# Smaller State, Larger Ambitions: A study on the negotiations leading to the 1972 Sino-Dutch communique

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A study on the negotiations leading to the 1972 Sino-Dutch Communique

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# Contents

## Abstract

Using hitherto unexplored archival materials, this study explores the extended negotiations leading to the 1972 Dutch-Sino joint communique in which the exchange of embassies was settled. It identifies two accelerators and hurdles in the process. Richard Nixon's 1971 visit announcement initiated talks between the Netherlands and the PRC, while the PRC's admission to the UN removed an important difficulty in their bilateral ties. Hurdles arose during discussions on how to communicate the elevation of bilateral ties to the ambassadorial level and on the formal language regarding Taiwan in the joint communique. The addition of the 'anti-Brezhnev doctrine' showcased the Netherlands' departure from the Brezhnev Doctrine, emphasizing peaceful coexistence. Beyond the negotiation intricacies, the study highlights the agency of smaller states. The Netherlands intentionally deviated from U.S. foreign policy in the UN-vote on Chinese representation and included discussions with Romania on European security and limiting superpower actions in its negotiations with China.

# 1: Introduction

On May 16, 2022, the Netherlands, and the People's Republic of China (PRC) celebrated the 50th anniversary of their diplomatic relations. Events were organized at embassies and consulates, including a grand cultural and artistic performance in The Hague, featuring Tai-Chi demonstrations, dance, and singing shows[1]. This celebration commemorated the signing of the "Communiqué of 16 May 1972 on relations between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Government of the People's Republic of China."[2] Reflecting on the anniversary in 2012, Chinese Ambassador Zhang Jun praised the substantial growth in trade between the two nations since the signing of the communique.[3] The signing of this document elevated diplomatic relations to ambassadorial level, although diplomatic relations had commenced when the Netherlands recognized the Central Government of the People's Republic of China on March 27, 1950. At that recognition, the Netherlands acknowledged the Central Government of the PRC as the *de jure* government of China and agreed to exchange diplomatic representatives, marking the beginning of official relations between the two countries[4].

However, despite the origin of official relations dating back to an earlier period, the commemoration primarily focused on the signing of the joint communiqué in May 1972. Yet despite the apparent importance, existing academic literature has given limited attention to this highly relevant and contemporary document and its genesis. The fact that the statements made by the Netherlands in this document regarding Taiwan continue to underpin the Dutch One-China policy today stresses the importance of this gap in academic discourse. Therefore, this research aims to provide a better understanding of the origins, motivating factors, and consequences of this communique, enhancing insight into current diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and China, especially concerning the complex issue surrounding Taiwan.

The central question in this thesis is what were the drives and obstacles in the formulation of the 1972 Dutch-Sino joint communique? The broader aim is to contribute to the academic literature on smaller states by providing insights into how smaller states navigated the complexities of the bipolar Cold War world. The subsequent sections of this thesis will commence with a literature review, addressing current

[1] China Times, *De Chinese gemeenschap in Nederland viert de 50e verjaardag van diplomatieke betrekkingen tussen China en Nederland*.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Zhang Jun, *Zhonghe lianxi 40 nian: shuzi beihou de gushi*.
[4] Chang, *Forgotten Diplomacy*, 442.

academic debates concerning the role of small states during the Cold War, the One-China Principle and One-China Policies, and Dutch-Sino relations from 1949 until 1971. The subsequent analysis will initially focus on two significant catalysts for improving Netherlands-China relations at that time, namely, Nixon's announcement of his visit to China in July 1971 and the admission of the PRC to the United Nations in October 1971. Following this, the analysis will delve deeper into the three main themes concerning the formulation of the joint communiqué: the way of communicating the elevations of diplomatic relations to the wider world, the wording regarding the status of Taiwan, and the Dutch addition to the communiqué.

## 2: Literature Review

The first section of this literature review will conduct a rigorous examination of the current corpus of smaller states literature. Scholars point out that smaller states Within the realm of Cold War Studies, scholarly works frequently encompass analyses of the policies, strategies, and diplomatic actions undertaken by various nations during the Cold War period. Nevertheless, a predominant focus within this existing literature tends to be on the major powers during this time: the United States and the Soviet Union. Moving away from this paradigm, this thesis aligns with Crump's assertion that the role and positioning of "smaller states" remain insufficiently investigated, thus contributing to the expansion of the scholarly discourse.

The second section delves into the way the literature has made sense of countries' bilateral relations with the PRC and focuses on the complexities of One-China Policies. The discussion will cover the historical importance of Taiwan in China's foreign policy, the varying interpretations of the One-China principle, and its impact on diplomatic ties between nations. An exploration of One-China Policies adopted by countries beyond the Netherlands is essential to grasp the process behind the creation of the joint communique, which forms the focal point of this study. Regarding Dutch-Sino relations, the academic discourse has predominantly focused on the events leading up to 1950, offering comprehensive analyses of that period. However, the 1971-1972 timeframe has only received sparse attention, despite its pivotal role in Dutch-Sino relations. This limited scholarly attention towards the latter period stands out as a noteworthy blank that this thesis aims to fill.

## 2.1: 'Smaller states' and smaller states in the Cold War

### 2.1.1: What is a 'smaller state'?

Recent years the academic literature has seen an increasing interest in the role of smaller states, whereas in the preceding decades, the focus of international relations theory was mostly on superpowers on the geopolitical stage. The literature that focused mostly on the role of superpowers deemed the role of smaller states less important because they argued that great powers established the norms and structures of the international system.[5] Especially realist theory in international relations scholarship has argued in this line by stating that superpowers or greater powers are the rule-setters, whereas smaller powers are rule-takers. However, Jesse and Dreyer critique this notion, arguing that these theories consistently ignore them. Instead, Jesse and Dryer argue that smaller states have a policy space in which they operate and have the freedom to make their own choices in foreign policy, despite having less options than the superpower states.[6] They can for example choose to follow the rule-setting hegemon or opt to resist these rules. The paradigm-shift towards acknowledging the importance of the study of smaller states has also stirred up debates on what exactly *is* a smaller state. Some scholars have used absolute terms to define what constitutes a smaller state.[7] Others propose to use relative measures to define a small state.[8] They argue that the smallness of states should be assessed in accordance with the region they are in, due to regional differences in population size and economic development.

Despite the difficulty of precisely defining a small state, the academic literature has pointed out several characteristics small states often share. A first characteristic is their low level of participation in international affairs.[9] Scholars point out that small states are weak compared to larger states and hegemons, and therefore have limited foreign policy options. They are also more vulnerable to assertiveness of larger states. A second characteristic is that small states often seek a foreign policy of neutrality. According to Vital, most small states exist in conditions of passivity in the geopolitical arena, either by choice or because they are being forced into this condition by circumstances.[10] While many scholars agree that small states seek security in international institutions, some scholars have pointed

[5] Jesse & Dryer, *Small States in the International System: At Peace and at War*, 3.
[6] Ibid, 4.
[7] Clark, *Politics, Security, and Development of Small States*.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Jesse & Dreyer, 32.
[10] Vital, *The Inequality of States*, 112.

out that the establishment of international institutions has also once been initiated by certain states and that small states have played a passive role in this.[11] System theorists argue that the *systemic role* of states should not be overlooked. In his effort to classify these systemic roles, Keohane has identified four categories: system-determining states, system-influencing states, system-affecting states, and system-ineffectual states.[12] In this classification, the system-determining states are often superpowers such as the US or the Soviet Union that play a critical role in shaping the system. System-influencing states are states that cannot individually affect the system but can have a large influence through unilateral and multilateral actions. System-affecting states can affect the system through the formation of alliances with other system-affecting states. For system-ineffectual states, foreign policy and the system is just a reality they have to accept and can adjust to, since they have minimal influence on the system and are themselves often dominated by larger powers. Keohane goes on to argue that these system-ineffectual states often correspond with the broad category of 'smaller states'.[13] A third feature of smaller states is their support of international law and international organizations. Rothstein argues that there are three reasons why smaller states seek support in these institutions.[14] The first is the formal equality of countries within an international organization. Difference in economic and military capabilities is less problematic within these organizations because formal equality means that the decision-making powers in an international organization should be the same for both large states and small states. This also points to the second reason, namely that these organizations restrain larger powers and superpowers, by making them subject to the rules and laws of the international organization. The last reason in the potential security that being part of an international organization entails.

Whereas most scholars agree with the previous characteristics and the passive, neutral, and weak nature of smaller states, others have questioned this lack of agency. Isabelle Duyvesteyn argues that an important trait of smaller states is that they engage in power politics.[15] In her view, it is not exclusive to larger powers to employ political, economic, and military strategies to advance their interests; smaller states, too, partake in such behavior. This contradiction in the literature calls for additional research contributions and a deeper exploration of the topic of smaller states.

[11] Keohane *Lilliputians' Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics*, 295.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Rothstein, *Alliances and Small Powers*, 41.
[15] Duyvesteyn, *Machiavelli and Minor States*.

