UTILIZING THE RIGHT WING FOR A UNITED FRONT: NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PRC AND THE FRG IN 1972

On October 11, 1972, Ji Pengfei, Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China (PRC), and Walter Scheel, Vice Chancellor and Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), representing their respective governments, signed a joint communiqué to establish diplomatic relations between the two countries in Beijing. The content was brief, containing just one sentence: «The Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany have decided to establish diplomatic relations and exchange ambassadors soon».[1] However, the representatives of both countries needed eight rounds of negotiations before and after reaching this agreement, which lasted for just over a month.

Previous research on the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and West Germany in 1972 can broadly be categorized into several types: One focuses on discussing the historical background of China's relations with West Germany and the subsequent development of bilateral relations without delving into the specific negotiation process for establishing diplomatic relations.[2] Other perspectives include examining the reaction of the German Democratic Republic

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[1] "Zhonghua renmin gongheguo he Deyizhi lianban gongheguo guanyu liangguo jianli waijiao guanxi de lianhe gongbao (Joint Communiqué between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the Two Countries)." in *Renmin ribao* (People's Daily), 12 October, 1972, p. 1.

[2] Vid. Wu, Jingping. *Cong Aojiao beizhan dao Ke'er fanghua: zhongde guanxi, 1861–1992* (From the Occupation of Jiaozhou Bay to Kohl's Visit to China: Sino-German Relations, 1861–1992), Fuzhou, Fujian Renmin Chubanshe, 1993; Mechthild Leutner and Tim Trampedach, hrsg., *Bundesrepublik Deutschland und China 1949 bis 1995: Politik, Wirtschaft,*

(GDR) to China's establishment of diplomatic relations with the FRG or understanding Sino-West German diplomatic relations from the perspective of party politics inside West Germany.[3] Another study covers the negotiation process for establishing diplomatic ties in 1972 but relies solely on Chinese sources and lacks a comprehensive examination of the background of the changing Cold War dynamics at the time, resulting in an incomplete understanding of the issue.[4]

Based on archival documents from China, the United States, and Germany, this article begins with the 1964 background and traces the history of negotiations, Chinese objectives, and obstacles to achieving formal recognition to demonstrate that China sought opportunities to establish diplomatic relations with the FRG. Contrary to previous assumptions, this did not stem from a shift in China's diplomatic strategy but instead demonstrated the consistency of political motivations and highlighted the continuation of united front thinking in China's revolutionary diplomacy during the Maoist era.[5]

Wissenschaft, Kultur; eine Quellensammlung, Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1995; Pan, Qichang. *Bainian zhongde guanxi* (A Hundred Years of Sino-German Relations), Beijing, Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 2006; Albers, Martin. "Business with Beijing, Détente with Moscow: West Germany's China Policy in a Global Context, 1969–1982," *Cold War History*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 2014, pp. 237–257.

[3] Vid. Schaefer, Bernd. "Ostpolitik, 'Fernostpolitk', and Sino-Soviet Rivalry: China und the Two Germanys," in Carole Fink and Bernd Schaefer, eds., *Ostpolitik, 1969–1974: European and Global Responses*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 129–147; Yuan, Weiman and Sun, Lixin. "Cong zhengdang zhengzhi jiaodukan 1972 nian Dezhong jianjiao shijian (The Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between West Germany and China in 1972: From a Party Politics Perspective)," *Heilongjiang Shehui Kexue* (Social Sciences of Heilongjiang), No. 6, 2012, pp. 165–168; Chen, Tao. "Zhongguo tong Lianbang Deguo guanxi zhengchanghua guocheng zhong de Minzhu Deguo yinsu (The Factors of German Democratic Republic in the Normalization Process of Relations between China and the Federal Republic of Germany)," *Dangdai zhongguoshi yanjiu* (Contemporary China History Studies), No. 6, 2013, pp. 71–78; Fukuda, Madoka. "'One-China' and East-West Germany: Normalization of Relations between China and West Germany," in Yuichi Hosoya, ed., *Postwar Asia-Europe Relations: Cold War, Decolonization, Regionalism*, Tokyo, Keio University Press, 2015, pp. 165–190.

[4] Li, Nan. "Zhongguo he yuan Lianbang deguo jianjiao tanpan guocheng fenxi (Analysis of the Negotiation Process for the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between China and the FRG)," Master thesis, China Foreign Affairs University, 2006.

[5] Yang, Kuisong. "Xinzhongguo de geming waijiao sixiang yu shijian (Revolutionary Diplomacy Thought and Practice of New China)," *Shixue Yuekan* (Journal of Historical Science), No. 2, 2010, pp. 62–74.

1. *An Unsuccessful United Front: The 1964 Talks in Bern*

From May to December 1964, representatives from China and West Germany held four informal talks in Bern, Switzerland, intending to improve trade relations between the two countries. However, these talks ultimately failed to produce any concrete results. The failure can be attributed to three main factors: divergent goals regarding the type of agreement to be signed, pressure from the United States on West Germany, and China's rejection of the Berlin Clause.[6] Among these factors, the latter is considered the primary reason for the failure of the talks.

First, regarding the type of agreement to be signed, West Germany initially set its negotiating goal at a government-level barter agreement (Warenabkommen), which specifies the types of goods traded. On the other hand, China assumed that the negotiations would concern a government-level trade agreement (Handelsabkommen).[7] It was only during the meeting on July 21 that the Chinese representatives noticed the difference in the type of agreement. This caused great dissatisfaction on the Chinese side. The Chinese Foreign Ministry believed that a barter agreement, similar to a trade contract and holding little political significance, would be meaningless to sign.[8]

Second, the United States exerted invisible pressure on West Germany. The United States expressed its dissatisfaction and concerns to West Germany regarding this agreement. Secretary of State Dean Rusk believed such an agreement was particularly untimely and suggested that Chancellor Ludwig Erhard discuss the problem with President Lyndon Johnson during his visit to the United States.[9] On June 12, 1964, during Erhard's visit to the United States,

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[6] Hans-Peter Schwarz, Hrsg., *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (hereafter AAPD) *1964*, München, Oldenbourg, 1995, S. 55, Anm. 20; *Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC* (hereafter AMFAPRC), 110-01296-03, pp. 30–33. The Berlin Clause is a provision used by the government of the Federal Republic of Germany in various agreements with foreign countries, which includes "West Berlin" within the scope of the agreement, thus establishing that West Berlin is under the jurisdiction of the FRG. When signing trade agreements with Eastern European countries, a similar effect is achieved by specifying the scope of the agreement as the "West German Mark Territory".

[7] Schwarz, Hrsg., *AAPD 1964*, *op. cit.*, S. 543, 585–590; AMFAPRC, 110-02035-06, pp. 22–23.

