Intentions Behind U.S.-Chinese Diplomacy

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Intentions Behind U.S.-Chinese Diplomacy

Abstract
Relations with China are more important than ever not even just for the United States, but the whole world. With Donald Trump as our President for now, general relations with China are on unsteady water since there is no predicting what either side might do. With the importance of Chinese relations so topical today, the base of the official U.S.-China relations would be just as important. Many people think Richard Nixon was the President who established these ties with China, but it was actually Jimmy Carter. Jimmy Carter had to trek through the muck set by President Nixon and Ford to establish official diplomatic ties with China. There was a lot of promises both Presidents before Carter made to the Chinese and President Carter had to work with the Chinese under those conditions. This historical event has been downplayed by the media and the American public because of the conditions Carter agreed to and the timing of this event. President Carter’s intentions in the beginning were pure when it came to Chinese relations, but by the end, the intentions were tainted because of secret deals and his cabinet members. In 1978, President Jimmy Carter’s intentions behind establishing official diplomatic ties with China were to help normalize the nation of China into the global community, to maintain a semi-healthy relationship with Taiwan, and to assist the United States strategically against the Soviet Union.

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Abstract

Relations with China are more important than ever not even just for the United States, but the whole world. With Donald Trump as our President for now, general relations with China are on unsteady water since there is no predicting what either side might do. With the importance of Chinese relations so topical today, the base of the official U.S.-China relations would be just as important. Many people think Richard Nixon was the President who established these ties with China, but it was actually Jimmy Carter. Jimmy Carter had to trek through the muck set by President Nixon and Ford to establish official diplomatic ties with China. There was a lot of promises both Presidents before Carter made to the Chinese and President Carter had to work with the Chinese under those conditions. This historical event has been downplayed by the media and the American public because of the conditions Carter agreed to and the timing of this event. President Carter’s intentions in the beginning were pure when it came to Chinese relations, but by the end, the intentions were tainted because of secret deals and his cabinet members. In 1978, President Jimmy Carter’s intentions behind establishing official diplomatic ties with China were to help normalize the nation of China into the global community, to maintain a semi-healthy relationship with Taiwan, and to assist the United States strategically against the Soviet Union.
The People's Republic of China is now a force to be reckoned with and the United States of America still cannot outline the intent behind their relationship. The U.S. tends to tread in the murky water when it comes to outlining their intentions especially with their relationship with China. The United States' intentions with China have not all been transparent. China and the U.S. encountered each other since the 19th century, but nothing close to establishing official diplomatic ties. In the early 1970s with the Nixon administration, the possibility to establish these ties appeared on the United States' radar. This occurred when President Nixon personally visited Communist China, a first for a U.S. President. Since Nixon's visit, China has undergone massive industrialization and economic changes which have allowed Chinese leaders to engage in global diplomacy. One main factor that helped China develop into the world power it is today was establishing diplomatic ties with the United States. Since Nixon's visit, each President has had to decide how their administration would engage China. President Jimmy Carter decided to create official diplomatic ties with China. While foreign policy experts consider President Jimmy Carter's track record to be weak, they do praise his efforts to formalize diplomatic ties with China. In 1978, President Jimmy Carter's intentions behind establishing official diplomatic ties with China were to help normalize the nation of China into the global community, to maintain a semi-healthy relationship with Taiwan, and to assist the United States strategically against the Soviet Union.

In the 1960s and the 1970s, the United States mulled the possibility of engaging with China. During his presidency, Richard Nixon and former National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger spearheaded the United States' diplomatic ties with China. Scholars consider Kissinger to be the impetus for establishing relations with China who managed to get Nixon on
board, but it was Nixon who planted the seed to open a relationship with China.\(^1\) With that said, Kissinger was the first major U.S. official to come out publicly in favor of a relationship with China in 1969. Scholars give most of the credit to Kissinger because of his active involvement after Nixon.

Initially, Kissinger was very skeptical about his trip to China and even wondered if it was going to be worth the time and effort.\(^2\) There were also added difficulties to establishing relations between the two countries. One of these was the fact that China was doubtful about a Nixon presidency. The doubt spawned from China wondering if Nixon would actually reach out and make the right accommodations for China. Additionally, each country had to contend with fears of being taken advantage of and the legacy of past relations. The last added difficulty was that almost all communication and meetings had to occur in secret because the U.S. decided to invade Cambodia in 1970, which China opposed. This factor made each step more time consuming since every circumstance and cover-up had to be perfect, so neither country would withstand a public relations debacle. Regardless of all the obstacles, the timing ended up being perfect for this to occur.\(^3\) The Soviet Union decided to oppose the Chinese along their border, which caused the U.S. to side with China. The U.S. also envisioned the establishment of a relationship with China as an opportunity to unsettle the Soviet Union, but they knew they would have to take small steps to mend the damage of this historically hostile relationship.

In February 1972 (right before the presidential election), U.S. President Nixon visited China and met with Chairman Mao Zedong along with other Chinese officials to continue

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\(^3\) James Mann, *About Face,* 24.
nurturing a good relationship between the two countries. According to Nixon’s notes that are now declassified and in the National Archive, the Chinese wanted to build up their world credentials, repossess Taiwan in general, and for the United States to get out of Asia. The United States wanted Indochina relations, a restraint in the spread of communism, and to reduce the threat of a confrontation by a Chinese superpower. Both countries sought to reduce the danger of a confrontation and/or conflict, stability in Asia, and a restraint on the U.S.S.R. This was because both countries did not want to end up in a war because of miscommunication and the U.S.S.R. was starting to threaten possible invasion along China’s borders. The talks were semi-one sided since Mao knew Nixon needed this trip to go perfectly to obtain political points in the upcoming election, so Nixon had relatively low input on many of his goals. This trip and the discussion that occurred were not planned to be as significant as it ended up being, but these two leaders started plotting the future for the rest of Asia.

The results of these talks were mixed, but it was still productive in the eyes of the Nixon administration. Nixon had a plan to essentially trade the strong relationship with Taiwan for help in Vietnam, but this Vietnam goal was eliminated before he even left the United States. Nixon did, however, accomplish other countries’ support towards communistic expansion to come to a standstill. China achieved more by definitely having an outlet to build their world credentials with the United States and also with their requests on Taiwan. Nixon could not provide all their requests and the establishment of official diplomatic ties in that moment because of politics. But secret meetings occurred after between both countries’ officials about how each side will keep their promises. Nixon and Kissinger promised the Chinese that their requests on Taiwan and the

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4 President’s personal files, Box 7, Nixon Papers, National Archives.
establishment of official diplomatic ties would occur after the election cycle. This would never end up happening for a series of reasons.

