

## Roads to Reconciliation

People's Republic of China, Western Europe and Italy  
During the Cold War Period (1949-1971)

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## The Research on China's Foreign Policy in the Cold War Period

Chinese Scholars' Exploration and Thinking  
(2001-2015)

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**Abstract** China was a very important regional power that influenced the fundamental pattern of confrontation and détente between the two blocs. With the emergence of new historical documents and the adoption of new methods, Chinese scholars have conducted a few discussions on China's foreign policy during the Cold War period since 2001. Their research activity is important for at least three reasons: first, thanks to the analysis of new historical material Chinese scholars have opened up many new research questions; second, it has constantly enlarged the field of analysis focusing on high level external contacts and lower strata grassroots exchange; third, a research team characterised by a reasonable age distribution is being formed in China. Moreover, China has already created two major institutions for scientific research and documentary collection located in the south and the north of the country: the Centre for Cold War International History Studies at East China Normal University and the School of History at Capital Normal University. Certainly, there are still shortcomings in Chinese research on China's foreign policy during the Cold War and Chinese scholars themselves are attempting to address the problems.


**Summary** 1 New Historical Material and New Methods. – 2 General Introduction to China's Foreign Policy. – 3 China's Policy Towards Socialist Countries. – 4 China's Policy Towards Capitalist Countries. – 5 China's Policy Towards the Third World. – 6 Review and Prospects.

**Keywords** China. Foreign policy. Cold war. Chinese scholars. Review article.

Leaving aside the two superpowers (the US and the USSR), the People's Republic of China (PRC) was the regional power that most greatly influenced the Cold War between the East and the West, to the point that "it even occupied a central position when it comes to some nodal points and key issues in the development of the Cold War" (Chen 2001, 17). China has, to some

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degree, influenced the fundamental pattern of confrontation and détente between the two blocs in at least three ways. In the first place, over time, it has formed an alliance with the Soviet Union, competed with the Soviet Union for the leadership of the Communist movement, sought Sino-American reconciliation, and then, wittingly or unwittingly, transformed the balance of power between the East and the West; furthermore, it has played its part in local wars (Korean and Vietnam for example), intervened in the internal disputes of the socialist camp (Poland and Hungary, for instance) and in Third World crisis (such as Laos), and participated in international meetings (such as Geneva and Bandung), producing changes in the region; and, finally it has benefitted from economic and technical aid and cultural exchanges to win the 'hearts and minds of the people' with the US or Soviet Union, influencing the development path of other Socialist or Third World countries.

Perhaps because of this, study and debate concerning China's foreign policy for a long time has been a focus of Cold War international history studies, while Chinese scholarly research has aroused the interest of international academic circles. This article investigates the results of the research by Chinese scholars into China's foreign policy in the Cold War period between 2001 and 2015<sup>1</sup> and discusses recent progress, existing shortcomings and future prospects.

## **1 New Historical Material and New Methods**

In the last ten years, Chinese scholars have obtained original results in the study of China's foreign policy during the Cold War. From a purely academic perspective, such progress has been made possible first of all thanks to the emergence of new historical documents and to the adoption of new methods.<sup>2</sup>

On September 5th, 1987, the 22nd meeting of the Standing Committee of the Sixth National People's Congress passed the "Archives Law of the People's Republic of China". Article 19 stipulates that: "historical records kept by state archives shall in general be opened to the public in less than 30 years; archives in economic, scientific, technological and cultural fields may

1 This paper mainly presents research studies based on original archival material published in mainland China: it mainly considers researchers based in mainland China, but also includes overseas Chinese. Considering the time-limit applied to archives declassification, these studies focus on the period extending from the late '40s to the early '70s. Due to length limits, the authors do not intend to provide a comprehensive review of the research carried out by Chinese scholars, but only present the most representative studies in the field.

2 From a non-academic point of view, the most important driving force is provided by increased international academic exchanges and research funds resulting from the rapid development of Chinese economy and China's increased openness to the outside world.

be opened to the public in less than 30 years; archives involving the security or vital interests of the state and other archives that remain unsuitable for accessibility to the public upon the expiration of 30 years may be opened to the public after more than 30 years. The specific time limits shall be defined by the state administrative authority for archives and submitted to the State Council for approval before they become effective” (Liu Guoneng 2012, 88; Beijing shi dang’anju 1987, 2-6). However, in practice, for a long period of time access to Chinese archives, especially those relating to foreign affairs was by no means been all plain sailing. For, in the process of policy implementation, a great degree of freedom has been allowed regarding application of the restrictions stipulated in the Archives Law and great discretionary power left with the management offices concerning declassified documents.

At the beginning of the 21st century the situation started to change. Since 2004 the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC has opened to the public three batches of archives containing records for clearly identified periods of time: 1945-1955, 1956-1960 and 1961-1965. The total amount exceeds 80,000 files (for details see the table below). The content of the declassified archives is very rich, covering the main fields of China’s foreign affairs, such as politics, economics, military affairs, culture, border issues, personnel exchanges and overseas Chinese matters. At the same time, the Foreign Ministry Archives also compiled three collections on the following topics: Geneva Conference, Bandung Conference and diplomatic normalization issues (Lian, *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo waijiaobu dang’anguan* 2006, 2007; Lian et al. 2006).<sup>3</sup> What should also be noted is that, with the exception of Tibet, Xinjiang and a few other provinces and cities, the majority of provincial and municipal archives are all open to the public. Among them, those with the greatest number of accessible records are the Shanghai Municipal Archives and the provincial archives of Jiangsu, Fujian, Hebei, Shanxi, Gansu, Hunan, Hubei, and Guangdong. These documents are also the main sources used in the study of China’s foreign policy during the Cold War (Yao 2015, 254-73).

Quantity of declassified and opened archives of the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Open batch	Period	Official opening date	Opened files	Total number
First group	1949-1955	16 January 2004	More than 4,000	15,003 files
		19 July 2004	More than 5000	
		10 January 2005	5,706	
Second group	1956-1960	10 May 2006	25,651	

<sup>3</sup> It is no exaggeration to say that the opening of the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC was an exciting and encouraging event for the international academic community.

