

A STRATEGIC DECISION: UNDERSTANDING CHINA'S NON-ALLIANCE POLICY IN THE CONTEXT OF ALLIANCE FORMATION

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ABSTRACT

China's non-alliance policy since 1982 is explained mostly from two perspectives. One is the official view from the Chinese government alleging the need to create a sound environment to China's development. The second perspective posits that China's non-alliance yields from Sino-soviet split and the US mismanagement of the Taiwan issue. Although both perspectives are parts of the explanation, they ignore to some extent the geopolitical factors that prompted China to adopt the non-alliance policy. Even though balancing and bandwagoning behaviors are sources to explain how and why states form, sustain and eliminate alliances, they cannot explain non-alliance choice since it is not just the elimination of alliance. In order to understand China's non-alliance decision, this article builds a hypothesis on non-alliance policy in the context of threats. Our hypothesis informs why China employed non-alliance policy even facing some threats, instead of balance or bandwagon. In order to do so, this article capture a wider range of geopolitical factors covering China's lean to one side decision, Sino-Soviet Alliance, Sino-Soviet Split, China's quest for alliance in the Third World and with the US, and China's sense of encirclement. Only by gathering all these factors in a wider perspective, we can explain China's non alliance decision. Non-alliance policy can be an alternative to deal with a threat instead of balancing and bandwagoning.

Keywords: Non-Alliance policy, Sino-Soviet Split, Lean to One Side, Balancing, Bandwagoning

INTRODUCTION

The 12th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (the CCP) held in 1982 specified the new guiding principles of political affairs with other states: "Independence, Complete Equality, Mutual Respect, Non-interference on Other's Internal Affairs" (Vieira, 2019:529-551; Li, 2007:69-93). This policy was called independent foreign policy. Following this, it is thought that China's non-alliance policy for the first time gained formal recognition when Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping referred to explicitly the strategy to a foreign guest (Ruonan-Feng, 2016:1-2). This was the natural result of the "reform and opening up" policy initiated by Deng Xiaoping, who came to power in 1978, in a sense. According to official point of view, reasons of non-alliance strategy like the following; non-alliance can reduce disagreements among nations, whilst a good global environment is useful to China's internal economic and social development; Sustain world peace and diminish threat of war; Conserve China's sovereign independence, free from restraints made by others, and able to exchange friendship world-wide (Campoya, 2016:105-110). Besides official view, this new policy outline was interpreted as a consequence of a new global reality or the People's Republic of China's (the PRC) rediscovery of the Soviet danger in the 1980s, or as a result of the United States (the US) President, Ronald Reagan's mismanagement of Taiwan question (Lijun, 1994:5).

However, this article offers a geopolitical explanation of China's non-alliance policy that goes beyond the official view, Sino-Soviet split, and Taiwan issue. Despite there are other researches approaching this topic beyond China's official narrative, they face some theoretical limitations. The alliance formation theory can explain China's alliance with the Soviet Union, the split between China and the Soviet Union, China's quest for an alliance with the US, but it fails to explain China's non-alliance decision altogether. At this point lays the limitations of other researches handling China's non-alliance policy. Although non-alliance policy is within the alliance formation theory, it is further than the result of eliminating an alliance as other studies

implicitly suggest when posits that the Sino-Soviet split is the cause of China's non-alliance policy. Non-alliance policy has its particular hypothesis that we aim at exploring on this article.

To this extent, to deal with China's non-alliance policy firstly we examine alliance formation theory. We posit the Alliance formation theory besides of explaining why states form, sustain and eliminate alliances, it also must explain in which conditions states do not form alliance in the context of threats. Therefore, we build our hypothesis on a non-alliance policy. We hypothesize that a non-alliance policy decision is an alternative option instead of balancing and bandwagoning strategies in facing rivals in the world of big powers. Non-alliance policy derives from three conditions: (i) non-align is desirable than align with direct rivals, so when external balancing is not a suitable option to face a threat and bandwagoning is not a choice, then great powers choose détente strategy; (ii) non-alliance policy can result from the impossibility of finding reliable allies among minor states that can boost the alliance to balance a potential rivals; (iii) non-alliance policy is suitable in a permissive strategic environment. In this situation a state does not fill its sovereignty being threaten. This is to say, when among great powers none of them see each other as an imminent threat, two rivals can keep themselves without any alliance being each other as target; All these conditions were gathered when China decided to pursue a non-alliance policy as this article displays by examining a wider range of geopolitical factors. This is to say, China's non-alliance policy is yielded of a lack of suitable alliances regionwide that matched properly to China's domestic and external interest and the encirclement imposed by then superpowers whereas China did not perceive its sovereignty at risk.

The article brings consistent evidence that since its foundation the PRC was eager to find allies before adopting non-alliance policy. First and naturally it forged an alliance with Soviet Union. Yet, due to many divergences that alliance ended up to dissolve by the 1960s. Because of the Sino-Soviet split, China paid attention to looking for new alliances. China engaged in approaching third world countries by supporting national movements which attempted to gain its national liberation struggle under the colonial regimes, and wanted to overthrow independent third world governments that were in close relationship with the West (Yi, 2020:8). Yet China could not create any coalition in the Third World opposed to both superpowers, the US and Soviet Union (Xia, 2008:1-14). The Sino-Soviet split has also created a sense of more and more imminent peril on the border north of the country than from the other side of the Pacific. Therefore, having no capacity to face two superpowers, Beijing decided to play as much as possible the US deterring the Soviet Union. To this extent, during the early 1970s, the China-US relationship straightened up dramatically and they became "implicit allies". However, the Sino-US relationship did not reach any formal alliance because there was still antagonist interest between them. Without the alliance with Soviet Union, with the Third world countries and with the US, could China have made alliance with the countries in East Asia and Asia-Pacific? Yet, the Soviet Union and the US policy of alliances toward those regions originated in China a sense of encirclement. Thus, because of lack of suitable alliances and sense of encirclement, Beijing adopted non-alliance policy as a strategic decision.

This article, by capturing the constraints bounded up with the likely alliances in a long-term and wider perspective and putting in context the Soviet Union and the US policy of alliances in the East Asia and Asia-Pacific builds a coherent and outright argument that explains geopolitically China's non-alliance policy which confirms our hypothesis on non-alliance policy as being an alternative of aligning. This study is timely because it helps not only to better understand China's options or lack of them in the alliances game during the Cold War, but also because it explores empirically the hypothesis of non-alliance policy. The article consists of four chapters apart of introduction and conclusion. First chapter brings a theoretical approach on alliance formation in a way to offer the basis to comprehend the alliance formation and mainly the non-alliance policy. To this purpose we benefit from some concepts of balance of power theory like as balancing and bandwagoning strategies, bribery and penetration. These concepts help to understand when states form, sustain and eliminate alliances. Yet we needed to add one hypothesis in alliance formation theory in order deal with non-alliance policy since we do not consider non-alliance policy as resulted of eliminating an alliance. Our hypothesis on non-alliance policy is crucial to deal properly with China's non-alliance policy. Second chapter gives us information on the matter of China's quest for the alliance since it decides the lean to one side policy in the early years of the Cold War. It assesses China's decision to lean to one side, presents the reasons and evolution of the Sino-Soviet alliance until its split. Third Chapter is analyzed the China's quest for new alliances after the Sino-Soviet split. In this regard we focus on China's Third World policy and

Sino-US rapprochement. Fourth chapter explores the encirclement imposed to China by both superpowers in its periphery and its consequences for China's decision of non-aligning with any country. The last Chapter makes a final evaluation of the most relevant content in order to summarize briefly the major findings.