Nixon’s opening to China shook the foundations of how Americans viewed the world and even the Cold War. But all this was undermined by the Watergate scandal. Nixon did not have enough time in his next term to follow through all the deals he made with China. Nixon ended up resigning in 1974 and passing the torch of the China relationship to President Gerald Ford. When this occurred, the initial relationship between the U.S. and China was completely jeopardized because most of the deals made with the Nixon administration were all in secret. Kissinger conducted damage control and soothed the anxiety of worried Chinese leaders. This was possible because he was staying on as National Security Advisor under President Ford. Kissinger also explained that Ford would share the same goals as Nixon.

Under the Ford administration, the United States and China became tacit allies. The main factor that kept these two states together at least as a remote ally was their shared hatred for the Soviet Union. The elephant in the room between the Ford administration and China was the fact that he couldn’t normalize diplomatic relations with the Chinese. This was because he could not suffer the possible political consequences. His own party had more conservative nominees, like Ronald Reagan, who were trying to take his nomination. The Chinese leaders were highly offended by this and they felt like they were being taken advantage of because they helped simmer North Korea to not attack the United States when they were struggling in Vietnam. Ford did visit China during his presidency, but the trip ended up being more of a charade than anything else. Under the Ford administration, Kissinger did most of the wheeling and dealing.

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5 James Mann, About Face, 62.
He ended up making a lot of public statements and secret deals that completely contradicted each other and jeopardized what was left of the U.S. and China relationship. At one point, Secretary of State Kissinger went so far that he “publicly reassured the new Chinese leadership that the United States would regard a Russian threat against China as ‘a grave matter’” according to a New York Times article in 1976. This article goes on to state that “administration officials said this was the strongest public formulation of the United States interest in China’s security, but that it is identical to what Mr. Kissinger has believed since 1969 and what he has privately stated to Chinese leaders over the years.”

Kissinger was confident that U.S.-Chinese relations was the best international decision the United States could make. He also seemed confident that he would able to put his name in the history books as the main figure who helped the United States and China finally establish official diplomatic relations with each other. This hope for Kissinger was deflated in 1976.

The year 1976 brought a new era of relations and leaders for both the United States and China. But the new era did not start off calm. 1976 was a chaotic year for both the United States and China including the relations that were trying to spawn from decades of interaction. The United States had a Presidential election which is always full of chaos and round-the-clock news coverage. China had a revolution after Mao passed away and the question of who would follow his leadership was did not have an answer. In 1976, the task or hope of creating new and evolved relations between these countries were put on hold by both sides because of the battles for leadership in both of these countries. With 24/7 news coverage, a major newspaper in the United States, The New York Times, covered domestic and international topics. Attitudes of this

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coverage depicted optimism, worry, and confusion throughout this year to give a different outlook on what should, could, and did happen with: the United States Presidential election between President Gerald Ford and Governor Jimmy Carter, Carter’s foreign policy outlook, the change of leadership in China, and what some international spectators outlook was on what was occurring in both the United States and China. A change of leadership in any country can be messy and U.S. politics does not make this process any smoother.

One of the most chaotic aspects of U.S. politics is the almost two-year long process of running for Commander in Chief. By the time the field is narrowed down to two, most people are ready to just vote, so they can live their daily life without hearing about on every news outlet they explore. This is also a time where voters get to match up both candidates and decide who will be better to lead the future of this country. The debates are a major way to allow voters to perform this match up. While it was not a main topic of all of the debates, particular insight on the goal of Chinese relations were also given in these debates. Interestingly, between President Gerald Ford and Governor Jimmy Carter, they knew what they appropriate end goal would be, but had no idea what the needed steps were to get there. During the debate, “both candidates repeated their support for normalizing relations with Peking while maintaining Taipei’s security” and “Mr. Carter accused the Administration of ‘frittering away’ the opening with China started in 1972, but he did not say how he would do better.”7 This just showed that each candidate had a groundbreaking goal, but had no idea what to do to achieve it. This can be pretty scary since China is not an enemy a country wants to have and the choices for President is someone who is completely inexperienced in foreign policy (Carter) and one who has been Vice President and

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President sometimes dealing directly with Chinese leaders. That is just how elections go sometimes.

During every election cycle, there are always ebbs and flows of success for each campaign. Governor Carter’s campaign “for the Democratic nomination was sometimes called brilliant, but his fall campaign against President Ford has been less sure-footed and his standing in the polls […] dropped precipitously.” The drop reportedly occurred because of many factors but are mainly attributed to “what some regard as intemperate attacks on Mr. Ford and in distractions that diverted attention from his major themes and that at times were frivolous and made him appear to be losing control of events.”

It is always nerve-wrecking for a candidate to do so well in the primaries to just drop in polls as the main event is underway. This showed that Jimmy Carter wasn’t always the perceived winner and that the future of these relations could easily have taken a different route.

The other interesting aspect of elections is that the incumbent has time to either play it safe or take risks that may help the voting population lean towards or against them. In terms of relations with China, Ford actually took a risk during the election season. Prior to the election, Ford argued that China would not be involved in any arms or any other military advancement equipment deals. Most of the American people also felt this was a solid plan of action. Then, all of a sudden, a little under a week until the Presidential election, newspapers and other media outlets reported that President Ford had approved “the sale of China of a computer system with both military and industrial capability.” Some Administration officials said that, “in approving the sale, Mr. Ford was waiving established safeguards on the advice of Secretary of State

Kissinger as a gesture to China’s new leaders." The two most controversial aspects of this whole report was that this computer is said to be capable of making calculations on nuclear tests and that it was sold to the China, but not the Soviet Union. Ironically the next day a little blurb in *The New York Times* stated:

An article of The Times yesterday incorrectly stated that the Ford Administration had authorized the sale to China of a type of computer system denied to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union is also getting a similar type of system.¹⁰

Not only did a very influential newspaper make a mistake on an article right before an important election about a hot issue, but also that President Ford decided to give a possible helping hand to the Chinese AND the Soviet Union when you still have more than half of the population in fear of general communism and almost everyone not trusting the Soviet Union. This may have been Ford’s political suicide if this attracted enough attention from the masses. This showed how one little thing can possible just the course of history and especially the course of U.S.-China relations since Kissinger would have been in power for another 4 years.

