

---

## China

---

# Faction fight spurs Deng's threat to end 'normalization' of U.S. ties

by Richard Katz

China has castigated the United States for the recent Dutch decision to sell submarines to Taiwan—including a threat to downgrade diplomatic relations with America. Behind the vehemence of Peking's protest is a fierce faction fight threatening the position of Deng Xiaoping.

Deng has staked his job on the course of China's economy and on his relationship with Zbigniew Brzezinski and Henry Kissinger. But the economy is in shambles, as the Chinese themselves report, and the inauguration of Ronald Reagan now threatens the alliances Deng has carefully built up in the U.S. Reagan, in a Jan. 19 interview in *U.S. News and World Report*, when asked about possible arms sales to China, of the sort discussed for a Carter second term, was quite blunt: "There has to be a very considered look at that, because we never want the experience again of finding out that the weapons we've provided were being used against us."

Deng's most serious opposition comes not from Jiang Qing and her radicals—though the reported decision not to execute her shows the residual strength of that faction—but from the military.

### Military purge

Deng has for weeks been purging his leading opponents among the high-ranking officers, and Western intelligence now reports a dismissal of 280,000 military personnel due to age and "chronic discipline problems."

In this fight, warned, Deng's opponents could charge him with selling out Taiwan to get a deal with the United States, should he show any softness on this issue.

Earlier this week, the Dutch government reaffirmed its decision to sell submarines to Taiwan. On Jan. 19, China informed the Netherlands that it was expelling the Dutch ambassador and downgrading diplomatic relations to the *chargé d'affaires* level.

This had been expected. But China also lashed out at the United States, blaming both Carter and Reagan for the Dutch decision. China's news agency Xinhua reported that on Dec. 4, the Netherlands had disclosed it had consulted with Carter on the sale to Taiwan, and had been told China would not retaliate. Xinhua further

charged that Reagan officials had told the Netherlands that the incoming administration would look favorably on the sale: "The current perverse trend in some countries to create two Chinas and to interfere in China's internal affairs may be tracked down to the pro-Taiwan forces in the U.S.," charged Xinhua, meaning Reagan.

*Guangming Daily*, a paper restricted to Chinese intellectuals, said the sale could "cause China-U.S. relations to retrogress to the period before normalization"; i.e., China would send American and Dutch ambassadors packing and downgrade diplomatic relations as well.

*Ta Kung Pao*, an informed pro-China newspaper in Hong Kong, quotes Chinese leader Liao Chengzhi, vice-chairman of the National People's Congress (China's nominal legislature), saying, "China is prepared to go as far as Reagan on the Taiwan issue. . . . China is preparing for a reversal in Sino-U.S. relations."

### China-U.S. relations jeopardized

Besides the Dutch submarine sale, China has protested Reagan's invitation of Taiwanese officials to his inauguration, even though they were invited as individuals. But the real cause of Deng's panic is not Taiwan, except as his opponents can use that against him. Rather, it is fear that the entire strategic-military relationship built up since Kissinger's 1971 visit may go down the drain. Even the appointment of China-card supporter Alexander Haig as Secretary of State does not allay these fears.

As one Chinese diplomat recently told the *Los Angeles Times*, "Beyond the basic recognition that Sino-American relations have a global implication, the Reagan administration does not appear to have a China policy. We welcome remarks by Haig that U.S. relations with China would not be a function of Soviet-American relations . . . and we were reassured by the priority he put on Sino-American relations . . . but we don't know how the new administration envisions the development of Sino-American relations. . . . It might take six months, perhaps a year."

Deng hopes his tantrums will cause Reagan to back

down and force the Netherlands to halt the sale. His internal position may depend on it. The inability to execute Jiang Qing is a sign of weakness, but Deng's problems go far beyond that. The *People's Daily* warns that "social and economic chaos" may result if the economic crisis continues for much longer. Deng is having trouble replacing the thousands of military personnel already purged, which reportedly could finally amount to 2 million—a total remaking of the army.

In addition, organized gangs throughout China are setting off bombs in public places and posting antigovernment posters, according to the Chinese press, leading to speculation on who is supplying them with explosives.

If, in the midst of this economic and political turmoil, Deng cannot prevail on Washington to show its support for Peking and Deng's faction, then the shakiness of his rule can only increase, no matter how many more people he purges.

## Opposition to the China card from Ray Cline and Soviet spokesman

*The following are excerpts from an op-ed column in the New York Times by Ray Cline, the director of the Georgetown University Center for Strategic International Studies (CSIS) and an adviser to Ronald Reagan on Asia policy during the campaign period. Following a speech Cline gave in Singapore in November criticizing the China card policy of Jimmy Carter, China attacked Cline (and by implication Ronald Reagan) for "crudely interfering" in China's affairs. This is Cline's response:*

Somehow, the Carter administration, by the violently anti-Soviet rhetoric of its last year in office, had aroused expectations in Peking that a second-term administration would both ignore the security provisions of the Taiwan Relations Act requiring modern defensive weapons for Taipei, and provide China with modern military weapons intended to frighten the Soviet Union but actually more likely to permit China to establish control over Taiwan and dominate other non-Communist neighboring countries.

Did Mr. Carter promise these two major policy changes to Peking without public or congressional discussion? The answer is probably "not quite" . . . But spokesmen . . . leaned so far in this direction that high

officials in Peking may have thought they had these vital concessions in the bag for the asking after the election. . . .

In my view, making a military alliance with China would be, to understate it, unwise. Arming the massive but ill-equipped Chinese military forces would take billions of dollars and five to ten years before the Soviet Union would be in real jeopardy. In the meantime, such a policy would indeed diminish American chances of maintaining a *modus vivendi* with the Soviet Union, and would also threaten our non-Communist friends on China's borders. Regardless of this military-alliance issue, the rising expectations in Peking with respect to Taiwan spell trouble for any President who proposes to carry out the law with respect to the security of the nearly 18 million people of Taiwan and adjacent islands.

*The following letter to the New York Times, from which we print excerpts, was written in response to Cline's column by Mikhail Sladkovsky, the director of the U.S.S.R.'s Institute of the Far East and a member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. The letter, which appeared in the Dec. 18 issue, is in line with the efforts of Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev to reach a *modus vivendi* on major international issues with the Reagan administration:*

Ray Cline's article . . . shows that there is still a heated discussion in your country over whether or not the U.S. should supply weapons to China. . . .

Mr. Cline, who believes that making a military alliance with China would be unwise . . . does not take into account that the Soviet Union will not sit idly by while the other side attempts to attain superiority.

Mr. Cline is undoubtedly right that the arming of China . . . "would threaten our non-Communist friends." . . . the arming of China, with its territorial claims and aspiration to dominate the region, is dangerous first of all for militarily weak states, including non-Communist friends of the U.S. China's socialist neighbors can defend themselves.

He pays great attention to the Taiwan issue. However, this is not the only area where differences and contradictions between Washington and Peking do, or can, manifest themselves. Another problem, for instance, is their respective influence in the ASEAN countries [Association of Southeast Asian Nations]. . . .

To play the China card successfully, the U.S.A. . . . would like to see a strong China. It may seem at first glance that the further military buildup of China will meet this aim. It is well known, however, that Mao Zedong's course toward turning the country into a "single military camp" resulted instead in an economic crisis and political instability, and his followers' policies are having a similar effect.