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1950 年的中英关系：脆弱关系的分崩离析

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Sino-British Relations in 1950: Fracturing a Fragile Relationship

Abstract: This paper identifies both the utility and risks of using linkage in foreign policy by considering a historical example. In September of 1949, Mao Zedong, Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, uttered the now famous words: “占人类总数四分之一的中国人从此站立起来了[The Chinese who account for one-fourth the world’s humanity, have stood up]” putting the world on notice that China had “stood up.”¹ This marked a dramatic break with modern Chinese history of foreign domination, invasion, and civil war. The newly established People’s Republic of China (PRC) had declared that it had the will and ability to end the remaining vestiges of the Unequal Treaties that originated with the Treaty of Nanjing of 1842. In addition, Mao had already announced that the PRC would “lean to one side” when it came to foreign relations.²

However, despite the anti-imperialist tone and socialist revolutionary rhetoric this paper demonstrates that the Communist Chinese based their early foreign policy towards Britain less on ideology than on London’s attitude toward the Guomindang, and did not necessarily deliberate on Britain’s imperialist past. The British initially failed to comprehend this opportunity and the PRC’s diplomacy of linking issues. The PRC Government linked seemingly unrelated issues, including withholding recognition of the British to indicate the PRC’s displeasure with Britain’s vote in the United Nations that helped the Guomindang. Similarly, questions over continued ties between the British and the Guomindang also caused the PRC to stall the British as they sought to deal with issues related to custody and upkeep of the Chinese Embassy in London. This paper utilizes the archives of the Chinese Foreign Ministry in Beijing and the United Kingdom’s National Archives in London which both record Chinese linkage and stalling, as well as, how British actions and attitudes towards the Guomindang fractured this fragile relationship and lost the opportunity to establish diplomatic relations in the months before the start of the Korean War in June of 1950.

Key Words: Britain, China, Guomindang, recognition, United Nations

¹毛泽东, “中国人民站起来了”, 中国人民政治协商会议第一届全体会议上的开幕词, 一九四九年九月二十一日, <http://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist.org-chinese-mao-19490921.htm>, December 21, 2012. This paper will utilize PinYin and simplified Chinese characters in the text. The citations will utilize Romanization systems as they appear in the archive documents with the PinYin in brackets the first time the name or term appears. Although Ministry of Foreign Affairs documents were written in full characters, quotes from them appear in simplified characters.

²毛泽东, “论人民民主专政”, 中国共产党文献资料毛泽东选集第四册, 一九四九年六月三十日, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64184/64185/66618/4488978.html>, December 21, 2012. Mao used this phrase when discussing the failures of Chinese nationalist reformers and revolutionaries such as Sun Zhongshan (Sun Yat-sen) who attempted to modernize and reunify China by borrowing ideas from the West. Of course, Sun also received assistance from the Soviet Union, but died in 1925 without achieving his goal. Mao stated that you had to follow one path to be successful or “lean to one side.” This meant that China could not have one foot in the socialist camp and another in the capitalist world and be successful.

1950 年的中英关系：脆弱关系的分崩离析

摘要：本文通过分析历史案例，指出在外交政策中将问题联系起来的效用和风险。

1949 年 9 月，中国共产党中央委员会主席毛泽东宣布：“占人类总数四分之一的中国人从此站起来了”。这句话现在已经成了一句名言，它向世界宣告，中国已经“站起来了”。“这标志着中国近代史上的重大转变，中国摆脱了外国统治、侵略和内战。新成立的中华人民共和国宣布，她有意志和能力，扫除自 1842 年《南京条约》以来所有不平等条约的遗迹。此外，毛泽东还宣布，在对外关系上，中国将采取“一边倒”的方针。

