the achievement of the project at all.

Organized chronologically in chapters each covering a period of several months at most, the book quickly moves from Nixon's assumption of the Presidency in early 1969 to the Warsaw channel, the Pakistani channel, the secret trip to Beijing by Nixon's National Security Advisor Kissinger, the U.N. vote on Taiwan, and finally the Nixon visit to China in early 1972. The thoughtful division of the narrative and the engaging writing style make the book a page-turner. Interspersed are a sufficient but not excessive number of judiciously selected anecdotes that enlighten our understanding of the inner workings of the Nixon administration. For example, the White House was quite aware in the spring of 1971 that engaging with Communist China would mean letting Taiwan down (73-74), but seemed to be more worried about the expected criticism of the "right wing nuts" like William Buckley or California Governor Ronald Reagan (108). Similarly, the Nixon administration deceived itself with regard to the possibility of keeping Taiwan in the United Nations before the crucial vote in the General Assembly in late October of that year (140). Obviously, as the United States was shifting the foundations of its own policy, it still hoped that the commitments of its own allies to Taiwan would not change. But the world turned out to resemble more a billiard table on which the movement of one ball affected many others. Moreover, Tudda's inclusion of South Asia—the Indo-Pakistani war and the partition of Pakistan—adds an important and often neglected chapter in the whole story. Tudda's ability to weave these ancillary narratives seamlessly into his larger whole makes his book a gripping and multi-faceted read.

The lack of access to Chinese sources still poses an insurmountable obstacle to our understanding of the full story, although Tudda tried arduously to track down all translated materials available. The existing Chinese-language secondary literature adds some additional aspects, particularly with regard to the developments in 1969 and 1971, but it does not question the conclusions of the book. Only the release of materials in the Chinese foreign ministry archives, which is expected to happen in the five to ten years, will fill some

of the glaring gaps on the Chinese side, particularly with regard to the set and hierarchy of the goals which Chairman Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai hoped to achieve in tactical and strategic terms. This material probably will also reveal that the two had problems similar to those of Nixon and Kissinger in convincing some of extremists (not only Lin Biao, who Tudda covers as well) in their own backyard about the wisdom of engaging with 'enemy number one' of the last quarter of the century. The currently accessible Soviet and East German sources on this issue are even less enlightening; only few sources and memoirs are available, and they provide more puzzles than answers.

Tudda's detailed analysis of the chronology of Sino-American rapprochement from early 1969 to early 1972 to a certain degree obscures the question of why the Nixon visit was "a Cold War Turning Point," as the book's title suggests. Among many Cold War historians, the historic role of the 1972 Beijing Summit usually is an unquestioned assumption which, to a certain degree, defies the actual historical record. Apart from the spectacular handshake between the two Cold War antagonists in East Asia, the Sino-American rapprochement really did not continue until 1978. Many other U.S. allies, particularly in West Europe, used the breakthrough as an opportunity to engage with Communist China, but the United States quickly lagged behind. As the whole set of high-level Sino-American conversations in 1971 and 1972 suggests, the White House and Zhongnanhai approached the talks in a different manner. While Nixon advocated rapprochement for strategic reasons in his famous *Foreign Affairs* article in 1967,¹ his administration lost sight of the larger picture as the conversations went on. As I have argued myself,² the Vietnam problem influenced much of the thinking of the Nixon-Kissinger team, particularly during the Beijing visit in 1972, when the American Indochina conflict entered its last round. Even the evidence Tudda marshals in his book reveals Zhou's long-term thinking and Nixon's and Kissinger's obsession with tactical details. Given the existing record of documents, it seems that it was this disparity which made Sino-American rapprochement in 1971-72 a turning point for China, but maybe not necessarily one for the United States.

¹ Richard M. Nixon, "Asia After Richard M. Nixon, "Asia after Viet Nam," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 46, No. 1, pp. 111-125.

² Lorenz M. Lüthi, "Beyond Betrayal: Beijing, Moscow, and the Paris Negotiations, 1971-1973," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 11:1 (Winter 2009): 57-107; Richard M. Nixon, "Asia After Viet Nam," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 46, No. 1, pp. 111-125.

One who merely looked at the title of Chris Tudda's new book, *A Cold War Turning Point: Nixon and China, 1969-1972*, might be tempted to conclude: "So what? Of course it was a turning point. What else can we say about it now?"

