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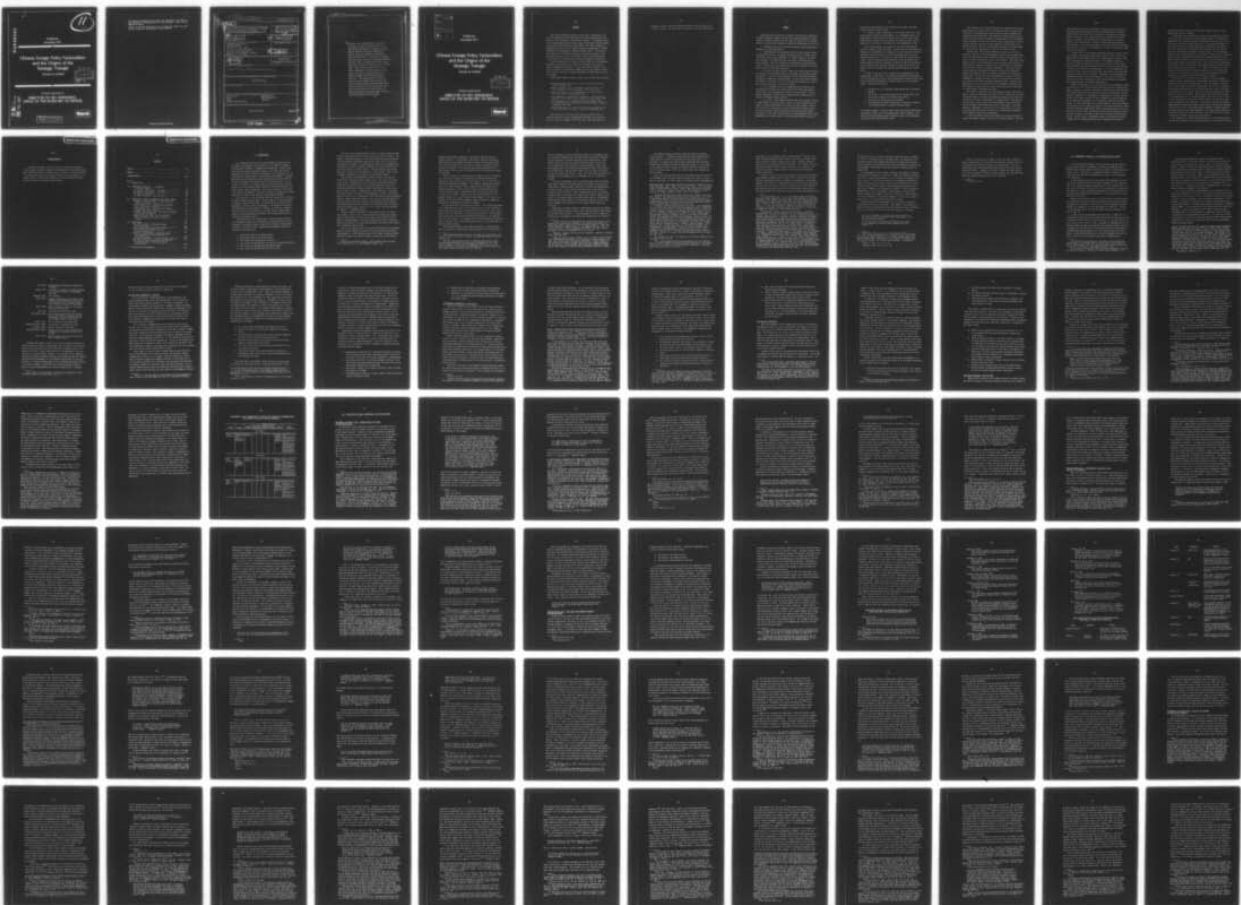
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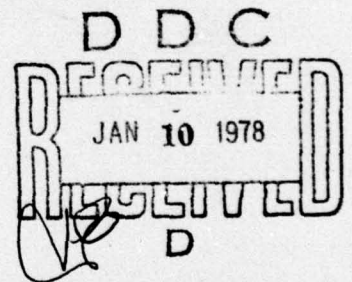
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November 1977

# Chinese Foreign Policy Factionalism and the Origins of the Strategic Triangle

Thomas M. Gottlieb



A Report prepared for

DIRECTOR OF NET ASSESSMENT,  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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↓ Provides a new interpretation of the very important yet poorly understood origins of the Sino-Soviet-American triangular relationship by tracing through the evolution of China's policy for coping with the Soviet Union as an adversary. The analysis suggests that the Chinese discussed and debated improving relations with the United States well before the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. Some principles that underlie the Chinese approach to policymaking are illuminated in an effort to comprehend how the Chinese handled critical foreign policy decisions. The study presents evidence on why the Chinese leaders split apart on the issue of ameliorating tensions between China and the United States and analyzes the impact such factionalism had on their ability to respond forcefully and consistently to Soviet political/military pressure. (PB)

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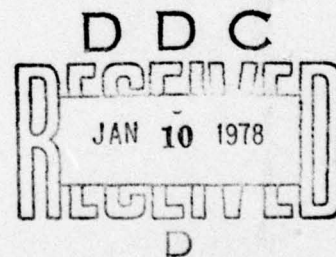


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# Chinese Foreign Policy Factionalism and the Origins of the Strategic Triangle

Thomas M. Gottlieb



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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**



PREFACE

This report documents research on the issue of Sino-Soviet competition undertaken at The Rand Corporation under sponsorship of the Director of Net Assessment, Department of Defense. In examining views of the United States and the Soviet Union held by major Chinese leaders during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1969), this study broadens the appreciation of the extent to which leadership disagreement in Peking influences the orientation of Chinese foreign policy. It describes the evolution of the Chinese response to the militarization of the Sino-Soviet dispute and in this context offers a new interpretation of the origins of the Sino-Soviet-American triangular relationship.

This study should be of value to readers involved in formulating policies that will directly or indirectly influence the course of future Sino-American relations. At the same time it should be relevant to students of contemporary Chinese politics who express interest in the issue of how well an outside observer can "know" what is going on in China.

Recent Rand studies relevant to this report include the following:

Michael Pillsbury, *Personal Ties and Factionalism in Peking*, P-5373, February 1975.

Michael Pillsbury, *SALT on the Dragon: Chinese Views of the Soviet-American Strategic Balance*, P-5457, April 1975.

Michael Pillsbury, *Soviet Apprehensions about Sino-American Relations, 1971-74*, P-5459, June 1975.

Lilita Dzirkals, *Lightning War in Manchuria: Soviet Military Analysis of the 1945 Far East Campaign*, P-5589, January 1976.

John H. Despres, Lilita Dzirkals, and Barton Whaley, *Timely Lessons of History: The Manchurian Model for Soviet Strategy*, R-1825-NA, July 1976.

Kenneth Lieberthal, *The Foreign Policy Debate in Peking as Seen Through Allegorical Articles, 1973-1976*, P-5768, May 1977.

The research for this report was initiated in March 1975 at Stanford University, and was subsequently expanded at The Rand Corporation during the summers of 1975 and 1976. The final draft was



completed in August 1976 and revised in December while the author was in Taipei, Taiwan. The author is a consultant to The Rand Corporation.



SUMMARY

This study of the evolution of China's "Soviet policy" during the Cultural Revolution suggests several conclusions regarding the formulation of Chinese foreign policy and about the ability of the outside observer to discern and comprehend leadership disagreements over policy:

1. Foreign policy was actively discussed and vigorously debated during the Cultural Revolution.

2. Confronted with an expanding Soviet military presence along the Sino-Soviet border, escalating involvement by U.S. ground forces in Vietnam, and a strong commitment to a massive domestic rectification campaign, the leadership split into three contending foreign policy groups. Each one assessed the international situation differently. For this and other reasons two distinct strategies for coping with the Soviet threat were advocated.

3. At least one major group in China fully appreciated the subtle but powerful role diplomacy plays in a strategy for repelling foreign adversaries. Because of their awareness of the liabilities inherent in being a "second-rate" military power, at least some Chinese leaders will desire to maintain close ties with the United States, as long as China remains vulnerable to Soviet pressures.

4. U.S. statements and actions regarding Soviet-American and Sino-American relations are closely analyzed by Peking and significantly affect the determination of China's foreign policy. In this manner, Washington's "China policy" significantly influences the direction of Peking's "America policy."

5. The issue of Sino-American détente has been violently opposed by many leaders at certain times. This fact, when considered in the light of current negotiations over Taiwan and other issues, leads us to believe that a hard-line U.S. policy toward China could be fatal for future friendly relations between China and the United States. Particularly in the wake of Mao's death, an uncompromising policy from Washington could easily result in the potentially fragile balance of

forces being tipped against those in Peking who support improving relations with the United States.

6. Finally, careful examination of the Chinese media can reveal clear signs of leadership disagreement. To a remarkable extent, top leaders openly discuss sensitive foreign policy issues which, when systematically compared and contrasted, can provide us with rich insights into the process of foreign policy decisionmaking in China.

This report examines the origins of the Sino-Soviet-American strategic triangle (from 1966-1969). By describing and analyzing the "debate" that accompanied the formulation of a strategy for safeguarding China's national security, we have challenged the notion that foreign policy was not a contentious issue during the Cultural Revolution. We have paid particular attention to the controversy that erupted among the Chinese leadership in 1967 and 1968 over whether or not the international situation warranted relying tactically on the United States to strengthen the Chinese position against the Soviet Union.

By 1966, as the Sino-Soviet polemics were transformed into an open military confrontation, top Chinese policymakers wrestled with a set of foreign policy issues that significantly structured the nature of the PRC (People's Republic of China) response to the new Soviet threat. These issues included:

1. The nature of the continuing confrontation with the United States.
2. The nature of the problem posed by the United States, and the correct strategy for handling that threat.
3. The nature of Soviet-American relations.
4. The desirability and/or feasibility of tactically relying on the United States to oppose the Soviet Union.

In addition, domestic concerns, particularly the Cultural Revolution, also played a large role in determining the Chinese response. Confronted with these pressing and contentious issues, the leadership split into three foreign policy groups.



The *moderates*, led by Premier Chou En-lai, argued that the Soviet Union posed a far greater threat to China than did the United States. Because of the international situation and the relative weakness of the People's Liberation Army, they urged that China isolate the main enemy--the Soviet Union--by driving a wedge between it and the United States. Because of their belief in the tactical importance of diplomacy and the fact that they did not regard the United States as an offensive threat to China, the moderates advocated that Peking normalize relations with Washington to cope with the Soviet threat.

The *military*, led by Defense Minister Lin Piao, rejected the moderates' analysis of the international situation and concluded that, since the United States would inevitably expand the Vietnam War into China, it posed the greatest threat to PRC security. The Soviet Union, however, was not yet irreversibly hostile to China, and therefore, if Peking did not provoke the Soviets, the confrontation that the moderates predicted could be postponed or prevented. Given their great concern with not provoking the Soviets, the military strenuously opposed the moderates' move to normalize relations with Washington because they felt that it would only dramatize the extent of China's commitment to opposing the Soviet Union, if not provoke the Soviets into applying even greater pressure against the PRC. Instead, they preferred to follow a "cautious" policy of gradually building up the PLA's ability to cope with the Soviet revisionists while continuing to explore means of defusing the crisis.

The *radicals* urged that China simultaneously oppose both super-powers. Rather than appease the Soviet Union or tactically unite with the United States, the radicals advocated a strategy of militant confrontation with both "revisionism" and "imperialism." This would be the best way to draw a clear line between China's principled stand and the decadent capitulationism of Soviet revisionism. Given the radicals' commitment to self-reliance in foreign policy, it is not surprising that they joined the military in opposing the moderates' bid to improve relations with Washington.

In 1966 and 1967 the moderates consistently led the movement to expose the dangers inherent in the Soviet military buildup. Chou and



other moderates were the only Chinese to discuss publicly the Soviet strategic reorientation against China, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) consistently drew attention to the aggressive nature of Soviet revisionism. The military never once referred to the Soviet buildup. Instead, they concentrated on dramatizing the potential threat of the United States. Relying on Defense Ministry warnings and statements by key military leaders, they totally ignored the threat from the north in favor of highlighting the need to "increase war preparations" in the south.

In early 1967, as the Cultural Revolution entered a phase of militant struggle, the moderates and military joined forces to limit the damage that the Red Guards might do in jeopardizing the ability of the PLA to safeguard the northern frontier. The radicals appeared to oppose these moves, arguing that the political nature of the Soviet threat demanded that the Red Guards be given the fullest opportunities to weed out all potential capitulationists. If the struggle were not waged to the end, the Soviets would have a far easier time subverting the goals of the Chinese revolution. Therefore, as the moderates and military advocated a policy of restraint in the north, the radicals pushed for militant confrontation with the foreign enemy and unrelenting struggle against the domestic revisionists.

Seeking to maximize a set of diverse and often contradictory goals, Mao did not at first visibly support any one particular foreign policy group. Instead, he pursued a strategy of remaining above the fray while at the same time selectively aiding each faction on particular issues. Thus his commitment to a fundamental reorganization of Chinese society as well as his basic distrust of Soviet intentions toward the PRC put him in ideological agreement with the Shanghai radicals and Chiang Ch'ing. Yet while Mao urged on the attack against "capitalist roaders" in the Party, he also sought the support of Lin Piao and the PLA, which not only provided a hedge against Soviet encroachment but also was the only politically reliable organization capable of overseeing and steering such a cathartic movement as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Finally, Chou's incomparable grasp of international affairs coupled with his unparalleled ability to intervene and bring the

Cultural Revolution's warring factions back together gave his views added weight with the Chairman.

By mid-1968, the international situation had changed and this was reflected by new developments in the strategic debate. The moderates argued that Tet, President Johnson's March speech, and the start of the Paris Peace Talks all revealed that the U.S. threat was declining. At the same time, Soviet military maneuvers near Mongolia and a general rise in tension along the northern border indicated that the Soviet Union was escalating its campaign to oppose China. The international situation thus compelled China to follow Mao's cardinal rule of strategy--when confronted with superior adversaries, determine which poses the greater threat, attempt to divide and isolate it, and concentrate all of one's energy against the primary enemy. This could best be accomplished by building a broad united front to strengthen China's position in relation to the number one adversary. As a result, the moderates reintroduced the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence as the cornerstone of China's foreign policy strategy to build an international base of support for the Chinese side in the Sino-Soviet dispute.

The military, on the other hand, refused to believe President Johnson's "sweet sounding words" and therefore continued to regard the United States as China's primary enemy. While the moderates referred to the United States as "strong in appearance, but brittle in essence," the military characterized it as the most ferocious enemy in the world. On the question of the Soviet threat, the differences within the leadership were even more striking. Opposing Mao's March 1966 instructions to send greetings only to the Soviet people, the military sent a cable of "warm greetings" to the Soviet Defense Ministry and the Soviet Army on the occasion of Soviet Army Day. No one else in China even acknowledged Soviet Army Day except that ten days later articles were published in the *People's Daily* criticizing Marshal Grechko's "heinous features." Six weeks after Lin sent warm greetings to the Soviet Defense Ministry, the Chinese MFA issued a stern warning to that same country for having "engaged in espionage activities" against China.

The radicals, in a weaker position because of the backlash against the excessive violence of the Cultural Revolution, continued to urge that



China oppose both the United States and the Soviet Union. Since both were enemies of the Chinese people, and the two colluded to isolate, encircle, and threaten China, anything less than militant confrontation was in the final analysis capitulationism.

Following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, what had been a three-way debate became a two-line struggle over the issue of whether the United States and the Soviet Union were colluding or contending. If, as the moderates argued, acute contradictions existed between the two, then theoretical grounds existed for attempting to use diplomacy to divide one into two and to isolate the Soviet Union by tactically uniting with the United States. Since both the military and the radicals still regarded the United States as a major threat, and because they believed that the United States and the Soviet Union collaborated against China, they therefore strenuously opposed the moderates' move to normalize relations with the United States.

Although our evidence about the policy positions of various individual Chinese leaders is "soft," it appears that Mao's vehement anti-Sovietism, in addition to his commitment to the principles espoused in "On Policy" (1940),<sup>1</sup> led him to throw his weight behind the moderates' cause. As a result, it was resolved at the Twelfth Plenum (October 1968) to ameliorate relations with Washington. This policy was embodied in a late November MFA initiative urging for the first time since the start of the Vietnam War that relations between the United States and the PRC be conducted according to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. Immediately, however, a barrage of criticism exploded in the Chinese press which pointed out the historical precedents for not improving relations with the United States.

Since the November initiative had been aimed at President-elect Nixon, the acid test for the moderates came in January when Nixon was finally inaugurated. For reasons that are unclear, President Nixon did not at that time comment on or even acknowledge the significance of the moderates' offer. This greatly undermined their argument and

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<sup>1</sup>Mao Tse-tung, "On Policy," December 25, 1940. Cited in *Mao Tse-tung: Selected Works*, Vol. 3, 1939-1941, International Publishers, New York, 1954.



seemed to convince Mao to withdraw his support for the policy. With Nixon ambivalent and without Mao's backing, it was not difficult for the military and the radicals to overturn the MFA initiative and cancel the scheduled Warsaw meeting. As a result, what might have been the Peking Agreement of 1969 instead became the Shanghai Communiqué of 1972.

Six weeks later, the simmering conflict between the Soviet Union and the PRC exploded in a series of bloody clashes over a disputed island along the Sino-Soviet border. The Chenpao clashes vindicated the moderates' assessment but left the issue of how to repel the Soviet aggressors largely unresolved.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

At successive stages of this research, I was greatly assisted by the numerous insights, comments, and suggestions of Alexander George, Harry Harding, Kenneth Lieberthal, Michael Pillsbury, and Allen Whiting. I am particularly grateful to Michael Pillsbury for encouraging me to examine Chinese foreign policy during the Cultural Revolution period rather than after the Chenpao Island clashes.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In a remarkably short period of time during the latter half of the 1960s, the foreign policy orientation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) underwent a fundamental metamorphosis. China's relations with the two most powerful nations in the world--the United States and the Soviet Union--were affected by the reassessment of the international situation made by major Chinese policymakers. Although many scholars and journalists have readily pointed out that China's decision to normalize relations with the United States was at least in part a response to the threat posed by the Soviet Union, the exact nature of the relationship between Sino-Soviet and Sino-American relations remains largely unexplored. This study attempts to trace from its inception the formation of China's strategy for managing the Soviet threat and to identify the origins of Sino-American détente.

