

International Relations Theory and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 1949-2002

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Abstract

This research traces the flow of ideas in China, as viewed by the Chinese Communist Party, with regard to international affairs. It begins by articulating the historical context through which contemporary perspectives in Chinese foreign policy made their way to the eventual creation of a foreign affairs group, established in Yanan in 1944, and the formal establishment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on November 8, 1949. The research is divided into 'eras' defined by the leaders who held power. These include the Mao (1949-1976), Deng (1978-1997), and Jiang eras (1997-2002), and range from year 1949-2002. Through an in-depth analysis of the selected works of these and other leaders by way of the Computer Assisted Textual Markup and Analysis (CATMA) tool, memoirs written by former ministry staff and diplomats, secondary literature on the development of the diplomatic corps, historical analysis through the use of both primary and secondary sources, as well as interviews with experts in the field, a cohesive narrative is created that demonstrates the remarkable consistency with which China has executed upon its foreign policy, as well as consistency in the theories that have guided those policies. This consistency suggests that there is a core set of foreign policy interests that have existed since the establishment of the Ministry, constituting a set of native ideas, and that a distinctly Chinese approach to understanding international relations has served as the dominant theoretical framework, leaving little room within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for foreign modes of understanding international phenomena.