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# The Bureaucratic Politics of US Arms Sales to Taiwan<sup>\*</sup>

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What influence do bureaucratic factors actually have on US arms sales to Taiwan? This is the core question that this essay addresses. The essay intends to analyze the processes of policy formulation behind US arms sales to Taiwan from bureaucratic decision-making perspective, using case studies that indicate the extent of bureaucratic models. It ultimately investigates and assesses the effectiveness of bureaucratic models in explaining US policy toward China.

## US Arms Sales to Taiwan and the Bureaucratic Political Model

US arms sales to Taiwan is at the core of the US–Taiwan relationship; it is an indication of how the US regards Taiwan as a political entity and, as such, is a source of China–US friction and conflict. US military exports to Taiwan form the basis of research of many academic works on China–US relations and US policy toward China.

Within the relevant American academic circles, US military exports to Taiwan is a focus of research on US policy toward China and US–China relations. Two such studies are particularly noteworthy in the context of this essay. The first focuses on the heightened tension in China–US relations during the early 1980s resulting from the Reagan Administration’s intention to sell FX fighters. In his study, Doak A. Barnett analyzes the issue and its ramifications, particularly the influence that selling the FX fighters would have on US–China relations.<sup>1</sup> As Barnett’s book was published prior to the Reagan Administration’s decision not to sell the FX fighters to Taiwan, one that was cut from the same cloth as Barnett’s recommendations, many surmised that the Administration accepted Barnett’s proposals.

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<sup>1</sup> Doak A. Barnett, *FX Decision: Another Crucial Moment in Sino–American Relations* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1982), p. 41.

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Another study by Dennis Hickey takes as its starting point US–Taiwan military and security relations, of which US military exports to Taiwan constitute an important aspect. After the establishment of China–US relations, Hickey conducted a deep and systematic research into US arms sales to Taiwan, particularly after the 17 August Communiqué of 1982, and uncovered certain details regarding the selling of F-16s to Taiwan by the George H. Bush Administration in 1992.<sup>2</sup> The historical description and analysis approach of both Barnett and Hickey to their research is echoed among other works on US policy toward China and Sino–US relations, in which the relationship between Taiwan arms sales and the politics of decision-making models is not actually discussed. In recent years, advances have been made insofar as using different policy-making models to analyze particular periods and the important incidents in China–US relations,<sup>3</sup> but no specialized research targeting systemic considerations has yet appeared on US weapons sales to Taiwan, and neither has any attempt been made to utilize the issue of US military exports to Taiwan in research examining the effectiveness of foreign policy decision-making models.

China has conducted considerable research into the subject, in two broad categories. The first is that of US military sales to Taiwan in the context of the history of China–US relations, US policy toward China, and Chinese foreign policy. Su Ge, Tian Zengpei, Zi Zhongyun, and He Di,<sup>4</sup> for example, in their different works on various periods of US arms sales to Taiwan provide certain insights. *Forty Years of U.S.-Taiwan Relations: 1949–1989* elaborates on the ways in which America's arms sales, this unique foreign policy instrument, have influenced the development of Taiwanese politics, and is still a tenable work today. The second body of research is on specific arms sales to Taiwan that, having become a focus of negotiation for the two countries and the center of public attention, has elicited domestic commentary. Chinese, like majority of US, research is mainly in the form of historical description and analysis. Many critical Chinese essays emphasize that US arms sales are a way of 'using Taiwan to contain China,' and assert that arms sales are a deliberately constructed obstacle to China's peaceful rise. Chinese writings on the subject always claim that

<sup>2</sup> Dennis Van Vranken Hickey, *United States–Taiwan Security Ties: From Cold War to Beyond Containment* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1994), p. 82.

<sup>3</sup> See Tan Qingshan, *The Making of US China Policy: From Cold War to Beyond Containment* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Co., 1994); Hao Yufan, *Dilemma and Decision: An Organizational Perspective on American China Policy Making* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Su Ge, *Meiguo dui Hua Zhengce yu Taiwan Wenti (US Policy toward China and the Taiwan Problem)* (Beijing, Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 1998); Zi Zhongyun, *Zhanhou Meiguo Waijiao Shi (US Diplomatic History After WW II)* (Beijing, Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 1994); Tian Zengpei, ed., *Gaige Kaifang Yilai de Zhongguo Waijiao (Chinese Diplomacy since Reform and Opening up)* (Beijing, Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 1993); Zi Zhongyun and He Di, eds., *Mei Tai Guanxi Sishinian: 1949–1989 (Forty Years of US–Taiwan Relations: 1949–1989)* (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1991).

playing the ‘Taiwan card’ and containing China serves US global strategy.<sup>5</sup> Regardless of historical analysis or political commentary, all are of the fundamental opinion that US military exports to Taiwan constitutes behavior with clear objectives, when viewing US government policy-making as a rational process of cost-benefit analysis.

But in today’s post-Cold War era, when the border between foreign and domestic policies is blurred and foreign policies are increasingly influenced by domestic factors, the use of rational actor models to explain foreign policy, US arms sales to Taiwan, and even general US foreign policy is increasingly criticized. While discussing the issue of US arms sales to Taiwan, Patrick Tyler, former *New York Times* Bureau Chief in Beijing, said, ‘The decision on arms sales to Taiwan was made after secret deliberations among Pentagon and State Department (hereafter: State) bureaucrats using criteria that had never been publicly disclosed or vetted. The full measure of American military assistance to Taiwan was classified “secret”, as if the American public could not be trusted to know how deeply involved the US was becoming with Taiwan’s military’. This kind of situation might be understandable during the Cold War, but when it ended, US security policy toward the Chinese mainland and Taiwan lost its basis for secrecy. But ‘... secrecy still surrounds the US relations with Taiwan...’<sup>6</sup> On 17 April, 2001, in the course of responding to reporters’ questions regarding US arms sales to Taiwan, White House Spokesperson Ari Fleischer said, ‘Our decisions regarding arms sales to Taiwan are the result of an extensive process of interagency consultations as well as consultations with Taiwan and the Congress’, and ‘We do not discuss the details of this process, except to note that the consultations are ongoing and are taking place at a high level’.<sup>7</sup> These statements reveal that formulation of US policy on military sales to Taiwan is often a bureaucratic process. In that case, during this process of US government policy formulation, how do governmental departments work with each other? And how does bureaucratic politics influence the outcome? These questions are answered by drawing on analyzes of bureaucratic political models and the policy-making process.

Bureaucratic models of foreign policy-making originated in 1954, when Richard Snyder and others published *Decision Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics*. They stated, ‘The key to the explanation of

<sup>5</sup> Wang Weixing, Meiguo dui Tai junshou, huo moda yan (US Military Sales to Taiwan, a Great Calamity), *Jiefang junbao* (*Liberation Army Daily*), 27 April 2001; Meiguo dang Tai de junhuoku (America becomes Taiwan’s Military Arsenal), *Huanqiu Shibao* (*Global Times*), 6 October 2000; Shen Xingwen, Jiekai Meiguo junshou de ‘heitougai’: shitu yi Tai zhi Hua (Uncovering the ‘Black Veil’ of US Military Sales: Trying to use Taiwan to Contain China), *Huanqiu jun shi* (*Global Military Affairs*), No. 6, May 2001, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> Patrick Tyler, *A Great Wall: Six Presidents and China, An Investigative History* (New York: A Century Foundation Book, 1999), p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> <http://usembassy-australia.state.gov/hyper/2001/0417/epf203.htm>

why the state behaves the way it does lies in the way its decision makers as actors define their situation'. That 'definition of situation' results from the relationships of members of the decision-making unit, existing in a particular international and domestic environment, as well as from each individual's personal attributes, values, and perceptions.<sup>8</sup> This kind of methodological research into the relations and apparatus among 'individual components' of a policy-making system and its actors was first refined and developed in Graham Allison's systemic research into the execution of US policy during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis; it was the first clear summary of 'bureaucratic political models' in policy-making processes. These conceptual models indicate that national interests are unclear and ambiguous, and that policy-making processes are also far from ideal. Various organizations and individuals have different policy positions, and 'where you stand depends on where you sit'. Policy-making thereby becomes a power lever for different governmental organizations, and the political resultant is a process consisting of bureaucratic wrangling, negotiation, and compromise.<sup>9</sup> Later, Morton Halperin argued, on the basis of the policy-making process and implementation of military and foreign policy during the Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson Administrations, that government is not a single, ideally behaving body and that neither is the formulation of foreign policy an ideal selection process. In the policy-making process, different administrative departments compete for power, funds, and territory, and government officials' pursuit of their own prerogatives often create adverse effects on policy implementation and impact that lead to irrational foreign policy.<sup>10</sup>

These studies have resulted in wide use of research into the patterns of bureaucratic politics. But as already mentioned, there has been no specialized research on the specific question of US arms sales to Taiwan, or exactly what value bureaucratic politics has in explaining them.

In order to assess the influence of the bureaucratic policy-making process on the formulation of US policy toward China, this essay chooses the most sensitive and representative cases of the Carter, Reagan, and G.H. Bush

<sup>8</sup> Richard Snyder et al., *Decision Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954), p. 65, quoted in Laura Neak et al., eds., *Foreign Policy Analysis: Continuity and Change in Its Second Generation* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1995), p. 19.

<sup>9</sup> Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little Brown, 1971). Precisely speaking, there are differences between Allison's bureaucratic politics model and the later one commonly used. Allison's model includes domestic politics, as well as Congressional and inter-departmental politics, and the stricter concept developed later emphasizes politics among administrative departments (like Morton Halperin's studies), including Allison's 'organizational process model', but not include domestic politics or politics between Congress and administrative departments. The latter is generally referred to as the domestic politics model or the inter-branch model.

<sup>10</sup> Morton H. Halperin, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: the Brookings Institution, 1974).

Administrations' selling of FX fighters to Taiwan.<sup>11</sup> US military exports to Taiwan were not an issue in China–US bilateral relations prior to establishing diplomatic relations, because there was a US–Taiwan military alliance and the US had troops stationed in Taiwan. Over the course of establishing China–US relations, the issue of weapon sales was ‘suspended’ because the US accepted China’s proposed ‘cutting off relations’, ‘abrogating the treaty’, and ‘withdrawing the troops’. In 1978, on the eve of establishing China–US relations, Taiwan proposed purchasing advanced fighters. The Carter Administration considered the request, and ultimately decided against selling the FX aircraft. The issue was reconsidered in 1980, but there was insufficient time to make a decision before Carter’s term ended. Exporting the FX fighter to Taiwan was also broached during the early days of the Reagan Administration, but the intention was abandoned when it provoked a crisis in China–US relations. Taiwan’s hopes were postponed from that time until the final key period of the 1992 US Presidential election, when incumbent G. H. Bush announced the selling of 150 F-16s. The decisions on exporting fighters to Taiwan invite a series of questions: Why did American Administrations refrain from exporting fighters for such a long period? Why would the conservative Reagan Administration, so-called anti-communist and friend of Taiwan, choose not to export arms to Taiwan, but the moderate conservative Bush Administration, dubbed ‘old friend’ by Chinese leaders decide to do so? What were the positions of various US governmental departments during these foreign policy-making processes, and what kind of influence did they have on the outcome? Through what channels were they producing that effect?

