

US-Soviet Top-Down Trust-Building: Lessons for the US-China relationship

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Cover Photo: President John F. Kennedy and Chairman Nikita Khrushchev during their meeting in Vienna, Austria, 1961. (Source: US National Archives and Records Administration).

US-Soviet Top-Down Trust-Building: Lessons for the US-China relationship

Yu Tiejun

On 2 August 2022, China conducted a series of large military drills in response to US Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi's visit to China's Taiwan region. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs also announced eight additional countermeasures on 5 August, including cancelling the China-US Theater Commanders Talk, the Defense Policy Coordination Talks (DPCT), and the China-US Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA) meetings. Beijing also announced it would suspend China-US cooperation on the repatriation of illegal immigrants and temporarily suspended China-US talks on climate change.¹

These countermeasures affected important areas of China-US cooperation, signifying a dramatic setback of the bilateral relationship and a deep-seated distrust between the two countries.²

The so-called Fourth Taiwan Strait Crisis can be viewed as part of a larger picture. With the increasing strategic competition between China and the United States, discussions abound on the similarity between current China-US relations and US-Soviet relations during the Cold War. Some believe that US-Soviet relations during the Cold War provide a useful analogy for understanding current China-US competition, while others argue that this analogy is misleading because both the era and the subjects – the Soviet Union then, China now – are so different. Still others believe that we are facing a new Cold War (or Cold War 2.0) in the sense that the current China-US rivalry may be similar but more complicated and dangerous than the US-Soviet struggle during the Cold War. A fair amount of foreign scholarship on the Cold War has been introduced to China, and Chinese scholars have published high-quality work in this field. However, there has been much less research on the operational level of Cold War-era top-down trust-building mechanisms and what lessons China could draw from the US-Soviet rivalry and their implications for China-US strategic competition.³

1 For details on the eight countermeasures, see: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2535_665405/202208/t20220805_10735706.html, accessed August 31, 2022. At the November 2022 G20 Summit in Bali, Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Joe Biden decided to restart talks on climate change.

2 On 3 August, China Foreign Minister Wang Yi commented on the countermeasures: "The US side's act in bad faith on the Taiwan question will only further bankrupt its national credibility." See: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/202208/t20220803_10732397.html, accessed August 15, 2022.

3 CISR (edited and published by Peking University's Institute of International and Strategic Studies and Springer) has invited foreign scholars to discuss this issue in recent years, but Chinese scholarship is still quite limited. See June 2020 issue of *China International Strategy Review*: <https://link.springer.com/journal/42533/volumes-and-issues/2-1>, accessed October 18, 2022.

For this author, China-US relations are indeed different from US-Soviet relations during the Cold War in many respects. To name only one, unlike the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War there is a high degree of economic interdependence between China and the United States.⁴ China also differs from the Soviet Union in many ways. However, when considering the major power rivalry between the two superpowers, and the similarity of the decision-making processes between China and the Soviet Union (that is, their centralised, top-down approaches),⁵ the US-Soviet relationship during the Cold War might serve as a good case study, one that is perhaps more appropriate than the Anglo-German rivalry before WWI or US-Japan competition before WWII.

There is no doubt that both the Soviet Union and China have stressed the importance of building good relations with the United States through a top-down process, which means agreeing on strategic principles at the top leadership level first, and then creating the conditions for cooperation on operational-level issues.⁶ It would be useful to illustrate whether and how this top-down approach to trust-building actually affected the Soviet-US relationship, as such lessons could shed light on how the United States and China could pursue a top-down approach in building a more stable relationship today. We should keep in mind the caveat that historical analogies are always limited, and sometimes even dangerous to use as road maps to the future. Still, we can see how the top-down approach to trust-building between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War fared, and whether there are useful lessons for improving trust-building in the current China-US relationship.

How they did it

The Cold War was characterised by the strategic competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. However, despite their intense rivalry, the

4 Bilateral trade between China and the United States in 2021 was about 755.6 billion US dollars.

5 It may be unnecessary to argue that China has a top-down decision-making model, especially with regard to foreign affairs and major-power relations. China Premier Zhou Enlai's words that "There is no small thing with regard to foreign affairs" (外事无小事 *waishi wu xiaoshi*) has still been taken as a guideline in China. See also Lu Ning, *The Dynamics of Foreign-Policy Decisionmaking in China*, 2nd edition, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997, pp.7-19.

