

# United States reopens ties to communist Chinese military

by Cho Wen-pin

It was reported recently that the Clinton administration has shifted to a friendlier policy toward China, codified in a classified "action memorandum" signed by President Bill Clinton last month, which includes the first direct, high-level contact in four years with China's military. Under the aegis of this new strategy, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Regional Security Charles Freeman traveled to Beijing in late October.

Mao Zedong used to characterize the world situation in the Cold War era as the "East Wind" versus the "West Wind," in mah-jong terms. He predicted that the former will eventually prevail. During the 1980s, when dozens of China's intermediate-range CSS2 missiles had traveled along the "silk route"—to as far as Saudi Arabia—where the "West Wind" also blew, the missiles themselves happened to be named "East Wind."

For the past decade, China's arms sales in the Middle East region have totaled in the billions of dollars. Many of China's arms sales to such western-friendly countries as Saudi Arabia occurred with the assent of the Pentagon—especially of Bush, who did not seem reluctant to aid the Chinese.

Yet, 1993 has seen some change. China, though it had been backing up the Palestinian cause with long and staunch support, finally established diplomatic relations with Israel in January 1992. David Levy, then Israel's foreign minister, traveled to Beijing at that time to cement ties. He was followed by then-President Chaim Herzog last December, and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres in May of this year.

Peres told Beijing at that time that the ninth round of Middle East peace talks was making progress, and he asked China to use its connections with Arab nations to help find a solution to the Middle East conflict. He extracted a promise from Beijing that China would cut arms sales to Israel's Arab foes.

## China plays geopolitics, makes up own rules

Nevertheless, when Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who doubles as defense minister, visited Beijing in October, he heard a rather different song. China's Prime Minister Li Peng told his Israeli counterpart that "China's role [in the Middle East] is quite limited, but we are ready to play our role," according to Chinese spokesman Wu Jianming. The specific demand made by Rabin in the 105 minutes of talks

between the two remains secret, but what is known to the press indicates that Li Peng rebuffed Israel's requests for limiting China's arms exports to Iran or leaning on Iran to recognize the peace pact between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

On the day of Rabin's arrival in Peking, the Iranian daily *Kayhan International* warned Beijing that Rabin would try to undermine ties between Iran and the People's Republic of China (P.R.C.). The official Iranian news agency IRNA quoted the paper as saying that "Rabin's priority during his first visit to China will be to seek a halt of missile sales to Iran and Syria. . . . Rabin knew well that Chinese foreign policy was not under Washington's influence, and that it was economically and politically strong enough not to surrender to U.S. bullying tactics."

IRNA further quoted the newspaper as saying that "Rabin's China visit is not only to plead his own case against Syria and Iran, but also that of the Americans."

As the Third World's main military supplier, China has dealt out just about every kind of military gear, from assault rifles and missiles to nuclear weapons, to 25 countries, from Albania to Zimbabwe. China has shopped for Israel's advanced missile technology and in-flight refueled jet fighters from Russia, and is looking for an aircraft carrier, such as the Ukraine's 67,000-ton *Varyag*, which is nearing completion at a port near Nikolayev, Ukraine.

According to an article by Larry Engelmann titled "China's Arms Business," carried in the China News Digest newswire network, a former officer of Poly Technologies, one of the two arms import-export corporations which market anything in the arsenal of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, said, "We see a different new world order than your defeated President does. The world Mr. Bush wanted to build was based on U.S. dominance."

While China's aggressive weapons acquisition program is breaking the Anglo-Americans' one-world gameplan, its arms sales are certainly disturbing the peace in the rest of the world, while China's hegemony in Southeast Asia has alarmed China's immediate neighbors. But back home, the same old Chinese tactic prevails—a skill possibly learned from Genghis Khan—of "shooting two hawks with one arrow," and getting the arrow back, too. According to such scheming, China would supply weapons to both Iran and Iraq

in order to keep wars going in the Middle East, so that China could earn hard currency.

But the worst comes for those targeted by the second hawk. To understand this second tactic, one may look at China's policy toward Taiwan. Recently, James Soong, governor of Taiwan province and one of the top five political powers in the Republic of China (R.O.C.), alleged that for the past few years China has been flooding Taiwan with drugs in order to destabilize the island, which is ruled under a non-communist government but is still considered to be part of China.