### 2.1.2: Smaller states in the Cold War

Now that the meaning and characteristics of a small state have been reviewed, it is important to look at how small states acted within the context of the Cold War. The Cold War was an extraordinary period which was defined by the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, the two major powers during this time. The academic literature on the Cold War has for a long time focused on these two superpowers. The Cold War, however, extended beyond this rivalry or the ideological clash between communism and capitalism. It encompassed a complex struggle involving smaller states versus larger ones.[16] Smaller states often found themselves navigating intricate diplomatic waters, and their experiences offer valuable insights. Much of the existing academic literature tends to concentrate on the roles of major powers during the Cold War or adopts a global perspective.[17] Nevertheless, recent scholarship has sought to shift this focus toward smaller powers.[18] However, the role of small states and non-aligned nations during the Cold War remains an underexplored area.

Some scholars claim smaller states engage in alliance-seeking because they relied on outside sources of security.[19] Rothstein argues that smaller states cannot rely on their own because they do not have enough political, economic, and military power compared to larger states or even superpowers.[20] It is also because smaller states realize that they are in a state of permanent weakness that they engage in these alliance-seeking actions. Lamoreaux points to the paradoxical notion that by seeking alliances with larger powers, smaller states hope to keep their sovereignty by handing some of their decision-making power to the larger state or larger states within an alliance.[21]

Other scholars have nuanced the view that smaller states willingly hand in their decision-making power in alliances. Crump has pointed out that the influence of small states has typically been viewed as passive, where they merely had the option to refrain from complying with the demands of larger states and lacked the means to actively pursue their own agendas, but that in reality this is not always the case.[22] In an effort to gain a better understanding of the contributions of smaller states during the Cold

[16] Crump, *Margins for Manoeuvre*, 1.
[17] Westad, *The Cold War*.
[18] Crump, *Margins for Manoeuvre*, 1; Gaddis, *On Starting All Over Again*, 32.
[19] Rothstein, *Alliances and Small Powers*, 2.
[20] Rothstein, *Alliances and Small Powers*, 2.
[21] Lamoreaux, *Acting small in a large state's world*, 568.
[22] Ibid, 8.

War, Crump introduced a novel analytical concept: "margins for manoeuvre".[23] This concept elucidates that smaller states had an active role amidst the major power politics of the Cold War. By focusing on the concept of margins for manoeuvre, Crump aims to redirect attention to the opportunities available to smaller states in the global political arena, rather than fixating solely on the constraints they faced. Lamoreaux goes even further by arguing that "small states are not limited to acting like small states: they often act like 'large' states".[24]

Crump argues that during the Cold War, countries tried to stretch their margins for manoeuvre through multilateralism. This could be done through larger multilateral initiatives, such as the Warsaw Pact and NATO, but also through smaller forms of multilateralism, such as the Benelux. Building on this argument, Palm claims that smaller states used cooperation in multilateral initiatives to actively pursue its agenda on the world stage.[25] During the Cold War, smaller states did so by creating new multilateral initiatives within their existing alliances, in order to counterbalance their interests against the superpower of their alliance. Smaller multilateral initiatives on the side of the NATO are for example the European Political Community and the Benelux. Efforts to hold a Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) stands out even more, since the US did not even endorse it.[26]

## 2.2: Bilateral relations with the PRC and Dutch China-policy

### 2.2.1: The PRC's relations with major powers, smaller states, and the UN

The focus of this section is on how the literature has analyzed the relations of major powers, smaller powers, and the UN with the PRC. The literature depicts the People's Republic of China's relations with major powers as one where the PRC is considered relatively weak in comparison. The PRC's choices are predominantly shaped by ideological alignments and strategic shifts, often instigated by the actions of the United States and the Soviet Union. Regarding smaller states, the People's Republic of China exercised greater agency, given that the intricate negotiations with these nations, influenced by historical

[23] Crump, *Margins for Manoeuvre.*
[24] Lamoreaux, *Acting small in a Large State's World*, 567.
[25] Palm, *Multilateralism as small power strategy*, 32.
[26] Ibid, 33.

legacies and geopolitical aspirations, allowed China a more influential role in the discussions. The scholarly discourse on China's representation in the United Nations highlights the increasing acknowledgment from smaller nations advocating for the People's Republic of China to be integrated into the international community. This also illuminates the struggles faced by major powers, exemplified by the United States, in effectively influencing and directing outcomes within the multilateral framework of the UN.

***The PRC and major powers***

Starting with the major powers during this time, the United States and the Soviet Union. These countries were in a complicated relationship with the PRC. After the proclamation of the PRC, China was aligned with the Soviet Union. Scholars have pointed out that this alignment was partly driven by shared communist ideologies and partly by common interests in countering Western imperialism.[27] After a period of cooperation, tensions emerged within this alliance that eventually led to the historic Sino-Soviet split of 1960.

The United States on the other hand, chose the ROC as the sole legal government of China after the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949, thereby alienating the PRC.[28] Liff and Lin have shown that the period 1970-1973 marked a turning point in the recognition question, because in this timespan alone 40 countries chose to recognize the PRC instead of the ROC.[29] The primary cause behind this change was the reconciliation between the United States and China, culminating in Richard Nixon's visit to China in February 1972.[30] Nixon's National Security Advisor, Dr. Henry Kissinger, noticed that that ongoing disputes between China and the Soviet Union provided the US with an opportunity to engage with China.[31] The Nixon visit concluded with the Shanghai Communique, in which the US stated that it did not support a two-China solution, while at the same time fostering a neutral stance on Taiwan's status, paving the way for strategic realignment between both countries against the Soviet Union.[32]

[27] Westad, *The Cold War,* 1.
[28] Ross *Negotiating cooperation*, 5.
[29] Liff & Lin, 983.
[30] Liff & Lin, *The 'one China' Framework at 50*, 983.
[31] Goh, *Nixon, Kissinger, and the 'Soviet Card' in the U.S. Opening to China*.
[32] Liff & Lin, *The 'one China' Framework at 50*, 985

Formal diplomatic relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China were only established on January 1, 1979, during Jimmy Carter's presidency.

However, when compared to the United States and the Soviet Union, the literature agrees that the PRC was considerably more influenced by external circumstances and the actions of these two superpowers. Scholars contend that developments in US-Soviet relations played a substantial role in shaping the PRC's security landscape, with a lesser impact in the opposite direction.[33] Additionally, the PRC's relative weakness vis-à-vis both superpowers meant that it had to rely on US-PRC security cooperation to protect itself against the Soviet threat after the Sino-Soviet split.[34] Consequently, in its interactions with the United States, the PRC faced limitations in agency.

***The PRC and smaller states***

Many smaller countries went through extensive negotiations with the PRC before settling for a certain formal statement on 'One-China'. Often these negotiations started because countries wanted to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC, or because they wanted to elevate their diplomatic ties, as has been the case with the Netherlands. There have been multiple in-depth studies into these negotiations for other Western countries than the Netherlands. Especially the negotiation processes of three countries have been covered by the academic literature, namely those of Canada, the United Kingdom, and Denmark.

Analyzing the case of Canada, Evans and Frolic argue that the PRC leadership accepted a 'take note' formula on the Taiwan-issue, because the Canadian-Chinese relationship was not burdened by history, whereas other countries had long histories of semi-colonization and geopolitical ambitions in China.[35] Evans also notes that Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau got a good footing with the Chinese leadership because had been promoting a geopolitical agenda in which he wanted to see the PRC as a part of the world community.[36] Under his leadership, the Canadian government's 'A *Foreign Policy for Canadians'* states that Canada wanted to make a contribution to bringing the People's Republic of China into the world community.[37] Besides, the PRC wanted to engage with a Western country at the end of the 1960s

[33] Ross, *Negotiating Cooperation*, 247.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Evans & Frolic, *Reluctant Adversaries*.
[36] Evans, *Engaging China*, 28.
[37] Ibid.

and chose Canada as its opening to the West, because of its proximity to the US and its relative independence from US foreign policy.[38] Because of these things, the Chinese leadership deemed the 'take note' formula on Taiwan acceptable.

Looking at the British negotiations with the PRC on the elevation of diplomatic relations to the ambassadorial level, Chi-Kwon points out that the United Kingdom was among the first to recognize the PRC in January 1950 and had since pursued a policy in which the legal status of Taiwan was 'undetermined'.[39] He argues that the UK had to go through tough negotiations before the PRC wanted to exchange embassies. Like the Canadians, the UK looked into the possibility of a 'take note' formula to break the stalemate over Taiwan, but the PRC negotiators did not accept this. Chi-Kwan argues that this is because British had been extensively involved in Chinese affairs for a long time.[40] Furthermore, despite recognizing the PRC in 1950, the British still kept the possibility for an independent Taiwan open by stating that Taiwan's status was undetermined.[41] Eventually, the British accepted a counterproposal in which the United Kingdom 'acknowledged' the Chinese view that Taiwan is a province of China. Interestingly enough, Chi-Kwon notes that the British preferred this formulation over another counterproposal in which the UK 'respects' the Chinese one-China principle.[42]

The literature has also paid some attention to Denmark's raising of diplomatic ties to the embassy-level. Denmark already elevated its diplomatic ties with the PRC in 1956. This made Denmark the only Western country at the time to exchange embassies with the PRC. Brødsgaard emphasized that the PRC agreed to exchange embassies with Denmark because Denmark consistently supported seating Beijing in the United Nations instead of the ROC.[43]

These studies show that smaller states find themselves more vulnerable to China's influence, as China wields a relatively greater level of influence over them compared to major powers. China's sway in negotiations is more pronounced when dealing with non-major powers, allowing it to significantly impact the outcomes of such negotiations. The variability in the success of negotiations with China hinged on several factors, making it a nuanced dynamic. One critical aspect was the burden of history, as

[38] Evans, *Engaging China*, 28.
[39] Chi-Kwan, *Waiting for the Dust to Settle*, 880.
[40] Chi-Kwon, *Waiting for the Dust to* Settle, 889. The Chinese government deemed it problematic that the UK was a signatory to the Cairo Declaration on December 1st, 1943, in which the signatories state that all territories claimed by Japan in China should be returned to the Republic of China after the Japanese defeat.
[41] Chi-Kwan, *Waiting for the Dust to Settle*, 889.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Brødsgaard, *China and Denmark*, 200.

some countries bear a historical legacy of imperialism in China, while others do not. This historical context could shape the power dynamics and influence the negotiation process. Additionally, public statements regarding the People's Republic of China and the status of Taiwan contributed to this variability. Some countries chose to express their stance more explicitly in public, such as Canada, impacting their diplomatic interactions with China. In addition, Denmark consistently voted to seat the PRC in the UN. The interplay of historical factors and public positions complicates the negotiating landscape for small countries in their dealings with China.

