

BEIJING AND MOSCOW : THE POST-MAO SCENARIO //

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CONTENTS

	<u>Pages</u>
PREFACE	1 - 11
CHAPTER I MAO AND BEIJING-MOSCOW RELATIONS (1949-1976)	1 - 56
CHAPTER II THE POST-MAO PHASE OF BEIJING- MOSCOW RELATIONS : OSCILLATORY ANTAGONISM	57 - 92
CHAPTER III INTERNATIONAL REPERCUSSIONS OF THE BEIJING-MOSCOW DISPUTE	93 - 126
2881-HT	
CONCLUSION	127 - 133
BIBLIOGRAPHY	134 - 143



PREFACE

Much scholarly output has been accumulated on 'Beijing-Moscow relations' since the palmy days of their 'Mutual Alliance' (1950). However, China watchers focussed attention on their relationship in the late 1950s when Sino-Soviet 'rancour' came into the surface.

Beijing-Moscow partnership gave momentum to the theory and practice of balance of power and their implacable hostility again tilted the balance with far-reaching repercussions. Mao, the great 'Helmsman' of China, was the principal actor in both the seismic shifts in their relationship. During his time the euphoria of 'Fraternal Alliance' snowballed, and during his leadership, the 'honeymoon' of 'Sino-Soviet friendship' ended with the opening of great 'schism.'

After the demise of Mao, the estrangement between Beijing and Moscow was supposed to wane. But the prognosis that the post-Mao China would very soon lean towards Soviet Union again is yet to be an accomplished fact. However, the trends in the domestic policies and external postures of both the countries since the beginning of 1980s have unleashed the process of 'normalization' slowly but steadily.

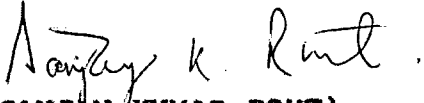
The post-Mao phase or current phase of Sino-Soviet relations monopolises the attention of Sinologists because sources of analysis of their present relationship and writings on the particular aspect of foreign policy are still scanty at their disposal.

Sensing the significance of the study of the 'post-Mao phase', I venture to pursue research in this particular field. It would be blasphemous to say that I have produced a very good or high-standard dissertation on this particular topic. However, as a keen observer of Chinese politics and foreign policy, I have tried utmost to give a dispassionate and sober analysis of facts for which I am greatly indebted to the scholars and writers whom I have referred in my dissertation. An effort such as this volume inevitably owes its success to the efforts and cooperation of many people. I am very much indebted to Professor (Mrs) Gargi Dutt, my supervisor (then Chairman, Centre for East Asian Studies), whose guidance and cooperation is indescribable. I am also grateful to Professor P.A.N. Murthy, the Chairman of the Centre for his help and co-operation.

I should like also to give special thanks to those who have assisted me at each and every step of my endeavour in writing the dissertation. Although it is my duty to acknowledge their invaluable assistance, I have to bow down to their wishes as they want to remain behind the 'curtains.'

Last but not the least, I am also very much thankful to Mr. Yashwant for his inscrutable typing within a very short time, crucial for me.

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(SANJAY KUMAR ROUT)

CHAPTER I

MAO AND BEIJING-MOSCOW RELATIONS (1949-1976)

Relationship between two nations is not a rare phenomenon in the whole gamut of international politics. But certain kinds of relationships have far-reaching repercussions which alter the course of global politics setting a new trend altogether. Sino-Soviet relations was one of the focal points of world politics in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s and will perpetuate to be so during the 1980s. While the super-power rivalry will, for the foreseeable future, remain the pivot of international relations, the Sino-Soviet relations (alliance or conflict) influences the major aspects of their hostility. Sino-Soviet alliance exacerbated the super power antagonism during the heyday of cold war. And again Sino-Soviet conflict is a major contributing factor for the inception of Detente between the USSR and the USA in the 1960s and 1970s. If the triangular relationship (China, the USA and the USSR) is of supreme importance in the global diplomatic poker, the relationship between Beijing and Moscow is indispensably attached to it (because they constitute two angles of a triangle). And the way they manage this relationship will profoundly affect the prospects of peace and stability in the arena of global and regional politics.

Sino-Soviet relations has been passing through twists and turns since the liberation of the People's Republic of China. However, two eye-catching, seismic shifts in their relationship are of crucial importance from the standpoint of

global politics. First, the treaty of mutual alliance and friendship and second, the Sino-Soviet schism. The grand fraternal alliance of 1950s was purged into the fire of implacable hostility in 1960s and 1970s and yet the conflict has been unabated. Like a long-smoldering volcano the Sino-Soviet rift erupted with unprecedented intensity in the late 1950s and perpetuates still today and the possibility of a 'thaw' is still a conjecture. The yawning gulf between Beijing and Moscow has riveted the attention of scholars since the 'Great Divide' for an appraisal of the conflict and an analysis of their dispute. The source and causes of the conflict are many and diverse; and overestimate of one to others will lead to a biased and incomplete perusal of their longstanding schism.

Prior to our analysis of the issues and factors contributing to the dispute, we should focus on the Sino-Soviet mutual alliance and friendship which is the starting-point of their post-world war amity.

From 'Honeymoon' to Dispute (1949-1969)

Mao Zedong, the 'Great Helmsman' of China, was the principal actor in Sino-Soviet friendship and in the subsequent rift, it was Chairman Mao of Chinese Communist Party who was the chief architect of Communist China. Mao's ideology and thought was Communist China's ruling philosophy both in domestic and global context. Although today, 'de-Maoization' is in force, yet the rudiments of Maoism are prevalent in the Chinese official pronouncements.

When the new Communist regime swept into power in 1949, Mao Zedong's policy of 'leaning to one side' became the kernel of China's foreign policy. On 30 June 1949, Mao proclaimed his policy of leaning onesidedly toward the Soviet Union. Mao said:

The Chinese people must either incline to the side of imperialism or towards that of socialism.... It is impossible to sit on the fence; there is no third road, neutrality is merely a camouflage, a third road does not exist.... Internationally we belong to the anti-imperialist front headed by the USSR. 1

After this unequivocal declaration, Mao took concrete actions to carry out the policy. They were: (1) the Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance between the USSR and the Communist China signed in February 1950, depending on Moscow for 'national security' and treating the US as its hypothetical enemy, (2) internally, learning from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union "who is our best teacher"² in economic construction and relying on the Soviet Union for industrialization; (3) in foreign affairs, toeing the line of united front fashioned by the 'Communist Camp' with the Soviet Union as its leader. By so doing, China became an integral part of the 'Communist Society' buttressing its monolithic structure. Thus China and the Soviet

1 Mao 'On People's Democratic Dictatorship', 1949, Selected Works, vol.4, p.423.

2 Ibid.

Union were drawn together both by ideological kinship and by the requirements of the existing circumstances.³

From the foregoing analysis it is crystal clear that in an ideologically polarised world, Beijing's friendship with Moscow was permanently ensconced by the ideological affinity between the two Communist giants. Another un-avoiding reason for Mao's lurch towards Moscow was the prevailing circumstances. After seizure of political power with Soviet assistance, the People's Republic of China was under the spell of a war-ravaged, inflation-torn economy. Hence the new regime was badly in need of a variety of aid in order to rehabilitate and restructure the sagging economy. Well aware of the fact that outside assistance was available only from the Soviet Union, Mao had no other option but to stay in the 'Soviet Camp' and remain aligned with Moscow in order to have Stalin's friendship.

The Treaty of Mutual Alliance and Friendship signed by Mao Zedong and Joseph Stalin in February 14, 1950 gave a new dimension to cold war. China's 'anti-US' stance and 'hate America' campaign was equally counter-reacted by the USA. 'MacCarthyism' and 'Truman doctrine' were immediate answers to this Communist challenge. The USA's hysterical outbursts

3 V.P. Dutt, China's Foreign Policy (1958-1962)
(Asia Publishing House: Bombay, 1964), p.58.

against 'Communist conspiracy' intensified the tempo of cold war, and the outbreak of Korean war in June 1950 led the two super powers into the 'brink of a world war.'

The Korean war unleashed on 25 June 1950 when North Korean troops crossed the 38th Parallel and mounted a full-scale attack on South Korea. Within three days, they captured Seoul (the capital of South Korea) and threatened to occupy the entire country.

With the outbreak of the Korean war, America's China policy shifted significantly. These changes reflected a clearer understanding of the existing Sino-Soviet relations. It was generally believed that behind the North Korean aggression, there was a well-calculated international communist conspiracy masterminded by the Kremlin.⁴

The Korean war was the acid test of Sino-Soviet alliance. China's involvement in the war hardened USA's attitude towards international Communism in general and to China in particular. As a result of the Chinese intervention in the war, domestic pressure on the Truman Administration accounted partly for the stiffening of US policy towards China. It was manifested in the postponement of the issue of recognition, making of Formosa (Taiwan) an integral part of the American security

4 Partha S. Ghosh, Sino-Soviet Relations (New Delhi: Uppal Publishing House, 1981), p.87.

system in the Pacific and commenting on Communism in China as a "passing and not a perpetual state."⁵

After the end of Korean war most of the scholars were convinced of the monolithic structure of international Communism and the earlier view that traditionally and culturally China and the Soviet Union were so different that a 'rupture' between them was hanging on balance, seemed to many as chimerical.

Stalin's vision of the prospect of a Communist China under his wing to serve the Soviet national and revolutionary goals conjured up the theme "don't forget the East." Further Stalin's towering personality and commanding position brought China into the 'Communist fold.' Mao tried to endear himself to Stalin by an anti-US posture in the pre-Korean war period while the latter tied the former to an anti-US 'chariot' by feigning disinterestedness.⁶ However, Mao's dubious attitude towards Stalin was never revealed during the lifetime of Stalin and Mao was cautious in dealing with his Soviet counterpart. "The Memoirs of Khrushchev" has highlighted Stalin's arbitrary and domineering attitude bringing Stalin-Mao negotiations to the brink of disruption which would have happened had there been no mutual interest in fighting against the Americans.

5 A. Doak Barnett, A New US Policy Towards China (Washington, D.C., 1971), p.11.

6 Yao Meng-hsuan, "The Outlook for Peiping-Moscow Relations", Issues and Studies (Hong Kong), January 1977, pp.39-40.

During the Stalinist period, Beijing-Moscow alliance in fact was more or less a master-subordinate relations. During this period Beijing could not assert independence in international affairs. Beijing was chided for claiming to occupy the leading position in the Asian revolutionary movement at the Conference of Trade Unions of the Countries of Asia and the Pacific in December 1949. Stalin took a decisive stand against Maoist attempts to soft-sell the experience of the Chinese Communist struggle in China to Indonesia and India.⁷

Stalin was the 'sacred Marxist pantheon' for the Chinese leaders primarily because he had intensified insigence towards the West. Of course, Mao did not glorify Stalin as an infallible leader. What provoked Mao to be friendly to Stalin was that Stalin, unlike Khrushchev, was an arch enemy of Western imperialism and was ready to create a crisis in Berlin in 1948 at a time when the USA had the monopoly of atomic weapons. Communist China was prepared to tread the same path despite its lack of atom bombs. Mao lamented: "The atom bomb is a paper tiger which the US reactionaries use to scare people. It looks terrible but in fact it is not."⁸ In point of fact, Mao was ardently

7 O.B. Borisov and B.T. Kolosov, Soviet-Chinese Relations, 1945-70 (Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1975), pp.124-5.

8 Lewis S. Fencer, Marxism... How Many? Cited by him originally from Ren min Ribao editorial, "Problems of Communism", 31 December 1962, p.21.

loyal to the Moscow line ideologically, but he was independent organizationally. Although the Stalinist monolith covered up from Germany to Indonesia, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was never a part of that monolith. Mao may not be a Titoist but both Tito and Mao took a stand when their independence or stature within the 'bloc' seemed threatened and then began to conjure up ideological reasons to justify resistance to Moscow. It was perhaps only an accident of time and place that Yugoslavia, in defying Stalin, turned ideologically toward the pragmatic, lower-pressure communism of Lenin and (without credit) Bukharin, while Mao saw his best political opportunity in respecting the decompression of Khrushchev and reaffirming the uncompromising stance of Stalinism.⁹

If Mao concealed his defiant attitude towards Moscow during the lifetime of Stalin, it was because of China's own interests. Mao did not venture to embrace a 'Titoist path' very soon when China's economy was in shambles. Thus the infant stage of liberation was not the best opportune moment for Mao Zedong and his China to embitter their relations with the Soviet Union.

Following the demise of Stalin powers in the Kremlin had passed onto the hands of a triumvirate - Georgi M. Malenkov,

9. Robert V. Daniels, "How Monolith was the Monolith", Problems of Communism, March-April 1964, p.47.

the Prime Minister, Vyacheslav M. Molotov, the Foreign Minister, and Marshall Klement Y. Voroshilov, the Chairman of the Presidium. But within a short span of time (September 1953), power was wielded by Nikita S. Khrushchev. This sort of shift in power in the Kremlin was coincided by the change of leadership in the White House also. The Truman-Acheson leadership was replaced by Eisenhower-Dulles leadership in the USA. For the new leadership at Washington international communism was nothing but an "unexpurgated evil." The US policy towards communism was that the Communists would not be given a free hand to proceed further into the "Free World". Accordingly, the USA adroitly devised certain security arrangements which brought into existence defence organizations like SEATO, CENTO and ANZUS.

With Khrushchev's enthronement into power, Sino-Soviet relations took a different turn. Although Mao-Khrushchev 'honeymoon' started and continued for half-a-decade, it could not last long. Certain internal and external policies of Khrushchev infuriated Mao and sparked off the Sino-Soviet schism. Khrushchev's 'de-Stalinization' and 'peaceful co-existence' alarmed Mao and his colleagues who subsequently opposed 'Khrushchevism-oriented world communism' deprecating it as a 'revisionist view of Marxism-Leninism.' In a similar vein, Mao's ambitious nature and his claim for world communist leadership and radical economic policy threatened Khrushchev's position within the 'bloc.' As a result, Khrushchev stiffened

his attitude towards China and Mao. And the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU), 1956, brought about a momentous change in their alliance worsening affecting it.

The 20th Party Congress is a turning point in the international Communist movement. It sowed the seeds of 'polycentrism' or 'bi-centrism' in the Communist monolithic garden. The high water-mark of the Congress was Khrushchev's acerbic speech of 25 February 1956 denouncing Stalinism.¹⁰ Khrushchev debunked 'Stalin's adventurism' in foreign policy. He denigrated Stalin pointing out his errors that Stalin's domineering attitude and one-man decisions threatened the Soviet Union's peaceful relations with other countries causing great complications. Khrushchev's unflinching support for 'peaceful co-existence' induced him to remark:

When we say that the socialist system will win in the competition between the two systems - the capitalist and the socialist systems - this by no means signifies that its victory will be achieved through armed interference by the socialist countries in the internal affairs of the capitalist countries. We believe that countries with differing social systems can do more than exist side by side. It is necessary to proceed further, to improve relations, strengthen confidence between countries and cooperate. 11

10 Ghosh, n.4, p.225.

11 G.F. Headson, R.Lowenthal & R. Macfarquhar Documented and analysed, The Sino-Soviet Dispute (London, 1961), pp.42-43.

Khrushchev's secret speech in the 20th Congress of CPSU very soon became a matter of simmering controversy between China and the Soviet Union. The Chinese leaders criticised the way Stalin's image had been tarnished. To the Chinese leadership Stalin's contributions to the cause of communism far outweighed his shortcomings. However, they were sceptical of Khrushchev's attack on the 'personality-cult' that might have its repercussions in China and tarnish the image of Mao which in many respects resembled that of Stalin. The CCP regarded the 20th CPSU resolution as a partial appraisal of Stalin and released a Marxist explanation of Stalin's errors and how they could be prevented.

Khrushchev's policy of "peaceful co-existence" and 'peaceful transition to socialism' in 1956 further clashed with Mao's policy of 'armed struggle' and "uninterrupted revolution." Khrushchev visualised that under the changed international scenario, the possibility of peaceful assumption of power by the Communist Parties in some capitalist countries could not be ruled out. However, the Soviets did not undermine the importance of violent revolution, though they conceded the probability of peaceful transfer of power from bourgeoisie to Communists. Khrushchev devised this pragmatic policy keeping the world situation in view. To avert a direct collision with the USA and the peril of nuclear holocaust, he preferred 'peaceful co-existence' to 'armed struggle.' To Mao, a diehard Marxist, it was

inconceivable that the bourgeois ruling class would part with the power without violent conflict and that the Communists could take any other course than that of smashing the existing state structure by force.¹² The Chinese leaders further blamed the Soviet Union for over-emphasizing the strength of imperialists and losing confidence in socialism. When the Soviet Union paid a deaf ear to the Chinese view the schism started between Beijing and Moscow and ideology served as the language of their mutual vituperation.

Despite this, the Chinese Communist elite avoided yawning differences and sought common ground so that Beijing-Moscow relations were drawn closer and more durably united. In pursuance of this policy, the CCP's 8th National Congress deleted the article relating to deification of Mao from the party constitution. But the reports by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping insinuatingly criticised Khrushchev's opposition to the personality-cult and his enunciation of the doctrine, 'peaceful co-existence.' In an East European anti-Soviet uprising, Beijing strongly advocated and ardently supported the Soviet armed suppression of the Hungarian revolution (1956). Thereafter, Zhou Enlai made a hectic tour of the East European countries with a view to persuading and

12 Dutt, n.3, p.100.

pacifying the Soviet 'satellites' to be on good terms with Moscow. Thus, Beijing could manoeuvre to stop the 'intra-bloc' disintegration and uphold the unity of the 'bloc' as well as the CPSU authority.

Mao, in the late 1950s, took a first step to throw a crimp into Beijing-Moscow fraternity by barking upon the People's Commune Movement, Taiwan Strait military adventure and Sino-Indian border dispute.¹³ As a result, Mao's foreign and domestic policies slipped out of the Soviet control and even divorced from the Khrushchev line. If Mao had intended to shake off Moscow's fetters after the eternal disappearance of Stalin from the scene, he could have taken full advantage of the unrest which erupted in East Europe in 1956. When the monolithic movement was on the 'brink of disintegration' and when the CCP and CPSU became embroiled in bitter ideological polemics, Mao could have aligned with East European countries to pose a formidable challenge to Moscow's hegemony. On the contrary, he fervently helped Moscow to regain control over its 'satellites.'

Another controversial issue which fueled the fire of Sino-Soviet rift was Yugoslavia and the divergent attitude of China and the Soviet Union towards it. The Chinese leaders fiercely attacked Yugoslavia for its 'distortion and possession' of Marxism. The scathing criticism was due to the draft

13 Meng-huan, n.6, p.41.

programme of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, adopted by the 7th Congress of the Yugoslav Communist Party, which the Chinese Communists branded as an anti-Marxist-Leninist programme. The 'revisionist path' embraced by the Yugoslavia were assaulted by China when the latter accused that they were being made the tools to slander the proletarian dictatorship, the socialist system, the international Communist movement, and the unity of the socialist countries. Zhen Boda, a propaganda commissar of the CCP lampooned the Yugoslavs in the following words:

It is precisely the import of large quantities of US aid and the American way of life that has brought a change in the consciousness of the Yugoslav leading group, caused revisionist ideology to grow up in its midst, and determined its internal and external policies which are directed against the Soviet Union, against Communism, against the Socialist camp and against Socialism in its own country. 14

It is important to bear in mind that it was Beijing which initiated the attack on Belgrade and not Moscow or other Communist countries of the world. The rationale behind this repudiation was the restoration of Yugoslav-type of Communism in China. During the rectification campaign many critics appreciated the 'Yugoslav-oriented communism' and pleaded for its 'emulation in China.' The liberalised version of Marxism interpreted and adopted by the Yugoslavs

14 Cited in Dutt, n.3. Originally quoted from Zhen Boda's speech on Yugoslav Revisionism - Product of Imperialist Policy (Hung 41), no.1, 1958.

infuriated China because a new dogmatic phase in the Chinese Communism was gathering momentum at that crucial moment.