Third group	1961-1965	12 November 2008	41,097
Total number	81,751		

Since the mid-'80s, China's official research agencies such as the Archival Research Office of the CCP Central Committee (*Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiu shi*), the Academy of Military Science of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (*Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun junshi kexueyuan*), the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (*Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan*) and archival departments have edited and published a number of impressive publications related to Chinese leaders such as biographical chronologies, selected works, collected works, manuscripts, biographies and official archival collections. Among them, the publications with the largest number of documents relating to China's foreign diplomacy include: "Mao Zedong manuscripts since the founding of the State" (*Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao*) (1987-1998), "Selections from archival materials on the economy of the People's Republic of China (1949-1952)" (*Zhongghua renmin Gongheguo jingji dang'an ziliao xuanbian, 1949-1952*) (1989-1996), "A Selection of Zhou Enlai's Writings on Diplomacy" (*Zhou Enlai waijiao wenxuan*) (1990), "Chronology of Zhou Enlai's Diplomatic Activities, 1949-1975" (*Zhou Enlai waijiao huodong dashiji, 1949-1975*) (1993), "Collected writings of Mao Zedong" (*Mao Zedong wenji*) (1993-1999), "A selection of Mao Zedong's Writings on Diplomacy" (*Mao Zedong waijiao wenxuan*) (1994), "Chronological Biography of Liu Shaoqi, 1898-1969" (*Liu Shaoqi nianpu 1898-1969*) (1996), "Chronological Biography of Zhou Enlai, 1949-1976" (*Zhou Enlai nianpu 1949-1976*) (1997), "Zhou Enlai's Biography" (*Zhou Enlai zhuan*) (1998), "Liu Shaoqi Biography" (*Liu Shaoqi zhuan*) (1998), "Selections from Archival Materials on the Economy of the People's Republic of China, 1953-1957" (*Zhonghua renmin gongheguo jingji dang'an ziliao xuanbian, 1953-1957*) (1998, 2000), "Biography of Mao Zedong, 1949-1976" (*Mao Zedong zhuan 1949-1976*) (2003), "Liu Shaoqi manuscripts since the founding of the state" (*Jianguo yilai Liu Shaoqi wengao*) (2005, 2008), "Chronological Biography of Ye Jianying, 1897-1986" (*Ye Jianying nianpu 1897-1986*) (2007), "Zhou Enlai Manuscripts Since the Founding of the State" (*Jianguo yilai Zhou Enlai wengao*) (2008), "Chronological Biography of Deng Xiaoping, 1904-1974" (*Deng Xiaoping nianpu 1904-1974*) (2009), "Mao Zedong Military Manuscripts Since the Founding of the State" (*Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong junshi wengao*) (2010), "Selections from Archival Materials on the Economy of the People's Republic of China, 1958-1965" (*Zhonghua Renmin gongheguo jingji dang'an ziliao xuanbian 1958-1965*) (2011), "Chronological Biography of Mao Zedong, 1949-1976" (*Mao Zedong nianpu 1949-1976*) (2013), "Chinese Communist Party Central Committee Selected documents, October 1949-May 1966" (*Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian xuanbian, 1949.10-1966.5*) (2013), "Works of Deng

Xiaoping, 1949-1974" (*Deng Xiaoping wenji, 1949-1974*) (2014), "Deng Xiaoping Biography, 1904-1974" (*Deng Xiaoping zhuan, 1904-1974*) (2014). Even though these documents are generally not so detailed and exhaustive as are archival collections, they can nonetheless be of enormous help to researchers in filling the gaps in historical knowledge, and thus prove to be extremely precious research material.<sup>4</sup>

In a certain sense, in China the research on China's foreign policy during the Cold War can be classified as contemporary Chinese history (or PRC history) studies. At the same time, it can also be incorporated into the field of Cold War history studies. Before the end of the Cold War, so-called Cold War history studies "almost completely took as its basis the documents of the US and other Western countries; as a matter of fact, this is often one part of US diplomatic history studies and US-Soviet relations studies, at most we can only say that it is an extension of the studies on the history of US external relations" (Chen, Yu 2003, 7). As a result, the choice of perspective, methodology and research subjects clearly reflects the tendency to put 'the US at the centre', with its excessive emphasis on power and a focus on high-level politics. In the first half of the '90s, prominent American Cold War history expert John Lewis Gaddis actively promoted the development of 'The New Cold War History' or what is also known as 'Cold War International History Studies', meaning a totally new post-Cold War framework in which researchers could use archival material from many different countries, overcome the restraints of 'US as the centre', focus on the Second and Third worlds and also once more acknowledge the influence of ideology in the Cold War. In fact, the reason why 'The New Cold War History' could form a new academic trend is mainly owing to the influence of Chinese scholars, especially those living in the US (Chen, Yu 2003; Dai 1999). Most importantly, in recent years still more Chinese scholars within China, including a group of doctoral students, wittingly or unwittingly drawing a lesson from the historiographical notion of 'The New Cold War History', have used newly emerged Chinese archival data, thus developing research on such issues as, for instance, China's position in the East-West Cold War, the role and function of ideology in China's foreign policy during the Cold War as well as the influence of Cold War politics on ordinary Chinese people.

4 Apart from archival materials in China, access to archives in US, Russia and Japan to a large extent has also pushed forward research by Chinese scholars on China's foreign policy during the Cold War, allowing them to cross-check foreign sources against the Chinese ones.

## 2 General Introduction to China's Foreign Policy

Chinese scholars have conducted a few discussions on China's foreign policy during the Cold War period based on concrete evidence. For convenience, this article will group the results under three main categories: China's overall foreign strategy, single foreign policies and participation in international conferences or organisations.

Zhang Baijia takes China's diplomacy in the 30 years after the founding of the new China in its entirety. In his view throughout this period, China's main goal was "to establish diplomatic relations with every country in the world on the basis of equality" (Zhang 2002, 11). Specifically the whole period can be divided into three phases: from the establishment of the PRC until the mid-'50s when China made great efforts to create an international environment conducive to its own development; from the mid-'50s to the end of the '60s, China gradually took the road of confrontation with both the US and the Soviet Union; lastly, in the '70s, by relaxing relations with the US, China extended the scope of its diplomatic activities to the entire international arena (Zhang 2002). Relatively speaking, Yang Kuisong attaches even more importance to the continuity of China's diplomacy. His research reveals that class struggle and the united front experience moulded Mao Zedong's radical revolutionary diplomacy, ultimately pushing China into the position of having enemies on all sides in the early stages of the Cultural Revolution (Yang 2010a).

Similarly, Chen Jian defines the New China as a 'revolutionary state' determined to pose an all-out challenge to the existing international order and norms. In his view, the 'Bandung spirit' that China actively initiated in the mid-'50s was not really a retreat from the revolutionary principle of its foreign policy, but instead a deepening and a redefinition of this principle. By pursuing the 'Bandung spirit', China brought decolonization into the discourse system of the socialist countries during the Cold War, launching a new challenge to the international system. Hereafter, with the rise of the Great Leap Forward, China's diplomacy underwent a change: it further acquired a revolutionary character and opposed at the same time the two superpowers, the US and the Soviet Union (Chen 2008, 2010).

Niu Jun considers China's external policies even more closely from the perspective of independent diplomacy, believing that soon after the PRC was founded Chinese leaders regarded Asia as a 'stopover' and a 'starting point' even more enduring than the Sino-Soviet alliance, the main arena external to the two camps (US-USSR) in which to develop new strategic competition. For Niu Jun, the alliance with the Soviet Union and participation in the Korean war as well as the establishment of diplomatic relations with the US and the launching of the counterattack in self-defence against Vietnam, clearly show that Beijing never allowed hostile powers, especially the military power of great nations, to come close to China's

borders, and was determined to curb the strong and help the weak, taking the initiative to establish a balance of power within the region. Similarly, he also stresses the domestic reasons for the directions taken by China's foreign policy, pointing out that the dispute and different opinions among policy makers regarding how to evaluate the 'Great Leap Forward' and how to react to economic recession resulted in spurring China's diplomacy toward a radical leftist turn in the first half of the '60s (Niu 2003, 2012b, 2012c, 2014).

