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**The United States and China; a closer look at Sino-American
relations and the One-China policy**

Barack Obama's governing of the One-China policy compared to his predecessors

A BACHELOR'S THESIS BY DAVID WAGENER

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ABSTRACT

Although relatively short, the history of Sino-American foreign relations is one of the most important in the world. The bilateral relationship between the United States and China has, since 1784, evolved into a balancing game with high stakes and even higher rewards. Regarding population and economic and military prowess these two nations have become the world's two largest superpowers. Since 1979 a major point on foreign relations between the two has been the One-China policy, which the US enacted to settle the dispute between the People's Republic of China (mainland) and the Republic of China (Taiwan). The One-China policy states that the PRC is the sole legitimate government of China, and that the US will not continue diplomatic relations with the ROC. The One-China policy is based upon the Taiwan Relations act of 1979 and the Three Communiqués of 1972, 1979, and 1982. Since its origin the policy has undergone several changes but the underlying concept has remained the same. With the rise of China as a superpower and a changing political climate it is up to Barack Obama and his successors to act accordingly and find the right balance between a friendly Sino-American relationship and the preservation of important Western and American values.

 KEYWORDS

Barack Obama

Barack Hussein Obama II (1961). American Democratic politician, and the first president of the US from African American descent. Served as the 44th president from 2009 to 2017, known for his multilateralism and his campaign based on 'change'.

Beijing

Beijing, or Peking, capital city of the PRC. It is the world's third most populous city.

Bill Clinton

William Jefferson Clinton (1946), American politician and the 42nd president of the US from 1993 to 2001. Member of the Democrat Party. Was impeached in 1998 but acquitted in 1999. Known for his 'third way' political philosophy.

Canton (Guangzhou)

Capital of the province of Guangdong in Southern China. A city with a rich history and the third most populous city in China nowadays. In 1784, Guangzhou was the first American trader's port in China.

Henry Kissinger

Henry Alfred Kissinger (1923), American diplomat and politician who served as US Secretary of State and National Security Advisor under Presidents Nixon and Ford.

Played an important role in American foreign policy in the 1970s including in Sino-American relations.

John Hay

John Milton Hay (1838-1905), American statesman and politician. Served as US Secretary of State under Presidents McKinley and Roosevelt. Author of Hay's Notes, which laid the foundations for the Open Door Policy.

Mao Zedong

Chairman Mao (1893-1976), Chinese communist politician and revolutionary. Founded and led the PRC from 1949 till his death as Chairman of the Communist Party of China. Played an important role in US-China rapprochement by meeting with Nixon in 1972.

Normalization (of US-China relations)

Normalization (rapprochement) of the relationship between the US and the PRC. Originates during Nixon's presidency and is based largely upon the Three Communiqués.

Open Door Policy

A policy related to US foreign relations in the late 19th and early 20th century. Based on Hay's Notes, the policy proposed to open China to trade for all countries on an equal basis, while also protecting China's integrity.

One-China Policy

Policy that states that there is only one legitimate state called 'China', despite both the PRC's and ROC's claims for the name. To have diplomatic relations with one forces states to break diplomatic relations with the other. The term was coined under Nixon's presidency in the 1970s, when the US shifted its recognition from the ROC to the PRC and made official during Jimmy Carter's presidency.

People's Republic of China (PRC)

Founded in 1949 by Mao Zedong's Communist Party. Has been the party in control of the mainland of China since 1949 and is, since 1979, recognized by the US as the sole legitimate government of China. Does not recognize the ROC's existence or their claim for China.

Republic of China (ROC)

Taiwan, officially the ROC, a state in East Asia. Was established in 1912 by the Kuomintang, the Nationalist Party. Has

claimed to be the sole legitimate government of China, and was supported by the US until 1979. Does not recognize the PRC's existence or claim for China.

Richard Nixon

Richard Milhous Nixon (1913-1994), American politician, served as the 37th US president from 1969 to 1974. The only president to resign office due to the Watergate Scandal. Played an important part in US-China normalization.

Ronald Reagan

Ronald Wilson Reagan (1911-2004), American politician and the 40th US president from 1981 to 1989. Started off as Hollywood actor, before becoming Governor of California. Known for his Reaganomics and actions regarding foreign affairs in the Cold War. Played an important role in Sino-American relations.

Sino-American relations

China-United States relations, foreign policy between the United States and China. Has by Barack Obama been regarded as the most important bilateral relationship of the century.

Sino-Soviet Split

The split between the PRC and the Soviet Union that took place from 1969 to 1989.

The breach between the two largest communist states in the world served as an opportunity for the US to reestablish relations with the PRC.

Soviet Union

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), or Russia, a socialist state that existed from 1922 to 1991. Led by the Communist Party, it engaged in a Cold War with the US between 1947 and 1991. The SU and the PRC were the two largest communist states in the world.

Taipei

Taipei, or Taipei City. The largest city and capital of Taiwan.

Taiwan Relations Act (TRA)

Act of the United States Congress enacted in 1979. Establishes US recognition of the PRC and it has since then defined US-Taiwan relations regarding the dispute of the Taiwan Strait.

Taiwan Strait

Taiwan or Formosa Strait, a 180 kilometers wide strait that separates the PRC from the

ROC around which the Taipei-Beijing dispute revolves.

Theodore Roosevelt

Theodore Roosevelt Jr (1858-1919), American politician who served as the 26th president of the US from 1901 to 1909. A progressive president, he played an important role regarding the origins of the Open Door Policy.

Three Communiqués

The Three Joint Communiqués (Shanghai Communiqué of 1972, Joint Communiqué of 1979, Normalization Communiqué of 1982), a collection of statements made by the PRC and the US. The Communiqués are the foundations for the Sino-American relationship and played a crucial role in US-China normalization of relations.

Zhou Enlai

Zhou Enlai (1898-1976) served as the first Premier of the PRC from its founding in 1949 till his death in 1976. Served side by side with Mao Zedong and had an important role within the Communist Party. Was also involved in US-China rapprochement during Nixon's presidency.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	1
Keywords.....	2
Introduction	6
Chapter 1 First contact and first policies.....	10
1.1 China the marketplace	10
1.2 The Sino-American relationship and rising diplomacy	12
1.3 Missionaries and the Open Door	15
Chapter 2 The United States and the One-China policy	20
2.1 Origins of the One-China Policy and early American Involvement.....	21
2.2 Nixon’s Visit and his Five Principles.....	23
2.3 Reagan’s Anti-Communism.....	27
2.4 Clinton’s Balancing of the Taiwan Strait	30
Chapter 3 Barack Obama’s Change in China	34
3.1 The Promise of Change.....	34
3.2 Obama’s Reiteration of the One-China Policy	37
Conclusion	41
Further Research	44
Bibliography	45

INTRODUCTION

“But China’s past does not die away so easily, nor does our involvement in it”, John King Fairbank wrote in the preface of his critically acclaimed book *The United States and China* (xiii). A prominent and famous American academic and historian on the field of China studies, Fairbank has, through his publications, contributed to the growing understanding of China and its culture in the United States: “Like any sincere professor, I aimed in writing this book to explain China to Americans so we could live in peace and friendship. So what happened?” (*The United States* 1983) The answer to that question is long and complicated. Despite the relatively short history of foreign relations between the United States, China, and Taiwan, there have been numerous encounters, peaceful and violent, between the three nations. The aim of this thesis is to analyze the Sino-American relations through the history of the United States, and take a narrower look at the handling of the One-China policy.

To cover all of the history between such important nations in great detail like Fairbank did would be a great and time consuming task, therefore I have decided to focus on the United States’ One-China policy, a policy that has been a critical topic in regards to Sino-American relations since 1949, when the Communist party took power and the People’s Republic of China (PRC) was founded, creating a dispute between the PRC and the Republic of China (ROC), or Taiwan. In this thesis I will start off by analyzing the rich history between the United States and China up to 1949, because it is of importance to know the way the two nations have interacted with each other in the early stages of their diplomatic ties. From 1949 onwards, during the Cold War, the attitude of the United States towards China and Asia in general changed many times, and different policies were made including the One-China policy. During this period different presidents of the United States had different ways of handling China and their China policies differed significantly. By taking a closer look at Presidents Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, and Bill Clinton, presidents who all had a large impact on US-China relations, I can analyze the Sino-American relations from 1949 onwards. I will then compare and contrast these presidents to see if their handling of the One-China policy has been consistent. These first two parts of the thesis will be essential for setting up for the third and final part, in which I will use the information I have acquired to look at Barack Obama’s presidency and the way he handled foreign policy in regards to China. Obama, often praised for his multilateralism and his desire to unite the United

States with (former) allies, is the last in a long line of presidents who all added to the rich history of Sino-American relations. By comparing Obama's foreign policy and handling of the One-China policy to the foreign policy of presidents before him I can determine if he made any significant changes, what his goals were, and whether or not he achieved them.

The importance of the history between the United States and China is stressed by many historians. Thomas H. Etzold, in his book *Aspects of Sino-American relations since 1784*, states that because of the growing power of China and especially the attaining of regional power, the nation has gained increased influence in the rest of East Asia and beyond. Other nations like the former Soviet Union, Japan, and the United States have interests in a positive relationship with the People's Republic. (vii). But to strengthen their relationship the United States must first gain deeper knowledge about the nation and its culture and history. Etzold believes that:

"it is particularly necessary to understand the legacy that burdens, and to a certain extent constrains, the relation between the United States and China."(viii)

This acknowledgement that change through the form of knowledge and understanding is needed is also supported by Fairbank in his book *China Perceived*.