[8] Schwarz, Hrsg., *AAPD 1964*, *op. cit.*, S. 872–873; AMFAPRC, 110-02035-07, pp. 33–34; 110-02035-03, pp. 11–12.

[9] Cable regarding a possible West German trade agreement with China, May 23, 1964, *U.S. Declassified Documents Online* (USDDO), CK2349478605, pp. 1–2.

he assured Johnson and Rusk that West Germany did not intend to establish diplomatic relations with China or sign a trade agreement. They were only considering how to strengthen trade with China, and Bonn's actions would be consistent with Washington's without taking any initiative towards Beijing.[10] Naturally, Beijing was dissatisfied with Erhard's statements. West Germany's policy towards China was nowhere near as independent as France's, leading Mao Zedong to criticize Erhard for «listening too much to the United States».[11]

Third, the main reason for the failure of the Bern talks was China's refusal to accept the Berlin Clause, and this policy had already been determined before the contact between China and West Germany began. A telegram sent by the Chinese Embassy in Switzerland to the Foreign Ministry on May 7, 1964, explicitly stated that China could sign an official trade agreement with West Germany. Still, it should not include the recognition of West Berlin as part of West Germany. The first point of the negotiating policy formulated by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs was to «insist on not including West Berlin in the agreement», and they optimistically believed that «through struggle, it is possible to force West Germany to make concessions».[12] However, at the same time, when West Germany formulated its negotiating policy, it emphasized that the agreement must include the Berlin Clause. As the West German Foreign Minister Gerhard Schröder told Rusk, what attracted the Germans was the ability to ensure the Berlin Clause in some form of agreement with China, just as they did in their trade agreements with Eastern European countries. The West Germans were not eager for an increase in their trade, but they strongly desired to obtain the Berlin Clause.[13]

The FRG believed it could achieve its goals because of a misinterpretation of the Sino-Soviet conflict. They thought that since China no longer recognized

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[10] Schwarz, Hrsg., *AAPD 1964*, *op. cit.*, S. 648, 654; James E. Miller, ed., *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS), *1964–1968*, Vol. XV, Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1999, pp. 108–110, 113.

[11] Mao, Zedong. "Women henxinshang Faguo zhezhong duli zhengce (We appreciate France's independent policy), September 10, 1964." in Zhonghua renmin gongheguo waijiaobu (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC) & Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi (Literature Research Office of the CCCPC), eds., *Mao Zedong waijiao Wenxuan* (Selected Works on Mao Zedong's Diplomacy), Beijing, Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe & Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 1994, p. 542.

[12] AMFAPRC, 110-02035-03, p. 14; 110-02035-06, p. 20.

[13] Schwarz, Hrsg., *AAPD 1964*, *op. cit.*, S. 543; Miller, ed., *FRUS, 1964-1968*, *op. cit.*, pp. 108–110, 113.

the Soviet Union's leadership in the Communist world, Beijing's policies would be increasingly driven by national objectives.[14] Eastern European countries, under pressure from the Soviet Union, had to rewrite "West Berlin" as "West German Mark Territory" in their trade agreement with the FRG. Still, with its independent and unconstrained foreign policy, China did not need to consider such factors,[15] implying that China should change its stance on the Berlin issue. However, the reality was quite the opposite. It was precisely because of the Sino-Soviet conflict that China could not accept the Berlin Clause. Beijing claimed, «We can avoid the present revisionists using any wrongdoing as a pretext to accuse us. We do not consider the issue of recognizing West Berlin as part of the West German Mark currency area in the agreement, which Poland, Hungary, and others have recognized under the nod of the Soviet revisionists».[16] China's refusal to accept the Berlin Clause was also a test for the FRG. If Bonn made concessions on this issue, it could undermine American control and constraints over its relations with China.

In conclusion, during the 1964 talks with the FRG in Bern, China aimed to isolate and divide the United States in its relations with the FRG. This is a typical international united front strategy, which Lenin described as: «The more powerful enemy can be vanquished only by exerting the utmost effort, and by the most thorough, careful, attentive, skillful and obligatory use of any, even the smallest, rift between the enemies, any conflict of interests among the bourgeoisie of the various countries and among the various groups or types of bourgeoisie within the various countries, and also by taking advantage of any, even the smallest, opportunity of winning a mass ally, even though this ally is temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional».[17]

In September 1963, Mao Zedong pointed out, «The establishment of a broad international united front against American imperialism should include the intermediate group, namely the Inner Six of France, West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg, as well as the Outer Seven that includes Britain, along with Japan and Canada».[18] Thereafter, China sought to

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[14] Schwarz, Hrsg., *AAPD 1964*, *op. cit.*, S. 42, Anm. 4.

[15] Ibid., S. 586–587.

[16] AMFAPRC, 110-02035-03, pp. 14–16.

[17] Lenin, V. I. "'Left-Wing' Communism – An Infantile Disorder." in *V. I. Lenin Collected Works*, Vol. 36, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974, pp. 70–72.

[18] Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, ed., *Mao Zedong nianpu, 1949–1976* (Mao Zedong's Chronicle, 1949–1976), Vol. 6, Beijing, Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, 2013, p. 256.

exploit these contradictions between the so-called "second intermediate zone" countries[19] and the United States, thereby serving its diplomatic strategy of opposing "American imperialism." The successful establishment of diplomatic relations between China and France in early 1964 can be seen as a manifestation of this strategy.

The international united front strategy differs from classical realist diplomatic principles. Diplomacy must be divested of the crusading spirit; it must determine its objectives in light of the power actually and potentially available to pursue them and assess the objectives of other nations and the power actually and potentially available to pursue them.[20] But the united front is inherently an adversarial strategy. In 1964, China engaged in diplomacy with Western European countries on the premise that it had already set the goal of "opposing American imperialism." It did not seek mutual benefit in interstate relations but rather attempted to widen the divisions and contradictions within the Western camp.

It is precisely because China has sought to build a united front against American imperialism that its actions have violated the principles of realist diplomacy in two respects. First, foreign policy objectives must be defined in terms of the national interest, which is the integrity of the national territory and its institutions, and must be defended without compromise.[21] The Taiwan issue has always been, without any doubt, China's core national interest. However, during the process of establishing diplomatic relations between China and France, China in fact made concessions on the Taiwan issue by no longer insisting that France and the Taiwan authorities must first announce the "severance of diplomatic relations." Instead, this step was placed between the announcement of the establishment of diplomatic relations and the exchange of ambassadors. However, if the complete "expulsion of Chiang Kai-Shek" could not be achieved, it would mean the emergence of "two Chinas" and pose a risk of China and France breaking off diplomatic relations again.[22]

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[19] In the 1960s, as part of the united front strategy, Mao attempted to distinguish some Western capitalist countries, for example, Great Britain, France, West Germany, and Japan, from the United States, viewing them as a part of the second intermediate zone. See "Quanshijie yiqie fandui Meidiguozhuyi de liliang lianhe qilai (Let all the forces in the world that oppose American imperialism unite)," in *Renmin ribao*, 21. January 1964, p. 1.