A prominent geographical feature of China is that it has long borders along which are many neighbouring, periphery countries. Therefore, the proper resolution of border disputes soon became for the New China a major question that could not be ignored. Shen Zhihua has discussed China's policy of settling land boundary disputes. He believes that in the context of the cold war between two main camps, the motivation behind China's settlements of land boundary issues was to break the imperialist blockade and encirclement, thereby easing the often jittery relations with neighbouring countries so as to guarantee and safeguard China's territorial sovereignty. The result was that, on the one hand in nearly all border-related negotiations and talks China either took the initiative or was forced to compromise; on the other hand, initially the guiding principles for legal settlement of a border issue (whatever the basis: 'peaceful coexistence'; a spirit of 'equal cooperation, mutual understanding and accommodation'; 'peace negotiation'; observing the basic principle and practice of international law; recognising an existing border treaty; safeguarding the nation's interests; or progressively resolving border disputes with neighbouring countries) were often not consistent from start to finish and in some circumstances were even abandoned (Shen 2014a; on the same topic see also Liu Xiaoyuan 2011). Humanitarian aid is an important component of China's foreign aid. Yin Qingfei's research shows that between 1949 and 1965 the main purpose of China's provision of foreign humanitarian aid was to develop relations with the countries of the Third World. So the main aim of this aid was to serve China's diplomatic strategy, and gain moral superiority over the US and the Soviet Union. In the process of deciding the form and scope of aid, a proper balance was occasionally maintained among a few receiving countries and changing governments; at other times aid was used to express closeness with or distance from the other (Yin 2011). After the founding of the New China, the practice sprang up of expressing friendship to other countries through gifts and exchanges of animals, development of international academic exchanges, and cooperation in the field of the protection of wild animals, or the so-called 'animal diplomacy' (*dongwu waijiao*). Liu Xiaochen demonstrates that in the Cold War period China's 'animal diplomacy' to a large extent was a result of studying the advanced experience of the Soviet Union and Eastern socialist countries. Yet in the process of implementation, it was subject to perceptions and divisions towards the line

and camps in different periods. This kind of external interaction often had a strong ideological flavour: its success or failure largely depended on the success or failure of China's external policy and changes in the patterns of international relations, rather than on anything directly concerning the animals themselves (Liu Xiaochen 2013).

In the mid-'50s, thanks to the Geneva Conference and the Bandung Conference, New China started to participate in major discussions on international affairs acknowledged as a great nation in the area. Li Danhui points out that, through the Geneva Conference, China achieved the strategic goal of preventing the US from forming an alliance with Laos and Cambodia and from establishing military bases, while guaranteeing Vietnam's status as Democratic Republic. China was therefore able to create in the periphery a relatively stable situation, which was crucial for its own economic development. But issues unresolved by the Conference, such as the division of Vietnam as well as capitalist control over Laos and Cambodia after the withdrawal of the Vietnamese army, undoubtedly did little in the way of strengthening the power of the whole socialist camp. It was for this that, at the beginning of the '60s, Mao Zedong, who was reviving revolutionary spirit, went against the ideology based on compromise and flexibility while working for the Indochina armistice (Li Danhui 2013). Liu Lei says that China actively used the Bandung Conference to expound its peaceful diplomatic policy, improving to a certain degree the international political and economic environment determined by the Korean War. However, it should be pointed out that although the Bandung conference clearly promoted trade between China and Afro-Asian countries, it did not change the situation of China's being dependent of the Socialist camp, in particular the Soviet Union, in international trade matters. China still had to strive to further develop economic and trade contacts with Western nations (except the US) (Liu 2010).

From the second half of the '50s to the mid-'60s, China actively participated in various kinds of Afro-Asia organisations and conferences. On this issue, Li Qianyu developed a series of research projects. He believes that China's position regarding Afro-Asian joint meetings, economic conferences, economic cooperation organisations and the second Afro-Asian conference indicates that the focus of Beijing policy regarding African and Asian countries was already turning from allaying their suspicion and worry about the New China and preventing such countries joining US military bloc against it, to establishing an anti-imperialist united front and eliminating revisionism, clearly reflecting the diplomatic strategy of 'to oppose imperialism we have to oppose revisionism', 'both sides bowed'. China's policy concerning Afro-Asian countries at that time was unable to obtain the understanding and support of all countries; in certain situations it even became an obstacle to relations between China and Asian and African countries (Li Qianyu 2010, 2012, 2014). Since its foundation, the PRC actively sought to join the



United Nations in order to promote its national interests and cooperate in the struggle of the socialist camp against the US. The Universal Postal Union was the first UN agency, which New China successfully joined replacing the GMD, and thereby gaining a representative role. Han Changqing and Yao Baihui have carried out researches into this question. They believe that in striving to join the Universal Postal Union, China adopted suitable policies and tactics, and obtained the support of the USSR and East European Countries. This experience, on the one hand proves the effectiveness of the diplomacy of 'leaning on the one side' (*yi bian dao*) and on the other, reflects the diplomacy of laying equal stress on both Chinese national interests and international obligations (Han, Yao 2009a, 2009b).

### 3 China's Policy Towards Socialist Countries

In the minds of Mao Zedong and other Chinese leaders, New China was a new and developing independent nation, but still more, it was a socialist country. Regardless of the changes taking place in the relations within the socialist camp, and regardless of whether one considers unity or struggle, in almost all the Cold War period the policy towards the socialist countries was in any case an important component of China's diplomacy. For a time, it even became a matter of utmost importance.

With regard to China's policy concerning socialist countries, the most comprehensive and systematic research by Chinese scholars regards Sino-Soviet relations at state level, the prime example being the research conducted by Shen Zihua, Li Danhui and Niu Jun (their focus being on the '50s, the '60s-'70s and the '80s, respectively). These three scholars provided new perspectives in the study of this topic.

Shen Zihua's main point of view can be set out as follows: during negotiations for the Sino-Soviet Treaty, Chinese leaders did not consider the drawing up of a 'supplementary agreement' and the establishment of four Sino-Soviet joint-stock companies humiliating; instead, they were pleased at the outcome; both the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Soviet Union considered the question of an alliance from the point of view of their respective strategic interests - ideology was not the basic motive but certainly represented an essential condition; the firm decision by Mao Zedong in 1950 to dispatch troops to Korea to resist the United States, ensured the Sino-Soviet treaty would not be set aside; and, initially, the Central Committee of the CCP completely approved the line taken by the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party. In his heart of hearts, Mao Zedong was satisfied with the criticism of the Stalin personality cult, but he did not agree with the general idea of condemning it (the personality cult *per se* could be good or bad, it is up to us to insist on the correct personality cult). Moreover, Mao felt dissatisfied with the

fact that the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party in criticising Stalin's personality cult had not consulted the CCP and obtained its approval in advance. The 1957 Moscow Conference marked the peak of the Sino-Soviet alliance, but at the same time also raised the question of the leadership of the international Communist movement. Regarding the long wave radio station and the united fleet, Mao Zedong reacted radically, thereby setting up a psychological obstacle to further Sino-Soviet military cooperation, although Khrushchev was forced to surrender; the Chinese side in 1958 bombarded Jinmen without consulting the Soviet Union, and also without informing them in advance (Shen 2002, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c 2007, 2010, 2013).

