

“Diplomacy in the Laboratory: Scientific Collaboration Between the United States and the People’s Republic of China, 1978-2002.”

Normalization of diplomatic relations between the United States and the People’s Republic of Science in 1979 included high-level agreements for scientific cooperation. Those high-level agreements translated into exchanges between Chinese and American research and educational institutions and, ultimately, collaborative research and publishing activity between individual scientists. The present research examines the publication record of collaborative research between Chinese and American scientists during the period 1978 through 2002. A leading scientific indexing and abstracting service, ISI’s *Web of Science*, was queried for records of scientific research articles bearing author addresses in both the United States and the People’s Republic of China. The results indicate no collaborative work published between 1966 and 1977. The publication record grew from 4 collaborative articles indexed in *Web of Science* in 1978 to more than 3500 in 2002. The number grew steadily each year except for a decline between 1992 and 1994. That decline is likely the result of the suspension of many exchange programs following the events at Tiananmen Square in 1989.

The possibility of collaboration between scientists emerged as a result of political developments on both sides. The Communist Chinese party line toward intellectuals softened in the late 1970s. Chinese scientists were treated harshly during the Cultural Revolution (ca. 1966-1976), and contact with the West discouraged or forbidden. That changed in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, when officials, led by Deng Xiaoping, rehabilitated the intelligentsia, recognizing the contribution that scientists could make to industrial modernization and economic development. Contact with the West, while still tightly controlled, was also presented in a new light, in terms of what it could offer China in the way of advances in technology and science. Those developments coincided with the growing interest in the United States government for establishing high level relations with the Chinese during the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations. A policy of detente emerged as a way to engage the Chinese and end their political isolation, thereby reducing the military threat of a nuclear-armed China spreading revolution in Asia.

The poster presents a short background on the indexing and abstracting services used, a description of the method, and a graph of the number of collaborative papers published annually as recorded by the abstracting services. Other information will be included, such as a timeline of events in foreign policy influencing scientific collaboration, with details of significant events and agreements, information about specific researchers publishing frequently, leading institutions where collaboration takes place, programs that encourage collaboration, leading research topics, and leading journals where the research is published.

This work is the start of a larger inquiry into the uses of scientific collaboration in foreign relations.

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