That would be a mistake. Tudda has added new information (especially from the famous Nixon Presidential Tapes,) and new interpretations to the somewhat familiar story of the "turn" in Sino-American relations at a crucial turning point in Cold War history. Indeed, he makes a strong case that, despite all the hype concerning the president's trip at the time, it did represent a real turning point not only in Sino-American relations, but in the entire Cold War international structure that had emerged in the 1940s. It is also one of the most balanced treatments of the Nixon administration's diplomacy that I have seen.

Tudda makes clear that the initiative came primarily from the Americans, though there were those on the Chinese side who appeared just as enthusiastic. The Americans come across in this account as desperate to normalize relations. How else can one explain a May 1969 finding by the State Department that a Chinese editorial that referred to the president as "a hypocrite priest and a 'gangster' who, while talking peace, 'holds a blood-dripping butcher's knife'" as a positive sign because it had "carefully avoided any detailed discussion of the bilateral issues between the US and Communist China, thus leaving future options open"? (22). There were a number of other insults and harsh words from the Chinese in the beginning of the administration that were simply ignored. Increasing numbers in the foreign policy "establishment" were ready to deal.

That is not to say that it was easy or simple; hence the extreme secrecy associated with the policies. Many, initially including National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, were skeptical of dealing with a China that was in the final throes of the so-called Cultural Revolution. Here, as elsewhere, I thought Tudda was a bit unfair to the Johnson Administration. While it is true that Secretary of State Dean Rusk was something of a gatekeeper against normalization in Sino-American relations, there were also tentative actions taken in 1965-1966 to relax trade restrictions and more or less put on the gloves, at least somewhat.¹ But how does one normalize relations with a country that has recalled almost all of its ambassadors and is in the midst of domestic turmoil that a Chinese diplomat recently called "China's modern dark age."² The opportunities were modest to begin with, but it was not necessarily the Johnson Administration's rigidity or disinterest that prevented movement toward normalization; China's behavior was also important.

¹ See Michael Lumbers, "The Irony of Vietnam: The Johnson Administration's Tentative Bridge-building to China, 1965-66," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 6 Issue 3 (Summer 2004), pp. 68-114.

² See Ji Chaozhu, *The Man on Mao's Right: From Harvard Yard to Tiananmen Square, My Life Inside China's Foreign Ministry* (New York: Random House, 2008), p. 224. Ji was one of Mao's interpreters who was also close to Zhou Enlai. He later became a diplomat reaching the ambassadorial level. For an excellent recent account of the Cultural Revolution, see Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

This interpretation on his part leads Tudda to some dubious comments about individuals working in the government on China affairs in the Johnson period. For example, a leading China specialist in the State Department, Alan S. Whiting, is portrayed as an alarmist about China who stoked up Secretary Rusk's opposition by warning, "The Chinese are coming. The Chinese are coming" (5). (I assume this phrasing came from the late foreign service officer John Holdridge, who was instrumental in implementing Kissinger's and Nixon's trips to China, as he used the same language elsewhere, and is an important source for Tudda.³) But this, I believe, is a serious misreading of Whiting's position. What he was warning about was the possibility of China entering the Vietnam War if the North was invaded, as it had intervened in Korea in 1950. This may or may not have been good advice, but it is not an alarmist position, as Tudda himself later notes. I would not agree with Holdridge's portrayal of Whiting as a "hawkish" advocate against rapprochement. His entire scholarly output - was based on portraying China as a rational actor, not the - fanatical regime that was sometimes portrayed by others. -Whiting's whole point, as I understand it, was to warn against a potential Chinese invasion of North Vietnam as rational behavior, not to demonize the Chinese. Moreover, as early as 1963, he was a backer of new relations with China and was a major promoter of the December, 1963 - speech by Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs Roger Hilsman that was meant to open the door a crack.⁴

In an opposite vein, some are portrayed as more dovish than they were at the time, based on their own recollections. Ambassador Marshall Green, - like Holdridge a major source for some important material in Tudda's account, is portrayed as an 'early' advocate of rapprochement with China, as early as 1963 with the Hilsman speech. Yet as late as January, 1967, in Executive Session testimony before the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, while Ambassador to Indonesia, Green described China as leading a "Red Tide" by expanding into Southeast Asia in the most alarming terms. The Committee Chairman, Senator William Fulbright, took particular umbrage at this coinage and berated Green for the next several minutes of testimony.⁵ I do not believe that Ambassador Green was being dishonest here, but we are all subject to the pressures of 'hindsight bias' where we see our earlier views on a subject through the prism of subsequent information as being more clear than they were. It points to one of the problems with recollection sourcing in general: even if it is not overtly self-serving, which it often is, it can be just as erroneous even given good intentions of the interview subject.