This study will cover the period from the initiation of the Soviet military buildup along the border in early 1966 to the bloody clashes at Chenpao Island in March 1969. It was during this period that the deployment of Soviet troops and hardware to the Soviet Far East precipitated high-level discussions in Peking. In addition to posing a military threat by the buildup, by late 1966 Soviet leaders began publicly supporting Chinese anti-Maoist forces whose objective was to "halt Mao's erroneous course."

Confronted then with a growing Soviet military presence within easy striking distance of the vulnerable northern provinces and the existence of potential traitors within China, Peking's leaders began to debate a strategy by 1966. Significant disagreement existed on six basic policy questions:

1. The threat posed by the United States.
2. The threat posed by the Soviet Union.
3. The future of Soviet-American relations.
4. The utility of negotiations as a tactic to oppose adversaries.
5. The tactics for dealing with the United States.
6. The tactics for dealing with the Soviet Union.

The focus of the debates was not static but rather passed through several stages during which the particular mix of issues shifted. The agenda of questions appears to have been determined partly by domestic and international developments and partly by the tactics of the contending Chinese leaders. In analyzing the debate that accompanied the formulation of China's strategy, therefore, one must carefully place each event within its proper context. Matters concerning the Soviet Union were certainly not determined in a policy vacuum. Other issues constantly intruded into the arena of the strategic debates.

Most notably, the deployment of Soviet troops to the Far East occurred at a time when Chinese leaders had to cope with a "hot war" to the south. Throughout the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) the possibility that the Vietnam War might spill over into China deeply influenced Chinese views of what should be done to cope with the Soviet threat. Simultaneously confronted with a long-term potential threat to the north and an immediate "crisis" to the south, many political actors concluded that the United States posed the greatest threat to China's national security. This in turn led some leaders in Peking in 1966 to share the views of one anonymous Chinese official that "knowing nothing about the power of the United States of America, and *without making peace with the U.S.S.R.*, China could not possibly win any war."<sup>1</sup> [Emphasis added.]

Chinese leaders' assessments of the nature of the U.S. threat thus played a crucial role in structuring their strategy for coping with the Soviet Union. Since the two issues were "coupled" in the minds of key policymakers, one must constantly take into account the debate over China's U.S. policy when analyzing the debates over China's policy toward the Soviet Union.

Just as the international environment influenced China's response, domestic factors similarly affected the options available to Chinese decisionmakers. As Mao realized early in the 1960s, successful implementation of many of his goals required a politically loyal People's

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<sup>1</sup>Kikuzo Ito and Minoru Shibata, "The Dilemma of Mao Tse-tung," *China Quarterly*, No. 35, July-September 1968, p. 66.



Liberation Army (PLA) committed to pursuing the "Maoist line" in domestic politics. In retrospect, the factors that had contributed most heavily to the downfall of Chief of Staff Lo Jui-ch'ing in 1965 were not purely military or strategic but rather the domestic ramifications of strategy.<sup>2</sup> Lo's policies would have prevented the PLA from playing a decisive role in *domestic politics* just when Mao needed the PLA most.

Finally, aspects of "power politics" played a role in the debates over the correct strategy for repelling the "northern barbarians." Personality and organizational conflicts had set the tone for many of the Cultural Revolution struggles. For example, although Mao contributed to Lin Piao's meteoric rise to power in the late 1960s and undoubtedly approved of the decision to make the Defense Minister his "close-comrade-in-arms," nevertheless, Mao had his doubts about Lin as early as July 1966.<sup>3</sup> Despite this, Mao transferred some of his personal authority to Lin in return for PLA support. As a result, the politics of the early 1970s centered on Mao's attempts to regain his authority by undermining Lin's base of support.

Mao may well have anticipated this problem. Even during the height of the GPCR when Mao threw his full support to Lin, he also aided Red Guard leaders who inevitably clashed with Lin and the PLA. Mao's support for any one individual or faction was not absolute. Mao frequently had to make choices and utilized factional differences. The same was true for other leaders. For example, while Lin Piao might have supported Chou in opposing the excessive Red Guard violence, the two men were at odds over other issues.

Particularly by 1968, as the destructive phase of the GPCR gave way to a period of reconstruction, the questions of who would lead the

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<sup>2</sup>Harry Harding and Melvin Gurtov, *The Purge of Lo Jui-ch'ing: The Politics of Chinese Strategic Planning*, The Rand Corporation, R-548-PR, February 1971.

<sup>3</sup>Mao Tse-tung's private letter to Chiang Ch'ing (July 8, 1966), "Mao Tse-tung chih Chiang Ch'ing ssu-han," an appendix to the "top secret" document *Chung-fa*, No. 25 (September 1972), in *The Lin Piao Affair*, Michael Y. M. Kau (ed.), International Arts and Sciences Press, Inc., White Plains, New York, 1975, pp. 118-123.

task of rebuilding the Party and how the gains of the movement would be consolidated exposed deep cleavages within the Chinese leadership. In this situation, coalitions were most likely highly fluid. While Premier Chou En-lai and the Cultural Revolution group leaders may have disagreed with the decision to bring the GPCR to an end, they both became aware by the Twelfth Plenum (October 1968), and certainly by the Ninth Party Congress (April 1969), that the "gun" threatened to rule and control the "Party." Thus, they could agree that military dominance in policymaking had to be opposed, even if for different reasons.

In such an environment, where a certain policy toward the Soviet Union would translate into more resources and power for a particular organization, leaders probably based their strategic recommendations, at least in part, on the effects they would have on the balance of political power in Peking.<sup>4</sup> Thus, although this study is concerned primarily with the foreign policy debates that began in 1966 over the nature of the threat posed by the Soviet Union and the corresponding strategy China should pursue to deny Moscow its goals, it will treat these "arguments over strategy" in the context within which they occurred.

Beginning with Donald Zagoria's pathbreaking study of the origins of the Sino-Soviet dispute, we have been literally deluged with studies of the Sino-Soviet conflict.<sup>5</sup> Following Zagoria's lead, a number of analysts have succeeded in discovering new insights into the dispute.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>For an interesting though necessarily speculative study by a CIA analyst which carries this thinking to its logical conclusions, see Roger Glenn Brown, "Chinese Politics and American Policy: A New Look at the Triangle," *Foreign Policy*, No. 23, Summer 1976, pp. 3-23. An alternative view is Philip Bridgham, "The Fall of Lin Piao," *China Quarterly*, No. 55, July-September 1973, pp. 427-449.

<sup>5</sup>Donald S. Zagoria, *The Sino-Soviet Conflicts: 1956-1961*, Atheneum Press, New York, 1973.

<sup>6</sup>Among the many excellent studies, see G. F. Hudson, Richard Lowenthal, and Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Sino-Soviet Dispute*, Praeger, New York, 1961; David Floyd, *Mao Against Khrushchev: A Short History of The Sino-Soviet Conflict*, Praeger, New York, 1963; Edward Crankshaw, *The New Cold War: Moscow Versus Peking*, Middlesex, England, Penguin Books, 1963; William E. Griffith, *The Sino-Soviet Rift*, M.I.T. Press,



The Chinese strategic debates of 1965 and 1966 have prompted several studies.<sup>7</sup> Intimately intertwined with these debates was the larger question of China's relations with the Soviet Union.<sup>8</sup> In retrospect, it appears that some Chinese leaders may have advocated ameliorating relations with Moscow during the height of the war scare in the spring of 1966 to oppose the United States more effectively<sup>9</sup> and in the process keep the PLA out of Mao's hands as a domestic political weapon.

Also, it was during this time that the Chinese secretly worked out an arrangement with the United States setting clear limits on the extent of involvement of either country in Vietnam, greatly decreasing the

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Cambridge, Mass., 1964; idem, *Sino-Soviet Relations: 1964-1965*, M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1967; John Gittings, *Survey of the Sino-Soviet Dispute*, Oxford University Press, London, 1968; and Michael Pillsbury, *SALT on the Dragon: Chinese Views of the Soviet-American Strategic Balance*, The Rand Corporation, P-5457, April 1975 [1975b].

<sup>7</sup> Although analysts have argued over the exact nature of the "strategic debate," most agree that three issues were at stake: the nature of the threat posed by the United States, the optimal strategy for coping with the threat, and the form of military preparations necessary to successfully deter the United States from inflicting unacceptable damage on either North Vietnam or on China itself.

A number of authors have written on this topic: In chronological order of publication these include Franz Schurmann, "What Is Happening in China?," *New York Review of Books*, October 20, 1966, pp. 18-25; Uri Ra'anani, "Peking's Foreign Policy Debate, 1965-1966," *China in Crisis*, Vol. 2, University of Chicago Press, 1968, pp. 23-72; Donald Zagoria, "The Strategic Debate in Peking," *ibid.*, pp. 237-268; Uri Ra'anani, "Chinese Factionalism and Sino-Soviet Relations," *Current History*, Vol. 59, No. 349, September 1970, pp. 134-141; Harding and Gurtov, *op. cit.*; Michael Yahuda, "Kremlinology and the Chinese Strategic Debate, 1965-1966," *China Quarterly*, No. 49, January-March 1972, pp. 32-75 [1972a]; Donald Zagoria, "On Kremlinology: A Reply to Michael Yahuda," *China Quarterly*, No. 50, April-June 1972, pp. 343-346; Uri Ra'anani, "On Kremlinology: A Second Reply," *ibid.*, pp. 347-350; Michael Yahuda, "A Reply to the Kremlinologists," *China Quarterly*, No. 51, July-September 1972, pp. 547-553 [1972b]; and Jay Taylor, *China and Southeast Asia: Peking's Relations with Revolutionary Movements*, Praeger, New York, 1974.

<sup>8</sup> For studies that take this viewpoint, see Ra'anani, 1968, *op. cit.*; and Yahuda, 1972a, *op. cit.*

<sup>9</sup> For a study documenting Chinese apprehension over the Vietnam War, see Allen S. Whiting, "Indochina and PRC Deterrence," *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence: India and Indochina*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1975, pp. 170-195.

likelihood of an accidental military confrontation.<sup>10</sup> However, once these "strategic debates" were resolved in the winter of 1966, scholarly interest in Chinese foreign policy waned. Instead, attention shifted to the factional politics of the GPCR. As a result, the four-year period from the purge of Chief of Staff Lo Jui-ch'ing in late 1965 to the Chenpao Island clashes in the spring of 1969 remains largely unexplored.

Interest in Sino-Soviet relations perked up only after the sanguinary clashes at Chenpao Island in March 1969. Picking up the scent, analysts followed the trail to a number of conclusions. Of the many studies, those written by Thomas Robinson and Harold Hinton dealt most directly with the subject of China's response to the Soviet threat.<sup>11</sup> Both authors detected that the issue of normalizing relations with the United States was in some way related to Chinese apprehension over

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<sup>10</sup> Ito and Shibata, op. cit., p. 67; Kenneth Young, *Negotiating with the Chinese Communists: The United States Experience, 1953-1967*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1968. Also see an interview with Rene Dabernat, foreign editor of *Paris-Match*, which substantiates Ito's case: (cited in "How a French Authority Sees United States Role in Asia," *U.S. News and World Report*, January 15, 1967, pp. 93-94, 97). According to Dabernat, the Chinese took the initiative in contacting the Americans through the French Foreign Ministry.

<sup>11</sup> See Harold C. Hinton, "Conflict on the Ussuri: A Clash of Nationalisms," *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 20, January-April 1971 [1971a]; idem, *The Bear at the Gate: Chinese Policymaking Under Soviet Pressure*, Washington, D.C., American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, and Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, 1971 [1971b]; Thomas W. Robinson, "The Sino-Soviet Border Dispute: Background, Development, and the March 1969 Clashes," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 66, No. 4, December 1972, pp. 1175-1202 (also published by The Rand Corporation, RM-6171-PR, August 1970); idem, *The Border Negotiations and the Future of Sino-Soviet-American Relations*, The Rand Corporation, P-4661, August 1971; "China's New Diplomacy: A Symposium" (contributors to the symposium: Allen Whiting, G. F. Hudson, Robert Scalapino, Roderick MacFarquhar, Robert Barnett, C. P. Fitzgerald, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Juergen Domes, Morton Halperin, James Thompson, Jr., V. P. Dutt, A. M. Halpern, George Taylor, David Mozingo, Richard Walker, Edward Friedman), *Problems of Communism*, Part I, November-December 1971, pp. 1-32, and Part II, January-February 1972, pp. 48-70; Brown, op. cit.; Melvin Gurtov, *The Foreign Ministry and Foreign Affairs in China's "Cultural Revolution"*, The Rand Corporation, RM-5934-PR, March 1969; Stanley Karnow, *Mao and China: From Revolution to Revolution*, The Viking Press, New York, 1972.



the Soviet threat, yet neither Robinson nor Hinton found any evidence of "pro-U.S." sentiment prior to November 1968. In other words, the two major studies that analyzed this subject concluded that foreign policy questions concerning Sino-Soviet and Sino-American relations did not engender a debate until after the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968.

Having pegged the first signs of Peking's willingness to improve relations with Washington to the fall of 1968, both authors and others were quick to uncover disagreement over the wisdom and feasibility of such a policy.<sup>12</sup> Hinton found evidence of two groups--the "Maoists" (Mao, Lin, Chiang Ch'ing, Ch'en Po-ta) and the "Administrators" (Chou En-lai and many military leaders)--pitted against each other over a wide range of domestic and international issues.<sup>13</sup> While "non-Maoist" administrators were in "ascendency in policymaking" following the Twelfth Plenum, the Chairman forcefully intervened in January 1969, on the side of "Maoists," and that was enough to tip the scales against Chou's policy of normalizing relations with the West.

Robinson sensed the disagreement but was hesitant to identify personalities with policy positions. With regard to developing a cohesive strategy for dealing with the Soviet military threat, Robinson, after a close scrutiny of all the relevant documents, concluded:

nor is there evidence of a debate over how to deal with the threat posed by the massive Soviet deployments to the Sino-Soviet border region.

it does not seem that military problems with the Soviet Union engendered a factional debate among China's top leaders....<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Robinson, 1972, op. cit., p. 1192; Hinton, 1971b, op. cit., pp. 31-35. Hinton and Robinson are not alone in their conclusions. A. M. Halpern, Morton Halperin, G. F. Hudson, Stanley Karnow, and Roderick MacFarquhar, among others, also examined this period with similar conclusions. See "China's New Diplomacy: A Symposium."

<sup>13</sup> Hinton, 1971b, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>14</sup> Robinson, 1972, op. cit., p. 792.

Implicit, and explicit at times, in these and other analyses of China's foreign policy is the belief that Peking's foreign policy debate began after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Yet the Chinese must have closely monitored and discussed the Soviet buildup from its inception. Should we continue to assume that aside from a few radical extremists,<sup>15</sup> China's national defense strategy from 1966-1968 was unanimously agreed upon by all concerned?

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<sup>15</sup>Gurtov, op. cit.



## II. FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS: A "FACTIONAL POLITICS" MODEL

To facilitate understanding the intricacies of the strategic debates, we have chosen to highlight the three main arguments and to identify their leading advocates before we present our supporting data. At this point in the report, an explanatory guide is needed or the reader may lose sight of the significance of much of the information to be presented.

In many ways this section of the report thus represents a *conclusion* to our research insofar as we pieced together the full arguments only after reading through and analyzing all of the relevant data. It was only at that time (in April 1975, to be exact) that we "discovered" the existence of three contending assessments of the international environment and concurrently the existence of two strategies for coping with the Soviet Union.

While we were certainly alert to the possibility of dissent among the leadership, we did not begin the research with preconceived ideas concerning the existence of three, four, or more contending factions. Instead, we attempted to let the data speak for themselves. The precise methodology used to "decode" the media will be discussed in detail in Sec. IV.

In 1966, Chinese decisionmakers wrestled with a complex set of interlocking issues which when resolved and woven together would provide a blueprint for the future of Chinese society. One of these issues was how to cope with the Soviet threat. Although our comprehension of how and why leaders in China join together into advocacy groups is limited, it appears certain that a model of factional politics is necessary for providing some understanding of the relationships among the crucial issues confronting decisionmakers, the various arguments that are put forth, and who is associated with particular recommendations.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For an excellent discussion of factional politics models see Andrew Nathan, "A Factional Model of CCP Politics," *China Quarterly*, No. 53, January-March 1973, pp. 34-66; and *idem*, "Policy Oscillations in the PRC: A Critique," unpublished manuscript, n.d.

For studies on the broader topic of policy formulation in the PRC, see Michael Pillsbury, "Patterns of Chinese Power Struggles: Three

The factional approach has certain shortcomings, however. In particular because of the heavy reliance on refined content analysis of the media, the *arguments* are usually easier to discern than the *arguers*. Especially in matters concerning national security and sensitive foreign policy questions, when the number of individuals *publicly* discussing the issues is quite small, a problem may occur in fitting the policymaker to the policy. While one may assume that many individuals and even entire bureaucratic organizations *privately* discussed the issues and debated various strategies concerning the Soviet threat, the available data do not allow the analyst to distinguish the full cast of actors. Instead, the strategic recommendations of only a few highly visible policymakers can be detected.

It is clear that Chinese policymakers at the Politburo level reacted quite differently not only to the military and political threats posed by the Soviet Union but also in deciding the nature of the proper response to this development. While leadership disagreement is thus apparent, the data do not support the contention that entire bureaucracies (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Ministry of National Defense (MND), or the State Council) were associated with a particular strategy. As recent scholarship on the People's Liberation Army has demonstrated, interorganizational disagreements have often been accompanied by intraorganizational disputes.<sup>2</sup> As a result, it would be as unsound to assert that there was unanimity within various organizations as it would be to argue that there was perfect agreement among all Chinese leaders.

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Models," prepared for University Seminar on Modern China, Columbia University, New York City, March 27, 1974; idem, *Personal Ties and Factionalism in Peking*, The Rand Corporation, P-5373, February 1975 [1975a]; idem, 1975, op. cit.; Michel Oksenberg, "The Chinese Policy Process and the Public Health Issue: An Area Arena," *Studies in Comparative Communism*, Vol. 7, No. 4, Winter 1974, pp. 375-408; Michel Oksenberg and Steven Goldstein, "The Chinese Political Spectrum," *Problems of Communism*, March-April 1974, pp. 1-13; William W. Whitson, *Organizational Perspectives and Decision-making in the Chinese Communist High Command*, The Rand Corporation, P-4593, March 1971; idem, *The Chinese High Command: A History of Communist Military Politics, 1927-1971*, Praeger, New York, 1974; Parris Chang, *Power and Policy in China*, Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, 1975.

<sup>2</sup> See Whitson, 1974, op. cit.