According to Li Danhui, at the beginning of the '60s, Mao Zedong indicated that the CCP must influence the Soviet Communist Party, assisting Khrushchev. In part because of this, a series of new conflicts arose between the CCP and the Soviet Communist Party. Facing the economic recession brought about by the Great Leap Forward, Mao Zedong and the CCP - while standing up to Soviet pressure - could not but search for a compromise with the Soviet Union. In 1962, following Mao's reaffirmation of the importance of class struggle, the intensification of Sino-Soviet divergences regarding foreign policy and the emergence of international leftist forces, the CCP judged Sino-Soviet contradictions as contradictions between 'the enemy and us', and Khrushchev as a mouthpiece of the capitalist class, beginning the dispute with USSR regarding the general line of the international Communist movement. In October 1964, Khrushchev's fall from power did not bring new opportunities for Sino-Soviet reconciliation, as the CCP insisted on pushing the Soviet Communist party to refute the 20th Congress, while the Soviet Communist Party refused to negate itself; in the '60s, following the worsening of Sino-Soviet Party and state relations, border disputes between the two countries gradually became politicised, and the Chinese government's guiding principle in resolving Sino-Soviet border issues underwent a corresponding change, making known to the public that the partnership between the two countries was an unequal one (Li Danhui 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2009).

In addition, Shen Zhihua and Li Danhui have put forward their own original view about the rupture of the Sino-Soviet Alliance - the 'theory of unbalanced structure' according to which: firstly, after changes took place in the leadership structure of the socialist camp, the two communist parties were on an equal footing, and the competition for power became the main way the two handled political divergences, the main goal being the dominance within the world Communist movement; secondly, party-to-party relations covered and even replaced State-to-State relations. In substance, within this structure there was no awareness of sovereignty and equality. The above-mentioned structural shortcomings became the underlying cause of the inevitable Sino-Soviet split (Shen, Li 2012).

According to Niu Jun's analysis, soon after the founding of the PRC, the development strategy of Chinese leaders was to adhere to the Soviet model, and to form an alliance with the Soviet Union. After 30 years of upheavals and setbacks, the Chinese government raised the concept of 'socialism with Chinese characteristics', and chose an 'independent nonaligned and peaceful diplomacy'; this marks the fundamental harmonization of China's national development and diplomatic strategies. Specifically, it can be seen in Sino-Soviet relations: in the process of achieving normalisation with Moscow, Beijing progressively handled Sino-Soviet relations to avoid antagonism, with no formal alliance and thereby to ease tensions. Here, perhaps Chinese leaders did not make a conscious decision when they chose to withdraw from the Cold War, but Sino-Soviet diplomatic normalisation itself was the outcome of the fact that China's foreign policy was progressively shaking off the thinking pattern formed in the international Cold War climate (Niu 2008, 2011).

Similarly, worthy of attention is the fact that Chinese scholars discussed China's policy towards the USSR from the perspective of 'lower strata, the grassroots' (*diceng*) contacts. In the '50s an important aspect of Soviet economic assistance to China was the approximately twenty thousand experts sent to China. Shen Zhihua's research reveals that from the very beginning China considered the Soviet Union's provision of experts and other aid personnel as a government action taken for granted under the principle of internationalism; yet, Khrushchev viewed the dispatching of experts as diplomatic leverage to force China to give in when it came to theoretical and policy divergences. The result was that Soviet experts in China became political victims (Shen 2015; see also Zhang Haixing 2009; Hu Xiaojing 2012). Similarly, after the signing of the Sino-Soviet alliance China also sent a large number of students to the Soviet Union. You Lan believes that in the '60s, the worsening of Sino-Soviet relations put Chinese students in the Soviet Union - a product of Sino-Soviet friendship and collaboration - in an embarrassing position: since they had to continue and finish their studies, they had to withstand Soviet government pressure, while being at the forefront of domestic instruction in the struggle against revisionism. Essentially, personal qualities and circumstances determined the fact that these students were by no means suited to engagement in political struggles. As such, the Chinese side used these Chinese students in the USSR to develop, within the 'bastion of revisionism', anti-revisionist activity that, however, suffered repeated setbacks: not only could they not 'take struggle to promote unity', but instead they further pushed Sino-Soviet relations (which were already in a state of mutual hostility) toward antagonism (You 2014). From 1954 to 1963 China sent 2,000 workers to the USSR. According to Gu Jikun's analysis, Chinese workers sent to the Soviet Union to help build carried out their work in a state of misunderstanding in which both China and Soviet Union yielded with a show of reluctance. National sentiments in both countries were also involved at

that time and both sides demonstrated a regard for the other, which was full of speculation and questions (Gu 2013).<sup>5</sup>

Although China's policy towards the countries of Eastern Europe depended to a great extent on the policy of the Soviet Union, however in some specific circumstances it also had its own characteristics. Shen Zhihua discussed China's reaction to Poland and Hungary's incidents, and revealed the following important historical facts: on 10th October 1956 China did not yet know that the USSR had already planned a military intervention in Poland, and could not advise Moscow not to dispatch troops; at the end of October, Chinese leaders mediation work had an important influence on the resolution of the Poland issue. On 23rd October, when the Soviet Union for the first time decided to dispatch troops in Hungary, it had not yet solicited China's opinion; at the time the USSR again took the policy decision to send troops in Hungary, Chinese leaders took up a position that played a subtle influence and a guiding function on the USSR. On this basis, Shen proves that rather than saying that China helped the Soviet Union resolve the crisis, it is better to say that Mao Zedong through dealing with the crisis realised his objective both to criticise Moscow great-nation chauvinism and preserve the unity of the socialist bloc. More importantly, the CCP in this way thus started to intervene in European affairs (Shen Zhihua 2005). Li Danhui considers that in the '60s the Sino-Soviet alliance was beginning to crack and China relations with five countries of Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary and Poland) followed the ups and downs in the Sino-Soviet relations. In the '60s, China's policy towards these five countries was generally in line with the policy concerning the Soviet Union, but it also presented a different content and specific features. China tried to foster an anti-ruling party influence in these five countries: not only was it unable to achieve the goal of disintegrating Soviet Union and Eastern European countries bloc, but rather it stirred the enhancement of these five countries' hostile feelings against China (Li Danhui 2011). Niu Jun's research shows that at the end of 1982, after the end of the XII CCP Congress, China decided the policy towards these East European countries on the basis of the transformation of China's development and security strategy: first take the initiative to improve the relations with the five East European countries under a circumstance in which it was difficult to obtain fast progress in Sino-Soviet relations (Niu 2013).<sup>6</sup>

Besides this, Chinese scholars also studied China's relations with Korea, Vietnam, Mongolia and Cuba. Shen Zhihua challenged the traditional

5 Chinese scholars who have investigated China's policy towards the Soviet Union also include Yao Yu (2010a, 2010b, 2011), Wen Ting (2011), Wang Zhenyou (2014).