Although the Chinese pioneered the attack, Moscow followed the Chinese path very soon when Khrushchev fulminated against the Yugoslavian policy as a 'Trojan horse' on which 'Western imperialists' were betting their last card to undermine the Soviet Union. However, scholars harp on the view that Moscow did not mount the same kind of assault against Yugoslavia as Beijing did. Moscow took a lenient attitude towards the struggle against 'revisionism' than the Chinese Communists who were sworn enemies of the 'revisionists' because of their own national interests. Thus the chasm between China and the Soviet Union came to the surface when they exhibited divergent behaviour in external affairs in general and in Yugoslavia issue in particular.

Viewed from global perspective, Sino-Soviet relations in 1957 deteriorated due to the proliferation of a lot of controversies centering round the 'US imperialism and nuclear war.'

Moscow and Beijing nourished conflicting views in relation to nuclear war. The Soviet policy was to lessen the possibility of nuclear war because it would lead to the perdition of mankind. Khrushchev sensed very well that a direct confrontation between the USA and the USSR would wage

a nuclear war which would be fatal for the whole world. The Chinese stance was to heighten the global tension under the strong notion that this would force the USA to retreat and weaken the imperialists. Indeed, Beijing did not believe in negotiating nor in disarmament nor even in waiting for history for its destruction.

Mao had the notion that the military balance of power had drastically altered in favour of the 'socialist bloc'. The Soviet leaders openly claimed superiority over US nuclear capability. But the Soviet belief was soon tempered not only by the fact that the USA was also fast developing a sizable missile armoury but also by the realization that, despite the Soviet advances in the missile and rocket fields, a war between the two would lead to utter mutual destruction as well as to the end of much of the rest of the world.¹⁵ Mao could not restrain his revolutionary romanticism and lauded that 'East wind' now overwhelms 'West wind.' His conviction was that the USA would not dare to take steps risking nuclear annihilation and would retreat whenever the actual collision would start.

In 1958, Sino-Soviet hostility took a new dimension as new conflicts of conventional state interests cropped up in several fronts. The three major problems were the

15 Dutt, n.3, p.97.

military relationship between the two powers, the related question of Soviet conduct during the Taiwan Strait crisis and Beijing's radical new economic programme.

In the field of nuclear weapons, Moscow became reticent to disclose the secrets of atomic bomb manufacturing to Beijing. The Sino-Soviet agreement on "New Technology for National Defence", signed on 15 October 1957, was said to have included a provision for the supply of "a sample of an atom bomb and technical data concerning its manufacture."¹⁶ China alleged that in lieu of their aid, the Soviets had insisted on 'certain conditions' which were quite unacceptable demands intended to bring China under Soviet military orbit. Thus, the Chinese leadership refused to bow to 'certain conditions' and decided to follow an independent course to possess nuclear arsenal. This had greatly displeased the Chinese and constituted one more important item in the catalogue of Sino-Soviet schism.

However, the alliance was put to the acid test by the Chinese decision to bombard Quemoy beginning on 23 August 1957. Confronted by the American nuclear power, Beijing was desperately seeking the help of Moscow to obtain weapons on earlier commitment by the latter to the former at the time

16 Cited in K.N. Remachandran and S.K. Ghosh, Power and Ideology : Sino-Soviet Dispute - An Overview (New Delhi; Young Asia Publications, 1977), p.99. Originally quoted from Peking Review, vol.6, no.33, 16 August 1963, p.17.

of crisis. The Chinese government's statement of 1 September 1963 charged that the Soviet Union had perfidiously withheld such a commitment until Moscow was sure that it could be given without risk; in other words, until it was too late to be of any assistance to the original Chinese goal.¹⁷ Khrushchev lent support and issued a statement to this effect after the crisis had passed its peak. Although Mao delivered a letter of thanks to Khrushchev, he could smell the Soviet hesitancy. As Harry Gelman has rightly pointed out:

.... Khrushchev in his talks with Mao in October 1959 at Beijing sought to remove Taiwan as an 'incendiary factor in the international situation' by hinting that Beijing ought to accept a 'two-China solution.'¹⁸

This sort of attitude exhibited by Moscow towards China's internal affairs and more accurately towards her national interest intensified their conflict bolstering the grounds of Chinese accusation against Khrushchev and the Soviet Union.

A third new arena of friction developed in connection with the radical turn in China's domestic policy during 1958, manifested in the launching of the "People's Commune Movement" and the "Great Leap Forward." Chairman Mao

17 Harry Gelman, "The Conflict : A Survey", Problems of Communism, vol.13, 1964, p.6.

18 Ibid.

was the moving spirit behind these ambitious programmes. Mao, after 1957, could very well sense the inadequacy of the Soviet model of economic development and he assessed that taking the Soviet road would create a lopsided growth 'unsuitable for a poor agricultural country with a large population.' These experiences compelled Mao to devise an indigenous strategy of development which centered round the theme of 'walking on two legs' i.e., simultaneous development of both the industrial and agricultural sectors facilitated the implementation of these programmes with a view to achieving the cherished objectives. Mao's innovation of an alternative model challenged Moscow, 'the fatherland of socialism' because the former's indigenous strategy was not in consonance with the latter's strategy on socio-economic development using its own resources with the maximum mobilization of human effort, through which China expected to surpass Great Britain in industrial development in fifteen years. Moreover, the Chinese pronouncements during the early phase of Great Leap Forward (GLF) and Communes asserted that China would shorten the road to Communism - an assertion that even the better developed Soviet state had not ventured to make.¹⁹

As to the Soviet reaction to Mao's splintering inclination, Khrushchev 'metaphorically ridiculed' the communes

19 Ramachandran and Ghosh, n.16, p.98.

in his private talks with US Senator Hubert Humphrey in December 1958. When the content of the private talks was leaked to the press, Khrushchev berated Humphrey as a lying newsboy.²⁰ The 21st Congress of the CPSU in September 1958 rejected the Chinese thesis on 'short road to communism' and attached importance to gradualist move to Communism. The sharp differences between China and the Soviet Union with regard to the 'attainment of communism' brought about a strained relationship in the subsequent period.

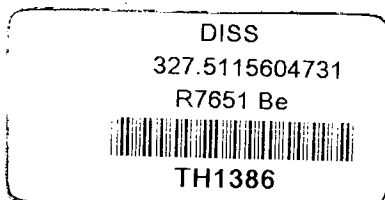
Another thorn in the Sino-Soviet alliance was the Sino-Indian border skirmish in 1959. When the Sino-Indian border hostilities flared up the Soviet Union admonished the incident and remained neutral in the conflict between its 'socialist ally' and the "nonaligned friend." In addition, the refusal of the Soviet leadership to stand beside Communist China in its border conflict with India was viewed in Beijing as an "outright betrayal of the obligation of proletarian internationalism." Not only was Moscow apathetic to their appeal but it later assaulted the Chinese Communist elite of having purposefully attacked India so as to embarrass Khrushchev on the eve of his trip to the USA.

Sino-Indian border dispute and Soviet reaction towards China accentuated the rift between Beijing and Moscow.

But perhaps a more disturbing factor in their friendship was Khrushchev's initiative for Summit talks which facilitated later on the meeting of Khrushchev with President Eisenhower in September 1959. On his way back from the USA, Khrushchev visited Beijing. At a banquet in his honour, he admonished those who wanted to 'test by force the stability of the capitalist system.' The forces of peace are now strong as never before. There are quite realistic possibilities of barring the way to war. The Chinese were far from reconciled to this view and continued to insist on the need for vigilance in dealing with the imperialists. It was also at this time Khrushchev allegedly suggested to Mao the desirability of accepting a two-Chinas solution of the Taiwan problem.²¹

As the Chinese witnessed it, Khrushchev's actions during 1959 had resulted in a new record of error and betrayal. He had rebuffed them on the question of nuclear weapons, interfered in Chinese internal affairs, compromised with the leaders of 'Yankee imperialism', and betrayed them in Taiwan Strait crisis and in Sino-Indian border conflict. All these paramount issues were questions of national interest and hence it is little wonder that in April 1960, the CCP resorted to a massive propeganda tirade against

21 Alan Lawrance, China's Foreign Relations Since 1949
(London and Boston, 1975), p.67.



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the policies and authority of the Soviet Union.

Another incident which aggravated their relationship further was the U2 incident. An American U2 aircraft flying over Soviet territory on a spying mission was shot down by a Soviet rocket on the eve of the proposed Summit Conference at Paris. Khrushchev lashed out at the USA for committing a 'criminal provocation.' As it happened before the Paris Conference to be held in May 1960, Khrushchev outrightly refused to participate in the Summit meeting of the Big Four Powers without an apology from Eisenhower and consequently the Conference ended in a fiasco because of the American President's stubbornness. Beijing took full advantage of the U2 incident and Mao lampooned Khrushchev and the Soviet leaders for their 'illusions.' The incident justified and emboldened China's stand in relation to their policy towards imperialists and their lackeys. It inspired the Chinese to hurl criticism openly at the Soviet leaders. Mao became vociferous while he said:

The U2 incident confirmed the truth, that no unrealistic illusions should be cherished with regard to imperialism and the winning of world peace should depend mainly on the resolute struggle waged by the peoples of all countries.²²

Beijing became more vocal in its attack when the opportunity came with the inauguration of the conference of World Federation of Trade Unions in early June 1960.

22 Beijing Review, no.20, 17 May 1960, pp.5-7.

Shortly after the Conference, Moscow proposed to Beijing yet another meeting to iron out their differences within the bloc and the moment came when the Rumanian Party Congress was convened in the later part of June 1960.

When the CCP representatives participated in the Bucharest Conference (1960), they were shocked to find themselves the target of a 'vilification' allegedly concocted by the CPSU in order to dwarf them into submission. As it is knowledgeable, Khrushchev's circulation of a CPSU letter to the CCP dated 21 June 1960, was full of venomous attack on the CCP "all along the line." In their speeches to the Congress Khrushchev and the East European satellites severely castigated the Chinese as 'Trotskyites' and 'mad men' seeking war. They further condemned the Chinese action in the Sino-Indian border conflict as 'utterly selfish' and 'aggressively nationalistic.' They also repudiated the purge of Marshall Peng Dehuat. The CCP delegation responded to the 'assaults' with a 'tit-for-tat' policy and distributed a written statement of defiance at the end of the Congress proceedings.

Moscow retaliated in a similar vein in July 1960 after the Chinese defiance during the Congress. In July Moscow suddenly took a unilateral decision recalling all Soviet experts and technicians within one month. In addition, the Soviet government unilaterally cancelled the mutual publication of friendship magazines in both the countries.

In the November 1960 Communist Conference the Sino-Soviet antagonism blew hot and cold. When the Conference was convened the Soviet Union again mounted fierce criticism by distributing among the delegates a new 60,000 word CPSU 'letter' attacking the CCP and the Albanian Party 'more crudely than ever.' In the debate at the Conference the CPSU piloted converging assaults on the CCP with its adherents in a futile attempt to force it to bow down. Finally, an ambiguous document was prepared and signed, embodying the mutually contradictory stands of the two Parties on a number of key issues. While the CPSU manipulated in getting more of its points included than did the Chinese, it nevertheless suffered a humiliating defeat on the central issue of authority. Just after the Conference, Khrushchev invigorated his attack on the Chinese position at what he evidently regarded as its weakest point - Albania. The Albanians, who had been the staunchest supporters of the Chinese at the Bucharest and the Moscow Conferences, were now subjected to an extension of the Soviet economic pressures that had been initiated in the summer of 1960. These reprisals climaxed in the recall of all Soviet technicians and abrupt termination of Soviet economic aid to Albania in April 1961. A resentful exchange of messages between Moscow and Tirana was culminated by a fiery letter addressed to the Albanian Party by the CPSU Central Committee on 24 August 1961. Beijing mediated between the Soviet Union and Albania in order to checkmate the tensions between the two and accordingly urged the Soviets to improve their relations.

Another agonizing failure of Sino-Soviet friendship was brought into limelight at the 22nd Congress of the CPSU held in Moscow in October 1961. At this Congress Khrushchev deprecated Albania for playing a proxy role for China. Premier Zhou Enlai, who headed the Chinese delegation, lashed out at the Soviet Union for snubbing a fraternal country and he left for Beijing while the Congress was still in session. An unusual gesture was displayed by Mao when he himself went to Beijing airport to receive Premier Zhou. It clearly vindicated Mao's approbation of Zhou's insult to the CPSU.

Sino-Soviet polemics perpetuated throughout 1962 and all the attempts by the fraternal Communist Parties for the relaxation of tensions ended in fiasco. The Sino-Soviet hostility assumed alarming proportions during 1962 when the Cuban missile crisis and Sino-Indian border war erupted.

The Cuban missile crisis occurred as a result of the Soviet deployment of nuclear missiles in Cuba. The USA seriously protested against the Soviet aggressive policy in the 'US hinterland' and on 22 October 1962 President John F. Kennedy publicly proclaimed that the USA would 'take appropriate action' against the Soviet offensive. After this, the USA became embroiled in the crisis when it blockaded the Soviet ships proceeding to China. For some time it appeared as if a major military confrontation might take place between the two super powers.²³ When both the

super powers were dragged into the brink of a nuclear war the Soviet Union retreated withdrawing the missiles.

While the Cuban crisis lasted, Beijing fully backed the Soviet Union, since the Soviet action led to a super power confrontation and helped to slow down the process of detente.²⁴ But witnessing the defusion of crisis, Beijing bluntly criticised the Soviet strategy of crisis management and denounced Khrushchev for his 'adventurism' for having placed the missiles and for his capitulationism for having agreed to retreat bowing down to the American pressure tactics.

Although China availed of the opportunity during the Cuban missile crisis sensing the Soviet Union's vulnerable position, a similar incident was repeated when the Sino-Indian border war broke out in October 1962. Here, it was the Soviet Union which took full advantage of the Chinese vulnerability. The first Soviet reaction to the Sino-Indian war was somewhat soothing towards Beijing but Moscow reversed its position when the war prolonged. After the recedence of Cuban missile crisis, Moscow took serious interest in the border war and chastised China in provoking the war. The Soviet Union's allies in the Communist world criticized Beijing's action as 'adventurist' and expressed open dissatisfaction with China's policy towards India.²⁵

24 Ibid.

25 Dutt, n.3, p.138.

The Soviet attack on China further deteriorated the relations between the two countries. However, the significance of Sino-Indian border war was that the Soviet Union militarily supported Indian bourgeoisie betraying its Communist brother. Consequently, the Soviet Union also openly backed the Colombo peace proposal for a peaceful settlement of Sino-Indian dispute. The Chinese leaders came to the conclusion that the Soviet Union would not alter its 'line' at the end of 1962. And the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963 buttressed their conviction.

The signing of the Partial Test Ban Treaty in July 1963 appeared to confirm the extent of the breach between Beijing and Moscow. China virulently criticised Moscow's stand when the Government statement was released on 31 July 1963. China's attitude towards the Partial Test Ban Treaty and reaction to the Soviet Union reads:

This is a treaty signed by three nuclear powers. By this treaty they attempted to consolidate their nuclear monopoly and bind the hands of all the peace-loving countries subjected to the nuclear threat.... Thus the interests of the Soviet people have been sold out, the interests of the countries in the socialist camp, including the people of China, have been sold out, and the interests of peace-loving people of the world have been sold out.... This is by no means a victory for the policy of peaceful co-existence. It is a capitulation to US imperialism. 26

The Chinese fulmination of the treaty as a 'fraud' to which the Soviet Union was a party, signalled the final parting of the ways between Beijing and Moscow. Thereafter, Beijing was engaged in hurling acrimonious statements at Moscow for the latter's so-called 'ideological perversions' and 'rightist deviations.'

Subsequent to the the Partial Test Ban Treaty ideological polemics started which continued till the fall of Khrushchev. The key points of attack mounted by China on the Soviets were the abandonment of class struggle and adoption of peaceful co-existence. The Soviet Communism was branded as 'goulash communism' - a new kind of capitalism. The struggle against the Soviet Union thus became a major thrust of China's policy framework in 1964, and, both the countries reached the peak and 'the point of no-return.' Thus, it was abortive to summon a conference within the bloc to iron out the differences. The escalation of Sino-Soviet rift was further intensified when both the countries were engaged in mutual vituperation and accusations.

After the fall of Khrushchev (14 October 1964), there was a glimmer of hope for successful negotiations. With the inauguration of Brezhnev-Kosygin leadership, scholars predicted the de-escalation of their tensions. But the negotiations which wound up without any results in November 1964, falsified their prognosis. Beijing attributed the failure in negotiations to persistence of the new Soviet

leadership in pursuing Khrushchev's revisionism and anti-Chinese Communist schemes, while Moscow held that Beijing's insistence on changes in Soviet policies and programmes as an unalterable condition for normalisation of their estrangement was responsible for futile negotiations.

Sino-Soviet relations reached a point where both sides engaged in mudslinging at each other and where both published statements revealing the secret aspects of their dealings with each other since the beginning of the dispute. The Soviets spoke of Mao as a senile 'Trotskyite' tyrant and racist, who sought world war, who had made monumental blunders in domestic policy, and whose government maintained 'concentration camps' and massacred minority peoples, forcing them to seek haven in the USSR. The Chinese, in turn, caricatured Khrushchev as a cowardly traitor allied with 'imperialism' who was striving to restore capitalism in the Soviet Union and to undermine Marxism-Leninism throughout the world.²⁷

After the deposition of Khrushchev, Beijing demanded a change in Soviet policy and accordingly the People's Daily wrote an editorial on 7 November 1964:

Khrushchev is the chief representative of modern revisionism. He has betrayed Leninism, proletarian internationalism, the path of the October revolution and the interests of the Soviet people.

27 Gelman, n.17, pp.14-15.

Commenting on Khrushchev's exit, it remarked in the same editorial:

Anyone who runs counter to Leninism, proletarian internationalism, the path of the October Revolution and the interest of the people will, sooner or later, inevitably be spurned by the people. This was so in the past, is so at present and will be so in the future. 28

The post-Khrushchev leadership at Kremlin wanted sincerely to lessen the rift between the two countries and China initially took interest in Moscow's lenient attitude towards Beijing. But very soon all their hopes were shattered. Brezhnev's anniversary speech on 6 November 1964 marred the prospects of normalisation. Brezhnev broadly enumerated Khrushchev's foreign and domestic policies and restated the validity of the formulations of 20th Congress. The delegation, headed by Zhou Enlai, who participated in the anniversary celebrations returned disheartened because the new Soviet collective leadership was in no mood to respond to the Chinese gestures.