6 Chinese Paramount Leader Deng Xiaoping told President George Bush's national security advisor Brent Scowcroft that "China-US relations need to be improved in the end" when he visited Beijing secretly on 10 December 1989 (中美关系终归要好起来才行, *Zhongmei guanxi zhonggui yao haoqilai caixing*). China's official position on top-down trust-building in the China-US relationship is both emphasizing and supportive. President Xi Jinping has repeated that major countries should "speak in good faith and with credibility" (大国要讲诚信 *Daguo yao jiang chengxin*) on many occasions. The most recent one is in his Global Security Initiative speech delivered at the Boao Forum in April 2022, see "Xi Jinping Delivers a Keynote Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2022" (2022-04-21), https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/202204/t20220421_10671083.html, accessed August 31, 2022.

United States and the Soviet Union managed – sometimes muddled through – their competition and managed to build some measure of trust between one another. This trust-building mainly took place in the security cooperation and crisis management arenas. It is worthwhile to look more closely at the top-down approach to trust-building in this aspect of the US-Soviet relationship during the Cold War.

Here, I will focus on three cases to briefly illustrate how the top-down approach to trust-building between the United States and the Soviet Union fared during the Cold War, and then evaluate them from a Chinese perspective. The cases chosen are: the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 (crisis management); the Incidents at Sea Agreement (INCSEA) negotiations in 1972 (security cooperation and confidence-building); and the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) negotiations in 1987 (arms control). These three cases were selected for four reasons. First, they are important case studies in the security arena as they provide some lessons on the top-down approach to trust-building among adversaries. Second, there is already plenty of reliable academic research on the relevant events to draw from. Third, these events are well-known in China and have been discussed within Chinese academia, and thus they've likely already been referred to for decision-making purposes within policy circles. And finally, they took place in different phases of the US-Soviet relationship during the Cold War, so we can compare their impact on the general state of bilateral relations as well as the impact of the top-down approach to trust-building.⁷

The Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) and its aftermath

Process

The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis broke out during the climax of the US-Soviet Cold War rivalry and may have been the most dangerous moment for the bilateral relationship, and indeed the whole world, in modern history considering it was the first direct confrontation between two major nuclear powers, both determined to not back down from any pressure from the adversary. As a classic case of decision-making and crisis management, the origins, processes, impacts, and lessons of the Cuban Missile Crisis have been thoroughly studied.⁸ In this case, neither side was prepared for the crisis at the outset, and they were forced to strike a compromise as the crisis evolved, with the nightmare of nuclear war in the minds of the leadership. In the end, President John Kennedy's brinkmanship policy seemingly won the upper-hand.

⁷ See, for instance, Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents*, New York: Times Books, 1995.

⁸ A seminal one is Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (2nd edition), London: Longman, 1999.

The Soviet leadership wrongly evaluated the relative power of the United States and the Soviet Union, greatly underestimated the United States' strong will to respond coercively to the missile deployments in Cuba, and was otherwise completely unprepared for the US response.⁹

However, from the point of view of crisis management and trust-building, the end result was not so bad. As a turning point in the Cold War, the crisis shifted the intense rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union into a more moderate phase and helped establish rules and boundaries for US-Soviet competition afterward. Crucially, the crisis formed a bottom line of trust and agreement between the top leaders of the two countries, namely that under no circumstances could they fight a nuclear war. This bottom line had a fundamental impact on both sides and lasted until the end of the Cold War.



Soviet Ambassador to the United States, Anatoly F. Dobrynin and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko talking with US President John F. Kennedy at the White House, 1962 (US Library of Congress).

Lessons

Despite the different decision-making structures and ideologies, a minimum common ground of world views was established between the top leaders and a domestic consensus gradually formed within the respective national

⁹ Khrushchev stepped down in 1964. His failure in managing the Cuban Missile Crisis was one of the main reasons that he came under criticism from some of his more hawkish colleagues, such as Brezhnev.

security establishments, which was vital for top-down trust-building between the United States and the Soviet Union. Both sides realised the necessity of avoiding a US-Soviet nuclear war and of securing the next generation's survival during and after the crisis, and that crisis management essentially demands basic understanding and trust between nations. Some examples include:

- President John F. Kennedy's conversation with Robert Kennedy on the life of the next generation and the impact of Barbara Tuchman's book *The Guns of August*;
- McNamara's thinking on the necessity of crisis management as a strategic instrument to fulfill national interests in the future;
- McGeorge Bundy's thinking on the usage and non-usage of nuclear weapons;
- Khrushchev's letters to John F. Kennedy in the months following the crisis, which showed for the first time his interest in Soviet-US arms control talks.