With respect to the question of China's response to the Soviet buildup, a detailed analysis of the available data suggests that three competing strategies were advocated by different groups within the Chinese decisionmaking elite. For presentational purposes, we shall refer to these groups as: military, moderates, and radicals.<sup>3</sup> In identifying the groups in this manner we seek only to highlight the general organizational and ideological orientations of three strategies or opinion tendencies within the leadership. While the clustering of individuals supporting particular strategies lends support to this particular trichotomy, we do not mean to assert that the overlap between the representative organization and the strategic arguments was complete.<sup>4</sup> Some PLA leaders did publicly advocate the military strategy, but there is no evidence that the PLA as an organization uniformly supported such strategic recommendations. Similarly, while those with "leftist" leanings did generally agree on the importance of resolutely opposing anything that challenged the ideological purity of the Chinese revolution, various radicals had different perspectives on the best way to prevent a revisionist restoration in China. Two radicals, Wang Li and Yao Teng-shan, advocated provocative tactics, while others clearly opposed this as being "ultra-leftism."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Although many studies of Chinese foreign policy have employed variations on a theme of two or three contending elite factions, the particular trichotomy used in this report is borrowed from an unpublished study written by Roger Glenn Brown and presented at The Rand Corporation in December 1975, entitled "Status, Power, and Crisis in Sino-Soviet Relations, 1968-74." This was subsequently revised and published in *Foreign Policy* (Brown, 1976, op. cit.). Brown's study is primarily concerned with the events immediately surrounding the clashes at Chenpao Island in March 1969. In analyzing Chinese foreign policy from 1968-1974, he pioneered development of the analytical framework of three factions--radicals, moderates, and military--struggling over fundamental issues concerning China's international relations. Other works on Chinese policy have employed somewhat different variants of a three-faction model. See especially the works of Kenneth Lieberthal: "The Battle to Succeed Mao Begins: Three Factions Emerge," *Chicago Tribune*, March 2, 1975; and "The Internal Political Scene," *Problems of Communism*, May-June 1975, pp. 1-11.

<sup>4</sup>This represents the major difference between Brown's three contending factions and the analytical framework utilized in this report.

<sup>5</sup>Gurtov, op. cit.

One reason for our relative inability to match strategists to strategies is our lack of clear understanding of the factors that motivate policymakers to pursue particular policies. Certainly some mixture of national and bureaucratic interests, organizational and personal loyalties, *weltanschauung*, and leadership rivalries can explain why Chou En-lai or Lin Piao advocated particular strategies, yet the relative importance of each factor cannot be ascertained.<sup>6</sup> Rather than get hopelessly and unnecessarily bogged down trying to know the unknowable, we shall place the issues of motivation aside and concentrate instead on discerning, to the extent the data permit, the specific tenets of each strategy and the individuals publicly associated with each argument.

Beginning in 1966, there were three distinct assessments of the nature, extent, and immediacy of the threats posed to China by the United States and the Soviet Union. By early 1968, at least two strategies emerged. In one, it was assumed that the United States and the Soviet Union were in close anti-Chinese collusion, so that Peking had no alternative but to adhere to the principles of self-reliance and oppose both adversaries. In the second, it was recommended that China exploit the differences that existed between the United States and the Soviet Union by normalizing relations with Washington to gain leverage against Moscow.

The debates over feasibility and advisability of improving relations with Washington to cope with the Soviet threat were significantly structured by the basic perceptual disagreements of various policymakers and by major domestic and international developments. Specifically, the following fourteen events structured the course of the debates:

- November 1966: Resumption of public Soviet calls for Chinese leaders to oppose Maoist policies.
- 1967: Acceleration of Soviet military buildup along the border.

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<sup>6</sup>Various students of Chinese politics have attempted to pinpoint the factors that explain the lines that divide the Chinese leadership. Northern versus southern, coastal versus inland, organizational loyalty, field army experience, personal relationships, and ideological outlook have all been used at one time or another to explain cleavages within the leadership. No one factor can by itself explain the differences, of course.



- June 1967: Meeting between Kosygin and Johnson in Glassboro.
- August 1967: Ascendancy of radicals in Peking leading to a seizure of power in the Foreign Ministry.
- February 1968: Tet offensive.
- March 1968: Johnson's decisions to stop most of the bombing of North Vietnam, to not run for the presidency, and to earnestly seek peace negotiations with the Vietnamese.
- April 1968: Hanoi's decision to agree to hold talks with the United States.
- May 1968: Initiation of Paris Peace Talks.
- July-August 1968: Mao's dissatisfaction with the divisiveness of Red Guard factionalism and his subsequent decision to bring an end to the "struggle" phase of the GPCR.
- August 1968: Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.
- September-October 1968: Enunciation of "Brezhnev Doctrine."
- November 1968: Nixon's election as President.
- January-February 1969: Nixon's failure to express publicly his commitment to improving relations with the PRC.
- March 1969: Clashes between the Soviet Union and the PRC at Chenpao Island.

Following the Chenpao clashes, as the policy stakes increased, the debates became more heated. Disagreement over the nature of the threats posed by the Soviet Union and the United States ultimately led to the demise of Lin Piao. These issues have yet to be resolved to the satisfaction of all major Chinese leaders.<sup>7</sup> It is because of the enduring importance of these fundamental foreign policy questions that the origins and the initial development of the strategic debates take on such significance. A clearer understanding of who in Peking took which position in the policy debates of 1966-1969 will certainly provide us with a guide for better comprehending the current foreign policy of the PRC.

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<sup>7</sup>For a study of the triangular relationship following the clashes at Chenpao Island, see Brown, 1976, op. cit.

With these goals in mind, we shall now set forth the basic arguments of each strategy and identify their key supporters.

THE MILITARY ALTERNATIVE: LIN PIAO

Lin Piao--Minister of National Defense, Vice-Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and Chairman Mao's "close-comrade-in-arms"--was the main public supporter of the military argument. Lin was joined by a number of key central PLA commanders (Huang Yung-sheng, Chief of Staff; Wu Fa-hsien, Deputy Chief of Staff and Commander of the Air Force; Yeh Ch'un, Lin Piao's wife and later Chief of the General Office; and others), but this "faction" was not coterminous with the PLA. Major PLA leaders such as Yeh Chieh-ying did not publicly support Lin Piao's foreign policy views and in fact were more closely identified with other groups.

Lin's strategic recommendations were influenced in part by his meteoric rise to power within both the PLA and the central leadership. Lin exploited the opportunities presented by the GPCR to replace a number of military leaders who were not personally loyal to him (Lo Jui-ch'ing, Hsiao Hua, Yang Ch'eng-wu) with people over whom he presumably exerted influence (Huang Yung-sheng, Yeh Ch'un). In this manner Lin was increasingly able to make the PLA his organization. As the violent phase of the GPCR threatened a breakdown of order, Lin's position as the head of the only organization capable of restoring order translated into still greater power for him over a wide range of policy issues.

Before 1966, as the top soldier in China and with the solid support of Chairman Mao, Lin's views on military and strategic issues automatically carried a lot of weight. When the prestige of the Minister of National Defense was augmented because of the unique role of the PLA within the GPCR, Lin's influence over the process of developing an adequate response to the Soviet threat was again increased. By the Twelfth Plenum (October 1968) and certainly by the Ninth Party Congress (April 1969) Lin may have been the most powerful decisionmaker in China.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> While it is unclear what role Lin played in the policymaking process in China in the late 1960s, for Lin to be overruled on a major



Caution is required in reconstructing the views of Lin Piao, for he has not had the opportunity of explaining his actions during this period or in the alleged 1971 "coup." While Lin sometimes appeared to be more Maoist than Mao in his public statements, if we are to accept the validity of the "571" documents,<sup>9</sup> we must regard much of what Lin said publicly as self-serving deception. Although Lin sought to keep his personal assessment of Mao confidential, he appeared to have been confident enough of his position to assert his foreign policy views in a number of public forums. Lin's motives remain unclear, but given the available sources we can still reconstruct the specific tenets of the military argument. Lin's personal policy preferences together with his presumed interest in strengthening his control over an expanding PLA most likely combined to produce the following assessment of the international environment:

- The international environment was essentially hostile.
- The United States was irreversibly committed to opposing China.
- The United States posed the most serious and most immediate military threat to China's national security.
- The Soviet Union might *eventually* pose a serious military threat to China's national security.
- The Soviet Union and the United States collaborated to contain and isolate China.
- China should never barter away principles to appease an adversary because it would only reveal Chinese weakness and thus embolden the enemy.

From 1966-1968, Lin presumably believed that the international environment was basically hostile. China was encircled by a "holy

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policy, Mao would probably have had to become actively involved.

For an interesting account of the Chenpao clashes based on the assumptions of Lin's superiority in policymaking, see both pieces by Roger Brown, op. cit.

<sup>9</sup>For a comprehensive collection of documentation on Lin's demise, see Kau, op. cit.

alliance" of colluding adversaries led by the United States and the Soviet Union. While the Soviet buildup in the north probably foreshadowed an eventual Sino-Soviet military conflict, the most serious immediate threat confronting China came from the south. Given the irreversibly hostile nature of the United States, revealed by its behavior in Korea, Taiwan, Quemoy, and currently in Vietnam, China had no choice but to confront and oppose "U.S. imperialism." Suggestions that China make concessions to improve Sino-American relations in the hope that the United States would then help China oppose the Soviet Union were quixotic at best and national betrayal at worst. Such a strategy both overestimated the seriousness of the Soviet threat and underestimated the dangers posed by 500,000 American troops within easy striking distance of China's vulnerable southern provinces. Furthermore, overtures to the White House would be read in the Kremlin as signs of Peking's weakness and desperation and would thus strengthen Moscow's resolve to act boldly against China.

Negotiations and other diplomatic tactics would only reveal to her adversaries China's "capitulationist" tendencies and her lack of determination to resist foreign enemies. Yet, at the same time, because of China's military vulnerability, a policy of provocation and confrontation would be equally disastrous. Given this analysis of the situation, Lin concluded that China's strategy for coping with foreign adversaries should include:

- Minimizing the likelihood of a Sino-Soviet military confrontation by using restraint when confronting superior Soviet military power to buy time for the PLA to enhance its preparedness.
- Increasing the share of the national budget allocated to the PLA to facilitate modernizing the Army, Air Force, and nuclear deliverance capability and credibility.
- Developing a strong, well-trained, politically loyal PLA under the control of the MND.
- Preparing China's citizenry to wage a people's war in the event military deterrence failed.



- Denigrating the importance of diplomacy and negotiating tactics in successfully deterring foreign adversaries.
- Adhering to the principles of self-reliance in foreign policy-- i.e., not compromising with secondary adversaries to oppose the primary enemy.

THE MODERATE ALTERNATIVE: CHOU EN-LAI

Chou En-lai--Premier of the State Council and "master-builder" of Chinese foreign policy since the 1940s--was the key advocate of the moderate approach. He was joined by Minister of Foreign Affairs Ch'en Yi and many other "responsible members" of the MFA. However, as is indicated by the rise and fall of Yao Teng-shan and Wang Li in the summer of 1967, the MFA was not a homogeneous organization. Accordingly, the moderates must not be viewed as supported by the entire State Council or the MFA. Some evidence even suggests that Yeh Chieh-ying, who until 1941 had served in Chungking with Chou at the Communist liaison mission and who later became Minister of National Defense, endorsed the policies of this group.

Chou's power and prestige within the civil bureaucracy and particularly in the foreign policy wing were truly awesome. Despite the brief interlude of radical dominance over the MFA, Chou effectively maintained leadership over the Foreign Ministry.<sup>10</sup> From his vantage point atop the organization responsible for implementing foreign policy, Chou became extremely sensitive to the changing nature of the foreign threats confronting China. Having led Chinese negotiating teams for over thirty years, Chou had a full appreciation of the benefits that could accrue from diplomatic initiatives and at the same time was exceptionally adroit in maneuvering in the complex world of international power politics.

Certainly by the time of the Enlarged Politburo Meeting of March 20, 1966, during which Mao demonstrated his determination never to compromise with the Soviet revisionists,<sup>11</sup> Chou realized that Sino-Soviet

<sup>10</sup> Gurtov, op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> Speech by Mao Tse-tung at Enlarged Politburo Meeting concerning the question of not attending 23rd Congress of Soviet Union Communist

relations could only deteriorate. At the same time, since guidelines had been established with the United States to prevent the Vietnam War from accidentally spilling over into China,<sup>12</sup> it became evident to Chou that the Soviet Union would soon be the dominant foreign adversary confronting China. Thus, despite the presence of 500,000 U.S. troops in South Vietnam, Chou played down the potential threat of the United States and instead highlighted the far more serious potential threat posed by the Soviet military buildup within easy striking distance of Peking.

Chou and other moderates watched with growing concern as Soviet-American "collusion" matured and took on a distinctly anti-China hue. As had been the case in 1937 against Japan and again in 1950 against the United States, Chou felt that Chinese interests would best be served by isolating the dominant adversary and uniting with all others to oppose it. Yet as long as the United States and the Soviet Union

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Party. Cited in *Mao Tse-tung tung-zhih shi dang-dai zui-wei-da de Ma-ke-se Lie-ning zhu-yi zhe* (Comrade Mao Tse-tung is the greatest contemporary Marxist-Leninist), a compilation of Mao's previously unpublished writings, which were distributed in China and subsequently published in Taiwan in August 1969, p. 634. This source is often referred to as *Mao Tse-tung ssu-hsiang wan sui*.

<sup>12</sup> China agreed not to provoke a war with the United States provided that Washington did not invade North Vietnam, destroy the Red River dams, or attack the Chinese border. According to Rene Dabernat, foreign editor of *Paris-Match*, the Chinese took the initiative by contacting the Americans through the French Foreign Office. Public statements by Secretary of State Dean Rusk on March 7 and 14 and by President Johnson on February 23 pledged that the United States did not seek to provoke a war with China. Chou En-lai's April 10 interview with the Pakistani daily *Dawn* laid out the full Chinese position in four points: (1) China will not take the initiative to provoke a war with the United States; (2) Chinese mean what they say--i.e., will continue to support nations confronted with U.S. aggression; (3) China is prepared; and (4) once the war breaks out it will have no boundaries. We are grateful to Roderick MacFarquhar for pointing out that the four points published in *Peking Review* did not in fact appear in *Dawn*.

See the following sources for information on the arrangements made between China and the United States: Ito and Shibata, op. cit., p. 67; "How a French Authority Sees U.S. Role in Asia," *U.S. News and World Report*; Harold Hinton, "China and Vietnam" in Tang Tsou (ed.), *China in Crisis*, Vol. 2, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1968, p. 214; Young, op. cit., pp. 268-275; "Premier Chou's Four-Point Statement on China's Policy Toward the U.S.," *Peking Review*, No. 20, May 13, 1966, p. 5; *Department of State Bulletin*, 1966, pp. 346-353, 390-393, 686-699.



actively collaborated in their "anti-China holy alliance," China was placed in the untenable position of trying to oppose both "superpowers" simultaneously. While such a stance had certain ideological appeal, it really only masked a policy of ultra-leftism. But if the two *colluded* and *contended* then the theoretical justification would exist to drive a wedge between the two and apply "the revolutionary dialectics of 'one divides into two' in making a scientific distinction between the enemy camps,...distinguishing between the primary enemy and the secondary enemy and between the temporary allies and the indirect allies."<sup>13</sup>

Relying on Mao's doctrine of "one divides into two," Chou developed a two-pronged strategy for coping with the Soviet threat: First, induce the United States away from further collaboration with the Soviet Union by normalizing relations with Washington, and second, use improved Sino-American relations to dissuade the Soviet Union from taking military action against China. Put briefly, the fundamental assumptions and assessments of the moderate strategy included:

- The international environment was entering a "new era" which provided China with many opportunities.
- Following the spring of 1966, while U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia did pose serious problems to North Vietnam, it did not pose a direct threat to the national security of China.
- The United States was not "irreversibly" committed to opposing China.
- The threat posed by the Soviet military buildup would eventually make the Soviet Union China's primary adversary.
- The Soviet Union and the United States both colluded and contended and as a result opportunities existed to "divide one into two."

<sup>13</sup> Writing Group of CCP Hupeh Provincial Committee, "A Powerful Weapon to Unite the People and Defeat the Enemy--A Study of 'On Policy,'" *Hung Ch'i [Red Flag]*, No. 9, August 2, 1971, cited in *Survey of China Mainland Press (SCMP)*, Nos. 711-712, September 7-13, 1971, pp. 1-9. Also see Mao Tse-tung, "On Policy," December 25, 1940. Cited in *Mao Tse-tung: Selected Works*, Vol. 3, 1939-1941, International Publishers, New York, 1954.

- What cannot be gained on the battlefield can sometimes be gained through diplomacy.
- China's national interest could be better served by a balance of power international system rather than by a bipolar system dominated by the United States and the Soviet Union.
- Many reasons existed for improving relations with the United States in addition to countering the threat posed by the Soviet Union: These include resolving the Vietnam War, solving the Taiwan problem, assisting in coping with Japan, gaining admittance to the United Nations, and acquiring western technology, including defense-related technology, equipment, and intelligence.<sup>14</sup>

#### THE RADICAL ALTERNATIVE

While the argument and the leading articulators of the military and moderate schools are easily discernible, the identity of the primary advocates of the radical alternative is more difficult to determine. The obvious place to look is in the Cultural Revolution Group (CRG). Its leaders were Mao's wife Chiang Ch'ing, Ch'en Po-ta, Yao Wen-yuan, Chang Ch'un-ch'iao, Ch'i Pen-yu, and K'ang Sheng. While Chiang Ch'ing, Madam Mao, was apparently the spiritual leader of this group, on several occasions during and after the GPCR she drew a clear line between her brand of "radical" politics and the "ultra-leftist" line of other "sham" radicals.<sup>15</sup>

Chiang Ch'ing's special relationship with Mao perhaps enabled her to champion the radical cause without fear of retribution. At the same time, however, once Mao committed himself to a particular policy, her

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<sup>14</sup>For a pioneering study on why China might want U.S. military goods and why the United States should facilitate Chinese military modernization, see Michael Pillsbury, "U.S.-Chinese Military Ties," *Foreign Policy*, No. 20, September 7, 1975, pp. 50-64 [1975c].

<sup>15</sup>Chiang Ch'ing publicly denounced the activities of Wang Li and Yao Teng-shan in a major address given on September 5, 1967, cited in Gurtov, op. cit., p. 63. Several years later, Chiang Ch'ing expressed her approval of Chairman Mao's "revolutionary line in foreign policy" by appearing with both President and Mrs. Nixon during his first visit to China in February 1972.



"stand" on that issue was then determined partially by where she "slept." In other words, it is difficult to get an accurate reading of Chiang Ch'ing's true sentiments on issues because her position required that she be somewhat responsive to the Chairman's wishes.