Before delving deep into further portrayal of their rift in the later period, it is pertinent to assess the 'personality factor' and 'personality-cult' which played a vital role in the Sino-Soviet conflict.

Marx once commented:

History does nothing, it possesses no immense wealth, fights no battles. It is rather man, real living man who does everything, who possesses and fights. 29

Marx's words find its justification when we focus attention on Khrushchev and Mao and their contributions to the hostility between Beijing and Moscow. It is indeed a stark reality that if the relationship is soured at the level of personal intercourse, then much else follows. The personal disagreements between the top-ranking leaders will strikingly affect the masses because they blindly follow instructions from the top.

In the late 1950s, denigration of Stalin led to the decline of Stalinism and blooming and upholding of Khrushchevism in the world Communist movement. Khrushchev could not digest a 'maverick Maoism' and an 'apostatic communist China' which would sooner or later thwart Soviet leadership of the international Communist movement.

In the years following the establishment of the Communist regime in China, Mao was obliged to reconcile himself to Stalin's authority in order to assure security and economic aid seeing no other option for him. After the exit of Stalin, Mao's 'honeymoon' with Khrushchev lasted for a brief

29 Cited in Peter Harris, Political China Observed (London: Croom Helm, 1980), p.185. Originally quoted from Marx and Engels : Gesamtausgabe 1, iii, p.625.

period and during that period, Mao followed Khrushchev's line. What caused enmity in Mao for Khrushchev was the 'de-Stalinisation' speech delivered by the latter. While Khrushchev secretly harped on 'de-Stalinization' he even did not consult Mao. Furthermore, Mao and other Chinese leaders' initial remarks on his speech irritated Khrushchev and he, in turn, also passed some injudicious comments on the Chinese Communist elites.

Another reason of Mao-Khrushchev rift was that Mao Zedong was contemptuous of Khrushchev's leadership (ideological and political) in the Communist Movement because he was aspiring for that coveted position after Stalin. Of course, based on seniority and experience, Mao's claim is justified but the way he tried to belittle Khrushchev's position exposed his personal ambition and megalomania. Stalin's private rationale for toleration of Mao's action was that Mao had cautiously kept his intransigence and independent course of action within the bounds of Stalinism and compatible with Soviet interests. While Maoism ran afoul of Khrushchevism and sought interests, Khrushchev who was at that time intent on consolidating his leadership in the Communist world in the face of restless Eastern Europe, could not allow Mao's independence to develop to such an extent that it would eventually bring distress to himself and to the Soviet Union.³⁰

Above all, personal factors played a key role in sharpening the rift. Had it not been for a Mao-led China, the regime might have taken a different approach to cope with international troubles. On the contrary, Khrushchev, unlike Stalin, could not assert an unchallenged authority and could not pursue a tougher policy in brow-beating the Chinese Communist leadership to submission. Khrushchev was soft towards the Chinese in the initial stages extending much scope for their independence in policy-matters and when he took a hardline later on, that led to the total disruption of relations between the two giants.

Besides these personal factors, the motivating and prime factor was China's demand for a great power status. China's traditional view of its place in the world and a century of humiliation at the hands of the Western powers have served to sharpen Chinese hostility and strengthen the determination to avenge the past wrongs, real or fancied.³¹

The post-Khrushchev era and Sino-Soviet rift centred round the Vietnam war, the Great Cultural Revolution, the Czechoslovakia crisis and the Sino-Soviet border war. From 1965 to 1969, these events incurred divergent interpretations from both the sides which showed that there was no room for Sino-Soviet amity.

31 Dutt, n.3, p.326.

When Vietnam war escalated in 1965, Sino-Soviet hostility assumed a new turn. Both the sides denounced the war but their approaches differed. While China wished for a prolonged war of liberation, the Soviet Union demanded an early ceasefire and ending of the war. The Soviet Union gave ideological and military support to Vietnam against the US imperialism. Behind Moscow's help was a political implication. Moscow wanted to be more close to Vietnam because that would help her to achieve her global objectives. Beijing was dead against any negotiations between the USA and North Vietnam, while the Soviet Union was bent upon it taking the changed world situation into account. In February 1965, Kosygin visited North Vietnam and pleaded for a negotiated settlement. However, Beijing supported Moscow's stand only after Sino-US rapprochement in 1971-72. Like Moscow, Beijing encouraged to pursue a policy of peaceful settlement of the conflict.

The Sino-Soviet rift reached an alarming proportion during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) which started in 1965. The movement was a watershed in the Chinese Communist history and it also affected significantly the relationship between Moscow and Beijing. This ideological revolution led to the inception of 'anti-revisionism' and 'anti-Sovietism' propoganda. The Soviets were extremely critical of Mao's Cultural Revolution. They interpreted it as a deliberate conspiracy by the

Maoists inside the CCP to eliminate the genuine Marxists and to install a military-bureaucratic dictatorship. On the contrary, the Chinese assessed the Soviet Union as one ruled by the 'revisionists' and 'renegades' who practised 'neo-colonialist exploitation' of the socialist countries. The Cultural Revolution culminated in the massive purge of anti-Maoists like Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping and Peng Zhen. According to the Maoists, all these leaders were supported by the Soviet Union. They were branded as revisionists and right deviationists. Liu, in particular, was described as 'China's Khrushchev.'

Another incident which worsened their rift was the 'Czechoslovakia crisis' in 1968. The Soviet intervention in August 1968 in the Czechoslovakia crisis and the overthrow of Dubcek regime irritated and provoked the Chinese. The Soviet Union came to be categorised as a 'socialist-imperialist' country - socialist in form but imperialist in deeds. China outrightly rejected Brezhnev's proposal for a collective security system in Asia and his concept of 'limited sovereignty' or the famous 'Brezhnev doctrine.' However, the Soviet Union justified its stand in terms of Brezhnev doctrine which legitimised the right of Moscow to interfere in Eastern Europe whenever it sensed a danger to socialism.

Sino-Soviet relations reached its nadir when the Ussuri border clash between China and the Soviet Union took place in March 1969. What began as an indestructible friendship in 1950 was drowned in the waters of Ussuri in March 1969.³²

The border question cropped up before the ideological question : it was a chronic problem left over from history. The border conflict is, above all, important because it concerns something as fundamental in land which is symbolic for traditional continental powers such as the Soviet Union and China.³³ The Chinese claimed perhaps 1.5 million square miles of what is part of the USSR, in Eastern Siberia and the Pacific coastal areas, as well as 300,000 square miles in central Asia. The Chinese believe that 600,000 square miles of the Mongolia Republic belong to them. In all, China wanted to divest the USSR of up to 15 per cent of its territory. Officially the Chinese criticised the treaties of Aigun and Beijing signed hundred years before 1964 as 'unequal treaties' and the Soviet Union as the inheritor of Tsarist conquest.

The conflict occurred in 1969 at Chen-pao tao (Damansky), which was a normally uninhabited island on the Ussuri. The border clash continued upto September 1969 and the sudden

32 Ramachandran and Ghosh, n.16, p.125.

33 Peter Harris, n.29, p.186.

meeting of the Zhou-Kosygin at the Beijing airport restored calmness on the border towards the end of 1969.

Each side blamed the other, but a close scrutiny reveals that the Chinese had tended to be very provocative in border clashes with the self-disciplined, well-trained Soviet forces.³⁴

China-watchers view the border conflict from different angles. As to the cause of border skirmishes, some opine that it was a deliberate plan by the Chinese to create such a crisis and to raise international tensions on the eve of the 9th Party Congress in Beijing.

Yet another possible reason subscribed by a group of scholars goes like this: The Ussuri clashes were master-minded by Defence Minister Lin Biao himself in order to focus attention on the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to strengthen it and ensure its voice in the decision-making.

It is also believed by others that China piloted the border skirmishes in order to make room for Sino-US rapprochement. And two years after the border conflict, 'China opened towards West' in 1971-72, when Nixon visited China and Mao exhibited warm cordiality.

34 Ramachandran and Ghosh, n.16, p.161.

The border conflict aggravated the Sino-Soviet relations and changed the perception of Chinese leaders. They lashed out at the Soviet leaders as 'New Tsars.' Their changed perception of world order led them to establish cordial relations with the USA, once described as the chieftain of imperialism. Now the Soviet Union was elevated to enemy No.1, the 'social imperialist' and it persisted till Mao's death.

From Ninth Party Congress to Mao's Death (1969-1976)

The year 1969 signalled the most important breakthrough in modern Chinese foreign policy. It shelved the "rebellion diplomacy" employed in the Cultural Revolution and presented a 'revolutionary diplomacy' by means of adopting the strategy of "peaceful co-existence" - a strategy derived from Mao's own tactical arsenal. Since its liberation, Communist China has altered its foreign policy several times with a view to gratifying the needs of "national interests" and world 'revolution' and to the cataclysmic changes in the global situation. Yet none of those changes was more drastic in scope than the one put into effect between 1969 and 1976.

The history of the Beijing regime has shown that its foreign policy has been greatly influenced by domestic affairs. In a nutshell, the regime made headway in diplomatic matters during periods of internal stability and suffered diplomatic setbacks during periods of internal

turmoils. This historical cycle has repeated itself several times over the past two decades. And the Cultural Revolution not only proved a major embarrassment to the advocates of diplomatic contacts with mainland China but also actually disrupted many of Beijing's diplomatic contacts with much of the world. It was not until Communist China had ridden out the traumatic Cultural Revolution in 1969 that its foreign policy began to turn the corner.

'Anti-US' has been a hallmark of Beijing's foreign policy since the establishment of the Chinese Communist regime in 1949. At the same time "leaning towards Soviet Union" was the kernel of their external policy during the 1950s. The 'Great Divide' in the Communist monolith during the early 1960s was a severe setback to the continuity of their foreign policy. And when the mutual verbal vituperation between the two Communist giants turned into armed confrontation in 1969, China's leadership could very well smell the danger and looked for a drastic change in their continuing policy. The Chinese view of world order took a different turn in 1969 and later on it paved the way for Sino-American rapprochement and united front struggle against "Soviet social imperialism and hegemonism."

Two important causes are solidly behind the change in China's foreign policy. First, China's own security and second, China's role in the global politics.

The August 1968 Soviet incursion into Czechoslovakia and Moscow's concurrent formulation of the so-called 'Brezhnev Doctrine' of limited sovereignty demonstrated to the Chinese that Moscow might be prepared to use its overwhelming military superiority in order to pressure, and even to invade the People's Republic of China.³⁵ The Sino-Soviet border clashes of 1969 and the Chinese leaders' suspicion about Moscow's atomic attack compelled Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai to end China's international isolation and to broaden its diplomatic contacts. In this pursuit they utilized 'conventional diplomacy' (in Mao's words Revolutionary diplomacy) devoid of the ideological shrillness, characteristic of Chinese foreign policy during the Cultural Revolution.³⁶ To counter Soviet antagonism, China opened the door for the West and for the US, in particular, and the concurrent international situation was congenial for Chinese diplomats to establish new relationships.

Because of Moscow's massive military power, Beijing realised that establishing diplomatic relations with most foreign nations would be of little significance in helping China with its pressing needs to offset the USSR. In East Asia, only the other super power, the USA, seemed to have sufficient strength to serve as an effective deterrent to

35 Robert G. Sutter, China Watch (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1978), p.1.

36 Ibid., p.2.

Soviet pressure. Moscow in the past has shown uneasiness over signs of possible reconciliation between China and the USA. Thus, the Chinese leaders were aware that they held an important option; they could move closer to the USA in order to readjust Sino-Soviet relations and form a new balance of power in East Asia favourable to Chinese interests.³⁷

Secondly, Beijing also needed the rapprochement with Washington to enter the international community, establish better politico-economic relationship with other Western countries and thus improve its security and change its international status.

Beijing's new policies toward the Soviet Union and the USA and its more flexible posture in international affairs proved to be extremely beneficial for China's national interests over the next few years. Following the pragmatic strategy begun by Zhou Enlai in the late 1960s, Beijing rapidly expanded diplomatic contacts and resumed relations with many nations during the first years of the 1970s. The Chinese advance was highlighted by Beijing's entrance into the United Nations in October 1971, President Nixon's visit to China in February 1972 and the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations during Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka's trip to China in September 1972. These developments

37 Ibid.

testified to China's emergence as a new force in international politics, and they served to offset what Beijing viewed as the anti-China designs of its main adversary - the Soviet Union.

While the Chinese faced increasingly heavy Soviet pressure in 1969, the newly installed Nixon Administration was beginning policy initiatives designed to pull back American military forces from Asia and to reduce US commitments along the periphery of China. It was soon apparent that the so-called 'Nixon-doctrine' of gradual troop withdrawal was perceived favourably by Beijing. The Chinese leaders saw the American pullback as solid evidence of the Nixon Administration's avowed interest in improved relations with China. They also viewed it as a major opportunity for China to free itself from the burdensome task of maintaining an extensive defence network along China's southern and eastern borders against possible US-backed armed incursions.³⁸

Similarly, the USA under the Nixon Administration began to bury the past, undifferentiated prejudice against Communist regimes in general and to actively capitalize on nationalist divergencies in Asia, hoping thereby to achieve a more favourable strategic balance. The major divergence Washington chose to exploit was the one between Moscow and Beijing. Further, the USA's attitude towards China was the

38 Ibid.

subject of criticism in many third world countries, and so it seemed clear that Washington could not keep Beijing out of the United Nations much longer. Finally, many scholars and statesmen in the USA argued that the international system was evolving away from bipolarity; thus, improving relations with China would help dispel one of the rigidities that characterized the old style of international relations.³⁹ In any event, the causes for a rapprochement with China were compelling.

In retrospect, it seems that Moscow underrated Beijing's 'American alternative' or at least did not take it seriously enough to forestall it by major improvement in its own dealing with the USA. In both 1970 and 1971 the Soviets kept their relations with Washington in reserve. Tensions in 1970 mounted over the Suez, Jordan and a Soviet submarine base in Cuba. The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) remained stalled until May 1971. Indeed, in this period Moscow's preferred policy was to deal with the Europeans - especially West Germany - to the exclusion of the USA. The Soviet success in dealing with Germany in 1970 and the slight improvement in relations with USA when the SALT deadlock was broken in early 1971, have led Moscow to believe that China was being effectively isolated.

39 John F. Copper, "Taiwan's Strategy and America's China Policy", Orbis (Philadelphia), Summer 1977, p.261.

In any event, at the 24th Soviet Party Congress in March 1971, which saw the opening of Brezhnev's 'peace programme', the Soviet leaders still held out to the Chinese the option of an improvement in relations. "The situation demands unity", he said, adding that the USSR was prepared not only to lower Sino-Soviet tension but to restore friendly relations.⁴⁰

The secret visit of US presidential adviser Henry Kissinger to Beijing in July 1971 shattered this strategy. Both Washington and Beijing created new options and gained new leverage. Now it was the Soviets and not the Chinese who were in danger of being outmanoeuvred.

The Sino-American reconciliation had its official beginning with President Nixon's visit to China (21-28 February). The visit was highly significant for these reasons: (1) It marked an end to US containment of China and all but eliminated Chinese concern over American forces stationed in Asia; (2) it reflected a reduction in US support for the Taipei Government, thus providing greater leverage and new opportunities for Beijing in its continuing effort to gain control of Taiwan, and (3) it enhanced China's rising international stature and established a set

40 William G. Hyland, "The Sino-Soviet Conflict: A Search for New Security Strategies", Strategic Digest (New Delhi), 1980, p.186.

of Sino-American principles that would govern future developments in East Asia.⁴¹ Commenting on Sino-US rapprochement, Professor Allen S. Whiting expressed:

The cultural gulf separating China and America has been widened by the ideological gulf between Communism and capitalism. Yet the two societies can have a mutually fruitful interaction even while their systems remain in antithesis. For this relationship to develop, however, it is essential that each nation understand the other and communicate its own intent clearly as well as credibly.⁴²

In as much as Taiwan was considered a major hurdle to closer relations with China, President Nixon signed a joint communique with the Chinese Government in early 1972 - the Shanghai Communique - acknowledging that Taiwan is a part of China. Nixon also committed the USA to withdraw its 8,500 troops from Taiwan. Subsequently, an across-the-board act was made that left about 3,000 American troops on the island. US war-planes were relocated and Washington cut Taiwan's military aid. Finally, the US Congress invalidated the resolution under which the then President Eisenhower promised US help in the defence of the Nationalist-held offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu.

Characteristically, Moscow responded to this new reality by increasing the pace and scope of bargaining

41 Robert G. Sutter, n.35, p.109.

42 Allen S. Whiting in his 'Forward' in Robert G. Sutter, n.35, p.xii.

with both the Americans and the Chinese. The Berlin negotiations with the West were quickly accomplished in August 1971, and a summit conference with President Nixon was arranged and announced in October. Further, the Soviets tried to resume the abortive border talks with China. In February 1972, the Soviet diplomats ostentatiously returned to Beijing shortly after the Nixon visit. And in March, Brezhnev revealed that the Soviets had made proposals to the Chinese for a non-aggression treaty and a border settlement.⁴³ Moscow was ready to iron out outstanding disputes on the basis of principles of peaceful co-existence, a concept that the Soviets earlier had restrictedly applied to non-socialist states. In essence, triangular diplomacy had begun with vengeance.

The focal point of Soviet efforts, however, increasingly was the USA. During President Brezhnev's visit to USA in June 1973, the Soviet leader declared in Washington the inevitability of detente and signed a new agreement to reduce the danger of nuclear war between the USA and the Soviet Union. Interestingly, Brezhnev subsequently revealed that on the eve of his departure for Washington he had made a similar proposal to the Chinese, which they had not deigned to answer.⁴⁴ With US-Soviet relations improving, the Soviets

43 Hyland, n.40, p.186.

44 Ibid.

began to revise their view of the Chinese relationship. Brezhnev was worried about a Sino-American military relationship and predicted that in ten years China would be a major nuclear power with a capability equal to the Soviet Union. According to Nixon's account, "Brezhnev did not think that the Chinese policies would change even after Mao's death. He was certain that the entire Chinese leadership was instinctively aggressive."⁴⁵

By the summer of 1973, the Soviets had made numerous negotiating offers to the Chinese. They had not compromised on essentials: i.e., they still demanded that China should renounce its revisionist claims to Soviet territory, nor would they disengage and withdraw their troops from along the border. But on matters of form and minor border adjustments, the Soviets had sought to demonstrate their flexibility and put the onus for intransigence on Beijing.

At the Tenth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in August 1973, however, the Chinese displayed no enthusiasm or willingness in moving towards Moscow. Indeed, Zhou Enlai, temporarily in the ascendancy, seemed to be preparing a new policy line stressing the importance of making China into a great power by the end of the century. The Soviets arrived

45 Richard Nixon, The Memoirs of Richard Nixon (New York: Grosset and Dunlop, 1978), p.882.

at the conclusion that this meeting marked the end of any possibility for an accommodation as long as Mao lives.

