Chapter I

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In world politics, the People's Republic of China (hereafter referred to as China) plays a significant role due to its sheer size, population, resources and above all its monolithic system of government.\(^1\) Its importance has been further enhanced by the significant role it plays in the central strategic balance between the Super Powers. Since it obtained its legitimate representation at the United Nations in October 1971, it has, over the decades, further expanded its political status in international politics.

China's image as that of a "war-monger" and "exporter of revolution", largely depicted by the Westerners, had created apprehensions in the minds of many that the representation of People's Republic of China to the United Nations might lead to disruptive consequence for the world body. Such apprehensions had been belied by the subsequent events. Contrary to the widely held belief, China had shown a remarkable capacity to play real politik in the world body, while continuing its ideological rhetoric. Like any other country at the United Nations, Beijing vigorously pursues its national interest.

\(^1\)\text{Of late, this monolithic character had somewhat been loosen. Under Deng Xiaoping's leadership, China experienced some liberalization as corollary to its central task of four modernization programme. Yet its tolerance of open dissidence probably remains a remote possibility. The arrest of the students' leaders due to recent flare up of the students' movement in various parts of the country and dismissal of Hu Yaobang from the post of Secretary-General of the Communist Party of China shows the extent to which the present regime is willing to go along in democratization of its polity.}
It should be noted that Beijing, notwithstanding its ambition to play a global role, is still a regional power and its political and strategic interests are largely focused in Asia and around its immediate neighbourhood. As such, and by virtue of its being a power of significance in the Asian region, any conflict-situation in this part of the world has direct bearing on its national as well as security interests.

This study attempts to examine the extent to which China has made use of instrumentality of the United Nations to promote its national as well as larger interests and with what degree of success. To what extent has China's attitude towards the United Nations undergone a change after gaining entry in the world body? What impact or difference, if any, has China's membership made on the functioning of the United Nations? What role has it played in major conflict-situations in Asia? To what extent its role and stance in the conflict-situations has been in conformity with the principles and the purposes of the UN Charter? What factors determine its stand and role in various conflict-situations? To what extent Beijing's political ideology has motivated its actions, inactions and interactions at the United Nations?

These and related questions are the subject of this study.
Although the study is set within the framework of the United Nations, China's bilateral and multilateral relations are also taken into account, as and where necessary. It facilitates the comparability between Beijing's policy pronouncement at the United Nations and policy performance in international arena.

First, the attempt has been made to provide background to the study. It discusses China's role during the formation of the United Nations, how it acquired permanent membership to the Security Council and the development leading to denial of its representation once the Communist forces took over the governance of China mainland in 1949. It also discusses in brief China's foreign policy objectives and the general strategic environment within which its foreign policy operated. Further, it deals with China's changing attitudes towards the United Nations, while being kept out of the world organization until 1971.

The subsequent chapters deal with China's interactions and role in major conflict-situations in Asia that had confronted the world forum since it joined the United Nations. China's stance has been determined to a large extent, by its bilateral relations with the conflicting nations and the strategic environment within which the conflict-situations evolved over a span of time. As such attempt has been made to provide appropriate background for each conflict-situation discussed to place the subsequent developments in proper perspective.
This study covers the period from 1971 to 1982. However, major developments subsequent to the period have also been taken into account.

The final chapter of the study provides an overall assessment of China's role in the United Nations.