The Presidential election was worth mentioning because it gave the outlook of wondering if it really matters who the next president is. James Reston asks, “does it really matter between Ford or Reagan, or between Carter and Humphrey, Udall, Church, and Brown?” And responds by stating that “all of them would be bound by the commitments of the past at home and abroad.”¹¹ This observation could also be true. There could easily be a chance that it wouldn’t have mattered if President Ford toppled Carter. This establishment of official diplomatic ties with China could have happened at the same time. His statement is also factual. There are many

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occasions where Carter couldn’t make the progress he wanted to because of his predecessors’ promises. It would be interesting to see if a Ford presidency would have created the same outcome as Carter’s did. But we will never know.

Another fascinating aspect of the establishment of a Carter presidency that can relate to the establishment of diplomatic ties with China was Carter’s foreign policy outlook as he was running for President. A general commentary that was given to the Carter campaign was a well-planned enigma. Some felt that Carter purposefully gave his campaign this image because that’s how he wanted it to be. As un-presidential as that may sound there was a strategy behind it.

“Right from the very beginning of the Carter campaign, the trick has been to stay as fresh and as new and, perhaps, as enigmatic as possible. He has been able to wade through more than a year of selling himself all over the country without revealing much of his merchandise.”12 This right here may be the reason he snuck into the people’s hearts and minds of America to be victorious in the Presidential election against Ford. This may also hint at reasons why his China policy started with his goal in mind, but the steps were mostly taken by his advisors to help him achieve his goal. Carter may have never had a solid plan for U.S.-Chinese relations. Maybe he was just playing the game and being optimistic that he could accomplish this if he became President. This enigma factor might have been put into place to hide particular flaws in his ideology, so it looked like he had everything planned out accordingly. This, in fact, could possibly be why his advisors took most of his essential steps to help Carter meet his goal for himself and the promise to the American people.

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Regardless if the enigma tactic worked, Jimmy Carter still had a fierce opponent in Ford. Even though Ford had some major goofs like wrong word choices and vague answers, he still had the experience a lot of voters look for in a President. As on article wrote, “Jimmy Carter is obviously the political rookie of the year, but he is vulnerable to the charge that he knows very little about foreign affairs at a critical time in the transition of political power in China, the Soviet Union, Japan, the Philippines, Europe and the Middle East.”13 This was a good point. Why would the American people vote for someone with little knowledge of foreign affairs when so many revolutionary events are occurring in the international community? This was an uphill battle for Jimmy Carter, but clearly his general direction, goals, and hopes for his international policy were enough for the American people.

Carter’s foreign policy direction may not have been laid out in step by step plans during the election season, but he still did have aspirational goals that would improve general international relations especially when it came to U.S.-China relations. One of these ambitious goals was that “he believed the United States ‘must pay more attention to China and to Eastern Europe,’ adding that ‘it is in our interest and in the interest of world peace to promote a more pluralistic Communist world.’”14 More specifically when it came to China, his goal was “‘early movement’ toward diplomatic relations with Peking is favored—which implies a break in diplomatic relations with Taipei.” But adds that “this is sought in the context of a ‘peaceful’ resolution of the future of Taiwan—something on which Peking has refused to commit itself for a quarter-century.”15 Jimmy Carter was very optimistic when he mentioned foreign policy on the

campaign trail. Optimism doesn’t tend to be a bad thing, but people will hold it against someone if things are delivered as promised. Overall, Carter believed that the United States could be doing more in the international community making it a safe or more peaceful world. He had no intentions of sounding a war cry against country and instead just sit down and discuss issues with other leaders like the true essence of diplomacy. His original goal was to make sure Taiwan was safe throughout the whole process, but Carter may have not completely believed in that idea and might have been just saying it for more votes.

One of the most interesting views about the U.S. foreign policy direction was an article by William Safire. William Safire was a more conservative journalist from *The New York Times* who was a main critic of Carter and his policies. This find noticed that a particular Professor Cohen has either intentionally or unintentionally had previous presidents follow his ideas.Ironically, President Carter followed this layout almost completely how Professor Cohen suggested. Professor Cohen suggested that the U.S. should not pick China over the Soviet Union and that they should treat both of them evenly. He also suggested it is time that the U.S. de-recognizes Taiwan and to establish a full-sized embassy in Peking. Mr. Safire thought otherwise though. He believed that Taiwan would one day soon be conquered by force. He also bluntly stated that this policy does constitute and abandonment of Taiwan and even the selling out of Taiwan in to a Communist subjugation. To sum up his complete opinion on this matter he stated:

The Cohen-Carter view contains important qualifiers and is the product of a serious expert who commands respect and deserves lengthier analysis. The view is profoundly wrong, in my opinion, in its central assumption—that Taiwan is more important to the Chinese than America’s resistance to the expansion of Soviet influence. The view is mistaken, too, in warning that if we do not break

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16 NYT 10
with Taiwan so as to upgrade our liaison office in Peking to an embassy, the new leaders in China will grow impatient with us and re-embrace Moscow. The only policy that will encourage China to remain an opponent of Moscow is United States firmness toward Moscow. Certainly, China wants Taiwan, and would grab it, given the chance—but the Chinese leaders out first things first and the balance between the “barbarian” superpowers comes first.17

Mr. Safire’s view was not wrong because certainly everything he suggests could be completely true. He really thought the U.S. should take a more aggressive step and induce Chinese cooperation by using the threat of that cooperation to negotiate more aggressively with the Soviets. Mr. Safire was looking for a more aggressive policy because that what he was accustomed to with most of previous Presidents. This was just not the way Jimmy Carter would prove how he conducted his role in the international community especially when it came to China and the Soviet Union.

Throughout 1976, was a nation in flux. With the death of Mao, leadership went into a frenzy since he did not really pick a successor. When decisions were not being made, the people of China protested, and the leadership changed. It was reported that, “the Chinese leadership, moving in a deteriorating political situation, deposed Deputy Prime Minister Teng and appointed Hua Kuo-feng as Prime Minister of China and First Deputy Chairman of the Communist Party.”18 This event lead to a whole debacle in American politics wondering if this leadership change would affect the progress of U.S.-China relations. When any power shift or struggle occurs in any country, there is always no certainty about what might follow. China was no exception in 1976. But Secretary of State Kissinger stayed optimistic. He was reported stating, “Chinese-American relations will not be set back by Mao’s death.”19 Kissinger may have known

something that the American public did not considering his forms of communication with the Chinese, but it really did not affect U.S.-Chinese relations. With that said, the future of U.S.-China relations was still completely uncertain for the next President of the United States at this time.

