Chapter II

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When World War II was going on, the principal ally Powers had worked out plans for a post-war international organization to safeguard the succeeding generation from the scourge of a similar holocaust. Their strategic interest converged on a framework which envisaged an extension of the war-time alliance between the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union. The three powers "saw themselves as a consortium who would rule the world for the foreseeable future suppressing indefinitely the enemy nations of Germany and Japan." To these three, were added France (on the insistence of the United Kingdom) and China (on the insistence of the United States).¹

China and the Making of the United Nations

When plans for setting up an international organization -- which was subsequently named as the United Nations -- were being worked out, Chiang Kai-shek's government was also a participant in some of the diplomatic parleys. However, China, engulfed in civil war and a long drawn-out war with Japan, was in no position

to play any effective role in the making of the United Nations. Nonetheless, President Franklin Roosevelt of the United States perceived China as a bulwark against Japanese expansionism and an important ally to serve the US strategic interest in the Far East. Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour had added a new dimension to China's strategic importance in the security perceptions of the United States. Roosevelt wanted China to play an active role in the war efforts and also in the planning of a post-war world organization. He also envisaged China as one of the four major powers. The Soviet Union, initially, did not approve of US elevation of China to the status of a big power, partly because of its apprehension in regard to the effect on its relations with Japan and also because of its reluctance to support the nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek. However, the Soviet Union at the Yalta Conference (February 1945) concurred along with the United States and the United Kingdom to make China a veto wielding member of the United Nations.

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3 The Soviet Union excused itself, on the pretext of its Neutrality Pact with Japan, from involving in any war-time effort of post-war policy formulation in which China participated. This necessitated two phases of Dambarton Oak Conference. See, for details, Russell, n.1, pp.411-16.

4 See, Russell, n.1, p.533.
The Soviet Union's endorsement to this effect was followed by the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Alliance and Friendship, which, not unexpectedly, led to a phase of bitter relations.

On the other hand, the smouldering Nationalist-Communist conflict burst into a full scale civil war as the World War came to close. It was further aggravated when developments in China became a part of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union whose war-time alliance had fallen apart. With the Soviet support, the Chinese communists' hostility towards the Nationalist Government acquired a new dimension. By January 1947, the United States, which till then was trying to mediate between various factions to form a unified democratic government under Chiang Kai-shek, gave up its mediatory efforts and increased its support to the Nationalist Government. These extraneous factors along with other reasons, exacerbated the conflict which eventually forced the Nationalist Government to flee from mainland China to Formosa (Taiwan), the last refuge of the Chiang Kai-shek regime.

It was a great blow to US strategy in the Far East. While not willing to enter into military adventurism in China, the United States put all efforts to isolate the new Communist regime which it regarded as a satellite of Moscow. It

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apprehended that a veto wielding Communist China in the United Nations would hurt the US interest and, therefore, directed its efforts to deny Communist China's representation to the United Nations and this for more than two decades. During the period (1949-71), the ousted Chiang Kai-shek's regime (Taiwan) continued to occupy China's seat at the United Nations.

The propaganda unleashed by the media and the Western governments led by the United States, was that the new regime in Beijing did not believe in Charter principles and that it was not a peace loving state and that developments in China reflected the Communist conspiracy to enslave the free world.

It would be pertinent here to recapitulate China's (henceforth new regime in Beijing will be referred to as China) foreign policy objectives and performance in international relations for the bygone years, to review briefly the evolution of Chinese attitudes towards the United Nations and also to recall the strategic significance of Asia in the security perception of China.

**Policy Objectives and Changing Environment**

Like any other regime which gained power after a protracted struggle, the immediate objectives of China were
to safeguard its national integrity, state sovereignty and above all to gain wider international recognition.⁶

On 1 October 1949, Zhou En-lai issued a declaration inviting all countries to establish diplomatic relations with the new government on the basis of "equality, mutual benefit and mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty."⁷ Simultaneously, its quest for a membership to the United Nations also received the highest priority, because it symbolizes as a badge of sovereignty and legitimatizes the government and its status as a Great Power. That is why immediately after its inception, Premier Zhou En-lai had sent a telegram to UN Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly repudiating the delegation of Nationalist China.⁸

Meanwhile, in the bipolarized world, national interests and ideological affinity had driven Mao Zedong to "lean to the side" of the Soviet Union.⁹ It hoped to achieve not only

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⁷Cited in Werner Levi, Modern China's Foreign Policy (Minneapolis, 1952), p.273.