This essay examines models of bureaucratic politics by tracking three Administrations’ policy-making processes, as far as possible eliminating international strategic conditions, as well as Congressional and other important variables, that could have influenced the US military exports to Taiwan. Its main focus is on the US internal government operation.

## President Carter’s FX Policy

US arms sales to Taiwan constituted an ongoing problem throughout the process of establishing China–US relations. Bureaucratic competition influenced the Carter Administration during the negotiating process, and

<sup>11</sup> The fighters considered to export to Taiwan in the early days were referred to as FX, which stood for Fighter Experimental. Taiwan wanted to make advance with its fighters but nothing in the US inventory was thought to be suitable because of its offensive capability. So the US planned to modify US fighters by reducing its flying radius and ground attacking capabilities and then export to Taiwan. From 1978 to 1982, the Carter and Reagan Administrations were considering combining General Electric’s F-16/J79 model and Northrop’s F-5G model into one aircraft, but in 1992 Bush decided to export the F-16 only.

after officially opening diplomatic relations its position on maintaining arms sales to Taiwan did not change.

With a view to ameliorating problems between National Security Advisor (NSA) Kissinger and Secretary of State Rogers of the Nixon and Ford Administrations, Carter said upon taking office that he would reduce the NSA's function and capacity, and establish specialized procedures for harmonizing the NSC and State, as well as the offices of the NSA and Secretary of State. On his first day in the White House, Carter issued a directive which 'place more responsibility in the departments and agencies while ensuring that the NSC continues to integrate and facilitate foreign and defense policy decisions'.<sup>12</sup> The Carter Administration's policy was called a process of 'multiple advocacy'. The President's participation in the discussion and formulation of policy was, however, infrequent. Brzezinski would generally pass the minutes of the meeting on to the President, who would subsequently make his policy choice. As the President did not personally participate in the specifics of the policy-making process, the departments concerned did not adapt to this type of informal policy-making structure. The Whitehouse consequently lacked the timely channels of communication that ensure good policy-making. This, in turn, lead to circumstances wherein there was divergence between department heads on policy, for example, during discussions of conditions regarding normalization of the China-US relations.

On 8 August 1977, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance traveled to China, taking with him a draft of the Carter Administration's communiqué for establishing diplomatic relations. As Vance was a supporter of giving US-Soviet relations precedence over China-US relations, the Chinese government was not optimistic about his visit. During his trip to China, Vance proposed that after the normalization of China-US relations, the US would maintain a liaison office in Taipei, which was essentially a kind of 'reverse liaison office'. This was the position of State, and initially put forward by Anthony Lake, Director of State's Office of Policy and Planning, who was later to be President Clinton's NSA.<sup>13</sup> As Vance had anticipated, this idea met with Chinese opposition and negotiations made no advance at all during his visit. Yet, on Vance's way home from his visit to China, a news report in Washington stated that Vance's trip had been a success and that the Chinese had displayed flexibility. Vance was furious, believing that someone had intentionally provoked the Chinese into sabotaging his visit; his entire delegation suspected that the National Security Council was responsible. After the Chinese received the report, it issued a

<sup>12</sup> James Nathan and James Oliver, *Foreign Policy Making and the American Political System* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1994), p. 41.

<sup>13</sup> Jim Mann, *About Face: A History of America's Curious Relationship with China, from Nixon to Clinton* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), p. 83.

public denouncement of Vance's 'reverse liaison office'. Deng Xiaoping later remarked to a nongovernmental delegation of Americans that Vance's visit was a step backward in China–US negotiations. Vance had lost an opportunity to promote the normalization of China–US relations.<sup>14</sup>

At the end of the 1970s, the Soviet Union's aggressive world offensive threatened not only China's national security, but also America's global strategy. This common threat accelerated the pace of bilateral normalization. Before Brzezinski, Carter's NSA, traveled to China in 1978, the President gave him orders to indicate clearly that, after the establishment of China–US relations, '... the United States would reserve the right for itself to provide arms to Taiwan, as it saw fit'. But at his meeting with Chinese leaders in Beijing, Brzezinski stated only that the US was willing to accept China's conditions for establishing relations, that America had 'several domestic problems' and 'lingering historical issues' that it needed to resolve, and that they are complicated, difficult, and in some cases extremely emotional problems. Brzezinski also expressed '... our hope for peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue that would not be contradicted by the Chinese side...'<sup>15</sup> When reporting back to Carter, Brzezinski said that the issue of arms sales had not directly arisen, but that the Chinese seemed prepared to offer two choices: either continue arms sales to Taiwan after normalization without an indication from the Chinese that they would resolve the Taiwan issue peacefully, or make no further arms sales in tandem with a Chinese declaration of peaceful intent.<sup>16</sup> Brzezinski later insisted that he had told Deng Xiaoping that the US was continuing to diminish its military presence on Taiwan, but that it would avoid creating circumstances that could be destabilizing to the extent that, subsequent to the normalization of China–US relations, an insecure Taiwan could fall to into the hands of 'our mutual adversary', the Soviet Union. He said immediately thereafter, 'This issue must be borne in mind when resolving the issue of normalization and when defining the full range of relations during the historically transitional period of our relationship with the people of Taiwan'.<sup>17</sup> However, he did not directly raise the sensitive issue of arms sales to Taiwan. The following research shows how Brzezinski attempted to use the 'full range of commercial relations' to imply continued arms sales to Taiwan. When he met with Hua Guofeng, for example, he stated that after the normalization of China–US relations, 'there is going to be a period of historic transition during which presumably the United States will maintain a full range of commercial relations with Taiwan, and in the course of

<sup>14</sup> John Holdridge, *The Normalization of US–China Relations since 1945* (Shanghai: Shanghai Yiwu Press, 1997), p. 216.

<sup>15</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser, 1977–1981* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1983), p. 218.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 218.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214.

which many of the historical legacies of the past can then gradually be diluted, overcome or resolved'.<sup>18</sup> Brzezinski later said that this phrase intimated that the United States would continue selling arms to Taiwan. Yet, at least one American reporter believed the phrase to be ambiguous: 'The connection seems to have existed only in Brzezinski's mind... Even if Deng spoke English, he could not have understood the sentence'.<sup>19</sup>

Vance opposed Brzezinski's visit to China because he felt that it infringed upon what was State foreign policy territory. From the outset of his trip, Brzezinski was unwilling to allow any State participation. Although Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Richard Holbrooke later became a member of Brzezinski's delegation, he was excluded from all the important negotiations—to the extent that after a visit to China during the early days of the Administration, Oksenberg and Holbrooke had a verbal confrontation on the flight home.<sup>20</sup> On 13 June 1978, after Brzezinski's trip to initiate negotiations for China-US normalization, Vance proposed in a memo to President Carter that the Administration '... must be in a position to state to Congress that we will continue sales of defensive military equipment to Taiwan...' He also suggested, 'In order to make that statement, the public and private record must sustain our characterisation of Peking's position'. Regarding the 'delphic and ambiguous' statements made in May between Hua Guofeng and Brzezinski, regarding arms sales, Vance believed that sales of arms to Taiwan was still the trickiest issue and a potential deal breaker, but that

<sup>18</sup> Alan D. Romberg, *Rein in at the Brink of the Precipice: American Policy toward Taiwan and US-PRC Relations* (Washington, DC: The Henry L. Stimson Center, 2003), p. 85, fn. 35.

<sup>19</sup> Patrick Tyler, *A Great Wall: Six Presidents and China, An Investigative History* (New York: A Century Foundation Book, 1999), pp. 254–5, footnote.

<sup>20</sup> Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Richard Holbrooke and China specialist at the NSC Michel Oksenberg established a gentlemen's agreement in 1977 promising that they would not keep secrets from one another and tell each other everything so that they would not compete. But because Vance was unable to make any progress on his China visit, he lost his leading role within the Carter Administration in promoting the normalization of relations. After Brzezinski took the lead on the issue, he tried his best to keep State out of the process. On the eve of Brzezinski's 1978 visit to China, he avoided bringing along any of the State personnel that had been working on China issues. Although Holbrooke was allowed to go along, he was neither permitted to participate in any meetings with Chinese leaders, nor allowed explication of any of the content of these meetings. Holbrooke repeatedly asked Oksenberg for the minutes of the meetings during the visit through till the time of the homeward flight to the US but Oksenberg followed Brzezinski's orders not to reveal anything. This so incensed Holbrooke that he grabbed Oksenberg's collar and criticized him for violating the agreement that they had made, shouting at him, 'If you don't give me the memos after we get back, I will destroy you'. Oksenberg then grabbed Holbrooke's collar and shouted back, 'If I give you the memos when we get back and you violate my trust, I will destroy you'. The two parted on bad terms. Tyler, *The Great Wall*, p. 236 and pp. 259–60.



steps could be taken to influence the Chinese position as views on the issue had already been directly exchanged.<sup>21</sup>

China explicitly laid out its conditions for the normalization of China–US relations at the end of the 1970s. They were that the US cut off ‘diplomatic’ relations with Taiwan, abrogate the Mutual Defence Treaty, and withdraw US troops and military facilities from Taiwan—in other words ‘cut off relations’, ‘abrogate the treaty’, and ‘withdraw the troops’. Carter later recalled his worries that Chinese sensitivity to US arms sales to Taiwan would make the US demands to continue such arms sales too extreme and difficult for the Chinese to accept.<sup>22</sup> Before Vance’s trip in August 1977 and Brzezinski’s in May 1978, therefore, he specifically indicated that they should raise the issue.<sup>23</sup> But Vance never had a chance to discuss the question, and Brzezinski cunningly dodged it with practiced political panache.

None of the participants in the normalization negotiations mentions in their memoirs the manner in which Vance and Brzezinski were to conduct exchanges with the Chinese on this issue. Brzezinski offers the alternative explanation in his memoir that the US insistence on selling Taiwan arms after normalization was not itemized in the negotiations between Ambassador Woodcock and the Chinese foreign minister Huang Hua, or between himself and Ambassador Chai Zemin, for the sake of ‘protecting these meetings from unnecessary polemics’.<sup>24</sup> Brzezinski also says that the major negotiations did not touch upon the arms sales question, and that it was handled in a separate channel between Assistant Secretary Holbrooke and Vice-Foreign Minister Han Xu. This channel was established to discuss the ‘unpleasant aspects of our relations’, and it was the medium through which China’s complaints about arms sales to Taiwan were to be expressed. Bearing in mind the problems between State and the NSC during the course of normalization negotiations, namely, the State’s being marginalized, and Holbrooke’s being denied access to participation in Brzezinski’s talks with the Chinese, it is difficult to imagine how Holbrooke was able to take on this thorny issue.