Consequently, top leaders could exchange their opinions with, and obtain support from, other members of core decision-making circles, which formed the basis of top-down consensus-building.

They came to recognise the importance of maintaining a secret, trustworthy, and stable communications channel between top leaders through reliable agencies and persons (and later the establishment of the US-Soviet hotline) as exemplified by the John Kennedy-Robert Kennedy-Dobrynin-Gromyko-Khrushchev channel during the crisis. Secret decision-making processes without competent professionals are dangerous and likely to create disaster. Anatoly Dobrynin, the Soviet ambassador to the United States, was left out of the loop before the crisis erupted, while Llewellyn Thompson, a top Russia expert in the United States, played an important role during the crisis from the very beginning.

In his memoirs, Ambassador Dobrynin warned about the dangers of keeping secrets from the diplomatic service in a crisis, as it makes it difficult for diplomats to maintain a trusting relationship with the host nation, which Dobrynin considered the bottom line of trust-building between nations.¹⁰

It is also important to have a sympathetic understanding of an adversary's position and reasonable interests through person-to-person understanding and communication between top leaders, and clear signaling between rivals. Both

¹⁰ Amb. Dobrynin's memoir titled *In Confidence*, describes the crucial role an ambassador can and should play in US-Soviet relations during the Cold War. In the introduction of his memoir, Dobrynin writes: "I saw my fundamental task as one of helping to develop a correct and constructive dialogue between the leaders of both countries and maintaining the positive aspects of our relations whenever possible." See Dobrynin, *In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents*, 1995, p. 3.

President Kennedy's commitment to withdraw US missiles from Turkey and his message to Khrushchev included in the public speech that he delivered at the American University on 10 June 1963 were crucial in shaping Soviet policy during and after the crisis.¹¹ A kind of mutual trust and friendship between John Kennedy and Khrushchev facilitated the signing of the Partial Test Ban Treaty in 1963, the first real achievement in the struggle to contain the arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union, and thus laying the foundation for the US-Soviet détente in the late 1960s and 1970s.

INCSEA (1972)

Process

The Agreement on the Prevention of Incidents on and over the High Seas, or the Incidents at Sea Agreement (INCSEA) signed by the United States and the Soviet Union in 1972 was the first international agreement on maritime military security cooperation. The agreement was created against a backdrop of hundreds of incidents at sea involving US and Soviet ships and aircraft in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Those incidents included dangerous manoeuvres of naval units in close proximity, close air surveillance, simulated attacks, accidental firing during exercises, and other acts of harassment, and aroused deep concern that unintentional conflict escalation might take place between the two navies. Former US Secretary of the Navy John Warner was quoted as saying that the two superpowers “were just waiting for an accident to happen” during this period.¹²

The increasing frequency and severity of US-Soviet naval incidents led the United States to propose negotiations on the subject in 1967, which the Soviet Union initially ignored for over two years before it proposed opening negotiations in the spring of 1971. Instead of responding immediately, the United States initiated an intra-agency review to formulate a position. The intra-agency process involved the State Department, the Navy, the Department of Defense, and the National Security Council. National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger was directly involved. Having formulated its position, the United States accepted the Soviet offer to negotiate in June 1971.¹³

11 The speech titled “Strategy for Peace” is a crucial text for understanding Kennedy’s thinking, as well as the key message that he wanted to pass on to Khrushchev. Kennedy said in the speech: “And no nation in the history of battle ever suffered more than the Soviet Union suffered in the course of the Second World War...” showing respect and sympathy toward the Soviet Union. See *Living Documents of American History*, Press and Cultural Section, US Embassy, Beijing, 1985, p. 175.

12 Quoted in Sean M. Lynn-Jones, “The Incidents at Sea Agreement,” in Alexander L. George et al. eds., *US-Soviet Security Cooperation*, p. 486.