Along with this optimism form Secretary of State Kissinger, other views formed on what the future of relations would be between the United States and China. One of these views analyzed if the United States was taking the right approach to China’s revolution. This view recognized that many American analysts saw the latest developments in China as steps to pursuing a more moderate international course. This also included establishing closer ties with the West. Other analysts also saw that these new leaders of China weren’t radicals like some expected. But an argument can be made that radicals may in fact slow down or even halt international relations within the international community while “practical-minded” leaders may just patch up ties with Moscow more energetically. This view concluded that there has been some criticism that the United States has moved too slowly to establish full diplomatic relations with China, but overall, the general approach to China has been acceptable. The other view was more internationally based. This view essentially asked what these changes occurring in China will mean for the rest of the world. This view recognized that usually in time of turmoil, China traditionally turns inward to focus on domestic before international. This essentially means that analysts with this view do not expect any dramatic changes in foreign affairs, which may mean that a diplomatic opening with the United States could be given less emphasis. Both of these views were taken from valid assumptions and at that time, it really was just a guessing game to

see what the next President of the United States would have to encounter when trying to establish ongoing and healthy new relations with China. This may also be a reason why neither U.S. Presidential candidate could not outline a step by step plan for the future of U.S.-Chinese relations because there was so much uncertainty that they didn’t want to make promises they couldn’t keep.

Along with these views, there were public opinions that held their own views. Public opinion will always be part of society and when major events happen more opinions will surge. Two of these opinions had different outlooks on the events going on in the United States with the election, in China with the revolution, and the relations between these two countries after this year passes. The first opinion is someone from the United States that has an insight on which country we should “tilt” towards between the Soviet Union and China. It states:

We (the United States) should remain neutral in their quarrel (border tension between the Soviet Union and China) but ponder, ‘Who should we be neutral ag’inst?’ Since expansionist Russia is the global threat today, while China will be hors de combat for a decade or more, wisdom dictates that we “tilt” toward China to maintain the Eurasian balance for the foreseeable future.22

This made a very futuristic insight of how China may be the next threat to the United States’ standing in the world. This insight saw that China has the capability to be the next global influence when it is not injured as the opinion states. It also thought that the in the best interest of the United States, the U.S. should tilt towards China to keep a balance on that continent.

On the contrary, the other opinion comes from a political correspondent from Moscow. Mr. Nekrasov, the political correspondent from Moscow, saw that “if this proposal (establishing full diplomatic ties with China) were designed to normalize U.S.-Chinese relations, it could only

be welcomed by the Soviet Union as part of the talks of promoting peaceful ties between all nations.”

This may or may not be true considering the circumstances, but one insight of this opinion does make a fair assessment of the American press and people. He notes that peace doesn’t seem to be the intent of neither of those entities. He sees that authors of the press tend to openly express hope that closer relations between the United States and China would actually increase the tension in Soviet-China relations. This interesting observation makes it seem that America in general doesn’t want international tensions to relax. Mr. Nekrasov also pointed out that, “as far as the present situation is concerned, Peking’s stance suggests that those countries in greatest danger may be those Chinese neighbors whom Peking considers both economically and militarily weaker.”

This opinion can be looked at from two different angles. One is that the Soviet Union just had someone write to *The New York Times* to save face for the Soviet Union and stir things up so China doesn’t receive the U.S. as a strong ally since there are complications between the Soviet Union and China. Or it can be a hint that the Soviet Union also wants peaceful international relations and the United States should stop being paranoid about the Soviet Union and trying to stay one step ahead instead of working with them. These two public opinions showed the range of views that could be expressed by the general masses.

Public opinion is tricky in this since. It is easy to look at non-leadership accounts of situations and pass it off as that’s what everyone during that time was thinking. But not everyone is going to have that opinion and sometimes it may even be the minority opinion. The other aspect of public opinion statements like these and that the intention behind them are not laid out. The intention will never be known unless you look into their personal history. That

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being said, these are still helpful accounts to see what people are thinking during the chaotic year of 1976. Both of these opinions give different ideologies and insights into U.S.-China relations. Each one has its own merit and valid points and gives insight what people from two separate, internationally involved countries have to say about one another. The insight from the U.S. paints a cautionary path, which Jimmy Carter seemed to eventually take.

Jimmy Carter had the purest intentions when he was submerged in the mess that was U.S. and China relations. This was shown during the first Presidential debate on October 6th, 1976. Both candidates were asked if they, in the next four years, would normalize relations with China. President Ford gave a safe answer and said he would in a traditional sense. This would be accompanied by making sure Taiwan is protected the whole time. He stated this in a presidential debate knowing that secret deals would prove otherwise. But Carter, not completely knowing about these secret deals of Nixon’s and Ford’s past answered:

In the Far East I think we need to continue to be strong, and I would certainly pursue the normalization of relationships with the People’s Republic of China. We opened up a great opportunity in 1972—which has pretty well been frittered away under Mr. Ford—that ought to be a constant inclination toward friendship. But I would never let that friendship with the People’s Republic of China stand in the way of the preservation of the independence and freedom of the people on Taiwan.\(^25\)

On the issue of the U.S.-China relations, that was a perfect answer. It was what most of Americans wanted to hear on this issue. The points that America will not be intimidated by another country, a slight jab at the other candidate, and that Taiwan would be safe from any Chinese oppression while still establishing diplomatic ties were what everyone wanted to happen. And you could tell that Carter believed this too considering he exclaimed multiple times

throughout the campaign on this topic that President Ford didn’t do enough to grow the relationship between the U.S. and China. Carter even took office intending to establish official diplomatic relations with China. What presidential candidate Jimmy Carter did not realize at this time that there was a lot more to it.

After an election, there is always hope, criticism, and challenges that are laid out for and by the next President of the United States. The topic of Chinese relations didn’t have an exception to this rule. With the theme of hope, a *New York Times* article pointed out that “Jimmy Carter will inherit a world situation not free of crisis but one that is not likely to demand immediate agonizing decisions.” Also adding that “Mr. Carter will have time to play himself gradually into his self-appointed role as ‘the spokesman’ for the nation in the area of foreign affairs” which was true.\(^{26}\) Carter became President when the U.S. was not involved in anything that desired his leadership the minute he stepped in the oval office. The international community was calm in general. This definitely gave him time to set a base for his experience in foreign affairs. The same article also hoped that the Carter Administration will be able to make gradual contact with new regimes of Indochina along with expanding relations with China. The author recognized that the terrible burden of the Vietnam War is in the past and that relations with Japan are evolving in a healthy state. Like most Americans, the article also hoped that Carter abides by his promise of keeping Taiwan safe and independent. Carter also held a lot of hope and optimism that this author laid out. These facts also helped Carter establish a policy that was not as aggressive not only with China, but also in general.

