Chapter V

SINO-AMERICAN APPROACHMENT, 1971-73
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SINO-AMERICAN RAPPROCHEMENT, 1971-73

1. An Alternative Explanation

Sino-American rapprochement has been explained by most writers as the outcome of the Sino-Soviet conflict. There has also been a tendency to place undue emphasis on the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in August 1968 as the time when Mao, fearful of the Soviet Union, looked to the Americans for help. In Mao's perception, it is argued, 1963 was the turning point "at which decisive changes began to occur in the balance of world forces". In our view, the key explanation for Sino-American rapprochement lies in the changes in the world balance of power. The development of multipolarity influenced the changing course of Sino-American relations. This change in the balance of power brought about changes in the perceptions of decision-makers in both China and the United States, towards each other and towards the world in general. Changes also occurred in other countries and areas affecting Sino-US relations indirectly, but decisively.

Once the international balance of power is taken as the key explanation of Sino-American rapprochement, it will be advantageous in three respects: first, in seeking to explain Sino-American rapprochement, we look to the major forces which shaped the course of relations instead of any single event, i.e., the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, which apparently

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decisively initiated the process of Sino-US rapprochement. In fact, this event was the manifestation of the changes in the balance of power in the world rather than one which initiated major changes. Secondly, by overcoming the undue importance attached to the Sino-Soviet dispute in explaining Chinese foreign policy, we can place Sino-American relations in proper perspective. It would be insufficient to look to Sino-Soviet dispute as an independent variable in explaining the rationale of Sino-American rapprochement. Once it is linked to other major developments in the world such as the growth of new power centres in the world, it is possible to overcome the anomalies of a single-factor explanation. Thirdly, we view the process of change in the world balance of power as that of Sino-US relations originating in the mid sixties, and as the outcome of the Vietnam war. The US setbacks in Vietnam initiated major changes in the balance of power in the world. The Americans also started rethinking on China as a consequence thereof. The debates in the US Senate in 1966 on China had a major affect on America's perceptions of China which paved the way for Sino-US rapprochement.

Again, it is argued that Mao's decision to improve relations with the USA was taken in the period between the cancellation of the session of Warsaw talks in May and the interview given by Chairman Mao to Edgar Snow in December 1970, and most probably at the Second Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in August 1970. While without

2 Ibid., p. 317.
disputing that foreign policy issues were considered seriously around this time, we must argue as to why such debates took place. We know that Mao had taken a relaxed view of the danger the United States posed as early as 1965. This posture helped change of policy afterwards, and thus is significant. Again, it is quite probable that the Chinese leadership must have noticed US trouble in Vietnam, and its possible impact.

In our view, the interaction of two interdependent factors brought about a limited rapprochement in Sino-American relations. The crucial factor, as noted earlier, was changes in the balance of power in the world. The internal developments largely in China and to a lesser extent in the USA also facilitated the process of rapprochement. We, therefore, consider it as a secondary factor.

As a broad analytical category, we have taken the changes in the world balance of power as the key explanation. We also disagree with the view that major changes in Sino-US relations occurred only after 1968. Facts show the contrary. As early as 1966, the Senate hearings on US China policy helped in changing perceptions towards China. The Chinese took note of the debates, though expressed critically in a public statement. In 1967, Nixon wrote an article in Foreign Affairs magazine pleading for a change in policy. As for China, Mao himself de-emphasized the danger posed by the United States. It is evident from a van suil document which came to light in 1973. Mao while stressing the importance of "three-line construction" said that by the time it was complete "we won't be afraid if war breaks
out". He said that before they were completed, China could
tackle the situation with the help of conventional weapons.
Thus, it is apparent that the American danger was no longer
important in his mind. All these events affected Sino-US rela-
tions and paved the way for rapprochement. As regards Mao's
view that the Americans would not attack China, it can be
argued that Mao had seen signals of change in the world. Thus,
it was not in 1968 but much earlier that Mao's perceptions were
changing, facilitating Sino-American rapprochement afterwards.

The Soviet intervention of Czechoslovakia was therefore
not the crucial event which initiated major changes in the
world as such. The Vietnam war had already weakened American
strength, while the Soviet Union had increased its own strength.
The Soviet intervention indicated that the Soviet Union was
asserting its increase in power in Czechoslovakia.

In our view, the process of change that started since
mid-sixties took a long time to have visible form. As the
international balance of power was changing, the United States
and China, and especially the former, were adjusting their
relations with each other and with the world at large.

How did the process begin? The first major change was
initiated by the debacle of the United States in Vietnam. The

3 Directions after hearing the Reports of Ku Mu and Yu
Ch'iu-li on Planning Work (January 1965), Miscellany of
Mao Tse-tung Thought (Virginia: JPRS, 1974).

4 Alstair Buchan, "The Indo-China War and World Politics",
Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 53, no. 4, July 1975,
p. 646.
United States, the dominant power in the world since World War II, showed signs of decline. The Chinese statements frequently refer to the United States being on the defensive since the Vietnam debacle of the United States. It is quite probable that they began to notice changes in the balance of power in the world as early as 1965.

The Soviet Union obviously increased its power and was rapidly advancing towards parity in military power with the United States. Again Western Europe and Japan were also emerging as independent centres of power.

The redistribution of world power was further affected by the burgeoning Sino-Soviet dispute which culminated in a border war in March 1969. It opened up possibilities of new alliances in the world.

As regards the impact of Sino-Soviet dispute on Sino-US relations, we would not like to put undue emphasis on the effect of this dispute on Sino-US relations. It is argued that fear of a Soviet attack around 1968-69 caused the "most profound soul-searching in Peking". We know however that the Chinese attitude towards the United States had changed even before, in late 1965. It is also probable that China noticed the reassessment of policies towards itself in the United States. Thus, it was


not in 1968 that the position of China changed.

The internal developments in the USA and to a greater extent in China facilitated the process of \textit{rapprochement}. In the United States, the changes in the world balance of power in the context of the erosion of the power of the United States had changed the perceptions of the people, the Congress and the Administration. The \textit{rapprochement} with China was therefore somewhat easier. In China, on the other hand, the victory of the Maoists over Lin Piao helped the process of \textit{rapprochement}. However, the international balance of power had significant affects on the perceptions of Lao and Chou En-lai. The fall of Lin Piao made their task easier, and thus it is necessary to study the events and issues surrounding Lin Piao's fall in September 1971.

I. \textit{Fall of Lin Piao and Its Impact on China's Relations with the USA}

Not all the circumstances leading to the fall of Lin Piao are yet clear. It is possible that in course of time further evidence on the subject would become available. All that we know from official Chinese sources today is that Lin Piao developed major differences with Mao Tse-tung at the Lushan Plenum held in August 1970. He then reportedly drew up a plan entitled "Outline of 'Project 571' to stage a \textit{coup d'état}. When the plan failed, he made an attempt to flee the country in a plane. According to CCP Central Committee Document Chung-Fa (1973), Lin Piao was accompanied in the plane
by Yeu Ch' un, Lin Li-Kuo and several others. The plane crashed somewhere in Mongolia. Lin's idea according to Chou En-lai's report to the Tenth Congress of the CCP was to seek asylum in the Soviet Union.

Whatever the circumstances and details, it is certain that Lin Piao's struggle with Mao precipitated the crisis. An assessment of the nature of his struggle against Mao would throw light on the impact of the event on China's foreign policy and domestic developments.

Prime Minister Chou En-lai's report to the Tenth Congress and other major documents available on the subject indicate that Lin fell in the course of a struggle for power. There were, of course, differences over several issues between Lin on the one hand and Mao and other leaders on the other, but the dominant cause was the power struggle.

In his report to the Tenth Party Congress Chou threw light on Lin's ambitions. He called him "a bourgeoisie careerist, conspirator, double dealer, renegade and traitor".

Also, according to a "Top Secret" document relating to Mao's talks with local comrades in August-September 1971, Mao referred to "a certain person" who wanted to become State Chairman.

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7 CCP Central Committee Document Chung-Fa (1973), no. 34, Issues and Studies (Taipei), vol. 10, no. 6, March 1974, p. 117.
9 Ibid.
Afterwards this charge was levied on Lin by name: The CCP Central Committee Document Chung-Fa (1973) says: "Anxious to become Chairman of the State, Lin Piao wanted to split the party and seize power from Chairman Mao and the Central Committee". According to Jurgen Domes the question of succession thus was "of considerable importance in the development of the Lin Piao crisis". He adds, however, that policy issues were important too.

The army was involved in the crisis. Leaders of the people's Liberation Army who played important roles during the crucial phase of the Cultural Revolution and emerged with far more political power than ever before were reluctant to part with the political power they had gained. The army was a house divided against itself. By the time of Lin's fall however, Lin's strength had weakened and that of the other group had considerably strengthened.

While power struggle was real and brought about Lin's fall, the policy differences between Mao and Lin played an important supporting role by being closely linked to the power struggle. They are, therefore, significant for our study. Mao's victory facilitated the implementation of certain policy lines.

10 Chinese Law and Government (New York), nos. 3-4, Fall-Winter 1972-73, Doc. No. 1, p. 32.
12 Chinese Law and Government, nos. 3-4, Fall-Winter 1972-73, Doc. No. 1, p. 32.
at home and abroad.

Upto 1973, official Chinese sources used to give the impression that Lin Piao's line was one of "subjectivism, dogmatism, and idealism and that he was an "ultra-leftist". Now a days Lin Piao is being accused of having been an "ultra-rightist" who wanted to "restore capitalism" at home. According to an article published in *Wen-hui bao* Lin "intended to revive the land-lord bourgeoisie class in order to exercise a feudal-comprader-fascist dictatorship".

What then is the truth of Lin's position? Let us ignore for the present Maoist rhetoric and study what Lin said on the subject in the detailed plan he drew up in consultation with his supporters for seizure for power, viz. outline of 'project 571'. We find Lin here emphasizing increase in production rather than getting embroiled in revolution. We also find him criticizing Mao for allegedly hoping to make the country prosperous while keeping the people impoverished. His own slogan was "A prosperous people and a strong country". He ridiculed Mao for apparently supporting the slogan "A prosperous country and an impoverished people". Lin Piao sought "to make the people happy with their homes and content with their work, to give them enough to wear and

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14 Chou En-lai's report to the Tenth Congress of the CCP, no. 8, p. 9.


16 Ibid., nos. 3-4, Fall-Winter 1972-73, Document No. 2, p. 52.
eat and genuinely liberate them politically and economically.

The economic development priorities did figure in the
debates between the Maoists and Lin Piao. The role of the army
was another area of major difference. For our purpose, however,
the major area of interest is the difference Lin had with the
Maoists on foreign policy issues.

As for foreign relations, without reference to his name
Lin Piao was charged with maintaining "illicit relations" with
a foreign country. The reference was clearly to the Soviet
Union. The charge perhaps was more rhetorical than true, but
it lays bare the differences between Lin and the Maoists in the
sphere of foreign relations. In the Tenth Party Congress Chou
accused Lin of wanting to "capitulate to Soviet Revisionist
Social-Imperialism". As the Maoists launched offensives
against Lin, they have gone farther in accusing Lin of "colluding
with the Soviet revisionists to attack us simultaneously from the
north and the south". It was also alleged that he wanted to
"sell out" China for "personal glory". Domes argues that the
charge of the Maoists against Lin of acting as an instrument of

17  Ibid.
18  New Year's day editorial in Jen-min Jih-pao, Hung ch'i
and Chieh-fang Chun-pao, Hsinhua News Bulletin, no. 8387,
1 January 1972, p. 5a.
19  Chou En-lai's report to the Tenth Party Congress,
n. 8, p. 9.
20  CCP Central Committee Document Chung-Fa (1973), n. 7,
p. 118.
21  Speech at the Conclusion of the Study Class for Cadres
of the Yunnan Provincial Committee and the Kunming
Military Region, Chinese Law and Government, vol. 7,
the Soviet Union was "highly unlikely" for Mao's behaviour in
the whole decade before 1971 had not given indications of a pro-
Soviet attitude.

Though the charges could be highly exaggerated, it is
known however that Mao was personally responsible for a policy
of improved relations with the United States. It is quite possi-
ble to argue that on a policy plane Lin and Mao's attitude
towards the USA was an important issue of struggle. While Lin
might have been willing to struggle against both "imperialism"
(USA) and "social imperialism" (USSR), the evidence suggests
that he could not reconcile himself to a policy of accommodation
with imperialism (i.e. with the USA). That went against the
tenor of the basic argument in "Long Live Leninism" that he
had authored on behalf of Mao. To accept a policy of accommoda-
tion with imperialism (i.e. with USA) was to turn one's back on
all the arguments that Peking had used till then against the
Soviet search for a detente in its relations with the USA.
Peking had criticized the Soviet Union for seeking accommodation
with imperialism. It had argued that such a policy betrayed the
cause of the revolutionary peoples and movements in the world.
It had portrayed itself as the champion of the cause of the
revolutionary movement. It must have, therefore, seemed at least
to some leaders in Peking that the Maoist line of seeking
rapprochement with the USA was a reversal of China's revolutionary

22 Domes, n. 11, p. 130.

23 "Long Live Leninism", Peking Review, no. 17, 26 April
1960, pp. 6-23.
line and thus a betrayal of the revolutionary movement of the peoples of the world.

The Maoists argued differently on the ideological plane. Their arguments were contained in an article appeared in August 1971 by the time Nixon had already accepted the invitation to visit China. The article called for a study of Mao's essay "On policy" published in 1940. It disagreed with the view that "all enemies are same". On the contrary it asked to study Mao's view that the enemy camp had contradictions which must be made use of to "win over the many, oppose the few and crush our enemies one by one". In its view, there must be proper study of the international situation to "turn to good all such fights, rifts and contradictions in the enemy camp and turn them against our present enemy". Referring to the prevailing international situation, it said that "imperialism" and "social imperialism" were colluding and contending with each other and viewed Mao's analysis of the enemy camp as "great guiding significance for us to correctly understand today's international situation". It also argued for adopting "a revolutionary dual policy", viz. that to use "flexible tactics in struggle is to realize a firm revolutionary principle". The Maoists, in effect, argued that a policy of seeking accommodation with the USA was consistent with

25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
China's revolutionary strategy and that it was no betrayal of principles.

In seeking better relations with the USSR, Lin and his supporters who were mostly professional military men, were presumably motivated by the fear that improved relations with the USA might antagonize Moscow and thus increase the danger of a Sino-Soviet war. The People's Liberation Army did not want such a war. This is a reasonable assumption, for Lin supported production rather than heightening of revolutionary fervour.

The Maoists, on the other hand, apparently felt that the USSR was a greater danger to China's security and that a rapprochement with the US would deter the USSR from launching any adventurous, even reckless attack on China.

Even after Lin's fall in September 1971, supporters of his line of thinking continued to exist. While the process of Sino-US rapprochement continued its pace was slow. This may be partly due to the continued opposition at home. Thus as late as 1973, it was necessary to justify China's policy towards the United States. The Outline of Education on Situation thus referred to the "reactionaries at home" who "left no stone unturned in their efforts to slander and vilify us, saying that our talks with the United States meant a collusion between China and the United States". It also referred to the criticism of China's policy towards the United States. In defence, it argued that

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28 Outline of Education on Situation, Issues and Studies (Taipei), vol. 10, no. 9, June 1974, p. 103.
Mao's purpose was to increase people-to-people contacts between the two countries as well as to exploit contradictions. It said:

The two arch enemies facing us are U.S. imperialism and Soviet revisionism. We are to fight for the overthrow of these two enemies... are we to fight these two enemies simultaneously, using the same might? No. Are we to ally ourselves with one against the other? Definitely not. We act in the light of changes in situations, tipping the scale diversely at different times. (29)

The above statement was intended to rationalize China's policies towards the United States which had been opposed by Lin and continued to be criticized even after his fall from power. While Lin's fall facilitated Sino-US rapprochement, the process had begun much earlier in response to changes that were taking place in the world balance of power. After discussing the various factors in bringing about Sino-US rapprochement, now let us see how the breakthrough actually came to pass.

3. **Important Developments in Sino-US Relations**

Meanwhile the process of improvement of relations continued. The fall of Lin Piao facilitated the process of rapprochement as it muted that section of the Chinese Communist Party which was not in favour of accommodation with what it called imperialism.

The Americans were now portraying China as a powerful force with which there was need to come to terms. In a radio speech on 25 February 1971 the US President, Richard Nixon,

29 Ibid., p. 104.
described China as "a potentially powerful communist nation" in Asia and put it on a par with Japan and the Soviet Union. He said that peace in Asia depended on how China, Japan, and the Soviet Union interacted and how the United States reacted to their interaction. He also drew attention to China's growing power, and added that Peking's importance derived from more potential than from actual power.

In his report to the US Congress on 26 March 1971 on foreign policy the US Secretary of State claimed that China had asserted itself internationally. He described China's income as small and its power as "more potential than actual". Even then China wielded enormous influence in Asia because of both its size and its potential power. With increase in its strength it would wield more and more influence. Rogers, therefore, argued that it was important to improve Sino-US relations. He said that such improvement should be sought without weakening the treaty commitments to Taiwan.

In portraying China as a powerful force the United States had three major objectives. For one thing it wanted to justify at home the need for a detente in its relations with China. Secondly it was anxious to convince China that it had accepted its legitimate role in Asian and world affairs. In the past it


had refused to recognize that China had a legitimate role to play in world affairs, and this had turned China into an anti-status quo power. The United States, therefore, wanted to convey to Peking that it recognized China's legitimate interests. The implication was that the United States no longer saw China's interests as always conflicting with its own interests and that there were areas in which their interests converged. Thirdly, the United States wanted its Asian allies to recognize the necessity of accommodation with China in view of China's emergence as a major force in Asian and world affairs. Its purpose was also to reassure them that it was not concluding any secret deals behind their back and that it was only recognizing the reality of the situation in Asia as a result of China's emergence as a major force.

The US statements and assertions of accepting China's legitimate role in Asian and world affairs must have created positive reactions among the Chinese leaders. Notwithstanding China's statements that it would not be a super power for propaganda purposes, the aim of becoming a major power is obviously an important Chinese objective. In Chinese perspective, the American acceptance of China's legitimate role and status helped the two countries in developing complimentarity of interests on some issues and in some areas of the world though in a limited way. This added incentive obviously helped the process of rapprochement. For a brief period however the US intervention in Laos in early 1971 interrupted rather than prevented the ongoing process of improving relations.
Laos

It appeared at one time as though the US intervention in Laos would damage the prospects of US-China rapprochement. The danger of such a thing happening came to the fore when 5,000 South Vietnamese troops, supported by US helicopters and fighters, poured over the border into Laos on 7 February. The US State Department stated that the operation would be limited and that it was in no sense "an enlargement of the war". However, China reacted sharply. A Chinese Foreign Ministry statement described the invasion of Laos as a grave provocation to the three peoples of Indo-China and the Chinese people and pledged support and assistance to defeat "US aggressors". A Chinese Government statement issued on 12 February said that the invasion was a grave menace to China. In March Chou En-lai visited Hanoi and criticized the US action. He pledged "support and assistance" to the three peoples of Indo-China.

The USA, however, saw no danger of Chinese intervention in Laos. At a news conference on 17 February 1971 President Nixon said that the Chinese would not interpret the operation in Laos as a threat to them. After the withdrawal of South Vietnamese troops on 23 March 1971, the danger was eliminated. Chou's visit to Hanoi had fanned speculation about Peking's intentions.

32 Asian Recorder, 26 March-1 April 1971, pp. 10070-1.
33 3CMP, no. 4840, 18 February 1971, pp. 109-10.
34 Ibid., no. 4843, 23 February 1971, pp. 86-87.
Secretary Rogers in a television interview on 9 March played down such a possibility. He felt that Chou's purpose was to give comfort to the North Vietnamese. The above statements indicated that the United States had assessed the Chinese approach correctly and the process of rapprochement was not hampered. Why did Americans think that China would not interpret the operation in Laos as a danger to itself? It is probable that the Americans had already contacts with China at some diplomatic levels. China on its part probably knew that the United States was not involving itself in a massive way in Laos after the reverses in Vietnam and thus there was no danger to China's security as a result of the US actions in Laos.

**Ping-Pong Diplomacy**

A new phase of relations began when China invited a US table-tennis team to play a series of goodwill matches in China. Immediately a spokesman of the State Department responded that the United States regarded the invitation as a favourable development. The US Press highlighted the invitation and called it a major development. It interpreted it as the first favourable response from China to the US efforts to draw it into the community of nations. When the US table-tennis team arrived in China, four US newsmen too came along with it to cover the visit. The group was the first official delegation of professional US journalists to visit China since 1949. Chou En-lai received the

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36 *Times of India* (New Delhi), 9 April 1971.
38 *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), 11 April 1971.
players warmly. According to him, the event "opened a new page in the relations of Chinese and American peoples". He also expressed the view that the "beginning again of our friendship" would "meet with the majority support of our two peoples". Chou's speech indicates that Peking wanted to give free rein to people's diplomacy and allow it to play its part in improving relations before taking steps at the Government level. It subsequently transpired that Mao himself was behind the move to invite the US table-tennis team with a view to bringing about a psychological change in the situation.

On the surface the Chinese move to invite the US table-tennis team appeared to be a dramatic one. In reality, years of unremitting efforts of the United States in a changing world environment had contributed to this development. While conveying its desire of improving relations in a meaningful way, the Chinese leadership could still tell people at home that the step was a limited one and that China had not gone back on its principles.

Five New Steps

Taking advantage of China's new mood, President Nixon announced five new steps to improve relations with Peking. These included expediting of visas for visitors from China to the USA, relaxation of currency controls to permit the use of dollars in China, and lifting of restriction on the American oil companies in the matter of providing fuel to ships or aircraft travelling to and from China.

In an interview released on 16 April 1971 by newspaper editors, Nixon reiterated his country's desire to improve relations with Peking. He felt that the long-range view of any US Administration should be normalization of relations with China. He also expressed his country's readiness to take further steps in the field of trade. He wanted the two countries to develop their mutual relations by increasing contacts and exchanges culturally and otherwise. And then, tentatively, he suggested that it might be a good idea for him to visit China while in office.

There was, however, no indication that the United States was willing to accord diplomatic recognition to China at that stage.

On 23 April 1971 Secretary of State Rogers expressed the hope that China would appreciate the significance of the steps his country had taken to improve relations with China. Commenting on the Chinese invitation to a US table-tennis team, he said that he looked upon it as marking the beginning of new relations between China and the United States.

Mao's Invitation

It was during this period of widespread optimism that Edgar Snow's conversations with Mao Tse-tung were published in the Life magazine. Snow quoted Mao as having expressed a desire to meet Nixon, "either as tourist or as President". He said that according to Mao, Nixon was welcome because "at present the problems between China and the USA would have to be solved with Nixon".

41 Ibid., pp. 561-6.
42 Ibid., no. 1663, 10 May 1971, p. 595.
On Formosa, Mao was quoted as having expressed the view that the problem was created by Truman and Acheson and that it had nothing to do with Nixon. It stands to reason that Snow must have carried a more meaningful message to Nixon.

Subsequently, the Chinese people were told that it was to increase contacts with the American people that Nixon was invited to China. Without talking to Nixon, it held, it was difficult to increase contacts between the Chinese and the American peoples. It said that talks with Nixon were necessary to solve problems in Sino-US relations and to "get in touch with the people of the United States". Mao told Snow: "The people of the United States - the leftists, the intermediate elements, the rightists must all be permitted to come". He added, "In seeking a solution of problems, the intermediate elements and leftists can do nothing. It is necessary to have problems settled with Nixon, temporarily".

In order to rationalize China's invitation to Nixon Peking told its own people afterwards that Mao's purpose was "to exploit contradictions", a theme explicitly stated in "On Policy". The purpose of this way of rationalization was to satisfy the Chinese public. However, the changes in the balance of power in the world appeared to had a profound bearing on the Chinese leaders. This has been stated in the framework of China's own way of ideological rationalization. The Outline on Situation said:

Standing at a tower overlooking the general situation in the world, having far-sightedness and a correct recognition of questions, and

43 The Times (London), 28 April 1972.
44 Outline of Education on Situation, n. 24, p. 103.
correctly laying a firm hold on contradictions, our great leader Chairman Mao sent out all at once our ping-pong teams and invited Nixon to visit China. (45)

The above statement supports the view that the Chinese policy was largely determined by the development of polycentrism in the world. The Chinese leadership, and in particular Mao, was observing profound changes in the world-situation. They did not take a sudden or dramatic decision but presumably framed policy towards the United States and the world over a period of years.

Thus the invitation to Nixon cannot be understood as an isolated event, but closely related to the development in the world balance of power. The Chinese action was not solely propelled by an anti-Soviet stand. What China did was a diplomatic offensive towards the world in general and towards the United States in particular on the new situation.

US Reaction

Responding to Mao's invitation Nixon said in a speech on 29 April 1971 that he hoped and even expected to visit China "some time in some capacity". He added that it was only a long-term hope. He said that he was anxious to contribute to a "policy in which we can have a new relationship with mainland China". As regards the Sino-Soviet dispute, he maintained that the United States would not wish to get embroiled in it. On the


other hand, he indicated a desire for better relations with both 47 China and the Soviet Union.

In a statement on 27 April before the SEATO Ministerial Council Rogers hailed the invitation to the US ping-pong team as a small yet significant step, and said that China would play a significant role in Asia. He added that the United States would not deny China such a role. Indeed, he stressed that far from frustrating China's ambition to play such a role the United States would do all it could to facilitate China's playing such a role. As regards Mao's invitation to Nixon, Rogers maintained on 29 April that the invitation was "casually made" and that Nixon might visit China if there was sufficient advance towards a rapprochement. He also expressed his satisfaction with the progress made towards improving Sino-American relations.

Although he still held that China was militant, he said that he felt encouraged by China's overtures to the outside world.

In accordance with President Nixon's statement of 14 April 1971 the US Departments of Treasury, Commerce, and Transportation announced relaxations of trade regulations with regard to China. The announcement added that the purpose of the relaxations was to facilitate "broader opportunities for contacts between the Chinese and American peoples". Commenting on the new developments,

48 Ibid., no. 1666, 31 May 1971, p. 683.
49 Ibid., p. 637.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid., p. 703.
President Nixon said that he saw a new relationship with China emerging as a result of increased trade and exchange on the personal level. He declared that the United States would take more steps to improve relations. In his news conference on 1 June, he said that there was significant movement in two areas, in areas of "opening the door to travel and opening the door to more trade". There was a "long way to go" but the "journey" had begun "toward eventual - a more normal relationship with mainland China".

On 10 June 1971 Nixon announced a major trade relaxation: he terminated controls over a large number of non-strategic goods. As a result American business men were enabled to export the following goods to China: a number of farm, fish, and forestry products, tobacco, fertilizer, coal, certain chemicals, rubber, textiles, certain metals, agricultural, industrial and office equipment, household appliances, electrical apparatus in general, industrial, and commercial use, certain kinds of electronic and communications equipment, certain kinds of automatic equipment, and consumer goods. The termination of controls was intended to help accelerate the thaw in Sino-American relations.

**Secret Visit**

Nixon visited China after the ground had been prepared for

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52 Ibid., no. 1668, 14 June 1971, p. 759.
53 Ibid., no. 1669, 21 June 1971, pp. 792-3.
54 Ibid., no. 1670, 28 June 1971, p. 815.
it by Henry Kissinger, his National Security Adviser, during a secret trip to Peking. Kissinger first went to Pakistan in the second week of July 1971. While he was still there, on 9 July 1971, it was announced that he was suffering from a stomach infection and would spend the next three days in the mountains of Pakistan as he needed rest. Actually this was a piece of diplomatic fiction calculated to put newsmen off the scene and make a dash to Peking on a secret mission. Kissinger kept it an exclusively White House enterprise; no State Department representative accompanied him. Later Kissinger said on 19 July that only two men from Pakistan accompanied him, both secret service agents, assigned to protect the confidential documents he was carrying. According to newspaper reports, which relied on a certain unnamed White House source, it was in April 1971 that Nixon first learnt that there was reasonable prospect of arranging a Presidential visit to China. This was how arrangements came to be made for Kissinger's visit through secret negotiations, and finally Kissinger went to Peking with the knowledge that his visit would result in an invitation for President Nixon to China. It is said that the intermediaries included President Nicolae Ceauscean of Romania and President Yahya Khan of Pakistan. It

58 International Herald Tribune,
59 Times of India, 18 July 1971.
is also said that Kissinger spent nearly twenty hours in talks with Chou En-lai which culminated in Peking's invitation to Nixon.

Announcement of Nixon's Peking Visit

On 15 July 1971 President Nixon announced that he wished to visit Peking before May 1972 in response to an invitation from Chou En-lai "to seek normalization of relations" between China and the United States and "to exchange views on questions of concern to both the sides". In the view of the New York Times, Nixon's announcement ushered in a new era in international relations. The visit would affect "almost every part of the globe" and mark "the end of more than two decades of irrational intransigence on both sides and the beginning of a more pragmatic approach to mutual problems". Others saw the announced visit as representing a shift from people's diplomacy to Government-to-Government diplomacy. Yet others, however, emphasized certain "objective difficulties" in Sino-U.S. relations and predicted moderate success for the summit. They felt that several years of shifting and adjustment would be necessary for happy relations to be established.

After generating some initial optimism, Nixon tried to sound a note of caution. At a Press Conference on 4 August 1971

61 Times of India, 13 July 1971.
he admitted that the United States had "no illusions" about its differences with China, that he recognized the differences well enough, and that the talks would not dissolve all the differences. He, however, emphasized that it was important to note that channels of communication had been opened. According to him, there could be no world peace without some communication between China and the United States.

Premier Chou En-lai talking to James Reston of the New York Times in an interview, also emphasized the differences between the two countries. He said: "...we do not expect a settlement of all questions at one stroke. This is not possible. That would not be practicable. But by contacting each other, we may be able to find out where we should start in solving these questions". He added that he was interested not only in making efforts towards solving such short-term problems as ending the war in Vietnam, Taiwan, etc. but also in discussing with Nixon the changing roles of the United States, Japan, and the Soviet Union in Asia and the Pacific. He especially emphasized China's determination to solve the Taiwan question.

James Reston's interview with Chou En-lai thus clearly indicates China's interest in the changing balance of power in the world. It shows that China took keen interest in the changes

67 The Times (London), 10 August 1971.
68 Ibid.
that had taken place or might take. In Chinese perception the United States would play a complementary role with China in the process of change in the world balance of power. Chou's speech also shows that changes in the world balance of power had not taken final shape.

The Chinese Representation Question

Once the United States decided to change its policy towards China and accept it as a major power, it became necessary to change its earlier policy towards China in the United Nations. Opposition of China's seat in the United Nations would have been contrary to its acceptance of China as a major power. However, any explicit support for China at the cost of Taiwan would also seem to have a very adverse effect on the US allies in Asia. Thus, it became a painful but necessary decision to change policy on this question without giving the appearance that the United States was isolating its ally Taiwan. The US also had to demonstrate that there was no opposition at home on the decisions of the Administration as regards its new policy on the question of China's representation in the United Nations. Thus a debate began in the US Senate on this question.

The Senate hearings begun in June 1971 covered the question of China's representation in the United Nations and the issue of Taiwan. Most speakers demonstrated their change of perceptions with regard to this question. Some, however, differed as regards the manner of tackling the question.

In a statement on 24 June Senator Jacob K. Javits (Republican, New York) said that the United States should extend
its support to the move to secure admission for the People's republic of China in the United Nations without compromising its position on Taiwan. Some others said that it would be vain for the United States to try to bring the Peking Government in as a Member of the United Nations without at the same time getting the Chiang Government expelled from the Organization. Peking was so dead set against Taiwan that it would rather stay out of the world body than allow Taiwan to be a fellow Member. Yet others thought that the seating of China in the world body would automatically result in the ousting of Taiwan and that to bring the Peking regime in even at the risk of the ousting of Taiwan would be in the US interest in view of the fact that friendship with Peking was a "paramount objective in clearly ordered priorities". Professor James C. Thomson held that even if Taiwan was ousted as a result of the Peking regime coming in as a Member, it might become possible at some future date to restore Taiwan's membership of the United Nations. Senator Arthur F. Golston supported the idea of securing representation for China in the United Nations and establishing diplomatic relations with China. He even favoured giving up altogether

69 US Senate, 92nd Congress, 1st session, Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings, United States Relations with the People's Republic of China (Washington, D.C., 1971), p. 34.
70 Ibid., p. 64.
71 Ibid., p. 180.
72 Ibid., pp. 180-1.
the old policy of underwriting the regime of Chiang Kai-shek. Some experts and Senators though a minority in the hearings, wanted to oppose China's entry in the United Nations. They argued that Taiwan was a part of the US defensive perimeter in the Far East.

Most experts and Senators agreed that the People's Republic of China should have representation in the United Nations. They differed, however, over the question of allowing the Republic of China to continue as a Member.

The debate shows that the Senators had become aware of the changes in the balance of power in the world and felt the necessity to secure a seat for China in the United Nations. No doubt, the hearings in the US Senate in 1971 had no such perceptible impact on the China policy of the United States as the hearings of 1966 had done. By trying to cast off the rigidity of the past however, the Senate facilitated for the US Administration in taking a bold decision on the question of China's representation in the United Nations.

In a news conference on 1 June 1971 President Nixon indicated that the US Administration was reviewing the question of China's representation in the United Nations in consultation with the Republic of China and with third parties.

73 Ibid., p. 117.
74 See for example, Hon. G. Tower's (Republican, Texas) statement, ibid., pp. 312-15.
75 *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, vol. 7, no. 23, 7 June 1971, p. 849.
In August 1971 Secretary Rogers made a major announcement on the Chinese representation question. He said that the United States would support the proposal to give representation to the People's Republic of China in the United Nations and at the same time oppose any move to expel the Chiang Government or to deprive the Chiang Government of its representation. He added that this decision was "in accord with President Nixon's desire to normalize relations with the People's Republic of China...and in accord with our conviction that the continued representation in the United Nations of the Republic of China will contribute to peace and stability in the world".

President Nixon himself let it be known at a news conference on 16 September 1971 that the United States would support Peking's admission into the Security Council while voting against the expulsion of Taiwan from the General Assembly. In the UN General Assembly the United States introduced a resolution supporting representation simultaneously for both the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China, but by then Albania had already tabled a resolution calling for the seating of the People's Republic of China and for the expulsion of the Republic of China from all UN bodies. Eventually the Republic of China was expelled. Although the United States tried its best at least


outwardly to ensure the continuance of the republic of China as a Member of the United Nations, it kept up the process of improvement of relations with Peking. Indeed the UN decision might have come as a relief to the US Administration as it was a major hurdle in the way of normalization. On 4 October, Secretary William Rogers had already formally welcomed the People's Republic of China to take its seat in the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Of the US stand on the Chinese representation question, China was critical as expected. It accused the United States of creating a "two-China's plot" to obstruct its admission to the world body. On 20 August 1971 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China issued a statement in which it declared that "the Chinese Government and people absolutely cannot tolerate" the US position on the question of representation in the United Nations. It also charged the United States with playing all kinds of "tricks" and of arbitrarily imposing restrictions in order to retain the Government of Chiang Kai-shek in the United Nations. A Jen-min Jih-pao commentator on 25 September too criticized the US position as an attempt to create a "two China's" situation in the United Nations.

81 Ibid., no. 4967, 2 September 1971, pp. 126-7.
Notwithstanding the above criticisms, Peking did not cease its efforts to improve relations with the United States. While China's tough position was required to safeguard what it viewed as its legitimate national interests, it must have perceived that the United States facilitated the change of perceptions of a large number of countries leading to its entry in the United Nations.

China's entry in the United Nations fulfilled a major goal of China - the restoration of its legitimate rights in the United Nations. Now recognized as a major power, China argued that it would "stand with all the countries and peoples" that loved peace and justice and "struggle for the national independence and state sovereignty of various countries and the cause of safeguarding international peace and promoting human progress".

In Chinese perspective the restoration of its seat in the United Nations was a major victory of Mao's line in international affairs. China argued that its foreign policy was supported by a large number of people in the world, and that its international prestige had been "greatly elevated".

In Chinese perspective China itself benefited from the changing multipolar world. The United States itself facilitated restoration of the Chinese seat notwithstanding its resolution to retain Taiwan in the Assembly. The very fact that Kissinger...

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83 Reference materials concerning Education, n. 28, p. 103.
84 Ibid.
was in Peking to finalize the agenda of Nixon's visit when China was admitted to the United Nations shows that the improvement of relations with each other was a priority both for China as well as the United States. On his second visit to Peking from 20–26 October 1971 Kissinger met important officials in China and had ten hours of talks with the Chinese leaders. It is significant to note that photographs of the American mission with Mao and Chou appeared in the *People's Daily* at this time. The Chinese leaders were trying to rationalize their policy of improving relations with China. The photographs in the *People's Daily* clearly demonstrate that Mao himself was the primary mover in this effort to improve relations with the United States.

**More Steps**

During the interval between the US announcement of its changed policy in regard to the Chinese representation question and the formal admission of the People's Republic of China to the membership of the world body, the United States adopted a cautious approach in its references to the Peking regime. There was a marked change in the US perception of the Peking Government. Speaking before the Subcommittee on National Security and Scientific Developments of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on 23 July, Ronald I. Spiers, then Director of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs, declared that unlike the Soviets the Chinese had no traditional interests in the Indian Ocean and that

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85 *Statesman* (New Delhi), 21 October 1971.
militarily they had never ventured out of their coastal waters.

On 12 October 1971, President Nixon announced at a news conference his decision to visit Moscow. He had already announced his intention to visit Peking. He declared that neither of the trips was intended to exploit the differences between Peking and Moscow. His purpose was only to improve relations with both.

On 30 November, the White House announced Nixon's programme in detail. Nixon's National Security Adviser, Henry A. Kissinger, reiterated that the purpose of the visit was to promote better understanding of the positions of the two sides and to initiate exchanges in various fields. Nixon's announcement of the Moscow visit did not create as much enthusiasm in the United States as his China visit.

Another notable development was a display of clemency by China in commuting the sentence of an American, John T. Downey, to five years. President Nixon welcomed the gesture.

Publicly the United States continued to maintain a cautious stance in its analysis of the various developments tending towards improvement of relations with China. On 12 November 1971, when questioned about the possibility of establishing diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, Secretary

86 *Department of State Bulletin*, vol. 65, no. 1678, 23 August 1971, p. 203.
87 Ibid., no. 1688, 1 November 1971, p. 473.
88 Ibid., no. 1695, 20 December 1971, pp. 709-11.
89 Ibid., vol. 66, no. 1698, 10 January 1972, p. 31.
Rogers avoided giving any firm indication either way. In his State of the Union Message, the President, too, remarked that great differences still persisted in Sino-US relations and stressed the need to discuss them and sort them out.

In his report on foreign policy to the Congress on 9 February 1972 Nixon emphasized the importance of developing contacts with China. He referred to his forthcoming visit to Peking, and said that it was not an end in itself. It was, according to him, the starting point of a process of change in "the postwar landscape". He also underlined the fragile character of Sino-US relationship and maintained that his visit to Peking would not bring "a quick resolution of the deep differences" that divided the two countries. However, he saw the signal ending "a sterile and barren interlude" in their relationship.

On 10 February 1972 Nixon described the Peking visit as "a watershed in relation between the two governments". He added that "the post-war era with respect to China and the United States, that chapter now comes to an end from the time I set

90 Ibid., vol. 65, no. 1693, 6 December 1971, p. 654.
91 Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, vol. 8, no. 4, 24 January 1972, p. 76.
93 Ibid., p. 238.
foot on the soil of Mainland China". In spite of this optimism, Nixon did not fail to underline the fact that what they expected in the Peking visit was "primarily dialogue" while with the Soviet Union the United States was already negotiating on certain subjects. Thus, in spite of Nixon's optimism as regards improved relations with China, it was difficult on his part to visualize a mature relationship with China similar to the one it had with the Soviet Union in view of China's limited strength in the balance of power in the world.

Another important step was taken before Nixon's visit to China. The US Administration relaxed restrictions on exports to China. It placed China in country group Y of the Commodity Control List, thus making available to it all commodities then available to the Soviet Union. It also made it unnecessary to obtain a prior treasury licence.

Chinese Policy

China, on its part, showed moderation especially after entry into the United Nations. On the surface criticism of US policies continued unabated. Some of the criticisms did reflect China's genuine differences with the US on a host of issues like Taiwan. Some of its critical statements as regards the United States were intended to show the people at home, and allies abroad, that China was still maintaining its revolutionary orientation in foreign policy and that it would not barter away its


95 Ibid., no. 8, 21 February 1972, pp. 438-9.
principles.

China's criticisms of the Soviet Union were noticeably sharper than those of the United States. The Chinese said that the Soviet Union had "developed into one of the countries with the biggest military machines, into a dangerous aggressive force". At the same time the US was seen as a declining power. Thus, in effect, the Chinese suggested that the Soviet Union was the greater danger than the United States.

In November, Maxwell had an important interview with Chou En-lai in which he rationalized China's invitation to Nixon. He told Maxwell: "if you do not talk with the head who else should you talk with? If you talk with people of second or third rank, instead of the head, the issues cannot be solved". Chou expected limited outcome in the summit and said: "we should not expect too much to come out of it. How could all problems be solved at once? There can be no such thing. But if he solves nothing, will the American people agree to it?"

In his view, the solution of the Taiwan question was "crucial" yet had a "secondary place", for, the liberation of Taiwan had already waited twenty-two years, while the termination of the Indochina war was, "more urgent". This shows that Chou viewed the talks with USA in a global perspective.

96 Jen-min Jih-pao commentator's article, 12 November 1972.
97 Sunday Times, 5 December 1971.
98 Ibid.
99 Ibid.
It was clear from his view that the solution of the vexed Vietnam problem would allow China greater flexibility for playing a dynamic role in the world arena.

As the year 1972 dawned, and Nixon was to visit Peking in February, China's talks with Nixon was rationalized implicitly in the new year's day editorial of Chinese newspaper. It pointed out the basic contradictions in the contemporary world and said: "...the contradictions between US imperialism and Soviet revisionism on the one hand and the people of the world including the American and the Soviet people on the other, and the contradictions between the two super powers in their scramble for hegemony and spheres for influence have become 100 even more sharpened". In Chinese view as stated "on policy", contradictions between the two super powers necessitated making use of those contradictions. The Chinese indirectly suggested that the United States was not the primary focus; it was in a declining plight and its "power of aggression" had been "increasingly weakened". The article thus hinted at the justification of making a distinction between the primary and the secondary enemy and to take the former more seriously. Thus China had given the theoretical justification for improving relations with USA even before Nixon's visit to Peking.

4. Nixon's Peking Visit

Nixon arrived at Peking on 21 February 1972. He was accompanied by William P. Rogers, Secretary of State, Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President in National Security

100 Peking Review, no. 1, 7 January 1972, p. 8.
affairs and other important officials. The visit was extensively covered by the US media, especially television. Initially, however, there was some disappointment that there was no large crowd or enthusiasm in public. This low-key reception was partly due to the long absence of diplomatic relations between the two countries. It was also deliberately done by China so as to measure opinion abroad and at home about Peking's principled stand. However, immediately on arrival Chou En-lai received Nixon. Nixon was given a 500-man military honour guard. Those assembled at the airport to receive Nixon included Yeh Chien-ying, Li Hsien-nien, Kuo Mo-jo, Chi Peng-fei, Wu Teh, Hsiang Hui, Shen Kuang, and Li Chen.

In spite of the low-key reception, Nixon had an unexpected and unscheduled meeting with Mao Tse-tung. Henry A. Kissinger was present on the American side; and Chou En-lai and Wang Hai-jung were present on the Chinese side. The talks were later described as "frank and serious".

Next day the People’s Daily carried on its front page a picture of Nixon’s meeting with Mao Tse-tung. This was intended to show that the move for closer relations with the United States had the blessings of the Chairman.

Premier Chou En-lai hosted a banquet in honour of Nixon in the Great Hall of the People, and said that Nixon’s visit gave the leaders of the two countries an opportunity to meet

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102 **Current Background**, no. 952, 27 March 1972, p. 11.
in person and promote normalization of relations, as also "to exchange views on questions of concern to both sides". The event in his view was "unprecedented in the history of the relations between China and the United States". After suspension of relations for twenty years, he declared: the gate to "friendly contacts" had been opened. He felt that in spite of differences in the social systems of the two countries, it was "not impossible" to normalize relations on the basis of the five principles of peaceful co-existence.

Nixon's reply was characterized by a certain amount of euphoria. He said that if China and the United States could find common ground for working together, the chance for world peace would be "immeasurably increased". He noted that there were great differences between them, but added that what had brought them together was common interests "which transcend those differences". Though there was still a gulf of differences between them, they could talk around the table. He went on: "There is no reason for us to be enemies. Neither of us seeks the territory of the other; neither of us seeks domination over the other; neither of us seeks to stretch out our hands and rule the world". Quoting Mao, he made an appeal for seizing the hour and the day to build "a new and better world".

On 22 February, Nixon and Chou met for four hours. Nixon was accompanied by Kissiner. The Chinese side was represented by Chiao Kuan-hua, Chang Jen-chin, Wang Hai-jung

105 Ibid., pp. 15-16.
and Chao Chi-hua. The Chinese Foreign Minister, Chi P'eng-fei and the US Secretary of State, Rogers, held a separate conference. Besides talks, there were other engagements. One of these was a ballet performance.

Nixon and Chou met again on the following day for four more hours of talks. Later he visited important places of interest in Peking.

On 24 February, after yet another round of talks, Nixon visited the Great Wall of China. Looking at the wall, he said: "We do not want walls of any kind between peoples". While returning, Nixon and Marshall Yeh Chien-ying stopped at the Ming Tomb.

On 25 February Nixon visited parts of the Forbidden City. Later in the afternoon he met Chou for an hour of private talks. In the night he gave a banquet in honour of Chou. Recalling his thoughts on the Great Wall, Nixon said that the long process of removing the wall between China and the United States had started. He recognized the differences but underlined the determination to transcend them in order to live in peace. In his reply Chou said that the talks had enabled the two sides to gain a clearer knowledge of each other's position and stand. This, he pointed out, would

106 Ibid., p. 16.
107 Ibid., p. 17.
108 Ibid.
109 Ibid., pp. 24-25.
benefit both sides. He declared that the common desire of the people of the two countries was to enhance "their mutual understanding and friendship" and to "promote the normalization of relations".

On 26 February Nixon went to the City of Hangchow, about a hundred miles south-west of Shanghai. The city is well-known for its scenic beauty. On 27 February, he flew to Shanghai in the company of Chou En-lai. He was greeted at the Shanghai Airport by Chiang Chun-chiao, chairman of the city's Revolutionary Committee.

At a banquet held after their joint communique was signed, Nixon declared: "We have been here for a week. This was the week that changed the world". Obviously he had the world-wide power relationships in mind. He thought that the summit would have world-wide repercussions. In the same speech he even went to the extent of saying: "...our two peoples tonight hold the future of the world in our hands". Notwithstanding the exaggeration in his remarks one could see the importance of Sino-US relations as a new element in the power configuration in the world.

The Shanghai communique signed at the end of Nixon's visit was cautiously drafted. The Chinese side expressed its

113 Ibid., p. 433.
support for "national independence and revolution" and for the right to choose any social system. It also called for the withdrawal of foreign troops. It expressed support for the people's struggles in Cambodia, and Korea, Loas, and Vietnam thus manifesting its concern for the Far East. There was a reference to the Indo-Pakistani dispute as well and China expressed support for the Government of Pakistan in maintaining its independence. The Chinese, further, upheld the right of self-determination in Kashmir.

The United States emphasized its desire to reduce tensions. It stressed the importance of keeping up communication to avoid misunderstanding. It also called for support for a plan known as the Right-Point Plan which it had earlier put forward in consultation with South Vietnam for ending the Vietnam War. Further, it referred to its close ties with South Korea and Japan. In South Asia, the US position was to keep the area insulated from the rivalry of the Great Powers. The United States envisaged "the ultimate withdrawal of all U.S. forces" from Indo-China "consistent with the aim of self-determination for each country".

Both sides noted the essential differences between their social systems. They, however, agreed to apply the principle of peaceful co-existence in their mutual relations. They felt that normalization of Sino-US relations was "in the

interests of all countries". They affirmed their common commitment to reduce the danger of any possible international military conflict. They declared, further, that they would not seek hegemony in the Asian-Pacific region and that they would also not brook any attempt by any other country to establish its hegemony. They were totally opposed to the very idea of spheres of interest. Though they did not specifically mention the Soviet Union by name, the reference was clear. The Soviet Union was already suspicious of the nature of Sino-US talks. If there had been a specific reference to it by name, it would have charged China and the United States with colluding in anti-Soviet activity.

The Taiwan issue was stated to be the main obstacle to normalization of relations between the two countries. The Chinese side was indeed explicit on this point. The two countries only agreed to shelve the problem for the time being. The Chinese reiterated their determination to liberate Taiwan, but did not spell out how they proposed to achieve their aim. In the past they had refused to renounce their right to use force to secure the kind of solution they wanted. Now, by their silence, they were probably giving indication of their willingness to seek a peaceful solution of the problem.

The Americans for their part agreed with the view of the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China that Taiwan was a part of China. They also agreed progressively to reduce their forces and military installations in Taiwan "as

116 Ibid., p. 39.
the tension in the area diminishes", with a view to their ultimate withdrawal from Taiwan. This statement on Taiwan by the Americans represented a considerable advance on their earlier position, i.e. the position they had taken since the outbreak of the Korean War.

Another significant point about the communique was its silence as regards the defence treaty between the United States and the Republic of China. The Chinese possibly did not insist on a reference being made to that treaty in order to facilitate an agreed joint communique.

The communique, however, left some doubts and ambiguities. The doubts, as far as the Chinese were concerned related to their silence over the way they proposed to liberate Taiwan. The US statement on Taiwan was ambiguous too. The American commitment ultimately to withdraw from Taiwan was as ambivalent and vague as their undertakings to withdraw forces from Taiwan progressively "as the tension in the area diminishes".

In spite of these confusions and uncertainties as regards the Taiwan problem, it is important to note that both

117 Lucian Pye is of the view that the withdrawal of military forces presumably referred to the six thousand or so air force personnel, who are not functional to the defence of Taiwan, but rather were introduced in conjunction with Vietnam and the need to provide mid-air refuelling of B-52 from Guam, Lucian W. Pye, "China and the United States: A New Phase", Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, vol. 492, July 1972, p. 101.


119 Ibid., p. 154.
sides were prepared to talk and develop their relations in view of the changing strategic environment. The US recognition that there was only one China was a victory for the People's Republic. China probably thought that this recognition would ultimately help solve the Taiwan problem in its favour. It knew that there was no immediate solution for the problem and was reconciled to a long wait after having secured American acceptance of the position that Taiwan was a part of China.

The two sides agreed to broaden their mutual understanding. To that end they discussed certain specific areas where they might co-operate to mutual advantage. These areas included science, technology, culture, sports, and journalism. The two sides were agreed on the need to expand bilateral trade. They felt, above all, that their talks signified a "relaxation of tensions in Asia and the world".

The Shanghai communique showed broad areas where the interests of China and the United States converged. Though they did not explicitly say so, the two countries believed that they had a common interest in containing the growing Soviet influence in several areas, particularly in Asia. The statement that they would not seek hegemony and would not brook the attempt of any other country "to seek hegemony" in the Asian-Pacific region was clearly directed towards the Soviet Union.

The Chinese side expressed its concern about her opposition to "the revival and outward expansion of Japanese militarism". In this question the US side preferred not to be explicit in order not to hurt Japanese susceptibilities. There is no doubt, however, that it did not want any revival of Japanese militarism either.

The Shanghai communique outwardly achieved limited results. The outcome of the visit did not measure up to the high expectations entertained in certain quarters from Nixon's visit to Peking. There were various limitations and we can conveniently put them under three categories: (i) global power balances; (ii) old legacies of the past; (iii) domestic constraints both in China and the United States.

The most significant constraint was the global balance of power, which was in a state of flux. No doubt the changes in the world balance of power facilitated Sino-US talks in the first place. However, such changes had not yet taken any distinct shape. The uncertainty that characterized the world scene impeded a significant breakthrough in Sino-US relations.

The Soviet factor was a case in point in this context to illustrate how the international balance of power affects America's relations with both the USSR and China. While in view of growing Soviet power, the United States wanted an enhanced leverage through talks in Peking, it was still important for the United States to keep its relations with the

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121 Ibid., p. 33.
122 Ibid., pp. 473-6.
Soviet Union in good repair. Any Soviet misunderstanding as regards the nature and scope of the Sino-US talks had the possibility of damaging Soviet-American understandings in several parts of the world. Thus in order to avoid creating suspicions among the Soviet leaders the President's Message to the Congress on 9 February 1972 said: "our policy is not aimed against Moscow. The U.S. and the USSR have issues of paramount importance to resolve; it would be costly indeed to impair progress on these through new antagonisms".

Secondly, China's own strength in the world power balance was limited. Although the United States spoke of China, as a major force in world affairs, it was aware that China was far from being a Great Power from the military and economic points of view. In the economic field China was far behind the two super powers and was not in a position to make massive investment in the armament industry and develop into a military of power of world significance. Thus, howsoever the United States might have liked to use China as a counter-weight for Soviet power, China was not in a position to serve as a credible counterweight to the Soviet Union.

The third limitation of the world situation related to the apprehensions of other major allies of China and the United States. From the US point of view, Japan could not be allowed to entertain further apprehensions as regards Sino-US talks. Japan was an important ally and a giant in economic power, and

it would have been a bad bargain if the United States displeased Japan. There were US allies in other parts of the world too who would have questioned the value of their relationships with the United States had it gone for a kind of dramatic change of policy which would portend abandoning Asian allies. China also faced the same problem. Its allies too, in particular Albania and Vietnam would have sharply reacted to any Chinese move to forge a Sino-US combination at this stage. The Shanghai communique was therefore so worded as not to create fear and nervousness among other countries, whether allies or rivals.

As regards the old legacies of the past, Taiwan was the major obstacle. The Chinese side was emotionally involved with the question of "liberation" of Taiwan. For over two decades Taiwan had constituted the defence parameter of the United States in the Far East. The United States had stationed a large number of troops in Taiwan to prevent Peking from "liberating" Taiwan. It had taken the position that the Chinese Government in Taiwan represented the whole of China, and it had for the reason refused to recognize the Peking regime and tried to prevent the People's Republic of China by all means from securing membership of the United Nations. Besides, as Peking saw it, the civil war was yet to be completed. Hence it was uncompromising on the Taiwan issue.

Peking argued that Taiwan was a part of China and that the liberation of Taiwan was an internal affair of the Chinese people. It, therefore, declared that it would brook no
interference in the matter by any other power. It would
decide for itself how precisely Taiwan should be liberated
and when. In China's view no outside power would be allowed
to dictate to it the course of action China should take.

The US defence treaty with Taiwan obviously posed pro-
blems in Peking. If the Americans had repudiated the treaty,
it would have had far-reaching consequences. It would cer-
tainly have led to alarm and shock among the allies of the
United States. Peking was equally firm that the treaty was
unacceptable. It, however, realized the US difficulty and
preferred to remain silent on this point in order to facili-
tate the formulation of an agreed communique and gradually
promote relations.

Besides Taiwan, in view of the hostility of two decades,
it was difficult to make a complete departure in policies
overnight. Nevertheless there were wide differences between
the two sides on several issues. Before reaching agreement on
these issues, they had to open up a channel of communication
as a first step.

The third limitation which prevented any major agreement
was the constraints of domestic politics, especially in China.
Unlike in the United States, where the people were constantly
exposed to the media and thus were familiar with the develop-
ments in the world, the people in China were not aware of the
changes in the world balance of power which necessitated a
change of perceptions to the world and the United States.
Nixon's visit to China might have appeared to some as a dramatic
reversal in China's policy towards the United States and also a betrayal of principles. The outline of Education on Situation indicated that many Chinese were not convinced of the rationality of inviting Nixon to visit China. It said: "...some comrades within our ranks, owing to their lack of high consciousness in regard to the struggle between the two lines, and because of their low ability to make distinctions, are plagued by an erroneous cognizance. For example, there are some comrades who say that, in the past, we interpreted negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union as US-Soviet collusion, but now we too are negotiating with the United States. Hence they ask whether we have changed our policy". The other major obstacle was the opposition by a section of the Chinese leadership to the idea of mending fences with the United States. No doubt Lin Piao was no longer on the scene, but it is quite possible that many others in the Chinese leadership did not want their country to sign agreements and lay itself open to the charge of collusion with US imperialism. Thus there were domestic constraints in the way of big things being achieved during the summit.

As regards Washington, the nature of domestic constraint was different. While change of policy towards the People's Republic was generally accepted, many Americans were not prepared to pay the price of alienating their ally Taiwan. In such a situation, the US Administration did not wish to give the appearance that it was abandoning Taiwan.

124 Outline of Education on Situation, n. 28, p. 103.
In spite of these limitations it is undeniable that China and the United States had developed many areas of convergence. Future prospects depended more on the world balance of power which seemed in a state of flux but generally favoured Sino-U.S. detente.

5. Subsequent Developments

Sino-American relations continued to improve in the months that followed. The first significant step in the direction of improving relations after Nixon's Peking visit was the establishment of a channel of communication in Paris. The US Press Secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, announced on 10 March 1972 that the choice of Paris did not "close other channels" and that the problem discussed in Paris would be "far broader than anything ever taken up in Geneva and Warsaw". Talks commenced on 14 March and were described as "warm and cordial".

The United States continued to emphasize the global character of China's role. Thus Nixon declared on 24 March 1972:

At the present time, it could be said that the United States and the Soviet Union are the two major powers from a military standpoint and the People's Republic of China is the most populous nation in the world with the potential of becoming a major power, and,

therefore, any one who is interested in trying to build a structure of peace must deal with the relationships between these three great powers centres now. (128)

Sino-US contacts developed further. A Chinese table-tennis team visited the United States in April 1972. Its political significance can be seen from the fact that the players were received by President Nixon in the White House on 8 April. Welcoming the team, he emphasized the importance of people-to-people contacts for overall improvement in Sino-US relations. Several teams of US doctors, scientists, and newsmen visited China. Some of them were received by important personalities like Chou En-lai. A detailed description of these visits is not necessary here. Suffice it to say that they manifested the desire on both sides for improved relations. Chinese media reflected in their dispatches, reports, and broadcasts the improvement that had taken place in Sino-US relations. Criticism of the United States was also muted. A Hsinhua dispatch from the United Nations on 5 January 1972 said that although China and America were separated by an ocean, the friendship between the Chinese people and the American people were too strong to be broken even by the policies of the US Government. It went on to narrate the welcome accorded to the Chinese delegation by different sections of people in the United States.

129 Ibid., vol. 8, no. 17, 24 April 1972, p. 774.
In May Nixon visited Moscow. At the end of the visit, on 29 May 1972, a communique was issued as scheduled. The two countries had a major agreement, the SALT accord, limiting US and Soviet offensive and defensive missiles. The communique refrained from making any reference to issues were likely to hurt China's susceptibility.

The summit meeting indicated that Sino-US rapprochement was at a beginning stage, while Soviet-American relations, in spite of differences, had become mature. This was reflected in a subsequent address of Nixon. He said that the United States had begun a generation of peace in "opening a new relationship with the world's most populous country, the People's Republic of China" as well as through its "negotiations with the Soviet Union". The summit demonstrated the US efforts to cultivate better relations with both China and the Soviet Union and thereby giving it greater diplomatic maneuverability in dealings with both the countries. If Nixon would not have gone to Moscow after his Peking visit, the Soviet suspicions as regards US-China talks would have intensified, finally risking the negotiations on SALT between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Moscow Summit and the nature of Soviet-American agreements also suggests that such relationships could be possible only at the super power levels and that the nature of Sino-American relations could acquire such perspective only when

132 Ibid., vol. 8, no. 35, 28 August 1972, p. 1274.
China's military power increased to a point credible enough to rival the super powers. 

Notwithstanding these limitations, Sino-US relations had become a priority area in the foreign policy of the United States. And thus it was necessary for Kissinger to pay a visit to Peking on 19 June 1972 for consultations. Kissinger was closeted with Chou En-lai for four hours on 19 June 1972. Next day he had another round of talks lasting four hours. On this second occasion Foreign Minister Chi P'eng-fei and other officials were also present. Kissinger told a press conference after his return to Washington on 24 June 1972 that he did not see Mao and said that he received no confirmation of Mao's alleged illness. He discussed the Indo-China War at length with the Chinese leaders. It appears thus that the Indo-China war was a serious concern for the Chinese. As regards the question of China helping in a Vietnam settlement, he said that China would "not sit in judgment on its allies". The decisive voice in any settlement would be that of Hanoi, he added. A joint statement issued on 24 June said the Kissinger-Chou talks were "extensive, earnest and frank" and with a view to promoting normalization of relations between the two countries. It also expressed the "desirability of continuing" consultations in the future. It was, of course, clear that the real purpose of Kissinger's visit to Peking was to allay possible fears or


suspicions in China about the Soviet-US parleys held during Nixon's visit to Moscow in the previous month on the question of strengthening the process of *detente* between the two countries.

On 8 May 1972 Nixon had ordered the mining of Haiphong harbour and six other ports. There was intensive bombing of North Vietnam's other supply lines. According to *The Times* of London, Chou En-lai told a BBC correspondent that he would judge the Americans by their deeds. He also held that the withdrawal of US troops from Taiwan would depend on a solution of the problem of Indo-China. In spite of this cautious reaction on his part to Nixon's action in escalating the Vietnam War, it was clear from what Chou said that he feared that the US action might weaken Sino-American relations in the long run. On 11 May a *Jen-min Jih-pao* article characterized Nixon's action as a "dangerous move to extend the war of aggression in Vietnam", and as a "grave act of war escalation". The next day a Chinese Government statement criticized Nixon's action as a "new grave new step". It declared that China would "resolutely support and assist" the Vietnamese people till a completely victory was won.

In the event, however, Sino-American relations were not affected adversely by the escalation of the Vietnam war. On the contrary, there was some improvement in those relations,

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136 SCMP, no. 5138, 22 May 1972, p. 45.
137 Ibid., pp. 43-45.
especially after the signing of the agreement in Paris. On 22 November 1972 President Nixon lifted the 22-year-old ban on travel by aircraft or by ship to China. In an interview on 16 August Secretary Rogers said that Sino-US relations had improved "somewhat" though the improvement was "gradual". He attributed this gradual rather than drastic improvement in relations to the suspension of official relations for twenty-two years. The feeling was that China had been very friendly and restrained in its comments about the United States.

China, too regarded the new development in Sino-American relations as important. Thus Chiao Ku-an-hua, speaking in the General Assembly in October 1972, made a warm reference to the understanding between China and the United States on the principles on international relations. He also said that "the leaders of China and the United States have held talks after more than twenty years suspension of relations between the two countries" and categorized this development as one of the "important events" in international relations.

A Hsinhua report declared that the "gate to friendly relations" had been opened. This report also referred to China's establishment of diplomatic relations with West Germany and Japan. At least in the second case, Japan's overtures

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139 *Department of State Bulletin*, vol. 67, no. 1733, 11 September 1972, p. 270.
140 *Peking Review*, no. 41, 13 October 1972, p. 4.
141 *Hsinhua Selected News Items*, no. 42, 16 October 1972, p. 23.
towards China had been facilitated by the United States move 
towards China. Thus, having established diplomatic relations 
with a large number of countries, China could see the success 
of its diplomatic offensive. A Hsinhua report argued: "Friendly 
contacts have become more frequent between the Chinese people 
and other peoples in more countries and more regions. The 
policy of those who vainly attempted to isolate and encircle 
China has suffered an ignominious failure". No doubt one of 
China's foreign policy goals was to increase its contacts world-
wide; the improvement of Sino-US relations was a related aspect 
of that goal.

The Paris agreement, which brought the war in Vietnam 
to a close, facilitated further improvement of Sino-American 
relations. As China was interested in the conclusion of the 
war in Vietnam to acquire greater flexibility in world affairs, 
by deflecting the super power's rivalry away from Southeast 
Asia to Europe or the Middle East, it was very happy at the 
development. The outline of Education on Situation argued 
that an important objective of the Soviet Union was to pin down 
US forces in Vietnam and the plan failed with the ending of the 
Vietnam war. Now, China felt, the United States would "shift 
its forces from Vietnam to Europe, the Middle East and other 
regions to contend with Soviet revisionism for hegemony".

The significance of the conclusion of the Vietnam war 
for China can be understood from an address delivered by US

142 Ibid.
143 Outline of Education on Situation, n. 28, p. 97.
Deputy Secretary Kenneth Rusk on 21 March 1973. He said: "During and following the President's trip to Peking the Chinese made clear that significant further improvements in relations would follow a settlement in Vietnam". He disclosed that accordingly Nixon sent Kissinger to Peking after the conclusion of the Paris agreement. The talks proved "enormously productive" and the United States moved "more rapidly in the direction of normal relations with the Chinese...." 144

Kissinger went to Peking on a five day visit in February 1973 after the conclusion of the Paris agreement, and each country decided to establish a liaison office in the other's capital. He was received on arrival in Peking by Foreign Minister Chiao Kuan-hua. He had several hours of talks with Chou En-lai, Chi P'eng-fei, and Chiao Kuan-hua. Kissinger met Mao Tse-tung for nearly two hours. Later he described the talks as "frank and wide-ranging conversations in an unrestrained atmosphere". The front-page photographs appeared in the People's Daily in which Mao Tse-tung, Kissinger, and Chou En-lai were shown sitting together. According to the communique issued on the occasion, the two sides reviewed the relations that obtained then between the two countries. They agreed that there had been noticeable progress in Sino-US

146 Ibid., 18 February 1973.
relations and that this would benefit the peoples of both
countries. Indeed, they held that normalization of relations
between China and the USA would contribute to the process of
relaxation of tension in trade as well as to increase scienti-
fic and cultural exchanges. Each side also agreed to estab-
lish a liaison office in the capital of the other.

In a statement released after the communique was signed
Kissinger referred to the various topics discussed during the
talks. He disclosed that the principles of the Shanghai
communique were discussed, particularly those dealing with the
question of normalization of relations and reducing the danger
of military conflict. There was also a reaffirmation of the
undertaking they had jointly accepted in Shanghai that neither
of them would seek hegemony and that they would oppose the
effort of any one else to establish hegemony. Kissinger
said that he was gratified with the talks, and added that the
two countries had "merged from hostility towards normalization".
He also disclosed that they had agreed to discuss "on a global
scale" certain US financial claims against the Chinese Govern-
ment, as also the question of blocked Chinese assets in the
USA; that China would release Philip E. Smith and Robert J.
Flynn, two US nationals held in China since 1965 and 1967

148 See Department of State Bulletin, vol. 68, no. 1760,

149 Kissinger's news conference, 22 February 1973,
ibid., p. 314.

150 Ibid., p. 315.
respectively; and that it would review the case of John T. Downey, an agent of the Central Intelligence Agency who had been captured in 1952. He gave details of the exchanges proposed for the immediate future between the two countries—viz. that China was interested in inviting the Philadelphia Symphony during the fall of 1973, a medical group during the spring of 1974, and a scientific group during the summer of 1974; and that China had agreed to send by way of reciprocation archaeological exhibit from Peking, a group of water conservation experts, insect hormone specialists, and high-energy physicists, and a gymnastic team.

On 15 March 1973 Nixon formally announced that the US liaison office in Peking would open on 1 May, with David Bruce as its chief. He added:

It was the beginning, we trust, of a longer journey, in which we will have our differences, but one in which the most populous nation in the world and the United States of America can work together where their interests coincide for the cause of peace and better relations in the world. (152)

Peking also announced on 30 March, the starting of its Liaison office in Washington, D.C. It named General Huang Chen as the head of its mission in Washington. Huang Chen had been China's Ambassador to France and had participated with the former Chinese Ambassador in Paris in the talks regarding improvement of relations.

The establishment of liaison offices was a significant

151 Ibid.
152 Ibid., vol. 68, no. 1763, 9 April 1973, p. 413.
step in the direction of improving Sino-US relations. Establishment of full diplomatic relations seemed some distance away. Kissinger admitted as much, though implicitly, at a news conference on 22 February 1973. Thus, with the establishment of liaison offices Sino-US relations entered upon a new stage from "largely personal diplomacy to institutionalized diplomacy".

Kissinger again went to Peking in November 1973 to hold talks with the Chinese leaders. Owing to the Watergate affair the US President was incapacitated at this time from taking any major foreign policy initiative. Yet Kissinger got a good reception in Peking. On 10 November he was received by Prime Minister Chou En-lai. In a banquet the Chinese Foreign Minister Chi Peng-fei, referred to the "good progress" in Sino-US relations, and added that the two countries were "determined to do much more and complete the progress" stated earlier. Another significant aspect of the visit was Kissinger's meeting with Mao for as long as two and three quarters hours. The talks between the two reportedly covered "a wide range of subjects


155 Jerome Alan Cohen, "China and the United States: When will the normalization of relations be completed?", in Francis O. Wilcox, China and the Great Powers: Relations with the United States, the Soviet Union, and Japan (New York: Praeger, 1974).

in a "friendly atmosphere". It was rather unusual for Mao to give such a long audience to anybody. It demonstrated Kissinger's excellent personal rapport with the Chinese leaders.

In the communique issued subsequently the two sides stated that they were committed to the principles established in the Shanghai communique. They stressed their opposition particularly to any country or group of countries" seeking to establish its hegemony in any area or region. The communique attached great importance of having "frequent contacts at authoritative levels".

6. China's Policies and Posture

An understanding of Sino-American rapprochement requires a study of China's foreign policy perspective. It has already been stated that China's improvement of relations with the United States was a part of a diplomatic offensive to the world. The main driving force for China's overtures to the world lies in the changes in the balance of power in the world.

In spite of improved relations with the United States, China differed with the latter on various issues. The main reason for its limited convergence of interests with the United States was due to its fragile strength, both economic and military, in the world's balance of power. This gap in power with the United States, and conspicuously with the Soviet Union because the latter's power is immediately felt due to geographical

proximity, is due to its relative weakness in relation to the super powers. This awareness made necessary China's identification with the Third World which differed with the super powers on various issues. China tried to counterpose the third world against the super powers, mainly the Soviet Union. China's relative weakness in the world power balance impelled China not to identify with the big powers entirely. It wanted to identify with the Third World and the revolutionary movements. Chiao Kuan-hua told the 26th session of the General Assembly on 15 November 1971: "We are opposed to the power politics and hegemony of big nations bullying small ones or strong nations bullying weak ones". He also claimed that China did not intend to be a super power subjecting other countries to its "aggression, subversion, control, interference or bullying".

In fact, a major goal of China is status. Up to the period under study, its two major bases of support were its limited power potential combined with a revolutionary posture.

China launched a diplomatic offensive in search of status as a major power in the world. It would be wrong to argue that it is mainly guided by an anti-Soviet phobia. No doubt, China had serious differences with the Soviet Union. However, its overtures to the world cannot be explained as entirely reaction of its anti-Soviet orientation. Its other major objective was to improve relations with various countries in the world in order to play a dynamic role in world affairs.

160 Ibid.
The Americans were now giving a helping hand to China for playing a major role in the world. This was the logical consequence of improvement of relations with the United States, and this US connection, being a major theme in its foreign policy, had to be rationalized. The New Year Day joint editorial in Jen-min Jih-pao and Chieh-fang Chun pao held:

We insist on peaceful coexistence with countries having different social systems on the basis of the five principles and strive for the relaxation of international tension.... Even if a country previously adopted a policy hostile to China we would hold talks with it for the improvement of relations. We uphold our principle and at the same time adopt a flexible attitude which is permissible and necessary for carrying out that principle. (161)

In other words, China sought to justify its new relationship with the United States by taking the position that it was not against holding talks with a country which had previously been hostile. The editorial also reflected the "flexibility" in China's foreign policy line.

Chou En-lai's report at the Tenth National Congress of the CCP in August 1973 also showed the improvement that had taken place in China's relations with the United States. Without directly naming the United States, it argued that the "necessary compromises between revolutionary countries and imperialist countries must be distinguished from collusion between Soviet revisionism and US imperialism". A noteworthy


feature of the report was that while its criticism of the United States was in a low key, it was all fire and brimstone in its comments on the Soviet Union.

Besides China's US connection, the other goal remained its identification with the Third World. We have already explained the main reason for China's identification with the Third World. China's report to the Tenth Congress of the CCP held:

The awakening and growth of the Third World is a major event in contemporary international relations. The Third World has strengthened its unity in the struggle against hegemonism and power politics of the super powers and is playing an ever more significant role in international affairs. (164)

China also stated publicly that it was a part of the Third World. It expressed support for these countries in their struggle to win national independence and state sovereignty, the development of economy and protection of natural resources. The growing non-alignment movement, which had a significant voice in international affairs, was also eloquently praised by China. Greeting the Fourth Conference of Heads of Non-aligned countries, Chou En-lai expressed China's support to the "the non-aligned policy of peace and neutrality pursued by the non-aligned countries".

Speaking in the UN Assembly on 15 November 1971, Chiao

163 Ibid., p. 24.
164 Ibid.
165 Hainhua Weekly, no. 38, 17 September 1973, p. 47.
Kuan-hua stated that all countries, big or small, were equal and were entitled to their independence and sovereignty. He opposed power politics and criticized interference by any country in the internal affairs of others.

Another major theme in Chinese foreign policy was anti-Sovietism. No doubt, the Soviet Union became China's "most important enemy". The Chinese propaganda was essentially directed against the Soviet Union. However, this was only one aspect of China's foreign policy. Any exaggeration of this aspect is likely to be misleading with regard to China's foreign policy perspective.

It is true that China was worried about the Soviet challenge to its influence and not so much military threat as many authors stress. The report of the Tenth Party Congress clearly reflected the bitterness in Sino-Soviet relations. The same bitterness found expression in other official and non-official statements and speeches as well. China often accused the Soviet Union of "scrambling" for maritime hegemony and of being an expansionist power in the world. Chou's report to the Tenth Congress of the CCP referred to declining power of the United States and the consequent offensive strategy adopted by the Soviet Union, and by posing the greater danger.

China stressed on propaganda offensives against the USSR and maintained that the Soviet Union was betraying the

166 Outline of Education on Situation, n. 28, p. 98.
167 Chou's report, n. 8, pp. 11-12.
168 Ibid., p. 12.
interests of the Third World. It charged how the Soviet Union was using "economic aid" as bait and how it was betraying the interests of the revolutionary peoples. While China claimed itself to be a member of the Third World, it tried to alienate the Soviet Union from the Third World and at the same time counterpose the Third World against the Soviet Union.

Another important aspect of China's foreign policy related to Western Europe. China's policy towards Western Europe was significant in two respects. Firstly, as Western Europe emerged as a new centre of power, it was natural for China to take note of this phenomenon. As an emerging power, it was in China's interest to develop areas of complimentarity with Western Europe, wherever possible. Secondly, China felt that a militarily strong Western Europe would compel the Soviet Union to keep large forces on its European front. In Chinese perspective if the USSR's European front was secure, the attention of the Soviet Union would be focussed on the Chinese border and China would be under constant pressure. On the other hand, a challenge to Soviet power from a more cohesive Western Europe would deflect the Soviet Union's attention away from the USSR's Eastern front, thereby somewhat easing the Soviet pressures on China. Besides, in a limited way, the European Economic Community was important for China. By 1973 China began to show some interest in Western technology. If it decided to import Western technology on a massive scale, significant political or even military links with Western Europe would be

of great help.

In view of these reasons China supported a unified Western Europe. At the end of Pompidou's visit on 17 September 1973, a communique was issued in which China said: "China supports the efforts made by the European peoples to safeguard the independence, sovereignty and security of their respective countries and, on this basis, to unite themselves for the preservation of their common security".

It is clear from above that China's foreign policy has acquired greater flexibility and China wants to play a dynamic role in world affairs. However, its limited power in the world balance has prevented it from playing a major role. In the 1973 October war in Middle East, it could not play a major role as in the Indo-Pakistani conflict in 1971. This weakness of China kept China's option open and allowed to play big power diplomacy in a limited way, while identifying with the Third World countries, and even other revolutionary movements. The future however remained uncertain, especially in view of possible changes in the balance of power in the world.

7. The Nature of Sino-American Detente: Problems and Prospects

In the wake of Nixon's visit to Peking, there was much euphoria in the United States over the prospect of an improvement in Sino-American relations. A drastic change occurred in the US Press and public perceptions of China. Nixon himself

observed that this week-long visit to Peking had changed the world. By the end of 1973, however, the euphoria gave way to cool realism which made the two countries leadership aware of the limitations to the process of improvement in Sino-US relations. No doubt cultural contacts expanded; trade relations were strengthened though the volume of trade remained small; but full normalization of relations seemed a distant goal.

The main reason lay inherent in the world power balance. In view of China's weaknesses as a power, it could not play a major role in conflict situations. It was also unattractive for the United States to negotiate with China on limitation of armaments as China's arms strength was not comparable to the super powers. Negotiation on major issues facing the world in a significant way could not be possible in view of China's weak power position.

There were a number of reasons for the tardiness in the progress towards improved Sino-US relations. The US Administration, caught in the Watergate scandal, felt handicapped about taking major foreign policy initiatives. No doubt, Chou En-lai told an American journalist, C.L. Sulzberger, on 8 October 1973 that relations between the two countries would not suffer as a result of the Watergate affair. Kissinger, however, presumably sensed some uneasiness in Peking as regards the effect of Watergate on Sino-US relations and reassured the Chinese leadership on 13 November 1973 that friendship between China and the USA would be continued whatever happened in the

future and "whatever the Administration". 

Besides, the Watergate affair, there was also the intense preoccupation of the Chinese with their own internal affairs. The Tenth Party Congress held in 1973 reflected the differences that had riven the Chinese leadership in the preceding years.

In spite of these limitations, China and the USA forged new links that were "significant but still fairly fragile". They were able to identify areas where their interest converged in various parts of the world. We must, therefore, discuss the areas where there was agreement between the two countries, as also the areas where they disagreed and the problems they faced.

China and the USA found themselves fairly close to each other on some political and strategic sphere. China followed a balance of power approach just like the United States. The United States was a useful ally in checking the growing Soviet influence in various parts of the world, notably in Southeast Asia. The two countries could play complementary roles in checkmating the Soviet Union. This complementarity of roles, however, should not be pressed too far. The Americans had compelling

175 Ibid., p. 1.
reasons for maintaining good relations with the Soviet Union. They shared with the Soviet Union a desire to check proliferation of nuclear weapons. They had a stake in the continuance of the SALT talks. Besides, though the relationship with China was important for the United States, it could not yet be a substitute for the Soviet Union as China's economic strength and military power were limited. The limited nature of Chinese power in relation to the power of other major countries was a serious obstacle on development of a US-China equation that could be fully utilized against the Soviets. While the United States wanted to gain diplomatic leverage with the Soviet Union, it did not want to appear as though it was entirely anti-Soviet. The Americans did say that their efforts to improve relations with China were not directed against Moscow.

Although both China and the United States were anxious to act in concert to limit Soviet political influence in various parts of the world, they had not yet reached a stage where a military understanding between them for mutual help in the event of a possible Soviet attack upon either of them. Some authors have speculated on what might have happened in the event of such a Soviet attack, but the whole question is hypothetical to the extreme and does not merit serious attention.


177 James C. Thomson, Jr., "The United States and China in the Seventies", The Era in American Foreign Policy (New York, 1973); also see Barnett, n. 172, p. 197.
In fact the understanding between the United States and China was still at a formative stage. It had to remain so partly in view of China's weaknesses as an economic or military power. Besides, Sino-US rapprochement, limited though it was, had not been entirely based on an anti-Soviet platform. Both the countries only were adjusting themselves to changes in the world as a whole, and their rapprochement was a part of a changing multipolar world.

Japan was another area where the strategic perspectives of China and the United States manifested a high degree of compatibility. Neither China nor the United States wanted Japan and the Soviet Union to enlarge their mutual contacts. The Soviet Union was trying to wean Japan away by tempting it with the huge economic profits it might gain by undertaking to explore Siberian resources, especially gas resources. In view of this, and also in view of the possibility of an economically powerful Japan rearming itself, China was anxious to draw Japan towards itself and to preclude Soviet influence on Japan. Perhaps, it felt that Japan's foreign policy was not too rigid and was capable of being influenced. It also thought that closer relations between itself and the USA might help in exercising the requisite influence on Japan's foreign policy to bring in line to serve their interests. Japan had finally recognized Peking. It also severed diplomatic ties with Taiwan though it still retained its economic contacts. China's acquiescence in

Japan's retaining its trade connexions with Taiwan clearly demonstrated how much China valued its relations with Japan. Nevertheless, Japan still appeared to be undecided owing probably to the choices open to it.

Our discussion of the nature of Sino-American relations must also touch on two other issues, viz. Taiwan and trade relations.

The US defence treaty with Taiwan was a major stumbling-block. The American had made no secret of their difficulties in going back on their treaty commitments. Though they avoided emphasizing their treaty commitments to Taiwan, Kissinger affirmed that the treaty would be maintained: "The US position was stated in the President's world report in which he said that the treaty will be maintained. Nothing has changed that position". on 16 July 1973, in a statement to the Joint US-Japan Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs in Tokyo, Secretary Rogers talked of US "determination to fulfil our commitments to the Republic of China". At a Press Conference on 21 November 1973 Henry Kissinger reiterated that there had been no change with respect to "the situation in Taiwan".

In seeking to draw closer to each other the overriding

181 Ibid., vol. 69, no.1731, 13 August 1973, p. 239.
182 Ibid., no.1748, 10 December 1973, p. 703.
concern of China and the USA was largely strategic. However, as we have already noticed, Taiwan posed a major problem in the way of normalization of relations. The two countries glossed over the issue at Shanghai in order to facilitate the signing of an agreed communique, but it was clear that until the Taiwan issue was solved, normal diplomatic relations between the two countries was ruled out.

The United States realized that as long as it maintained its embassy in Taipei, full diplomatic relations between the Peking regime and the United States were out of the question. The question of diplomatic relations had a symbolic significance for Peking. For years the Taiwanese regime had claimed to be the legal Government of China. It had enjoyed representation in the United Nations and had claimed to represent the whole of China. It had also served as a US defence perimeter to contain the Peking regime. In view of this, China would not establish full diplomatic relations with USA unless it severed its political ties with Taiwan. No doubt the Chinese did not press the issue. They gave more importance to the political and strategic aspects of their relations to avoid complicating Sino-US relations by pressing a quick solution of Taiwan issue. Even then Taiwan posed problems on account of its involvement with complex legal and political questions concerning both countries.

183 Jerome Alan Cohen, "China and the United States: When will the normalization of relations be completed?", in Francis O. Wilcox, China and the Great Powers: Relations with the United States, the Soviet Union and Japan (New York, 1974), p. 70.
The Americans found it difficult to sever diplomatic ties with Taiwan. Though most Americans accepted improvement of relations with the People's Republic of China as a creative departure in the post-war foreign policy of their country, they were not as yet prepared to go so far to sever ties with Taiwan. Some of them were in favour of giving an opportunity to mainland Taiwanese to choose their future.

US economic interests in Taiwan were another problem. Even in the event of their political ties being severed with Taiwan, the Americans wanted to retain their economic ties with Taiwan. The Japanese were able to retain their economic links with Taiwan even after severing diplomatic relations. Whether the Americans would be able to do likewise was not certain.

The Americans were deterred from severing ties with Taiwan for fear of creating destabilizing effects in the area from their point of view.

Withdrawal of forces from Taiwan was not as difficult a problem for the United States as the question of severing ties with Taiwan or of going back on the defence treaty with Taiwan. By 1973, as the Vietnam War ended, the Americans withdrew a larger number of forces from Taiwan.

The Americans stated at Shanghai that the Taiwan issue should be settled peacefully. China on the other hand was not averse to the use of force to liberate Taiwan if a peaceful solution was not easily available. It looked upon the liberation

of Taiwan as an internal affair of the Chinese people. It was, therefore, not willing to rule out the use of force to liberate Taiwan. It consistently opposed the idea that it should commit itself not to use force and that it would not take a public position to the contrary. The situation, however, called for a peaceful solution. Firstly, use of force might damage China's relations with the USA and Japan - the two countries which were most important for China. Secondly, a military resolution of the Taiwan issue was difficult. China would encounter sufficient resistance from the well-trained Taiwanese forces. Besides, there was the Soviet military pressure on the northern borders.

In view of these difficulties, it seems that China wanted to put pressure on Taiwan and secure a peaceful liberation. In its perspective, China's United States connection would ultimately demoralize the Taiwanese and thus facilitate a peaceful solution. The Outline of Education on Situation said that "with the improvement of Sino-U.S. relations, there will arise a gradual alienation in relations between the United States and the Chiang gang". It also argued that it was only due to the support of the United States that Taiwan "appeared to be quite tough". With the improvement of relations between China and the United States, Taiwan was not as tough as before. It said: "We can exploit this by urging them to come over for talks in order to strive for the liberation of Taiwan and the unification of the fatherland by peaceful means".

185 The Outline of Education on Situation, n. 28, p. 106.
186 Ibid.
Trade

It is necessary to study Sino-American trade as well in order to understand the nature of the relations between the two countries. In the wake of Nixon's visit to Peking, the Americans hoped that the huge China market might be opened up to their manufactures. They looked upon the establishment of liaison offices as "a first step toward building the necessary infrastructure" for Sino-US trade.

However, the increase in Sino-US trade did not measure up to the expectations, though trade continued to increase steadily. No doubt total trade between the two countries increased from a bare $5 million to $35.9 million in 1972 and even $805.1 million in 1973, the US share of China's total trade was not significant. In 1972, the US shared 2.8 per cent of China's imports and 1.1 per cent of China's exports. In 1973, the share of China's imports rose to 16.3 per cent while exports remained at a bare 1.3 per cent. Although the United States was in a position to give sophisticated technological products to China, the growth of trade appeared to be hindered by certain political constraints like the absence of diplomatic relations and the impasse over the Taiwan question.

Economic contacts were also limited by the fact that China followed a policy of self-reliance. Trade formed a small part of the UN. To some extent any major change in the volume and pattern of Sino-US trade depended to some extent on the change of the policy of self-reliance, which had not changed as

187 Cohen, n. 159.
189 Ibid., p. 595, Table 3.

There were other constraints, chiefly economic. Even in the period 1971-73 there was a significant trade imbalance in favour of the United States. There was also the question of US tariffs on goods from China. China did not enjoy the "most favoured nation" treatment in the United States that a large number of other countries did. This limited the development of Sino-US trade.

The future trends on Sino-US trade were not clear as of 1973. It depended mainly on two factors, a change in China's policy of self-reliance and further improvement of Sino-US relations at the political level.

**China's Quest for Technology**

It is possible that one of the considerations behind China's seeking improvement in its relations with the United States was its quest for sophisticated technology. Significantly, in the period following Nixon's visit to Peking, the Chinese evinced keen interest in importing sophisticated technology from the advanced countries. They bought various types of plants and equipment from Japan and Britain. They organized export fairs and industrial exhibitions in China in the course of their bid to acquire foreign technology. They seemed to be interested especially in the technological advances made in the industrialized countries of the West in areas such as oil exploration, mining, and power. They were even prepared to buy foreign equipment and pay for them from what they were earning from their petroleum
exports. All this was a clear departure from their earlier policy of doing without foreign technology.

The United States, being highly advanced in sophisticated technology, was in a better position to fulfill China's requirements than most other countries. However, up to 1973, the Chinese did not utilize U.S. technology on a large scale. A major handicap was the absence of diplomatic relations between the two countries. It looked as though the Chinese would go in a big way for U.S. technology in the event of diplomatic relations being established between their country and the United States; for the Americans on their part had shed the inhibitions of the past. They would be only too glad to meet China's needs if China should ever show keen interest in their technology.

Both China and the United States had a stake in improving their mutual relations. Their efforts to improve mutual relations did not achieve the desired degree of success because the state of Sino-American relations depended on the nature of the international balance of power, which was in a state of flux. The state of Sino-Soviet relations and the attitude of Japan were also important in this context, and changes in either could have bad implications for Sino-U.S. relations. China and the United States, therefore, decided to solidify all existing links and move gradually in the direction of improving relations.