In addition to the problem of Chiang Ch'ing's masked personal views and feelings, we are provided with few of her public statements on foreign policy issues. This same lack of authoritative foreign policy pronouncements is true for most of the other so-called Cultural Revolution radicals. However, while we have no speeches to evaluate, we are able to circumvent this problem by turning to articles and editorials from the press.<sup>16</sup>

From these sources we can ascertain that the radical alternative was in many respects similar to the military argument. The radicals agreed with Lin that China was confronted by two irreversibly hostile adversaries, and thus China was presented with a *dual adversary* threat to its security. Thus with respect to the threat posed by the United States, the radicals were in essential agreement with the military. Yet while Lin chose to emphasize the *military* aspect of the Soviet threat, the radicals were far more concerned with the threat posed by the Soviet *ideological deviation*. Soviet troops massing at the border were certainly cause for some concern, but an equally if not more damaging aspect of the Soviet threat was the challenge Soviet revisionism posed to the very success of the Chinese revolution. Only by carrying the GPCR through to the end and weeding out all "capitulationists" could China protect itself from the "sugar-coated bullets" of Soviet revisionism, they argued.

Overall, despite political and international developments, the radical alternative was consistently based on the following assessments of the international environment:

- The Soviet Union posed both a *military* threat to the national security of China and an *ideological* challenge to the success of the Chinese revolution.

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<sup>16</sup>Section IV describes the methodology employed to determine the views of various political actors.

- The United States was irreversibly committed to opposing China.
- The Soviet Union and the United States collaborated to contain and isolate the PRC.
- China should never barter away principles to appease an adversary because it would only reveal Chinese weakness and thus embolden the enemy.

The radicals concluded that the country was encircled by a hostile "anti-China holy alliance." Thus while not necessarily "isolationist" by choice, they felt the international situation required that China strictly adhere to the principles of self-reliance. Because of their assessment of the "objective" conditions confronting China, the radicals argued that China must follow these basic guidelines in responding to the Soviet threat:

- Adhere to the principles of strict self-reliance--i.e., do not compromise with secondary adversaries to oppose the primary enemy.
- Since an important aspect of the Soviet threat is the danger of Soviet-supported domestic subversion and capitulationism, the GPCR must be continued and given wide liberties to weed out all hidden revisionists and capitulationists within China.
- Given the subversive nature of the threat, the general citizenry must vigilantly guard against ideological deviations and eliminate those responsible for undermining the domestic unity needed to oppose revisionism.
- Prepare China's citizenry to wage a people's war in the event military deterrence fails.
- Stress that the Chinese people will not be intimidated by Soviet pressure by demonstrating Chinese resolve to wage a tit-for-tat struggle against Soviet revisionism.

THE ELDER STATESMAN: MAO TSE-TUNG

Chairman Mao's position in the 1960s on the set of issues concerning China's response to the Soviet military threat and the decision to



normalize relations with Washington cannot be definitely determined. Partly because of the paucity of data and partly because of Mao's unique leadership role, he appears, on the surface, to have been little more than a powerless shuttlecock bouncing back and forth between rival factions. While this characterization may have some validity, we would argue that a more accurate representation would have Mao as the arbiter among various leadership factions--simultaneously manipulating the debate by seemingly throwing his support first with one group and then another, often contradicting himself in the process. In this manner, Mao cannily awaited the appropriate moment before fully revealing his hand. Therefore, Mao was receptive to diverse recommendations, yet at the same time he had sufficient influence among the key leaders to effect his larger policy goals.

We know, for example, that during this period Mao took a militantly anti-Soviet position and that he was extremely sensitive to the military ramifications of the Soviet threat.<sup>17</sup> When a number of top leaders raised the issue of compromising with Moscow to form a broad anti-U.S. "united front," it was Mao who spearheaded the attack on Teng Hsiao-p'ing and other "weak-kneed people in Peking" for recommending that China barter away her principles.<sup>18</sup> Yet at the same time that Mao demanded unswerving opposition to the Soviet revisionists, he stressed

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<sup>17</sup> In conversations with a delegation of Japanese Socialist Party members on July 10, 1964, Mao spoke of the Soviet Union's concentration of troops along its border and linked that with concern over Soviet desires for Chinese territory. In talks with another Japanese delegation in March 1966, Mao was far more specific, stating that:

Russia, with the Sino-Soviet defense pact as its pretext, will cross the frontier from Siberia and Mongolia to occupy China, starting at Inner Mongolia and Northeast China. The result will be a confrontation across the Yangtse of the Chinese Liberation Army and the Russian Army....

These two conversations are cited in Dennis J. Doolin, *Territorial Claims in the Sino-Soviet Conflict: Documents and Analysis*, Stanford University, Stanford, 1965, pp. 42-44; and in Ito and Shibata, op. cit., p. 67. Also see the relevant sections in *Mao Tse-tung ssu-hsiang wan sui*, cited above in footnote 11.

<sup>18</sup> Cited in Ito and Shibata, op. cit., p. 59.

that while enemies must be struggled against *strategically*, one must be cautious in handling them *tactically*. Therefore, while Mao played the decisive role in mobilizing widespread support for his anti-Soviet policy, it is unclear whether he would have gone so far as to incite the Soviets by provoking border incidents or advocating blatantly aggressive procedures for handling Soviet ships or Embassy personnel.<sup>19</sup>

Just as the degree to which Mao was willing to exacerbate tensions with the Soviet Union is unclear, so is the extent to which Mao was willing to support China's policy of normalizing relations with the United States. Historically, Mao's interest in ameliorating Sino-American tension began in the 1940s, when he expressed interest in visiting President Roosevelt in Washington.<sup>20</sup> Twenty years later, even after the Gulf of Tonkin incident, Mao was still optimistic that "...the U.S. and China would someday be on friendly terms."<sup>21</sup> Yet by March 1966 he had concluded that "War between China and America is inevitable."<sup>22</sup>

From March 1966 until his conversations with Edgar Snow on October 1, 1970, Mao never once *publicly* endorsed policies designed to normalize relations with Washington.<sup>23</sup> Quite the contrary, on a number of

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<sup>19</sup> Brown argues that Mao ordered the March 2, 1969, Chenpao clash to publicize the danger inherent in the Soviet buildup and to affect Peking's factional politics. See Brown, 1976, op. cit.

<sup>20</sup> John Paton Davies, Jr., *Dragon by the Tail: American, British, Japanese and Russian Encounters with China and One Another*, W. W. Norton & Co., New York, 1972; Joseph W. Esherick, *Last Chance in China--The World War II Dispatches of John S. Service*, Random House, New York, 1974; Barbara Tuchman, "If Mao Had Come to Washington: An Essay in Alternatives," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 51, No. 1, October 1972, pp. 44-64.

<sup>21</sup> "Mao Said to Assert Viet Cong Will Win," the *New York Times*, February 5, 1965, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Ito and Shibata, op. cit., p. 67.

<sup>23</sup> The photograph of a smiling Chairman Mao next to Edgar Snow taken during the National Day celebration in 1970 and published on the front page of *Jen-min Jih-pao*, December 26, 1970 (which was the Chairman's seventy-seventh birthday), is generally believed to be the first "solid" evidence that Mao was *publicly* willing to support Chou's policy of leaning toward the United States to combat the Soviet Union. Mao explicitly told Edgar Snow on October 1, 1970, and again on December 18, 1970, that Nixon would be welcome to come to Peking "either as a



occasions as late as May 20, 1970, he covered his "left" flank by vitriolically denouncing U.S. imperialism.<sup>24</sup> While Mao's public position prior to December 1970 remained consistently hostile to the United States, strong circumstantial evidence suggests that Mao was closely associated with the "pro-U.S." policy initiative launched by Chou in November 1968.<sup>25</sup> On the theoretical level, Mao allegedly referred to the Soviet Union as China's primary enemy during his speech to the Twelfth Plenum (October 1968), and in doing so he rejected Lin's dual adversary analysis in favor of Chou's primary/secondary assessment.<sup>26</sup>

It is only since July 15, 1971, that we find Mao strongly endorsing the policy that Chou had advocated since 1968. Mao officially sanctified the "pro-U.S." policy by personally hosting President Nixon in February 1972 and ex-President Nixon four years later. Following the Shanghai Communiqué, Mao has time and again stood up in support of Sino-American détente. Even when the policy came under criticism by those who felt China was doing all the giving and getting little in return, Mao quieted their opposition by reaffirming Chinese commitment to use the United States to counter the Soviet Union. In the first major theoretical justification of the policy of normalizing relations with Washington, the new line in foreign policy was even officially dubbed, "*Chairman Mao's revolutionary diplomatic line.*"<sup>27</sup> [Emphasis added.]

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tourist or as President." For a published version of Mao's conversation with Edgar Snow, see Edgar Snow, "A Conversation with Mao Tse-tung," *Life*, April 30, 1971, pp. 46-49. Also see Edgar Snow, *The Long Revolution*, Random House, 1971.

<sup>24</sup>"People of the World, Unite and Defeat the U.S. Aggressors and All Their Running Dogs," statement of Mao Tse-tung read by Lin Piao on May 21, 1970, at a rally at Tien An Men Square, cited in *Peking Review*, Special Issue, May 23, 1970.

<sup>25</sup>See Sec. III, pp. 97-104.

<sup>26</sup>John Gittings, "Peking Walls Have Ears, Too!," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, January 30, 1969, pp. 175-176.

<sup>27</sup>This phrase first appeared in a joint *Hung-ch'i, Jen-min Jih-pao, Chieh-fang-chün pao* editorial commemorating the 44th anniversary of the founding of the PLA. Many of the points raised in the editorial reflect Chou's assessment of the international situation and his strategic

In reconstructing Mao's policy preferences from 1966-1969, because of the paucity of hard data, one must extrapolate from earlier statements and subsequent actions. While this form of triangulation yields conclusions that cannot be substantiated, it provides us with the best estimate of the role Mao played in strategic debates. With these caveats in mind, we can argue that Mao shared Chou En-lai's general assessment of the international situation--particularly with respect to the utility of diplomacy for effecting policy goals and Chou's primary/secondary enemy analysis. In rejecting Lin's dual adversary assessment, Mao opened up the possibility of forming temporary alliances with the secondary adversary to oppose the primary threat.<sup>28</sup>

Again, although the evidence is soft, it also appears that Mao supported Chou's November 1968 initiative to resume the Warsaw Ambassadorial Talks. Yet several months later, Mao withdrew his support for the policy because of a combination of factors including: Lin's adamant opposition coupled with his dominant position in policymaking, the strong opposition of the radicals, and Nixon's failure to indicate publicly that he supported a Sino-American détente. Because of the fierce domestic opposition, Mao most likely concluded that a policy of ameliorating tension with the United States would be accepted in

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recommendations. As the editorial put it:

The enemy rots with every passing day, while for us things are getting better daily. Our revolutionary unity with the fraternal socialist countries has become stronger and our relations of friendship and cooperation with many Asian, African and Latin American countries have developed further. *The friendly contacts between the Chinese people and the people of other countries, including the American people, are rapidly expanding.* We have established diplomatic relations with more and more countries. The U.S. imperialist policy of blockading and isolating China has failed completely. *Chairman Mao's revolutionary diplomatic line has won great victories. China's international prestige is increasing. We have friends all over the world.* [Emphasis added.]

This editorial was cited in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), Daily Report (DR), Communist China (CC), August 2, 1971, p. A-10.*

<sup>28</sup>"A Powerful Weapon."



Peking only if it appeared that Washington was making all the concessions. Only if the costs to Peking were low and if the benefits in bolstering the Chinese position in the Sino-Soviet dispute were high would it be possible to convince some of the domestic opposition of the policy's tactical wisdom and importance. Thus, while Mao did not *publicly* support a "pro-U.S." policy from November 1968 to December 1970, he was probably waiting for and possibly privately encouraging Nixon to commit himself to a policy of improving Sino-American relations. Beginning in July 1969, the United States began to demonstrate its desire to ameliorate relations with the PRC by making several unilateral gestures of friendship. More significantly, in August, the United States voiced its opposition to a Sino-Soviet war, implicitly warning the Soviet Union not to launch a preemptive nuclear strike against the PRC. Once Nixon was able to disarm his domestic opposition and publicly demonstrate his personal commitment to improving relations by offering concessions to the Chinese, then Mao could convince or circumvent his opposition. With the domestic opponents outflanked in both nations, normalization could proceed and Sino-American détente could become a reality.<sup>29</sup>

In analyzing the strategic debates of the later 1960s it is important to keep in mind that these disagreements were aired in an

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<sup>29</sup> If this interpretation is correct, it suggests an explanation for Mao's immense respect for Richard Nixon. While the differences must not be overlooked, there was a similarity in the situations confronting both leaders in the late 60s and early 70s. Both men were persecuted by what they felt were short-sighted domestic opponents who prevented them from realizing their goals of transforming society. While each man held a different vision of the future, they shared a common belief that Sino-American friendship was in the best interests of their respective nations and the world at large.

Mao Tse-tung's efforts to bring to fruition many of the tenets of his "great strategic plan" were resisted time and time again. Richard Nixon, on the other hand, was able to overcome his opposition and accomplish many of his goals. Particularly on the issue of improving Sino-American relations, Mao refrained from circumventing his opposition because of his need for their support on other equally important policy questions. Yet because of Nixon's success in outfoxing his domestic enemies he was able to reveal his commitment to normalize relations. Nixon's position shored up Mao's argument for the feasibility and desirability of improving relations. Mao thus perhaps respected Richard Nixon's ability to implement long-range goals without having to compromise his principles.

atmosphere of *general consensus* on how to handle the Soviet threat. After mid-1966, none of the available data suggest that anyone advocated compromising with the Soviet Union on ideological issues to defuse the military threat. While there were certainly varying degrees of anti-Sovietism and different ways of expressing hostility, we found no traces of any "pro-Soviet" sentiments.

Perceptual differences, however, particularly over the nature of the Soviet threat, the U.S. role in Vietnam, and the nature of Soviet-American relations, were clearly evident in the 1964-1966 period. Leaders debated the primacy and immediacy of the Soviet threat, its effect on the domestic struggles connected with the GPCR, and the broad question of how China should interact with the United States. Yet these diverse assessments did not prevent the major policymakers from agreeing on the basic tenets of China's cautious but firm response to Soviet pressure. While leaders' strategic recommendations differed, they all accepted the importance of opposing Soviet aggression without compromising with Soviet revisionism. Especially in 1968, because of Tet, the Paris Peace Talks, and Czechoslovakia, the strategic debates increasingly focused on the immediacy of the Soviet threat and on whether or not China should normalize relations with Washington to be better prepared to cope with the Soviet Union. The central issue of the "great debate" concerned *how* China could and should deter Soviet aggression, not *whether* China should oppose Soviet aggression.



# ASSESSMENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COPING WITH CHINA'S MAJOR ADVERSARIES

| Nature of U.S. Threat                                     | Nature of Soviet Threat   | Nature of Soviet-American Relations     | Which Threat Is More Damaging | Which Threat Is More Immediate | Feasibility of Dealing with the U.S. to Help Deter the Soviets | Desirability of Dealing with the U.S. to Help Deter the Soviets | Strategy for Coping with U.S. Threat   | Strategy for Coping with Soviet Threat  |
|---|---|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| RADICAL ALTERNATIVE                                       |   |   |                               |                                |  |   |  |   |
| Military & political<br>Increasing<br>Aimed against China | Military & political<br>(with political potentially more damaging)<br>Increasing<br>Aimed at subverting gains of the Chinese revolution | Collusion to encircle and isolate China | Soviet                        | U.S.                           | Not feasible   | Not desirable   | Encourage the Vietnamese to rely on protracted people's war strategy<br>Discourage Vietnamese from negotiating with the U.S.   | Adhere to the principles of self-sufficiency in foreign policy<br>Weed out revisionists and capitulationists within China--i.e., continue the GPCR<br>Increase people's awareness of the threat posed by the Soviet Union<br>Prepare the general population in the principles of the people's war strategy<br>Gradually increase China's military deterrence capability and credibility<br>Draw a clear line between China's revolutionary principles and the Soviet Union revisionist principles |
| MILITARY ALTERNATIVE                                      |   |   |                               |                                |  |   |  |   |
| Military<br>Increasing<br>Aimed against China             | Military<br>Increasing<br>Aimed at military coercing China to take a more pro-Soviet position (possibly invade China)                   | Collusion to encircle and invade China  | U.S.                          | U.S.                           | Not feasible   | Not desirable   | Increase military preparations in S. China<br>Encourage the Vietnamese to rely on protracted people's war strategy<br>Discourage Vietnamese from negotiating with the U.S. | Adhere to the principles of self-sufficiency in foreign policy<br>Rapidly increase China's military deterrence capability and credibility<br>Increase resource allocations to the PLA (especially for the Air Force and nuclear delivery systems)<br>Do nothing to increase tensions with the Soviet Union<br>Prevent a military confrontation until a time when China would be better prepared to repel Soviet forces with indigenous capabilities   |
| MODERATE ALTERNATIVE                                      |   |   |                               |                                |  |   |  |   |
| Military<br>Decreasing<br>Aimed against Vietnam           | Military & political<br>(with military more critical)   | Collusion and contention                | Soviet                        | Soviet                         | Feasible   | Desirable   | Military preparations in S. China already adequate<br>Encourage the Vietnamese to pursue a "talk/fight" strategy<br>Begin to normalize relations with U.S.                 | Highlight the decreasing nature of the U.S. threat<br>"Divide one into two" by separating the U.S. from the Soviet Union<br>Use diplomacy to augment China's indigenous military capabilities<br>Normalize relations with the U.S.<br>Increase people's awareness of the threat posed by the Soviet Union<br>Gradually increase China's military deterrence capability and credibility  |

### III. EVOLUTION OF CHINA'S RESPONSE TO THE SOVIET UNION

#### SEPTEMBER 1965-MARCH 1966: RESTRUCTURING THE IMAGE OF THE SOVIET UNION

By the fall of 1965, Mao fully realized the seriousness of the problem he faced within the highest echelons of the CCP and PLA over a wide range of issues.<sup>1</sup> Among the issues confronting the Chairman and others was the continuing question of whether or not China should form a "united front" with the Soviet Union to help the Vietnamese resist the United States. With the help of some of the Shanghai radicals, a broad counteroffensive was launched in early November to focus attention on several fundamental issues. On November 10, Yao Wen-yuan published his acerbic critique of Wu Han's play, "On the New Historical Play, 'Hai Jui Dismissed from Office'";<sup>2</sup> and the next day a joint *People's Daily* (PD)-*Red Flag* (RF) article riveted attention on the question of opposing Soviet revisionism.<sup>3</sup>

The "refutation" of the new Soviet leaders was the clearest and most authoritative denunciation of the Soviet Union since the demise of Khrushchev in October 1964. It explicitly linked China's rejection of the Soviet offer of "united action" to the fact that the "new

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<sup>1</sup>Among the many problem areas were: the correct road to Chinese Communism, control of the Party, and the issue of "revolutionary successors," as well as more specific questions such as P'eng Chen's refusal to expose and oppose Wu Han, Liu Shao-chi's poor handling of the Socialist Education Movement, the ramifications of Lo Jui-ch'ing's strategic program, the overall resistance within the CCP to Mao evidenced by the September 1965 Enlarged Politburo Work Conference, and specific problems in the realm of education and health care.

