US-China Relations

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History of US-China Relations before 1979

- 1911: the Republic of China (ROC) was established
- WWII: China became an US ally
- 1946-49: Chinese civil war “biased” mediator
- 1949: the People Republic of China (PRC) was established.
- 1950-53: the Korean War
- 1960: President Eisenhower visited Taiwan
President Eisenhower visited Taiwan (1960)

Figure 5.2  U.S. Troops Stationed in Taiwan (1950–1979)
The Normalization of Sino-US relations (1979)

• China wants
  • abrogating the 1954 ROC-US treaty
  • withdrawing US troops from Taiwan
  • cutting formal relations with Taiwan
  • stopping selling weapons to Taiwan

• US wants
  • Maintaining a consulate in Taiwan
  • China promised not to use force against Taiwan
The Normalization of Sino-US relations (1979)

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• Outcome:
  • China dropped the last condition and implicitly promised peaceful unification
  • US maintained only economic and cultural ties
Taiwan Relations Act (Apr 10 1979)

• “make clear that the United States decision to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China rests upon the expectation that the future of Taiwan will be determined by peaceful means”

• US to make available “such defense articles and defense services as may necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability”.

Protestors in Taipei, (1979)
The Cold War Superpower Triangle

1950s

1960s

1970s

U.S. - U.S.S.R. - P.R.C.

U.S. - U.S.S.R. - P.R.C.

U.S. - U.S.S.R. - P.R.C.

amity

hostility
Why we should miss the cold war...

- Reagan visited China, 1984
- Bush visited China, 1989
- Gorbachev visited China, 1989

1980s
A Chinese man stands alone to block a line of tanks heading east on Beijing's Changan Blvd. in Tiananmen Square on June 5, 1989. (AP Images)
Is your overall opinion of China very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable or very unfavorable?

[Line graph showing changes in percentage of favorable and unfavorable opinions from 1978 to 2022.]
The troubling 1990s

• 1992: US approved the sale of 150 F-16 jet fighters to Taiwan
• 1993: China lost its bid the 2000 Olympics Games to Sydney by two votes.
• 1990-94: Annual fight for China’s most-favored-nation (MFN) trading status
• 1995-96: Taiwanese President Lee Tenghui visited the US, triggering the third Taiwan Strait Crisis
• 1999: US bombed Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia
• 2000: Taiwan’s pro-independence candidate won presidential election
• 2001: US-China mid-air collision in South China Sea
US trade with China

US trade deficit with China has soared since 1985

1997: Asian financial crisis
2001: China joins World Trade Organization
2007-10: Global financial crisis

2018 trade deficit: $419bn

Source: US Census
The 2000s: “the US-China relationship is the best ever!”

- 2001: the war on terror
- 2003: the invasion of Iraq
- 2003: Bush publicly criticized Chen when Chinese premier visited
- 2006: Bush declared the Sino-US relationship the “best ever”
- 2006: China and US cooperated against North Korea’s nuclear program
- 2007-8: the Great Recession and the Beijing Olympic games
US President Visited China

• Richard Nixon (1972)
• Gerald Ford (1975)
• Jimmy Carter (1979)
• Ronald Reagan (1984)
• George H. W. Bush (1989)
• Bill Clinton (1998)
• Donald Trump (2017)
• Joe Biden (?)
From cold peace to cold war

• 2011: President Obama announced an American pivot to Asia
• 2012: Xi Jinping stated the Chinese dream of the “great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation”.
• 2013: China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)
• 2016: The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)
• 2018: President Trump started the trade war by imposing $60 billion tariff.
• 2022: Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the last lost opportunity
Reasons for Emerging US-China Tensions

• Changing balance of power
• Lack of a solid foundation for bilateral relations
• Taiwan, the issue that is never resolved
  • From “strategic ambiguity” to “strategic certainty”
  • Sep. 18, 2022: President Biden said U.S. forces would defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese invasion
FIGURE 16-6
Power Transition and the Risk of War

- High risk of war
- Power transition period
- Dominant State
- Challenger

Capabilities
High
Low
Time
Is your overall opinion of China very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable or very unfavorable?

- **Total % favorable**
- **Total % unfavorable**

GALLUP
"How do you think China is viewed internationally?"

![Graph showing public opinion on China's international perception](image)

- **Very Favorably**: 55.8%
- **Favorably**: 44.0%
- **Unfavorably**: 10.0%
- **Very Unfavorably**: 6.0%
- **Refuse to Answer**: 1.2%

Veteran journalist and political commentator Jiang Jieshi's book, *In the Clay and the Fire*, discusses the concept of international perception. His views are widely recognized and have been influential in the field of political analysis.