³ See the remarks by Holdridge in Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, Ed., *China Confidential: American Diplomats and Sino-American Relations, 1945-1996* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p. 202.

⁴ See remarks by Lindsey Grant, Officer in Charge of Mainland China Affairs, US State Department, 1962-64, on Whiting's role in disseminating Hilsman's speech to the press in *ibid.*, p. 195.

⁵ US Senate, *Executive Sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Together with the Joint Sessions with the Senate Armed Services Committee (Historical Series)*, Ninetieth Congress (1967), (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2007), pp. 153-155.

These are not just arcane factoids of people's views of the past. Tudda's concentration on the internal machinations of the administration and its interactions with the Chinese is first rate. But he might have also pointed out that, despite the difficulties in making gestures to the Chinese politically, the American view of recent history with that country was undergoing a sea change in the period he covers. The years 1969-1972 saw what I would call the 'myth of the China Hands' become an accepted interpretation of earlier events, the Pentagon Papers informed the public of some of the seedier underside of policy-making, and Barbara Tuchman's *Stillwell and the American Experience in China* and David Halberstam's *The Best and the Brightest*⁶ (two books I find deeply problematic) captured the educated public's imagination and had a profound effect on how Asian Cold War history – and foreign policy making more generally – was viewed in the United States. Previously, it had been all China's fault. Now, it was all America's.

So Nixon's initiative was a bold move, but it was a bold move that was perceived to be correcting past mistakes. That important variable is missing in Tudda's account. The difficulties with the conservatives is covered, but not the push from the liberals and a growing number of Americans, no matter how simplistic their interpretations of the complexities of the history.

Finally, in telling the story, Tudda places the ensuing diplomatic debates within the context of Kissinger and Nixon's realist approach to foreign policy. As a political scientist, I find this to be one of the more interesting questions in this interesting book. One of the questions that has often been debated in assessing realism in foreign policy is whether it is *prescriptive* (the way states ought to act) or *descriptive* (the way states do act) – or both. Most analysts, I think, choose -[remove quotation marks]both.- Certainly Nixon and Kissinger seem to have done so. One of their problems, as Tudda shows, was that the Chinese did not necessarily act according to the prescriptions that the Americans offered them, especially in South Asia (207). The Americans were trying to act according to realist principles, but their assumption that the Chinese were also represents a significant prescriptive failure for the approach. As one of Tudda's sources demonstrates, rapprochement with the U.S. was a very difficult psychological process for the Chinese, especially for Mao Zedong. For the Chinese, sometimes ideological motivations still prevailed.⁷ To be sure, the growing threat from the USSR played a key role in moving the Chinese toward rapprochement. But the shift was always tactical for Mao. It was only after he had died that China entered into a truly pragmatic manner of foreign policy and ended its support, moral and otherwise, to revolutionary movements around the world. But what if the radical, anti-détente "Gang of Four" had prevailed, or Mao's designated successor Lin Biao had managed to hold on until Chairman Mao's death? Both were

⁶ Barbara W. Tuchman, *Stillwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-45* (New York: MacMillan, 1971); David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest, Third Edition* (New York: Random House, 1972).

⁷ See the excellent Kuisong Yang and Yafeng Xia, "Vacillating between Revolution and Détente: Mao's Changing Psyche and Policy toward the United States, 1969-1976," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (April 2010), pp. 395-423.

apparently anti-détente and preferred the more ideological ‘go it alone’ strategic approach to the two superpowers. These are unlikely scenarios, but they are hardly outside the realm of possibility. History remains a highly contingent process, despite the “‘big forces’” and ‘geopolitical realities that Nixon and Kissinger loved to expound and posit as determinant.

It is also worth noting that the Nixon-Kissinger policies of *realpolitik* did not survive them long. They were followed by a president who made Human Rights and idealism a hallmark of his approach. American foreign policy does not follow a consistently realist or idealist - orientation. It oscillates between the two because they both appear to fail over time within the context of the American ideology and value system.⁸

Chris Tudda has written a fine book that increases our knowledge of an immensely important turning point in American and Chinese history. I recommend it highly.

