

**US POLICY TOWARDS CHINA:  
1989-1992**

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**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**PALLAVI**

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## **PREFACE**

Any relationship between Western and non-Western powers has travelled over a bumpy road with lots of ups and downs. Cultural differences coupled with strategic interests have been an important denominator in deciding relations between the largest populated nation of the world-the People's Republic of China and a constantly rising Western superpower-the United States of America.

China has evolved as a nation through different and many turbulent stages from the time the Communist State was formed in 1949 to the Cultural Revolution of Mao in 1960s and the subsequent economic and diplomatic opening in 1970s, and then the rise to economic prosperity of eighties and nineties. China's desire of emerging as a global economic power encouraged it to join international organizations and cooperate with the capitalist United States.

The United States is the leading military and economic giant of the world and Americans deeply identify with their forefathers who escaped from oppression in other countries and gained liberty in the United States. Americans take immense pride in their 'Statue of Liberty' standing tall in the citadel of their economic power – New York City.

American Foreign Policy has always been important for the world as America enjoys as well as carries the burden of being a superpower. Foreign policy is also not divorced from the domestic policy of any country. As a matter of fact, there is a symbiotic relationship between the foreign policy and domestic policy and the United States is no exception to this fact.

American foreign policy towards China has been a subject of debate in America ever since the formation of the People's Republic of China. The relationship between the United States and the People's Republic had started on a sour note because the United States was

visits of 1971 and 1972 to China constituted the initial breakthrough in Sino-U.S. relations. The establishment of formal diplomatic ties between the two countries in 1978 marked the revival of a relationship in decline.

However, there were differences between the United States and China on issues such as Human Rights, commercial relations, and China's arms sales abroad but the relationship was moving in a somewhat positive direction despite all the differences. Then, the brutal massacre of the democracy-seeking students in Tiananmen Square in 1989 sparked the most severe crisis in Sino-American ties since the rapprochement between the two countries that had begun some twenty years earlier. This phase of unrest was an acid test for President George Herbert Walker Bush who had a special interest in forming good and workable relations with China. George Bush also shared a special relationship with China because he had stayed as an envoy to China in Gerald Ford's Presidency and was well aware of the nuances of the Chinese leadership. Bush's determination to keep the lines of communication open between the United States and China earned him more brickbats than bouquets in the US.

Moreover, in both the countries, the domestic consensus supporting the Sino-American relationship had collapsed. Important elements of both societies viewed the other with suspicion and dismay and both the governments confronted each other on issues ranging from Human Rights to economic issues. The way President Bush handled the crisis in Sino-American relations speaks volumes of his masterful diplomacy and his will to preserve goodwill with China for economic and security reasons.

This study has made an effort to understand some of the unavoidable and critical issues raised in the preceding paragraphs. It has traced the many highs and lows of Sino-American relationship. This piece of work is a modest attempt on US policy towards China and although it has a historical background, the study especially focuses on

the Presidency of George Herbert Walker Bush. The dissertation is based on some limited primary sources and several secondary source materials such as books, periodicals, seminar papers, and newspapers.

The chapterization scheme followed is as follows: the first introductory chapter will trace the historical developments in US-China relations. This is important because to understand the relationship between two countries in any time frame, historical background is a must. History helps in understanding the present with the help of past events.

The second chapter will throw light on the Presidency of George Herbert Walker Bush and his understanding of Sino-American relations and his perception of China. Bush's Presidency has been especially important for Sino-American relations because it was in his time that Tiananmen Square Massacre took place, an event, which shook the foundations of Sino-American relations.

Chapter three will give a detailed description of the dramatic causes and effects of the Tiananmen Square Massacre. It will also deal at length with the issue of Human Rights violations in China and include discussion of the mercantile interests between the United States and China.

The fourth chapter would give an account of the major irritants in Sino-U.S. relations like Taiwan, Tibet and Non-Proliferation.

The concluding chapter will consist of a preview of the entire gamut of Sino-American relationship. It will also be an analysis and synthesis of the events that influenced the direction of Sino-American relations in the eventful years of the Presidency of George Bush.

# CHAPTER I



# **A Brief History of Sino-American Relations: Communist Revolution to the Carter Administration**

The relationship between the United States of America and one of the oldest civilizations of the world, that is, the People's Republic of China (PRC) is a kaleidoscope of historical images and discordant views that keeps on changing. America inherited the European view of China, which was that of the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century<sup>1</sup>. As late as the British and Dutch embassies to Beijing in the 1790s, the minuscule American impression of China was still in the shadow of the enlightenment's enthusiasm. However, after 1830, American protestant missionary pioneers developed their dual function as image-makers. They told the Chinese of the multiple benefits of Christianity, democracy, and material progress, while describing to their home constituents the faded grandeur of a Chinese civilization sinking in decay and sin<sup>2</sup>.

The commercial and evangelical interests collapsed by the 1890s in demanding an open door of opportunity to seek Chinese buyers and believers. For centuries, the Great Wall of China symbolized the isolation of China from Western influence. It was in 1757 that the Chinese emperor opened the port of Canton for the first time to foreign trade. But it was in 1848 with the California Gold rush that thousands of Chinese migrated to American states.

It must be borne in mind while exploring U.S-China relations in historical perspective that immigration is one of the major themes of

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<sup>1</sup> Michael H. Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and China To 1914*, (New York, 1983), P.92.

<sup>2</sup> James Reed, *The Missionary Mind and American East Asia Policy, 1911-1915*, (Cambridge, 1983), P. 56.

American history. Therefore, it was Chinese immigration to the United States coupled with the American missionary zeal towards China, which was the starting point of the relationship between the United States and China. Early Chinese arrivals to America were mostly men, and their communities were known as “bachelor societies”<sup>3</sup>. Many Chinese worked in the mining camps, assisted in building Western railroads, and were active in business ventures and small trade.

The reception of Chinese immigrants in the United States was harsh and often violent. The Chinese were both non-white and non-Christian, at a time when either trait alone was a serious handicap. Hatred for people of colour, and fear that cheap Chinese labour would drive down white man’s wages, produced a bigoted fear of the<sup>4</sup> “Yellow Peril” during the 1870s. Riots and mob violence erupted in China towns across the West. A series of discriminating laws against the Chinese immigrant population was passed in California’s Second Constitution, adopted in 1879, which made it illegal for corporations and governments to employ Chinese.

In an attempt to halt Chinese immigration, President Chester Arthur signed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, barring the immigration of labourers for ten years and strictly limiting the immigration of many professionals. In 1892, the exclusion law was extended indefinitely, reducing the Chinese population considerably.

There were instances of immigration of some American missionaries to China too and this led to curious parallels – the Chinese coolie labourers in the United States and the American missionaries in China were both immigrants and brought their cultures with them. In the 1880s and 1890s, when American

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<sup>3</sup> John King Fairbank, *China Watch*, (Cambridge, 1987), p.116.

<sup>4</sup> Jessie Carney Smith (ed.), *Ethnic Genealogy*, (Connecticut, 1983), P. 244.

missionaries sometimes suffered from mob action in China, Chinese labourers hired to build the Western American railways suffered from mob action by American workers. In these parallel but unrelated riots, scores of Chinese died but almost no Americans<sup>5</sup>.

It is in the twentieth century that a new phase in the American attitude towards China began. The ideal image of the enlightenment and the disillusioned image of the nineteenth century contributed to a repertoire of ways to understand China. The fluctuations of this approach can be seen throughout the history of U.S.-China relations. The anti-imperialist Boxer Rebellion of 1900, in fact, produced one of the worst hostage crisis of the century. In the hot summer of 1900, fanatical boxer rebels, backed by the ruling Manchu dynasty, besieged 475 foreign civilians and 450 military men of eight nations as well as about 3,000 Chinese Christians and 150 racing ponies in the Peking Legation quarter<sup>6</sup>. Soon the Peking Legations were rescued by troops from all the major European nations. The boxers disappeared back into the countryside while the Manchu dynasty was preserved in order to keep China at peace and also for facilitating foreign trade.

Thus, American image of China as of that period was one of heathen barbarism and inferior to the Western civilization. Yet paradoxically the 1900 crisis gave birth to the American Open Door doctrine, which not only claimed access to China but also sought to preserve China's opportunity to develop as a modern nation-state. The United States, by now, a Far Eastern power became increasingly concerned over the dramatic events unfolding in the Asiatic Mainland. The idea of equal commercial opportunity began to meet with increasing favour, especially with American mercantile and missionary groups. Therefore, in the late summer of 1899, A. E. Hoppisley and W.

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<sup>5</sup> Fairbank, n.3 p.116.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*, pp.5-6.

W. Rockhill working with President McKinley and Secretary of State John Hay brought out a memorandum, which advocated Open Door Policy towards China and became official American policy.<sup>7</sup> On September 6, 1899, Secretary Hay sent the first of his Open Door notes to Berlin, London, and St. Petersburg and later on also included Tokyo, Rome and Paris. The foreign offices in these capitals were requested to provide assurances regarding the points summarised below:

(i) Within its sphere of interest or leasehold in China, no power should interfere with any part of the treaty that could have affected the West.

(ii) The Chinese treaty tariff would be applicable within such spheres of interests, and the duties were to be collected by the Chinese Government.

(iii) Within its sphere no power would discriminate in favour of its own nationals in the matter of harbour dues and railroad charges.<sup>8</sup>

Each nation was urged not only to subscribe to these principals but to use its influence to secure its acceptance by others. In popular phrase Open Door Policy meant equal commercial opportunity in China but it was based primarily on commercial notice designed to promote American trade.

However on July 3, 1900 Secretary Hay launched an important corollary of his original Open Door note of September 1899. He sent a circular note to the powers which proclaimed that the "policy of the

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<sup>7</sup> F.H.Harrington,, "The Anti-Imperialist Movement in the United States, 1898-1900," *Foreign Policy*, (New York) vol. xxii (1935), pp.211-230.

<sup>8</sup> W. A. P. Martin, "The Awakening of China", *Foreign Relations*. (New York) (June 1899), pp. 128-142.

Government of The United States is to seek a solution”, which may “preserve Chinese territorial and administrative entity,” and “Safeguard for the world the principle of equal and impartial trade with all parts of the Chinese Empire.”<sup>9</sup> Unlike the original notes, the circular of July 3, 1900 did not call for an answer and this time Hay merely proclaimed America’s policy.

It was at this time that the Manchu dynasty was engaged in an attempt to survive building against the twin internal and external challenges – first through economic and military, and then through political and educational reforms. Soon the Manchu Dynasty entered a period of terminal decline as it was challenged intellectually by the May Fourth Movement, produced by the very educational reforms that the Manchus had launched.<sup>10</sup> Soon, power passed to provincial economic and military interests, competing for control of a weak Central Government in Beijing. Subsequently, America welcomed the advent of the Chinese Republic in 1911. America deplored the political chaos of the warlord era but fostered the growth of a dozen Christian colleagues.

America supported China against Japanese encroachment during World War-I.<sup>11</sup> When Japan, through its twenty-one demands of 1915, tried to consolidate its special position in China, hoping to surpass the Western “imperialists”, American opinion took China’s side. At the end of World War-I in 1919, when the peace settlement let Japan retain the imperialist position it had seized from Germany in Shantung province, America refused to ratify the treaty<sup>12</sup>. However,

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<sup>9</sup> *ibid*, p.299.

<sup>10</sup> Harry Harding, “An Introduction to Contemporary China”, (Salzburg Seminar Session 373) (December 4, 1999), p.2.

<sup>11</sup> Fairbank, n.3 p.6.

<sup>12</sup> Review of *mutsu munemitsu, kenkenroku: A Diplomatic Record Of The Sino-Japanese War, 1894 – 1895*, (e.d.) and trans. Gordon Mark Berger (Princeton, 1982), p. 43.

after World War-I, there was a need for unification of China. Military power needed to be supplemented by a strong civilian base, mobilized by a modern political party with an attractive programme. Such a party emerged in the 1920s, first under Sun-Yat-Sen, and then under Chiang Kai-Shek. When the Kuomintang (KMT) party under Chiang-Kai-Shek came to power in the Nanking Government of 1928-1937, foreigners both in and out of China had high hopes that it would begin to meet China's urgent problems.

Unfortunately, by the time the Kuomintang came to power, it had turned its back on its Chinese allies. After 1931, the aggression of Japanese militarism led to China's final militarization and its clamping down on social revolution<sup>13</sup>. Mao-Tse-Tung had risen on the political stage of China. It was that time of history when Pearl S. Buck's bestseller -*The Good Earth* (1931) brought Chinese peasants into the American public horizon and Mao and his colleagues were learning how to mobilize them for political power. A young Kansas City journalist, Edgah Snow wrote Mao's story in *Red Star over China* (1937).<sup>14</sup>

Besides, the drain on the Chinese economy caused by the Sino - Japanese War undermined the economic, social and political stability of the country. No revenues were obtained from the conquered cities, and the maintenance of the Chinese armies, required vast outlays. Inflation was completely out of control. In 1936, Chiang Kai-Shek came to a wartime understanding with the Communists. The Communist manifesto referred to the formation of a "United Front" with the Kuomintang against the Japanese, but the details as to how this front was to operate were never worked out. The Chinese

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<sup>13</sup> Ainslie T. Embree and Carol Gluck, ed., *Asia in Western and World History*, (New York, 1997), p. 605.

<sup>14</sup> John King Fairbank, "The Growth Of Chinese History In American Minds", *Foreign Affairs* (October 1987), p. 7.

Communist allies maintained their own independence and in their own controlled territories were able to harass the Japanese by guerrilla tactics.