6 On China's policy towards Eastern and Central European countries see also Chen Tao (2012, 2013), Ge Jun (2015), Liu Yong (2011), Cheng Xiaohe (2008) and Jiang Huajie (2012).

wording 'mutually dependent' for Sino-Korean relations, believing that during the Korean war many contradictions emerged on questions related to military tactics and after the end of the war Kim Il-Sung's purge of the 'Yan'an faction' brought about a crisis in the Sino-Korean alliance. But with the emergence of Sino-Soviet divergences, Mao Zedong needed Korean support, and rather adopted a tolerant attitude toward Kim Il-Sung to improve Sino-Korean relations. The Sino-Korean alliance was an extremely unstable 'political marriage', permeated with internal contradictions (Shen Zhihua 2009). Dong Jie pointed out that after the launching of the Cultural Revolution, under the influence of leftist diplomacy, Sino-Korean relations were at a low ebb. At the end of the '60s, the two countries were even faced with increasing security issues and both sides undertook to restore good relations. As China started to assume the responsibility for the worsening of Sino-Korean relations produced by the Cultural Revolution, North Korea did not hesitate to approve the previously negated Cultural Revolution (Dong 2014b). Regarding China's policy toward North Korea at the time of Sino-American reconciliation, Shen Zhihua argues that Sino-Korean relations were maintained as friendly and even advanced to a certain extent. Generally speaking, even though China provided aid to North Korea, Pyongyang was not satisfied. Xia Yafeng proved that China's policy toward North Korea was not based on conformity in the ideology of the two countries but rather stemmed from considerations pertaining to national security interests and regional political affairs (Shen Zhihua 2014b; Xia 2013). Shen Zhihua and Dong Jie's research also revealed that after the end of the Korean war, despite the fact that China was beset with difficulties, it continued to provide aid to Korea so as to bring about economic reconstruction: the initial sum of money provided to Korea exceeded the combined total given by the USSR and East European countries (Shen, Dong 2011).

Further discussing China's economic aid to Korea in the first half of the '60s, Dong Jie believes that stemming from political and regional factors, China did all it could and calculated only the political costs (not taking into account economic costs) (Dong 2014a). Along the same lines, China's scholars also started to analyse China's Korean policy from the perspective of relations at lower levels. At the beginning of the '60s, huge numbers of Koreans residents were crossing the border in northeast China illegally. Shen Zhihua points out that the Korean government did not enforce the Sino-Korean agreement on how to deal with those persons who crossed the border illegally, and the Chinese government was unwilling to do so in order to preserve Sino-Korean relations, thus further aggravating the problem (Shen Zhihua 2011). Training Koreans was one of the most important matters covered under China's economic aid program to Korea. Dong Jie and Liang Zhi have examined the phenomenon of Sino-Korean relations' dependence on party-to-party relations, by focusing on

Korean trainees in Beijing and in Shanghai in the '50s and '60s (Dong 2011; Liang 2014).

Since 2000, China scholars started to carry out empirical research on China-Vietnam relations (Li Danhui 2000). According to Niu Jun's analysis, the motivations behind China's support of Vietnamese resistance against France have to do not only with an intrinsic impulse to support revolutionary movement in East Asia but also with fundamental considerations regarding the country's security. Moreover, the policy of aid for Vietnam was also influenced by the Sino-Soviet alliance (Niu 2012a). Yang Kui-song's analysis affirms that the reason why at the Geneva conference Beijing advocated the ceasefire is closely linked to the fact that the foreign policy of the New China was changing from emphasising the ideology of 'leaning to one side' to a pragmatic tendency that gave more importance to the country's interests (Yang 2001). Li Danhui points out that from the late '60s to the beginning of the '70s, China promoted Sino-American reconciliation by handling the Vietnam issue. She identifies three stages: the first stage is characterised by using the Vietnam issue to spur high-level Sino-American dialogue; the second stage saw China insisting on supporting the fundamental policy line of Vietnam, and promoting Sino-American reconciliation; the third stage was characterised by attempts to persuade Vietnam to move towards negotiations and so end the war, and fulfil the grand strategy of joining with the US and opposing the USSR (Li Danhui 2002). In recent years, China's policy regarding Vietnam has attracted the attention of Chinese scholars. Among them, Zhang Mianli has made a positive evaluation of China's economic and technical aid to Vietnam during and after the Vietnam war against France, believing that China's aid had the following characteristics: it started early, covered a broad field, had ample scope, lasted long and achieved notable results. Zhao Yanghui and Wang Shu also show the effectiveness of China's technical aid by taking as their example Vietnamese students trained at the Harbin Institute of Military Engineering (Zhang Mianli 2010; Zhao, Wang 2010).

You Lan and Fan Liping's research, however, further reveals the problems encountered in the efforts to aid Vietnam. The former scholar believes that, from the Chinese point of view, the key issue that would determine the success or failure of the job of training Vietnamese trainees, was not just to help them acquire specialised skills but even more importantly it was to urge them to keep up a high level of political consciousness. Lastly, since there was evident divergence regarding the relations between the country's interests and its ideology, frictions between China and Vietnam continually emerged and the political and ideological education that China was instilling into the Vietnamese trainees encountered difficulties. Fan Liping affirms that, being affected by the planned economic system and a low level of development of the Sino-Vietnam railroad system, as well as by the Vietnam war (American bombs and the ever-changing demands of the

war) and by political factors (Vietnamese aid demands were too high and the Soviet Union increased the volume of transferred goods to help Vietnam), Sino-Vietnam joint international railway transport failed to resolve the contradiction presented by the difference between the railway transport project and its actual implementation (You 2012; Fan Liping 2014).

In the period of 1949-1973, regarding the incident concerning overseas Chinese who had travelled to Mongolia and asked to return to their country in the early years of the PRC, China maintained that under requests from the Mongolian government, more than 26,000 Chinese workers had gone to Mongolia to help building development. Gu Jikun discusses this issue, believing that from the beginning to the very end, there was divergence and contradiction between the leaders of both countries with regard to Chinese workers going to Mongolia: the Mongolian side was ever wary of Chinese workers; Chinese leaders, instead, refused to answer Mongolian demands regarding the dispatch to Mongolia of large numbers of Mongolian ethnic minority workers from Inner Mongolia (Gu 2015). In the first half of the '60s, China helped Cuba train a group of trainees. Taking Shanghai as an example, Ge Jun points out that because of differences in the realms of language, knowledge, habits, customs and traditions, many frictions and contradictions emerged between Chinese and Cuban workers. The Chinese side not only undertook the technical instruction of Cuban trainees, but also made greater efforts to promote propaganda related to 'anti-imperialism, anti-revisionism' and 'three red banners' (that is, the general line of socialist construction, the Great Leap Forward and the People's communes) among these people, in an attempt to influence their political stance (Ge 2011; on China's aid to Cuba see also Wang Yongzhong 2015).