⁸ Douglas J. Macdonald, *Adventures in Chaos: American Intervention for Reform in the Third World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

Drawing primarily upon newly-released American documents, including the Nixon tapes, Chris Tudda is able to let off fireworks that light up a number of shadowy corners in the saga of the Sino-American rapprochement. Tracing the events that finally led to the Beijing summit in February 1972, Tudda sheds new light on such issues as the rivalry between National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger and Secretary of State William Rogers, U.S. efforts to keep Taiwan in the United Nations, and Kissinger's second visit to China in October 1971. Providing fascinating new insights into the chaotic nature of policy making within the Nixon administration, Tudda highlights its miscalculations and misjudgments, especially its exaggeration of Beijing's readiness to sway Hanoi's opinions on the behalf of the United States. By calling the Sino-U.S. rapprochement a "triumph" for Nixon's and Kissinger's "strategy of foreign policy realism" (205), Tudda echoes the prevailing view in the literature that Nixon's China diplomacy represents a bright spot in his foreign policy record.

Although Tudda's volume constitutes a solidly-researched study, which offers a vivid and highly-revealing account of how policy was made within the Nixon administration, it still leaves much to be desired. It suffers from a number of shortcomings and omissions: its treatment of Chinese decision-making is superficial, and at times, questionable, especially regarding the role of Defense Minister Lin Biao; its discussion of the impact of the Sino-American rapprochement on Hanoi is rather simplistic; its analysis of Nixon's and Kissinger's calculations about South Asia in 1971 is unconvincing; and its failure to assess the implications of Nixon's China policy for Anglo-American relations is regrettable.

Tudda argues that "both Nixon and Mao believed that they had to overcome significant domestic opposition in order to proceed with their radical new policies" (208). It is true that Nixon had to worry about the reaction of the pro-Taiwan China Lobby, but the claim that Mao had to deal with Lin Biao and the Cultural Revolution radicals, who were against rapprochement with the United States and were in favor of detente with the Soviet Union, is not supported by archival evidence. In explaining the implications of Nixon's Cambodian invasion for China's decision-making, Tudda cites the findings of the scholar Kuo-kang Shao¹ to argue that the Cambodian attack made it hard for Premier Zhou Enlai to persuade his colleagues to support rapprochement with the United States because Lin Biao then spoke in favor of mending fences with the Soviet Union (52). But Kuo-kang Shao's description and analysis of Lin Biao's reaction to Sino-American rapprochement was not based on any Chinese archival sources. In making his argument that the Chinese military, led by Lin Biao, opposed Mao's plan to improve relations with the United States, Tudda is repeating a myth first mentioned by Kissinger in his memoirs that the main dispute between Mao and Lin Biao was Mao's decision to seek cooperation with Washington.²

¹ Kuo-kang Shao, *Zhou Enlai and the Foundations of Chinese Foreign Policy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).

² Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), pp. 696-697; 768-769.

Tudda also contends that because Mao, like Nixon, was concerned about internal opposition, he had to emphasize secrecy in conducting the rapprochement negotiations. This is debatable. Before Kissinger's first visit to Beijing in July 1971, the Chinese side had first suggested an open trip, and Mao had said to his advisers that there was no need to hide Sino-American contact³. It was primarily in response to the American insistence on secrecy that the Chinese government later agreed to keep Kissinger's first visit secret.

Did Lin Biao oppose rapprochement with the United States? To date, no archival evidence has surfaced in China to indicate that Lin Biao ever said to Mao that rapprochement with the United States was a bad idea. It is true that Mao told Nixon in February 1972 that "there is a reactionary group which is opposed to our contact with you. The result was that they got on an airplane and fled abroad."⁴ But Mao made his accusation after Lin Biao had broken with him in September 1971.