President Roosevelt sent Patrick J. Harley as his personal representative to try to bring the Nationalists and Communists together to fight the Japanese, and sent General Albert C. Wedemeyer to head American troops in China in the place of General Stilwell who had been recalled upon Chiang's insistence<sup>15</sup>. Patrick's mission ended in failure and he contributed to the rejection of the advice and services of the American State Department's best China experts, who clearly saw the collapse of Chiang-Kai-Shek and the rise of Mao-Tse-Tung. At this point of time, the Chinese people ravished by four years of war with Japan, expected deliverance from the United States after Pearl Harbour<sup>16</sup>. Therefore, immigration and naturalization barriers against the Chinese were brought and the US Congress passed a "morale boosting" law in December, 1973, which made thousands of Chinese aliens in America eligible for citizenship, and it permitted 105 immigrants to enter annually on a quota basis<sup>17</sup>. It was at this time that General George C. Marshall, fresh from his wartime laurels as United States Chief of Staff, was sent to China on a last chance mission late in 1945. The Marshall Mission followed at a very critical time in the Civil War in 1945-1946.<sup>18</sup>

It was doomed to failure because both the Nationalists and the Chinese Communists were unwilling to yield to each other. It was also the time when Harry Truman became the President of the United States upon Roosevelt's death in April 1945. Truman assumed the office while about thirteen million Americans were still fighting in

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<sup>15</sup> Robert H. Ferrell, *Truman- A Centenary Remembrance*, (London, 1984), P. 432.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas A. Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People*, Tenth Edition, (New Jersey, 1980), p. 745.

<sup>17</sup> J. W. Stilwell, *The Stilwell Papers*, (New York, 1948), p. 84.

<sup>18</sup> Herbert Feis, *The China Triangle*, (Princeton, 1953), p. 86.

Europe and Asia and post World War-II problems were beginning to emerge<sup>19</sup>. Truman's Presidency had marked the era of the atomic bomb and the Cold War.

In the meantime, situation in China deteriorated to such an extent in 1947, particularly in Manchuria, that President Truman returned General Albert C. Wedemeyer to China on a fact-finding mission. The Wedemeyer report, submitted to the President on September 19, 1947, noted the shortcomings of the nationalist regime – corruption, nepotism, incompetence, oppression, reaction, inflation and disintegration and it also pointed out the danger of a Communist victory in China<sup>20</sup>. It recommended immediate action by the United Nations to place Manchuria under the guardianship of the five powers, including the Soviet Union, or a United Nations trusteeship.

Secretary Marshall and President Truman considered that the report would be offensive to Chinese sensibilities and refused to make the report public. Among the recommendations were military and economic aid to China under a programme of assistance over a period of at least five years on the condition that China made effective use of its own resources, implemented urgently required political and military reforms, and accepted American advisers to assist in utilizing aid in the manner for which it was intended. The suppression of the report by Secretary Marshall and President Truman alienated General Wedemeyer.

During 1948, the Chinese Communists went on an offensive in Manchuria and took over the leading cities. As Marshall and Wedemeyer had warned Chiang Kai-Shek, the Nationalist forces that had been moved to Manchurian cities were isolated. They found

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<sup>19</sup> Eleanora W. Schoenebaum, *Political Profiles – The Truman Years*, (New York, 1978), p. 169.

<sup>20</sup> Ross Terrill, *China in Our Time*, (New York, 1992), p. 36.



themselves to be unpopular with the local population and they defected or surrendered with little or no resistance. The Communists had been greatly strengthened by the Japanese arms that they received from Soviet help, and by American equipment abandoned or sold to them by the Nationalists<sup>21</sup>. The morale of the Chinese Communist troops was high, while that of the Nationalist was sinking fast because of lack of food, lack of military supplies, poor leadership, and loss of faith in the Nationalist cause. Congress passed a China aid bill in 1948 under Republican Party pressure and President Truman signed the bill. Truman and Marshall proposed economic aid and opposed increased military aid at this time.

It must be said that there was very little effective opposition to Truman's containment policies in Europe but members of the Congressional China lobby led by William Denver, Walter Judd and William Knowland, also opposed extensive aid to Europe. They believed that Truman's emphasis on aid to Europe was taking assistance away from the Nationalist Chinese who were fighting a civil war with the Communists. They made approval of aid to Europe contingent upon extension of aid to Chiang-Kai-Shek. A bipartisan coalition of Democrats and internationalist Republicans led by Arthur Vandenburg and Henry Cabot Lodge, were able to overcome this opposition.

Dean Acheson, the new Secretary of State was compelled to spend time on American relations with China, even as a group of Republican Senators was becoming increasingly critical of Administration's China policies<sup>22</sup>. On February 4, 1949, at a Cabinet meeting, Truman approved a National Security Council recommendation to suspend military aid to Chiang on the ground that

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<sup>21</sup> John King Fairbank, *China Bound - A Fifty Year Memoir*, (New York, 1982), p. 62.

<sup>22</sup> Ferrell, n. 15 p. 434.

the Communists would capture it. On February 24, Acheson met with the Senators but his explanations backfired. Senator McCarrow, introduced a bill to provide a loan of \$1.5 billion to Nationalist China for military and economic purposes. Senators H. Styles Bridges, McCarron, and William F. Kowland called for an investigation on the Administration's China policy. Senators Corrally and Fulbright defended Truman and Acheson. Finally, the Mc Carran bill was not voted on.

There was mounting Congressional and press criticism of America's China policies with bitter denunciations of the United States by both the Nationalists and Chinese Communists.

So President Truman and Secretary Acheson decided that the public needed information on the true situation in China. In March 1949 Truman authorized the preparation of a white paper that would explain the Chinese situation in all its aspects. The white paper, *United States Relations with China*, was released in August 1949.<sup>23</sup> It was composed of 409 pages of narrative and 645 pages of documents. The white paper was meant largely for the domestic audience, but it enabled Mao to tell his people that the United States was a "paper tiger"<sup>24</sup>. The white paper convinced the Soviet Union that the United States would not interfere in the Civil War in China.

The white paper was prophetic and China was taken over by the Communists, and the People's Republic of China was declared on October 1, 1949. Chiang-Kai-Shek fled to Formosa on December 8 with about half a million of his troops and some \$365 million in gold and silver reserves that belonged to the former Nationalist Treasury in Nanking. This laid the basis for America's Two-China Policy, which led to trouble between both the countries for a long time.

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<sup>23</sup> Ferrell, n. 15 pp. 435-436.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*, p. 436.

The Soviet Union had recognized the People's Republic the day after it was proclaimed other Communist countries followed shortly, and on December 30, 1949, India became the first non-Communist state to recognize Beijing.

Acheson tried to get the British to hold off their recognition, but he failed. London followed New Delhi on January 5, 1950, in recognising the new regime. When President Truman was asked in a press conference on October 19, 1949, that under what circumstances would America recognize Communist China, he replied, "I hope we will not have to recognize it<sup>25</sup>." Truman's opposition to recognition was strengthened by the harsh treatment by the Beijing government of Angus Ward, the American Consul General in China. Acheson and his advisers tried to persuade Truman early in 1950 to adopt a policy that would drive a wedge between Beijing and Moscow and encourage the Communist Chinese to become friendlier toward the United States. The details of such a policy were, however, not worked out.

The existence of the Nationalist regime in Formosa and the strong support given to Chiang-Kai-Shek by the Republicans, the China lobby, and some American military leaders made it difficult to find a way to carry out the Truman-Acheson policy. On December 29, 1949, the National Security Council considered a recommendation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for more military equipment for Chiang in Formosa.

Secretary Acheson was opposed to this idea and Truman was also against any military support to Chiang. But the Republicans wanted to use the US navy to protect Formosa. President Truman in his press conference of January 5, 1950, announced: "The United States Government will not pursue a course which will lead to

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<sup>25</sup> Schoenebaun, n. 19 p. 214.

involvement in the civil conflict in China”<sup>26</sup> Senator H. Alexander Smith of New Jersey and Senator William F. Knowland of California told Acheson that this was the end of bipartisan foreign policy.

Harry Truman was on a brief holiday in his Grandview farm when the Korean crisis erupted after Communist North Korea attacked South Korea. At that point of time, Truman was sceptical of the extent of involvement of the United States in the war. But within days, the American government enlisted the support of the United Nations Security Council. As Commander-in-Chief Truman issued the order of June 27, 1950 for American air and Naval forces to resist Communist aggression in Korea. In a brilliant and daring stroke, MacArthur captured the port city of Inchon in September 1950, crushing the North Korean advance<sup>27</sup>. In September, the United Nations troops also recaptured the South Korean capital – Seoul. For a short time it seemed that North Korea might also be taken and a unified Korea registered. MacArthur, however, pursued the North Koreans back almost to the Chinese border, confident that they would not intervene. But he was wrong. In late November 1950, over 300,000 Chinese troops entered the war, moving at night, surrounding American units, suddenly attacking to the accompaniment of blasts of nukes. Within hours, the Chinese forces pushed the United Nations forces back into the South.

General MacArthur became increasingly insubordinate as he was disillusioned by Harry Truman’s war policies and Truman fired him.

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<sup>26</sup> Harry Truman, *Memoirs by Harry Truman*, (New York, 1956), p. 10.

<sup>27</sup> William Manchester, *American Caesar: Douglas MacArthur, 1880- 1964*, (Boston, 1978), p. 77.

The United Nations forces led by a new American commander – General Mathew B. Ridgeway, eventually held the attacking Chinese. Early in 1951, America began a new offensive that moved the front lines back up approximately to the parallel but the war ended in an armistice. South Korea remained free, but tension along the border continued for years. In the three years that the war lasted more than 33,000 Americans were killed and estimates of the death of Koreans and Chinese, military and civil, ran to half a million<sup>28</sup>.

Dwight D. Eisenhower became the successor of Harry Truman. John Foster Dulles became his Secretary of State. The Eisenhower-Dulles policy toward Communism was even more strident than Truman's. Dulles escalated the rhetoric of the Cold War to new levels by threatening "massive retaliation" if the Soviets became aggressors while President Eisenhower worked quietly behind the scene to reduce tensions. Eisenhower followed a moderate course and refused to assist the Hungarians who revolted against their Soviet overlords in 1956. The Chinese leadership also tightened its grip over ideology because they were alarmed by the anti-Communist tendencies in Poland and Hungary that was soon repressed by the Soviets in 1956-57 and the Chinese launched the Anti-Rightist Movement in China<sup>29</sup>. John Dulles' statement that the United States should encourage peaceful changes in socialist countries to alter their political system caught particular attention in China. The Eisenhower administration had declined to recognize Red China and opposed China's entry into the United Nations and had held fast on Formosa<sup>30</sup>.

Since the very beginning of the People's Republic of China, achieving national unification and safeguarding integrity have been a

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<sup>28</sup> Ted Galen Carpenter, *A Search For Enemies: America's Alliance After The Cold War*, (Washington DC, 1992), p. 102.

<sup>29</sup> Wang Jisi, "China's Relations with the United States: Past and Present", (Salzburg Seminar) (Session 373) on *China and the Global Community*.

<sup>30</sup> E.J. Hughes, *The Ordeal of Power*, (New York, 1963), pp. 340-341.

central goal of the whole nation. The United States, in Chinese eyes, has always been the main external obstacle to achieving this goal. The US Government, in particular the Central Investigation Agency (CIA), gave behind the scenes support to the Dalai Lama's separatist Movement in Tibet in the 1950s. But the major irritants between the two nations have been American efforts to obstruct Taiwan's reunification with the Mainland. The separation of the two sides of the Taiwan Strait was a legacy of the Chinese Civil War from 1946 to 1949. The Americans embarked on a number of efforts aimed at denying China's territorial claim to the island in the 1950s. Washington and Taipei signed a mutual defence treaty in 1954, and American troops were stationed on the island for deterring the Mainland's plan to cross the strait. After two military showdowns across the Taiwan Strait in 1954-55 and 1958 respectively and many rounds of contest and negotiation, the bottom-lines of both China and the United States were crystallized, and has been consistent since then despite small conflicts from time to time.

As a matter of fact, one major reason why China and America did not have full diplomatic relations until the 1970s was because the Taiwan issue obstructed that step, and debate went on in different ways in both countries about when "normalization" of ties between Beijing and Washington could be possible, and how Taiwan issue would be solved.<sup>31</sup>

John F. Kennedy became the President of the United States after Eisenhower's departure from Presidency. His reign was marked with extreme tension with Communist countries. At that point of time, the United States was following the policy of containment of Communism, including in the People's Republic of China.

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<sup>31</sup> Terrill, n. 20 p. 161.

In the 1960s there was dispute between China and Soviet Union. The central theme of the period was what should be the correct attitude towards U.S. imperialism. China censured the Soviets for their reluctance in supporting the anti-colonial and national liberation movements in Asia, Africa, and Latin America and for their collaboration with the United States in issues like arms control that weakened the strength of the socialist countries. The central concern then in China, consistently expressed by Mao Zedong, was that some Chinese leaders would become "revisionists" like those in the Soviet Union who modified the Communist ideology to pave the way for peaceful evolution. The efforts to prevent revisionism culminated in the Cultural Revolution starting from 1966.<sup>32</sup> China's relative international isolation, first from the West, and then from the Soviet bloc, removed China from the growing trends toward economic interdependence, and further eroded China's economic competitiveness. The 1970s saw Mao Zedong toning down the utopian economic policies followed in China. At the time Richard Nixon became the 37<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. The Nixon years began with the Vietnam War in high gear, and America becoming more disillusioned with the conflict. While the war was dragging on, President Nixon and Henry Kissinger, Nixon's Chief Foreign Policy Advisor and later Secretary of State sought to open new diplomatic avenues with Communist China and the Soviet Union. The policy they adopted became known as "détente" – a gradual lessening of tensions.

In the February of 1972, the world saw something that would have been unthinkable a few years earlier. Nixon and Kissinger made a historic trip to China and later the same year to Moscow. President Nixon spent four hours with Premier Zhou Enlai. Seeing the two men together was a significant breakthrough, and no one was more appreciative of its importance than Nixon. The symbolic highlight

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<sup>32</sup> Jisi, n. 29 p.4.

came when Nixon visited Chairman Mao Zedong, the ideological and political leader of some one billion Chinese. "The Chinese Army base played 'America the Beautiful' and 'Home on the Range', noted the euphoric *New York Times*<sup>33</sup>. After eight days of meetings, sightseeing, and drinking, President Nixon parted after exchanging pledges for the gradual increase in Sino-American contacts.