⁸UN Doc.A/1123, 18 November 1949.

national security under the shield of Soviet alliance, which was a paramount factor, but also to grow relatively strong with Soviet economic and military aid. Therefore, the signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance in February 1950 with the Soviet Union, gave encouragement to its attempt to clear its flanks of the influence of hostile power by way of sending the People's Liberation Army to Tibet, involvement in Korean war, and support to the Ho Chi Minh forces in Indochina. These developments strengthened the US perception that the new regime at Beijing was "an alien outpost of a worldwide communist conspiracy led by the Soviet Union." It gave impetus to the US policy of isolating and denying the UN seat to China. Further, the United States entered into a series of bilateral and multilateral security treaties with the non-

10 The Chinese and Russian agreed that if either were "attacked by Japan or any state allied with it" (i.e., the United States), the other would "immediately render military and other assistance by all means at its disposal." See, Sino-Soviet Treaty and Agreements (Peking, 1951), pp.5-8.


communist states in the Chinese periphery, in line with the Truman doctrine, to contain communist influence in Asia.15

China's concern over these developments was further heightened as the Soviet Union, its ally, was not only reluctant to support the Chinese policy of challenging US containment in Asia but also appeared to be opting for a policy of accommodation towards the United States in its effort to relax the Cold War tension.16 These developments created apprehensions for China regarding Soviet strategic interest and its credibility as an ally.

Beijing adjusted to the changing environment by adopting moderate and flexible foreign policy strategies. It obliged Beijing to re-evaluate its relations with the newly independent nations of Asia, which hitherto, had been perceived, in line with Stalin's two camp view of international relation, as agents of Western imperialism.17 Accordingly, China went ahead in cultivating a friendship with these countries on the principle of peaceful coexistence in a bid to break through the


16 See, for details, Barnett, ibid., pp.34-37.

17 Mo, n.9, pp.415-16.
US imposed encirclement and isolationism. China made conscientious efforts to dispel its hawkish image, especially among its Asian neighbours, played down its support to the communist movements in the Third World in an attempt to cultivate diplomatic relations irrespective of their social and political systems. The climax of such a policy occurred at the Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian nations in 1955, at which Zhou Enlai went out of the way to project a new and conciliatory image of China. Besides conventional diplomacy, Beijing also adopted cultural exchange, trade and foreign aid as an important and integral component of its policy.

These endeavours greatly contributed to the recognition of Beijing's regime by many Afro-Asian nations, and dissuaded many countries from joining Western initiated treaties and also enhanced China's international stature. Its diplomatic breakthrough at the Bandung Conference along with its high profile role in Geneva Conference succeeded remarkably in forcing the other Powers of the central balance to accept China as an equal-partner on all important international decisions regarding the future of its Asian neighbours. Beijing expected these


19 For further details, see, ibid., pp.67-69.

diplomatic manoeuvres to facilitate the formation of a coalition which would gradually erode US power in Asia and establish the legitimacy of Chinese interests and objectives in the area. Its diplomatic initiatives demonstrated China's independence from the Soviet Union as well as its capacity to thwart the American policy of containment. Its initial success gave an impetus to its aspiration to acquire a leadership role among the Afro-Asian nations.\textsuperscript{21}  

However, the "Bandung phase" turned out to be a short-lived affair, as by 1958, Beijing had once again shifted its strategy and begun a much more militant policy in internal as well as external affairs. The Chinese leaders appeared to have become disappointed with "the bourgeois" nature of nationalist revolution. It was in favour of the proletariat, through communist parties, having a firm hegemonial control over the nationalist revolution.\textsuperscript{22} It resulted in alienating many of its former Third World friends. On the other hand, Sino-Soviet relations further deteriorated with differences in perception about the potentiality of newly acquired Soviet power in nuclear technology. The Soviet Union's concept of liberation


without war, peaceful transition to "socialism", its move towards détente and disarmament negotiation with the United States further exacerbated Beijing's apprehension of the reliability of Soviet strategic protection.\textsuperscript{23}

The escalation of Sino-Soviet differences was accompanied by the competition of influence in the Afro-Asian countries which manifested itself in the form of the breaking up of communist parties in these countries and the Sino-Indian war of 1962.\textsuperscript{24} It also impelled China to propagate a new international united front with the ostensible conviction that the focus of the United States attack had been shifted to the vast intermediate countries, lying between the two Super Powers.\textsuperscript{25} The strategy of the front inevitably required China to extend its involvement beyond Asia to include the first intermediate zone consisting of all the developing nations and the second intermediate consisting of all the developed countries. Beijing was willing to assume a leadership role to give militant direction to such a front.\textsuperscript{26} In fact, it is stated that

\textsuperscript{23}Yahuda, n.18, pp.95-114; see also Harold C.Hinton, \textit{China's Turbulent Quest} (London, 1970), pp.96-102.