After Brzezinski’s trip to China, Ambassador Woodcock was authorized to conduct talks with the Chinese. Brzezinski made sure that intelligence offices gave the Chinese feedback on what was nearly the final draft communiqué on normalization directly to him, and first notified Oksenberg and Deputy Secretary of State Christopher before Holbrooke actually saw it. Holbrooke found no evidence in the text of the draft and its associated

<sup>21</sup> Romberg, *Rein in at the Brink of the Precipice*, p. 86.

<sup>22</sup> Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), p. 197.

<sup>23</sup> Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, p. 208; Cyrus Vance, *Hard Choice* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983), p. 82.

<sup>24</sup> Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, p. 229.

documents (both sides' public announcements) to suggest that the Chinese either understood or agreed with the US right to sell arms to Taiwan, or that they understood that the US had nonetheless agreed not to sell arms to Taiwan during the year before the Mutual Defence Treaty ceased to exist. In his capacity of Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Holbrooke was bound to communicate and explain the agreement to Congress. He feared if the information was released to the public, it would be difficult to obtain Congress approval for everything that we want to do. Holbrooke was dissatisfied with the content of the communiqué. Brzezinski, under State pressure, sent a telegram to Woodcock asking whether or not he firmly believed that the Chinese understood the US determination to continue selling weapons to Taiwan. After carefully reading the notes from the meetings, Woodcock responded that this was 'unclear'. Brzezinski then sent Woodcock a second telegram requiring him to meet with Chinese leaders and express to them how essential it was that Carter assure Congress that security commitments to Taiwan would continue, and that although the US arms sales to Taiwan would be 'limited' and 'defensive', the President nevertheless retained this right and needed to show Congress that he had indeed such a right. The Chinese needed to understand that under any other conditions, normalization would be difficult to achieve.

On the afternoon of 15 December 1978, Ambassador Woodcock again met with Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping. Deng refuted the American position saying to Woodcock, 'If America continues to sell weapons to Taiwan it will in the long run create an obstacle for Taiwan to be peacefully reunited with the mother land, and will finally lead to settlement by force.' Deng stated that if President Carter publicly stated he would sell arms to Taiwan, the Chinese would disagree. If Carter were willing to discuss this issue, the Chinese wanted to make immediate clarification of their position, but they wanted to 'first suspend this problem', and let 'both sides discuss it again later'. Woodcock's response was that he would report immediately to the US government. After his doing so, the US government raised no objections.<sup>25</sup> This was the last time the two sides held a meeting on the issue of continuing arms sales to Taiwan, and it was also when both countries came to a final agreement: that the Chinese disagreed with the American position, but nevertheless wanted normalization of China-US relations.

From formerly secret archives it is now possible to pinpoint another reason why the Carter Administration insisted on continuing weapon sales

<sup>25</sup> 'Qian Jiang, 'Deng Xiaoping yu Zhongmei jianjiao: guanjian shike yichui dingyin' ('Deng Xiaoping and the Establishment of China-US Foreign Relations: Turning Points Have the Final Word'), *Huanqiu shibao* (*Global Times*) 23 February 2001, No. 11; Wang Taiping, ed., *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Waijiao Shi: 1970-1979*, di san juan (*The Diplomatic History of the People's Republic of China: 1970-1979*, Vol. 3), (Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 1999), pp. 380-2; Tyler, *The Great Wall*, p. 269.

to Taiwan. In the middle of the 1970s, the US government allowed the Northrop Corporation to build, jointly with the Taiwanese authorities, a production line in Taiwan for the production of F-5E/F fighters. The ostensible reason behind this decision was that of ensuring that Taiwan was capable of protecting itself in a situation where the US military had been removed from Taiwan. After the 1970s, every country that initially bought the F-5E fighter went on to acquire more advanced fighter aircraft, and the Taiwanese wanted to be a part of this trend. In early September 1978, before the official start of negotiations regarding China–US bilateral relations, Taiwanese officials issued a request that, after a final production batch of 48 F-5E fighter aircraft, they jointly produce 50 advanced versions, namely the F-5G. This communication included an ultimate request to purchase the RF-4 interceptor fighter, Harpoon ship-to-ship missiles, and also Raytheon SM-2 Standard surface-to-air missiles—in all more than 10 weapons procurement requests.<sup>26</sup> Upon accepting the offer of military purchases, and in preparation for answering the Taiwanese authorities' request, the Carter Administration began to consider what type of fighter aircraft it would sell: the F-4 or the more advanced F-5E (or a modified version called the F-5G). Certain members of the National Security Council, one of them Michel Oksenberg, the President's advisor on China, believed that unless several specific problems achieved adequate resolution, the F-5G was absolutely not the best choice of fighter aircraft to sell Taiwan.<sup>27</sup> Oksenberg and others recommended that a final decision be made after deeper analysis of the F-5G and other choices, and to sell the F-4 in the interim.

This recommendation, however, did not get the support of Brzezinski, who joined Vance and Secretary of Defence Harold Brown in recommending that the President reject 'the F-104s, the F-4s, a departure version of the F-16, and additional F-5Es', and to consider selling F-5Gs instead. They stated, '... such an airplane would be acceptable to the ROC and of all the options considered would be the least likely to produce a negative PRC reaction sufficient to adversely effect our efforts toward normalization'. It would also '... demonstrate to the ROC and to Congress that key defense links to Taiwan would continue after normalization even in the absence of a formal defense treaty'.<sup>28</sup> In most situations of policy-making decisions, when principal cabinet members such as the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, and member of the NSC all agree, matters are finalized. On this occasion, however, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) were in opposition.

<sup>26</sup> National Security Council, *Aircraft Sales to Taiwan*, Memorandum for the President from Zbigniew Brzezinski, 29 September 1978.

<sup>27</sup> National Security Council, *F-4/Improved F-5E Sales to Taiwan*, Memorandum for Zbigniew Brzezinski from Leslie G. Denend and Michel Oksenberg, 18 July 1978.

<sup>28</sup> National Security Council, *Aircraft Sales to Taiwan*.

ACDA opposed this recommendation. Paul Warnke, the director of ACDA, argued against the sales of F-5G to Taiwan on grounds that a decision to authorize development of the F-5G would violate PD-13, which prohibited the development of significant modifications of a unique advanced systems solely for export to other than exempt countries, and could have a significant adverse effect on efforts to restrain arms transfers throughout the 1980s. ACDA argued that ‘the F-5G could find overseas markets only by diverting scarce resource from economic development particularly among Third World countries. In order to make the price of the F-5G acceptable to the ROC, Northrop would need to amortize the development costs over 300–500 aircraft’, and ‘approval of 50 F-5Gs for Taiwan would therefore imply approval of sufficient numbers of F-5Gs to make the project economic for Northrop’.<sup>29</sup> The Defense Department (hereafter: Defense), with the concurrence of the State Department, responding to ACDA’s argument, asserted ‘that the change from the F-5E to the F-5G would be evolutionary’, and ‘the F-5G is not an advanced system by today’s standard and in any case, would not be delivered until 1984 at the latest time’.<sup>30</sup>

It was during the argument over which fighter aircraft would the United States ultimately sell to Taiwan that China–US normalization talks reached a turning point. Cognizant that arms sales to Taiwan was an extremely sensitive and difficult issue within bilateral negotiations, the Carter Administration supported the ACDA position and approved the export of a certain number of F-5E fighters to Taiwan.<sup>31</sup> As a gesture of compromise in the negotiations, the United States agreed to halt arms sales for one year following the establishment of diplomatic relations. The problem was thus temporarily shelved.

At the end of 1979, the Mutual Defence Treaty was terminated. In January 1980, the United States renewed military sales to Taiwan, but in order to promote US–China strategic cooperation, the Carter Administration did not approve all Taiwanese requests for advanced FX fighters and other advanced weaponry.<sup>32</sup> This policy encountered criticism from certain friends of Taiwan in Congress. The Carter Administration and Congress subsequently decided to open a debate on the procedural issues regarding the sale of weapons to Taiwan, and how to implement the Taiwan Relations Act. As the US Presidential elections drew near, the Republican Party nominee Ronald Reagan attacked the Carter Administration’s China policy, which caused criticism from the Chinese government and condemnation in the Chinese media. If the recently normalized relations

<sup>29</sup> National Security Council, *Aircraft Sales to Taiwan*.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Robert L. Downen, *The Tattered China Card: Reality or Illusion in United States Strategy?* (Washington, DC: Council for Social and Economic Studies, 1984), pp. 75–6.

were to be retained, Carter had to counter Reagan's attacks, and also adopt measures to strengthen political, strategic, and economic relations. A State spokesperson was obliged to come forward and restate the US government's position on the question of arms sales and to refute Reagan's statements in order to diffuse any negative influence that Reagan's campaign speeches might have on fragile US–China relations. In the face of protests from the Chinese government and pressure from Congress, the Carter Administration could not make a hasty decision as to a choice between the F-5G and F-16/76, and so opted to extend the F-5E joint-production line for three years, leaving the FX fighter issue for newly elected President Reagan to deal with.

### The Reagan Administration's FX Policy

Experience and personality were what distinguished the Reagan Administration's policy-making system from that of Carter. The scholarship assigned to Reagan's personality and foreign policy-making methods was more or less agree on Reagan's approach to it. For instance, James Barber's research on Presidential personalities describes Reagan as 'passive-positive', or someone who did not get actively invested in the work, but could still glean happiness and satisfaction from it.<sup>33</sup> Reagan left what he regarded as lesser affairs to his foreign policy-making committee to decide, although he, of course, had the final say. One White House advisor said, 'In Reagan's mind, somebody does the lighting, somebody else does the set, and Reagan takes care of his role, which is the public role'.<sup>34</sup> The Reagan Administration policy-making structure evolved through the establishment of various unofficial committees that allowed the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and Director of the CIA to take the lead in policy-making. But one such unofficial committee, which included the Vice-President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Director of the CIA, White House Counsellor to the President Edwin Meese, and White House Chief of Staff James Baker, formed the policy-making core of the NSC. As, among major members, there were varying levels of experience, they diverged on many issues, from US global strategy to US policy toward Taiwan issues. For instance, White House Deputy Chief of Staff Michael Deaver, Meese, and Reagan's NSA, Richard Allen, were all Reagan's old friends from his years as governor of California. Others, like Reagan, were closely acquainted with Taiwan affairs before arriving at the White House. White House Chief of Staff James Baker came from Texas and was a close friend of Vice President George H. Bush, but nonetheless felt deeply about Taiwan. All of them were accordingly

<sup>33</sup> James Barber, *The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1992).