The United States also promised to begin to withdraw American forces from Formosa, Beijing's chief irritant. The "China Opening" remained the most widely approved single act of Nixon's Presidency.<sup>34</sup> Unofficially, talks between representatives of the two nations took place in Warsaw for several years, but they had no real impact upon the climate in Asia. Neither Kennedy nor Johnson was sympathetic to the notion of ending the non-recognition policy towards China.

Kennedy, as the first Democrat since Truman, felt it was a political impossibility, and Johnson also felt the same. Moreover, the Vietnam War was considered necessary to counter expansionist ambitions of People's Republic of China, an argument that was made with particular force by Dean Rusk as Secretary of State under both Kennedy and Johnson.

The French and West German leaders, who argued that Communist China was too big to be ignored and too vital for the United States to play a role in Asia without them, encouraged Nixon's reconsideration of American policy. On the other hand, the Chinese also had their American card to play. They were worried about any future revival of militarism in their old nemesis Japan and fearful of the threat from their ideological competitor, the Soviet Union. Moscow was in uncomfortable rapport with Washington, a consequence of the Kennedy initiatives on atmospheric nuclear testing and Johnson's

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<sup>33</sup> *New York Times*, (February 24, 1972), p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> Herbert S. Parmet, *Richard Nixon and His America*, (Boston, 1990), p. 621.



opening of a dialogue about limiting strategic weapons. But just three months after the visit to Beijing the world witnessed Nixon scoring again on the Foreign Policy ground, as he became the first American President to visit the Russian capital.

There Nixon was received by Communist Party Secretary General Leonid I. Brezhnev and Premier Aleksey N. Kosygin. One of the significant outcomes of this meeting was negotiation over the strategic arms limitation talks (SALT) that began in Helsinki in 1969, and ended with Nixon and Brezhnev signing a series of historic documents in the Great Hall of the Kremlin. The most important treaty was the antiballistic missile treaty (ABM). Never before had limits been placed on the growth of American and Soviet strategic missile arsenals. It was a major gain in the long history of nuclear arms control legislation.

On the Vietnam front, Nixon came up with a new policy known as "Vietnamization", which would end any further U.S. involvement in the war. The Nixon doctrine laid the foundation of this policy<sup>35</sup>.

Meanwhile the improvement of China-U.S relations in the early 1970s brought about an unexpected change in Chinese politics. It must be borne in mind that the US-China rapprochement of 1971-1989 was rooted in a common opposition to the Soviet Union<sup>36</sup>. However, broadened contact with the West led to the realization that China had lagged behind most of its neighbouring societies, not to mention the West, in terms of economic development, technological progress, and standard of living. Leaders represented by Premier Zhou Enlai and Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping saw the need to de-

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<sup>35</sup> The American President,  
(<http://www.americanPresident.org/kotrain/courses/JC/JC-foreignaffairs.htm>).

<sup>36</sup> James H. Nolt, "U.S. - China Security Relations", (World Policy Institute) (April 8, 1989), p. 11.

emphasize ideology and class struggle for speeding up economic growth. People in China became increasingly disillusioned about the Cultural Revolution, and the popular sentiment sided with the thinking of Zhou and Deng. However, Mao, who continued to call for vigilance against "revisionism" and would not allow reduction of the revolutionary zeal, reproached them. The Gang of Four manipulated the situation and forced Deng to step down in the wake of Zhou's death. Two years after the death of Mao Zedong and the arrest of the Gang of Four, China entered in 1978 a new stage of reform and opening under Deng Xiaoping. The establishment of China-U.S. diplomatic relations coincided with the conclusion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Plenum of the 11<sup>th</sup> Communist Party Congress that had made the major decision to negate the Cultural Revolution and carry on domestic reforms<sup>37</sup>.

Ever since the launch of the increasingly market-oriented and 'open door' modernisation strategy by the post-Mao reformist leadership in December 1978, strong strategic and cooperative relationship with the United States has been the core Foreign Policy goal of Beijing. The architect of China's reforms, Deng Ziaoping, personally nurtured and shaped the anti-Soviet united front that Mao and Zhou Enlai had initiated with the United States in the early 1970s into a dramatically vibrant cooperative strategy that not only verged on a quasi-alliance relationship but also involved an increasing integration with the global capitalist system. The United States had become central to China's quest for modernisation, security, and its pursuit of great power. It is unlikely that without the U.S-China strategic ties and the consequent U.S. backing for China's modernization, the overseas communities in East Asia-especially in Hong Kong or Taiwan would have moved en-masse their export-oriented labour intensive industries into the low-wage coastal provinces of Guangdong and Fujian. The United States would have

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<sup>37</sup> Jisi, n. 29 p. 5.

also not opened its doors to absorb the growing volume of Chinese exports that had become a new dimension of the reordering of the capitalist web and the expansion of American strategic interest in East Asia.

In effect, what had begun as a strategic response to Soviet power and a new configuration of forces among the key actors in the Cold War had by the 1980s gained a qualitatively new direction. The United States got deeply involved in the radical changes underway in China, in redrawing the regional security architecture, and course of the Cold War. The two states did encounter frictions and strong differences on many bilateral issues such as Taiwan and trade through the 1980s but they found ways to deal with the disappointments and obstacles in order to advance their larger strategic goals.

Trade, investments, and defence relations – all gradually advanced through the first decade of China's reforms and diplomatic relations with the United States. The United States shifted its earlier policy of containment towards China to engagement. However, engagement could not erase other divergence of interests. To the United States ensuring a free access to the markets of Asia Pacific, including the sea-lanes of communications, preventing the rise of a regional hegemon that could challenge American primacy, and preventing a large Chinese nuclear build-up were key goals. Gilbert Rozman writes: "If since the 1980s Chinese officials have repeatedly acknowledged the importance to security of economic development, they have also insisted that national interest demands that they struggle against a looming US hegemony. This translates into calls for blocking the 'new world order', touching regionalism to oppose Western-dominated universalism weakening the unity of US alliances,

damaging Japanese relations with other great powers, and reinforcing Chinese nationalism as a lever for global competition.”<sup>38</sup>

When Jimmy Carter became the President of the United States, he continued to expand American contacts with the Communist China. To do so required the severing of diplomatic ties and withdrawal of recognition of non-Communist Taiwan but no real damage was done to Taiwan.

On the evening of December 15, 1978, President Carter, reading from a joint Communiqué, announced to the nation “the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China have agreed to recognize each other and to establish diplomatic relations as of January 1, 1979.” He went on to quote from the document that there “is but one China, and Taiwan is part of China.” Yet the United States would continue to maintain “cultural, commercial, and other official relations with the people of Taiwan.” Soon a new China policy began to take shape-bidding goodbye to years of isolation and an excess of ideology.

Moreover, Carter unilaterally revoked the 1955 Mutual Defence Treaty with the Republic of China, effective from January 7, 1980. Conservative Republicans challenged Carter’s Treaty abrogation in the federal courts. In the Federal District Court his opponent’s won. However, in an appeal Court the Government’s position that Carter had the power to abrogate the treaty without Senate consent prevailed. The Supreme Court then threw the entire case out without rendering any decision, thus leaving the constitutional victory with the President by default. Carter’s public pronouncements stressed the victory for peace through stability in East Asia, as well as the commercial gains for both Beijing and the United States that would result from freer contacts<sup>39</sup>. Communists who were more interested in

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<sup>38</sup> Gibert Rozman, “China’s Quest for Great Power Identity”, *Orbis* (Philadelphia) (Summer 1989), p. 385.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300.

economic growth than in military confrontations replaced hard-liners in China. Beneficial trade relations were established between China and the United States, leading to huge imports of finished consumer goods from China, in return for U.S lumber and foodstuffs.

As a substitute for diplomatic relations with Taiwan, Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act. It provided for creation of an American Institute on Taiwan, which bought the old American Embassy. The Institute staffers consisted of newly retired American Foreign Service officers experienced in Far Eastern affairs. Taiwan established a corresponding institute in Washington, D.C, staffed with its retired diplomats. Thus each side continued with quasi-diplomatic relations, even though the pretence was that they had cut-off the relationship. The United States continued to supply arms to Taiwan to defer itself from the Mainland, a step that kept some friction in United States.

By the time Carter's Presidency drew to a close in the winter of 1981, the bilateral relationship between Beijing and Washington was thickening, although beset with arguments over textile imports from China, civil aviation, etc. The relationship as a deterrent to Soviet global adventurism and a force for stability in Asia was of great importance for both the states.

After the 1980 American Presidential election, when Ronald Reagan became the US President, a debate began to unfold. It centered around the need for an ideological approach toward China or a national interest approach. Reagan accepted pursued the policy of national interest approach toward China, in keeping with the approach that essentially had been common to Nixon. This meant leaning towards China as a counterweight to USSR, and viewing a good relationship with China as the key to peace and stability in Asia.

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The flowering of American friendships with individual Chinese was a benefit of Deng's reforms and normalization between China and other Western countries. By 1982 there were more than ten thousand Chinese students on campuses in the West, and an array of American and other Western academic, research, and commercial relationships had been established in Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Chengdu, Dalian, Xian, and other Chinese cities. American magazines like *Time* and *Newsweek* were available in the Chinese hotels. Chinese television offered a window on the real life of America, Japan, Taiwan, and gradually some Chinese officials and many intellectuals developed a commitment to and vested interest in the nexus with the West. Young urban Chinese found in the West and its people and ideas a force that changed their lives.

Then in 1989 Republican George Herbert Walker Bush took the oath of office as the President of the United States after serving eight years as Ronald Reagan's Vice-President. Bush had been envoy to the People's Republic of China and had also headed the Central Investigation Agency (CIA). The Bush years were extraordinarily eventful from a foreign policy standpoint – the Cold War ended, Germany was reunified, the Soviet Union collapsed and relations with China were strained following the lethal suppression of student protest in Beijing in 1989.<sup>40</sup> Bush's Presidency period saw the rise of issues like Human Rights and trade policy with China and was a turning point in Sino-American relations.

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<sup>40</sup> Henry F Graff, *The Presidents- a Reference History* (second edition), (New York, 1996), p. 589.

## CHAPTER II

## **NEW BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S PERCEPTION OF CHINA**

The United States of America had a new President after a span of eight year of the Reagan Presidency. George Herbert Walker Bush was, however, not a new face as he had held various high government positions and was Vice-President since 1981.

George Bush was born in Milton, Massachusetts, On June 12, 1924, and became the youngest pilot in the Navy at the age of eighteen and he flew fifty-eight combat missions during World War II. He was even awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for bravery in action.<sup>1</sup> Later on, Bush became interested in public service and politics. He served two terms as a member of the House of Representatives from Texas and twice he ran unsuccessfully for the US Senate. Then he was appointed to a series of high level positions: Ambassador to the United Nations, Chairman of the Republican National Committee, Chief of the U.S. Liaison office in the People's Republic of China, and Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

In 1980, Bush campaigned for the Republican nomination for President. He lost the nomination but was chosen as Vice-Presidential candidate by President Ronald Reagan. As Vice-President, Bush had responsibility in several domestic areas, including federal deregulation and anti-drug, programme, and visited scores of foreign countries. In 1988, Bush won the Republican nomination for President and he defeated Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis in the general election.<sup>2</sup> Bush was the first Vice-President to be elected President since Martin Van Buren in 1836.

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<sup>1</sup> The White House (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/gb41.html>)

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, gb41.html.



President Bush filled his cabinet and senior White House staff with middle-aged men and many of his trusted friends. His closest political friend and campaign manager in 1980 and 1988, James A. Baker, became Secretary of State. Lawrence S. Eagleburger, an experienced foreign policy professional, served as Secretary of State. Brent Scowcroft, retired Air Force Lieutenant, became the National Security Advisor, and Dick Cheney became the Secretary of Defence. Bush inherited Ronald Reagan's Director of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), William H. Webster, a former federal judge and director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). President Bush's most important military nomination was that of General L. Powell to the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff (JCS). Two other important Bush appointments were William K. Reilly as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and William J. Bennett as Director of the National Drug Control Policy.

George Bush took the oath of office as the President of the United States on January 20, 1989. Bush's inaugural address called for the United States "to make kinder the face of the nation and gentler the face of the world." In foreign affairs, Bush rejoiced, "A world refreshed by freedom seems reborn" but emphasized the importance of maintaining the nation's alliances and military strength. He spoke cautiously about the Soviet Union. "Our new relationship in part reflects the triumph of hope and strength over experience. But hope is good and so is strength and vigilance"<sup>3</sup>

So Bush talked of a vision about a thousand points of light where all Americans could work together to help the unfortunate. It must be mentioned here that by "vision" people seem to mean the ability to foresee, what lies ahead and the imagination to overcome it if it is a problem, the wit to take advantage of it if it is a windfall, or to achieve an objective if it seems possible and desirable.

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<sup>3</sup> Department of State, February 1989.

George Bush had decided to lay special emphasis on expanding trade on favourable terms in Asia and was therefore, concentrating on China for that objective. Bush knew more about China and the issues in Chinese-American relations than most of the Presidents in the history of the United States.

