5-11-2023

Chinese strategic partnerships: A new form of alliance politics

Sean L. Starkweather
James Madison University

Chinese Strategic Partnerships: A New Form of Alliance Politics

---

An Honors College Project Presented to

the Faculty of the Undergraduate

College of Arts and Letters

James Madison University

---

by Sean Lee Starkweather

May 2023

Accepted by the faculty of the Department of Political Science, James Madison University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Honors College.

FACULTY COMMITTEE:

Project Advisor: Yi Edward Yang, Ph.D.
Professor, Political Science

Reader: Hak-Seon Lee, Ph.D.
Professor, Political Science

Reader: Bernd Kaussler, Ph.D.
Professor, Political Science

HONORS COLLEGE APPROVAL:

Bethany Blackstone, Ph.D.
Dean of the Honors College

PUBLIC PRESENTATION

This work is accepted for presentation, in part or in full, at the MPSA Annual Conference on April 13, 2023.

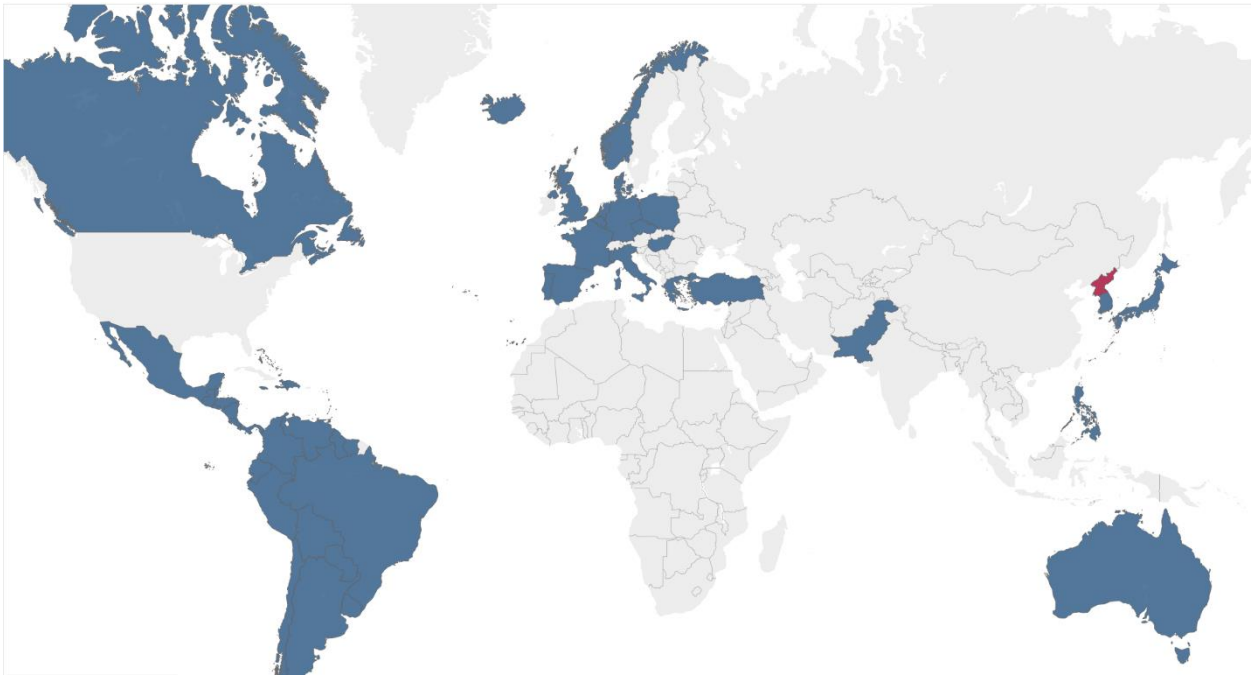
Dedication

I dedicate this work to my parents for their continual encouragement and to Melissa, for her boundless positivity and unending support.

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

Map of Current US and Chinese Formal Alliances



Data: Formal Alliances (v4.1) (Correlates of War)
Blue = US, Red = China

Acknowledgements

This project found its origin in a cold email sent to a professor I had never met prior—without the guidance and support of those who lent a helping hand, completing this project would not have been possible. I would like to give special thanks to my committee chair, Dr. Yi Edward Yang, for generously providing your guidance and feedback throughout the thesis process and with regards to postgraduate life. Thank you to my readers, Dr. Hak-Seon Lee and Dr. Bernd Kaussler, for reviewing and providing feedback on my writing as well as providing advice about postgraduate options. Thank you, Dr. Keith Grant, for taking the time to discuss my project and helping me understand in greater depth the literature on alliance formation. Thank you, Dr. John Scherpereel, for reaching out to discuss grants for the MPSA Annual Conference. Finally, thank you, Dr. Kerry Crawford, Dr. Kristin Wylie, and Dr. Howard Lubert, for your support as the Honors Political Science Colloquium advisors and work towards making this opportunity possible.

This project was presented at the JMU Asian Studies Student Conference on February 20, 2023 as well as the MPSA Annual Conference on April 13, 2023. My attendance at the MPSA Annual Conference was made possible through the JMU Honors College Small Grant, the JMU Office of Research and Scholarship's Undergraduate Travel Grant Award, and a grant provided by the Phi Beta Kappa chapter at JMU.

Abstract

During the 14th National Party Congress in 1992, Jiang Zemin declared that China would never seek alliances nor pursue hegemony. Indeed, since 1961, China has formed formal alliances with mutual defense clauses with only two countries: North Korea and the Soviet Union. Given the US' alliance network, which extends deep into East Asia and Oceania, many scholars predict that China would seek similar security arrangements to deter potential aggression. However, very little research has been conducted to answer the question of why China has remained persistent in rejecting alliance formation as a viable strategy despite popular notions of increasing Chinese nationalism and assertiveness. As a first cut into this question, I argue through a qualitative case study of Chinese foreign relations that China's stratagem of using less formal partnerships to fulfill the role of formal alliances is driven by three motivations: 1) the structural conditions for alliance formation have not been met, 2) China prioritizes the strategic flexibility which partnerships provide over deeper commitments that would equalize its dyadic relationships, and 3) China is viewed as an undesirable ally among other states. As such, China's partnerships function as a means of forming linkages with other states, exerting a limited degree of leverage, and imposing potential costs on states considering opposing core Chinese interests while maintaining a high degree of flexibility in their policy options.

1 Introduction

On May 31, 2021, Xi Jinping, in a study session of the Politburo, appeared to acknowledge the increasing isolation that Beijing faced as a product of its "wolf warrior diplomacy," calling on the CCP's cadres to engage in a more positive diplomacy. The goal of this transition, while not new, was still notable in the context of the previous admission: to "make friends, unite, and win over the majority" (Smith 2021). Xi's announcement, which signaled a sudden change in China's approach to the conduct of diplomacy, has reinvigorated discussions over the future of China's relationships with other states among policymakers and academics through public forums and think pieces. These discourses have been further complicated by speculation over the possibility of deeper security cooperation between China and states such as Russia.

As the US-China competition continues to expand into new domains, enveloping a greater portion of the world's states and garnering greater attention from policy elites and publics alike, the question of what this new form of great power politics may look like has become increasingly salient. Contrary to what many existing models of alliance formation would have predicted, China has not formed alliances to counterbalance the American network of bilateral alliances. Just as importantly, the other regional powers in East, Southeast, and Central Asia have not formed a grand coalition against China, and do not appear poised to do so. However, while the economic development of China as a global power has contributed to a large volume of scholarship on China's individual relationships with particular states (i.e., US-China relations, China-Australia relations, etc.) and a similarly large volume of work on the US alliance structure in Asia, there is a lack of research on how China perceives their own security situation of having only one formal ally in North Korea and how policymakers approach the question of forming and managing alliances. Moreover, there is a surprising dearth of research on the dynamics of

Chinese alliance politics, the causes of China's current lack of formal allies, and whether this has changed over time.

In international relations, it is generally understood that alliances are a critical element in managing power distributions and maintaining balances of power in each region. Realism has long grounded its central descriptions on how states balance against rising hegemons in their ability to form alliances; the notion of collective security rests on the formation of an alliance network; certain forms of defensive alliances between two states can even act as deterrents. The clear importance of alliances cannot be understated. Yet, this leaves the question of China's ostensible lack of desire in pursuing formal alliances. Indeed, China has not managed to sign a defense treaty with another state since 1961. Given the US' alliance network, which extends deep into East Asia and Oceania, one would have been led to predict that China would seek similar security relationships to deter and defend against potential aggression, just as the USSR did with the Warsaw Pact. But even under Xi Jinping's externally-focused approach to developing relations with neighboring and peripheral states, China has refrained from proposing a single defense treaty with another state. China's approach to alliances will have significant ramifications on regional security in Asia, especially when considering that states like South Korea have, in terms of policy, a desire to refrain from choosing between the US and China. How China will look to develop its relationships with other states will therefore have a great impact on the strategic calculations of each regional power as the costs of conflict increase.

2 Methodology

The fundamental purpose of this study is to answer the question of what China's approach to alliances and alliance formation is, and what the causal factors behind their approach are. In assessing these questions, a qualitative case study on Chinese foreign relations will be conducted to examine how China's relationships with other states have changed over time. Through within-case analysis, the unique attributes of Chinese foreign relations can be determined, thereby generating more useful explanations of Chinese behavior. Of special interest is the question of whether Chinese policy vis-à-vis alliances is path-dependent i.e. whether China's historical policies restricts their policy options today. While quantitative analysis can produce novel insights in this regard, a within-case qualitative research design allows for a more focused analysis which provides an opportunity to both explore the context in which the actor—in this case, China—is situated and navigate oftentimes nebulous concepts such as "alliances," "alignment," and "coalitions."

However, there are weaknesses to this approach. While a within-case analysis can prove helpful in enabling a closer inspection of the particular case in question, it lacks in other ways the explanatory power afforded by cross-case or comparative methods; the generalizability of this study is further impeded given that this is a small-N study. As such, caution is necessary when attempting to generalize the arguments found in this analysis. Furthermore, a major limitation in this study is a shortage of Chinese sources—particularly those located in China proper—as a result of language barriers and accessibility issues.

The basic structure of the study will be as follows: first, a theoretical justification for using a particular definition of "alliance" will be provided. Second, the core explanations for Chinese policy regarding alliances will be laid out as a three-pronged argument. The following

two chapters will focus on providing additional historical and empirical support for the argument. Specifically, the first test will comprise a history of Chinese foreign relations—an evaluation of the Mao, Deng, Jiang, and Hu eras will be established, with greater attention being given to the state's relations with other states and the development of those relationships over time and through certain critical junctures. Next, a quasi-quantitative examination of Chinese foreign policy—focusing largely on their behavior in militarized interstate disputes—will be used to strengthen the third prong (China is an undesirable ally) in particular. The study ends with a brief section discussing specifically the remarkable constancy of Chinese alliance policy despite changes in other policy domains over time, as well as a conclusion summarizing the study and discussing the prospect of China embracing formal alliances in the near future.

3 Literature Review

As with a number of other terms and ideas central to international relations, the concept of "alliance" remains somewhat nebulous and malleable, easily shaped to fit a wide variety of contexts. While this has allowed the concept to be incredibly versatile, this broad understanding has come at the cost of imprecision. One reason for this may derive from *how* the definition of alliance has changed over time—previous iterations remained relevant in academic discourses as the concept evolved, in part because other areas of inquiry within political science began applying the term to help describe and explain other phenomena. This is not necessarily an undesirable outcome. However, the result has been that it is possible to speak of alliances in formal and informal terms; in hard military and economic terms; and even still, in softer cultural, social, and ideological terms. Another point of divergence exists in how alliances are at base—whether they are processes or institutions; techniques of statecraft; or a broader regulating mechanism to maintain even distributions of power. This conceptual chaos is likely in part a product of theoretical models being dependent on cases drawn from particular time periods and regions. As Abbas and Schneider (2015) note in their thesis alliance formation patterns, changing international political conditions, and the subsequent patterns of behavior among states and statesmen would bring to the fore different variables that were once considered marginal. Because the debate on how to conceive of alliances is unlikely to be resolved anytime soon, and far more likely to remain ideographic, it is appropriate to assess the general theoretical frameworks for alliance formation before establishing in more concrete terms a useful, if particular, conception of alliances. In doing so, it will be possible to construct a security-oriented definition of alliances while also recognizing the significant roles played by non-security factors in compelling or otherwise motivating alliance formation.

Equilibrium Models

The most conventional conception of alliances is that of formal relationships between states for security purposes. Perhaps reflecting the dominance of realist thinking that characterized the Cold War period, early theories on alliances derive largely from realist frameworks. As a result, realist models have proven to be both the most varied and the most durable.

Balance of Power Theory

Hans Morgenthau (1948), in his seminal *Politics Among Nations,* would frame alliances as a process wherein actors seek to shape the equilibrium of the international system i.e. maintain a clear balance in the distribution of power in the international system. Through this model, alliances are a means of altering and facilitating equilibrium in the balance of power. As an initial inquiry into alliances from the realist framework, Morgenthau would posit that all that is necessary is a tentative agreement—that is to say, formal treaties are not a requisite—that two or more states will come to one another's aid in the event of an attack (Morgenthau 1948). This broad conceptualization allows a great deal of flexibility in explaining how states maintain the balance of power, thereby serving as a convenient reference point for future research. However, Morgenthau's descriptions are too vague for effective application in case studies of real-world alliances.

While several later theorists would emphasize an alliance's *military* roles, most authors assert that "security" involves political goals. Herbert Dinerstein (1965), who, responding to coalitional and public goods models, would assert that in the post-World War II period, political goals have in fact superseded military ones. Diverging to some degree from a strictly realist logic, Dinerstein (1965) took a softer approach to alliances, arguing that the "transformation" in alliance systems is a product of both the postwar bipolarization of power and the increased role

that ideology plays as a determinant of international political behavior. The introduction of nuclear arms would lead to the now familiar argument that in this transformed system, the "expectation that war can be avoided makes the primary purpose of alliances deterrence of war rather than preparation for its conduct" (Dinerstein 1965, 593). In this new postwar system, alliances are fleeting and shift frequently from a period of a "brink of war" to détente to entente (Dinerstein 1965); Nicholas Spykman, known for his rimland theory, would be noted as signaling agreement by declaring that balance of power dynamics means that no state can retain permanent allies (Duncan and Siverson 1982). But, Dinerstein's framing of inter-alliance dynamics as zero-sum limits the explanatory and predictive power of his model, especially as they pertain to inter-alliance cooperation.

George Liska's theory of alliances, laid out in his *Nations in Alliances* (1968), contradicts the transformed nature of alliance patterns asserted by Dinerstein. In contrast to the changes taking place within the structure of the international order, Liska towed a more subtle line, both recognizing the value of cultural and ideological influences while emphasizing the continuity that endured through the postwar period and its associated technological advances in particular, the advent of nuclear weapons, the seeming prominence of ideological alignment—specifically along liberal democratic and Marxist-Leninist lines—and the growing abundance of newly formed sovereign states (Fedder 1968; Kratochvil 2007).

In other words, Liska sought to answer the question of how one can accept the dominating presence of power while simultaneously making room for normative variables. Nonetheless, in classical realist form, he would follow Morgenthau's basic premise and assert that alliances' principal function is to "prevent undesired transformations" and maintain the balance of power (Liska 1963; Fedder 1968, 78; Abbas and Schneider 2015). In this sense, "alliances are against

and only derivatively for, someone or something" (Snyder 1990). But, although Fedder (1968) would argue that Liska in some way assumed alliance to be coalition-based, George Modelski (1963) would point out that Liska fails to actually provide general information on what alliances actually *are*.

Initially serving as a brand-new paradigm, Kenneth Waltz's neorealism has become a popular lens through which to understand alliance formation and offers explicitly structural explanations for alliance formation. Because of the primacy of security as a national interest, "states behave in ways that result in balances forming" (Waltz 1979); a means of achieving this balance is through alliances and coalition-building. Even if an alliance were to destabilize the balance by achieving victory over another state, they would themselves be balanced by other states, as even within an alliance some states would find themselves with a higher degree of relative gains, encouraging the other states to balance against their former allies (Waltz 1979).

Glenn Snyder argues along similar lines and explicitly makes clear his inclination towards Waltzian neorealism (1990, 104). Focusing on polarity, Snyder posits that relative to a multipolar system, alliances in a bipolar system will exert fewer "independent effect on relations" in large part because it is the structure which determines one's interests and, by proxy, alignments (Snyder 1990; 117); alliance formation in a bipolar system is therefore a matter of "systemic determination (Snyder 1990; 117). Moreover, the restrictive nature of bipolar systems removes many of the incentives or even opportunities for states to defect, as there are only two main options to choose from.

Similar conclusions would be reached by Li and Thompson (2014), who viewed alliance formation as a stochastic process and found that alliance formation during periods of multipolarity were random and unstable, while during periods of bipolarity there was a far higher

degree of "serial dependence" and stability. Further support would be given by McGowan and Rood (2014), who used a Poisson model to assess European alliances, finding that 1) alliances occur randomly with respect to time, 2) the time intervals between alliances are randomly distributed, and 3) decreases in alliance formation comes before systemic-changing events. Thus, marking perhaps the final major equilibrium model, Waltz's theory remains very relevant and a common reference point for other scholars engaging in discourses on alliances.

Over time, balance of power theory in particular has become the target of a high volume of criticism. Paul Schroeder (2004), using the oft-cited example of an exemplary realist alliance structure of Otto von Bismarck's alliance network, argued that Bismarck's intention was not, in fact, to maintain a balance of power, but rather to manage and exert control over adversarial states. In a more general manner, Brian Healy and Arthur Stein (1973) would argue that the realist descriptions of balancing dynamics were far too generalized and failed to capture the marked differences in how states engaged with one another and formed relationships in a given period. Ultimately, whether it is too generalized, or a good-enough theory remains a topic of debate.

Prospects of War

In a more fundamental sense, the role of an alliance is often said to be in relation to more immediate prospects of conflict between two or more states, which incentivizes states to find friends to improve their chances at either deterring conflict or achieving victory in conflict. Describing traditional models, Fedder (1968, 67) produces a model wherein alliances would serve one of three primary functions:

1. To augment: State A allies with State B to add B's capabilities to its own capabilities to defend against a hostile State C (A + B > C).

2. To preempt: A allies with B to prevent C from being able to ally with B (A > C – B).
3. To gain strategic access: A allies with B to obtain use of B's strategic resources i.e. access to land to reach strategic positions or move troops to a distant location more quickly.

Chun (2000) lays out a similar conceptual framework when discussing the advantages procured through alliances, describing them as being used to achieve a reduced likelihood of attack (deterrence), greater strength against an adversary (defense), or prevention of an ally's alliance with an adversary (preclusion). Under these models, states engage in strategic deliberations and respond to external stimuli—chiefly antagonistic behavior by hostile states—by searching for allies. Alliances in this sense are the product of military-strategic considerations over power distributions and serve as balancing acts against potential threats of hegemony.

A number of both theoretical and empirical investigations would lend generally positive support to the notion of alliances as deterring, defensive, or augmenting forces. A new approach is developed by Alastair Smith (1998), who laid out a game theoretic model to determine that under conditions of imperfect information, alliances generally improve deterrence as well as the likelihood that a member will intervene in the event of aggression, thereby decreasing the likelihood of an outbreak of war. This conclusion would be supported by Sorokin's (1994) case study on Israel's conflicts with Egypt and Syria, which found that general deterrence succeeds under instances of complete information but do break down sometimes under conditions of incomplete information. Moreover, the more likely an alliance member is to intervene, the more likely the other is in resisting an aggressor's advances (Smith 1995). In other words, "alliance formation deters A and reassures B" (Smith 1998, 317).

Many of the more empirically-grounded research has focused on the relationship between alliances and conflict initiation to then arrive at theoretical implications on the nature of

alliances. Focusing on the timing of alliance formations, Sprecher (2004) finds that as the goals of an alliance become offensive, war becomes more likely, and that states with offensive goals will be more likely to become involved in war. Johnson (2015) lends support in a similar vein, finding that defensive pacts increase the probability of members joining the target of a war, while offensive pacts increase the probability of states joining a war's initiator. Expanding on this argument, Johnson (2017) argues that a target of a war will be more likely to seek out alliances if it perceives the aggressor to be more likely to win i.e. external threat perceptions drive alliance formation. Edry, Johnson, and Leeds (2021) find that while external threats motivate defense pacts, alliances can fulfill a consultative role against *internal* threats of civil war. Several studies, particularly by Woosang Kim (1989; 1991), have pointed to alliances as being causal to war. Others, including Levy (1981) and Kimball (2006), reject or qualify the conclusions reached by Kim.

An important break in this tradition would emerge with Stephen Walt's *Origins of Alliances* (1990). Deriving a great deal of inspiration from Waltz, Walt would diverge from balance of power theory to develop his novel balance of *threat* theory. To begin with, Walt (1990) posits a general claim that threatened states have a choice of balancing *against* a more powerful state or bandwagoning *with* it. In conducting a regional study of the Middle East, he demonstrated that regional powers were much more concerned about local antagonists than superpowers (1990). Consequently, he found that states are typically more likely to balance against threatening actors, and that ideological dispositions may play some role; the former finding was supported by Niou and Ziegler (2019).

Notably, Walt criticized balance of power theory for its lack of sophistication and argued that a more accurate understanding would be to view states as allying against those states which pose

the greatest *threat* to them. In arguing this, he is able to integrate other variables into his predictions, including "geographic proximity, offensive capabilities, and perceived intentions" (1985, 9). Walt concludes both that security and pragmatic interests are the most important considerations for states, but at the same time that the power wielded by a state is only one among many contributing factors which play into calculations on whether to form alliances and how.

Walt's theory is not without its criticisms, however. While Glenn Snyder (1991, 129) would refer to the concept of bandwagoning as Walt's most original idea, he would also call it Walt's most elusive, as Walt's strict focus to alliances "blocks a full analysis of the question of when states will resist their opponents and when they will conciliate them" (Snyder 1991, 129-130). Though, as Snyder acknowledges, Walt does attempt to answer these questions. Looking at Southwest Asian alliance structures, Walt finds states are less likely to engage in balancing behavior if 1) the states are too weak to effectively balance, 2) capable and reliable allies are not available to join in a balancing effort, and 3) if there is a perception that the threatening state can be appeased or managed through other, less provocative means (Walt 1988). A state may engage in bandwagoning behavior as a form of appeasement (defensive bandwagoning) or to share in the spoils of victory (offensive bandwagoning) (Walt 1985). While he would ultimately disagree with many of Walt's theoretical arguments, John Mearsheimer's (2001) concept of balancing versus buck-passing likely derived from the considerations made by Walt. Given this, Walt's balance of threat theory and, more specifically, the dichotomous choice of bandwagoning versus balancing has proven to be important in analyses on security relations between states.

Equilibrium models have proven to be the most enduring, popular, and numbered with regards to theorizing alliance formation. Despite having received a wide variety of criticisms,

they remain among the more accepted models which describe the conditions under which alliances form and who they ally with—as a testament to their dominance in the literature, it is usually the case that balance of power dynamics as they pertain to alliance dynamics are taken as assumptions in analyses of inter-state relations.

Alliances as Coalition Games

While less common, and in contrast with how the terms are typically treated contemporarily, several scholars have notably argued in favor of conceptualizing alliances as coalitions. Game theory has provided a number of analytical tools in this pursuit. Although game theoretic models have also been developed in support of balance of power theory, such as with Alastair Smith, it has also been used to study coalition politics, often focusing on predictors of alliance sizes.

John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern would, in the 1940s, develop a breakthrough game theoretic model constructing a cooperative theory of *n*-person games (Fedder 1968). As laid out by Yoshinobu (1974), Von Neumann and Morgenstern make several critical assumptions: 1) only two coalitions are formed in a game, 2) these coalitions are mutually exclusive, 3) any coalition is either winning or losing, 4) coalitions are "flat," meaning in a player in a losing coalition loses what he would otherwise lose if isolated, 5) winning coalitions gain what the losing coalition loses, and side payments are possible (games without side payments are ignored), 6) the game is essential, and 7) players maintain perfect and complete information. Operating under these assumptions, Von Neumann and Morgenstern's major contribution is finding that the optimal solution to these coalition games is to form "minimum winning coalitions," where participants form coalitions with the number of members as needed to win and no more (Yoshinobu 1974).

Riker would expand on the model offered by Von Neumann and Morgenstern, taking it from the economic sciences and applying it to the political sciences and using their "Minimax" and "*n*-person game" theories in analyses on legislative coalitions, though Riker would assert that it also applied to military alliances (Snyder 1991; Fedder 1968; Fordham and Poast 2014). In contrast to Von Neumann and Morgenstern's fourth assumption, Riker would apply the model more broadly and add into his analysis cases where the value of a losing coalition can be greater than the sum of the values would lose if they were without the coalition i.e. isolated. Even under these looser conditions, Riker concluded that minimum winning coalitions are, in a game theoretic sense, optimal and the ones which occur (Abbas and Schneider 2015; Yoshinobu 1974).

Implicit in Von Neumann and Morgenstern and Riker's frameworks is the assumption that alliances behave to "maximize some infinitely divisible, conservable good" (Yoshinobu 1974, 32), an assumption which contrasts the equilibrium models discussed earlier. Another criticism is that their framing of coalition games as zero-sum, noting that the assumptions made by Von Neumann and Morgenstern and taken up by Riker are rarely, if ever, observed in the international system; for their model to apply, the international environment must be such that "war has been fully expanded and only one or two major powers still remain non-participants" (Yoshinobu 1974, 38-41). In addition, one of the core assumptions adopted in these models is the possession of perfect and complete information, a state which, while allowing for much simpler and less messy models, is nonetheless now understood to be flawed—agents behave, as is now understood, using imperfect information that is subject to a great variety of cognitive heuristics, biases, and even emotions. Because of this, as Niou and Ordeshook (1998) suggest, their models fail to fully explain *why* alliances form in the first place; Riker himself would apparently concede that experimental testing of his model would be difficult (Robinson 1963). Nevertheless, as

Fordham and Poast (2014) recognize more recently, the size principle can still help explain particular alliance configurations in either offensive or defensive alliances—in the former, a larger alliance would reduce the share of gains by member states, whereas in the latter, larger alliances would create commitment issues.

Developing a more traditional argument, Edwin Fedder (1968, 80-81) argues that alliances "are restricted to specified goals relative to a specifiable external enemy" and hence "tend to be short-lived and non-hierarchically organized." As a result, alliances are a type of coalition used by states as a tool in pursuit of foreign policy ends. Even so, while it is reasonable to accept the premise that alliances are typically formed with particular goals and directed at specific states, it is highly questionable that they are short-lived and non-hierarchically organized, especially in the post-Cold War period. (Of course, Fedder could not have predicted the state of a post-Cold War system). As an example, alliances such as the US-ROK alliance under the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1953 could be said to be constructed on the basis of particular goals (security) and with a specifiable external enemy (North Korea, China, former USSR), but it is certainly neither short-lived nor non-hierarchical. As Victor Cha's (2009; 2016) concept of "powerplay" demonstrates, the US' bilateral alliances in East Asia are characterized by a highly imbalanced relationship between the US and states such as South Korea and Japan. As such, viewing alliances as coalitions seems to have fallen out of favor over time, especially as distinctions between alliances and coalitions emerged in the literature.

Public Goods Theory

An interesting line of inquiry integrates economic considerations in explaining the formation and continuation of alliances (Olson and Zeckhauser 1966; Sandler and Cauley 1975; Sandler and Hartley 2001; Jackson and Nei 2015). Of particular interest has been the incorporation of public

goods theory to help explain collective action problems (Olson and Zeckhauser 1966; Sandler and Cauley 1975; Sandler and Hartley 2001). Related to issues such as burden-sharing, public goods theory remains relatively under-studied despite being related to broader phenomena such as collective action problems; it still represents an interesting line of thought on how alliances operate, however.

The "economic theory" of alliances would find its origins in Olson and Zeckhauser's (1966) seminal work assessing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In their analysis, they reconceptualized deterrence as a public good, meaning deterrence is both nonexcludable and nonrival, at least among the alliance's participant states. Deterrence in this context is nonexcludable and nonrival because of the introduction of nuclear arms, where the "deployment" of a nuclear deterrent can be used by any number of members. Their core finding was that smaller states share less of the defense costs relative to their larger allies (Olson and Zeckhauser 1966). This is in part because each member would only receive a partial amount of the benefits of any collective good when paying the entire cost of additions to the collective good. The consequence of this is that alliance members are incentivized to stop providing the good, leading to suboptimality and disproportionality (Olson and Zeckhauser 1966, 278); because smaller states receive smaller amounts of any benefits, their incentives to free-ride are greater. Olson and Zeckhauser's thesis would be subject to contradicting empirical work; Niou and Ziegler (2019) would find that instability within alliances pushes smaller allies to commit more resources and free ride less. In contradiction, as Sandler (2001) suggests, while their work provided a variety of interesting arguments, it is Olson and Zeckhauser's recognition that "economic principles of military alliances" apply to different global issues and help explain institutional dynamics that remains their most important insight.

Todd Sandler and Jon Cauley (1975) expanded and refined the original model, arguing that although Olson and Zeckhauser saw deterrence as a pure public good, some defense expenditures are in fact impure because they are, in fact, divisible and exclusive. Arguing from the principle of self-interest maximization, they use a club framework as well as a cooperative game model for alliances which posits that military alliances are an integrative force and that, in fact, the optimal size of an alliance is global—that is to say, wholly integrative of all states (Sandler and Cauley 1975, 347; Sandler 1999).

Sandler also argues that the view of deterrence as a public good leads the two towards several important hypotheses, which Sandler (1993, 446) lays out: in particular, defense burdens should be shared unevenly, with the larger states holding up more of the burden, and, in contradiction with the expectations derived from coalition game models, there is no need to restrict alliance sizes. Olson and Zeckhauser (1966) believe that any additional allies would be a net positive as costs become increasingly shared, while the benefits do not become diminished despite the increasing suboptimality. While initially appealing, Sandler points out several collective action problems, all of which negatively affect alliances: 1) as the number of allies increases, suboptimality worsens; 2) the exploitation hypothesis, wherein large allies become responsible for the defense of small allies; 3) the impact of endowment asymmetry (Sandler 1993).

