

## Reactions of the Sino-Soviet Bloc to the U.S.-ROK Alliance

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### ABSTRACT

Covering and possessing an impressive chunk of the earth in both geographical and demographic terms, the relationship between two great continental powers (one Asian and one Eurasian) has always had a significant impact on Northeast Asia and beyond. At the same time, the Sino-Soviet relationship has been closely keyed to and shaped by two other great maritime powers (Japan and the United States) in Northeast Asian geopolitics. In the first half of the twentieth century, Japan had the greatest impact on Sino-Soviet relations, and the United States has played the largest role since the end of World War II.

This article explores the rise and fall of the Sino-Soviet alliance—and the rise of the Sino-Russian strategic partnership in the post-Cold War era—and its fitful interaction with the U.S.-ROK alliance over the years, with primary attention to the first two decades of the Cold War. The Korean War served as the first testing ground for the alliance. After the war, however, as Nikita Khrushchev moved the USSR away from Stalinism, the alliance waned and eventually turned into enmity and conflict that lasted until Mikhail Gorbachev's revolution in foreign policy. Gorbachev provided running room for the slow but steady process of Sino-Soviet rapprochement-cum-renormalization in the late 1980s that morphed into a new "strategic partnership" in the 1990s. In the background of these relations has stood North Korea on one side and the United States—with its relationships with South Korea and Taiwan—on the other.

Keywords: China, the Soviet Union, the United States; the Republic of Korea, Sino-Soviet Alliance; US-ROK Alliance

## Introduction

To revisit the checkered history of the Sino-Soviet alliance—and its reactions to the U.S.-ROK alliance—is to be confronted with multiple contradictory forces with several paradoxical consequences. First, there was no interaction of any kind during the Korean War (1950–1953), the most sanguinary phase of East-West conflict as well as the first and only hot war between the United States and the People's Republic of China (PRC) during the Cold War, with some three million casualties. The Sino-Soviet bloc—formalized with the signing of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance (hereafter SSA) on February 14, 1950—predated the outbreak of the Korean War by more than four months, whereas the U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty (hereafter USROKA), signed on October 1, 1953, followed the end of the Korean War in July 1953. Second, the SSA, though formally expired in April 1980, lasted for only about eight years as a working alliance system, while the USROKA survived the end of the Cold War, lasting more than a half century. Since the longevity of most alliances is better measured in years than in decades,<sup>1</sup> the SSA seems like more a "normal" alliance than does the USROKA. Alliance longevity is not the same as alliance success. Like General MacArthur's old soldiers, some old alliances never die; they just fade away.

Third, thanks to the Korean War, the SSA was greatly strengthened in the short run (1950–1957) and weakened in the long run as it planted seeds of suppressed humiliation-cum-resentment for the not too distant future. Fourth, while Washington remained as the most crucial factor in the rise and fall of the SSA (and especially the former), the USROKA, at least the South Korean component, remained largely a secondary derivative variable. For the making of the Sino-Soviet socialist bloc, the United States served at once as both the most cohesive and the most divisive element. This is hardly surprising since the relationship between two great continental powers (one Asian and one Eurasian) has been closely keyed to and shaped by two other great maritime powers (Japan and the United States) in Northeast Asian geopolitics. In the first half of the twentieth century, Japan had the greatest impact on Sino-Soviet relations, and the United States has played the largest role since the end of World War II. Hence, one cannot track and evaluate the strategic significance of the evolving Beijing-Moscow relationship without assessing the influence of the U.S. factor and the triangular relations among the three powers. Fifth and most paradoxically, the slow but steady process of Sino-Soviet rapprochement-cum-renormalization in the 1980s that morphed into "strategic partnership" in the 1990s can be dated as far back as April 3, 1979, when Beijing informed Moscow of its

decision not to renew the 1950 alliance treaty<sup>2</sup> and simultaneously offered normalization talks.

All of this bespeaks the twists and turns on the turbulent trajectory of the Sino-Soviet and Sino-Russian relationship over the years.<sup>3</sup> This article tracks and evaluates the rise and fall of the Sino-Soviet alliance—and the rise of the Sino-Russian strategic partnership in the post-Cold War era—and its fitful interaction with the U.S.-ROK alliance over the years, with primary attention to the first two decades of the Cold War and with insights gained from recently released Chinese and Russian primary (documentary) materials.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Making of the Sino-Soviet Alliance**

Even before the establishment of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders began to actively pursue building a formalized alliance relationship with the Soviet Union. Having already adopted the "lean-to-one-side" policy as the first basic foreign policy line on June 30, 1949,<sup>5</sup> CCP leaders clearly perceived a need for such an alliance for ideological, economic, and strategic reasons. The dire economic conditions, the need for a defensive and deterrent shield against American intervention, the lack of a viable "third road," and the requirement of international recognition and legitimation—all of these factors forced CCP leaders to assume the disquieting role of anxious supplicants in pursuit of a security alliance treaty with the Soviet Union.

Against this menacing backdrop and two days after Mao had made his lean-to-one-side pronouncement, Liu Shaoqi, one of Mao's closest colleagues, was dispatched to Moscow to convey Mao's commitment to the lean-to-one-side policy as well as to solicit Stalin's help for the People's Liberation Army (PLA). During the course of this visit Stalin agreed to help the PLA in gaining control of the strategically vital province of Xinjiang as well as providing Yak fighters and heavy bombers. However, there is no indication in available Chinese materials that the Korean problem came up in Liu's talks with Stalin.

Mao made his first foreign trip to Moscow in mid-December 1949 and stayed for nine weeks, personally negotiating the terms of an alliance treaty with Stalin. That it would require nine weeks of Mao's precious time away from Beijing when it should have taken no more than a few days to complete such a short six-article agreement suggests that this was indeed the first protracted struggle—or what Mao later characterized as a "series of struggles"<sup>6</sup>—for the fledgling three-month old People's Republic.

Mao had few bargaining chips. Strategically and ideologically, he had already cast New China's lot with the socialist camp led by the Soviet Union, as there was no "third road." And yet Stalin, according to Mao's 1962 recollection, "was not willing to sign" an alliance treaty. Stalin stressed that concerning Taiwan "There is no need for you to create conflicts with the British and the Americans."<sup>7</sup> Instead, Stalin initially adopted a "grabbing with two hands" approach. With one hand Stalin would grasp and safeguard all the concessions he had extracted from the Chinese Nationalists (the Guomindang, GMD) five years earlier via the 1945 Sino-Soviet treaty he had signed with the Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) regime, while at the same time suppressing the idea of an anti-American alliance treaty with the other hand. In his first meeting with Stalin on December 16, 1949, Mao stressed the imperative of establishing international peace for China's domestic economic recovery and reconstruction:

The most important question at the present time is the question of establishing peace. China needs a period of three to five years of peace, which would be used to bring the economy back to prewar levels and to stabilize the country in general. Decisions on the most important questions in China hinge on the prospects for a peaceful future. With this in mind the CC CCP [Central Committee of the Communist Party of China] entrusted me to ascertain from you, Comrade Stalin, in what way and for how long will international peace be preserved.<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, the United States was present at creation as the "invisible third partner"<sup>9</sup> at the Stalin-Mao summit in Moscow adding both cohesive and contentious elements in the making of the SSA. The differing attitudes of Mao and Stalin on how to respond to the U.S. threat stemmed from their differing assessments of the likelihood of a U.S. attack against their countries. While Moscow assessed American plans for Japan's rearmament as a looming threat, Beijing asserted that the United States was actually plotting to subvert the victory of the Chinese Revolution by providing support for the GMD on Taiwan and also by actively organizing and funding counterrevolutionary groups on the mainland. To the Chinese, Washington's anti-PRC actions spotlighted the urgent need for a formalized Sino-Soviet alliance as soon as possible.<sup>10</sup>