[20] Morgenthau, Hans J. *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, New Delhi, Kalyani Publishers, 2018, pp. 563–564, 584.

[21] Ibid., p. 586.

[22] Yao, Baihui. "Zhongfa jianjiao tanpan zhong guanyu Taiwan wenti de 'sanxiang moqi' – Zhou Enlai zongli tanhua yaodian xingcheng kaoshi ('Three Tacit Agreements' on

Second, nations must be willing to compromise on all issues that are not vital to them.[23] During the 1964 Sino-German talks in Bern, accepting the "Berlin Clause" would not have harmed China's core sovereign interests. Yet why did China reject it from the outset and refuse to compromise on non-essential issues? Some Chinese scholars argue that this demonstrates China's commitment to its diplomatic principles.[24] But this persistence reflected that, at the time, China was not conducting diplomacy with West Germany but rather engaging in united-front work. It just did not achieve the kind of major success that the establishment of diplomatic relations with France had.

As the Cold War international landscape underwent significant changes in the 1970s, China's diplomatic thinking on the international united front remained unchanged. It was simply that, as its primary powerful enemy shifted from the United States to the Soviet Union, it gained a new understanding of its united front with the FRG and took new actions.

2. *The Eve of Diplomatic Relations: From Ostpolitik to Nixon's Visit to China*

Two significant events occurred in China and West Germany, respectively, in 1969, which became the starting point for the two countries to adjust their diplomatic strategies. In March, Chinese border troops clashed with Soviet border troops in the Zhenbao Island area of the Ussuri River, and from that time onwards, the Sino-Soviet alliance became entirely illusory. In Mao Zedong's view, the "social imperialists" of the Soviet Union had replaced the United States as the number one enemy of China and the world's peoples. Therefore, he transformed China's international united front strategy, choosing to reconcile with the United States to form a unified front against the Soviet Union.[25] However, this transformation was not immediate.

Taiwan Issue during the Negotiation of the Establishment of Sino-France Diplimatic Relations – Exploration of the Forming of 'The Gist of Premier Zhou Enlai's Talk')," *Dangdai zhongguoshi yanjiu* (Contemporary China History Studies), No. 2, 2012, p. 76.

[23] Morgenthau. *Politics among Nations*, *op. cit.*, p. 587.

[24] Pan, Qichang. "Boerni huitan – Zhongde guanxishi shangde yiduan mishi (Berner Gespräch – eine Geheimgeschichte in der Geschichte der Beziehungen zwischen China und Deutschland)," *Deguo Yanjiu* (Deutschland-Studien), No. 3, 2002, p. 19.

[25] Li, Danhui and Xia, Yafeng. *Mao and the Sino-Soviet Split, 1959–1973*, Lanham, Lexington Books, 2018, p. 261.

West Germany's policy towards China during this period also underwent some changes. In December 1968, the Federal Foreign Office still believed that although the United States was interested in gradually improving its relations with China, Sino-American relations would not improve in the short term. Therefore, West Germany's policy towards China aimed to improve trade between the two countries, and so they sought to reach a trade agreement with Beijing. At the same time, West Germany held a more open attitude towards establishing diplomatic relations, believing that all issues, including diplomatic relations, should be discussed with Beijing. Even in the face of conflicting positions with the United States, West Germany was prepared to express its legitimate right to implement its own decisions.[26] Willy Brandt, who served as foreign minister in the grand coalition government, also stated several times that the conditions for developing relations with China had matured.[27]

After the outbreak of the Sino-Soviet conflict over Zhenbao Island, the FRG's attitude appeared to grow more cautious. During his visit to Japan in May 1969, Chancellor Kurt-Georg Kiesinger stated, «We do not intend to establish diplomatic relations with China or prepare for it. I also do not believe the Chinese side is interested in this». A month later, Hans Ruete, Deputy Director of the Second Political Division of the Federal Foreign Office, met with Xiang Qian, Chief of Xinhua News Agency's branch in Bonn. He said that improving Sino-West German relations was not easy, but neither side was responsible for that. The Chinese side may have misunderstood the Chancellor's previous statements on Sino-West German relations. He wanted to convey that it was not yet the time for the two countries to formally establish diplomatic ties, but that this was an achievable goal.[28] Overall, at this time, although the FRG had not formulated a clear policy toward China, it believed that a Sino-Soviet reunion was unlikely. Therefore, China should no longer be isolated by the West.[29]

In October 1969, Willy Brandt became Chancellor of the FRG and immediately set a new agenda for foreign policy under the label of New Ostpolitik.

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[26] Hans-Peter Schwarz, Hrsg., *AAPD 1968*, München, Oldenbourg, 1999, S. 1613–1615.

[27] Wang, Shu. *Zhongde jianjiao qinliji* (Personal Recollection of the Establishment of Sino-German Diplomatic Relations), Beijing, Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 2001, p. 27.

[28] Hans-Peter Schwarz, Hrsg., *AAPD 1969*, München, Oldenbourg, 2000, S. 720, Anm. 3, 721.

[29] David C. Geyer, ed., *FRUS, 1969–1976*, Vol. XL, Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 2007, p. 70.

Improving relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries became a top priority in the new government's foreign policy. Brandt took control of foreign policy and, just ten months later, signed the Moscow Treaty with the Soviet Union. Egon Bahr, State Secretary of the Chancellor's Office, once expressed to Henry Kissinger, Assistant to the U.S. President for National Security Affairs, and Secretary of State William Rogers, that the Soviet Union had a willingness to negotiate and achieve détente with the FRG because it was uncertain about how to handle its relationship with China and had not formed a coherent idea. Therefore, the Soviet Union hoped to maintain a peaceful and stable situation in the West. However, Kissinger was quite disdainful of this viewpoint, believing that this thinking among the Germans was an illusion.[30]

For China during this period, any country establishing diplomatic détente with the Soviet Union would be detrimental, as it would allow the Soviet Union to devote more energy to dealing with China. At the end of 1969, Wang Shu was sent to work at Xinhua News Agency's branch in Bonn, where one of his main tasks was to study the impact of Brandt's Ostpolitik on Sino-West German relations. He found that Brandt was more prudent in his ties with China after becoming Chancellor, placing China behind the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries. For example, Conrad Ahlers, director of the Federal German Press Office at the time, stated, «There is no key to German reunification on the Great Wall». Therefore, China's response to Brandt's Ostpolitik was critical. At the same time, Wang Shu also discovered that the Christian Democratic Union and the Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU), which had become opposition parties, were criticizing Brandt's policies for betraying national interests, acknowledging the Soviet Union's sphere of influence, and weakening NATO's unity, while pointing out that the Ostpolitik should not stop at Moscow but should extend to Beijing. As a result, the China issue became a topic of domestic political struggle within the FRG.[31] From the perspective of united front work, this could be exploited as the internal contradictions within the bourgeoisie.