In 1971, as Ambassador to the United Nations, he had been assigned the task of leading the fight to keep a seat for Taiwan in the General Assembly. Bush had also spent the better part of two years in Beijing as head of the American Liaison office in China in 1974 and 1975. When Gerald Ford became the President of the United States he offered either of two top ambassadorships-London or Paris to Bush but Bush surprised everyone by asking for the ambassadorship of China. Dean Burch – one of Bush's close friends in the White House at that moment, admitted later that he thought that it was a strange move for Bush. " I was shocked then", said Burch, " but it proved to be a valuable experience, broadening his feel for foreign affairs-the P.R.C. in particular and enhancing his image as a potential world leader."<sup>4</sup>

However, there was no concrete work in China to do at that point of time by George Bush. One political critic back in the United States sneered that the only Chinese Bush met were the boys sent over by the foreign ministry to play tennis with him. But Bush never stopped trying to widen his acquaintance among the citizenry despite their reticence to mix with foreigners. In Bush's own words "I spent over a year in China and tried to get to know the leaders and people as well as I could. Our diplomacy with Beijing at that time was very active and, while Secretary of State Henry Kissinger conducted much of it, the job was fascinating and kept me busy. We were building a relationship with a country with which we had no contact for over two decades. Barbara and I tried to widen our contacts in every fashion. We bought bicycles and went about town as the Chinese themselves

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<sup>4</sup> Fitzhugh Green, *George Bush - An Intimate Portrait* (New York, 1989), P. 140.

do. I created as many excuses as possible to invite Chinese to functions, and I attended the national day celebrations held by them. But high-level contacts were few and far between, all tightly controlled from the top.”<sup>5</sup>

Later in the election campaign of 1980, when Ronald Reagan refused to endorse the Shanghai communiqué and threatened to reestablish official relations with Taiwan, it was George Bush who flew to Beijing in an attempt to soothe Deng Xiaoping. Therefore, with an elaborate background of experience in China and Sino-American affairs, George Bush perceived no need for initiatives on China policy from the Department of State or the National Security Council after he occupied the White House in 1989. Undoubtedly, President Bush intended to be his own desk officer for Chinese foreign policy.

Bush’s vision of the Chinese-American relationship was closer to that of Nixon and Kissinger than that of Ronald Reagan. Bush considered China to be an important strategic partner in the struggle against the Soviet Union. Unlike Reagan, the concerns of the people of Taiwan were not high on his agenda. Bush was very much aware of the problems that existed between China and the United States. The most troublesome irritant between the two nations was Chinese arms sales of Antiship Silkworm missiles to Iran, which posed a grave threat to U.S. Navy vessels protecting shipping in the Persian Gulf. There was evidence that the Chinese were supplying missile and nuclear technology to Pakistan and countries less friendly to Americans and these activities certainly ran counter to American interests in the Middle East. <sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World transformed* (New York, 1998), p. 112.

<sup>6</sup> Warren I. Cohen, *America’s Response to China A History of Sino-American Relations (Fourth Edition)* (New York, 2000) P. 212.

In 1987, the Reagan administration was unable to engage the Chinese in discussions about these activities and announced restrictions on high technology exports to China. The Silkworm deliveries to Iran for which the Chinese had denied responsibility, was supposedly stopped and the restrictions were lifted by the United States.

A number of other issues of lesser salience had emerged in the 1980s. There was evidence that Chinese intelligence had penetrated the CIA and it was very troublesome, but hardly shocking to the then Vice-President Bush, who had once been Director of Central Intelligence under President Ford. Besides, Chinese exports, especially of textiles, grew and contributed to the serious trade deficit because of which the United States suffered. The Chinese Government in a host of ways obstructed the import of American goods into China and frustrated American businessmen who invested in joint Chinese-American ventures.<sup>7</sup> The early euphoria over trade and investment opportunities in China was evaporating and important segments of the American business community were unhappy. These were issues that Bush as President of the United States had planned to address, but these issues were hardly such as to threaten a strategic relationship.

One other issue had consistently been subordinated to American national security concern. It was China's treatment of its own people, its persistent violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Government and people of the United States had been highly critical of Human Rights abuses in the Soviet Union and most Communist states. Throughout the Cold War, comparable offences by America's allies had been overlooked. American leaders knew China's Human Rights record could not withstand close

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<sup>7</sup> Roger W. Sullivan, "China, the United States, and the World beyond Normalization", *China Business Review*, (New York) (February 1989), p. 45.

scrutiny, but decided to mute their concerns and treated China as though it were an ally and China's internal affairs were not subject to public criticism.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to the national security rationale for ignoring China's disagreeable record on Human Rights such as the absence of freedom of speech, of religion, the suppression of political dissent, and forced abortions, there was a widespread view among Americans that China's performance was improving in the economic arena. China's economy was opening up and there were chances that its politics could liberalize with time.

However, signs of trouble had come early, both in China and in Washington. In 1979 and 1980, activities seeking what they called the "fifth modernization" set up the democracy wall in Beijing, a place where wall posters calling for political reform might be read by ordinary Chinese.<sup>9</sup> The movement quickly spread to other cities, but was suppressed in 1980 and its most prominent figure, Wei Jingsheng, was arrested and imprisoned. The U.S. Department of State criticized the arrest of Wei, but no concrete step was taken and nothing happened. Wei's imprisonment did little to contain the intellectual and political ferment in China as Deng Xiaoping and his colleagues attempted to fix safe balance between the freedom necessary to unleash the energies and creativity of their people and the level of repression they deemed necessary to maintain their control.<sup>10</sup>

In October 1986, then Vice-Premier Li Peng told a group of visiting American Scholars that he did not believe China had to adopt

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<sup>8</sup> Leonard A. Kusnitz, *Public opinion and Foreign Policy: America's China policy, 1949-1979* (Connecticut, 1984), p. 138.

<sup>9</sup> Cohen, n. 6 p. 213.

<sup>10</sup> Roberta Cohen, "People's Republic of China: The Human Rights Exception," *Human Rights Quarterly* (New York), Vol. 9 (November 1987), P.447.

western values in order to utilize western democracy.<sup>11</sup> Basically the Chinese leaders were hoping to obtain the keys to the wealth and power of the West without sacrificing Chinese values.

On the other hand, in Washington, it was becoming difficult to ignore the repressive behaviour of the Chinese Government. Nonetheless, the Administration was not complaining much because of President Bush's desire to have cooperative economic relations with China.

In February 1989 President Bush Flew to Tokyo for the funeral of Emperor Hirohito. In the words of Brent Scowcroft, the National Security Advisor of President Bush " During the Presidential transition we contemplated the possibility of a visit to China in the early weeks of the Administration, and especially after one was announced for Gorbachev. We wanted very much to meet with the Chinese leaders to review and enhance Sino-American relations before Gorbachev, had a chance to speak with them. There was no way, however, to justify a trip to China in the first quarter of the first year of the President's term. Important though such a meeting would be, I had all but given up on it when, on January 7, 1989, Emperor Hirohito of Japan died. In purely diplomatic terms, this sad human event gave us the required opening. The funeral was scheduled for February 24. The President's attendance was a matter of great significance to the Japanese. The bonus of the trip was the opportunity it gave us to stop in Beijing for strategic discussions well before Gorbachev. We quickly arranged for a "working visit" and talks with the senior leadership, including Deng Xiapoing, Li Peng, and Zhao Ziyang. This trip made President Bush the first American President to travel to Asia before Europe- a sign of priorities for the new era".<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Cohen, n. 6 p. 214.

<sup>12</sup> Bush and Scowcroft, n. 5 p. 91.

President Bush had travelled to China for a three-day visit after leaving Tokyo on February 25, 1989. Bush was met with a warm reception on arriving in Beijing on February 25. <sup>13</sup> George Bush later said in his own words on the evening of their arrival in Beijing of February 25, "I met with President Yang Shangkun. He assured me that future Chinese relations with the Soviet Union would not be as in the 1950s. There would be no military alliance or relationship."<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, at a banquet that evening, President Yang Shangkun spoke of the "valuable friendship" the U.S. President had already forged in his past stay in China and said he had played an important role in resolving disputes between the two countries.<sup>15</sup> Bush also laid emphasis on "the new relationship our two countries have established with each other. The United States and the People's Republic of China have also found common interest in a growing economic relationship. And we've developed an active program of military cooperation that is forging ties of friendship between our defence establishments, even as we've found a diplomatic unity in our shared opposition to policies of international aggression and domination. We owe it to mankind to work together for peace and international stability"<sup>16</sup>

Bush also met Premier Li Peng on February 25 and urged China to stop aiding Khmer Rouge guerrillas in Cambodia. The next day, i.e., on February 26, Bush met with China's Supreme Leader, Deng Xiaoping, and the two discussed the warming of Sino-American relations. Bush also gave an interview on the same day on national television in which he referred to a worldwide movement towards greater freedom that was being observed, also by China. But it was

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<sup>13</sup> *Facts on File* (New York, 1989), p. 410.

<sup>14</sup> Bush and Scowcroft, n.5 P. 91.

<sup>15</sup> *Facts on File*, n. 13 p. 410.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*, p. 412.

more of a diplomatic speech by President Bush aimed at securing the goodwill of China.

Bush also met Chinese Communist Party leader Zhao Ziyang and was told by Zhao that any American attempt to promote multiparty politics in China would harm relations between the two countries. Zhao was apparently referring in part to a February 16 call by intellectuals, in a letter to the Communist Party Central Committee and the Government, for an amnesty for political Prisoners, in particular those jailed in 1979 in connection with the "Democracy Wall" movement.<sup>17</sup> The appeal came after a prominent dissident astrophysicist, Fang Lizhi, in January sent a letter to Deng Xiaoping calling for an amnesty. Since then, letters supporting that call had been signed by more than seven hundred people in the United States and by intellectuals in Taiwan.

Moreover, the dissident intellectual Fang Lizhi appeared on the list of prominent Chinese invited to an embassy banquet hosted by President Bush. U.S. Ambassador Winston Lord and his staff thought the invitation would be an unprovocative way for the President to express concern for Human Rights. They were surprised when the Chinese Government objected to the invitation, but with the help of Bush's National Security Advisor, Brent Scowcroft they negotiated an arrangement whereby Fang Lizhi would be seated at a spot distant from the head table and have no contact with the President. Chinese security officials, however, intercepted Fang as he was on his way to the dinner and prevented him from attending.<sup>18</sup>

The next day, i.e., on February 27, Bush played down the incident, saying he believed quiet diplomacy was the correct course of action regarding the Human Rights issue in China. He expressed

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<sup>17</sup>*New York Times*, February 27, 1990, p. A. 6.

<sup>18</sup> Facts on File, n. 13 p. 411.



regret to a Chinese official over the barring of Fang, and asked the US Ambassador Winston Lord, to pursue the matter.

Chinese officials blamed the United States for the trouble over Fang Lizhi's invitation and said that American officials had invited Fang to the banquet without first consulting China. The following day, Bush defended the invitation. In a further statement on March 1, 1989 a Chinese foreign ministry official said U.S. remarks the previous day were "irresponsible."<sup>19</sup>

However, it was increasingly clear that the Chinese government had no intention of carrying out political reforms and that it feared the minuscule movement for democracy that Fang symbolized. It was equally clear that the Bush administration had no intention of intervening on behalf of dissidents. It seemed as if Bush and Scowcroft were determined not to threaten Chinese leaders and do nothing to undermine Sino-American relationship.<sup>20</sup>

Above everything, the strategic rationale for the unusual sensibility of American leaders to the concerns of China's leaders was the desire for Chinese support in the great struggle against the Soviet Union. But by 1989, it was becoming apparent that the Cold War was virtually over. In the spring of 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev had emerged as the paramount leader of the Soviet Union. He was determined to end the western perception of a Soviet threat and to obtain an arms control agreement with the Americans. In 1987, Gorbachev and Reagan agreed to destroy thousands of intermediate range missiles. In 1988, Soviet forces began to withdraw from Afghanistan and Mongolia. In December 1988, Gorbachev flew to New York and announced to the United Nations that he would reduce Soviet forces

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<sup>19</sup> Facts on File, 1.13 p. 413.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Sherring, "the Impact of Political Reforms in China", *Congressional Quarterly Almanac* (New York) (July 1989), p. 42.

unilaterally and eliminate ships stationed in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary.<sup>21</sup>

Gorbachev had also explained to newly elected President Bush that the Soviets could no longer afford an empire. They were opting out of the Cold War. Soviet troops and tanks began to pull out from Poland, Hungary, and East Germany. Therefore, it is clear that the Soviet Union no longer threatened the United States. Still the Bush Administration thought it necessary to court China, mainly because of concerns of a fruitful economic partnership with China. Bush had admitted the growing economic cooperation in his visit to China in a statement on February 25, 1989, "when I came here in 1974, our two-way trade totaled about \$ 900 million, and now it some \$14 million. And for this we must credit the reforms China embarked upon 19 years ago under Chairman Deng Xiaoping's farsighted leadership"

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However, soon events concerning Human Rights and democracy unfolded in the People's Republic of China. There were student demonstrations and protest against the Government, which saw its culmination in the Tiananmen Square Massacre on June 3 and June 4, 1989. This one incident shook the Sino-American relations about which President Bush later said, "I had left Beijing optimistic that we had laid some important groundwork for a productive period in our diplomatic relations, despite the threats of turbulence in China's domestic affairs. Now, just a few months later, the tragic events of Tiananmen, events which began with some hope of a peaceful resolution, seriously damaged our hard-won gains."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Cohen, n. 6 p. 219.

<sup>22</sup> Department of State, April 1990.

<sup>23</sup> Bush and Scowcroft, n. 5 p. 97.

## **CHAPTER III**

## **UPHEAVALS IN US-CHINA RELATIONSHIP: TIANANMEN SQUARE MASSACRE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND TRADE ISSUES**

The events that defined Chinese–American relations in the last years of the twentieth century began with the death of Hu Yaobang on April 15, 1989. Thousands of mourners began to fill the huge Tiananmen Square, the centre of Beijing and in a few days tens of thousands of Chinese assembled there, protesting corruption, inflation, and the arbitrary exercise of state power. The student participants were well organized and well led and careful to avoid any provocation. Political action had been planned for May 4, to capitalize on the symbolism of the May Fourth Movement.<sup>1</sup> Hu Yaobang's death provided an arguably more propitious moment with which to begin the movement.

The Chinese government responded with impressive restraint in the beginning. It allowed the growing mass of demonstrators to control the Square through Hu's Funeral, and through the commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the May Fourth Movement.