<sup>2</sup>Yao Wen-yuan "On the New Historical Play, 'Hai Jui Dismissed from Office,'" *Wen Hui Pao*, November 10, 1965. The article was later republished in *Jen-min Jih-pao* on November 30, 1965.

<sup>3</sup>Editorial Department of *Jen-min Jih-pao* and *Hung-ch'i*, "Refutation of the New Leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on United Action," *Jen-min Jih-pao* and *Hung-ch'i*, November 11, 1965. For a short discussion of the article, see Griffith, 1967, op. cit., pp. 138-143. The article later appeared in translation in *Peking Review*, Vol. VIII, No. 46, November 12, 1965, pp. 10-21; and in *FBIS, Supplement (S)*, No. 218 (7S), November 10, 1965, pp. 1-20. We have relied on the *FBIS-S* translation for the subsequently cited passage.



leaders" in the Kremlin would "stop at nothing in order to ally themselves with the United States against China."<sup>4</sup> After refuting Soviet charges that China had "obstructed the transit of Soviet military aid for Vietnam" and rigorously documenting China's case against the new revisionists, the article ended with the need for heightening people's understanding of the struggle:

*In the course of combatting Khrushchev revisionism, there is bound to be a certain unevenness in the degree of people's understanding of the struggle. This kind of phenomenon becomes particularly conspicuous when the struggle becomes sharp. That is both natural and inevitable. Lenin said that when astonishingly abrupt changes took place, people "who were suddenly confronted with extremely important problems could not long remain on this level. They could not continue without a respite, without a return to elementary questions, without a new training which would help them digest lessons of unparalleled richness and make it possible for comparably wider masses again to march forward, but now far more firmly, more consciously, more confidently, and more steadfastly." Just such a situation exists at present. As the struggle against Khrushchev revisionism becomes sharper and deeper, a new process of division will inevitably occur in the revolutionary ranks, and some people will inevitably drop out.*<sup>5</sup> [Emphasis added.]

This article touched off a major campaign to convince the masses and those in positions of authority unable to "digest the lessons of unparalleled richness" that the Soviet Union must be permanently and irreversibly struggled against and under no circumstances appeased. An editorial note to the November 10 issue of *PD* outlined the specific ammunition that was to be used to vilify the Soviet Union.<sup>6</sup> The new

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 18-19.

<sup>6</sup> The editorial note accompanied three pages of anti-Chinese statements made by various Communist leaders and the Soviet press which were printed under the boldface banner headline, "Anti-Chinese Statements by New Leadership of CPSU and Their Followers, Made Since Divisive March Meeting," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, November 10, 1965, pp. 3-6. Although the articles are not translated, the editorial note can be found in *FBIS, DR, Far East (FE)*, No. 218, November 10, 1965, pp. BBB 1-3. Essentially the same "editor's note" and a similar but shorter series

leadership of the Soviet Union was denounced for "pursuing Khrushchevism without Khrushchev," "attacking the CCP," and "helping imperialism," but nothing was mentioned about the threat posed by the increasing presence of Soviet troops along the border.

A problem arose, however, because stressing that China would not compromise with Soviet revisionism caused some people to despair that China would never be able to survive what was generally considered to be the "inevitable" war with the United States.<sup>7</sup> Because of Vietnam, it was felt in China that:

U.S. imperialism is shifting step by step the emphasis of its global strategy from Europe to Asia, and is training its sights at China as its main enemy.<sup>8</sup>

As the authoritative Hong Kong *Wen Hui Pao* saw it, this meant that "An early war, and a large-scale war between China and the United States seems to be inevitable."<sup>9</sup> [Emphasis added.]

of anti-Chinese statements were broadcast by the *New China News Agency* (NCNA) in Chinese on November 1, 1965, which were supposed to be published in *Jen-min Jih-pao* on November 2. However, one hour later, an NCNA "service message" requested that the newspapers hold up publication of the item.

It is interesting to speculate why the series was held up for nine days. Plausibly, those opposed to the contents of the article and note could have intervened and stopped them from being published. Another possibility is that the article was meant to be published simultaneously with Yao Wen-yuan's article and complications caused them both to be postponed until the 10th. Still another explanation is that it was decided to wait until after the November 7 celebrations in Moscow to determine if the Soviet Union continued to advocate the same policies.

<sup>7</sup>Ch'en Yi's September 29 press conference was the clearest sign that top Chinese leaders were alarmed by the U.S. escalation in Vietnam. Another indication was the publication of a series of articles in the authoritative Hong Kong *Wen Hui Pao* and a similar series in *Ta Kung Pao*, which drove home the message that a Sino-American war was "inevitable." These references can be found in the *New York Times*, February 12, 1966, p. 1; Whiting, op. cit., pp. 189-191.

<sup>8</sup>*Jen-min Jih-pao*, January 29, 1966. This same theme was brought up by Hsiao Hua in his report to the Work Conference of the General Political Department of the PLA held from late December 1965, until January 18, 1966. Excerpts of the report were published in *Jen-min Jih-pao*, January 25, 1966, pp. 1-2. Cited in FBIS, DR, FE, No. 17, January 25, 1966, pp. CCC 1-9.

<sup>9</sup>See Whiting, op. cit., p. 190, footnote 63.



Since the growing concern that "*China could not possibly win any war*"<sup>10</sup> [emphasis added] threatened to undermine the success of the movement to vilify the Soviet Union, a second prong was added to the campaign, which explained exactly how the United States would be defeated in Vietnam.<sup>11</sup> The series of signed PD articles beginning in late February stressed that by rigorously adhering to the principles of people's war "*the South Vietnamese people can certainly concentrate a superior force and choose the proper time and place to destroy the enemy forces one by one.*"<sup>12</sup> [Emphasis added.] While the struggle would follow "a tortuous road"<sup>13</sup> true Marxist-Leninists "anticipate possible twists and turns" and "are never panic-stricken, nor do they sink into passivity and despair."<sup>14</sup> Those who wanted to abandon China's struggle against both the United States and the Soviet Union were branded "opportunists and revisionists"<sup>15</sup> and they were criticized for advocating capitulationism.

With the second prong of the campaign well in hand,<sup>16</sup> the crucial test of Mao's anti-Soviet foreign policy hinged on whether or not China would attend the 23rd Congress of the Soviet Communist Party (CPSU) in late March. In a series of actions taken in early 1966, Moscow began to solicit support for the Soviet side in its dispute with China so that the Congress would unanimously condemn the PRC. A secret intra-party document had been circulated within the CPSU justifying Moscow's

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<sup>10</sup> Ito and Shibata, op. cit., p. 66.

<sup>11</sup> The first article in the series was signed by Ho Chiang (probably a pseudonym) entitled "United States Imperialism Invariably Will Not Stop Making Mistakes," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, February 27, 1966, p. 4; the second article, signed by the same author, appeared the next day, entitled "United States Imperialism Can Be Defeated," p. 3. Subsequent articles appeared on the following dates: March 3, 4, 7, and 9, and April 3.

<sup>12</sup> Ho Chiang, February 27, 1966, op. cit.

<sup>13</sup> "About Twists and Turns and Progress," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, March 7, 1966, p. 3. Cited in FBIS, DR, FE, No. 44, pp. BBB 4-6.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> See footnote 12, p. 18.

more openly hostile policy toward China.<sup>17</sup> This was followed by a not-so-secret letter sent out from the CPSU to other Communist Parties in February, proclaiming that the Sino-Soviet conflict was no longer simply an ideological dispute and that Moscow would hereupon regard China as an adversary.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to campaigning for the upcoming Congress, Moscow showed signs of following Washington's lead in shifting its attention to Asia. The "Tashkent Spirit," where Kosygin resolved the Indo-Pakistani War, foreshadowed increased efforts by Moscow to expand its influence and prestige in Asia on China's southwestern flank. In doing so, the new Soviet leaders built on the anti-China position Khrushchev had started and promoted in 1959 and 1962 in siding with India against the PRC in the border disputes. Even more ominous to the Chinese was the renewal of the Soviet-Mongolian mutual defense treaty in January, which reportedly included "a secret protocol authorizing the stationing of Russian troops on Mongolian soil."<sup>19</sup> By these and other actions the Soviet Union began to lay the groundwork for the initial phases of its military buildup along the border.

Despite the blatantly anti-Chinese actions of the Soviet Union, Lin Piao nevertheless extended "warm festival greetings" to Marshal Malinovski for Soviet Army Day on February 23. Although less effusive than the 1964 and 1965 cables, the 1966 message stated:

May the great militant friendship between the peoples of China and the Soviet Union and between their armies be tempered and show its splendid brilliance in the flames of

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<sup>17</sup> Maury Lisann, "Moscow and the Chinese Power Struggle," *Problems of Communism*, November-December 1969, p. 37.

<sup>18</sup> Excerpts from the secret letter were "leaked" to the Hamburg paper *Die Welt* and subsequently reprinted in the *New York Times*, March 24, 1966.

<sup>19</sup> Robert Rupen, "The Mongolian People's Republic: The Slow Evolution," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 7, No. 1, January 1967, p. 18. Text of the Treaty in *Pravda*, January 18, 1966, translation in *Current Digest of Soviet Press*, Vol. 18, No. 3, February 9, 1966, pp. 7-8.



the struggle against United States imperialism, the most ferocious enemy of the world people.<sup>20</sup>

Lin's actions suggest that he would have preferred to see Sino-Soviet relations remain friendly.

The MFA, however, went to the opposite extreme by dramatizing the Soviet Union's hostile actions and intent. In March, Chinese diplomats began spreading the word that Soviet troops were moving in large numbers to forward positions in Mongolia. Western diplomats in Moscow concluded that "the Chinese are eager to spread word of Soviet military moves to underline Peking's charges that Moscow is hostile toward the Chinese."<sup>21</sup> At the same time, domestic broadcasts reported a speech made by a visiting Australian, which focused on the Soviet troop deployments to the Chinese border.<sup>22</sup> Finally, Mao himself intervened on March 20 by unequivocally stating that China would not attend the conference, commenting that "If we do not attend the '23rd Congress,' then the most they can do is threaten us with their troops."<sup>23</sup>

Although the "united front" issue had been resolved by Mao on March 20 and by the Central Committee two days later, resistance still remained. In a very revealing conversation, Mao told a visiting Japanese Communist Party delegation that the joint draft prepared by

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<sup>20</sup>"Lin Piao Greets Malinovskiy on USSR Army Day," *NCNA*, February 23, 1966. Cited in *FBIS, FE*, No. 36, February 23, 1966, p. BBB 2. *NCNA*, February 22, 1965, *FBIS, FE*, No. 35, February 22, 1965, p. BBB 15. *NCNA*, February 21, 1964, *New China News Agency-Daily Bulletin*, No. 2216, February 22, 1964, p. 26.

<sup>21</sup>Peter Grose, "Move in Mongolia Is Laid to Soviet," the *New York Times*, March 16, 1966, p. 8.

<sup>22</sup>*Trends and Highlights of Communist Bloc Broadcasts (Trends)*, January 18, 1967, p. 10. *Trends* is published weekly by the editors of *FBIS* as a *classified Confidential* summary of the Communist media and then automatically declassified after six months. It is an excellent source for "scanning" large time blocs of the Chinese press, but its accuracy is subject to question.

<sup>23</sup>*Miscellany of Mao Tse-tung Thought (1949-1968)*, Part II, *Joint Publication Research Service (JPRS)*, No. 61269-2, February 20, 1974, pp. 375-380.

Teng, Chou, and others was absolutely unacceptable because it was not sufficiently anti-Soviet. During the interview, Mao went on to a worst case analysis when he stated:

A war between China and America is inevitable. This year at the earliest or within two years at the latest such a war will occur. America will attack us from four points, namely, the Vietnam frontier, the Korean frontier, and through Japan by way of Taiwan and Okinawa. On such an occasion, *Russia, with the Sino-Soviet defense pact as its pretext, will cross the frontier from Siberia and Mongolia to occupy China, starting at Inner Mongolia and Northeast China. The result will be a confrontation across the Yangtse of the Chinese Liberation Army and the Russian Army....*<sup>24</sup> [Emphasis added.]

This passage is interesting for two reasons.<sup>25</sup> First, it has Mao concluding that war with the United States is inevitable, even though Peking had just reached an agreement with Washington (finalized at the Warsaw Ambassadorial Talks of March 16), which had explicitly sought to prevent a direct confrontation with the United States. The more significant aspect of Mao's revelation, though, was that in the event of a four-prong U.S. invasion, Mao perceived that Soviet troops would invade China. Given this unlikely situation, Mao's response would be to direct the PLA to counterattack the Soviet troops, not the U.S. invaders. Furthermore, Mao would "allow" Soviet troops to occupy

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<sup>24</sup> Ito and Shibata, op. cit., p. 67.

<sup>25</sup> When analyzing this statement it is crucial to bear in mind the occasion: Mao was attempting to justify to the Japanese Communists why China would not collaborate with the Soviet Union against U.S. "imperialism." Under these circumstances, Mao had to establish that China was not downgrading the menace posed by the United States and thereby sacrificing the Vietnamese simply because of its own quarrel with the Soviets. How better to do this than to suggest that China was not only aware of the threat that Vietnam faced, but that it even anticipated an attack upon itself? Having just received private assurances from Washington at the March 16, 1966, Warsaw meeting, Mao was in an excellent position to talk relatively unseriously about the dangers of a U.S. attack. While this interpretation clearly cannot be proven, it highlights the crucial importance of analyzing Mao's statements within their proper context rather than taking them at face value. The author is indebted to Roderick MacFarquhar for suggesting the preceding analysis.



all of Northern China and confront them at the Yangtse, not the border. Similar to Chiang Kai-shek's passionate, almost irrational hatred and fear of the Communists during the War of Resistance against Japan, Mao clearly felt more threatened by Moscow than by Washington, and thus would strike back at the Soviet aggressors, not at the United States.

Although opposition to Mao's foreign policy views might have remained, the completion of the first purges of the GPCR in May<sup>26</sup> (Chief of Staff Lo Jui-ch'ing and P'eng Chen) must have cautioned others from publicly deviating from the Maoist line. In particular, the removal of Lo Jui-ch'ing enabled Lin and Mao to consolidate their control of the PLA. With China clearly committed to supporting North Vietnam with personnel and material aid<sup>27</sup> but not provoking a direct Sino-American confrontation, and with the backbone of any move to appease the Soviet Union effectively broken, Mao turned to the domestic and leadership issues that lay at the heart of the GPCR. A fragile consensus had been forged on the crucial foreign policy issues facing China but its durability remained to be tested. During the succeeding months, diversity would replace unanimity.

#### APRIL-DECEMBER 1966: INTERPRETING THE MAOIST LINE-- THE ROOTS OF DIVERSITY

While all the groups publicly supported Mao's foreign policy line, each chose to stress a particular aspect of it. Other coalitions, possibly led by Teng Hsiao-p'ing or Liu Shao-ch'i, may have worked behind the scenes to subvert the spirit of Mao's policies, but there is no hard evidence to suggest this.<sup>28</sup> The differences among the dominant

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<sup>26</sup> Kenneth Lieberthal, *A Research Guide to Central Party and Government Meetings in China, 1949-75*, International Arts and Sciences Press, Inc., White Plains, New York, 1976.

<sup>27</sup> Whiting, op. cit., pp. 170-195.

<sup>28</sup> For a detailed study of the tenets of the Liu Shao-ch'i line in foreign policy based on subsequent GPCR revelations, see David Mozingo, *China's Foreign Policy and the Cultural Revolution*, International Relations of East Asia Project, Cornell University, 1970. For a report by Edgar Snow that Liu sought "to reactivate the Sino-Soviet alliance," see "Mao Tse-tung and the Cost of Living: Aftermath of the Cultural Revolution," *The New Republic*, April 10, 1971, p. 19.

groups were at first subtle, but gradually, as the domestic and international situations changed, they became more visible and increasingly contradictory. Simply stated, Chou and Ch'en Yi quite possibly emboldened by the understanding reached with the United States in March 1966, led the movement to publicize the seriousness of the military threat posed by the Soviet buildup while simultaneously emphasizing that Sino-American hostility would *not* last forever.

Lin, on the other hand, appeared far more sensitive and alarmed by the threat to China's national security posed by increasing U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Lin argued that the United States would inevitably escalate the war and therefore prudence dictated that China heighten its vigilance and preparedness in the south. Though Lin did not reject Chou's analysis of the Soviet threat, neither did he support it. Neither Lin nor any military spokesmen publicly acknowledged (let alone dramatized) the Soviet military buildup. Instead, all of their denunciations of the Soviet Union were couched in language that publicized the dangers from Soviet-American collusion. The views of the radical alternative during this period are not discernible. Their subsequent actions lead us to believe that they *probably* accepted Lin's analysis of a serious U.S. threat and Chou's assessment of growing Soviet-American collusion aimed against China, but there is little corroborative evidence in this period. We will focus our analysis on the split between Lin and Chou.

The moderates began to stress that *despite* the antics of the "U.S. ruling group," at least some people in China were optimistic that:

some day the Chinese and American people will smash the scheme of the U.S. reactionaries, sweep away all obstacles, and establish close contacts, to bring about a tremendous growth of the friendship between our two peoples.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup>"Old Tune, New Conspiracy," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, March 29, 1966. Cited in *FBIS, DR, FE*, No. 60, March 29, 1966, p. BBB 4.



Responding to Secretary Rusk's March 1966 public statements on Washington's new "flexible policy"<sup>30</sup> they went on to add that "If by this he means that the U.S. Government is now resolved to redeem its wrongs in the past, *that would be a different matter.*"<sup>31</sup> [Emphasis added.] In other words, if the United States was willing to demonstrate *by its actions* that it was truly committed to reducing hostility toward China, then at least the moderates would be willing to meet Washington half way. Without such U.S. actions, they could not override Lin's view that Rusk's talk of improving relations was a "smoke screen" and as a result there could be no reduction in Sino-American enmity. In March 1966, then, those in China most committed to improving relations had to demand that the United States change its policy on both Taiwan and the United Nations *before* there could be a normalization of relations.<sup>32</sup> Five years later, primarily because of increased alarm over the Soviet threat, those in Peking in favor of effecting a Sino-American détente were able to drop their demand that the United States act first, and this greatly facilitated the rapprochement.