13 Ibid, pp. 486-487.

The US delegation to Moscow consisted primarily of participants of that intra-agency review process, headed by John Warner, then undersecretary of the US Navy. The Soviet delegation was headed by Admiral Vladimir Kasatonov, deputy commander of the Soviet Navy and included the second, third, fourth, and fifth highest-ranking officers of the Soviet Navy. The high-ranking nature of the delegation possibly indicated that central authorities had reduced some of the constraints that were generally imposed on Soviet negotiators.¹⁴

Against the background of the US-Soviet détente, because of the announcement of President Richard Nixon's planned visit to Moscow in October 1972 and, more importantly, thanks to shared interests, the negotiations went quite well and made considerable progress. Some obstacles remained unresolved but they did not sink the second round of talks in Washington. The agreement was formally signed by Warner, who had by then been promoted to Secretary of the US Navy, and Admiral Gorshkov, the Commander in Chief of the Soviet Navy on 25 May 1972 during the Moscow summit meeting.

Though INCSEA was not well known when it was signed, it substantially reduced the number of maritime incidents between the US and Soviet navies. In potential crisis situations, both navies could communicate through channels constructed through the agreement to avoid escalation. The INCSEA protocol (1973) extended some provisions of the 1972 agreement to nonmilitary ships. Despite the ups and downs of the US-Soviet and later US-Russia relationship, INCSEA remains functional and in force.¹⁵ It has also been referred to by other countries, such as China and Japan in 2014-15, when dealing with their controversial maritime issues.¹⁶

Lessons

INCSEA provides quite an encouraging case of successful US-Soviet security cooperation. The agreement could be viewed as a confidence-building measure, an arrangement “designed to enhance such assurance of mind and belief in the trustworthiness of states and the facts they create.”¹⁷

It is worth keeping in mind that the timing (détente), the nature of the problem (incident avoidance or reduction), and the crucial roles of participants (e.g. Admiral Gorshkov) all factored in ways that can be difficult to replicate in the US-China relationship. Still, some top-down trust-building was accomplished, and

14 Ibid. p.487.

15 Sean M. Lynn-Jones, “The Incidents at Sea Agreement,” pp. 482-509.

16 See Yu Tiejun, “Crisis Management in the Current Sino-Japanese Relations,” in *China International Strategy Review* 2014, Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2015, pp. 96-113. <http://en.iiss.pku.edu.cn/research/discuss/2014/2415.html>, accessed August 31, 2022

17 Quoted in Lynn-Jones, p. 502.

several points deserve attention here. First, common interests in trust-building did exist even among major powers in strategic competition: avoiding incidents at sea; not excluding competition; regulation of inevitable competition; and increasing predictability and stability in US-Soviet relations. Second, INCSEA shows that security cooperation, crisis management, and confidence-building (different but related forms of trust-building) between the United States and the Soviet Union were possible as well as feasible. Third, common interests, if concrete and negotiable – such as removing the physical dangers of collisions, avoiding incidents that could increase tensions and the risk of war, and preventing incidents and escalation during crisis – can facilitate a top-down trust-building process. Fourth, strong leadership and professionalism in the navies of both countries plays a critical role. In the INCSEA negotiations, high-level delegations on both sides helped improve confidence and overcome domestic impediments. The top-down approach yielded results through proactive, responsible, and professional behaviour on the part of the involved agencies and people.



US Rear Admiral Shawn Duane and his Russian counterpart signing the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the Waters Outside the Limits of the Territorial Sea (INCSEA) agreement in Moscow, 25 May 2021. The annual event reviews the implementation of the agreement and reaffirms commitment to risk reduction dialogue (US Navy Photo).

What happened should now prompt us to make new great efforts so that no repetition of such events should be allowed because if we succeeded in finding a way out of a dangerous situation this time, next time we might not safely untie the tightly made knot. And the knot that we are now untying has been tied rather tightly, almost to the limit.

– Khrushchev, in letter to Kennedy, November 1962.

The INF Treaty (1987)



Soviet inspectors and their American escorts stand among several dismantled Pershing II missiles as they view the destruction of other missile components. The missiles are being destroyed in accordance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty (US Department of Defense, Jose Lopez Jr.).