On August 12, 1970, the FRG formally signed the Moscow Treaty with the Soviet Union, which raised concerns in the United States. Kissinger believed that the Moscow Treaty had little substantive content and only created a sense of détente, because Brandt's policy of accepting the European status quo was fundamentally at odds with the Soviet Union's demand to freeze it, which could leave the FRG trapped in a stalemate. Furthermore, the Ostpolitik would increase Western distrust of the FRG. The United States was concerned that if

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[30] Geyer, ed., FRUS, 1969–1976, Vol. XL, *op. cit*., pp. 205, 217, 283.

[31] Wang, Shu. *Zhongde jianjiao qinliji*, *op. cit*., pp. 27–28.

this continued, the Soviet Union would gain the ability to influence German politics, and the FRG would become another Finland.[32]

Beijing also criticized the Moscow Treaty, using even harsher language. China viewed it as a dirty deal between the Soviet Union and the FRG, condemning the Soviet Union for betraying the GDR's sovereignty and accusing the FRG of expansionist and aggressive ambitions in Eastern Europe.[33] In Mao Zedong's words, «Revisionism has its deceptive side, and the current government of West Germany also has its deceptive nature».[34] However, at that time, China still focused primarily on its united front work with East Germany, sending an ambassador back to East Germany in an attempt to assert that it was the sole representative of East Germany's interests, thereby weakening Soviet influence in Europe. However, since the survival and security of East Germany depended on the Soviet Union, this approach did not improve China's relationship with East Germany.[35]

Regarding China's apparent "support", Gustav Hertzfeldt, East German Ambassador to China, candidly told Qiao Guanhua, Vice Foreign Minister of China, that China «actually wants to exploit the complex issues in our struggle to attack the Soviet Union, rather than supporting the GDR».[36] China also did not respond to exploratory contacts from the FRG, believing that the German problem was complex and that developing relations with the FRG must take into account China's overall relationship with the Soviet Union and the United States, as well as China's consistent principles and stance on the German and Berlin issues.[37] Beijing's stance naturally dampened the FRG's enthusiasm for improving relations with China. Throughout 1971, the main goal of the FRG remained to ease relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries while avoiding closer ties with China to avoid arousing Soviet suspicions.

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[32] Geyer, ed., *FRUS, 1969–1976*, Vol. XL, *op. cit*., p. 318.

[33] "Ping Sulian Xide tiaoyue (Review of the Soviet-West German Treaty)," in Renmin ribao, 13 September 1970, pp. 1, 4.

[34] Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, ed., *Mao Zedong nianpu, 1949–1976*, Vol. 6, *op. cit*., p. 361.

[35] Hershberg, James, Radchenko, Sergey, Vámos, Péter, and Wolff, David. "The Interkit Story: A Window into the Final Decades of the Sino-Soviet Relationship," *Cold War International History Project Working Paper*, No. 61, 2011, p. 17, n. 26.

[36] *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts* (hereafter PA AA), *Ministerium für Auswärtige Angelegen-heiten* (hereafter MfAA), C 1.364/74, Bl. 94.

[37] Wang, Taiping. *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo waijiaoshi* (Diplomatic History of the People's Republic of China). Vol. 3, Beijing, Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 1999, p. 291.

There were breakthroughs in easing Sino-American relations at this time, with the news of U.S. President Richard Nixon's planned visit to China shocking the world. In addition, the PRC regained its legitimate seat at the United Nations in October 1971, which forced the FRG to consider adjusting its policy towards China. On December 29, during his meeting with Nixon, Brandt expressed that at the appropriate time, the FRG would also seek diplomatic normalization with China. Over the next six months, the FRG would attempt to meet with China in a third country to normalize trade relations and expand other contacts. However, Brandt was very concerned about the feelings of the Soviet Union. Bonn could not appear to be playing off Moscow and Beijing against each other so Bonn would inform the Soviet Union in advance. Nixon suggested that contact with China could take place in Paris.[38]

Brandt did not set establishing diplomatic relations with China as the goal, stating that it would not happen in the short term, reflecting his prudent approach to China policy. In early 1972, Brandt even joked about those who argued that the FRG's Ostpolitik must first be a Far East policy, claiming, «Anyone familiar with maps knows this idea is unrealistic and would only lead us astray. The FRG is a European country. In Europe, our fate and those of our allied countries depend on our relations with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. I warn everyone not to rely on some miracle. We should solve our problems here; miracle weapons do not exist, and China is not a miracle weapon».[39]

With Nixon's successful visit to China in February 1972, two forces began to push Brandt's government to further advance its relations with China. One force was China itself. In the wake of the Sino-American rapprochement, Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai began to focus on relations with the FRG and Japan. The other force was the CDU/CSU within the FRG, which had always been critical of the ruling party government's Ostpolitik and now demanded the early normalization of relations with China with even more significant momentum.

3. *Utilizing the Right Wing: Schröder's Visit to China*

On February 21, 1972, U.S. President Nixon arrived in Beijing, beginning what he called a "week that changed the world" visit to China. That afternoon, he met with Mao Zedong, during which Mao humorously remarked to Nixon,

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[38] Geyer, ed., *FRUS, 1969–1976*, Vol. XL, *op. cit*., p. 954.

[39] Brandt, Willy. *Begegnungen und Einsichten: Die Jahre 1960–1975*, Hamburg, Hoffmann und Campe Verlag, 1976, S. 472.

«I like rightists. People say you are rightists, that the Republican Party is to the right, and that Prime Minister Heath is also to the right. […] They also say the Christian Democratic Party of West Germany is to the right. I am comparatively happy when these people on the right come into power».[40] The subtext of favoring the right wing is a preference for political factions that are anti-Soviet; to achieve an anti-Soviet united front, the PRC could form a temporary alliance with these right-wing factions. This statement indeed reflected, to some extent, the fundamental stance of Chinese diplomacy at the time. In January 1972, before Nixon's trip to China, Gerhard Schröder, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Bundestag and Vice Chairman of the CDU, told his wife, «We will travel to China». His wife found this unbelievable, as they had not received any invitation from the Chinese side at the time.[41]

According to Wang Shu's recollection, at the end of January 1972, during a reception at the Romanian Embassy in the FRG, he spoke with Schröder. Noting that Schröder had publicly expressed a desire to visit China, Wang asked for his views, and they agreed to discuss the matter in detail later. On February 21, the same day Nixon visited China, Wang met Schröder at his office. After more than two hours of discussion, Wang asked Schröder about visiting China. Schröder expressed willingness to visit China at a convenient time, with the specific dates to be arranged by the Chinese side.[42]

In mid-March, Wang Shu received instructions from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Chinese Embassy in France, informing him to invite Schröder to visit China from July 14 to 28 on behalf of the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs. According to Wang Shu, this invitation resulted from discussions between Zhou Enlai and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to dispel doubts and advance the Sino-West German relationship by inviting the CDU leader to visit China. However, besides Schröder, many others wanted to visit China. The reason for choosing Schröder was that he not only served as the Vice Chairman of the CDU but also as the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs

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[40] Steven E. Phillips, ed., *FRUS, 1969–1976*, Vol. XVII, Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 2006, p. 608; Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, ed., *Mao Zedong nianpu, 1949–1976*, Vol. 6, *op. cit*., p. 427.