The main criticism of Carter, right after the election season, was his inexperience in foreign policy considering he was the former governor of Georgia. In particular, sometimes Carter would forget that words and phrases could be taken a different way and completely not get across his actual point. There was one instance where William Safire decided to question Carter about a speech he gave to the Senate that said "'there will be times, when nobody needs to know about a foreign policy challenge except me and the Secretary of State, or sometimes perhaps just me and the head of a foreign government.'"\(^{27}\) Mr. Safire did not think this statement was presidential regardless of the lack of experience Carter had at this point. He proceeded to question Carter on what he could mean by that if there was any case in the United States’ history where nobody needs to know about a foreign policy challenge except him and the Secretary of State. He continued to ask if any such challenge should be kept secret from the whole United States and what person would sign up to be his Secretary of State of national security advisor if they might just be cut out of the loop entirely. William Safire ended on a more pessimistic note by the end stating:

Years from now, Jimmy Carter will be able to make a secret summit deal, or reach an unadvised understanding, and will alter look at angry Senators and say: ‘But that’s exactly what I told you I might do. And there wasn’t one word of objection out of any of you.’\(^{28}\)

Carter faced a lot of criticism for his inexperience in foreign affairs. This may be why when he was running for office he did not share any solidified foreign policy plans and that he brought people into his cabinet that were more knowledgably and strong-willed on foreign affairs.


There were many challenges Carter faced in the next four years and his goal of establishing official diplomatic ties with China was no easy feat for President Carter. Right after the election, Fox Butterfield released a report that outlined the many challenges the Carter Administration was going to face in Asia. When it came to China, he thought that the most difficult decision is when and how to rescue the stalled movement toward normalization of diplomatic relations with China. One of the main reasons was because there were reports that “officials in Peking have indicated that they are unhappy with the lack of progress on the ultimate withdrawal from Taiwan promised by President Nixon, and they were particularly upset with Mr. Carter’s remark during the televised debates that he would not establish relations at the expense of independence and freedom of Taiwan.”

President Carter may have not been informed that Nixon promised the Chinese to withdraw from Taiwan which he promised he wouldn’t throughout the campaign. This made relations difficult because the Chinese had no plans of receding from their idea to have Taiwan to be completely part of their country. Carter would either have to find a way to negotiate with China, so they can be satisfied with the idea of an independent Taiwan, or Carter was going to have to retract one of his campaign promises and general American public opinion and withdraw the U.S. government and protections from Taiwan. This would be a huge issue in the endeavor to establish official diplomatic ties with China.

In the beginning of the Carter administration, Carter focused on other matters than relations with China. Carter’s main foreign policy focus went into the negotiations of the Panama Canal issue. This made the Chinese leaders completely skeptical with the Carter

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administration. This was mainly because the other officials under Carter's Administration who were communicating with China were promising less than Nixon and Ford especially when it came down to the issue of Taiwan. China was accustomed to special treatment under the Nixon Administration and eventually Ford administration that they expected the same from Carter. This put a definite rough patch in plans for the Carter Administration, but eventually concluded the negotiations to establish official diplomatic ties.

Before this was even put into motion, President Carter had to establish himself in both the domestic and international community. In his first Presidential report to the American People, one of his main points was that he was going to reform the U.S. Government. In doing so, the Government would also become as open and honest as it could be. During this report, Carter also made a couple of commitments to foreign policy. He was determined to have a strong, Lean, efficient, fighting force along with a policy that would be based in close cooperation with allies and worldwide respect for human rights, a reduction in world armaments, and that all policy would reflect the moral values of the United States. President Carter promised to continue expressing concerns about human rights violations without upsetting any efforts towards friendly relationships with other countries. This last bit was interesting because what does that mean. You will be a strong advocate for human rights, but you won’t address the issue if it with a country you are trying to establish relations with? Wouldn’t most of the countries Carter would have to express issues on the stereotypical image of human rights be with countries the United States is trying to better relations with? When it came down to it, what Carter said gave him a

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scapegoat just in case he brings up the issue of human rights with one country, but not the rest which he eventually did.

After the beginning months of 1977, President Carter was in full force of playing the role of leader of “the free world.” He was trying to accomplish the most he could in the time he was allotted. His sites set on China in late 1977 and into 1978. There were many obstacles that he had to overcome to get to his goal of establishing diplomatic ties with China. Not only did he have to deal with disagreeing close cabinet members, but also trying to negotiate in the best interest of the United States and his track record for the election in 1980. Overall, Carter achieved his goal. There is no doubt about that. But it was overshadowed because part of his intentions did not play out publicly well to most of the American population.

In the beginning, Carter refused to budge on the issues that the two previous presidents secretly did, especially with the requirements the Chinese wanted with Taiwan. Until Carter started to solely focus on the U.S.-China relations, no progress occurred. After his Panama Canal matter was complete, President Carter trekked through the muck that Nixon, Ford, and Kissinger created and finally made the United States have official diplomatic ties with China.

This muck President Carter had marched through created a lot of different commentary on how he handled everything with the establishment of official diplomatic ties with China. One of the biggest concerns, James Reston commented on. He thought that “there (was) something very pragmatic in all this […] but he (Carter) could be getting into trouble, because he is doing the one thing he promised he wouldn’t do—letting his politics get in the way of his principles.”32 He saw that politics in the way of Carter’s message in multiple ways. One example is when

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President Carter sent Secretary of State Vance to Peking when even his own aides in the Cabinet agreed that there wasn't any chance of an agreement on the negotiations about Taiwan. This trip raised the questions of Carter's judgment in general. It seemed like it was the wrong mission, about the wrong topic, and everybody in his Administration knew it. "And the paradox of all this is that the Carter Administration's policies and objectives with Moscow, Peking, Jerusalem, Panama and Havana may be right, but their tactics are very odd."33

Another question, brought to light by William Safire, was on Carter's judgement. This time it was on another trip he ordered, but this time it was for his son. Safire concluded with the thought that it's ironic since "the President sends his son to Peking this week to signal an interest and to scare the Russians. But Chinese leaders would be far more impressed by a show of American backbone in helping Zaire stem the Soviet-Cuban invasion."34 He immediately after commented that this is just another example of weak-kneed Carter Doctrine that only encourages the Chinese to accommodate the Soviet Union in their international policy. This showed that not only is Carter starting to play politics with the Chinese for official diplomatic ties, but also there is a good part of America that worries about the Soviet Union establishing better ties. Politics will always be played by a President whether they like it or not because the candidates and the general public doesn't know everything that happens behind closed doors. Each President has to account for past dealings when trying to do anything and Carter had to deal with the Nixon, Ford, and Kissinger mess. This account also gave a slight insight to public opinion too. This showed that the American public may want peace, but they throw caution to the wind. They do not want the Soviet Union to be able to be stronger than the U.S. in any way. They would rather

have the Soviet Union all by themselves internationally than having any ties with the United States or China.