Process

In 1985, Gorbachev took power in the Soviet Union, bringing about Glasnost and a great change in East-West relations. It was mainly through the efforts of Gorbachev, who overcame resistance from the military and from some conservative leaders, that the Soviet Union and the United States signed the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) on 8 December 1987. The INF Treaty eliminated a class of missiles variously described as Intermediate Range or Long-Range Theatre Nuclear Weapons (LRTNW). The agreement was the culmination of some six years of arms control negotiations that the Reagan administration initiated with a set of proposals known as the “Zero Option.” For a long time, the INF Treaty was regarded as one of the most important symbols of the improvement of US-Soviet relations and became a prelude to the end of the Cold War.

Seen from the history of arms control and disarmament, the INF Treaty is indeed a landmark achievement. It eliminated a whole class of missiles and greatly improved strategic stability, especially the stability of Europe. It also contributed to further trust-building in US-Soviet relations and elevated Gorbachev’s reputation in the West. The treaty was in place until 2020 when the Trump administration formally withdrew the United States from it.

Lessons

From the perspective of top-down trust-building between the United States and the Soviet Union, the INF Treaty was good for improving bilateral relations, but whether the INF Treaty was conducive to the national interests of the Soviet Union there are different opinions.¹⁸ It might be safe to say that there existed strong domestic opposition to the INF Treaty, but Gorbachev, as the General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party and the paramount leader of the Soviet Union, called the shots. The new paramount leader's ideas regarding relations with the West, the United States, and the nature of international politics had a huge impact on Soviet foreign policy. The example of Gorbachev thus shows the power of leaders' ideas and world views in shaping foreign policy. However, one can question just how lasting this impact was; after all, the INF Treaty eventually broke down, and relations between Russia and the United States have been further strained in its aftermath.

Implications for US-China Relations Today

It remains to be seen how lessons drawn from US-Soviet relations can apply to current China-US relations for several reasons. First, China's evaluation of Soviet strategic responses to the United States is negative due to the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991. The underlying official Chinese interpretation of the Soviet Union's demise usually places much blame on the leadership failures of Gorbachev, such as his weakness and changing ideology in response to Western challenges, as well as Western insidious conspiracies ("peaceful evolution" then; "colour revolution" now). Against this background, lessons from the INF case study, for instance, are more likely to be viewed by the Chinese leadership as cautionary lessons that should be avoided. Second, compared with Western countries and even Russia, given that China always emphasises its own principles, guidelines, and strategic culture in conducting security cooperation and handling international crises, it is not certain to what extent the top-down approach to trust-building between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War can apply to China-US relations.

Nevertheless, China realises that distrust, misunderstanding, and misperceptions create big problems for current China-US relations, and China does want to build trust. Additionally, China always approaches China-US relations through a top-down approach. With that in mind, it is beneficial for China to learn from relevant studies on US-Soviet security cooperation and the crisis management arrangements that helped build up basic trust between the two sides.

18 Dobrynin criticised Gorbachev for giving up too much without getting anything in return from the United States. Zubok believed that the decision of accepting the Zero Option was made by the Soviet Political Bureau instead of Gorbachev himself, but he also criticised Gorbachev for his improvised commitment to reducing SS-23 missiles. See *In Confidence*, pp. 623-627; Zubok, *A Failed Empire*, pp. 300-302.

Only by doing so can China learn the conditions and patterns of trust-building among nations and how the opposing side would act in trust-building and crisis management situations. From there, China can consider its own approaches.

INCSEA is a good example for China in thinking about maritime security, confidence building, and crisis management, considering its increasing security role in the world. How to apply the US and Soviet experience during the Cold War to the current China-US rivalry – through engagement, negotiation, communication, and rule-making to reduce the risk of armed conflict among naval forces, or to keep conflict at a lower level once it erupts – requires further exploration. Although China and the United States have a Maritime and Air-Space Liaison Mechanism with codes of conduct, many risks remain at sea, including different interpretations of codes and international law, near misses between vessels and airplanes, and US FONOPS (Freedom of Navigation Operations) in the South China Sea, the Taiwan Strait, and the East China Sea.