Tudda's appraisal of the effects of Nixon's China initiative on North Vietnam reveals a rather one-dimensional understanding of Hanoi's decision-making. While it is true, as Tudda points out, that "Nixon and Kissinger failed to account for China's unwillingness or inability, to influence Hanoi's behavior" (206), this does not mean that the big-power diplomacy produced no effect on the Vietnamese Communists. Tudda fails to explain how Beijing's invitation to Nixon to visit China affected thinking in Hanoi. The news of the invitation came as a shock for the Vietnamese Communists, who were reminded of the 1954 Geneva Conference. When they were still locked in a bitter war with the United States, China chose to invite their archenemy Nixon for an official visit. Beijing's decision deepened their distrust of the Chinese. The Sino-American rapprochement trivialized and marginalized the Vietnam War. As Lien-Hang T. Nguyen's study makes clear, Nixon's great power diplomacy was not ineffective; on the contrary, it succeeded in disrupting the Chinese-Soviet-Vietnamese triangle.⁵ Policy makers in Hanoi felt powerless in the face of the Sino-American opening and Soviet-American detente, and they allowed the reconfiguration of big-power alignment to shape their approaches to war and peace in Indochina. They were convinced that the great powers were inclined to sacrifice the Vietnamese interests in 1972 as they had done previously during the Geneva Conference in 1954. North Vietnamese leaders acted on this conviction by hardening their position in

³ 魏史言(Wei Shiyan): "基辛格秘密访华内幕," (The Inside Story of Kissinger's Secret visit to China) in 外交部外交史编辑室编(The Chinese Foreign Ministry's Editorial Office on Diplomatic History, ed.) : 《新中国外交风云》(Diplomatic Episodes of New China) (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 1991), Vol. 2, p. 37.

⁴ Memorandum of Conversation, February 21, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, China, 1969-1972*, p. 680.

⁵ Lien-Hang T. Nguyen, *Hanoi's War: An International History of the War for Peace in Vietnam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

Paris and by planning a major military operation. They timed their spring 1972 offensive to coincide with Nixon's trips to Beijing and Moscow.⁶

Tudda's coverage of the 'Nixon shock' to America's allies is fragmentary. Although he does pay attention to how the Nixon administration attempted to soothe the ruffled feathers of its Asian allies, that is, Taiwan and Japan, he makes no mention of how Nixon's China opening affected U.S. connections with its Western allies, particularly, the British. As Andrew Scott points out in his recent study on Anglo-American relations under Nixon and Edward Heath, the "Nixon shock" strained political ties between Washington and London.⁷ As a key ally of the United States, Britain expected close consultations with the White House, but the Nixon administration failed to inform London of its decision to reach out to the PRC. Nixon's behavior disturbed British officials, who were distressed at being kept in the dark about his China gambit and were apprehensive that future surprises might be in store, particularly when the United States was conducting exclusive arms talks with the Soviet Union.⁸

In explaining Washington's tilt toward Pakistan in its war with India in 1971, Tudda argues that repaying President Yahya Khan for his assistance in establishing the Pakistani channel for Sino-American rapprochement did not enter into the calculations of the Nixon administration (xiii). If, as Tudda contends, gratitude played no role in the attitudes of Nixon and Kissinger toward Pakistan in the South Asian conflict, then how would Tudda make sense of Kissinger's comment during the crisis that the Indians "have never lifted a finger for us."⁹

Despite these criticisms, Tudda's book remains a welcome addition to the literature on Sino-American relations during the Cold War. It enriches our understanding of U.S. decision-making during a time when the two countries, after over two decades of an absurd standoff, began to forge a new relationship.

⁶ Nguyen, *Hanoi's War*

⁷ Andrew Scott, *Allies Apart: Heath, Nixon and the Anglo-American Relationship* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

⁸ Scott, *Allies Apart*.

⁹ Quoted in Margaret MacMillan, *Nixon and Mao: The Week that Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2007), p. 221.

While it is an honor to be asked to contribute a review in an H-Diplo Roundtable, a number of which I have had the good fortune to write over the past few years, it pales in comparison to having one's book become the subject of a Roundtable. I therefore want to acknowledge and thank Tom Maddux, Diane Labrosse, George Fujii, and everyone at H-Diplo for organizing and publishing this Roundtable on *A Cold War Turning Point*. I am honored also by the participation of these particular reviewers, whose scholarship I have long admired. Thanks therefore to Christopher Jespersen, Lorenz Luthi, Doug MacDonald, and Qiang Zhai for taking the time to review my book and Jeremi Suri for his introduction.

I am pleased that each reviewer praises the book for its contributions to the study not only of Sino-U.S. rapprochement but the diplomacy of the first 'Nixinger' administration, and finds that it is well-written. I set out to write a book that students would (hopefully) not be dragged kicking-and-screaming into reading, that was affordable in this age of highly-priced and highly-specialized monographs that faculty often cannot assign to undergraduates, and one that graduate students and scholars would also find useful for its analysis, insight, and methodology.