#### 4 China's Policy Towards Capitalist Countries

In the early days of the Cold War, China's policy towards the members of the capitalist camp was characterised to a great extent by struggle. However, in certain historical moments this policy did not prevent Mao Zedong from seeking contacts with Western countries on the basis of the theories of the 'intermediate zone' (*zhongjian didai*) and the 'second intermediate zone' (*di er zhongjian didai*). To be more precise, disintegrating the enemy's internal relations was in itself a form and tactic of struggle.

In recent years, Chinese scholars have discussed China's US policy from political, economic, military and cultural perspectives. Yang Kuisong believes that soon after the founding of the new government Chinese leaders were not yet eager to eliminate US cultural influence and power from China. But the outbreak of the Korean war and China's participation in it forced China to sweep away the 'pro-US' attitude, 'worship of US' and 'the fear of US' among the masses in the field of religion, education, radio, film (Yang 2010b).

The two Taiwan Strait crises in the '50s have also received the attention of Chinese scholars. Yang Kuisong argues that, having taken into consideration the precedents of both the Korean and Vietnam war armistices and the need to take advantage of the opportunity to seize Dachen island and other offshore islands and prevent the US and Taiwan from signing a military treaty, Mao Zedong decided to bombard Jinmen in 1954. At the end of 1957, the US downgraded Sino-American ambassadorial talks. This action stirred Mao Zedong's national pride. On 23rd August 1958, China once more bombarded Jinmen (Yang 2003).

Niu Jun's research lays even greater emphasis on the military nature of these two Strait crises and the interrelations among them. He says that in 1954-1955 the factors behind Chinese leaders determination to launch a military attack in the Taiwan Strait were mainly: US promotion of the so-called 'unleashing Chiang Kai-shek' policy, and the rapid increase of Chinese and Taiwanese military operations on the offshore islands; the beginning of US consultations with Taiwanese authorities for a 'mutual defence treaty'; the acceleration of the 'two Chinas' activities by the US and other allied countries; and the shooting down of two Chinese People's Liberation Army planes by US military forces on 26th July 1954. The 1958 bombardment of Jinmen, despite having a certain political significance, was, in the first place, a military action, a part of China's military plan (formulated in 1954) to seize the islands along the southeast coast occupied by Chiang Kai-shek and also a continuation of the military operations commenced in spring 1954 in a peculiar internal and external situation (Niu 2004, 2009, 2012b, 350-77; on China's role in Taiwan Strait crises, see also Dai 2003).<sup>7</sup>

Regarding the US position behind the 1962 Chinese policy decision on the Taiwan Strait, Wang Dong affirms that in this case what concerned Beijing in the first place was how effectively they could eliminate the threat of a GMD military counterattack against the mainland. Only after they came to know - through informal talks - that the US had no intention to support Chiang Kai-shek, did Beijing let out a sigh of relief. We must say that both China and the US found a common interest in preserving the 'status quo' on the Taiwan issue (Wang Dong 2010). Wang Dong also addresses the question of why China and the US did not reach reconciliation despite the fact that at the second Geneva conference they were both willing to seek a compromise. On China's part, their leaders clearly realised the strategic effectiveness of maintaining an anti-American stance, believing that the goal of becoming a great nation could be achieved by strengthening the country's leading position within the socialist camp and by initiating national liberation movements in the Third World (Wang Dong 2009; on

7 Studies on Sino-American relations in the '50s also include Li Bingkui, Feng Xiaoli (2008) and Li Bingkui (2008).



Sino-American relations in the '60s, see also Chen Jimin 2010). The development of China's nuclear weapon received extremely close US attention; Zhan Xin's research on US nuclear strategy regarding China in the '60s shows that following the worsening of Sino-Soviet relations, the US policy of nuclear containment concerning China also changed, the nuclear factor becoming the catalyst that accelerated the change (Zhan 2011). Before Sino-American rapprochement, Sino-American ambassadorial talks represented the most important channel of communication between the two countries. Xia Yafeng's research indicates that, as did American leaders, Chinese leaders also attached equal importance to the Warsaw channel, believing that its existence was helpful in managing fragile, nervous Sino-American relations. Because of this, even though it was during the most radical period of the Cultural Revolution, Beijing had not yet nullified Sino-American ambassadorial talks (Xia 2007). Zhang Shuguang has discussed the plan and implementation of US policy in relaxing Sino-American relations, including the previously neglected issue of communication strategy and technique between the leaders of the two countries at the time of Nixon's visit (Zhang Shuguang 2008). In addition, Ouyang Xiang and He Hui shed light on the positive effects of Sino-American reconciliation in terms of trade, by taking as an example the China export trade fair (since these meetings were held in Guangzhou, the abbreviated name is Guangjiaohui-Guangzhou Export Commodities Fair) (Ouyang 2012; He 2008).

Britain was the first great Western nation to recognise the PRC. Mao Zedong and other leaders attached extreme importance to relations with Britain. Xu Youzhen argues that in 1950-1954 the history of Sino-British diplomatic negotiations indicates that from the beginning to the end China occupied a leading position, dominating the rhythm and direction of the negotiations. Here, Beijing's attitude and position changed from a cautious and procrastinating approach to a proactive and flexible one. This reflects the change of China's diplomatic strategy from a 'revolution diplomacy' (*geming waijiao*) giving prominence to national security and regime stability to a 'peaceful diplomacy' (*heping waijiao*) striving for a peaceful environment and peaceful coexistence with countries with a different ideology and different values (Xu Youzhen 2013). Zhou Hong has studied communication with Britain in the early PRC, focusing on the China-Britain National Day Reception. She believes that the Chinese side fully used this to combine together struggle and cooperation, properly replying to some concrete issues related to Sino-British relations, while sticking to their principles (Zhou Hong 2013). Moreover, Shi Shantao discusses the 1954 China-Britain aeroplane incident, proving from different perspectives that the incident was really not intentionally caused by China as Great Britain officially suspected, but a mistake. The reason why the incident could successfully be resolved has to do with the adoption by the Chinese government of a flexible and pragmatic policy response, particularly with

China actively providing Great Britain with compensation (Shi 2010; on Sino-British relations see also Zhang Minjun 2013).