<sup>34</sup> Barber, *The Presidential Character*, p. 464.

strong advocates of promoting US–Taiwan relations and arms sales to Taiwan in the belief that it was essential to fulfilling the commitments of the Taiwan Relations Act. Secretary of State Alexander Haig, formerly commander-in-chief of NATO, and Kissinger’s erstwhile aide, had a more global perspective of China and the US policy toward China. He believed, ‘In terms of the strategic interests of the United States and the West in the last quarter of the twentieth century, China may be the most important country in the world’.<sup>35</sup>

Four months after Reagan took office, Haig made a visit to China to assure Beijing that the Reagan Administration intended to treat China as an important and valuable friend for global strategic reasons. He told Chinese leaders in Beijing that ‘a fundamental strategic perspective’ governed Reagan’s Asian policy and that a key element was the Soviet threat. To demonstrate the new administration’s desire to improve relations with Beijing, Haig announced that, for the first time, the United States was willing to sell arms to China on a case-by-case basis. The United States would gradually relax restrictions on arms sales and technology transfer to China. Reagan did sign on 4 June 1981 a directive that America would make public this decision during a Chinese military official’s planned visit to Washington DC, and that the United States would announce at the same time its decision on arms sales to Taiwan. Haig went public with this decision in advance frustrating friends of Taiwan such as NSA Allen, Secretary of Defense Weinberger, and others, who pushed Reagan into announcing on the last day of Haig’s visit to China: ‘I have not changed my feeling about Taiwan. We have a Taiwan Relations Act which provides us the legal basis for us to provide Taiwan defense articles.... I intend to live up to the Taiwan Relations Act’.<sup>36</sup> Consequently, when Haig ended his visit to China, only a Vice-Minister saw him off at the airport, not, as originally planned, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Huang Hua. Haig was furious, and upon his return attempted to prevent NSC member James Lilley and Richard Armitage of Defense from traveling on his aircraft.

China firmly opposed the US arms sales to Taiwan. Deng Xiaoping told Haig that the Chinese government’s tolerance for arms sales to Taiwan was limited, and that excessive interference in the issue would stagnate or even set back China–US relations. Haig said that he understood the sensitivity of this issue to China and that the United States would treat the problem carefully and with restraint. He also insisted that the US ‘would provide Taiwan with some carefully selected, moderate defensive weapons

<sup>35</sup> Barber, *The Presidential Character*, p. 194.

<sup>36</sup> Council on Foreign Relations, *Foreign Affairs Chronology of World Event 1978–1991* (New York: Council on Foreign relations Press, 1992), p. 239.

to Taiwan in the foreseeable future'.<sup>37</sup> After his visit, Haig was eager to act on his announcement that the United States would export arms to China. He had hopes that arms sales and technology transfers to China would stabilize US–China relations, and that the US could later export advanced fighters to Taiwan, which would help the Northrop Corporation out of its financial plight. Haig was at once angered when Holdridge, his former Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, did not facilitate the selling of military equipment to China. He urged Holdridge 'We are going to sell arms to the People's Republic of China in September so that we can sell arms to Taiwan in January . . .' But Haig's churlish remarks in Beijing about technology transfers to China displeased the White House and Defense, and, as a result, State's clear and detailed announcement of arms sales and technology transfers met opposition from Defense, leaving the decision unexecuted and unimplemented.<sup>38</sup>

As Haig's pushes to transfer technology to China failed to advance, friends of Taiwan, meanwhile, conducted a massive publicity campaign in preparation for FX fighter sales. The Northrop Corporation had great expectations of the Reagan Administration's sales of advanced fighters to Taiwan, because Northrop had a thousand employees in Reagan's home state of California, and its President, Tom Jones, was also Reagan's long-time friend and political supporter. Northrop and the Taiwanese authorities worked together to persuade the White House that the United States must export advanced fighters to Taiwan. As part of this political effort, Jones told Secretary of State Haig that the Carter Administration had already made all the necessary decisions, with the exception of approving the F-5G fighter sales. Reagan's NSA, Allen, was constantly speaking with the Taiwanese through various private channels, and he could guarantee that they would soon get both the most advanced fighters. For good measure, he also leaked to the press every few days the possibility that Taiwan had a very good chance of getting advanced fighters.

In October 1981, on the eve of the North–South summit in Cancun, Mexico, head of State's China office, William Rope, recommended to Reagan that he let the Chinese at the meeting know that the United States had decided not to sell the most advanced fighters to Taiwan. But to give Taiwan face, Northrop could help Taiwan re-equip its current F-5Es (an extremely common occurrence in active service airplanes). Haig, however, had what he proudly believed to be a great resolution to the problem: Northrop could sell Taiwan a more advanced fighter, but the US government would explain to the Chinese government that the aircraft was a variation of one already in operation. The engineers could give the

<sup>37</sup> Tian Zengpei, ed., *Chinese Diplomacy since Reform and Opening up*, pp. 387–8; Patrick Tyler, *The Great Wall*, p. 299.

<sup>38</sup> Patrick Tyler, *A Great Wall*, pp. 306–7; Holdridge, *Crossing the Divide*, pp. 262–3.

F-5E a high-powered engine produced by General Electric, add to it the newest mixed technology, use F-16 hardware and software, and call the aircraft the F-5E/T (T for Taiwan, signifying the specific plane). Pleased with his scheming, Haig said that no one would be able to tell the difference.<sup>39</sup> Holdridge and other officials working on China issues said nothing; it was just Rope and Haig who disputed over whether or not China would discover the ruse. Rope later enlisted the support of Rick Burt, Assistant Secretary for Political and Military Affairs, to try once more to convince Haig, but to no avail. Haig used his fingers to signal the counting of money, but said nothing. Tyler wrote, 'Everyone in the room understood. It was all about money, all about saving Northrop, all about bailing out the president's friend. There may also have been an ideological component for some people in the White House like Allen, but Haig was admitting that, first and foremost, the deal was about money'.<sup>40</sup>

During the October 1981 summit in Cancun, Mexico, as well as the subsequent visits to the United States, Huang Hua said to Haig that the US government must clearly promise: (i) US arms sales to Taiwan will be limited to a stipulated time frame; (ii) During this time period, arms sales to Taiwan will gradually decrease and eventually stop. Haig explained that the United States was unable to accept the demand to halt arms sales to Taiwan during a specific time frame; before the unification of China, 'such sales would continue to be "sensitive" and "restrained" and limited to defense weapons'; that future US arms sales were 'not expected to exceed, in qualitative or quantitative terms, the level of arms sales of recent years' and that the FX issue would be handled in this context. He also expressed willingness to continue talks on the issue with the Chinese side, at which time the United States would progress cautiously, but 'it would still do what it had to'.<sup>41</sup> Shortly after, Haig again brought all of State's officials on China together to deliberate on their countermove. It was once again Rope who objected, saying that the US could accept gradual decreases in arms sales to Taiwan, but on the condition that China conduct a peaceful policy toward Taiwan. On thanksgiving, 1981, State drafted a memo for the President indicating that it was negotiating the third major communiqué with the Chinese.<sup>42</sup>

The Taiwan problem provoked criticism from conservatives of the Reagan Administration's approach to Taiwan, in which they constantly reminded

<sup>39</sup> Romberg, *Rein in at the Brink of the Precipice*, p. 128; Patrick Tyler, *A Great Wall*, pp. 311–21.

<sup>40</sup> Patrick Tyler, *A Great Wall*, p. 314.

<sup>41</sup> Han Nianlong, ed., *Dangdai Zhongguo Waijiao (Contemporary Chinese Diplomacy)*, (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1987), p. 236; Tian Zengpei, ed., *Gaige Kaifang Yilai de Zhongguo Waijiao (Chinese Diplomacy since Reform and Opening up)*, (Beijing Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 1993), p. 388; Patrick Tyler, *A Great Wall*, p. 316.

<sup>42</sup> Patrick Tyler, *A Great Wall*, p. 318.



him of the political cost he would pay as regards aggrieved supporters if he did not carry out his campaign promises. But, as Haig wrote in a memo to Reagan at the time, relations with China stood at a 'critical juncture', and '... careful management is essential, if we are to avoid a setback which could gravely damage our global strategic policy'. The memo recommended: 'First, we must recognize that mainland capabilities and intentions do not require a level of US arms sales above that of the final year of the Carter Administration, which provided an unusually high ceiling. We can agree to stay within this level, so long as Peking pursues a peaceful Taiwan policy. We can also decide the replacement aircraft issue in this context. Second, while we cannot specify a time certain for ending arms sales, we can develop formulation linking our actions to genuine progress on peaceful reunification'.<sup>43</sup>

As Reagan was planning to announce which type of FX fighter Taiwan would receive at the end of 1981, the White House neither paid attention nor gave consideration to Haig's recommendations. High-level American officials also privately revealed that until early 1982, the President and his advisors still believed that they should not give up old allies, and that the base policy of selling Taiwan advanced fighters should not waive in the least. But, developments inside governmental departments and international circumstances gave Reagan no choice but to change his persisting views.

First was Allen's failure to report accepting \$1000 from a Japanese magazine reporter in exchange for an interview with first-lady Nancy Reagan. The ensuing scandal caused his resignation in November 1981, weakening the circle of policy-makers in the Reagan Administration that was in favor of exporting advanced fighters. Second, after trade unions-led strike broke out in Poland, the Soviet Union was intent on intervening, and the United States wanted to obtain China's cooperation in jointly opposing such Soviet action. But the Chinese Government firmly objected to any foreign power's interference in internal Polish affairs, and it objected more firmly still to the US exporting advanced fighters to Taiwan.

Under these circumstances, Rope, and Hallford, Rope's assistant at State's China desk, came up with the plan whereby Haig and Weinberg would jointly sign a letter to President Reagan in support of the conclusion reached at a meeting with Reagan's Chief of Staff: Taiwan does not need new variations of fighters. After being handed this memo, Haig convened a meeting with Holdridge, Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Shoemith, Rope, and others, and flew into a rage. He thundered, 'Have you all lost your senses? I don't believe we are working on the same building. Are you

<sup>43</sup> Tad Szulc, 'The Reagan Administration's Push toward China Comes from Warsaw', *Los Angeles Times*, 17 January 1982; Some of Haig's memo is available in Chinese. See Liu Liandi, ed., *Zhongmei Guanxi Zhongyao Wenxian Ziliao Xuanbian (Anthology of Important Documents in China-US Relations)* (Beijing: Shishi Chubanshe, 1996), pp. 218-9.

working for that short little bastard across the river or are you working for me?" Haig was extremely agitated and would not co-sign the letter with Weinberg that would get Defense involved in China policy that was within the scope of State authority. Other advisors tried to calm him down with little effect.<sup>44</sup>

In early January 1982, Reagan and his advisors discussed this question at Camp David. They decided not to sell advanced fighters to Taiwan, but instead to extend the life of the F-5E production line. Holdridge was sent ahead to Beijing to explain the US decision not to export new FX fighters to Taiwan. Armitage of Defense accompanied Holdridge, as well as John Davis, head of Eastern European Affairs at State, whose '...task was to explain to the Chinese how the current Soviet pressures on Poland might connect with the US arms sales to Taiwan. A possible point here was what seemed to be a Soviet build-up for an attack on Poland, which may have helped the President withhold the F-5G from Taiwan to ease tensions with China...'<sup>45</sup> In Beijing, Holdridge notified Chinese leaders that the United States would not export fighters to Taiwan, and offered the Chinese government a statement of principles to resolve the arms sales issue. Contrary to US hopes and expectations, China did not express appreciation to the US government, and also strongly criticized the decision to extend joint-production of F-5Es. The day after State announced the decision not to sell FX fighters but instead to extend joint-production of F-5Es, a spokesperson for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated: 'The issue of American arms sales, including fighter aircrafts sales, are now being discussed between the Chinese government and the US Assistant Secretary of State John Holdridge, who is now on a special trip in Beijing. While the negotiation is underway, the US government announced that it intended to sell Taiwan fighters. The Chinese government hereby lodges a strong protest against it. The whole question of US arms sales to Taiwan is a major issue affecting China's sovereignty which must be settled between the US and Chinese governments. The Chinese government will never accept any unilateral decisions made by the US government'.<sup>46</sup>

With the two sides being unable to reach an agreement, President Reagan again sent Vice-President Bush to China carrying a letter to Chinese leaders. This visit accelerated progress on the Joint-Communiqué on arms sales. During the visit, State emphasized incessantly the importance of China-US relations, which triggered off fierce opposition from those loyal to Taiwan. In July 1982, an article in the *Washington Times* claimed that State was preparing at least two secret drafts of joint-agreements limiting weapon

<sup>44</sup> Patrick Tyler, *A Great Wall*, p. 320.