Quasi-Alliances

A unique approach to alliance formation was taken up by Victor Cha (1999) in his influential study on the South Korea-Japan relationship. As he defines it, quasi-alliances are “two states that remain non-allied but share a third power as a common ally” (Cha 2000, 261). Following from his concept of “powerplay,” where the US pursued a network of bilateral alliances in order to exert maximum pressure on each individual ally, he argues that contrary to the conventional

arguments on inter-Korean-Japanese animosity, the two states have demonstrated a surprising degree of alignment, and the key factor at play is US commitment (Cha 2000; 2009; 2016).

The theoretical explanation is as follows: larger state A (i.e. the US or, in the context of this analysis, China) has developed alliances with smaller states B and C. Even under conditions where B and C are antagonistic towards one another, strategic and security interests are still in play. If there is less patron commitment from A, B and C will exhibit a greater degree of cooperation on security issues and prioritize that strategic cooperation over existing hostilities related to non-strategic issues. If there is an increase in patron commitment, B and C will exhibit a lower degree of cooperation and become freer in pursuing their non-strategic issues. In this sense, patron promises are of greater importance than even threats from an adversary (Cha 2000).

Cha's model would be tested and supported by Kim (2020), who applied Cha's model in assessing Japan's and Korea's perception of US commitment to the region under both the Obama and Trump administration, and whether Japanese and Korean foreign policy behavior reflected these perceptions. Wilkins (2015) would also apply this framework in his study on ties between Australia and Japan, providing further support for the theory's relevance. However, in focusing on the relationships between two smaller states (South Korea and Japan) as opposed to patron behaviors (the US), Cha's model is of limited applicability with regards to assessing China's own relationships. This is evident when also considering that unlike the US, which maintains long-standing defense treaties with South Korea and Japan, China has a select few of such formal commitments.

Yet, while Cha's model represents the only attempt at a more general theory of quasi-alliances, the term has been used more frequently to describe a general relationship between two states which approach the status of an alliance, with relatively clear expectations and

commitments by each member to the other, but which lacks the formal grounding of that relationship in a legal document (e.g. the US-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty). As Tziarras (2016) notes in his study on the Israel-Cyprus-Greece trilateral relationship, quasi-alliances are sometimes desirable because they allow a greater degree of flexibility for member states. As Leeds et al. (2000) notes, this added flexibility allows states to more easily, and with fewer legislative barriers, shape expectations, change commitments, and avoid becoming too entangled in their quasi-ally's affairs; if deemed necessary, cutting off the relationship is made far simpler because of the absence of formal agreements.

Along this broader conception of quasi-alliances, Degang Sun and Shuai Zhang (2017; Sun 2009) establish in their study on the Syria-Iran relationship that quasi-alliance formation can be driven by balance of power dynamics as well as the existence of common security concerns. Notably, Sun and Zhang (2017, 539) distinguish cooperative quasi-alliances, where members seek to provide public goods and consolidate the alliance, from competitive quasi-alliances, where members bargain with one another and attempt to privatize goods, ultimately undermining the alliance. Moreover, they note that quasi-alliances can be covert in the sense that the details of the security cooperation are hidden—this can explain why quasi-alliances sometimes do not mature into arrangements with formal treaties. In this context, although there are no formal agreements, there may exist clear commitments. This point in particular may hold significant implications in explaining the Chinese approach to building and managing their relationships with other states, as they would have an "out" in order to avoid excess entanglements.

Alliance Networks

Network theory has begun to attract a greater amount of attention beyond sociology within the social sciences, serving as a broad means to track and analyze relations between actors and

groups. It is therefore perhaps not all that surprising that it has been applied to the question of alliances; while they are still in their early stages of development, network theories of alliance have promise in being able to explain how alliances form.

Cranmer, Desmarais, and Kirkland (2012) propose a general model for alliances that looks beyond state and dyad characteristics. Arguing that the structure of international political alignments can be described as "punctuated equilibrium"—that is, periods of stability followed by brief but dramatic changes in the system's configuration—they observe that new periods of stability are best explained through network effects (Cranmer, Desmarais, and Kirkland 2012, 296). More fundamentally, beginning with the assumption that alliances are "signals of peaceful intentions between signatories," their model emphasizes the role of complex interdependencies existing within alliance networks and how the structure of those networks impact "tie formation" (Cranmer, Desmarais, and Kirkland 2012, 296-299). A critical element in their model is the role played by "synergy effects," where the gains from alliances ties between three or more states is greater than the sum of the dyadic relationships. In some sense, their network theory reflects Cha's quasi-alliance model; their concept of "triangle closure" refers to instances where two states who are formerly unallied to one another but have a mutual ally decide to finally form an alliance and "close" the triangular alliance network (Cranmer, Desmarais, and Kirkland 2012, 302). But in a broader sense, this theoretical framework serves to open a new line of inquiry with regards to interdependency's role in motivating alliance formation.

Despite the new set of analytical tools they offer and the potential they have in explaining broader questions of inter-state relationships, network theories have only recently begun to attract a great deal of attention in international relations scholarship. Jackson and Nei (2015) sought to formalize network theory and argued the role of trade in creating and sustaining stable

alliance networks. Pursuing the concept of networks from a different lens, Hiller (2011) produced a game theoretic model of network formation to help explain the interplay between positive and negative links as well as questions related to relative network sizes and the maximum number of groups. Most interestingly, Ford (2020), in a report for Brookings Institution, applied the concept of network power to explain the contours of China's pursuit of an Asian security architecture, laying the groundwork for future network analyses of Chinese foreign relations.

Push and Pull Factors

Offering something short of a general theory of alliances, a number of scholars have discussed and debated oft-neglected variables which can impact the initial formation of an alliance as well as the character of the alliance once it has been created. In many cases, these variables can exert push or pull forces under different conditions, either inhibiting or encouraging alliance formation. While these variables do not singularly explain alliance formation, they nonetheless help color any understanding of why states pursue or decide not to pursue alliances.

Hakan Şan (2007), in his study on alliance formation during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, posited that it is importance to consider the ethnic composition of alliances, and even that ethnic ties can serve to shape the preferences of states and shape alignments between actors. Perhaps by extension, one can consider cultural connections as being an impactful variable. Many scholars have also focused on others' perceptions of a state's identity; of particular importance is their emphasis on the role of reputation, as well as the costs involved in reneging on commitments, in signaling credibility and contributing to one states' willingness to enter into an alliance with another (Crescenzi et al. 2012; Gibler 2008).

Other scholars have looked at state-level factors to help explain decisions to form alliances as well as the alliance formation process itself. Looking towards the effect of regime type, Siverson and Emmons (1991) assess alliances created between two time periods (1920-1939, 1946-1965) and find that in the latter period, alliances between democracies were formed at much higher rates than would be expected through any given probability model. This conclusion would be supported by Bennett (1997, 850), who argues that both regime change—which increases the prospects of "alliance termination"—and regime type shape alliance dynamics. These conclusions would be qualified by Gibler and Wolford (2006), who notes that the evidence on the effect of domestic politics on alliance formation changes depending on research design and variable definition. Nonetheless, they found that autocratic states tended to ally with one another. An interesting point of inquiry was directed by Powell (2010), who provides a deeper base to Poast's (2012) work on issue linkages and its role in motivating alliance formation; in her study, she suggests that domestic legal regimes affect the legislative processes underlying the creation of international law which, by extension, affect treaty negotiations and how states design commitments and link issues.

In his *System Effects*, Robert Jervis (1999) introduced several unique points for consideration: the Lijphart Effect, where on some occasions the belief that "undesired results are likely if decision makers do not take unusual steps that may lead them to take such steps and prevent the 'natural' outcome" (Jervis 1999, 263); the domino theory paradox, where statesmen who believe in domino theory and suffer small defeats may act boldly to disprove the theory i.e. states will exhibit foreign policy firmness and aggression during periods of domestic turmoil in order in fear of other states perceiving them as weak (Jervis 1999, 266-267); and acting "in

twos," wherein a state will simultaneously implement two policies in fear that one could produce an unbalanced impression (Jervis 1999, 271).

It is unclear which specific model of alliance formation holds the greatest predictive power in the Chinese context. What is more likely is that several seemingly disparate theories hold meaningful insights that can help explain Chinese behavior up to this point and predict what form Chinese alliance policy will take in the near future. In particular, network theories of alliance formation as well as the literature on quasi-alliances hold the greatest potential in explaining Chinese alliance formation. Both focus on relationships that are more informal and which emphasize flexibility in policy, allowing states to change expectations and commitments in response to stimuli. More significantly, they fill gaps in the realist research regime on alliances, which often narrowly focus on alliances as balancing acts. From a realist or power transition perspective, China would have been expected to form alliances to achieve parity with the US in terms of military capabilities and challenge the hegemon. In response, other regional powers would be expected to form a balancing coalition to prevent that from occurring. However, neither of these outcomes have come to pass. While regional powers such as South Korea and Japan have begun to signal concerns over China, they have remained limited in the degree to which they resist China's ambitions. Nonetheless, equilibrium theories—especially Walt's balance of threat theory—contain useful insights on how leaders may behave in response to perceived threats and under expectations of war onset. Some authors may contend that disagreements over the conditions under which alliances form and state behavior in alliances may rest on disagreements over what constitutes an alliance. As such, it is worthwhile to establish first the particular conception of alliances taken up in this survey of Chinese foreign relations.

4 Towards a Conceptualization of Alliances

Just as Walker Connor spoke of "terminological chaos" in reference to the volume of different conceptualizations of the "nation," the concept of alliance remains the subject of continued debate (Connor 1994). This review does not seek to settle the debate. Nonetheless, because of the lack of an accepted general theory of alliances, it is necessary in this context to adopt a more particular conception. Given the purpose of this analysis as tracing the contours of China's policy vis-à-vis alliances, a narrower definition of alliances can be used as a basis to delineate and compare how Chinese attitudes towards its relationships with other states have changed over time.

Following from James D. Morrow's (2000) definition of alliances as being when "[two or more] states conclude a treaty that obliges them both to take certain actions in the event of war," an alliance can be understood as follows: a formal arrangement between two or more states committing all participant members to one another's defense. Under this definition, the manner in which alliances are understood is narrow enough such that alliances are effectively seen as security-oriented and formed through the passing of a legal treaty, thereby establishing a more credible commitment when compared with, for example, a verbal communication. However, it is also broad enough to include those arrangements which do not involve one state being obligated to come to another's military defense i.e. declaring war on their allies' aggressor, as restricting the definition in this way would exclude arrangements widely seen as obvious cases of alliance formation, such as NATO. Thus, this definition fulfills a key organizational role by ensuring that 1) relationships categorized as alliances are, as a function of their legal treaties, concretely bounded and not as questionable, and 2) they fulfill security roles but extend beyond, or in some cases do not even involve, military commitments.

There are also analytical reasons to adopt this particular definition: because it is a more rigid and conventional way to define alliances, it is a useful means to test theories of alliance formation developed before "softer" conceptions of alliances became prominent. In a related sense, it also assumes from the outset that the Chinese approach to building relations with other states is, in fact, different than has been observed in other spaces, both geographically and temporally. Because alliances are formal, the curious absence of security treaties—with one exception—is suggestive of the idea that Chinese foreign relations do not fit within the range of expected outcomes from conventional models of alliance formation, a situation which is especially apparent when the US' large array of alliances is taken into consideration.

Furthermore, it helps distinguish alliances from other forms of alignment that many would intuitively question are alliances. Most notably, by including as a requisite formal and mutual treaties, it helps distinguish what are typically agreed upon as alliances with instances where states are almost forced or otherwise compelled to "ally" as a result of either dependence or subjugation. An example of this is found in the Roman system of *socii* and *amici*, where Rome transitioned from being "friends" with its smaller neighbors towards being a "mistress" and sought to co-opt them into a rough network of political entities which at first glance appear to be a series of mutually agreed upon relationships but are, on a deeper level, compelled (Matthaei 1907). These smaller neighbors provided Rome with both manpower and materials as they enlarged and became increasingly encumbered with the requirements of holding territories and the possibility of both foreign incursions and civil conflicts (Matthaei 1907). It also helps distinguish alliances from coalitions as they are commonly understood—that is, as "ad hoc multinational undertakings that are forged to undertake a specific mission and dissolve once that mission is complete"—as well as alignments induced by a sense of cultural or ideological

affinity (Weitsman 2010). By refraining from placing all such forms of alignment under the umbrella of “alliance,” a more precise assessment of how China is approaching the question of alliances is possible.

5 China's Search for Friends

An Outward Transition Under Xi Jinping

The work done by previous administrations to shore up China's domestic industrial capacities and consolidate authority provided the conditions which allowed a new leader to redirect China's attention abroad and focus on pursuing its interests through foreign relations. And while many states, particularly in the Global South, embraced China's return to a more prominent role in international politics, those in China's more immediate proximity became increasingly insecure. Xi Jinping's ascendance in the CCP, culminating in his appointments as General Secretary of the CCP and Chairman of the Central Military Commission in 2012, marked the beginning of what would become the most significant divergence in Chinese foreign policy since Deng Xiaoping. While China's shift in focus from internal development to external affairs began most clearly in around 2009 following the global financial crisis, it was Xi who replaced the longstanding strategy of "keeping a low profile," which had been favored by Deng and Jiang, with a strategy of "striving for achievement" (Garver 2018, 763).

Just two weeks after becoming general secretary of the CCP, Xi bolstered the outward transition by articulating a "Chinese Dream" of rejuvenation of the Chinese nation that would form the core of Xi Jinping Thought, replacing Hu's "Harmonious World" concept and asserting that the prosperity of the nation is the ultimate goal of the people (Bhattacharya 2019). While the targeted audience at the time was largely a domestic one, Xi would turn this rhetoric outward when, in the following May, he addressed the Latin American and Caribbean states and declared that the "Chinese dream will benefit not only the people of China, but also other countries" (Xi 2012a; 2013a). It would also be in this speech that Xi elaborated more on the substance of the "China Dream" by establishing that China would "adhere to the path of socialism with Chinese

characteristics… carry forward the Chinese spirit… build up cohesive strength… [and] pursue peaceful development" by embracing an opening-up strategy which would enable common development (Xi 2013a). In contrast with his predecessors, Xi emphasized the importance of military power, as demonstrated by the reissuing of *The China Dream*, a book written by former PLA Colonel Liu Mingfu which called for China to surpass the US in military might and which had been taken out of production during the Hu era (Garver 2018, 769-770).

Strategically, Xi's perceived hardline approach to international politics contributed to a growing sense among other world powers that China was becoming more assertive (Carlson 2020); as Kathy Gilsinan (2015) found, mentions of Chinese assertiveness spiked after 2009 and then again in 2013, with the trend continuing an upward trajectory through the time of publication. As American and West European officials voiced their discontent towards China's growing ambitions in the Indo-Pacific, officials from Indo-Pacific states also began to voice concern as China began to pursue its claims to various territories in the South China Sea (SCS) more aggressively, going as far as to ignore rulings made by the Permanent Court of Arbitration against it regarding territorial claims in the SCS (Graham 2016). While Chinese claims and military buildups in the SCS were not new, the adoption of "gray zone" tactics, all of which were coercive but did not constitute a *casus belli*, complicated the regional security landscape. Thus, as the Chinese began their construction of artificial islands for military purposes through salami tactics, the installation of oil rigs, and expanded fishing, many regional powers found themselves almost helpless in resisting these new security challenges (Garver 2018, 772).

Diplomatically, Chinese foreign policy has alternated between the two poles of hostile aggression and friendly cooperation. On the one hand, Xi extended the Hu-era concept of a "community of common destiny" to suggest that renewed Chinese prosperity would improve the

wellbeing of the global populations and that diplomacy with neighbors should be characterized by "friendship, sincerity, reciprocity, and inclusiveness" (Chen 2021; Xi 2013d). Later, in 2014, Xi asserted the need for a Chinese diplomacy which reflected its major power status, and which allowed for "win-win" outcomes through neighborhood diplomacy (Xi 2014d). This "new security concept," based on the concept of "comprehensive security"—that is, security which encompasses traditional and non-traditional domains of security—first appeared during the Jiang era and called for mutual trust, cooperation, open dialogue on equal terms, and a positive-sum system without a place for threats or disagreement (Dittmer 2014; Xi 2014b). However, on the other hand, some analysts have interpreted these concepts in more negative terms, believing that it demonstrates China's revisionist inclinations and that the timing of its articulation indicates its use as a counter-balancing tool in response to the US' "pivot to Asia" (Jin 2013). Beyond the debate, it would seem that Xi was intent on establishing China's role as a leader in the region—it would be *through* Chinese success that other countries may also find success. Being receptive to these criticisms, the English translation of "common destiny" was changed to "shared future" in 2015 in order to avoid the sense of inevitability given off by the original translation (Chen 2021).The more negative interpretation of Chinese diplomatic ambitions, often referenced as "Wolf Warrior" diplomacy and stemming from the nebulosity of the concept of a "shared future," gave rise to similar concerns of increased Chinese assertiveness, as external observers perceived that China was unwilling to compromise on its rather narrow interests despite its ostensibly engagement-oriented approach (Zhang 2018).

At the 19th National Party Congress in 2017, Xi declared a "New Era" of Chinese foreign policy to mark the enshrining of the Belt and Road Initiative into the Chinese constitution (Chen 2021; Ying 2017). First proposed by Xi in 2013, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in some

respects functioned as a bridge between Chinese security and diplomatic interests, providing the flexibility for Chinese officials to craft issue linkages through infrastructure and other investment projects. Despite criticisms of a Chinese "debt trap" diplomacy wherein infrastructure projects financed through the BRI were being used to indebt countries and secure strategic areas of interest, such as deep-water ports, the BRI has continued to steadily expand beyond the routes established by the ancient Silk Road, reaching into southern and western Europe and deeper into the African continent, providing opportunities for China to engage with other states on security and political issues not always directly associated with the BRI itself. Focusing on key partners such as Pakistan and Cambodia, Xi successfully deepened ties with countries in the periphery for developmental purposes. As many analysts have argued, the BRI can be viewed as the principal tool by which the PRC can pursue their "community of shared future" (Van Oudenaren 2022). However, they also fulfill security roles, as China under Xi has pushed to expand military exchanges and exercises conducted in conjunction with other states, such as the annual "golden dragon" exercises with Cambodia (Parameswaran 2020).

Yet, despite Xi's outward transition, China remains seemingly alone against the US' deep network of bilateral alliances, with North Korea being its only formal alliance. Remarkably, Beijing under Xi's leadership has consistently opposed alliance strengthening, instead advocating for alternative security architectures which are ostensibly more inclusive, "win-win," and modern as opposed to the exclusive, zero-sum, and anachronistic US bilateral alliance network (Liff 2017). In fact, China has opposed alliances at a conceptual level since the early 1990s, when Jiang, in a report to the 14th Party Congress, declared that "[China] will never enter into an alliance with any country or group of countries and will not join any military bloc… [China] is opposed to hegemonism, power politics, aggression and expansion in any form" (Jiang

1992). As a first foray into answering the question of why China has adopted this position—and more impressively, remained persistent in it—this study will propose three major explanations for this phenomenon, all of which serves functional roles in shaping China's alliance politics and their hesitance in turning to alliances as a solution to their security dilemma: 1) contemporary China has not faced imminent threats which would have spurred the creation of formal alliances. 2) China has prioritized strategic flexibility over committing to other states' affairs. 3) Other states do not wish to ally with China. Expectedly, all three arguments are closely linked and in many ways overlap, reinforcing one another and allowing for a more holistic general argument regarding the absence of Chinese alliances.

Alliances Born Under Threat

Developing a neorealist theory of alliances, Snyder (1990) asserted that by introducing variables such as particular conflicts and affinities as well as disparities in military capabilities, states are incentivized to ally in a manner that is predictable. Two strong states with a weak state between them will rival one another in order to claim and protect the weak state for themselves. Yet, just as the Chinese experience contradicted the notion that modernization causes democratization, the Chinese experience also contradicts the notion that competition between two strong states causes the formation of predictable alliances. It is impossible, however, to detach China's strategy from the broader space of alliance politics in the post-Cold War era, warranting a brief assessment of alliance politics after 1991 more broadly.

Brett Ashley Leeds and Michaela Mattes (2007), using their Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions (ATOP) dataset, studied alliances during the Cold War in an attempt to determine the continuities and changes in the conduct of alliance politics during the Cold War relative to other periods, including the period after 1990. Relevant findings include: 1) major powers have been

more likely to form alliances with minor powers since the Cold War. 2) During the Cold War, 75.9% of all alliances included either a defense obligation or both a defense and offense obligation. 3) Sharing a nonaggression pact did not bear a statistically significant relationship to peace. 4) 27% of all alliances consisting of a major power and a minor power were asymmetric. 5) More broadly, both during the interwar period as well as the Cold War, the percentage of alliances which maintained asymmetric obligations was around 17%—this value dropped to 1.8% after 1990. The latter two points will be explored in future sections. For now, the former three points are of particular interest and can be applied to the American context for illustrative purposes.

First, the US' alliances were largely born in the wake of regional or systemic wars, with its allies pushing for further military support and protection in response to severe military threats. In fact, 16 of the 26 alliances formed by the US were created in a 15-year period—between 1945 and 1960 (Leeds and Mattes 2007). Including collective security arrangements such as NATO, OAS, and ANZUS, the US maintains sixty defense pacts globally (Taylor 2015). In East Asia, the US-Korea Mutual Defense Treaty was signed just two months after the Korean War ended in a ceasefire in 1953; the US-Japan security treaty was first signed in 1951 in San Francisco following the end of the US Occupation. In Southeast Asia, the US signed a mutual defense agreement with the Philippines in 1951 and attempted a collective security framework through the Manila Pact in 1954 (Buszynski 1980; Chang 2021). Second, excluding the entry of additional members to NATO, the US has not unilaterally established another formal alliance since the end of the Cold War. Many of the treaties signed by the US—including those signed with South Korea and Japan—involved a mutual defense obligation and were crafted after World War II and the Korean War and in response to the start of the Cold War in Asia.

With the exception of North Korea, China has no long-standing alliances which lasted through the Cold War. This could be in part explained by how China is situated in an environment which does not lend itself to alliance formation. In terms of inter-state war, Asia has been largely peaceful in the last few decades, giving China few options to pursue alliances via external threat perceptions; while China perceives the US as a major security threat, other regional powers do not. However, the contemporary Chinese experience contrasts its earlier experiences, albeit in varying degrees, suggesting that this reality may change. During the Cold War, China and the USSR had signed the Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance in 1950, wherein common interests—generally those opposing US hegemonic ambitions—became the underpinning for a relatively lasting relationship. But, China under Deng Xiaoping did not renew the treaty upon its expiration in 1979, providing the pretext for China's invasion of Vietnam. In the case of North Korea, China signed a Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance in 1961 in large part as a result of fears over a potential invasion by the US and South Korea as South Korean President Park Chung-hee called for increased defense spending (Albert 2019; Vu 2021). Even beyond the Cold War, China is no stranger to alliance formation. When the ancient Korean kingdoms of Goguryeo and Baekje allied with one another to invade Silla during Korea's Three Kingdoms period, thereby threatening local stability and disrupting trade, the Tang Dynasty allied with Silla in 658 to ward off attacks which had first begun in 655 (Holcombe 2017). In all three cases, the presence of external threats drove Chinese alliance formation. Nonetheless, it is worthwhile to note that while the US maintains more than fifty mutual security commitments, the PRC since 1949 has only formed two despite the presence of an identified long-term threat in the US (Dittmer 2014).

The formation of alliances involving a major power undoubtedly has a very significant impact on international politics. Testing for incidences of major power conflict between 1816 and 1975, Woosang Kim (1989) argued that the probability of war increases when two alliance coalitions have roughly equal capabilities, thereby finding support for neither balance of power theory nor power transition theory. Modifying this earlier claim to align with power transition theory, Kim (1991) later argued that the equality of capabilities between two great powers, after taking into consideration the contributions provided by alliances, has a large effect on the incidence of major wars. However, before calculations related to relative capabilities are made, there must be motivations for such alliances to form in the first place. Following from Stephen Walt's balance of threat theory, Colonel Patrick T. Warren cites Tatsuya Nishida in asserting that there is a positive relationship between the presence of external threats and alliance formation. In fact, "the existence of a threat or hostile power is a necessary condition for developing a security alliance" (Warren 2010, 11). However, the impact of these perceptions may not be restricted to external threats; while external threats may drive the formation of defense pacts, internal threats may drive the formation of consultation pacts, while internal threats which have the possibility of internationalizing can drive nonaggression or neutrality pacts (Edry, Johnson, and Leeds 2021). Using Egypt as a case study, Michael Barnett and Jack S. Levy (1991) argue that domestic variables motivate alliance formation in two ways: 1) domestic constraints may limit a state's capacity to mobilize resources for security purposes without infringing on the interests of the political elite, thereby incentivizing a search for outside sources of security; 2) internal threats can push a government to seek external alliances in order to obtain additional resources to counter domestic challenges to the regime.

Ceteris paribus, then, China may feel compelled to pursue alliances if they either identify an external threat which jeopardized the survival of the regime, or if they identify an internal threat which has the potential to destabilize the society and challenge the legitimacy of the regime. However, although protests had broken out over Xi's "zero COVID" policy in China in 2022, it is difficult to envision a scenario in the near future where a domestic threat appears large enough to compel the PRC to form an alliance in order to procure additional resources to mobilize against the threat. Furthermore, it is even more difficult to see China engage in alliance formation during times of stable peace, as alliances impose certain costs during peacetime; the coordination of foreign policies often requires one or both members of the dyad to forego certain policies; military specialization leaves each state more vulnerable to specific threats; credibility becomes a variable which leaders must take into even greater consideration (Morrow 1994). The more reasonable assumption would therefore be that an escalation in the US-China competition could compel Chinese alliance formation. Jack S. Levy (1981) argues that alliances have often been formed in response to unstable conditions, rising tensions, and the anticipation of a probable war; Johnson (2017) concluded that alliances are generally formed when the probability of conflict is already high. Along a similar line, Leeds and Mattes (2007) find that while nonaggression pacts have no significant association with peace, this may be because they are formed when leaders are already concerned about the outbreak of conflict i.e. the baseline probability of a conflict breaking out is higher.

It is significant then that Xi has demonstrated that he is more willing to use coercion and force to achieve foreign policy ends, but it is just as significant that like his predecessors, he too still believes that the international environment is favorable towards China, lowering the perceived need for China to pursue alliances to counter a possible confrontation with the US

(Yang, Keller, and Molnar 2018). Furthermore, as Andrew Chubb (2021a; 2021b) shows, Chinese assertiveness in certain policy domains, in particular the South China Sea maritime disputes, has spiked since the beginning of Xi's tenure as paramount leader, thereby encouraging further US involvement in the region and raising the overall level of tension felt by regional actors as well as the US and China. However, considering that the type of assertiveness which saw the *greatest* increase was demonstrative, not coercive, the threshold to initiate alliance formation may not have been met, especially if they are recognized to be strictly limited to the SCS (Chubb 2021a). If tensions related to SCS territories, Taiwan, or any other flashpoint continues to rise, China may face a dilemma between escalating by forming more formal security relationships and continuing the status quo of being disadvantaged by the US' own network of bilateral alliances.

Against this backdrop, the question remains as to why China has opted not to pursue alliances with other states despite the regional environment becoming more unstable, tensions rising, and growing anticipation of a conflict over Taiwan. While threat perceptions and structural variables form a partial answer, they are not satisfactory. If China's decision not to form alliances is in fact predicated on a certain threshold not being met, at what point can Chinese decisionmakers say that it has been met? In China, a number of scholars have already argued strongly that the absence of alliances is a fundamental weakness and have consequently argued in favor of alliance formation (Liu and Liu 2017). Yet, this has not translated into policy. To develop a more concrete answer as to why this is the case, it is necessary to investigate other calculations which Beijing may be making.

Entangling Alliances and Strategic Flexibility

China's Commitment Problems

The second major explanatory variable of China's approach to alliance formation is a prioritization of strategic flexibility. This sits in direct contrast with the US, which has sought to engage in "powerplay" and exert maximum pressure and control through asymmetric bilateral alliances during the Cold War (Cha 2009; 2016). At a theoretical level, intentionally forgoing alliances provides several strategic benefits. To begin with, while the absence of formal commitments makes it more difficult for China to secure military support—be it manpower or materiel—it also allows China, in the event of a conflict, to avoid the variety of challenges which alliance formation entails, including the question of burden sharing and the associated problem of free-riding by smaller states (Morrow 2000). Moreover, it allows China to signal certain commitments to other states while simultaneously providing a more plausible exit strategy to avoid excessive entanglements. Generally, realists would argue that alliances simply reflect a state's self-interest and remain static as a state enters into an alliance. However, a state's interests are likely to change when it aligns with another such that each state attracts the friends of its ally and repel its enemies, thereby bringing the two allies closer together but drawing harder lines between repellant states (Jervis 1999). Because of the expectations held by others, the given state "may find that what was supposed to be a limited commitment has become much more entangling" (Jervis 1999). By refraining from entering into more formal arrangements, China maintains the ability to stay out of smaller states' quibbles and conflicts which are not useful for China's own interests. Interestingly, an increasing number of American analysts—typically in the realist camp—have used this same logic in the post-Cold War era to advocate for the scaling down or abandonment of the US' security commitments (Beckley 2015). Whether the notion that a bigger ally is likely to become entangled in the smaller ally's affairs is an empirically legitimate claim is not by itself important. What is more important is that Chinese policymakers

believe that it is a real and likely outcome. Staying true to George Liska's (1962) description of alliances as being "*against*, and only derivatively for, someone or something," many Chinese policymakers associate alliances with conflict and war; forming an alliance would therefore mean signaling to their neighbors that they expect a conflict of some sort sometime in the future, thereby bringing about the very conditions for a confrontation with the US which China wishes to avoid.