THEORETICAL APPROACH: ALLIANCE FORMATION AND NON-ALLIANCE OPTION

There is an impressive account explaining how and why states form, eliminate and sustain alliances in international relations mainly when it comes to the relationship among great powers (Lalman and Newman, 1991:275-316). However, there is a scant literature dealing with great powers non-alliance policy. By going through the theoretical approach on alliance formation we aim at explaining China's quest for alliance pre its adoption to non-alliance policy, but above all we want to get insights to better understand China's non-alliance policy. In this research, we will use balancing, bandwagoning as well as aggregate power, proximity, offensive capability and offensive intentions (Walt, 1985:3-43) to make an evaluation of China's alliance or China's quest for alliance. In addition, we benefit from international bribery and penetration as instruments of alliance formation. The reason we choose these approaches is because when nation face a strong or threatening states, they either balance against or bandwagon with them (Waltz, 1979:127), and because while forming an alliance, states should take aggregate power, proximity, offensive capability and offensive intentions into consideration. Bribery and penetration are important instruments to be used while making an alliance. Since all these concepts form the hypothesis that has to do with alliance formation, we add one hypothesis to explore China's non-alliance policy that requires some additions to alliance formation theory. Non-alliance decision is further than just eliminating an alliance; it involves a wider setting of conditions.

Balancing and Bandwagoning

The suggestion that nations participate in alliances to avoid domination by stronger powers lies in the foundation of traditional balance of power theory. This hypothesis says that states takes place in alliances to conserve themselves from states or states of coalitions whose superior resources could create a serious threat to its existence. Thus, states prefer to balance for two reasons (Edward, 1967:62). First of all, states may risk their existence and survival if they do not materialize to prevent a potential hegemon from dominating before it gets so powerful. Making an alliance with dominant power implies putting "one's trust in its continued benevolence" (Edward, 1967:62). Therefore, the more proper strategy is to make an alliance with those who cannot dominate other allies, so as to escape being dominated by those who can. Second, alliance with more vulnerable party enhances the new member's influence since the weaker side generally need greater aid and assistance. In contrast, alliance with the stronger party decreases the new member's influence, for it provides coalition with relatively small and less contribution, and leaves it vulnerable to the preferences of its new ally. For this reason, joining with the weaker side is more preferred option (Waltz, 1979:127).

As to bandwagoning, two different motives can be counted on behind of bandwagoning strategy as well. First, states can opt to bandwagoning strategy as a kind of appeasement in that by joining with the threatening state or coalition, a bandwagoner can expect to escape an assault on itself by averting it elsewhere. Second, in case of a war, a nation can make an alliance with the dominant side to share the spoils of victory (Walt, 1985:3-43). For the former one, bandwagoning is of defensive purposes as a way of sustaining independence in the event of a potential threat while for latter one, bandwagoning is of offensive aims to obtain territory. As seen above, balancing and bandwagoning strategies bring distinct predictions and explanations about how nations make and choose their alliance (Walt, 1985:3-43).

Aggregate Power is measured by some components, such as population, industrial and military capability, technological prowess and so on. Therefore, the greater a nation's total resources, the greater a potential threat it may pose to other states (Lipmann, 1947;). *Proximate Power* creates more dangerous than those that are far away, inasmuch as the ability of power projection reduces with distance. It is likely that states make an alliance in response to threats posed by proximate power. Proximate threats can result in balancing or bandwagoning behavior (Kennedy, 1980:421). *Offensive Power* means that nations having large offensive military capabilities are more likely to create an alliance than those who are weak and capable only of defending. Imminent danger that such capabilities create can pave nations the way for balancing by joining with others. However, on the other hand, in case of offensive power allows rapid conquest, weak states can find little hope in resisting, so balancing cannot be wise choice, for allies cannot provide with aid and assistance adequately rapidly. States bordering those having large offensive capabilities can be enforced to

bandwagon since balancing alliances are not feasible (Walt, 1985:3-43). *Offensive Intentions* points out that states that seem aggressive may provoke others to balance against themselves. Intentions perceived by a state play a significant role in making an alliance and alliance choices. When an aggressor's intentions seem to be unchanged, balancing with others becomes the best way to escape being a victim. Overall, the more aggressive and expansionist a state seems, the more likely it is to provoke an opposite coalition (Walt, 1979:3-43).

Bribery and Penetration

This hypothesis proposes that the provision of economic and military assistance can make effective allies by illustrating one's own favorable intentions and leading to a sense of gratitude, or since the recipient will depend on the donor. The hypothesis is at heart of most economic and military aid programs (Walt, 1985:3-43). Hence, to reach a conclusion that they are main cause of alignment or a powerful way of influence is somewhat incorrect. The opinion that aid creates allies disregards the fact that economic and military aid is offered and admitted only when supplier and receiver consider it is in interest to do so. It means that offering and admitting aid is just one tool that states having separate capabilities can respond to a common danger. Therefore, a large assistance program is, in fact, the result of alignment, but not a cause of it (McNeill, 1953:137-155). However, whether or not bribery give suppliers effective political leverage is not always certain. This can be explained in a few reasons. First, in case the supplier is not the only source of economic and military assistance, the leverage will be constrained since the recipient can acquire it elsewhere. With two superpowers capable of supplying aid, client states can threaten to alter suppliers unless their interests are being served (Walt, 1985:3-43). Second, for recipients are frequently weaker than suppliers, they can bargain harder since they have more at stake. Further, suppliers will be unwilling to halt supplies should they view it can leave their allies weak. This restrains their leverage power (Walt, 1985:3-43). Third, the importance of recipient to donor determines the amount of assistance. Yet, if a recipient is very crucial, the donor will be likely more unwilling to put pressure it severely. If client thinks that its interests are not being served, its threats to realign will be more effective although its patron has already invested largely. In the event that client determines to realign or suffers from a defeat, the patron's prestige is probably to suffer. So, a supplier's ability to force obedience by limiting provisions decreases more. Finally, the supply of assistance may be self-defeating since it reinforces the recipient's position and thus declines the need to pursue its patron's wants (Kissinger, 1981:468).

As for penetration, it is directly related to effects of political penetration. It can take different forms: 1) public officials whose loyalties are divided can utilize their positions to move one state closer to another; 2) lobbying organizations can be utilized to vary policy decisions and public perceptions concerning a potential ally; or 3) foreign propaganda can be utilized to canalize elite and mass attitudes. The hypothesis estimates that alliances may be readily created by manipulating foreign governments through these indirect tools. Hence, in which circumstances penetration if of crucial effect is limited. First, it is more likely to achieve in open communities, where elites are more apt to foreign ideas. Second, should the attempt to penetrate is seen by the target state as illegitimate or subversive, it is likely to react by staying away from the state looking for to increase its influence and the penetration can be counterproductive as a result. This probability demonstrates that penetration can be safest when there are powerful incentives for the two parties to align in order to the efforts to encourage the alliance through penetration cannot seem as threat or dangerous (Walt, 1985:3-43).

As a result, as in foreign aid, a large military or educational training program is one effect of good relations, yet is occasionally an independent cause. Where penetration contributes to an alliance, it will be where tools are thought as legitimate and where concrete incentives for alignment exists, in order to the campaign will be opined as less unpractical and the related targets will tend to see the message favorably. Hence, this refers that penetration is not likely to do more than strengthen current leverages for alignment. Overall, penetration can conserve or raise an existing alliance, but it occasionally creates new one by itself. Penetration can merely so effective when the central authority of the target nation is too weak (Walt, 1985:3-43).