Each reviewer has offered criticism, and I take such critiques seriously. Christopher Jespersen argues that I overreached in the connection I made between secrecy in the rapprochement process and President Richard Nixon's later willingness to subvert the law and constitutional process. I agree with him that Vietnam likely had more of an impact on Nixon's penchant for secrecy, and I should have been clearer about that in my brief discussion about how the obsession with the release of the *Pentagon Papers* impacted Kissinger's impending secret visit to Beijing. I believe that it is more likely that each episode had a snowball effect on the other. Nevertheless, Jespersen raises an important cautionary point about historians going out on a limb and making 'bold' pronouncements. Then again, how can I complain about a review that references *Star Trek VI*?

Regarding my contention about Nixon's boldness towards China in comparison to Lyndon Johnson (which Doug MacDonald also questions in his review), I tried to note that the documents demonstrate that Johnson, his National Security Advisor Walt Rostow, and NSC Staffmember and China expert Alfred Les Jenkins were all skeptical about the value of any overtures to the Chinese during the Cultural Revolution, and that Chairman Mao Zedong himself recognized that he had gone too far in isolating the People's Republic of China (PRC) from the rest of the world. Nevertheless, it takes two to tango, and it's not really fair to blame Johnson for a diplomatic mess that he did not cause. This is a point I should have made that more clear. As for Jespersen's question about whether or not Nixon and Mao were "surfers riding a big wave of change," I still cling to the (perhaps) old-fashioned idea

¹ The views presented here are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of State or the United States Government.

that individuals make history. Mao could have dug in his heels, intensified the Cultural Revolution in response to the new threat from the Soviet Union, and ignored Nixon. Nixon, meanwhile, merely could have paid lip service to the *Foreign Affairs* article² and concentrated solely on détente with the Soviet Union. That both leaders chose not to do so demonstrated their personal willingness to improve the U.S.-PRC relationship even when it angered allies, potentially jeopardized détente, and caused internal and domestic dissension.

Lorenz Lüthi's positive review is especially gratifying. I managed to do a fraction of the amount of multi-archival research he did for his book on the Sino-Soviet split,³ so I am happy that he not only acknowledges what I did include, but also recognizes the difficulty in writing about the rapprochement where the Chinese documentary record is lacking. As for his question about whether or not the first part of the rapprochement truly represents a 'turning point,' I should have emphasized earlier in the book that this really was only the beginning of what in the conclusion I call "a cautious process that slowly became normalization over the next six years" culminating in Carter's decision to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC. (204)

While Doug MacDonald agrees with my contention that the rapprochement represented a turning point, and I am thankful for the praise he otherwise offers, he makes some valuable and valid criticisms about my portrayal of the hawks and doves on China who preceded Nixon. I should have been more careful about my acceptance of the Holdridge-Green criticisms of former State Department Advisor Alan Whiting given they occur in oral histories and Holdridge's books, and reflect what MacDonald perceptively calls "hindsight bias." MacDonald also makes some incisive points about whether realism is prescriptive or descriptive. Should another edition of the book come out I will focus on this debate in more detail.

Qiang Zhai offers the most pointed criticism of the book, which I will address shortly, but I am happy that he nonetheless believes I have provided "fascinating new insights" about Nixon's foreign policymaking and that he considers the book a "welcome addition to the literature on Sino-American relations during the Cold War." Now to his comments. First, he calls my treatment of Chinese decision-making "superficial." However, I noted repeatedly throughout the book that the paucity of Chinese primary sources from this time period currently precludes a thorough examination of Chinese motives and their decision-making process. As Lorenz Lüthi notes in his review, this lack of sources "still poses an insurmountable obstacle to our understanding of the full story." So I used the available documents from Chinese, French, German, and Romanian archives (many of them online) as well as the documents that have appeared in books and articles by Yafeng Xia, Yang

² Richard M. Nixon, "Asia After Vietnam," reprinted in *Foreign Relations of the United States Vol. I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1969-1972* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2003), 10-21.

