CHAPTER THREE

CHINA, INDIA AND
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The emergence of People's Republic of China in October 1, 1949 made the world balance of power upset. It introduced an entirely new political element in the continent of Asia. It immediately posed the problem of recognition of the new regime as the Government of China and sitting of a regime in the United Nations Organization as the real representative of the Chinese people.

India and the United States took an entirely contradictory view of these new developments and this difference continued for a considerable period of time. India welcomed this development as a victory of the Chinese people but the United States of America interpreted it as another installment of victory of aggressive international communism. The communist aggression against South Korea and China's role in prolonging the war kept American opinion strongly antagonistic to the Chinese communist regime. The basic objective of American foreign policy was to restrain what they considered expansionist design of international communism. A network of military alliances and bases initiated by the anti-communists stretched across the oceans and continents and America expected India to join the Western power.

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On the other hand, from the very beginning India took the position that as the communist regime had, in fact, come out victorious in the civil war and as revolutionary changes were taking place in China, other nations could help, make and keep the transition a peaceful one by showing understanding and sympathy for the new regime. Many Indians reasoned that unless the new Chinese regime was generally accepted, its leaders would become embittered and isolated from the main current of world affairs and unduly dependent on the Soviet Union. In spite of their both being Asian nations, India and China had nevertheless been far removed from each other. At the same time, however, there prevailed an atmosphere of support within India that communist China, in future, will be helpful to Asian people to face successfully the stronger Western powers. There was also a sense that China might compete with India for influences over the future of Asia. In spite of this awareness in India and the rejection of Chinese communist domestic methods by many thoughtful Indians, there was a significant difference in Indian and American reaction towards development within China. India did not share the moral repugnance toward communism that most of the Americans felt. The believe that the Chinese people had a right to choose whatever form of government they desire and that it was no concern of outsiders what that choice was, Americans felt that no real choice was made by the Chinese people. They also felt that the international character of a communist government premeated the actions that it took toward other nations and in turn influenced the assumptions on which other national based their policies toward communist state.
Difference in evaluation of the Chinese communist domestic order served as an irritant in Indo-American relations, as did the differences in evaluation of the Soviet system. However, the more acute issues concerned rather the impact of the Chinese politics in world affairs and the most suitable international postures adopted towards the communist China. In Indo-American views the major issues had been the recognition of communist China and its admission into the United Nations.

The recognition of the regime as the Government of China and the seating of a regime in the United Nations as the accredited representative of China were separate issues, but they were closely interrelated, leaning as they did on the same arguments and bringing into play the same emotion. Both issues rested on combinations of formal arguments and political considerations. Both India and America were in opposite camps on the question of recognition and accepting China as a member of the United Nations. Both countries had adopted a different attitude towards China, and the United States, in particular, tried to counter the influence of Japan and Russia.

In the absence of uniformly accepted criteria of legitimacy, India had in most cases, though not all, followed the simple doctrine that de facto control of territory and administration entitles a government to 'de jure' status. India the second non-communist Government did so on this basis. The United States of America had, since the time of Jefferson, in most, but not all periods of its history, applied three criteria for recognition.
(i) Control over machinery of State,
(ii) Government with the assent of the people or at least without their open opposition, and
(iii) the willingness and ability of a regime to fulfil its international obligations.

Failure to meet the 2nd and 3rd standards, or either of them had in the twentieth century delayed or prevented American recognition. In the opinion of American, the Chinese communist did not meet Jefferson's second criterion and had repeatedly violated the third one. Particularly, the aggression of China in Korea as charged by the United Nations had not been purged by the subsequent action of Peking. Hence the formal grounds for continued recognition of the Kuomintang Government by the U.S.A. remained valid. These reasons applied equally to the American's stand on the seating of the Chinese communist regime in the United Nations. This line of argument had little impression in India. India's complaint was that those principles were not applied by the United States of America in comparable cases, including the states of Eastern Europe and Israel.

Prime Minister Nehru, during his visit to the United States of America, had touched on the question of the recognition of Chinese Communist Government. He had pointed out the need for recognising 'realities'. India herself recognized the reality and she did not wish to wait for United States' action in question of recognition of the Communist Government of China. Peter Calvo Coressi explained
India's attitude in the following words: "The Indian Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru was eager to establish relation with Peking because he believed that Chinese communist could be weaned from Moscow and that India and China could together constitute a third force, which might perhaps build a bridge between Washington and Moscow".  