***The PRC and the United Nations***

When the UN was established, the ROC held the seat representing China in the UN Security Council. However, following the Chinese Civil War, a discrepancy emerged where the ROC no longer governed China, but the PRC did. This raised the fundamental question of whether the PRC should assume the UN seat instead of the ROC. The first vote to seat the PRC in the UN was in 1950 and many countries followed the example of the United States by making sure that the ROC would not be expelled.[44] There have been resolutions on the admission of the PRC in nearly every year since 1950, first proposed by the Soviet Union and after the Sino-Soviet split by India and Albania.

Scholars have demonstrated a progressive narrowing of the vote margin over the years. To prevent the outcome of the vote to shift in Beijing's favor, the Eisenhauer administration (1953-1961) managed the admission of Beijing an 'important question' in the UN, requiring a two-thirds majority instead of normal resolutions in the UN General Assembly.[45] Despite these efforts, an increasing number of nations rallied behind the PRC's UN admission. Scholars argue that this was because more and more countries started recognizing the PRC or were considering it.[46] Yet Torelli argues that it was Nixon's diplomatic efforts and his announcement on 15 July 1971 to visit the PRC in the next year that ultimately facilitated the PRC's eventual admission.[47] Torelli argues that Nixon saw it as crucial to engage with the PRC and deemed this engagement geopolitically too important to continue to keep on protecting the ROC at all costs, thereby seeing the ROC and the UN as a secondary and less important problem.[48] She goes on to argue that

[44] Torelli, *The Cost of Realism*, 159.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Luard, *China and the United Nations*, 733.
[47] Torelli, *The Cost of Realism*, 180.
[48] Ibid.

Nixon viewed the Third World majority in the UN with suspicion and felt that the United States should work around the United Nations. Nixon wanted the US do adopt a new foreign policy that was based on direct cooperation with other big powers and was characterized by pragmatism and realism.[49]

As a consequence, the UN General Assembly rejected the Important Question resolution in October 1971, and voted in favor of the Albanian Resolution that would seat the PRC in the UN. Although not giving primary importance to the UN vote, Torelli points out that the Nixon administration exerted substantial efforts to avert the expulsion of the ROC from the United Nations and was frustrated by the fact that small countries did not listen to the United States.[50] These findings show that even a major power like the United States could not control the outcome in the UN. In the end, the UN is an organization where small countries are at an equal footing with larger countries.

### 2.2.2: Dutch foreign policy and Netherlands-China relations

After having assessed how the academic literature has made sense of other countries' relations with China, this last section of the literature review will focus on existing studies that cover Dutch foreign policy in general, and the bilateral relationship between the PRC and the Netherlands in particular during the Cold War. Scholars argue that before 1949, Dutch foreign policy was characterized by neutrality with a focus on the preservation of its colonial possessions in present-day Indonesia.[51] However, after the Second World war and the downfall of the Dutch colonial empire, the Netherlands made a large political shift. According to Hellema, after the Netherlands had accepted the new geopolitical reality, it chose to embrace multilateralism by becoming active in NATO and the European Communities and accepted American leadership on the political, economic, and military aspects.[52] Hellema also points out that shortly after losing Indonesia, the Netherlands was searching for what its new role was in the global stage.[53]

When shifting attention to Dutch foreign policy in relation to China, Chang has identified three traits of early modern Dutch-Sino relations, from the 17th century until the start of the Second World War: the

[49] Torelli, *The Cost of Realism*, 181.
[50] Ibid, 174.
[51] Hellema, *Buitenlandse Politiek*, 332.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.

active pursuit of trade, an indirect and reactive nature, and the existence of an "Indonesian problem".[54] The first characteristic, the active pursuit of trade, shaped Dutch China-policies from the 17th century onwards. Unlike major powers, the Netherlands avoided territorial concessions in China, focusing instead on the treaty-port system to maintain commercial competitiveness. Despite not actively seeking geopolitical control, Dutch behavior in China involved unsolicited intervention driven by commercial interests. Historians like Frans-Paul Van der Putten argue that the Dutch government effectively exploited Qing's weakness for colonial and economic gains within and beyond China. This imperialistic behavior, primarily centered around commerce and trade, characterizes Dutch engagement with China during this period.

A second trait is that the relations between the Netherlands and China have mostly been reactive and indirect. Scholars point out that this is in line with the Dutch foreign policy of neutrality, and that this stance suited Dutch political and economic security in Europe, most notably its possessions in the Dutch East Indies.[55] China also mostly adopted a passive stance, but mostly because it was a part of 'major-power diplomacy' in which other countries established imperial settlements in China. Chang notes that China opted a passive stance towards smaller states such as the Netherlands that did not have spheres of influence or territories in China.[56]

The last characteristic of early modern Dutch-Sino relations is the importance of Indonesia in their bilateral relations. The literature points out that there were over one million overseas Chinese in the Dutch East Indies and that their discriminatory treatment contrasted with the privileges enjoyed by Dutch citizens in China.[57] As China strengthened ties with the overseas Chinese, it led to assertive diplomacy, causing tension with the Dutch colonial administration. This issue had a defining impact on the bilateral relationship, marked by sizable diplomatic networks.[58]

Transitioning from the broader context of Dutch-Sino relations to the specific period of the Cold War, scholarly works predominantly concentrate on the intricacies of the recognition of the PRC in 1950.[59] Smit and Schot have pointed out that the Netherlands opted to follow the United Kingdom in their foreign policy decision to recognize the PRC, even though it is often argued that the Netherlands mostly

[54] Chang, *Forgotten Diplomacy*, 22.
[55] Ibid.
[56]Ibid, 23.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Smit & Schot, *Nederland en de Erkenning van de Volksrepubliek China*; Chang, *Forgotten Diplomacy*.

followed the United States after the Second World War.[60] They argue that this was possibly due to the fact that the Netherlands still wanted to play a role in Asia after losing Indonesia.[61] Chang claims that the Netherlands chose for a quick recognition of the PRC not because of geopolitical ambitions, but because the Dutch government believed that the Chinese state was entering a new era, and that there was no point in ignoring the new reality in which the PRC governed China instead of the ROC.[62] The literature has recognized the decision to recognize the PRC as typical for Dutch foreign policy up until 1950. It was a neutral policy decision in the sense that the Netherlands did not align with a superpower; it had Dutch trade interests in mind, since the Dutch did not want to harm future trade interest in China; lastly it served Dutch postcolonial aspirations by linking the Dutch recognition of the PRC to the PRC's recognition of the newly formed Republic of Indonesia.[63]

In conclusion, scholars have pointed out that the recognition of the PRC provides crucial context for understanding why the Netherlands and the PRC deemed it necessary to issue a joint communique in May 1972. This is necessary given the scarce scholarly attention on the diplomatic negotiations surrounding the 1972 communique. This research therefore seeks to address a notable gap in the existing literature and provide fresh perspectives on how the Netherlands navigated its interests during this tumultuous period. Moreover, drawing comparisons between the recognition in 1950 and the negotiations leading to the 1972 communique can offer valuable insights into the changing power dynamics in the bilateral relationship between the Netherlands and China.

# 3: Methodology

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the underlying motivations and obstacles behind the release of the 1972 communique between the Netherlands and People's Republic of China, to assess why negotiating the communique took so long, in order to shed light on the question how smaller states navigated the bipolar dynamics of the Cold War. In doing so, this study builds on existing scholarship on Dutch-Sino diplomatic history by Dr. Vincent Chang and draws on extensive archival sources that have not before been used from the Dutch National Archive. Focusing on the internal correspondence within

[60] Smit & Schot, *Nederland en de Erkenning van de Volksrepubliek China*, 46.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Chang, *Forgotten Diplomacy*, 437.
[63] Ibid.

the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the study aims to unravel the complexities of Dutch maneuvering within the global geopolitical arena amid Cold War dynamics.