\textsuperscript{24}Barnett, n.15, p.45.


China anticipated the acquisition of a power status equal to that of the Soviet Union and the United States through the leadership of such a front.\textsuperscript{27} Commensurate with this strategy, China also abandoned the Soviet development model and initiated the Great Leap Forward and Communes programme in a bid to set a model for all the developing countries.\textsuperscript{28}

However, China received major setbacks to its programme as response by the Third World to its perception of world situation was cold. Further, the Great Leap Forward had become in actuality the Great Leap Backward, leaving China in the grip of a major economic crisis. These misfired policies along with its apprehension of Super Power collusion for the domination of the world, eroded whatever residual interests Beijing had in its strategic cooperation with the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{29} In fact it castigated the Soviet Union as "revisionist" and made persistent attempts to secure the exclusion/expulsion of the Soviet Union from various anti-colonial and left front organization in Afro-Asian countries. In the process, the Chinese sought to present themselves as the true champion of Afro-Asian interest and made a determined effort to supplant Soviet influence in these regions. China brought forth even the racial issue by calling

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., p.193.
the people to "revolt against white domination of the world." It went to the extent of advocating nuclear proliferation to reap political advantage over the Super Powers by projecting itself as champion of non-nuclear states for their rights to develop nuclear technology. Subsequently, it sought to form an alternative international forum, being frustrated with its attempt to secure the UN seat, to enable it to play its due role in world politics. These strategies and policy formulations were manifested in its push for the second Afro-Asian Conference. Its enthusiasm for this conference, despite various hurdles and its insistence on the exclusion of the Soviet Union and the UN representative, proved to be a great diplomatic blunder. As such, Beijing's relations with several of the Asian states had already begun spiralling downwards because of China's domestic radicalism, Chinese harsh suppression of the national uprising in Tibet in 1959, and Beijing's subsequent border war with India. These incidents reinforced misgivings among the Third World of Chinese intentions.

30 Cited in Dutt, n.26, p.311.


Its failure in all these designs was ensued by its famous or infamous Cultural Revolution during which Beijing's foreign policy was frozen in a sterile posture of ideological militancy and hostility to nearly everyone. Its provocative diplomatic behaviour, particularly during 1967 and early 1968 severely weakened China's international stature. Above all, China perceived that there was some "collusion between Moscow and Washington" to contain and isolate Beijing. It resulted in a markedly more uncompromising approach toward both the Super Powers.

However, the transition from revolutionary chaos to pragmatic reconstruction started in late 1968 with the ascent of moderate elements in China's power struggle. It was synchronized by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia on 20 August 1968 and the formulation of the Brezhnev doctrine of "limited sovereignty". The latter created apprehension among the Beijing leaders that Moscow might use its overwhelming military superiority in order to pressure and even invade mainland

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China on the pretext of preserving socialism in Beijing. Moscow’s proposal of Asian "Collective Security system" and the regional economic cooperation had been viewed by China as "nothing but a trap for setting up a military ring of encirclement against Beijing and for political control and economic plunder of Asian countries." These led Beijing to give the Soviets the new designation of "social imperialist" which ranks it with the United States as a leading oppressor state. Its vulnerability was further stocked with the Soviet military built-up along their common frontier in October and the increasing frequency of border clashes. Thereafter, it perceived that the main threat to its security emanated from the Soviet Union and its strategic calculations had been centered around the building of an anti-Soviet united front. It also followed a policy of rapprochement with the


United States with a hope of acquiring effective deterrence to Soviet threat. Theoretically, China still considered both the Super Powers as adversaries but it had explicitly declared that the Soviet Union "which flaunts the label of socialism is especially vicious."