Pandit Nehru explained the attitude of India in the Indian Parliament on March 17, 1960. He said that India was recognizing the facts of the Chinese communists having come into power and effectively controlling the mainland of China. He pointed out that it was not a question of approving or disapproving the changes, but of recognizing of a major event in history and dealing with it. India was satisfied that the new Government of China was a stable government and there was no force likely to supplant it. India's approach was thus based on the defacto theory of recognition of the Government. International law holds that new Government should be recognized as soon as they are, in fact in control of the State, without going into the nature of that Government. It would be wrong to assume that mere recognition of Communist China by India only created serious and immediate differences with the United States of America. There were a number of facts which must be remembered in this connection.

Firstly, not only India but also the United Kingdom, the principal partner of the U.S.A. in cold war, accorded recognition to the Government of Peking.

Survey of International Affairs (London), 1949 SR., p. 335.
Secondly, attitude of the United States of America at the end of 1949 against China's recognition was not fully hardened. The publication of the Department of States White Paper on American Policy in China on August 4, 1949, had been an evidence that the "American Government had washed its hands of the Nationalist regime and was waiting on events." It had emerged that the United States of America was not prepared to under-write to the Chiang Government but, at the same time, did not quite know what to do about the Peking Government. The United States wanted to wait for China's development, particularly whether communist China passed into the Russian orbit or not, and to delay recognition until this became clear. The United States interpreted Mao-Tse-Tung's prolonged visit to Moscow in December, 1949 as an evidence of Chinese subservience to the Soviet Russia. In a Press Conference on January 12, 1950 Mr. Acheson expressed this fear and alleged that the Soviet Union was trying to dislodge Chinese provinces namely Manchuria, Outer Mongolia and Sinkiang.

Thus the United States was suspicious on two grounds:

(i) The Peking Government's subservience to a foreign imperialism, and

(ii) Peking Government's maltreatment to the United States' citizens and seizure of military barracks in Peking on 16th January, 1950, which housed the United States' Consular Offices.

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3 Survey of International Affairs of 1842, London, pp. 50 - 325.
4 B. M. George (ed.): The Pattern of Responsibility Record of Secretary of States Dean Acheson, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1962, pp. 179-80.
This was confirmed on the signing of Sino-Soviet treaty of friendship alliance and Mutual Assistance on February 15, 1960.

Indian stand for recognizing the Government of China was not complicated by any policy failure or anti-communism. In fact her attitude to the communist victory in China was quite different from that of the United States of America. India explained that no moral judgement was involved in recognizing the Peking Government. India looked upon the downfall of the Kuomintang not merely as the defeat of a regime, but due to the fact that it had made itself an instrument of Western imperialism interest.

Both India and America were allied in the fight against Japan in the second World War, and the United States despite the opposition of its allies seated China as a permanent member of the United Nation Security Council. But when Mao-Tse-Tung came to power, the United States was perturbed and began to work against China, giving support to Chiang-Kai-Shek who had set himself up as the head of the Government of China in a small island off the coast of China. Although India had hob-nobbed with Chiang-Kai-Shek when he was on the mainland, she recognized the revolution and welcomed Mao-Tse-Tung's accession to power. Nehru thought that the emergence of China as a unified country would certainly change the balance of power in Asia. The United States' leaders on the other hand saw in Mao-Tse-Tung the sinister apparition of international communism and could not understand Indian's enthusiasm for him.