This study provides a comprehensive chronological and thematic analysis, with a particular emphasis on the pivotal years of 1971 and 1972 These years mark pivotal moments, including the 1971 announcement of Richard Nixon's historic visit to China and the United Nations vote regarding the admission of the PRC. These events serve as key accelerators in initiating and shaping the main event of this thesis: the negotiations between the Netherlands and China. The key actors are diplomats from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign affairs, most notably the Dutch *chargé d'affaires* in Beijing J.J. Derksen, who was responsible for negotiating with his Chinese counterparts. Derksen sends his correspondence directly to Minister Schmelzer in the Hague, who needs to grant Derksen permission for the steps in the negotiation process. The most important Chinese negotiator is Zhang Wenjin 章文晉, who is Director for Europe, America, and Australia within the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The data used in this thesis are mostly unexplored archival sources, including cables, memoranda, newspaper articles, notes, and visual materials from 1968 to 1973. This broader range is strategically adopted to have a better understanding of the events surrounding the negotiations on the communique. However, this range fails to provide a complete understanding of all important events in question. Consequently, other relevant events might have failed to capture the attention of this research. The primary sources were identified by looking at specific topics within the archival database of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, such as Dutch-Sino bilateral ties, personal memoires of ministers, and documentation surrounding larger events, such as the Nixon visit to China and the UN-vote in October 1971. The reason for this extensive use of archival records is because these documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs offer insights into the foreign policy decision-making and broader discussions of foreign policy within the ministry. Since this is a study into Dutch foreign policy, this is important. It should be noted however that these archives are all from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, any insights into the Chinese stance presented in this research should be viewed through a Dutch lens, as the information is inherently biased. As a consequence, whenever the analysis refers to the desires or intentions of the Chinese negotiators, it actually refers to Derksen’s interpretation of these desires and intentions.

This study also aims to unravel the intricacies of Dutch maneuverability within the Cold War geopolitical arena, shedding light on how the Netherlands pursued its interests amidst global power dynamics. Engaging with Crump’s concept of “margins for manoeuvre” on the agency of smaller states, the analysis will delve into the proactive measures taken by the Netherlands to assert its interests, participate in key

diplomatic events, and contribute to the evolving global order. Through this exploration, the study aspires to offer valuable insights into the broader narrative of Cold War diplomacy and the active role played by smaller states in shaping international relations.

## 4: Analysis

The historical relationship between the Netherlands and the Chinese Communists extends far beyond the signing of the 1972 communique and has its roots in the Chinese Civil War (1945-1949). During this war the Netherlands initially adopted a stance of neutrality and non-engagement in the conflict between the Nationalists and Communists in China, but held diplomatic ties with the Nationalist government.[64] As Dutch diplomats felt that a communist victory was looming towards the end of the war, they started closely monitored the evolving situation without official engagement with the Communist forces.[65] When the CCP victory was eminent, the Dutch government started deliberating on the situation and consulted extensively with other Western countries, particularly Britain and the United States, about the potential implications of recognizing the emerging Communist government.[66]

However, the United States and Britain held different positions regarding recognition of the Communist government. While Britain initiated moves to establish informal relations with the Communist authorities, the United States propagated a containment strategy, since it did not want another large country to fall for communism. Foreign Minister Stikker and the Dutch government chose to follow Britain's strategy.[67] When England granted *de jure* recognition to the Central Government of the PRC on 6 January 1950, the expectation was that the Netherlands would soon follow this example.[68] This was not the case, since it took the Netherlands 12 weeks to recognize the Central Government on 27 March 1950. The cause of this delay was the Dutch wish to couple the Dutch recognition of the government of the PRC to the PRC's recognition of the newly formed Republic of the United States Indonesia, with

[64] Chang, *Forgotten Diplomacy*, 377.
[65] Ibid, 379.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid, 388.

which the Netherlands had an agreement to always discuss foreign policy decisions.[69] Despite this early recognition, the PRC did not reward the Netherlands with the exchange of permanent diplomatic envoys and the following years were marked with minimal official contact.[70] From the recognition in 1950 until 1954 these contacts were on an ad hoc basis, and from 1954 onwards on the *chargé d'affaires* level.[71]

A pivotal shift occurred in Dutch-Sino diplomatic relations with the announcement of US President Richard Nixon's visit to China in July 1971. This event serves as the starting point for the thesis's analysis, signifying a significant turning point in the relationship between the Netherlands and China. In line with Torelli's argument, it will be argued that this announcement contributed to the PRC's admission to the United Nations. Consequently, these two events helped initiate the negotiations between the Netherlands and China concerning the elevation of diplomatic relations to the ambassadorial level.

## 4.1: Kickstarting Netherlands-PRC Negotiations in 1971: the announcement of Nixon's visit to China and the PRC's admission to the UN

From the start of official diplomatic ties in 1954 until the announcement of the Nixon visit, efforts to improve Dutch-Sino bilateral relations seemed like a game where both governments continuously passed the ball to each other. This deadlock meant that Netherlands was convinced that the PRC had to make concessions for the establishment of official diplomatic relations, while the PRC believed that the Netherlands had to yield before both countries could exchange ambassadors. The Chinese standpoint was particularly influenced by Dutch voting behavior in the UN and comments by the Dutch Prime-Minister de Jong and Minister of Foreign Affairs Schmelzer regarding the recognition of both the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China, leaving the door open for a Two-China Policy. When looking at the Dutch standpoint, the Dutch government emphasized that its policy since 1950 had been consistent, pointing to the Dutch recognition of the People's Republic as the sole China. These diplomatic exchanges laid bare the fragile nature of the relationship between the Netherlands and the PRC during this period.

[69] Chang, *Forgotten Diplomacy*, 388. After the Dutch transfer of sovereignty to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia in December 1949, the Netherlands and Indonesia agreed to form a 'union' in which they would coordinate their foreign policy decisions.
[70] Ibid, 442.
[71] Ibid.

Starting with the PRC's point of view, In the early 1970s, the relationship between the Netherlands and China was marked by growing dissatisfaction from the Chinese side regarding the Dutch stance towards the Taiwan issue. The first source of discontent for China was the fact that the Netherlands did not advocate for the People's Republic of China to occupy the Chinese seat in the UN. This inconsistency led to significant frustration on the part of the Chinese government. The second point of contention was the response of Prime Minister de Jong and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Norbert Schmelzer to questions in the Dutch Parliament. De Jong concluded that there was insufficient support in the UN for a 'Two-China policy', where both the PRC and the ROC could have seats in the UN. In addition, Schmelzer expressed on 10 December 1970 that the Dutch government actually wanted a situation where both China's would be recognized in the UN. The Chinese side interpreted these statements as support for the American 'Two-China policy'.[72] This did not result in improved bilateral relations.

The Netherlands on the other hand wanted to exchange embassies without making large statements on Taiwan and without replacing the Nationalist government on Taiwan by the PRC in the UN. A crucial moment occurred in March 1971, when J.J. Derksen, the Dutch *Chargé d'affaires* in Beijing, had a conversation with the Chinese Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Qiao Guanhua 乔冠华.[73] Derksen states that Qiao argued that the Chinese government was not responsible for the cool relations and pointed out that the Netherlands has only insulted the PRC by making statements about ROC recognition and by abstaining from voting in the UN. Qiao argued that the Dutch government was not aware of the sensitivity of its recent statements regarding Taiwan. Derksen responded that it was, according to the Dutch government, the Chinese government that bore full responsibility. Nevertheless, both parties pledged during the conversation to strive for normalization and the start of negotiations.

### 4.1.1: Nixon's announcement to visit China (15 July 1971)

On 15 July 1971 the U.S. President, Richard Nixon announced on live television that he would be visiting China on an appropriate date before May 1972. The Dutch government viewed this announcement positively, considering it an opportunity to enhance cooperation with the PRC by eliminating problems

[72] Cable (no. 17) dated 22 March 1971 from Derksen to Schmelzer (NNA 2.05.313/25595).
[73] Ibid.

between the two countries, in order to establish ambassadorial exchanges. This announcement kickstarted the negotiations on the elevation of bilateral ties between the Netherlands and the PRC.

The Netherlands first reacted to the announcement on July 20, 1971, when Minister of Foreign Affairs Norbert Schmelzer released a statement regarding a potential shift in Dutch-China policy.[74] The statement notes that, like many other countries, the Netherlands is in the process of reviewing its bilateral relations with China. The rationale given is that this review is an annual occurrence in preparation for the United Nations General Assembly. According to Schmelzer, the Dutch stance might change for two reasons: a new government has just taken office, and the United States has announced that President Nixon will visit the PRC the following year. Schmelzer emphasizes that this study on a possible change in bilateral relations began before Nixon's visit was announced. A tentative conclusion drawn by Schmelzer is that “Chinese reluctance to exchange ambassadors with the Netherlands may also be influenced by Dutch voting behavior in the United Nations”.[75] Notably, Minister Schmelzer explicitly speaks in favor of a change in voting behavior, and it occurs just five days after Nixon's visit announcement. Despite stressing the independence of the annual study on Dutch-Chinese bilateral relations, a conclusion can be drawn that Nixon's visit has given the Dutch government a nudge to foster better relations with the PRC.

At this point of time, officials within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs believe the Netherlands had placed itself in a disadvantaged position compared to other countries with representations in China.[76] Two reasons are attributed to this. Firstly, it was noted that the Netherlands “does not toast Chairman Mao during official receptions”. A decision was then made to change this practice. The second reason is that “Netherlands, along with 'neutral' Laos, is the only country represented in Beijing that does not vote in favor of the Albanian resolution during the annual UN treatment.” The concern expressed here is that if the Netherlands does not quickly adopt a different policy, the Chinese side may raise the price for normalization. On the economic front, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also deemed crucial for the Netherlands to change its stance, as it could better safeguard economic interests in Taiwan, particularly concerning the significant stake held by the electronics company Philips.[77]

[74] Telex message dated 22 July 1971 from Schmelzer to Derksen (NNA 2.05.313/25595). Schmelzer forwards a ANP news message to Derksen in Beijing.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Memorandum dated 9 August 1971 from the Department of East Asia to the Chef of the Department of East Asia (NA 2.05.166/655).
[77] Ibid.