"American Relations with China have reached a difficult phase. We can't just do something; we have to think. Our knee-jerk reactions of the past will no longer serve."(xiii)

Both Fairbank and Etzold understood the fact that America must seek to improve her relation with China but to do this it has to cleanse herself from ignorance surrounding its history and culture. Now, thirty years later and well underway in the 21st century we know that the historians were correct and that the People's Republic of China has grown to be the most populous country and has turned into one of the superpowers of the world, on the same level as the United States. Although the relationship between China and the US has been improving through the years, the differences between the nations are still immense, and the simplistic way their peoples look at one another has persisted. By investigating foreign policy between the two nations up until the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, I hope to gain a better understanding of the way the nations think and if their ways of dealing with each other have altered after the Communist party took over.

Then, having investigated the earliest diplomatic ties between the two superpowers, I can shed a light on how the relation has changed since the origins of the PRC, and more importantly since the start of the disagreements between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China. The United States did not recognize the PRC for the first thirty years of its existence, instead supporting the ROC's claim for China. America had always wanted a free China, and a China free of communism. After the great nationalist war that raged in China from 1946 to 1949 and the victory of the Communist party, fears in the US became significantly greater as the threat of a communist China seemed disastrous (Fairbank, *The United States* 350). At most, during the period from 1949 to 1972, Taiwan became the ally the United States had been looking for in the years before. The US tried to exert power on the Taiwanese government and people, with the goal of keeping the nation communist free and making the ROC an independent state. Important events during this period such as the Cold War, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War all proved to be challenges for the United States government. Presidents Nixon, Reagan, and Clinton all had to deal with different problems and they all did it in their own way. For all of them there were the big issues of the One-China policy, the fall to Communism, and the potential loss of a free China.

Now, over thirty-five years and many diplomatic interactions later, Barack Obama has just ended his two terms as the president of the United States. His policies were based on change, both in the domestic spheres as on the area of foreign relations. This period of Sino-American relations may be the most important so far. In *Responding to the China Challenge*, historian Michael H. Hunt claims that the US–China relationship may now be at a major inflection point. He states that the growth and increasing power of China is becoming a bigger and bigger challenge for the US-defined and dominated global regime. Even more than Fairbank, Etzold, and others may have foreseen, China has grown to be the self-confident nation that the United States desires to be itself:

“While U.S. presidents have grudgingly accepted China’s legitimacy as a major power, rumblings of discontent with China’s Communist Party dating back some six decades have echoed powerfully in Washington and the media. The result has been a divided U.S. response to China’s rise, part accomodation, part confrontation, and each arising from distinct, even contradictory promises.”

Clearly, Hunt continues the debate that Fairbank and other historians started over five decades ago. Can the United States handle the upcoming superpower that is China and how do they deal with the everlasting dispute of the Taiwan Strait? Barack Obama is often seen as the president that aimed to change and enforce alliances with nations that might previously have been unfriendly or even hostile to the US. The title of Hunt's essay *Obama's Foreign Policy: Not Change But More of the Same* gives away that, according to the historian, Obama has not changed America's foreign policy as much as he could or wanted to. The question is whether or not Obama was able to get rid of the old and somewhat ignorant conceptions Washington D.C. has posed regarding to China and Asia in general, and if he was able to respond to and maybe even support China's worldwide growth. Do his actions prove of a different and more understanding handling of the One-China policy when compared to his presidential predecessors? What is the China legacy Obama leaves for the US and for the world?

CHAPTER 1

FIRST CONTACT AND FIRST POLICIES

First Sino-American contacts were made in 1784. The merchant ship *Empress of China* established a trade route between New York and Canton, or Guangzhou. (Hunt, *The Making of 2*) It was the start of a long relation of diplomatic ties, but it was also the first encounter between two completely different nations. On one side were the American traders who were, to say the least, unsatisfied having to submit to Chinese rules and laws but they had no choice but to obey to them. On the other hand were the Chinese, who regarded the newcomers from the rising North American continent as the same old Western ‘barbarians’, whose only goal was to deceive and lie to make profits. In the following 130 years these negative opinions and attitudes did not change much, but the political and diplomatic strategies and opinions did. Overall there are certain important patterns extinguishable during this period, including the rise of the Open Door and the foundation of Western policies that determined the fate of China for years to come. But also cultural patterns and the misunderstanding and confusion between the two nations that sometimes resulted in conflict. In this chapter I will provide an overview of these first encounters and patterns within Sino-American relations, from 1784 to 1914.

1.1

CHINA THE MARKETPLACE

Central to the first diplomatic relations between the United States and China lies the Open Door Constituency that arose from 1784 to 1860 (Hunt, *The Making of 5*). This constituency became the foundation for the Open Door Policy that existed in the late 19th and early 20th century and transformed China to a giant marketplace for all Western colonial nations to exploit. With the independence of the United States they finally became free to set up their own trade market instead of having to abide by rules set up by the British East India Company (Hunt, *The Making of 6*). Motivated by the closing of British trading markets belonging to the monopoly of the British East India Company, Americans were forced to seek their own form or revenue and their own markets. Through the ship the *Empress of China* the first forms of successful trade on the Chinese mainland were made and its first return signaled the start of a long economic history between the two nations (Etzold 6). Although the voyage from the United States to Canton took

more than a year and was filled with danger, it was often worth it because of the profitable trades that were made. The Americans were well schooled in trade and they had experience with previous dealing with British trading companies. Even though they had to travel to uncharted parts of the world, their will to succeed was strong and through persistency they indeed succeeded. In 1803 the Americans stationed their first agents in Canton, thereby really enforcing the importance of the Chinese market to the American society.

Between the first forms of trade and the 1830's the Sino-American trade was mostly one-sided. The Americans had nothing to offer that was of worth to the Chinese, and therefore well-funded, sufficiently supplied American wares were not available. On the other hand, the Chinese offered expensive goods like silk, cloth, porcelain, and tea. Tea became one of the biggest imports to the United States in that period, where it became a daily beverage for many people. While looking for suitable trading wares the Americans eventually discovered the market for opium. The British had already been shipping opium gathered in India through China, and therefore the Americans had to gather opium somewhere else, namely Turkey. Although the exchange of opium from the United States never reached the magnitude of the British opium trade, it was the fastest expanding trade ware in China, with over 2000 chests being shipped through China annually (Hunt, *The Making of 7*). In China these dealings with opium were unappreciated, but because of the immense profit being made with the opium trade, the illegal drug trafficking of the substance was common. This hunger for profit and disrespect for the law caused problems for China internally too, and the opium trade started to take its toll on the inhabitants of Canton, where living conditions were changing for the worse. (Etzold 11).

Because of the war that raged in Europe in the early 19th century, American trading ships had all the freedom in the world. Under a neutral flag they were the main contributors to the Canton market and without the immense European competition the Americans did as they pleased. However, after the war ended in 1815, the Europeans returned. The East India trading companies took over many positions previously held by the Americans, they were still a far greater force, and only the large trading companies were able to hold on to their position in Canton. Meanwhile, the opium trade became an increasingly risky business to be involved in, with Chinese officials hunting down illicit opium dealers. On top of this the market started to explode with opium, since the British started bringing in the opium they gathered from India.

The revenue of opium dealings decreased by half compared to when the Americans were the primary traders on their Chinese marketplace (Hunt, *The Making of* 9). To ensure the success of the Sino-American trade relationship the Americans had to come up with a solution. This solution turned out to be the placement of economic intermediaries that could serve as a bridge between the market in China and the market in the United States (Hunt, *The Making of* 10)(Etzold 11)(Fairbank, *The United States* 160). Based on the many trade relations the Chinese had had in the years before, a system was set up in which the Americans were allowed to trade in Canton under strict supervision, and they were to adhere to all Chinese laws and regulations. These laws and regulations were overseen by the cohong, which Michael Hunt describes as “A corporate body of major merchants of that city selected by the Chinese government to supervise foreigners and deal with their commercial requirements.” The main grounds for trading were simple; contact with Chinese was out of the question unless for mercantile reasons, and the American ‘barbarians’ were to leave the Chinese coasts when the trading season was over. As we can see, although the United States established a successful trading market in Canton, there were still problematic situations, there was no mutual understanding, and there was absolutely no intent to learn and understand each other’s cultural differences.

1.2

THE SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP AND RISING DIPLOMACY

The arrival of the Americans to China was fueled mostly by the desire to make profit. While the British only sold to Chinese traders the Americans were very interested in Chinese goods and they therefore were the preferable customer in Canton. Over time, the relationship started to change as increasingly more Americans desired to travel to the mysterious nation, for pleasure but mostly in an attempt to impose Christianity on them. “By the middle of the 19th century, though, the relationship had grown. American churches led the way, seeking converts to Christianity among China’s enormous population. American missionaries began preaching in China in the 1830s, even when they could not legally visit many areas. Missionaries were among the first Americans to study the Chinese culture and language, and helped to shape American perceptions of Imperial China.”, says Chinese expert Dean Cheng in his article *The Complicated History of U.S. Relations with China*. The same goes for Chinese workers travelling to the United States. The first Chinese emigrants did not plan to stay permanently, but merely wanted

to profit from the Gold Rush and by working on railroads. The United States was still growing vastly and the Chinese people understood that in this 'land of opportunity' they could share in the profits of its prosperity.

Although the Sino-American relationship had now evolved to something more than just purely mercantile ties, the attitudes the two nations bore towards each other were mostly negative. The Chinese tended to think of every Westerner, no matter their nationality, as one and the same: an 'ocean barbarian' with animal-like natures, more like sheep and dogs than men. (Hunt, *The Making of* 42). Of course, it was not hard to confuse the British with the American, since their looks are similar and their language is one and the same. This relationship based on ignorance persisted throughout the first seventy years of Sino-American relations, although other significant changes were made. Because of the progress the United States was making, their reliability on China was decreasing. Where at first the Americans were a society that needed Chinese technologies because of the absence of them in their own (rural) society, the rising industrialization made the US less reliant on those. Also, the import of silk and other goods like porcelain from China was replaced by import from Europe, where the same goods were produced cheaper. As a result, eighty percent of the import from China to the United States became tea. (Etzold 14). Meanwhile, there were little signs of Asian culture to be seen in the United States. The intermediaries and traders with East Asian experience did not spread their knowledge throughout the United States, simply because the Americans were uninterested. Even with Chinese immigrants flooding the US after the 1840s the impact of Chinese culture was minimal, as the immigrants came to the US with the intention to rapidly return to their homeland with the profit they made. "As sojourners, they came mainly from the peasantry-unlikely carriers of sophisticated artistic or philosophical accomplishment," states Thomas Etzold (15). Of this Chinese culture and heritage the immigrants brought, there was only one aspect in which the Americans showed some interest, namely the Chinese kitchen.