Korea was Mao's second-order priority and as such it was not on the agenda in any of the official Mao-Stalin summit talks in Moscow.<sup>11</sup> Strategically, the Soviet Union's main concern was preventing the reemergence of Japan as a military rival in the region. The course of

Russo-Korean history followed a sinusoidal wave of development in which three different Russias (Imperial Tsarist Russia, Soviet Russia, and post-Soviet Russia) have interacted with and affected three different Koreas (Chosun Korea, Colonial Korea, and Divided Korea). Imperial Russian intrigue in Chosun Korea began in the mid-nineteenth century and reached its zenith in the final decade of that century. Then Japan gained ascendancy, through the military defeat of the Russian Empire, and Russia would remain clear of the colonized Korean peninsula until the Soviet Union's mid-twentieth-century entrance on the northern half of the peninsula, an event which helped create the third Korea: divided Korea. It was in this historical and geostrategic context that Korea was important, because the peninsula had been the major battleground of the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905 and the staging ground for Japanese incursions on the Asian continent afterward.<sup>12</sup> A June 1945 report from the Far Eastern Department of the Soviet foreign ministry stated that "Japan must be forever excluded from Korea, since a Korea under Japanese rule would be a constant threat to the Far East of the USSR."<sup>13</sup> For Stalin Korea was still important not only because it was part of the security belt on Soviet eastern flank but also because it could serve as a springboard for Japan's invasion.<sup>14</sup>

After the prolonged and wary negotiations in Moscow, the newly established PRC and the Soviet Union finally concluded and signed on February 14, 1950 six agreements, including most importantly the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance, the linchpin of the new Sino-Soviet bloc-cum-alliance system. The main objective of this six-article treaty was to forge a socialist solidarity in East Asia as a counterweight against the clear and continuing possibility of a Japanese-American anti-Communist alliance network in East Asia. In both the preamble and article 1, the central objective was stated in terms of Stalin's first priority of "preventing the resumption of aggression and violation of peace on the part of Japan or any other state [the United States] which would unite with Japan directly or in any other form in acts of aggression." But article 5 incorporated and presaged China's Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence (FPPC) (also known by its Indian name *panch shila*), which were first embodied in the Sino-Indian Treaty (April 29, 1954) and ceremoniously confirmed in a joint declaration that Premier Zhou Enlai signed with Prime Minister Nehru (June 18, 1954). In stark contrast, the six-article USROKA treaty has nothing remotely resembling the FPPC, even as article 4 stipulates the asymmetrical nature of the alliance: "The Republic of Korea grants, and the United States of American accepts, the right to dispose United States land, air and sea forces in and about the territory of the Republic of Korea as determined

by mutual agreement."

The Stalin-Mao summit ended with mixed bag outcomes for the Chinese delegation. Beijing got the promise of Soviet military assistance in case of "aggression on the part of Japan or any other state [the United States] that may collaborate in any way with Japan in acts of aggression." Moscow also agreed to provide a loan of \$300 million over five years (at a concessionary interest rate of 1 percent) plus construction aid in building fifty massive heavy industrial projects (and eventually thrice that number) as well as military aid in essential areas such as the construction of a PRC air force and development of long-range artillery.<sup>15</sup> But Beijing failed to get Mongolia or aid to "liberate" Taiwan, let alone a joint revolutionary strategy for East Asia.

Worse, the Soviet side forced the Chinese into the demeaning role of desperate supplicants, and Stalin, especially, missed no opportunity to lord over his Chinese visitors. At one of six Stalin-Liu meetings in the summer of 1949, for example, Liu presented a six-hour report on China's political realities repeatedly depicted as on the road to becoming the Soviet Union. On Stalin's personal copy of the report are a dozen 'Da!'s written in Stalin's handwriting after each and every passage that acknowledged China's subordinate position.<sup>16</sup> For those in the Chinese delegation who had not experienced Stalin's Russia firsthand, it was a rude reminder of the hegemonic Soviet socialism, presaging the rhetorical shape of ideational conflict to come in Sino-Soviet relations.

That said, however, the Sino-Soviet alliance stood out as the most significant challenge to Western capitalist supremacy in three centuries. Covering an impressive chunk of the earth in both geographical and demographic terms, it posed a threat that could not be waved off amid rising Cold-War tensions.<sup>17</sup> In the context of these tensions, the SSA meant for the fledgling People's Republic an opportunity for enhanced security and a countering force to the perceived survival threat coming from the United States. In addition this represented a promise of beefing up Chinese military, political, and economic capabilities following a long decline. As well, the seemingly mighty Sino-Soviet alliance stood out in the 1950s in sharp contrast to the untidy asymmetrical alliance relationships that the United States had created with such putative Cold War anti-communist allies as Japan, South Korea, and the GMD on Taiwan.<sup>18</sup> From the American perspective, the SSA was a failure of the State Department objective of driving a wedge between the two Communist powers. President Eisenhower voiced this failure in the spring of 1950: "I believe Asia is lost with Japan, P[hilippine] I[slands], N[etherlands] E[ast] I[ndies] and even Australia under threat. India itself is not safe!"<sup>19</sup>

## Testing the Sino-Soviet Alliance in the Korean War

The first major test for the Sino-Soviet alliance came just six months after it had entered into force (April 3, 1950) when, in October 1950, the Chinese leadership encountered an agonizing decision-making process about sending Chinese troops—the so-called “Chinese People’s Volunteers” (CPV)—to enter the Korean War. From Beijing’s perspective, such a test not only allowed Mao and his comrades to test the outer possibilities and limitations of the alliance for China’s national security and status drive; it also provided them with a valuable opportunity to better assess how the alliance would actually strengthen and consolidate the new socialist bloc unity in Asia. China’s Korean War experience, consequently, would profoundly influence Mao’s strategic thinking about the future of the Sino-Soviet alliance and the future of Sino-American relations.

As revealed by new Russian and Chinese sources, however, the idea of initiating the war came directly from Kim Il Sung, who began lobbying for a Soviet-backed invasion as early as March 1949 with the assurance that it would take no more than three days to “liberate” the South, leaving the United States no time to intervene. Stalin rejected this plan on the grounds that such war could trigger a direct armed conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, that it was therefore not necessary or too risky, that North Korean forces could cross the 38th parallel only as a counterattack, that the Chinese Civil War was still unresolved, and that the North Korean military was still weak and ill-prepared.<sup>20</sup> It was not until April 1950 that “the Soviet dictator explained to Mao Zedong that it was now possible to agree to the North Koreans’ proposal ‘in light of the changed international situation.’”<sup>21</sup> The victory of the Chinese Communist Party and the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in October 1949, the successful test of the Soviet atom bomb in 1949, the withdrawal of American troops from South Korea in June 1949, and U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson’s January 1950 speech at the National Press Club, excluding both Korea and Taiwan from the American defense perimeter in Asia—all of “the changed international situation”—led Stalin to change his mind and to give the final go-ahead, but still on the condition that Mao Zedong agreed. Nonetheless, there is no evidence of any joint Sino-Soviet planning of military operations before the outbreak of the war on June 25, 1950.<sup>22</sup>

When the course of war reversed dramatically after U.S. troops landed at Inchon on September 15, however, Stalin’s attitude regarding Soviet military assistance, especially Soviet air support, changed. He became more determined than ever to avoid a direct military

confrontation with the United States. In a telegram to Chinese leaders dated October 1, Stalin pointed out that the situation in Korea was grave and that without outside [Chinese] support, the Korean Communist regime would collapse. He then asked the Chinese to dispatch their troops to Korea. It is worth noting in this connection that he did not mention what kind of support the Soviet Union would offer China, let alone touch on the question of Soviet air support.<sup>23</sup>