[41] Schröder, Gerhard. *Mission ohne Auftrag: Die Vorbereitung der diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen Bonn und Peking*, Bergisch Gladbach, Gustav Lübbe Verlag, 1988, S. 30.

[42] Wang, Shu. *Zhongde jianjiao qinliji*, *op. cit*., p. 67; According to Schröder's memoir, he had separate meetings with Wang Shu on November 16, 1971, and February 24, 1972, at the Bundestag Building. See Schröder, Gerhard. *Mission ohne Auftrag: Die Vorbereitung der diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen Bonn und Peking*, *op. cit*., S. 39.

Committee of the Bundestag and had previously held positions as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defence. In particular, during his tenure as Foreign Minister in 1964, he had shown a positive attitude towards improving relations with China.[43]

Beijing decided to invite Schröder to visit China in the name of the Chairman of the Bundestag's Foreign Affairs Committee, a move that not only encouraged the Social Democratic-Liberal Party government but also avoided causing embarrassment. Notably, at this point, China had received a proposal from the Federal Foreign Office for negotiations between the two countries in Geneva or elsewhere, but ultimately chose to temporarily set aside formal contact with the government and instead prioritize inviting Schröder to visit China. The intent behind this decision was undoubtedly to leverage intra-party politics in West Germany to exert greater pressure on the ruling coalition, thereby generating anti-Soviet sentiment.

Shortly after April 2, Schröder received an official invitation from China, and news of his planned visit immediately caused a great stir within the FRG. Chancellor Brandt had previously mocked Schröder, saying he would find the key to German reunification on the Great Wall. In response, Schröder sarcastically asked if Brandt would find that key in Moscow. Did he find it? Would he be willing to show it? The ruling coalition had no consistent stance, with Foreign Minister Scheel more inclined to establish contacts with China.[44] However, China had temporarily suspended the formal connection between Bonn and Beijing, and everything awaited Schröder's trip to China.

On July 15, 1972, Schröder, accompanied by his wife and Hermann Jung, the secretary of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Bundestag, arrived in Beijing. On the same afternoon, he met with Deputy Foreign Minister Qiao Guanhua, and they had three more meetings over the next three days. During the second meeting, Schröder mentioned that he had discussed establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries with Brandt and Scheel before coming to Beijing. His impression was that they both welcomed the establishment of diplomatic relations but had different views on it, with Brandt more cautious. Schröder advocated for the two countries to strive to establish diplomatic relations before the federal elections in November. He presented a memorandum of understanding drafted by the Federal Foreign Office to

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[43] Wang, Shu. *Zhongde jianjiao qinliji*, *op. cit*., pp. 74–75; Miller, ed., *FRUS, 1964–1968*, *op. cit*., pp. 119–120.

[44] Schröder, Gerhard. *Mission ohne Auftrag: Die Vorbereitung der diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen Bonn und Peking*, *op. cit*., S. 31, 37–38.

support his proposal and asked the Chinese side to consider it. After reviewing it, Qiao Guanhua believed it was largely in line with China's views and could be signed after minor modifications through negotiations.[45]

With this, Schröder's mission to visit China was a great success. On the afternoon and evening of July 19, Zhou Enlai had two conversations with Schröder at the Great Hall of the People. Schröder mentioned that he had already communicated with Chancellor Brandt and Foreign Minister Scheel, believing the time was ripe to normalize relations between the FRG and the People's Republic of China. However, Zhou Enlai corrected him, saying, «The issue between our two countries is not about the normalization of relations, but about establishing diplomatic relations. "Normalization of relations" can be used for Sino-American and Sino-Japanese relations. The FRG has its characteristics. It has never had any relations with Chiang Kai-shek. This is probably thanks to Chancellor Adenauer's foresight». Zhou revealed the unique nature of Sino-West German relations, emphasizing that the Taiwan issue would not be an obstacle to establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries. However, he doubted whether the Federal German government was ready to establish diplomatic relations immediately. Schröder stated that Chancellor Brandt would be pleased to see his Foreign Minister achieve this milestone, especially with the upcoming elections.[46] Schröder and Qiao Guanhua signed the memorandum of understanding the following day.

On July 22nd, the chief of the Xinhua News Agency Bonn Branch, Wang Shu, who had been urgently recalled to China, discussed Schröder's visit with Zhou Enlai, Foreign Minister Ji Pengfei, Qiao Guanhua, and others. They believed China would soon establish diplomatic relations with the FRG. Zhou requested that Wang Shu return to Bonn as quickly as possible to understand the reactions of the Federal German government and society following Schröder's return from China. At the same time, they could consider inviting Franz Strauß, the Chairman of the CSU, to visit China. On the evening of July 24, Mao Zedong summoned Zhou, Ji, Qiao, Wang, and others, expressing his agreement with the invitation to Strauß and his fondness for the right wing.[47] During Kissinger's visit to China in June, Zhou Enlai discussed the

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[45] Wang, Shu. *Zhongde jianjiao qinliji*, *op. cit.*, pp. 78–79.

[46] Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, ed., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949–1976* (Zhou Enlai's Chronicle, 1949–1976), Vol. 3, Beijing, Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, 1997, p. 538; Schröder, Gerhard. *Mission ohne Auftrag: Die Vorbereitung der diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen Bonn und Peking*, *op. cit.*, S. 50.

[47] Wang, Shu. *Zhongde jianjiao qinliji*, *op. cit.*, pp. 82–84; Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, ed., *Mao Zedong nianpu, 1949–1976*, Vol. 6, *op. cit.*, p. 361.

issue of contact with the FRG. In Kissinger's view, Strauß was the most steadfast among the current leaders in the FRG. Still, due to his weak political foundation, he was not the best candidate for dialogue with China. Schröder, second only to Strauß, had a better political foundation and would express his views to the Chinese side.[48] Therefore, the preparation to invite Strauß to visit China could be understood as a contingency plan by China to promote further the process of establishing diplomatic relations with Germany and as a means to create a stronger atmosphere to push the Brandt government when the process was stalled.