At the same time the moderates were suggesting that Sino-American relations would *some day* improve, they were also working hard to dramatize how Sino-Soviet relations could only deteriorate. Ch'en Yi told

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<sup>30</sup>For an informative inside account describing how Secretary of State Rusk blocked any flexibility on China policy during the 1960s, see James Thompson, Jr., "On the Making of U.S.-China Policy, 1961-9: A Study in Bureaucratic Politics," *China Quarterly*, No. 50, April/June 1972, pp. 220-243.

<sup>31</sup>"Old Tune, New Conspiracy," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, March 29, 1966. Cited in *FBIS, DR, FE*, No. 60, March 29, 1966, p. BBB 4.

<sup>32</sup>As the *Jen-min Jih-pao* article stated:

The source of all the tension springs from the extremely hostile policy that the U.S. Government persistently pursues toward China, and primarily because the United States is occupying by force China's province of Taiwan.

So long as the U.S. Government does not change its hostile policy toward China and refuses to pull out its armed forces from Taiwan and the Taiwan Strait, the normalization of Sino-American relations is entirely out of the question and so is the solution of such a concrete question as the exchange of visits between personnel of the two countries.

*Ibid.*, p. BBB 3.

a delegation of Scandinavian journalists on May 17 that the Soviet Union had provoked "more than 5,000 incidents of various kinds" along the border between July 1960 and the end of 1965.<sup>33</sup> Continuing in this vein, Ch'en added:

They [the Soviets] have increased their forces at the Sino-Soviet border and held continuous military maneuvers at the border, during which they assume that China is the enemy. *Their intention is crystal clear.*<sup>34</sup> [Emphasis added.]

Thus, the moderates opposed the tendency to exaggerate about the U.S. threat and instead went out of their way to heighten people's awareness of the hostile nature of Soviet intentions. This summarized the essence of the moderates' argument in 1966.

In May, when intruding U.S. fighter planes shot down a Chinese aircraft over Yunnan province, Lin seized upon the incident to underscore the ferocious nature of the United States. For the first time since the initiation of the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam, the Defense Ministry issued a sharp warning to the United States which spoke of a "debt of blood owed by U.S. imperialism to the Chinese people."<sup>35</sup> This marked the first of a long series of Defense Ministry statements, presumably issued at Lin's behest, which sought to paint an indelibly black image of U.S. imperialism impatiently waiting to go to war with the PRC. Yet when Soviet planes crossed into Heilungkiang in 1968, the Defense Ministry remained silent. Only the Foreign Ministry was willing to publicize the Soviet overflights.

A pattern slowly emerged whereby the Defense Ministry would only dramatize threats posed by the United States, while only the Foreign Ministry would publicize threats posed by the Soviet Union. While this trend may possibly have been coincidental or reflected a functional

<sup>33</sup> J. B. Holmgaard, "We Shall Not Ask U.S.S.R. for Aid if U.S. Should Attack," *Information*, Denmark, May 24, 1966, pp. 1-2. Cited in *Translations on International Communist Developments: Interviews with Ch'en Yi*, No. 852, *JPRS*, No. 36,163, June 23, 1966.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Cited in *Peking Review*, No. 20, May 13, 1966, p. 5.



division of labor between the two ministries, it much more probably revealed the diverse assessments of the leading spokesmen for the organizations. Lin's and Chou's positions within their respective ministries presented them with frequent opportunities to set forth their arguments and strategic recommendations. As the international situation confronting China evolved and the nature of the foreign threats changed, this forum became an increasingly clear indication of the extent of disagreement between the moderates and the military.

A parallel indication of diverse assessments can be found by analyzing the reactions to each U.S. overflight into China. Quite consistently the *PD* editorials stressed the "paper tiger nature"<sup>36</sup> of U.S. imperialism, warned against "arrogance"<sup>37</sup> in the PLA, and concluded that the "Chinese people have already made all preparations"<sup>38</sup> to meet U.S. aggressors. *Liberation Army Daily* (*LAD*) editorials, on the other hand, emphasized the need to repay the U.S. blood debt "at compound interest rates,"<sup>39</sup> that "the aggressive nature and warlike nature of U.S. imperialism *will never change an iota*"<sup>40</sup> [emphasis added], that "we must always bear in mind the danger of war,"<sup>41</sup> and finally that the PLA had to "strengthen preparations against war."<sup>42</sup>

While one cannot irrefutably associate the *PD* commentaries with Chou and the *LAD* commentaries with Lin, on the few occasions when both leaders discussed foreign policy issues, their own diverse analyses

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<sup>36</sup>*Jen-min Jih-pao*, editorial, July 21, 1967, p. 1. Cited in *FBIS*, *DR*, *CC*, No. 141, July 21, 1967, pp. BBB 4-7.

<sup>37</sup>"Severely Punish the U.S. Aggressor," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, by Commentator, April 13, 1966. Cited in *FBIS*, *DR*, *FE*, No. 71, April 13, 1966, pp. BBB 2-3.

<sup>38</sup>"Those Who Play With Fire, Watch Out for Your Heads!," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, by Commentator, February 15, 1968. Cited in *FBIS*, *DR*, *CC*, No. 33, February 15, 1968, pp. BBB 2-3.

<sup>39</sup>"Old Hatreds and the New Ones Are Intolerable," *Chieh-fang-chün pao*, editorial, May 13, 1966. Cited in *FBIS*, *DR*, *FE*, No. 93, May 13, 1966, pp. BBB 2-4. Since the *LAD* is not available in this country, we must rely on the *FBIS* translations from Chinese radio broadcasts.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup>National Defense Ministry Protest, May 2, 1967. Cited in *FBIS*, *DR*, *CC*, No. 86, May 3, 1967, p. BBB 1.

<sup>42</sup>See footnote 39, this page.

paralleled the divisions that existed in those newspapers. During the rallies held to celebrate National Day in 1966, for example, Lin portrayed the United States as threatening world peace:

U.S. imperialism is trying hard to find a way out by launching a world war. We must take this seriously. The focal point of the present struggle lies in Vietnam.<sup>43</sup>

As Lin conjured up images of the United States provoking a world war, Chou chose to discuss how

The Vietnamese people are marching from victory to victory in their war of resistance against U.S. aggression and for national salvation.<sup>44</sup>

As Chou expressed the fullest confidence in the ability of the *Vietnamese people* to defeat U.S. imperialism, Lin spoke of the need for China to prepare for a U.S.-launched world war. The two quite clearly had different perspectives on the threat potential of the United States. Given their leading positions within their respective organizations, it is thus not surprising to find evidence of two distinct assessments reflected in the media.

The Eleventh Plenum, held in Peking in early August, dealt primarily with the domestic issues concerned with setting up the guidelines for the GPCR.<sup>45</sup> The Communiqué, issued on August 12, nevertheless discussed at some length international issues. "U.S. imperialism" was explicitly designated "the most ferocious common enemy of the peoples of the whole world."<sup>46</sup> At the same time the "new leading group" in the

<sup>43</sup> Speech by Lin Piao at National Day Rally on October 1, 1966. Cited in *Peking Review*, No. 41, October 7, 1966, pp. 10-11.

<sup>44</sup> Speech by Chou En-lai at National Day Reception on October 1, 1966. Cited in *ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>45</sup> Philip Bridgham, "Mao's 'Cultural Revolution': Origin and Development," *China Quarterly*, No. 29, January-March 1967, pp. 1-35. Also see Lieberthal, 1976, *op. cit.*, p. 255, for the available primary source materials on the Eleventh Plenum.

<sup>46</sup> "Communiqué of the Eleventh Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China," adopted on August 12, 1966. Cited in full in *Peking Review*, No. 34, August 19, 1966, pp. 4-8.



Kremlin was condemned for "practicing Khrushchev revisionism without Khrushchev." Finally, while Soviet revisionism was accused of forming with U.S. imperialism a new "holy alliance" against China, the Communiqué noted that the *holy alliance* "is doomed to bankruptcy and is already in the process of disintegration."<sup>47</sup>

On account of Lin's leading role at the Plenum--he was officially elevated to be Mao's "close-comrade-in-arms" as well as promoted to number two in the Chinese political hierarchy--we would expect the Communiqué to reflect many of Lin's foreign policy views. As Mao turned to Lin for support in the upcoming struggles of the Cultural Revolution, Lin was no doubt able to capitalize on his newly earned prestige by strongly influencing the tenor of official Chinese government statements, like the Communiqué.

Despite Lin's dominance of the moment, however, we still find traces of policy views that were clearly associated with Chou En-lai. Lin had in the past and would continue to argue that Soviet-American collusion was growing stronger and increasingly aimed against China. The Communiqué, however, referred to the Soviet-American "holy alliance" as *in the process of disintegration*. Disintegration prepared the way for "dividing one into two" and thereby separating the two into primary and secondary adversaries. Lin opposed this analysis because it provided his opponents with a theoretical justification to challenge his dual adversary assessment. The inclusion of this point suggests that while Lin was clearly in an extraordinarily strong position, Chou was not completely overruled, but rather was able to interject a very subtle and esoteric dissenting opinion.

Several weeks after the Plenary Session, Ch'en Yi went on record directly challenging Lin Piao's assessment of the United States. In response to a question from a Japanese Government delegation about the likelihood that the United States would wage a war with China, Ch'en responded:

*We do not think the United States would immediately wage a war with us or that the present Sino-American tension will*

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

*last for a long time.* We have no intention to provoke a war with the United States....It is wrong to consider that China has no intention of having talks with the United States, and the two countries will continue negotiations at Warsaw at the Ambassadorial level. *A settlement of questions through talk is China's basic policy.* If this were not true, the Warsaw Talks would have been suspended long ago.<sup>48</sup> [Emphasis added.]

Part of the motivation for Ch'en Yi's discussion of the Warsaw Talks was to soften the impact of the decision to break with protocol and publicize its main statement of the 131st meeting of the Sino-American Ambassadorial Talks the next day.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, at a time when the United States was unabatedly escalating its involvement in Vietnam and rapidly expanding its military presence in Asia, and while Lin and the military felt the Chinese should be "sharpening our swords" to prepare for the worst if the war extended beyond Vietnam to involve China, it is highly significant that Ch'en Yi was willing to predict that Sino-American relations would improve. While moderates were unable to prevent Lin and others from cancelling the Talks, they demonstrated that the leadership was divided on the issue.

A short time later, in response to another U.S. overflight, a *LAD* commentary, followed Lin's lead, refocused attention on the U.S. threat.

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<sup>48</sup>*Mainichi*, Tokyo, September 7, 1966. Cited in *FBIS, DR, FE*, No. 173, September 7, 1966, pp. BBB 6-7.

<sup>49</sup>The full text of Ambassador Wang Kuo-chuan's public statement made at the 131st meeting of the Talks on September 7, 1966, can be found in Young, *op. cit.*, pp. 420-425. This marked the first and last time either side publicly revealed the full text of the main statement given at the Talks.

The apparent reason for the Chinese action was a *Pravda* article published on July 28 which implicitly accused China of using the Talks to "barter away principles" by making behind-the-scene deals with the United States over Vietnam. See "The Sino-American Dialogue," *Pravda*, July 28, 1966, p. 3. The article included excerpts of an interview by *U.S. News and World Report* with John Gronowski, U.S. Ambassador to Poland, on the Sino-American Ambassadorial Talks. An *NCNA* broadcast on August 2, 1966, discussed the *Pravda* article and explicitly rejected the claim that China had made "political deals" with the United States at Warsaw. Cited in *FBIS, DR, FE*, No. 149, August 3, 1966, pp. BBB 2-3.



Its [U.S. imperialism's] war provocations against the Chinese people are becoming ever more frequent, more and more unscrupulous, and increasingly grave. This [incident] has helped us see more clearly that U.S. imperialism's policy of extending its war adventures was set long ago and that it will never change till its death.<sup>50</sup>

The PD commentary on the same incident, however, refrained from using the harsh tones and inflammatory rhetoric found in LAD.<sup>51</sup>

Following Gromyko's tête-à-tête with Johnson on October 10 at the White House, the Chinese media were filled with stories that dwelled on this new level of Soviet-American collusion.<sup>52</sup> Although the press was still emphasizing the collaboration theme in December, Ch'en Yi once again challenged the prevailing trend by returning attention to the Soviet military buildup. In what became a sensational news item in the West, Ch'en Yi told a Brazilian lawyer:

The Soviets have 13 divisions at China's frontier, moved there from Europe. We do not fear a Soviet-American attack. The Chinese people are prepared for the war and confident of final victory.<sup>53</sup>

Although the article never specified whether Ch'en meant that they were newly deployed divisions, it must be seen as another attempt by the moderates to publicize the Soviet threat.

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<sup>50</sup>"Raise Vigilance a Hundredfold and Be Ready in Battle Array," *Chieh-fang-chün pao*, by Commentator, September 17, 1966. Cited in FBIS, DR, FE, No. 181, September 19, 1966, p. BBB 1.

<sup>51</sup>"If You Come, We Shall Strike You Down and Give You No Quarter," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, by Commentator, September 17, 1966. Cited in *ibid.*, p. BBB 4. Even the titles of the two commentaries reflect strong perceptual differences.

<sup>52</sup>For a representative article, see "Expose the U.S.-Soviet Plot for a New Eastern Munich," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, October 23, 1966. Cited in *Peking Review*, No. 44, October 25, 1966, pp. 7-9.

<sup>53</sup>Danillo J. G. Dos Santos, "Russia Has Thirteen Divisions on China Border, Mao Aide Says," *The Washington Post*, December 11, 1966, p. A34. For an analysis of the Soviet buildup in 1966, see "Red Army Begins to Face East," *Radio Free Europe, USSR: Military*, December 29, 1966.

While the comment was interpreted in the West as proof that the *Chinese leadership* was aware of and alarmed by the buildup, we would argue that such analyses were not sufficiently sensitive to *leadership diversity*. In the eight months since Mao ostensibly had set the direction of Chinese foreign policy in his March 1966 statements, neither Lin nor any radical spokesperson publicly drew attention to the Soviet threat. Ch'en Yi and Chou En-lai, however, had consistently led the movement to expose and oppose the Soviet revisionists. Back in July 1966, it had been Ch'en Yi who first accused Moscow point blank of "making military deployments along the Chinese border...."<sup>54</sup>

Throughout this period, then, we consistently find Lin and the Defense Ministry concentrating on three themes: the growing U.S. threat, the need to increase preparations for a war with the United States, and the increasing seriousness of Soviet-American collusion. Chou En-lai and Ch'en Yi, on the other hand, dramatized the Soviet threat. These different portrayals of the major foreign threats confronting China are important insofar as they reveal that these foreign policy questions were actively being discussed. What is more they disclose that major Chinese leaders clearly disagreed over fundamental foreign policy issues. These findings challenge the prevailing wisdom that:

it does not seem that military problems with the Soviet Union engendered a factional debate among China's top leaders....<sup>55</sup>

JANUARY-AUGUST 1967: WHO POSES THE GREATEST THREAT?--  
THE BREACH WIDENS

During the early months of 1967 as the domestic purge of the GPCR took on a life of its own, it became increasingly difficult for various central organizations in Peking to control the expanding violence. The PLA was called in to support the left and later to promote stability, but on the whole it was unable to prevent the chaos from spreading throughout China. In the midst of this tumultuous struggle to weed out domestic revisionists and put the revolution back on course, foreign

<sup>54</sup> See footnote 35, p. 40.

<sup>55</sup> See footnote 14, p. 7.



policy questions were not forgotten. Leadership disagreement continued to center on three basic issues:

- The nature of the Soviet threat.
- The nature of the American threat.
- The nature of Soviet-American relations.

As pressing foreign problems compelled the leadership to consider curtailing some of the more disruptive activities associated with the GPCR, the radicals became increasingly involved in the brewing controversy over the nature of China's foreign opponents. With respect to the issue of Soviet-American collaboration, the radicals strongly echoed Lin's assessment. However, they rejected his appraisal that U.S. military involvement in Vietnam posed the greatest threat, and chose instead to dramatize the danger of creeping Soviet revisionism. In stressing the political aspect of the threat, they argued that the best defense required widening the scope of the struggle to include all people in positions of authority who were susceptible to the "sugar coated bullets" of revisionism and capitulationism. Rather than prematurely end the GPCR and let some of Liu Shao-ch'i's "black gang" remain in office, it was necessary to give the Red Guards wide latitude to rid the CCP of all those who did not put "politics to the fore."

With the entry of the radicals into the foreign policy debates, what had been primarily a two-line struggle became a *pas de trois*. The introduction of a third group led to the formation of a number of shifting coalitions. When the issue was the nature of the U.S. threat, the radicals and military could join forces against the moderates. Yet when the debate devolved into the question of whether or not the threat justified building up China's military defenses in the south, then the moderates and radicals were in fundamental agreement: the moderates because they felt that in the final analysis the United States would not invade China and the radicals because they felt *psychological preparations* were far more important than modern weapons.

When the debate centered on Soviet-American collaboration, the radicals and military again ganged up against Chou and Ch'en Yi,

although the radicals put greater weight on the Soviet political threat while Lin focused on the U.S. military threat. The same alliance formed when the issues of parliamentary struggle and peaceful coexistence were discussed. Finally, when the matter of how to oppose the Soviets was raised, we find Lin and Chou agreeing not to provoke Moscow, while the radicals advocated a militant confrontation approach. Depending on the particular mix of current issues, different coalitions developed. In general, however, the debates increasingly pitted the moderates against the military/radical group.

Breaking the pattern established in 1966, Yeh Chien-ying, then Vice-Chairman of the National Defense Council and a high-ranking member of the Military Affairs Commission (MAC), told a *domestic* audience:

The leading clique of Soviet modern revisionism,...going against the will of the Soviet people and following in the footsteps of U.S. imperialism, is now shifting its military strategy to the east, stepping up its disposition of troops against China.<sup>56</sup> [Emphasis added.]

Yeh implied that, since the United States had shifted its main front to the east, the Soviet Union was then freed from maintaining such a high number of troops in Eastern Europe, and so it began to turn its attention to China. This new behavior was one possible result of Moscow's decision to make China a major adversary. Coming shortly after Ch'en Yi's December statement, and at a time when no PLA members had acknowledged the Soviet shift, Yeh's remarks suggest that he was more closely associated with the moderates than with the military.<sup>57</sup> No other national military leader publicly discussed the new Soviet military threat until *after Czechoslovakia*. Yeh's comment thus leaps out as the only time a central PLA Commander was willing to protest the Soviet military buildup.