Regarding China's policy toward France, Chinese scholars have focused the attention on Sino-French normalisation, termed by the media 'a nuclear explosion in diplomacy' (*waijiao hebaozha*). Zhai Qiang believes that in the history of PRC external relations, the normalisation of diplomatic relations between China and France in 1964 is a peculiar case because it was the first time and also the only time that Chinese leaders agreed to establish diplomatic relations with a country that had not first broken off ties with Taiwan. Sino-French diplomatic normalisation was the first great diplomatic breakthrough sought for by the Chinese government under Mao's principle of the 'two intermediate zones' (*liang ge zhongjian didai*); it was an important event that finally brought China into the international community (Zhai 2012). Yao Baihui's research reveals important historical facts that the French government and French scholars alike tend to neglect: first of all, "The main points of Premier Zhou Enlai's talks" (*Zhou Enlai zongli tanhua yaodian*), reflecting the importance the Chinese side attached to the question of Sino-French normalisation, is not a unilateral document, but the result of Sino-French consultation on the basis of equality. Moreover, France's establishment of diplomatic relations with China was not at all unconditional. France promised to recognise the PRC as the only legitimate government representing the Chinese people, to support the right of representation of the New China within the UN and to not continue French-Taiwanese diplomatic relations. Although the Chinese side did not yet request that France break off relations with Chiang Kai-shek, the above-mentioned commitments made by the French former prime minister Faure had already made breaking off France's diplomatic relations with Taiwan inevitable (Yao Baihui 2012, 2014).

Apart from policy concerning the US, Britain and France, Chinese scholars have also attempted to address the question of China's relations with West Germany, Italy, Denmark and Japan (Ge 2013; Wang Ruoqian 2012; Yin, Wang 2013; Qi Jianmin 2014).

## 5 China's Policy Towards the Third World

Granted that for a quite long time after the founding of the New China Beijing's diplomacy had a clear 'revolutionary nature', the most important arena of this revolutionary diplomacy can be said to be the vast area of the Third World. The concrete patterns of this diplomacy include: providing the countries of the Third World with economic, technological and military aid; supporting the national liberation movements of those countries; encouraging their acceptance of anti-imperialist thought; and preventing

them from falling into the US camp through international negotiations.<sup>8</sup>

Regarding Southeast Asia, the topmost priority among Chinese scholars is the evolution of China's policy regarding Burma. Of these, Fan Hongwei's research is the most systematic (Fan 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d, 2009, 2010a, 2012). What we need to point out in particular is that the Sino-Burma border issue aroused widespread interest among Chinese scholars. Fan Hongwei believes that successful negotiation of the 'Sino-Burma border treaty' was brought about mainly because China accepted substantial compromise (Fan 2010b). Relatively speaking, Qi Pengfei and Zhang Mingxia stress even further the positive aspect of the Chinese policy decision and in a very detailed way outline the history of the resolution of the Sino-Burma border issue (Qi, Zhang 2012). Guan Peifeng points out that the border negotiations succeeded on the one hand because both countries were in good faith and determined to reach a peaceful resolution of the issue, and, on the other, because during negotiations China took the interests of the other side into great consideration (Guan 2014).<sup>9</sup>

Sino-Indonesia relations is another topic on which Chinese scholarly research is rather thorough. Zhang Xiaoxin's research shows that from the start, China's Indonesia policy received close attention from Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi and other prominent CCP leaders. In the early '60s, the CCP Central Committee regarded the task of supporting national democratic revolutionary movements just as important as the task of moving international socialist revolutionary movements forward, and thus embarked on a policy of vigorous support for Indonesia's struggle against imperialism and colonialism (Zhang Xiaoxin 2011, 2013).

According to Li Yiping and Zeng Yuleng's analysis, from 1958 to 1965 China's aid to Indonesia was by no means perfectly coordinated with the development of Sino-Indonesia friendly relations, the main reason being that China took 'revolution' as the most important priority in its Indonesian aid policy (Li, Zeng 2012).

Zhou Taomo discusses the contradictions in China's Indonesia policy from the late '50s until the early '60s: the widening of Sino-Soviet divergence on the one hand made China happy to see that USSR interference in Indonesia provided checks and balances on the US; on the other, it was an indicator of possible future conflicting interests between China and the USSR in Indonesia. At the same time, within the international Communist movement, the Indonesia Communist Party's abandonment of the philosophy of armed struggle did not prevent the CCP from approaching the Indonesia Commu-

8 Empirical research on the relations between China and Latin American countries by Chinese scholars is very scarce, Sun Hongbo's study being among a handful of studies published so far (Sun 2013). For this reason, in this chapter the authors only present the main results in the study of Chinese policy concerning Afro-Asian countries.

9 For a detailed study on the history of Sino-Burma border issue resolution see Feng Yue 2014.

nist party with the intention of establishing an anti-USSR coalition. In the handling of overseas Chinese issues and party-to-party relations between the CCP and the Indonesia Communist Party, Chinese diplomacy clearly favoured pragmatism compared with loud propaganda (Zhou 2010).

As regards Sino-Cambodian relations after the Geneva conference, Zhai Qiang affirms that China's main policy consideration was how to win Sihanoukville's good opinion of China and to strive for his cooperation to prevent Cambodia from joining the anti-China encirclement of US organisations, and to spread - via Cambodia - Chinese influence in neutral Afro-Asian states (Zhai 2013; see also Zhang 2014; on China's policy concerning Thailand and Laos see, Wang 2011; Pan 2014; Feng Yiming 2014).

With regard to China's policy towards South Asia,<sup>10</sup> Chinese scholars have mainly focused on Sino-Indian relations. Among them, Dai Chaowu's research is the most representative. His analysis of the reform of the Tibetan currency system, Indian trade control and embargo on Tibet and India's occupation of the south of the 'McMahon demarcation line', reveals the asymmetric nature of Sino-Indian relations: in the case of external relations, the New China depended greatly on India; in consolidating stability in Tibet it also needed Indian support. As such, relations between the two countries were clearly asymmetric. Following the changes in Chinese foreign policy strategy in the mid- and late '50s, especially because of the ever-widening divergence between the Chinese and the Soviet Communist parties on a series of significant international strategic questions, the CCP leaders, especially Mao Zedong, started to reconsider the nature and functions of this kind of 'nationalist country' under Nehru's leadership, considering India's to be 'reactionary nationalism'. Sino-Indian asymmetric political relations thus no longer existed. Yet, the inauguration in December 1954 and October 1957 of the Sichuan-Tibet highway, the Qinghai-Tibet highway and the Xinjiang-Tibet line to a great extent resolved the transportation problems Tibet had with inland areas and significantly changed unbalanced Sino-Indian economic relations (Dai 2012, 2013a, 2015). Moreover, Dai Chaowu also discusses the question of the 1962 Sino-Indian border war and China's handling of Indian prisoners, clarifying Indian censure on a series of important related questions and also pointing out the inappropriateness of China's related policies (Dai 2013b; on Sino-Indian relations see also Gao, Gao 2011; Zhu 2012). Chinese scholars have also considered Sino-Pakistan relations. According to Cheng Xiaohe's analysis, the hostility between China and India in the first half of the '60s caused China to gradually abandon the bias of its ideology and form an alliance with Pakistan. In 1965 during the Indo-Pakistani war, China gave full aid and support to

10 Chinese scholars have also paid attention to the relations between China and Afghanistan (Zhou, Qi 2011; Zhang An 2012, 2015, among others).