In this respect, the PRC's past experiences have seemed to vindicate their current strategy. Despite sharing the same core interest in opposing US hegemonism, the PRC's alliance with the USSR between 1950 and 1979 was racked with hostility, discontent, and disagreements over which strategies were to be implemented in pursuit of that fundamental goal as well how, where, and when. This became even more true following Stalin's death and, later, Mao's death. More recently, Russia's aggression in Ukraine has put China in an undesirable position of having to signal support for their partner while not wanting to suffer the consequences of openly doing so. Because China lacks any formal commitments to Russia, they have the flexibility to simultaneously express support to Russia, assume an ostensibly neutral position by calling for general peace which respects all parties and abstaining in UNSC votes, remain detached from the conflict i.e. not have to commit manpower or materiel, and even profit from the conflict as Russia becomes increasingly dependent on Chinese trade (Green 2022; Ning 2022). If China had signed an agreement involving a mutual defense clause with Russia, the possible counterfactuals wherein China is legally obligated to commit to Russia's aid, especially following their annexation of certain Ukrainian territories, would place Beijing in the unenviable position of choosing between becoming more deeply involved in a conflict which did not directly involve them or abandon their partner and suffer reputation costs. By avoiding such formal

commitments, China is not only able to keep their focus directed on self-development, but also the largely domestic "three evils" of terrorism, separatism, and extremism.

In Northeast Asia, Beijing's relationship with Pyongyang is just as informative given North Korea's continued status as China's sole formal alliance. While many outside observers may interpret the relationship as a natural one given their shared opposition to the West as well as their ostensible status as communist regimes, the relationship in reality is fraught with discontent (Kim 2010; Kim 2020; Parton and Byrne 2021; Vu 2012). As it stands, China has expressed a commitment to come to North Korea's aid if and only if it is attacked first (Panda 2017; Vu 2021). However, more privately, China-North Korea relations have at certain points deteriorated such that Chinese officials have tried to convince North Korea to excise a clause in their mutual security treaty which would obligate China to come to North Korea's aid in the event of an attack (Glaser and Smith 2014). From Beijing's perspective, North Korea itself violated their treaty by declaring itself a nuclear power without consulting the CCP (Vu 2012). Subsequent nuclear tests conducted during sensitive times in Chinese foreign relations have likewise degraded the bond between the two states (Parton and Byrnes 2021). Evidence of the rocky relationship between Beijing and Pyongyang abounds in history, too. When North Korea captured the USS *Pueblo*, an electronic surveillance ship, in 1968 and faced down a possible US military intervention—in fact, US military officials had even considered the nuclear option—China remained silent and provided no support, likely as a means of showing their dissatisfaction with North Korea's recklessness (Griffiths 2018; Simmons 1978).

Given the consistent ability for Pyongyang to frustrate Beijing by provoking regional crises, it is unsurprising that China's North Korea policy remains one of the more contentious points of debate within the CCP. As Heungkyu Kim (2010) found, North Korea's provocations during the

Hu era have reinvigorated the question of North Korea's strategic value to China and strengthened those factions within the CCP who wish to reduce ties with North Korea and minimize the diplomatic space within which North Korea is able to maneuver. At the time, the "developing country" school of thought remained predominant, and the idea of abandoning North Korea was thought to be untenable (Kim 2010; 2020). Under Xi's leadership, however, North Korea's status as a "strategic burden" has deepened. Xi's tenure saw the rise of the "rising great power" school, which saw North Korea as a liability and supported the policy to join the economic sanctions against North Korea following their nuclear tests in 2016 (Kim 2020). Fearing that China may become entrapped in a conflict as a result of North Korean behavior, an increasing number of Chinese scholars and officials have supported the alternative of abandoning North Korea entirely as North Korea engages in what are perceived to be increasingly reckless behavior.

Writing on peacetime alliances, Glenn H. Snyder (1990) noted that restraining an ally is a major political function of an alliance. The enduring alliance between China and North Korea, therefore, can be at least partially explained by Beijing's desire to use its leverage to prevent Pyongyang from instigating a regional security crisis (Vu 2012). Undoubtedly, China's decision to sanction North Korea would have sent a strong signal to Pyongyang not to interfere with China's foreign policy and attract unwanted attention. Yet, North Korea's continued provocative behavior may cost it its northern ally as the CCP manages internal debates over the value of North Korea as an ally and the extent to which China should remain committed to their ally's defense. For now, as Charles Parton and James Byrne (2021) conclude, it is through "not so much 'lips and teeth' as gritted teeth" that China maintains its alliance with North Korea.

First Among Equals?

Comparing the Sino-Soviet alliance with the US-Japan alliance, Lowell Dittmer (2014) found that in both cases, the alliances bound two sovereign *but* unequal states despite any rhetoric of fraternity and equality. In other words, the two alliances conformed to a hierarchical patron-client model existent in East Asia between 1368 and 1841 (Kang 2010; Kang 2013; Ringmar 2012). These asymmetric, hierarchical alliances were made possible as a consequence of the Chinese and Japanese experiences, which placed them in a politically weak position that compelled them to enter into formal arrangements with the two larger powers on unequal terms for the sake of immediate safety. Furthermore, in this particular form of patron-client relationship, there exist certain expectations in how each actor in the dyad will behave. In the event of a military attack, the client expects more than support from the patron, while the inverse is true if the patron were to be attacked (Dittmer 2014). More specifically, the patron is not only expected to provide aid and military support but, in peacetime, to also serve as a model for the client's development; the client, on the other hand, is expected to remain loyal, and the mutual defense clause is often implicitly waived (Dittmer 2014). Hence, Mao became indignant upon Khrushchev's suggestion that the USSR and China cooperate in a "joint fleet" in the 1960s (Dittmer 2014).

Another way of framing the formation of asymmetric alliances is that the actor which values the alliance least is able to demand terms more advantageous to itself (Snyder 1990). As such, an important point of consideration is China's self-perception as the "Middle Kingdom" of Asia (Dastidar 2020). Deriving in part from the "century of national humiliation" narrative which has become a core piece of the Chinese national story, China's lack of—and desire for—political and cultural authority in Asia, as well as its belief in its rightful status as the predominant power in East Asia may preclude it from entertaining the possibility of alliances (Kang 2010). By pursuing

an alliance with another state, China may inadvertently give that state leverage that they can wield to obtain more favorable terms within the alliance, thereby elevating them to a more "equal" position relative to China. This sharply contrasts the American experience, where as a result of the other parties being victim to high levels of domestic instability, crippled economies, and other undesirable conditions, the US was able to secure defense treaties which enabled them to exert an immense amount of pressure over their allies. As an example, while South Korea now maintains operational control over its military in times of peace, the US reserves the right to assume control over its military in the event of a war on the peninsula, leading to continued debates—and occasional outrage—over what the form of the status of forces agreement should look like (Botto 2019). In the post-Cold War era, however, Asia has experienced few inter-state wars, and few states can be considered to be compromised as a result of domestic threats. As a result, China's potential allies would feel that they are in a better position to demand more favorable terms in any potential security agreement with China.

In a related manner, the presence of a defense pact has been demonstrated to reduce the probability that a given state will be subject to an interstate militarized dispute over territory, reduce the level of militarization on the part of a state, and indirectly increases the probability of a democratic transition by removing a major obstacle of democratization—that is, the instability of international borders (Gibler and Wolford 2006). In most cases, these would be viewed as positive developments. However, China desires none of these three outcomes. Currently, China is itself engaged in seventeen territorial disputes and has continued to shore up their military capabilities in order to advance their territorial claims, particularly in the South China Sea; Chinese favorability towards democracy, as it is conceived of in the West, is also low, and the CCP has little appetite for a democratic transition (Chen 2014; Krishnankutty 2020; Shapero

2022). Given these considerations, the value of alliances is diminished in the minds of Chinese decisionmakers looking to continue China's trajectory towards great power status.

In a bid to secure the advantages which alliances afford while mitigating the risks of entangling alliances, China has adopted a substitute for alliances: the partnership. As of 2019, China maintained partnerships with 78 countries and five regional organizations, such as ASEAN (Li and Ye 2019). The development of China's partnership network reflects their gradual shift away from the strategy of "keeping a low profile" and focusing on self-development towards assuming a more active and prominent position in the international system. After forming their first partnership with Brazil in 1993, China formed 23 partnerships between 1993 and 2004, 34 partnerships between 2005 and 2012, and 26 partnerships between 2013 to 2019 (Li and Ye 2019). However, the remarkable diversity and stratification of China's partnerships have led to disagreements over how to interpret them, with characterizations of Chinese partnerships ranging from simply being "what states make of it" to "Eastphalianism" (Li and Ye 2019; Yu 2018; 2019). Attempts have nevertheless been made to categorize and rank China's partnerships in an attempt to evaluate the level of cooperation and commitment shared between China and its partners. Citing Su Hao, Dittmer (2014) forwarded a ranking of partnerships on three levels in ascending order: the constructive partnership, characterized by cooperation and the presence of serious disagreements; the consultative partnership, based on friendly cooperation between states interested in increasingly deep relations; and the strategic partnership, defined by the sharing of strategic aims and interests and maintaining no fundamental differences that would preclude further cooperation. Referencing comments made by former Premier Wen Jiabao, Quan Li and Min Ye (2019) propose a hierarchy of partnerships

in descending order: comprehensive strategic partnerships, strategic partnerships, and regular partnerships, with each denoting a lower level of cooperation.

Regardless of how China's partnerships are grouped, and despite the increased complexity resulting from China's collective partnership associations such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), each method of categorization suggests that the manner in which each partnership is termed has significant implications regarding the degree of cooperation seen across a certain range of policy domains between China and its partner state. Under Premier Wen's description, partnerships denote a relationship that is characterized by cooperation in economic, technological, cultural, and political domains; that is multi-layered and involves both government-to-government and people-to-people diplomacy; that is both bilateral and multilateral such that both actors in the dyad can coordinate on multilateral issues; that is stable and long-term; and that is predicated on mutual respect, trust, and equality (Li and Ye 2019). Interestingly, Chinese multilateralism showed signs of advancing when, at both the 2013 G20 Leaders' Summit and the 2017 World Economic Forum, Xi defended economic globalization in a period where the US and Europe retreated into economic protectionism (Parker 2017; Xi 2013b). Yet, China's seeming embrace of multilateralism is partial and conditional, for while China has welcomed multilateral cooperation on certain issues, such as trade, it has resisted external efforts to include China's territorial disputes within those very same frameworks, insisting that they can only be resolved through direct bilateral relations (Goldstein 2003). This conditionality is reflected historically, when Mao warned the CCP that accepting US and British aid should be conditional to the extent that China's territory and sovereignty remains protected (Sheng 1993, 141). As Li and Ye (2019) conclude, Chinese partnerships are driven by three goals: 1) a perceived need to counter US pressure, 2) the necessity of keeping their borders stable

and secure, and 3) pursuing modernization. In this respect, China's partnerships can be more definitively argued to fulfill the role of alliances while mitigating the potential negative consequences associated with those more formal arrangements. As Gibler and Wolford (2014) established, alliances increase the likelihood of democratization by stabilizing international borders; if alliances are undesirable because they lower the barrier to democratization, partnerships are China's alternative means to stabilize international borders without the possible negative consequence of a democratic transition.

Another strategic factor underpinning China's decision to adopt the stratagem of pursuing partnerships over alliances is the understanding by states that alliances are a more concrete demarcation of alignment. As Robert Jervis (1999) notes, leaders are inclined to believe that their enemies will align with one another to oppose them. Given this, "the international system can polarize as alliances spread consistency throughout it" (Jervis 1999). An example of this can be found in the German-Japan alliance of 1940, which was signed as a means of discouraging US opposition, but which had the opposite effect of confirming in the minds of American policymakers that Japan and Germany were truly linked together. Rather than explicitly aligning with particular states and identifying friends and enemies, China has opted to build a network of partnerships even with major powers with whom China maintains serious disagreements with. As such, China has maintained a high degree of strategic flexibility in how it conducts its foreign policy while simultaneously increasing its leverage and its attractiveness to potential partners (Garver 2018). By forming ties with states that would otherwise view China as a principal opponent if China were to establish formal alliances, China is also able to tie their interests together, thereby diminishing those states' ability to oppose their behavior or form a coalition against them (Garver 2018). The Philippines, which feels stuck between the US and China, is

more likely to show greater restraint in their behavior towards perceived Chinese encroachment if Chinese firms retained partial control over their national energy grid, giving them the capability to effectively "turn off" the Philippines' power (Robles 2019). Asian, and perhaps even European, states would also be less likely to support a Washington-led coalition of Indo-Pacific states as they calculate the costs which China can incur on them as a result of the linkages developed through their partnerships.

Leveraging the Belt and Road Initiative

Similar to how Chinese partnerships fulfill similar functions as alliances to the extent that they help stabilize international borders, China's partnerships provide China a means of exercising leverage over partner states and compelling closer alignment by other states to Chinese policy positions. While Jervis pointed out that a state's interests may change when it aligns with another state—and in this context he explains that this applies to *both* parties of an alliance—a characteristic of Chinese partnerships is that the influence has been largely one-sided. Two separate analyses of Chinese foreign aid and its impact on voting behavior at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) between 2000-2014 both found a relationship between Chinese aid and voting compliance on the part of aid recipients at the UNGA (Abudula 2018; Parida 2020). Abulaiti Abudula (2018) in particular disaggregated Chinese aid to assess which forms of aid were especially impactful, finding that program aid, ODA, and grants were the most significant in influencing voting behavior, although project-related aid, OFF, and other loans still had an impact. Considering this, it may be easy to downplay the effect of the BRI, which is often advanced through a partnership with China, on compelling voter compliance. However, looking at BRI loans specifically, Linnea Maria Dulikravich (2020) found that between 2001 and 2013,

states which were recipients of substantial BRI loans were likely to align with China on UNGA votes, even if there was greater divergence on certain policy domains such as human rights.

It is difficult to ascertain whether Chinese policymakers are aware of this phenomenon, and if so, whether it was planned for. Publicly, Xi (2013c) had addressed ASEAN to declare that the BRI is means to common development both economically and diplomatically—here, phrases invoking the idea of "kinship" and "good-neighborly ties" to reference not only interstate relations, but also interpersonal relations are commonly used. Whether it is a part of a lowkey bid by China to further their interests or a genuine attempt to improve their image, it is another benefit which is characteristic of both alliances and partnerships but is far more subtle in the case of the latter. Certainly, more attention has been given to how the US leverages foreign aid in order to "buy" votes at the UNGA (Dreher, Nunnenkamp, and Thiele 2008; Wang 1999). Yet Chinese foreign aid is largely similar to the aid provided through the Washington Consensus or through the US' series of bilateral alliances, suggesting both that it cannot be considered "rogue aid" which damages human rights regimes and democratization processes and that the old strategy of "keeping a low profile," while not the predominant mode of thinking in Beijing, still shapes Chinese decisionmaking (Abudula 2018; Parida 2020).

Complexity in East Asia

On the question of Chinese strategic flexibility, the introduction of complexity theory to political contexts holds some promise in helping explain the complicated and sometimes even contradictory nature of Chinese foreign relations. First taken up by Robert Jervis (1999), complexity theory still remains marginalized in political science research. However, there are certain concepts articulated by Jervis, including the Lijphart Effect, "acting in twos," and the domino theory paradox, which are of particular interest in the context of Chinese alliance

formation. These "system effects," and specifically how leaders respond to them can function as additional tools to understand Chinese behavior in the international system. Speaking on the importance of interactions, Jervis (1999) was keen to make clear that the interconnectedness of the international system meant that the relations between two states are determined not only by their shared and diverging interests, but also by their relations with other states; any shift in stance on a given issue, therefore, has the likely potential to set off a chain reaction in how states perceive their position relative to others. As mentioned in an earlier section, this would serve as a very powerful incentive for Chinese policymakers to decide against aligning too far on one side, instead using partnerships to provide the flexibility to respond to any possible political developments which would require them to rethink their strategic calculus.

The possibility of a "chain of consequences" can in turn lead to a fear of blowback. Commenting on Arend Lijphart's research on the stability of democracy in the Netherlands despite divisions along ethnic, religious, and linguistic lines, Jervis (1999) made the point that by recognizing the likelihood of undesired outcomes in advance, otherwise unusual steps can be taken to prevent the more "natural" outcome. In the context of the Netherlands, leaders understood that conflict was likely given such cleavages in identity and were able to construct a policy of compromise which satisfied each group's desire for representation. Coined as the "Lijphart Effect," a similar process can be observed in China. While the degree to which Chinese historical memory shapes Chinese foreign policy decisionmaking is uncertain, it has understandably shaped perceptions of US intentions. Believing that the US is actively seeking to undermine China's rise, Chinese policymakers may—and perhaps are incentivized to—view the US as a hostile actor despite their public comments to the contrary (Pillsbury 2016; Westad 2019). Nonetheless, China could be refraining from forming deeper security relationships with

Indo-Pacific states in part because of an anticipation that doing so would invite blowback from the US, thereby further destabilizing the regional security environment and distracting from China's continued goal of modernization. By pursuing partnerships whose clauses fall short of the level of commitment often provided by formal alliances, China is able to ostensibly maintain the status quo by publicly endorsing cooperation and multilateral processes for dispute resolution. In other words, partnerships are a means to hedge against possible blowback by allowing China to form ties with a range of states without provoking the kind of hostile reactions which a formal alliance could, both the US and other regional actors. Indeed, in response to then President Trump's explicitly hostile posture towards China, Chinese policymakers recognized the risks involved in a purely tit-for-tat approach and explored opportunities for conciliation leading up to and going beyond the 2017 World Economic Forum (Hass 2021).

A common concept applied in the unusual context of Chinese foreign relations is the domino theory, whereby initially small defeats produce a positive feedback loop such that a state's enemies perceive the state as weak and therefore prone to conceding on other issues. Put more broadly, "a departure from equilibrium begets further departures" (Snyder 1991). While Jervis (1999) argues in a particular direction—indeed, even invoking the PRC as an example—that leaders who buy into the theory may seek to counteract it and act more boldly following a defeat in order to demonstrate strength to other states, China today has instead sought to undermine domino theory at its very foundation. As already discussed, by forming partnerships, China gains the ability to form ties with states who harbor major disagreements with them on key policy issues, such as human rights. Through such partnerships, other states are forced to include in their strategic calculus the heavy costs which they would incur if they were to act against China on issues related to human rights and territorial disputes, among others. As such, China is able to

better guarantee that potentially hostile states do not act to take advantage of China's perceived weakness following a defeat, thereby reducing the need to act more boldly.

The uncertainty inherent in a chain of consequences resulting from a departure from equilibrium lends itself to a more cautious foreign policy. However, the caution exercised by past policymakers can lead to a policy inertia which makes it increasingly difficult over time for current and future policymakers to change. In this sense, that China has long foregone alliances and its associated hegemonism inhibits them from forming alliances today. What this points to is that China's approach to alliance formation has been path dependent. As will be examined in further detail in the following section, the impact of Mao and Deng's bid to appeal to the Non-Aligned Movement during the Cold War continues to impact Chinese foreign policy, as China under Xi still seeks to gain the favor of non-aligned states. On diplomacy, Xi (2013d) publicly acknowledged that since the PRC's founding in 1949, each generation of CCP leadership developed strategic ideas which "laid a solid foundation for future diplomatic work" and continue to shape Chinese policy. Remarkably, this would even be hinted in Xi's (2017b) articulation of Chinese "diplomacy in the new era," which described the new form of diplomacy as an improvement rather than a departure from the strategies implemented by previous leaders. Moreover, while Chinese partnerships would become a major point of research during Xi's tenure, Xi (2018a) himself was careful to note that China's major-power diplomacy would see an *enhancement* of the network of global partnerships, not the beginning of a new one.

A final point for consideration is how China uses its partnerships to act "in twos" for the purpose of generating desired impressions about their intentions and policies; where a softer policy may lead to China being seen as weak, a more assertive policy may have the unintended effect of making China appear as a threat to be opposed (Jervis 1999, 271). To balance between

these two possible perceptions, China often will enact seemingly contradictory policies or statements. As such, while Chinese fishing vessels continue to encroach on the maritime borders of the Philippines, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi makes diplomatic overtures and calls to uphold the China-Philippines friendship, announcing that China would send a grant of 100 million Renminbi to the Philippines through their partnership (Wang 2022a). In a broader sense, as China became increasingly aggressive in the South China Sea through the 2010s and sought to pursue their territorial interests via bilateral negotiations, Xi repeatedly asserted a Chinese commitment to multilateralism and fostering partnerships on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence to ultimately create an "Asian community of shared future" (Xi 2017a; 2018b; 2019). In contrast with alliances, wherein the two states in the dyad tend to include a consultation clause and where actions against the ally would quickly lead to the deterioration and possible end of the alliance, partnerships provide the flexibility for China to pursue its interests which lie in tension with the partnered state while maintaining the ability to rebuild the relationship and keep it afloat.

China: An Undesirable Alliance?

China's Dual Identity

While much research has been done on the economic, financial, and political linkages between China and its partner states, two variables often taken for granted in discourses on contemporary Chinese foreign relations has been how China presents itself to other countries—in other words, how they project their image—and how other states perceive China's image and respond to it. Though China's crisis of identity can be framed as being a tension between presenting themselves as equal to other states and being recognized as the undisputed leader of Asia, Yan Xuetong (2021) argues that China also maintains a dual identity of being both a major power

capable of diverging from the path set by the US and a developing country lacking the resources to function as a global leader.

China may thus feel compelled to avoid falling into alliance politics in order to maintain its historical non-aligned position in relation to the former Third World states. By forming alliances, states in the Global South may perceive China as being a hegemonic power and withdraw support on key Chinese interests. This internal tension between the two disparate identities has contributed to conceptual chaos externally, resulting in concepts such as Hu's "Harmonious World" and Xi's "community of shared future," which serve as easily marketable visions of a "win-win" global order, but which lacks depth and clarity, forcing states to have to interpret for themselves Chinese intentions. As David C. Kang (2010) argues, while there is respect given by other Asian states with regards to Chinese economic development, there is wariness over Chinese political and cultural beliefs. While the ambiguity of such concepts has been recognized as a primary challenge for China in terms of promoting its acceptance within the developing world, China is unlikely to institute the changes necessary to reassure the Global South: greater transparency, commitment, and concrete actions (Zhang 2018).

Relatedly, Garver (2018) argues that the most important dimensions of Xi's tenure have been China's vigorous attempts to control territories administratively and militarily in the South China Sea as well as the Belt and Road Initiative. However, Andrew Chubb (2021a) argues instead that Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea in particular began to increase as early as 2007, well before the global financial crisis. In fact, the roots of China's more contemporary assertiveness date back to 1998, when the PRC passed legislation formalizing its claims to state maritime jurisdiction as well as "historic rights" beyond what was demarcated by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (Chubb 2021a). Just two years later, Jiang declared that

becoming a "maritime great power" is a critical task for China to achieve. Nonetheless, the degree of the shift outward under the leadership of Xi Jinping has been far greater compared to his predecessors.

As will be examined in the final chapter, this shift has largely centered on territorial disputes with neighboring or near-peripheral states. Given the narrow focus of Chinese interests and the increasing intensity with which it has pursued them, other states may be unwilling to enter into an alliance in fear of being dragged into a conflict over a crisis along the Chinese border or in the South China Sea (Chubb 2021). In other words, there is a high degree of unnecessary risk for comparatively little gain which could be gained through other means, including partnerships. However, some states *have* shown a willingness to enter into deeper security relations with China. In May 2022, the Solomon Islands signed a security pact with China wherein Beijing has agreed to send police and military personnel to assist in maintaining domestic social order in the Solomons as well as protect Chinese workers (Kim 2022). However, this has still fallen well short of being a formal alliance, and some analysts have argued that the move is more of a product of a bid by Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare to retain power as public opinion turns against him than it does a genuine desire to engage more deeply with China (O'Brien 2022). Nevertheless, confirming Chinese concerns of US blowback, the US responded by sending its own delegation to the Pacific islands and verbally committing to a greater US presence in the Pacific Islands region and improved cooperation on key policy issues (PBS 2022; The White House 2022). It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that Foreign Minister Wang Yi (2022b) emphasized that the China-Solomon Islands pact did not represent a Chinese move to establish a regional security agreement.

Nonalignment 2.0?

The ambiguity of Chinese intentions also raises in the minds of other states' policymakers concerns over abandonment and entrapment. Described by Snyder (1984) as the principal "bads" of the alliance security dilemma, Cha (2000) defined abandonment as referring to the fear that an ally may either exit the alliance or not follow through with its commitments. In contrast, entrapment refers to the fear that an alliance may compel the state to become involved in affairs detrimental to its interests i.e. "the entanglement in a dispute over an ally's interests that one does not share, or values only partially" (Cha 2000). While the abandonment and entrapment complexes are typically inversely related such that high fears over one constitutes low fears of the other, both factor into the calculus of Global South states. Because of China's narrow economic and territorial interests, states may fear that China would fail to uphold their commitments in an alliance if they were to become embroiled in their own dispute which holds little gain for China specifically. On the other hand, entrapment represents perhaps a far greater concern. Not only has China been focused on territorial disputes along its border and in the South and East China Seas, but it has also demonstrated a willingness to use force to secure its claims on such territories. M. Taylor Fravel (2007) found that Beijing has been extremely sensitive to declines in its relative position in its territorial disputes; while recognizing the viability of alternative explanations focusing on variables such as reputation costs and domestic political incentives, Fravel concluded that declines in bargaining power account for many, though not all, of China's uses of force in territorial disputes. Building on this argument, Nie Hongyi (2009) found that when a neighbor state began to improve its position in the regional power structure and adopted an expansionary border policy, China was in turn inclined to adopt a hardline policy. Given the rising status of states such as India as well as the increased US involvement in regional territorial disputes, it is understandable why states would fear becoming

entrapped in Chinese territorial disputes which hold an increasingly high likelihood of becoming "hot." It is unsurprising then that Indonesia declared in an ASEAN meeting of foreign ministers that ASEAN has no desire to become trapped by the US-China rivalry (Ge 2020).

This is not to suggest that China and the Global South, along with other neighboring states, do not share interests. China has repeatedly advocated for maintaining strict state sovereignty and common development, both of which are highly valued by a large number of developing countries. Moreover, many states share the resentment felt by China towards US international dominance, with Russia being the most notable example. However, this has failed to produce any concerted effort to oppose the US' policy in Asia. While other states share these interests, albeit in varying degrees, and hold disdain for the conditional nature of joining into the Washington Consensus, which often requires trade liberalization, democratization, the implementation of a human rights regime, and so on, they may either feel not dissatisfied enough to alienate themselves from the West or uncertain over the actual degree to which China is aligned with them. Furthermore, some states also view with anger what is perceived as Beijing's disregard for their interests. At the 27th Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27), the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)—an organization which includes the Solomon Islands—requested that China and India pay for damages incurred as a result of climate change (Volcovici and Lewis 2022). The seeming rift that is growing between China and the Global South will further preclude any potential Chinese attempts to establish formal alliances with states in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific—that these are the regions poised to suffer the most as a result of climate change is nontrivial. Because of the presence of such major disagreements and a growing sense that China is no longer "one of them," the Global South has begun to favor an approach which has been described as "Nonalignment 2.0" by

Western observers and the "new Non-Aligned Movement" by observers in Asia and Latin America (Ge 2020). Simply put, countries in the Global South have little desire to choose between the US and China, and more importantly, they do not feel that they have to (Traub 2022). Writing for the Global Times, a Chinese newspaper published by the People's Daily, Ge Hongliang (2020) argued that Indonesia was in fact falling into a trap of "choosing sides," further supporting the notion that Chinese partnerships are a means of tying disparate states' policies and interests with China. While this sentiment is echoed by Chinese policymakers as well as other outside observers, such as Tom Fowdy (2021), who go even further to insist that China will continue its own policy of nonalignment and successfully maintain its relationship with the Global South, China must still navigate and take into account the increasing likelihood that the Global South is beginning a turn towards rejecting the US-China competition.

As discussed earlier, China has consistently and publicly associated alliances with hegemonism and conflict and maintained a policy against forming alliances as a result. The policy inertia resulting from China's long-standing rejection of alliance politics means that forming alliances today would function as a loud signal that the regional system is shifting away from the status quo, inviting loud responses in kind by other regional actors, including the US. By embracing alliances, China would lose its appeal to the Global South, as much of its rhetoric has centered around avoiding military adventures, maintaining strict state sovereignty, and pursuing common development. Indeed, much of China's criticism towards the US has focused on how the US' network of bilateral alliances is the "Achilles heel" of inclusive, win-win security and economic cooperation (Liff 2017). The dilemma faced by Chinese decisionmakers, however, has left open a discursive space that public intellectuals and even everyday citizens have begun to occupy.

Reflections in Chinese Public Discourses

Considering the current security landscape, China's strategic outlook, and other states' perceptions of China, the Chinese approach to alliance formation appears to be just as much a genuine departure from alliance politics in favor of more flexible alternatives as an inability to develop the deep linkages required of alliances. However, this can all change. If the US were to indicate that it is lowering its commitments to its bilateral alliances in Asia, or otherwise reducing its footprint, the result could be a ripple effect whereby regional powers may bandwagon with China through a fear of abandonment. In a more real sense, Chinese leaders' perceptions of the international political environment, how the Chinese people understand themselves as "Chinese," and subsequently what Chinese leaders view as viable policy options will all shape how China behaves in the near future. While Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao perceived the international environment as being friendly towards China and therefore favored a more cooperative approach in pursuit of their interests, Xi Jinping sees the international landscape as being more hostile compared to his two predecessors, which lends itself to the adoption of relatively more assertive or aggressive foreign policies (Yang, Keller, and Molnar 2018). As such, increased assertiveness in the South China Sea may push affected states away from China.