The decision to send the CPV to Korea was certainly the most difficult one that Mao and his fellow CCP leaders had to make in the first year of the PRC. Even after Mao had issued the formal order to enter the war on October 8, he twice postponed the deadline in the wake of the Soviet renege on the promised air support. Faced with the massive American counterattack in mid-September, Mao too hesitated. He told Stalin on October 2 that China would not send its troops to fight in Korea, since such a giant intervention meant that "our entire plan for peaceful reconstruction will be completely ruined, and many people in the country will be dissatisfied."<sup>24</sup> It took a direct request from Stalin to Mao, as well as a series of meetings between the Soviet leader and a Chinese delegation headed by Zhou Enlai and Lin Biao in the Crimea on October 9-10, to get the Chinese to change their minds. On October 13 Mao informed Soviet Ambassador Roshchin that China would send troops to Korea.<sup>25</sup>

China's entry into the war immediately altered the balance of power on the Korean battlefield. With Mao's approval, Marshal Peng Dehuai adopted a strategy of inducing the enemy troops to march forward and then eliminating them by superior forces striking from their rear and on their flanks. On October 25, the Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV) initiated its first campaign in Korea, suddenly attacking South Korean troops in the Unsan area. In twelve days, South Korean troops were forced to retreat from areas close to the Yalu to the Chongchun River. Starting on November 25, Chinese troops began a vigorous counteroffensive. Under tremendous pressure, US/UN troops had to undertake what Jonathan Pollack has called "the most infamous retreat in American military history."<sup>26</sup> By mid-December, the CPV and the reorganized Korean People's Army (KPA) troops had regained control of nearly all North Korean territory.<sup>27</sup>

After thirty-seven months of fighting, the United States suffered 137,250 casualties—36,940 killed in action; 92,134 wounded; 3,737 missing in action; and 4,439 prisoners of war.<sup>28</sup> The South Koreans lost 400,000 troops, with a huge civilian loss as well; and combined North Korean and Chinese casualties were close to two million. Property damage on both sides of the DMZ was enormous. The destructive U.S.

bombing of North Korea left almost nothing standing anywhere in the country. The war, therefore, left North Koreans with enormous fear, resentment and hatred of the United States, which has been exacerbated by the continued presence of UN/US forces in South Korea. The war was the defining event of North Korean identity formation. Whereas the 1950 invasion etched into the minds of the American policymaker and public an image of North Koreans as aggressive communists who must be deterred and stopped at any cost, North Koreans view the United States intervention in the Korean War and subsequent military presence on the Korean peninsula as yet another example of great-power interference in Korean affairs. More than two decades after the end of the Cold War, the United States and North Korea remain technically at war and mired in Cold War ideological conflict.

At long last, the Korean War was brought to an inconclusive end (armistice), signed at Panmunjom on July 27, 1953 largely through Beijing's diplomatic efforts after Stalin's death, with the Kremlin being paralyzed by a serious succession crisis.<sup>29</sup> China wanted to reach a negotiated settlement by late 1952 but was unable to bring Stalin around to its position. From Stalin's perspective, the protracted war and stalemate produced multiple geostrategic advantages and benefits for the Soviet Union. It tied down American forces while providing first-hand intelligence on American military capabilities. It drained American economic and political resources, making Washington much less likely to launch a full-scale war against the Soviet Union. Above all, it deepened Beijing's dependence on Soviet political, military and economic assistance, thus lessening "the danger that Mao would follow the path of Marshal Tito in Yugoslavia, an eventually that ranked among Stalin's greatest fears, second only, perhaps, to a premature war with the US."<sup>30</sup>

By any reckoning the Korean War was the single greatest system-transforming event in the early post-World War II era, with the far-reaching catalytic effects of enacting the rules of the Cold War zero-sum game as well as congealing the patterns of East-West conflict across East Asia and beyond. It was the Korean War that brought about such defining features of the Cold War as high military budgets (e.g., a quadrupling of U.S. defense expenditures), and the crystallization of East-West conflict into a rigid strategic culture dependent on a Manichean vision of stark bipolarity.<sup>31</sup> In addition the Cold War sparked the proliferation of U.S. bilateral alliance treaties with Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, South Vietnam, the Philippines, and Thailand—hub and spokes of the San Francisco System—as well as an ill-conceived and short-lived multilateral security organization, the South East Asia Treaty

Organization (SEATO). And yet, by dint of its timing, its course, and its outcome, as the diplomatic historian William Stueck argues, “the Korean War served in many ways as a substitute for World War III.”<sup>32</sup> This notion of the Korean War as a proxy for a World War III is supported by recently available Russian archival sources.<sup>33</sup>

The parameters for managing a superpower conflict established by the two sides during this war remained in force for the rest of the Cold War. Similarly, both the Sino-Soviet alliance and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), created shortly before war began in Korea, took concrete shape in the course of this first hot civil-cum-international war. And the Korean War provided the concrete content and shape for the Sino-Soviet relationship that the Moscow summit had failed to produce.<sup>34</sup> Beijing also believed that the SSA was one of the crucial factors that prevented U.S. extension of the Korean War into Chinese territory. Indeed, the SSA not only covered Beijing's backbone and helped the CPV through the Korean War without the conflict spreading to its territory. Even after the war, the alliance provided both protection and prestige as Beijing launched its diplomatic debut at the 1955 Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian newly independent countries.<sup>35</sup>

The drawn-out negotiations in Korea, lasting from July 1951 to July 1953, led many within the U.S. government to conclude that negotiations with Communists were pointless and perhaps even self-defeating, a stance that contributed to the militarization of U.S. containment policy. President Eisenhower was anxious to wrap up the 1953 Korean negotiations as quickly as possible and he threatened to use nuclear weapons against China if the prisoner repatriation issue was not resolved promptly. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, along with Eisenhower, long held that it was this nuclear threat that pushed China to a breakthrough in the negotiations, and this claim had a long-term effect on U.S. thinking on “nuclear diplomacy.”<sup>36</sup>

The two superpowers loomed large in the conception, development, and final success of the Chinese bomb. U.S. nuclear threats were an initial catalyst for engendering the national will and consensus that in a nuclear world China without the bomb does not count or could not really stand up. This national will was well reflected in Foreign Minister Chen Yi's statement that China had to build the bomb at any cost, “even if the Chinese had to pawn their trousers.”<sup>37</sup> Beijing's nuclear quest dovetailed its changing relations with Moscow, evolving from dependency (1955-1958) to interdependency (1959-1960) and finally to self-reliance (1960-1964). North Korea's nuclear strategy too has been significantly shaped by perceived U.S. nuclear threats since the early 1950s, portending quest for a self-reliant existential nuclear deterrent for the DPRK.<sup>38</sup>

Particularly significant, but not sufficiently acknowledged, is the role of the Korean War in the creation of Cold-War identity in Northeast Asia and beyond.<sup>39</sup> For both Koreas, the experience of the Korean War initiated a decisive shift in identity politics from the competition of multiple identities to the dominance of the Cold-War identity. While the Korean War accelerated and completed the process of Cold-War identity construction, decades later the end of the Cold War and the collapse and transformation of the communist world failed to turn inter-Korean identity politics around.

The United States, too, owes to the Korean War the crystallization of its Cold-War identity, which in turn gave birth to an American strategic culture that thrived on a Manichaeian vision of global bipolarity and the omnipresent communist threat. Similarly, until the latter half of the 1980s, Soviet strategic culture was anchored in and thrived on its own Cold-War identity. The simplicity of a stark bipolarized worldview provided an indispensable counterpoint to the quest for superpower identity and security in the region dominated by American hegemony. It is worth noting in this connection that some elements of U.S.-USSR rivalry during the Cold War had more to do with the promotion of national identity as status competition than with the promotion of any identifiable “national interest.”