本文指出，虽然有反帝国主义的激昂口号和社会主义革命的慷慨陈词，中国共产党对英国的早期外交政策，与其说是以意识形态为基础，不如说是以伦敦对国民党的态度为基础的，而且并没有过多纠缠英国的帝国主义历史。一开始，英国没能理解这个机会，也没有理解中国在外交中把问题联系起来的做法。中国政府把看似无关的问题联系在一起，包括不承认英国人，以表达中国对英国在联合国投票帮助国民党的不满。同样，英国和国民党之间继续保持关系的问题，也导致中国在英国寻求中国驻伦敦大使馆的保管和维护问题上一再拖延。本文的资料来自于位于北京的中国外交部档案和伦敦的英国国家档案馆，它们都记录了中国联系问题和拖延处理的做法，其他问题还包括：英国对国民党的行动和态度，使中英间脆弱的关系分崩离析；英国没能抓住在 1950 年 6 月朝鲜战争开始的前几个月和中国建立外交关系的时机。

关键词：英国，中国，国民党，识别，联合国

Sino-British Relations in 1950: Fracturing a Fragile Relationship

The rise of China since its opening in 1978 has put it on a trajectory towards greatness. Today, this achievement seems not only to have been inevitable but also now almost unstoppable, suggesting the coming of a new Pacific Century dominated by the Chinese. This paper reminds us of the limits of such thinking particularly since, as we see with the British, great power status can be ephemeral. In 1949, revolutionary changes wrought by the Communists under Chairman Mao Zedong appeared to herald the emergence of a new, bold China. Mao's China sought both respect and legitimacy through established methods such as entering diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, then the undisputed leader of the Communist world. At the same time, when it suited the Chinese, they rejected international norms and assumptions regarding the practice of diplomacy. Imperialist countries such as Britain that had benefitted from China's weakness in the "unequal treaty" period that followed the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing of 1842, ending the First Opium War, were treated with disdain. Chinese historian Chen Jian explains this and argues that ideology was the sole determiner of the PRC's foreign policy and decisions on recognition of foreign governments.³

This paper argues, however that, despite the PRC's an anti-imperialist, anti-British, revolutionary rhetoric, the Communist Chinese based their early foreign policy towards Britain less on ideology than on London's attitude toward the Guomindang (GMD also known in English as the Nationalist Party). Despite the willingness of the Chinese Communists to overlook Britain's imperialist past, the British failed to meet the new Chinese leaders' expectations. For example, the British seemingly condoned the presence of Nationalist operatives and spies in Hong Kong, they maintained a consulate in Taiwan, and, they voted on the Chinese Seat in the United Nations (UN) in a manner that allowed the GMD to retain it. In retaliation, the PRC employed stalling and linkage techniques in which they linked progress on one issue to a completely unrelated one which the British often failed to comprehend which had dire implications for the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two nations.

On January 5, 1950, Britain announced that it would extend *de jure* recognition to the PRC, conceding that the Communists had established control over the vast majority of China proper.⁴ The United Kingdom (UK) was the second Commonwealth member after India to recognize the new Beijing government. Despite this, as the senior British diplomat in China, Sir John Hutchison, later admitted, the UK had not only waited three months but also "then made plain to the world the reluctance and disapproval with which recognition had been

³ Jian Chen *China and the Cold War* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 38-48. Although Chen does not explore Sino-British relations in 1950, he argues that the failure of the PRC and the United States to engage in diplomatic relations was not solely the decision of the Americans. Instead, he argues that, for ideological reasons, Beijing would not have recognized the United States even if the Americans had recognized the PRC. Chen's work provides insight as to why the PRC did not simply grant Britain recognition immediately in return for London's recognition. The delay was due to the fact that the two countries were not in the same ideological camps of the Cold War.