The Chinese side presented various reasons for the cool bilateral relations between the Netherlands and the People's Republic of China, with Taiwan always at the forefront. Conversations between Dutch and Chinese officials suggest that both sides agree on the central issue but struggle to understand each other's arguments. It often feels like they are talking past each other. This was evident in a conversation on 11 October 1971 between an official from the East Asia Directorate and a Chinese delegate in the Netherlands.[78] During this exchange, the Chinese delegate, Luo Zhongjing, brought attention to a gathering of supporters of the ROC in the Netherlands, labeling them "reactionary elements" and "members of the bandit clan of Chiang Kai-Shek." He then reminded his Dutch counterpart that "there is only one China, under the leadership of the government of the Chinese People's Republic, and that Taiwan is an inseparable part of this sacred territory of China." The frustration of the Dutch official is evident in the conversation report, where the Dutch side highlighted the fact that the Netherlands had already severed all relations with "the regime of Chiang Kai-Shek" since 1950.[79] There was thus a consensus within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the Dutch reasoning in this argument was correct, and there was little understanding for the Chinese point of view.

### 4.1.2: The UN-vote on the PRC's admission (25 October 1971)

Three months after the announcement of Nixon's visit, a second important event came up: a meeting of the UN General Assembly with an Albanian resolution to seat the PRC in the United Nations and to recognize the PRC as the sole legitimate China. On October 25, 1972, during the vote on this resolution it was overwhelmingly adopted.[80] This resulted in Taiwan's exclusion from the UN and the recognition of the People's Republic of China as the only representative of China in the United Nations. The Dutch government ignored multiple US requests to align its voting to US-voting prevent the ROC from being expulsed from the UN. Not long after this, the Netherlands sensed a favorable geopolitical climate for initiating negotiations with the PRC regarding embassy exchanges, prompting the commencement of talks.

[78] Memorandum dated 11 October 1971 from the Department of East Asia to the Chef of the Department of East Asia (2.05.166/655). In the sidenote minister Schmelzer writes that he agrees with this line of reasoning.
[79] Memorandum dated 11 October 1971 from the Department of East Asia to the Chef of the Department of East Asia (2.05.166/655).
[80] Torelli, *The Cost of Realism*, 177.

The vote in October 1971 consisted of two main resolutions: the US-resolution and the Albanian-resolution. The US-resolution was about treating the seating of the PRC as an Important Question (IQ), require a supermajority, so two thirds of the votes. The Albanian-resolution proposed seating the PRC in the UN and the expulsion of the ROC.[81] Since the US formally recognized the ROC, it wanted the ROC to keep its seat in the UN. In search of support, the US in August 1971 had invited multiple countries, including the Netherlands, to make sure these countries would vote in favor of the US-resolution in the upcoming vote.[82] Later, Minister Schmelzer received a letter from the US ambassador Middendorf in the Hague with the urgent request to consider the UN-vote on the seating of the PRC and the expulsion of the Republic of China as an 'important question'.[83] Middendorf pointed out that many other countries that wanted to engage with China, such as Belgium, Luxemburg, and Togo among others, had expressed that they would vote in favor of the US-resolution.[84]

However, the Dutch government thought it was time for a PRC entry into the United Nations. The most important reason for this is that the Netherlands did not want to risk the negotiations that would soon begin on the exchange of embassies. Schmelzer believed that the situations mentioned by Ambassador Middendorf for other countries were fundamentally distinct from the Dutch context. The aforementioned countries were engaged in discussions with the PRC regarding recognition, which is a unilateral action. In contrast, the Dutch government was involved in negotiations for an exchange of ambassadors, representing a bilateral action. Therefore, under relative US pressure, the Netherlands decided to vote against a supermajority. This voting behavior aligned with the trend of many Western countries beginning to recognize the PRC and gradually reducing diplomatic relations with the government on Taiwan.

[81] Torelli, *The Cost of Realism*, 177, 159.
[82] Letter dated 2 August from US ambassador J. William Middendorf to minister Schmelzer (NA 2.21.351/602).
[83] Cable no.289 dated 13 October 1971 from Schmelzer to the embassy in Washington DC (NA 2.05.313/23349).
[84] Letter dated 13 October 1971 from J. William Middendorf to Minister Schmelzer (NA 2.02.313/25985).

## 4.2: Negotiations for exchanging embassies (October 1971 – May 1972)

It is now evident how the Netherlands acted and what the considerations at play existed after the announcement of Nixon's visit and in preparation of the 1971 UN-vote. The rapid succession of events eventually provided the Netherlands with a window of opportunity to elevate its relations with the PRC to the ambassadorial level. The remainder of this thesis will focus on the negotiation and policy process leading up to the official signing of the communiqué on May 17, 1972, announcing the exchange of ambassadors between both countries.

Initially, both sides thought that the exchange of ambassadors would be settled swiftly. The only aspects that seemed to require clarification were Schmelzer's comments and obtaining absolute clarity on the Dutch stance regarding Taiwan. Zhang Wenjin 章文晉, Director for Europe, America, and Australia within the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, indicated that besides these points, there were no objections from the Chinese side.[85] When Derksen mentioned the potential content of a joint communiqué after concluding negotiations, Zhang responded that it wouldn't be an issue and stated, “we shall probably draft that in two minutes when the time comes.”[86]

In retrospect, it is evident that this was overly optimistic. Seven months of negotiations transpired from the UN vote to the signing of a joint communique on May 16 at four o’clock in the afternoon. It was apparent that the negotiations encountered significant obstacles, primarily revolving around two key points: the mutual positions and formal language in the communique regarding Taiwan, the need of issuing a Dutch-Chinese communique. A third intricacy of the negotiations is the Dutch addition to the communique. This addition did not necessarily form an obstacle, but nevertheless tells a lot about the Dutch intentions in its foreign policy. The analysis will start by examining the way in which the exchange of embassies would be made public.

### 4.2.1: Communicating the exchange of ambassadors to the world: a joint communique or not?

The fact that there would be a joint communique was not that obvious from the beginning. There were many more ways in which the Netherlands and China could have communicated the opening of

[85] Cable no.133 dated 2 November 1971 from Derksen to Schmelzer (NA 2.05.166/655).
[86] Cable no.133 dated 2 November 1971 from Derksen to Schmelzer (NA 2.05.166/655).

ambassies in each other's countries. The way of communicating this fact to the world marked the first hurdle in the negotiation process. Whereas the Netherlands first wished to exchange embassies without a common statement, it eventually settled for a grand joint communique in which the exchange would be announced. The Dutch opposed issuing a communique or a joint press statement due to the implication that subsequent negotiations would follow concerning the statement's contents. This included the challenge of formal language regarding Taiwan, an area where both countries lacked mutual agreement.

In a telegram to Derksen on January 21, it becomes clear how the Dutch initially wanted to communicate the common statement.[87] Minister Schmelzer explicitly expressed the Dutch government's wish for the first time. The goal was to achieve "silent normalization", meaning a swift elevation of bilateral relations to embassy level without making grand statements and definitely without a communiqué. Schmelzer was disappointed with the Chinese response proposing further negotiations on these topics in the early stages of the negotiation process. This continuation implied that some concessions from the Netherlands were expected by the Chinese side, involving clear statements about Taiwan's status and the sovereignty of the PRC, but also on the way to communicate this to the world. In terms of content the Minister suggested that "the maximum achievable for China would be a paraphrase of our 1950 recognition but without territorial definition."[88] In other words: the Netherlands did not make the Taiwan-question a part of the negotiations.

Schmelzer now understood that this was going to be a long-term battle. It was deemed better not to rush. Schmelzer believed that hasty action might force too many concessions from the Netherlands. Therefore, the Dutch government opted a strategy of waiting. One noticeable negotiation tactic he planned to implement involved assigning Derksen to prepare for departure to a new destination at a yet to determined date and introducing a new *chargé d'affaires*.[89] The Minister intended to send his primary representative in Beijing to a new post, essentially shifting the initiative to the People's Republic of China.[90]

Derksen's farewell dinner took place on March 19, 1972, precisely when both governments had negotiated most intensely, evident from the numerous conversation reports from the period between

[87] Cable no.9 dated 21 January 1972 from Schmelzer to Derksen (NA 2.05.166/655).
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Cable no.15 dated 28 January 1972 from Derksen to Schmelzer (NA 2.05.166/655).

March 17 and 21. During this time, there seemed to be a consensus between both parties to issue a press statement regarding the elevation of diplomatic missions[91]. The proposal was for a brief joint statement followed by individual statements from each government, allowing both to express their views without requiring endorsement from the other. However, this was unacceptable to the Chinese government, as stated by the Chinese negotiator Zhang Wenjin. From this point, the idea of a press conference was discarded, and it became increasingly evident that China genuinely wanted a joint communiqué. By March 21, Derksen could only conclude that there was still much work to be done.[92] He thanked Zhang for their cooperation, highlighting that both parties had come much further than a year before. His temporary successor, Semeijns de Vries van Doesburg, would take over the reins. However, Schmelzer had planned to send Derksen back to Beijing once more in early May to conclude the negotiations.