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<sup>56</sup>Speech given by Yeh Chien-ying at mass rally in Peking on January 14, 1967, to welcome the visiting Albanian military delegation, cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 10, January 16, 1967, pp. BBB 5-9.

<sup>57</sup>Consistent with this interpretation, Yeh was one of the few very high-ranking PLA officers who was not dragged down by the Lin Piao affair. He is currently Minister of National Defense.



As the Soviet Union escalated its hostility towards China, some leaders concluded that it was necessary to bring a halt to the divisive aspects of the GPCR, which threatened to hamper the ability of the PLA to guard the northern border. Whether the radicals were willing to join this movement and see the GPCR ended in the north is difficult to determine. The MAC, which was under Lin's influence,<sup>58</sup> and the Central Committee, which usually represented the interests of the dominant group in the Party, clearly led the campaign to suppress the fighting in Sinkiang and Inner Mongolia. Red-Guard-provoked border incidents as well as Red Guard behavior toward Soviet Embassy personnel and Soviet ship crews suggest that at least some radicals did not favor a policy of muting the struggle in sensitive areas. Furthermore, the CRG did not publicly endorse any of the directives that sought to end the fighting in the north. Thus, while there is no irrefutable evidence one way or the other, the little we do know concerning this period, including the radicals' general ideological orientation, leads us to believe that they did not actively support these moves. Whether or not the radicals opposed these measures and were subsequently overruled simply cannot be ascertained given the available data.

Before chronicling the series of Chinese actions that attempted to restore order in the northern border region, we will first list the major political and military actions taken by the Soviets and the Chinese in 1966 and 1967 that heightened tension between the two countries.

MAJOR SOVIET ACTIONS THAT HEIGHTENED TENSION IN SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS: AUGUST 1966 TO AUGUST 1967

August 17, 1966

The Soviets continued their military buildup in Mongolia and in the Far East. Harrison Salisbury of the *New York Times*, upon his return from a trip to the Soviet Far East, published the best-documented evidence of the buildup.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Although the membership of the MAC changed during the GPCR, the main participants throughout 1967 were Mao Tse-tung, Lin Piao, Yeh Ch'un, Yang Cheng-wu, Hsu Hsiang-ch'ien, Yeh Chien-ying, Ch'en Yi, and Nieh Jung-chen.

<sup>59</sup> Harrison Salisbury, "Soviet-Chinese Hostility Found Along Their Frontier," the *New York Times*, August 17, 1966.

August 31, 1966

CPSU Central Committee labeled the Eleventh Plenum "new serious step" in further deteriorating Sino-Soviet relations.

November 27, 1966

Major *Pravda* article openly attacked Mao Tse-tung and encouraged opponents of Mao within China to "halt his erroneous course."

December 12, 1966

CPSU Central Committee Plenum formally approved new hard-line anti-Chinese position.

December 1966 to January 1967

Key Politburo members toured Soviet Union to rally support among second- and third-level Party officials to increase vigilance and preparedness against China.

January to December 1967

Substantial additional border troops were deployed in the Soviet Far East and Mongolia bringing the total to 250,000-350,000.

January 5, 1967

Full-time Chinese radio broadcast jamming, which had been suspended in October 1964, was resumed by the Soviets.

January 1967

Kosygin, Polyanski (First Deputy Prime Minister), and Krylov (Nuclear Missile Commander in Chief) toured Soviet border areas addressing local military and political leaders on developments in the Peking-Moscow split and encouraging them to take a more hard-line position against China.

January 25, 1967

Several hundred soldiers, police, and plainclothesmen clashed with Chinese students who were trying to place wreaths on Lenin's tomb, leaving over 30 Chinese injured.

January 28, 1967

*Radio Tashkent* (broadcasting in Uighur to Sinkiang) insinuated that Soviet assistance would be forthcoming if Uighurs rose up in rebellion against Chinese Government.

February 3, 1967

Soviet "hooligans" invaded Chinese Embassy in Moscow and "savagely beat up" Chinese diplomats and Embassy personnel.



February 10, 1967

Kosygin, in London, declared that the Soviet Union is "aware that there are today in China, in the Communist Party of China and in the Chinese Government, people who are struggling against the dictatorial regime of Mao Tse-tung....We sympathize with them."

February 15, 16, 21, 1967

*Red Star* and *Pravda* claimed that Moscow was ready to take any action necessary against China, offensive or defensive, to assist the Chinese people liberate themselves from Mao's rule.

March 1, 1967

*Radio Peace and Progress* (broadcasting in Mandarin) offered inflammatory appeals to the genuine Communists in China to rise up and overthrow Mao.

March 1967

Kosygin stated that in the face of Chinese threats, the Soviet Government was obliged to maintain a strong military force on the border and be ready for any eventualities.

June-July 1967

DNEPR Maneuvers (a theatre-scale, nonnuclear, multi-branch military maneuver) were conducted by the Soviet Red Army, coordinated by Colonel General Pavloskii, former Commander of Far East Military Region.

July-August 1967

A series of articles in *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, a speech by Marshal Yakubovsky (First Deputy Minister of Defense), and a Government statement encouraged those in China who opposed Mao's dangerous policies to rebel, insinuating that Soviet troops might intervene if the situation demanded such action.

MAJOR CHINESE ACTIONS TO HEIGHTEN PREPAREDNESS ALONG  
THE BORDER: JANUARY 1967 TO MAY 1967

| <u>Date</u>      | <u>Initiator</u>  | <u>Action</u>   |
|------------------|-------------------|---|
| January-December |                   | Approximately 200,000 troops redeployed to the north bringing the total to roughly 600,000.       |
| January 14       | Central Committee | A directive issued asserting that the spearhead of struggle must not be directed against the PLA. |

| <u>Date</u>      | <u>Initiator</u>                          | <u>Action</u>  |
|------------------|---|--|
| January 22       | Chou En-lai                               | Troops and personnel in the Work Department for War Preparations "cannot adopt the form of mass struggling for power."   |
| January 28       | MAC                                       | <p>Eight-point Directive severely limiting the role PLA troops involved in war preparation activity could play in the GPCR.</p> <p>Carry out the GPCR stage by stage and group by group in military regions.</p>   |
| January 29       | Chou En-lai                               | Wang En-mao, long-time Sinkiang Party Boss, ordered back to Peking for consultation.   |
|                  | Chou En-lai<br>and<br>State Council       | Sinkiang Military District Production and Construction Corps ordered to suspend all GPCR activities.   |
| January 31       |   | Heilungkiang Provincial Revolutionary Committee established.   |
| January-February |   | Total weapon procurement budget leveled off after being drastically cut back in 1966.  |
| February 11      | MAC, Central Committee, and State Council | The strategic importance of the Sinkiang Military Region Production and Construction Corps is highlighted and the Production-Construction Corps (PCC) is placed under the command of the Sinkiang Military Region. |
| February 12      | MAC                                       | The "Four Great Movements" are stopped in Lanchou Military Region.   |
| Mid-February     |   | Civilian population ordered to vacate a 30-200 km zone along the border and to move behind the front line of Chinese border troops.  |
| February 16      | Chou En-lai                               | Efforts made to settle the political struggle in Sinkiang.   |



| <u>Date</u> | <u>Initiator</u>  | <u>Action</u>  |
|-------------|-------------------|--|
| February 25 | Central Committee | The GPCR is officially ended in Sinkiang, but fighting continues.  |
| March-April | Chou En-lai       | Teng Hai-ch'ing, formerly Deputy Commander of Peking Military Region, is appointed Acting Commander of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. |
| April 13    | Central Committee | Wu T'ao made Political Commissar of Inner Mongolia Military District.  |
| May 25      | MAC               | PLA in Inner Mongolia Military District ordered to restore order and heighten war preparedness.  |

As the two lists indicate, Chou En-lai and the MAC led the movement to prevent the GPCR from adversely affecting China's ability to safeguard the northern border. In response to the Soviet military buildup and the hostile tone of Moscow's pronouncements concerning China, the struggle phase of the GPCR was suppressed in Sinkiang and Inner Mongolia, PLA troops responsive to commands from the Center were rushed to the border, and great efforts were made to expedite the removal of both Wang En-mao and Ulanfu. However, since supporters of Wang and Ulanfu launched counterattacks against Teng Hai-ch'ing and others brought in to control the situation, violent outbreaks occurred with some regularity throughout 1967 and 1968.<sup>60</sup>

More generally, following the January 25 and February 3 incidents in Moscow, enormous demonstrations led by the Red Guards were held outside the Soviet Union's Embassy in Peking. The Foreign Ministry sent

<sup>60</sup>Paul Hyer and William Heaton, "The Cultural Revolution in Inner Mongolia," *China Quarterly*, No. 36, October-December 1968, pp. 114-128; Bruce J. Esposito, "China's West in the 20th Century," *Military Review*, January 1974, pp. 64-75. Although Wang En-mao was criticized throughout the GPCR, when it was all over in late 1968, he was made the Vice-Chairman of the Sinkiang Regional Revolutionary Committee, which was formed on September 5, 1968, the last Provincial Revolutionary Committee to be established.

a biting protest note<sup>61</sup> to Moscow following the first incident and the Chinese Government issued a serious warning after the incident at the Chinese Embassy.<sup>62</sup> A massive anti-Soviet rally was held in Peking on February 11 during which both Chou and Ch'en Yi presented major addresses castigating the Soviet revisionists. Yet Chou's speech, which contained an implicit criticism of the violent Red Guard demonstrations and the statement that "we must slight the enemy [the Soviet revisionist leading clique] strategically and take full account of him tactically," was never published by the Chinese.<sup>63</sup> The Chinese account of the rally, in fact, implied that Chou never even gave a speech.<sup>64</sup> A plausible explanation for the omission is that Chiang Ch'ing and other CRG leaders objected to the passive tone of Chou's speech and chose instead to publicize Ch'en Yi's speech, which was generally more derisive. In any event, Chou's strategy of passive resistance prevailed in the end because the Red Guard's militant siege of the Soviet Embassy was lifted two days later. This suggests that while the radicals may have had an extraordinarily strong hold over the media and particularly the *People's Daily*, Chou was still able to influence policy decisions.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Chinese Foreign Ministry Statement of Protest, January 26, 1967. Cited in *Peking Review*, No. 6, February 3, 1967, pp. 21-23. Chou and Ch'en Yi, acting on behalf of the Central Committee, the State Council, Chairman Mao, and Lin Piao, sent a personal telegram to the students on the same day praising them as "our valiant anti-revisionist fighters," *ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>62</sup>Chinese Government Statement, February 5, 1967. Cited in *Peking Review*, No. 7, February 10, 1967, pp. 6-7.

<sup>63</sup>Speech by Chou En-lai at anti-Soviet rally in Peking on February 11, 1967. Cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 30, February 13, 1967, pp. BBB 5-6. See also Thomas Robinson, "Chou En-lai and the Cultural Revolution in China," in Robinson, 1971, op. cit., pp. 265-266.

<sup>64</sup>"Peking Mass Rally of Revolutionary Rebels Condemns Traitors to Lenin," *Peking Review*, No. 8, February 17, 1967, p. 12.

<sup>65</sup>We have only the barest understanding of the impact the GPCR had on the Chinese media. We do know that the editorial staff of the *PD* was reorganized in the late fall of 1966, and its editor-in-chief Wu Leng-hsi was replaced by Tang Ping-chu. Tang and several others who moved to the *PD* had been working on the *LAD*. In March 1967, *NCNA* was reorganized under the supervision of Wang Li of the CRG. Aside



During the winter months of 1967, both the United States and the Soviet Union had stepped up their opposition to China. The Soviet Union had singled out Mao as the culprit behind the domestic upheaval of the GPCR and blamed the "Mao Tse-tung group" for all the tension in Sino-Soviet relations. The United States was rapidly expanding its war effort in Vietnam as well as justifying the need for an ABM system to a skeptical nation for the value it would have against the future ICBMs of the aggressive and inscrutable Chinese. In addition to the anti-Chinese moves made by Washington and Moscow, the two began to improve their bilateral relations.<sup>66</sup>

These international developments coupled with the deleterious effects of the "February Adverse Current" prompted the radicals to air publicly their views on important foreign policy matters. Ch'i Pen-yu, a prominent member of the radical CRG, chose as his medium a reactionary "film of national betrayal." In a *Red Flag* article of early April, Ch'i used his critique of the film to launch an allegorical attack on those who "vainly hoped to arrange a compromise with imperialism, and

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from these physical changes, we do not know very much about the decisionmaking process in various newspapers.

Since Wang Li and Ch'i Pen-yu both held high positions on the editorial staff of *RF*, it is not surprising that it became the mouthpiece for radical views. The *LAD* was published under the guidance of the General Political Department of the PLA, but we are unable to ascertain just how tightly the GPD controls the *LAD*. So many different viewpoints are expressed in the *PD* that it is impossible to determine who sets the editorial policy simply by reading through the paper. Although the radicals appeared to have a commanding control of the *PD*, particularly during the height of the GPCR, Chou was nevertheless able to get his views into the Central Committee's paper--partly because of his own power and prestige, and partly because of his relationship with Mao. Other corroborative evidence, such as speeches and interviews of Chinese leaders, suggests that particularly in the case of the *PD* commentaries concerning U.S. overflights, the content was set by the moderates.

<sup>66</sup> Among other things, in late January both the United States and the Soviet Union signed the U.N. Treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons in outer space; in March, Johnson and Kosygin expressed a willingness to discuss means of limiting the costly arms race in offensive and defensive nuclear missiles, and finally the two ratified a consular treaty establishing closer diplomatic ties between Moscow and Washington. For a study of the impact of Soviet-American relations on Chinese, see Pillsbury, 1975b, op. cit.

get 'understanding' and 'help' from it."<sup>67</sup> In language ostensibly directed at Liu Shao-ch'i, but which also appears to have been aimed at the moderates, Ch'i wrote:

Chairman Mao called on us *to cast away illusions*, to give the enemy tit-for-tat struggle and fight for every inch of land, whereas this person energetically *spread illusions about peace with U.S. imperialism and its lackeys* and impudently wrote articles in newspapers in which he expressed gratitude for U.S. imperialist "help" to China and *begged for "peace" from U.S. imperialism in an attempt to benumb the fighting will of the people*. He even deceived the people by saying that "the main form of struggle in the Chinese revolution has become *peaceful and parliamentary*." [Emphasis added.]

Ch'i's article was the clearest statement yet by the radicals that they fundamentally opposed any reconciliation with the United States, regardless of the concrete conditions confronting China. A policy of relying on the strength of the West:

To realize...constitutional reform and modernization... could only...*bring a wolf into the house* and accelerate the process of *reducing China to semi-colonial, semi-feudal state*,.... [Emphasis added.]

The truly revolutionary strategy would be to oppose such a compromise and instead wage "armed struggle" under "proletarian leadership." Although Ch'i dealt extensively with the late Ch'ing period (the film concerned the Reform Movement of 1898) and the early 1960s, he emphatically stated that the questions that were the "focus of struggle" "*remain so even today*." [Emphasis added.]

During the summer, the radicals restated their views on foreign policy questions by dwelling on the importance of "people's war."<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Ch'i Pen-yu, "Patriotism or National Betrayal," *Hung-ch'i*, March 30, 1967, No. 5. Cited in *Peking Review*, No. 15, April 7, 1967, pp. 5-16.

<sup>68</sup>Hung P'ing, "Praising 'Taking the Bandits' Stronghold'--A Revolutionary Peking Opera on Contemporary Theme," *Hung-ch'i*, No. 8, May 23, 1967. Cited in *Selections of China Mainland Magazine (SCMM)*, No.



They openly rejected the "bourgeois humanism and pacifism"<sup>69</sup> by which some Chinese leaders grossly exaggerated the horrors of war. Instead, by relying on statements by Mao and Chiang Ch'ing, they knew the only effective way to oppose an implacably hostile aggressor was by relying on the "gun barrel," not by following Liu's line of placing all "hopes on U.S. imperialism, the Number 1 Enemy of the Chinese people, begging it for 'sympathy' and 'assistance.'"<sup>70</sup> Since the reactionary nature of U.S. imperialism would never change, *begging for sympathy and assistance* amounted to nothing less than "out and out national betrayal."<sup>71</sup> By totally rejecting the capitulationist line of "parliamentary struggle," the radicals put forth a strategy whereby:

the revolutionary people should not only *cast away illusions and prepare for struggle*, but they should dare to wage a tit-for-tat struggle against them and obtain victory.<sup>72</sup>  
[Emphasis added.]

While the radicals felt that the greatest danger from the U.S. threat lay in the "capitulationist" tendencies of some Chinese leaders, the Soviet problem was more complex. Since the United States so clearly opposed China--U.S. jets at this time were bombing virtually right up to the Chinese border--the problem there centered on the misguided souls who advocated "parliamentary struggle." In the case of the Soviet Union, many people were still taken in by the Soviet revisionists' sweet-sounding words. In discussing how the Arab-Israeli War revealed the true "renegade features" of Brezhnev and Kosygin, it was pointed out that:

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580, June 19, 1967, pp. 37-43. Cheng Li-chia, "Down with the Capitulationism of China's Khrushchev!," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, July 6, 1967. Excerpts are cited in *Peking Review*, No. 31, July 28, 1967, pp. 19-22. "Brezhnev's Renegade Features Revealed More Clearly," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, by Observer, July 16, 1967. Cited in *Peking Review*, No. 30, July 21, 1967, pp. 9-11.

<sup>69</sup> Hung P'ing, op. cit.

<sup>70</sup> Cheng Li-chia, op. cit.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

in ordinary times they [the Soviet revisionists] talk about nothing but "friendship," but at the "critical moment," they do not hesitate to commit acts of betrayal...*no one can tell when they will stab them in the back.*<sup>73</sup> [Emphasis added.]

In the same article, the radicals cautioned, in a crystal clear warning:

*How can any people be sure that it will not be their turn next? What are they not capable of doing? Whoever still harbours illusions towards the Soviet revisionist clique and allows himself to be fooled by its false phenomena, failing to recognize its essence, will one day find himself sold out.* [Emphasis added.]

As the radicals were presenting their case against "both" the United States and the Soviet Union, a PD article by the authoritative Observer concluded that the real issue in Chinese foreign policy boiled down to:

Who are our enemies? Who are our friends? This is a question of the first importance for the revolution....We must unite with our real friends in order to attack our real enemies. This is a question on which there must be no ambiguity.<sup>74</sup>

This bold analysis specifically rejected the "all struggle" strategy put forth by both the radicals and the military. It presented the case in the same manner as did the theoretical justification which three years later explained why Mao invited Richard Nixon to visit China:

If we only think of struggle without unity, we will not be able to unite with the forces that can be united, or to

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<sup>73</sup>See "Brezhnev's Renegade Features Revealed," footnote 68, p. 56.