Schröder's successful visit to China significantly impacted the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and West Germany. According to a survey conducted in the FRG, 77% of the people expressed keen interest in the news coverage of Schröder's visit to China, and 69% believed the visit had achieved beneficial results. Upon his return to Bonn, Schröder held a press conference on July 31, during which he emphasized the importance of his visit to China. He said that given China's significance in world politics, the FRG needs to establish normal diplomatic relations with China as soon as possible.[49]

At the same time, the Brandt government also acted. Interior Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, through his office director, contacted Xinhua News Agency's Bonn branch to invite Chinese sports journalists to visit the FRG for two weeks. He also suggested that the Chinese side formally invite Foreign Minister Scheel to visit China, which would help promote the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. On August 4, Wang Shu arrived in Bonn. Before his departure, Zhou Enlai gave him two instructions: first, to meet with Schröder and seek his opinion on establishing diplomatic relations; second, to meet with Genscher or Scheel, listen to their views, and present two draft joint communiqués prepared by the Chinese side. If the FRG's government agreed to one of them, the Chinese side was willing to invite Scheel to visit China as soon as possible and to sign the joint communiqué establishing diplomatic relations.

On August 5, Wang Shu visited Schröder and informed him about his visit to China. He suggested that Wang Shu have direct discussions with Scheel as soon as possible. He believed that a more straightforward joint communiqué to establish diplomatic relations would facilitate the negotiations. The next day, Wang Shu visited Genscher, who expressed his willingness to arrange a meeting

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[48] Phillips, ed., *FRUS, 1969-1976*, Vol. XVII, *op. cit*., pp. 983–984.

[49] Schröder, Gerhard. *Mission ohne Auftrag: Die Vorbereitung der diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen Bonn und Peking*, *op. cit*., S. 30, Anm. 56.

between Wang Shu and Scheel as soon as possible. Genscher also revealed that his initial idea was to follow the US-China "Ping-pong Diplomacy" model, starting with inviting sports journalists to promote contacts between the two countries. He may not have anticipated Zhou Enlai's instruction to Wang Shu, suggesting inviting Scheel to visit Beijing "preferably in August".[50] The time indicates that the Chinese and the German governments had different expectations regarding the speed of establishing diplomatic relations.

On August 10, Scheel received Wang Shu, who expressed Beijing's wish to establish diplomatic relations with the FRG as soon as possible and invited him to visit China. Scheel believed there were no particular issues to discuss between the two countries and hoped to determine the specific time and location for negotiations as soon as possible. He also accepted the invitation to formally sign the joint communiqué on establishing diplomatic relations in Beijing after reaching an agreement in the negotiations.[51] Subsequently, representatives from both countries began diplomatic negotiations in Bonn.

4. *The Obstacle of the West Berlin Issue in the Diplomatic Negotiations*

On August 18, 1972, representatives of the PRC and the FRG began diplomatic negotiations at the Federal Foreign Office in Bonn. The Chinese delegation was led by Wang Shu and assisted by Mei Zhaorong, who was working at the PRC Embassy in the GDR. Berndt von Staden, Director of the Political Department of the Federal Foreign Office, led the West German delegation. As the FRG had never established diplomatic relations with the authorities in Taiwan, representatives from both China and West Germany believed the negotiations would be completed quickly. Von Staden even suggested this might be the "fastest negotiation in the world".[52] However, the negotiations unexpectedly lasted over a month, with eight rounds, and the West Berlin issue became the biggest obstacle to the smooth progress of the talks.

On September 3, 1971, the governments of the Soviet Union, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France reached an agreement on West Berlin. It was stated that the connection between the FRG and West Berlin would be maintained and developed. Still, West Berlin would not be a part of

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[50] Wang, Shu. *Zhongde jianjiao qinliji*, *op. cit*., p. 92.

[51] Ibid., pp. 91–95.

[52] Ibid., p. 96; Mei, Zhaorong. "Zhongde jianjiao tanpan huigu (Ein Rückblick auf die Verhandlung über Aufnahme der diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen der VR China und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland)," *Deguo Yanjiu*, No. 3, 2002, p. 9.

or governed by the FRG.[53] At the second round of Sino-West German diplomatic negotiations on August 21, 1972, von Staden proposed that they find an appropriate way to confirm the rights of the FRG to represent West Berlin and the Germans living in West Berlin in international affairs. He suggested that a confidential joint agreement be signed by both sides, covering the West Berlin issue and the principles of mutual exchange for establishing embassies, the registration of embassy personnel on the diplomatic list, technical details such as wireless communication, and consular jurisdiction. Then, according to the Basic Law of the FRG, the agreement reached between the PRC and the FRG on the West Berlin issue would be presented to the Bundestag. Wang Shu asked whether the West German side had used such an approach when establishing diplomatic relations with other countries. Von Staden replied that there had been no unified approach in the past because there had been no Berlin Agreement among the four powers. The West Berlin issue was not a problem in diplomatic relations with most countries. Therefore, even after the Berlin Agreement took effect, the FRG did not need to conclude new agreements with these countries. However, the situation was different for China.[54]

The West German proposal on the West Berlin issue was not unexpected for the Chinese delegation. After the second round of negotiations, the Chinese delegation consulted with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing and received instructions on August 23 that the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries was not related to the unique situation of West Berlin and did not need to be linked to it or be addressed through a separate protocol. However, when dealing with specific issues in the future, the actual situation in West Berlin would be taken into account.[55] This meant that although China did not legally recognize West Berlin as part of the FRG, it had already tacitly acknowledged that the FRG represented West Berlin and its residents. Compared with its 1964 stance, China's stance on the West Berlin issue had changed significantly. However, at the same time, China intended to separate negotiations to establish diplomatic relations from the West Berlin issue.

At the third round of negotiations on August 24, Wang Shu announced the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' instructions. The West German side was satisfied

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[53] U.S. Department of State, ed., *Documents on Germany 1944–1985*, Washington, U.S. Dept. of State, Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, 1985, p. 1136.

[54] Hans-Peter Schwarz, Hrsg., *AAPD 1972*, München, Oldenbourg, 2003, S. 1100–1101.