³ Lorenz Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

Kuisong and Yafeng Xia, and F.S. Aijazuddin, not to mention memoirs by Ji Chaozhu, Huang Hua, and Sultan Khan to plug these gaps.⁴

As for my speculation that Defense Minister Lin Biao opposed rapprochement with the U.S. and that the invasion of Cambodia made rapprochement even harder, I also cited Jussi Hanhimäki for the deleterious effect of the Cambodian invasion on rapprochement. However, I did note in footnote 39 of chapter three that Gong Li has argued that Cambodia did not affect rapprochement at all. (226)⁵ I also wrote in footnote 24 of chapter five that Chen Jian has argued that “Lin Biao’s downfall might have removed a political obstacle as well as provided additional justification” for Sino-U.S. rapprochement. Yafeng Xia has also written that the Lin Biao incident might have allowed Zhou to “de-radicalize China’s domestic and foreign policies.” (241)⁶ I am perfectly willing to acknowledge that my theories about Mao’s and Zhou’s motives and decision-making, as well as whether or not Lin Biao opposed rapprochement with the U.S., is speculative due to the lack of archival sources, but in that regard I am in good company with the scholars noted above.

Qiang Zhai notes that I did not examine the effect of the rapprochement on Hanoi or London, but they were not the focus of my book. Instead I chose to analyze how rapprochement affected Moscow, Taipei, and Tokyo. As for his comment that the South Asia chapter is “unconvincing,” I believe it is actually the strongest chapter because it demonstrates how the Nixon administration tried to grapple with its inability to convince the Chinese to act in their own best interest, while also showing the limits of thinking “geopolitically.” In particular, he asks how, since I argued that “gratitude played no role in the attitudes of Nixon and Kissinger toward Pakistan,” I would “make sense of Henry Kissinger’s comment during the crisis that the Indians ‘have never lifted a finger for us’?” That’s easy: Nixon and Kissinger a) were upset that India, ostensibly the world’s largest democracy and a long-time recipient of American foreign aid, sided with the communist

⁴ See Yafeng Xia, *Negotiating with the Enemy: U.S.-China Talks during the Cold War, 1949-1972* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); Xia, “China’s Elite Politics and Sino-American Rapprochement, January 1969–February 1972,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8.4 (Fall 2006); Yang Kuisong and Yafeng Xia, “Vacillating between Revolution and Détente: Mao’s Changing Psyche and Policy toward the United States,” *Diplomatic History* 34.2 (April 2010); F.S. Aijazuddin, *From a Head, Through a Head, to a Head: The Secret Channel Between the US and China through Pakistan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Huang Hua, *Memoirs* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2008); Ji Chaozhu, *The Man on Mao’s Right: From Harvard Yard to Tiananmen Square, My Life Inside China’s Foreign Ministry* (New York: Random House, 2008); and Sultan M. Khan, *Memories and Reflections of a Pakistani Diplomat* (London: The Centre for Pakistan Studies, 1997).

⁵ Jussi Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 80-82 and Gong Li, “Chinese Decision Making and the Thawing of U.S.-China Relations,” in Robert S. Ross and Jiang Changbin, eds., *Re-examining the Cold War: U.S.-China Diplomacy, 1954-1973* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 339.

⁶ Chen Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 269-71 and Xia, “China’s Elite Politics and Sino-American Rapprochement, January 1969-February 1972,” 21-22.

Soviet Union and b) believed that India wanted to “dismember” Pakistan by supporting the Bengalis in East Pakistan and preparing to attack West Pakistan. (146-47, 158-61)

The lack of gratitude towards Pakistani President Yahya Khan was also an important historiographical point that I made and that Qiang Zhai omitted from his review. Most scholars claim—as did contemporary critics—that Nixon ‘tilted’ to Pakistan in order to pay Yahya Khan back for facilitating the rapprochement process, despite Yahya’s bloody crackdown on Bengalis who still suffered from the effects of the November 1970 cyclone. I demonstrate, however, that Kissinger and Zhou simply agreed to thank Yahya in the last meeting of the secret trip in July and move the secret channel to Paris (96). During the war fourth months later, none of the available documents, including the Nixon Tapes, indicate that Nixon and Kissinger considered anything other than geopolitics in ‘tilting’ towards Pakistan.

By writing this book, I aimed to add to the growing historiography about U.S.-China relations in the Cold War as well as the study of Richard Nixon’s and Henry Kissinger’s diplomacy. I appreciate once again the time my colleagues have devoted to their reviews, and I look forward to reading more scholarship as more documents become available, new methodologies and approaches are offered, and other scholars make their own contributions to this fascinating time in international history.

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