Non-alliance option

According to Walt (2013:33) "states form alliances to balance against threats rather than bandwagon with them". Thus, if balancing can mostly explain China's alliance with the Soviet Union and its quest for alliance

in the Third World and with the US falling in the prevision of Walt as we will demonstrate in detail a little later; neither balancing nor bandwagoning strategies can explain China's non-alliance policy. Though alliance is a response for threat (Walt, 2013:04), non-aligning does not mean absence of threat. It can be another option to deal with threats. This option has not deserved the same attention as the others competing alternatives. To purpose of this work, it is our hypothesis that non-alliance policy is an alternative instead of balancing and bandwagoning as response to threat that lead to alliances. Non-alliance decision from great power comes from three conditions: (i) non-align is preferable than align with a rival, so when external balance is not suitable option to face a threat and to bandwagon is not option, instead great power can choose détente strategy. Détente involves roughly equal concessions in which both sides benefit (Walt, 2013:282); (ii) non-alliance policy can result from the impossibility of finding reliable allies among minor states that can boost the alliance to balance a potential rival; (iii) non-alliance policy is employed in a permissive strategic environment; this is to say when among great powers none of them see each other as an imminent threat, two rivals can keep themselves without any alliance. We mean alliance against each other. In this situation a state does not see its sovereignty being threatened; when these three conditions are gathered we can see a great power employing non-alliance policy. This hypothesis explains China's non-alliance policy properly. When PRC was founded it could not employ non-alliance policy because it could undermine its sovereignty. The conditions to non-alliance policy were not created at that time as it was in 1980s. Despite we did not make a profound research to find further data that can support our hypothesis on non-alliance decision over time, this is not the aim of this work, we find that the alliance coming either from balancing or bandwagoning confirm our hypothesis, because in whatever cases, the conditions to non-alliance where not there as it was unimaginable the alliance between the US and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. This hypothesis helps to embody the alliance formation theory that was lacking of exploring non-alliance policy as an alternative to balancing and bandwagoning strategies as way to deal with a threat. The alliance formation beyond of explaining the reasons to alliance formation as a way to deal with a threat has to explain in which conditions states can deal with a threat without forming alliance. This article is an initial attempt in doing so. The great risk of non-alliance decision is of being attacked without any support. In the Churchill's words "There is only one thing worse than fighting with allies and that is fighting without them" (quoted by Mansoor and Murray, 2016:16). The likelihood of this risk has driven the China's quest for alliances in early years of its foundation. The major award of employing non-alliance policy is to prevent the rivals to form alliances being you as target. Ultimately China expected of benefiting from this possibility by the 1980s. Whether the alliance formation is prone to war or not it is still an open debate (Levy, 2013:582).

CHINA'S LEAN TO ONE SIDE POLICY and SINO-SOVIET ALLIANCE FROM FORMATION TO SPLIT

The Chinese civil war erupted after the end of Second World War and the beginning the Cold War between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) and the US forced the leadership of the CCP change their views they had held for a few years, and they put forward a new concept called "intermediary zone" in 1946, which the concept had far-reaching meaning and was significance. According to concept, rivalry and confrontation amid the US and the USSR would not impact on the political situation of China. Hence, after September 1947 when Moscow brought the theory of "two blocs" forward, the concept of intermediary zone started to be abandoned in the minds of the CCP leadership. At the end of the 1940s, a Chinese revolutionary and theorist, Liu Shaoqi published an article, saying that it is not possible to remain neutral between two blocs at present. He viewed the alliance with the Soviet Union as a "demarcation line between revolution and counter-revolution and between progress and retrogression" for China (Jun, 2012:81-97). Hereupon, the leaders of the CCP realized that the post-second world war world was divided into two camps between superpowers, which one camp was headed by the USSR and the other one was headed by the US. They embarked on forming their foreign policy. The Cold War was escalating with the development of Soviet-American confrontation. CCP was seeking an alliance with the Soviet Union (Jian, 1992:5-36). While Chairman Mao was speaking on the occasion of the twenty-eighth anniversary of the founding of the CCP on July 1, 1949, he read the article called "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship", which was written by himself. He expressed that "The forty years' experience of Sun Yat-sen and the twenty-eight years' experience of the Communist Party have taught us to lean to one side, and we are firmly convinced that in order to win victory and consolidate it we must lean to one side of socialism" (Bary-Lufrano, 2000).

It is understandable that Chairman Mao's "lean to one side" statement was in this context of postwar international structure. The reason behind Mao's decision was that the CCP had to ally itself with the Soviet Union and had no other option in the international structure divided into two camps. The CCP assessed America's threats to China's national security as an important factor for leaning to one side. Mao and the CCP leadership hoped that an alliance with Soviet Union would put China in a stronger position to face with American threats (Jun, 2012:81-97). Deciding to form an alliance with the Soviet Union, the CCP followed the principle of non-recognition of western nations, in particular, the US (Jian, 1992:5-36). What's more, China's domestic politics played a significant role in the CCP's "lean to one side" policy. Namely, Mao saw that "lean to one side is essential for Chinese foreign policy so as to promote the Communist revolution at home (Mingling, 2005:2). China needed the Soviet Union as an example of socialist achievements to show and make Chinese people to comprehend what the future of socialist China would be like. As a result, advocating the Soviet Union and asking the nation to learn it was a priority for the CCP after the creation of the PRC on October 1, 1949 (Mingling, 2005:2).

Having established the PRC, Chairman Mao Zedong visited Moscow to negotiate an agreement with Soviet Union in February, 1950, and this visit resulted in the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance for the next thirty years on February 14, 1950. According to treaty, China did not restore its sovereignty over Outer Mongolia and granted Soviet Union provisional military and economic rights in both Manchuria and Xinjiang. In return, Soviet Union provided China with military support, weapons and large amounts of economic and technological support (Urbansky, 2015:35-52; Iliev-Petreski, 2015:313-326). The Soviet side acknowledged to deliver unconditionally to China all properties belonging to and under control of Soviet government in Dalian, the Changchun Railway, Port Arthur. On the other hand, Chinese side would not intervene and block when the Soviets wanted to transfer its military forces through a specific railway in China (Kuisong, 2005:1-12). With this alliance treaty, both states would consult with each other in all significant international issues, and to improve and consolidate their economic and cultural ties amid themselves, and to provide with all economic cooperation (Gerson, 2010:6). China recognized Soviet leadership in the communist world, and admitted Soviet model as a model for development. In addition to China's motives to make an alliance with the Soviet Union, Soviets were also interested in alliance with China since both communist countries had a common enemy, which was the US. Following the alliance, the Korean War (1950-53) consolidated Sino-Soviet relations considerably, united them, and made China more dependent on a foreign power than ever before (Urbansky, 2015:35-52; Iliev-Petreski, 2015:313-326).

Sino-Soviet relations were always sincere and first priority for the PRC administration during the first half of the 1950s. Two governments made frequent communications and contacts and conducted their bilateral relations amid top leaders of both nations (Xia, 2008:1-4). The early 1950s are a honeymoon period in bilateral relations. Upon the end of Korean war and Stalin's death, relations experienced their golden years. The war had culminated in a sense of brotherhood amid two countries and Stalin's masterful behavior no longer posed a negative image on Chinese's minds. Therefore, bilateral relations reached a peak in the areas like economic cooperation, technical assistance and cultural exchange. Increasing number of Chinese students registered in Soviets universities whilst many Soviet technicians and experts came to China (Urbansky, 2015:35-52; Iliev-Petreski, 2015:313-326). The Soviet Union provided China with necessary military technologies and industrial capacity covering modern aircraft and missiles. Furthermore, Soviet assistance played a crucial role in China's nuclear acquisition. Both countries signed the New Defense Technical Accord on October 15, 1957, which it stipulated Moscow to procure China a prototype atomic bomb. The Soviets would sell China equipment for uranium enrichment (Gerson, 2016:6).

