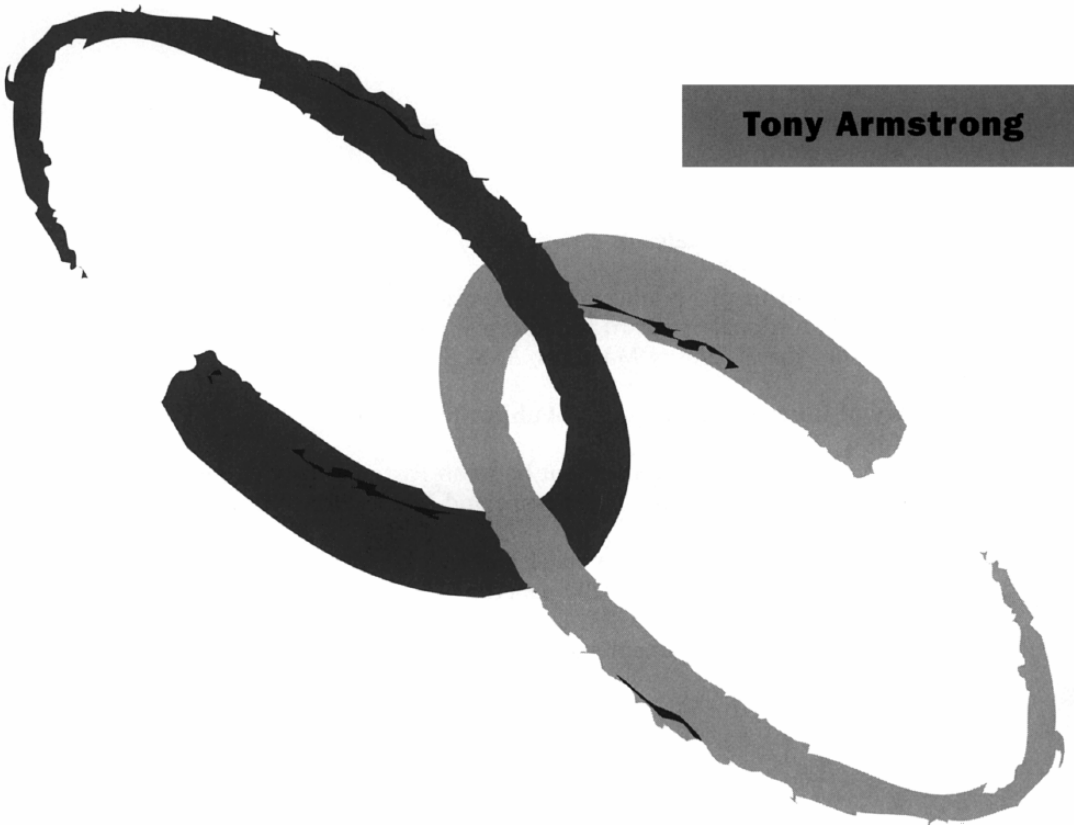


# BREAKING THE ICE

**RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN  
EAST AND WEST GERMANY  
THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA  
AND ISRAEL AND EGYPT**

**Tony Armstrong**



**United States Institute of Peace Press**

The views expressed in this book are those of the author alone. They do not necessarily reflect views of the United States Institute of Peace.

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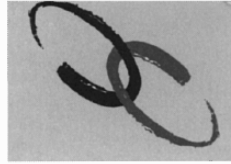
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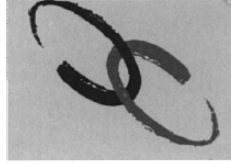
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## Foreword

"It is not enough just to be for peace," observed President Richard Nixon in 1971. "The point is, what can we do about it?" As this book details, Nixon obeyed his own injunction, translating the desire for better U.S. relations with the People's Republic of China into action and achievement. Other national leaders featured in this study—among them Willy Brandt, Jimmy Carter, Anwar Sadat, and Menachem Begin—likewise recognized that old enemies would not become new partners just because circumstances favored such transformations. Rapprochement, they understood, is a process, the success of which depends on the judicious application of careful planning, bold imagination, and dogged determination.