While the trading business in Canton had been going on for several decades, the political involvement from the American government stayed minimal. Although several merchants attempted to get political support for their trading companies, describing it as one of the most profitable trade routes in existence, the Democratic-Republican administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison were reluctant to support them. According to Hunt, they

“recognized the practical importance of foreign trade to the national livelihood but regarded warily the attendant entanglements and indeed were prepared to sacrifice it in waging economic warfare against Britain and France from 1807 onward” (*The Making Of* 12). The Federalist Party, led by Alexander Hamilton and John Adams, did more to increase the Sino-American trade route although even there the actions taken were minimal. Both camps wanted, however, to use the Asian market to compete against European trading companies and both believed that the Sino-American relation was of the utmost importance for enhancing growth of the American economy. However, the lack of support for the Canton traders suggested otherwise, and for the first 50 years of their involvement in Canton they were practically on their own, left to the mercy of Chinese officials and they had to rely on themselves to defend them on their long journeys (Hunt, *The Making Of* 13)(Etzold 7).

During the 1830s the call for support from the American traders became louder. While the British had set up certain agreements for their trade with China, the relationship between them, the most influential trading nation in the world, and the Chinese was challenging. Britain was still the strongest military and economic power in the world and it used this power to enforce certain regulations on China, including the requirement that the Chinese accept foreign traders and treat them as their equals (Hunt, *The Making Of* 14). In the background, the American traders pressed their government to assemble a naval presence in Asian waters to enforce their presence on the Canton market, and to show the Chinese they were stronger than, or at least equal to the British. In the following period Washington D.C., with support from John Adams, chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and President John Tyler, became increasingly active regarding China relations. In 1843, during Tyler’s presidency, he ordered a mission to China with the diplomatic goal of ‘making known the American friendship and to keep abreast of the gains won by Britain [...] and serve the commercial and manufacturing, as well as the agricultural and mining interests of the United States’ (Hunt, *The Making Of* 15)(Webster 140). By sending diplomats and ministers to China, the United States government hoped to establish a strong position there and to ensure a future trade relationship. With the British and the Chinese relation still in crisis, the goal of the United States was to stay informed about the Anglo-Chinese conflicts but certainly not to participate. Washington D.C.’s interests around the 1840s concerned domestic struggles above all, with the expansion of the North American continent and the uncertain future of slavery. So despite some initial interest in

establishing official diplomatic ties with China, the Sino-American foreign relations were near the bottom of a long list of interests. Thus the only option left for American diplomats was to rally behind the British and use their aggressive presence in East Asia as a safeguard for economic advances. This reliance on Britain, or ‘jackal diplomacy’, caused unhappiness under the American politicians, diplomats in China, and also under Americans in general, because the idea of the US coming second to the British in any way was not appreciated. Instead of straying behind the British, some offered, the US should take a more aggressive stance in China, advancing side by side with their European counterpart but without the imperial motivation the British still carried (Hunt, *The Making Of 17*). The differences in opinion between the US government and American diplomats in China proved to be troublesome and therefore it became difficult to impose treaties. On top of this, the opium wars between the British, French, and Chinese caused for disturbance and delay in diplomacy, despite the United States not participating.

1.3

MISSIONARIES AND THE OPEN DOOR

“The missionary endeavor, in both Near East and Far East, was distinctly culture-bound, an expression of American home values,” states John Fairbank in regards to the evangelical presence of the United States in China (*The United States* 309). According to him the Americans enjoyed the ability to ‘enlighten’ other nations with the American values and way of life, most notably Christianity. Michael Hunt calls the missionary presence in China a “modest faint trans-Pacific reverberation of the great religious revival experienced in the northeastern United States in the early nineteenth century” (*The Making Of* 24). The two China experts agree, then, on the fact that the missionaries voyages came from a supposed American ‘generosity’, the will to give other nations the chance to enjoy the American life of liberty. The first evangelical mission to China was sent out by the American board in 1830, and by 1839 there were six evangelical workers in China, attempting to save humanity. Although the presence of missionaries in the East Asian region only grew, they found it difficult to have a large impact on the Chinese population. The amount of time and money it took to achieve only the slightest successes made the mission seem feeble. Restrictions from the Chinese initially made it hard for missionaries to come in contact with possible ‘unsaved’, and even when they were able to preach the reception

was meager, as the differences between the two peoples were just too obvious. While the missionaries kept trying to come up with new ways to save the Chinese people, they clashed with the mercantile presence in China. The missionaries were “sharply critical of merchants for their high living in safe, comfortable enclaves; for their indifference to China’s idolatry; for their consuming materialism; and for their participation in the opium trade” (Hunt, *The Making Of* 37). On the other side, the merchants found the missionaries to be a disturbing factor that might scrutinize their presence in Canton and the rest of China. Meanwhile, both parties had their doubts about the way the US government handled their relation with China and they were often unsatisfied with the diplomats sent out to assist them.

Towards the end of the 19th century, the idea of an Open Door policy was established by United States’ secretary of state John Milton Hay. He occupied this position during the presidencies of William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt who both played an important role in establishing an early US-China relation. Although the idea behind the Open Door already existed in Britain, Hay worked on it himself and drafted the official notes in 1899. The Open Door was a response to the attempt by Britain and the other great powers at that time, France, Germany, Japan, and Russia, to claim parts of China for themselves. US response was to instate the Open Door policy, with the intention of establishing an equal trading presence for all states that wanted to participate in China. Hay’s original notes proposed that “each power should not interfere with the vested interests of other powers within its sphere of influence, and secondly that only Chinese government should collect customs duties, that no preferential harbor dues or railroad charges should benefit the subjects of a power having a sphere.” As we can see, China’s integrity is not mentioned and the notes did not restrict any imperialistic views or motives. On top of this, the Open Door initially was not legally binding, but the notes were merely political. It was not until 1922 that the treaty was enacted in a legal form (Fairbank, *The United States* 321-322). Through the years the Open Door kept being subject to change, and China’s integrity became more and more important. According to Hunt, Etzold and Fairbank the Open Door policy eventually concerned two main tendencies: the integrity of China, and the equal treatment of all foreigners there (*The Making Of* 40)(68)(322).

One thing that remains clear about the Open Door Policy is that China always came second. For all nations, the main concern of the policy was to prevent other nations from

becoming too powerful and to ensure their profitable trade in East Asia. And so, there was no American intention to stand up for the rights and values of the Chinese. Many experts agree that a reason for this was that the gap between the American citizen and the Chinese society was too big. Concerning American images of China, Hunt writes: “Even well into the nineteenth century China, so central in the mental map of missionaries, less so for merchants and diplomats, must have been distant from the daily concerns of most Americans. [...] The most that could be claimed for the open door constituency was that it had probably expanded the space China occupied on the fringes of American consciousness” (*The Making Of* 40). Meanwhile, Fairbank agrees with Hunt that the nature of the American interest in China was purely commercial. The people that came closest to understanding or caring for the Chinese people were the missionaries, who lived amongst the Chinese for years and started to understand their culture. The diplomats and traders, however, did not even attempt to gain a deeper understanding of their Chinese counterparts. Thomas Etzold is also clear about American intentions concerning the Open Door: “In the first four decades of the twentieth century, the principles of the open door and the integrity of China gave to American Far Eastern policy an appearance of consistency. In actuality this was an illusion, for change and confusion, rather than uniformity, characterized American policy.” (Etzold 48) He also claims that Hay’s notes were often unclear, and even American leaders were often left in confusion as to what was allowed in China and what was not, thereby enforcing the bewilderment of other nations concerning the Open Door doctrine. Even though the integrity of China was high on the list of all of the nations involved, well-being of the Chinese people and the growth and progress of the Chinese nation was not a priority. The Open Door constituency proved, above all, of the greed of Western nations.

As mentioned above, an important player in the establishing of the Open Door was Theodore Roosevelt when he was the president of the United States from 1901 to 1909. John Hay occupied the position of Secretary of State during part of that period (until his death in 1905) and, seeing spheres of influence appear in China, he “sought to preserve equal commercial opportunity within the spheres (Esthus 437). However, when met with resistance from the Chinese people, most notably during the Boxer Rebellion in 1899, nations like Russia rapidly sent troops into Chinese territory. This rebellion forced a response out of Roosevelt and Hay, and in 1903 US leaders stated that no matter what, the Chinese territorial and administrative entity must be preserved while dealing with the Boxer dispute. It did not take long, however, for

Roosevelt and Hay to throw away the principles they were initially committed too. When Russia took complete control of the area Manchuria, it proved that both the president and the Secretary of State were very willing to scrap their principle, “if only commercial equality would be saved” (Esthus 437). As it turned out, the Open Door notes that Hay had so carefully written did not achieve what he originally wanted. At his death in 1905 the Open Door had most definitely not resulted in a success or made any progress. However, his death proved to be a turning point. The principles, although heavily altered, survived their creator’s death and were even expanded greatly during the next five to ten years. Again, the core of the Open Door doctrine was built around ‘the integrity of China’, a phrase that became one of the most important feats of Sino-American relations. Even though, when looking at the notes, it may seem the US had changed its goals and that their priority now was to preserve the Chinese integrity, there is little truth to that. The main reason for its concern of China was the dispute between the US and Japan. Japan had been driving the Russians from China, only to take over the territories themselves. With that the American commercial interests were endangered and therefore Roosevelt and his new secretary of state, Elihu Root, were forced to use the Open Door as a means to keep Japan out of China. Self-interest fueled US interests for Sino-American relations, and the integrity of China, although promoted as a very important point, was basically an excuse to ensure commercial prosperity for the United States.