⁴ 中华民国外交部档案馆阅览室, 北京: 110-00022-01, 就中国英国建立外交关系事两国外长的互函, 1950年1月5日. W.G. Graham Peking, Beijing, letter to General Chou En-lai [Zhou Enlai], Minister for Foreign Affairs, 5 January 1950.

accorded.”⁵ After the founding of the PRC by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) on October 1, 1949, it was recognized by several socialist countries that it recognized in return. This was not the case with the UK.⁶ Instead, the Chinese informed the British that they were prepared “to begin preliminary and procedural negotiations” regarding recognition and the establishment of diplomatic relations, phrasing which the British, perhaps arrogantly, assumed reflected the Chinese Communists’ “lack of familiarity with normal international practice” for the establishment of diplomatic relations.⁷ It soon became clear, however, that it was a deliberate policy on the part of the Chinese to link to the question of establishing diplomatic relations not only the actions but also the attitudes of other countries to the GMD. Chinese records show that the Chinese were prepared to recognize the UK, but it was the “insincere” behavior of the British which negated an improved relationship months before the outbreak of war in Korea.

Although the Chinese Communists defeated the Nationalists in 1949, President Chiang Kai-shek fled with the government of the Republic of China to Taiwan. The Nationalist Government clung to other small outposts of Chinese territory and was clearly unwilling to concede defeat. Without the protection of the United States, however, liberation of Nationalist-held areas was a distinct possibility until the start of the Korean War in June of 1950.⁸ Although the British held a poor view of Chiang and the GMD, they maintained a consulate at Danshui in GMD-held Taiwan which had been re-opened in 1948. Although they claimed to deal only with sheng (省) or provincial officials on Taiwan, also called Formosa at that time, the British were willfully blind to the extent that such conduct impeded improving their relationship with the PRC. At no point did the British consider closing the Consulate even after recognizing the PRC. In fact they stationed a Naval Liaison Officer in addition to a diplomat at Danshui even though there were fewer than 200 British citizens on Taiwan whose interests could have been protected by the Americans or another friendly state.⁹ The British decision to retain the Consulate impacted negatively the quality of their

⁵ National Archives, Kew, London, United Kingdom: FO371/92220 FC 10120/1, Sir John Hutchison’s Report on Conditions in China, 27 March 1951.

⁶ The Netherlands and Norway received similar treatment. Heads of the diplomatic missions were accorded personal diplomatic status, but neither their staffs nor their Embassy buildings were officially accorded similar status. They were, however, generally treated as though they held official diplomatic status.

⁷ National Archives, Kew, London, United Kingdom: FO371/92189 FC1011/1, Annual report on China for 1950 submitted by J.D. Hutchison, Beijing, 1 March 1951.

⁸ For several years after October 1, 1949, the PRC engaged in clean-up operations to liberate parts of China that remained under Nationalist control such as Hainan Island. Foreign observers expected Taiwan was to be liberated by the PRC. Events in Korea resulted in an indefinite delay of such an occurrence as it resulted in an order from President Truman for the American Seventh Fleet to patrol the Taiwan Straits. This saved Chiang and the Republic of China on Taiwan. The ambivalence that Truman felt towards Chiang and the PRC in the months before the outbreak of war on the Korean Peninsula is convincingly explained by Nancy Bernkopf Tucker in *Patterns in the Dust: Chinese-American Relations and the Recognition Controversy, 1949-1950*.

⁹ National Archives, Kew, London, United Kingdom: FO371/83561 FC1912/1 to /21, Position of Naval Liaison Officer in Tamsui [Danshui in Pinyin]. The British Embassy in the PRC argued against this retaining a Naval Liaison Officer in Taiwan since the British official would indisputably have contact with the Nationalist Navy, belying British claims to only have contact with provincial officials. The Foreign Office realized that the Chinese

relationship with the PRC. Keeping the Consulate on Taiwan along with other actions such as the British vote on the Seat reserved for China in the UN, show that the British Foreign Office was lackluster and unconcerned with whether or not diplomatic relations were established with the PRC.¹⁰ Both the British Consulate and the UN vote caused Chairman Mao to question whether the British were sincere in their claim to recognize the Beijing government as the sole legitimate government of China which impacted his response to the British overture and caused him to link what the British saw as unrelated issues: the China Seat in the United Nations and the exchange of ambassadors with the UK.

