



PROJECT MUSE[®]

LOUIS W. PAULY

The Political Resonance of *Nixon in China*

ABSTRACT

Contemporary hopes for China's peaceful rise, the continuing global reverberations of the end of the Cold War, and, most importantly for an opera crafted in a distinctly American musical idiom, profound questions concerning the systemic power and role of the United States – all help *Nixon in China* draw an expanding audience. That the opera has entered the canon is partly because the complexity of Nixon's character suggests the insecurity of global political leadership in our own day. Understanding the context within which it was first created may be useful, but the opera's broader themes resonate more deeply with the human experience in a rapidly changing world.

KEYWORDS: Richard M. Nixon, globalization, hegemony, political leadership, Vietnam War, Cold War, China's rise

The reviews following the 2011 performances of John Adams's *Nixon in China* in New York and Toronto commonly noted that the work had now entered the 'canon.' Its musical, literary, and theatrical virtues will surely determine its long-term durability. But other factors help explain its resonance in our own time. Although its historical context and political themes may eventually fade in significance, they have become ever more important since the opera's premiere in 1987. Contemporary hopes for China's 'peaceful rise,' the continuing global reverberations of the end of the Cold War, and, most importantly for an opera crafted in a distinctly American musical idiom, profound questions concerning the systemic power and role of the United States – all today help the opera draw an expanding audience.

In interviews, Adams has said that his opinion of Richard Nixon evolved as he did his preparatory research and sought the deeper sources of modern myths. What came into clearer view for Adams then, and for his audiences now, at one level draws on a familiar archetype: the flawed human capable of great achievements but, driven by deep insecurities and the fateful law of unintended consequences, also capable of inflicting

great harm, including on himself.¹ Only one other character in the opera approaches such a level of complexity, and that is Chou En-lai.² Alice Goodman's evocative libretto assigns him the task of asking the unanswerable but essential question every reflective person must ask in the twilight of life. But Nixon's musings on stage as well as in historical time give that question increasing resonance in contemporary politics, when the post-1945 American imperium seems just past its zenith.

Future audiences will judge for themselves the depth and continuing appeal of the opera's mythology. But the role of Nixon's 1972 visit to China in opening a pathway to the end of the Cold War and signalling an end to China's post-1949 isolation has obvious current appeal for audience members from the 'baby boom' generation, the same generation as the composer, librettist, and original director.³ If they also leave their seats discomfited by the darker memories and gathering shadows evoked by the opera, they will have discerned deeper connections between the opera and the zeitgeist then and now. In their inner ear, perhaps they will even hear the spinning rotors of a helicopter ignominiously taking off from the rooftop of the US Embassy in Saigon three years after Nixon met Mao Tse-tung in Beijing. Perhaps they will associate that same sound with more recent events in Baghdad, Kandahar, and Kabul.

VIETNAM

The year 1972 was a dangerous and lucky one for me. I remember it very well. That was the year I became a close student of international relations. In February of that year, as depicted in *Nixon in China*, the president visited China. In December, he almost sent me to Vietnam. I was then an undergraduate living in New York City, and it was my year for the military draft. On 23 April 1970, Nixon had ended college deferments. The next year, he began a long process of drawing down US ground forces from Vietnam while leaving military 'advisers' there and simultaneously ramping up the air war over Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The campuses of many American universities remained under siege, as images of dead student protestors beamed around the world. As it happened, the conscription lottery spared me. But the memory of that close call still burns. Less lucky members of my cohort were

1 For an enlightening January 2011 interview with Peter Sellars, who planted the seed for the opera in 1983 and staged its first performance, and John Adams, see *The Met Online*, <http://www.metoperafamily.org/metopera/index.aspx>.

2 Since John Adams used the Wade-Giles system of transcription for the designation of characters in *Nixon in China*, that notation is being followed here for consistency, rather than the now standard pinyin.

3 Adams was born in 1947, Goodman in 1958, and Sellars in 1957.

called to active duty in June 1973, the last draftees inducted before the inception of an all-volunteer army in the United States.

Anyone paying attention knew by 1972 that American and South Vietnamese forces could not prevail, and thanks to many memoirs of policymakers and much research in the intervening decades, we now understand that key American leaders knew full well as early as 1967 that the war was unwinnable (McNamara et al.).⁴ But the killing continued until 1975, when Saigon finally fell. Hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian as well as over 50,000 American – and Canadian – lives had by then been lost.⁵ Even more blood would be shed in the war's direct aftermath, not least through the efforts of the Khmer Rouge on the killing fields of Cambodia so well prepared by North Vietnamese troops and American bombers.