As for China, although its troops suffered huge casualties in the Korean War, Beijing succeeded in forcing the strongest superpower on earth to compromise in Korea and to accept China’s representatives as equals at the bargaining table. No one in the West would ever again dismiss China’s power as General MacArthur had in the fall of 1950. Indeed, the Korean War confirmed for the national self and “significant others” that China could stand up against the world’s antisocialist superpower for the integrity of its new national identity as a revolutionary socialist state. In reviewing fifty years of Chinese diplomacy, Beijing still calls the Korean War a war of aggression launched by the imperialists to strangle the new People’s Republic. The Chinese performance in Korea is still publicly exalted as “a world miracle in which the weak vanquished the strong,” even as “the signing of the Korean armistice rewrote the history of Chinese diplomatic negotiations which [prior to the coming of the PRC] had always ended with sacrifice of China’s national interests.”<sup>40</sup> By successfully forcing the strongest nation on earth to compromise in Korea and to accept China’s representatives as equals at the bargaining table, Beijing had successfully overcome the hundred years of national humiliation (from the 1840s to 1940s) and its appropriated national identity as the “Sick Man of Asia.”

The newly established People's Republic of China almost single-handedly rescued Kim Il Sung's regime from extinction, but at inordinate material, human, and political cost. In addition to over 740,000 casualties<sup>41</sup>—including Mao's eldest son, Anying—China missed the opportunity to “liberate” Taiwan, was excluded from the United Nations for more than two decades, and lost twenty years in its modernization drive. On the other hand, China's performance in Korea was also a source of heightened stature and influence in world politics. Sino-DPRK relations were consolidated in November 1953 when Kim Il Sung led a large delegation to Beijing and negotiated agreements for long-term military, economic, and cultural cooperation. Beijing promised \$200 million in aid for reconstruction during the next three years, only \$50 million less than committed by Moscow.<sup>42</sup> In addition, Chinese troops remained in North Korea for five years following the war, helping with reconstruction projects.

During the long Cold War years, Chinese leaders reiterated the immutability of their “militant friendship” with North Korea. Premier Zhou Enlai and Marshall Zhu De used the metaphor of the closeness of “lips and teeth” to describe the strategic importance of Korea to China as a cordon sanitaire against hostile external power.<sup>43</sup> The militant revolutionary “alliance sealed in blood” (*xiemeng*) during the Korean War, formalized in a 1961 treaty, sustained China's one-Korea (pro-Pyongyang) policy for more than three decades.

Despite or perhaps because of the extreme dependence on the Soviet Union in the preparation of North Korea's invasion, the balance of great-power influence shifted from Moscow to Beijing, due in no small measure to the Chinese intervention in October 1950. The deepening Sino-Soviet conflict gave Kim Il Sung more leverage opportunities and space than could be realistically considered under the Sino-Soviet alliance. The Soviet army that had successfully maneuvered Kim Il Sung into power failed to return, while the CPV intervened to rescue the fledgling socialist regime on the verge of collapse and stayed on until 1958, marking the end of Soviet domination and the beginning of Chinese influence.

The Korean War crystallized the bifurcation of China-Korea relations into two pairs: North Korea with the People's Republic on the one hand and South Korea with Nationalist China (Taiwan) on the other, so that Cold-War tensions first across the Korean de-militarized zone (DMZ) and second across the Taiwan Strait constantly reinforced one another and were pulled into the orbit of US-USSR rivalry and became its ideological derivatives.<sup>44</sup> It remained an unspoken geostrategic assumption that each of the two Chinas and each of the two Koreas

would of necessity align with one or the other superpower. The triangular relationship among North Korea, South Korea, and China during the 1950s was thus characterized by amity on one side of the triangle (between China and North Korea) with enmity on the other two sides (between South Korea and each of the other two). The global ideological-strategic context calcified these dynamics as the U.S.-USSR rivalry allowed little running room for Sino-ROK rapprochement.<sup>45</sup>

### **The Unraveling of the Sino-Soviet Alliance**

One of the many unexpected and paradoxical consequences of the Korean War was that the Sino-Soviet alliance was greatly strengthened in the short run and weakened in the long run. The alliance received a shot in the arm from China's intervention in the Korean War, consolidating the Moscow-Beijing axis on a foundation of shared values and shared fears. The war against American troops in Korea shaped and cemented the alliance in ways that neither Beijing nor Moscow could have predicted in 1950. By creating a sense of accomplishment on the Chinese side and a sense of socialist solidarity with the Soviet Union that had stood by them, the Korean War bolstered the relationship between the People's Republic and the Soviet Union.<sup>46</sup>

The years of 1953 to 1956, in retrospect, should be regarded as a golden age of the Sino-Soviet alliance. During this short-lived honeymoon period, the scope of Soviet economic, technological, and nuclear aid increased considerably. More than 10,000 Soviet specialists were sent to China, while some 10,000 Chinese engineers, technicians, and skilled workers, and about 1,000 advanced scientists received further training in the Soviet Union. In 1959, a year that saw the biggest increase in Sino-Soviet trade, nearly 50 percent of China's total trade was with the USSR.<sup>47</sup>

At least up to Khrushchev's de-Stalinization speech at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1956, Beijing's publicly proclaimed policy was one of setting in motion a tidal wave of learning from the Soviet Union, as made manifest in an editorial from Renmin Ribao (People's Daily, Beijing):

To industrialize our country, the primary issue before us is to learn from the Soviet Union. . . . we must get going a tidal wave of learning from the Soviet Union on a nationwide scale, in order to build up our country . . . "follow the path of the Russians."<sup>48</sup>

We find Khrushchev resisting—and yielding to—Chinese pressures for more aid with the plea that the Soviet Union was still "hungry and poverty-ridden from the war" [World War II] and Mao demanding—and

resenting—more Soviet aid. Paradoxically, the rise of substantial Soviet aid in the post-Stalin years was a consequence of China's increased self-confidence and greater political and ideological leverage in Communist intra-bloc politics. Yet such a relationship with an uneven distribution of costs and benefits could not persist too long. In Beijing's eye, Moscow by 1959 had failed to meet expected alliance obligations (indeed, litmus tests) in the second Taiwan Strait crisis, the Sino-Indian conflict, and a united front against American imperialism. Symbolically and strategically, the "perfidious" Soviet letter of June 20, 1959, in which Moscow cancelled the 1957 Defense Technical Accord, marks the rupturing of the "spinal cord" of the alliance. All subsequent attempts to put the alliance back on track proved to be of no avail.

The Sino-Soviet conflict was a drawn-out process, evolving by fits and starts in several phases before its purported final rupture in 1964. Khrushchev's de-Stalinization speech opened a Pandora's box, introducing polycentric tendencies to a Communist world hitherto united by the ultimate ideological authority and supreme leadership in the Kremlin. In addition, Khrushchev introduced several doctrinal innovations (e.g., the demise of the inevitability of war and peaceful coexistence as the general foreign policy line) that would fuel the Sino-Soviet conflict for the next twenty years. Still, Sino-Soviet disputes between 1956 and 1960 were largely confined to esoteric intra-bloc communications. From 1960 onward, the dispute began to escalate from ideological to national security issues, reaching the point of no return by early 1964. On February 4, 1964, Beijing publicly accused Moscow of having violated the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance with the unilateral decision to withdraw (in 1960) 1,390 Soviet experts working in China, to tear up 343 main and supplementary contracts on the employment of experts, and to cancel 257 projects of scientific and technical cooperation.

The official Chinese account from 1964 to 1965 (and also in the post—Mao era) generally accepts the Twentieth CPSU Congress in 1956 as "the root from which stems all the evils done by the Khrushchev revisionists" and situates the main causes of the split in (1) Soviet demands that would have harmed Chinese sovereignty (meaning Khrushchev's request to set up a Sino-Soviet joint fleet and radio station for Soviet submarines in the Pacific in 1958), (2) Soviet hegemonic behavior in the management of inter-socialist relations within the Communist bloc, and (3) Soviet pressures and sanctions against China, ranging from breaching contracts, withdrawing experts, and pressing for the repayment of debts to beefing up military forces along the border.