<sup>45</sup> Holdridge, *Crossing the Divide*, p. 215.

<sup>46</sup> *People's Daily*, 13 January 1982, cited in Liu Liandi, ed., *Anthology of Important Documents in China-US Relations*, p. 15.

sales to Taiwan, one of which contained the US promise to ‘reduce gradually such sales and to eventually terminate them’.<sup>47</sup> Republican senator Barry Goldwater formally inquired whether State had such documents, and its answer was that it had never created this kind of draft communiqué. After the hearing of this report, the White House also made formal enquiry to the State and received a similar response. But it was later discovered that the State was indeed preparing this kind of draft, which infuriated the conservatives in Congress who believed that the State was manipulating China policy to the detriment of Taiwan. They demanded that the President fully implement his campaign promise to execute faithfully the provisions on arms sales in the Taiwan Relations Act, and they also demanded that State adopt such measures.<sup>48</sup>

The next day, President Reagan informed Haig that he had accepted the Secretary’s resignation, which, according to Haig, he had not yet given to the President.<sup>49</sup> But Haig insisted before he resigned, ‘if the President faltered in his relations with China, the Democratic opposition would leap on this question and turn it into a major issue in the 1984 election. The refusal to search for a compromise on the issue of Taiwan could result in the most significant diplomatic disaster since the ‘loss of China’ in 1949, and the party judged responsible for this failure would, and should, pay a heavy political consequence’.<sup>50</sup> When he left State, Haig did not receive one word of commendation or praise from Reagan. Haig said that if the decision to waffle on arms sales triggered a major crisis in US–China relations, he would personally lead the parade publicly condemning the President.<sup>51</sup>

After Haig’s resignation, Reagan’s second NSA William Clark told a few Congressmen that the President would not ‘retreat’ on relations with Taiwan, and ‘would not put a time limit on weapon sales to Taiwan’. On 19 July, nine representatives from 28 conservative groups met in Washington to warn Reagan that he would create an ‘extremely acrimonious’ backlash among his supporters if he cut off arms to Taiwan.<sup>52</sup> Despite the pressure exerted by these conservatives, Reagan still believed that a compromise regarding arms sales to Taiwan was impossible. On July 14, the United

<sup>47</sup> *Washington Times*, 2 July 1982, cited in Martin L. Lasater, *Policy in Evolution, the US Role in China’s Reunification* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1987), p. 86.

<sup>48</sup> Lasater, *Policy in Evolution*, p. 86.

<sup>49</sup> Alexander Jr Haig, *Caveat: Realism, Reagan and Foreign Policy* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1984), p. 314; Lasater, *Policy in Evolution*, p. 86.

<sup>50</sup> Haig, *Caveat*, p. 214; There were many problems between Reagan and Haig, such as that centering on the Malvina (Folkland) war between Britain and Argentina, and the petroleum pipeline between the Soviet Union and Europe, etc. See Zi Zhongyun, *US Diplomatic History After WW II*, pp. 874–4; Kevin V. Mulcahy, ‘The Secretary of State and the National Security Adviser: Foreign Policy-Making in the Carter and Reagan Administration’. In Jerel A. Rosati, ed., *Readings in the Politics of United States Foreign Policy* (Fort Worth, Texas: Harcourt Brace College Publisher, 1998), pp. 88–9.

<sup>51</sup> Patrick Tyler, *A Great Wall*, p. 325.

<sup>52</sup> Haig, *Caveat*, p. 314; Lasater, *Policy in Evolution*, p. 86.

States offered six assurances to Taipei: (i) not to agree to a date for ending arms sales to Taiwan; (ii) not to agree to hold prior consultations with the PRC on arms sales to Taiwan; (iii) not to play any mediation role between Taipei and Beijing; (iv) not to agree to revise the Taiwan Relations Act; (v) not to alter its position regarding sovereignty over Taiwan (that is, the United States would continue to regard Taiwan as part of China, the question of reunification would be left to the Chinese themselves, with only stipulation being that reunification be by peaceful means); (vi) not to exert pressure on Taiwan to enter into negotiation with the PRC.<sup>53</sup>

Haig was forced to leave State, but during his tenure he worked tirelessly to maintain US–China strategic relations and had a somewhat sobering understanding of Reagan’s China policy, particularly regarding the Taiwan arms sales issue, as he understood that US–China relations were far more important than US relations with the Taiwan region of China. After announcing his resignation, he called together those working under him for one final deliberation on US policy toward China, using this platform to draft two memorandums in which he expounded on the American and Chinese positions on arms sales to Taiwan. Reagan rejected the memorandum recommending that the US end arms sales, but accepted that suggesting President Reagan reach a new joint-communiqué with China. It included a draft of the memorandum, which suggested that: the United States had no Two Chinas or One China, One Taiwan policy; affirmed Beijing’s commitment to a peaceful resolution of Taiwan question; and offered the following language on the subject of arms sales: ‘the United States does not seek to carry out a long-term policy of arms sales to Taiwan and affirms the ultimate objective of ending arms sales to Taiwan. In the meantime, it expects a gradual reduction of its arms sales, leading to a final resolution of this difficult issue’.<sup>54</sup>

Holdridge said in his memoirs that after Haig’s resignation, ‘I found that despite the State’s loss of an able and distinguished head, Haig’s resignation was a blessing in disguise. His relations with the White House staff, that “hydra-headed monster” as he once termed it in my hearing—consisting of Michael Deaver, Edwin Meese, and James Baker—had become adversarial to the extent that it brought the Secretary’s work to a virtual standstill. Any proposed drafts of the joint communiqué on arms sales to China that he might have sent over to the White House would probably have been scrutinized with a magnifying glass, with any small point of contention requiring return of the document for redrafting. I cannot but give Al Haig credit for recognizing that his departure was a significant factor in our

<sup>53</sup> See Stephen P. Gibert and William M. Carpenter, eds., *America and Island China: A Documentary History* (Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America, 1989), p. 326.

<sup>54</sup> Haig, *Caveat*, pp. 214–5.

ability to reach an ultimate agreement with the Chinese on arms sales to Taiwan'.<sup>55</sup> Haig himself also said, 'On reflection, it seems to me that my precipitous, albeit inevitable, departure from the Reagan Administration was the single act that made possible the solution of this critical question'.<sup>56</sup> It was Haig's resignation that enabled Reagan to accept the recommendations offered prior to his departure on how to handle the arms sales issue, and soon thereafter to achieve the August 17 Communiqué with China.

On July 28, Reagan called a group of Congressmen who were supporters of Taiwan to a meeting at the White house. He informed them that the US might possibly reach an agreement with China in which it promised to decrease military exports to Taiwan, but that he wanted to make clear he would not abandon Taiwan. He would extend F-5E joint-production, and notify Congress of this decision within two weeks. Haig's joint-communicé draft became the core of the August 17 Communiqué. In the document, the United States made the following promise on arms sales to Taiwan: 'The United States Government states that it does not seek to carry out a long-term policy of arms sales to Taiwan, that its arms sales to Taiwan will not exceed, either in qualitative or in quantitative terms, the level of those supplied in recent years since establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and China, and that it intends to gradually reduce its sales of arms to Taiwan, leading over a period of time to a final resolution'.<sup>57</sup> This public document not only restricted sales of FX advanced and similar fighters because they would otherwise exceed the amount of weapons supplied to Taiwan since establishing relations with China, but also limited the level of weapons sales that the US could offer Taiwan from that day forward, thereby raising the prospect that the United States would stop weapon sales completely.

## The Bush Administration's FX Policy

Bush had an excellent résumé when he took office: Director of the CIA, Congressman, Chairman of the Republican Party, US Ambassador to the United Nations, Director of US Liaison Office in Beijing, de facto Ambassador to China, and Vice-President. As to China relations, no other US President had ever had as much experience in this field. In 1971, when the majority of third world countries supported China's seat at the United Nations, US Ambassador George Bush 'led the lobbying effort to permit Taiwan to keep its UN seat as part of what was called the "Dual Representation Plan"' in fall 1971 when the third world majority voted to expel Taiwan from the UN. In 1975, when he was asked by President Ford

<sup>55</sup> Holdridge, *Crossing the Divide*, p. 230.

<sup>56</sup> Haig, *Caveat*, p. 210.

<sup>57</sup> Gibert and Carpenter, eds., *America and Island China*, p. 313.

whether he would like to be US ambassador to Great Britain or France, he told the President that he wanted to be the director of the US liaison office in Beijing. As he recalled: 'An important, coveted post like London or Paris would be good for the resume, but Beijing was a challenge, a journey to the unknown'.<sup>58</sup> This was actually the beginning of his relationship with China. During the Reagan campaign, Bush was sent to Beijing to explain Reagan's China policy, and to eliminate any worries the Chinese leadership may harbor regarding some of Reagan's campaign statements. He refused a State briefing before departing saying, 'I know these people [Chinese leaders]'.<sup>59</sup> When bilateral negotiations on the question of arms sales to Taiwan entered their most difficult phase, he was again sent to Beijing to communicate with the Chinese in 1982, when he in no way endorsed exporting advanced fighters to Taiwan. Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping called him an old friend,<sup>60</sup> and Bush felt that the phrase was not just the usual flattery, but because Deng knew that he '... understood the importance of the US-China relationship and the need to keep it on track'.<sup>61</sup> This depth of experience, particularly with China's handling of the Taiwan problem, made Bush cognizant of the importance and sensitivity of the Taiwan issue in Chinese foreign relations. When Bush became President, it seemed to bode well for China-US relations.