Remarkably, other states' uncertainty over the ambiguous nature of Chinese motivations and intentions are reflected in Chinese public discourses. Since Hu articulated his harmonious world concept, Chinese citizens were—perhaps inadvertently—left with opportunities to discuss openly the different possibilities for their country's future and the path China should take to reach that future (Callahan 2013). Moreover, intellectuals in particular have increased in influence, in part as a result of media commercialization; while the party apparatus remains predominant, public intellectuals' opinions have become a major source of ideas which are considered or perhaps

even integrated into broader discourses within China and within the CCP (Callahan 2013). Since 2011, debates have proliferated over what the "China Dream" consisted of and what a "community of shared future" would look like—would the US and China coexist, and would China simply seek "achievements"? Or would China seek to revise the system and assume the US' position as the preponderant power? How can China reach such a status, and how should it behave towards other states? Such questions have been addressed more vocally by an increasing assortment of scholars. Notable academics, such as Yan Xuetong, argued that China should embrace its role as a major power and endorsed forging a more formal arrangement with Russia as well as issuing greater security guarantees to neighboring countries (Wang and Meng 2020). However, a far greater proportion of Chinese scholars believe that China should pursue a more neutral position. In contrast with Western observers' interpretation of the "Asia for Asians" concept as indicating a Chinese equivalent of the Monroe Doctrine, Chinese scholars argue that it is in fact a call for multilateral, collective security framework in Asia. However, some Chinese scholars acknowledge the possibility that China may use it to hedge against the US in Asia. Yan Xuetong (2011) ties this division into the broader factional divide between the "Chinese School," which perceives China as a developing country and therefore should maintain a low profile, and the traditionalists, who believe that China is currently the second greatest power and should assume a role in international politics commensurate with that status. Nonetheless, given the increasing relevance and weight of public opinion, the CCP may feel compelled to respond to or accommodate opinions which diverge from the status quo if they were to become more popular (Wang and Meng 2020).

The increasing focus given to the role of public opinion has contributed to a greater desire to understand the phenomenon of Chinese nationalism. A large number of observers have pointed

to increasing Chinese nationalist sentiment as being a source of concern in large part because of the effect it may have on China's foreign policy (Ma 2021). Even domestically, former executive vice-president of the Central Party School He Yiting warned that increasing nationalism may lead to heightened tensions with the US (Wang 2021). Certainly, a domestic politics-based theory of Chinese decisionmaking predicated on a notion of rising Chinese nationalism would predict increased Chinese assertiveness and a greater desire to demonstrate Chinese power. However, despite the increasing power of public opinion in China, it remains very limited in impact (Torigian 2019). Moreover, although existing research on Chinese nationalism lacks conceptual clarity, a growing volume of literature has tempered the perception that Chinese nationalism is rising. Alastair Iain Johnston (2017) found that the "rising popular nationalism meme" is largely inaccurate, and that Chinese nationalism has for the most part remained stable since the early 2000s, with youth demonstrating *lower* levels of nationalist sentiments than older generations. Narrowing the focus to perceptions of military spending, Xiao Han, Michael Sadler, and Kai Quek (2020) found that while Chinese citizens support military spending in isolation, such support dissipates when military spending is considered alongside other domestic issues. Furthermore, seemingly paradoxically, support for military spending was positively associated with anti-war sentiments bordering on isolationism (Han, Sadler, and Quek 2020). As such, though former Singaporean Ambassador to the UN Kishore Mahbubani's (2015) warned that a more democratic China could become a more nationalist and aggressive China, implying a more assertive approach and the development of alliances with key partner states, the empirics do not support this notion, although Johnston (2017) is careful to note that the CCP's efforts to manufacture nationalism are a long-term process. As such, there may be delayed effects, and the true impact of Chinese nationalism is yet to be seen.

As it stands, elite politics play a far more significant role in the Chinese policymaking process, suggesting that variables such as leadership style, elite preferences, bureaucratic politics, and organizational interests are critical variables which help determine China's policy vis-a-vis alliances. Regarding leadership style, personality, and preferences, if Xi were to view the international environment as increasingly hostile, China may alter its strategy in response to perceived opposition and pursue alliances as a means of securing its interests. In this respect, there is reason to believe that Xi wields greater authority than Jiang and Hu, although it is unlikely that he can recreate the legendary image of Mao for himself (Torigian 2019). This increased authority could lead Xi to have confidence in pursuing policies not favored by the majority of party elites; such authority could also lead to self-censorship by other party elites, giving off the illusion of consensus where there is in fact great disagreement (Houghton 2012). However, this has been disputed, and Chinese scholars such as Chen Dingding have argued that there is healthy debate within the CCP (Bradsher and Myers 2018; Torigian 2019). To better understand internal party dynamics, a research regime around assessing leader personalities and preferences in China has begun to gain ground but remains limited by the volume and quality of data available. A leadership trait analysis conducted by Dan Douglas, for example, determined that Xi preferred to share leadership, a finding for which Douglas acknowledged that the inverse was likely to be true.

An equally significant variable is the preferences and interests of other organizations. In particular, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is seen by a number of scholars as having the most potential to influence Chinese strategy towards more conventional alliances (Garver 2018; Torigian 2019). While Xi remains the Chairman of the Central Military Commission, other military elites are still able to exert their influence on party decisionmaking, shaping not only

internal discourses but substantive policies. According to Garver (2018, 795), the PLA has historically succeeded in translating its policy preferences to actual policy before. Though this does not mean that the PLA necessarily favors war or even alliance formation, Garver notes that there are many possible uses of military force which do not meet the threshold of direct belligerence. In this respect, Chinese military leaders' training and experience may color their preferences towards favoring conventional alliances and the power dynamics which typify security behavior between two major powers, potentially driving Chinese policy towards alliance politics.

6 A Historical Evaluation of Chinese Foreign Relations

The following two sections will serve as a means to test and provide additional support for the explanations offered above. The current section will function as a historical test, with the purpose being to trace the contours of Chinese foreign relations and elucidate an answer to the question of how China came to its current dilemma of whether to form an alliance and whether the outcomes of China's foreign policy decisions today are path dependent i.e. determined by decisions made by previous leaders in past moments in time.

Foreign Relations of Maoist China

On October 7, 1949, Mao proclaimed the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), signaling an end to the civil war on the Chinese mainland and ushering in a new era of Chinese political development. Slamming Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang, Mao would emphasize at the beginning of his proclamation Chiang's supposed betrayal to China and "[collusion] with imperialists" (Mao 1949). Undoubtedly a reference to the US, the PRC's immediate hostility towards states deemed to be imperial powers demonstrated to some later scholars the failures of American foreign policy and "what could have been" (Mao 1956).

Most famously, David Halberstam (1993) would articulate a powerful corrective to the McCarthy-era narrative of the loss of China being caused by communist sympathizers within the US Department of State and argue that the US' foreign policy crises in Asia—in particular, in Vietnam—were in fact the product of rejecting the recommendations of the "China Hands," lower-level diplomats and embassy staff in China who had expertise and experience with Chinese politics. Supporting this position, Kenneth S. Churn (1976) argued that while the China Hands, especially John Paton Davies Jr. and John S. Service, continuously reported on the CCP's rise and would cable recommendations to engage with the CCP in a bid to open them up to

cooperation with the US—and draw them away from Moscow—the conservative "China Lobby" in the US, led by figures such as Ambassador Patrick Hurley, would oppressively undermine any possible policy shifts favoring the CCP and go as far as to relocate most of the China Hands to embassies outside of East and Southeast Asia. Another version of the "lost chance" thesis is grounded in the idea that, prior to the Korean War, the Truman administration had actually been moving towards accommodating China; assessing work done by Warren Cohen and Nancy Tucker, Robert J. McMahon (1988) noted that proponents of this version believe that then Secretary of State Dean Acheson pushed for a policy of rapprochement with China in order to drive a wedge between the PRC and USSR by converting Mao into an "Asian Tito."

The work done on the significance of the China Hands and their seeming prophetic wisdom as well as the US executive's early approach to China has proven useful in understanding US foreign policy in East Asia as well as China's response to perceived US encroachment. However, both face similar shortcomings. To begin with, as McMahon (1988) noted, Acheson had only pursued a policy of accommodation with much reservation, and there were a number of competing interests within the US' bureaucracy regarding both China and, more specifically, the Taiwan question; while Acheson and much of the Department of State may have been willing to accommodate China, the Department of Defense was staunchly opposed to accommodating China and asserted the importance of keeping Taiwan out of mainland China's control. This "dualism" within the executive would have made it difficult to pursue a true policy of accommodation.

Most significantly, the two versions of the lost chance thesis neglect the degree of agency which Mao and the PRC exercised in international politics. In Mao's China, personality incarnated authority. Through the 1950s, China's highly personalist system ultimately had the

effect of Mao having the final say on all policy matters; by the time of the Cultural Revolution, even top party officials "lived in abject fear of the chairman" to the extent that many refused to express their opinions at party congresses (Torigian 2019). At first glance, the lost chance thesis would seem to find support in the fact that Mao himself had long pursued cooperation with the US from 1936, when he sought a united front with the US against fascism, through the 1940s as China faced off against both the Japanese and the Nationalists (Di 1994); Mao's later bitterness and resentment towards the US after the US decided to throw its lot with the Nationalists can, in this way, be easily seen as a failure of US foreign policy. As Sheng (1993, 135) points out, the lost chance thesis rests on the notion that the CCP operated "simply in response to the situation they found themselves in," and not according to a particular ideology or global vision. Yet, as Sheng's reappraisal of the lost chance thesis shows, the release of additional CCP documents demonstrated that Maoist ideology precluded any true cooperation between the US and the CCP. As the end of the civil war approached, Mao's view on the US had hardened, and he recognized that "the imperialists who had always been hostile to the Chinese people will not change overnight to treat us on an equal level" (Di 1994, 147). But this was not simply an ideological shift which occurred in response to a specific stimulus—in this context, being dropped in favor of the Nationalists. From the beginning, even when the CCP had sought cooperation with the US, they retained a staunchly anti-imperialist ideology and remained cautious to detect any misgivings from the US (Sheng 1993). Even as they sought support from the Anglo-American camp, Mao stressed to the rest of the CCP elite the imperial nature of the US and Britain, and that accepting aid should be limited to ensure Chinese political and territorial sovereignty (Sheng 1993). By 1949, Mao himself considered that US imperialism was not compatible with his ideology (Di 1994).

Chinese foreign relations during the Mao era can therefore be said to have been colored by the CCP ruling elite's own vision of global politics. Their desire to institute a Communist model at home as well as becoming the leader of the global Communist revolution would strongly shape which states they saw as friendly, approachable, untrustworthy, or hostile, and it would help determine the perceived correct approach used to engage such states (Garver 2018). In terms of policy, Mao's increasingly ideological approach to foreign policy would compel China to "lean to one side" in 1949 and engage the USSR specifically as well as the Communist bloc generally in order to secure support for Chinese national security, economic development, and recognition abroad (Di 1994, 147; Yufan and Zhihai 1990). Strategically, because Mao and many within the CCP elite, including figures such as Zhou Enlai and Liu Shaoqi, viewed foreign relations through the same prism as they did domestic class struggle, they would seek to apply the same techniques abroad as they did at home; while the US' bilateral alliances in Asia would become notable for their longevity, Mao would implement united front tactics, aiming to develop short-term allies to achieve more immediate objectives (Sheng 1993). So embedded was this concept in the CCP's strategic thought that Zhou Enlai would at one point explicitly assert that "diplomacy is also a kind of united front work" (Sheng 1993).

This is not to suggest that Chinese decisionmakers neglected variables typical of a more realist calculus—in fact, the CCP would temporarily drop the united front approach to global politics when the USSR formed a pact with Germany in 1939. And as Avery Goldstein (2003), argued, China operated on a survivalist logic; China by 1949 was in a precarious position, having been ravaged by Japanese colonial ambitions as well as a decades-long civil war. Consequently, Mao exhibited a high degree of fear regarding American ambitions in Asia and in China specifically (Goldstein 2003). As such, the "leaning to one side" strategy adopted between 1946-

1949 likely satisfied both the desire to be part of a global Communist revolution as well as the more immediate need to secure the country and build a counter-hegemonic coalition against the US. By 1950, though Mao had already developed a powerful disdain towards perceived imperial states, the Korean War would only amplify Mao's growing sense of resentment and fear towards perceived reactionary actors—both in terms of bad actors within China as well as perceived imperial states—and underscore the urgency with which he felt he needed to consolidate his authority domestically. It was little surprise then that China and the USSR would sign a Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance in early 1950, establishing a bilateral security framework which obligated each state to "immediately extend military and other assistance with all the means at its disposal" in the event of an attack by Japan or any other state—the treaty would last until Deng assumed the position of paramount leader of China (Kraus 2020; Ministry of Foreign Affairs n.d.).

Consequences of the Korean War

The seemingly sudden outbreak of the Korean War marked a watershed moment in the history of Chinese foreign relations. Not only did it force Mao into a position of insecurity, thereby deepening his sense of fear of exploitation at the hands of the imperialists, it reinforced suspicions among Mao and the CCP elite towards their Soviet and North Korean counterparts, suspicions which remained despite the collective security treaty signed earlier that year. Though it would not be evident to many external observers at the time, the Korean War exposed the "congenital defect" which plagued the unstable Sino-Soviet and Sino-North Korean relationships: although communist ideology pushed party leaders in the three states to advocate for ostensibly internationalist ideals and values, their status as leaders of nation-states meant often that each maintained conflicting interests (Fredman 2012). Borrowing from Walker

Connor's (1984) phrasing, China, the USSR, and North Korea's individual doctrines were "socialist in form, nationalist in content."

It is therefore little surprise that Mao was taken by surprise when Kim Il-sung and the People's Army launched their offensive across the South Korean border on June 25, 1950. Having received approval from Stalin to begin a military offensive to reunite the Korean peninsula, Kim followed Stalin's instructions to gain Mao's approval, but intentionally withheld many of the details of the invasion plans drawn up by him and the other North Korean military leadership (Fredman 2012). Interestingly, Kim had even unintentionally misled Stalin; just as Putin became convinced that the Ukrainian public would jump ship and join arms with Russian forces in the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Stalin became convinced by Kim, who himself was convinced by the leader of the South Korean Worker's Party Pak Hon-yong, that the South Korean people would rise up against the dictatorship of Rhee Syngman. Initially, while many Western analysts viewed potential Chinese involvement in strategic terms and stressed the significance of North Korea as a buffer state, Mao desired Korean "liberation" and viewed a potential Korean conflict in the context of the ongoing Asian communist, anti-imperial revolution (Chen 1992). Nonetheless, CCP leaders ultimately had little intention of becoming involved in a largely Korean affair out of fear of giving additional incentive for the US to become involved themselves (Chen 1992). Nevertheless, the US would enter the war just as North Korea had pushed South Korean forces to the southern coast near Busan in a location that would become known as the Busan Perimeter, successfully launching an offensive in Incheon, pushing east towards Seoul and, soon thereafter, north towards the Yalu River (Halberstam 2008). Fearing a spillover of conflict into China, Mao committed military support to North Korea

and provided manpower in the form of the newly-established Chinese People's Volunteer Army (CPVA).

Yet, problems arose. Almost immediately, Mao became infuriated upon learning that the North Korean generals and his military advisers had become embroiled in heated disagreements over the appropriate strategies, logistics, and tactics to use against the South Korean—and potentially the American—military to push towards the southern coast as quickly as possible (Fredman 2012; Halberstam 2008). To be sure, Kim's own nationalist inclinations meant that if that invasion were to be successful, it was to be because of North Korean, not Chinese, efforts (Chen 1992). The situation deteriorated to the point that the general charged with leading the CPVA, Peng Dehuai, had his request to establish his headquarters in Pyongyang denied by North Korea (Fredman 2012). On a personal level, Mao took offense to the independence and arrogance that Kim Il-sung, who had achieved comparatively little prior to being installed by the Soviets to lead the new North Korea, exhibited during their meetings and in their correspondence (Halberstam 2008). On the Soviet end, Mao would come to understand the limits of the seeming Sino-Soviet bond when, in direct contradiction with early promises and commitments, Stalin decided not to commit Soviet airpower as Mao's PVA readied to intervene in Korea (Chen 1992; Halberstam 2008). Certainly, this perceived betrayal would directly impact China's approach not just to the Korean War, but to international relations more generally; that Kim was favored and ideologically trained by the Soviets was enough on its own to warrant Mao's distrust despite Kim's experience as a guerrilla leader during the Chinese civil war (Halberstam 2008).

Thus, it was not enough for Mao to have China be a participant in the global Communist revolution—his experiences in dealing with the other members of the Communist bloc proved to him that they could not be relied upon. For Mao, China must be the country to lead the global

Communist movement, and he was the only one capable of doing it. Although Mao recognized that China could not go it alone and that they required support from the rest of the Communist bloc to counter capitalist and imperial ambitions, he became convinced that only they were the true bearers of real communism and that only they could guide the rest of the bloc towards the communist end. And so, North Korea would continue to receive Chinese support despite the Soviet betrayal; despite the rifts that existed between the ruling elites in the two states; and despite North Korea ignoring Chinese and Soviet protests to not execute leaders of the South Korean Worker's Party, including Pak Hon-yong, who had miscalculated the level of local support they would receive during the war (Halberstam 2008). In fact, in the aftermath of the Korean War, China would even forgive North Korean war debts and provide aid to help the country rebuild (Fredman 2012); eventually, Mao would go so far as to conclude a defense treaty with Kim in 1961—the only one which either state would sign since (Dwivedi 2012). Kim, himself trying to ensure the survival of the North Korean state by balancing between China and the USSR, was content with this outcome.

The Maoist approach to alliance formation had derived from a survivalist logic, particularist national interests, as well as Mao's unique flavor of communism; the former compelled China to pursue means of security—which it found in the USSR. In fact, immediately after the Korean War, Mao, recognizing that they were once again in a precarious position as the US threatened additional interventions in Indochina and wanting to mobilize its new socialist institutions at home, supported a Soviet proposal to ease tensions with the West and launch a "peace offensive" (Chen 1993). Nonetheless, the CCP approached the Western powers as part of the larger Communist bloc, and as such, Mao's ideology still helped shape perceptions of which states were viable as allies and the policies implemented to pursue relations with friendly states.

Similarly, China's approach to alliance formation reflected Mao's personal beliefs, fears, insecurities, and goals. Although Mao's insecurity with regards to Chinese security and status had been present since before the formal establishment of the PRC, the trajectory of the Korean War and its outcome became critical in shaping how China perceived other actors—both internal and external—and approached them; while it is widely understood that the Korean War likely laid the seed for the eventual Sino-Soviet split, the high degree of apathy and more limited degree of opposition among the Chinese public also played a role in reinforcing the sense of fear and insecurity that impacted Mao's decisionmaking (Hajimu 2012). And while some scholars argue that national interests, not ideology, were the primary driving factors behind Chinese policy, it is perhaps better to frame the consolidation and spread of Communist ideology as being placed as a core national interest in the minds of Mao and the other CCP elite which became animated by their fear of having their regime collapsed, especially as they faced mounting criticisms both abroad and at home. This becomes even more evident when shifting the focus towards Southeast Asia.

China During the Indochina Wars

Since the 1920s, the CCP received frequent contacts from Ho Chi Minh and the Indochinese Communist Party, with Ho making multiple visits to personally seek support from his Chinese counterparts (Chen 1993). After the end of the Chinese civil war in 1949, the CCP immediately committed support to the Vietnamese communists and Viet Minh, a nationalist coalition, in their bid to establish a state and gain independence from France during the First Indochinese War (1946/1950-1954); by proxy, they would also throw their weight behind the previously established Pathet Lao resistance government in Laos and a Khmer resistance government in Cambodia (Fifield 1977).

Despite the French desire to keep the war an internal matter, the war would become internationalized as the Communist bloc, beginning with China, would recognize the Democratic Republic of Vietnam as a state. Speaking to Luo Guibo, the CCP's liaison representative in Vietnam, Liu Shaoqi would stress that "it is the duty of those countries which have achieved the victory of their own revolution to support peoples who are still conducting the just struggle for liberation" (Chen 1993, 87). China would consequently provide an increasing volume of arms, supplies, advisers, and technicians to Ho Chi Minh. Offering one of the most comprehensive assessments of Chinese foreign relations, Jian Chen (1993) would assert that the CCP's support for a liberated Vietnam was a derivative of 1) their belief in an imminent Asia-wide revolution following the Chinese model and 2) a thought process reminiscent of more traditional Chinese rulers wherein the safety of the "Middle Kingdom" required ensuring that neighboring lands were free from "barbarian" hands. While in the early years, Mao may have seen China as following in the footsteps of the Bolsheviks and therefore followed the instruction of the Comintern, the progression of China's revolution would lead to an increasingly wide rift between the Chinese and Soviets, with the former beginning to develop a vision of an anti-imperialist, communist, Asian revolutionary movement that would then ignite a world revolution. However, by the First Indochinese War, Mao's support for Vietnam remained consistent with his "leaning to one side" policy, as Stalin himself expressed support to Liu Shaoqi of greater Chinese involvement in East Asian communist movements (Chen 1993).

Despite the early optimism of Vietnamese-Chinese coordination against the French imperialists, a closer inspection of the relationship reveals its true fragility. Somewhat similar to the experience in North Korea, Chinese military leaders sent to Vietnam would disparage their Vietnamese counterparts, noting their lack of "Bolshevik-style self-criticism," while the

Vietnamese would privately express resentment towards what appeared to be attempts by Chinese political indoctrination and attempts by the Chinese military leadership to impose their own methods unilaterally (Chen 1993). This tension would boil over to some degree following the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and the subsequent negotiations in Geneva. Keeping to their post-Korea "peace offensive," the Chinese and Soviets pushed for a compromise that would eventually end in a document that would leave the questions of Laos and Cambodia for future negotiations and split Vietnam into two separate political entities; though the Vietnamese Worker's Party (VPW) resisted a possible partition of Vietnam, Zhou Enlai was able to convince Ho of the necessity of such a compromise at the time. However, the conference laid the foundation for an even more significant break soon thereafter.

The Geneva Accords of 1954 contained within it provisions to hold a national plebiscite on July 1956 which would lead to Vietnamese unification. Yet, though the VPW had been pacified by Zhou's remarkable diplomatic approach in 1954, the State of Vietnam—the southern political entity—refused to entertain the possibility of holding national elections when the time came, a move that saw no resistance from the US (Garver 2018). Angered by this development as well as the passing of the Manila Treaty by the US and the resultant creation of the Southeast Treaty Orgnaization (SEATO), many within the VPW turned to the CCP for political support and, upon finding little desire in the CCP to deteriorate relations with the US over Indochina, directed their frustration towards their eastern neighbor (Fifield 1977). In an ironic twist, then, just as the Chinese felt betrayed at the Soviets' sudden withdrawal of military support in Korea, the Vietnamese would reinterpret Zhou's diplomacy during the Geneva Conference and feel betrayed by the Chinese lack of diplomatic support at the negotiating table (Garver 2018, 99). Nonetheless, the VPW would continue to interact and cooperate closely with China, and the

CCP, unaware of the undercurrent of frustration on the part of the VPW towards Chinese policy, would likewise continue to maintain close relations with their neighbor.

China in 1958 would revert back to its older approach of strict anti-imperialism. Stemming from both a perception of the balance of power shifting as capitalism waned and socialism gained as well as Mao's realization of the constancy of the US' Taiwan policy, Mao would concede that he believed his older ideas were better (Di 1994). Contributing to periods of personal insecurity over the status of his country was Mao's extreme sensitivity to how foreign powers perceived China as a result of China's humiliation at the hands of imperial forces. Consequently, when the VPW began "armed resistance" in the South in 1959, the CCP remained neutral, neither encouraging nor preventing the North's attempt at unification. And when US policy itself changed course and saw the superpower begin to intervene in Vietnam as the VPW began its "armed resistance" in the South, the CCP continued to feel a sense of solidarity with Vietnam. On a personal level, Mao believed that the US was seeking to change socialist countries within the "intermediate zone" via "peaceful transition"; protecting the global revolution therefore meant "cutting off the fingers" of the imperialists by protecting states in Asia, Africa, and Latin America as they built up their socialist governments (Di 1994; Fardella 2017). Yet, by the early 1960s, Sino-Soviet ideological disputes threatened to break apart their relationship as both parties accused the other of diverging from Leninist theory (Garver 2018, 171); consequentially, Mao became worried about a possible US-Soviet joint attack against China, and Beijing would begin looking for support elsewhere, beginning a propaganda campaign to declare that China was a natural ally of the oppressed people of the world as they fought for liberation (Di 1994).

By late 1962, China became even more radical in its foreign policy and increased support for national insurgencies abroad, including further commitments to Vietnam as the VPW ramped up its own resistance activities (Di 1994; Chen 1995). As the Cultural Revolution neared, Mao would push for greater security commitments to Vietnam in order to radicalize Chinese domestic sociopolitical life and gain allies in response to the deteriorating Sino-Soviet relationship; criticizing the Soviets for not aiding revolutionary movements meant that China would have to provide more to such movements to prove itself as "true Communism" (Chen 1995). Understanding the increasing likelihood of greater US involvement in the region, China would increase the volume of its own aid to North Vietnam and, by 1963, would commit to the defense of North Vietnam in the event of US attacks. This would continue through the rest of the decade as the US found itself more deeply involved in Southeast Asia and China became increasingly concerned over an expanding conflict zone inching closer to their border.

Just as in the 1960s, by the 1970s, with the Cultural Revolution ongoing, the rifts between China and the USSR had grown larger as both became embroiled in further ideological disputes and as the USSR began a military buildup along its Asian frontier, motivating China to oppose them on both ideological and material fronts (Goldstein 2003). However, unlike during the previous decade, the US under Nixon had shown the limits of its involvement in the region and showed signs of engaging in a policy of retrenchment, a development which would evolve into full-scale Vietnamization. Sensing this shift in hegemonic power politics, Mao realized the limitations that China faced in terms of policy options, and China would require allies more powerful than the third-world powers which they had been appealing to and initiated a strategy of "leaning to the other side" i.e. rapprochement with the US as a means of countering Soviet encroachment and improving their status (Goldstein 2003). Interestingly, Mao would confide to

Khrushchev during this period that he was uncertain of who was truly afraid of whom (Di 1994). Nevertheless, Mao remained committed to supporting Vietnam, but as with the First Indochinese War, the same differences would surface—while the VWP remained motivated by the thought of Vietnamese unification, Mao wished to use the war in Vietnam as a means of furthering the revolution by encouraging "continuous revolution" (Chen 1995). That Mao would reject a proposal by Kenji Miyamoto, the Japanese Communist Party general secretary, to create an "international united front" contributed to increased anger on the part of the VWP at perceived Chinese ideological ambiguity and hypocrisy as well as a desire to increase ties with the Soviets (Chen 1995).

Unbeknownst to the VWP, though China may have described their relationship as an "alliance between brotherly comrades," Mao still understood China's role within the broader international revolutionary movement not as one among many, but as first among equals. As Chen (1995) argues, foreign policy had occupied a vital place in Mao's strategy of continuous revolution, which sought to push China to the center of the international community; the Vietnam War became a means for Mao to drive the Cultural Revolution and increase Chinese influence in Southeast Asia. Yet, his desire to establish Beijing as the model for anti-imperial struggle and drive the global revolution was forcibly tempered by the policy options they were limited to in order to avoid conflict with the US; this gap between Chinese words and actions led many in the VWP to decry what they saw as Chinese hypocrisy (Chen 1995). Along this line, and much to Zhou Enlai's despair, the increasing radicalization of Cambodia's Khmer Rouge led China to commit further support to the nascent communist regime, laying the seed for future conflict within the Asian communist bloc (Garver 2018, 319). In hindsight, then, it is perhaps little surprise that China's attempt to build an Asian revolution collapsed just several years later.

Based on the Chinese experiences in the Korean peninsula and Indochina, China's approach to alliances was regionally circumscribed, largely focused to communist governments located in East and Southeast Asia, with lower degrees of support given to communist movements and governments in other regions, including Africa (Garver 2018, 106). The CCP had become enthralled by the seductive appeal of liberating Asian states from their imperial captors and leading them towards a communist revolution modeled after their own, even if it meant pushing certain states towards alignment with the US (Garver 2018, 197). This vision, when put into practice, was both animated and warped by Mao's insecurities, fears, and uncertainties over his own calculations of regional affairs. And in some sense, China's idealistic alliance policy derived from an ethnocentric and universalist approach which would eventually backfire on the CCP (Chen 1995); in others, Chinese policy seemed more in line with conventional power politics as Mao became fearful for the survival of the regime because of their northern neighbor. Yet, despite their expressed status as equals with the other communist movements and their real security needs, they continued to maintain a sense of superiority towards their Southeast and East Asian neighbors, believing that states such as Vietnam *should* be their allies and that Vietnam only needed to be guided towards the natural choice of joining China in their growing conflict with the USSR. However, following Mao's death in 1976, the CCP, used to Mao being the arbiter of Chinese foreign relations, would be faced with serious questions on how to approach the question of alliances for the first time in decades.

Changing Currents in the Post-Mao Era

Asserting himself as Mao's chosen successor, Hua Guofeng would attempt to fill the massive space that Mao left. Though Hua would find some success in diplomacy by standing in contradistinction with US foreign policy and opening up relations with states such as West

Germany, he would also be responsible for notable failures, such as the breakdown of relations with Iran following the Iranian Revolution. More broadly, Hua's bid to build a global coalition to oppose revisionist Soviet imperialism and advance the Chinese revolution would also founder as China found few willing participants. Thus, despite the best efforts of Hua to maintain Maoist doctrine within the party, going so far as to try to appease moderates through the Ten-Year Plan, Deng's rise to power and the resultant removal of Hua and the other hardline Maoists would lead a qualitative shift in China's approach to alliances and, more broadly, international relations. Considering the relative constancy of Deng's fundamental approach through his next several successors' reigns, it is reasonable to describe the political lineage from Deng to Hu as the "post-Mao" era for comparative reasons. The path of Chinese foreign relations from the late 1970s to the early 2010s demonstrates an interesting degree of change and continuity, indirectly reflecting the party's own struggle to find its identity in the post-Mao era.