In January of 1950 senior Chinese officials including Chairman Mao Zedong were in Moscow negotiating the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance, but Mao clearly remained in control of events in Beijing. In Mao's view, the PRC was in control of Sino-British negotiations to engage in diplomatic relations since British officials had already extended recognition without reservations or conditions. Mao gave approval to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in Beijing on January 9 of 1950 that Hutchison be invited to Beijing to begin discussions regarding the exchange of diplomatic relations. Mao's invitation was based on assurances from the British that official connections to the GMD had been severed including those in Hong Kong and Taiwan, and that all Chinese Government property in the United Kingdom and Hong Kong would be secured for the PRC. At Mao's direction, however, brakes were applied to the recognition process after Britain's abstention in the UN a few days later on January 13. The Chinese felt that Britain's abstention helped the GMD retain the UN Seat reserved for China, and, if London really considered the PRC to be the sole legal government of China, it would not have voted this way. Annoyed, Mao directed the MFA to “拖一下” or “wait for a while” in retaliation.¹¹ At that point the British did not quite understand that the PRC had not automatically recognized them in return. Indeed, it was the poor treatment of British citizens and diplomats that caused the British to question if indeed the PRC had agreed “to the establishment of diplomatic relations” at all.¹²

Communists would complain, but considered it to be just one of many complaints. Thus, Admiralty insisted on retaining a Naval Liaison Officer on the island no matter the cost to Sino-British relations. The Nationalist Navy regularly interfered with shipping along the Chinese coast including British shipping, which in the view of Admiralty and the Foreign Office justified the need to retain the Naval Liaison Officer on Taiwan.

¹⁰ In Jay Taylor's 2009 revisionist biography *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China*, the author claims without naming anyone specifically that Premier Zhou Enlai of the PRC maintained contact with the Nationalist President for decades after 1949. The British, however, acknowledged the Consulate and its staff in their official proceedings. Thus, even if this “connection” did not exist, the PRC could easily have obtained information on the British Consulate in Taiwan from public records without the use of spies.

¹¹ 中华民国外交部档案馆阅览室, 北京: 110-00022-03, 毛主席关于中国英国谈判的指示, 莫斯科讯 毛主席, 1950 年 1 月 18 日. 苏联讯, 毛 (毛泽东) 告刘: 关于印度之指示, 1950 年 1 月 20 日上午 1 时. Mao insisted that the Communist Party should work with the MFA to determine the topics for discussion with the British delegation headed by James Hutchison. Mao also wanted the CCP to help determine the attitude to be taken by the PRC since he did not believe that the diplomats in the Ministry fully comprehended that China had the upper hand. Hence, Mao believed that the British should be made to wait.

¹² 中华民国外交部档案馆阅览室, 北京: 110-00022-06, 就同意英国政府派代办来华的来往函, 1950 年 1 月 28 日. Ernest Bevin letter to Mr. Chou En-lai, 31 January 1950. The

Eventually the British Consulate in Beijing asked for clarification regarding the UK's diplomatic status. It was Chairman Mao himself who set the tone for Chinese policy by directing the MFA to continue to delay and to obfuscate with the British Government.¹³ The MFA informed the British that China had indeed recognized Britain, but Hutchison should still come to Beijing to start negotiations on recognition. Although the formal reply was vague, confusing and contradictory, the British were coming to understand that the Chinese had not recognized them.¹⁴