Bush's main foreign policy-makers all had abundant experience of working in governmental agencies. Other than John Sununu, White House Chief of Staff, those within the Bush policy-making circle were all Washington insiders from the Nixon, Ford, and Reagan Administrations. Secretary of State James Baker had been Under Secretary of Commerce under Nixon and Ford, and Reagan's Chief of Staff. NSA Brent Scowcroft was once Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs when Kissinger was with the NSC, and when Kissinger became Secretary of State, Scowcroft took on the role of NSA. Assistant Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger was initially Kissinger's executive assistant, and later became Deputy Secretary for administrative affairs. Most important, all of

<sup>58</sup> George Bush, *Looking Forward* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), p. 130.

<sup>59</sup> Harry Harding, *A Fragile Relationship: the United States and China since 1972* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 1992), p. 229.

<sup>60</sup> After Reagan was elected, Deng Xiaoping was interviewed by the editor-in-chief of the *Christian Science Monitor* and said that he was not familiar with Reagan, but that, 'I am very familiar with some of Mr. Reagan's policy-makers, we are practically old friends. Mr. Bush, for instance, is one that I know well'. See 'Vice-Chairman Deng Xiaoping Answers an American Reporter's Questions', *People's Daily*, 24 November 1980; After the Tian'anmen Square incident, Bush sent National Security Advisor Scowcroft with a special envoy to Beijing to exchange views with Chinese leaders. Deng Xiaoping said upon seeing Scowcroft, 'I have already retired. This would not have been my job, but it would be improper etiquette not to meet with my good friend President Bush's special envoy'. See *Deng Xiaoping Wenxuan (The Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping)*, vol. 3, (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1993), p. 350.

<sup>61</sup> George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), p. 94.

the Bush Administration's major foreign policy-makers were long-time friends. Bush met Baker as soon as he moved to Texas in 1959, and the two became good friends. Baker had given Bush steadfast support since he first entered politics, and was always Bush's right-hand-man on the campaign trail. In 1992, when Bush was in the midst of a difficult campaign for re-election, Secretary of State Baker left State to become White House Chief of Staff once more and manage Bush's re-election campaign. Bush called their relationship a 'big brother–little brother relationship', which Baker said, in his memoirs, was an accurate description.<sup>62</sup> Their political views were also extremely close. Bush loved personal diplomacy, as did Baker. Bush's trust in Baker enabled him to express his opinions freely to the President.

National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft became Bush's friend during the Ford era, when Bush was Director of the CIA, Scowcroft was Deputy NSA. Bush trusted his experience, and his pragmatic, mild-mannered working style. Bush later recalled that Scowcroft was '... my first and only choice to head the NSC'. Scowcroft let his assistants handle the daily NSC affairs, and saw himself as coordinator and advisor to the President, with no authority to serve as 'decision-maker'. Bush wrote in his memoirs, 'He handled that job with total dedication and skill. [He is] one of my closest advisors on all things...'<sup>63</sup> Bush also said, 'His reputation, based on his deep knowledge of foreign policy matters and his prior experience, was such that there could be no doubt that he was the honest broker I wanted. He would not try to run over the heads of the cabinet members, or cut them off from contact with the president, yet I also knew he would give me his own experienced views on whatever problem might arise'.<sup>64</sup> After being voted out of office, Bush and Scowcroft cooperated on a joint-memoir that details the level of closeness within Bush's foreign policy team.

Members of Bush's team were more than simply good friends—they had 'thirty years of friendship'. Although there were specific disputes on the occasional issue, Baker later recalled, their differences 'never took the form of the backbiting of Kissinger–Rogers, Vance–Brzezinski eras, or the slugfests of our national security teams during the Reagan years. There was no trashing of colleagues at the upper levels, and very little leaking to the press'. 'As a result, I firmly believed that one of the foremost accomplishments of the Bush Presidency was that we made the national security apparatus work the way it was supposed to'.<sup>65</sup>

As a President with extensive foreign policy experience, Barber describes Bush as an 'active-positive' president, in the sense that he was actively

<sup>62</sup> James A. Baker III with Thomas M. DeFrank, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War and Peace 1989–1992* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1995), p. 22.

<sup>63</sup> George Bush, *All the Best, George Bush, My life in Letters and Other Writings* (New York: A Lisa Drew Book/Scribner, 1999), p. 17.

<sup>64</sup> Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, pp. 18–9.

<sup>65</sup> Baker III, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, pp. 19, 25.

engaged in Presidential work and derived much happiness from it.<sup>66</sup> Bush's time as a career diplomat and his experience in multiple governmental agencies, particularly his frequent and active experience with foreign policy matters as Vice-President, made him acutely interested and often actively participant in policy formulation on foreign matters. He was fond of 'telephone diplomacy', and excelled at interface with other leaders by telephone in order to establish personal relations. He enjoyed participating in foreign policy activities and was a keen diplomatic mastermind. After Bush had been in office for two years, *Foreign Policy* published a comparison of the Bush and Reagan foreign policy-making styles: 'Bush prefers politics on the retail level, in marked contrast to Ronald Reagan's wholesale style. Rather than beginning with a high-profile, public position, Bush first lays out broad objectives before his top associates, then joins them in an intense and often lengthy consultative and lobbying effort, checking the political winds to see what will fly. Only when the administration is fairly certain its proposal is acceptable will the president reveal his program, almost as a done deal. . . . Although Bush has occasionally reached out for expert opinion, he prefers to rely on a small group of trusted advisers, particularly on sensitive political issues or in crisis'.<sup>67</sup> Bush's individualized policy-making style and the close relations among his foreign policy assistants meant that there were few bureaucratic struggles within the foreign policy-making structure.

Bush traveled to China soon after taking office, which was another good sign for China-US relations. But when, after the Tian'anmen Square incident, Bush announced the adoption of multiple forms of sanctions, China-US relations tumbled to their lowest point since they had started. Bush understood China and knew its aversion to foreign intervention and hence that excessive interference would run counter to US interests. Even more important, as the Cold War was unfinished, China still held an important strategic position. Bush therefore stated that he would not adopt measures to break off relations that the two sides had worked so hard to establish since 1972. He insisted, 'This is not a time for an emotional response, but for reasoned, careful actions that takes into account our long term interests. . .'.<sup>68</sup> Bush stood up to Congressional pressure and refused to close the US embassy in Beijing. Moreover, soon after the US government announced its adoption of sanctions, he sent Scowcroft and Eagleburger on secret visits to China, first in July and then again in December. He said later, 'I had a keen personal interest in China and I thought I understood it

<sup>66</sup> Barber, *The Presidential Character*.

<sup>67</sup> Terry L. Deibel, 'Bush's Foreign Policy: Mastery and Inaction'. In *Foreign Policy*, No. 84, Fall 1991, pp. 6, 9.

<sup>68</sup> *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, 5 June 1989, pp. 839-40.



reasonably well, enough to closely direct our policy towards it'.<sup>69</sup> Nonetheless, in 1992, Bush announced the export of 150 F-16s to Taiwan.

Bush's decision to sell advanced fighters to Taiwan was made under conditions where there was no indication whatever of bureaucratic wrangling. After Bush entered the White House, the international system experienced its most significant changes since World War II: sudden political upheaval in Eastern Europe, the fall of the Soviet Union and the Persian Gulf War. Skilled as he was in international affairs, Bush faced these myriad changes and handled them adroitly. But as the US celebrated the end of the Cold War and victory in the Persian Gulf, disaster struck at home: the US economy entered another recession, and Americans switched their focus to the close connection between their personal well-being and the domestic economy. Bush's high popularity rate, which originated from victory in the Gulf War, precipitated shortly after the end of the war. The first economic downturn at the end of the Cold War affected multiple sectors of the economy. The war industry was hit hardest, and many corporations fixed their gaze on Taiwan. But the first arms company to invest in Taiwan was not an American one. Owing to the explicit promises in the August 17 Communiqué, US corporations barely considered the possibility of the US government's ending restrictions that had been in place for over a decade, most particularly during Bush's term in office, on sales of advanced fighters to Taiwan.

During spring, 1992, Taiwanese officials began making annual arms purchasing trips to Washington. It was business as usual, with F-16s as the Taiwanese authorities' top choice of weapon. But research shows that the US government had still not responded to Taiwan's request for advanced fighters until the end of May 1992, when negotiations on US-Taiwan arms sales ended. When State officials notified Taiwanese representatives of the decision, F-16s were still ineligible for export. If Taiwan truly wanted to purchase even more advanced fighters, it could try for France's Mirage-2000.<sup>70</sup> James Lilley, who had just switched from US ambassador to Beijing to Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, encouraged Defense and State to analyze the military balance in the Taiwan Strait, and called on the US government to export advanced fighters to Taiwan.

At Defense, Lilley told Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Wolfowitz and Douglas Paal, who handled China affairs at the NSC, to think about arms sales to Taiwan. In May 1992, on a flight back from Australia, where Lilley and Secretary of Defense Cheney had attended a ceremony marking the anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea, Lilley raised the issue with

<sup>69</sup> Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 90.

<sup>70</sup> Mann, *About Face*, p. 265; Robert L. Suettinger, *Beyond Tian'anmen: The Politics of US-China Relations, 1989-2000* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 2003), p. 140.

Secretary of Defense Cheney. Lilley told Cheney that Taiwan's request for advanced fighters had just been turned down again, but that the PRC was purchasing Russian Su-27s, France was marketing the Mirage-2000, and that Taiwan's 'Indigenous Defense Fighter' (IDF) was not developing well and had limited 'loiter time', the F-5E production line had stopped, and the F-104 could not fill the gap. Lilley encouraged Cheney to revisit the issue, and at his urging, Cheney also became an active supporter of exporting advanced fighters to Taiwan. Lilley recalled sending a memo to the NSC, State and the White House during the summer of 1992, and after a period of silence a directive suddenly ordered: 'Form an interagency group to look at this'. A rather truncated interagency process ensued.<sup>71</sup>

As the re-election campaign was looking less and less favorable for Bush, he was obliged to give more attention to domestic matters. At the end of July 1992, Bush accepted the invitation of Texas Senator Joe Barton (R) to campaign at the Texas F-16 manufacturing plant in Fort Worth. Before Bush arrived, General Electric announced on 29 July that it would lay off 5800 employees by 1994 because of a reduction in F-16 orders.<sup>72</sup> On the plane to Texas the next day, Bush said to a group of reporters that he would 'strongly consider' whether the United States could export F-16s to Taiwan. Defense then began detailed research into what type of and how many fighters would be exported. At the time he was considering the US policy on exporting fighters to Taiwan, Bush was also dealing with the issue of whether to export the F-15 to Saudi Arabia.<sup>73</sup>

The primary considerations regarding potential sales to Taiwan were that of Defense articulating a convincing rationale for doing so; mitigating internal government opposition; finding a reason why this deal did not violate the limitations put on the US by the August 17 Communiqué; stating clearly Taiwan's need for these weapons; and explaining why the Chinese government should not react too drastically. At the time, State was against the sale.<sup>74</sup> Assistant Secretary of State William Clark drafted a memo for the White House arguing that exporting F-16s to Taiwan may lead to an intense reaction from the Chinese government. US Ambassador to China Stapleton Roy thought that exporting F-16s to Taiwan would indeed violate the August 17 Communiqué, and that the United States should abide by its promises. But while, in August 1992, the interagency group deliberated on this issue, it did not allow other agencies to explain their viewpoints in detail;

<sup>71</sup> Romberg, *Rein in at the Brink of the Precipice*, pp. 150–1.

<sup>72</sup> Susumu Awanohara, 'Election Dynamics'. In *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 20 August 1992, p. 20.

<sup>73</sup> Mann, *About Face*, pp. 266–7; Suettinger, *Beyond Tian'anmen*, p. 140.

<sup>74</sup> Suettinger, *Beyond Tian'anmen*, p. 140.

it was Defense that was explaining the basis of the deal to the representatives in State, Commerce, and Intelligence who still were uncertain of it. State's opposition to this decision soon appeared to lack conviction. In an effort to improve Bush's dismal campaign circumstances, Baker left State to become White House Chief of Staff, which was actually the post of Bush's campaign manager. William Clark later recalled that State's objections to the arms deal were meaningless: 'I think it was already decided in the White House. They were just going through the form'.<sup>75</sup>

During the course of the Bush Administration policy-maker process, media and Congressional participation was limited. It was only after Bush declared that he would reconsider arms sales to Taiwan that the media, Congress, and defense corporations began to exert pressure.<sup>76</sup> Scarcely more than a month passed from the time Bush said that he would revisit the arms sales issue to the announcement that the United States had authorized the export of 150 F-16A and B fighters. In less than two months, Bush made the decision to sell Taiwan the aircraft that it had fought for ten years to get, and which the Reagan and Carter Administrations, as well as his own, had all been against Taiwan's purchasing.

## Conclusion

The evidence provided in these three case studies enables the following conclusions to be drawn on the efficacy of bureaucratic political models in explaining the Taiwan arms sales policy, the conditions under which bureaucratic politics influence outcome, and the general usefulness of bureaucratic models.

### Bureaucratic Conflict Was Pervasive during the Process of Forging Carter, Reagan, and Bush Policy on the Taiwan FX Issue

First, bureaucratic models are generally effective at explaining US policy-making on Taiwan arms sales; they help to understand US policy. From a procedural standpoint, US military export policy (including exports to Taiwan) is standardized by law. Different departments handle various types of military exports and, with the exception of those that are sensitive or large-scale, the President's participation is not usually necessary. But the sensitive issue of arms sales to Taiwan touched upon China-US relations and US global strategy, meriting the President's involvement. In these three instances, the participants, in addition to the President, in forging US policy

<sup>75</sup> Mann, *About Face*, p. 267.

<sup>76</sup> Zhang Qingmin, 'Bush zhengfu xiang Taiwan chushou F-16 zhandouji de jue ding: Meiguo dui Hua zhengce jue ding yinsu de yige anli fenxi' ('The Bush Administration's Decision to Export F-16s to Taiwan: A Case Study in US Policy-making toward China'), *Meiguo yanjiu (America Studies Quarterly)*, 2000, No. 4, pp. 97-122.

were State, Defense, the NSC, the ACDA, and their sub-departments. Outside of these administrative departments, the Congress, the media, and the Taiwanese officials were also involved. In practice, the departments that participated in the decision to sell the weaponry had differing understandings and viewpoints. The jockeying for position, endless wrangling and rivalry that occurred was exactly what classic bureaucratic politics writings would predict. Even though bureaucratic conflict was not obvious during the Bush Administration, there was nevertheless an inter-departmental investigation of the issue.

This bureaucratic conflict most certainly encompassed different views and positions that existed in each department, and cases of 'where you stand depends on where you sit'. But belief, experience, emotion, and knowledge also determined points of view and carried the most weight in that respect. From a 'where you stand depends on where you sit' perspective, State in particular was worried whether arms sales to Taiwan would damage China-US relations, while the frequent concern of Defense and other military agencies was whether arms sales to Taiwan would benefit US global strategy. In practice, Carter's NSA on East Asian Affairs, Reagan's Secretary of State Haig and Assistant Secretary Holdridge, as well as Bush's Deputy Secretary of State William Clark and Ambassador Roy all advocated either not exporting weaponry to Taiwan or handling the issue very carefully. To a large degree, their views on these questions hinged on where they worked.

But there are still ample cases in which the post held did not explain the policy position. For instance, during the course of establishing relations with China, Carter's Secretary of State Vance and Assistant Secretary Holbrooke insisted on maintaining the US right to export arms to Taiwan, as did the Reagan White House and James Lilley of the Bush era. Apart, perhaps, from Lilley, in his position as Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, the others' policy views cannot be explained by 'where you stand depends on where you sit'. Those of Vance and Holbrooke reflected their dissatisfaction with Brzezinski, and also domestic political considerations. Meanwhile, Brzezinski was making every effort to normalize relations with China, primarily because it was related to his beloved anti-Soviet Union strategy, a commitment inseparable from his anti-Soviet sentiments as a Polish descendant. Reagan and his White House staff promoted the export of arms to Taiwan because they were all political conservatives with anti-communist sentiments and, more important, had close economic ties with Taiwan. Haig endorsed arms sales to Taiwan while actively promoting technology transfers to China, a viewpoint that could be explained by his position as Secretary of State. It could also have to do with his experience as Commander-in-Chief of NATO and as Kissinger's aide,

which enabled him to see US–China relations and the Taiwan arms sales issue from a more global strategic perspective.

### **Bureaucratic Political Conflict Had Differing Impacts on the Policy-making Processes of the Carter, Reagan, and Bush Administrations**

There were three main aspects to problems among the various departments of the Carter Administration. First was that of State and NSC personnel's vying for influence during the process of establishing China–US relations. After winning the authority to lead, Brzezinski used discussions on Taiwan arms sales to promote strategic cooperation with China, and dodged the issue of arms sales by focusing on the need to promote strategic cooperation. State was first to oppose Brzezinski's visit to China in May 1978, and soon after once more let Carter know that the United States must clearly indicate its position on arms sales during negotiations to open relations. Although State's methods smacked of political undercutting, it is important to bear in mind that State had to explain to Congress all the promises made to China over the course of normalization talks. Relations between Congress and the administrative departments were already tenuous because of the Taiwan arms sales issue, and it would be State, not the NSC, that would have to address Congress directly, providing a satisfactory explanation for US actions. Holbrooke, for instance, needed to report and explain to Congress any China–US agreement, and he insisted that normalization negotiations must explicitly indicate US intentions to sell arms to Taiwan. Second, when the US first considered Taiwan's request for advanced fighters in 1978, there was disagreement within the NSC. In order to keep arms manufacturers from expanding their foreign markets, Michel Oksenberg, responsible for China affairs at the NSC, wanted to export the F-4, not the F-5G. But Brzezinski dismissed his and others' objections, unifying State and Defense in recommending that Carter export the F-5G. Third, there was conflict among the ACDA and associated departments. ACDA responsibility was to help create US arms control and disarmament policy. It approached the issue in the same way as certain members of the NSC did, recommending exports of the F-4, which lacked air-to-ground missile capacity. Carter eventually supported the ACDA position and decided against selling the F-5Gs to Taiwan.

During the Reagan era, the bureaucratic conflict and other problems that existed among departments included several related to Taiwan arms sales. First, the White House's emphasis on ideology as compared with the State Department's more strategic view of relations with China gave rise to different understandings of China, which consequently also engendered divergent views and considerations on the Taiwan arms sales question. As regards the administration's composition, Haig was appointed Secretary of

State in order to provide the government with foreign policy experience, not because Reagan trusted him. Judge William Clark was appointed Assistant Secretary to 'act as Reagan's watchdog in the State Department'.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, there were problems between State and Defense. Haig believed that it should be State's exclusive right and duty to determine whether or not to export weaponry to Taiwan. He would not allow Defense involvement in any matters that were within State's function and authority, and would fly into a terrible rage at any dispute of this principle. There were also problems and disagreements within State. Documents eventually revealed that when the United States and China were negotiating the arms sales issue, Director of the Office of Policy Planning Wolfowitz wrote two articles criticizing Haig's China policy. During 1981, he authorized aides to write an extensive memorandum arguing that Haig overestimated the strategic value of the relationship with China. In the spring of 1982, he wrote another article criticizing the US for making too many compromises on the arms sales issue. This so infuriated Haig that he insisted on Wolfowitz's not receiving any information on the negotiations until the joint-communique was finished.<sup>78</sup>

Staff members' bureaucratic political tussling may have influenced specific policy outcomes and also influenced long-term policy orientation. Allen's resignation from the NSC affected the strength of the movement from the White House that was pushing for Taiwan arms sales. After Haig resigned, Holdridge was appointed Ambassador to Indonesia, and Rope later became an expert on Turkey. After obtaining the support of Secretary of State Schultz, Wolfowitz was appointed Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, which marked a change in the level of importance accorded China in America's East Asia policy.

The Bush Administration's decision-making process differed from those of his two predecessors in certain respects. First, NSA Scowcroft and Secretary of State Baker cooperated very well, they did not have dazzling disagreements, neither did they always jockey for position. The Baker-led State Department had a close-knit foreign policy team, and Scowcroft took on a harmonizing, housekeeping, advising, and implementing role. Although the subordinate levels of government could air their opinions and objections, they were unable to influence the highest policy-making level. As regards China policy, the time period over which the decision to sell F-16s to Taiwan was made was less than two months, and there has been no evidence since to indicate that bureaucratic conflict existed at the time. James Lilley once advocated selling the F-16s, but his impact on the process and outcome is

<sup>77</sup> Robert S. Hirschfield, 'The Reagan Administration and US Relations with China and Taiwan'. In Koenig et al., eds., *Congress, the Presidency, and the Taiwan Relations Act* (New York: Praeger Publisher, 1985), p. 117. Holdridge, *Crossing the Divide*, p. 265, footnote 6 and p. 348.

<sup>78</sup> Mann, *About Face*, p. 129.

unclear. He said that he recommended exporting 50 F-16s, with the result that Bush decided to sell 150. Lilley recalls that although it superficially seemed as though the inter-agency group was analyzing the feasibility of arms sales, this was actually all for show because it seemed that the decision had already been made.<sup>79</sup> Of the three occasions that the US administrations considered exporting arms to Taiwan, the Reagan and Carter Administrations provide particular examples of bureaucratic politics models.

The policy-making processes of the Carter, Reagan, and Bush Administrations indicate that the Reagan Administration's process was full of bureaucratic 'games', that the influence of bureaucratic conflict was serious, and that bureaucratic models have relatively high explanatory power. Bureaucratic conflict in the Bush Administration's policy-making process was barely perceivable; bureaucratic conflict did not influence the process and bureaucratic models have negligible effectiveness in explaining the outcome. The role and influence of bureaucratic conflict in the Carter Administration's policy-making is somewhere between that of the Reagan and Bush Administrations.

### The Influence of Presidential Leadership and Decision-making Capacity on Bureaucratic Conflict

First, those who participated in making policy on Taiwan arms sales held unequal positions under the President. According to the US Constitution, it is the President who has the right to guide foreign policy. The President has the authority to select the policy-making style that he wants and to pursue policies in accordance with his political views, as well as to choose the policy-making team members. As Krasner points out, 'The President chooses most of the players and sets the rules. He selects the men who head the large bureaucracies. The individuals must share his values... The success a bureau enjoys in furthering its interests depends on maintaining the support and affection of the president'.<sup>80</sup> During the Carter era, Carter first oscillated between Brzezinski and Vance, but as Carter increasingly looked to Brzezinski for guidance, Brzezinski secured more initiative on China policy. In the Reagan era, on the other hand, although Haig won the bureaucratic conflict on arms sales to Taiwan, he paid a high price for it—that of losing Reagan's trust. Reagan said in his memoirs, 'He and I also differed about Taiwan: I regarded Taiwan as a loyal, democratic, long-time ally to whom we owed unqualified support. Haig and others at the State Department were so

<sup>79</sup> Romberg, *Rein in at the Brink of the Precipice*, p. 151.

<sup>80</sup> Stephen D. Krasner, 'Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison Wonderland)'. In G. John Ikenberry, ed., *American Foreign Policy: Theoretical Essays* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1996), pp. 463–4.

eager to improve relations with the People's Republic of China that they pressed me to back away from this pledge of support'.<sup>81</sup> Haig had won the battle, but lost the war and was forced to resign. As the main policy-makers of the Bush Administration had views identical to those of Bush himself, and their relations were so close and trusting, there was never any trace of bureaucratic conflict or rumours of resignations.

Moreover, whether there was bureaucratic conflict depended to a large extent on the President's personality, policy-making style, and control over the policy-making process. Krasner argues, 'The behaviour of the state, that is, the behaviour of some of its official organizations, in the international system appears confused or even contradictory. This is a situation which develops, however, not because of the independent power of the government organizations, but because of failures by decision-makers to assert control'.<sup>82</sup> As the most powerful policy-maker, the President's participation or otherwise in the policy-making process determines whether or not there is bureaucratic conflict, and also the degree of any discord. Margaret Hermann, former President of the International Studies Association, raises several factors influencing a leader's foreign policy-making. First, under certain conditions, a leader's personal characteristics and foreign policy behavior is 'affected by the political leader's interest in foreign affairs, his training in foreign affairs, and his sensitivity to his environment'.<sup>83</sup> She adds, 'Interest is a motivating force. One consequence of interest in foreign policy will be increased attention to the foreign policy-making process'.<sup>84</sup> Second, foreign policy experience, training, or specialized knowledge influences the options, methods, and strategies in a leader's repertoire when making policy. Third, the less sensitive a leader is to his environment, the more likely his personality will be to influence foreign policy, the less likely the leader will be to change, for example, his longstanding goals, attitudes, and strategies.<sup>85</sup> If a President has abundant foreign policy experience and is extremely interested in foreign affairs, he will enter the foreign policy-making process and participate in formulating policy. But even if those in his cabinet disagree, the President will not allow discord among subordinates to influence the final outcome. If the President is not interested in foreign policy, then he will not participate in the policy-making process. A non-participatory or detached President will give rise to divergent voices and policy advocates, creating inevitable bureaucratic

<sup>81</sup> Ronald Reagan, *Ronald Reagan: An American Life* (New York: Pocket Book, 1990), p. 361.

<sup>82</sup> Krasner, 'Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison Wonderland)', p. 465.

<sup>83</sup> Margaret G. Hermann, 'Effects of Personal Characteristics of Political Leaders on Foreign Policy'. In Maurice East et al., eds., *Why Nations Act: Theoretical Perspective Foreign Policy Studies* (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications Inc., 1978), p. 68.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>85</sup> Margaret G. Hermann, 'Leaders and Foreign Policy Decision-making'. In D. Caldwell and T. McKeown, eds., *Diplomacy, Force and Leadership* (Westview Press, 1993), pp. 77-94.



conflict, the seriousness of which depends on the political views of the government officials.

As for the three cases chosen in this essay, Carter entered the White House after serving as the Governor of Georgia. He had never worked in Washington and had no foreign policy experience. When it came to foreign policy, he was an outsider. After taking office, he saw himself 'as a policy initiator and manager who would make his own decisions from the range of views provided by his senior advisor'.<sup>86</sup> The differing views of his main foreign policy aides created problems, and as he could do no more than go back and forth among them, bureaucratic conflict ensued. Reagan had also not received education on foreign policy, and lacked experience and know-how on foreign matters. More important still, he was not sensitive to or interested in foreign affairs; and his lack of experience led him to rely heavily on his foreign policy team. But as the scope of responsibility for these participants was unclear, his policy-making system was extremely chaotic. It was called by one of the participants as 'highly concentrated but participatory decision-making system', which was characterized as a kind of 'black hole' into which issues entered but policy never seemed emerge.<sup>87</sup> In this environment, US arms sales to Taiwan became a focal point of bureaucratic conflict. Bush's experience and personality were exactly the opposite of Reagan's. He had not only an extensive diplomatic experience, but also a deep commitment to international affairs. It would appear that Bush, after careful consideration, created a small diplomatic policy-making committee consisting of people who were loyal and devoted to him. This policy-making style, consisting of small committees of staunch supporters, has caused certain analysts of foreign policy to suspect that Bush's policy-making suffers from 'groupthink'.<sup>88</sup> It is, therefore, to be expected of future US policy-making on arms sales to Taiwan that the level of bureaucratic conflict will depend to a large extent on the President's experience and worldview, as well as on his understanding of US-China relations, particularly in the light of the Taiwan problem. The richer a president's diplomatic experience and interest in foreign policy, the greater the likelihood of his entering into the policy-making and formulating process, and the smaller the relative influence of bureaucratic politics. In contrast, a president without diplomatic experience or interest in foreign affairs will leave such issues to his foreign policy team,

<sup>86</sup> Mulcahy, 'The Secretary of State and the National Security Adviser: Foreign Policy-Making in the Carter and Reagan Administration'. In Rosati, ed., *Readings in the Politics of United States Foreign Policy*, p. 82.

<sup>87</sup> Leslie Gelb, 'Is Washington Big Enough for Two States?' *New York Times*, 21 February 1982, cited in Nathan and Oliver, *Foreign Policy Making and the American Political System*, p. 52.

<sup>88</sup> John Dumbrell, *The Making of US Foreign Policy* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 91; Diebel, 'Bush's Foreign Policy, Mastery and Inaction', p. 20.

which intensifies the impact of bureaucratic politics on the outcome. The policy-making process is a potential hotbed of intense bureaucratic infighting.

### **Bureaucratic Political Models Have Limited Explanatory Power and Provide an Incomplete Picture of US Arms Sales to Taiwan**

The factors influencing a nation's foreign policy-making are complicated. They encompass international circumstances, domestic politics, history, culture, and the nation's special characteristics. Various models attempt to analyze foreign policy from a particular perspective, enquiring into the influence of certain factors on the outcome. Bureaucratic political models emphasize administrative departments and hope to understand the problems and conflicts among them. Bureaucratic theory not only ignores cases where departments advocate the same position (it cannot explain the Bush Administration's decision), but also takes no account of domestic and international circumstances. In his critique of Allison, Krasner recognizes that there are inevitable demands put on a bureaucratic department, but that 'this does not, however, imply that the analyst should abandon a focus on values or assumptions of rationality... The behaviour of states is still determined by values, although foreign policy may reflect satisfactory rather than optimal outcomes'.<sup>89</sup> Bureaucratic conflict was most intense during the Reagan Administration, but the President, Congress, White House, and State held identical views on the general arms sales policy toward Taiwan; they differed only on timing and the type of aircraft to export. It cannot be argued that it was simply because bureaucratic conflict was present that the nation was unable to achieve the most beneficial result; the claim that bureaucratic political theory prevails over the rational actor model is, therefore, flawed. In this case, it answers the question of 'how' the United States formulated its policy toward arms sales, but in order to answer the question as to 'why' the United States had certain intentions and objectives, it is necessary to draw on the rational actor model.

Also, models of bureaucratic politics and other models of foreign policy-making are not always easily distinguishable. They are often complementary, and when put together reveal the outcomes of US policy-making on arms sales to Taiwan. If during the policy-making process administrative departments were bogged down in bureaucratic struggle, they would often give Congress the opportunity to get involved in the process, thereby creating further inter-departmental problems. If, on the other hand, administrative departments were unified, they would minimize the possibility of Congressional involvement. Because bureaucratic political models are limited in scope to those of administrative departments, it is

<sup>89</sup> Krasner, 'Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison Wonderland)', p. 462.

also impossible to consider the functions of Congress in sharing foreign policy authority during the policy-making process, as stipulated in the Constitution.

The bureaucratic politics model is similar, therefore, to the rational actor model and inter-branch model, but it is simply one facet of the policy-making process rather than a complete picture of the process of formulating policy. Various models are able to explain certain phases of the policy-making process only; they do not completely explain developments or changes along the way. Different policy-making models also mistake one aspect of the policy-making process for its entirety, and are actually only able to see one part of the 'big picture'. As Jervis explains, 'Domestic politics may dictate that a given event may be made the occasion for a change in policy; bargaining within the bureaucracy may explain what options are presented to the national leaders; the decision-maker's predisposition could account for the choice that was made; and the interests and routines of the bureaucracies could explain the way the decision was implemented'.<sup>90</sup> In order to grasp fully the 'big picture' behind US arms sales to Taiwan, different models must be drawn upon in accordance with changes in circumstances, thereby taking into consideration all the different factors that influence foreign policy-making.

From a definitional standpoint, however, the bureaucratic politics model states that the US government consists of numerous departments and is not a single, rationally behaving unit. These departments may have different interests and possess divergent policy views on certain problems, including the issue of exporting arms to Taiwan. In opposing US arms sales to Taiwan, and handling other aspects of our relationship with the US, we in China normally approach diplomacy as a form of inter-governmental contact. In past communications with the US, we would often lump all US officials into one. Experience shows this practice to be insufficient and unsound. We should invest ourselves in understanding specific issues and the control the President has over relevant departments, work decisively to strengthen communication with each governmental department and generally to harmonize the positions of various departments. Amid increasingly interconnected and globalized circumstances, China and the United States already have a multi-level system of communication with numerous areas of exchange. We in China can oppose US arms sales to Taiwan and resolve other problems through meticulous work with various US departments, thereby creating more feasible conditions in which to build stable China-US relations.

<sup>90</sup> Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 17.