Incidentally, Mikhail Gorbachev who attempted to ease his nation's burden and sought rapprochement with China as well as the United States, had travelled to Beijing in May 1989. Therefore, news media from all over the world flooded into China to cover the story but Gorbachev was upstaged by thousands of Chinese demonstrators who, chanting his name, demanded political reform from their own leaders. The journalists and television cameramen who had come to Beijing to cover Gorbachev's meetings with Chinese leaders were captivated by the revolutionary demand for democracy by Chinese

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<sup>1</sup> Warren I. Cohen, *America's Response to China A History of Sino-American Relations*, Fourth Edition (New York, 2000), P.216.

students and the public demonstration of support for the students by workers, doctors, journalists, teachers, scholars and even policemen, soldiers, and Communist party cadres.<sup>2</sup> Chinese students staying abroad also demonstrated on college campuses around the world.

Increasingly, evidence of disagreement among party leaders over the question of political democracy in China had reached foreign observers. Deng Xiaoping and other prominent Chinese leaders were angered by student demands that threatened both their power and vision of a Socialist China. They were uneasy about the support industrial workers were giving to the students. Zhao Ziyang, the prominent economic reformer and one time Premier who had replaced Hu as party secretary in 1987, resisted Deng's call for the use of force. Chinese citizens begged the soldiers not to hurt the demonstrators. Leading military figures of the past circulated a letter urging the government to refrain from the use of force: the People's Liberation Army (PLA) must never be used against the people.<sup>3</sup> There were rumours that the commander of the forces stationed around Beijing had refused to attack the demonstrators that his own daughter was among those who had begun a hunger strike.

Towards the end of May, as the numbers of demonstrators occupying Tiananmen Square dwindled, some of the original student leaders were prepared to ease the pressure and allow the government some respite. They were ready to declare victory and hope for a reasonable response from the government. However, on May 29, a few hundred feet from Mao's tomb on the Southwest side of the Tiananmen Square, students erected a "Goddess of Democracy and Freedom," modelled on the American Statue of Liberty. Soon reports of government organized anti-American demonstrations surfaced,

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<sup>2</sup> Michael MccGwire, *Perestroika and Soviet National Security* (Washington, 1991), p. 324.

<sup>3</sup> Cohen, n.1 p.217.

indicating that elements within the Chinese leadership were attempting to discredit the students by branding them as instruments of a foreign power. Deng flew to Wuhan where he rallied military support. Zhao Ziyang had lost the struggle for power and the demonstrators who were demanding the retirement of Deng and the ouster of Li Peng would not be tolerated.<sup>4</sup>

On the night of June 3 and the early morning hours of June 4, the People's Liberation Army launched an assault on the students who had gathered in Tiananmen Square. Accompanied by tanks, the troops got into the Tiananmen Square, crushing all who stood in their way, killing almost thousands of men and women. Thousands were wounded and thousands more arrested and some of them were beaten and summarily executed. Foreign cameramen caught some of this savage repression on film and within hours it was shown on television screens all over the world. Much of the world was outraged by what it saw. Demonstrations protesting the Tiananmen Square Massacre broke out in Moscow and Hong Kong as well as across Western Europe and the United States.<sup>5</sup> The popular image of China changed irrevocably. The vision China's friends had for the evolution of its government into a regime that would free its people was shattered. The killing fields of Tiananmen left a stain the Communist party of China could never erase.

The Bush Administration had watched developments in China with great apprehension, expressing sympathy for the goals of the students and hoping that the Chinese government would refrain from the use of force. "Later in the morning of June 5, we arranged a meeting with Chinese students studying in the United States, to

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<sup>4</sup> Miriam London, "China: the Romance of Realpolitik," *Freedom at Issue*, (New York) vol. 110 (September- October 1989), p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> Lowell Dittmer, "The Tiananmen Massacre," *Problems of Communism*, vol. 38 (September - October 1989), p. 2.

symbolize our solidarity. There was a previously scheduled session that afternoon with the Congressional bipartisan leadership, to allow President Bush to review his just completed European trip. He used the occasion to denounce the Chinese actions and outline the steps already taken in response", Brent Scowcroft wrote.<sup>6</sup>

Though President Bush was mindful of the strategic importance of Chinese-American relations, he was horrified with the Tiananmen Square Massacre and quickly denounced it. In the days that followed, the Chinese government brushed aside foreign criticism and began the systematic arrest of demonstration leaders and the purge of scholars, journalists, and officials who had supported the movement for democracy. Regular demonstrations against the government in Shanghai, Wuhan, and Chengdu, as well as the massive demonstrations in Hong Kong, did not deter Deng Xiaoping. Chinese television showed prisoners who had obviously been sentenced to death amidst denials by the government that its troops had killed demonstrators. According to the Chinese government, counterrevolutionary hooligans had perpetrated all violence upon the PLA and few if any demonstrators had been killed- a line difficult to sell abroad when foreign television cameras and other eyewitness accounts captured the reality.<sup>7</sup>

A complicated situation was made worse when a well know dissident astrophysicist-Fang Lizhi, appeared at the US Embassy asking for refuge.<sup>8</sup> So on the morning of June 4, as the troops fired on their own people and security forces began to round up student leaders and their sympathizers, Fang Lizhi and his wife took refuge in the American Embassy.

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<sup>6</sup> George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A world Transformed* (New York, 1998), pp. 98-99.

<sup>7</sup> Yi. Mu and Mark V. Thompson, *Crisis at Tiananmen: Reform and Reality in Modern China* (San Francisco, 1989), p.69.

<sup>8</sup> Bush and Scowcroft, n. 6 p. 99.

In Washington, President Bush suspended the sale of weapons to China and broke off contacts with the PLA but there were demands in the United States for stronger action to punish China. Therefore, the Administration cancelled a series of high-level visits to the People's Republic. President Bush ordered arrangements to extend the visas of Chinese students in the United States. He announced that his government would work to postpone Chinese applications for loans from international financial institutions. Congressional leaders from across the political spectrum denounced the Chinese government and many legislators called for even harsher measures. Soon the World Bank announced that it was indefinitely suspending consideration of \$ 780.2 million in loans to China that had been pending before the bank's board of directors.<sup>9</sup>

In Beijing troops fired into the compounds in which foreign diplomats, journalists and their families were housed. Deng Xiaoping denounced American criticism as interference in Chinese internal affairs and himself criticised American "hypocrisy". While insisting that China would continue its economic reform programme, including opening domestic markets to foreign investors, Deng purged the government of its leading reformers, Zhao Ziyang and his associates, and alienated the intellectuals upon whom much of the programme depended.<sup>10</sup>

Clearly, the modernization process of China had suffered a setback. Chinese -American relations were probably the shakiest they had been since Kissinger and Nixon opened the political dialogue with the People's Republic in the early 1970s.

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<sup>9</sup> Asia Watch Report, *Punishment Season: Human Rights in China after Martial Law* (New York, March 1990), pp. 15-16.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*, p. 24.



However, despite mounting public hostility towards China among the American people and Congressional pressures for punitive action, Bush and Scowcroft were determined to keep the lines of communication open between Washington and Beijing, to preserve some of the gains of the 1970s and 1980s. America was still fighting the Cold War and they feared driving the Chinese back into Soviet arms. Bush insisted that the relationship was enormously important and essential to the nation's security. He rejected demands for recall of the American Ambassador from Beijing and decided to reach out to Deng Xiaoping and assure him of his desire to resume strategic cooperation as soon as the public rage against China subsided.<sup>11</sup>

Three weeks after the People's Liberation Army gunned its way into Tiananmen Square, George Bush sent a secret mission to Beijing.<sup>12</sup> The Bush Administration publicly declared that it would have no high-level contacts with China. Privately, Bush sent two envoys Brent Scowcroft and Lawrence S. Eagleburger to China.

They met Deng and other Chinese leaders in China and their assignment was to reopen the lines of communication between Bush and Deng and to indicate to him that the public furor over Tiananmen Square Massacre had forced Bush to impose sanctions, but these would be lifted as soon as possible. Most of all, Scowcroft was to convey to Deng that Bush believed that friendly relations with China were extraordinarily important to the national interest of the United States.

Deng blamed China's problems on the United States, which, he insisted, interfered constantly in China's internal affairs. Despite

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<sup>11</sup> Harry Harding, *China's Foreign Relations After Tiananmen: Challenges For The U.S* (Seattle, 1990), pp. 5-6.

<sup>12</sup> R. Robinson and D. Shambaugh, *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, (Oxford and New York, 1994), p. 110.

Deng's lukewarm response, Bush's emissary described the trip as a success, because the Chinese were kept from isolating themselves.<sup>13</sup>

The secret July visit of Scowcroft and Eagleburger to China was confirmed after a White House report of the trip was broadcast by the Cable News Network (CNN). Public disclosure of the secret visit provoked a new wave of criticism of the Administration's policy toward China from Democrats in Congress. Senator George J. Mitchell said he was "astonished" to learn of "another midnight mission" barely a month after the brutal killing of pro-democracy student demonstrators."<sup>14</sup>

Over the next several months the Administration battled an unforgiving Congress determined to demonstrate its displeasure with the Chinese government. As the Soviet empire unraveled and one Communist state after another collapsed in Europe, few members of Congress shared the President's conviction of the importance of the relationship with China. Few were prepared to resume the level of discourse the two countries had enjoyed at the beginning of 1989. In February 1989, several months before Tiananmen Square Massacre, 72 percent of those polled reported in an American opinion poll, favorable perceptions of China. The percentage came down to 31 percent retained favorable views in the first poll taken after the bloodshed in 1989.<sup>15</sup>

Human Rights became the most important issue of discontent between the United States and the People's Republic. "The year 1989 may very well go down in history book as a watershed year regarding the worldwide cause of Human Rights", in those words the State Department introduced its latest annual report of Human Rights

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<sup>13</sup> Cohen, n.1p.219.

<sup>14</sup> *Washington Post*, December 11, 1990, p. A 14.

<sup>15</sup> Gallup Release, February 15, 1989 and Gallup Release, July 25, 1989.

conditions in 169 countries. The report concluded: "...the positive trends are unmistakable, making the setbacks all the more stark."<sup>16</sup> Among the setbacks was China's bloody suppression of student-led pro-democracy demonstrations in 1989.

The State Department report examined carefully the Human Rights violations in China. It stated that the Beijing massacre was followed by a drastic, countrywide crackdown on participants, supporters, and sympathizers. At year's end the crackdown was still continuing. These were credible reports of numerous raids on university campuses, private residences, workers, dormitories, think tanks, and hotels in the weeks following the June 3-4 massacre by both the PLA and various security bureaus. The report also said that the estimates of the number of detainees after June 4 vary from the 2,500 officially announced in late June to over 100,000 according to some journalists and Human Rights groups. On the other hand, Western press reports in December 1989 quoted "well informed government sources as putting the figure at 10,000."<sup>17</sup>

By the end of 1989, China and the United States faced the challenge of "renormalizing" their relationship. Ten years earlier, in the late 1970s, normalization had referred to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China.<sup>18</sup> Later in late 1989, 1990 and 1991, the renormalization of Sino-American relations implied the lifting of the diplomatic, military, and economic sanctions that the two nations had imposed on each other after the Tiananmen Crisis of 1989.

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<sup>16</sup> Human Rights Reports, *Historic Documents of 1990*, February 21 and July 10, 1990, p. 129.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*, p. 143.

<sup>18</sup> Harry Harding, *A Fragile Relationship- The United States and China since 1972* (Washington, D.C., 1992), p. 7.

Two men who did advocate putting aside differences over the Tiananmen crisis were Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, both of whom travelled to China in late 1989 and returned to urge President Bush to send another mission to Beijing. In fact, Nixon in a report to a bipartisan group of Congressional leaders identified the American interest in preserving a cooperative relationship with China. Nixon argued that it would be “foolhardy” for America to exclude itself from China’s huge potential market, let alone for Washington to “run the risk of being an adversary rather than an ally of China in the next century.”<sup>19</sup>

Nixon and Kissinger also reported to President Bush that Deng was ready to deal and he would allow Fang Lizhi to leave the country if, in exchange, the President would invite a Chinese leader to visit the United States early in 1990, with full honours symbolizing American respect for the post-Tiananmen Chinese regime.

Bush liked Deng’s offer, but wanted it implemented in two stages. First he wanted the Chinese to release Fang Lizhi and then Bush would invite Jiang Zemin – Zhao Ziyang’s successor as party secretary, to Washington. It was clear that the Chinese interests were hurt by US sanctions policy and Beijing and wanted sanctions lifted to obtain loans from the World Bank. China also wanted American technology, especially satellites produced by the Hughes Electronics Corporation. It very much desired to resume the high-level meeting with the US to demonstrate the legitimacy of the government.

Soon, the Bush Administration lifted or modified three of the sanctions that it had imposed on China in the wake of the Tiananmen crisis. First on December 19, it granted export licenses for three American communications satellites to be placed into orbit by Chinese launchers, thus lifting one of the sanctions contained in the

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<sup>19</sup> Department of state, Washington DC, n.d., 1990, pp. 5-6

comprehensive sanctions legislation still under consideration by Congress. On the same day, the White House also announced that it was resuming Exim-bank lending to China, thus removing a sanction Congress had recommended but not mandated in pending legislation. And third, on January 10, 1990, the Administration said the United States would no longer oppose all World Bank loans to China but would consider on a case-by-case basis those projects that met the basic human needs of the Chinese people. This American initiative sparked a debate in Beijing over the appropriate Chinese response.<sup>20</sup>

Some analysts, including many of China's America specialists, urged their leaders to be flexible and forthcoming. This group argued that in an era of intense international economic and technological competition, China would fall behind its neighbours if it did not maintain cooperative relations with the United States. Others insisted that China could not and should not shape domestic policies in response to American pressure, and that the time was not yet ripe to relax political controls. This group pointed out that the second Scowcroft - Eagleburger visit in December 1989 had pointed out that the United States was eager to improve relations with China, indicating that Beijing retained substantial leverage and needed to make only a minimal response.