However, Mao had bigger gains to make in the West by pursuing the Helsinki Conference and starting the negotiations on force reduction in Central Europe. Economic credits were beginning to flow to the Soviet Union in some volume and there were prospects for luring the Americans and Japanese (with obvious overtures for Beijing).⁴⁶ Moreover, the Chinese leadership were embroiled in factionalism. The "Gang of Four" initiated its challenge to the pragmatic Zhou Enlai, putting the skillful but ailing Premier on the political defensive. For Moscow, another period of waiting seemed advisable in the East, while efforts proceeded to secure the Western flank of the Soviet Union.⁴⁷

As for China, it seems that the resignation of President Nixon following the 'Watergate Scandal' and in the face of a meeting between Brezhnev and President Ford at Vladivostok, there was a short span of time in which it considered some gestures towards Moscow, tactically expedient. In early November 1974, a congratulatory message from the Chinese on the anniversary of the October Revolution

46 Hyland, n.40, p.187.

47 Ibid.

proposed a non-aggression agreement, renunciation of the use of force, mutual withdrawal of forces and a border settlement. Beijing withdrew her demand for Soviet recognition of the inequality of the Czarist treaties. Western observers began speculating about a "reconciliation between Russia and China that is now taking shape."⁴⁸

To the astonishment of some observers, Brezhnev brusquely rejected the proposal during a stop-over in Mongolia two days before meeting with President Ford at Valdivostok. He construed the Chinese proposal as a demand to recognize "disputed" border areas. For the Soviets, this sort of negative response to the Chinese gesture might have been an indication of their belief that with Nixon's exit and Mao reaching the fag-end of his life, Beijing's adherence to the Maoist policy of dealing with ^{the} USA would be shortlived. The implication was that impediment to normalization of Sino-Soviet relations was Mao, and his defeat or demise had become a pre-condition for any major progress or improvement in those relations.

An interesting line of speculation is that the Soviets may well have come to believe that the group around Jiang Qing (Chiang Ching) - later to be denounced as the 'Gang of Four' - was a promising source of weakness in the Chinese

48 Victor Zorza, The Washington Post, 14 November 1974, quoted in Hyland, n.40, p.187.

leadership. Its opposition to Zhou Enlai, who advocated building China into a modern power by the end of the century, might have seemed to the Soviets as likely to deepen internal divisions in Beijing. In any case, this radical element in the leadership was likely to jeopardise China's relations with the USA and upset any realistic foreign policy strategy. For Moscow, waiting seemed the best course: Either Jiang Qing would plunge China into another period of chaos, or she would be destroyed and thereby discredit Mao himself. In either case, the Soviets stood to gain ground.⁴⁹

Alternatively, there is some evidence that Zhou and Deng Xiaoping might have wanted to signal to Moscow the possibility of a reconciliation when they unexpectedly released a captured Soviet helicopter crew on 27 December 1975, after 21 months of detention. If so, the Soviet response was not altered. Indeed, at the 25th Party Congress in February 1976, the Soviet leadership explicitly spelled out its waiting game: "The ball is in the Chinese court" was Brezhnev's utterance. His address to the Party Congress on 24 February contrasted with the more conciliatory line of five years earlier. Whereas in 1971, he had

49 Hyland, n.40, p.188.

spoken of unity and mutual interest, he now described China as a 'reserve' of imperialism engaging in feverish attempts to wreck detente and seeking to provoke a world war. If China was ready to return to a policy based on 'genuine' Marxism-Leninism, then Moscow was prepared to meet it with an appropriate response, corresponding to principles of 'socialist internationalism'. (as opposed to peaceful co-existence).⁵⁰ Thus, one can only conclude that the Soviets were quite content to wait for the exit of Mao.

Summary

The foregoing analysis shows that after extensive debate over a period of some years, the CCP radically altered a number of key assumptions, underpinning its foreign policy. The primary focus of China's concern was shifted from US imperialist aggression in the Third World to the 'hegemony' of the two super powers in the 'intermediate zone'. So far China's perception had been that the world was divided into three parts: the Socialist world, the imperialist world, and the third world, comprising the developing countries of the world. The policy of

50 Ibid.

the socialist world was primarily directed towards winning the allegiance of the third world. The new situation in which the conflict with the Soviet Union became the paramount factor necessitated changes in this perception. The division was now into four categories: the imperialist world, the social-imperialist world (the Soviet Union and its allies), the Socialist world (China, Albania and one or two other countries like North Korea), and the third world.⁵¹

Although the contradiction between US imperialism, Soviet social imperialism and the oppressed nations of the world was not officially designated as the world's 'principal contradiction' it clearly fulfilled that function within the new Chinese foreign policy. During the 9th Party Congress, Lin Biao, the Vice-Chairman of CCP, advocated that a broad united front should be formed to attack the US imperialism, the Soviet revisionism and social-imperialism. However, gradually China's leaders felt that China could not continue a policy of confrontation with both the super powers. It could no longer wallow in splendid isolation without damaging its interests. Too close a relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union raised the spectre of a US-USSR axis against China.⁵² The rethinking

51 Gargi Dutt, "China and the Shift in Super Power Relations", in M.S. Agwani, ed., Detente (Delhi; Vikas, 1975), p.68.

52 Ibid., p.69.

in Beijing was hastened by the reappraisal in the USA of its China policy. The need for such a reappraisal was provided by the failure of the US war in Indochina and by the worsening Sino-Soviet rift. Both Nixon and Kissinger were convinced that it would be in the interest of the USA to strive for a new relationship with China.

In any case, the Vietnam factor was most decisive factor in determining the Sino-American relations. The US perception was that the war in Vietnam could hardly wound up without China's support. The Americans had to play their cards in such a way that both the Russians and the Chinese would use their influence with Hanoi and dissuade it from trying to extort too heavy a price from Washington, a price which might be politically unacceptable within the United States.⁵³ At any rate, Beijing's good offices would be needed by the USA in its efforts to withdraw from Vietnam without losing face. This was the rationale behind a detente between China and the USA.

Prior to the Nixon-Mao 'honeymoon' the USA supported China's entry into United Nations on 25th October 1971 which was a green signal to their future reconciliation. Nixon's pilgrimage to China on 21 February 1972 and his successful meeting with Mao broke the hard-crust of Sino-American relations which aggravated the ire of the Soviets.

53 Ibid., pp.71-72.

There could be no doubt whatsoever that a new page had opened in the relations between China and the USA. Nixon described it as a 'week that changed the world.' The development had certainly vital new dimensions for the peace of the world. It also introduced a new element in the relationship between the US and the USSR. But viewed from Chinese perspective, it was a development specifically devised for use against the Soviet Union.

That the Sino-Soviet antagonism was a prime factor in this detente worried Moscow particularly. Further the Sino-Japanese normalization in 1972 added to their suspicion. It was not only Moscow which tended to view this US-Japan-China axis as a part of Washington's effort to harass Soviet Union, but many observers aired the similar view.

After the Sino-US thaw, China's foreign policy took a new line. China directed its entire thrust of attack against the super powers but managed to concentrate on the Soviet Union. Indeed, the USA was often let off with minor admonitions, while Moscow was kept constantly under fire. Not infrequently the US was brushed aside in the propaganda against the super powers on the ground that it was at least being frank and in its declining phase (due to crisis in the capitalist system), whereas the sharpest broadsides were reserved for the Soviet Union, which was more 'cunning and more deceptive' and hence more dangerous and more vicious.

If the 9th Party Congress laid the foundation-stone of China's new foreign policy, the 10th Party Congress in 1973 buttressed China's policy with regard to her antagonistic rhetoric against the Soviet social imperialism. The 9th Party Congress report read by Lin Biao was a confused statement about China's correct policy on external affairs, whereas the 10th Party Congress report read out by Zhou Enlai boldly proclaimed China's gesture towards the super powers and intensified its rift with the Soviet Union.

During 1971-72, the Bangladesh crisis precipitated China's hostility towards Soviet Union. Soviet Union's support to India and Bangladesh war of liberation exacerbated the situation and China strongly criticized the involvement of a super power in the politics of South Asia. The Indo-Soviet treaty in 1971 caused much irritation to the Beijing leaders which furthered the widening of the rift. Soviet and Indian fears of an emerging Washington-Beijing-Rawalpindi axis, crystallised by Yahya Khan's 20 June warning that he would declare war if 'India made any attempt to seize any part of East Pakistan' and that in a war 'Pakistan would not be alone' led to the signing on 9 August of the Indo-Soviet treaty of peace and friendship.⁵⁴

The triangular relationship which, on the one hand, witnessed Sino-US rapprochement, on the other, accentuated Sino-Soviet rivalry. The leitmotiv of new policy which

54 Greg O'Leary, The Shaping of Chinese Foreign Policy (London & Hongkong: Croomhelm, 1980), p.159.

emerged between the 9th and 10th Party Congresses had its slogan, 'countries want independence, nations want liberation and the people want revolution.' The commitment of the CCP to the second and the third element of this slogan, i.e., to the struggle of national liberation movements and the international working class movement has been a consistent feature of its foreign policy. Thus, China's conflict with the USSR, the fear of improved US-Soviet relations, the Vietnam war, its own security and politico-economic interests and its claims of solidarity with the developing nations and the need to end its isolation and expand its influence in the world have also prompted China to seek a detente in its relations with the USA. Any reduction of tension in the relations between China and the US no doubt contributes to world peace, but it cannot but be noted that from China's own point of view, this detente has specific objectives; it is not part of any effort towards a universal detente.⁵⁵ This detente is meant for Beijing's rivalry with Moscow and it continued till Mao's death in 1976.

55 Dutt, n.51,p.93.

CHAPTER II

THE POST-MAO PHASE OF BEIJING-MOSCOW RELATIONS : OSCILLATORY ANTAGONISM

Foreign policy in general is a complex phenomenon that anchors on a variety of factors. Concentration on the goals and means of foreign policy without understanding the plethora of forces that restrain or facilitate its behaviour is an exercise of not much practical use. The actors can be pictured in a matrix of internal and external forces that affect their behaviour through pulls and pressures. These are known as 'determinants' of foreign policy. This inexorable law of international relations also pertains to the foreign policy of China.

Among the major determinants of foreign policy, the role of domestic policy in the formulation of the former can hardly be ruled out. In fact, an intimate relationship has always subsisted between the two and the one can seldom be divorced from the other. The long-term stability of a particular foreign policy depends entirely on the stability of the domestic scene from which it emanates ... where the socio-economic or political balances of domestic forces are not in equilibrium, foreign policy often becomes hostage to the requirements of home politics; rather than being designed to affect external audiences, it becomes instead a vehicle with which to shore up the internal fortunes of its protagonists. This reverse 'potential' of a foreign policy is of course never altogether absent, and its possible impact will hence never be ignored by the architects of a nation's foreign policy; it will always

constitute one of the considerations shaping a country's external posture.¹ There has been at many critical times a close relationship between internal development and external postures whether it was the period of Hundred Flowers Movement or Anti-Rightist Campaign, or Great Leap Forward or the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution or the fall of Liu Shaoqi or the fall of Lin Biao, and the demise of Mao Zedong. 'The unification of Taiwan' and 'Four Modernisations' are also two major issues which profoundly influence the external policy of China. Sino-Soviet relations during the 1950s, 1960s and through the 1970s did, to a considerable extent, fall prey to just such a phenomenon. The aforesaid domestic factors have been analysed in the previous chapter because both Beijing and Moscow were enmeshed in the schism.

After the demise of Mao Zedong (9 September 1976), the Sino-Soviet tension took a different turn. The ideological rift which persisted until the death of Mao and the subsequent ouster of the 'Gang of Four' have now been put on a back burner as a consequence of the very different ideological priorities and perceptions of the successor regime. Other grievances rose to the fore, however. Ideology remained a sphere of contention. Hua Guofeng was enthroned to power in 1976 as the new Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party.

1 C.G. Jacobsen, Sino-Soviet Relations Since Mao (New York: Praeger, 1981), Ch.III, p.68.

The 'Gang of Four' was accused of having plotted a coup and of having intentionally subverted Mao's purpose and will. Within a week after Hua's assumption of power Jiang Qing, Wang Hongwen, Zhang Chungqiao and Yao Wenyuan had been arrested. The ouster of the 'Gang of Four' occasioned immediate recrudescence of Deng Xiaoping - China's 'strong man' who was unceremoniously sacked from the Party and government posts for his alleged indulgence in the famous Tienmen Square Incident in April 1976. Deng was duly rehabilitated and given back his old positions in July 1977, and his policies soon appeared to sweep the board.

There were speculations that after the death of Mao, the prime actor in the Sino-Soviet rift, the Beijing-Moscow relationship might be improved and there was talk that there might be limited rapprochement. The speculations became more stringent after the withering away of the 'Gang of Four' from the Chinese Communist Party's decision-making body. But to the Soviets' utter dismay and disappointment, the post-Mao China has not smiled toward the Russian bear.

During the crisis of leadership in Beijing, Moscow as soon as possible tried to test the waters to see if a post-Mao leadership would evince any interest in normalization of Sino-Soviet relations. The Soviet initiatives, however, remained half-hearted (a cessation of anti-China polemics, a symbolic party-to-party telegram congratulating Hua Guofeng on his assumption of the Party Chairmanship, and

a request to renewed long-stalled border negotiations). The Chinese leadership, moreover, was too weak, divided, and overwhelmed with domestic problems to tackle a major and potentially divisive foreign policy issue such as a change in Sino-Soviet relations. When the Soviets received no satisfactory response to their efforts, Moscow reverted to the heavily unfriendly position it had adopted in recent years.²

The role of leadership or 'personality' factor in moulding the foreign policy of a country cannot be underscored. Viewed from this angle, the year 1976 is the turning point in the annals of China's external policy because since this cataclysmic year, the changes wrought by the Party, the government and by the people of China have altered the surface as well as the depths of Chinese politics.

To many, Mao was the personification of Chinese Communism, and China without Mao seemed inconceivable. Yet there has been no "deluge", no chaos, but rather the gradual emergence of a pragmatic new order with a different approach to socialist transformation.³

During the fag end of his life, Mao Zedong attempted to reach the pinnacle of revolution through the gigantic social and political upheaval of the Cultural Revolution.

2 Dieter Heinzig, "PRC-Soviet Relations After Mao" in Jurgen Domes, ed., Chinese Politics After Mao (Cardiff: University College, 1979), pp.269-77.

3 Imanuel C.Y. Hsu, China Without Mao (Oxford, 1983), Preface, p.vii.

He sought ideological sanctity through intensified class struggle and the purge of high Party and government leaders and intellectuals. Though in appearance a champion of noble idealism, the Cultural Revolution brought about a decade of destruction and disorder. The Party was decimated, industry, agriculture and science suffered severe losses. Disruption in education left a generation untrained, and scholars were denied years of teaching and research, resulting in an incalculable loss of human resources. Ironically, the Cultural Revolution turned out to be anti-cultural.⁴

It is quite important that the purge of senior Party members made way for the emergence of Mao's wife, Jiang Qing, who catapulted to the position of first Vice-Chairman of the Cultural Revolutionary Committee in 1966. She built up a radical following which, together with the military under Lin Biao, became the chief beneficiary of the Cultural Revolution. When Lin was killed following an abortive coup in September 1971, Jiang Qing rose further in national politics. At the 10th Party Congress in 1973, she and three senior associates - Wang Hongwen, Zhang Chunqiao, and Yao Wenyuan - won leadership positions. With Premier Zhou Enlai and Chairman Mao both in ill-health, Jiang Qing's group prepared themselves for succession. Mao patronized them but also warned them not to become a "Gang of Four." With the support of Kang

4 Ibid.

Sheng's secret police, they tyrannized the country. Perceptive leaders were flabbergasted at this state of affairs, yet dared not to open their mouth for fear of reprisal.

Hua-Deng Dumvirate

The demise of Mao signalled an epochal turning point in Chinese politics. The struggle for succession that ensued led to the smashing of the Gang and the rise of Hua Guofeng, Mao's "anointed successor", as Party Chairman and State Premier.

Following the downfall of the 'Gang of Four', Chairman Hua Guofeng faced three pressing issues: (1) his legitimacy as Mao's successor, (2) the rehabilitation of Deng Xiaoping; and (3) the reordering of economic priorities to promote modernization.

Mao's declaration: "with you (Hua) in charge, I am at ease" was regarded by Ye Jianying and Deng Xiaoping supporters as reflecting Mao's personal view rather than the will of the Party, whose constitution has specific provisions governing the election of the party Chairman.⁵ By implication, Hua's ascendancy to Chairmanship of the Central Committee and of its Military Commission was deemed unconstitutional but, if he would agree to the reinstatement of

5 Ibid., pp.29-30.

Deng, this question of legitimacy could be negotiated or even withdrawn. Thus, the two issues came into balance. As a result of persuasion and mediation by Marshall Ye and Vice-Premier Li Xiannian, who desperately desired a smooth transition to the post-Mao era, Hua agreed to rehabilitate Deng, and to revise the five-year economic plan to accelerate the Four Modernizations. In late November 1976 Hua announced that Deng's reinstatement would be discussed at the next Central Committee meeting in July 1977. In return, he was extended support by Ye, Li and others for Chairmanship of the Central Committee and its Military Commission.⁶

Emergence of Deng Xiaoping

At the same time, in spite of the unity represented by the three-way coalition of Hua, Ye and Deng, tension continued to mount. On the surface, Hua and Deng maintained a working relationship; Hua treated Deng with due respect as a party senior of Long March generation, while Deng treated Hua with the courteous condescension that an elder Chinese family member exhibits toward a younger one. Yet Deng's strategy for political domination put him in conflict with Hua. Deng's growing power as well as his strategy were obvious enough, but Hua lacked the organization to halt it.

6 Ibid.

Deng was intent upon enlarging his power base by rehabilitating men who had suffered under Mao and the Gang of Four in the name of "righting the wrong" (ping pan). Meanwhile, Deng also cultivated able, younger followers, placing them in key positions so that they could perpetuate his economic policies.⁷

Deng, however, did not circumscribe himself to attacks on individuals or the appointments of young blood; he simultaneously eroded the ideological power base of his former adversaries by combating the embedded supremacy of "Mao thought."

Hua Guofeng's political fortune reached its low ebb when he graciously submitted his resignation as Premier and nominated Zhao Ziyang as his successor. The appointment of Zhao Ziyang further consolidated Deng's position because the former is a strong protege of the latter. The pragmatists gained power at the expense of Hua and the Maoists. Although Hua Guofeng retained the Chairmanship of the Party, his organizational power was clipped off by the Dengists due to their majority in the party's top level organizations. Their growing victory came in June 1981 when the 6th Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee officially affirmed socialist economic development as the

7 Hsu, n.3, pp.34-5.

central task of the party and government under the new collective leadership of Party Chairman Hu Yaobang, Vice-Chairman Deng Xiaoping and Premier Zhao Ziyang. Hua's ouster from party Chairmanship culminated in the 12th Party Congress, 1982 (September) and ushered in the Dengist era in Chinese politics. The 12th Party Congress adopted a new constitution to break from Maoism.

The Waning Maoism

During the last fifteen years of his life Mao, the Chinese "Lenin and Stalin combined", was sanctified as an all-knowing all-wise demigod who could do no wrong. It was an incredible cult of personality that surpassed even Stalin's.