The Question of Representation

The question of Chinese representation arose because the Western bloc headed by the United States was not ready to recognize the new regime at Beijing. On the other hand, China struck to its claim of a seat at the United Nations. On 18 November 1949, Zhou Enlie sent a telegram to Secretary-General Trygve Lie and the President of the General Assembly repudiating the delegation of the Chinese Nationalists, and two months later he informed the United Nations that he had designated Chang Wentien as "Chairman of the Delegation of the People's Republic of China... to participate in the work of the United Nations..." The subsequent tussle over the

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40 *Peking Review*, vol.17, no.16, 19 April 1974, p.6.

41 UN Doc.A/1123, 21 November 1949 and also S/1462, 24 February 1950.
issue intensified the tension within the United Nations. It remained as a nagging issue in international politics for two decades and threatened the very fabric of the world organization.

The crux of the matter was that there were two contending governments claiming to represent the same state. There were no guidelines in the Charter, unlike the question of admission, in respect to "representation" of government when the nature of a regime within a state changes. A distinguished international lawyer, Clyde Egleton, rightly pointed out that the question of Chinese representation "is not a question for a court to answer." As the discussion on the issue both at the Security Council and the General Assembly was highly politicized, no concrete plan of action emerged. The only action was the formation of a committee by the General Assembly resolution on 26 October 1950 to go into the matter. The resolution further recommended that the attitude adopted by the General Assembly concerning any such question should be "taken into account" in other organs of the United Nations and the specialised agencies. Since the report of the Committee was inconclusive, the United


43 General Assembly Resolution, 490(V), 26 October 1950.
Nations failed to establish guidelines pertaining to this issue. Hence, from 1951 to 1953, the General Assembly approved the United States proposal to postpone the question and from 1954 to 1960, it concorded to US proposal "not to consider" any move to seat China or expel the Nationalists.

By 1961, with the expansion of membership to the United Nations and an increasingly close vote between for and against on the Soviet draft resolution, the countries opposing a change in representation adopted a different delaying device. The United States introduced a resolution to the effect that the issue was an "important question". The consequence of such a manoeuvre was that no decision on the main question could be taken unless it received the support of two thirds of the members present and voting. The "two Chinas" proposal to end the deadlock was also opposed by both the governments on various grounds. Thus till 1970, the Republic of China (Nationalists) continued to occupy China's seat at the United Nations.

Changing Attitude towards the United Nations

The positive attitude of the Chinese Communist Party

44 UN Doc. A/1578, 1 December 1950.
towards the United Nations can be traced as far back as 1945 when the party not only appointed its own representative on the China's delegation to the San Francisco Conference but Mao Zedong himself came forth to herald the ideal of United Nations. No wonder Beijing initially maintained a positive and optimistic attitude towards the United Nations and made persistent attempts to gain its seat.

Although there were some accusations of US domination in the United Nations, basically Beijing saw a membership in the Organization as an important means to gain world recognition of its legitimacy, a new power status and a useful battle ground for the Communist states to struggle against the "imperialists" led by the United States. Its optimistic view of gaining the seat was due to the fact that the international environment was not altogether unfavourable to China's bid for its seat in the United Nations. The prospects of seating Beijing appeared to be bright as five of the eleven members of the Security Council had already extended recognition to the new regime at Beijing. Even the US delegate, Ernest Gross, though strongly opposed to any change in representation, declared that "the

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US government considers that the Soviet draft resolution presents to the Council a procedural question involving the credentials of a representative of a member. Accordingly, a vote against the motion... could not be considered as a veto ... My Government will accept the decision of the Security Council on this matter when made by an affirmative vote of seven members." 49 It should also be recalled that Secretary-General Trygve Lie's special memorandum on legal aspects of the problem of representation in the United Nations strongly supported Beijing's position. 50 Although, a Soviet draft resolution calling for acceptance of Beijing's credential was defeated on 13 January 1950, China persisted with its endeavour to gain its seat at the United Nations.

After the outbreak of the Korean war and especially after Chinese intervention in it, international support in favour of China's representation rapidly slackened. In fact, this was the period when the United States enunciated its policy of isolating China. These developments necessitated China to deal with the


United Nations and in the process made it rethink its approach towards the United Nations.