Against this backdrop, the Chinese started publically expressing their suppressed resentment and views on a host of issues, especially on the burden sharing and equal partnership during the Korean War. The demand that China pay for all the military support Beijing had received during the war made the Soviets seem more like arms merchants than genuine socialist bloc allies, especially compared to what the United States had done for its junior allies during the first decade of the Cold War. In 1964, Beijing made known its suppressed views on the Soviet "burden sharing" during the war: "We made tremendous sacrifices and spent enormous sums of money for military purposes . . . We have paid all the principal and the interest on the Soviet loans we obtained at that time, and they account for a major proportion of our exports to the Soviet Union. In other words, the military supplies provided China during the 'Rest America, Aid Korea' war were not free aid."<sup>49</sup> Beijing also revealed that of a total of \$1.34 billion borrowed in the 1950s, fifty percent was incurred during the Korean War and that many of the weapons sold were out of date. The total cost of the war to the Chinese was \$10 billion.<sup>50</sup>

Even during the heyday of Sino-Soviet bloc solidarity, Mao and his close comrades were uncomfortable with its appropriated identity as the junior partner in asymmetrical alliance relationship with Stalin. As Chen Jian and Yang Kuisong argue, in the wake of Stalin's death in 1953, "Beijing's pursuit of an elusive 'equality' would cause friction with the new Soviet leadership."<sup>51</sup>

The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the 1969 Sino-Soviet military clashes on Zhenbao Island, and the ensuing Soviet threat to launch a preventive attack on Chinese nuclear installations refocused minds in Beijing and Washington on fresh strategic thinking about the changing correlation of forces in Northeast Asia. This transformation led China to abandon the dual-adversary policy as it sought to improve U.S.-Chinese relations in order to offset the escalating Soviet threat.<sup>52</sup>

With Sino-Soviet conflict escalating to military clashes and border war in 1969, Moscow took several measures to isolate China, including the not-so-subtle hint at the possibility of a nuclear strike, the anti-China proposal for an Asian Collective Security System, and the 1971 treaty with India.<sup>53</sup> Meanwhile, China was seeking strategic alignment with the United States to balance against the Soviet Union even as the United States was seeking an exit from the quagmire of the Vietnam War. Thus, the rise and fall of the strategic triangle (tripolarity) was closely keyed to the rise and decline of Soviet power relative to that of the United States.<sup>54</sup>

Throughout the 1960s, both Beijing and Moscow were too preoccupied in fratricidal polemics, geostrategic tit for tat schemes, an intense arms race and border fortification, and occasional border violence to be able to pay much attention to the U.S.-ROK security alliance. While the United States still remained “the invisible third partner” in Sino-Soviet relations, after 1958 the U.S. factor became secondary to the Sino-Soviet dispute.<sup>55</sup> Beijing’s “relations” with South Korea remained antagonistic due to the enmity generated during the Korean War as well as by South Korea’s staunch anti-Communist stance. China stressed a special relationship with North Korea, except during the heyday of the Cultural Revolution (1967-69), one that was often dubbed an “alliance sealed in blood” (xiemeng). On the other hand, South Korea sustained a very amicable relationship with Taiwan, China’s archenemy, not only through their firm commitment to the USROKA but also via close personal ties between Jiang Jieshi and Syngman Rhee and Park Chung Hee.<sup>56</sup>

The Sino-American rapprochement in 1970–1972—also known as the “Nixon in China Shock” in much of Asia, especially in Japan—came to serve as the chief catalyst (and a force multiplier) for China’s belated grand entry into the United Nations and UN Security Council as one of the five permanent members in late 1971. By 1978 bipolarity had been not so much destroyed—at least not yet—as shifted and mutated into a U.S.-Soviet-China strategic triangle. For all practical purposes the Cold War was almost over by the late 1970s but it would take the 1989 Sino-Soviet summit and renormalization to deliver the final blow. On April 3, 1980 the Sino-Soviet alliance treaty formally expired, three months after U.S. Defense Secretary Harold Brown visited Beijing, where he suggested that China and the United States planned to “facilitate wide cooperation on security matters” in order to remind others that “if they threaten the shared interests of the United States and China, we can respond with complementary actions in the field of defense as well as diplomacy.” A quasi-alliance seemed at that stage to have come into being, even as outgoing Carter administration officials were suggesting that discussions with the Chinese on military matters had become “almost like talking to an ally.”<sup>57</sup>

During most of the Cold War, Beijing and Moscow had virtually no ideological or strategic space in which to deviate from the special relationship with Pyongyang. However, with the ascendancy of Deng Xiaoping as China’s paramount leader at the historical Third Plenum in December 1978, his “reform and opening policy” in 1979, and then his inauguration of “an independent foreign policy line” in 1982, Beijing’s one-Korea policy began to be “de-ideologized,” if not completely

decoupled from the great-power dynamics.

### **The Rise of Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership**<sup>58</sup>

Gorbachev's Soviet Union was the single greatest factor in the reshaping of China's strategic context for the two-Koreas decision in at least three separate but mutually inter-penetrable ways—the end of Cold War bipolarity, Sino-Soviet renormalization, and Soviet-ROK normalization with the consequent removal of a possible Soviet veto standing in the way of Seoul's "long march" and grand entry into the United Nations. By addressing nearly all of Chinese and American security concerns through a series of unprecedented unilateral actions, Gorbachev removed beyond recall the strategic *raison d'être* of the Sino-Soviet-U.S. triangle. "All of this had happened by 1990," as Robert Levgold aptly put it, "two years before the collapse of the Soviet Union, and largely as the result of the revolution that Gorbachev brought about in his country's foreign policy. . . . In the end, the demise of the triangle, which had been a profound manifestation of the old order, became one of the profoundest manifestations of its passing."<sup>59</sup>

When the Sino-Soviet conflict ended so did the logic of the strategic triangle in global politics and Sino-Soviet competition in North Korea. The rapid progress in Moscow-Seoul relations, coupled with an equally rapid decompression of Moscow-Pyongyang relations has taken the sting out of the long-standing ideological and geopolitical Sino-Soviet rivalry over North Korea. On September 1, 1990, for example, Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze agreed following their extensive behind-the-scenes discussion in the city of Harbin that "without a solution to the Korean Peninsula question, it is impossible to achieve genuine security and stability in Northeast Asia" and that "the dialogue between North and South parts of Korea is important in the easing of the tensions."<sup>60</sup> Previously, ever since the deepening of the Sino-Soviet conflict from the early 1960s to the mid-1980s, Kim Il Sung opted for the strategy of making a virtue of necessity by pursuing an indeterminate line. Indeed, central to North Korea's independent foreign policy was Kim Il Sung's extraordinary ability to manipulate his country's relations with China and the Soviet Union in a flexible and self-serving way, always attempting to extract maximum payoffs in economic, technical, and military aid but never completely casting his lot with one at the expense of the other. However, the end of Cold War bipolarity has meant that Pyongyang's leverage in Moscow and Beijing has substantially dissipated.