From its opening scenes, *Nixon in China* encourages the audience to remember. The dramatic arrival of the presidential aircraft in Beijing thrills today, but the actual flight was occurring even as B-52s carried out their presidential orders over Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Nixon and his national security advisor, Henry Kissinger, had long since abandoned the original rationale for the war. Nixon, who made his career as an arch anti-Communist, apparently no longer believed in falling dominoes – one country after another joining an ideological alliance extending from Moscow to Beijing. After all, the People's Republic of China had already lost confidence in the Soviet Union, and Mao Tse-tung had clearly signalled his concern about Soviet intentions in China's borderlands. For their part, Nixon and Kissinger hoped widening the gulf between the two great Communist powers would allow China to play a positive role in peace talks then underway between the United States and North Vietnam.⁶

4 Discerning observers sensed the extreme odds against American victory long before. How the United States decided to take the place of France after its defeat in 1954 and how it persisted in misunderstanding an abiding nationalist struggle and refusing to acknowledge Vietnamese perceptions that it had become just another imperial power is the sobering theme of Fredrik Logevall's outstanding new book.

5 Canada's extensive involvement included thousands of volunteers in American uniforms, hundreds of whom died or were wounded, and deep, if often denied, governmental support of the American–South Vietnamese alliance (Levant).

6 In a bid to encourage the North Vietnamese to agree to a cease-fire, among other tactics Nixon and Kissinger tried to give the impression that Nixon was a 'madman,' suffering from delusions of grandeur and willing to escalate the conflict beyond any imaginable limits (Kimball). That plausible and commonly held image of the man, reinforced then by the impact of widening antiwar protests and later by the paranoia that became quite clear during the Watergate crisis, informs the bizarre text Nixon sings at the end of Act 1, Scene 1: 'An old cold warrior piloting towards an unknown shore through shoals. The rats begin to chew the sheets. There's murmuring below. Now there's ingratitude! My hand is steady as a rock. A sound like mourning doves reaches my ears. Nobody is a

In his famous handshake with Mao, Nixon did take a step toward ending the Cold War, of which the struggle in Vietnam had long been depicted by successive presidents as a key element. That handshake affirmed the simple truth that the American will to deploy soldiers on the Asian mainland was waning. As Margaret MacMillan describes in her 2006 book with the same title as the opera, to the chagrin of his conservative base back home, Nixon even went soft on the US commitment to the Nationalist government in Taiwan that still claimed all of China as its own. He and Kissinger, the archpriest of the church of *realpolitik*, had already concluded it was necessary to end the strategy of confrontation with the People's Republic of China that had shaped bilateral relations ever since 1949, when the Communists succeeded in pushing the Nationalists to their island home.

In the midst of the opera's opening scenes, and with much of the libretto lifted directly from the transcript of the actual 1972 meeting, Chou reminds everyone that 'this is an election year' in the United States. A few moments later, Mao observes that Nixon's visit is motivated by a straightforward agenda: 'You want to bring your boys back home.' To this Nixon replies quite assertively, 'What if we do? Is that a crime?'⁷ Mao gets the last word on this theme: 'Our armies do not go abroad; we have all we need.' That was not true, as Chinese deployments from Korea to Vietnam itself would attest. In any case, China did not help the United States extricate itself from the conflict in Vietnam. Following Nixon's lead, nevertheless, American policy toward China did decidedly tilt in a direction that might have been labelled 'appeasement' in an earlier era. That policy line remains the dominant one today.

FORGETTING THE PAST

In the decades since 1972, the United States did not in fact 'bring its boys back home.' It redeployed them elsewhere and built a permanent system

friend of ours. Let's face it. If we don't succeed on this summit, our name is mud. We're not out of the woods, not yet. The nation's heartland skips a beat as our hands shield the spinning globe from the flame-throwers of the mob. We must press on.'