Other commentaries that formed in between the start of Carter’s presidency and the date official diplomatic ties with China were established ranged from wondering if the Carter administration was in a rush to Carter’s goals with China and even the general outlook if diplomatic ties were even going to happen. Another report by James Reston brought a different insight to the Vance trip mentioned earlier. As before, he mentioned that this upcoming trip illustrated a problem because neither side are ready to settle the issues at hand. They would talk with him, but not agree with him. This problem is that “there is something very amiable but also a little confusing about the Carter Administration’s diplomacy. It is in a great hurry.”

This raised a good point that the Carter Administration may have too many things on their plate and President Carter did not have the set plans to delegate properly to each matter, so he just kept sending himself or trusted associates to try and complete the matter. Carter may have rushed the negotiations with China which may have hurt him in the end because of what happened with Taiwan.

During this time, Carter even addressed his goals with relations to China. It was reported that:

The President also reassured China that the United States planned to involve it in the formulation of its global policies. China is ‘a key force for global peace,’ the President said. ‘We wish to cooperate closely with the creative Chinese people on the problems that confront all mankind. We hope to find a formula which can bridge some of the difficulties that still separate us.’


During the same address he sketched out dimensions of the new American foreign policy in which he seeks improved relations with China. This was very sincere and optimistic coming from Jimmy Carter. This also displayed that President Carter wanted to normalize the nation of China into the international community which was one of his intentions.

Another commentary that formed during this almost two-year time period was on the general outlook on if establishing these international ties were even plausible. Reports show that the outlook was not grim, but no one was going to hold their breath waiting for anything to be established. One report in particular thinks that the Carter Administration will remain unwilling to establish these ties unless Peking assures the U.S. that it will not move against Taiwan. But it did state that that both countries “may continue to seek further steps toward normalization short of full diplomatic relations, such as more trade and increased exchanges.”\(^{37}\) This report held some optimism that there may be a solution to find a gray area that both countries can agree upon, but the author also thinks that the gray area would actually have no one happy including Taiwan. This outlook seemed bleak and probably during those years, it did. When it came down to it, President Carter surprised the whole nation when these ties were solidified. There was not really a warning or a big build up to the moment. It kind of just happened which is why most of these reports do not show any sign of monumental progress.

All this commentary has truth to it and it was proven in an end of the year interview with President Carter. The blurb was short and sweet, but it spoke volumes. President Carter “thinks that we will make progress in our dealings with China” in the upcoming year.\(^{38}\) Notice that


Carter saw general progress, but not the complete established diplomatic ties that did actually occur in 1978. Does this mean that even Carter did not see in the short future that official diplomatic ties would be established? Would this imply that Carter was actually rushing his foreign policy to reach his goals? Or was it just the right time and it had to happen then? Only Carter and his closest associates would know. But this does give validation to all these reports that had almost no idea what was actually going to happen for U.S.-China relations. Establishing these official diplomatic ties was a highlight and a feat of Carter’s presidency, but it may have been just because he was at the right place at the right time.

The biggest threat to the efficiency of the Carter Administration was the constant disagreements between Cyrus Vance and Zbigniew Brzezinski. Both advisors differed on the topic of China and both fought to have the President side with their ideals. Scholars tend to disagree on who ended up having more influence at the end of the time in the White House. Brzezinski was the driving force behind a lot of Chinese developments, but Vance always cautioned the President with the steps with China and worked many other foreign policy issues in the Carter administration. Scholars tend to differ on who they believe ended up having more influence in the Carter administration on the relations with China. Breck Walker argued that Cyrus Vance had more of in influence over the relations with China, but was overshadowed by other foreign affairs and Carter’s reliance on his National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski. Enrico Fardella argued that Zbigniew Brzezinski had a more prominent role behind the scenes than anyone else and he also argues that Carter’s success with China was

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mainly due to him being in the right place at the right time in history.\textsuperscript{40} Patrick Tyler argued China was put on the backburner longer than expected because of intense internal competition from Brzezinski and Vance along with other internal difficulties. He also argued that this made normalization harder then it needed to be.\textsuperscript{41} These scholars shed a different light on the topic. They all have merit since Vance was part of the picture until the very end and the internal struggle took its toll on the normalization efforts, but Carter was clearly influenced by one advisor over the other on different foreign policy issues. Fardella is closest to the truth when he argued that Brzezinski had the most prominent role and that him being at the right place at the right time helped achieve the Carter’s goal of establishing official diplomatic ties with China. As history does sometimes, new information has the possibility of changing who really was the advisor Carter listened too.

There were some advantages and disadvantages that emerged out of Carter’s decision to establish diplomatic ties with China. One of the main advantages was that President Carter helped to normalize the nation of China into the global community. It did not reach a complete global scale since history would play out that Carter only had 2 years left in his term. But Carter did start the normalization process within the United States. One way Carter started the normalization process within the United States was through broadening the social basis.\textsuperscript{42} Carter did this through educational exchanges. The U.S. received a disproportionate number of Chinese exchange students, but Carter saw this as an opportunity to make part of the younger generation more sympathetic towards the United States which would help the relationship for the future.

\textsuperscript{41} Patrick Tyler, “The (Ab)normalization of U.S.-Chinese Relations.” \textit{Foreign Affairs}, September/October 1999, 93.
\textsuperscript{42} James Mann, \textit{About Face}, 102.
The Chinese viewed this opportunity to create a better/smarter newer generation that would ultimately help the Chinese society as a whole. Even though the Chinese leaders later became paranoid that these students would disrupt the order of their society and a lot of Chinese students used every path to stay in the U.S. longer since their homeland offered them almost nothing, this scholarly exchange was still part of the path to a global normalization.

