Constructing the U.S. Rapprochement with China, 1961–1974
From “Red Menace” to “Tacit Ally”

With Nixon’s historic reconciliation with China in 1972, Sino-American relations were restored, and China moved from being regarded as America’s most implacable enemy to being a friend and tacit ally. Existing accounts of the rapprochement focus on the shifting balance of power between the United States, China, and the Soviet Union, but in this book Goh argues that they cannot adequately explain the timing and policy choices related to Washington’s decisions for reconciliation with Beijing. Instead, she applies a more historically sensitive approach that privileges contending official American constructions of China’s identity and character. This book demonstrates that ideas of reconciliation with China were already being propagated and debated within official circles in the United States during the 1960s. It traces the related policy discourse and imagery, examining their continuities and evolution into the early 1970s and the ways in which they facilitated Nixon’s new policy. Furthermore, the book analyzes the implementation of the policy of rapprochement and demonstrates how the two sides constructed the basis for the new relationship based on friendly mutual images, shared interests, and common enemies. It reveals how, beginning in 1973, Nixon and Kissinger pursued the policy of supporting China as a “tacit ally” against the Soviet Union.

Evelyn Goh is Assistant Professor at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. She graduated with first-class honors in geography from Oxford University and also obtained an M.Phil. in environment and development from Cambridge University. In 2001, she completed a doctorate in international relations at Nuffield College, Oxford. Dr. Goh has been a Visiting Fellow at the East-West Center in Washington, D.C., where she received the 2004 Southeast Asian Fellowship. Her main research interests lie in the areas of U.S. foreign policy, U.S.–China relations, and Asia-Pacific security and international relations. She has published on the diplomatic history of U.S.–China relations, U.S. strategy in the Asia-Pacific region, the implications of 9/11 on U.S. power, and environmental security.
Constructing the U.S. Rapprochement with China, 1961–1974

From “Red Menace” to “Tacit Ally”

EVELYN GOH

Nanyang Technological University
Constructing the U.S. Rapprochement with China, 1961–1974

*From “Red Menace” to “Tacit Ally”*