⁷ Original documents now released affirm the idea that Nixon's visit was strongly motivated by electoral considerations and secondly by his, and Kissinger's, belief that US counter-revolutionary credibility had to be preserved. Required was a 'decent interval' between American withdrawal from Vietnam and the inevitable victory of the North Vietnamese. In short, the war needed to be prolonged beyond the 1972 election (Kimball). If China would assist, Nixon was willing to tilt away from Taiwan's now fanciful claim to represent all of China and even to oppose any future claim by Taiwan to independence. In the context of vitriolic pushback from the right wing of his own party, Nixon's position later moderated. For their part, Chinese officials did subsequently continue long-standing discussions with the North Vietnamese, but there is no evidence to suggest their serious intent or decisive effort to end the war (Mann). Nevertheless, Nixon and Kissinger did get their 'decent interval' after Nixon was re-elected in 1972.

of bases and supply lines to facilitate the projection of American power abroad. The détente promoted by the United States after 1972 and, more importantly, the internal dissolution of the Soviet Union and its system of satellite states brought about a new situation. So too did China's decisive opening after Mao left the scene. But instead of tempting the United States to stand down, its military commitments abroad became ever more expansive.

The conflict in Vietnam still resonates in American politics, and so too does the legacy of the Cold War. When *Nixon in China* was composed and first staged, many Americans simply wanted to forget the Indochinese nightmare, but the Cold War had not yet ended. Moreover, even more horrible events in China's post-1949 history were just beginning to come into clearer view. When Nixon ventures into Mao's study and declaims that he is 'nearly speechless with delight just to be here,' Goodman captures not only a troubling part of Nixon's personality but also a monumental act of forgetting. Perhaps that is why the opera most often depicts both Nixon and especially Kissinger as more craven than heroic. Although they did not then know in detail what we know today, they did understand that Mao and the state apparatus led by Chou En-lai were responsible for human deaths on a vast scale. In his book, *Bloodlands*, the historian Timothy Snyder holds Hitler and Stalin jointly responsible for some 14 million premature civilian deaths in central Europe in the terrible decade after 1939. The best evidence available today suggests that Mao's utopian fantasies after 1949, and especially during the Great Leap Forward between 1959 and 1962, caused the deaths of about 45 million of his countrymen (Dikötter). Even in the early 1960s, the outside world knew something was happening. We called it a famine, mainly an act of nature. We now know that it was entirely caused by a misguided, misanthropic utopianism. It was caused by Mao, the proponent of 'permanent revolution,' the man who seemed to crave disorder and who traumatized the country once more with the so-called Cultural Revolution in the years just preceding Nixon's visit.

Although Nixon and Kissinger may have chosen to forget, Adams and Goodman do not give their audience that luxury. Mao's Heldenentor suggests dangerous energy, and the text leaves no doubt. Here is the revolutionary who likes 'right wingers' because he knows what to expect from them. When Kissinger supinely states that Mao's revolution 'will last a thousand years,' Mao reminds him of the underlying dynamics. 'After the founders come the profiteers,' he sings bitterly and knowingly, and we sense that he understands how to manipulate the avarice of foreign and domestic 'capitalists' who preceded and will follow Nixon and Kissinger. They provide new fuel for the revolutionary furnace (Kissinger 106).

Especially disconcerting is Mao's discernment of the links between religion, culture, politics, and raw economic interests signified by this

visit from foreigners, the latest in a long line of armies, diplomats, merchants, and Christian proselytizers. Nixon and Kissinger represent 'fishers of men': 'New missionaries, businesslike, survey the field and then attack. Promise to change our rice to bread, and wash us in our brother's blood, and give us beads, and crucify us on a cross of usury. After them come the Green Berets, insuring their securities.' Nixon follows up with the question, 'Where is the Chinese people's faith?' Mao's devastating response: 'The people's faith? Another myth to sell bonds.' And forget the past anyway. Only the present really matters. As Mao thinks of his compatriots, 'The world to come has come, is theirs. We cried "Long Live the Ancestors!" once. It's "Long Live the Living!" now . . . We no longer need Confucius. Let him rot.'

In the actual meeting, Nixon might finally have understood that if neither the past nor the future mattered to China, the world faced a huge challenge. If he were alive today, would Nixon be comforted by the decisive opening that occurred a few years after his visit? Would he laud the apparent confirmation of Mao's expectation that grabbing as much as they can for themselves right now, today, had become the very purpose of life for so many 'profiteers' inside China and on both sides of the Pacific? For that matter, if Mao came back today, would he be comforted by the apparent fragility of global capitalism? Both Adams's music and Goodman's text beg such questions. The audience would have to work hard not to hear them.