As we can see the Open Door went through a lot of change and there were three important patterns distinguishable. All this time the phrase ‘integrity of China’ proved to be the most important pattern, even though the interpretation of and motivation behind this phrase differed significantly throughout the years. Both Raymond Esthus and Clair Wilcox state that the first phase of the Open Door under John Hay was a failure. His concept was based on the creation of equal opportunity in China, and because of, for example, the Boxer Rebellion he rapidly had to stray away from his principles to protect American commercial interests. And even though the aspect of Chinese integrity became important to Hay, the only reason the Russians were forced to leave China was because of the military presence of Japan and most definitely not because Hay’s Notes emphasized China’s integrity. During Elihu Root’s time working on the Open Door, the focus on China’s integrity was still there, and Root was less willing than Hay to give way on this matter. The difference between Hay and Root was that Root was not so bent on changing the spheres of influence that had come to exist in China. He

acknowledged their existence but attempted to work around them. The third pattern or phase, Esthus states, was when the Open Door evolved into a dollar diplomacy, with the main goals again being the breaking of the spheres, the establishing of equal commercial opportunities, and the equal division of investments. (438)(112)

In the years that followed, up to World War II, the Open Door policy suffered more and more defeats, and yet managed to reaffirm its position time after time. Treaties made during World War I between the Triple Entente (the Russian Empire, the French Third Republic, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland) and Japan undermined the policy because it promised Japan the German territories in China after the war was concluded. This treaty was then reinforced during the Versailles Treaty in 1919, causing much anger within the Chinese society. In the following years the Chinese government started to align with its citizens more and more and the need for Chinese sovereignty became the biggest priority for the Chinese government. Because, however, it was immensely hard to undermine the treaty of Versailles it took more than three decades, until after World War II, before the People's Republic of China closed the Open Door decisively (Fairbank, *The United States* 323). We can conclude that eventually the Open Door proved to be a failure in American foreign policy, and yet it might not have seemed so at the time to the American public. Raymond A. Esthus catches this essence perfectly in his article *The Changing Concept of the Open Door, 1899-1910*:

“The expanded concept of the open door became the basis for future policy. The gap between objectives and capabilities (in terms of both military power and diplomatic support) had been widened tremendously. [...] The Open Door concept placed American policy in a high moral position. [...] It even had a genuine element of altruism. In short, it seemed to possess all the elements of good policy – all except the one indispensable component: a reasonable chance of succeeding (Esthus 454).

CHAPTER 2

THE UNITED STATES AND THE ONE-CHINA POLICY

“As the century ends and the new millennium begins, America is busily preparing Taiwan for war with mainland China, and it is surprising how the relentless military buildup has engendered little debate in the United States, despite the certainty that any war between China and Taiwan would draw the United States into a defense of the island” (6). This statement made by Patrick Tyler in his acclaimed book *A Great Wall – Six Presidents and China* hits the nail on its head, because although the Beijing-Taipei dispute is of great importance to the US and the rest of the world, it is not often spoken about or debated. This chapter aims to analyze the importance of the dispute and it seeks to determine where the US allegiances lie. Since the Xinhai Revolution in 1911, the United States has recognized the Republic of China (ROC) as the only legitimate government of China. Even though there were claims made by several groups in China, the US supported the government led by the Kuomintang. The Kuomintang is a Nationalist Party, presently the second largest party in China. Throughout World War I and World War II, the United States has not ceded their allegiance to the ROC. In 1949 a Communist revolution led by Mao Zedong took place and the People’s Republic of China (PRC) was founded. From that moment on a conflict between the ROC and the PRC started, with both parties’ goal being to become the undisputed legitimate government of China. The PRC acted from the Chinese mainland, while the ROC was based on Taiwan. It took over thirty years for the United States to recognize the PRC’s existence, let alone their claim for governance of the nation. By then they had become a larger and more powerful side than the ROC. It is important to analyze the way the United States has handled their relation with the ROC and the PRC since its founding in 1949, and study how different presidents and their administrations have handled the One-China Policy. As Shaohua Hu writes in her article *A Framework for analysis of national interest: United States policy toward Taiwan*: “Since the cross-Taiwan strait relationship may trigger a major war between the two largest economies and nuclear powers, many scholars and practitioners have attempted to figure out which policy toward Taiwan will serve the United States [...] As fruitful as they are, the debates are flawed in several ways” (144). She is supported in this statement by specialist in Asian Security Affairs Shirley A. Kan, who, in a report written for the US Congress and obtained by Wikileaks, states that “Despite broadly consistent statements, the US “one

China” policy concerning Taiwan remains somewhat ambiguous and subject to different interpretations. Apart from questions about what the policy entails, issues have arisen about whether US presidents have stated clear positions and have changed or should change policy, affecting US interests in security and democracy” (1). In this chapter I will continue what I have started in chapter one by looking at the Sino-American relationship from 1949 and onwards, with special focus on the way the United States has handled the dispute between the ROC and the PRC. I will begin by analyzing the origins of the dispute between the two sides, and continue by looking at certain presidents that played an important part in the matter. The presidents I have chosen to focus in my research are Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, and Bill Clinton. These three presidents and their administrations were very active concerning Sino-American relations, with special regards to the One-China policy, and they all ruled in a very different political environment. While Nixon was president in the midst of the Cold War, Reagan was in office almost 20 years later, and Clinton was the last president of the twentieth century. Besides analyzing the One-China policy and presidential actions, this chapter will lay the foundations for my third and final chapter, in which I will compare the actions of these presidents with the actions of Barack Obama in his recently ended eight years as president of the United States.

2.1

ORIGINS OF THE ONE-CHINA POLICY AND EARLY AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT

“China and Taiwan maintain a fragile relationship, which has improved during the past seven years but is periodically tested” says Eleanor Albert in her article *China-Taiwan Relations*. The fragility that she is talking about is core to the One-China policy. Before looking at present relations, however, we have to look back at the origins of the two nations. Taiwan, or the Republic of China (ROC), originated in 1912 after the Xinhai revolution that overthrew the Qing Dynasty in China. It was the sole ruling party in China up until 1949, when the Communist Party of China founded the People’s Republic of China. Since then, none of the two sides respect the other side’s claim for China. While the PRC claims that after their founding the ROC ceased to exist, the ROC does not recognize any claims from the PRC and refers to, or dismisses them as, ‘the mainland’. Both sides oppose each other, not always shying away from the use of force. There have been several aggressive encounters between the two governments, including the

Taiwan Crises. Even though both sides claim the other's territory, since 1949 the PRC has ruled the mainland of China and the ROC has ruled on Taiwan. (Kan 1).

For over 70 years, from 1913 to 1978, the United States has supported the ROC's claim. According to John K. Fairbank, the frontier of contact with the Chinese people from 1949 to 1972 was Formosa, or Taiwan (*The United States* 353). Thanks to economic and military aid from the US, Taiwan came to be a progressive nation with eventually a strong industry. This was a progressive change, since the nation was inherently reliant on the marketing of sugar and rice, an economy which origins lie in the Japanese rule over the island after the Sino-Japanese war of 1895 (*The United States* 353-355). An interesting feat is that the first time the ROC military occupied the island of Taiwan was not until 1945, after the surrender of Japan. Shortly after that, in 1949 the ROC had to retreat to its capital Taipei because the Communist forces of Mao Zedong proved to be too powerful. Shirley Kan states that because of this unstable past, "Taiwan's people have faced social, ethnic, linguistic, and political issues of whether to identify with Taiwan or China, with two major groups of local "Taiwanese" and "Mainlanders" (people who retreated to Taiwan with the KMT forces and their descendants)" (1). After 1949, however, with American aid, Taiwan became a stronger and more independent nation. Although the dispute with the PRC was still an important issue for the Taiwanese government, they did not let it get in the way of the economic and cultural growth of the nation. Fairbank states that "Taiwan during the Cold War had two faces. Looking backward, it claimed that there was only one China, not two Chinas (Peking agreed), that the civil war was not over, and the KMT would still somehow save the Chinese people from communism. Looking forward, however, Taiwan joined the industrial trading world and made good use of Japanese and American technology, trade, investment, and cultural contact" (*The United States* 357). So while the United States was one of the first major powers to support the progressive government of Taiwan, it was also one of its longest supporters. Behind this support was, for a large part, the anti-communist mentality that heavily influenced foreign relations in the United States after World War II and into the Cold War.

After almost 70 years of supporting the ROC's claim for power over China, ideas arose within the American government about shifting its loyalty to the PRC. During Richard Nixon's presidency in the early 1970s the term 'One-China' policy was mentioned for the first time. The

term was used in reference to talks the US had with the PRC (in secret). Even though the US wanted to recognize the PRC's claim because of commercial interests and power politics (the PRC had outgrown the ROC), it was important for them to not to lose their diplomatic relation with the ROC or to escalate the conflict. After years of negotiations in the 1970s, the PRC and the United States, now led by President Jimmy Carter, came to an agreement which was made official through the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) of 1979 (Kan 1). The act focuses on congress's ambitions to establish a relationship with the People's Republic. Where Nixon played a large part in the origins of the agreement, it was Carter who eventually made it official. As stated in the TRA, the PRC insisted on the principle of 'One China', in which the US was to recognize the PRC's 'mainland' China as the only legitimate form of Chinese government and to accept that Taiwan is officially a part of this larger nation.