Poly Technologies is controlled by the so-called princelings' party, the Taizidang—the sons and daughters of founders of the P.R.C. General Manager He Ping, who is said to be worth \$30-40 million, is married to one of Deng Xiaoping's daughters. This type of "family-run" arms business brings in sizeable capital for financing China's army and military high-tech development, but is done at the expense of multiple violations of the sovereignty of both foreign countries and of China itself, thus hurting China's would-be image as a "republican" country, and creating hostility which blocks China from even exporting cheap goods to earn hard currencies.

So when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs complained that some of Poly's deals would cause the United States and others to issue strong protests, perhaps meaning Beijing would lose its trade benefits and other privileges, Deng said he would resolve the issue personally. Under his pragmatic rule, he has been attempting to strike a balance between the arms sales—representing the financial interest of the military which often acts outside of the Constitution—and foreign policy considerations, supposedly aimed at protecting the nation's interest as a whole—i.e., tipping the balance of the world superpowers in China's own political and economic favor. Yet the crisis keeps deepening, as China's current policy remains under the strong philosophical influence of the founders of the communist state.

At home, China continues to threaten the security of its rivals across the Taiwan Strait, providing an excuse for the R.O.C. to promote its own political independence, such as buying votes from six small central American countries and appealing to Western powers for its U.N. membership bid. The world may not go along with Taiwan's proposal, yet such actions further destabilize the already chaotic situation of the "multi-party" politics in Taipei, forcing the ruling party to spend more of its huge foreign reserves on weapons.

### **U.S. plays Taiwan and Israel like mah-jong**

While Taiwan gets arms wheeling and dealing from the U.S. side, for more than a decade Israel has been providing China with advanced military know-how that the United States and other western countries would not supply directly. But ironically, weapons enhanced with such technology often fall into the hands of Israel's sworn enemies, such as

Pakistan and Iran.

To those writing for the *New York Times*, "Israel's burgeoning cooperation with China is puzzling in the wake of progress in autonomy talks with the Palestinians and the prospect of peace with all its next-door neighbors." But the answer is clear if one compares Israel with Taiwan, besides the fact that Israel could have obtained from Beijing valuable information which has been collected by intelligence agents teamed up with Chinese overseas firms, concerning the Arab countries' construction sites.

Israel and Taiwan are similar in two respects. First, both are recipients of U.S. military technology, and both are being played as cards to balance the power: Israel is used to counter-balance Arab countries in the Middle East, while Taiwan—which, ironically, at one time was being supported by Moscow to offset the wayward Chinese communists—is now increasingly used and supported by America to counter Beijing. Second, both have domestic and international policies which are influenced by their overseas ethnic individuals and groups, who are often backed by the U.S. administration and its various semi-official organizations.

In the feature article "Israel's Secret Weapon" in *Time* magazine Oct. 25, the man who "opened the doors for China to Israel" is identified as Shaul Eisenberg—"the real-life version of the international power brokers who appear in the pages of popular thrillers. . . . He is a legendary figure in Asia, a modern taipan."

In early October, after China went through with its underground nuclear test in Xijiang, but during Rabin's visit to Beijing, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency alleged that after having "conducted a study" on arms proliferation threats in the 1990s, it had ascertained that Israel has sold military technology to China that could be worth "several billion dollars." In a written statement to the Senate Governmental Committee, CIA director James Woolsey reported that Israel had assisted China with technology for jet fighters, tanks, and air-to-air missiles.

This is hardly a new discovery. In 1978, more than a decade before China established diplomatic relationship with Israel, Shaul Eisenberg started pushing arms exports to China, with exclusive rights granted by then Prime Minister Menachem Begin, to ostensibly increase influence over a country that supported Israel's Arab enemies. Israel claims that since 1979 it has sold \$3.5 billion in military parts and processes, although Woolsey claims it's \$10 billion, which has permitted the creation of a new generation of Chinese weapons ranging from improved tank guns to armor, targeting systems, missiles, aircraft electronics, computers, etc.

All this intense trade activity happened right under Uncle Sam's nose; but for more than a decade, Uncle Sam chose to keep silent about it. But now the American geopoliticians have decided to make China the number-one enemy, based on the false assumption that China and the Arab countries might make an alliance.