According to the standard set by the historical Mao, Nixon's personal flaws seem puny. The opera, however, serves up two anti-heroic caricatures, with a more complex Nixon getting the slightly better treatment. (It is an American opera, after all.) Light is shed on the worst aspects of their personalities through the matched characterizations of their key allies: Kissinger (and especially Kissinger as Lao Szu, the sadistic factotum of the proverbial landlord, in the bitter play within the play) and Mao's wife, Chiang Ch'ing, the persistent advocate of violent cultural change. Overall, nevertheless, the interaction of Nixon and Mao captures the truth beneath the horror associated with both of their lives and their lies. But these men were not entirely unlike us in the audience. They did connect, and their meeting itself did forge a recognizable human bond. Two years after their meeting, when Nixon came down with a life-threatening case of phlebitis, his hospital attendants were shocked one day to pick up the telephone to hear Mao on the other end wanting to wish his old friend a speedy recovery.

Until his own death in 1994, Nixon frequently depicted his role at the beginning of the end of the Cold War as his greatest historical legacy. Adams's music does nothing to contradict this view, notwithstanding the cupidity and inanity of the Watergate saga that were on the composer's

mind when he began his work. China has been at the centre of the drama of global history ever since then.

CHINA'S RISE

Adams and Goodman symbolically captured the essential forces lying behind the 1972 summit. The composer himself has said that he meant Nixon to stand for the democratic-capitalist market economy and Mao to symbolize the socialist alternative of Marx and Lenin. In that context, Nixon seems eventually to have triumphed. After Mao's death, the pragmatist premier Chou's favoured successor, Teng Hsiao-P'ing, finally gained secure control over the party and state machinery. He then craftily succeeded in burying Maoism, if not what was left of Mao's body itself.

Teng, a remarkable survivor of the Cultural Revolution, was the true cultivator of the seed Nixon thought he had planted in 1972. 'Do not care if the cat is black or white, what matters is it catches mice,' Teng said in 1961 and finally put into practice after 1979. Frankly, it is doubtful that he actually needed Nixon or Kissinger. China changed and continues to change in its own time. Nevertheless, the legitimacy of the regime ever since the late 1970s has been tied to high economic growth rates propelled by relative openness between the Chinese and American economies, as well as by a now quite explicit Han nationalism. Ever mindful of the 'century of humiliation' that followed the late nineteenth-century heyday of European imperialism, a Communist Party-led China is now the world's factory, and the United States is the willing consumer of its products. In turn, China's trade surplus is recycled in US securities markets, as a banker transforms deposits into loans.

In this context, Mao-as-symbol remains both problematic and necessary. Ask Chinese university students what they think of Mao today, and you will literally get the party line every time: '70% good. 30% bad.' Yes, there were excesses. He had blood on his hands. But rebuilding a nation is hard, those students will assert, and after all is said and done, Mao, Chou, and Teng buried the past and ushered in the era of China's 'peaceful rise.'

Who can say they are wrong? Ten years after *Nixon in China* premiered, Teng had almost finished the historic turnabout by forcing Portugal and Hong Kong to hand back Macao and Hong Kong, and the bloodshed of Tiananmen Square was still two years away. Only Taiwan remained as the major piece of unfinished business, and, despite vitriolic reactions in conservative circles back in the United States, the concessions made by Nixon and Kissinger at the 1972 meeting and noted in the opera foreshadowed a weakening of the American commitment to the island-based Republic of China. Even if the status of Taiwan

would remain a running sore, the next generation of Chinese leaders would claim that Mao, Chou, and Teng did recover greater China's rightful place in the world. Today's audience for *Nixon in China* will at least concede that Nixon and Kissinger anticipated that recovery. What they might not have anticipated were its full implications for American power.

IMAGINING THE FUTURE

Conrad Black, opera fan and biographer of Nixon, has written that Nixon once asked Kissinger to remember and record the similarities between him and Chou (793). Like Chou, Nixon wanted people to remember that 'he came up through adversity, performed best during crises, was tough, bold, willing to take chances, took the long view, was philosophical, worked without notes, was steely, subtle, almost gentle.'⁸ Unlike the steady and wise Chou we see and hear in the opera, however, Nixon was also famously insecure. These features we do sense in the action on stage, and they do resonate more deeply. After all, Adams and Goodman knew how this story continued in Nixon's desperate effort in the years after his resignation to rehabilitate himself, as he had done so many times before. Is that not at the core of the larger American story, a continuing story of dreams, disappointment, and re-imagination?