Moving from a press statement to a joint communique might not appear significant at first glance, but it wielded substantial influence over the negotiations. Similar to a press statement, a joint communique allows both parties to express their own perspectives. However, a crucial distinction lies in the formality: a joint communique stands as a highly formal, written document, while a press statement has a less formal tone and structure. By underwriting a joint communique, both parties state that they agree with its contents and therefore, the specificities of the communique need to be carefully discussed and negotiated. After the Dutch negotiators concluded that a joint communiqué was inevitable, it was only the contents that needed determination.

### 4.2.2: The communique's formal language on Taiwan

Now that the issue of voting behavior, as presumed by The Hague prior to the vote, had been resolved, another problem arose. A quick elevation of bilateral ties appeared not to be possible due to differences of opinion on the formal language on Taiwan. Whereas China wanted an unequivocal statement by the Netherlands that Taiwan is a part of China, and that the PRC is the sole legal government of China, the Netherlands were not too eager to reiterate this One-China principle. The statements that would be made on Taiwan in the Dutch-Chinese communique turned out to be the biggest hurdle both sides had

[91] Cable no.55 dated 20 March 1972 from Derksen to Schmelzer (NA 2.05.166/655).
[92] Cable no.56 dated 21 March 1972 from Derksen to Schmelzer (NA 2.05.166/655).

to overcome. Eventually both sides settled for a formulation in which the Netherlands "respected" the Chinese point of view regarding Taiwan.

Derksen reported to The Hague that Zhang had informed him that "even today the subject of our raising the level of respective missions to embassies hinges on the Taiwan question."[93] According to Zhang, this was directly related to Minister Schmelzer's recent remarks in parliament. Schmelzer had stated that "Taiwan should limit its claim to representing all of China to those countries with which it maintains diplomatic relations."[94] Derksen reported that this statement had caused significant indignation in the People's Republic, as it seemed to imply that the Netherlands gave authority to "the Taiwan clique". The minister's perspective seemed to hinder the progression toward ambassadorial exchanges.

It quickly became evident in the subsequent conversation with his conversations with Zhang that things might become a bit more complex. For convenience, Zhang had prepared a draft text for a joint communiqué. According to Derksen, the following point in this Chinese draft text could potentially pose difficulties:

> "The government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands recognizes the position of the Chinese government that Taiwan is a province of the People's Republic of China."[95]

The Dutch side mentioned that they didn't particularly have issues with the content of these statements but expressed doubts about the Dutch government's approval. Derksen noted that "no government likes to reiterate statements previously made, as it implies that the original statement was not strong enough."[96] Referring back to the 1950 declaration, Derksen argued that it wasn't necessary to express the same sentiment in slightly different words. The 1950 exchange of notes already acknowledged the PRC as the "de jure" government and expressed respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of China. In response, the Chinese side indicated a willingness to negotiate the wording. This indicated that the earlier assumption by Zhang that the content of the communiqué could be settled in two minutes was no longer the case. From this point on, the negotiation battle over the right formulation on the Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan had started.

During a meeting on 1 February 1972, Derksen informed his negotiating partner that the Dutch government couldn't agree to the proposal presented by the Chinese government. In an attempt to meet

[93] Cable dated 30 December 1971 from Derksen to Schmelzer (NA 2.05.166/655).
[94] Ibid.
[95] Cable no.4 dated 13 January 1972 from Derksen to Schmelzer (NA 2.05.166/655).
[96] Ibid.

his Chinese counterpart halfway, he presented another paraphrase of the 1950 agreement agreed upon with Minister Schmelzer:

> "The Government of the PRC and the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, having reviewed the relations between their two countries, reaffirm their adherence to the principles of equality, mutual benefit, and mutual respect of territorial integrity, referred to in their exchange of notes of March 28 and April 4, 1950."[97]

The Chinese government reiterated that it could not agree with this proposal. At this moment, it became clear to the Derksen and Schmelzer that the PRC government had problems with the 1950 agreement and that any reiteration of its contents would be rejected. According to the Chinese side, there was no evidence that the Netherlands actually intended to abide by that agreement. This was according to the Chinese side particularly evident in the fact that for 20 years, the Netherlands had always contributed to preventing the PRC to be admitted to the UN.[98] The Netherlands supported a PRC seat in the UN only once following its recognition, and that lone instance was in 1950, the year of recognition and shortly before the Korean War. Therefore, according to the PRC, a new statement was necessary.

The negotiations faced added complexity due to the outcome of the visit by U.S. President Nixon to China. Besides the state banquets and mutual praises, a communiqué was issued. This statement by the U.S. regarding the sovereignty of the PRC and the status of Taiwan deliberately maintained ambiguity, allowing for various interpretations.[99] Derksen felt that China would become bolder and might insist that the Netherlands should issue a new and stronger statement about Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan. Even from London, which was in the final stages of negotiations, there were hints that China might demand additional terms from the Netherlands following Nixon's visit and the ensuing communiqué.[100]

By March 17, an impasse seemed to be forming in the negotiations. Derksen conveyed that the Dutch government couldn't agree to the far-reaching statement on Taiwan made at the start of the negotiations. Derksen noticed Zhang was taken aback by this. The Dutch government was of the opinion that an exchange of ambassadors should not require negotiations, especially not on a text containing non-reciprocal elements.[101] Additionally, the Netherlands hadn't had relations with Taiwan for 20 years

[97] Cable no.17 dated 1 February 1972 from Derksen to Schmelzer (NA 2.05.166/655).
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ross, *Negotiating Cooperation*, 24.
[100] Cable dated 6 March 1972 from Schmelzer to Derksen (NA 2.05.166/655).
[101] Cable no.34 dated 17 March 1972 from Schmelzer to Derksen (NA 2.05.166/655).

and had, in their view, recently removed the last obstacle in bilateral relations by supporting the PRC's UN seat.

Following a decrease in their negotiations throughout the month of April, primarily attributable to Derksen's departure, negotiations resumed in early May upon his return from his new assignment. Already spanning six months, Derksen, in a letter to Minister Schmelzer, acknowledged his anticipation of time-consuming negotiations but expressed surprise at the unexpectedly long process.[102] During his absence, Derksen had been active, contemplating ways for the Netherlands and the PRC to reach a swift resolution. In his proposal, Derksen showed some alignment with Chinese demands. The new sentence in the Dutch proposal indicated this shift:

> "The Government of the People's Republic of China has taken the opportunity provided by these consultations to reiterate its position that Taiwan is a province of the PRC. The government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands is aware of this position of the government of the PRC, which it recognizes as the sole legal government of China"[103]

The change here is that Derksen notes that the Netherlands is 'aware of' the position of the PRC. This was a big step, since the Dutch side for the first time excluded the 1950 statement in this newest proposal. This statement does not explicitly say that the Dutch government fully agrees with China's claim that Taiwan is a province of the People's Republic of China. Instead, it communicates awareness of the Chinese government's stance on Taiwan.

It wasn't until May 9 that the Chinese representatives responded. Zhang expressed regret for the delay, mentioning that "in terms of efficiency, the Chinese government is much behind the Dutch government."[104] However, from this point, things progressed swiftly. At the second meeting since Derksen's return, Zhang presented a draft communiqué. Derksen observed that China had made significant progress in the negotiations. Regarding Taiwan, China would have liked that the Dutch in the joint statement 'acknowledged' the Chinese government's view on Taiwan. Foreseeing Dutch objections to the word "acknowledge", Zhang instead proposed that the Netherlands "respect" the fact that Taiwan is a province of the PRC.[105] Both parties found this agreeable and proceeded to draft the communique.

[102] Cable no.81 dated 2 May 1972 from Derksen to Schmelzer (NA 2.05.166/655).
[103] Ibid.
[104] Cable no. 90 dated 9 May 1972 from Derksen to Schmelzer (NA 2.05.166/655).
[105] Ibid.

### 4.2.3: A Dutch counterproposal: the Anti-Brezhnev doctrine

A third intricacy about the joint communique is the Dutch addition to it. In the last paragraph of the communiqué, the Dutch government expresses its views on what seems to be a completely different subject than Netherlands-PRC bilateral ties:

> "The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands holds that the principles of peaceful coexistence should imply non-interference in each other's internal affairs, not only between countries and groups of countries of different socio-political systems, but equally between countries belonging to an alliance and having identical or similar socio-political systems. The Government of the People's Republic of China appreciates this stand of the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands."[106]

In a communiqué intended to regulate bilateral relations, this paragraph stands out because it pertains to broader geopolitical issues. The text emphasizes the standpoint that the principles of peaceful coexistence should mean that countries refrain from interfering in each other's internal affairs. In order to prevent escalation during the Cold War, there was already a consensus that the two sociopolitical systems, with the United States and the capitalist system on one side, and the Soviet Union and the communist system on the other, should not intervene in each other's geopolitical blocs.[107] However, this paragraph underscores that this principle applies not only to countries with different political systems but also to those forming an alliance with similar systems. In telegram exchanges between Derksen and Schmelzer, this latter paragraph is referred to as the 'anti-Brezhnev doctrine'.[108] Through this deliberate connection between seemingly disparate events, the Netherlands aimed to actively support the establishment of multilateral institutions. In doing so, the government sought to expand its margins for maneuver, strategically positioning itself to play a more influential role in shaping multilateral initiatives.