Soon after the United Nations intervention in Korea, Beijing's official statements began to make a technical distinction between the United Nations of the Charter and the United Nations under US control. Beijing sought and supported the former, but the latter was denounced as an instrument of US "imperialism". It further contended that without its participation, it would be impossible to settle any major internal questions, above all the questions of Asia. It also declared that all decisions made by the United Nations without China's participation were "illegal, and consequently null and void." It insisted the United Nations to restore China's seat. Its lingering faith in the United Nations can be deduced from its attempt to work through the United Nations system by lodging a formal complaint with the Security Council on US aggression over Taiwan and demanding "severe sanctions" against the United States.

However, a series of events worked against China's interest such as the Security Council rejection of the Soviet proposal to

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51 See Weng, ibid., p.681; see also Mostafa, n.49, p.827.
52 See Weng, n.47, p.84.
invite the representative of Beijing to participate in the Korean debate, the Chinese "volunteers" involvement in Korean war in fighting against the UN forces under the command of the US military personnel. In fact, the event made China to charge that "by their (US) criminal aggressive action in Korea, they have made the UN flag a rag to hide their shame." The most frustrating experience was probably Beijing's effort to work through the UN system to condemn the United States for its alleged "armed aggression" in Taiwan. In its place, China itself got branded as an "aggressor" by a resolution of the General Assembly. The international environment too was cold to China compared to the earlier years. Further, the United States government openly campaigned to prevent the seating of Beijing in the United Nations.

These developments along with its disenchantment with Soviet friendship (due to the lack of actual Soviet backing in the Korean war and the Soviet's inaction on the Taiwan Strait crisis) necessitated Beijing to review the whole spectrum of foreign policy. It facilitated Beijing's surrogation to itself as a champion and a leader of the newly

54 See for details in Whiting, n.12, pp.116-50.

55 Cited in Mostafa, n.49, p.927.

56 General Assembly Resolution 498(V), 1 February 1951.
independent developing countries. The Bandung Conference of 1955 served its purpose well in promoting a good rapport with Afro-Asian nations. In fact, an increasing number of these nations accorded recognition to China after the conference. The expansion of the UN membership with the admission of these nations also kindled Beijing's expectation of transforming the United Nations into a more balanced organ. Therefore, Beijing's new approach was to wait for the United Nations to transform and when such an eventuality occurs, it hoped that the UN itself would invite it in. 57 During this period, the UN Charter had been cited with approval in a number of bilateral friendship treaties concluded by China with a number of nations such as USSR (1950); East Germany (1955), Czechoslovakia (1957), Hungary (1959), and Afghanistan (1960).

Its policy of "work and wait" for the transformation of the United Nations worked according to its expectation as the increase of Afro-Asian members to the United Nations, led to lesser and lesser support for the moratorium against changing representation of China in the United Nations. 58 However, the United States' "new trick" changed the course of the event. In December 1961, the United States succeeded in changing the

57 Weng, n.47, p.95.

58 See Appendix.
issue of Chinese representation from a procedural matter, requiring a simple majority, to a substantive question, requiring two-thirds majority in the General Assembly. 59 A strong reaction to it came in the form of a statement issued by China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in which it "solemnly" declared that the resolution "which tramples upon the UN Charter and infringes China's sovereignty is completely illegal and null and void."60

After the resolution crushed its hope of taking over China's seat, Beijing's attitude towards the United Nations turned negative. It launched uncompromising attacks against the United Nations. There was a realization on the part of Beijing's leaders that a seat in the United Nations even with the "veto" power would not add much to Beijing's already acquired power-status. On the contrary, it felt that its very membership would restrict its freedom of action. 61 Thus Beijing found it attractive to search for a substitute for the United Nations in which China would be in a dominant position. Therefore, it stepped up its efforts to win the support of


60 Cited in Weng, n.50, pp.693-94.

Afro-Asian and Latin American nations. Beside the establishment of relations in terms of cultural exchange, trade and aid, there was frequent exchange of delegations. Its morale was further boosted with the withdrawal of Indonesia from the United Nations. Chairman Liu Shao-chi expressed great appreciation of President Sukarno's statement that "the crown of independence of a country does not lie in membership of the United Nations, but in self-reliance." Chen Yi called the Indonesian move "a lofty and just revolutionary move" and "the first spring thunderbolt of 1965 which resounded throughout the world," which "shocked and dismayed" the "imperialists", but "inspired and brought joy to all countries and peoples fighting imperialism and colonialism to safeguard their national dignity." The government statement of 10 January said:

The United Nations is no means sacred and inviolable. We can live on very well without it... President Sukarno has kicked the backside of this tiger. This is a great help in ending the blind faith to the United Nations. (65)

62 Weng, n.47, p.262.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid., pp.5-6.
By roundly condemning the United Nations, China was endeavouring to draw Asian, African and Latin American countries to pave the way for a substitute for the United Nations. Premier Zhou Enlai introducing the theme that the United Nations should be remoulded, declared:

The United Nations has committed too many mistakes. It has utterly disappointed the Asian and African countries. It must correct its mistakes. It must be thoroughly reorganized... In these circumstances, another United Nations, a revolutionary one, may well be set up so that rival dramas may be staged in competition with that body which calls itself the United Nations but which is under the manipulation of United States imperialism and therefore can only make mischief and do nothing good. (66)

Its push for the Second Afro-Asian Conference was obviously a major attempt towards the setting up of "a revolutionary United Nations." However, its enthusiasm for the Conference, its persistent opposition to the participation of the UN Secretary-General and the Soviet Union created misgivings of Chinese intention among the Third World countries. Ironically, despite Beijing's continued attacks on the United Nations, the voting at the twentieth session of the General Assembly on the issue for the first time received a favourable vote of 47 to 47 ties. (68)

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66 Ibid., no.5, 29 January 1965, pp.5-6.
67 See Yahuda, n.18, p.161.
With the onset of the Great Cultural Revolution, the United Nations was one of the main targets of abuse in Beijing's propaganda. It further increased the conditions of its acceptance of UN membership. All these led to the reversal in voting on the question of Chinese representation in 1966. In a comment on the disappointing results of the vote on the question at the twenty second session of the General Assembly, China declared:

Speaking frankly, the Chinese people are not at all interested in sitting in the United Nations, a body manipulated by the United States, a place for playing power politics, a stock exchange for the United States, and the Soviet Union, to strike political bargains and an organ to serve the US policy of aggression and war. (70)

The culmination of China's Cultural Revolution coincided with the beginning of a pragmatic foreign policy which was formulated at the Ninth Party Congress. China now gave top priority to the early entry in the United Nations and the machinery of conciliatory diplomacy was put into operation to

69 Some of conditions were that: the United Nations must be freed from the control of the major powers; the resolution condemning China for aggression in Korea must be rescinded and the United States condemned as an aggressor; the Charter must be reviewed and faults in the organization corrected; all independent States should be included in the United Nations; the Chiang Kai-Shek clique and other imperialist puppets should be expelled. See, Peking Review, vol.8, no. 41, 8 October 1965, pp.11-12.

win the necessary support. It demonstrated an extraordinary degree of flexibility and moderation by extending the limited normalization towards former enemies such as the United States, Japan and Yugoslavia. Meanwhile, world public opinion had persistently expressed itself in favour of China's representation in the United Nations. UN Secretary-General, U.Thant, during the course of a speech on 26 June 1970 to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the signing of the Charter at San Francisco, made a strong plea "for the early involvement of China in the activities of the world organization." He said that China was "a key element" if efforts were to be made to solve the many problems facing the world and its "absence" had given the United Nations "a great deal of artificiality." 71 The United States also realized that China would be admitted to the United Nations by 1971 in spite of its opposition. Therefore, it felt the need to modify its policy towards Beijing. Nevertheless, it tried till the end, to save the Republic of China (Nationalist). 72 On 25 October 1971, the historic resolution which admitted China and expelled the Chinese Nationalist government from the United Nations was adopted by a vote of

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76 in favour to 35 against with 17 abstentions. 73 This brought to an end one of the most controversial issues of the United Nations.

Joining the United Nations

Widely divergent view were expressed about the likely repercussions of the entry of China into the United Nations. There were warnings of disruptive and disastrous consequences of Beijing's participation in the United Nations. 74 Some of the critics drew attention to Beijing's opposition to virtually all UN actions for the maintenance of international peace and security; and also its deprecation of UN attempts at economic and social cooperation. 75 They were of the opinion that

73 The General Assembly Resolution 2758 (XXVI) of 25 October 1971. Its operative paragraph reads:

Decides to restore all its rights to the People's Republic of China and to recognize the representatives of its Government as legitimate representatives of China to the United Nations, and to expel forthwith the representatives of Chiang Kai-Shek from the place which they unlawfully occupy at the United Nations and in all the organizations related to it.


Beijing's hostility towards the United Nations was the manifestation of the fact that the United Nations and China were two incompatible systems, i.e., the principles and purposes of the United Nations contradicted those of the foreign policy of China. According to these critics, it followed that Beijing, if allowed to enter the United Nations, would either destroy the United Nations or endanger its own identity. 76

On the other hand, there were romantic revolutionaries who expected China to bring about revolutionary changes once it gained its "rightful" seat in the United Nations. They were of the opinion that Beijing's presence in the United Nations was bound to change the manner of its functioning, if not its character. They hoped that China would be able to equalize the opportunities and initiatives of all the members, irrespective of their size and potentialities. The high expectation was largely due to Beijing's ability "to gain widespread acceptance of its claim to be a far more revolutionary power than the Soviet Union." 77

However, in actual practice, China disappointed both these extreme views. The composition of its first delegation to the United Nations indicated that the Chinese delegation

76 See, Lincoln P. Bloomfield, n.61, pp.660-65.

77 Harold Hinton, n.6, p.280.
had not come to the United Nations to destroy or disrupt its proceedings. The fact that it consisted of Beijing's senior and experienced diplomats was the overt gesture of its seriousness of business at the United Nations.\(^7\) Obviously, aimed to undo the projected image of a reckless bull, Zhou En-lai candidly said, "we have not yet made adequate preparations... We do not have too much knowledge about the United Nations and are not too conversant with the new situation which has arisen in the United Nations. We must not be indiscreet and haphazard."\(^8\) Even in some of the main committees in which it participated, its representative stated that it would be a "period of learning" for them as they were not yet familiar with the UN procedures.\(^9\) Thus, instead of high profile posture of a revolutionary challenger, China assumed "the low-profile posture of a diligent apprentice who was preoccupied in learning a new trade..."\(^10\)

The running theme of its foreign policy at the United Nations, in the initial stage, was its attack on both the Super Powers for the domination of the international system.

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\(^7\) For the list of members in the delegate see, *Peking Review*, vol.14, no.45, 5 November 1971, p.7.


It identified itself with the Third World by evoking common historical experiences and similarity of their present tasks at hand.\textsuperscript{82} It also tried to draw the second intermediate, consisting of developed countries, to its side in their common effort to "shake off foreign domination and control."\textsuperscript{83} Its spokesmen repeatedly stated that it would not be a Super Power.\textsuperscript{84}

Notwithstanding this protestation and its emphatic identification with the Third World, China did not hesitate to accept all the privileges accorded to the five Big Powers in the United Nations such as veto power at the Security Council, membership in the elective bodies of the United Nations (according to Gentlemen's Agreement of 1946).\textsuperscript{85} The inherent contradiction between its "principled stand" of never to act as Super Power and its privilege of veto power in the Security Council became more glaring and put China in an awkward situation.\textsuperscript{86} Beijing, however, tried to minimize and to some extent got over this contradiction by adopting


\textsuperscript{83}GAO\textit{R}, 6th Special Session, 2209th Plen.mtg., 10 April 1974, p.15.

\textsuperscript{84}GAO\textit{R}, n.82, p.19; GAO\textit{R}, 6th Special Session, 2209th plen.mtg., 10 April 1974, p.19.

\textsuperscript{85}See for the list of such bodies to which China joined, Kim, n.74, p.113.

\textsuperscript{86}For detail, see, Kim, n.74, pp.201-13.
tactical postures. It rarely exercised its veto and opted instead for a voting method of "non-participation" which proved to be a useful device in overcoming the inherent contradiction. 87

Behind the ideological rhetorics and militant revolutionary appeal, Beijing vigorously pursued its national interests and participated in the games of power politics, like any other nation at the United Nations.

Although China's aspiration seems to restore China to a position of equality with all the Great Powers in the world, its vital area of concern is Asia as whatever happens in this region has direct bearing on its national and security interests.

Its policy towards Asia has been oriented to promote a balance of influence favourable to Beijing and prevent any hostile power from gaining bases in, access to or control of its neighbourhood from which it could threaten China itself. Besides its security perspective, this policy has been propelled by its unalterable objective of acquiring predominate position in Asia. The subsequent chapters on China's action in and reaction to various conflict-situations in Asia at the United Nations would manifest these policy objectives and the strategies it adopted.

87Kim, n.74, pp.209-10.