The other way Carter helped normalize China into a global community was extending their trading partnership to most-favored-nation privileges. At first, Carter did not know if it was going to be a good idea because he did not want to create a complete imbalance between the two biggest communist countries, the Soviet Union and China. Carter’s National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, urged Carter to follow through while his Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, warned Carter to be cautious. This most-favored-nation trading status allowed China to have a freer trading partnership with the United States. It dropped tariffs and opened China to do business and trading on a global scale. This was the first major step towards the economic powerhouse that is China today. One of the more concrete ways that it was shown that China was slowly being globalized was a *New York Times* article. This article reported that China was planning a conference on modernizing industry. This may seem something so small to “western” nations, but this was actually a huge step for China. It proved that instead of China retreating inwards as history usually shows, they were starting to accept more industrialized ideals to move their country in a better internationally economic standing. By allowing China to participate in an educational exchange and promoting China’s trading privileges to a most-favored-nation status, Carter helped normalize China into the global community.

One of the negative factors for President Carter with establishing official diplomatic ties with China was the issue of Taiwan. In the beginning, he had the best intentions to maintain a strong U.S.-Taiwan relationship. The obstacle was all the secret deals his predecessors made. Nixon and Kissinger put the issue of Taiwan into China's favor. They were looking forward to the new relationship with China so much that they ended up giving away a strong U.S.-Taiwan relationship. By the time Carter was president, China was so used to this special treatment that they felt they did not need to negotiate any of their requests as Carter would have wanted them too. The main reason why Carter ended up changing his mind on the issue of Taiwan was that the timing was a now or never type of situation. Carter just finished the politics surrounding the Panama Canal issue and he had a good amount of time before the next SALT initiative with the Soviet Union would occur which would be another uphill battle in the U.S. Congress. The timing was also right after mid-term elections in the United States, so people in Congress couldn't disagree based on wanting to win an election. This gave Carter the best opportunity to accomplish establishing official diplomatic ties with China.

Carter did make his own power move with Taiwan towards the Chinese. It was not huge, but in the official documents, Carter made sure that the U.S. still could sell weapons to Taiwan after the following year. The Chinese leader, Deng, was infuriated, but signed it anyway because he needed the U.S.' moral support against their planned attacks against Vietnam. James Reston of the New York Times put the meaning of this situation the best: "He may have cut many of his friends (the powerful lobbies and the Party), but he has probably increased his influence at home and abroad."44 It was a great thing to establish official diplomatic ties with a country that had an increasing population towards 1 billion, but that doesn't mean political opponents will let you

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live down the couple million you signed away that used to be close allies. President Carter’s intentions were to maintain a strong relationship with Taiwan, but the issue surrounding Taiwan was a negative factor for the Carter administration since Carter’s predecessors put him in a tough position and the timing was perfect to accomplish establishing diplomatic ties with China.

President Carter’s main intention to establish official diplomatic ties with China was for strategic American military purposes towards the U.S.S.R. and other Cold War issues. Carter did not start with this intention, but his National Security Advisor, Brzezinski, slowly pushed him towards it. After establishing official diplomatic ties, Carter turned towards military cooperation between the two countries. These two countries shared the same amount of hatred for the Soviet Union and Carter and Brzezinski played off of this. Brzezinski also saw an opportunity to push the military relationship with China with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. He argued “that we use the Soviet invasion of a country in a region of strategic sensitivity to Asia as a justification for opening the doors to a U.S.-China defense relationship.” And Brzezinski did exactly that. This relationship would later become a problem when the Soviet Union fell, but Carter still pursued this route. The military cooperation included a joint intelligence collection since they were the closest ally they had to the Soviet Union since the base in Iran fell. It also included selling hardware and advanced Western technology with military applications. This did not completely happen considering when advisors went to look at the foundation they would have to work off of in China, it was too old to make a jump to the modern-day equipment. The other problem was that Carter lost the election the following year because of his public perception of missteps in foreign policy and inflation. Carter’s intentions

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may have been to build a different and better relationship with China, but other obstacles got in
the way before he could do it. Carter’s main intention at the time was to establish official
diplomatic ties with China for the American military strategy.

After everything was finally established with these intentions in mind, news reports,
commentary, and public opinion were so mixed for the year to come. Immediate reactions can
be summed up in one word: unmoved. Public opinion was so all over the place that a New York
Times author reported that “no major groundswell of American opinion favors closer ties with
China, despite the Carter Administration’s decision last week to recognize Peking, but
Americans are not enthusiastic about supporting Taiwan either, according to a poll by The New
York Times and CBS News.”\(^47\) It also claimed “while many Americans believe Taiwan will not
be adequately protected after the planned American pullout, a sizable majority opposes further
arms sales to the Chinese Nationalists” in Taiwan. The American public was so numb to the idea
and preoccupied with the Christmas season that they just didn’t take any real notice to it.

The were two competing views that the American public contained. Both were outlined
by two U.S. citizens who wrote to The New York Times to publish their ideas. One view
questioned Carter’s decision weighing some of the pros and cons but concludes that it should go
back to how it was to protect Taiwan from communist China.\(^48\) While the other letter is full of
hope that it will be a healthy relationship. But this letter also pointed out that this conundrum
could have been avoided by Truman when he was President. They point out that at that time
Mao declared that China and the U.S. have the same goals which would have worked out to be a
fine partner in the international community. But Truman did not because he did not want to trust

any Communists. If Truman would have just made the right move, Carter could have avoided this with Taiwan possibly receiving a better outcome. Both of these letters showed two public opinions that probably most of the American population had. And both these opinions have not fully recognized the importance behind what President Carter accomplished.

Another opinion on this whole situation contributed an insight how this event relates to the Soviet Union. Some people saw this event as a lack of strategy from Carter in that “he didn’t merely play ‘the China card,’ but under pressure from Teng Hsaio-ping, he strew the whole China deck of card on the table just when the Russians were shuffling their hand.” This was more of a pessimistic view of what Carter was doing, but there is some truth behind it. President Carter may have established ties with China because of strategic purposes, but everything happened so quick that maybe he didn’t see the possible consequences. There is a possibility that Carter wanted to accomplish this so bad that he didn’t actually know if this would put a strategic edge over the Soviet Union. At this point, tension had calmed down between the Soviets and the Chinese and some reports out of the Soviet Union were hoping for peaceful diplomacy between the two countries. For all Carter knows, the Chinese could have been establishing ties with the Soviet Union the same time they were with the United States. This may have led to a more peaceful international community, but the U.S. would have lost their strategic element. This showed that this event was also over shadowed because the American public was concerned that the Soviet Union still had a chance to have China as an ally.