To understand what they mean by this, it is crucial to first examine what the Brezhnev doctrine precisely entails. On July 15, 1968, the members of the Warsaw Pact sent a threatening letter to Alexander Dubcek, the recently elected First Secretary of Czechoslovakia.[109] Dubcek had reform plans, and protests were ongoing throughout the country. Five weeks after the Warsaw Pact's letter to Dubcek, Soviet troops invaded Prague. Explanations for this intervention from the Soviet Union indicated that the sovereignty and the right to self-determination of socialist countries were subordinate to the interests of the Socialist

[106] See Appendix A for the whole communique.
[107] Westad, *The Cold War*, 33.
[108] Cable no.81 dated 2 May 1972 from Derksen to Schmelzer (NA 2.05.166/655).
[109] Loth, *Moscow, Prague and Warsaw*, 103.

world system. In other words, the Soviet Union was allowed to intervene forcefully if the socialist rule in a country was under pressure, as was the case in Prague in 1968. Western media reacted with shock to the harsh repression and coined a term for this policy: the Brezhnev doctrine.[110] This doctrine became one of the cornerstones of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union from 1968 when the country was under the leadership of Leonid Brezhnev.

Derksen and Schmelzer used the term 'anti-Brezhnev doctrine' to refer to precisely the opposite: respecting the sovereignty of countries, even if they are part of an alliance with *similar* political systems. Thus, the Soviet Union is not allowed to intervene in other countries within the Soviet bloc, and similarly, countries in the Western sociopolitical bloc are prohibited from doing so. In the context of China, this addition raises some questions. Why did the Netherlands place such importance on this anti-Brezhnev doctrine? And why did the Netherlands want to include this in a communiqué with the PRC?

A deeper investigation into the internal correspondence of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs reveals that the term 'anti-Brezhnev doctrine' is first mentioned in discussions with the Romanian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vasile Gliga.[111] The discussions covered bilateral relations between Romania and the Netherlands, not only regarding trade relations but also concerning security cooperation and the geopolitical climate. Regarding the international situation, the focus was specifically on West Germany and its relationship with the Soviet Union. West Germany was actively negotiating two treaties that were soon to be concluded: the Moscow Treaty and the Warsaw Treaty. These treaties committed West Germany and the Soviet Union to maintain international peace, promote the relaxation process, and establish the disputed border between East Germany and Poland.[112] Hoping that these treaties would be definitively signed, Schmelzer first mentioned the anti-Brezhnev doctrine. Therefore, the Netherlands was positioning itself as an advocate and pioneer for a safer Europe.

This becomes evident in a second meeting with the Romanian delegation, which specifically discussed European security. What stands out from this conversation is that Romania seems to attach importance to non-intervention between countries belonging to the same political system.[113] In a statement earlier that year – on February 1, 1972 – Romania also emphasized the importance of the right of states to free development.[114] In this context, Deputy Minister Gliga and Minister Schmelzer discussed the desirability

[110] Loth, *Moscow, Prague and Warsaw*, 104.
[111] Cable no.22 dated 17 March 1972 from Schmelzer to the Dutch embassy in Bucharest (NA 2.05.242/139).
[112] Gray, *Paradoxes of Ostpolitik*, 412.
[113] Cable no.20 dated 17 March 1972 from Schmelzer to the Dutch embassy in Bucharest (NA 2.05.242/139).
[114] Ibid.

of a conference for European security and cooperation in the form of a multilateral meeting. The Romanian side had even instructed the Romanian ambassador in Helsinki to speak bilaterally with Finland about hosting this conference in Helsinki. This conference was intended to focus on security issues and result in troop reductions and a code of interstate behavior to reduce tensions between East and West and within the ideological blocs themselves. After this initial conference, the plan was to establish a permanent body to address these issues and organize subsequent conferences. Ultimately, these conferences would culminate in the Helsinki Accords of 1975, agreeing to strive for improved détente between East and West and leading to the establishment of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 1994.[115]

It is important to note that it was not the Netherlands but primarily Romania that took the lead in initiating these European security conferences. Romania, like other smaller countries, sought to navigate the geopolitical climate of the time. Despite not being part of the Soviet Union, Romania had a socialist regime led by Nicolae Ceausescu that clearly was within the Soviet sphere of influence.[116] In this light, Romania's proposal for a conference on European security is not surprising; it likely aimed to defend against potential intervention by the Soviet Union, as had happened a few years earlier in Prague.

Netherlands aligned itself with this initiative. However, the internal correspondence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not entirely clarify why the Netherlands adopted this proposal and renamed the proposition of non-intervention the 'anti-Brezhnev doctrine'. The fact is that the anti-Brezjnev doctrine was apparently so significant for the Netherlands that its inclusion in the joint communiqué with China was considered a victory. During the conclusion of the communiqué negotiations, Derksen, in a telegram to Schmelzer, first suggested the possibility of adding 'your anti-Brezhnev doctrine' to the communiqué to give it more weight.[117] By referring to it as “your anti-Brezhnev doctrine”, it seems that the doctrine was an invention of Minister Schmelzer. When proposed, the Chinese negotiator Zhang Wenjin expressed no objections to the content but noted it could lead to speculation. In the next meeting, Derksen could announce that the Chinese government had agreed to the addition of the anti-Brezjnev doctrine. The Chinese government quickly accommodated the Netherlands, and the Dutch addition caused little additional difficulty in the negotiations[118]. The Dutch government could now demonstrate that it had also gained something in the negotiations with the PRC. A Dutch newspaper, *De Volkskrant*,

[115] Westad, *The Cold War*, 514.
[116] Ibid, 82.
[117] Cable no.81 dated 2 May 1972 from Derksen to Schmelzer (NA 2.05.166/655).
[118] Cable no.84 dated 3 May 1972 from Derksen to Schmelzer (NA 2.05.166/655).

made it clear that China's appreciation for the Dutch stance was an implicit condemnation of the Brezjnev doctrine.[119]

From the preceding analysis, it is evident that the addition of this statement to the communiqué does not directly relate to the bilateral relations between the Netherlands and China. In fact, it has little to do with the PRC. Instead, it reflects how the Netherlands wished to see international relations amid the Cold War. With the declaration on the Anti-Brezhnev doctrine, the Netherlands wanted to emphasize its broader stance on international relations, aiming to protect smaller countries from the whims of geopolitical powers.

# 5: Discussion

This study has examined why it took so long for the Netherlands and China to issue a joint communique and has identified two accelerators and two hurdles in the negotiations. The first accelerator was the announcement of Richard Nixon's visit to China in mid-1971. This announcement has played a pivotal role in kickstarting the negotiations between the Netherlands and the People's Republic of China. The Dutch government viewed Nixon's announcement positively, seeing it as an opportunity to enhance cooperation with the PRC, address longstanding issues, and establish ambassadorial exchanges. The significance lay not specifically in Nixon's subsequent visit in February 1972 but rather in the impact of the announcement itself on the evolving geopolitical landscape.

The UN-vote on October 25, 1971, regarding the recognition of the People's Republic of China as the sole legitimate China, marked a second accelerator. The Netherlands, under relative U.S. pressure, chose to abstain from voting on the Important Question Resolution. This resolution proposed that the seating of the PRC in the UN should require a supermajority vote, equivalent to two-thirds, as presented by the United States. Regarding the Albanian Resolution, the Netherlands voted affirmatively and decided to support the PRC's inclusion in the United Nations. This change in voting behavior strengthened the Netherlands' position towards China, leading to a confidential message from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs authorizing the *chargé d'affaires* in Beijing to approach the Chinese government for the exchange

[119] De Volkskrant 17 May 1972. Accessed via Delpher.

of ambassadors. The Hague was convinced that any remaining Chinese objections had now been resolved and felt assured to initiate negotiations and elevate diplomatic missions to the ambassadorial level.

The delay in exchanging embassies extended beyond six months due to two significant hurdles. First, there was a prolonged discussion on how to communicate the elevation of diplomatic relations, ultimately leading to the adoption of a joint communique. The decision to have a joint communique in the Netherlands-China negotiations was not initially evident. There were various ways to communicate the opening of embassies, and the method of communication posed the first significant challenge in the negotiation process. Initially, the Netherlands preferred exchanging embassies without a formal statement, aiming for “silent normalization”. However, as negotiations progressed, the Dutch government realized that discussions about a joint communique were unavoidable. Despite a preference for a more informal approach, the formality of a joint communique became crucial, influencing the negotiation dynamics. While the transition from a press statement to a joint communique may seem subtle, the formality and structure of the document played a significant role in shaping the negotiations. A joint communique, being a formal document, needed careful consideration of its contents.

A second significant hurdle related to the formal language on Taiwan and the sovereignty of the PRC in the joint communique. While China insisted on an explicit statement acknowledging Taiwan as part of China and recognizing the PRC as the sole legal government, the Netherlands hesitated to reiterate the One-China principle in such explicit terms. After a series of negotiations and counterproposals, both sides eventually settled for a formulation in which the Netherlands “respected” (*zunzhong* 尊重) the Chinese point of view regarding Taiwan.