If there is a deeper sense of constancy in the opera, it is symbolized by Pat Nixon. As in the opera, Pat appeared to be with her husband through thick and thin. She hopes against hope for affirmation. In real life, who didn't puzzle over their relationship whenever we saw Pat on the television screen? Margaret MacMillan quotes Margaret Truman's depiction: 'They tried to love each other, but the gulf remained, a kind of black hole that sucked into it the good feelings that might have made Nixon a more human, more stable president' (270). MacMillan nevertheless concludes, 'That is seeing them from the outside, as most people did. Perhaps, in the end, all that can be said is that they had a working partnership and that it took more of a toll on Pat Nixon than it did on her husband' (270). For their part, Adams and Goodman depict her more fully as the quintessentially decent, hopeful, slightly naïve middle American – the opposite of the radical, bloodthirsty Chiang Ch'ing, who haughtily sings, 'I am the wife of Mao Tse-tung.' Pat would never have sung the equivalent. It was her silence and stoicism that spoke volumes, and well represent the American people surprised and perplexed by their post-1945 role on the global stage.

8 After the visit, Chou himself was not so complimentary. He reported to colleagues in China's Politburo that Nixon had 'eagerly presented himself like an over-dressed whore at China's door' (Black 729).

A less sympathetic character, certainly on the operatic stage, is Kissinger. He was an effective consigliere to Nixon, but the two obviously had a complicated relationship. How complicated we are still learning from the Nixon presidential tapes, especially from conversations in which Nixon's personal insecurities and anti-Semitism meet Kissinger's own personal insecurities and hunger for perpetual influence.⁹ Today, it is the wordless doubtfulness of Pat and the voluble assertiveness of Kissinger that neatly symbolize the conflicted soul of America. The wish to stay at home, far away from the world's troubles, and the necessity to engage with challenges abroad before they threaten American interests – these conflicting impulses interact at the core of the contemporary American imperium. And Adams and Goodman capture them well, as if through a Chinese mirror.

In the opera, the character we most admire is Chou. He is solid, stable, skeptical, knowing, pragmatic, and world-weary. We hear it all in his voice. But pay special attention to the first handshake between Nixon and Chou we witness in the opera. The actual event was certainly important to the real Nixon because he thought it was vital to the real Chou, and Adams and Goodman set it carefully and deliberately. It came eighteen years after what Chou reportedly took to be yet another in a long line of humiliations for China, when at the 1954 Geneva Conference on Korea and Indo-China the American secretary of state John Foster Dulles contemptuously refused to grasp his own outstretched hand. A despicable act, Chou apparently recalled long afterwards (Spence 525; Black 779).¹⁰ Nixon did see his own action as signalling an historic reversal. Nevertheless, it was Chou who did the hard and not always uplifting work of rapprochement on the Chinese side long before Nixon's arrival; working closely with Mao, and surviving, can hardly have been easy or morally unproblematic. In the end, Mao made the decision to welcome Nixon, but Chou had helped prepare the ground. It seems only right, then, that in the opera he is the one who makes the historical narrative speak to broader themes.

9 Mao is reported to have observed that Kissinger was 'just a funny little man; he is shuddering all over with nerves every time he comes to see me' (MacMillan 76).

10 The episode is well known and much recorded, although when Chou later called Dulles's behaviour at Geneva in 1954 'false, dirty,' he was mostly referring to larger political questions regarding US policy in Indochina. Chou never denied the refused handshake story, and Spence records that at the time he took the high road and shrugged it off. A friend of mine, however, a senior Chinese scholar of international relations, once explored the incident in depth and sought out the views of people who had been present in 1954. He found two direct 'witnesses,' who have since passed away. One said, 'It never happened.' The other said, 'It definitely happened; I saw it.' My friend lined up the one remaining potential corroborator. Alas, his death occurred before he managed to interview him. As far as the opera is concerned, whether it happened or not, it should have.

Chou helped China stand up and stay up, even when Mao was busy wreaking havoc. Chou's legacy seems well captured in the simple proposition that the Party still uses to bolster the legitimacy of its continuing rule: never again will the great Chinese people be humiliated (McGregor). But what does a nation do after recovering its dignity and its self-respect? As Goodman has Chou sing, the necessary question then becomes, 'how much of what we did was good?'

Is China's contemporary economic juggernaut sustainable? Is American finance capitalism, with flaws now made so evident by the crisis of 2008, itself sustainable? Are extractive elites the main beneficiaries of China's rise on both sides of the Pacific? Can those two systems, now so interdependent, long endure together? When the post-1945 American imperium seems less than robust, can the United States and China collaboratively and decisively address global problems requiring collective action that only they have the systemic power to instigate?