[55] Mei, Zhaorong. "Zhongde jianjiao tanpan huigu," *Deguo Yanjiu*, No. 3, 2002, p. 10; Wang, Taiping. *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo waijiaoshi*, Vol. 3, *op. cit*., p. 299.

with China's position on the West Berlin issue, but still emphasized that the establishment of diplomatic relations and the West Berlin issue were related. In particular, both sides had reached a consensus in practice, but it had not been recorded appropriately, which was unsatisfactory. Therefore, von Staden proposed a new form of agreement, to which the Chinese side responded by acknowledging the West German position without objection.[56] After this proposal was reported back to Beijing, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs instructed that the establishment of diplomatic relations be without preconditions and that the West Berlin issue need not be directly linked to it. If the West German side raised this issue, it would be considered a precondition. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also reiterated that China would handle specific topics on the situation in West Berlin.[57]

At the fourth round of negotiations on August 28, Wang Shu once again emphasized that «what we said before about the status of West Berlin is still valid!» From the West German side, China had expressed its final position on this issue, and Wang's statement implied that verbal declarations were as effective as written agreements. Therefore, von Staden stated that if his understanding was correct, China wanted to use a statement to replace the written agreement proposed by West Germany. If this were the case, he would consider this fact and the content of China's declaration and respond in the next round of talks. Wang Shu reiterated China's essential position, stating that this issue would not be difficult to resolve once diplomatic relations between the two countries were established. Subsequently, Klaus Blech, a member of the West German negotiating team, gave a lengthy explanation of the West Berlin issue. At the same time, von Staden once again emphasized that this issue had already been resolved among the United States, Britain, France, and the FRG. If negotiations were to continue after establishing diplomatic relations, it would certainly not be conducive to developing ties between the two countries. Wang Shu repeatedly emphasized that China's position had already been expressed clearly.[58]

The two sides were initially scheduled to hold the fifth round of talks on August 31. However, since West Germany still insisted on signing a written document regarding West Berlin, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs believed West Germany may have been under the impression that China was eager to establish diplomatic relations. Since Scheel had already announced that he would

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[56] Schwarz, Hrsg., *AAPD 1972*, *op. cit.*, S. 1121–1122.

[57] Mei, Zhaorong. "Zhongde jianjiao tanpan huigu," *Deguo Yanjiu*, No. 3, 2002, p. 10.

[58] Schwarz, Hrsg., *AAPD 1972*, *op. cit.*, S. 1140–1141.

visit China in October to sign the joint communiqué on establishing diplomatic relations, there was sufficient time for negotiations. Therefore, China proposed postponing the fifth round of talks to September 4, creating the impression that it was not in a hurry to establish diplomatic relations with the other side.[59]

The differences over the West Berlin issue were partially resolved at the fifth talk on September 4. Von Staden expressed regret that China did not accept the joint agreement and proposed a new plan. When signing the joint communiqué, he would read out the relevant items agreed upon by both sides, and the West German side would record this in a document. He assumed that China would not object to this and Germany would provide the record to China as an "informal document" for evaluation. Wang Shu stated that he was willing to report the content of this "informal document" to Beijing. The West Berlin issue was reflected in Article 5 of this document, stating, «As the representative of the government of the FRG, I explained during the negotiations how the interests of Berlin (West) and the permanent residents of German nationality in Berlin (West) are represented by the FRG and its diplomatic missions abroad. As the representative of the government of the PRC, you subsequently confirmed that the PRC will act according to the actual situation in Berlin (West) and that there are no conflicts or issues of interest between the FRG and the PRC».[60]

At the sixth round of negotiations on September 13, Wang Shu replied to von Staden, stating that China agreed to the proposed method of «West German reading out the record, and the Chinese not opposing it». However, there were two points of disagreement regarding the fifth item of the "informal document." First, China requested the removal of the last half-sentence, «there are no conflicts or issues of interest between the FRG and the PRC», as it could be misinterpreted as indicating that China had no conflicts of interest with the FRG regarding the issue of West Berlin. In reality, China did not recognize West Berlin as part of the FRG, a stance that differed significantly from the FRG's position. Second, China objected to the use of "Berlin (West)" and advocated "West Berlin" or "West Zone of Berlin".[61] Von Staden explained that the use of "Berlin (West)" was consistent with the established factual situation, and that retaining the statement that there were no conflicts of interest between the two countries was intended to prevent future diplomatic disputes

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[59] Mei, Zhaorong. "Zhongde jianjiao tanpan huigu," *Deguo Yanjiu*, No. 3, 2002, pp. 10–11.

[60] Schwarz, Hrsg., *AAPD 1972*, *op. cit.*, S. 1176–1178, Anm. 3.

[61] Mei, Zhaorong. "Zhongde jianjiao tanpan huigu," *Deguo Yanjiu*, No. 3, 2002, p. 12.

over Berlin. However, he pointed out that if China were willing to compromise and agree to use the term "Berlin (West)," it would be more likely to remove the last half-sentence.[62]

In the end, China accepted this suggestion. At the seventh round of negotiations on September 21, Wang Shu first explained the use of the term "West Berlin" by China and then agreed to use "Berlin (West)" in the "informal document." However, China would continue to use the term "West Berlin" (Xibolin) in Chinese expressions. He once again requested the removal of the last half-sentence of the fifth item, emphasizing that the issue of West Berlin was unrelated to establishing diplomatic relations between the PRC and the FRG. He stated that, given West Germany's position, China had already expressed its stance on West Berlin and agreed to use "Berlin (West)," implying that West Germany should make corresponding concessions. Von Staden expressed that they could provide a revised version soon. At the final round of negotiations on September 25, Germany expressed its willingness to remove the last half-sentence at China's request.[63] With this, the biggest obstacle to establishing diplomatic relations between the PRC and the FRG was resolved. The representatives of both sides finally signed the Joint Communiqué on September 29.

5. *Conclusion*

On October 10, 1972, Scheel first flew to Shanghai and then, the same evening, went on to Beijing, becoming the first Foreign Minister of the FRG to visit China. The next day, before the bilateral talks began, he and Chinese Foreign Minister Ji Pengfei signed a joint communiqué on establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries, opening a new chapter in their relationship.

From the inconclusive outcome of the Sino-German Bern talks in 1964 to the formal establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Germany in 1972, China's foreign strategy underwent a major shift, with its primary enemy changing from "American imperialism" to the Soviet Union's "social imperialism." However, the strategic means employed to confront the primary enemy remained essentially consistent: efforts focused on establishing an international united front to widen divisions within the main enemy's alliance or to prevent any country from forming a potential new alliance with the main enemy.

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[62] Schwarz, Hrsg., *AAPD 1972*, *op. cit.*, S. 1328–1329, Anm. 4.

[63] Ibid., S. 1329–1332, 1355.

Mao Zedong questioned whether the Soviet Union was using a diversionary tactic or genuinely shifting its strategic focus eastward. He believed the Soviet strategic focus remained on Europe. Wang Shu's report echoed this view and received internal praise from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, Mao was also concerned that the West might stir trouble in the East by promoting a rapprochement between the FRG and the Soviet Union and then luring the Soviet Union to move eastward.[64] Thus, preventing the FRG from further improving relations with the Soviet Union and thereby shifting the Soviet strategic focus to the East became China's primary goal in seeking to establish diplomatic relations with West Germany.