The outcome of the debate was a compromise, in which China made some conciliatory gestures to the United States but refused to modify policy in other areas important to Washington. Therefore, Beijing lifted some of the restrictions on Sino-American cultural and academic exchanges that it had imposed after the Tiananmen crisis. Chinese leaders also adopted some modest measures to relax the political climate, especially in Beijing. On January 10, 1990, they lifted martial law in the capital, which had been in effect since May 20

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<sup>20</sup> Harding, n. 11 p. 42.

of the previous year.<sup>21</sup> A week later they announced the release of nearly six hundred people who had been arrested after the Tiananmen protests. At around the same time, they removed the heavy guard that had been placed around the American Embassy in Beijing and allowed American diplomats better access to Chinese officials.

However, missing from the list of the Chinese responses to the December Scowcroft Mission was the release of Fang Lizhi from his refuge in the American Embassy in Beijing. Since China's leading dissident had taken shelter in the U.S Embassy, the case of Fang Lizhi was a powerful symbol to conservative Chinese of American intervention in their country's internal affairs.

In the United States, some expressed dismay at the President's China policy. His veto of a bill introduced by Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi that would have extended the visas of Chinese students and scholars received critical comments. Bush succeeded in finding the votes he needed in the Senate to sustain his veto of the Pelosi bill, but only with a commitment to protect the Chinese students by executive order.

By February 1999, the Bush Administration's year-end overture had produced a mood of disappointment and disillusionment in Washington and Beijing. American officials indicated that they felt betrayed because Beijing had done so little to reciprocate the American gestures, and suggested that few further initiations would be forthcoming.<sup>22</sup> Ironically, Chinese officials and analysts expressed a similar view. The Chinese also pronounced themselves astonished and distressed by the harsh tone of the State Department's depiction of China in the annual Human Rights Report. Therefore the Chinese leaders stiffened the conditions for the release of Fang Lizhi,

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<sup>21</sup> *New York Times*, January 10, 1990, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> *Washington Post*, March 7, 1990, p. A30.

demanding not only that he admit guilt but also that the United States remove the restrictions it had imposed on World Bank loans and the transfer of American technology to China.<sup>23</sup>

## **MFN Debate**

The Congress, however, was seeking means to punish China for the Tiananmen Square massacre and to assert Congressional influence on the government's China policy. So, Congress focused on the annual renewal of most favored nation (MFN) treatment of Chinese exports to the United States. MFN status to China had been granted in 1980 until 1990, and the renewal of MFN had been a routine event. Now, the first time since this preferential tariff treatment was granted to China in 1980, there seemed to be a possibility that China might lose most favored nation status.<sup>24</sup> Although not as severe as a full trade embargo against China, the denial of MFN status to Beijing would have seriously harmed Sino-American relations. Rather than being subject to normal tariffs, Chinese goods entering the United States would have assigned higher duties, which would have risen from an average rate of 8.8 percent to one of 50.5 percent for the twenty-five most important commodities.<sup>25</sup> The U.S.-China Business Council estimated that this change would have reduced Chinese exports to the United States by full 50 percent, or by around \$ 6 billion.<sup>26</sup>

Defenders of MFN argued that a trade war would hurt both American and Chinese workers. It would deny poor Americans access to cheap Chinese goods. However, the debate in Congress and American media over MFN accomplished what previous sanctions,

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<sup>23</sup> *New York Times*, April 4, 1990, p.A 12.

<sup>24</sup> *Journal of Commerce*, May 16, 1990, p. 4A.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*, p.4A.

<sup>26</sup> Wang Jisi "China in 1989: The Crisis of Incomplete Reform" *Asian Survey*, (California) Vol. 30 (January 1990), p.37

Bush's letters to Deng, and the two Scowcroft missions failed to do. It awakened China's leaders to the terrible cost of alienating the United States. In early May, Beijing announced the release of 211 dissidents, intended to be a sign that the political climate in China was returning to normalcy. This gesture greatly facilitated President Bush's decision to recommend the renewal of Beijing's MFN status for twelve months.<sup>27</sup>

The Congress, nevertheless, was unmoved by Beijing's gestures. Reports by two leading Human Rights organizations, Amnesty International and Asia Watch, concluded that thousands of dissidents were still imprisoned subject to physical and psychological torture and to arbitrary judicial procedures, and that the overall political atmosphere in China had worsened rather than improved.<sup>28</sup>

Efforts by the Administration to persuade Congress that China was still important despite the apparent end of the Cold War and assumptions that a hostile China could create problems for the United States in Korea and South East Asia as well as the UN Security Council won few votes for MFN. In June 1990, the Chinese Government had finally agreed to permit Fang Lizhi to travel to Great Britain.<sup>29</sup> But official Chinese denials of the tragic circumstances of June 1989 was offensive to Congress leaders as well as to a world that had seen the truth on television.

In both 1990 and 1991, the annual renewal of China's MFN status became the occasion for domestic debate in the US Congress. At the same time, bilateral negotiations over the prospects for maintaining friendly Sino-American relations continued. In the end, both governments made necessary adjustments in their respective

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<sup>27</sup> *New York Times*, May 9, 1990, A.31.

<sup>28</sup> Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 1990* (New York, 1990), p. 16.

<sup>29</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, June 26, 1990, p. A. 14.



policy to preserve China's preferential trading status. Each year Beijing made concessions on Human Rights and on economic issues by releasing political prisoners, lifting martial law and boosting imports of American goods to enable entry of Chinese goods to US markets.

In July 1990, the "G-7" finance ministers meeting accepted a Japanese proposal to relax sanctions against China and soon Japanese and several European countries resumed high-level diplomatic contacts with China. The Americans could not be far behind. In 1993, the Bush Administration finally abandoned its policy of swapping concessions with Beijing and announced a new strategy of employing carrots and sticks to influence Chinese behavior.<sup>30</sup> These adjustments avoided greater deterioration in Sino- American ties, but the political relationship between the two countries remained deadlocked and was held hostage to sceptical attitudes in both countries and to an overburdened agenda of complex and contentious issues.

Chinese leaders realized that they had to find a new basis for a cooperative relationship with the United States and it was Iraqi leader Saddam Hussain, who, by invading Kuwait in August 1990, gave China its desired opportunity to demonstrate its continued relevance. American leaders needed broad international support after deciding to rescue oil rich Kuwait from Iraqi aggression. The extraordinary financial deficit run up by the Reagan Administration required President Bush to seek funds from other governments to pay for planned military operations. The Bush Administration wanted the United Nations (UN) to impose sanctions on Iraq and it required the support of the five permanent members of the Security Council of the United Nations. The Chinese voted in favor of economic and political

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<sup>30</sup> *Congressional Record*, daily ed., vol. 137, no. 112, July 26, 1991.

sanctions against Iraq, but threatened to veto the use of force.<sup>31</sup> Finally the Chinese chose to abstain, allowing the American led forces to attack Iraq.

In November 1991, Secretary of State-James Baker became the first high level US official to travel to China since Tiananmen. He was eager to strengthen the bilateral relationship but there were huge hurdles to overcome. He found the Chinese extraordinarily intransigent. On the eve of Baker's departure, the release of a few more political prisoners was announced and Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen held promises of China signing the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and adhering to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) after sanctions were lifted.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *China*, September 27, 1990, p. 8.

<sup>32</sup> Harry Harding, "China's American Dilemma," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, (New York) Vol. 519 (January 1992), p. 13.

## CHAPTER IV

**PERSISTENT IRRITANTS  
IN  
SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONS:  
TAIWAN, TIBET AND NON-PROLIFERATION**

**The Taiwan Issue**

China and the United States are oceans apart, sharing no common borders. Yet for more than three decades they have been engaged in a rather unusual territorial dispute over the status of Taiwan.

Historically, Taiwan has been part of Chinese territory. It was taken by Japan as booty after China's defeat in a war in 1895. With few exceptions, Chinese national leaders since Dr. Sun-Yat-Sen have all considered the loss a national humiliation and hence recovery of the island a sacred national mission. Legally, Taiwan was restored to China by a number of international agreements during World War II.<sup>1</sup> At the Cairo Conference in November 1943, Roosevelt and Churchill met their wartime ally, Chiang Kai-Shek, for the first time. They declared that Taiwan and Manchuria would be returned to China as part of the postwar settlement. This decision was reaffirmed at the important Potsdam conference, a decision to which the People's Republic still refer in documenting its claim to the island.<sup>2</sup> Then is the event of 1945-46, when the United States assisted the Republic of China to establish its authority over Taiwan's population. Having no

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<sup>1</sup> Earl Lazerson, (ed) Gene T. Hsiao and Michael Witunski, *Sino - American Normalization and its Policy Implications* (New York, 1983), p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Ezra F. Vogel, *Living with China U.S./ China Relations in the Twenty First Century* (New York, 1997), p. 63.

role in determining their fate, Taiwan's population at first welcomed their Chinese kin to be rulers, but Chiang's Kuomintang rule proved rapacious. The mainland officers and troops that Chiang had dispatched to the island were ill behaved, and Chiang sought to extract resources from the Island to help sustain his fight against the Communists on the mainland. Most of the Taiwanese looked upon those mainlanders as an invading army, and in subsequent decades significant tensions erupted and existed between the mainlanders and the Taiwanese.

Strategically, the island is only ninety miles from the mainland coast and is, therefore, regarded vital to the defence of the coastal provinces. When the Nationalists moved to Taiwan in the aftermath of the Communist victory in the Chinese Civil War, Taiwan practically became a separate political entity. Mainland China considered it a great challenge and has been seeking the reintegration of the territory since then.

Since 1949, the United States has consistently denied, challenged, and frustrated the Chinese claim to the island. While the real cause of this is deeply rooted in U.S. opposition to Chinese Communism, a pretext has been found in the lack of a formal confirmation of China's sovereignty over Taiwan in the peace settlement with Japan. Therefore, the United States has claimed that it has a moral and legal obligation to protect Taiwan against the use or threat of force by the People's Republic. This dispute blocked the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the United States for twenty-eight years and almost caused a major war involving

the possible use of nuclear weapons by the United States against the mainland of China in the 1950s.

Within twenty four hours after the outbreak of the Korean War on June 25, 1950, President Harry S. Truman ordered the US Seventh Fleet to "neutralize" the Taiwan Strait and imposed three alternative conditions on Taiwan for the determination of its future status: the restoration of security in the Pacific, a peace settlement with Japan or consideration by the United Nations.<sup>3</sup> This hasty action assumed a crucial question of a possible linkage between Taiwan and Korea - between the Chinese and Korea Civil Wars - though the Chinese neither initiated nor participated in the Korean War until about four months later.<sup>4</sup>

The Korean War, China's entry into it, the Cold War, the political clout of the Taiwan Lobby, and growing tension in the Taiwan Strait prompted the conclusion of a formal defence treaty between Taiwan and the United States in 1954. This alliance and Sino-American hostility led Taipei and Washington to cooperate in covert activities on the Mainland that were intended to foment unrest and instability. Taiwan's cooperation in the conduct of American Foreign Policy was extensive, locking the United States into a hostile relationship with the People's Republic for over two decades that adversely affected the American posture elsewhere in Asia as well.<sup>5</sup>

U.S policy toward Taiwan was transformed in four steps. First, in 1971, the Nixon Administration established direct, high-level

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<sup>3</sup> Vogel,n.2 p.35.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph C. Goulden, *Korea : The Untold Story of The War*(New York, 1982), p.65.

<sup>5</sup> vogel,n.2 p.63.

contact with the Beijing government, culminating in Nixon's February 1972 trip to Beijing and the issuance of the Shanghai Communiqué. The United States acknowledged the position by Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Strait and agreed that there was but one China and that Taiwan was part of it. Second, the United States continued to have full range of unofficial relations with Taiwan. The government of the United States and Taiwan established private agencies, staffed by personnel on temporary leave from their governments, to carry out the trade and business between the two countries. Third, a special legislation - the Taiwan Relations Act, passed in 1979 enabled the unofficial relationship with Taiwan to confirm and mandated that the executive branch provide Taiwan with the capacity to provide for its self-defence and consult with Congress in the event that Taiwan's security was endangered. Fourth, the United States would accept any solution Taiwan could negotiate without duress on the issues that divided China.

Ironically, the success of the policy framework of the 1970s brought into question its applicability in the 1990s. Taiwan's democratization had started in the last years of Chiang Chingkuo's reign and in September 1986, a new political party - Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was formed.<sup>6</sup> DPP emerged as the major opposition party to the Kuomintang (KMT) in a democratic Taiwan. Democratization and free circulation of ideas were also transforming the sense of identity among many Taiwanese residents. Most Taiwanese people identified themselves as both Taiwanese and Chinese or simply as Taiwanese. As Taiwan shed its authoritarian system in favour of democracy, the United States began to feel greater affinity for its government. In the United States, many in Congress and Human Rights organisations had long prodded Taiwan to move in

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<sup>6</sup> Martin L. Lasater, *The Changing of The Guard: President Clinton and The Security of Taiwan* (New York, 1995), p. 81.

this direction and many Americans also felt an obligation to offer support to the island. This feeling increased after the brutal suppression of the 1989 demonstrations in Beijing and China's continued oppression of political dissidents and, by implication, the contrast between Taiwan and the mainland sharpened.

Therefore, the *de facto* independence of Taiwan posed a major threat to Sino –American relations. Nixon and Kissinger, Ford and Carter had all accepted the “One China” formula upon which Beijing insisted.<sup>7</sup> Reagan had unnerved Chinese leaders by his temporary reluctance to endorse the Shanghai Communiqué. Nonetheless, the Taiwan Relations Act and continued American arms sales to Taiwan came to be persistent irritants in US-China relations.

Most strikingly, in 1991, President Bush, who had proved so malleable in the past, split with Beijing on the issue of Taiwan's accession to General Agreement for Trade and Tariff (GATT). Bush ended American support for the simultaneous accession of both the Taipei and Beijing regimes and endorsed the prior admission of Taiwan. Bush's advisors also argued in favour of sale of F-16 fighters to Taiwan which it had been asking for since 1981.<sup>8</sup> First, the Taiwan Relations Act required the United States to provide Taiwan with the weapons it needed to defend itself. It was also argued that Taiwan might turn to France for mirage fighters at a time when American arms manufacturers were seeking new markets to compensate for restraints on the Pentagon as a result of the end the Cold War. There

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<sup>7</sup> Warren I. Cohen, *America's Response to China –A History of Sino – American Relations*, Fourth Edition) (New York, 2000) p. 227.