A significant shift has also occurred in Moscow's attitudes toward the U.S. military presence in South Korea. Some politicians even argued

that U.S. troops played a deterrent role against a flare-up of an uncontrollable conflict between the two Koreas while at the same helping to limit or constrain Japanese military expenditures. Unlike in the past, Gorbachev's Soviet Union started to advance its own ideas for a settlement. Untying the Korean knot became an important foreign policy goal. By the time Gorbachev went to China in May 1989 to fully normalize relations, there remained virtually no traces of Sino-Soviet competition over North Korea.<sup>61</sup> As well, there occurred a new turning point in Moscow's strategic perceptions of the two Koreas in the mid-1990s following changes inside Russia—the Chechen war and the rise of nationalism. That said, however, the Kremlin still views the situation on the Korean peninsula in the context of its regional and global relations with China and the United States.<sup>62</sup>

Paradoxically, the two great continental powers that had never been able to agree on the same Marxist ideology now found it both desirable and feasible to forge a new post-Cold War "strategic partnership," despite or perhaps because of the absence of shared ideological precepts. This was first proposed in the form of a "constructive partnership" by Yeltsin in September 1994 at the inaugural presidential summit in Moscow; it was then elevated to a "strategic partnership for the twenty-first century" during Yeltsin's April 1996 summit in Beijing, unsurprisingly in the wake of China's confrontation with the United States over Taiwan and in the context of President Clinton's reaffirmation of a strengthened Japanese-American security alliance, and finally formalized in a "Treaty of Good Neighborly Friendship and Cooperation" in July 2001 (reportedly at Beijing's initiative).<sup>63</sup>

What's in, of, and by the Sino-Russian strategic partnership (SRSP)? According to Li Jingjie, the director of the East European, Russian, and Central Asian Studies Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) in Beijing, the SRSP is not confrontational, not an alliance, not a united front, and is not directed against any third country. Rather, it is "a long-term, stable, mutually cooperative relationship based on the principles of peaceful coexistence."<sup>64</sup> In fact, Chinese and Russian leaders repeatedly assert that they reject all military alliances as Cold War relics and that their strategic partnership does not hinder the development of cooperative relationship with other countries including the United States.<sup>65</sup> On the day that South Korean President Lee Myung-bak arrived in Beijing to establish a Sino-South Korean "strategic partnership," for instance, the spokesman for the Chinese foreign ministry remarked, "The Korean-U.S. alliance is a historical relic. . . . We should not approach current security issues with military alliances left over from the past Cold War era."<sup>66</sup> Such a characterization of

America's Cold War alliances in general and the U.S.-Japan alliance in particular has become Beijing's standard rhetoric or practice in the post-Cold War era, as it has emphasized the necessity of leaving behind the military alliance mindsets in favor of a more cooperative regional and global multilateral security model.<sup>67</sup>

The SRSP is said to necessitate discarding Cold-War logic and replacing it with a new security outlook and model. Thus, China and Russia have successfully resolved their long-standing border dispute following officially recognized international law principles, and in a spirit of give-and-take signed, in May 1991 and September 1994, two agreements regarding their mutual borders. In November 1998 China and Russia declared that following the conclusion of the boundary demarcation work on the eastern and western sections, the countries had precisely demarcated their borders for the first time in their history.

Since China and Russia emphasize economic development and reform to enhance domestic stability and legitimacy, they do require a peaceful external environment free of threats to their sovereignty and territorial integrity, especially on their borders. They have no choice but to work together to transform their "near abroad" environment safe and peaceful. Since 1992 dozens of Beijing-Moscow summit meetings and high-level diplomatic meetings have produced numerous geostrategic and geoeconomic agreements, including one to delimit the eastern borders and initiate border demarcation (1991); the Five-Year Military Cooperation Pact (1993); an agreement on mutual nonaggression, mutual detargeting of strategic weapons, and no first use of nuclear force (1994); and agreements on trade, oil and gas development, and cultural cooperation in 1997. Russia and China also joined in opposing NATO expansion, U.S. withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, the U.S. missile defense program, humanitarian interventions, expanded 1997 guidelines of the Japanese-American security alliance, and participation of the Central Asian republics in NATO's Partnership for Peace and joint military exercises.<sup>68</sup>

The SRSP is also said to be the joint pursuit of "a multipolar, just, and rational international order, which is to say common opposition to the present (U.S.-dominated) "unipolar world." Both countries seek to strengthen the role of the United Nations and oppose any attempts to use any other international organization to replace it. From 1995 to 1996 Moscow came to realize that any true strategic partnership with the United States and any promised economic assistance were illusory. The United States on the one hand strove to support Russia's market reform and democratization process and on the other tended to view Russia as a latent threat that should be mitigated through an expansion of NATO.

China in that period was similarly viewed by the United States as posing a latent threat, one that must be hard balanced by strengthening U.S.-Japan alliance, even while comprehensive engagement with China was propounded. American foreign policy thus presented Moscow and Beijing with the same strategic challenge, as was noted and acted out in a meeting between Jiang Zemin and the Russian foreign minister as they recognized their common interest in "opposing hegemonism and supporting the direction of world peace. In short, the accelerated development of contradictions and the sudden collapse of "the revolution of high expectations" in the Russo-American relationship brought the Sino-Russian strategic partnership into existence.<sup>69</sup>

If the Sino-Russian strategic partnership is not a hard balancing alliance, what is it? With its emerging influence and growth in soft power, China's relationships with the rest of the world have undergone subtle but significant transformations. Soft balancing is a distinctively post-Cold War and post-9/11 concept.<sup>70</sup> Since the coming of the ABC (All But Clinton) administration with its unilateral triumphalism, second-tier major powers such as China, France, Germany, India, and Russia have abandoned traditional "hard balancing" based on countervailing alliances and arms buildups. Instead, second-ranking major powers, especially China and Russia, have adopted "soft balancing" strategies through coalition building and diplomatic bargaining within regional and global multilateral institutions—mainly within the United Nations—to constrain the power as well as the threatening behavior of the United States as a sole superpower.

This was part of a broader trend for the United States in reconstructing its post-Cold War national identity as a lonely superpower. As Samuel Huntington observed in 1999 in a trenchant critique of creeping U.S. unilateralism, "On issue after issue, the United States has found itself increasingly alone, with one or a few partners, opposing most of the rest of the world's states and peoples. ... On these and other issues, much of the international community is on one side and the United States is on the other."<sup>71</sup> Although Huntington spoke of tendencies present in the 1990s during the Clinton administration, it was not until the election of George W. Bush that U.S. unilateralism became a fully refurbished national identity as well as a fully deployed weapon of American exceptionalism. In its first two years, guided by runaway unilateralism-cum-exceptionalism, the Bush Administration decided to trash multilateral treaties and treaties-in-the-making one after another: the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Land Mine Treaty, the Kyoto Protocol, the treaty to establish the International Criminal

Court (ICC), the Geneva Conventions, and a draft treaty on international small arms sales. In May 2002, the Bush Administration took the unprecedented step of “unsigning” the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court by informing the U.N. Secretary-General of its decision not to be party to the treaty, claiming that the United States had no legal obligation arising from President Clinton’s signature on December 31, 2000. In short, the Bush administration exemplifies in extreme form the notion of American exceptionalism that is often presented as an aspect of a newly minted U.S. national identity.

There is little doubt that China is challenging—and soft balancing against—U.S. unilateral triumphalism. Active Chinese participation in regional and global multilateral institutions represents a growing recognition that the U.S. unilateral, hegemonic world order can best be constrained through the soft forces of globalization and multilateralism.<sup>72</sup> Against this backdrop the Sino-Russian strategic partnership converged on the notion of soft balancing as more cost-effective ways and means of constraining U.S. power without harming their multidimensional economic ties with the world’s greatest economic power. The veto power that both China and Russia hold in the UN Security Council is “pivotal to this strategy” as it denies the UN’s collective legitimation of U.S.-led interventions.<sup>73</sup>

Unlike Russia, however, China and the United States are joined at the hip as Beijing holds nearly \$800 billion of U.S. treasury bonds even as the United States remains China’s largest export market. China’s relative immunity to the world’s pernicious economic woes since 2008 and the evident symbiotic relationship between the Chinese and U.S. economies are giving rise to much talk of a shift from U.S. dominance to a new multipolar or U.S.-China bipolar era. The United States has already become China’s most important trade partner, accounting for ten times as much trade as with Russia. With such limited and uneven economic stakes, and without mutually agreed strategic objectives or common foes, just how powerful can this strategic partnership be in the uncertain years ahead?