Once Mao was in eternal exit and the Gang of Four smashed, Mao's image quickly became tarnished. His responsibility for the trauma of Cultural Revolution and the rise of the Gang of Four was common knowledge; yet not one dared to fulminate him as Khrushchev had Stalin. With the rehabilitation of Deng in July 1977, Mao's de-sanctification was accelerated. First by indirect and later by open criticism, Mao's pedestal was chipped away.⁸ Deng emphasized discipline and hardwork to advance modernization: "There must be less empty talk and more hard work." The "empty talk" of the Cultural Revolution had offered no concrete improvements,

8 Ibid., p.44.

and Deng's "economics in command" triumphed as the new line giving a deathknell to Mao's "politics in command." Deng needed to loosen the country from the grip of Mao's strictures in order to launch his own programmes of rapid modernization, which was a revolution in itself, albeit of a different nature.

Deng admitted that some restraint was required to ensure stability; still it was clear that there was a conscious effort to strip Mao down to human size. One by one his deeds were undone. Yao Wenyuan's article, "Comment on the Dismissal of Hai Rui", whose publication was directed by Mao and his wife and considered the first shot of the Cultural Revolution, was condemned in November 1978. The verdict that the Tian An Men Square Incident was counter-revolutionary was reversed to read revolutionary. Peng De huai, the Defense Minister purged in 1959, and Tao Zhu, party propaganda chief purged during the Cultural Revolution, were posthumously rehabilitated. In January 1979, the widow of Liu Shaoqi reappeared in public after ten years of detention foreshadowing the rehabilitation of her husband. At Liu's memorial service on 17 May 1980, Deng called him a "Communist saint" - a far cry from his previous designation as a "Communist traitor." The rehabilitations of Peng and Liu were clear negations of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution.

In this way the party renounced the personality cult of Mao and moved him from the lofty status of demigod to the

humble one of human. Certainly the party would neither deny Mao's contributions, nor hide his mistakes, especially his part in the Cultural Revolution, the "decade of great catastrophe." The major factors such as China's new line, the ascendance of Deng Xiaoping and the demystification of Mao Zedong profoundly moulded the post-Mao Chinese policy in both internal and external spheres. The de-Maoification of politics is bound to continue as the influence of the thrice-resurrected Deng and his policies for China's modernization begin to be felt in every aspect of Chinese life. And its repercussions in the external policy can now be gauged.

Now that China's economic development has turned in a direction that, for all its differences with the history of Soviet industrialization (above all in the greater priority given in China to agriculture and light industry over heavy industry) still shows an essential parallel to earlier Soviet developments, the continued Chinese hostility to the Soviet Union is deprived of its ideological cloak and appears in its nakedness as the response of a weaker but proud and ambitious power to the pressure and threats of a stronger rival.⁹ However, the ideological factor has been

9 Richard Lowenthal, "The Degeneration of an Ideological Dispute" in the edited book of Douglas T. Stuart and William T. Tow, China, the Soviet Union and the West: Strategic and Political Dimensions in the 1980s (Westview, 1982), p.70.

subdued by the threat perception recently reinforced by the Soviet's encircling moves in supporting the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea and in invading Afghanistan directly.

As it is clearly discernible from the earlier discussions that - ideology was a key factor in Sino-Soviet alliance as well as in Sino-Soviet rift, it has degenerated on both sides for, though the Soviet ideology has largely remained the same, it has lost decisively in relevance and attractiveness for Soviet foreign policy, based more and more, on military strength.

Ideology has lost almost as much as a key to Chinese policy motivation. At the same time, there has been something of a reversal of roles. The Soviet Union, which once appeared as the advocate of restraint on Third World revolution for the sake of peaceful co-existence, is now the protagonist of the 'revolutionary' use of military force in Asia and Africa, while China, once the would-be promoter of violent revolution at any price, now stands for compromise between the conservative and the revolutionary forces of the Third World in the common interest. Ideology, once a major factor in sharpening the rift to a break, has today become a mere dependent variable in its development.

In the post-Mao China, ideology is the instrument of state policy and Communist dogma has lost its intrinsic significance. The real politik is the actual conflict. Doctrine is a mere adjunct.¹⁰

10 Peter Harris, Political China Observed (Croom Helm, 1980), p.177.

There is no doubt that the most obvious human considerations enter into the relationship between the affairs of States. The qualities of the diplomat are worth-cherishing, but have been missing in the Sino-Soviet dispute. Abstractions like "hegemonism" only serve to cover up certain personal difficulties. If the relationship is soured at the level of personal intercourse, then much else follows. For personal reasons, ideology may come into question and the behaviour of States may become irrational and then bellicose towards each other, because armies, bureaucrats and even the masses follow instructions from the top. If the leaders have personal disagreements, the masses may become involved.¹¹ The role of personality and personality cult during the Mao era has been picturised in the previous chapter. Here, it needs no elaborate mention. Similarly, in the post-Mao era, Deng Xiaoping, "the strongman", of China has been playing the same role what was played by Mao earlier.

Earlier the Sino-Soviet rift centred on Mao and Khrushchev, today it is relying on Deng and Brezhnev and Andropov (after the death of Brezhnev on 10 November 1982). Thus, the role of leadership in determining the fate of the nation is crystal clear from the above viewpoint.

11 Ibid., p.180.

In the light of this premise, it can be assessed that China at the dawn of the 1980s did indeed look to be Deng's preserve. His old nemesis, Mao Zedong, was dead; Mao's radical followers appeared cowed, their leaders faced the doom. After two and a half years uneasy dummvirate with Hua Guofeng, Deng managed in 1980-81 to tilt the scales of power dramatically and perhaps decisively in his own favour stripping Hua down out of power. Today Hua Guofeng is no more in the forefront of decision-making and Deng's proteges are at the helm of affairs both at the Party and government levels.

Deng's emulation of the early Stalinist model (one also pursued by Stalin's successors in Moscow) did, as previously discussed, extend also to the concept of socialism in one country. In effect this concept is a declaration of self-sufficiency, connoting a programme of self-interest and self-reliance, of de-ideologized and supremely pragmatic search for advantage (one might call it even "Gaullist"). In the sphere of foreign affairs it suggests a willingness to tailor policies so as to extract maximum advantage from opportunities of the moment. Alliances are viewed without emotion, as tools to be used when opportune for the furthering of one's own interests and security calculations. Seen in this light, Stalin's pact with Nazi Germany in 1939 became an essential tool for the postponing of looming conflict,

once it became clear that Britain and France were not prepared at that time to commit themselves to joint defence with Moscow. China's quasi-alliance with Washington was similarly dependent on Beijing's perception of US willingness and ability to satisfy Chinese needs - developmental and security - and it was dependent on a Chinese judgement that these could not be better served through different alignments.¹²

China's so-called moderates or pragmatists had always criticized the emotionalism of Mao's anti-Soviet phobia as counter-productive and dangerous. The elements of danger arose from their perception of the historical legacy, namely, that Sino-Soviet border issues encompassed a number of potential 'berlins' - friction points which, if approached emotionally or dogmatically, could all-too-easily spill over into much wider and less manageable confrontations. The counter-productive argument, however, extended also well beyond matters of security. There was deep conviction that a freezing of ties with Moscow was not in China's developmental interest.¹³ There was considerable economic compatibility between the divergent Soviet and Chinese economies. Soviet technology and machinery might,

12 C.G. Jacobsen, Sino-Soviet Relations Since Mao: The Chairman's Legacy (Praeger, 1981), p.150.

13 Ibid., p.151.

in many cases, not be up to the most advanced Western standards of sophistication. But though sometimes simpler, the Soviet products were often 'sufficient'; furthermore, it could be argued that their very simplicity made them better suited to less developed regions, easier to operate by less educated personnel, and in general easier to absorb into the structure of local knowledge and requirements.

The argument that echoed the more general degree of product sophistication often proved more disruptive than helpful and that the primary emphasis ought to be on projects and technology that could be integrated into the existing socio-economic structure. Finally, the point must be made that these Chinese leaders had been trained and socialized to see the Soviet model of economic development and political control as the most effective generator of progress. This was the persuasion that had formed the core of their criticism against Mao during the 1950s and through the subsequent decades.¹⁴

Deng's personal history evinced a lifelong familiarity with, and preference for, Soviet socio-political and economic structures and a consequent belief that Sino-Soviet negotiations could and should be conducted as between people

¹⁴ Ibid.

who at least speak the same language - no matter how vexatious the particular differences that separate them might be. Deng's posture towards the end of the 1970s, especially at the time of the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese war and its aftermath (Deng assumed the role of prime spokesman for anti-Soviet phobia), jarred sharply with that of his past. In the light of his subsequent reversal to a posture more in keeping with his earlier stance towards Moscow, one is tempted to see his aberrant record in part as a tactical response to Hua's manoeuvring of 1978-79. Deng would not have failed to appreciate that his stand might serve, whether coincidentally or not, to undercut any punitive rapprochement between Hua and the radicals.¹⁵

A Western diplomat commented:

It has become embarrassing for the current leadership that the Russians are considered 'revisionists.' There is too much similarity now with Deng Xiaoping's own economic policies and there had to be some kind of official meetings where Russian economics (was) given the okay. 16

Deng was clearly orchestrating a climate favouring substantive Sino-Soviet negotiations. Anti-Soviet propaganda had not been totally discarded. But Hua Guofeng was

15 Ibid., pp.151-2.

16 Bryan Johnson, from Beijing, "China Voices Approval of Soviet Internal Plans", Globe and Mail, 3 May 1980. Cited in C.G. Jacobsen, Sino-Soviet Relations Since Mao : The Chairman's Legacy (Praeger, 1981), p.153.

allowed to reclaim the role as the main author of anti-Soviet hysteria. The fact that he was allowed to do so was thought by many observers to be suggestive of Deng's confidence. Deng's desire to ensure that established bridges not be burnt before new ones were in place (and preferably not at all) might also be presumed to have been involved.

There were two external obstacles to Deng's unfettered pursuit of his personal inclinations. One lay in the cold war type atmospherics that in 1980 again threatened to petrify established alignments and perceptions. Deng might wish to improve State to State and perhaps Party to Party ties with Moscow, but much had been invested in improved relations with Washington, and their disruption was a price that Deng was loath to pay. The other external obstacle arose from the uncertainties of succession in Moscow. Secretary-General Brezhnev was seriously ailing, yet no succession script looked either securing or lasting.¹⁷

If the time since Mao's death provides any insight, Sino-Soviet differences can no longer be attributed simply to the fixations and suspicions of an aged political leader. While Mao played a pivotal role in the ultimate disintegration of the Moscow-Peking alliance, his successors have yet

17 C.G. Jacobsen, Sino-Soviet Relations Since Mao : The Chairman's Legacy (Pracgar, 1981), p.153.

to judge his actions deleterious to Chinese interests. Contrary to widespread expectations, tensions have not diminished between the two powers. The Soviet statements immediately after Mao's death were decidedly low-key and contained tentative, if somewhat vague, overtures to Beijing. These included declaratory pledges to seek normalized relations, if not outright accommodation. All went entirely unheeded. Chinese statements promptly and pointedly underscored past pledges to "carry the struggle against Soviet revisionism through to the end." Border negotiations in Beijing during late 1976 and early 1977 failed to yield any more positive results than previous sessions undertaken periodically since 1969. No Chinese leader has been willing, at least publicly, to assert or imply a less hostile view of Soviet power and policy. Indeed, recent expressions of official policy and comments to foreign visitors convey an even more insistent denial that longstanding differences may soon be conciliated.

Treating Sino-Soviet relations in highly personalized terms, therefore, seems increasingly inappropriate. While this dimension cannot be overlooked, an undue emphasis on personalities obscures more than it reveals. The long and troubled association between Soviet and Chinese Communists antedates the founding of the People's Republic of China by nearly thirty years. The decade of the 1950s - the period of

the greatest Soviet influence on Chinese political, economic and institutional development - left a legacy of bitterness and suspicion whose scars still remain. Furthermore, the Soviet Union's progressive emergence during the 1960s and 1970s as a genuine military and economic Super Power has troubled many Chinese decision-makers. These factors seem certain to endure well beyond the lifetime of a leader such as Mao, no matter how singular his role might have been. Thus, judgement seems all the more valid in view of the increasingly visible challenge to Mao's political legacy in other realms.¹⁸

Prior to the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, there were, in addition to Mao's obsessive anti-Sovietism, two basic reasons why the Chinese opposed a detente with Moscow. One was ideological, the other strategic. The ideological concern of Mao and the "radicals" was that too close a relationship with the "revisionist" Soviets could contaminate the Chinese Revolution. But once Mao died, the post-Mao leaders quickly purged the radical "Gang of Four", and have since adopted a markedly pragmatic approach to the country's development. They have invited foreign capital into China; they have expanded free markets, they have increased material incentives; and they even engaged in a virtual de facto decollectivization of agriculture under the rubric of the "household

18 Jonathan D. Pollack, "Sino-Soviet Relations" in Grayson Kirk and Nils H. Wessell, eds., The Soviet Threat: Myths and Realities (Praeger, 1978), p.31.

responsibility system." Having replaced revolutionary zeal with a determined emphasis on economic development, the new Chinese leaders now have much less to fear from Soviet "revisionism." In this new context, it would be patently hypocritical for them to continue their ideological critique of the Soviets, they can hardly accuse them of "heresies" that they themselves are practicing. So, for several years now, the Chinese have stopped referring to the Soviets as "restoring capitalism" and "betraying Marxism." In sum, Mao's death has worked to remove the ideological barrier to detente between Beijing and Moscow.¹⁹

The second barrier to detente prior to Mao's death was strategic. China's concern about possible military action by Moscow was at its height in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In this period, the Soviets greatly increased the quantity and quality of their military forces on the Chinese border; they invaded Czechoslovakia and proclaimed the "Brezhnev Doctrine" which arrogated to Moscow the right to intervene in the affairs of any "socialist" country; they began to threaten a pre-emptive strike against the Chinese nuclear missiles, and there were two bloody battles between Soviet and Chinese forces over disputed islands in the Anur River. It was these developments that propelled the Chinese into the arms of the United States in the early 1970s.²⁰

19 Donald S. Zagoria, "The Moscow-Beijing Detente", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol.61, no.4, Spring, 1983, p.854.

20 Ibid.

Viewed against the background of these broad sets of images, the normalization between Beijing and Moscow appears to be very warming. Although a major 'breakthrough' is yet to be accomplished, the normalization process is going on slowly but steadily. However, a brief description of the developments since the death of Mao merits our attention, so that a prognosis can be made on the basis of the developments occurred so far.

During the interval between the death of Zhou Enlai (January 1976) and that of Mao Zedong (September 1976), Moscow's nerves were somewhat strained by the temporary ascendance of the militantly anti-Soviet as well as highly anti-American, "Gang of Four". The passing of Mao, the gang's presumed patron, and their purge the following month evoked some cautiously optimistic Soviet gestures to the new Hua Guofeng leadership which rebuffed them. The Chinese anti-Soviet polemic continued and early in 1977, Moscow began to reciprocate one of its leading propaganda themes being a warning to the West and Japan not to help arm the alleged militarists in Beijing.

Two of the main innovations propounded by Hua Guofeng at the Fifth National People's Congress (February-March 1978) evidently aroused serious concern in Moscow. One was the announcement of accelerated and ambitious economic targets for 1985 which, to be sure, was only one of many indications that the Chinese leadership was firmly committed to

making the country a much stronger and, therefore, potentially an even more uncomfortable neighbour for the Soviet Union than before. Beijing's external economic relations, especially those with Japan and Western Europe, proliferated at about that time. Partly in the hope of increasing its already substantial trade with China, Japan signed a treaty of peace and friendship with the Chinese on 12 August 1978. At Chinese insistence, the treaty included an "anti-hegemony" clause aimed at and most unwelcome to Moscow.²¹

During 1978, Beijing's economic and technological relations with the USA also started in full swing. All these created a bleak and menacing picture for the Soviets, who were only partly relieved in early 1979 by clear signs that Beijing was scaling down its overly ambitious targets set the year before.

Hua's other initiative was even more immediately disturbing because it related to the highly sensitive border issue and occurred against a background of other disagreements in the field of Sino-Soviet State relations. On 24 February 1978, only two days before the opening of the National People's Congress, Moscow proposed in private that the two sides issue a joint statement basing their mutual relations on peaceful co-existence. This overture

21 Harold C. Hinton, "Sino-Soviet Relations : Background and Overview" in Stuart and Tow, eds., n.9, p.19.

was rejected in a note of 9 March that echoed what Hua had said meanwhile to the National People's Congress.²²

Two of Hua's demands regarding the border question - one, that Soviet forces withdraw from the Mongolian People's Republic and the other, that Moscow implement the alleged Zhou-Kosygin agreement of 11 September 1969 for a mutual troop withdrawal from disputed areas - were old, but another one was new. For the first time, in public at any rate, the Chinese side demanded that Soviet military power along the entire Sino-Soviet border be reduced to the level of the early 1960s, before the build up had begun. All three of these demands were emphatically unacceptable in Moscow. They evoked strong reactions in the Soviet press and a visit by Brezhnev and Defence Minister Dimitri Ustinov to the Sino-Soviet border region (28 March-9 April). Another probable manifestation of Moscow's reaction was an obscure border incident that occurred, evidently at Soviet initiative, on 9 May at a spot not far from the site of the two clashes of March 1969.²³

Sino-American normalization in the early 1979 gave Moscow some reason to fear the emergence of a triangular anti-Soviet detente among the other major Far Eastern powers. By continuing its rather heavy-handed international behaviour,

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

Moscow may be confronting the beginnings of a self-fulfilling prophecy.²⁴

'Kampuchea issue' provided the catalyst for China's war with Vietnam in mid-February 1979. The Sino-Vietnamese war once again jeopardized the normalization process. It worsened the feeling of China towards the Soviet Union. Moscow's Vietnam ties make Sino-Soviet rapprochement vastly more difficult. Indeed the Vietnam factor was of signal importance in bringing China and the USA in closer relations in 1979. Sino-American normalization began after two points became clear: that the USA did not contemplate an early modus vivendi with Vietnam and that a Soviet supported Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea was imminent. From the Chinese point of view, Sino-American detente, followed by Deng's January 1979 visit to the USA and the "lesson" of February-March 1979 to Vietnam, were to a large extent, efforts to cope with the Soviet-Vietnamese steamroller that was flattening Kampuchea and to that extent the Chinese were, of course, not successful.

On 3 April 1979 the Chinese government notified Moscow of its decision not to extend the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance beyond its original 30-year term (to expire on 10 April 1980). In the light of the vastly

24 Ibid., p.20.

changed international scenarios, since the inception of the Treaty 30 years ago, China's move was not unexpected. In fact, the Treaty long ceased to be a meaningful link between the two countries since their open schism in the late 1950s. The decision had been announced before by Deng during his visit to Japan in 1978. The reason given: the treaty of 1950, directed against Japan, was now obsolete, especially in view of the new treaty between China and Japan of August 1978. Simultaneously, however, Beijing suggested to Moscow that the two governments should begin talks and do this without preconditions. The Kremlin agreed on 17 April 1979.