2.2

NIXON'S VISIT AND HIS FIVE PRINCIPLES

“President Nixon's trip to Peking in February 1972 was a dramatic turn away from Cold War confrontation onto the long road of Sino-American understanding” (Fairbank, *The United States* 457). As mentioned above, it was under the Nixon administration that the term One-China policy was coined. It was also under Nixon's presidency that the breach between the United States and the Republic of China began to expand, and US recognition of the People's Republic of China became increasingly likely. For many Americans this came as a surprise, Nixon was known to be an anti-communist and his presidential campaign was built around his firm and determined handling of US foreign policy: “Nixon said that a new relationship would "not come at the expense of our old friends. It is not directed against any other nation." Rather, he hoped, it would be a "journey for peace." The world paused, speechless” (Tyler 108). It seemed, however, that Nixon's 'hatred' for the Soviet Communism overcame his hatred for communism in general, and he and his administration were willing to work with Communist Mao Zedong to form a united front versus the SU. “Despite the Cold War context, Richard Nixon with his strategic view saw an opportunity posed by the Sino-Soviet split, and given his strong Cold War credentials, he was able to take advantage of changed strategic circumstances in the 1970s (which included a shared hostility toward the Soviet Union) to open the door to China and thus reframe U.S.–China policy” (Garrison and Wall 49). While Nixon acquired fame for his role in

Sino-American ‘rapprochement’, he never did it alone. He was supported by his secretary of state Henry Kissinger, another firm anti-communist, and a valuable friend to have because of his skills regarding foreign relations. He and Nixon shared many ideas on how to handle Sino-American relations and, more importantly, how to combat Soviet Communism. Because even though the TRA was only instated in 1979 during Jimmy Carter’s presidency, Nixon’s and Kissinger’s foreign policy efforts had already shaped a better understanding between the PRC and the US. This normalization of relations between China and the United States had foundations in several other important world events. First of all, and most importantly, both the United States and China had become rivals of the Soviet Union in the period before. The raging Cold War was dividing the US and the Soviet Union, and the Sino-Soviet split was emerging. According to Rosemary Foot “the alliance between the PRC and Soviet Union no longer appeared operable, as interests diverged and Moscow as the dominant partner found it increasingly more difficult to constrain the behavior of its ally” (115). So while the Cold War raged on between the SU and the US, the SU also parted from its former ally China. Nixon, recognizing the opportunity presented, responded by doing everything he could to unite the PRC and the US. A second important event enforcing Sino-American relations was the Vietnam War, or the ending of it. When the war ended under Nixon’s presidency in 1973, it opened the door for refortification of the Sino-American relation. Parallel to this development were the efforts of Mao Zedong to make China a great proletarian nation with the intent of establishing normal diplomatic relations in the changing world. Considering these important changes it still took a long time before any substantial changes were made. According to Fairbank, “this length of time was a tribute to the fact that Richard Nixon could safely reverse the anti-communist stance on which his political career had so largely been based” (*The United States* 457). So although presidents preceding Nixon might not have gotten away with dealing with Communist revolutionary Mao Zedong, he apparently received more breathing room regarding this anti-communist mindset in America. Concluding, it took Nixon and Kissinger’s political expertise, changing relations within the Soviet Union, and slight attitude changes within US foreign relations to justify his dealings with Communist China to the public.

As quoted above, one of the most important examples of the efforts Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger undertook was the now famous trip that Nixon took to Peking to meet with

Chinese leader Mao Zedong, and to a lesser extent with Chinese premier Zhou Enlai. Previously, Henry Kissinger, who was also National Security Advisor, had already visited Peking in secret. He, unknown to the public, made the arrangements for Richard Nixon's visit, which took place from February 21 to 28 in 1972. The importance of this event cannot be underestimated, as it is generally viewed as the start of the normalization of the relationship between the United States and China. Indeed, the event already emphasized in Patrick Tyler's work, was so important that Margaret Macmillan, a Canadian historian, wrote her book *Nixon in China: The Week that Changed the World* on it. The book tells, in great detail, of all the moves Richard Nixon and his accomplices made on their trip, from the moment they left Washington to the moment they returned to the US. Because of the magnitude of the meeting, with it potentially being the start of a long diplomatic relationship between two of the world's biggest nations, it also was a very risky maneuver for both Nixon and Kissinger. MacMillan states that "Kissinger was taking a political risk too. If he did not bring back concrete results from his meetings with Zhou, his own position in Washington would be weakened" (MacMillan chapter 12) Of course the same consequences loomed for Nixon, who was already desperate for political success with the war in Vietnam not progressing as expected, and because foreign policy was among the most important points in his presidential campaign. Thus the meeting happened and the conversation between Mao, Nixon, and Kissinger lasted for over an hour. "The tone was amicable and, at times, jocular" While Nixon attempted to talk about foreign policy, Mao is believed to have replied with "those questions are not questions to be discussed in my place. They should be discussed with the Premier. I discuss philosophical questions." (MacMillan chapter 5) As we can see, the meeting between two of the most powerful men in the world turned out to be friendly, even informal, as opposed to the expected clash of political and diplomatic intentions.

While the meeting lasted, Richard Nixon did mention the One-China policy, but his inquiries to the PRC's relationship with the ROC were pushed aside by Mao. Responding in a similar fashion as mentioned above, the only thing Mao had to say on the matter was that "Chiang Kai-shek, "our common old friend" did not approve of his meeting with Nixon (MacMillan chapter 5). Chian Kai-shek had been the leader of the ROC from 1928 and would stay in this position until his death in 1975. Needless to say, he had had plenty of previous dealings with the United States, which had supported his claim for China for over seventy years. Besides the meeting with Mao Zedong, both Nixon and Kissinger had several other meetings

during that week with Zhou Enlai. On February 22 the dispute between China and Taiwan was thoroughly discussed and Nixon made clear of his ‘Five Principles’:

Principle one. There is one China, and Taiwan is a part of China. There will be no more statements made—if I can control our bureaucracy—to the effect that the status of Taiwan is undetermined.

Second, we have not and will not support any Taiwan independence movement.

Third, we will, to the extent we are able, use our influence to discourage Japan from moving into Taiwan as our presence becomes less, and also discourage Japan from supporting a Taiwan independence movement. I will only say here I cannot say what Japan will do, but so long as the U.S. has influence with Japan—we have in this respect the same interests as the Prime Minister’s government—we do not want Japan moving in on Taiwan and will discourage Japan from doing so.

The fourth point is that we will support any peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue that can be worked out. And related to that point, we will not support any military attempts by the Government on Taiwan to resort to a military return to the Mainland.

Finally, we seek the normalization of relations with the People’s Republic. We know that the issue of Taiwan is a barrier to complete normalization, but within the framework I have previously described, we seek normalization and we will work toward that goal and will try to achieve it.

(White House, February 22) (Kan 35)

As we can see Nixon came well-prepared and he and Kissinger made sure to have an answer and demand for every question regarding the One-China policy. This was the first time the United States recognized the PRC’s claim to China and they thereby ceded diplomatic relations with the ROC. Nixon made use of his meeting to indirectly let Japan know they were not to interfere in either Taiwan or on the Chinese mainland, and that the US would provide support for the PRC and the ROC in case of a conflict. Perhaps the most important thing to notice, though, is that the US seemed to have turned around its attitude towards the PRC, while simultaneously attempting to stay on good terms with the ROC. Besides these five principles, Nixon made another

statement regarding the military presence of the United States on Taiwan. In the statement, made on February 24, Nixon revealed his plans to remove all US military forces from Taiwan. He justifies this decision by referring to the so-called Nixon Doctrine, under which the United States aimed to remove troops from Korea, Vietnam, and Taiwan. Interesting is that Nixon did not want to share this information with his government: “Now if someone asks me when I return, do you have a deal with the Prime Minister that you are going to withdraw all American forces from Taiwan, I will say “no.” But I am telling the Prime Minister that it is my plan...” (White House, *February 24*)(Kan 35). Again, this statement proves the good will of President Nixon and his companions, for if the United States government had found out about him promising full cooperation to China without informing the people at home, it would undoubtedly have damaged his reputation as the president. In a response through the Shanghai Communiqué on February 27, the Chinese once more stressed the importance of the One-China affair. According to Kan, the Chinese confirmed that the Taiwan question is the most crucial problem standing in the way of a normal relationship between the US and the PRC (36).

All things considered, Richard Nixon was a pioneer when it comes to Sino-American relations. He broke the spell of not dealing with a communist leader and he was the first president genuinely set on normalizing the diplomatic relation between the two nations. Besides that, under his presidency the One-China policy was coined and the triangular relationship between the US, the ROC, and the PRC was changed drastically. These changes benefited the US and the PRC most, since their rapprochement enforced their position against the Soviet Union. Also, by re-initiating diplomatic and economic relations between the two superpowers he enhanced their growth and they became even more powerful. Meanwhile it proved to be a fruitful change for Taiwan too, because, as we will learn later, both the United States and China aimed to maintain commercial relations despite their diplomatic differences.

2.3

REAGAN'S ANTI-COMMUNISM

After Richard Nixon's presidency ended, Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter were to proceed in his footsteps. Nixon had already paved the way to normalizing Sino-American relations, and his two successors followed suit. During Ford's presidency the conversation between the US and China

fell rather silent, however, and it was not until Jimmy Carter became president in 1977 that Nixon's plans were finalized. Under Carter, the United States in 1979 officially began recognizing the PRC as the sole legal government of China, thereby condemning Taiwan to merely non-diplomatic relations. (Kan 40) The Taiwan Relations Act was enacted on April 10 and the reunion between America and China became history.