However, in the later period of the 1950s, the CCP had some differences of opinion with the Soviets, especially with regard to how to evaluate Josef Stalin and the direction that Nikita Khrushchev was taking the international communist movement (Xia, 2008:1-4). In February 1956 when Khrushchev, criticized Stalin at the twentieth congress of the CPSU, a serious turning point occurred in alliance because Khrushchev's policy of de-Stalinization and peaceful coexistence with the west caused some anxiety in China (Urbansky, 2015:35-52; Iliev-Petreski, 2015:313-326). Notwithstanding his disagreements with Stalin, Mao defended him against Khrushchev's accusations since these criticisms could have threatened to shake his own internal legitimacy and authority. Thus, Mao adopted a harder line against the de-Stalinization policy of Khrushchev, stating that "Stalinism is just Marxism...with shortcomings, and the so-called de-

Stalinization is this simply de-Marxification” (Gerson, 2016:6). Mao blamed Moscow for infringing the “theory of Marxism-Leninism” and even described the Soviet Union as “a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, a dictatorship of big capitals, a Hitler-type Fascist dictatorship” (Gerson, 2016:6). Hereafter, long-standing disagreements over economy, foreign policy, ideology, military affairs, leadership in the Communist world and border territories triggered diplomatic tensions and quarrels between two nations (Urbansky, 2015:35-52; Iliev-Petreski, 2015:313-326). Moreover, Khrushchev’s criticism led China and Soviet Union to actively compete for the leadership of communist world. Probably, the most fundamental result of this rivalry was the de facto elimination of the Sino-Soviet alliance (Khoo, 2010:3-42).

In fact, if we count the reasons of Sino-Soviet split, we should put Soviet attitude to Korean War on first rank. At the beginning of the Korean War, Chinese negotiated with Soviets with view to possible Sino-Soviet cooperation for intervention in Korea, and both sides, by taking Sino-Soviet alliance treaty into account, reached a conclusion that if Chinese forces entered the Korean War, Soviet Union would dispatch its air forces to procure air umbrella for the Chinese. In a later meeting, Stalin was unwilling to send Soviet air forces to Korea, which was a big surprise for Chinese side. He stated that the Soviet Union would transfer the Chinese military equipment for 20 divisions, yet the Soviet air forces would not be dispatched to the war inasmuch as they were not ready, but needed much more time to get ready. This unexpected Soviet change caused some problems in Chinese leadership. Mao and the CCP leadership faced the fact that their land forces would not be protected from an air assault in Korea. This Soviet attitude made both Mao and the CCP leadership to think about the limitations of their alliance with the Soviet Union. However, they had no other choice but to acquiesce the Soviet attitude. In this way, an important differentiation in the Sino-Soviet alliance took place in the first year of signing of the alliance (Jian, 1992:5-36).

Another differentiation in bilateral relations came with geopolitical interests of both countries. Namely, the Soviet Union went on seeking a warm-water port in the Pacific and Khrushchev suggested the building of a jointly owned submarine flotilla and long-wave radio transmitter on China’s soil in 1958. Mao refused the suggestion, and perceived it as a Soviet effort to bring historical Soviet designs back on Chinese soil and a kind of red imperialism (McNamee-Zhang, 2019:291-327). In Mao’s view these suggestions were a threat to Chinese sovereignty and Soviet’s desire to control China. Furthermore, at this time, Mao was seeking Taiwanese reunification through military means while the Soviet Union was unwilling to utilize his military forces in supporting of Mao’s endeavor, for the USSR worried about fighting a nuclear war with the US. These differences in strategic calculations made by both countries appeared in the Quemoy incident that happened in 1958 when the PRC embarked on bombing the two Taiwanese islands, Quemoy and Matsu, even without giving information to the Soviet Union. The significance of this event comes from the fact that it took the superpowers, the US and the USSR to the brink of nuclear war (McNamee-Zhang, 2019:291-327). China’s nuclear weapon development also became a cornerstone of incoming Sino-Soviet split. In April 1956, Mao reaffirmed a decision given on January 1955 about nuclear weapons development. Stating that “if we are not to be bullied in the present-day world, we cannot do without the bomb” (Khoo, 2010:3-42) Mao’s concerns were endorsed on 25 July 1963 when the Soviet Union, the US and the United Kingdom signed the Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT). Had Mao signed the LTBT, it would have posed an obstacle for China’s seeking for nuclear capabilities. Even Chinese leadership evaluated the treaty to be signed for this purpose. Therefore, Mao’s reluctance to the treaty necessitated a nuclear test, for in his mind, nuclear weapons were not only the offensive component of Chinese defense policy, but also the third front as the defensive component. China tested its first nuclear bomb successfully on October 16, 1964. The test gave China a much more confident so that he could compete with the Soviet Union in the military sphere as well as the ideological realm. This development deepened the Sino-Soviet disassociation and the Soviet leadership increasingly worried about what a nuclear-armed China might do with its new capability (Khoo, 2010:3-42).

The next aggravation came with China’s announcement of “Great Leap Forward” in 1958. Chinese saw the Soviet experience as a conservative and backward one. Khrushchev being suspicious about the Great Leap Forward and People’s Communes was unwillingness for China’s request for new assistance. It was in this atmosphere that the CCP gave order the People’s Liberation Army to bombard the Jinmen Islands without giving information to the Soviet side. Thus, tensions amid both parties grew significantly. Hereafter, the Soviet Union criticized, in an allusory way, the political line of the CCC on the People’s Commune and the

Great Leap Forward at the 21st National Congress of the CPSU (Communist Party of Soviet Union) (Mingling, 2005:2).

The Sino-Indian border dispute became the next problem between the PRC and the USSR. In the summer of 1959, two armed conflicts happened between China and India in the border area at Longju and the Kongka Pass, and these events triggered a very tense situation across the Sino-Indian border. All posed new difficulties to China in suppressing the Tibetan Uprising and damaged the Sino-Soviet relations. Following the events, the Soviet Union provoked an incident at the border area of the Potzuaikerh Pass, in China's Xinjiang Autonomous Region (Jun, 2012:81-97). Furthermore, the Soviet Union remained neutral during the Sino-Indian border conflict and declared that it was not worth resorting to arms in those barren land in the border area. This Soviet attitude made the CCP very angered (Mingling, 2005:2). Chinese considered that the Soviet Union abandoned its alliance commitments to the PRC in quest of developed relations with capitalist countries (Blank, 2014:31-38). From now on, none could hope a peace on the Sino-Soviet border.

Another conflict of interest between the PRC and the USSR arose during the Vietnam War (1955-75) when competition for influence in third world sharpened amid them. From the Moscow's point of view, Mao posed a serious problem for the Soviet leading position in terms of Eastern Europe, and further, utilized the rhetoric of China's people's war to weaken the Soviet influence in the third world (Westad, 2005:160-170). Following Khrushchev's downfall in October 1964, newly-elected First Secretary of the CPSU, Leonid Brezhnev preferred more proactive policy concerning the Vietnam War and in February 1965, Moscow administration embarked on providing military and economic assistance to North Vietnam, which until now, only Beijing provided necessary aid North Vietnam needed (Mark, 2012:62). At the month, the Soviet Prime Minister, Aleksei Kosygin requested Zhou Enlai to permit the rapid delivery of Soviet anti-aircraft armament to North Vietnam by means of air. Yet, Zhou insisted that arms transportation should be made by railway. Moreover, the Soviets asked the utilization of two airfields in southern China for the deployment of MIG-21 fighters as well as 500 Soviet personnel. This was a forward demand made by the Soviet because Beijing's agreement already provided an opportunity to the Soviets to transport 4000 Soviet anti-aircraft missile troops to Vietnam via China. Beijing rejected these Soviets demands, for it feared that Vietnam would become too dependent on Moscow with transportation of these military equipment and personnel, which China lacked of advanced weaponry. Those differences of opinions and disputes in between both capitals moved on during the subsequent years (Mark, 2012:62). All tension above mentioned prepared a ground for a border conflict between China and the Soviet Union on the island Zhenbao or Damanskiy on the north-eastern border, very near to Chinese bank of Ussuri river in 1969, and marked the Sino-Soviet split. Both parties were about to be drawn on the brink of war. Hence, the tension would calm down in the same year when Chinese Prime Minister Zhou En-Lai would meet with the Soviet counterpart Alexei Kosygin (Iliev-Petreski, 2015:313-326).