Deng Era: Black Cat or White Cat

In terms of core interests, China's basic orientation remained static: the USSR remained an increasing threat, while the US became an increasingly attractive partner in an anti-USSR front (Goldstein 2003). Yet, in terms of the content of their foreign policy, China's orientation underwent a marked transformation (Garver 2018, 351). Gone were the ideological rivalries and its associated claims of Soviet socialist imperialism as well as assertions of China's position as the leader of an international revolution. Deng shifted the focus of Chinese foreign policy back towards two pre-Mao goals, forming the basis for what would later be expanded into "socialism with Chinese characteristic": wealth and power (Delury and Schell 2014; Garver 2018). Deng's focus had centered on domestic reforms, pushing China to ensure that a secure international environment existed for Chinese growth to be made possible. This focus would become the

centerpiece of Chinese foreign policy for Deng's successors, with each international political crisis serving as a reminder of the necessity for China to pursue a "rich country and strong army."

By the early 1980s, two policy adjustments revealed the nature of China's new approach: first, the China-US alignment itself shifted as the US undertook a military buildup to counter the Soviet bloc and the USSR's threat level was perceived as declining (Goldstein 2003); second, in abandoning the concept of continuous revolution and subsequently walking back from Mao-era commitments to international revolution, Deng largely ended China's remaining material and moral support for other revolutionary movements and reduced the volume of aid sent to third-world states (Pye 1991; Xia 2008). Earlier, this shift was also reflected at the theoretical level: reframing their new mission in Marxist-Leninist terms, the CCP asserted that the "fundamental contradiction" was between the underdeveloped forces of production and the material needs of the labor classes, not between the proletariat and bourgeoisie as Mao had declared (Garver 2018, 333). The CCP therefore no longer leaned on the rhetoric of revolution versus revisionism to explain anti-Soviet behavior and were able to justify their "opening to the outside" transition without inciting instability by way of completely disregarding Mao's thought (Garver 2018; Goldstein 2003). This "opening" was facilitated by the advent of a new form of Chinese communism—socialism with Chinese characteristics—and a new guiding theory—cat theory—which called for Chinese to "dare to practice" without being constrained by predetermined ideological principles (Pye 1991). Marked by a new narrative of "century of national humiliation," the core of China's approach to foreign affairs and alliance formation rested not on protecting a nascent regime and inciting an Asian and, later, global revolution, but on modernizing China and transforming it back into the esteemed imperial power it was throughout

its 5,000-year history, even if that required building bridges—sometimes literally—with capitalist states.

But before China could begin the process of integrating into the global economic order and establish new relations in the 1980s, a conflict brewed between two familiar allies. By 1975, the Vietnamese Worker's Party had worked to secure their country's unification following the Paris Peace Accords, which brought an end to the Second Indochinese War. For a while, the CCP remained unaware of Vietnam's increasing contacts with the USSR and distancing from China but would become alarmed by what was perceived as a budding military alliance between Hanoi and Moscow after the two states signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in 1978, which was seen as having the potential to threaten the secure international environment the CCP needed for domestic reform and development (Maclaren 2019; Nguyen 2017). By then, the Sino-Soviet Stability Treaty had concluded, giving Chinese decisionmakers more policy options than if Deng had renewed the alliance (Maclaren 2019). As such, when a unified Vietnam invaded Cambodia in February 1979 in response to Cambodian shelling, murder of ethnic Vietnamese, and a growing Khmer Rouge backed by China, the CCP would in turn invade Vietnam "to teach Hanoi a lesson" and protect the Khmer Rouge, perceiving Vietnamese behavior as showing a lack of gratitude for Chinese support in previous decades (Chen 1995; Maclaren 2019).

Though other causal factors undoubtedly played into Chinese foreign policy decision-making, the intervention into Vietnam was largely the product of a strategic calculation whereby the prospect of a Vietnam-led "Indochina federation" integrating Cambodia was seen as unacceptable, and the idea of an unstable security landscape to their southwestern border seen as highly concerning (Garver 2018, 390). As has been the case throughout their long history, Cambodia ought to remain an independent state which could look to China for protection and

aid, and that continuity would be disrupted if Vietnam were left to meddle in Cambodia's internal affairs with support from the Soviets (Garver 2018). In this sense, although the Chinese intervention was largely seen as a military success, it did achieve certain political goals—just as the Soviets' hesitance in becoming involved in the Korean War exposed to the Chinese the limits of their relationship, the invasion of Vietnam by China demonstrated to the Vietnamese the limits of their treaty of friendship and cooperation with the Soviets as Moscow refrained from becoming directly involved to help defend against encroaching Chinese forces (Nguyen 2017).

That China intervened in Vietnam to keep Cambodia independent of Hanoi's control demonstrated to the other Southeast Asian powers that China was willing to maintain its commitments to state aligned with it—as China saw it, Cambodia was and has always been a protectorate of China since the time of the Yongle Emperor in the early 15th century (Garver 2018, 392). However, the intervention also showed the limited degree to which China was willing to become entangled in foreign affairs. Keeping to their core interest of maintaining a stable regional security environment, the degree to which Deng extended Chinese support to other states was commensurate with the degree to which such support could help realize a more stable environment, allowing China to concentrate on their domestic industrialization and development. While the operation had grown larger than initially anticipated as Vietnamese resistance grew fiercer, Deng maintained a clear focus on the narrower objectives which China sought to achieve. Within a few weeks, it became clear that their political objectives had been fulfilled—that is to say, Vietnam had been relatively pacified, and China showed itself to be a major power in Asia—and that further military involvement would bring additional costs in terms of manpower, resources, and authority (Chen 2021). By the middle of March, China pulled its military forces out of Vietnam, marking an interesting contrast with the later American

experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, where mission creep resulted in the US committing to long-term state- and nation-building projects (Maclaren 2019).

Deng, employing a triangular diplomacy to leverage its position between the US and the USSR, sought to create a "favorable macroclimate" to bring about the economic modernization he had been so fervently pushing for, even if that required pursuing closer relations with the US and other capitalist states (Garver 2018, 404). So tight would PRC-US cooperation become that through the 1980s, as China continued to support Khmer resistance groups fighting against Vietnamese forces, the US would reinforce Chinese policy by opposing Soviet-endorsed attempts by Vietnam to have its client regime in Phnom Penh be recognized as the official representative to the UN; the resultant effect would be for US media to begin speaking of China as a quasi-ally in their struggle against the USSR (Garver 2018, 405). But Chinese attempts to construct cooperative relationships throughout the 1980s would extend beyond the US: remarkably, Sino-Soviet relations would again improve as both states sought economic development, pushing both towards the US while, at the same time, US policy towards Taiwan pushed China to shift from anti-Soviet hegemonism to opposing all forms of hegemonism at the rhetorical level (Zubok 2017); in Europe, China developed closer relationships with a number of European states, including Italy, Hungary, Romania, and Germany (Fardella 2017; Gnoinska 2017); elsewhere in the periphery, China would rebuild its relationships with India, Iran, Japan, and South Korea, while also starting relations with states such as Indonesia (Garver, 2018). In all cases, China avoided making strategic commitments. By the time of the Tiananmen Massacre on June 4, 1989, when China faced a "democratic threat" from abroad as states moved to isolate Deng's regime, Deng would seek support from Eastern Europe as well as the region he had once left: the Third World. Framing themselves once again as a developing country resisting the

encroachment of "Western values," China would find great success in courting many Third World states, especially after the articulation of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which included a shared interest for Western noninterference (Garver 2018, 494).

When restricted to this set of facts, China's approach to alliances under the leadership of Deng can be easily interpreted as being the product of a more rational process than exhibited under Mao, with ideology being removed from the CCP's foreign policy calculus. Yet, Deng had always remained a committed communist, having survived through the Long March with Mao and many of the other CCP elites (Pye 1991). As such, it is unsurprising that, despite the fact that Deng had reneged on his predecessor's commitments to communist movements abroad, Chinese foreign relations contained traces of ideological considerations. Chinese ties with Italy, while motivated in part by a desire for trade, were also stimulated by the Italian Socialists' presence within the executive. Over time, China became impressed with Italy's independent activism against US control, opening the door to bilateral meetings and, eventually, China's first consular convention with a European country (Fardella 2017). In Poland, Chinese officials had shown little interest until a social movement, known as Solidarity, began to threaten the existing communist regime in the early 1980s. When this became evident to CCP leaders, China began to show economic and moral support for the Polish government, asserting that "socialist friends should help each other in crises" (Gnoinska 2017, 148). Unsurprisingly, China still had a strong interest in the survival of the communist regimes in Europe (Garver 2018; Westad 2017). Nonetheless, these relationships fell far short of alliances, and Beijing would be forced to watch as communist regimes in the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria collapsed in Eastern Europe, with the USSR soon to follow.

Deng may have not redefined or reframed alliances, but he did scale back commitments to formerly aligned states and engaged with external actors for purposes of internal growth, diverging from his predecessor's more active policies. While Deng sought closer relations with other states to facilitate the acquirement of inputs, he did not wish to develop such closer relations that China may be dragged into political crises which would impede or otherwise distract from domestic modernization. As such, while China increased its trade volume with Western European countries and the US, Deng opted not to participate in extensive economic and technological exchanges (Albers and Chen 2017). In this sense, the Chinese experiences with the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance as well as the North Korean and Vietnamese relationships may have played a role in shaping how Chinese leaders understood alliances as a vector for unwanted commitments, compelling them to avoid making agreements which could complicate future policy. To the CCP, tying oneself to the fate of the other regimes brought with it far too many risks with too little gain.

Jiang Era: China in Crisis

When Jiang Zemin was announced as General Secretary of the CCP in the months following the Tiananmen Massacre and Deng's subsequent purging of Zhao Ziyang, few believed Jiang had the strength to guide China as the developed world began to isolate China and as the CCP's internal politics intensified (Faison 1999). Although factional divisions, however obscure, have been a feature of the CCP since its origin, the aftermath of Tiananmen led to a three-way split between the "hardliners," who wanted to retreat from the reforms which Deng undertook and become isolationist, the "reformers," and the "tough internationalists," who wanted to continue cooperation with the West but on Chinese terms (Zagoria 1991). Citing Harry Harding, Donald S. Zagoria (1991) noted that through debate, the rigid policies which the hardliners advocated for

were rejected, leaving the reformers and tough internationalists to compete against the other. In spite of such pitfalls, elite politics would become more rational and predictable relative even to the Deng era over the course of Jiang's tenure as paramount leader (Shambaugh 2001).

By 1992, when China felt confident that it had weather the political storm generated in Tiananmen, the CCP began to exhibit greater confidence abroad, once again instituting reforms and pushing for large-scale trade (Goldstein 2003). As Jiang settled into his role as the largely undisputed leader of China, Chinese foreign policy would exhibit a high degree of continuity as Jiang followed Deng in pursuing domestic stability through stable external relations and the acquisition of capital and expertise for domestic economic modernization (Zagoria 1991). Thus, Chinese foreign policy remained subordinate to the stronger desire for internal development. In other words, Jiang, like Deng, remained fixated on maintaining a peaceful and stable international environment to ensure the smooth growth of Chinese industries. However, Jiang would find that the international environment was less forgiving to China than it was during the 1980s; though memories of Tiananmen had faded, and the discourse around the CCP's human rights record emptied, they had not disappeared. Curiously, and though he would later backtrack, Bill Clinton would in early 1993 recommend Congress to not extend China's Most Favored Nation status in response to their human rights record, thereby tying values with policy and exemplifying the ambiguity which defined the Sino-American relationship (Garver 2018, 532).

This ambiguity, and resultant insecurity, would motivate China to go out and develop even closer ties with other states, beginning with Cambodia and North Korea. Operating under the same goal of maintaining a secure international environment for developmental purposes, China would diplomatically engage with Hanoi, Moscow, and Washington to ensure that Vietnam no longer involved itself in the internal affairs of Cambodia (Garver 2018, 438). On the other hand,

while China would reject the human rights-based criticisms forwarded by the US after Tiananmen, the experience made officials more sensitive to and cautious of being associated with Cambodia's brutal Khmer Rouge regime. At the same time, Beijing continued to work for a settlement favorable to their interests, and through a UN-led process, succeeded in removing Vietnamese domination and proving to the Cambodian government China's effectiveness as a protector despite their simultaneous effort to distance themselves from Cambodia's past. In North Korea, the breakout of a nuclear crisis in 1993 would serve as further evidence for China's commitment to creating a stable international environment for itself. Recognizing that remaining neutral could play against them if war were to break out again on the peninsula, China would eventually come to support a resolution drafted by the US at the UN Security Council which would criticize North Korea for its violation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, a process which would later lead to an Agreed Framework in 1994. As China would come to appreciate, the flexibility in their approach to each unique situation was afforded to them by virtue of not having committed too deep into the fates of Cambodia and North Korea.

The importance of maintaining a safe neighborhood for development was amplified for a reason which Jiang's predecessors did not have to concern themselves with: by the time Jiang became paramount leader, the structure of elite politics in China had changed, and legitimacy was now earned from factors other than personal prestige and patronage, including the strength of the economy as well as improving living standards (Shambaugh 2001). Moreover, nationalism became a more powerful source for legitimacy; pursuing Taiwan and Japan, resisting the US, and visiting as well as receiving other national leaders all served an important functional role in bolstering CCP leaders' status abroad by signaling to the public that China was becoming recognized as the power it was destined to be (Shambaugh 2001). Elite politics would also

change in another critical way by becoming more pluralized and more *ad hoc* than during the Deng era. A greater number of consultative organs, executive institutions, and "leadership small groups" are now involved in the policymaking process, with the result being a less personalist system, where Jiang and the other Standing Committee of the Politburo members look to accommodate sometimes competing interests (Shambaugh 2001). In having to balance between the public desire for increased national prestige by way of increased connections with other states as well as the party's desire to keep to the developmental path and avoid becoming entangled in other states' affairs, China would craft a form of relationship which would become the hallmark of the Chinese approach to international politics: the strategic partnership.

Understanding the advantages of seeking an improved relationship with historically aligned states, China and Russia would begin to court one another despite the mutual disdain and distrust with which leaders of both states held each other. As the West appeared to renege on its promises of aid and consolidate former socialist states into the NATO fold, the Sino-Russian relationship would once again come to the forefront of Chinese foreign relations. In April 1996, China and Russia would issue a joint communique elevating their relationship to a "strategic cooperative partnership," which committed both states to the territorial security of the other—in particular, the Taiwan question in China and the Chechnya question in Russia—by way of providing military support, if not direct intervention (Garver 2018; Li and Ye 2019).

By 1998, the international environment would once again look different to Jiang and the other CCP leaders. As China continued to establish strategic partnerships and as the discourse of human rights continued to fade, Jiang and the other CCP leaders would appear far more friendly than it did just half a decade prior. Through the end of his tenure in 2002, Jiang and the rest of the Chinese party and government apparatuses would consistently view the international

environment as being friendly, opening up the possibility of deeper cooperation than was possible in 1992 (Yang, Keller, and Molnar 2018). While increased assertiveness in areas such as the South China Sea would induce a sense of concern among other states that China itself had hegemonic ambitions, Beijing would still successfully establish a series of strategic partnerships between 1996 and 2002. Through the end of the 20th century, China had established such partnerships with countries such as Brazil, France, ASEAN, Canada, India, Pakistan, and Japan; through the end of Jiang's tenure, China had expanded that list to include the EU, the UK, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, and South Africa (Garver 2018, 551).

The question of alliances appeared early on during the Jiang era, with Western analysts pointing to alliance formation as an alternative for China to deal with the insecurity it faced in the early- to mid-1990s. However, at that time, China in the wake of Tiananmen faced an absence of possible allies which shared their concerns and values, a point which will be explored later (Goldstein 2003, 71); it is also plausible that, nearing the end of the decade, China did not pursue alliances because they had come to be seen as unnecessary. Even after facing notable political crises, such as the 1999 US bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, China had become more concerned over US "soft containment" rather than direct military confrontation, with the exception of Taiwan. Yet, even in relation to Taiwan, China had managed to procure Russian support. In response to the US' policy of "engagement" with states peripheral to China and the US' ostensible Chinese containment policy, party leaders exercised caution in following the same path of the former Soviet Union and developing a Chinese bloc which would invariably draw greater American attention to the region and bring about the tragedy of great power politics once more.

Hu Era: A Community of Common Destiny

Ascending to General Secretary of the CCP at the end of 2002, Hu Jintao would expand the path of development first set by Deng, reinforcing Jiang's Three Represents and crafting his own "Scientific Outlook on Development" theory. But in the realm of foreign relations, he would signal a shift in China's outlook towards international politics, laying a foundation for his successor to build on. Like Jiang before him, Hu also viewed the world in rather friendly terms and sought to utilize cooperative strategies to pursue Chinese interests (Yang, Keller, and Molnar 2027). This perception of the international community would motivate Hu to go further abroad and form deeper relations with an even larger quantity of states. Several important concepts which would signal to other states Chinese intentions and perspectives would also first appear in this period and be taken up by Hu's successor as a means of balancing China's more assertive behaviors.

Before 2003, the naming convention for China's new partnerships was haphazard, with labels ranging from the "Strategic Cooperative Partnership" with Russia to the "Partnership of Constructive Cooperation" with India to the "Relation of Strategic Cooperation Facing 21st Century" with Saudi Arabia (Garver 2018, 551). By 2005, the naming process had been standardized, and most of China's additional partnerships became known as "Comprehensive Strategic Partnerships," indicating a stabilization of China's approach across states regardless of their real status vis-à-vis China. In order to adapt to a changing international and domestic landscape, Hu recognized the growing infeasibility for China to "lie low" as it did in the Deng era (Zheng 2007). Understanding China's need to "go out" to stimulate development, Hu would develop and employ a theory of "harmonious world" first at the United Nations in 2005, and later in his report to the 17th National Party Congress in October 2007, using key words such as "shared benefits," "diversity," and "cooperation" as a bid to project a passive and pacific image

to other external actors (Callahan 2013; Zheng 2007; "17th Party Congress" 2007). The harmonious world concept would be accompanied by a growing "confident nationalism" deriving in turn from increasing national prestige and economic development; citing a *People's Daily* article published during the 2008 Olympics hosted in Beijing, Abanti Bhattacharya (2019) noted that in this period, China had said "goodbye to humiliation." Through China's newfound philosophy of harmony, Hu projected an image of China which respected and would uphold a pluralist international community wherein states can coexist despite differences in national values. Juxtaposed against the current events of the time—a largely unilateral American intervention in Iraq, most notably—Hu's critique of hegemonism found a widespread audience among states weary of old power politics and unilateralism, as well as interested peoples at home who used the intentionally nebulous nature of the concept to debate China's path (Callahan 2013).

Hu's "Harmonious World" concept would find a complementary, but more nascent and more geographically restricted, idea also located within Hu's report to the 17th National Party Congress: the idea of a "community of common destiny." At first, the notion of a common destiny was introduced strictly within the context of cross-strait relations; arguing that China and Taiwan shared a common destiny, Hu reiterated the party's commitment to "peaceful reunification" ("Hu Jintao's report" 2007). However, by 2007, Hu had invoked the concept on a broader scale, first applying it regionally at a mid-2012 meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, then applying it globally in his report to the 18th National Party Congress held in late-2012 (Chen 2021; Jin 2013; "18th Party Congress" 2012). Harkening back to his Harmonious World concept, Hu would reiterate China's commitment to democracy, sovereignty, and global stability and peace; more significantly, Hu would also reinforce the importance of

respecting a diversity of "civilizations and development paths," allowing all peoples to independently select their social systems and development processes.

In the policy realm, China's image would briefly waver through its relationship with North Korea, with Chinese strategic thought alternating between four characterizations of the relationship: 1) one of China and North Korea as conventional allies; 2) of traditional neighborly and friendly relations; 3) of strategic partnership; 4) and of normal state-to-state relations (Kim 2020). Each view had an associated group of believers within the party, and though none were able to become predominant in party thinking, North Korean behavior would limit the influence of some. In particular, North Korea's continued nuclear weapons tests would result in increasing isolation on the part of the international community, putting strains on China's patience and providing support for those in the party who viewed North Korea as a strategic liability (Kim 2010). When North Korea sank the South Korean warship *Cheonan*, killing 46 sailors, China called for "restraint" and "calm" (Garver 2018, 670). When it was determined that North Korea was, in fact, responsible for the incident, China would swiftly and strongly stand behind the hermit regime, refusing to engage with the Joint Investigation Group organized to analyze the physical evidence and working to ensure that North Korea avoided accountability and that the US and South Korea exercised caution in retaliating against the state (Garver 2018, 670). In moments of crisis, then, North Korea's status as a perceived buffer state would trump its status as a liability—in moment of crisis, China's security meant that the realities of power politics continued to overshadow its expressed desire for a Harmonious World characterized by open communication and multilateralism.

The Curious Case of the Non-Aligned Movement

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) deserves special attention not only because it represented an attempt by Third World states to move away from the great power game played by the US and USSR, but also because, temporally, it has lasted through the end of the Cold War—and by proxy through each generation of Chinese leadership—and conceptually, it provides a case which demonstrates the continuity of China's expressed disdain for conventional alliance politics and drive to secure support from among the Third World. Though a full treatment cannot be provided here, it is worthwhile to begin setting the stage for later examination.

China's first substantive attempt to reach out to the Third World occurred in 1955, when China accepted an invitation by India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Burma, and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) to participate at the Bandung Conference, a meeting of 29 Asian and African states over the problem of great power politics (Wood 2012). Though the conference itself would be characterized by a variety of competing interests and values, it would lay the foundation for an emergent movement of non-aligned states and provide China with opportunities to diplomatically engage Third World parties, such as Egypt and Nepal, which were previously out of reach (Garver 2018, 108). Yet it would also bring to the surface the disparate belief systems of India's Nehru and China's Mao; though India and China would tentatively seek friendly relations, Nehru's vision of non-alignment and disarmament was incompatible with Mao's vision of a united front against imperialism that would wage revolutionary war in the name of socialism (Garver 2018, 110). By the 1970s, Mao and Zhou would perceive India as a Soviet ally and consequently look to bolster Pakistan's military capabilities—indeed, going as far as to send nuclear scientists to assist their nuclear arms program—following its humiliating defeat by India in 1971, viewing the Pakistani regime as a quasi-ally (Garver 2018, 333). That China disapproved of non-alignment would be an understatement.

By the time Jiang became paramount leader, however, China's attitude towards the now existent NAM had, like other aspects of Chinese foreign policy, changed. In 1992, China formally assumed observer status within the NAM as a means of further appealing to Third World states and securing their support, a policy which China would maintain through the present day. The NAM, first established for states who desired to remain detached from the US-USSR competition, had shifted its focus general anti-hegemonism and common development, which China had found highly agreeable as the US began to experiment with the possibilities of a unipolar world (Fowdy 2021). Recognizing the discontent present throughout the Third World—soon to be known as the Global South—China would continue its old strategy of appealing to states perceiving the US' unipolar moment as a new form of economic imperialism via an image of a pacific and development-focused China.

7 A Quasi-Quantitative Test of Chinese Alliance Formation

Although an evaluation of the history of Chinese foreign relations provides a great deal of support for the claimed causes of the observed structure of Chinese alliance formation, it is not without its weaknesses. As such, this chapter seeks to integrate a more quantitative component into an analysis of Chinese foreign policy. Because of the absence of hypothesis testing, it is reasonable to describe this form of data-based evaluation as being "quasi-quantitative." It is meant only to supplement the historical analysis, not supplant it. Nonetheless, a closer look at the data reveals insights which are interesting to consider, even if they are inferential and not conclusive. This section will be divided into two sections which respectively consider in greater depth the second and third arguments—that is, China maintains a preference for strategic flexibility and therefore requires relations with fewer commitments, and also that other states maintain an entrapment complex towards China and therefore view any alliance with China as undesirable. For the first section, the Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions (ATOP) dataset will be consulted to assess the characteristics of China's existing relationships; for the second section, the Militarized Interstate Disputes (MID) dataset will be consulted to assess the characteristics of those conflicts which involve China—and by extension, any state which decides to enter into a formal alliance with China.

China's Treaty Obligations and Provisions

The second prong in the general explanation for Chinese behavior vis-à-vis alliance politics is that China prioritizes flexibility in their relations with other states over deeper, more direct control. As mentioned before, this is the inverse of what has been observed with US' own network of bilateral alliances, wherein the US has historically sought to maintain maximum pressure and control over their Asian allies. Principally, there are several questions that are of

particular interest: 1) when were China's historical alliances formed—is the ATOP data consistent with the historical evaluation? 2) What are the obligations agreed upon by each member of the dyad? 3) Were the obligations symmetric or asymmetric? If they were asymmetric, which state acted as the patron? Moreover, in consulting the ATOP data to answer these questions, it is important to consider the definition of alliances advanced by Leeds, Ritter, Mitchell, and Long (2002) and reemphasized in the ATOP codebook: "written agreements, signed by official representatives of at least two independent states, that include promises to aid a partner in the event of military conflict, to remain neutral in the event of conflict, to refrain from military conflict with one another, or to consult/cooperate in the event of international crises that create a potential for military conflict."

As a note, it is helpful to note that alliances are coded only if they involve *cooperation* in addressing military threat—agreements which only involve intelligence sharing, territorial leasing, etc. do not qualify. In arrangements where the expectations of behavior for each allied member do not involve active cooperation, entrapment fears are likely to not be felt or otherwise perceived by a state—in cases where they are felt, such fears would not be as acute as in arrangements that involved active cooperation. As such, this descriptive analysis will utilize the standard ATOP dataset set at the alliance level to assess the first question posed, while the directed dyad-year dataset will be used to assess the nature of the obligations maintained by each member of the alliance. Importantly, the former set excludes nonaggression pacts because they by definition do not involve provide for specified obligations on the part of either state.

When Were the Alliances Formed?

The ATOP data is largely consistent with the historical evaluation presented in the previous chapter. However, despite ostensibly excluding nonaggression pacts, the standard alliance-level

dataset includes a number of relationships between China and other states which are strictly nonaggression pacts—for example, the nonaggression pact signed by China and Ghana in 1961 (ATOP ID: 3450). As these agreements contain no provisions for cooperation in the face of threat, these do not meet the conditions of being an alliance. In terms of more conventional alliances, the ATOP data identified the China-USSR (ATOP ID: 3123) and China-North Korea (ATOP ID: 3547) relationships as the sole alliances. Interestingly, while the China-North Korea alliance is coded as having been formed outside of the context of war as expected, the authors coded the China-USSR alliance as having been signed during war—specifically, on the final day of WWII. Just from the data, therefore, it is easy to infer that the China-USSR alliance was formed out of insecurities faced in the face of varied threats. While the China-North Korea alliance, as it is coded, would not appear to support the assertion that it was formed out of threat perceptions, the historical evaluation fills this explanatory gap.

Equal Alliances

In a broad sense, the China-USSR and China-North Korea alliances—as they are coded—differ in that the former is categorized as both a defense and offense pact, whereas the latter is a defense and nonaggression pact. Relatedly, while the latter is a more general alliance whereby each actor promised to support one another in conflict and not engage in other alliances directed against the other, the former was crafted explicitly through an identification of Japan as a security threat. In fact, termination of the alliance was contingent on either it going beyond a certain date—360 months after going into effect—or if the UN took responsibility for preventing Japanese aggression. Moreover, neither state was obligated to militarily support the other unless the belligerent was Japan. Most importantly, however, the obligations were the same for each state. In other words, the dyad was symmetric, a stark contrast to the form of China's current

partnerships, which take the form of a patron-client relationship wherein initial economic ties link to other policy domains and China exercises far more leverage in managing the terms of the relationship.

China's Militarized Interstate Disputes

Perhaps the most interesting point, as well as the most challenging to demonstrate, has been that China is perceived as an undesirable ally, hence other states' general reluctance to engage in relations with China beyond developing economic ties and leveraging Chinese patronage to shore up domestic political support. The historical analysis above asserted that, given both China's policy inertia in relation to alliance formation as well as China's rhetoric against the more general dynamics of alliance politics, China would further lose its appeal to the Global South if it embraced conventional alliances. Certainly, much of China's bid to appeal to the Global South has relied on rhetoric centering on avoiding adventurism and maintaining strict state sovereignty. This section will look to explore in further detail the former point—that is, that China is perceived as an undesirable ally as a result of entrapment fears by China's potential allies. Specifically, this section will assess the character of Chinese disputes and conflicts using the MIDs dataset to derive inferences about how other states may be responding to Chinese behavior—in particular, those which have generally responded positively towards Chinese overtures. Using Johnston's (1998) "first cut" at the MID data as a reference point, several questions are especially relevant: 1) what is the relative frequency of disputes in which China is a participant? 2) What kind of disputes—territorial, policy, or regime—is China involved in, and to what extent? 3) What is the average level of force reached by China? 4) Perhaps most significantly, how does this all compare with Chinese behavior in militarized interstate disputes during the Cold War? While the assessment here will largely be grounded in descriptive analysis,

it can still either provide unique insights or reinforce the arguments laid out in prior sections. In addition, although this is ground already covered in Johnston (1998), the time frame covered in his study ends at 1992, leaving out Chinese behavior in disputes during the Jiang, Hu, and Xi eras.