In 1981, Jimmy Carter's presidency ended and he was succeeded by Ronald Reagan. Under Reagan's administration the Sino-American relationship evolved even further and several important events took place. However, according to James C. Hsiung, professor of politics and international law, "we cannot discuss the Reagan administration's China policy outside the general context of its overall foreign-policy goals. These goals are: (a) To end what Reagan considers to be a decade of foreign-policy vacillations and ambivalence; (b) to check the onslaught of Soviet expansionism (which he attributes to the failures of the previous detente policy); (c) to reassert US leadership in the free world; and (d) to ensure the West's access to vital strategic resources" (1). An important point Hsiung makes is that Reagan's anti-communist attitude was more aggressive than that of his predecessors, and he seems to have passed the Détente-strategy that previously dominated US anti-communist politics. This puts the Sino-American relationship in a tricky position; where Nixon and Carter recognized China's potential and eventually regarded the PRC as an equal ally, Reagan saw the Chinese as just another means to aid the US in defeating the Soviet Union. Instead of an ally, he might have seen China as a 'shield' to protect US soil if it ever came to war. Besides that, the idea of two communist forces fighting each other definitely pleased Reagan. Issues with Reagan arose instantly after his inauguration because he was known to be pro-Taiwan, and he was thereby forcing Washington D.C. to make generous compensations towards the PRC (Hsiung 2). Hence, the instance Reagan came into power PRC leader Ye Jianying brought forth a nine-point proposal. In this proposal the PRC's power over the ROC was stressed and demands were made concerning the TRA. Reagan also was to reduce dealings with Taiwan, especially concerning the still existing arms trade. Surprisingly, the Reagan administration complied to nearly every proposal made, with exception for the changes in the TRA (Hsiung 2). Reagan's eagerness to ensure the relation with China is stressed in several letters he sent to the PRC in 1982, on April 5:

Clearly, the Taiwan issue had been a most difficult problem between our governments.... The

United States firmly adheres to the positions agreed upon in the Joint Communiqué on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and China. There is only one China. We will not permit the unofficial relations between the American people and the people of Taiwan to weaken our commitment to this principle. (Kan 43)(Hsiung 3)

And on July 26:

I want to point out that this decision [on a joint communiqué] is based on a PRC decision only to use peaceful means to resolve the Taiwan issue. On this point, the U.S. will not only pay attention to what the PRC says, but also will use all methods to achieve surveillance of PRC military production and military deployment. The intelligence attained would be brought to your attention. If there is any change with regard to their commitment to peaceful solution of the Taiwan issue, the U.S. commitments would become invalidated. (Kan 4)(Hsiung 3)

As we can see, despite Reagan's pro-Taiwan stance, he seems to have been very accommodating towards the PRC. Many demands made by the Chinese government have been adhered to by the United States, and we can say it made the United States look weak to the world. So what were the reasons for Reagan's sudden compliance with the PRC's wishes? When looking back at the goals of Reagan's foreign policy mentioned earlier by Hsiung, we find some explanations. By strengthening the bond between the US and the PRC the President clearly made a choice, instead of supporting both the PRC and the ROC he cut more and more ties with the ROC, thereby 'ending a decade of foreign policy vacillations and ambivalence.' (Hsiung 1) Also, as explained before, Reagan's severe anti-communism justified his actions to befriend the PRC. Even under communist rule, the PRC would be a very useful ally for the US against their largest enemy, the Soviet Union. As Hsiung states, Reagan meant to use China as a pawn in the Cold War (1). The last two points made above, reasserting US leadership in the free world and ensure its access to vital strategic resources, fit into this pro-China attitude. According to Reagan, rising power China would prove to be a useful ally for the future and would fortify America's strong economic and military position in the world.

In conclusion, the One-China policy that originated during Nixon's presidency evolved further during the Reagan administration. Even though the two presidents might have had

different ideas and attitudes, the decisions they made were almost always pro-PRC. The relationship with the ROC was always to be sacrificed to ensure a friendly relationship with the more powerful People's Republic. However, it looks like Reagan lacked the ability to see the independent superpower China could become. Nixon tried to make the PRC an ally and a friend, where Reagan seems to have handled mostly out of self-interest. Because of this different attitude, Reagan, despite several attempts to win China over to his side, might have missed the point completely and he might have pushed China further away than ever.

2.4

CLINTON'S BALANCING OF THE TAIWAN STRAIT

When Bill Clinton became president of the United States in 1993, the Sino-American relationship had become more complicated than roughly two decades earlier. During the Bush administration before his, the attention for China's neglecting of human rights and their aggressive stance in Asia had become a major point in foreign relations for the United States and for the rest of the world. One of the major reasons for this were the Tiananmen Square protests that took place in 1989. These student-led protests were part of the Democracy Movement in China, in which students and scholars demonstrated against the Communist Party. Their motives were corruption within the party, and they wanted to achieve democratic reforms, including freedom of speech and press. Under martial law, a violent and aggressive reaction by the Chinese government struck the protests down, with hundreds to thousands civilian casualties. This 'Tiananmen Square Massacre' forced a response out of the United Nations and it put the PRC in a negative spotlight. So where under earlier presidents the focus in Sino-American relations still lied on supporting the Chinese society, normalizing relations and most of all, securing a friendly relationship, this was changing rapidly at the end of the 19th century. During Clinton's presidency China was no longer the playground of other nations and it was certainly not in need of nurturing. As said by Robert A. Manning, "President Bill Clinton has gone from the poetry of campaigning to the more nettlesome prose of governing" (193). A consequence of this was that several changes took place concerning the US relation with China and Taiwan. Not only that, but the relationship between Beijing and Taipei had also changed, and for the better. While tensions regarding the Taiwan Strait remained, economic relations between the two nations showed positive change (Manning 201). Clinton's foreign policy was generally based on two themes,

expanding the economic prowess of the United States to continue the nation's growth, and continuing to promote democracy across the world. With the Cold War concluded, this last point came forth out of the defeat of communism, and the United States interventionist stance on worldwide politics.

In a review released September 7 1994, Washington D.C.'s stance on the One-China policy was reaffirmed. It states that the Taiwan Relations Act and the Three Communiqués (Shanghai Communiqué of 1972, Joint Communiqué 1979, and Normalization Communiqué 1982) are still the foundations of the US-PRC-ROC relationship (Kan 55). However, in the subsequent part of the statement, we notice that the relationship between the US and Taiwan is definitely becoming friendlier, to the disliking of China:

We will continue to provide material and training to Taiwan to enable it to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability, as mandated by the Taiwan Relations Act...

Within this framework, the President has decided to enhance our unofficial ties with Taiwan.... the Administration strongly opposes Congressional attempts to legislate visits by top leaders of the "Republic of China" to the US...

Recognizing Taiwan's important role in transnational issues, we will support its membership in organizations where statehood is not a prerequisite, and will support opportunities for Taiwan's voice to be heard in organizations where its membership is not possible.

We do not seek and cannot impose a resolution of differences between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China. Nor should we permit one to manipulate us against the other. (Kan 56)

The agreements Reagan made about aborting arms dealings with the ROC had been unmade, and the United States aimed to strengthen Taiwan's presence in the world politics. As we can see the US was looking to include Taiwan in organizations for which it does not need to be an independent state, and even to have a voice in organizations which require statehood for membership. These statements had several consequences, the first being a response from the PRC stating that an "independent Taiwan" was still out of the question and the idea of two Chinas was firmly opposed. However, the continuing support the ROC received from the United States encouraged Taiwan to let their voice be heard too, and they did release statements hinting

towards independence of Taiwan. In a secret letter sent to the PRC in August 1995, Bill Clinton does, in fact, state that he still opposes Taiwan's independence and still supports only one China (Kan 58). As we can see, the Clinton administration is trying to do two things: to ensure their allegiance to the PRC by supporting their 'one China' claim, and at the same time to support Taiwan's position in the world and increase the dealings between Taipei and Beijing. So while their official standpoint on the One-China policy stays the same, the details and subtleties of the triangular relationship are constantly under change. This attitude was, again, affirmed during the summit of 1997, in which Clinton said:

A key to Asia's stability is a peaceful and prosperous relationship between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. I reiterated America's longstanding commitment to a one China policy. It has allowed democracy to flourish in Taiwan and provides a framework in which all three relationships can prosper—between the United States and the PRC, the United States and Taiwan, and Taiwan and the People's Republic of China. I told President Jiang that we hope the People's Republic and Taiwan would resume a constructive cross-strait dialogue and expand cross-strait exchanges. Ultimately, the relationship between the PRC and Taiwan is for the Chinese themselves to determine—peacefully (Kan 62).

The obvious conclusion of these statements is that Bill Clinton was doing his utmost best to secure Sino-American relations and make sure that the two nations remained allies. As mentioned before, one of Clinton's main goals concerning foreign policy was securing economic success for the United States. Obviously, he and his administration believed that China would become one of the largest economic powerhouses in the world and if the US wanted to stay on top, they needed to work together. His attempts at aiding Taiwan and securing a positive relationship between Taipei and Beijing fit into Clinton's other foreign relations theme, namely the spreading of democracy and the 'balancing' of the world. By balancing on the edge of acts, policies, and rules, Clinton manages to find the best of both worlds. He keeps reminding the world of the fact that there is only one China and that China is the PRC, while aiding Taiwan wherever he can and ensuring a non-violent relationship between the two opposite sides of the Strait. When comparing this method to Nixon and Reagan, we can see some clear similarities. Where Reagan, known for his pro-Taipei stance, also had to work hard and adhere to the PRC's demands to regain the trust of the nation, Clinton is 'stuck' in basically the same situation. The

main difference between the two presidents is that the world, and political climate, around them has changed significantly. The Cold War is over and China is no longer in need of as much support as it was. Therefore, it is harder for Clinton to remain allies with both the PRC and the ROC, while also showing the world the US does not approve of China's disregard for human rights and other 'Western' values. We can state that while Clinton might have been in the toughest spot of all presidents when it comes to Sino-American relations, he handled the One-China policy exceptionally well by finding the right balance between adhering to policies and supporting a non-violent diplomatic relation.