When the negotiation process was going on, the Sino-Soviet relationship plunged to a new low when a Christmas invasion again occurred on 27 December 1979 - from the USSR into Non-aligned Afghanistan. In the General Assembly of the United Nations, 104 governments, including China, requested that the USSR get out of Afghanistan, but to no avail. The Chinese were deeply upset by this 'imperialist action' of the USSR. Reacting sharply, Beijing on 20 January 1980 announced that for the time being there would be no second round of the Sino-Soviet talks. This announcement was followed on 23 January 1980 by a statement that no Chinese would take part in the Summer Olympic Games to be held in Moscow in July and August 1980.

These are some of the developments which punctuated the "normalisation process" started in 1979. However, from 1981, the process has gathered momentum and the intertempive factors have receded.

In the year 1979, Beijing refused to renew the 1950 "Sino-Soviet Treaty of Alliance and Mutual Friendship" but agreed to a Soviet proposal for general Sino-Soviet negotiation - that is, talks not limited to border issues.²⁵

Since 1969, the Chinese had insisted that Moscow acknowledge certain islands - notably one across from Khabarovsk - and some land in the Parivis to be "disputed territories", and also insisted that the Soviet Union evacuate them, before Beijing would negotiate an agreed frontier on the basis of what it termed the "unequal" Russian-Chinese 19th century treaties. In fact the Soviets had withdrawn their forces from all the islands in the Ussuri except the one across from Khabarovsk.²⁶ According to a inter-official Soviet account, not disputed by the Chinese, Beijing, citing the military threat from the "North and South", made the following demands in 1979:

(1) a outbreak of Soviet troop deployment on the Chinese

25 William E. Griffith, "Sino-Soviet Rapprochement?", Problems of Communism, March-April 1983, p.20.

26 Kenneth G. Lieberthal, Sino-Soviet Conflict in the 1970s: Its Evolution and Implications for the Strategic Triangle (Santa Monica, CA, the Rand Corporation, July 1970), p.148.

frontier to the level maintained under Khrushchev;
 (2) withdrawal of all Soviet troops from the Mongolian
 People's Republic; and (3) the end of Soviet aid "in any
 form" to Vietnam. In sum, Beijing demanded that Moscow
 abandon all its geo-political instruments of pressure on
 China without receiving anything in return.²⁷

The USSR, according to this Soviet account, rejected
 these Chinese demands and tabled a draft joint-Sino-Soviet
 declaration, which (1) denounced 'hegemony' (a favourite
 Chinese charge against the Soviets) by either side,
 (2) proposed a mutual end to unfriendly propaganda;
 (3) provided for regular Sino-Soviet meetings, including
 summit meetings; and (4) endorsed expansion of trade and
 of scientific, technical and cultural exchanges.²⁸

As depicted earlier in this chapter that the Soviet
 intervention in Afghanistan in late December 1979 stalled
 matters a spell. On March 1981, Moscow proposed to the
 Chinese a series of "confidence building measures", in
 which Japan, North Korea, South Korea and the United States
 could all participate. Moscow stated that it had approached
 all these countries, except South Korea, in this regard.²⁹

27 Griffith, n.25, p.20.

28 Ibid.

29 N.S. Ukraintsev (a pseudonym for Mikhail Kapitsa,
 now Deputy Foreign Minister), Far Eastern Affairs
 (Moscow), no.3, 1982, pp.15-24.

Nevertheless, in early 1981, Mikhail Kapitsa, then Chief of the First Far Eastern Department of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, twice visited Beijing privately and saw some officials in the Chinese Foreign Ministry.³⁰ The general level of Soviet polemics against China also declined somewhat, even though strong attacks against Beijing continued to appear in some important Party journals. Chinese athletes began to compete with their Soviet counterparts in various international sports events, and in November 1981, even participated in a Moscow Meet. (Shades of "Ping-Pong Diplomacy"!).³¹

In late 1981, notably in an October 10 speech by Yao bang, General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), a new ideological formulation of Chinese foreign policy began to appear, emphasizing its "independence". The new formulation contained the usual criticism of "hegemonism" (read the Soviet Union), but it included some criticism of imperialism (read the USA) as well.³²

On 25 September 1981, Moscow proposed resuming border negotiations and on 16 December, Moscow proposed regular scientific and technological exchanges. On 25 December Beijing agreed to the latter in principle but

30 Nayan Chanda, "Breshnev Breaks the Ice", Far Eastern Economic Review (Hong Kong), 2-8 April 1982, pp.12-13.

31 Griffith, n.25, p.21.

32 Hu Yang bang's speech in Beijing in commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the 1911 revolution. Beijing Review, 19 October 1981, p.19.

added that these exchanges should be postponed indefinitely.³³ However, on 8 January 1982, Li Xiannian, the number three Chinese leader, declared in an interview with a group of West European journalists that Sino-Soviet differences were primarily about State, not ideological issues; that China posed no pre-conditions for Sino-Soviet negotiations, although the border, troops, Afghanistan and Indochina issues would have to be discussed, and that the USA was always an "imperialist country" with whom China did not have "intimate relations."³⁴ That same month, a Soviet-China specialist, Sergey Tikhunskiy, visited Beijing as a guest of the Soviet Ambassador. On 3 February 1982, Moscow yet again proposed the resumption of border negotiations and on 9 February, the Soviets suggested annual exchange of students and teachers for language training.³⁵

The Chinese response was moderate. Insinuation against the Soviets continued, but with decreasing intensity. Moreover, in March 1982, China played host to Maxime Gremetz, a leading official of the French Communist Party (PCP). This visit prepared the ground for a visit later that year by PCP head Georges Marchais, during which relations were resumed between the Chinese and the French Communist Parties. This was the first time since the

33 Griffith, n.25, p.21.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

Sino-Soviet split that Beijing restored party relations with a pro-Soviet Communist Party. It is also important to note that the CCP had earlier resumed party relations with Euro-Communist Italian and Spanish parties in part because of the fact that by 1982 the Soviet and Italian parties were increasingly involved in mutual polemics.³⁶

The most spectacular aspect of the 'normalization drive' came when Brezhnev renewed his overtures to Beijing on 24 August 1982, at Tashkent. He announced that Moscow did not refute that China was socialist, indicating that ideological chasm was no longer a formidable issue. He again proposed border negotiations and "confidence building" measures. But Brezhnev still insisted that these not be "to the detriment of third countries", i.e. he would make no concessions on Mongolia, Afghanistan or Indochina. The Chinese rejected his overtures a week later.

Despite this, the trend toward Sino-Soviet rapprochement continued. In March, Chinese athletes again competed in Moscow. In May, Kapitsa made another "private" visit to Beijing. On 20 May, Pravda published a highly authoritative article by the pseudonym "I. Alexandrov" which echoed at length Brezhnev's strong advocacy of Sino-Soviet rapprochement. A group of Chinese economists visited the USSR. In June a group of Soviet athletes competed in Beijing. Several

36 Ibid., pp.21-2.

new groups of Chinese athletes competed in Moscow. The volume of Sino-Soviet trade began to increase.³⁷

By this time, the long, hard Sino-American negotiations in Beijing over the Taiwan issue were reaching their climax. The result was the 17 August Sino-US communique. The USA declared that it looked forward to reduction and resolution of arms sales to Taiwan, but set no date for this. China indicated that it strove for a "peaceful" resolution of the Taiwan issue. However, Beijing and Washington thereafter interpreted the communique differently on those issues.³⁸

That the Sino-US communique did not reverse, or even arrest, the gradual improvement in the atmosphere of Sino-Soviet relations was made clear by the August visit of Kapitsa's Chinese opposite member Yu Hengling, to Moscow, as "a guest of the Chinese ambassador." This visit probably concluded preparations for resumption of general Sino-Soviet negotiations.³⁹

The continuation of negotiations was further strengthened by the 4 September speech of Hu Yaobang to the 12th CCP Congress which set forth at the most authoritative level the new "independent" Chinese foreign policy line: Concentration on the Third World, although not on Chinese leadership of it; and condemnation of both the USSR and the USA as

37 Ibid., p.23.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

"hegemonic" powers.⁴⁰ The speech demanded deeds, not only words, from the USSR, at the same time, it strongly criticized US policy toward Taiwan. Beijing's leaning toward the USA at least in terms of ideological formulae, seemed to have waned.

In a 26 September speech at Baku, Brezhnev again reiterated his overtures to Beijing. At this moment, however, Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang was telling Japanese Premier Zenko Suzuki that "Soviet hegemonism" has not changed."⁴¹ In his last major speech delivered to a group of high military officials on 27 October 1982, Brezhnev once again repeated his desire for Sino-Soviet detente. This time he spoke to nuanced charges in Chinese policy: although there had been no "radical changes", he said, "the new things which appear must not be ignored by us."

Sino-Soviet negotiations began in October 1982 in Beijing at the level of Deputy Foreign Ministers: Leonid Il'ichev and Qian Qichen. The substantive differences remained the same as in 1979, except that the Chinese now also demanded Soviet evacuation of Afghanistan. Indications were that the Soviets were more likely to make some concessions on the border troop issue than on Indo-China. Conversely, Beijing seemed more interested in Soviet concessions on the latter issue.⁴²

40 For the text see, Beijing Review, 13 September 1982, pp.11-40.

41 Griffith, n.25, pp.23-4.

42 Ibid., p.24.

In early November 1982, Brezhnev's death provided the opportunity for the highest public level of Sino-Soviet cordiality since 1963. The then Chinese Foreign Minister, Huang Hua, attended the funeral of Brezhnev. He was mainly received by Andropov and thereafter by Andrei Gromyko; Soviet and Chinese press items about these meetings were almost friendly. On 14 November, the day that Huang met with Gromyko, a senior Soviet official - V.G. Afanas'yev, editor-in-chief of Pravda and a full member of the CPSU Central Committee - told a Japanese journalist in Moscow that the USSR and China might agree to mutual troop reductions on their borders.⁴³ Huang called Brezhnev an "outstanding statesman" and expressed Chinese "appreciation" for his gestures toward China and "hope" that his successor would move further in this direction. Chinese interest in improving state relations and resuming party contacts seemed stronger than at any time since the 1960s.⁴⁴

Huang who, before leaving Moscow, had praised Brezhnev's contribution to the improvement of Sino-Soviet relations, declared upon returning to Beijing that he was "optimistic" about future Sino-Soviet negotiations. That Huang was replaced as Foreign Minister shortly thereafter was not, in retrospect, a sign of change in Sino-Soviet relations.⁴⁵

43 Beijing Review, 22 November 1982, pp.8-9.

44 Carol Lee Humrin, "China Reassess the Super Powers", Pacific Affairs, vol.56, no.2, Summer 1983, pp.223-24.

45 Griffith, n.25, p.24.

Former Soviet KGB Chief Yuri Andropov has become the topman in the Kremlin succeeding the late President Leonid Brezhnev. Even before his assumption of leadership moves to patch up relations had already begun. Both the Soviet Union and China seem to have taken steps in anticipation of the post-Brezhnev era. So the change in leadership in the Kremlin may result in acceleration of talks between Moscow and Beijing rather than retarding them. In sum, Andropov's Chinese policy is essentially the same as Brezhnev's partial Sino-Soviet rapprochement without any surrender of Soviet gains or chances of further advantage.

From the aforesaid analysis, it is crystal clear that Sino-Soviet thaw has so far remained limited to peripheral matters - trade, scientific and cultural exchange, and so on. If relations improve further, progress is more likely on bilateral than on multilateral issues - for example, on mutual troop reductions, rather than on the more contentious issues of Mongolia, Afghanistan, and especially Vietnam. But in early 1983, no rapid and eye-catching progress seemed in the offing.

Among the bilateral issues, the border dispute is the apple of discord in their relationship. And among the multilateral issues, the Vietnam factor is the most crucial one that will determine the future course of normalization process.

Apart from these, the Super Power factor holds the key. China's relationship with the USA is more or less

stable. Though the Taiwan issue is the constant irritant in the Sino-US 'honeymoon', yet they have not parted their ways. The leadership in the post-Mao China is moving cautiously in dealing with the Super Powers.

Historically, China always tried to have an independent foreign policy and the Chinese Empire did until its final decline. China has never trusted foreign 'barbarians.' Only weakness led the Kuomintang to ally with the USA and Mao to ally with Stalin.⁴⁶ In essence, the present leadership is emulating an independent foreign policy or "equi-distance" policy or "balancing policy" based on pragmatism and real politik. Ideology is a chimera.

However, at this stage of Sino-Soviet relations it is very difficult to predict about the normalization. Moreover, the multilateral issues like Afghanistan issue, Vietnam factor, Taiwan factor and the USA are of vital importance which require elaborate analysis because these factors have profound influence on Sino-Soviet relations. And in the next chapter, a full-fledged discussion of these issues will further substantiate the trend in their normalization process.

46 Griffith, n.25, p.24.

CHAPTER III

INTERNATIONAL REPERCUSSIONS OF THE BEIJING-MOSCOW DISPUTE

The bitter cleavage between the Soviet Union and China is now entering its third decade, and no single event in the 20th century international relations has more profoundly affected global politics.¹ The external policies of every nation and, especially the major states, have been deeply influenced by the 'Great Divide'. Its impact, in the global as well as in the regional spectrum, is accelerating rather than receding. It is important to witness the degree to which relations with the Soviet Union and the PRC have become the centre-piece in US foreign relations or the mounting pressures upon Japan and West Europe derived from the same problem. The third world States have not insulated themselves from its repercussions. The dilemma confronting the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) grows ever more acute, as does that of such South Asian states as India and Pakistan. Even still more remote regions like Africa and Latin America feel the tremor of the Sino-Soviet conflict in a variety of ways, with influence upon domestic as well as foreign politics.

International repercussions of the rift can be catalogued in two volumes: global and regional. The global

1 Robert A. Scalapino, "Containment and Countercontainment: The Current Stage of Sino-Soviet Relations" in D.T. Stuart and W.T. Tow, eds., China, the Soviet Union and the West (Westview, 1982), p.159.

impact centres round the 'triangular relationships.' The regional impact of the rift revolves round various regions such as East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, West Asia, East Europe, West Europe, Africa, and Latin America. A meticulous and probing analysis of both the impacts will pave the way for the 'prognosis.'

The Triangle

The 'triangular relationship' of Washington-Moscow-Beijing has far greater significance for global peace and for the avoidance of any nuclear war than any other relationship. China's foreign policy and its role in world affairs have been greatly concentrated on its relations with the two super powers, the USA and the USSR.² So also, the Soviet Union's policy toward Beijing and Washington has been greatly affected by the triangular relationship, as has China's policy towards Washington and Moscow. The great powers' triangle is a product of two major factors - the Sino-Soviet rift and the limited Sino-American rapprochement. It has transformed world politics from a bipolar to a multipolar one. The relationship in the triangular diplomacy among Washington, Moscow and Beijing, as one expert describes it, is that "each country is to some degree

2 Golan W. Chaudhury, China in World Affairs : The Foreign Policy of the PRC Since 1970 (Westview, 1982), Ch.7, p.163.

the adversary of each of the other two. Simultaneously, each country is a potential ally of the remaining one against the other."³

The USA seems to be in a favourable position in the great powers' triangular relationship as both Moscow and Beijing seek US friendship, not out of love for the Americans, but out of their growing mutual distrust and fear. The threat perception which has its key role in the 'triangular relationship' was given priority by the policy-makers both in China and the USA in the early 1970s. The Sino-Soviet border dispute (1969) and the Brezhnev doctrine (1968) alarmed the Chinese leadership to give a new orientation to their foreign policy. The Soviet military intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968 under the "Brezhnev doctrine", and the fear of a pre-emptive attack on its emerging nuclear plants were the main reasons for which China responded to President Nixon's friendly gestures. On the other hand, the USA was engaged in negotiations with the Soviet Union over Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT-I), European security talks and mutual reduction of armed forces in Europe, and Nixon recognised that a link with Beijing would serve as a powerful lever against Moscow. On the other hand,

3 "United States-Soviet Union-China : The Great Power Triangle - Summary of Hearings" (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 12 August 1980), p.3. Cited in, Chaudhury, *...* Ibid., p.163.

the Kremlin leaders were no longer in a position to take the US-China hostility for granted; on the contrary, they were worried about a US-China collusion against the Soviet Union.

Although the new great powers' relationship is described as "triangular", there have not yet been any triangular meetings of discussions, merely US-USSR or US-PRC talks. But the absentee third-party has been of crucial importance in Washington's negotiations with both the Soviet and the Chinese leaders. China never misses an opportunity to tell the Americans and the world about the "danger" of Soviet social imperialism. The Kremlin leaders, for their part, never tire of designating Maoist China as the potentially greatest threat to world peace and stability.⁴

The evolution of Chinese foreign policy over the past three decades vindicates that strategic factors have played the most important role in its relations with the USA and the USSR. During the 50's, Sino-Soviet alliance was established to counteract the 'Pax Americana.' In the 1970s, Sino-US Detente was designed to contain 'Pax Sovietica.' Of course, China's national interest is a paramount factor which contributed much to the 'Super Power' rivalry. Security and economic aspects of 'National Interest' served the maximum purpose of the Chinese for which it had to initiate the rapprochement with the USA.

4 Ibid., p.164.

Another factor that prompted the US leaders to come to an understanding with China was that their adventure in Vietnam was taking them nowhere, rather their position was becoming more and more hopeless by the heroic resistance of the Vietnamese people, on the one hand, and by the growing nation-wide protest inside America, on the other. They began to think in terms of getting 'honourably' out of the blind alley, and a detente with China appeared to be essential to them.⁵ China was also only too willing to end the course of confrontation with the USA since this course and presence of the formidable US naval force poised against it had created a sort of weariness in the minds of the policy-makers. To this was added the escalation of their anti-Soviet crusade.

This openly anti-Soviet feature of the Chinese policy led its leaders to seek allies in the anti-Communist capitalist world. They were guided by the age-old proverb: "My enemy's enemy is my friend" as well as of the Chinese feudal emperors: "Become friends with a distant enemy and attack a near enemy." Furthermore, Mao's "three-world theory" provided the rationale for the 'anti-Soviet tirade.' It is fully revolving round, as it has generally in the past, the big powers, relations with whom remain the major concern

5 Sailen Chaudhuri, Beijing, Washington, Islamabad Entente (New Delhi: Sterling, 1982), p.27.

of Chinese foreign policy, the other relationships constituting side-streams.