As of mid-January of 1950, the negotiations for Sino-British recognition were kept within the parameters set by Mao: delay and obfuscate. The lack of progress impacted the British on many fronts. The British had been trying for quite a while to shift their Embassy from Nanjing to Beijing but encountered tremendous difficulties gaining access to officials in Shanghai and elsewhere whose permission was required. In his first meeting in late February of 1950 with Zhang Hanfu, the Vice Minister of the MFA, Hutchison tried to use his "guanxi" or previous connection to Zhang to advance matters. The Vice Minister had been posted previously in Shanghai and was known to Hutchison. When Hutchison attempted to use their previous acquaintance as an opening to a discussion of British problems including the fate of British citizens in Shanghai, he was soundly rebuffed. Zhang claimed no knowledge of events in Shanghai having left two months prior.¹⁵ This was indicative of the brief and infrequent contacts British diplomats had with the MFA in Beijing in the winter and spring of 1950.

As late as March of 1950, the Chinese remained open to recognizing Britain and allowing full diplomatic relations including the exchange of ambassadors dependent on British actions toward the GMD. Hutchison realized that the sticking point continued to be Britain's actions in the UN regarding the China Seat, but either the Foreign Office in London did not agree with Hutchison that the Chinese were linking the two unrelated issues of the UN China Seat and Chinese recognition of the UK or other British officials did not care. Despite his personal qualms, Hutchison attempted to justify Britain's vote in the UN as directed by the Foreign Office to MFA officials with the following:

underlined passaged was marked as such by hand in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs archive. The British thought that the PRC had recognized them back but the Chinese believed that they had only agreed to negotiations to establish relations.

¹³中华民国外交部档案馆阅览室, 北京: 110-00022-05, 毛泽东主席关于中国英国建立外交关系谈判的指示电, 1950年1月24日. 刘少奇 讯: 请毛主席就中英建交问题之指示. 110-00022-05, 毛泽东主席关于中国英国建立外交关系谈判的指示电, 1950年1月26日. 莫斯科 讯, 毛告刘: 指示对英、印、印尼之处理意见.

¹⁴中华民国外交部档案馆阅览室, 北京: 110-00022-06, 就同意英国派代办来华的来往函, 1950年1月28日. Pages 1, document not identified but dated 1950年一月二十八日. "中英两国外长的换文表示双方政府对于建立外交关系的同意." British informed on issue of recognition on instruction of Mao Zedong per 110-00022-05. 中华民国外交部档案馆阅览室, 北京: 110-00022-02, 就中英建立外交关系的谈判意见, 此页上刘少奇批示, 1950年1月16日. Page 1, MFA letter to 刘少奇, [1950] 一月十七日.

¹⁵中华民国外交部档案馆阅览室, 北京: 110-00024-02, 英国谈判代表来京与我礼节性拜会的谈话摘要报告, 1950年2月27日. Pages 1 and 2, 报告 (外交部欧非司致上级) 年二月27日 于欧非司, "副部长答以本人已来京两月上海情况不清楚."

Our experience since the setting up of the United Nations, has proved to us that collective decisions in the desired direction are brought about by consultation, and not by publicly registering a vote in opposition to the majority. When His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom abstained from voting in the Security Council, on the issue of the expulsion of the former Nationalist representative, this did not constitute an expression of view in favour [sic] of the former Nationalist representative, or against the People's Government representative. The decision to abstain was taken because there was, at that time, no likelihood of a majority decision, and it was consequently premature for the question to be raised.¹⁶

The Chinese simply did not accept the British excuse that the UN needed to have collective decisions made by consultation rather than publicly registering a vote on such an important decision as a UN Seat for a country that also has a permanent Seat on the UN Security Council.¹⁷ This cost Britain a great deal since Mao pre-approved recognition of Great Britain had Hutchison's explanation been satisfactory, his only caveat was that the Chinese would still make the British wait another two days before informing them of the PRC's decision to recognize Britain.¹⁸ By the time the British voted in a manner designed to pacify the Chinese in regard to the Seat reserved for China in the UN, the Korean War had begun and the Chinese did not acknowledge the change.¹⁹