<sup>8</sup> Lester L. Wolff and David L. Simon, *Legislative History of the Taiwan Relations Act: An Analytic Compilation with Documents on Subsequent Developments* (Jamaica, 1982), p. 312.



was an even more powerful argument for ignoring Beijing's strictures and increasing military aid to Taiwan. Its most persuasive advocate was James Lilley, former Ambassador to China and close associate of President Bush. They had worked together in Beijing in the 1970s. Lilley argued publicly that the Shanghai Communiqué was an anachronism. He said that in the twenty years since Nixon's historic journey to China, Taiwan had become a democracy, where many people did not share the view that there was only one China and that Taiwan was a part of it.

In the meantime, when President Bush travelled in late July, 1991 to Texas, General Dynamics – manufacturer of the F-16 fighters, announced that it might have to fire 5,800 workers at its Ford Worth division due to lack of business. Leading Texas Democrats immediately blamed Bush for betraying the interests of Texas workers by refusing to sell the planes to Taiwan. Bush informed reporters that he was taking a new look at the F-16 question and several weeks later announced the sale of 150 F –16 fighters to Taiwan.

When an effort was made to pacify Beijing, there is little doubt that Chinese leaders were shaken and outraged by the proposed arms sale to Taiwan. The assumption by Chinese that time was on their side with regard to the “return of Taiwan to the motherland” and that the US would do little to stop mainland forces from growing powerful enough to “intimidate” Taiwan, was shattered.<sup>9</sup> Those Americans who insisted that in the post-Cold War era China should no longer be treated as if it were indispensable to the nation's security had apparently prevailed. It was a clear signal from the US that it was in no mood to kowtow to China and that was definitely not good news to

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<sup>9</sup> Cohen, n.7 p.231.

Chinese leaders who had always expressed displeasure at US policy on Taiwan.

### **The Tibet Issue**

Modern Tibet dates back to the seventeenth century. In 1642 the realm became unified under the religious and spiritual authority of the Dalai Lama situated in Lhasa. Although China's imperial rulers had extended their influence into Tibet during both the Tang and the Yuan Dynastic rules, Beijing became deeply immersed in Tibetan politics only in the 1700s, stationing a small garrison and appointing a permanent representative in Lhasa in 1720.

During the warlord and nationalist eras (1911–1949), Tibet for all practical purposes was independent of central government control, although the central government continued to dabble in Tibetan politics, cultivating allies who were rivals of the authorities in Lhasa. With the ascent of the Communists, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) entered Tibet in 1950, and Beijing dispatched officials to Lhasa to establish a Provincial government. In 1951 the new authorities negotiated a seventeen-point agreement in Beijing with representatives of the young Dalai Lama that granted the Buddhist religious order considerable autonomy.<sup>10</sup> The agreement, however, proved unworkable.

By 1956–57 Tibetans had started demanding autonomy from Chinese rule. In 1959, a full-fledged rebellion broke out among the Khamba Tribesmen in Eastern Tibet, People's Liberation Army (PLA)

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<sup>10</sup> Vogel, n. 2 p. 80.

forces entered the province from Sichuan to quell the revolt. The tribesmen retreated to Lhasa, pursued by the PLA, who then entered the provincial capital and the religious centre of the Dalai Lama. Dalai Lama fled to Northern India, where with the US and Indian assistance he established the base that has been his home ever since. On the other hand, many rebels met their fate at Chinese Hands. The Chinese attributed the unrest to the Dalai Lama, whom they henceforth looked upon with animosity.

However, many Tibetan and Western sources thought of the rebellion as a spontaneous, popular, and unified national expression of support for the Dalai Lama, Tibetan independence, and resentment against the Chinese high-handedness in Lhasa.<sup>11</sup> For instance, Dawa Norbu wrote, "The Lhasa uprising in March 1959 was a spontaneous revolt sparked off by desperation".<sup>12</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of the 1959 debacle, Chinese rule became more harsh and oppressive. To ensure Han domination, the Chinese Government sponsored a migration from other provinces to Tibet's major urban areas. During the Cultural Revolution (1966 – 1976), especially in its early years, Red Guards had committed unspeakable crimes, killing many monks and destroying monasteries throughout Tibet. Deng Xiaoping himself, in meetings with Americans, acknowledged the extensive Chinese misrule during that era.

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<sup>11</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy* (New Delhi, 2001), p.213.

<sup>12</sup> Tsering Topgyal, "The Birth of a Nationalism and the 'Death' of National Government: The Tragic Irony of the 1959 Tibetan Uprising against Chinese Occupation –II", *Tibetan Review*, (New Delhi) (April 2003), p. 19.

However, under Deng Xiaoping and especially with the encouragement of Deng's anointed successor Hu Yaobang in the early and mid 1980s, the government sought to compensate for its previous errors by allowing monasteries to reopen and young monks to be recruited, permitting greater religious freedom. There was also opening of Tibet to tourism, and increased central government subsidies for education, public health, transportation facilities, and so on. Such developmental tasks improved the quality of life for Tibetans to some extent, most of whom were steeped in rural poverty. Beijing took a common sense view that a more economically and socially prosperous Tibet would give rise to less political and religious discontentment.

However, the Dalai Lama and the independence for Tibet' campaign had repeatedly asserted that and freedom of worship, especially in Tibet's monasteries had been brutally suppressed. Tibetan traditional culture and spirituality appeared to be in danger of extinction. It was even alleged by a report on Tibet that around one million Tibetans were killed in the Cultural Revolution. This is an exaggerated account as remarked by Jing Wei, a Chinese journalist. He said, "If one million were killed then there would be almost no Tibetans left. The truth, however, is just the opposite."<sup>13</sup>Therefore, the tug of war between China and Tibet on the autonomy and religious freedom of Tibetans have been a continuous feature of international debate though China has always discouraged interference from any foreign power in its dealings with Tibet.

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<sup>13</sup> Jing Wei, "100 Questions About Tibet", *Beijing Review*, (Beijing) (n.d. 1989) p. 30.

Nevertheless, the United States has always supported Tibet's struggle for autonomy from the Chinese rule. In 1987, Dalai Lama had visited Washington for an informal meeting with the Chinese officials and also to talk to them about a plan under which Tibet would acknowledge Chinese sovereignty in exchange for a withdrawal of Chinese military forces from Tibet and a high degree of political and cultural autonomy to Tibet<sup>14</sup>.

The *New York Times*, in support, of Dalai Lama's plea had published an editorial urging the State Department to "stand up for decency in Tibet"<sup>15</sup> and had urged the White House to make the treatment of the Tibetan people "an important factor", in its policy discussion with China. There was also a freestanding Senate resolution in March 1989 condemning Chinese policies in Tibet<sup>16</sup>. George Bush, Vice-President during the Reagan Presidency, had soft corner for the Tibetans.

In the spring of 1991, President Bush, by now the US President, met Dalai Lama to express his concern for Human Rights in Tibet. It was for the first time that the religious leader of Tibet, Dalai Lama had met any American President<sup>17</sup>. Pictures of President Bush shaking hands with Dalai Lama was carried in American, Chinese and Tibetan newspapers. This symbolic gesture became a momentous event for Tibetans because it showed American concern for Tibet.

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<sup>14</sup> *New York Times*, October 7, 1987, p.p A1, A9.

<sup>15</sup> *New York Times*, October 8, 1987, p. A38.

<sup>16</sup> *Washington Post*, April 1, 1989, p. A17.

<sup>17</sup> *Washington Post*, April 1, 1991, p.p. D1, D6.

However, it was bad news for the People's Republic of China and they felt threatened by the sympathy of the United States for Tibet and were upset with the grand welcome and respect bestowed upon Dalai Lama by President Bush. Tibet had been a sore point between the United States and China but it was not so important as to bring major differences between the two countries. However, a noteworthy fact is that there has been wide spread support for the Tibetan cause among American people and in American media. American celebrities have also shown great interest in the Human Rights situation and the autonomy issue of Tibet, including rich businessmen and glamorous Hollywood stars like Richard Gere.

Moreover, President Bush acknowledged the Tibetan cause and gave importance to Dalai Lama by meeting him. As a matter of fact, this one single meeting had granted indirect legitimacy to Tibet's struggle for autonomy against the People's Republic of China and had also acted as a "morale booster" for Tibetan people.

### **Non-Proliferation and Indiscriminate Sale of Arms**

An issue complicating the Sino -American strategic relationship was China's position on nuclear non-proliferation. For a long time, the US championed the cause of non-proliferation and gave unstinted support to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). China, however, did not sign the NPT for decades. The non-proliferation issue came under focus the two countries desired to conclude an agreement on civilian nuclear cooperation, which would permit the export of American

nuclear power generating equipment to China.<sup>18</sup> China desired nuclear equipment as a way of increasing its ability to generate electric power, which was one of the most important bottlenecks in its economy. American companies were faced with a shrinking domestic market and were eager to gain access to a large potential Chinese market.

Besides, a commercial nuclear cooperation agreement, could link various agencies of the U.S government with their counterparts in China, encouraging Beijing to join the international regime against the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The process of negotiating the Sino-American nuclear cooperation agreement, which had begun at the start of the Reagan Administration in 1981, was complicated by some considerations. As a matter of practical politics, it would have been difficult for Washington to gain Congressional support for such an agreement in the absence of Chinese commitment to the principle of signing the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. The most disturbing part for the US was the "highly credible" reports that China was helping Pakistan develop nuclear weapons capability by providing information on the design of atomic explosives and by assisting in the construction of an unsafe uranium enrichment plant in that country.<sup>19</sup>

A second set of issues stemmed from the provisions of the US Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act of 1978, which governed the transfer of

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<sup>18</sup> Qingshan Tan, "U.S China Nuclear Cooperation Agreement: China's Nonproliferation Policy", *Asian Survey*, (California) Vol. 29(September 1989), p. 870.

<sup>19</sup> *New York Times*, June 22, 1984, p.3.

nuclear equipment and materials overseas. Although there were some ambiguities in the law when applied to countries that already had developed nuclear weapons, the Act seemed to require that any American nuclear exports to China be subject to international safeguards, including on-site inspections of the raw materials and equipment provided by the United States and American consent to the reprocessing or transfer of spent nuclear fuel. For a country like China, traditionally obsessed with preserving sovereignty against foreign intervention, these American requirements were controversial intrusion into Chinese internal affairs.

In December 1983, several members of Congress concerned with non-proliferation wrote to Secretary of State George Shultz about the nuclear cooperation agreement then under negotiation with China. They suggested that the United States demand from Beijing an explicit commitment to the principle of non-proliferation and a pledge that it would place all new nuclear exports under the safeguards administered by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). They also wanted China to accept IAEA safeguards on its own civilian nuclear installations. Beijing agreed to join IAEA, which implied an acceptance of other elements of the international non-proliferation regime. The Chinese Government had also begun to make public statements supporting the principle of non-proliferation. One such statement was made by Zhao Ziyang in a toast at the White House during his visit to Washington in 1984, and another in a report to China's national legislature several months later.

Privately, Beijing gave Washington oral assurances that it would not assist Pakistan to develop nuclear weapons. The State Department



drafted a secret memorandum summarizing its interpretation of the more forthcoming Chinese position on non-proliferation, which Beijing declined to sign. China had also refused to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, citing historical objections for its refusal.

Moreover, as far as situation in the Asian sub-continent was concerned, China, regarded India as a potential strategic rival, a near nuclear power. To maintain a check on Indian ambitions, China over the years was prepared to go to great lengths to support Pakistan-India's arch-rival. By contrast, the United States saw the decline of the Soviet Union as an opportunity to cultivate India. The United States repeatedly found itself in disputes with China over the latter's support for Pakistan's efforts to counter India's nuclear and missile capabilities. Washington perceived it to be a destabilizing phenomenon.

Another contentious issues between China and the United States were Chinese arms sales to the Middle East. By 1975, China had exported heavy weapons to twenty-two countries in Asia and provided light weapons to many other governments in the 1980s. China's arms sales were focused on two countries in Asia (Thailand and Pakistan) and five in the Middle East (Egypt, Syria, Libya, Iran and Iraq). The Iran-Iraq war had also offered an ideal opportunity for China to increase arms sales to the Middle East. China showed no reservations about selling weapons to both sides, signing agreements with Iran valued at \$ 3 billion and agreements with Iraq totaling \$ 5.1 billion.<sup>20</sup> In March 1987 George Shultz had raised the issue of Chinese

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<sup>20</sup> Eden Y. Woon, "China Arms Sales and U.S China Military Relations", *Asian Survey*, vol. 29 (June 1989), p. 604.

arms sales to Iran during his visit to Beijing, apparently requesting a termination of the Silkworm missiles.<sup>21</sup> Initially, the Chinese had refused to acknowledge that any Silkworm missiles were being sent to Iran, even when shown American reconnaissance photographs.<sup>22</sup> Therefore in October 1987, the United States had suspended the liberalization of controls on the export of advanced technology to China.<sup>23</sup> So Beijing had said that it would take measures to stop what it called the diversion of Silkworm to Iran market. After confirming that China had indeed stopped the delivery of Silkworms to Iran, Washington announced the first relaxation of technology transfer restrictions since the dispute began.<sup>24</sup>

Even as the Silkworm issue was being resolved, Washington received reports of the sale of Chinese C-SS-2 intermediate range ballistic missiles, valued at \$3 billion to Saudi Arabia. There were also reports that China was negotiating the sale of medium range M-9 missiles to Syria, and possibly to Iran, Libya, and Pakistan.<sup>25</sup> However, without making any firm or explicit commitments, Chinese leaders had implied to Defence Secretary Frank Carlucci during his visit to Beijing in September 1988, that the Chinese would refrain from selling any more missiles to the Middle East.