In short, balance of power theory, rooted in hard-balancing strategies such as arms buildups and alliance formation, does not seem to explain the current Sino-Russian strategic partnership behavior. And yet, the Sino-Russian strategic partnership has widened and deepened, leading some scholars to call the first decade of the post-Cold War era the best period in the checkered history of Beijing-Moscow relations.<sup>74</sup>

## Conclusion

Many key events of the Cold War center on the relationship between China and the Soviet Union. First, the Sino-Soviet alliance was a key event—perhaps the key event—in redefining and reshaping the global strategic parameters of the first half of the Cold War in general and the Korean War in particular. Then the Sino-Soviet split played a similar role in redefining and reshaping the global strategic parameters of the second half of the Cold War in general and the Second Vietnam War in particular. And following the Cold War the Sino-Russian strategic partnership seemed made ready to play a key role in the shaping of a post-Cold War world order.

What is most striking about the Sino-Soviet and Sino-Russian relations over the years is the extent to which the United States has remained the most crucial factor—the invisible third partner—in the rise of the Sino-Soviet alliance, while the U.S.-ROK security alliance, at least the South Korean component, remained largely a secondary derivative variable. Throughout the 1960s, both Beijing and Moscow were too preoccupied with managing or fueling the Sino-Soviet conflict to be able to pay much attention to the U.S.-ROK security alliance. While the United States still remained “the invisible third partner” in Sino-Soviet relations, after 1958 the U.S. factor became secondary to the Sino-Soviet dispute. Sino-Russian rapprochement-cum-renormalization leading to the strategic partnership and joint soft balancing is among the most paradoxical developments of the post-Cold War era, seemingly turning the wheel of Beijing-Moscow relationship full circle.

And yet, the Sino-Russian strategic partnership or soft balancing is not preprogrammed destiny. As shown in all the twists and turns on the turbulent trajectory of the Sino-Soviet and Sino-Russian relationship over the years, alliance or alignment behavior as well as hard balancing and soft balancing is highly contingent and contextual. Alliances play functions other than balancing; they may serve as instruments for binding, restraining and managing junior members. Common ideology may sustain alliances but only as long as the ideological tenets do not themselves become a contentious issue. The Sino-Russian strategic partnership cannot help but lie within wider and deeper geostrategic contexts in East Asia with its hub-and-spokes San Francisco system firmly in place.

Most ironic and revealing in the final analysis is that if the United States as the invisible third partner has driven Beijing and Moscow into a closer strategic partnership and joint soft balancing, it could as easily prize them apart by pulling out all the stops. After all, Beijing and Moscow, especially the former, have a major economic stake in

cooperating with the United States as the world's largest economy.

**Notes:**

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<sup>1</sup> Ole R. Holsti, "Military Alliances," in Mary Hawkesworth and Maurice Kogan, eds. *Encyclopedia of Government and Politics*, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 1012.

<sup>2</sup> According to article 6, "the present treaty will be valid for thirty years. If neither of the contracting parties gives notice one year before the expiration of this term of its desire to renounce the treaty, it shall remain in force for another five years." Hence, the 30-year treaty formally expired on April 3, 1980. For an English text of the treaty, see Jerome Alan Cohen and Hungdah Chiu, *People's China and International Law: A Documentary Study*, vol. 2 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 1166-1167.

<sup>3</sup> The *locus classicus* on this subject is Lowell Dittmer, *Sino-Soviet Normalization and Its International Implications, 1945-1990* (Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> See Sergei N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993); Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); Odd A. Westad, ed., *Brothers in Arms: The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1945-1963* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998); and Lorenz M. Luthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> Mao's lean-to-one-side policy statement reads in part: "Externally, unite in a common struggle with those nations of the world which treat us as equal and unite with the peoples of all countries. That is, ally ourselves with the Soviet Union, with the People's Democratic Countries, and with the proletariat and the broad masses of the people in all other countries." Cited in Chen Jian and Yang Kuisong, "Chinese Politics and the Collapse of the Sino-Soviet Alliance," in Westad, ed. *Brothers in Arms*, p. 247.

<sup>6</sup> Dittmer, *Sino-Soviet Normalization and Its International Implications*, p. 164.

<sup>7</sup> Odd A. Westad, "The Sino-Soviet Alliance and the United States," in Westad, ed. *Brothers in Arms*, p. 170.

<sup>8</sup> See "Record of Conversation, Stalin and Mao Zedong, December 16, 1949," *ibid.*, p. 314.

<sup>9</sup> Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners*, pp. 104, 217.

<sup>10</sup> Westad, "The Sino-Soviet Alliance and the United States," pp. 167-170.

<sup>11</sup> Luthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split*, pp. 33-34.

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<sup>12</sup> Stephen Kotkin and Charles K. Armstrong, "A Socialist Regional Order in Northeast Asia after World War II," in Charles K. Armstrong et al., eds., *Korea at the Center: Dynamics of Regionalism in Northeast Asia* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2006), p. 112.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>14</sup> Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners*, p. 213.

<sup>15</sup> Odd A. Westad, "Introduction," in Westad, ed. *Brothers in Arms*, p. 11; see also Shu Guang Zhang, "Sino-Soviet Economic Cooperation," *ibid.*, pp. 189-225.

<sup>16</sup> Ted Hopf, "Identity Relations and the Sino-Soviet Split," in Rawi Abdelal et al., eds., *Measuring Identity: A Guide for Social Scientists* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 304.

<sup>17</sup> Westad "Introduction," pp. 1-2; Rosemary Foot, *The Practice of Power: US Relations with China since 1949* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), p. 115.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>19</sup> Cited in Westad, "Introduction," p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Kathryn Weathersby, "To Attack or Not to Attack? Stalin, Kim Il Sung, and the Prelude to War," *Bulletin of Cold War International History Project*, vol. 5 (1995), pp. 1-9; Kathryn Weathersby, "The Korean War Revisited," *The Wilson Quarterly*, vol. 23, No. 3 (Summer, 1999), pp. 91-95. See also Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners*, pp. 150-151, 213; Chen and Yang, "Chinese Politics and the Collapse of the Sino-Soviet Alliance," pp. 250-251; and Westad, "The Sino-Soviet Alliance and the United States," p. 171.

<sup>21</sup> Weathersby, "The Korean War Revisited," p. 93.

<sup>22</sup> Niu Jun, "The Origins of the Sino-Soviet Alliance," in Westad, ed., *Brothers in Arms*, pp. 47-89.

<sup>23</sup> Chen and Yang, "Chinese Politics and the Collapse of the Sino-Soviet Alliance," p. 252.

<sup>24</sup> Westad, "Introduction," p. 13.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Jonathan D. Pollack, "The Korean War and Sino-American Relations," in *Sino-American Relations, 1945-1955: A Joint Assessment of a Critical Decade*, Harry Harding and Yuan Ming, eds. (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 1989), p. 224.

<sup>27</sup> Chen, *China's Road to the Korean War*, pp. 211-223.