CHINA'S THIRD WORLD POLICY

China's third world policy refers to a set of goals and approaches that China has pursued on the relationship with all developing and underdeveloped countries in Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America. In the current literature, China's third world policy is divided into three major phases: (i) Maoist era, 1949-1976 and (ii) Dengist era, 1978-1997 (Cheng-Zhang, 1999:91-114) and (iii) twentieth-first era, 2001 up now (Lee, 2008:1-46). However, the scope of our research is just related to first two eras in which we can examine why China could not make alliances in the third world. During Maoist and Dengist era, China was mainly responding to the international pressures from the US and the Soviet Union rather than dealing with the Third World countries *per se*. However, in none of the two phases, Beijing has made any alliance in the Third World. By examining comprehensively both phases, it will enable us to get the factors that explain China's non-alliance in the Third World. China's inability to form alliance in the Third World matches to the second condition on our hypothesis of non-alliance decision: non-alliance policy can result from the impossibility of finding reliable allies among minor states that can boost the alliance to balance a potential rival.

During the Maoist era, China was eager to break the international isolation imposed by the West. The first attempt to do so was the short-lived alliance with the Soviet Union. The leaning for soviet side was the only option for Chinese leadership under the stimulus and constraints from international system (Cheng-Zhang,

1999:91-114). In the early stages the alliance was marked by an arrangement which had the character of a division of labor, in which China should take on responsibility for helping what he called 'national and democratic revolutionary movements in colonial, semi-colonial, and subordinate countries. Stalin considered that China was in a much better position than the Soviet Union to play such a role in Asia (Olsen 2006: xv). In this regard China approached to the Third World. However, as set forth earlier such an alliance did not last long, tensions and rivalries led to the Sino-Soviet split in the 1960s. Hence Mao Zedong sought an alternative both to face the isolation imposed by the west and the danger coming from the Soviet Union in order to make China an independent and important strategic power (Cheng-Zhang, 1999:91-114). The leaning to one side" strategy had lost its foundation, and China chose to uphold the two conspicuous flanks anti-imperialism and anti-revisionism, as declared by Mao in early 1961 (Cheng-Zhang, 1999:112-127). The division of labor transformed in competition between the two former allies to conquer the Third World. This competition is visible in the Soviet Union attitude toward Vietnam (Olsen, 2006: xvi).

Meanwhile, many countries were gaining their independence from the European colonial powers. Those countries sought to distance themselves from the global competition between the US and the Soviet Union. To this extent, after get their independence from the European colonial powers, they referred to themselves as neither being aligned with NATO or the Soviet Union, but instead constituting a non-aligned "third world (Cheng-Zhang, 1999:112-127). Despite there are those who think that China never truly identified with the third world, rather it was only a strategic consideration to find anti-Soviet allies (MLM, 2007:1-40), Mao soon sought to emerge as the Champions of the Third World as the Conference of Bandung in 1955 demonstrated. China proceeded to create a new political force made up of the newly independent countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Lee points out that China's strategy during this time is the best pointed out through this slogan: "All people of the world unite, to overthrow American imperialism, to overthrow Soviet revisionism, to overthrow the reactionaries of all nations", from the Cultural Revolution. In order to create one third front with the third world, China supported local nationalistic movements (Xia, 2008:1-4). By invoking the anti-colonial rhetoric across Africa, Asia and Latin America, Mao presented himself as an international spokesman of the Third World. In 1963 alone, Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai visited 20 Third World countries. Cheaper loans were provided and more advisers, including military experts, were sent abroad. Later, Mao himself met some African leaders in order to convince them on the need of unite third world against the superpowers, for instance, President of Cameroon, Ahmadou Ahidjo, in 1973, President of Mali, Moussa Traoré, in 1973, President of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda, in 1974 (Yi,k 2020:1-32). China has also helped militarily guerillas as FRELIMO in Mozambique, the PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau, ZANU in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), and the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania and the ANC in South Africa (MLM, 2007:1-40). 1960s had marked the decline in both the presence and credibility of pro- Soviet parties in many countries, such as India, Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, Greece, Brazil, Chile and South Africa in part, in some cases, due the exposure by revolutionary Maoist forces (MLM, 2007:1-40). China also made the same effort in the Middle East in supporting some liberations movements and countries in most times openly antagonized the Soviet influence (MLM, 2007:1-40).

However, Mao's Third World policy failed to mobilize the developing and underdeveloped countries against the US and the Soviet Union. Despite their admiration for Mao's engagement to support them, very few countries really followed China's leadership. Instead, many of them sought to combine all kind of international support, from China, the US and Soviet Union as much they could (MLM, 2007:1-40). Moreover, at that time China did not have the economic structure and adequate military power to compete at an equal level against the US and Soviet Union, and most of the third world countries were aware of this fact. Therefore, they maintained themselves in one or another way under the US or Soviet Union umbrella. According to Walt (2013:07) when states around the world assume that the leading country lacked either the forces or the will they will accommodate themselves to the dominant trend. At time the dominant trend was the Soviet Union and the US. Moreover, China itself did not want to forge any coalition that could bring large-scale military intervention by the Americans into the region. Therefore, despite all support to Vietnam, China tried most to manage the deteriorating situation there at point that could prevent that scenario (Jun, 2005:1-36). Hence, Mao's Third World policy failed to create a new coalition of states against the American and Soviet influences in global politics (Xia, 2008:1-4).

During the Dengist era, China's third world policy experienced a deep shift. Deng Xiaoping's economic reform after 1978 marked a radical departure from the revolutionary radicalism of the Maoist era. Meanwhile, during this time, China was still responding to the stimulus and constraints from the international system as the previous phase. In this regard, it still maintained its pragmatic approach to foster diplomatic relations with some middle powers such as South Africa, Mexico and Brazil. Thereby, the main purpose was not to unify the Third World but to marginalize Taiwan in global politics and stop Taiwan from joining the World Health Organization, the United Nations and other international bodies (Lee, 2008:1-46).