The Chinese Communists tendency to link seemingly unrelated issues is also reflected in the exchanges between the British and Chinese in regard to the former Chinese Embassy in London which PRC officials dogmatically referred to as the "Former Nationalist Embassy" in London.²⁰ This terminology underscored the fact that Beijing had not recognized the UK or established a diplomatic mission in London even though the PRC claimed ownership of the

¹⁶中华民国外交部档案馆阅览室, 北京: 110-00024-05, 关于我国与英国建交过程中有关问题的考虑, 1950年1月26日. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Report, Unsigned and Undated, but after March 17, 1950. Substance of an Oral Communication, dated March 17, 1950: Hutchison (胡阶森). This passage was underlined in the report. "我们对于他们的解释并不认为满意."

¹⁷中华民国外交部档案馆阅览室, 北京: 110-00024-04, 就中国建交与英临时代办胡阶森的第二次谈判记录, 1950年3月17日. 110-00024-05, 关于我国与英国建交过程中有关问题的考虑, 1950年1月26日. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Report, Unsigned and Undated, but after March 17, 1950. Substance of an Oral Communication, dated March 17, 1950: Hutchison (胡阶森). This passage was underlined in the report. "我们对于他们的解释并不认为满意."

¹⁸中华民国外交部档案馆阅览室, 北京: 110-00024-04, 就中国英国监教育应临时代办胡阶森的第二次谈判记录, 1950年3月17日. Page 1, 报告 [MFA Report] 批示, [1954] 三月十八, 送周部长阅: "周总理批: 按毛口头要节, 原则上可以同它建立正式外交关系, 但回答时间仍可托他两天再办."

¹⁹ National Archives, Kew, London, United Kingdom: FO371/92189 FC1011/1, Annual report on China for 1950 submitted by J.D. Hutchison, Beijing, 1 March 1951.

²⁰ The main Chinese property included the Chinese Embassy at 49 and 51 Portland Place, London, and another building at 37 Devonshire Close, London. The empty Chinese Embassy suffered water damage due to a clogged gutter which resulted in severe water damage both to building's structure as well as to items within the building. The Chinese Embassy's wall on Weymouth Street also required reconstruction according to Marylebone District authorities.

property. The British Foreign Office had requested that the Nationalists vacate the Chinese Embassy in London before recognizing the PRC. Anxious to smooth the transition for the PRC and to show good will, the British agreed to assume custody of the Embassy and other property owned by the Chinese Government in London. Initially, the British expected the imminent arrival of the PRC's delegation and simply locked the Embassy's door and pocketed the key. As the winter of 1950 turned to spring with its attendant rain storms, the British began to rue their generosity. A broken window at one of the PRC's diplomatic buildings in London was investigated by both a Foreign Office official and a police inspector only to find that the damage had not been caused by an intruder but by a storm; the building and its contents suffered serious damage from rain.²¹ No one knew then that it would take years that spanned the first year and a half of the Korean War to get the PRC to cooperate and agree to its repair. Due to the lack of Chinese officials in London, the only way to discuss the issue with the PRC was to raise the problem of the Chinese Embassy during the already tense Sino-British negotiations on recognition in Beijing.

Official treatment of British officials in China by the Chinese could be described as off-hand, brusque, and officious. Hutchison and his team were granted minimal access to the MFA. The situation had not improved by March of 1950 when the British began to request payment for the upkeep of the Chinese Embassy in London. MFA officials questioned whether the electricity and other bills that the British submitted for the Chinese Embassy in London really needed to be paid; Chinese officials suspected that the British had started linking unrelated issues in retaliation for the lack of progress on Sino-British relations in Beijing. The Chinese believed that if the bills related to the Embassy really were an issue, that they should have been delivered to the MFA in February when negotiations began not in late March when it was clear that Mao had directed that MFA stall the British indefinitely due to their vote in the UN on the China Seat.