Surprisingly perhaps, that understanding does not seem to be shared by many historians and analysts of rapprochement. Commonsensical though Nixon's remark seems, few studies have been made of *how*—and not just *why*—old enemies relinquish hostility for cooperation. All too often, analyses have concentrated almost exclusively on the changing circumstances that inspired national leaders to seek some accommodation with long-standing adversaries; how that desire for rapprochement was translated into practice has received comparative neglect. Such neglect underestimates the formidable obstacles to rapprochement posed by distrust, fear, and anger. As Tony Armstrong points out in the introduction to this book: "Relationships marred by one or more wars, a high level of military tension, provocative propaganda, and policies reflecting deep-seated

animosity across a range of issues present barriers to cooperation that cannot simply be dismissed at will. . . . The conditions that lead to a desire to help construct a house of peace are essential, of course, but the tools and knowledge of housebuilding are necessary to fulfill the desire."

In *Breaking the Ice*, Armstrong sets his sights firmly on the process of rapprochement. By what means, he asks, did long-standing adversaries replace their mutual hostility with mutual cooperation? Why did earlier attempts at rapprochement fail while later initiatives succeeded? Do successful initiatives share certain common characteristics? In a three-part inquiry, Armstrong first analyzes which international circumstances are most conducive to the successful timing of a rapprochement initiative. Second, he explores which policies are most likely to produce success. And third, he assesses how best to conduct the formal negotiations that establish the conditions for normalized relations.

The study centers on three cases: Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik initiative, which resulted in 1972 in the Basic Treaty between East and West Germany; the diplomatic and political "minuet" by Presidents Nixon and Carter and their Chinese counterparts Mao Tse-tung and Deng Xiaoping, which led to the normalization of U.S.-Chinese relations in 1979; and the process of negotiation and reconciliation undertaken by Anwar Sadat, Menachem Begin, and Jimmy Carter, which culminated in the 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel.

For readers interested in learning more about one or more of these cases, Armstrong provides succinct and fascinating narratives of the moves and countermoves made by the involved parties. The stories he tells offer rich insights into both the national and the personal psyches and agendas of the key players. More than this, however, Armstrong reveals that there were often striking similarities in the ways that each of the rapprochements was achieved. By asking the same questions of each of the cases, the author arrives at a set of "principles of ice-breaking"—strategies and tactics that seem to have worked in quite different situations.

Among the many contributions this book makes to our understanding of the dynamics of politics and diplomacy, not the least interesting is that it demonstrates clearly that the Cold War was anything but a period of stasis and stagnation. Each of the rapprochements analyzed here occurred in the depths of the Cold War and each involved the active participation of at least one of

the superpowers. Clearly, the global bipolar stand-off between East and West did not preclude regional bilateral accommodations.

Perhaps the most important contribution *Breaking the Ice* makes—certainly, its most tantalizing conclusion—is to suggest that the principles of icebreaking distilled from an examination of the three Cold War cases may also apply in the post-Cold War world. Long-standing adversarial relationships are hardly a thing of the past: Israel and Syria, the United States and Cuba, North and South Korea, the list goes on and is likely to grow longer as old animosities reassert themselves amid the debris of the former Soviet bloc. If Armstrong is right, if the success of rapprochement depends on the use of particular strategies at particular times, then we should encourage old enemies to study the new approach presented in this book.

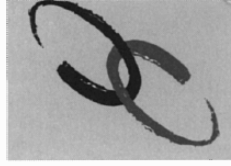
Tony Armstrong is a former Peace Scholar of the Jennings Randolph Fellowship Program of the United States Institute of Peace. The Institute is pleased to have supported the research that led to *Breaking the Ice*, the subject and ambition of which fit well with the Institute's mandate to promote study and discussion of the peaceful resolution of international conflict.

Samuel W. Lewis, President  
United States Institute of Peace

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