At the same time the United States had announced that it would permit the use of Chinese rockets to launch space satellites manufactured in the United States, with certain economic and technical safeguards. Although both governments denied any connection between the two issues, some in Washington suspected

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<sup>21</sup> *Washington Post*, June 11, 1987. p.a 29.

<sup>22</sup> *China*, February 22, 1984, p AI.

<sup>23</sup> *New York Times*, October 23, 1987 pp.A1.A9 4

<sup>24</sup> *Asian Wall Street Journal*, August 8, 1988, p. 19.

<sup>25</sup> *New York Times*, June 22, 1988, p. A 6.

that this concession had been a quid pro quo for China's reassurance to stop missile sales to the Middle East.<sup>26</sup>

The Bush Administration's foreign policy measures had tilted towards the South Asian region and especially toward the People's Republic of China. As a matter of fact, Washington had expected to play the role of the balancer and the restraining factor to keep in check the strategic ambitions of China<sup>27</sup>.

The United States was also unhappy with the Sino-Pakistan nuclear collaboration. When the Cold War had ended with the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan in 1989, Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme had come under serious scrutiny in the United States. Two months after Iraq occupied Kuwait in 1990, the Bush Administration had imposed the Pressler Amendment on Pakistan<sup>28</sup>. The Pressler Amendment was a kind of punishment meted out to Pakistan for conniving with China in developing its nuclear capabilities secretly. Islamabad for a while sought to evade the US pressure by dangling the bait of playing the positive role in the Kuwait crisis. But the Kuwait crisis was not an instance of Cold War and Pakistan failed in its attempt to wriggle out of Pressler Law<sup>29</sup>.

On the other hand, China, despite frequent denials, had persisted in selling missiles to Pakistan and Middle Eastern countries. There were also reports of China helping Algeria to build a nuclear

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<sup>26</sup> *Washington Post*, October 12, 1988, p. A 19.

<sup>27</sup> Chintamani Mahapatra, "Major Powers and South East Asian Security in the Post-Cold War World," *Strategic Analysis*, (New Delhi) Vol. XVII No. 6 (September 1994), P. 671.

<sup>28</sup> Chintamani Mahapatra, "Politics of Sanctions: US position on the M-11 issue," *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. XIX No. 5 (August 1996), p. 810.

<sup>29</sup> Mahapatra, n. 27 p. 810

power reactor<sup>30</sup>. Therefore, in retaliation for Chinese missile exports, the Bush Administration denied licenses for several high technology items that the Chinese had wanted to purchase<sup>31</sup>. Despite continued friction between the United States and China on the issue of non-proliferation and Chinese missile exports to number of countries, China sought to repair the damaged ties with the West in general and the United States in particular. China had announced its intention to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1991 and to accede to the principals of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in 1992.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, Secretary of State James Baker's trip to Beijing in November 1991 had signalled that it was the beginning of high-level official contact between the two countries<sup>33</sup>. From July 1991, the Bush Administration's policy towards China had centered on what came to be known as "Constructive Engagement"<sup>34</sup>.

On his part, President Bush had removed tactical nuclear weapons from US ground and naval units as a way of lessening the risk of nuclear confrontation<sup>35</sup>. This step was an indirect signal to the People's Republic to be true to its words and strictly adhere to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and cooperate with the US by signing the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

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<sup>30</sup> Cohen, n. 7 p. 225.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid*, p. 226.

<sup>32</sup> Chintamani Mahapatra, "The Eagle and The Dragon After the Cold War," *Strategic analysis*, vol. XIX No. 2 (May 1996), p. 232

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*, p. 232.

<sup>34</sup> Shankari Sandararaman, "Sino-US Relations for Better, for Worse," *Strategic Analysis*, vol. XXIII No. 1 (April 1999) p. 47

<sup>35</sup> Paloma Galindo, Bush Administration Promotes Nuclear Revival (<http://www.afn.org/-iguana/archives/20021009.html>)

## CHAPTER V

## **CONCLUSION**

The United States is a pluralistic nation, federalist in structure, shaped by immigrants who came here seeking freedom and opportunities of a better life. The People's Republic of China is ethnically homogenous and has a long tradition of centralism and has always been preoccupied with internal stability because of painful experiences in its contacts with the West. Ideological and cultural differences have played an important role in determining Sino-American relations.

Therefore, the normalization of relations between the United States and China after the historic visit of President Richard Nixon in 1971 was considered one of the geo-political paradoxes of the twentieth century. At that point of time, containment of Communism was the cornerstone of the US foreign policy. The goal of America was to contain the spread of influence of Communist Soviet Union through the help of Communist China.

But the virtual disintegration of the Soviet Union brought about major changes in the foreign policy of the United States. While the strategic relevance of Sino-American security ties came to be challenged in the post Cold-War environment, the unprecedented economic success of China created a different logic for the continuation and further improvement of cooperative ties between the two countries.

Moreover, the inauguration of George Herbert Walker Bush as President of the United States in January 1989, was a positive factor

for the future of Sino-American relations. The Chinese perceived a friend in the White House, the first American to have served as his country's representative in China.

Besides, with the considerable growth in the trade and investment relationship between China and the United States, a new business community had emerged within the US to protect and promote bilateral ties. The champions of democracy and Human Rights within the governing circles in Washington and in the circles of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the US appeared less influential than the pro-China business lobby groups until the Tiananmen Square Massacre of June 1989. The tragedy in Tiananmen Square sparked the most severe crisis in Sino-American ties since the rapprochement between the two countries had begun some twenty years earlier. The Tiananmen crisis also intensified the long-standing fears of Chinese conservatives of the subversive effects of extensive contact with the United States. The huge popular protests calling for greater democracy were seen as the consequences of the opening to the West. The critical commentary in the American press, the sanctions on China by the U.S. government, and the pressure from Congress for even greater retaliation convinced Chinese conservatives that the United States was engaged in a programme of peaceful evolution aimed at the overthrow of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Besides, China always had this notion that the United States poses the greatest threat to China's national security and political stability.

Therefore, the People's Republic of China had always tried to prevent American influences from undermining China's political order

and Communist ideology. On the other hand, the U.S. government, many American non-governmental organizations and American press had repeatedly criticized the absence of Human Rights in China. The United States had employed a variety of measures from private diplomacy to public criticism to threats of economic sanctions to try to force change in China's system of governance and to gain greater respect for Human Rights in China. As a matter of fact, Human Rights has been one of the most prominent and contentious issues in U.S.-China relations, ever since the mid-1980s, and especially since the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989.

However, the Chinese had a different story to tell. They argued that after the Tiananmen crisis, there had been marked progress on Human Rights condition in China and the overall situation remained stable. The Chinese also said that the standard of living for the majority of the population had improved and ordinary people had greater freedom from government or party intervention in their daily lives. Besides, the Chinese reported widespread progress in enhancement of the rule of law and enlargement of the power of legislative bodies. In fact, the Chinese found it difficult to understand that why American observers failed to acknowledge the improvement in Human Rights condition of China.

Thus China and the U.S. reached an impasse over Human Rights. Where Chinese saw progress, Americans saw stagnation and even retrogression. Where Americans saw grounds for criticism, many Chinese found reasons for satisfaction. Many Chinese believed that the American preoccupation with Human Rights was the greatest evidence that the United States was a hegemonic power, which tried to



interfere in the internal affairs of other countries to impose its political system and cultural values on them. Most of the Chinese people felt that the motive of U.S. intervention was to keep China weak and divided by undermining the central government, by encouraging regional separatism and by fomenting social unrest. So American policy toward Human Rights in China was perceived not only as ill-informed but also as ill-intentioned.

Thus, the Human Rights issue was a highly emotional one and touched some of the core values in both American and Chinese societies. Americans value freedom, individualism and democracy, and the Chinese value sovereignty, national pride, and self-determination. It evokes each society core myths: America's missionary responsibility to carry freedom and democracy overseas, and China's struggle against foreign intervention in its internal affairs. The above issues were also related to the shift in the relative power of the two countries -China's determination to become strong, and America's desire to maintain its leadership role in international affairs.

Ideological considerations have always been a constant source of ambivalence and opposition to Sino-American relations. Many Chinese Communist leaders have had a lifelong aversion to capitalism and imperialism and saw the United States as the principal embodiment of both evils in post World War II. Similarly, many Americans found any variety of Communism repugnant and regarded Chinese Communism as even more brutal than its Soviet counterpart.

The Tiananmen crisis led many Chinese leaders to accuse the United States of trying once again to remake China in its own image

this time by exporting a secular philosophy rather than religious teachings. The interest that many young urban Chinese showed in American popular culture, economic institutions, and political theory and the rise of dissent between the Chinese intellectual and students' communities, intensified the concern of Chinese conservatives that the relationship with the United States had become a destabilizing element in Chinese society.

The Tiananmen crisis undoubtedly had embittered relations between the United States and China and had made President Bush's desire of improving relations with China very difficult. So President Bush had to walk a very fine line in defining policy towards China in the summer of 1989. However, President Bush had his own style of dealing with US policy towards China. The emphasis on making personal contacts with foreign leaders, the absence of emotional rhetoric about the Tiananmen Square massacre and the focus on strategic and economic concerns rather than Human Rights was typical of President Bush's general approach to the conduct of foreign policy towards China.

Moreover, China's modernization programme and economic opening had raised aspirations in China and China was all set to become a major economic power. To realise this objective, China wanted to develop economic relations with the United States and absorb developmental experiences and technological know how from it. China had also joined the Bretton Woods institutions of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1980. After that China became an active participant in the governance of these

organizations and was the largest recipient of multilateral assistance in the world by the end of the 1990.

However, China emerged on corporate America's radar screen only in 1990. The total volume of trade increased greatly from \$13.5 billion in 1988 to \$20.0 billion in 1990. Chinese exports to the United States rose sharply from \$8.5 billion in 1988 to \$12.0 billion in 1989, and then to \$15.2 billion in 1990. The surge in Chinese exports to the United States was the result of several factors. The Chinese government offered financial subsidies, concessional credit, and cheap raw materials to exporters, which enabled them to offer their goods to foreign markets at bargain prices. Moreover, there was some improvement in relations between Taiwan and China and this encouraged many Taiwanese firms to shift production from Taiwan to China. A similar phenomenon was also occurring in Hong Kong, as entrepreneurs there relocated their factories across the border into Guangdong province. This pattern meant that goods once exported to the United States from Hong Kong and Taiwan were now exported from China. It also meant that the political burden of the resulting trade surplus had shifted from Taipei to Beijing. Above all, President Bush's interest in strengthening economic partnership with China was the most important factor in the increase of trade between the United States and China.

Despite the economic partnership between the United States and China there were some persistent irritants between them. The issue of non-proliferation had created bitterness in US-China relations. President Bush had imposed sanctions on China and was insisting upon China to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty

(NPT). There is little doubt that the Bush Administration made some conscious efforts to encourage China to be part of international efforts to prevent nuclear and missile proliferation. President Bush and his foreign policy team adopted a carrot and stick policy to achieve this goal. However, China is not a country that cooperates under pressure. In a way, China itself took a conscious decision to join the non-proliferation regime in order to ward off pressures on other areas, such as Taiwan, Tibet, Human Rights and trade issues.

Issues such as Taiwan and Tibet have always created tension in US-China relations. The Bush administration did not take any concrete measures to remove these irritants. In fact, the Tiananmen Square incident turned Human Rights into a major issue of concern in the US policy-making circles. As a result, Tibet, which was a dormant issue, suddenly got prominence in US approach towards China. President Bush's willingness to meet Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama was aimed at exerting pressure on China to improve its Human Rights record in Tibet.

The Taiwan issue which was in the backburner for about a decade, bounced back as a major political irritant in US-China relations. The souring of the bilateral ties in the wake of the Tiananmen incident, political activism of Human Rights groups in the US, political reassertion of the Taiwan lobby in the US and the rising losses of the US arms industry was responsible for putting Taiwan issue in the forefront.

However, in the spring of 1991, the elements of a new strategy towards China had begun to take shape by the Bush Administration.

The new strategy, which had been implicit in some of the initiatives taken by the White House throughout the spring, was the result of the first comprehensive interagency review of America's China Policy since Tiananmen crisis, as well as of a lengthy memorandum submitted to the President by Secretary of State James Baker. The Bush Administration had identified a long list of measures to address the various problems in Sino-American relationship. On Human Rights many of the economic and military sanctions imposed in June 1989 remained in effect but George Bush stressed on the importance of continued dialogue with China on the subject. Nevertheless, the Bush Administration had cited China under Section 301 of the Trade Act for failing to protect Intellectual Property Rights. The administration also revealed that it had planned to deduct more than \$ 100 million from China's annual textile quota to compensate for goods illegally transshipped through third world countries. President Bush had also declared his intention to temporarily embargo products believed to be the product of prison labour from Chinese jails.

However, by the end of 1991 and the beginning of 1992, the Chinese government was less fearful of being isolated in the world. Most of the world's diplomats had come back and investors were slowly returning to the People's Republic of China. China's exports to the United States and favourable balance of trade continued to grow rapidly. Tourism had resumed in China and though Americans remained suspicious of China, they visited China in large numbers. China also sent young people from their country to American graduate schools for getting education.

In November 1992, the political scenario in the United States took a turn and George Bush lost the Presidential seat to Democrat candidate Bill Clinton and the Chinese were unhappy at the loss of a friend in the seat of the highest office of the United States. An oscillating pattern of progress and stagnation, crisis and consolidation had characterized the relationship between China and the United States in the eventful years of the Presidency of George Herbert Walker Bush.

If one attempts to prepare a balance sheet of US-China relations under the Bush Administration, one would find that the political irritants between the two countries picked during this period. However, the evolving economic relationship between the two countries was already so intense that neither Washington nor Beijing could afford a rupture in the relationship. A careful examination of the MFN debate in the US Congress and political concessions made by China perhaps provide a testimony to this conclusion.

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