Discussions concerning China's disputes are not new. M. Taylor Fravel (2007) asserted that China employed force in six of its twenty-three territorial disputes since 1949. Nie Hongyi (2009), focusing on border issues, assessed twenty cases of Chinese behavior in response to neighboring states' border policies, finding that Chinese policy was reactive—when a neighboring state adopted an expansionary border policy, China responded in a more hardline manner than if the neighbor had accepted the status quo. Most recently, Chubb (2021) applied a similarly narrow focus and assessed Chinese behavior in the South China Sea between 1970 and 2015, finding that PRC assertiveness had "intensified in some form almost every year since 1970, and every year since 1990." Complementing this finding, Johnston (2013) had concluded earlier that the meme of "Chinese assertiveness" was, as described earlier, inaccurate in all contexts, with the notable exception of the territorial disputes in the South China Sea. Although Johnston's 2013 was subsequently critiqued, notably by Dingding Chen and Xiaoyu Pu (2013), who argued in favor of expanding the concept of assertiveness to include more positive connotations, Johnston's article established an important point which sheds light on why states may fear becoming entrapped in an alliance with China, a point which will be discussed in greater depth next.

Table 1: Total Number of Disputes, 1992-2014

State	Period	# of Disputes	Orig	RevState	ProRevState
China	1992-2014	67	66	40	0.60
U.S.	1992-2014	82	65	42	0.51

Russia	1992-2014	79	74	36	0.46
India	1992-2014	29	29	11	0.38

Frequency of Disputes

China was involved in fewer militarized interstate disputes relative to the US and Russia; however, China was involved in far more disputes than other rising powers in a similar position, such as India (see Table 1). Moreover, and perhaps more significantly, although the US was a revisionist state in a greater number of disputes in absolute terms compared to China, Russia, and India, China was a revisionist state in a greater proportion of disputes relative to the other major powers assessed (see Table 1; "RevState" = dispute wherein the given actor was a revisionist state as opposed to a status quo state). (The proportion of disputes wherein a state was revisionist is represented by "ProRevState"). Just as significantly, China was the originator of 98% of the disputes it was involved in, just behind India (100%) but above the US (79%), Russia (93%).

While the number of disputes which a given state is involved in may not accurately represent the attractiveness of that state, it is reasonable to assume that states that are more prone to becoming involved in militarized disputes, and moreover, that are more prone to *initiating* disputes as opposed to simply defending against aggression by other states are more likely to induce entrapment fears in allied or otherwise aligned states. If smaller states wish to retain the status quo in the security environment, China's tendency to attempt to revise the international or regional system may further repel possible allies. As it stands, China during the post-Cold War period has been the originator in the overwhelming majority of its disputes, it has been the revisionist state in the majority of its disputes, and it has been involved in a higher frequency of disputes. Overall, the result is a decrease in the likelihood for alliance formation to occur. This may be especially pronounced in the case of China, as many of the disputes that it has been

participant to have been territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas or borders disputes with neighboring states, all of which hold little value to states allied to China.

Table 2: Comparative Frequency of MIDs during the Cold War

State	Period	Frequency (MIDs/year)
China	1949-1992	2.34
U.S.	1946-1992	3.12
USSR	1945-1992	2.96
India	1947-1992	1.53

Table 3: Comparative Frequency of MIDs, 1992-2014

State	Period	Frequency (MIDs/year)
China	1992-2014	2.96
U.S.	1992-2014	3.73
Russia	1992-2014	3.76
India	1992-2914	1.32

Perhaps unsurprisingly, China during the Cold War did not participate in MIDs at the same frequency as the two global superpowers (see Table 2). As demonstrated by the historical evaluation, this was largely because of Chinese leaders' focus on consolidating the regime's authority and ensuring its survival against largely internal enemies. It is similarly unsurprising, therefore, that the post-Cold War era saw an increase in the frequency of disputes for most major powers (see Table 3). Save for Russia, China saw the largest increase in the frequency of MIDs from 2.34 to 2.96 MIDs per year as Chinese leaders slowly shored up their authority and began to go outward into the international community. There are two points worth noting here, though: 1) the democracy movement in China during the 1980s, which culminated in the infamous 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, led to Chinese policymakers suddenly shifting their focus inward as leaders were faced with an internal crisis requiring their immediate and full attention; the

backlash received from the international community over the massacre further drove China to become remarkably hesitant in engaging with the outside world. In fact, China was involved in no disputes from 1989-1990 and only one in 1991. 2) Based on Chubb's (2021) assessment of Chinese behavior in the South China Sea, it is reasonable to assume that the frequency of Chinese MIDs has only increased since 2014, though there is no data yet to support this claim.

It is also important to note that there exist discrepancies between the frequency values listed in Johnston (1998)—which utilized the original MID 1.0 dataset—for China (2.74), the US (3.93), and the USSR (1.72), and the values calculated here using the MID 5.0 dataset (China = 2.34, US = 3.12, USSR = 2.96). These discrepancies are likely a result of continual updates and corrections to the data. Indeed, studies on the validity of the MID dataset, such as Downes and Sechser (2012) and Gibler, Miller, and Little (2016), had found errors in the coding of hundreds of cases ranging. These errors ranged from minor imprecisions that could be easily and swiftly corrected to inaccuracies significant enough to warrant a recommendation by the authors that they be dropped from the dataset entirely. While it is unclear to what degree this would render Johnston's original assessment inaccurate, it is notable that the region and period which contained the greatest number of coding errors was Asia between 1946-1992 (Gibler, Miller, and Little 2016). More specifically, Gibler, Miller, and Little (2016) found that Asia between 1946-1992 contained the highest number of cases for every category of alteration (drop, merge, major change).

Table 4: Mode of MID Type, 1992-2014

State	Period	Mode
China	1992-2014	2
U.S.	1992-2014	2

Type of Disputes

Both China and the US have been involved in more policy disputes (coded as 2) than territorial (coded as 1) and regime (coded as 3) disputes (see Table 4). However, while both states have been involved in more policy disputes than any other type, this alone does not tell the full story. Significantly, between 1992 and 2014, China has been engaged in nineteen territorial disputes; in contrast, the US has engaged in only one territorial dispute with Canada in 1997, when Canadian fishermen blocked an Alaskan ferry and held its passengers hostage for several days over a dispute concerning fishing rights near Machias Seal Island (Selkirk 2019). Moreover, while the US has been involved in three regime disputes, China has been involved in five regime disputes, a reality which contrasts China's long-time rhetoric—and real concerns—on prioritizing state sovereignty in international crises over other notable issues, such as the protection of human rights.

However, as Johnston (1998, 12) notes, many of the instances coded as "regime" could be recoded as territorial disputes for several reasons: 1) many cases coded as "regime" were disputes with Taiwan in the 1960s which over control of the island. 2) Chinese uses of force were not designed to overthrow the ruling KMT as a result of a lack of capability. 3) Chinese military actions would not have taken place if China did not stake claim to Taiwan as Chinese territory. Taken altogether, China's tendency to initiate a high volume of territorial and policy disputes would deter other states from entering into formal alliances that would militarily commit them to supporting Chinese actions largely along the border and in the South and East China Seas. While this likely would not make a significant impact on an analysis of the dataset, it is nonetheless important to take into consideration—the manner in which those disputes are

framed would determine whether Chinese rhetoric aligns with its behavior in relation to state sovereignty.

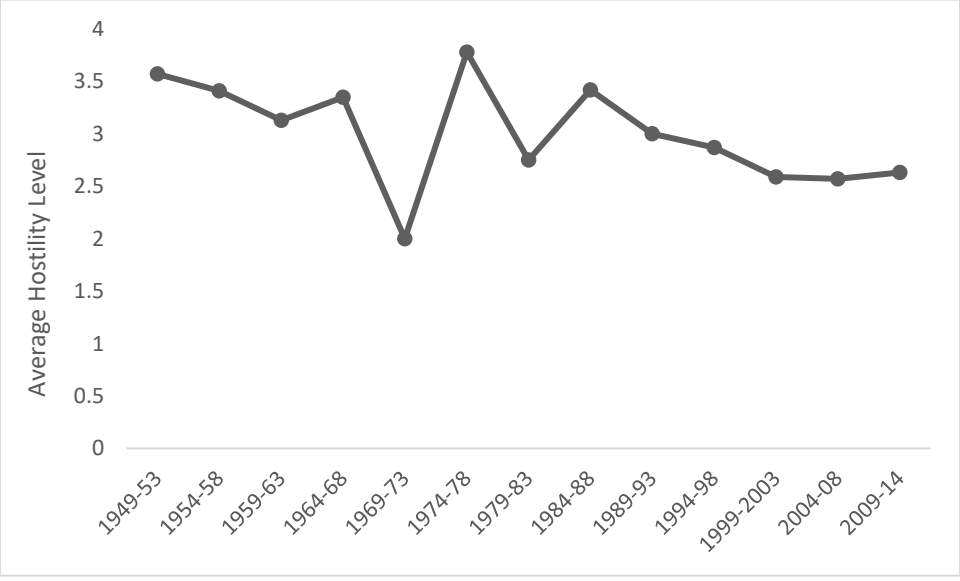
Table 5: Comparative Average Level of Hostility, During and After Cold War

State	Period	Average Hostility Score
China	1949-1991	3.158
	1992-2014	2.716
U.S.	1945-1991	2.800
	1992-2014	3.000
USSR	1945-1991	2.964
Russia	1992-2014	2.772
India	1947-1991	3.319
	1992-2014	3.379

Table 6: China's Average Level of Hostility, Pre- and Post-Xi

State	Period	Average Hostility Score
China	1992-2011	2.655
	2012-2014	3.000

Figure 1: Average Hostility Score per MID in Five Year Periods, 1949-2014*



*The year 2014 was included in the original 2009-2013 period to include Xi's second year in the average.

Use of Force

The MID dataset incorporates two measures of levels of force used by a state in a given dispute. The first is a five-point scale measuring hostility levels.[1] The second is a twenty-one-point scale categorizing the action taken by a state in the dispute.[2] Referencing hostility levels—a more general and less imprecise measure—first, China during the Cold War was involved in disputes that escalated higher relative to other states' disputes, with the notable exception of India (see Table 5). While the US and Russia maintained an average hostility score of under 3 (use of force), China's average surpassed that figure. In the context of China specifically, the average hostility score was at its lowest during the 1969-1973 period, which Johnston (1998) believes was a product of both the winding down of the Cultural Revolution and China's strategic opening to the US (see Figure 1).

Critically, Chinese hostility levels dropped after the 1984-1988 period—China initiated fewer disputes and were less likely to use force in disputes. In fact, China maintained the lowest average hostility score of the major powers assessed as China became much keener on relying on threats and displays of force to avoid provoking further international criticism. However, when comparing the periods before and after Xi's ascension to leading China, China's average hostility score increased from 2.655 to 3 after Xi became paramount leader (see Table 6). Furthermore, the number of cases in the 2012-2014 are low (N = 12). The addition of cases after 2014 would

[1] The hostility levels are: no militarized action (1), threat to use force (2), display of force (3), use of force (4), war (5).

[2] The categories of action are: no militarized action (0), threat to use force (1), threat to use blockade (2), threat to occupy territory (3), threat to declare war (4), threat to use CBR weapons (5), threat to join war (6), show of force (7), alert (8), nuclear alert (9), mobilization (10), fortify border (11), border violation (12), blockade (13), occupation of territory (14), seizure (15), attack (16), clash (17), declaration of war (18), use of CBR weapons (19), begin interstate war (20), join interstate war (21).

certainly lead to a different figure; given the trend and increasing number of reports concerning fishing rights violations, demonstrations of force in the South and East China Seas, restarting of border clashes with India, etc. it is likely that the average hostility score would be higher than is listed here. (Furthermore, while Johnston develops a violence score by multiplying the action code number with the hostility level number, the absence of the former value in the contemporary dataset precludes a replication here).

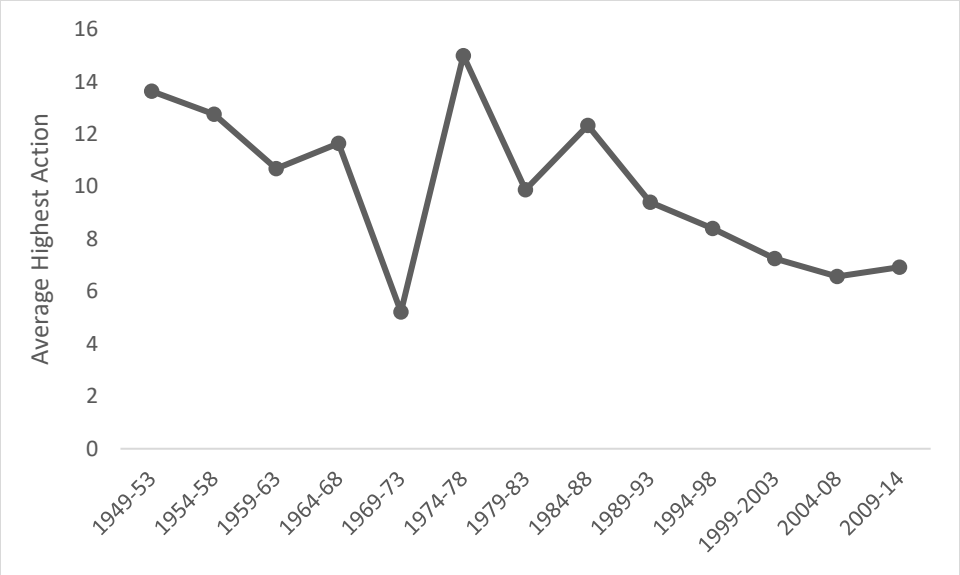
Table 7: Comparative Average Highest Action in Disputes, 1992-2014

State	Period	Average Highest Action
China	1949-1991	11.22
	1992-2014	7.582
U.S.	1945-2014	8.307
	1992-2014	9.451
USSR	1945-2014	9.453
Russia	1992-2014	8.139
India	1947-1991	12.06
	1992-2014	12.24

Table 8: China's Average Highest Action in Disputes, Pre- and Post-Xi

State	Period	Average Highest Action
China	1992-2011	7.273
`	2012-2014	9.000

Figure 2: Average Highest Action per MID in Five Year Periods, 1949-2014



The average highest action score is even more illustrative of this basic reality. During the Cold War, China was the most escalatory state among the major powers included in the analysis (see Table 7). Prior to Hu Jintao's tenure as paramount leader, China was involved in a high number of clashes (coded as 17) along its border with states such as Vietnam and the USSR. However, in the post-Cold War era, China became the least escalatory state. When looking at changes in Chinese behavior after Xi became paramount leader, China's average highest action increased to 9 from 7.273 during the 1992-2011 period, meaning China was more likely to pursue more escalatory means relative to the US (5.75) and Russia (8.8)—again, India (9.9) was the exception. In both the pre- and post-Xi periods, the most common actions by China were "shows of force" (40% and 42%), "border violations" (9% and 7%), and "seizures" (7% and 25%). However, as with the measure of average hostility level during the 2012-2014 period, it is likely that the inclusion of disputes later in Xi's tenure, such as border clashes with India and displays of force in the South and East China Seas, would alter this figure.

A More Hostile Environment

When considered together, the ATOP and MID data demonstrate a point of critical importance. On first inspection, it would be tempting to downplay or otherwise undermine the capacity of the ATOP and MID data to explain Chinese alliance politics because the two datasets explicitly focus on *militarized* behavior. For the ATOP, Leeds specifies that alliances, as coded, refers to instances where two or more states entered into a formal arrangement principally for the purpose of military cooperation. The MID, as the name suggests, by design narrows its focus to those disputes and conflicts which involved militarization of some form, excluding other disputes that did not contain a militaristic element—for example, trade disputes, diplomatic fracturing, and other forms of non-military conflict. However, while such factors are certainly relevant, and ideally, a full analysis would require a dataset containing such datapoints, the ATOP and MID data nonetheless bolsters the proposed explanation.

What the ATOP and MID data helps demonstrate is that while states have been willing—oftentimes even eager—to enter into economic relations with China as they seek to develop their domestic infrastructure or diplomatically support Chinese proposals and resolutions at the UNGA, they have been far more hesitant to go further in their relations with China and link their own security with that of China. Both instances of Chinese alliance formation during the Cold War, as discussed in the second chapter, came from acute perceptions of threat experienced by both members of the dyad; since the 1960s, China has not entered into any formal security arrangements.

In terms of militarized interstate disputes, China has acted in a less hostile manner during the post-Cold War Period, even relative to other major powers. However, despite the absence of data post-2014, the 2012-2014 period still showed an upswing in the frequency of disputes that China became involved in, the level of hostility to which China escalated the dispute, and the severity

of policies China pursued to secure their interests and resolve the dispute. All of these considerations would factor into the calculus of policymakers of smaller states deciding between staying neutral or joining China as an ally and committing themselves to the risk of being dragged into distant disputes that promise few gains.

8 Explaining Variance in Chinese Alliance Politics

As a final exploration of Chinese alliance formation, it is reasonable to appreciate the consistency with which China has approached the question of alliances. Despite radical shifts in Chinese foreign policy, what has remained constant was their rejection of alliances as a solution. Here, it is worthwhile to establish that while generally, all three explanations offered tend to reinforce one another, it would be more precise to note that at any given point, one particular explanation takes prominence over the others. This is especially the case with the latter two explanations—that is, China's strategic outlook and other states' perceptions of China. For example, during periods in which China was active in regional and international politics, China likewise exhibited higher levels of hostility in militarized interstate disputes. In these contexts, negative perceptions of China by other states serve as the primary explanatory variable. In contrast, during periods of low hostility, China was absent in the region, instead focusing on internal issues. In these contexts, Chinese strategic preferences can be considered the primary explanatory variable as CCP leaders sought a means of holding onto their interests abroad while avoiding making excessive commitments that would entangle or otherwise distract them.

Chinese foreign policy during and after the Cultural Revolution is illustrative of this. From 1969 to 1973, as the Cultural Revolution was winding down, China became involves in fewer disputes, and in the disputes in which they were participants, Chinese leaders were far less inclined to escalate them (Figure 2). During this period, China's decreasing hostility would, at first glance, indicate that they would be most primed to forge new alliances, as others' threat perceptions of China would commensurately decline. However, China's inactivity abroad reflected their inward focus as the regime sought to consolidate their authority and restabilize the country in the wake of mass purges. In this context, Chinese policymakers had little desire to

become involved in adventures abroad, and would therefore be unwilling to join in formal commitments which ran the risk of becoming militarily involved in another's conflicts. Following Mao's death, Hua's China became involved in a greater number of disputes. What is more, as Hua attempted to continue pursuing Mao's goals, China became far more willing to escalate those disputes, using higher levels of force to achieve their interests (Figure 2). In light of this newfound vigor, Hua's bids to craft deeper security relations with other states failed as other leaders viewed Chinese intentions with increasing suspicion.

Yet, in other contexts, both China's strategic outlook as well as outside perceptions of China appear to maintain roughly equal significance in explaining the absence of alliance formation, oftentimes contributing to the other. In the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, CCP leaders were largely preoccupied with internal issues—notably, dealing with the democratic movement that had begun to question the legitimacy of the regime. However, the immediate and widespread backlash from the international community surprised Chinese policymakers, who further retreated into a safer policy of inactivity. As mentioned earlier, China was involved in only a single dispute between 1989 and 1992. Moreover, after 1993, China was far less escalatory in its disputes, opting for less aggressive means of securing their interests. In this case, China's strategic outlook, which was already inward-looking and favored fewer and shallower commitments, was reinforced by other states' negative perceptions of China, in no small part because it increased feelings of insecurity and fear in the minds of Chinese policymakers. Ultimately, given the longevity of this negative trend in levels of hostility, which had persisted through the end of the Hu era and through the Jiang era, the eventual reversal of this trend by Xi in 2012 becomes all the more significant.

Although the MIDs dataset does not yet include data beyond 2014, it is reasonable to assert based on other research that China's shift outward under Xi has been accompanied by a relatively higher propensity to both become embroiled in militarized interstate disputes but also to escalate those disputes (Chubb 2021). Some observers, including famed geopolitical analyst Elon Musk, believe that China's perceived assertiveness, and resultant tension with the US, would lead to a renewed alliance between China and Russia, as both seek to compete against the US just as their predecessors have (Olinga 2023). Indeed, some assert that the relationship already constitutes an alliance, albeit an undeclared one (Allison 2023; Brands 2023; Washington Post 2023). Many of the warnings given by authors regarding a possible Sino-Russian alliance have come *after* the Russian invasion of Ukraine (although many have been discussing the possibility long before then). To some, the increasing cooperation between China and Russia seems to signal a genuinely deepening relationship between the two countries, made possible by a mutual desire to upend the US as the preponderant power.

However, the findings of this study predict that the relationship will not deepen into a formal alliance with military commitments in the near future unless the CCP feels that they are in imminent, existential danger. Three points in particular should be considered: 1) the war in Ukraine has limited relevance to China, and certainly does not directly affect Chinese sovereignty and territory, which CCP leaders have consistently referred to as red lines which *would* warrant uses of force. 2) China has refrained from voting in UNSC resolutions against Russia, opting to simply abstain from the vote altogether (India Today 2023). 2) Following a summit with Putin that ended on March 22, 2023, Xi called on former-Soviet states in Central Asia to a meeting, undermining Russian influence in the region (Porter 2023). This remarkable maneuver demonstrates China's opportunistic calculus as it navigates the fragile political

landscape created by Russia's reckless behavior. In a more general sense, although it is difficult to ascertain how the CCP is choosing their foreign policies vis-à-vis Russia in the context of the invasion of Ukraine, it is reasonable to assert that they wish to avoid becoming entangled in Ukraine by committing to Russian security. In other words, it is just as likely that China is simply taking advantage of an opportunity to place itself in a better position relative not only to the US, but also to Russia, with minimal costs to itself. If this is the case, Chinese policymakers likely feel vindicated about their chosen strategy of partnerships—certainly, a formal alliance would have led them into a quagmire designed not by them, but their ally.

9 Conclusion

The purpose of this analysis was to begin to make ground on the surprising dearth of research on contemporary Chinese alliance politics. While much work has covered China's Belt and Road Initiative, especially as notions of a Chinese "debt trap" diplomacy began to predominate political discourses, and though a research regime covering China's partnerships are in its nascent stages, most of this work has focused on either the economic implications of these developments, the military-strategic implications of Chinese expansion into its neighborhood and periphery, and increasingly, examinations of the impact of Chinese projects on local communities and environments. Very few scholars have approached the curiosity that is Chinese strategic partnerships from a distinctively political science perspective—that is to say, by tying it into the broader literature on alliance formation. This analysis argues that Chinese alliance formation has been inhibited by three major factors: 1) at a systemic level, the conditions of East Asian security are such that a certain "threshold" has not been met which would spur states to search for allies. 2) In contrast with the US, which sought to maximize pressure and control over its Asian partners, Chinese policymakers have pursued a foreign policy which prioritizes

strategic flexibility. 3) China is perceived as an undesirable ally by other, smaller states who harbor concerns over increasing Chinese assertiveness in disputes which hold little value outside Beijing.

The first point is a seeming constant in international politics—perceptions of threat will compel states to look towards gathering support from other states. The second is unique to China. While China is not the only state which could be said to prioritize "strategic flexibility"—after all, most states operating on a hedging strategy could have that description applied to them—there is a certain policy inertia which guides Chinese policy in that particular direction. As the historical evaluation showed, China had consistently made overtures to the Nonaligned Movement, asserting itself a friend of Third World and, after the Cold War ended, of the Global South. Reneging on this very open and clear rhetoric would damage its credibility vis-à-vis those very states; China today needs their support, whether as votes for UNGA resolutions or for international trade. As such, Chinese alliance politics has been path dependent, and China must tread carefully if it wishes to engage in the same alliance dynamics it has long criticized as anachronistic. The third point closely relates to the second: as China continues to struggle with its dual identity of being both a major power and a developing country, Global South states in particular look with concern over how China is managing its various disputes with other, developing states such as the Philippines. While China may not have become more assertive in most policy domains, it *has* become more hostile in the disputes which hold the least relevance for other states: territorial disputes along its border and in the South and East China Seas. That aligning with China would mean severing most ties with the US also makes this choice an even more difficult one for states that have much to lose in a conflict with either global power.

While the first argument was largely theoretically grounded, the second and third arguments were tested through an application of process tracing, where the foreign relations of China under each paramount leader was evaluated to determine how past Chinese behavior contributed to their contemporary policies. The third argument was further supported by a quasi-quantitative examination of Chinese militarized interstate disputes. Using the MID 5.0 dataset, this study used descriptive statistics to determine how the frequency of Chinese disputes, their type, and their severity changed over time. It found that while Chinese disputes decreased in both frequency and intensity around the time of the Cultural Revolution and Tiananmen Square massacre—and this remained constant for most of the post-Cold War period—it began an upswing once Xi became paramount leader in 2012. Although there is an absence of data in the years after 2014, it is reasonable to assume that this upward trend in both frequency and severity has continued as China became bolder in pursuing disputes concerning its border, fishing rights, resources, and contested territories.

While it is hoped that this analysis sheds some light on Chinese foreign policy decision-making as well as the external causes for China's strategy of networked partnerships, it still suffers from the same condition that many other single-N case studies fall into: the explanation proposed remains largely idiosyncratic and evades easy generalization. However, beyond serving as a case study on a major power in the post-Cold War era, this study contributes to the broader literature on alliance formation in several ways. Most significantly, it demonstrates that existing theories of alliance formation are unable to explain patterns of alliance formation in at least an East Asian context. While the presence of external threats, particularly immediate ones, *may* compel alliance formation—and indeed, such a development could lend support to balance of threat theories—realist theories of alliance formation would have predicted that alliance

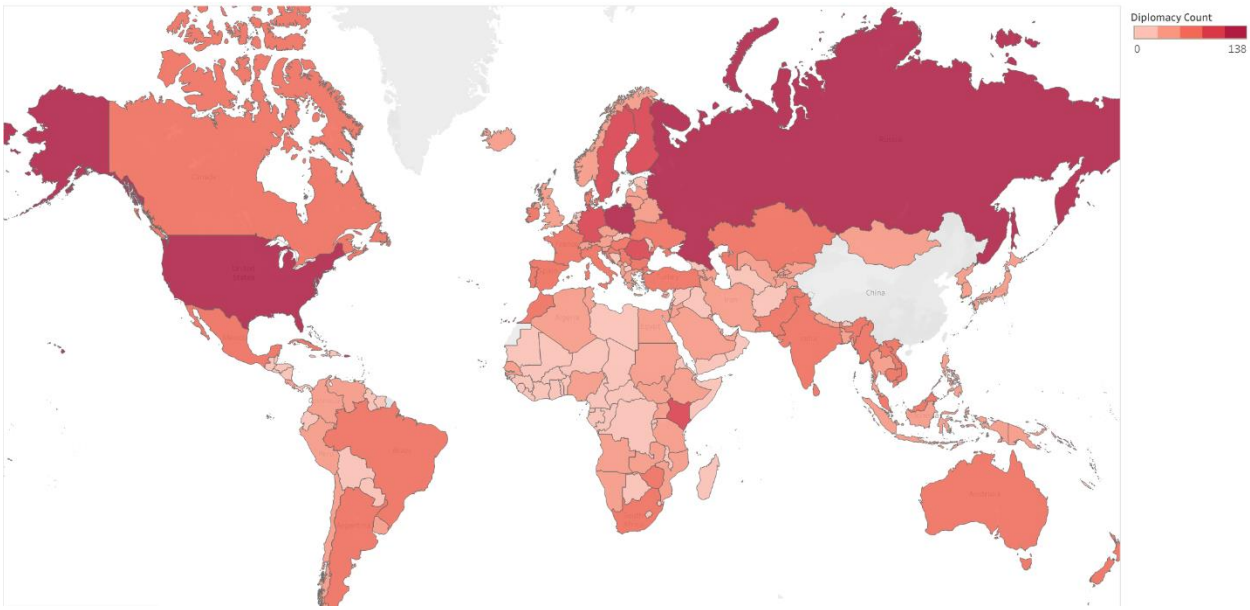
formation would have already occurred as China seeks power parity with the US. However, this analysis shows greater promise for network theories of alliances as well as theories of quasi-alliances, which often focus on informal relations between states that approach alliances but fall short of the formal commitments that would obligate a state to intervene on behalf of another's security. In addition, although this study does not approach a "soft" model of alliance formation, what is nonetheless indicated is the importance of sub-system variables. Processes such as foreign policy decision-making as well as factors related to how states perceive one another—many of which suffer from nonrational processes such as affect and cognitive biases—hold great influence over how a state seeks to develop closer ties with other states, even in relation to security. More generally, history, though not deterministic, likewise holds sway over contemporary policy. In other words, China's historical policy regarding alliances partially informs their current policy.

Beyond the literature, understanding Chinese alliance formation and how it either matches or diverges from conventional alignment and alliance dynamics is critical as US-China competition continues to intensify and other regional actors feel increasingly pressured to respond to a rapidly changing security landscape. Although Washington may think in more black-and-white terms—what Chinese policymakers have criticized as "zero-sum" thinking—and concerns itself with questions over how smaller states will choose between the US or China, Beijing may be thinking in broader terms of how it can link and shape the foreign policies of even those states with which it maintains strong disagreements with. However, as Asia's cauldron continues to boil, Chinese policymakers have increasingly debated how China should answer the alliance question; it is therefore possible, though unlikely, that China will respond to further perceived US transgressions as a call to revert to a well-trodden path and look to formal alliances as a solution

to their insecurity. The increasing militarization of the South and East China Seas are of particular concern, especially in the context of recent research on Chinese assertiveness in the former. If the US responds to Chinese behavior in a manner perceived as war-like, China may feel a *need* to pursue the harder commitments that they could rely on to a greater degree. However, increasing Chinese assertiveness itself will push many states further afield of Chinese influence, precluding alliance formation with states in regions such as the Asia-Pacific. China therefore finds itself in a unique position where, even if its decisionmakers change course to pursue defensive alliances, its desire to pursue the narrow interests upon which its legitimacy rests may eliminate their ability to do so. Indeed, China's recent attempts to engage in linkage politics even with hostile states represent a large-scale bid to reduce the chances that such a need would ever arise. As such, the findings of this study indicate that regardless of future political developments, it is unlikely that China will establish the formal alliances that have characterized the Cold War period.