Yet one cannot help but ask: why did the 1964 Bern talks fail, while the negotiations to establish diplomatic relations in 1972 succeeded? This depended on the FRG's position. Even after the détente in West German-Soviet relations under Brandt's Ostpolitik, West Germany was never a member of the Eastern Bloc. The goal China sought to achieve by establishing diplomatic relations with West Germany was merely to prevent its "Finlandization." In contrast, during the 1964 negotiations, what China wanted was for West Germany to split the Western alliance from within, much like France had done—a goal whose difficulty was on a completely different level.

Indeed, this explains why China's stance on the West Berlin issue shifted. The attitude toward West Berlin became an important bargaining chip in negotiations between China and the FRG. In 1964, when China concluded that «given the current relations between West Germany and the United States, as well as the West German government's policy on the "two Germanies," it seems unlikely that the West German government will follow France's lead in its policy toward China»,[65] it was unwilling to easily give up this key leverage, namely, making concessions on the West Berlin issue. By 1972, however, China made concessions, expecting that its goals could be achieved with relative ease. At the same time, it sought to minimize the visibility of these concessions, which is why what might have been the fastest negotiations in the world ultimately lasted more than a month.

Ultimately, China maintained the legal position that West Berlin was not part of the FRG, but in certain diplomatic activities it tacitly accepted its actual status. For example, in July 1973, after the inauguration of the mayor of West Berlin,

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[64] Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, ed., *Mao Zedong nianpu, 1949–1976*, Vol. 6, *op. cit.*, p. 441; Wang, Shu. *Zhongde jianjiao qinliji*, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

[65] AMFAPRC, 110-01773-03, pp. 20–21; 110-02035-03, pp. 11–12.

Chinese Ambassador to the FRG Wang Yutian handed him a business card in the manner of presenting one to an FRG minister. This naturally caused strong dissatisfaction within the GDR, which believed that China was condoning the FRG's violation of the Four-Power Berlin Agreement and therefore lodged a verbal protest with the Chinese side.[66]

The FRG was well aware of China's intentions. Günther van Well, the director of the Third Policy Department of the Federal Foreign Office, told Japanese Vice Director of Foreign Affairs Shinsaku Hougen that China's purpose in establishing diplomatic relations with the FRG was not to seek economic cooperation but to view the FRG and the European Community as essential forces in international politics.[67] However, between Moscow and Beijing, Bonn favored Moscow politically. To push the Brandt government into action, China further exploited the "contradictions within the West German bourgeoisie" by inviting opposition leader Schröder to visit China and subsequently signing a memorandum of understanding with him expressing the intention to establish diplomatic relations. This created political and public opinion within West German society, increasing the ruling party's willingness to act. In the history of the PRC's diplomatic relations, this was a unique case, demonstrating China's initiative and proactivity.

However, compared with the negotiations to normalize Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations during the same period, the importance of establishing diplomatic relations between China and West Germany took a back seat. Initially, China had hoped Scheel would visit in August. During subsequent negotiations, when the West German side offered the end of September or the second half of October, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs chose the end of September. But at that moment, Mao Zedong issued instructions stating, «It is appropriate for Tanaka to come first, followed by Scheel». By the time of the second round of negotiations, the Chinese side had accepted the West German suggestion and intended to invite Scheel to visit China around October 10.[68] It was precisely because of Mao Zedong's order on the sequence of visits that Wang Shu had ample time to haggle meticulously with the German side over West Berlin during the negotiations.

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[66] PA AA, MfAA, C 6.610, Bl. 248–251.

[67] Tajima, Nobuo. "From the Cold War to Détente: 1949–1973," in Akira Kudo and Nobuo Tajima, eds., *Post-War History of the Relations between Japan and Germany*, Tokyo, Tokyo University Press, 2014, p. 68.

[68] Schwarz, Hrsg., *AAPD 1972*, *op. cit.*, S. 1098, Anm. 2, 1119, 1139, 1180; Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, ed., *Mao Zedong nianpu, 1949–1976*, Vol. 6, *op. cit.*, p. 446; Mei, Zhaorong. "Zhongde jianjiao tanpan huigu," *Deguo Yanjiu*, No. 3, 2002, p. 9–10.

The importance of the FRG is not as great as Japan's, nor does it match the level of personnel currently involved in the negotiations or the time spent on them. The issues to be handled between China and Japan were far more complex than those between China and Germany, yet the time spent on negotiations was much shorter. The difference is that the Sino-Japanese negotiations were conducted as head-of-government talks between Zhou Enlai and Kakuei Tanaka, whereas the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Germany was handled by representatives of the two countries' foreign ministries. As the Chinese negotiating representative, Wang Shu had no decision-making authority; each time, he had to report issues arising from the previous round of talks to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then convey the Ministry's opinions to the German side in the next round. This back-and-forth process was naturally far less efficient than direct negotiations between heads of government. To some extent, this also shows that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is not a decision-making body for a country's foreign policy, but rather an executive body that acts under the directives of the highest leadership.

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Abstract

In seguito al riavvicinamento sino-americano dopo la visita di Nixon in Cina nel 1972, la Repubblica Popolare Cinese iniziò a esplorare relazioni diplomatiche formali con la Repubblica Federale di Germania (RFG). Tuttavia, il governo di Brandt, vincolato dalla sua "Ostpolitik", mantenne un approccio prudente verso la Cina. Per contrastare l'influenza sovietica e impedire che la RFG si avvicinasse all'Unione Sovietica, la Cina ritenne necessario stabilire rapidamente legami diplomatici con la RFG. Nel perseguire questo obiettivo, la Cina cercò di sfruttare l'Unione Cristiano-Democratica per persuadere l'amministrazione Brandt ad avviare colloqui diplomatici e a fare concessioni sulla questione di Berlino Ovest. Nonostante questi sforzi, i negoziati incontrarono ostacoli significativi, con la questione di Berlino Ovest come principale impedimento. I colloqui, che durarono oltre

un mese, subirono ritardi in gran parte a causa del ruolo del Ministero degli Esteri come esecutore di politiche piuttosto che come decisore politico.

PAROLE CHIAVE

Relazioni Sino-Tedesco-Occidentali
Negoziazioni Diplomatiche
Questione di Berlino Ovest
Fronte Unito

Abstract

Following the Sino-American rapprochement after Nixon's 1972 visit to China, the PRC began exploring formal diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). However, Brandt's government, constrained by its Ostpolitik, maintained a cautious approach towards China. To counter Soviet influence and prevent the FRG from drawing closer to the Soviet Union, China saw the need to swiftly establish diplomatic ties with the FRG. In pursuit of this goal, China sought to leverage the Christian Democratic Union to persuade Brandt's administration to open diplomatic talks and to make concessions on the West Berlin issue. Despite these efforts, negotiations encountered significant hurdles, with the issue of West Berlin as the primary obstacle. The talks, which lasted over a month, faced delays largely due to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' role as a policy implementer rather than a policy maker.

KEYWORDS

Sino-West German Relations
Diplomatic Negotiations
West Berlin Issue
United Front