Pakistan in accordance with the agreement. But the space barrier between the two countries and the deficiencies in the mechanism of military cooperation as well as China's diplomatic isolation and its limited strength, limited the effects of Chinese aid. Consequently, after the end of the war, Pakistan changed its previous international attitude of 'being close to China and estranging the US' (*qin Zhong shu Mei*), and adopted a policy of equal distance between China, the US and the Soviet Union (Cheng Xiaohe 2009, 2012; on Sino-Pakistan border issue see Han 2011).<sup>11</sup>

In recent years, Chinese scholars have focused their attention on China's Africa aid policy, most prominent among the studies being the research by Jiang Huajie. Considering many instances such as Chinese training of Zambian armed forces, its aid in building the Tazara railway, China's replacement of Taiwan in African agricultural aid, training African students and providing aid to African medical teams, Jiang studied China's aid policy towards African countries from 1960 to 1978 and reached the following conclusions: Chinese aid action in Africa is very different from development aid as generally defined. This action was not only a policy tool to build a united international front against imperialism and revisionism, but it also reflected the Cold War policy of exporting its own economic development model. Finally, China's own experience in social, political and economic development was not accepted and put into practice by African countries, the underlying reason being complex: both political and international relations issues obstructed implementation as did social, ethnic and cultural differences (Jiang 2013, 2014; Shen Xipeng 2009; Hu 2013; Xu 2010).

## 6 Review and Prospects

In the past 15 years, Chinese scholarship on China's foreign policy in the Cold War era has made notable progress in at least three aspects: first, thanks to the analysis of new historical material it has opened up many new research questions (such as China's resolution of border issues), revealed a wealth of previously neglected historical facts and to a certain extent laid a solid foundation for future analysis of the history of the foreign affairs of the PRC. Secondly, it has constantly enlarged the field of analysis focusing on high level external contacts and lower strata grass roots exchange (such as in the case of Soviet experts helping China, the training of foreign experts, students studying abroad and aid workers), while discussing the role and function of ideology in China's foreign policy action from different perspectives. Moreover, it has also provided a new understanding of some

11 Chinese scholars have also focused on Sino-Nepal relations (Mu 2012, 2013a, 2013b; Qi 2011).

major theoretical questions (such as Shen Zihua and Li Danhui's research on Sino-Soviet relations, for instance, aimed at refining the theory of 'un-balanced structure' when it comes to relations between Socialist countries; Dong Jie, Liang Zhi and Gu Jikun's related research verifying how applicable this theory is). And, finally, at the turn of the 21st century Chinese scholars involved in the study of China's foreign policy in the Cold War were born in the '50s, as for instance, Shen Zihua, Li Danhui, Niu Jun and Yang Kuisong.<sup>12</sup> At present, these scholars are still at the forefront of research work, while emerging scholars born in the '60s and especially in the '70s and '80s are joining the group. A research team characterised by a reasonable age distribution is being formed. Most importantly, as regards China's foreign policy during the Cold War, China has already created two major structures for scientific research and documentary collection located in the south and the north of the country. These are the Centre for Cold War International History Studies at East China Normal University and the School of History at Capital Normal University, the former being engaged in researching on and collecting a large quantity of archival documents related to China's relations with Socialist and periphery countries while the latter focuses on the relations between China and capitalist countries as well as on the situation of archival sources on Cold War history in every country and collects a large amount of archival documents on Western countries' relations with China.

Without doubt, at present, Chinese scholars' research on Sino-Soviet relations, Sino-Korean relations and Sino-Indian relations is at the forefront of world research. But, we cannot deny that, generally speaking, there are still obvious shortcomings in Chinese research on China's foreign policy during the Cold War: apart from researchers engaged in Sino-Soviet relations, Sino-American relations, Sino-British relations and Sino-Indian relations, other Chinese scholars are still using only Chinese archival materials to conduct research on China's foreign policy. On some major questions, research is done but is of a somewhat cursory nature, when addressing the changes in China's attitude and stance towards the question of the return to the UN for instance, or, Sino-Mongolian relations, Sino-Cuban relations and China's relations with countries of Latin America. A part of young scholars' research is even more limited to restoring historical facts, the field of vision being rather narrow and lacking the necessary awareness of the issues and theoretical concern, demonstrating a scarce critical understanding of China's foreign policy.

Of course, on these issues Chinese scholars themselves have already gained some understanding and are attempting to resolve the problems. In 2013, the Centre for Cold War International History Studies at East China

12 Their books have already been translated in several languages (English, Russian, Japanese, Korean, and European languages), circulating among the international academic community.

Normal University started a large research project on “The Relations Between China and Periphery Countries and Frontier Issues During the Cold War” and in 2015 was awarded financial aid from National Planning Office of Philosophy and Social Science. The members of this research project are divided into four research sub-groups covering Central Asia, North Asia, Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia. These are involved in gathering, arranging and translating archives pertaining to periphery countries’ relations with China, and also in re-discussing China’s foreign policy during the Cold War on the basis of bilateral and even multilateral archival research. To date, the project groups have already visited archives in Russia, Australia, Japan, Mongolia, Burma, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia among others, conducting documentary investigation and collection.<sup>13</sup>

In order to coordinate the research work, the Center for Contemporary Documentation and Historical Materials of Oriental History Studies Foundation, East China Normal University was established on 10th October 2014. This center is mainly devoted to Cold War archives in every country (including China) relating to Chinese domestic and external affairs, especially to arranging, classifying and creating a database of materials related to periphery country relations with China. Similarly, what deserves attention is the fact that in the last two or three years the North East Normal University, Xinjiang Normal University, the Sun Yat-sen University, the South China Normal University and Ji’nan University, one after another, have established academic centres dedicated to Cold War history. These academic centers are located in provinces in the border area of China and their research is mainly related to the relations of periphery countries with China as well as to border issues. Moreover, in recent years the Centre for the Study of PRC History and the Centre for Cold War International History Studies at East China Normal University have sponsored a series of scientific activities for doctoral students and young scholars with the idea of strengthening the young researchers’ competence in deciphering documentary material.<sup>14</sup>

We believe that through perseverance and hard work, in the near future Chinese research on China’s foreign policy in the Cold War period, a field that has not yet been completely explored, will bear even more substantial fruit.

**13** Since 2013, the archives of the PRC Ministry of foreign affairs are closed “due to technical reasons” and access to local archives have also been restricted. As such, the use of foreign archives has become especially necessary for the study of China’s foreign policy during the Cold War.

**14** For instance, on 17-27 July 2015, an advanced course on “Contemporary History: Documents and Methods”, sponsored by the Oriental history research foundation, has been organised by the Institute of Culture and History at South China Normal University. It was attended by nearly 30 students, selected through a national examination, and saw the participation of ten professors from East China Normal University, Beijing University and other colleges and universities.

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