CHAPTER 3

BARACK OBAMA'S CHANGE IN CHINA

Over the last few decades, the relationship between the United States and China has become the most important international relationship in the world. The two nations possess the two largest economies and their combined military capacities are unprecedented. When Barack Obama came into office he immediately made clear that the Sino-American relationship was of great importance to him and to the United States. A visit to China in his first year, something that no president had done before, stressed the significance of this relationship. Obama's mission was clear, as it has been for many US presidents since the normalization. Since Nixon, the three main goals of US-China policy have been to side with the PRC against the Soviet Union, to assure American access to an increasingly strong economic market, and to ensure their alliance and cooperation on a global level. With the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, only two of these goals remained. A change in attitude from the US regarding China is, according to many critics like Hunt, Garrison, and Wall, very much needed. China's continuous violation of human rights and the lack of a democratic system have changed the nation, and it needs governing instead of nurturing. For this the US has to break with its Nixonian idolizing of China. Besides the very lackluster claims that the US does not agree with the Chinese communist society, their violation of human rights, and other values core to the 'Western' world, no actions are being taken versus the People's Republic out of fear for the negative effects on the US economy. The question to ask is, then, was Obama able to live up to his promise of change regarding China or did he get stuck in the same loop as the other presidents succeeding Nixon? To find out I will analyze the changes in US-China foreign relations under Obama's presidency, paying special attention to the One-China policy. Did Obama make significant changes or was it, in fact, 'more of the same'?

3.1

THE PROMISE OF CHANGE

"Barack Obama was elected president on the promise of change. And in domestic policy he may deliver on some of that promise. But on foreign policy the record to date suggests that Obama means more of the same" (*Obama's Foreign Policy* 1). Michael Hunt states that, one year after becoming president, the change Barack Obama promised is still far away regarding foreign

policy. With the war on terror, nuclear weapons, and climate change occupying the United States internationally, there is almost no room to realize any significant change regarding other important subjects. Relations with China, for example, have gradually been moving in the same direction for the past two decades of Sino-American diplomacy. While roughly thirty-five years ago China was dependent on the US for economic and military support, the tides have changed and many experts believe that the balance has shifted towards China and that the US is now on the back foot. This shift is most apparent on the economic level. United States debt to China has grown to over a trillion dollars, its second largest debt only after Japan. (Amadeo, *U.S. Debt*). Besides that, the US economy has become increasingly dependent on import and export to China. According to the United States Census Bureau, China is the US largest trading partner, after neighboring country Canada (*Top Trading Partners – April 2017*). While the rise of the Chinese empire is certainly not unexpected, it does anger Americans to see the nation that thwarted them so often in the past (in Korea and Vietnam) become so powerful. As stated in earlier chapters, US presidents since Richard Nixon have reacted to their China challenge similarly: “While virtually every one of Nixon’s successors have accepted the logic behind his policy of accommodation, they have done so with personal or political reservations. They have invariably denounced Communist China when in campaign mode and then equally invariably once in office followed Nixon’s prudent concession to Chinese power” (Hunt, *Obama’s Foreign Policy* 9). So, since the recognition of the PRC as China’s legitimate government US policy has barely changed; presidential campaigns denounce Communist China and its violation of certain ‘Western’ values, but after elections they do nothing to prevent these violations or the eminent shift of power from happening. Obama’s presidency has fallen into the same pattern. Hunt is supported in this claim by Jean Garrison and Marc Wall, who state that “the Obama administration’s approach encompasses both cooperative and hedging strategies, thus demonstrating more continuity than change in its approach to China” (47). Of course, to realize change in a dynamic that has been going on for nearly forty years is extremely difficult and would take time. Besides that, Obama had to make difficult choices during his presidency. The diplomatic relation with China had to be preserved, because of common threats such as nuclear weapons in Korea and Iran, and because of the massive economic connection the two nations built up through the years. On the other hand, the world was waiting for a determined US response to the violation of human rights in China and its hostile approaches to Taiwan. In

Responding to the China Challenge, Hunt states that “even as the presidents followed the essentials of the Nixon policy, they continued substantial military aid to Taiwan, lent verbal support to the cause of Tibet, publicly invoked timeworn clichés about the needs of the Chinese people, and offered assurances about inevitable liberalization”. We can conclude, then, that there have been two sides to US-China policy since Nixon’s normalization of the relation. On the one hand, continuation of Nixonian politics in which the US accommodated China in any way possible. And on the other hand, a slight response from the United States government to stand up to the rise of China and attempt to enforce US values, most notably rights of freedom, on the communist nation.

When Obama became president after a campaign that was based on ‘change’, many critics expected a change of attitude towards China. The growing differences between Beijing and Washington D.C. asked for a different approach to China policy. But besides a promising speech given by Obama in 2009 in Shanghai, in which he spoke out for political change in China and for asserting US values all over the world, he, like many presidents before him, generally fell back to the politics originally used by Richard Nixon in the early 1970s. The main pattern in China policy under Obama has focused on establishing a pan-Asia policy. By shifting focus from the bilateral relation between the US and China to the issues involving the rest of Asia, the US government hoped to gain some control over China’s actions (Garrison and Wall 58). The idea behind a pan-Asia concept was that, as the most powerful nation in Asia, China would have to bear part of the responsibility for its well-being and growth. By enforcing these responsibilities on China the US hoped to indirectly contain and control its actions. Obama also tried to reach the Chinese by recalling their history which, according to Obama, was based on friendship and support (Hunt, *Responding to the China Challenge*). A noble effort but not based on truth, as Obama very well knew. Like many US presidents, Obama started off his presidency in a difficult position regarding US-China policy. He had to, if he meant to follow ‘tradition’, maintain a healthy relationship with China, while the critics breathing down his neck demanded repercussions for China’s violation of human rights and hostile movements in Asia. However, if Obama had really lived up to his promise of change, he would have broken with Nixon’s politics and, instead of continuously accommodating China, he would have realized his intentions of enforcing even the slightest change on China’s society, or at least attempted to decrease US dependency on its largest economic adversary. But, while this might have resulted in a change of

dynamics in US-China relations, it would also have had a negative impact on the US economy and on the Sino-American relationship. Two risks, Obama felt, he could not take; for his benefit and for the benefit of the United States.

3.2

OBAMA'S REITERATION OF THE ONE-CHINA POLICY

Under President George W. Bush the One-China policy had not gone through many significant changes. On the contrary, under Bush the United States reaffirmed their stance on the China-Taiwan conflict. It seemed that no matter what, the main priority of the US was to maintain the status quo that had come to exist in the Taiwan Strait. In 2003, when attempts were made by the PRC and ROC to change the policies and treaties regarding the dispute, the United States stepped in and uttered their disapproval through this statement:

We oppose any attempt by either side to unilaterally change the status quo in the Taiwan Strait. We also urge both sides to refrain from actions or statements that increase tensions or make dialogue more difficult to achieve. Therefore, we would be opposed to any referenda that would change Taiwan's status or move toward independence. The United States has always held, and again reiterates, that cross-strait dialogue is essential to peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait area. President Chen pledged in his inaugural address in the year 2000 not to declare independence, not to change the name of Taiwan's government, and not to add the "state-to-state" theory to the constitution, and not to promote a referendum to change the status quo on independence or unification. We appreciate President Chen's pledge in 2000, and his subsequent reaffirmations of it, and we take it very seriously. (Kan 76)

So, the status quo was to be upheld and the US wanted to maintain the triangular relationship they had worked so hard to achieve in the past decades. A similar reaction came when Taiwan attempted to hold a referendum on joining the United Nations in 2007. According to the US a referendum would only increase tensions in the Taiwan Strait, while it would have no practical beneficial impact on the UN or Taiwan. The US also stated that to allow Taiwan to have such a referendum would be to undermine the agreements made between President Chen (of Taiwan) and President Bush in the years before. When later that year Chen applied for the UN despite the US strongly advising not to, the US came with a statement opposing Taiwan's membership:

The United States supports Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations whenever appropriate. Such involvement is in the interest of the 23 million people of Taiwan and the international community, and we urge all UN members to set aside preconditions and work creatively toward this goal. Consistent with our long-standing One China policy, the United States does not support Taiwan's membership in international organizations where statehood is a requirement, so it cannot support measures designed to advance that goal. We believe that efforts to urge UN membership for Taiwan will detract from our goal of advancing Taiwan's involvement in international society. (Kan 82-83)

We can see that the US strictly adheres to the requirements of statehood for any nation attempting to join the United Nations. While the US supports Taiwan's involvement in other international organizations for which statehood is not required, it claims that Taiwan's joining of the UN would be a step closer to independence and therefore a possible escalation of the dispute between the ROC and the PRC.