SINO-US RAPPROCHEMENT

The Sino-Soviet split is an essential factor to understand the Sino-US rapprochement (Yi, 2020:1-32). This fact matches to the first condition of our hypothesis: non-align is preferable than align with a rivalry, so when external balance is not suitable option to face a threat and to bandwagon is not option, instead great power can choose détente strategy. However, before making considerations on this factor, it is necessary to point out what kept China and the US under the freeze relationship since the creation of the PRC in 1949. The PRC has born as a natural potential rival of the US (Yi, 2020:1-32). The US helped Chiang Kai-Shek during the civil war against the CCP. Even with the defeat of Chiang Kai-Shek, the US resisted long to recognize the RPC as legal representing of Chinese people, instead they claim that the legal authority of Chinese people was in Taiwan (Campayo, 2016:105-110). Then, after the victory of the CCP led by Mao, China decided to lean to the socialist side. Later, China and the US fought in indirect conflicts in the Korean Peninsula and in Vietnam. The CCP leadership early set the US as a serious threat to the recently created PRC both in terms of ideology and territorial integrity. And China was aware that it was not in position to deter the US alone (Cheng-Zhang, 1999:91-114). Nonetheless, the Sino-Soviet alliance did not provide China enough resources to face the US threat in the region as came evident during the Korea war as described earlier. With the Sino-Soviet split China felt itself vulnerable amid two big threats, from the US and the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union from ally had become a threat to China whereas the US was still being a threat, but less. Furthermore, China had tense relations with its neighbors, such as the Soviet Union in the north and west, India in the south, Japan in the east and so on as will be mentioned later. In the case of war against China, it would not have any support (MLM, 2007:1-40). This sparked in Chinese leadership the feeling of anxiety regarding its own security. This scenario became worse for China when it perceived the likely signals of cooperation between the two big powers to contain it (MLM, 2007:1-40).

Thus, being in no position to deter two superpowers, China leaned toward which was less dangerous to counter the greater and imminent threat. This time, it was coming from the northwest, rather than from the other side of the Pacific. Meanwhile, before employing this strategy of approaching to the US, China has tried a different alternative. In the 1960s, China adopted an anti-imperialist (US) and antirevisionist (Soviet Union) international united front strategy by trying to gather the third world countries around its axis, but this strategy failed as pointed out earlier (MLM, 2007:1-40). None country in the third world could create a coalition with China to deter the Soviet Union or the US. It was without options that China appeal to US to counter the Soviet Union (Xia, 2008:1-4). Despite some signals that the Soviet Union and the US could cooperate to counter and isolate China, they still were the major rivalries of each other. To this extent, during the early 1970s, the China-US relationship straightened up dramatically. In 1971 US Secretary of State Kissinger visited Beijing (Di, 2007:7-18). In the following year, the US President Richard Nixon paid a visit to China on 21 February.

Following these events the US and China decided to normalize relations with common interest of deterring the Soviet Union in February 1972 (Cheng-Zhang, 1999:91-114). Despite many benefits that China achieved by warming its relations with the US, for instance, having improved its relations with western countries, adhering to international institutions, diminishing its security concerns, which laid a solid foundation for the next phase of "reform and opening to the outside world (Cheng-Zhang, 1999:91-114), the US and China could not become full formal allies. The common interest of deterring the Soviet Union was not strong enough to overcome many spots of discord regarding many issues between them and make the rapprochement a formal alliance. At that time, Taiwan question was the most significant one (Yi, 2020:1-32). Despite the US had stepped back to recognize the government of the RPC as the legitimate authority of China at cost of Taiwan, very early Mao and Zhou told Kissinger and Nixon that full normalization of relations could not take place unless the US ended its military support for Taiwan (MLM, 2007:1-40).

Nevertheless, the US did not commit itself with Chinese demands, though that contradiction, China and the US have become “implicit alliance”. In order to achieve their common geopolitical interest of confronting the Soviet threat, both sides made concessions, one of which was to postpone the Taiwan question for a later date (MLM, 2007:1-40). Yet, both the US and China was aware that each one was just a card in the strategic dispute against the Soviet Union, therefore beside of that they were still pursuing policies against each other. For instance, China did not abandon its anti-imperialist rhetoric against the US and the US kept its support to Taiwan (Yi, 2020:1-32). With Deng Xiaoping, the architect of China’s foreign policy from 1978 until the early 1990s, China adopted a policy of non-alliance. China carried on a foreign policy more balanced between the two superpowers, which were called “an independent foreign policy” at the 12th National Congress of the CCP in 1982 (Xia, 2008:1-4).

GEOPOLITICAL CONSIDERATION ON CHINA’S ENCIRCLEMENT

The geopolitical consideration of this article examines China’s periphery, China’s periphery relations and activities of superpowers in this periphery during the late 1970’s and early 1980’s. This chapter shows how China, with a sense of encirclement, has taken a non-alliance policy. It shows in detail how the world, with spotlight to Asia, was split between Soviet and US in zones of influence and its significance for China’s non-alliance policy.

To begin with the Soviet Union, the length of Sino-Soviet border was around 4259 km. By the late 1970s, Soviet military presence in Asia, Soviet agreements with Vietnam and Afghanistan (Xia, 2008:1-4), Soviet military buildup along Sino-Mongolian border since the middle of 1960s, long-term Soviet efforts to improve Eastern Siberia, Soviet navy presence in the Indian Ocean and a treaty of friendship and alliance between Soviet Union and India, all enhanced China’s sense of being surrounded by Soviet power (Lieberthal, 1978:23-38). In April 3, 1980, Chinese Foreign Minister, Huang Hua notified J. S Shcharbakov the Soviet Ambassador to China in a diplomatic way that the PRC did not consider to extend the expiration date of the 1950 Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance, which expiration date would end up on April 11, 1980. Thus, the Sino-Soviet alliance ended up formally (Pollack, 1982:46).

By the middle of the 1960’s, Sino-Soviet and Sino-Mongolian relations were so bad that the Sino-Soviet split led the Mongolian People’s Republic (the MPR) to make a formal alliance with the Soviet Union against the PRC. This alliance was made in January 1966 when the Sovietk; leader, Leonid Brezhnev paid a visit to Ulaanbaatar to sign the treaty of friendship, co-operation and mutual assistance for 20 years (Radchenko, 2003:2-30). The treaty facilitated the Soviet Union to deploy its military troops and set up missile bases in the Mongolian territory. Thus, Soviet Unions’ best ally in Asia, the MPR became a front line amid Sino-Soviet confrontation. As a result of this treat, Mongolia decided to double the size of its army, and further, by the late 1970s, more than 120.000 Soviet soldiers had been already deployed in Mongolia to provide it with security guarantee against China (Batbayar, 2003:951-970).

As for Northeast Asia, both China and Soviets had made efforts for close relations with Kim Il-sung, the leader of Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). However, North Korea followed a policy of equidistance amid China and Soviets, and did not lean to one side, signing different mutual defense treaties with both countries, with almost same conditions in 1961. North Korean relations with its two giant neighbors experienced ups and downs throughout 1960s and 1970s (Wertz, 2019:5-6). Therefore, neither Beijing nor Moscow had a real control over Kim Il-sun’s regime on North Korea. Since the US gave effective weapons to Republic of Korea and China did not meet its North Korean’s needs with view to weapons compared to the Soviet Union, North Korea remained dependent on the Soviets. On the other hand, North Korea’s economic ties with China and need of oil and electricity generated in China also prevented the regime from tilting the Soviets totally (Lieberthal, 1978:34), and thus North Korea remained somewhere between the China and Soviets without tilting and leaning to one side.