Another commentary, that occurred immediately after Carter’s announcement of the new relationship with China, found the timing of the Carter decree very interesting. This perspective

viewed Carter’s television announcement as “even more carefully arranged for minimum exposure, coming on Friday night of the penultimate weekend of the Christmas season, after the network news shows and too late for ample coverage in most Saturday morning newspaper—a hard time to start or sustain a controversy and therefore, from a President’s standpoint, as good as a time as could be found to break the old emotional commitment to the rump Chinese Nationalist regime on Taiwan.”50 This was a valid point. President Carter may have waited to specifically settle negotiations with the Chinese and announce it this particular weekend, so any controversy or anger would be almost overlooked in the news because it was almost Christmas. This may also attribute to the fact that it seemed like nobody recognized the importance of this event after it was announced. The other important insight Joseph Lelyveld offered that reinforced his previous claim is that this was also a time of political calm. “Three Presidents really waited for then was a moment of relative political calm at home—denied Mr. Nixon during Watergate and Mr. Ford during his drive for the Republican nomination—the kind of moment, for instance, when an election has just passed, one Congress is ending and another has not yet begun.”51 Carter found this moment and capitalized on it. Regardless if all this helped or hurt him when it came down to election time, he was in the right place at the right time and decided to take advantage of it and do something historical.

The following year, 1979, was not a good time for Jimmy Carter even when it came to comments on the new ties with China. In February of that year, a poll in Carter’s home state of Georgia showed that even with his decision to recognize China, his job rating was no better at that moment then it was six months ago which was considered to be his lowest rating he

received. Some explanations of this poll consisted of three aspects: Carter's foreign policy voyage is bound in shallows and miseries, no definition in his course, and Chinese actions in Asia. At this time, a lot of Carter's foreign ventures were hitting a dead end or not evolving. There were so many things President Carter was trying to keep tabs on that he didn't have time to finish one off and move on to the next problem. Along with this, Carter had a tough time defining a certain course of action and in times of restraint, needed to convey more firmness. In terms of Chinese actions part of the explanation, the article states:

The normalization of relations with China had its own historical logic. It does not require the President to stand mute while the Chinese carry their new Western banner into battle. Mr. Carter should be denouncing Peking's aggression in Vietnam just as he denounced Vietnam's in Cambodia.

This showed that Carter sometimes could sometimes be hypocritical by playing politics to try and appease countries he cares about healthy relationships with. Other forms of this evidence can be seen when he denounces human rights violations in the Soviet Union but leaves out any mention of China. Carter tends to get caught in the middle of spearheading a pure cause then having to play politics to save face. It is interesting to see that these would be the explanations for the bad poll numbers even though "Jimmy Carter has no reason to let the polls make him apologetic about his Presidency. On the big questions he has been right: the Middle East, Panama, arms control, China, the concern for human rights, the environment."

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By the time the election of 1980 rolled around, everyone seemed to act like it never happened. Most newspapers used the fact the President Carter established official diplomatic ties with China as just something to put as a track record. There was no praise or big columns made to show that this was a huge achievement and that Carter should have another four years to capitalize on it. Everyone just seemed to forget about it even the huge issue with Taiwan. Even when *The New York Times* broke down the general ideas for Carter and Reagan on China, Reagan just said whether he likes it or not he has to recognize China and that there really isn’t anything that would be productive sounding the horn for Taiwan.\(^{56}\) Carter just mainly hoped to expand relations. It is so interesting to think that this feat was just a fad for America. It seemed that no one completely realized the importance of this event. Maybe it was the fact that President Carter announced it out of no where and at a time that was slow for media. Maybe it was that the public was so angry that Taiwan was betrayed that they downplayed the whole event. Whatever the reasoning was, by 1980 it wasn’t on anyone’s mind.

It is thought provoking to reflect that most of the American public did not register the importance of this event. Establishing official diplomatic ties with China was not only a consequential historical event, but it put China on the map to become the economic stronghold it is today. Maybe the American public just did not see that healthy relations with China would be beneficial for the United States in the future or the American public was doing what it does best and not pay that much attention to foreign affairs that doesn’t have guns/conflict involved. I think it was put best by Hendrick Smith when he reported:

'We live in a world of images and symbols,' one of the President’s men mused last week. ‘People have a felt need for vivid, tangible leadership. It’s hard to convey, to translate the kind of steady, responsible, methodical, low-key

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leadership that Carter exemplifies into the shorthand symbols that come across the screen on the evening news.\textsuperscript{57}

It is sad to think that "the trouble with Jimmy Carter (was) his incapacity or unwillingness to incite some of us to hate others. It is ironic that these failures are seen as Carter's weaknesses. Almost everyone seems disappointed that he believes in practicing Christianity in politics as well as in personal life. It will be an interesting commentary on our nation if he turns out to be our President for only one term.\textsuperscript{58} Maybe the downfall of Carter wasn't actually his game that he played in politics or his aspirations to tackle many foreign issues at once that made him seem scatterbrained. Maybe his downfall was the American people.

President Jimmy Carter's intentions behind establishing official diplomatic ties with China were to help normalize the nation of China into the global community, to maintain a semi-healthy relationship with Taiwan, and for strategic American purposes. President Carter was a one term president and does not receive much praise for the way he handled a lot of issues. He came to power in a time that maybe was a "fortuitous accident of history" since "the political leadership of the United States, China, the Soviet Union, Japan and other strategic countries [...] (were) all coming to the point of political decision at about the same time."\textsuperscript{59} President Carter started off with good intentions, but ended up cracking under the pressure and skipped a lot of corners that only hurt him at the polls. There are multiple consequences of President Carter's relationship with China. The biggest one being not being able establish a healthy relationship with China since he was a one term president. This consequence has landed the U.S. in the situation it is in now with China. Along with the consequences, President Carter tends to be

\textsuperscript{59} Reston, "Does it really Matter?" \textit{New York Times}, May 28, 1976,
known for his human rights initiative for the world that ended up excluding China if people looked a little closer. President Jimmy Carter wasn't perfect and played politics as best as he could. Some things ended up working for him and other crashed and burned. But his intentions in the beginning were pure. There is a large gap between believing in intentions and following through on them. Nobody is perfect, so should Carter receive the below par outlook on his administration just for playing the game of politics that makes pure intentions disappear?
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