The question, then, is whether or not Obama attempted to change the Beijing-Taipei relationship during his presidency. We came to the conclusion that Obama's handling of US-China policy in general was not based on a lot of change. Historians like Hunt, Garrison, and Wall stated that the change Obama promised turned out to be a continuity of foreign policies from the past. With regards to the One-China policy, it seems that this specific feature of policy making did not change either. The first statements made by Obama regarding the One-China policy came in 2009 during a Joint Press Statement from the White House (November 17 and 19):

We also applauded the steps that the People's Republic of China and Taiwan have already taken to relax tensions and build ties across the Taiwan Strait. Our own policy, based on the three U.S.-China communiqués and the Taiwan Relations Act, supports the further development of these ties—ties that are in the interest of both sides as well as the broader region and the United States. (Kan 84)

The United States and China underscored the importance of the Taiwan issue in U.S.-China

relations. China emphasized that the Taiwan issue concerns China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and expressed the hope that the United States will honor its relevant commitments and appreciate and support the Chinese's side position on this issue. The United States stated that it follows its One China policy and abides by the principles of the three U.S.-China Joint Communiqués. The United States welcomes the peaceful development of relations across the Taiwan Strait and looks forward to efforts by both sides to increase dialogues and interactions in economic, political, and other fields, and develop more positive and stable cross-strait relations. (Kan 84)

As we can see the two statements both confirm the US position regarding the Taiwan Strait dispute. Obama's administration reminds the world of the Taiwan Relations Act and the three Shanghai Communiqués that have since three decades been the main enactments regarding the matter. More statements were made regarding the US delivering of arms to China, with the Taiwanese president stating that, while the ROC will keep importing arms from the United States, they would never request the US government to fight for Taiwan. Meanwhile, both the PRC and the ROC made several statements, with the ROC stating that:

According to our Constitution, the sovereign territory of the Republic of China includes Taiwan and the mainland. At present, the ROC government has authority to govern only in Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen, and Matsu. In other words, over the past two decades, the two sides of the Taiwan Strait have been defined as "one Republic of China, two areas." (Kan 84-85).

and the PRC responding in kind:

On major issues involving the nation's reunification and the Chinese nation's long-term development, our position is clear-cut and firm, and there will be no compromise and wavering. Since 1949, although the two sides of the Strait have not been reunited, the fact that the mainland and Taiwan belong to one China has never been changed, nor will it change. The return to unity between the two sides means the end of political confrontation, not a recreation of territory and of sovereignty. "Peaceful reunification and one country, two systems" is our basic principle to resolve the Taiwan issue (Kan 87).

With both of the sides in a position they would not easily alter, it was up to the United States to enforce any changes. However, the United States goal regarding the policy has been to maintain the status quo, while at the same time looking for diplomatic progress. Obama, once more, confirmed this in his final news conference of 2016. He stressed the importance of the Sino-American relationship in regards to the US and world economy, and the severity of the Beijing-Taipei dispute to the PRC and ROC. Surprisingly, he also said that one of the strengths of US foreign policy was the ability to look at certain important subjects with “fresh eyes”. This comment suggested the possibility of a different attitude towards the One-China dispute, but he quickly recovered by stating that forcing change upon the Beijing-Taipei situation would be problematic. “For China, the issue of Taiwan is as important as anything on their docket” and “Although many aspects of US-China relations can be subject to change, the One-China policy is at the heart of their conception as a nation. And so if you are going to upend this understanding, you have to have thought through what the consequences are, because the Chinese will not treat that the way they’ll treat some other issues” (Obama, *News Conference*). In these statements we notice the Nixonian mentality again. Even though the United States wanted, or even needed, to make changes to their relationship with China, they were being held back by their own self-interest and fear for losing their position of power. The rise of China and the shifts in the balance of power between the two nations had paralyzed the US and Barack Obama was forced to fall back into old habits to protect his nation.

CONCLUSION

Ever since the first United States merchantmen set foot in Canton in 1784, one crucial pattern regarding US China policy has stayed the same: self-interest fueled US interests for Sino-American relations. The integrity of China, although promoted as a very important point, was mostly an excuse to ensure commercial prosperity for the United States. To ensure a lasting economic relationship that would strengthen the US economy and reinforce their position of power in the world US regarding China was always their main goal. The first Americans to set foot on Chinese soil were traders and since then trade has been the red line through the history the Sino-American relationship. While it took a while for the government of the US to take the time to establish official diplomatic ties with China, the Chinese marketplace was always their main interest, although it was often stated otherwise. Up until 1949, US activity on the Asian continent grew rapidly, and eventually treaties had to be made. In the struggle for power over the Chinese profitable trading ports the US and great European nations like Britain established an Open Door, in which all nations were equal in regards to trade with China. John Hay, writer of the Open Door Notes, stressed the importance of the integrity of China, but in reality the people of China always came second. Once more, there was little to no regard for the growth of the Chinese nation in general. This self-centered attitude the US developed regarding China persisted, and we can trace it all the way up to present times.

In 1949 the People's Republic of China was founded by the Communist party under Mao Zedong. In the years before, China had been ruled by the Kuomintang, the Nationalist Party, under the name Republic of China. However, after a revolution in the late 1940s, the Communist Party took over. The ROC then retreated to the island of Taiwan while the PRC ruled the Chinese mainland. Both sides refused to recognize each other's claim for the governance of China and the dispute of the Taiwan Strait was born. US allegiance for the ROC finds its origins early in the 20th century, and even after the PRC was founded the US did not recognize their existence. US foreign policy during that time (the Cold War) was built on anti-communism, and so their policy regarding the dispute was to side with the ROC and support their claim. As a result, the relationship between the US and the PRC started off on bad terms and it would not be until Richard Nixon's presidency in 1969 that changes would appear.

Under Richard Nixon the United States initiated a process of rapprochement and normalization regarding their relationship with the PRC. Nixon and his secretary of state Henry Kissinger laid the foundations for a fresh start, and it was under their governing that the United States switched to recognizing the PRC as the sole legitimate government of China. Under Jimmy Carter, the One-China policy was enacted in which the US would deny the ROC's claim and cancel any diplomatic relations with Taiwan. The alliance between an anti-communist US (and Nixon) and a Communist China was surprising, but not unexplainable. Nixon was motivated by the Sino-Soviet split that appeared during that time and his plan was to form a united Sino-American front versus the communistic Soviet Union. His hatred for Soviet Communism proved to be so severe that he aimed to establish a friendly relationship with Communist China. However, he also recognized the position of power China was in and the growth their nation was going through, and realized that the US needed to establish a friendly relationship with the PRC to ensure economic growth and a strong military position. Once more, the Sino-American relationship was not based on trust and friendship, but Nixon did definitely see China's potential.

US self-interested foreign policy making was enhanced under President Ronald Reagan when he became president in 1981. In fact, Reagan's China policy was based even more on the idea of using China purely to combat Soviet Communism. If it ever came to all-out war between the US and the SU Reagan saw in China the perfect 'meat shield', and he would have been satisfied to see two communist forces engage each other. Where Nixon's vision of China was somewhat based on a future friendly relationship, Reagan dismissed this with his pro-Taiwanese and anti-Communist mentality and he drove the two nations further apart.

In the roughly thirty years during which Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, and Bill Clinton were president, the US-China policy did not alter much. However, the world did. During Clinton's presidency from 1993 to 2001, he focused on balancing powers in the world and the spread of democracy. Clinton's China policy is characterized by his attempts to bring the US and PRC's China closer together while also maintaining a healthy relationship with the ROC in Taiwan. The biggest difference between Reagan and his predecessors is that the political climate surrounding China had changed significantly during the past years. Where under Nixon, and to a certain extent under Reagan, China was still quite in need of US economic and military support,

this changed under while Clinton was president. The Cold War ended and China had become a very powerful and independent nation. Also, after the Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989, the world became increasingly aware of China's violations of human rights and important values of freedom and democracy the 'West' adhered to. Therefore, Clinton got stuck between a rock and a hard place. In the end, however, we can state that while Clinton's task was the most complicated out of all his predecessors regarding the Sino-American relationship and the One-China policy, he handled them both exceptionally well, by finding the right balance between adhering to the old US policies and supporting a non-violent Beijing-Taipei diplomatic relation.

Barack Obama's election in 2008 was based on his campaign that opted for change. Change on the domestic and international level, and therefore change within US-China foreign policy. While Obama intended to shake up the static relationship that had existed since Nixon's normalization, it did not take long for him to fall back to the same predictable patterns that had shaped throughout the years. Since the rapprochement between the US and China, nearly all presidents have accommodated all China's needs, despite their continuous violation of human rights and aggressive stance within Asia. This accommodating of the PRC was justified by US ambition to keep their ally close, for several reasons. The most important reason was to repel Soviet Communism, but with the disappearance of the Soviet Union the largest communist power left is, in fact, China. However, for changes to be realized the US had to make sacrifices to their commercial relationship with China and, since Nixon, no president has dared to do so. The United States had grown increasingly dependent on China regarding their economy, with their debt to China reaching over a trillion dollars and the fact that China had become one of their largest trading partners. Therefore, the fear of what losing the Chinese market could do to the US economy is so deeply rooted into US foreign policy that a change of pace is far away. Regarding the One-China policy the US has also positioned itself into a tough spot. Although their relationship with Taiwan has become more intensive over the years and their military aid for the ROC had increased, the US is desperate to maintain the status quo in the Taiwan Strait. Where the ROC has attempted to make steps towards independence, by attempting to join the United Nations for example, the US has always strongly opposed these actions. The same goes for Obama, who very recently stated that to upset the Beijing-Taipei relationship would be very unwise because the Chinese value the One-China policy like nothing else. We can conclude that

Obama, despite his presidency being based on change, has in fact continued the trends that have existed since the 1970s. While the balance of power between the US and China slowly shifts to the PRC, the US does no longer want, or dare, to change the Sino-American relationship. The red line of economic self-interest returns once more. The United States' incapability of changing the dynamics of this bilateral relationship and of exerting change on the One-China policy can all be traced back to the fear of losing their position of power in the world. And the further we go, the further the balance of power shifts, and the less likely any future change becomes.

FURTHER RESEARCH

This thesis has determined that the evolution of the One-China policy is, in fact, one-sided and that even Barack Obama has not been able to exert the change he wanted regarding the Sino-American relationship. With Obama's presidency having ended in 2016 and the election of Donald Trump shortly after that, another interesting topic for further research has arose. Although we are still in the early tidings of Trump's presidency, interesting developments in regard to US-China policy have already been made. A phone call President Trump made with the president of Taiwan immediately caused anger in the PRC, and many critics have noted Trump's obsession with the Sino-American relationship. Perhaps the only one capable of changing the dynamic between the US and China would be someone like President Donald Trump.

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