China-Vietnam relations were close during the early decades of Cold War and the PRC provided the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) with abundant economic and military aid. Hence, relations deteriorated during the 1960s and early 1970s because of distinct understanding of the Soviet Union and difference of opinion on relations and talks with the US. Especially, relations between the PRC and DRV moved from normal relations to war amid 1975 and 1979. Other reasons that carries normal relations to war

were; sovereignty issue over Paracel and Spratly archipelagos in the South China Sea; demarcation line of land border between two countries; China's cutting of economic assistance to the DRV; and ill-treatment of Chinese minority by the DRV in Vietnam (Amer, 1997:2-3). In order to better understand Sino-Vietnamese relations, Soviets' role should be emphasized in relations among them. The DRV had been approaching the Soviets since 1968 and Soviet assistance to Vietnam by far exceeded that of China. Both China and the Soviets were keen to fill the power vacuum that the US withdrawal from Vietnam created. Yet, many differences between Beijing and Hanoi made Vietnam a valuable ally for the Soviet Union to be able to contain China. Further, the DRV could provide Moscow with significant military bases that would help the build-up Soviet naval power in the Pacific. Following the unification in 1975, Soviets could provide the DRV with extensive economic assistance, but China was not in a position to do the same (Routledge, 1988:58-77). Thus, Vietnam participated in Soviet-sponsored economic organization, called Council of Economic and Mutual Assistance (CEMA) in July 1978, and four months later both sides signed the Soviet-Vietnamese Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation (Stoecker, 1989:5).

Thereafter, relations amid China and the DRV continued to worsen dramatically whereas Moscow-Hanoi relations was getting stronger. The Beijing felt increasingly the danger of encirclement. As China's hostility aimed at Vietnam fed close Soviet-Vietnamese relations, close Soviet-Vietnamese relations fed China's hostility as well. This finally, led to Sino-Vietnamese war in 1979 after the DRV invasion of Kampuchea in December 1978. The Soviets supplied the DRV with large amount of economic and military aid during the war and it was the First Secretary General of CPSU, Brezhnev's warnings on March 2 that paved the way for China's withdrawal from Vietnam (Stoecker, 1989:5). Consequently, it can be said that the Soviets established and consolidated a strategic position in South East Asia from the second half of 1970s to mid-1980s, brought its Pacific fleet from Vladivostok to South East Asia, -and this made China's sense of encirclement stronger.

As for India, controversies over India-Tibetan border between China and India at the end of 1950s and early 1960s triggered a border war between two Asian giants on October 20, 1962 when China attacked Indian positions in the eastern and western sectors of the border. Following the war India embarked on aligning with the Soviet Union more closely, which was also the period of Sino-Soviet split. By the 1965, India-Pakistan war became a litmus test for both already established the US-Pakistan relationship and the new Sino-Pakistan relationship. The US, as an ally of Pakistan, neither provided with Pakistan a military assistance nor gave support to India, but preferred to remain neutral in this war. Thus, Islamabad turned to Beijing for military assistance and equipment, which Beijing supplied with huge quantities (Malone-Mukherjee, 2010:137-158). In September 1967, a new clashes occurred between Indian and Chinese troops over the Sikkim-Tibet border and lasted intermittently almost one week. Both sides accused each other of entering other's territory (Sage Journal, 1976). Two years later, as abovementioned, Sino-Soviet border clashes happened, and in the same year, China kept on providing with Pakistan arms, training and funding to insurgents in India's northeastern region, which China had been supporting the activities since 1962 Sino-Indian war. As the Cultural Revolution in China ended up, the US began establishing diplomatic ties with China via Pakistan. Throughout the 1971 riots in Eastern Pakistan, India faced significant leverages from the US and China, leading Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to make a military alliance with the Soviet Union (Malone-Mukherjee, 2010:137-158).

The relationship amid the Soviet Union and India during the Cold War was generally a success story because of no conflict of interests between them, even though they did not share the same values and ideologies. Therefore, they could create mutually beneficial relationship in this period. As Sino-Soviet relations turned sour during the 1970s, the Soviet Union considered India as a counterweight to the PRC. Both countries' interests were similar in the Indian Ocean; to create as a "zone of peace" (Mastny, 2010:50-90). The 20-year treaty of friendship and alliance signed in 1971 between India and Soviet Union stipulates the Soviet Union to come to India's assistance in the event of an attack. The treaty also enabled the Soviet Union to deploy its naval forces, to acquire naval docking, repair and maintenance as well as other concessions in the Indian Ocean (Lieberthal, 1978:23-38).

Another important area where the Soviet expansionism expanded in Asia was Afghanistan during the 1970s and 1980s. With a Soviet-inspired military coup in July, 1973, Mohammad Daoud came to power in the

Afghan politics. Under his republican regime, Beijing perceived a reasonable increase in Soviet influence in its southwest region. However, though the PRC recognized new regime in Afghanistan in July, 1973, it gave military and economic assistance to the Pashtun and the Baluch dissidents for their seeking for autonomy. By the 1978, Afghan regime abandoned its active neutrality policy, signing a twenty-year friendship pact with Moscow which stipulated provisions for collective defense (Mohanty, 2017:7). The PRC saw the Afghan-Soviet agreement as an indicator of Soviet hegemonism, and following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan on December 1979, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that “Afghanistan is China’s neighbor...and therefore the Soviet armed invasion of that country poses a threat to China’s security. This cannot but arouse the grave concern of the Chinese people” (Beijing Review, 1980). Furthermore, Chinese leader, Deng Xiaoping told on 15 November 1980 that “in seeking hegemony against China, the Soviet Union had not only stationed 1 million troops along the Sino-Soviet border, but had dispatched troops to invade Afghanistan” (Hilali, 2010:323-351). Explicitly, Deng considered this action, partly, as aimed at China.

As a result, the Chinese leadership evaluated the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan as a part of Soviet strategy of China’s encirclement and isolation. The treaty of Friendship and Co-operation signed amid the Soviet Union and Afghanistan was thought by the PRC as an extension of treaties signed by Moscow with states having border with China like India, Mongolia and Vietnam. Thus, China’s sense of encirclement was reinforced by existing Soviet troops along the Mongolian and Afghan borders (Hilali, 2010:323-351). Overall, given the all Soviet activities on China’s periphery from Soviet’s massing troops and sophisticated weaponry in its Far Eastern territory and Mongolia bordering with China in Northeast Asia to the installation of the Vietnam and Soviet-backed Heng Samrin government in Kampuchea in 1979 and Sino-Vietnamese Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation in 1978 in south and southeast Asia, close Soviet-Indian relations and Soviet-Indian alliance in the south, Soviet’s Pacific fleet from Vladivostok to South East Asia, and eventually Soviet invasion of Afghanistan did leave China little space to maneuver and to find few countries to make an alliance against Soviet encirclement.

On the other hand, it is worth to mention about the US and its alliance structure in Asia during the Cold War because Chinese sense of encirclement by superpowers dominated its non-alliance policy. From the early to mid-1950s, the US constructed its alliances in Asia and increasingly surrounded China. Namely, the US created bilateral security alliances with Japan, Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines in 1951, the Republic of Korea in 1953, Japan, Thailand and Taiwan in 1954, and multilateral security alliances with the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1954 and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in 1959 (Gill, 2004:207-230).

The foundation of RPC prompted suspicion in those pro-liberal and democratic countries as the case of Australia and New Zealand. This suspicion met breeding ground that has been nurtured throughout the Australian history due its geographic position that makes China a threat (Kwong, 2016:1-162). Thus, it was not without much surprise that these two countries went into the US grand strategy toward Asia-Pacific to encircle and isolate China in terms of security. Australia and New Zealand sought a formal alliance with the US, —The Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (ANZUS Treaty) — in 1951 (Kehoane-Nye, 2012:1-319). Australia, further than New Zealand, has been one of the most consistent supporters of American policy (Rolfe, 2004:1-8), and was one of the few allies of the US to furnish troops to fight in Vietnam. After the World War II, Australia and New Zealand were aware that they could not defend themselves against a powerful aggressor without American support. Despite New Zealand having withdrawn from the alliance throughout the 1980s, it remained a very close friend of the US. To this extent, it was clear to China that it could not count with them in case of war and worse than that, the US could use their territories and their logistics against China.