In regard to the London Embassy, the MFA followed the policy already put in place by Mao in the face of the demand for payment: stall and delay. Initially, the Chinese stalled to buy the time necessary for the Bank of China's London Branch to investigate former Nationalist officials and workers at the London Embassy who had remained in Britain. The PRC suspected that they might be acting as a conduit between London and the GMD and it took months of investigation to confirm that they remained solely as private citizens.²² The lack of communication frustrated the British who clearly had never expected the PRC to fail to send a diplomatic mission to London. The Foreign Office was not a real estate management agency and it was the irritation of dealing with minor issues such as water bills and repairs, not the failure of the negotiations on recognition that motivated British diplomats to relieve themselves of responsibility for the Chinese Embassy. Every issue required a letter to the British Consulate in Beijing which then had to request a meeting with the MFA. The British were rarely granted meetings. Hence, it was a waste of precious time and access to have to discuss drains and caretakers when important issues were at hand such as the arrest of British citizens in the PRC. The Foreign Office could not imagine why the PRC stalled and

²¹ National Archives, Kew, London, United Kingdom: FO371/83486 FC1466/2, N.H. Thrift Minute, 24 March 1950. FO371/83486 FC1466/10, There were later reports in a Hong Kong Newspaper, South China Morning Post, on 7 June 1950 that the Chinese Embassy in London had been stripped of its valuables and only broken remnants remained. This increased the Foreign Office's resolve to relieve itself of this burden.

²² 中华人民共和国外交部 档案阅览室, 北京: 110-00171-01, 前国民党政府驻英国使馆情况, 1950年10月29日. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Report signed by 王, 十月廿九日.

obfuscated on what were basically housekeeping and repair issues. In regard to the rain damage, one Foreign Office official speculated that the Chinese might even accuse the British of sabotage if the Chinese Embassy suffered further damage.²³ In fact, the PRC never questioned the cause of the damage, but delayed replies to British letters because each included a request that another agency take custody of all the PRC's property in London. The Chinese were really avoiding the only issue important to them: they wanted the British to be legally liable for the Chinese Embassy in London.

Months before China's entry into the Korean War, Sino-British relations were at a virtual standstill as each party viewed the other with suspicion and distrust. Since the Chinese linked so many seemingly unrelated issues, they suspected the British of the same conduct. For example, in September of 1950, the PRC punished Britain for its vote on Chinese representation in the UN which once again helped the Nationalists to retain the Seat reserved for China, by delaying the issuance of entry visas for British diplomats.²⁴ Hence, it is not surprising that, when the Foreign Office forwarded a demand for payment for ground rent due in arrears for the Chinese Embassy in London, the Chinese immediately suspected that the British were employing linkage. Just before the British Consulate delivered to the MFA a bill for ground rent for the London Embassy, the Chinese had attempted to challenge the diplomatic standing of the British Mission in Beijing by issuing a tax demand (which the British refused to pay).

No one in the MFA in Beijing was sufficiently familiar with Britain to know whether or not ground rent was simply another name for real estate tax. In fact, the bill for the ground rent had only been forwarded by the Foreign Office and was unrelated to demands for property tax on the Chinese Embassy in London. The internal discussion on the ground rent issue between the MFA and the Bank of China in London which needed to report to the British Foreign Office is revealing. The Bank of China's instructions were as follows: Do not reply and, if pressed by the Foreign Office, say you do not have instructions.²⁵ The unexplained delays and obfuscation annoyed the British, causing one diplomat to comment, "If the Chinese continue to behave in this thoroughly dishonest fashion, the time has perhaps come when we should formally let them know that we are no longer prepared to look after these premises. Needless to say in China their behaviour [sic] as far as British Government property is concerned is often both highhanded and obstructive."²⁶ By the time this was written, Chinese "volunteers" had been fighting UN troops in Korea for half a year so it was

²³ National Archives, Kew, London, United Kingdom: FO371/92321 FC 1462/17, K.R. Oakeshott Minute, 22 May 1951 to Lamb letter from Beijing.