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- <sup>28</sup> Ministry of National Defense, *ROK-US Alliance and USFK*, rev. ed. (Seoul: Ministry of National Defense 2008), p. 8.
- <sup>29</sup> Mineo Nakajima, "Foreign Relations: from the Korean War to the Bandung Line," in Roderick MacFarquhar and John K. Fairbank, eds., *The People's Republic*, part 1: *The Emergence of Revolutionary China 1949-1965* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 281.
- <sup>30</sup> Weathersby, "Stalin, Mao, and the End of the Korean War," in Westad, ed., *Brothers in Arms*, pp. 109-110.
- <sup>31</sup> See Robert Jervis, "The Impact of the Korean War on the Cold War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 24, No. 4 (December, 1980), pp. 563-92.
- <sup>32</sup> William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press 1995), p. 3.
- <sup>33</sup> Weathersby, "Stalin, Mao, and the End of the Korean War," p. 91.
- <sup>34</sup> Westad, "Introduction," p. 12.
- <sup>35</sup> Sergei Goncharenko, "Sino-Soviet Military Cooperation," in Westad, ed. *Brothers in Arms*, p. 145.
- <sup>36</sup> Weathersby, "Stalin, Mao, and the End of the Korean War," p. 90.
- <sup>37</sup> Cited in John Wilson Lewis and Xue Li-tai, *China Builds the Bomb* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1988), p. 130.
- <sup>38</sup> For analysis along this line, see Samuel S. Kim, "North Korea's Nuclear Strategy and the Interface between International and Domestic Politics," *Asian Perspective*, vol. 34, No. 1 (2010), pp. 49-85.
- <sup>39</sup> For a more detailed discussion along this line, see Samuel S. Kim, *The Two Koreas and the Great Powers* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 2-4, 49-52, 114-115, 239-242.
- <sup>40</sup> *Renmin ribao* [People's Daily], September 3, 1999, p. 1.
- <sup>41</sup> According to one official Chinese estimate, combat casualties were more than 360,000 (including 130,000 wounded) and noncombat casualties were more than 380,000. See Zhang Aiping, chief compiler, *Zhongguo Renmin Jiefang Jun* (China's People's Liberation Army), vol. 1, Contemporary China Series (Beijing: Dangdai Zhongguo Chubanshe, 1994), p. 137.
- <sup>42</sup> Stueck, *The Korean War*, p. 362.
- <sup>43</sup> David M. Lampton and Daniel Ewing, *The U.S.-China Relationship Facing International Security Crises: Three Case Studies in Post-9/11 Bilateral Relations* (Washington, D.C.: The Nixon Center, 2004), p. 45; Russell Spurr, *Enter the Dragon: China's Undeclared War against the U.S. in Korea, 1950-1951* (New York: Newmarket Press, 1988), pp. 62-63.

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<sup>44</sup> See Jae Ho Chung, "Korea and China in Northeast Asia," in *Korea at the Center*, pp. 202-203.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Westad, "Introduction," p. 14.

<sup>47</sup> Shu Guang Zhang, "Sino-Soviet Economic Cooperation," pp. 202, 211.

<sup>48</sup> *Renmin ribao*, February 14, 1953.

<sup>49</sup> Nakajima, "Foreign Relations: From the Korean War to the Bandung Line," p. 277.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 278.

<sup>51</sup> Chen and Yang, "Chinese Politics and the Collapse of the Sino-Soviet Alliance," p. 259.

<sup>52</sup> For the contending explanations of the Sino-Soviet split, see Luthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split*; Allen S. Whiting, "The Sino-Soviet Split," in MacFarquhar and Fairbank, eds., *The People's Republic*, pp. 478-538; and Donald Zagoria, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956-1961* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992).

<sup>53</sup> Muthiah Alagappa, "International Politics in Asia: The Historical Context," in *Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 93-94.

<sup>54</sup> For the concept of "strategic triangle," see Lowell Dittmer, "The Strategic Triangle: An Elementary Game-Theoretical Analysis," *World Politics*, vol. 33, No. 4 (July, 1981), pp. 485-515. For the rise and fall of tripolarity, see Robert S. Ross, ed., *China, the United States, and the Soviet Union: Tripolarity and Policy Making in the Cold War* (Armond, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1993) and Dittmer, *Sino-Soviet Normalization and Its International Implications*, pp. 147-255.

<sup>55</sup> Whiting "The Sino-Soviet Split," p. 478.

<sup>56</sup> Chung, "Korea and China in Northeast Asia," pp. 203-204.

<sup>57</sup> Foot, *The Practice of Power*, p. 140.

<sup>58</sup> See Li Jingjie, "Pillars of the Sino-Russian Partnership," *Orbis*, vol. 44, No. 4 (Fall, 2000), pp. 527-539; Lowell Dittmer, "The Emerging Northeast Asian Regional Order," in Samuel S. Kim, ed., *The International Relations of Northeast Asia* (Boulder, Colo.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), pp. 331-362; and Lowell Dittmer, "The Sino-Russian Strategic Relationship: Ghost of the 'Strategic Triangle?'" in Yufan Hao et al., eds., *Challenges to Chinese Foreign Policy: Diplomacy, Globalization, and the Next World Power* (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), pp. 87-113.

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<sup>59</sup> Robert Legvold, "Sino-Soviet Relations: The American Factor," in Robert S. Ross, ed., *China, the United States, and the Soviet Union: Tripolarity and Policymaking in the Cold War* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1993), p. 87.

<sup>60</sup> *Beijing Review* (September 17-23, 1990), pp. 12-13.

<sup>61</sup> Evgeny P. Bazhanov, "Korea in Russia's Post-Cold War Regional Political Context," in *Korea at the Center*, pp. 214-226; Evgeny P. Bazhanov, "Soviet Policy toward the Asia-Pacific Region: The 1980s," in Gilbert Rozman et al., eds., *Russian Strategic Thought toward Asia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2006), pp. 47-48.

<sup>62</sup> See Alexander Lukin, "The Russian Approach to China under Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and Putin," in *Russian Strategic Thought toward Asia*, pp. 139-166 and Vasily Mikheev, "Russian Strategic Thinking toward North and South Korea," *ibid.*, pp. 187-204.

<sup>63</sup> Dittmer, "The Sino-Russian Strategic Relationship."

<sup>64</sup> Li, "Pillars of the Sino-Russian Partnership," p. 538.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Michael Ha, "Chinese Official Calls Korea-US Alliance 'Historical Relic,'" *Korea Times*, May 28, 2008.

<sup>67</sup> Scott Snyder, *China's Rise and the Two Koreas: Politics, Economics, Security* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009), p. 175. See also Fei-ling Wang *Tacit Acceptance and Watchful Eyes: Beijing's Views about the U.S.-ROK Alliance* (Carlisle Barracks, Penna.: Strategic Studies Institute, January 24, 1997) and Robert Sutter, "China's Approach to the US-ROK Alliance--Background, Status, Outlook," *International Journal of Korean Studies*, vol. 10, No. 2 (Fall/Winter, 2006), pp. 125-142. For the single best book on China's security behavior in regional and global multilateral security institutions, see Alastair Iain Johnston, *Social States: China in International Institutions, 1980-2000* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008).

<sup>68</sup> Dittmer, "The Sino-Russian Strategic Relationship," pp. 96-97.

<sup>69</sup> Li, "Pillars of the Sino-Russian Partnership," p. 536.

<sup>70</sup> See Robert A. Pape, "Soft Balancing against the United States," *International Security*, vol. 30, No. 1 (Summer, 2005), pp. 7-45 and T. V. Paul, "Soft Balancing in the Age of U.S. Primacy," *International Security*, vol. 30, No. 1 (Summer, 2005), pp. 46-71.

<sup>71</sup> Samuel Huntington, "The Lonely Superpower," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 78, No. 2 (March/April, 1999), p. 41.

<sup>72</sup> Samuel S. Kim, "China and Globalization: Confronting Myriad Challenges and Opportunities," *Asian Perspective* vol. 33, No. 3 (2009), pp. 74-75.

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<sup>73</sup> Paul, "Soft Balancing in the Age of U.S. Primacy," pp. 58-59.

<sup>74</sup> Dittmer, "The Emerging Northeast Asian Regional Order," pp. 335-336 and Li, "Pillars of the Sino-Russian Partnership," pp. 538-539.