The case of the Philippines fits quite properly to the US grand strategy in the early Cold War toward Asia-Pacific. After the Philippines’ independence, it became one of the closest US allies in Asia (Alfred, et. al, 2009). This scenario was yielded by two dynamics. First dynamic was the Philippines’ need for the US partnership to ensure its survival in the early years of its independence when it was in a chaotic situation. The second dynamic was the US needed for Philippines’ partnership due to its strategic localization to assure a defensive perimeter running along the Pacific Rim from Japan to Australia thereby was essential preventing Manila to fall in “foes hands” (Alfred, et. al, 2009). In this regard, President Truman was advised

that the strategic importance of the Philippines was not open question to point that was essential the US assistance to the government of Manila to defeat Huk guerrillas (Alfred, et. al, 2009). These events lead to many bilateral treaties with Manila being the major one - the Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) signed in 1951. This is to say, the US kept strengthening its commitment regarding Manila in order to prevent it from becoming a communist country as happened to China. Thus, the encirclement against China, to one or another way, was embodying extensively.

With respect to South Korea, the effort to prevent it from becoming a communist country was bloody. The first open hostility between the Soviet Union and the US happened in the Korean Peninsula where the two superpowers fought also for prestige (Cha, 2016). The US had to fight a brutal war against North Korea and China in order to prevent the communist north to ensure reunification with the south and ensure its determination to contain the expansion of communism in Asia (Cha, 2016) On June 25, 1950, North Korean forces invaded the South. Led by the US, a United Nations coalition of 16 countries undertook its defense (Mearsheimer, 1994:326). Following China's entry into the war on behalf of North Korea later that year, a stalemate ensued for the final two years of the conflict until an armistice was concluded on July 27, 1953. At the end of the 1950-1953, the US and South Korea signed a treaty of mutual defense, where the two countries agreed to collective self-defense should either be threatened in the Pacific region (Maxwell, 2020:1-6). The deal provided the basis for the US armed forces' stationing in South Korea. In 1966, the two countries signed the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), which laid down the rules governing and protecting the US personnel stationed in South Korea. The US security approach toward South Korea, later nurtured China's sense of encirclement.

As set forth earlier, during China's civil war, the US supported the Chiang Kai-shek against the CCP. This prompted the US to recognize the Republic of China, instead of RPC as the legitimate authority of the Chinese people when the former moved to Taiwan. Despite after CCP victory in October 1949, the US was reluctant to keep its support to Chiang Kai-shek as way to not pushing the RPC to the soviet side. However, the outbreak of the war in the Korean Peninsula changed the US approach regarding Taiwan (Cha, 2016). The Korean War "miraculously saved Chiang Kai-shek's government from extinction," because the communists were now perceived to be testing the West's resolve in Asia as part of a broader challenge in the world (Cha, 2016 quoting Tucker, 1994). Therefore, was natural that the US had provided military support to Taiwan in order to prevent China from militarily ensuring reunification. Reunification with Taiwan by force was indeed a top priority for Mao Zedong and his comrades-in-arms in early 1950, but the outbreak of Korea War disturbed indefinitely the plan (Huang-Li, 2001:99-114). To this regard, the US and Taiwan signed the Mutual Defense Treaty in 1954 that was a defense pact between them that is lasting until up to now.

Thailand and the US have long bilateral ties. Thailand is the first Asian nation to establish ties with the US in 1818. A more substantive relationship began in the 20th century. After the defeat of Thailand during the World War II, the US played a principal role in saving Thailand from being treated as an enemy country by recognizing the Free Thai Movement's declaration of support for the Allied Forces (Chongkittayorn, 2019:1-12). The US helped Thailand to ameliorate its international image damaged due to its collaboration with the Axis powers during the war. Thus, with the emergence of the Cold War and the ideological competition between the US and the Soviet Union and its allies, the US feared that Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries could fall into the communist domain, to this purpose, it was established the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO¹), or Manila Pact in 1954. Despite the dissolution of SEATO in 1977, the Manila Pact remains in force (Chongkittayorn, 2019:1-12). As an offshoot of the pact, the Thanat-Rusk communiqué was signed in 1962 to strengthen the US defense ties with Thailand and specifically to protect from the communist threat. Thailand counted with an extensive air base that the US could employ to attack regional threats. Despite China's long standing relations and influence over Thailand and other Southeast countries, China could not count on them to face any security threat.

¹ The member of SEATO were Australia (which administered Papua New Guinea), France (which had recently relinquished French Indochina), New Zealand, Pakistan (including East Pakistan, now Bangladesh), the Philippines, Thailand, the United Kingdom (which administered Hong Kong, North Borneo and Sarawak) and the United States

Still with regard to Southeast Asia, Pakistan was an important actor. The US was one of the first countries in the world to establish diplomatic relations with the Pakistan after its independence in 1947. In the American campaign to counter the Soviet Union in Southeast Asia, Pakistan was crucial. As we saw earlier, the Soviet Union and India was allies as a counterweight to the PRC. To this extent, it was strategic both to the US and Pakistan to form alliance. In May 1954, Pakistan signed the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement with the United States. Later Pakistan adhered to CENTO and became member of SEATO. The US aim at containing Soviet Union, the Pakistan intended to counterweight India (Walt, 2013:304). However, the US unwilling to support Pakistan against India during the war between then prompted Pakistan to withdraw from SEATO and CENTO and get closer to China and the Soviet Union (ibid:203).

Conclusion

We set out in this study a more accurate examination on the origins of China's non alliance decision undertaken in 1982. Apart of Chinese official view on non-alliance policy, the earlier studies suggest that Sino-Soviet split and the unreached alliance with the US are the reasons to China's non-alliance policy. These approaches are bound up with alliance formation theory. This theory proposes that balancing and bandwagoning are source of alliances that explain whenever states form, sustain and eliminate alliances. It leaves implicit that elimination of alliance lead to non-alliance. This misunderstanding led to offer a limited examination on China's non-alliance policy. Balancing and bandwagoning cannot explain non-alliance polices because it is not just the result of elimination of an alliance, it requires other conditions. To this purpose the alliance formation theory needs some additions that this article has just carried out. It is our hypothesis that non alliance-policy yields from three conditions: (i) non-align is preferable than align with a rival, so when external balance is not suitable option to face a threat and to bandwagon is not an option, instead great power can choose détente strategy; (ii) non-alliance policy can result from the impossibility of finding reliable allies among minors states that can boost the alliance to balance a potential rivals; (iii) non-alliance policy is employed in a permissive strategic environment; this is to say when among great power none of them see each other as an imminent threat, two rivals can keep themselves without any alliance being one another as target.

In short, China has tried to balance the US by aligning with the Soviet Union, yet this alliance was not profitable to China's interest. China did not want to bandwagon to Soviet side. It intended only to balance the US. China also had irreconcilable interest with the US to point that their interest to balance the Union Soviet was not enough to motivate an alliance between them. Therefore, China eliminated its alliance with Soviet Union and could not reach an alliance with the US. Despite China has tried to form a coalition in the Third World against the revisionist Soviet Union and the imperialist US, it soon realized that none of the third world countries could afford China the enough leverage to face the superpowers and the third world countries were closer to lean to Soviet or American side rather than to China's side. Moreover, China found itself encircled by the two superpowers. In this context China decided, almost without any option, the non-alliance policy. However, this option rested upon in the permissive strategic environment. This is to say, China realized by the early 1980s that neither the Soviet Union and nor the US had China as target so it could survive even without any alliance.

This study is intended to add to the academic literature in this regard, and provide policy makers with historical context on China's non-alliance decision that will better understand the origins of such decision and it might be helpful in understanding some current dynamic involving China's periphery policy.

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