²⁴ 中华人民共和国外交部 档案阅览室, 北京: 110-00171-13, 与英代办处一等秘书班以安谈伦敦前国民党大使馆房屋等有关问题的报告, 1950年9月19日. Page 5, from: 温和宦司长, 姚周杰代笔, to: 章汉夫. "英代表办今当增加人员问题, 拟每一个等候, 看英国在联合国中如何投票, 然后再予处理办理." 章同意. The Chinese had already determined that in return for a satisfactory vote by Britain (even if the PRC did not gain entry to the UN), the MFA would issue one entry permit for a British diplomat.

²⁵ 中华人民共和国外交部 档案阅览室, 北京: 110-00172-10, 英国代办处关于伦敦前国民党政府大使馆房屋土地素付租金事的照会处理意见, 1950年8月22日-1950年8月28日. Pages 6-7, 处理意见, 八月廿八日. 章汉夫与宦乡同意 "暂不复, 候进一步调查. 如催问则口头告知尚未收到指示."

²⁶ National Archives, Kew, London, United Kingdom: FO371/92320 FC1462/14, A.A. E. Franklin minute, 20 April 1951.

not surprising that relations were tense; the question of establishing diplomatic relations would have to wait for the fighting to end.

Given Mao's decision to lean to one side, Sino-British relations were perhaps predestined to be problematic. Despite this, the British missed an opportunity to win recognition from the new Beijing government before the outbreak of the Korean War. The Foreign Office obviously expected the PRC to follow diplomatic practice and recognize the UK. As Mao noted, the British did not try to bargain or set terms before announcing recognition in January of 1950. By the time they realized that winning recognition would require more than safeguarding the Chinese Embassy in London and de-recognizing the Nationalists, the British consciously decided to risk condemnation by not only keeping their Consulate in Taiwan complete with a Naval Liaison Officer who obviously had contact with the Nationalist Government but also by voting in the UN in a manner that promoted American wishes to allow the GMD to retain the Seat reserved for China. After the Korean War began, however, British officials erroneously blamed the Americans for the state of affairs rather than themselves. As Hutchison noted without irony,

[T]here is reason to believe that the Chinese Government realise [sic] without resentment the obligations of British relations with the United States Government, and that they appreciate the moderating influence which His Majesty's Government have exercised on immediate American Far Eastern policies.²⁷

Thus, the British placed responsibility for their failure to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC on the Americans even though it was their own actions in the months before the outbreak of the Korean War that offended the Chinese and caused them to question British sincerity regarding breaking connections with the Nationalists.

The British who had contributed greatly to the creation of international system of the mid-twentieth century failed to perceive that any country, much less a poor one like China, could reject established practice out of hand. The opportunity to establish diplomatic relations was lost with the onset of war on the Korean Peninsula in June of 1950 and the entry of Chinese "volunteers" later that fall. In this instance diplomacy failed due to "linkage" as neither side was able to view the other through anything other than the prism of their own assumptions.

Ironically today attempts by nations to use "linkage" in foreign policy are rejected by Chinese leaders, for example, when they are faced with potential economic sanctions due to human rights abuses. At the same time, however, the PRC continues to use "linkage" in regard to Taiwan. In the contemporary world, leaders must be cognizant that the "linkage" of unrelated issues may provide them with a platform to air criticisms, complaints, or concerns, but they risk intransigence and stalling in return, which could cost both sides the opportunity for resolution or problem solving before escalation renders compromise and negotiation impossible.

²⁷ National Archives, Kew, London, United Kingdom: FO371/92220 FC 10120/1, Sir John Hutchison's Report on Conditions in China, 27 March 1951. Hutchison also wrote "It does not seem possible that any close relations can be established so long as the United Kingdom appears to support policies which the Chinese regard as designed by the United States to prevent settlement of the Korean, Formosan, and Japan treaty issues on lines which can be accepted by China..."