One evening during the 1972 summit, the visiting American delegation watched an exhibition of table tennis and gymnastics. 'Just superb,' Nixon told reporters afterwards, but in his diary that night, he echoed Napoleon's famous statement about the world-shaking impact of China's eventual revival. He wrote, 'Not only we but all people of the world will have to make our very best effort if we are to match the enormous ability, drive, and discipline of the Chinese people.' A good relationship with them is essential, and it will not develop automatically. 'Otherwise,' he went on, 'we will one day be confronted with the most formidable enemy that has ever existed in the history of the world' (Nixon 577). One way or another, China is already exercising decisive influence over the system that was well established when it last drifted into civil war and isolation. And even if that fact does not signify the ultimate decline of US power, the consequences of interventions from Vietnam to Afghanistan and Iraq hardly work in the opposite direction. With similar thoughts surely in mind, Goodman gives appropriate words to Chou near the conclusion of the opera: 'Everything seems to move beyond our remedy.'

MEMORY AND MEANING

An opera set in an historic political frame and restaged for a contemporary audience can only point to timely issues. That *Nixon in China* resonates today is partly because the complexity of Nixon's character still suggests the insecure, self-doubting, but hopeful systemic leadership of the United States itself. 'We came in peace for all mankind,' he asserts as the opera opens. The historically minded listener, unsuccessfully repressing mental images of violence in Indochina and central Asia, must be filled with a mixture of skepticism, irony, and perhaps a residual

measure of aspiration. Later, at the state dinner, Nixon concludes his toast almost pleadingly, 'The world watches and listens. We must seize the hour and seize the day.' Who can disagree?

An opera for the ages, though, must move beyond present concerns and peer more deeply into the human heart. This suggests that the durability of *Nixon in China* will rest ever more heavily on the character of Chou. He is the one who speaks most clearly for us, the audience, even today and even if we know little about China. Squarely confronting his own mortality, he senses the gulf between the reality of our daily lives and our longing for communal and individual redemption.¹¹ He is the one who reflects our doubts about the 'good' of our own lives. Near the beginning of the opera, he sings about 'a certain well-known tree, that grows from nothing in a day, lives only as a sapling, dies just at its prime, when good men raise it as their idol.' Later, at the very end, surely not thinking only of the summit meeting just concluded, he sings, 'I am old and I cannot sleep forever like the young, nor hope that death will be a novelty . . . Come heal this wound. At this hour nothing can be done.' But then, once more, he rallies himself, just as the real Chou quite obviously did throughout his long, dangerous, and complicated career. 'To work!' he proclaims. What more can the political successors of Chou and Nixon do? What more can any of us do?

WORKS CITED

- Black, Conrad. *The Invincible Quest: The Life of Richard Milhous Nixon*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart 2007
- Chandler, David P. *Brother Number One: A Political Biography of Pol Pot*. 2nd ed. Boulder, CO: Westview 1999
- Dikötter, Frank. *Mao's Great Famine*. New York: Walker Publishing 2010
- Goodman, Alice. *Libretto for Nixon in China*. New York: Hendon Music 1987
- Hitchens, Christopher. *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*. 2nd ed. New York: Verso Press 2002
- Kimball, Jeffrey. *The Vietnam War Files: Uncovering the Secret History of Nixon-Era Strategy*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas 2004
- Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. New York: Penguin 2011
- Levant, Victor. *Quiet Complicity: Canadian Involvement in the Vietnam War*. Toronto: Between the Lines 1986
- Logevall, Fredrik. *Embers of War*. New York: Random House 2012
- MacMillan, Margaret. *Nixon in China*. Toronto: Viking Canada 2006

¹¹ Chou's actual death was likely hastened by Mao, who, apparently not wanting Chou to outlast him, ordered a delay in the treatment of his diagnosed cancer of the bladder (MacMillan 318).

- Mann, James. *About Face: A History of America's Curious Relationship with China, from Nixon to Clinton*. 2nd ed. New York: Vintage 2000
- McGregor, Richard. *The Party*. New York: HarperCollins 2010
- McNamara, Robert, James Blight, Robert Brigham, et al. *Argument Without End: In Search of Answers to the Vietnam Tragedy*. New York: Public Affairs 1999
- Nixon, Richard. *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap 1978
- Shawcross, William. *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia*. New York: Simon and Schuster 1979
- Snyder, Timothy. *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*. New York: Basic Books 2010
- Spence, Jonathan D. *The Search for Modern China*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company 1999
- Taylor, Telford, et al. *Nuremberg and Vietnam*. Clark, NJ: Lawbook Exchange 2010