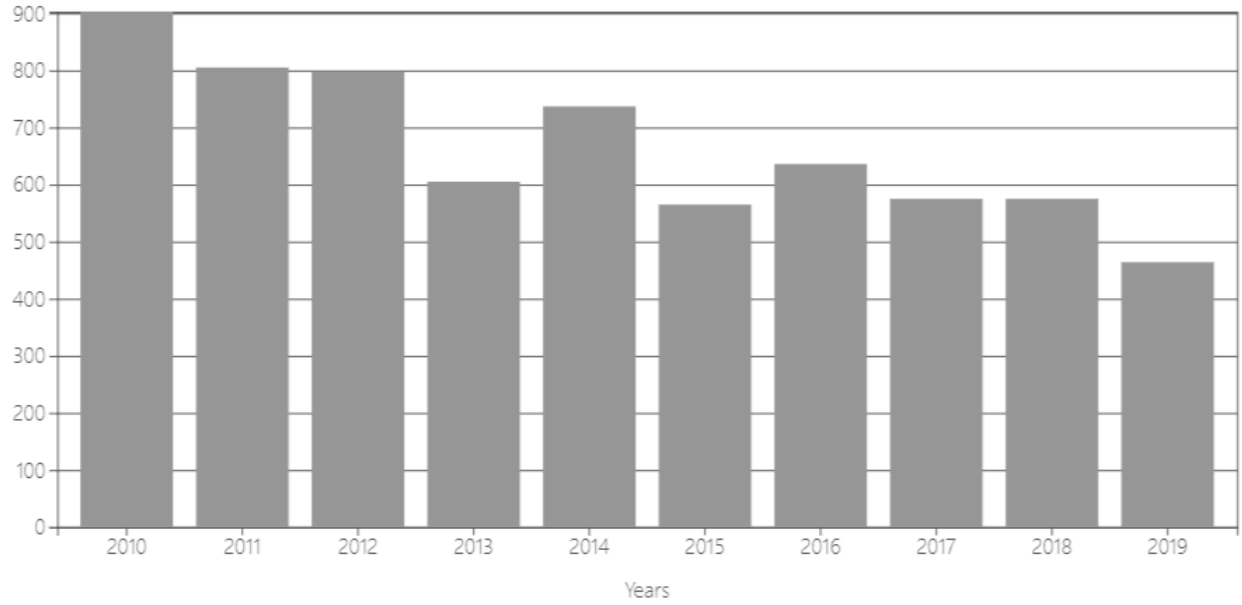
10 Appendix A

Chinese Elite Visits by Country, 2010-2019



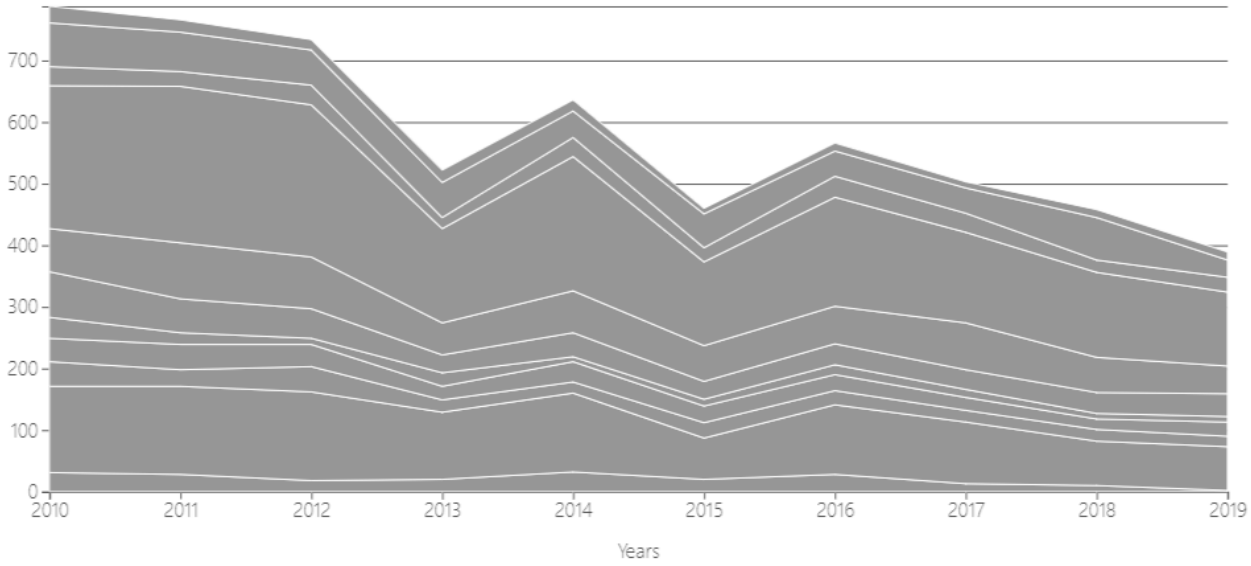
Data: China's Public Diplomacy Dashboard (v2.0) (AidData)

Total Number of Chinese Elite Visits by Year



Data: China's Public Diplomacy Dashboard (v2.0) (AidData)

Total Number of Chinese Elite Visits, 2010-2019

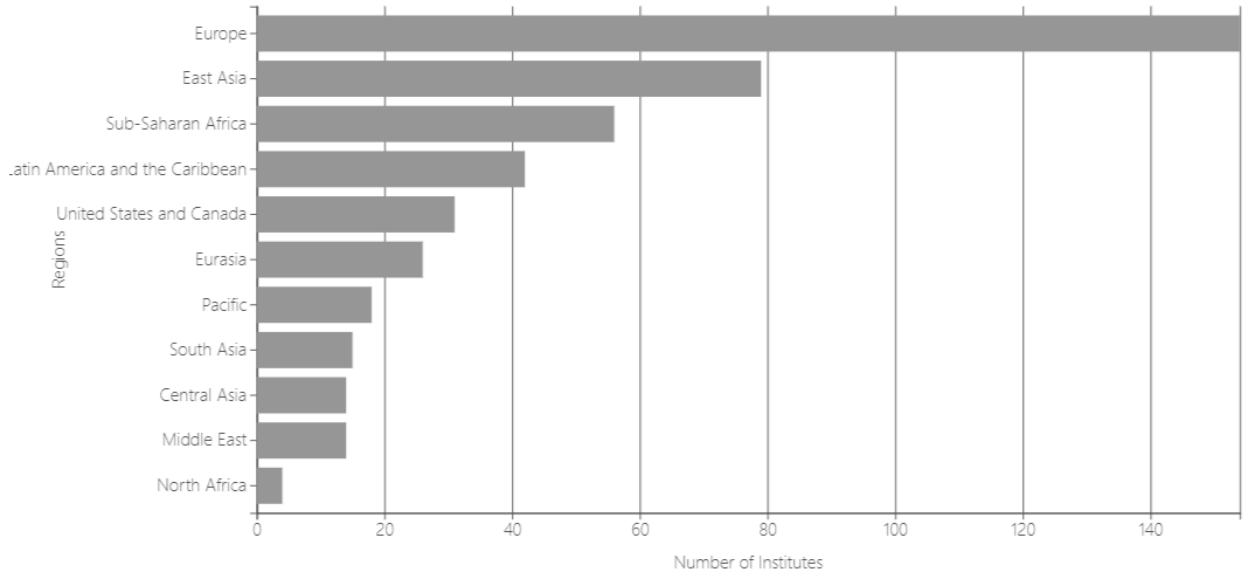


Data: China's Public Diplomacy Dashboard (v2.0) (AidData)

In descending order: Central Asia, East Asia, Eurasia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East, North Africa, Pacific, South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, United States and Canada

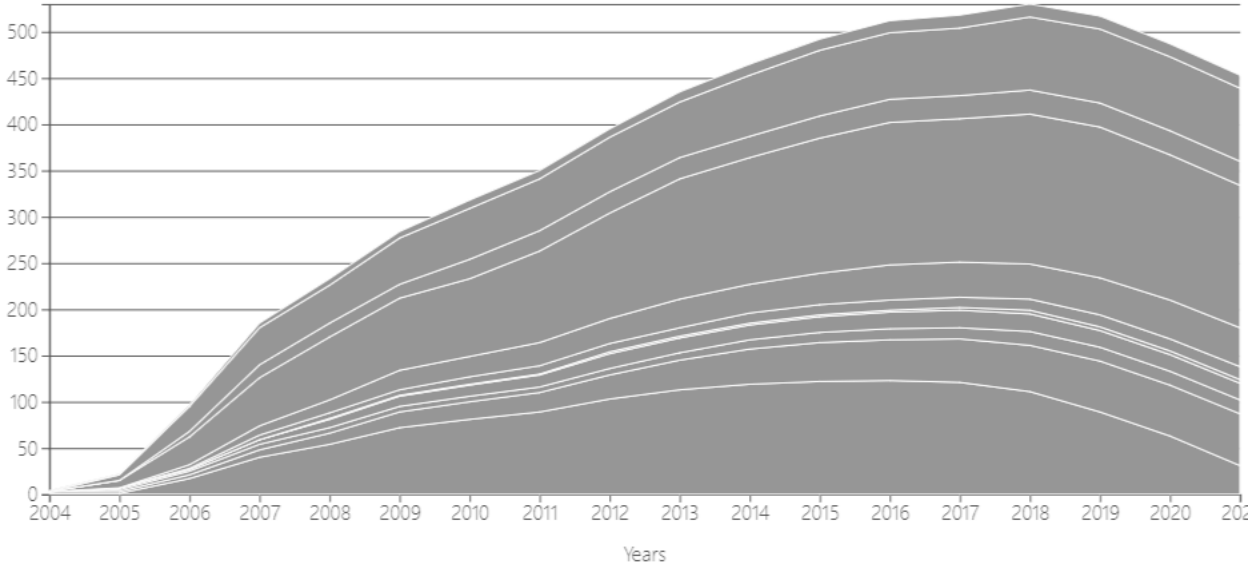
11 Appendix B

Total Number of Confucius Institutes by Region



Data: China's Public Diplomacy Dashboard (v2.0) (AidData)

Number of Confucius Institutes by Region, 2004-2021



Data: China's Public Diplomacy Dashboard (v2.0) (AidData)

In descending order: Central Asia, East Asia, Eurasia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East, North Africa, Pacific, South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, United States and Canada

12 Bibliography

Abbas, Wael, and Zoltan Schneider. 2015. *Understanding Alliance Formation Patterns*. Naval Postgraduate School Monterey United States. https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/AD1009050 (March 5, 2022).

Abudula, Abulaiti. 2018. "Chinese Foreign Aid and the UNGA Voting Patterns of the Recipients." Thesis. http://risc01.sabanciuniv.edu/record=b2274813 (Table of Contents) (November 16, 2022).

Albers, Martin, and Zhong Zhong Chen. 2017. "Socialism Capitalism and Sino-European Relations in the Deng Xiaoping Era, 1978–1992." *Cold War History* 17(2): 115–19.

Albert, Eleanor. 2019. "Understanding the China-North Korea Relationship." *Council on Foreign Relations*. https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-north-korea-relationship (November 11, 2022).

Allison, Graham. 2023. "Xi and Putin Have the Most Consequential Undeclared Alliance in the World." *Foreign Policy*. https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/03/23/xi-putin-meeting-china-russia-undeclared-alliance/ (March 26, 2023).

Al-Tamimi, Jonathan Fulton, Camille Lons, Degang Sun, Naser. 2019. "China's Great Game in the Middle East – European Council on Foreign Relations." *European Council on Foreign Relations*. https://ecfr.eu/publication/china_great_game_middle_east/ (July 13, 2022).

Barnett, Michael N., and Jack S. Levy. 1991. "Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignments: The Case of Egypt, 1962-73." *International Organization* 45(3): 369–95.

Beckley, Michael. 2015a. "The Myth of Entangling Alliances." *War on the Rocks*. https://warontherocks.com/2015/06/the-myth-of-entangling-alliances/ (November 13, 2022).

———. 2015b. "The Myth of Entangling Alliances: Reassessing the Security Risks of U.S. Defense Pacts." *International Security* 39(4): 7–48.

Bennett, D. Scott. 1997. "Testing Alternative Models of Alliance Duration, 1816-1984." *American Journal of Political Science* 41(3): 846–78.

Benson, Michelle. 2007. "Status Quo Preferences and Disputes Short of War." *International Interactions* 33(3): 271–88.

Bhattacharya, Abanti. 2019. "Chinese Nationalism Under Xi Jinping Revisited." *India Quarterly* 75(2): 245–52.

Botto, Kathryn. 2019. "Why Doesn't South Korea Have Full Control Over Its Military?" *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/08/21/why-doesn-t-south-korea-have-full-control-over-its-military-pub-79702 (November 13, 2022).

Bradsher, Keith, and Steven Lee Myers. 2018. "Trump's Trade War Is Rattling China's Leaders." *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/14/world/asia/china-trade-war-trump-xi-jinping-.html (November 22, 2022).

Brands, Hal. 2023. "The Epic Ambitions of the Chinese-Russian Alliance." *Bloomberg*. https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2023-03-26/chinese-russian-alliance-has-epic-ambitions-to-roll-back-us-power (March 26, 2023).

Buszynski, Les. 1980. “Thailand and the Manila Pact.” *The World Today* 36(2): 45–51.

Callahan, William A. 2013. “China’s Harmonious World and Post-Western World Orders: Official and Citizen Intellectual Perspectives.” In *China Across the Divide: The Domestic and Global in Politics and Society*, ed. Rosemary Foot. Oxford University Press, 0. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199919864.003.0002 (September 27, 2022).

Carlson, Allen. 2020. “Three Reasons China’s Assertiveness Threatens Asia’s Peace and Stability.” *South China Morning Post*. https://www.scmp.com/comment/opinion/article/3091475/three-reasons-chinas-increasing-assertiveness-threat-asias-long (November 7, 2022).

Cha, Victor D. 1999. *Alignment Despite Antagonism: The United States-Korea-Japan Security Triangle*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

———. 2000. “Abandonment, Entrapment, and Neoclassical Realism in Asia: The United States, Japan, and Korea.” *International Studies Quarterly* 44(2): 261–91.

———. 2009. “Powerplay: Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia.” *International Security* 34(3): 158–96.

———. 2016. *Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia*. Princeton University Press. https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691144535/powerplay (February 24, 2022).

Chang, Felix K. 2021. “The U.S.-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty and Philippine External Defense Forces - Foreign Policy Research Institute.” *Foreign Policy Research Institute*. https://www.fpri.org/article/2021/08/the-u-s-philippines-mutual-defense-treaty-and-philippine-external-defense-forces/ (November 11, 2022).

Chen, Dingding, Xiaoyu Pu, and Alastair Iain Johnston. 2013. “Debating China’s Assertiveness.” *International Security* 38(3): 176–83.

Chen, Jian. 1992. “China’s Changing Aims during the Korean War, 1950—1951.” *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 1(1): 8–41.

Chen, Jie. 2014. *A Middle Class Without Democracy: Economic Growth and the Prospects for Democratization in China*. Illustrated edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chen, la. 2021. “Community of Common Destiny for Mankind.” *China Media Project*. https://chinamediaproject.org/the_ccp_dictionary/community-of-common-destiny-for-mankind/ (September 26, 2022).

Chen, Richard. 2021. “Deng’s War: Assessing the Success of the Sino-Vietnamese War.” *Inquiries Journal* 13(11). http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/1922/dengs-war-assessing-the-success-of-the-sino-vietnamese-war (September 21, 2022).

Chern, Kenneth S. 1976. “Politics of American China Policy, 1945: Roots of the Cold War in Asia.” *Political Science Quarterly* 91(4): 631–47.

China Daily. 2012. “Hu’s Report at 18th Party Congress.” *China Daily*. https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/19thcpcnationalcongress/2012-11/18/content_29578562.htm (September 27, 2022).

Chubb, Andrew. 2021a. “Continuity and Change: China’s Assertiveness in the South China Sea.” *E-International Relations*. https://www.e-ir.info/2021/01/27/continuity-and-change-chinas-assertiveness-in-the-south-china-sea/ (November 10, 2022).

———. 2021b. “PRC Assertiveness in the South China Sea: Measuring Continuity and Change, 1970–2015.” *International Security* 45(3): 79–121.

Chun, Chae-Sung. 2000. “Theoretical Approaches to Alliance: Implications on the R.O.K.-U.S. Alliance.” *Journal of International and Area Studies* 7(2): 71–88.

Ciorciari, John D, and Jürgen Haacke. 2019. “Hedging in International Relations: An Introduction.” *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 19(3): 367–74.

“Conclusion of the ‘Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance.’” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China*. https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/ziliao_665539/3602_665543/3604_665547/200011/t20001117_697823.html (September 23, 2022).

Connor, Walker. 1984. *The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.

———. 1993. *Ethnonationalism*. Princeton University Press. https://press.princeton.edu/books/paperback/9780691025636/ethnonationalism (December 11, 2021).

Coy, Peter. 2022. “Opinion | Xi Jinping Is the Second Coming of Mao Zedong.” *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/07/opinion/xi-jinping-mao-zedong.html (October 25, 2022).

Cranmer, Skyler J., Bruce A. Desmarais, and Justin H. Kirkland. 2012. “Toward a Network Theory of Alliance Formation.” *International Interactions* 38(3): 295–324.

Crescenzi, Mark J.C., Jacob D. Kathman, Katja B. Kleinberg, and Reed M. Wood. 2012. “Reliability, Reputation, and Alliance Formation.” *International Studies Quarterly* 56(2): 259–74.

Dastidar. 2020. “Revival of the Middle Kingdom.” *Indian Defence Review*. http://www.indiandefencereview.com/spotlights/revival-of-the-middle-kingdom/ (November 13, 2022).

Delury, John. 2011. “Polar Opposites: Two New Histories of East Asia.” *Global Asia*. https://globalasia.org/v6no2/book/polar-opposites-two-new-histories-of-east-asia_john-delury (September 21, 2022).

Di, He. 1994. “The Most Respected Enemy: Mao Zedong’s Perception of the United States.” *The China Quarterly* (137): 144–58.

Dinerstein, Herbert S. 1965. “The Transformation of Alliance Systems.” *The American Political Science Review* 59(3): 589–601.

Ding, Jun, and Hongjin Cheng. 2017. “China’s Proposition to Build a Community of Shared Future for Mankind and the Middle East Governance.” *Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies* 11(4): 1–14.

Dittmer, Lowell. 2014. “Asian Alliances: Chinese and Japanese Experiences Compared.” *Asian Perspective* 38(1): 1–29.

Douglas, Dan. 2017. “Mao Zedong and Xi Jinping: A Trait Analysis.” Wright State University. https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/etd_all/1785.

Downes, Alexander B., and Todd S. Sechser. 2012. “The Illusion of Democratic Credibility.” *International Organization* 66(3): 457–89.

Dreher, Axel, Peter Nunnenkamp, and Rainer Thiele. 2008. “Does US Aid Buy UN General Assembly Votes? A Disaggregated Analysis.” *Public Choice* 136(1/2): 139–64.

Dreyer, June Teufel. 2019. *China’s Political System: Modernization and Tradition*. 10th ed. Routledge. https://www.routledge.com/Chinas-Political-System-Modernization-and-Tradition/Dreyer/p/book/9781138501522 (March 5, 2022).

Dulikravich, Linnea Maria. 2020. “Effects of Chinese Development Aid on International Human Rights: Analysis of UN Votes (2001-2013).” *UF Journal of Undergraduate Research* 22. https://journals.flvc.org/UFJUR/article/view/121763 (November 16, 2022).

Duncan, George T., and Randolph M. Siverson. 1982. “Flexibility of Alliance Partner Choice in a Multipolar System: Models and Tests.” *International Studies Quarterly* 26(4): 511–38.

Dwivedi, Sangit Sarita. 2012. “North Korea-China Relations: An Asymmetric Alliance.” *North Korean Review* 8(2): 76–93.

Edry, Jessica, Jesse C. Johnson, and Brett Ashley Leeds. 2021. “Threats at Home and Abroad: Interstate War, Civil War, and Alliance Formation.” *International Organization* 75(3): 837–57.

Faison, Seth. 1999. “Eye of the Tiger: What Jiang Zemin Tells Us about China” ed. Bruce Gilley. *Foreign Affairs* 78(1): 140–45.

Fardella, Enrico. 2017. “A Significant Periphery of the Cold War: Italy-China Bilateral Relations, 1949–1989.” *Cold War History* 17(2): 181–97.

Fedder, Edwin H. 1968. “The Concept of Alliance.” *International Studies Quarterly* 12(1): 65–86.

Fifield, Russell H. 1977. “The Thirty Years War in Indochina: A Conceptual Framework.” *Asian Survey* 17(9): 857–79.

Ford, Lindsey W. 2020. “Network Power: China’s Effort to Reshape Asia’s Regional Security Architecture.” *Brookings*. https://www.brookings.edu/research/network-power-chinas-effort-to-reshape-asias-regional-security-architecture/ (July 13, 2022).

Fordham, Benjamin, and Paul Poast. 2016. “All Alliances Are Multilateral: Rethinking Alliance Formation.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 60(5): 840–65.

Fowdy, Tom. 2021. “China’s Foreign Policy Is Rooted in Non-Alignment.” *China Internet Information Center*. http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2021-03/30/content_77359553.htm (September 29, 2022).

Fravel, M. Taylor. 2007. “Power Shifts and Escalation: Explaining China’s Use of Force in Territorial Disputes.” *International Security* 32(3): 44–83.

Fredman, Zach. 2012. “After Leaning to One Side: China and Its Allies in the Cold War.” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 25(3): 476–78.

Fromkin, David. 1970. “Entangling Alliances.” *Foreign Affairs*. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/entangling-alliances.

Fulton, Jonathan. 2019. “Friends with Benefits: China’s Partnership Diplomacy in the Gulf.” *Project on Middle East Political Science*. https://pomeps.org/friends-with-benefits-chinas-partnership-diplomacy-in-the-gulf (July 13, 2022).

Garver, John W. 2016. *China’s Quest: The History of the Foreign Relations of the People’s Republic of China*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Ge, g. 2020. “The Term ‘new Non-Aligned Movement’ Is Too Simplistic in Multilateral World - Global Times.” *Global Times*. https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1201243.shtml (September 29, 2022).

Gibler, Douglas M. 2008. “The Costs of Reneging: Reputation and Alliance Formation.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52(3): 426–54.

Gibler, Douglas M., Steven V. Miller, and Erin K. Little. 2016. “An Analysis of the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) Dataset, 1816–2001.” *International Studies Quarterly* 60(4): 719–30.

Gibler, Douglas M., and Scott Wolford. 2006. “Alliances, Then Democracy: An Examination of the Relationship between Regime Type and Alliance Formation.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50(1): 129–53.

Gilsinan, Kathy. 2015. “Cliché of the Moment: Is ‘China’s Increasing Assertiveness’ Either Increasing or Assertive?” *The Atlantic*. https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/09/south-china-sea-assertiveness/407203/ (November 7, 2022).

Glaser, Bonnie S., and Sheila A. Smith. 2014. “China and Japan’s Perspectives on North Korea.” https://www.cfr.org/event/china-and-japans-perspectives-north-korea-0.

Gnoinska, Margaret K. 2017. “‘Socialist Friends Should Help Each Other in Crises’: Sino-Polish Relations within the Cold War Dynamics, 1980–1987.” *Cold War History* 17(2): 143–59.

Godnick, William H. 2019. “Review of China’s Strategic Partnerships in Latin America: Case Studies of China’s Oil Diplomacy in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela 1991-2015, Xu Yanran.” *PRISM* 8(1): 143–45.

Goldstein, Avery. 2003. “An Emerging China’s Emerging Grand Strategy: A Neo-Bismarckian Turn?” In *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific*, eds. G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno. New York: Columbia University Press, 578.

Graham, Euan. 2016. “The Hague Tribunal’s South China Sea Ruling: Empty Provocation or Slow-Burning Influence?” *Council on Foreign Relations*. https://www.cfr.org/councilofcouncils/global-memos/hague-tribunals-south-china-sea-ruling-empty-provocation-or-slow-burning-influence (November 7, 2022).

Green, Mark. 2022. “In the Months Since Russia’s Brutal Invasion of Ukraine, Its Trade With China Has Surged. | Wilson Center.” *Wilson Center*. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/months-russias-brutal-invasion-ukraine-its-trade-china-has-surged (November 12, 2022).

Griffiths, James. 2018. “How the Seizure of a US Spy Ship by North Korea Nearly Sparked Nuclear War.” *CNN*. https://www.cnn.com/2018/01/20/asia/north-korea-uss-pueblo-intl/index.html (November 12, 2022).

Gulati, Ranjay. 1998. “Alliances and Networks.” *Strategic Management Journal* 19(4): 293–317.

Gurman, Hannah. 2010. "'Learn to Write Well': The China Hands and the Communist-Ification of Diplomatic Reporting." *Journal of Contemporary History* 45(2): 430–53.

Ha, Hoang Thi. 2021. "The ASEAN-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership: What's in a Name?" *Yusof Ishak Institute* (2021): 11.

Haggard, Stephan, and Min Ye. 2014. "China's 'Partnerships.'" *PIIE*. https://www.piie.com/blogs/north-korea-witness-transformation/chinas-partnerships (July 13, 2022).

Hajimu, Masuda. 2012. "The Korean War through the Prism of Chinese Society: Public Reactions and the Shaping of 'Reality' in the Communist State, October–December 1950." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 14(3): 3–38.

Halberstam, David. 1993. *The Best and the Brightest*. Anniversary edition. New York: Ballantine Books.

———. 2008. *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War*. Illustrated edition. New York Boston: Hachette Books.

Han, Xiao, Michael Sadler, and Kai Quek. 2021. "Guns and Butter in China: How Chinese Citizens Respond to Military Spending." *The China Quarterly* 245: 248–61.

Hass, Ryan. 2021. "How China Is Responding to Escalating Strategic Competition with the US." *Brookings*. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-china-is-responding-to-escalating-strategic-competition-with-the-us/ (November 16, 2022).

Healy, Brian, and Arthur Stein. 1973. "The Balance of Power in International History: Theory and Reality." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 17(1): 33–61.

Hiller, Timo. 2011. *Alliance Formation and Coercion in Networks*. Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network. SSRN Scholarly Paper. https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=1868069 (March 5, 2022).

Holcombe, Charles. 2017a. *A History of East Asia: From the Origins of Civilization to the Twenty-First Century*. 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2017b. *A History of East Asia: From the Origins of Civilization to the Twenty-First Century*. 2nd ed. Cambridge University Press.

Hongyi, Nie. 2009. "Explaining Chinese Solutions to Territorial Disputes with Neighbour States." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 2(4): 487–523.

Horowitz, Michael C., Paul Poast, and Allan C. Stam. 2017. "Domestic Signaling of Commitment Credibility: Military Recruitment and Alliance Formation." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61(8): 1682–1710.

Houghton, David Patrick. 2012. *The Decision Point: Six Cases in U.S. Foreign Policy Decision Making*. Illustrated edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

"Hu Jintao's Report at 17th Party Congress." 2007. *China Internet Information Center*. http://www.china.org.cn/english/congress/229611.htm (September 27, 2022).

Huang, Christine, Laura Silver, and Laura Clancy. 2022. "China's Partnership With Russia Seen as Serious Problem for the U.S." *Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project*.

https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2022/04/28/chinas-partnership-with-russia-seen-as-serious-problem-for-the-us/ (July 13, 2022).

Huwaidin, Mohamed Bin. 2022. "China's Strategic Partnership with the UAE: Foundation and Prospects." *Comparative Strategy* 41(3): 296–313.

Ikenberry, G., and Michael Mastanduno, eds. 2003. *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific*. New York: Columbia University Press.

"India, China Abstain from UN Vote Demanding Russia to 'immediately' Withdraw from Ukraine." 2023. *India Today*. https://www.indiatoday.in/world/russia-ukraine-war/story/india-china-abstain-un-vote-russia-withdraw-ukraine-war-2338838-2023-02-24 (March 26, 2023).

Jackson, Matthew O., and Stephen Nei. 2015. "Networks of Military Alliances, Wars, and International Trade." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 112(50): 15277–84.

Jacques, Martin. 2012. "Meet China's Top Public Intellectuals." *Martin Jacques*. http://www.martinjacques.com/articles/articles-geopolitics-globalisation/meet-chinas-top-public-intellectuals/.

Jarmuth, Anna. 2020. *China's Evolving North Korea Policy*. Institute for Security and Development Policy. https://isdp.se/publication/chinas-evolving-north-korea-policy/ (September 28, 2022).

Jervis, Robert. 1999. *System Effects*. Princeton University Press. https://press.princeton.edu/books/paperback/9780691005300/system-effects (February 24, 2022).

———. 2012. "System Effects Revisited." *Critical Review* 24(3): 393–415.

Jian, Chen. 1993. "China and the First Indo-China War, 1950-54." *The China Quarterly* (133): 85–110.

———. 1995. "China's Involvement in the Vietnam War, 1964-69." *The China Quarterly* (142): 356–87.

Jiang, Zemin. 1992. "Report at 14th Party Congress." *Beijing Review*. http://www.bjreview.com.cn/document/txt/2011-03/29/content_363504_10.htm.

Jin, Kai. 2013. "Can China Build a Community of Common Destiny?" *The Diplomat*. https://thediplomat.com/2013/11/can-china-build-a-community-of-common-destiny/ (September 26, 2022).

Johnson, Jesse C. 2016. "Alliance Treaty Obligations and War Intervention." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 33(5): 451–68.

Johnson, Jesse C. 2017. "External Threat and Alliance Formation." *International Studies Quarterly* 61(3): 736–45.

Johnston, Alastair Iain. 1998. "China's Militarized Interstate Dispute Behaviour 1949-1992: A First Cut at the Data." *The China Quarterly* (153): 1–30.

———. 2013. "How New and Assertive Is China's New Assertiveness?" *International Security* 37(4): 7–48.

———. 2017. "Is Chinese Nationalism Rising? Evidence from Beijing." *International Security* 41(3): 7–43.

Kang, David C. 2010. "Hierarchy and Legitimacy in International Systems: The Tribute System in Early Modern East Asia." *Security Studies* 19(4): 591–622.

———. 2012. “Authority and Legitimacy in International Relations: Evidence from Korean and Japanese Relations in Pre-Modern East Asia.” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 5(1): 55–71.

———. 2020. “International Order in Historical East Asia: Tribute and Hierarchy Beyond Sinocentrism and Eurocentrism.” *International Organization* 74(1): 65–93.

Kang, David C., Meredith Shaw, and Ronan Tse-min Fu. 2016. “Measuring War in Early Modern East Asia, 1368–1841: Introducing Chinese and Korean Language Sources.” *International Studies Quarterly* 60(4): 766–77.

Khong, Yuen Foong. 2013. “The American Tributary System.” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 6(1): 1–47.

Kim, Heungkyu. 2010. “From a Buffer Zone to a Strategic Burden: Evolving Sino-North Korea Relations during the Hu Jintao Era.” *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 22(1): 57–74.

Kim, Patricia M. 2021. “China’s Search for Allies.” *Foreign Affairs*. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2021-11-15/chinas-search-allies (March 5, 2022).

———. 2022. “Does the China-Solomon Islands Security Pact Portend a More Interventionist Beijing?” *Brookings*. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2022/05/06/does-the-china-solomon-islands-security-pact-portend-a-more-interventionist-beijing/ (November 21, 2022).

Kim, Woosang. 1989. “Power, Alliance, and Major Wars, 1816-1975.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 33(2): 255–73.

———. 1991. “Alliance Transitions and Great Power War.” *American Journal of Political Science* 35(4): 833–50.

Kimball, Anessa L. 2010. “Political Survival, Policy Distribution, and Alliance Formation.” *Journal of Peace Research* 47(4): 407–19.

Koga, Kei. 2018. “The Concept of ‘Hedging’ Revisited: The Case of Japan’s Foreign Policy Strategy in East Asia’s Power Shift.” *International Studies Review* 20(4): 633–60.

Korolev, Alexander. 2019. “On the Verge of an Alliance: Contemporary China-Russia Military Cooperation.” *Asian Security* 15(3): 233–52.

Kratochvíl, Petr. 2007. “George Liska and Political Realism: On the Tension between History and Structure, and between Norms and Power.” *Journal of International Relations and Development* 10(2): 97–121.

Kraus, Charles. 2020. “The Sino-Soviet Alliance, 70 Years Later | Wilson Center.” *Wilson Center*. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/sino-soviet-alliance-70-years-later (September 22, 2022).

Krishnankutty, Pia. 2020. “Not Just US, India — China Is Involved in 15 Other Territorial Disputes in Asia.” *ThePrint*. https://theprint.in/theprint-essential/not-just-india-tibet-china-has-17-territorial-disputes-with-its-neighbours-on-land-sea/461115/ (November 13, 2022).

Leeds, Brett Ashley, Andrew G. Long, and Sara McLaughlin Mitchell. 2000. “Reevaluating Alliance Reliability: Specific Threats, Specific Promises.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44(5): 686–99.

Leeds, Brett Ashley, and Michaela Mattes. 2007. "Alliance Politics during the Cold War: Aberration, New World Order, or Continuation of History?" *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 24(3): 183–99.

Leeds, Brett, Jeffrey Ritter, Sara Mitchell, and Andrew Long. 2002. "Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions, 1815-1944." *International Interactions* 28(3): 237–60.

Legarda, Helena. 2021. "From Marriage of Convenience to Strategic Partnership: China-Russia Relations and the Fight for Global Influence." *MERICS*. https://merics.org/en/short-analysis/marriage-convenience-strategic-partnership-china-russia-relations-and-fight-global (July 13, 2022).

Leifer, Michael. 1978. "The Paradox of ASEAN." *The Round Table* 68(271): 261–68.

Levy, Jack S. 1981. "Alliance Formation and War Behavior: An Analysis of the Great Powers, 1495-1975." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 25(4): 581–613.

Li, Quan, and Min Ye. 2019. "China's Emerging Partnership Network: What, Who, Where, When and Why." *International Trade, Politics and Development* 3(2): 66–81.

Li, Richard P. Y., and William R. Thompson. 1978. "The Stochastic Process of Alliance Formation Behavior." *American Political Science Review* 72(4): 1288–1303.

Liao, Wen. "China's Black Cat, White Cat Diplomacy." *Foreign Policy*. https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/07/10/chinas-black-cat-white-cat-diplomacy/ (September 18, 2022).

Liff, Adam P. 2018. "China and the US Alliance System." *The China Quarterly* 233: 137–65.

Liska, George. 1963. "Continuity and Change in International Systems" ed. Richard N. Rosecrance. *World Politics* 16(1): 118–36.

Liska, Professor George. 1962. *Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence*. The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Liu, Ruonan, and Feng Liu. 2017. "Contending Ideas on China's Non-Alliance Strategy." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 10(2): 151–71.

Liufang, Fang. 1989. "Chinese Partnership." *Law and Contemporary Problems* 52(3): 43–67.

Ma, Josephine. 2021. "Is China in Danger of Losing Control of Its Rising Nationalism?" *South China Morning Post*. https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3128482/china-danger-losing-control-its-rising-nationalism (November 21, 2022).

Ma, Shikun. 2014. "Abandoning the Nonalignment Stance? It's Not A Policy Option for China." *China-US Focus*. https://www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/abandoning-the-nonalignment-stance-its-not-a-policy-option-for-china (September 29, 2022).

Maclaren, James. 2019. "The Sino-Vietnam War and China's Long Route to Winning." *The Diplomat*. https://thediplomat.com/2019/05/the-sino-vietnam-war-and-chinas-long-route-to-winning/ (September 21, 2022).

Mahbubani, Kishore. 2015. "What Happens When China Becomes Number One?" Presented at the Cambridge, MA. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RO3izbn201s&t=1772s.

Mahoney, James. 2004. "Comparative-Historical Methodology." *Annual Review of Sociology* 30: 81–101.

Maizland, Lindsay. 2022. “China and Russia: Exploring Ties Between Two Authoritarian Powers.” *Council on Foreign Relations*. https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-russia-relationship-xi-putin-taiwan-ukraine (September 22, 2022).

Mao, Zedong. 1949. “Proclamation of the Central People’s Government of the PRC.” https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121557 (September 10, 2022).

Martin, Peter. 2021. *China’s Civilian Army: The Making of Wolf Warrior Diplomacy*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

McGowan, Patrick J., and Robert M. Rood. 1975. “Alliance Behavior in Balance of Power Systems: Applying a Poisson Model to Nineteenth-Century Europe*.” *American Political Science Review* 69(3): 859–70.

McMahon, Robert J. 1988. “The Cold War in Asia: Toward a New Synthesis?” *Diplomatic History* 12(3): 307–27.

Mearsheimer, John. 2001. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. W. W. Norton. https://wwnorton.com/books/9780393349276 (March 27, 2022).

Meeting China’s Military Challenge: Collective Responses of U.S. Allies and Partners. 2022. Washington D.C.: National Bureau of Asian Research. NBR Special Report. https://www.nbr.org/publication/meeting-chinas-military-challenge-collective-responses-of-u-s-allies-and-partners/.

Mintz, Alex. 2004. “How Do Leaders Make Decisions?: A Poliheuristic Perspective.” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48(1): 3–13.

Modelski, George. 1963. “The Study of Alliances: A Review : George Liska, Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence Robert E. Osgood, NATO: The Entangling Alliance Donald S. Zagoria, Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956-61.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 7(4): 769–76.

Mohanty, Manoranjan. 2003. “Three Represents: Ideology of the Fourth Generation.” *China Report* 39(2): 237–45.

Morgenthau, Hans J. 1973. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. Fifth. Knopf.

Morrow, James D. 1994. “Alliances, Credibility, and Peacetime Costs.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 38(2): 270–97.

———. 2000. “Alliances: Why Write Them Down?” *Annual Review of Political Science* 3(1): 63–83.

Myers, Margaret, and Ricardo Barrios. 2021. “How China Ranks Its Partners in LAC.” *The Dialogue*. https://www.thedialogue.org/blogs/2021/02/how-china-ranks-its-partners-in-lac/ (July 13, 2022).

Nguyen, Minh Quang. 2017. “The Bitter Legacy of the 1979 China-Vietnam War.” *The Diplomat*. https://thediplomat.com/2017/02/the-bitter-legacy-of-the-1979-china-vietnam-war/ (September 21, 2022).

Ning, Mao. 2022. “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mao Ning’s Regular Press Conference on October 10, 2022.” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China*. https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/202210/t20221010_10780417.html (November 12, 2022).

Niou, Emerson M. S., and Sean M. Zeigler. 2019. “External Threat, Internal Rivalry, and Alliance Formation.” *The Journal of Politics* 81(2): 571–84.

Nuruzzaman, Mohammed. 2021. “Does Realism Explain the Arab Spring? Neorealist Alliance Formation Theories and the Syrian Civil War.” *International Journal* 76(2): 257–79.

O’Brien, Patricia. 2022. “The Domestic Politics of Sogavare’s China-Solomons Tryst.” *The Diplomat*. https://thediplomat.com/2022/09/the-domestic-politics-of-sogavares-china-solomons-tryst/ (November 21, 2022).

O’Connor, Tom, and Shea Donovan. 2022. “With World’s Eyes on Beijing, Here’s How China Ranks Relations across Globe.” *Newsweek*. https://www.newsweek.com/worlds-eyes-beijing-heres-how-china-ranks-relations-across-globe-1679183 (September 17, 2022).

Olinga, Luc. 2023. “Elon Musk Warns About a China-Russia Alliance.” *TheStreet*. https://www.thestreet.com/technology/elon-musk-warns-about-a-china-russia-alliance (March 26, 2023).

Olson, Mancur, and Richard Zeckhauser. 1966. “An Economic Theory of Alliances.” *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 48(3): 266–79.

“Opinion | The U.S. Should Beware of the Beijing-Moscow Axis.” 2023. *Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/03/25/china-russia-growing-alliance-danger/ (March 26, 2023).

Panda, Ankit. 2017. “China and North Korea Have a Mutual Defense Treaty, But When Would It Apply?” https://thediplomat.com/2017/08/china-and-north-korea-have-a-mutual-defense-treaty-but-when-would-it-apply/ (September 28, 2022).

Pang, Xun, Lida Liu, and Stephanie Ma. 2017. “China’s Network Strategy for Seeking Great Power Status.” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 10(1): 1–29.

Parameswaran, Prashanth. 2019. “Managing the Rise of China’s Security Partnerships in Southeast Asia.” *Wilson Center*: 15.

———. 2020. “What Did the 2020 China-Cambodia Golden Dragon Military Exercise Actually Achieve?” *The Diplomat*. https://thediplomat.com/2020/04/what-did-the-2020-china-cambodia-golden-dragon-military-exercise-actually-achieve/ (November 9, 2022).

Parker, Ceri. 2017. “China’s Xi Jinping Defends Globalization from the Davos Stage.” *World Economic Forum*. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/01/chinas-xi-jinping-defends-globalization-from-the-davos-stage/ (November 15, 2022).

Parton, Charles, and James Byrne. 2021. “China’s Only Ally.” *Royal United Services Institute*. https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/rusi-newsbrief/chinas-only-ally (February 24, 2022).

PBS. 2022. “WATCH: Biden Vows U.S. Commitment to Pacific Islands at Summit.” *PBS NewsHour*. https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/watch-live-biden-delivers-remarks-at-first-u-s-pacific-island-country-summit (November 21, 2022).

Pillsbury, Michael. 2016. *The Hundred-Year Marathon: China’s Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower*. Reprint edition. St. Martin’s Griffin.

Poast, Paul. 2012. “Does Issue Linkage Work? Evidence from European Alliance Negotiations, 1860 to 1945.” *International Organization* 66(2): 277–310.

Porter, Tom. 2023. “Xi Snubbed Putin after Their Summit, Calling a Meeting of Central Asian Countries as Part of an Audacious Power Play.” *Business Insider*. https://www.businessinsider.com/xi-snubs-putin-amid-summit-with-central-asia-power-play-2023-3 (March 26, 2023).

Powell, Emilia Justyna. 2010. “Negotiating Military Alliances: Legal Systems and Alliance Formation.” *International Interactions* 36(1): 28–59.

Pye, Lucian W. 1991. *China: An Introduction*. HarperCollins. https://www.amazon.com/China-Introduction-Lucian-W-Pye/dp/0673464865 (March 5, 2022).

Robinson, James A. 1963. “Decision-Making and Coalition Building: A Review : William H. Riker, The Theory of Political Coalitions.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 7(4): 763–68.

Robles, Raissa. 2019. “China Can Turn off the Philippine National Power Grid, Officials Say.” *South China Morning Post*. https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3038655/china-can-turn-philippine-national-power-grid-officials-say (November 15, 2022).

Russett, Bruce M. 1968. “Components of an Operational Theory of International Alliance Formation.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 12(3): 285–301.

San, Hakan. 2007. *The Ethnic Dimension of Alliance Formation: Alignment Patterns in the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict*. Naval Postgraduate School Monterey United States. https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA475789 (March 5, 2022).

Sandler, Todd. 1993. “The Economic Theory of Alliances: A Survey.” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 37(3): 446–83.

———. 1999. “Alliance Formation, Alliance Expansion, and the Core.” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 43(6): 727–47.

Sandler, Todd, and Jon Cauley. 1975. “On the Economic Theory of Alliances.” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 19(2): 330–48.

Sandler, Todd, and Keith Hartley. 2001. “Economics of Alliances: The Lessons for Collective Action.” *Journal of Economic Literature* 39(3): 869–96.

Schell, Orville, and John Delury. 2014. *Wealth and Power: China’s Long March to the Twenty-First Century*. Illustrated edition. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks.

Schroeder, Paul W. 2004. “Alliances, 1815–1945: Weapons of Power and Tools of Management.” In *Systems, Stability, and Statecraft: Essays on the International History of Modern Europe*, eds. Paul W. Schroeder, David Wetzel, Robert Jervis, and Jack S. Levy. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 195–222. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-06138-6_10 (April 7, 2022).

Scita, Jacopo. 2022. “Implementing the China-Iran Comprehensive Strategic Partnership: Not So Fast.” *Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington*. https://agsiw.org/implementing-the-china-iran-comprehensive-strategic-partnership-not-so-fast/ (July 13, 2022).

Scobell, Andrew. 2000. *Chinese Army Building in the Era of Jiang Zemin*. US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute. https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA383134 (September 24, 2022).

Selkirk, Diane. 2019. “The Little-Known US-Canada Border War.” *BBC*. https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20191215-the-little-known-us-canada-border-war (January 22, 2023).

Shambaugh, David. 2001. “The Dynamics of Elite Politics during the Jiang Era.” *The China Journal* (45): 101–11.

Shapero, Julia. 2022. “Report: U.S. Admiral Says China Has Fully Militarized Three Islands in South China Sea.” *Axios*. https://www.axios.com/2022/03/20/china-fully-militarized-three-islands-south-china-sea (November 13, 2022).

Sheng, Michael M. 1993. “America’s Lost Chance in China? A Reappraisal of Chinese Communist Policy Toward the United States Before 1945.” *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* (29): 135–57.

Simmons, Robert R. 1978. “The Pueblo, EC-121, and Mayaguez Incidents: Some Continuities and Changes.” *University of Maryland School of Law* 8(20). https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/56353786.pdf.

Siverson, Randolph M., and Juliann Emmons. 1991. “Birds of a Feather: Democratic Political Systems and Alliance Choices in the Twentieth Century.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 35(2): 285–306.

Smith, Alastair. 1995. “Alliance Formation and War.” *International Studies Quarterly* 39(4): 405–25.

———. 1998. “Extended Deterrence and Alliance Formation.” *International Interactions* 24(4): 315–43.

Smith, Zhanna Malekos. 2021. “New Tail for China’s ‘Wolf Warrior’ Diplomats.” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*. https://www.csis.org/analysis/new-tail-chinas-wolf-warrior-diplomats (March 9, 2022).

Snyder, Glenn H. 1984. “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics.” *World Politics* 36(4): 461–95.

———. 1990. “Alliance Theory: A Neorealist First Cut.” *Journal of International Affairs* 44(1): 103–23.

———. 1991. “Alliances, Balance, and Stability” eds. Stephen M. Walt, Peter C. Ordeshook, Gregory F. Rose, and Emerson M. S. Niou. *International Organization* 45(1): 121–42.

———. 2002. “Mearsheimer’s World-Offensive Realism and the Struggle for Security: A Review Essay.” *International Security* 27(1): 149–73.

Sorokin, Gerald L. 1994. “Alliance Formation and General Deterrence: A Game-Theoretic Model and the Case of Israel.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 38(2): 298–325.

Sprecher, Christopher. 2004. “Alliance Formation and the Timing of War Involvement.” *International Interactions* 30(4): 331–47.

Spruyt, Hendrik. 2017. “Collective Imaginations and International Order: The Contemporary Context of the Chinese Tributary System.” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 77(1).

Storey, Henry. 2021. “Do Comprehensive Strategic Partnerships Matter?” *The interpreter*. https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/do-comprehensive-strategic-partnerships-matter (July 13, 2022).

Strüver, Georg. 2017. “China’s Partnership Diplomacy: International Alignment Based on Interests or Ideology.” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 10(1): 31–65.

Sun, Degang. 2009. “Brothers Indeed: Syria-Iran Quasi-Alliance Revisited.” *Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (in Asia)* 3(2): 67–80.

Sun, Degang, and Shuai Zhang. 2017. "Marriage Without Certificate: On Syria-Iran Quasi-Alliance From the Iranian Revolution to the Arab Revolution." *International Relations and Diplomacy* 5(9). http://www.davidpublisher.com/index.php/Home/Article/index?id=33168.html (April 9, 2022).

Taylor, Adam. 2015. "Map: The U.S. Is Bound by Treaties to Defend a Quarter of Humanity." *Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/05/30/map-the-u-s-is-bound-by-treaties-to-defend-a-quarter-of-humanity/ (November 13, 2022).

The White House. 2022. "Readout of Senior Administration Travel to Hawaii, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and Solomon Islands." *The White House*. https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/04/22/readout-of-senior-administration-travel-to-hawaii-fiji-papua-new-guinea-and-solomon-islands/ (November 21, 2022).

"Top 100 Public Intellectuals." *Foreign Policy*. https://foreignpolicy.com/2008/05/15/top-100-public-intellectuals/ (November 14, 2022).

Torigian, Joseph. 2019. "Elite Politics and Foreign Policy in China from Mao to Xi." *Brookings*. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/elite-politics-and-foreign-policy-in-china-from-mao-to-xi/ (September 11, 2022).

Tow, William T., and Satu Limaye. 2016. "What's China Got to Do With It? U.S. Alliances, Partnerships in the Asia-Pacific." *Asian Politics & Policy* 8(1): 7–26.

Traub, James. 2022. "Cold War 2.0 Is Ushering In Nonalignment 2.0." *Foreign Policy*. https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/07/09/nonalignment-us-china-cold-war-ukraine-india-global-south/ (September 29, 2022).

Tse-tung, Mao. 1956. "U.S. Imperialism Is a Paper Tiger." *Marxists Internet Archive*. https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-5/mswv5_52.htm (September 10, 2022).

Tziarras, Zenonas. 2016. "Israel-Cyprus-Greece: A 'Comfortable' Quasi-Alliance." *Mediterranean Politics* 21(3): 407–27.

Van Oudenaren, John S. 2022. "China's Shifting Approach to Alliance Politics." *Jamestown Foundation*. https://jamestown.org/program/chinas-shifting-approach-to-alliance-politics/ (September 25, 2022).

Volcovici, Valerie, and Aidan Lewis. 2022. "COP27: Island Nations Want China, India to Pay for Climate Damage." *Reuters*. https://www.reuters.com/business/cop/cop27-island-nations-want-china-india-pay-climate-damage-2022-11-08/ (November 9, 2022).

Vu, Khang. 2021. "Why China and North Korea Decided to Renew a 60-Year-Old Treaty." *The Interpreter*. https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/why-china-and-north-korea-decided-renew-60-year-old-treaty.

Wallsh, David. 2013. "Syrian Alliance Strategy in the Post-Cold War Era: The Impact of Unipolarity." *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* 37(2): 107–23.

Walt, Stephen M. 1985. "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power." *International Security* 9(4): 3–43.

———. 1988. “Testing Theories of Alliance Formation: The Case of Southwest Asia.” *International Organization* 42(2): 275–316.

———. 1990. *The Origins of Alliances*. Cornell University Press. https://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/book/9780801494185/the-origins-of-alliances/ (March 5, 2022).

Waltz, Kenneth. 2010. *Theory of International Politics*. 1st ed. Waveland Press.

Wang, Amber. 2021. “China Must Watch for Signs of Rising Nationalism, Warns Ex-Top Official.” *South China Morning Post*. https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3128482/china-danger-losing-control-its-rising-nationalism (November 21, 2022).

Wang, Dong, and Weizhan Meng. 2020. “China Debating the Regional Order.” *The Pacific Review* 33(3–4): 497–519.

Wang, T. Y. 1999. “U.S. Foreign Aid and UN Voting: An Analysis of Important Issues.” *International Studies Quarterly* 43(1): 199–210.

Wang, Yi. 2022a. “Upholding China-Philippines Friendship,Jointly Creating a Brighter Future.” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China*. https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/202201/t20220117_10601023.html (November 20, 2022).

———. 2022b. “Wang Yi on China-Solomon Islands Bilateral Security Cooperation.” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China*. https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx_662805/202206/t20220603_10698478.html (November 21, 2022).

Warren, Patrick. 2010. *Alliance History and the Future NATO: What the Last 500 Years of Alliance Behavior Tells Us about NATO’s Path Forward*. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/research/alliance-history-and-the-future-nato-what-the-last-500-years-of-alliance-behavior-tells-us-about-natos-path-forward/ (October 31, 2022).

Weitsman, Patricia. 2010. “Wartime Alliances Versus Coalition Warfare: How Institutional Structure Matters in the Multilateral Prosecution of Wars.” *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 4: 25.

Westad, Odd Arne. 2017. “China and the End of the Cold War in Europe.” *Cold War History* 17(2): 111–13.

———. 2022. “The Sources of Chinese Conduct.” *Foreign Affairs*. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2019-08-12/sources-chinese-conduct (October 24, 2022).

Wilkins, Thomas S. 2015. “From Strategic Partnership to Strategic Alliance?: Australia-Japan Security Ties and the Asia-Pacific.” *Asia Policy* (20): 81–112.

“Within-Case Analysis.” 2010. In *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*, 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks California 91320 United States: SAGE Publications, Inc. https://methods.sagepub.com/reference/encyc-of-case-study-research/n357.xml (October 26, 2022).

Wood, Sally Percival. 2012. “Retrieving the Bandung Conference... Moment by Moment” eds. Derek McDougall, Antonia Finnane, and Christopher J. Lee. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 43(3): 523–30.

Wyne, Ali. 2014. “5 Reasons China Has No Friends.” *Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2014/07/08/5-reasons-china-has-no-friends/ (February 24, 2022).

Xi, Jinping. 2012a. “Achieving Rejuvenation Is the Dream of the Chinese People.” *Qiushi*. http://en.qstheory.cn/2020-09/18/c_607580.htm (October 30, 2022).

———. 2012b. “Reform and Opening Up Is Always Ongoing and Will Never End.” *Qiushi*. http://en.qstheory.cn/2020-10/09/c_607587.htm (October 30, 2022).

———. 2013a. “Diplomacy with Neighboring Countries Characterized by Friendship, Sincerity, Reciprocity and Inclusiveness.” *Qiushi*. http://en.qstheory.cn/2021-01/29/c_607634.htm (October 30, 2022).

———. 2013b. “Enhance China’s Cultural Soft Power.” *Qiushi*. http://en.qstheory.cn/2020-11/13/c_607602.htm (October 30, 2022).

———. 2013c. “Jointly Maintain and Develop an Open World Economy.” *Qiushi*. http://en.qstheory.cn/2021-02/19/c_607640.htm (October 30, 2022).

———. 2013d. “The Chinese Dream Will Benefit Not Only the People of China, But Also of Other Countries.” *Qiushi*. http://en.qstheory.cn/2020-09/28/c_607584.htm (October 30, 2022).

———. 2013e. “Work Together to Build a 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road.” *Qiushi*. http://en.qstheory.cn/2021-01/27/c_607633.htm (October 30, 2022).

———. 2014a. “Asia-Pacific Partnership of Mutual Trust, Inclusiveness, Cooperation, and Win-Win Progress.” *Qiushi*. http://en.qstheory.cn/2021-10/25/c_670276.htm (October 30, 2022).

———. 2014b. “China’s Commitment to Peaceful Development.” *Qiushi*. http://en.qstheory.cn/2021-01/15/c_607628.htm (October 30, 2022).

———. 2014c. “China’s Diplomacy Must Befit Its Major-Country Status.” *Qiushi*. http://en.qstheory.cn/2021-10/18/c_667923.htm (October 30, 2022).

———. 2014d. “New Approach for Asian Security Cooperation.” *Qiushi*. http://en.qstheory.cn/2021-02/26/c_607643.htm (October 30, 2022).

———. 2016. “Improve Our Ability to Participate in Global Governance.” *Qiushi*. http://en.qstheory.cn/2021-10/22/c_669574.htm (October 30, 2022).

———. 2017a. “China’s Diplomacy in the New Era.” *Qiushi*. http://en.qstheory.cn/2022-06/17/c_759241.htm (October 30, 2022).

———. 2017b. “Towards a Community of Shared Future for Mankind.” *Qiushi*. http://en.qstheory.cn/2021-12/03/c_686693.htm (October 30, 2022).

———. 2018a. “Break New Ground in China’s Major-Country Diplomacy.” *Qiushi*. http://en.qstheory.cn/2022-06/22/c_759244.htm (October 30, 2022).

———. 2018b. “The Role of the BRICS in Building a Global Community of Shared Future.” *Qiushi*. http://en.qstheory.cn/2022-06/29/c_759252.htm (October 30, 2022).

———. 2019. “Create an Asian Community of Shared Future Through Mutual Learning.” *Qiushi*. http://en.qstheory.cn/2022-07/11/c_772022.htm (October 30, 2022).

Xia, Yafeng. 2008. “The Cold War and Chinese Foreign Policy.” *E-International Relations*. https://www.e-ir.info/2008/07/16/the-cold-war-and-china/ (September 20, 2022).

Yamamoto, Yoshinobu. 1974. “Probability Models of War Expansion and Peacetime Alliance Formation.” Ph.D. University of Michigan. https://www.proquest.com/docview/302709883/citation/CC7C70D716F24080PQ/1 (March 5, 2022).

Yan, Xuetong. 2011. “The Sources of Chinese Conduct.” *Project Syndicate*. https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/the-sources-of-chinese-conduct (October 24, 2022).

———. 2021. “Becoming Strong.” *Foreign Affairs*. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-06-22/becoming-strong (November 14, 2022).

Yang, Yi Edward, and Xinsheng Liu. 2012. “The ‘China Threat’ through the Lens of US Print Media: 1992–2006.” *Journal of Contemporary China* 21(76): 695–711.

Yang, Yi Edward, Jonathan W. Keller, and Joseph Molnar. 2018. “An Operational Code Analysis of China’s National Defense White Papers: 1998-2015.” *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 23(4): 585–602.

Ye, Min. 2022. “The Logic behind China and Russia’s Strategic Alliance-like Partnership.” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*. https://gjia.georgetown.edu/2022/04/14/the-logic-behind-china-and-russias-strategic-alliance-like-partnership/ (July 13, 2022).

Yi, Wang. 2022. “The Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between China and Pacific Island Countries Will Surely Achieve Steady and Sustained Growth.” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China*. https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/kjgzbdfyyq/202205/t20220531_10694932.html.

Ying. 2017. “‘Belt and Road’ Incorporated into CPC Constitution - Xinhua | English.News.Cn.” *Xinhua*. http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-10/24/c_136702025.htm (November 8, 2022).

Yu, Shirley. 2018. “Belt and Road Initiative: Defining China’s Grand Strategy and the Future World Order.” Harvard University. https://dash.harvard.edu/handle/1/37799759 (September 24, 2022).

———. 2019. “The Belt and Road Initiative: Modernity, Geopolitics and the Developing Global Order.” *Asian Affairs* 50(2): 187–201.

Yue, Shengsong. 2018. “Towards a Global Partnership Network: Implications, Evolution and Prospects of China’s Partnership Diplomacy.” *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies* 36(2): 5–27.

Yufan, Hao, and Zhai Zhihai. 1990. “China’s Decision to Enter the Korean War: History Revisited.” *The China Quarterly* (121): 94–115.

Zagoria, Donald S. 1991. “The End of the Cold War in Asia: Its Impact on China.” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 38(2): 1–11.

Zhang, Denghua. 2018. “The Concept of ‘Community of Common Destiny’ in China’s Diplomacy: Meaning, Motives and Implications.” *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies* 5(2): 196–207.

Zhang, Enyu. 2006. “Chinese Decision-Making in Response to Foreign Policy Crises, 1949-1996 : A Poliheuristic Analysis.” Thesis. University of Missouri--Columbia. https://mospace.umsystem.edu/xmlui/handle/10355/41893 (September 21, 2022).

Zheng, Yongnian. 2007. *“Harmonious Society” and “Harmonious World”: China’s Policy Discourse Under Hu Jintao*. Nottingham: China Policy Institute. https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/iaps/documents/cpi/briefings/briefing-26-harmonious-society-and-harmonious-world.pdf.

Zhongping, Feng, and Huang Jing. 2014. “China’s Strategic Partnership Diplomacy.” https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2459948 (July 13, 2022).

Zhou, Yiqi. 2017. “China’s Partnership Network Versus the U.S. Alliance System: Coexistence or Conflict?” *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies* 03(01): 1–18.

Zubok, Vladislav. 2017. “The Soviet Union and China in the 1980s: Reconciliation and Divorce.” *Cold War History* 17(2): 121–41.