The Three Worlds Theory, as is well known now, looked at the international situation in terms of a first world of 'hegemonistic' super powers - the United States and the Soviet Union - out to dominate the world, a second world of developed but declining imperial powers such as France, Germany, Britain and Japan, who have their own contradictions with the super powers, and a third world of the struggling, developing nations, the objects of dominance and exploitation by the super powers and, consequently, the standard bearers of revolt and revolution in the international order. China belonged to the Third World and the unity and struggle of the Third World with a temporary alliance with the second world would ensure the checkmating of the first world. The most authoritative expositions of the thesis have been given by the Renmin Ribao, by Deng Xiaoping in his speech at the UN, and Hua Guofeng in his report at the 11th Party Congress.⁶

That the Three Worlds theory was meant to provide an ideological framework for the shift in foreign policy and that Beijing had in fact gone beyond the Three Worlds concept

6 V.P. Dutt, "Chinese Foreign Policy : An Overall View" in his ed., China : The Post-Mao View (New Delhi: Allied, 1981), pp.3-4.

was evident from the pronouncements of the Chinese leaders and the Chinese media on foreign policy. Particularly, Mao's famous four-line poem set out the new thinking on the international situation, wherein Mao referred to the wounded tiger, the advancing bear, the exhausted lion and the docile cow.⁷ What was described as Mao's trimetrical classic went as follows:

The tiger averts its head,
 The tattered lion grieves,
 The bear flaunts its claws,
 Riding the back of the cow.
 The moon torments the sun
 The pagoda gives forth light.
 Disaster comes to birth,
 The olive is seen waving.⁸

The tiger that averts his head, giving the impression of sulking into a partial retreat, somewhat wounded and weakened and, therefore, not the ferocious danger he posed at one time, referred to the USA, who was now a 'retreating imperialism' and consequently not the primary enemy. The allusion about the tattered lion obviously was to Great Britain, a ruined imperialism exhausted and bereft of its

7 Ibid., p.4.

8 "Chinese Law and Government, IX, nos.1-2, Spring-Summer, 1976. The poem was translated by Professor David Lattimou of Brown University, cited in Ibid., p.4.

power and pounce. It was the bear, the USSR, who was now advancing and posing the biggest danger, while the cow referred to India, weak and sat upon by others. The poem was reportedly written sometime in 1974. The moon referred to the Arab countries who were tormenting the empires where "the sun did not set" earlier and the Pagoda giving forth light alluded to the situation in Indo-China.⁹

In essence, Mao's Three Worlds theory and the 'trimerical classic' reflected the foreign policy postures of China during the Maoist era and the post-Mao era. The gist of it is that the Soviet social imperialism is pushing a 'hegemonist' policy of aggression and expansion and its spearhead is directed not only at the third world and at the group of industrialized nations, primarily Japan and Western Europe, which are called in China the Second World, but more importantly right at the United States; that the main source of safeguarding world peace, all the countries and peoples opposed to Soviet expansion should unite and wage a tit-for-tat struggle against Soviet hegemonism.¹⁰

By this time, Washington too, had come to see that the USA and its allies alone were not strong enough to meet the Soviet challenge. Speaking of US relations with China

9 Ibid., pp.5-6.

10 Huan Xiang, "On Sino-US Relations", Foreign Affairs (New York), Fall, 1981, p.36.

in a foreign policy report sent to the Congress on 9 February 1972, Nixon stated that the USA "could not afford to be cut off from a quarter of the world's population." China, on its part, believed that the main threat to her came from the North. In a world, both China and the USA felt the need to change their policies to meet the new challenge. It was against this background and thrust the joint efforts of the two countries that Sino-US relations began to change, culminating in the Shanghai Communiqué during President Nixon's 1972 'China Odyssey' which ended their 20-odd years' estrangement. Their relations were normalized six years later, in 1978 during the Carter Administration.

In the first half of 1970s, the great powers triangular relationship was highly favourable to US global interests as both the Communist giants were forced to seek good relations with Washington. The triangular relationship put constraints on the role of both the Soviet Union and the PRC vis-a-vis the USA. Whenever Nixon or Kissinger went to Beijing in the early 1970s, Kremlin leaders would be fearful of a collusion between the USA and the PRC. Similarly, the Chinese were worried about the prospect of a detente between the two super powers. Leonid Brezhnev was reported to have advised the USA, Britain and France that the Soviet Union was in essence worried about "present" Chinese hostility, but added ominously that by the century's

end, China would be formidable. He proposed "a more cooperative Soviet-Western relationship to block the danger that Beijing, backed by the third world, might threaten both Russia and the West in another generation."¹¹

However, in the present triangular relationship of the great powers, China is as entitled to express concern about the detente between Moscow and Washington as the Americans are to express interest in, if not worry about, any prospect of a Sino-Soviet thaw, or what has been termed "the bear-dragon flirtation."¹²

The Americans realize that in the absence of Chinese hostility, the Soviet Union would become an uncontrollable "bear" in many parts of the world, including Japan, the NATO countries, the Middle East, and Africa. Similarly, the Chinese feel that if the two Super Powers were to reach a genuine understanding, the Soviet Union's menacing threats to China would be extremely serious. So, it is in the interest of China to prevent any meaningful understanding between Moscow and Washington, just as Moscow considers it constructive diplomacy if they can frustrate the emerging Sino-American relationship. The Soviet Union has also expressed its concern whenever there is any move towards an improvement in the Sino-American relationship.¹³

11 C.L. Sulzberger, "Brezhnev's Cruise to China", New York Times, 5 July 1975.

12 Chaudhury, n.2, p.168.

13 Ibid.

Triangular Relationship in the Post-Mao Era (1976-82)

The post-Mao era of Chinese foreign policy is more or less the foreign policy devised by Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong. But it has also undergone a subtle change within the broad framework of continuity. So far as security aspect is concerned, the role of "threat perceptions" has its importance. Similarly, economic modernization, geo-political interest, national unification and domestic politics influence the Chinese foreign policy. However, the post-Mao China's relations with the two Super Powers is somewhat more balanced and equidistant than what was during the lifetime of Mao.

Threat perceptions are always important, as they indicate a country's preoccupations at a given time. Beijing's threat perceptions have also been marked by considerable fluctuations. In the first few years of the rise of the Communist Party to power, it was mainly the threat from Japan, or any power leased on Japan, which loomed large in Beijing's calculations. The threat perception was then specifically identified as the danger from 'US imperialism.' US imperialism became the most 'ferocious enemy' of the peoples of the world and Beijing ridiculed and opposed any efforts at compromising with it.¹⁴ Today the threat perception holds good. But to the Chinese leadership threat is

14 V.P. Dutt, China and the World (New York: Praeger, 1966), pp434-146.

anticipated from Moscow, not from Washington. As it is discussed earlier in Mao's Three Worlds theory, a fuller analysis will be a mere repetition of the same thing. Although the 'Soviet socialist imperialism or hegemonism' is more dangerous, as the Chinese leaders viewed, it was sensed by Mao during the 1970s. The post-Mao leadership, particularly the Hua and Deng dummvirate, pursued the same line envisaged by Mao. To Hua and Deng the US imperialism was going "down hill", but the Soviet revisionist clique had made a socialist country degenerate into a social-imperialist country. Thus a change in the threat perception of Chinese leadership can be depicted as follows: "China bought security through alliance with the Soviet Union in the early stages, and is now seeking security through a new relationship with the United States."¹⁵

Another factor, which was the apple of discord in the Sino-American confrontation, is the 'Taiwan problem'. This factor also indirectly played an important role in the inflammation of Sino-Soviet relations.

One significant factor, in addition to many others, in the breach between Moscow and Beijing was the unwillingness of the Soviet Union to make available the military strength of the socialist bloc to China in the latter's drive for the liberation of Taiwan.¹⁶

15 Dutt, op.cit., p.3.

16 Ibid., p.8.

A detente with the USA has had as one of its primary objectives, acceptance by Washington of the position of Taiwan as a part of China. Perhaps, some of the rhetoric of Beijing about the world scene which appeared to place China on the side of the most conservative forces was meant to encourage this process in the USA so that under the impact of China's seemingly implacable hostility to Moscow, the USA, in order to take advantage of the Sino-Soviet confrontation and to adequately utilize this second front against Moscow, would accommodate China on the Taiwan issue. Deng Xiaoping has carried further this policy more determinedly and made the rhetoric more strident in order to carry more conviction.¹⁷

Another factor which is salient in the Chinese foreign policy formulation is the demands of 'Four Modernization'. The post-Mao China is embarking on the 'Four Modernization' programme.

China's urgent need for technological assistance played its part, in addition to ideological affinities, in that country turning to the Soviet Union in the early period. But when the developing dispute with Moscow made this source unavailable, Beijing gradually turned to Japan, Western Europe and the USA for modern technology.¹⁸

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid., pp.8-9.

"I would not be surprised if," to put it in rather bold terms, Deng Xiaoping might have said to his colleagues: "Let me get Taiwan back and let me get modern technology from Japan and the USA. In the interest of these, let us make whatever concessions are needed and when we have satisfied these to a great extent, we can take a relook at our policy and see what changes may be needed then."¹⁹

All these factors compelled China to forge an alliance with the USA to counteract the Soviet Union in the post-Mao era. Although Mao's era initiated the trend, it is still persisting. However, certain changes in the domestic balance of forces have altered the Chinese foreign policy approach in 1982 and particularly after the ouster of Hua Guofeng and consolidation of Deng's position.

Important changes occurred in 1982 in China's approach to international relations. Beijing began to highlight differences between Chinese and American interests and to explore the potential for more normal relations with the Soviet Union. At first, it appeared that this shift in posture might simply be a tactic to pressurise US policy-makers into setting limits on arms sales to Taiwan. This interpretation seemed justified in the light of comments by high-level Chinese officials, during and after Vice-President Bush's visit to Beijing in May, that the 'major' -

19 Ibid., p.9.

or even 'only' - obstacle to improved Sino-US relations was the Taiwan issue.²⁰ Such comments implied that a change in Washington's policy toward Taiwan would result in a return to China's earlier public posture that pointed toward closer strategic cooperation with the US. But when Chinese criticism of the US persisted after the 17 August Sino-US communique, it became clear that the changes had deeper roots and other aims. In fact, while the re-emergence of problems with the US over Taiwan beginning in mid-1980 served as a catalyst for the modification of China's foreign policy, the process surfaced earlier, and a number of domestic and international factors have shaped the outcome.²¹

The broad range of interrelated changes that have taken place in China's approach to international affairs have affected most of its important relationships. This points to a well-considered decision rather than mere pressure tactics, since it would be embarrassing, if not damaging to China's reputation. Moreover, General Secretary Hu Yaobang and Premier Zhao Ziyang, who are likely to lead China during the next decade, have become personally associated with the construction of the new framework.²²

20 Vice-Premier Wan Li's comments upon Bush's departure, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), 10 May 1982, p.82.

21 Carol Lee Hamrin, "China Reassesses the Super Powers", Pacific Affairs, vol.56, no.2, Summer, 1983, p.209.

22 Ibid.

In general parlance, China's modified foreign policy signals a retreat from its single-minded efforts of the late 1970s to build a matrix of strategic relations focussed on confrontation with the Soviet Union. There is no equal emphasis on the goals of sovereign independence, development, and security, and a greater appreciation for the need to forge a complex of economic, diplomatic and military assets to pursue these aims.

However, in projecting close ties with Third World, greater independence from the USA and a willingness to deal reasonably with Moscow, Beijing has not altered its basic aim for close link with the West for both security and development purposes. Nevertheless, China wants to increase its flexibility and widen its options in pursuing its interests. Its main aim is to de-escalate tensions and probe for gains with Moscow, while forcing caution on Hanoi, thus strengthening and stabilizing China's borders. At the same time, competition with Moscow in Third World and socialist arenas may become more effective. Meanwhile China wants that the USA must be reminded that the former has other resources for solving its problems, and then cannot be taken for granted.

A surprisingly even-handed critique of both Super Powers for their contribution to international instability vindicates that China's foreign policy is no more tilting towards West, rather it is more independent. In mid-April 1982, Zhao informed a visiting Somali official that:

Facts have shown time and again that the super-powers are bent on controlling, subverting, exploiting and invading other countries, third world countries in particular, and thus have posed a grave threat to peace and tranquility in the world. As an African saying goes, "When elephants fight each other, grass suffers."²³

This statement is a significant departure from China's single-minded anti-Sovietism of recent years. Zhao was implying that the USA as well as the USSR was ferocious, since it might subvert and invade other countries to achieve its aims.

In moving towards a more balanced stance vis-a-vis the Super Powers, China dropped its strident calls for the development of an international united front aimed at counteracting Soviet 'hegemonism.'

Another development which portrays China's balancing act is the 17 August 1982 Sino-US communique on the Taiwan issue. In sharp contrast to earlier communiqués that had stressed joint opposition to Soviet hegemonism (implicitly), the recent communique stated obliquely that "in order to bring about the healthy development of US-China relations, maintain world peace and oppose aggression and expansion, the two governments reaffirm the principles agreed on by the two sides in the Shanghai communique and the joint communique on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations."²⁴

23 FBIS, 20 April 1982, p.16.

24 Hamrin, n.21, p.212.

In November, comments by Huang Hua at the time of Brezhnev's funeral implied that China placed nearly as much importance on improving Sino-Soviet relations. For the first time, it was asserted that the Chinese leadership "attached importance" to the consultations between Vice-Foreign Ministers that had begun in October 1982. And Huang stated that improved Sino-Soviet relations would be "conducive to peace and stability in Asia and the world as a whole."²⁵

Chinese Communist Party General Secretary, Hu Yaobang spelled out the import of Beijing's new foreign policy line at the 12th Party Congress in September 1982. He depicted threats to China's security and threats to China's sovereignty and independence as of equal concern to the leadership. At the same time, he expressed a willingness to be friends with both Washington and Moscow if they demonstrated good intentions toward China with deeds rather than words.²⁶

From the aforesaid analysis, it is patent that Beijing's handling of the communique and the resumption of talks with Moscow served to underscore China's determination to deal with each country on its own merits and not to allow either to use China as a pawn in some geo-political game.

25 FBIS, 18 November 1982, p.C1.

26 Hamrin, n.21, p.212.

The international environment and reactions from other governments to China's international actions help determine its foreign policy. But more important influences are domestic economic and political developments, primarily because the country still faces political instability and some serious economic problems.

Four basic factors explain recent changes in the Sino-American relationship. First, the Reagan Administration is less interested in strategic cooperation with Beijing than was the Carter Administration. Second, limited relaxation of Sino-Soviet tensions makes Beijing less dependent economically on the West. Third, there is an opening because Chinese and Soviet interests are more compatible than Soviet and American interests. Fourth, Beijing is very worried about the influence of Western ideas and values in its younger generation.²⁷

By 1981, it had become apparent in both Washington and Beijing that Sino-American relations had reached a point where improving relations seemed not only difficult to pursue but unlikely. Disappointments on both sides had fostered doubt about the relationship to the degree that specific steps had to be taken to keep the relationship from deteriorating. At the same time leaders on both sides - Reagan and Deng - felt it necessary to criticise the other

27 Edmund Lee, "Beijing's Balancing Act", Foreign Policy, no.51, Summer 1983, p.33.

country in order to demonstrate that they were being objective in the formulation of their respective foreign policies and that they were acting in their own national interest.

Reagan, for example, noted in a major speech that "communism belonged on the ash heap of history." In so doing he failed to discriminate between Soviet and Chinese Communism and thus seemed to be directing the comment toward Beijing as well as Moscow. He was apparently trying to outflank the critics of US' China policy, especially those who assailed the State Department for allowing China policy to be made in Beijing and continuing a relationship that was one-sided. He was also apparently trying to divert attention away from charges of lost opportunities in US policy due to the preoccupation with better relations with China. Some of Reagan's advisers even argued that a sterner position toward Beijing would help the President's supporters in the election rather than hurt.²⁸

Deng, in order to outmanoeuvre his opponents, in 1981, began to refer to the US as a 'hegemonist' power of the same ilk as the Soviet Union. He also labelled as "imperialist logic" comments made by Reagan supporters about the strategic value of Taiwan to the US. Subsequently, he

28 John F. Copper, "Sino-American Relations : On Track or OFF Track?", Asian and Pacific Community (Tokyo), no.19, Winter 1983, p.22.

pointedly criticized the Reagan Administration over information leaks about US intelligence outposts in China that were spying on the Soviet Union and said about the possibility of a deterioration in relations: "Let it be!"²⁹

Deng apparently also condoned moves by Chinese government officials that led to cracking down on the US Embassy's use of the diplomatic pouch, limiting the number of American scholars in China, holding up shipments of Bibles, and other transparently anti-US actions. Likewise, he obviously approved of the closing of a US law firm in China and allowed the implementation of more restrictive policies on personal connections between Chinese and foreigners.³⁰

Another important item in the catalogue of Sino-American uneasy relationship is the issue of US arms supply to Taiwan. Beijing strongly accused the Reagan Administration's "Two-Chinas policy" and of violating the letter and spirit of the 'Shanghai Communique' and of going back on the understanding that had been confirmed by the three preceding Presidents, Nixon, Ford and Carter. It also accused the Reagan Administration of interfering in China's domestic affairs. Beijing described the arms sale to Taiwan as a major issue affecting China's sovereignty and even threatened to downgrade Sino-US relations.

It is imperative to bear this background in mind in evaluating the future trends in Sino-Soviet relations.

29 Ibid., pp.22-3.

30 Ibid., p.23.

Already there is enough evidence to indicate that the US-Chinese relationship has not fulfilled the expectations of either side and consequently is cooling. The US is now of the view that China's role as an adversary of the Soviet Union and its ability to tie up Soviet forces are limited and are likely to decline further. China, on the other hand, is in utter dismay about the US stance on Taiwan and the terms and quantum of technology transfer it has been able to obtain. Western observers have serious doubts about China's ability to absorb technology at a faster pace and about the future stability of the regime. These and other objective considerations are likely to steer China into attenuating its hostility towards the Soviet Union and normalise its relations. While it is difficult to predict when exactly this will happen there are very major compulsions on China that make this development nearly inevitable.

The Soviet Union too finds it worth its while to normalise relations with China, for which it has been putting out repeated signals. If the US is to engage the Soviet Union in another upward spiral of arms race, especially in qualitative terms, the enormous increase in the demand on Soviet resources could be to some extent offset by reduction in the cost of maintaining a posture of deterrence vis-a-vis China across its long frontier. Having a far superior conventional fire-power than China, the

Soviet Union could slash its troops deployment along the long border provided the political climate improves.

Attenuation of hostility with the Soviet Union and acquisition of modern technology is an attractive means in China's economic straits. Thus, normalization between the two Communist giants will be in the interests of the countries and also for the stability of "proletarian internationalism." Of course, improved Sino-Soviet relations will not necessarily mean a reversion to the euphoric days of the fifties, but certainly a great improvement over the current abrasive relationship.

Regional Impact of Beijing-Moscow Dispute

The Sino-Soviet rift has spilled over to affect the politics of most of the world's regions. The rift has its impact on the politics of East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Southwest Asia, Africa, Western Europe, Eastern Europe and Africa. Each of these regions is more or less influenced by their competition. A succinct analysis of the impact of their competition on these regions will lead us to get an overview of their rivalry in the geo-political chessboard.