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Chinese regime in Peaking was considered by Washington as a sore. So question of recognizing China was not entertained by them. Americans wanted to develop sudden interest in India. She appeared to some observers in Washington as the only hope of stemming the tide of communism in Asia. In August, 1950 The New York Times said that United States' hopes in Asia were pinned on India and that Nehru in a sense was the counter-weight on the democratic side to Mao-Tse-Tung. The newspaper wrote that to have Pandit Nehru as an ally in the struggle for Asiatic support is urgent. Nehru did not want to be hostile towards the United States, the first country outside the Commonwealth he visited. In 1949 he went there to seek goodwill and co-operation. Washington was most anxious to have Nehru's friendship but the inscrutable psychological and political barriers between the affluent United States and poverty-striken India did not allow them to move closer to each other. Nehru's meeting with President Truman and Dean Acheson, the Secretary of States showed that no clear rapport existed between Washington and New Delhi. Nehru was proud and suspicious. Truman was indifferent and condescending. Dean Acheson said of his meeting with Nehru that "he came in a prickly mood, annoyed by what he called American intervention". Acheson reported with a touch of contempt that "the great man arrived on October 11. I hoped that uninhabited by witnesses we might establish a personal relationship. But he would not relax... I was convinced that Nehru and I were not destined to have a pleasant personal relationship... he was one of the most difficult men with whom I ever had to deal..."
he talked to me, as Queen Victoria said of Gladstone, as though I were a public meeting. The New York Times, which had seen in Nehru in August, 1961 that Jawaharlal Nehru was "fast becoming one of the great disappointment of the post war era...". The United States accused India of adopting a basic pro-Soviet stand of opposing United states' policies in the United Nation and elsewhere and of taking no interest in the collective security of what Washington called the free world. One of the great motivations of Washington's foreign policy in the 1950s was its fear of the Soviet Union. The United States sought to stop what it called communist expansion by increasing military establishments and helping other nations to build up their armed strength. The United States military action in Korea, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia were in part meant to stop the spread of communism. Washington championed the concept of military alliance and declared that peace in a divided world could be achieved only through collective security. India was opposed to this policy. She feared it would lead to tension where none existed and to the eventual domination of weak nations by the United States. She felt that her national security would be safeguarded by following a policy of peaceful co-existence with other countries. It is clear that on the issues of recognition and seating of communist China in the United Nation, India and the United States did not see eye to eye. From time to time, various suggestions were put up for breaking the deadlock but none of them had much reality.

Thus, on occasions it had been suggested that Security Council membership be revised so that the permanent seat held by Nationalist China would be given to India. This was not acceptable to India nor was it in accord with its friendly relations with Communist China. Another proposal had been that both the Communist and the Nationalist Governments of China be recognized and accepted as members of the United Nation. In this manner, international representation of the communist regime would be recognized and relation of the United States with the Nationalist Government of China and other countries will continue. Both the Indian and American Governments had been acting to let the issue lie dormant for the time being since there seemed no acceptable way out of the present impasse. This course of "agreeing to disagree" also served the desire of both India and the United States to preserve place in East Asia. Furthermore, the issues of recognition and United National membership are part of a larger content which must itself change before any real new developments could be expected on these two issues. The questions of recognition and United Nations' membership could not be resolved so long as the status of Formosa remains in context. By 1961 however, when the peace treaty with Japan was signed, Chiang-Kai-Shek had been driven out from the mainland and had established the Nationalist Government of Formosa.

The Chinese communists had argued their case from the position that the People's Government by its mainland victory, became the successor government of China's territory including Formosa, thus placing the Kuomintang regime in the status merely of a rebellious opposition.
It was important symbolically and practically to the communists and cause of treat to peace which had created continuous anxiety in India and United States. The communists had repeatedly declared their intention of liberating Formosa if possible peacefully and by force if necessary. In 1955 they emphasized the point by building up airfields, supply dumps and other military facilities along the coast opposite to Formosa. Meanwhile, the Nationalist Government made every preparation to prevent the communist from seizing Formosa and the off-shore islands.

The Government of India did not recognize the Kuomintang regime in Formosa and would, indeed, not be averse seeing the end of a regime which depends on heavily American support. In a part, this attitude was based on the danger of war inherent and it was a result of the Indian feeling that the open and substantial American support to China controlled by Chiang represented a new kind of imperialism in Asia. It was assumed in India, however, that American opinion would not willingly accept a communist seizure of Formosa and this for a number of reasons the effect on non-communist Chinese everywhere of such a resounding communist victory.

Both India and the United States advised the two Chinese regimes not to break peace on Formosa issue. It was also not possible however, to work out any acceptable solution of the Formosa question. The idea of an independent Formosa was from time to time explored. An independent Formosa could probably be established only if it were
neutralized. It would also probably be necessary to provide outside help to ensure the development of economy in Formosa. Overloaded with difficulties as it was, this solution might produce some positive features, if pursued gradually, peacefully and without undue pressure. It may, of course, be possible that with the lapses of time the two Chinese Government will reach at some sort of settlement out of their own accord to put an end to the existing and uneasy situation.

It is believed that the Indian policy makers will continue to try to bring the Chinese Communists and the United States of America on the same platform with the wishful thinking of the two Chinese regime in the light of general concept and international political experience for peace and tranquillity over the world.