CONCLUSION

Sino-American relations from 1962-73 experienced a period of brief but intense hostility followed by a process of slow rapprochement when China and the United States developed complimentarity of interests in some areas, however limited. We have made an attempt to study the relationship between the two countries against the background of the undercurrent in world politics. It was the nature of international politics that was responsible for the intense period of hostility between the two countries. Again the slow transformation of the world situation since mid-sixties necessitated change of perspective of the United States and China towards each other.

The main reason as to why the global forces affected Sino-American relations is that while the USA was a Super Power and had global interests, China, because of its size and future potentials, had a global perspective. Thus changes in Sino-US relations were initiated by the transformation of the global forces. The Sino-US hostility up to the mid sixties and the rapprochement that came about afterwards can both be explained as the outcome of changes in the world forces. Now, we can briefly refer to the nature of hostility in Sino-American relations, before coming to the point of improvement in their relations.

The first phase in Sino-American relations which lasted till 1964 was one of developing hostility in which relations between China and the United States gradually reached a point of confrontation. In the second phase, relations between the
two reached the lowest ebb on the Vietnam issue. The United States, convinced that China was an expansionist power, decided to halt the spread of Chinese influence in Southeast Asia by defeating China's neighbour and ally, North Vietnam. China on its part did all it could to encourage the Vietnamese to stand up to the American challenge and carried on a propaganda war against the alleged American attempt to impose its hegemony on Southeast Asia.

On the basis of the developments during the period 1962-64, a few general observations may be made as to why China and the United States came to regard each other as enemies. We have already stated before, the international environment was the major factor behind their hostile relationship. The United States and the Soviet Union had entered upon a new phase in their relations. The way they sorted out the problems and situations that arose in Cuba, Berlin and Laos made the Chinese suspect a hang-up between these two powers. The suspicion was strengthened by the bitterness in China against the Soviet Union in the context of the Sino-Soviet dispute. It created a climate in which China became an anti- status quo Power and thought it imperative to oppose the United States. The Test-Ban Treaty of 1963 further confirmed for China the necessity to continue to be an anti-status quo Power. China wanted to develop nuclear weapons and severely criticized the Test-Ban Treaty as an act of collaboration between the United States and the Soviet Union aimed against China. The United States continued the process of promoting better understanding between itself and the
Soviet Union in dealing with conflict situations through increased communication and contact. In US perspective the Soviet Union was more important and reliable than China. The United States, therefore, decided to contain China along its periphery. A second major factor that deepened hostility between China and the United States was that they misperceived each other's words and deeds. The United States took an exaggerated view of China's alleged belligerency and aggressiveness and thought that it was an expansionist power. It, therefore, shaped its policies so as to contain China in every possible way. China on its part misperceived the nature and degree of the American involvement in Vietnam. It also misperceived the proportion of the role and activities of the anti-Chinese lobby in world affairs headed by the United States.

A few comments also need to be made on the nature of Sino-American hostility. Since the Tonkin Gulf Incident of August 1964, the United States massively involved itself in the war in Vietnam. Whereas in the earlier stages of the war, the United States was acting in an advisory capacity, in the later stages it became an active participant. It sent its ground forces in 1965 and bombed Hanoi and Haiphong in the following year. As the American involvement deepened, China's concern mounted. In its statements, China pledged "support" to North Vietnam, but in its actual conduct it took care not to get embroiled. It did, of course, offer limited help in other forms to North Vietnam. The United States severely criticized China. The United States made it clear that one of its
objectives in Southeast Asia was to contain China. This alerted China to the grave danger posed to its security by the American presence on its periphery. The hostility between the two countries was naturally intensified. It was feared in 1965 that China might be provoked to participate directly in the war and that the United States might destroy China's incipient nuclear capability and industrial centres. Neither of these happened because, in spite of their mutual misperception, the two countries were much too conscious of the terrible consequences both for themselves and for the world at large, of a direct showdown between them. The United States did not wish to risk involving itself in a land war in China. China on its part avoided taking any action that might provoke the United States to retaliate massively.

Confrontation between China and the United States helped neither of them in realizing their objectives. In Vietnam, in spite of massive American involvement and the use of various types of strategies, victory eluded the United States. Though tired, the United States continued the war. This set off a process of self-searching in the United States. The general public in the United States was disillusioned. Many people began to question the tenacity of American objectives and the validity of American policies. The Senate hearings contributed in a major way in enlightening the public and the Administration by subjecting the American objectives in Vietnam to searching scrutiny. They showed that the danger posed by China had been over-emphasized. It became clear that a policy framed with
reference to a mistaken perception was hardly likely to yield positive results. The hearings also brought out the American failure to isolate China. The Administration's response to the debate was slow, as we have shown earlier, but there was no ignoring the new mood prevailing in the United States. The US Administration, too, took note of the hearings in the Senate and began to reassess its policies with regard to China.

Now it has become evident that the American setbacks which became apparent in Vietnam led it to reassess its objectives in Vietnam. The United States also questioned its own earlier strategy of over-emphasizing the Chinese danger. A new perspective slowly developed in its foreign policy. The United States' exercise in this rethinking towards the world and China was the result of its weakening power as reflected in the US setbacks in the war in Vietnam. Now, in the US view, hostility with China would be counterproductive and a readjustment of its world-wide role was required as well as change of policies towards China. Thus it was not the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in August 1968 which, according to most writers, initiated major changes in the world balance of power. It is also not correct to argue that Mao looked to the Americans for help only in the aftermath of the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia. The change in the world balance of power must have affected changes in the perceptions of Mao Tse-tung towards the world and the United States. The Chinese leaders could not overlook the US setbacks in Vietnam and the consequent exercises to change policies towards China. The US Senate Foreign
Relations Committee had initiated a major debate on Sino-US relations in March 1966 which influenced the US Administration in reviewing its policy. As early as 1966, important US officials, including President Johnson and Secretary Rusk, had begun to be somewhat conciliatory towards China in their statements. Rusk in a speech in March 1966 announcing ten principles of policy towards China clearly indicated that the US Administration was developing a change in its perspectives towards relations with China. The speech of the US Under-Secretary of State, Nicolas Katzenbach on 21 May 1968 indicated the most comprehensive review of the US China policy, months earlier the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia. In May 1968 the Director of US Central Intelligence Agency had invited Chinese journalists to cover the 1968 US Presidential election thereby indicating that the concrete steps had been taken in the process of rapprochement. The Chinese, too, had taken note of the new posture of the United States, as evident from the speech of the Chinese Ambassador at Warsaw, Wang Kuo-chien in March 1968. Thus the above facts indicate that the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia was not the starting-point of Sino-American rapprochement, the event only accelerated the process already begun. In fact, the US setbacks in Vietnam worked as a compulsion for the United States to initiate major changes in its perspective towards the world as well as China. The developments after the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia was the continuation of the process of rapprochement begun earlier.

As regards the rationale of Sino-US rapprochement, the
changes in the international balance of power worked as the
decisive force to bring about Sino-US rapprochement. The
domestic situation in China and to a lesser extent in the
United States no doubt facilitated the process. However, it
was the transformation in the world forces that had the major
role in leading the two countries to mend fences; the changes
in the domestic factors in each country only lent a helping
hand to the process of rapprochement.

The US setback in the Vietnam war around late 1965
indicated the erosion of the power of the United States and
afterwards initiated changes in the world power relationships.
The US decline in power coincided with the Soviet Union's
attempts to achieve parity with the United States in military
capability, which crystallized afterwards. Again, an economi­
cally resurgent Japan and a more cohesive Western Europe began
to reassert themselves. The United States had to treat these
emerging centres of power in respectable terms. China, too,
had to take cognizance of the emerging multipolar world in
order that it would find a suitable role in the new balance of
power, which had been denied to it earlier.

China found a new situation in the world which facili­
tated its playing a major role. Notwithstanding China's rela­
tive weaknesses as an economic or military power, it was recog­
nized as a major force in view of its size, strategic importance
and future potentiality. China on its part was keener to play
a major role in world affairs.

The Sino-Soviet dispute which was getting intense added
fluidity in the world balance of power. It not only brought about changes in the world situation, it affected Sino-US relations in a major way. However, we must take into account all the forces that went into transforming the power relationships in the world and thereby effecting the process of Sino-US rapprochement.

While changes in the world balance of forces worked as decisive in bringing about Sino-US rapprochement, we must take into account the internal situation in China, and the United States as facilitating the process. The Cultural Revolution in China paved the process of rapprochement. It had a moderating effect on China's foreign policy in general, and policy towards the United States in particular. By the time the intensity of the Cultural Revolution had died down, China paid greater attention to its foreign affairs. As China had been busy in its internal affairs during the Cultural Revolution, and its hostility towards the USA diminished, the United States could seriously review its China policy. Another major development inside China, the fall of Lin Piao in September 1971, facilitated Sino-US rapprochement. Lin was presumably opposed to a policy of mending fences with the United States. Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai on the other hand favoured better relationships with the United States. No doubt, power struggle was central in the differences Lin had with the Maoists, and even domestic issues contributed to the differences in a major way, the differences over foreign policy issues is however not without significance. For the fall of Lin Piao eliminated an
effective internal opposition to the Maoists policy of improved relations with the United States. As regards the United States, the people in general were behind the Administration's policy of mending fences with China in order to readjust the United States relations with the major forces in the world, facilitating the process of rapprochement.

While Sino-US rapprochement has taken place, we can now discuss the nature of their rapprochement.

Sino-US rapprochement after 1971 appeared to be a dramatic change in the course of Sino-US relations. The visit of the US table-tennis team in April 1971 and Kissinger's secret trip to Peking culminating in the invitation to Nixon to visit China were seen as sudden changes in Sino-US relations. However, if we view these developments against the background of the process of rapprochement, especially if we refer to the steps taken since 1966 in the direction of improving relations, it would be clear that the developments after 1971 were the culmination of the process of rapprochement begun in mid-sixties.

China and the United States improved relations in several stages. In the first phase, efforts were made, especially on the part of the United States, to diminish hostilities and slowly begin to change the perspectives on which Sino-US relations were based earlier. In the second phase, efforts were made to make use of communication channels at Warsaw and through intermediaries like Romania. In the third stage, with the secret trip of Kissinger to Peking in July 1971, and Nixon's visit to Peking in February 1972, direct communication links
were established. The opening of liaison offices the following year created authoritative channels of communication and Sino-US rapprochement developed into another major stage.

The Shanghai Communique issued on 23 February 1972 indicated that Sino-US rapprochement had taken concrete shape. Notwithstanding differences on several issues, which were freely expressed in the communique, the two countries had identified areas of complimentarity of interests. One such area was to limit the influence of the Soviet Union though reference to the Soviet Union by name was avoided. Neither country wanted an immediate solution of the Taiwan issue in order to facilitate agreements on other areas, however limited at that time. The Chinese were content with the US assertion that it agreed with the view on either side of the Taiwan straits that there was only one China and that Taiwan was a part of China. Reference to US defence treaty with Taiwan was avoided.

Cultural contacts increased rapidly in the months following Nixon's visit to Peking. There was steady expansion of trade, while the volume of trade remained small. Kissinger's visits to Peking, indicating personal rapport with the Chinese leaders including Mao, brought about further improvement in relations between the two countries. However, by 1973, there appeared to be a slow down in the pace of rapprochement in Sino-US relations. In view of the Watergate affair, the American President was handicapped from taking major foreign policy initiatives. Inside China, with the strengthening of the hold
of the radicals, foreign policy issues received lower priority.

In spite of these developments, the Sino-US rapprochement had already become a priority area in the foreign policy perspectives of both China and the United States. While both the countries had interest in limiting the Soviet influence, the extent of acting in co-ordination was not yet clear. The United States especially did not wish to appear as though it was co-operating with China in an anti-Soviet platform. It seemed to keep its relationship with the Soviet Union in good repair.

While liaison offices had been established in 1973, the question of establishment of diplomatic relation became a live issue, though it appeared to be hindered by the Taiwan question. The solution of the Taiwan question again itself depended on a suitable climate for solution, depending on major developments in the international area.

A discussion of the nature of Chinese foreign policy is also called for understanding Sino-US relations.

The Chinese tone in foreign policy was moderated. With the emergence of multipolarity in the world, China seemed to be interested in playing a major role in world affairs. The Sino-US rapprochement was only one aspect, though a major one, of its strategy to play a growing role. Its frequent reference to "peaceful co-existence" as a principle of its foreign policy, its establishment of diplomatic relations with a large number of countries in the wake of Nixon's visit to China reflected China's desire of activating its foreign policy.

Notwithstanding improvement of relations with some of the
major powers, and the interest to project itself as a major force, China was constrained by its relative weaknesses in economic strength and military power. This gap in aspirations and potentialities necessitated ways of making up the shortcomings. Thus China looked to the Third World as a base of support by appearing to be their champion. Such a strategy gives China respectability as well as bargaining leverage in big power diplomacy, especially against the Soviet Union.

While as a broad generalisation, this was the nature of Chinese foreign policy, we can discuss the key forces determining the foreign policy making.

In our view, the nature of the international situation at a given point of time moulds its orientation in foreign policy. In the early sixties, China decided its foreign policy strategy in the context of the global balance of power, and became an anti-status quo power. The moderation in its foreign policy afterwards was the result of further changes in the global forces. China being a large state, strategically located and with high future potentials, it was more influenced by the international environment than small states.

No doubt, the nature of the internal situation also affected China's foreign policy, it was the global forces that determined China's strategy to the world. In the past, the Chinese leadership decided their strategy to the world and brought about changes in response to events elsewhere, not so much due to the events inside China.

What was the goal of China in its foreign policy? It
has been a subject of controversy in view of China's ideological pronouncements. The major criterion in determining its goals cannot be located on the basis of pronouncements, but on the basis of what China has done in the past. The task of identification of goals becomes somewhat easier, when we view China as a part of the international system, having a state apparatus to meet national compulsions. Thus China behaved and must necessarily behave in a way similar to any other major state.

Like any other state, China was concerned about its security. However, it would not be fair to argue that security considerations alone were central in the foreign policy-making of China. In fact, China seemed more occupied with the desire to play a major role in world affairs, and thus improve the status of the country. Over the years the search for status became more prominent in China's conduct of foreign affairs as reflected in its increased cultural and political contacts with a large number of countries, and the increased interest in international affairs. China also found greater scope to increase its influence.

As of 1973, it appeared that China would continue its policy of big-power game, while at the same time trying to use the Third World for its own advantage, by trying to appear as the champion of the third world cause. Sino-US relations bid for further development amidst this changing international correlation of forces, the continuity and indeed worsening Sino-Soviet conflict, the need to secure Taiwan through negotiation
with U.S.A., and the strong desire of the Chinese leaders to modernize the country for which technology and equipment is needed from countries like U.S.A., Japan, Germany, France and Britain. Political, strategic and economic considerations all make for growing ties between Washington and Peking, as long as the present international balance and domestic balance of forces continues to prevail. But the question of the future would be whether, apart from the international balance, the present domestic balance of forces continues to be maintained. Any major change there would inevitably bring about corresponding changes in foreign policy and in Sino-US relations. This unlike the immediate prospect lies in substantial improvement in Sino-US relationship, the distant future still remains uncertain.