China can still learn a lot from the Cuban Missile Crisis regarding current China-US crisis management. Some considerations and suggestions follow:

First, for countries in crises, it should always be remembered that the central objective of crisis management is to prevent conflict and war. Doing so depends on various factors, the most important one being the capacity and skill that main actors bring to crisis management. Elements for successful crisis management generally include limited policy objectives, restraint from using force, tight control over combat forces on the ground, reliable intelligence, effective decision-making systems, internal communications, clear signalling, limited escalation, and properly handling domestic political factors.

Second, the priority for China-US crisis management at the current stage is to prevent bilateral relations from deteriorating and to maintain crisis stability.

If a tense situation escalates, crisis management and trust-building becomes increasingly difficult, and military logic eventually overwhelms the logic of diplomacy. This would be a tragedy for both countries. Speaker Nancy Pelosi's irresponsible visit to Taiwan and the responses of Mainland China and the United States have once again revealed this dynamic.

Third, in crisis management, it is essential that each side does not view the crisis as a zero-sum game and that they resist the temptation to inflict a damaging, humiliating defeat on the opponent. In the Cuban Missile Crisis, Kennedy, on one hand, used a blockade to force Khrushchev to remove missiles from Cuba, while also letting Khrushchev save face by compromising on certain issues. If Kennedy had not handled the crisis delicately, the result might have been very different. By contrast, in the July Crisis of 1914, a prelude to the First World War, major countries persisted in advancing their own agendas without any concessions. Even though none of the great powers wanted to fight right up to the 11th hour, Europe sleepwalked into a disastrous war and thereby lost its supreme global position.

Certainly, crisis management involves struggle, bargaining, or even coercive diplomacy; however, inflicting a damaging and humiliating defeat on the opponent runs counter to the fundamental logic of crisis management, which is to avoid conflict and war.

Fourth, China's national security and crisis management system must enhance its institutional capacity for communication and coordination. The National Security Commission established in 2014 should play a more proactive role in improving China's capability of coordinating foreign affairs, national defence, intelligence, and crisis management. Managing China-US strategic competition involves multiple institutions, including the Party Departments, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the military, the Coast Guard, Trade, Finance, and Science & Technology Ministries, and so on. Therefore, it is essential to ensure coordination among different divisions to overcome communication problems, one-sided actions, and intra-agency competition. In this sense, without a system and mechanism for strong leadership, coordination, and management, the political will of top decision-makers alone cannot guarantee effective crisis management. Generally speaking, domestic challenges on the organisational level are much more severe and more difficult to tackle than other factors.

Finally, we should think about the following questions: What are the differences between the universal values and rule-based international order emphasised by the United States and the common values and Global Security and Development Initiatives raised by China? If senior diplomats from both China and the United States change the wording of their speeches, will we have a better chance to see trust-building between the two countries?

To answer these questions, the US-Soviet top-down trust-building experiences during the Cold War may provide helpful examples: the role of summit meetings and personal friendship between top leaders; sympathy with the other side's world views and feelings; attention to the domestic audience and regime security of the counterpart; reliable and trustworthy communication; non-ideological and professional foreign services; the importance of showing good-faith and credibility; and engaging with each other to try to find cooperative agendas with shared interests. Controlling nuclear arms, fighting pandemics, and dealing with climate change should not become areas of contention, but rather ways of alleviating animosity and improving mutual trust.

Read More

On cooperation and crisis management:

- Alexander L. George, Philip J. Farley, and Alexander Dallin, eds., *US-Soviet Security Cooperation: Achievements, Failures, Lessons*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
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On the US-Soviet top down approach to trust-building

- Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents*, New York: Times Books, 1995.
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On the Cuban missile crisis:

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On INCSEA:

- David F. Winkler, *Cold War at Sea: High-seas Confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union*, Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2000.

The APLN China-US-Asia Dialogue

The relationship between China and the United States has deteriorated significantly with the potential to worsen still. The security dilemma that this generates is fuelling fear, mistrust, and arms racing, impacting countries across the Asia-Pacific and globally. Potential repercussions include military confrontation and the possibility of nuclear escalation while undermining attempts at global cooperation on a range of 21st-century challenges.

Through a series of scholarly exchanges and publications, APLN's project China-US-Asia Dialogue evaluates what steps are necessary to improve understanding, reduce misperceptions, de-escalate risks and tensions, and build trust. The project is aimed at devising pragmatic policy recommendations for decision-makers and policy communities across the Asia-Pacific, and Washington and Beijing in particular.

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