The third intricacy of the negotiations on the elevation of bilateral diplomatic ties was the Dutch addition to the communique. In the final paragraph of the communiqué, the Netherlands expressed its views on broader geopolitical issues, emphasizing the principles of peaceful coexistence and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. This addition, referred to as the 'anti-Brezhnev doctrine,' was a significant departure from the Brezhnev Doctrine, which allowed the Soviet Union to intervene forcefully in socialist countries in which the socialist leadership was under pressure. Instead, the anti-Brezhnev doctrine states that larger powers should not intervene in the internal affairs of smaller states. The addition of the anti-Brezhnev doctrine did not present any challenges during the negotiations, and the Chinese negotiators comprehended the Dutch desire to incorporate it. It is evident that the PRC did not object to this statement. However, as it did not align itself with the Cold War superpowers, there is a possibility that it

may have endorsed its inclusion, given that the statement aimed to safeguard smaller states from superpower influence. It is important to note that this perspective lacks support from the archival documents.

## 5.1: A Smaller State with larger ambitions

In addition to a better understanding of the process that led up to this pivotal moment in Dutch-Sino diplomatic history, this thesis also offers a clearer insight into Dutch foreign policy during the Cold War and the role of smaller states. In doing so this study has used Laurien Crump's "margins for manoeuvre" framework. This framework illuminates the active role played by smaller states amid the power politics of the Cold War. Crump challenges the traditional notion that characterizes the influence of smaller states as passive. Instead, she emphasizes that these states are not confined to mere abstention from complying with the demands of larger states; they possess the capacity to actively pursue their own agendas.[120]

By examining the margins of manoeuvre in the negotiations on "1971" this thesis has first of all contributed to the literature on Dutch foreign policy during the Cold War. Some scholars have argued that after the Second World War, the Netherlands had to find a new role in the international political arena, and eventually chose to embrace multilateralism in NATO and the European Communities, and follow the United States on the economic, political, and military aspects.[121]

That things are not that simple can be seen in other studies that show multiple occasions in which the Netherlands chose not to follow the United States or ignored a US request all together. In May 1944, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs sent a letter to *The Times* in which he was critical about the proposed organization of the United Nations and the veto-powers powerful countries would get.[122] This is a direct attempt to protect its interests as a smaller state against the interests of major powers. A second event in which the Netherlands did not follow the US was the Dutch recognition of the PRC in February 1950, but instead followed the British example to recognize.[123] Chang has argued that this choice was not driven by geopolitical ambitions but by pragmatism, because it deemed the changing political landscape

[120] Crump, *Margins for Manoeuvre*,
[121] Hellema, *Buitenlandse Politiek van Nederland*, 332.
[122] Chang, *Allies as Adversaries*, 1264.
[123] Chang, *Forgotten Diplomacy*, 384.

in China irreversible.[124] He goes on to argue that this stance was particularly crucial in a period when the Cold War global order had not yet solidified, and transatlantic relationships hadn't evolved to a point where the Dutch felt ideologically or strategically bound to converge with the US.[125] This leaves the option open that the Netherlands would follow the United States during the peak moments of the Cold War.

This study adds two other cases in which the Netherlands purposely did not step in line with US foreign policy, during a time in which the bipolar Cold War world order was fully crystallized. The first regards the Dutch voting behavior in the UN General Assembly in October 1971. The archives in this study have shown that despite invitations to meetings with other Western countries and direct request from the US to align their voting, the Netherlands opted to abstain from voting on the Important Question Resolution and voted in favor of a PRC seat in the UN. The second instance was the inclusion of the Brezhnev doctrine in the joint communique with China, which can be seen as an intention to bind major powers.

By zooming in on discussions between the Netherlands and Romania regarding the anti-Brezhnev doctrine and European security, this case also reveals the role small states aimed to play in the bipolar landscape of the Cold War. Notably, the Netherlands actively sought to contribute to limiting the actions of such superpowers. This is evident in two aspects. Firstly, the Netherlands ensured the inclusion of the anti-Brezhnev doctrine in the joint communiqué. At that time, the Dutch government did not perceive China as a superpower but as one in the making. The fact that China, by signing the communiqué, endorsed the Dutch desire for non-intervention, was considered a victory for the Netherlands, as it had persuaded a potential superpower to make a statement on the sovereignty of smaller countries. It should be noted that Chinese negotiators had already expressed full agreement with the anti-Brezhnev doctrine, possibly because China, too, felt threatened by a superpower. Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, it had engaged in multiple border wars with the Soviet Union and remained vigilant against potential Soviet aggression.

Secondly, discussions on the anti-Brezhnev doctrine reveal that the Netherlands sought to limit the power of large countries through multilateral forums. As preparations for a conference on European security were underway, negotiations on the inclusion of the anti-Brezhnev doctrine in the communiqué cannot be divorced from discussions with Romania on European security and non-intervention. Despite Romania taking more initiative in the preparations by engaging with Finland on the organization, the

[124] Chang, *Forgotten Diplomacy*, 384.
[125] Ibid, 438.

discussions highlight the considerable efforts made by the Dutch government. The Netherlands demonstrated the importance it attributed to a future multilateral conference by incorporating the anti-Brezhnev doctrine into the communiqué with China.

Given the efforts of the Dutch government to include the anti-Brezjnev doctrine, Isabelle Duyvesteyn might be right in her oration in which she unconventionally argues that small states engage in power politics.[126] It is so that the Netherlands in this case does not engage in full power politics, but it did definitely have larger ambitions than merely following a superpower, the US in this case. The Dutch engaged in institution building, namely the ESCE, and used the negotiations with China to support the this. It seems that through the anti-Brezhnev doctrine, the Netherlands wants to bind superpowers to international institutions, in order to create a safer environment for smaller states. The academic literature on smaller states has indeed argued that smaller states seek safety in international law and multilateralism, but the literature has contended that it is usually the superpowers or major states initiative this institution building. In this case, a smaller state actively engages in the making of a new multilateral institution.

## Conclusion

This thesis has researched the negotiations on the signing of the 1972 Dutch-Sino joint communique, to find out what the drivers and hurdles were for the Dutch government in its relations with the PRC. By doing so, it aims to contribute to the academic discourse on smaller states, offering insights into how these states navigated the complexities of the bipolar Cold War world. The establishment of a joint communiqué was a complex process with accelerators and hurdles. The announcement of the Nixon visit to China and the admission of the PRC to the UN paved the way for the Netherlands and China to start talks on exchanging ambassadors. For this exchange, both sides had to overcome significant hurdles. The first hurdle was the question of how to communicate the elevation of diplomatic ties to the world. That the negotiators eventually settled for the issuance of a joint communique was not always evident, because the Netherlands preferred a “silent normalization” without noteworthy statements. The second

[126]Duyvesteyn, *Machiavelli and Minor States*.

hurdle consisted of the contents of the joint communique, and specifically the formal language on Taiwan. These two hurdles caused the communique to only be issued after more than six months of negotiating, while both sides initially expressed that they thought the exchanged would be settled in days.

Mapping out this process not only contributes to understanding one of the key events in modern history concerning Netherlands-China relations, but also provides insight into the role of smaller states in the Cold War. By building on Chang's work on Dutch-Sino diplomatic history, this study has addressed a significant gap in the academic literature. No earlier studies have detailed delved into the negotiations and the coming into existence of the 1972 joint communique. Despite scholars recognizing that, not the 1950 recognition, but the elevation of diplomatic ties has been the cornerstone of the Dutch One-China policy to the present day, prior research has not thoroughly explored the negotiations leading to the 1972 joint communique.

Having thoroughly investigated previously unexplored archival sources to gain deeper insights into the negotiations leading to the 1972 communique, this thesis has paved the way for other research to expand upon. While I have focused on the factors that facilitated the negotiations, and the hurdles that were present during the negotiations, there is still much ground to cover. Future research could delve into the implications of "1972" for their relations and show how the exchange of embassies has changed Dutch-Sino economic and political ties. Furthermore, additional research could delve into the elevation of diplomatic ties between China and other Western states. This exploration could assess whether the accelerators and hurdles identified in the negotiations between the Netherlands and China are echoed in the diplomatic relations between other smaller states and major powers during the Cold War, presenting a thorough comparative analysis. An alternative avenue for subsequent research entails a more in-depth exploration of the Netherlands' involvement in the creation of multilateral institutions, exemplified by the OSCE. The inclusion of consultations related to the OSCE's establishment within the negotiations with the PRC suggests that the Netherlands might have been a smaller state with greater ambitions.

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## Appendix A: the 1972 joint communique

"The government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, through their specially appointed representatives meeting in Peking, have held friendly consultations.

The two sides have reviewed the relations between the two Governments and the two peoples since 1950. Both governments confirm the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in each other's internal affairs and equality and mutual benefit and hold that further development of the relations between the two countries on the basis of these principles is to the mutual benefit of the two countries and the two peoples.

The Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands have agreed to raise the level of their respective diplomatic missions in the two countries from Offices of Charges d'Affaires to embassies as from May 18, 1972.

The Chinese Government reaffirms that Taiwan is a province of the People's Republic of China. The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands respects this stand of the Chinese government and reaffirms that it recognizes the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China.

The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands holds that the principles of peaceful coexistence should imply non-interference in each other's internal affairs, not only between countries and groups of countries of different socio-political systems, but equally between countries belonging to an alliance and having identical or similar socio-political systems. The Government of the People's Republic of China appreciates this stand of the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands."