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## The China Card

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# Arms for Peking pressed by CFR

by Richard Katz

A high-pressure campaign has now begun to ensure that the United States responds to any Soviet intervention into Poland by "realigning ourselves with China," including building up China's military, in the words of Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Charles Percy (R-Ill.). In fact, Percy's March 29 call on CBS-TV's "Face the Nation," echoed the same day in columns in the *New York Times* and *Boston Globe*, has little to do with Poland—that is just a tactic to sell the deal to President Reagan. Behind the campaign lay a March 19-22 conference on "The China Factor" sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations that took place at Averell Harriman's secluded Arden House estate in New York.

The more than 40 attendees included Winston Lord, Richard Solomon, William Hyland, and Helmut Sonnenfeldt from the Kissinger-era National Security Council (NSC), and, from the Carter administration, former Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke, former NSC staffers Michael Oksenberg and Roger Sullivan, and former Ambassador to Korea Richard Sneider. From the Reagan administration and other current policy-making centers were NSC staffer James Lilley, State Department China desk chief Charles Freeman, Defense Intelligence Agency Director Lt.-Gen. Eugene Tighe, Jr., and Joint Chiefs of Staff Director of Operations Lt.-Gen. Philip Gast.

### Alliance with China

One of the attendees, a longtime associate of Henry Kissinger, told *EIR* the purpose of the conference was to push Reagan into joining a long-term military alliance with China. "The Reagan administration will begin selling arms to China during its first term," he confidently predicted, "it's inevitable."

Indeed, the final report of the conference—attended by Kissinger and Carter associates as well as Reagan officials—declares: "Security cooperation should be expanded to authorize the licensing of defense-related industrial production technology," and suggests there should be "joint staff consultation and the removal of the current prohibition against the sale of lethal but defensive weaponry."

The Carter administration "had drafted a list of weapons to sell to China," announced Percy, a leader of the CFR's Chicago affiliate. "Congress would back Reagan if he decided to do it." But the November election put the Carter plan in limbo and many conference attendees fear it will now be very difficult to sell the plan to Reagan.

"All that has been achieved so far," explained former Carter National Security Council staff member Roger Sullivan, "is that Reagan has been convinced not to do anything that would disrupt U.S.-China ties until the issue has been more carefully studied. But there probably won't be any decision for months on security relations."

### Twenty-year buildup

A member of the pro-China Card faction of the Reagan administration made it clear that the "Polish crisis issue" was just a pretext to package a long-term strategy of moving the U.S. closer to China. "What we're really talking about here is a 20-year military buildup program for China. Their economy can't support a five-year rush buildup."

"The U.S. won't be selling China lots of fighter jets, for example, but instead we will sell them components, the technology to build engines, avionics, and build up electronics and other dual-use industries. Right now China is falling further and further behind the Soviet Union," he continued. "We want to reverse that."

At no point, according to several participants, was the conference allowed to discuss at any significant length the simple fact that Deng Xiaoping's policy of undercutting heavy industry domestically makes it impossible to transform China into a credible military power.

In fact, virtually every attendee spoken to actually endorsed Deng's economics. Sullivan, for example, admitted that China would suffer zero economic growth in 1981, but contended, "It will recover by 1983 and then have steady growth."

On the political side, a well-known China Card scholar dismissed reports of widespread strikes as "serious but manageable." "We agreed that as long as Deng is alive, his faction will remain in control," reported a Kissinger associate. "After that, no one knows." So much for a 20-year buildup.

"We didn't allow extended discussion of the economic or political stability in China," commented another attendee, "because you get bogged down and decide you can't do anything once you let that kind of talk start."

One can only wonder if Reagan will be told "not to get bogged down" in a discussion of Chinese reality as he is urged to form a 20-year military alliance with Peking.