Asia - The most recent phase of the Sino-Soviet rift is greatly focussed on Asia, where the two Communist giants seem to be engaged in all-out efforts to gain power and influence at each other's cost. "The no-quarter conflict between the Soviet Union and China for power and influence is turning the huge continent of Asia into a potential

battlefield." Already, there have been wars between Communist countries in Asia - Vietnam's invasion of Kampuchea and China's military intervention against Vietnam in favour of Kampuchea - but there has also been a Sino-Soviet cold war for power and influence in Asia in recent years.³¹

Asia seems to be a natural geographical area for both Beijing and Moscow to pay special attention to - theirs is a competition along the long "arc of neighbouring countries" from North Korea to Afghanistan! But though China and the Soviet Union are direct antagonists, other major powers - the USA and Japan are also indirectly involved in the struggle for Asia, and the stakes are high in terms of population, resources and strategic position. Moscow's aim is to establish a strategic foothold in Southeast Asia and in Indochina in order to outflank China. The Kremlin leaders were worried about China's recent diplomatic offensive among ASEAN countries, Japan, Australia, and the New Zealand, and the Russians are worried about China's improved relations with Washington and Tokyo. The Russians seem to be "haunted by the nightmare of a hostile China, the world's most populous nation, allied with the world's two most powerful industrial nations, the United States and Japan. So, the Russians have taken up the late John Foster Dulles's unfinished task of keeping China poor, weak and isolated and have chosen Indochina as the

31 Choudhury, n.2, p.139.

testing ground for the confrontation with its arch rival in Asia, the PRC."³²

As a generality, it is remarkable how much narrower Chinese-Soviet competition is in the early 1980s, compared with earlier periods, particularly in the 1960s. Competition for the allegiance of other Communist Parties, ruling or not, is no longer central to the dispute. Most parties have long since sided with one or the other, split over the issue or declared themselves either neutral or disinterested. Economic competition is no longer so stringent, and it is no longer expressed principally in terms of foreign aid and the presumed influence to be derived therefrom. If anything, it has been transferred to the realm of trade with third states, thus rendering it more innocuous, indeed, generally beneficial. And with Mao as well as Khrushchev and Brezhnev gone, much of personal animosity has been removed. The core of Soviet-Chinese chasm is in the military-security areas, as noted earlier, and in the ideological realm, neither of which seems likely to get out of hand in the future. Otherwise, the competition has simmered down, been confined to certain areas, regularised and tamed.³³

North East Asia - In North East Asia, with the exception of the security issue, Sino-Soviet competition is not a point of major difference separating States and defining issues.

32 Ibid., pp.139-140.

33 Thomas W. Robinson, "Sino-Soviet Competition in Asia" in Stuart and Tow, eds., n.1, p.178.

To be sure, it is not entirely irrelevant: China courts Japan just because of the perceived Soviet "menace", and North Korea maintains its intra-communist autonomy by playing Moscow off against Beijing. But although Pyongyang leans to the Chinese side, in reality it is in neither camp and probably never will be. Moscow and Beijing know that, and neither tries so hard any more to enlist Kim Il-sung. As for Japan, it is too strong and too closely associated with ^{the}USA to be treated as an object of Chinese-Soviet competition. Its foreign policy must roughly parallel that of the United States; if Washington sides with Beijing, Tokyo will at least lean that way.³⁴ So, it will perpetuate until Japan alters its own way in Asia and the world. As for South Korea, it does not come into picture in the Sino-Soviet dispute, except as a question the details and directions of which are determined by North Korea.

Southeast Asia - The Southeast Asian region has become the cockpit of Moscow-Beijing rivalry in the post-Mao era. The Sino-Vietnam war of 1979 bears ample testimony to this fact.

Vietnam has turned out to be an important regional power in Southeast Asia and China was not happy about the Moscow-Hanoi entente after the 1975 Communist victory in Indochina, to which the PRC had also contributed.

34 Ibid.

When Mao died, the top leadership of the Vietnamese Politburo showed up at the Chinese embassy in Hanoi to mourn the death of an "esteemed and beloved friend." There were several visits by Vietnamese top leaders to Beijing in the post-Mao era, but the dormant tensions between Beijing and "Moscow-oriented" Hanoi already existed. The growing tensions between Kampuchea; ("Cambodia", earlier) China's special ally in Indo-China and Vietnam caused worries in Beijing, and China tried to get Kampuchea and Vietnam to settle situation along their borders, but without success.³⁵

By 1978, the cold war between China and the Soviet Union was reaching the edge of a precipice. The tensions in Indo-China have had a long history, and they stem from regional and cultural differences between Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos. Those tensions remained dormant during the first Indo-China war against France and then during the war with the USA, but when Vietnam ousted the USA in 1975, the old dream of an 'Indochina federation', consisting of Vietnam, Kampuchea (Cambodia) and Laos, was revised. By 1978, the Indo-China crisis erupted which dragged Moscow and Beijing into the arena of conflict. Vietnam's dream of an "Indochina federation" became the cause of the discord.

Both the Soviet Union and China viewed the new war in Indo-China as a crucial test of their struggle in Asia. Moscow seemed determined to humiliate Beijing after China's

35 Choudhury, n.2, p.223.

diplomatic victory in Japan in August 1978 and a similar success in the USA in December 1978. China was equally determined to preserve the independence of Kampuchea to demonstrate that the Soviet Union cannot call the tune in Asian conflicts. Neither China nor Soviet Union could afford to see its client-State in Indo-China lose the war because of the wider implications such a loss would have in the global struggle.³⁶

The Vietnam-Kampuchea armed clashes began in early 1978. Simultaneously, tensions arose in the Sino-Vietnamese border, and the Vietnamese government began to harass its 1.5 million ethnic Chinese minorities. When China, in retaliation, put a total ban on its aid to Vietnam, Moscow gave all-out support to that country. In June 1978, Vietnam became the tenth full member of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON), the Communist economic grouping of Eastern Europe under Moscow's leadership. Ultimately, the Soviet Union and Vietnam signed a treaty of friendship on 3 November 1978 for its security purpose.

Vietnam commenced military operation against Kampuchea on 25 December 1978. In a two-week war, the Vietnamese reached its capital city, Phnom Penh, and ousted the China-supported Pol Pot regime of Kampuchea. The defeat signified a military/diplomatic victory for the Soviet Union and a humiliation and setback for China, which had only a month

36 Ibid., p.224.

earlier (15 December 1978) established full diplomatic relations with the USA.³⁷

China now faced a challenge and a dilemma. It was a 'Hobson's choice' before China, like the choice between the 'devil and the deep sea.' It could not afford to remain a passive observer of the overthrow of its ally in Indo-China, but any military action against Vietnam now linked with the Soviet Union by a friendship treaty, could lead to a direct war with Moscow. China found itself faced with two unacceptable alternatives: to lose its prestige in Asia and be labelled a "paper dragon" or to chance a direct and disastrous confrontation with the USSR.

The 'strongman' of post-Mao China, Deng Xiaoping, visited the USA in January and early February of 1979. In his various speeches and particularly in his exclusive talks with President Jimmy Carter, Deng made it clear by indirection that China would have to take some military measures against Vietnam.³⁸

Finally, the Chinese military action started on 17 February 1979, and continued for seventeen days until China announced the withdrawal of its troops on 5 March 1979. China's goal remained unfulfilled and "teaching Vietnam a lesson" could not be translated into reality. In this war, Vietnam became the gainer and China lost its claim to regional supremacy.

37 Ibid., p.225.

38 Ibid., p.226.

Thus Vietnam has become a bone in China's throat since the 1979 war and an important and additional item in the catalogue of Chinese-Soviet differences. There will be no Sino-Soviet detente without agreement on the future of the Soviet presence in Indo-China. In essence, this means that the Soviets will have to give up the substance of their economic and military ties with its "Asian Cuba", thus, in effect, handing Vietnam over to primary Chinese influence. But this sort of concession on the part of the Soviets may cost them dearer and there is not much chance of that occurring very soon.

The course of developments in Indo-China in 1979-80 led to closer co-operation, not alliance, between Beijing and the ASEAN countries. They began to voice strong disapproval of Hanoi's military actions against Kampuchea and China and the ASEAN countries voted together at the United Nations against the Soviet-backed Hanoi action. China was obviously pleased with the new trends among the ASEAN countries' roles and policy. China has an edge over Soviet Union so far as their competition among the countries of ASEAN is concerned.

South Asia - In South Asia, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan has upset the status quo. The Soviet Union now has the ability to dictate much of the future of the sub-continent, in particular of Pakistan. However, it cannot be denied that manipulations by both the USA and the Soviet Union had something to do with the past Indo-Pak

wars. With the Sino-Indian confrontation and Sino-Soviet rift entangled in these wars, the antagonism of the 'Indo-Soviet group' vs. 'the Sino-American-Pak' group has continued for a long time. But the Afghanistan incident made conspicuous the slow-down of the 'Indo-Soviet honeymoon' while Indo-Pak cooperation and Sino-Indian normalization have snow-balled.

It can be said that the settlement of Afghanistan issue would facilitate a great deal of improvement in Sino-Soviet relations. And if so, there would be a strong possibility that the Indian subcontinent States, which have been carefully watching developments of the Afghanistan issue, may as a whole, return to the Non-aligned camp with India at their head.³⁹

However, in South Asia, the balance is in favour of the Soviet Union, not in favour of China. Indo-Soviet friendship is stable and will remain so in the days ahead. Sino-Pak relationship is stable but it cannot be enduring because no one knows what will be the development after the fall of Zia ul-Haq's military regime. Furthermore, India is playing a balancing act in South Asia as an important regional power which is more or less congenial

39 Yasuhiko Ono, "Sino-Soviet Reconciliation and the Impact on Asia", Asia and Pacific Community, no.19, Winter 1983, p.12.

to Soviet influence over South Asia. Although Sino-Indian border talks have started since 1981, a 'breakthrough' or any limited agreement is yet to be an accomplished fact. In essence, the Soviet Union has outflanked China in their competition in the politics of South Asia.

Europe - Sino-Soviet rivalry in Western Europe has become one of the most fascinating aspects of the rift. China has become one of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) strongest supporters, from a rhetorical standpoint at least due to Beijing's recognition that a strong NATO alliance is critical to the success of its own "anti-hegemony" campaign against Moscow. The Soviet Union has attempted to counter Chinese initiatives in Western Europe by warning Western governments about the risks of experimentations with China and by conducting a well-timed diplomatic and economic campaign designed to effectively split the Western alliance system.⁴⁰

During the 1950s, the Chinese Communists, unfamiliar with Eastern Europe, recognised this area as being in the Soviet Union's backyard and as a rule deferred to Soviet judgement. The unexpected results of de-Stalinization in 1956 opened the door to some Chinese Communist influence. Zhou Enlai toured Eastern Europe in 1956 and 1957 stressing the need for unity within the socialist family. Subsequently,

40 Stuart and Tow, n.1, p.178.

the Chinese leaders claimed credit for the Soviet decision not to apply military force in Poland to stop the liberalization policies. However, in the case of Hungary's emancipatory effort during the same period, the Chinese Communists encouraged and applauded the deployment of Soviet troops to crush the alleged counter-revolution.⁴¹

The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 led to an effort on the part of Communist China to improve its relations with East Europe. Communist China coined a new term to describe the Soviet behaviour: "social imperialism."

However, during the recent Polish crisis (1980-81), Beijing moved cautiously and remained silent. It did not criticise the Soviet action in Poland and the imposition of Martial Law in Poland. Thus, it clearly vindicates that for the interest of Communism, China cannot go beyond the organizational pattern of the system. Because, China's criticism would have created problem in its own territory where freedom movement for trade unions can also be precipitated. In fine, the Sino-Soviet rivalry in the Eastern Europe is not acute because these States are within the 'Soviet orbit' and hence there is no chance for China to enter into the fray to sidetrack the "Communist big brother."

41 Otto Ulc, "China's Relations with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union", Issues and Studies (Taipei), vol.XIX, no.8, August 1983, p.59.

In Africa, both the giants are involved in the competition but the Soviet Union has an advantage over the Chinese so far, as Angola and Mozambique are concerned. In the field of arms transfers, the Soviets have clearly been more successful than the Chinese. But the proper conclusion is that, generally speaking, Africans remain guided by their wish to avoid getting involved in Sino-Soviet disputes and choose to treat specific issues on their merits, in keeping with their efforts to remain Non-aligned.

Regionalism is destined to become a major force in international affairs throughout the world. It is simply a historical force at work that is on the ascendancy and has not yet passed.⁴² However, for the Sino-Soviet dispute, regionalism promises to be the principal force with which it must contend, but it could also be the best mechanism for outside powers to be used as a pointer in dealing with the dispute. Indeed, it is possible that an account of the forces of regionalism versus the Sino-Soviet rift will be the centre-piece of the history of international relations in the coming years.

42 Douglas Pike, "The Impact of the Sino-Soviet Dispute on South East Asia" in Herbert J. Ellison, ed., The Sino-Soviet Conflict (Washington, 1982), p.204.

CONCLUSION

Three decades ago an alliance between the two largest and most populous States of the Eurasian continent seemed destined to play a major role in shaping the destinies of all people on its peripheries and, indeed, throughout the world. Yet, that 'fraternal' alliance lasted a decade and it has been followed by profound hostility between the two giants that has been of equally great significance.

The causes and impact of Sino-Soviet rift have been portrayed in the preceding chapters. The cause of the conflict is not a single one, nor its impact is circumscribed in one region. The causes are many and diverse and the impact is international in character.

During Mao's era, the Sino-Soviet friendship snowballed and during his leadership, the 'honeymoon' ended with the opening of virulent hostility. Gone are the palmy days of 1950s and even after the death of Mao there is no major 'breakthrough' in the relaxation of their conflict.

However, after the ouster of the 'Gang of Four' and demotion of Hua Guofeng from the Party Chairmanship, Mao's 'nemesis' and successor, Deng Xiaoping, the 'strongman' of China is firm in the saddle. The long anticipated establishment of 'True Deng' prominence appeared at hand. Maoism appeared truly to have been relegated to the dustbin of history, though the operative word was, indeed, "appeared."

Prospects for Normalization

Normalization is a relative term. It does not mean an absence of conflict, but rather, as the Chinese would have it, a process of "seeking common ground while preserving differences." Its goal is not to achieve harmony but to reduce the element of conflict in Sino-Soviet relations and to enlarge the element of cooperation so as to permit a narrowing down of differences to a point where they could either be contained or negotiated.

What makes normalization of relations between the two Communist powers theoretically possible is that the virulence of their bilateral conflict has essentially dissipated. Many of the original issues over which they had fought so bitterly in the past, such as which nation followed true Leninism and which had left a legacy of mistrust, appear in retrospect much less significant and even trivial. And although the accumulated hostility still affects attitudes and judgements of both leaderships, they also know that they must deal with new realities.

Broadly speaking, their normalization depends on three issues.

One is the question of the degree of stability that may be expected of the Chinese leadership over the next decade; as put more precisely, the degree to which a continuation of factional struggle - likely in any event - may be expected to affect Chinese policy generally and policy

towards the Soviet Union in particular. Mao and Khrushchev have gone, so also Brezhnev. The post-Brezhnev era is witnessing more relaxation in their uneasy relationship. With Yuri Andropov and Deng Xiaoping the Sino-Soviet relations may improve to a considerable extent. As discussed earlier, in the Sino-Soviet talks, held in Moscow in July 1963, both Andropov and the then Party General-Secretary Deng Xiaoping participated in discussions involving Communist ideology and other pending problems. Because of this, the two may have friendly feelings towards each other while, perhaps recognising each other as tough rivals. Further, it is not impossible that future shifts in the balance of power within that leadership, particularly after the demise of Deng Xiaoping, could affect the Chinese posture towards Moscow.

It is important to note that some uncertainty remains about the future continuity and consistency of US policy towards both China and the USSR. The USA has yet to demonstrate a broad and lasting consensus governing US policies affecting the PRC - whether in the extent of the evolving US security relationship with Beijing, on US policy towards Moscow on matters affecting Chinese interests, or even on the understanding previously reached over Taiwan. Even though the Chinese quarrel with the Soviet Union derives from fundamental and self-sustained issues of Soviet behaviour that Beijing will find difficult to evade regardless of US conduct, it is conceivable that a radical change in

US behaviour on a matter, very important to Beijing, could evoke a change in Chinese tactics towards the Soviet Union.

As the Taiwan factor and the USA's role in it is a constant irritant to the Chinese, so also the Vietnam factor is the most pertinent one in the Sino-Soviet relations. The main item on Beijing's agenda is to get Vietnam out of Kampuchea, the task for which the Chinese feel Soviet pressure will be required. Moscow is unlikely to be accommodating, in the process alienating an ally, however bothersome, in order to satisfy an adversary, because it makes little sense to the Soviets, who advise the Chinese to negotiate directly with Vietnam. Vietnam is willing to pull its troops out of Kampuchea if other involved nations accept the existing regime in Phnom Penh and stop supporting Khmer Rouge insurrection.

The territorial issue is more knotty. Since 1969, the border issue has been unsolved. As both sides share a long common border, so China's deep concern of its security vis-a-vis Soviet's deployment of troops is the serious stumbling block which impedes the process of normalization.

So far as economic development is concerned, China is not getting huge amount of aid from the West. The post-Mao leaders have realised that their most urgent priority for the next decade or two is to modernize China's economy; to do this, they require a peaceful international climate,

increased trade with the Soviet Union and the avoidance of any big increase in defence spending. In a nutshell, the Chinese leaders desire a breathing space with Moscow in order to concentrate on economic development. In this context, the Soviet Union will be a particularly attractive trade-partner for China, because, although not as affluent as the West, it will bring with it few ideological or cultural problems and it will trade with China on a barter basis, thus removing the kinds of balance-of-payments frictions that have developed with the USA. Moreover, for reasons of proximity, border trade with the Soviet Union will be particularly attractive to the Chinese.

By normalizing relations with the Soviet Union, China could also hope to achieve much greater manoeuvrability and flexibility in the great power triangle and thus put itself in a position where it could extract concessions from both the Super Powers. In the earlier situation of frozen relations with Moscow, Beijing could not exert much leverage on either Moscow or Washington.

Another important item for the Chinese leaders is that distancing itself from Washington also helps it to enhance its image of independence, particularly in the Third World, which China seeks to lead. The proud, highly nationalistic Chinese were not suited to be the junior partner of the Americans any more than they were suited to be Moscow's junior partner in the 1950s. Their present

stress on "independence" reflects a desire both to gain greater future manoeuvrability and to carve out a fully independent place in world politics.

The Soviets have equally powerful incentives for wanting detente with China. At a time when Soviet relations with the USA are at a low ebb, the Soviets have a strong incentive to try to play their "China card" against the USA. Improving relations with China will also help ease the Soviet Union's two-front problem by undercutting any strategic cooperation between Washington and Beijing. As it is commented that the Sino-American relationship is no more than a 'marriage of convenience' marked by mutual suspicion and the desire of each partner to out-manoeuvre the other, there will be 'rancour', between the two as a result of the yawning chasm in ideology and global interests.

From the foregoing analysis, it is evident that Sino-Soviet relations will improve depending on certain domestic and international situations. But the reality is that the process of normalization will accelerate if Moscow will come forward to give certain major concessions to the Chinese. To the Chinese, the border issue is the most vital one. Vietnam factor is also another thorny problem in their relationship. Apart from these two bilateral problems, Taiwan factor and the four modernization programmes are the two impeding factors that may lead to the attenuation

of conflict between the two Communist giants. To put it clear, Sino-American relations may deteriorate because it revolves round the unification of Taiwan. And Reagan's 'two Chinas policy' has irritated Beijing since his assumption of power in the White House. Similarly, China is not getting commensurate benefits from the West, particularly from Washington, so far as its modernization of economy and modernization of defence are concerned.

Keeping all these things in view, it can be said that interdependence among nations has become incomparably deeper than that of a decade ago. The current of history is causing nations to make a pragmatic choice not just for military or political alliances, but for combination of relationships which would be effective for them to pursue an independent foreign policy based on real politik. In this sense, the author is optimistic about the situation to follow the possible Sino-Soviet reconciliation in the foreseeable future. It all depends on the attitudes of the leadership, the domestic balance of forces, the international situations and on the mutuality of interests.

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