<sup>74</sup>"Soviet Revisionist Ruling Clique Is Rank Traitor to Vietnamese Revolution," by Observer, *Jen-min Jih-pao*, April 30, 1967. Cited in *Peking Review*, No. 19, May 5, 1967, pp. 18-21.



consolidate and develop the united front. We will not be able to force our principal enemy into a narrow and isolated position, and our struggle against the enemy will not be successful.<sup>75</sup>

Although the Observer did not suggest that China should "unite" with the United States "to attack" the Soviet Union, it nevertheless left the door open for such a possibility. Neither the radicals nor the military were even willing to say this because, as far as they could tell, the United States and the Soviet Union had already slammed the door shut.

In May the downing of five U.S. planes over Southern China gave the Defense Ministry an opportunity to refocus the debate on the nature of the U.S. threat. It accused the Johnson administration of trying to provoke a war with China "in a planned and purposeful way."<sup>76</sup> A LAD commentary followed it up the next day by quoting Western press reports that "U.S. imperialism 'will extend the war to China' if it thinks the time is ripe."<sup>77</sup> [Emphasis added.] Given the situation, the LAD exhorted "all PLA commanders and fighters" to "strengthen preparations against war."<sup>78</sup> [Emphasis added.] The PD commentary saw things quite differently. Instead of waiting to "extend the war to China," the PD accused the United States of "intensifying their war escalation in Vietnam...."<sup>79</sup> [Emphasis added.] In addition, while the LAD urged the PLA to *strengthen preparations* to meet the new threat, the PD concluded:

To put it bluntly, your bombs can only intimidate those spineless creatures who claim that a single spark will give rise to a world war and similar nonsense.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>75</sup> See footnote 27, p. 25.

<sup>76</sup> National Defense Ministry Protest, May 2, 1967. Cited in FBIS, DR, CC, No. 86, May 3, 1967, p. BBB 1.

<sup>77</sup> "Resolutely Smash the War Provocation of U.S. Imperialism," *Chien-fang-chün pao*, May 3, 1967. Cited in *ibid.*, p. BBB 2.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> "The Chinese Are Not To Be Trifled With," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, May 3, 1967. Cited in *ibid.*, p. BBB 1.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

A short while later, Ch'en Yi echoed the PD analysis by telling a Japanese delegation that "China is fully prepared" even if the United States extends the war to China.<sup>81</sup> Lin's recommendation that preparations be strengthened came from his position that the United States very possibly planned to *extend the war to China*. This conviction, whether based on Lin's "true beliefs" or on the effect he assumed it would have on his power position, compelled him to rethink his September 1965 formula to determine whether a limited response would still be an effective deterrence/defense strategy. From the tenor of the MAC and Defense Ministry statements, it would appear that Lin moved appreciably closer to the extensive response advocated by his purged Chief of Staff Lo Jui-ch'ing.<sup>82</sup> What remains unclear is whether Lin in 1965 privately agreed with Lo's analysis and recommendations, yet realized that Mao would never accept such a strategy because of its domestic ramifications. If that interpretation is correct, then Lin opposed Lo's views for their effect on domestic politics, not their validity per se. Later, as the United States did in fact expand its involvement and as Lin acquired greater personal authority, he may have felt confident enough to slide over and adopt Lo's policy.

While Lin perceived the United States to be highly threatening, the moderates, on the other hand, still believed that the United States had no intentions of expanding the war to China. While the war might last ten or twenty years, the *Vietnamese* would drive out the United States. Thus, although U.S. presence created a serious problem for the North Vietnamese, it in no way required increasing *Chinese* war preparations in the south. Such a move would be unnecessary and would signal to Washington that the Chinese were preparing for a Sino-American war. That could only further exacerbate relations between Peking and Washington at precisely the time when it was unclear who posed the greater threat. Even if the moderates were unable *at that time* to improve relations with the United States, they probably would have

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<sup>81</sup>*Tokyo Shimbun*, June 3, 1967. Cited in FBIS, DR, CC, No. 109, June 6, 1967, p. BBB 8.

<sup>82</sup>For the most complete presentation of Chief of Staff Lo Jui-ch'ing's views during this period, see Harding and Gurtov, op. cit.



cautioned against taking any action that would needlessly aggravate Sino-American relations and foreclose future options. Only later, after Tet and the Paris Peace Talks, would the moderates openly begin to move toward a policy of ameliorating relations with Washington to oppose Moscow. During the summer, therefore, one important aspect of the debate centered on the question of whether or not the United States was a threat.

By late July--before the United States escalated the air war, forcing reassessment of the situation--the PD reasoned:

The U.S. aggressors have lost all initiative in South Vietnam;...[they] can neither win a quick victory nor withstand a protracted war in Vietnam....This *ferocious looking* U.S. imperialism has more and more clearly revealed its *paper tiger nature* under the pounding of the *Vietnamese people*.<sup>83</sup> [Emphasis added.]

The PD analysis presented a sharp contrast with Yang Ch'eng-wu's appraisal given nine days later:

Holding swords in their hands, U.S. imperialism and its lackeys are killing people every day. In the face of a war of aggression and armed suppression, *we must never meekly capitulate* but must give tit for tat and put up resolute struggle; that is, *do unto the enemy what he does to us*.<sup>84</sup> [Emphasis added.]

Yang's assessment of the situation led him to conclude that the only way to oppose U.S. imperialism, which would "*invariably impose war on the people*," [emphasis added] was to "*heighten our vigilance a hundred-fold in guarding our great motherland*."<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> *Jen-min Jih-pao*, editorial, July 21, 1967, p. 1. Cited in *ibid.*, No. 141, July 21, 1967, pp. BBB 4-7.

<sup>84</sup> Speech given by Yang Ch'eng-wu at the reception given by the Ministry of National Defense celebrating the 40th anniversary of the founding of the PLA, in Peking on August 1, 1967. Cited in *ibid.*, No. 148, August 1, 1967, pp. CCC 3-7.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

At the same time Yang called for greater vigilance along the border, two extremist radicals, Wang Li and Yao Teng'shan, invaded the MFA building and seized power there causing the implementation of China's foreign relations to tilt sharply to the left.<sup>86</sup> A series of PD commentaries published during the apex of their control reflected their evaluation of the threat posed by Soviet-American collusion. While the military had invoked images of serious threats of "sabotage and troublemaking" posed by Soviet-American collusion, the radicals saw nothing but a "puny" anti-China "farce."<sup>87</sup> As a result, rather than unnecessarily "strengthen our military preparations,"<sup>88</sup> as the MAC had argued, China had to "understand that Mao Tse-tung's thought is the most powerful ideological weapon for winning victory in the revolution."<sup>89</sup>

In addition to stressing the importance of China's powerful "ideological weapon" and the principles of people's war, the radicals adopted the strategy of warlike confrontation. Since even tolerance of Soviet revisionism could be viewed as a sign of internal weakness, they launched a wave of militant incidents to demonstrate their resolve never to compromise on matters of principle. Red Guards forcibly detained a Soviet

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<sup>86</sup> See Gurtov, op. cit., for the most comprehensive examination of the radicals' reign over the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>87</sup> The following three articles were published in *Jen-min Jih-pao* during the apex of radical control: "U.S. Imperialism and Soviet Revisionism are Backstage Managers of Anti-China Farce," by Commentator, August 11, 1967; "We Have Friends All Over the World," by Commentator, August 14; "It's a Good Thing for U.S. That the Enemy Attacks China," by Commentator, August 17. Three other articles not directly bearing on the Soviet Union and the United States were also published in *Jen-min Jih-pao* during this period which appeared to champion the radical position: "The Indonesian People Have Raised the Torch of Armed Struggle," by Commentator, August 18; "Hong Kong Is Chinese Territory," by Commentator, August 20; and "Baring British Imperialism's Crafty Features," by Commentator, August 21. All of these commentaries are reprinted in *Peking Review*, No. 35, August 25, 1967, pp. 16-22.

<sup>88</sup> Order of Commendation issued by the Military Affairs Commission to the Air Force unit that shot down two U.S. A-6 attack planes over Kwangsi Province on August 21, 1967. Cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 163, August 22, 1967, pp. BBB 1-2.

<sup>89</sup> See footnote 87, this page.



ship, the Svirsk, at Ta-Lien, taunted Soviet border troops along the Amur River, invaded the Soviet and Mongolian Embassies, and burned down the British mission in Peking. Had it not been for Chou's timely intervention, the Svirsk incident would have led Moscow to terminate all Sino-Soviet trade. As had been the case in January and February, Chou strongly opposed any act that would strain Sino-Soviet relations to the breaking point. Such a move could only provoke Moscow to intervene militarily in the domestic struggles of the GPCR. Since China was in no way prepared for such a crisis *at that time*, Chou, possibly with Lin's approval, "appeased" Kosygin by releasing the Svirsk. The radicals who had "captured" the ship no doubt felt betrayed.

In late July, for reasons that are still puzzling, former Minister of Defense P'eng Teh-huai was dredged up from obscurity and made the subject of a virulent campaign. One of the central themes used to criticize P'eng concerned his alleged "capitulationism." Playing on this *leitmotif*, an *RF* article applied the lessons of the P'eng Teh-huai affair to the Arab-Israeli War. It pointed out that one major consequence of the War was that it "proves once again that U.S. imperialism is the root cause of modern wars."<sup>90</sup> The article implicitly rejected the purely military deterrence strategy put forth by Lin and Yang Ch'eng-wu by emphasizing that the United States is "more likely" to launch military adventures "against people who it thinks are mentally unprepared." Given this propensity, the best defense was for the people to:

take full cognizance of the fact that the U.S. imperialists may suddenly unleash war against them; they should maintain a high state of vigilance against such an eventuality; *they should be mentally prepared well in advance. This is a very important point.* [Emphasis added.]

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<sup>90</sup>"Along the Socialist Line or the Capitalist Road," joint *Hung-ch'i* and *Jen-min Jih-pao* editorial. Cited in *Peking Review*, No. 34, August 18, 1967, pp. 10-18. Although the reasons for digging up P'eng at that particular time are still unclear, it appears in retrospect to have been closely linked with Wang Li, who was then first chief-deputy editor of *Hung-ch'i*, but was subsequently purged in August 1967. The denunciations were constructed in such a way that they were equally critical of the military and those "soft" on imperialism--the moderates.

One had to cast away all illusions about both the United States and the Soviet Union, because putting one's faith in either could only produce unwanted dependency.

Despite the fact that Israel had annihilated the Arab forces at least partly because of their superiority in weaponry, the lesson to be learned was that placing "reliance on modern weapons...aircraft, tanks, or long-range artillery" would only produce defeat. Victory would come to the side that relied on the "political awareness of the people" and the principles of people's war. The model to follow, then, according to this radical interpretation, was to be self-reliant, mentally prepared, and well schooled in the theory and practice of people's war.<sup>91</sup> By implication, any other strategy would be unsuccessful in defending against and deterring armed attacks.

Beginning on August 9, the United States began to bomb a host of new targets including several facilities within Hanoi and along the railway line connecting China to North Vietnam. Targets within what had been a "China buffer zone" were now attacked, perhaps fueling Lin's belief that the United States did pose a critical threat to China. The boldness of the U.S. bombing initiative led the MAC to advocate that the Chinese "*strengthen our military preparations*."<sup>92</sup> [Emphasis added.] Wang Hui-chiu, a "leading member of the Air Force of the PLA," felt that the "mad dog" nature of U.S. imperialism required that they "make new contributions to the defense of the motherland...."<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> The same points were stressed in a number of other articles appearing in *Jen-min Jih-pao* at the same time: "And Mayflies Lightly Plot to Topple Giant Trees," commentary, August 25, 1967 (cited in *Peking Review*, No. 36, September 1, 1967, pp. 30-31); "Nuclear Hoax Cannot Save U.S. Imperialism and Soviet Revisionism," commentary, September 3, 1967 (cited in *Peking Review*, No. 37, September 8, 1967, p. 34); "Counterrevolutionary Revisionists Line in National Defense Research Repudiated," *Peking Review*, No. 37, September 8, 1967, pp. 9-10.

<sup>92</sup> See footnote 88, p. 62.

<sup>93</sup> Speech by Wang Hui-chiu, leading member of the Air Force of the PLA, at rally held in South China on August 28, 1967, celebrating the downing of two U.S. A-6 attack planes on August 20. Cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 169, August 30, 1967, pp. BBB 19-21. Wang is one of the few top Air Force commanders who was not purged following the fall of Lin Piao.



The fourth anniversary of Mao's statement denouncing U.S. aggression in South Vietnam presented those in China eager to stress the never-changing hostile nature of the United States with another opportunity to present their case. A *PD* editorial warned people not to pin their hopes on the "sensibleness" of the United States. It went on to assault the moderate position:

Chairman Mao Tse-tung hit the nail on the head by declaring that apart from those who are deliberately deceiving the people and those who are utterly naive, no one will assert that a treaty can make U.S. imperialism lay down its butcher's knife and suddenly become a Buddha, or for that matter, *behave itself even a little better.*<sup>94</sup> [Emphasis added.]

A loose coalition of military and radical leaders opposed to any move to appease the United States had challenged the moderates' assessment which continued to hold that the United States was not China's most fundamental adversary. Even during the pinnacle of the campaign to brand the United States as China's most ferocious adversary, the moderates still countered the MAC's assessment by concluding that "The Chinese people have finished preparing a long time ago...."<sup>95</sup> The Foreign Ministry statement on the U.S. bombing of Hanoi directly contradicted Wang Hui-chiu's exhortation to fortify defenses in the south and instead stressed how "We have long been prepared...."<sup>96</sup>

While no one publicly argued that the United States should be appeased in Vietnam, the radicals and military forcefully demanded that everyone accept that the United States was an implacably hostile aggressor and resolutely oppose it.<sup>97</sup> However, when Lin went on to prescribe additional war preparations, neither the radicals nor the moderates were willing to acquiesce.

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<sup>94</sup> *Jen-min Jih-pao*, editorial, August 29, 1967. Cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 169, August 30, 1967, pp. BBB 15-17.

<sup>95</sup> "Intruders Will Be Wiped Out Resolutely, Thoroughly, Completely, and Entirely," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, editorial, August 22, 1967. Cited in *ibid.*, pp. BBB 4-5.

<sup>96</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs Statement, August 30, 1967. Cited in *ibid.*, pp. BBB 24-25.

<sup>97</sup> See the chart, p. 29.

During this period, Soviet-American collaboration was seen by Lin as a military ring squeezing China, while the radicals saw only a tiny anti-China "farce." The moderates, on the other hand, were careful to distinguish clearly between two distinct threats: one from the north, which was increasing, and one from the south, which was decreasing. Finally, both the radicals and moderates were on the cutting edge of the move to expose and oppose the Soviet revisionists. The radicals were more concerned with the impact of their ideological deviation, while the moderates stressed the military aspect. Yet when it came time for action, the moderates backed away from the radical strategy of provocation and opted instead to join the military in sealing off the northern border regions from the excesses of the GPCR.

SEPTEMBER 1967-AUGUST 1968: WHO ARE OUR FRIENDS  
AND WHO ARE OUR ENEMIES?

By mid-September the Chinese political pendulum crested and began to swing toward moderation. In its descent it cut through Wang Li's and Yao Ten-shan's revolutionary shield and condemned the reactionary nature of their actions in the MFA. As Wang and Yao fell from grace it became increasingly clear that the days of rampant radicalism were nearly over.<sup>98</sup> Although violence would erupt now and again, the GPCR had entered the consolidation phase. The focus of the struggle slowly shifted. The crucial questions became who would lead in the process

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<sup>98</sup> Central Committee resolutions, directives from Mao, speeches by Chiang Ch'ing and other major Chinese elites, major *Hung-ch'i* and *Jen-min Jih-pao* articles, and a series of "latest instructions" from the Chairman were all used in the early weeks of September to signal to errant leaders and masses that violence (and especially violence aimed at the PLA) was not part of the game plan. Some of the most visible radicals (particularly Wang Li) were purged from their positions, and generally efforts were made to reunite the country by stressing that there were no fundamental conflicts of interest among the masses, Red Guards, PLA, and the working class. Since many of the most extreme radical activities had been undertaken by students, a campaign was launched by Chou, K'ang Sheng, Ch'en Po-ta, and others to compel all students to return to their home districts and re-enroll in their schools.



of rebuilding the Party, and how would the gains of the GPCR be consolidated in the aftermath of the movement.<sup>99</sup>

In the midst of these domestic developments, international events signaled to Chinese leaders that as the United States was becoming increasingly reluctant to pay any price for victory, Moscow was preparing for a showdown. As U.S. public weariness with the Vietnam War set in, President Johnson presented the "San Antonio Formula," which revealed Washington's new willingness to explore peaceful means of ending the conflict.<sup>100</sup> Though the Paris Peace Talks were still months away, Johnson's offer of late September 1967 suggested a waning of U.S. hopes that further escalations would assure victory. Though the U.S. threat appeared to be in decline, the Soviet Union demonstrated its hostility by increasing its military budget for 1968 by 15 percent, the largest single jump in six years.<sup>101</sup> The enormous military parade held in Ulan Bator on November 7, involving large numbers of Soviet troops and offensive weapons, confirmed the suspicions of those in Peking concerned about the Soviet threat.

As Chinese decisionmakers described these developments, they exposed continuing leadership disagreements over several fundamental foreign policy questions. While Chou portrayed the United States as "strong in appearance but brittle in essence,"<sup>102</sup> the radical and military spokesmen continued to dramatize that the United States was in fact the "most ferocious enemy of the world."<sup>103</sup> Mao's own statements

<sup>99</sup> This marks the beginning of Lin Piao's problems which, in the final analysis, led to his downfall in September 1971. See Bridgham, 1973, op. cit.; Michael Kau, op. cit.; and the works by Brown, op. cit.

<sup>100</sup> See the *New York Times*, September 30, 1967, for highlights of President Johnson's speech.

<sup>101</sup> *Jen-min Jih-pao*, editorial, August 29, 1967. Cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 169, August 30, 1967, pp. BBB 15-17.

<sup>102</sup> See the message sent by Chou En-lai to Laos on the occasion of the 22nd anniversary of the Laotian National Day on October 11, 1967. Cited in *Peking Review*, No. 43, October 20, 1967, p. 36.

<sup>103</sup> See "The Pitiful Struggle of U.S. 'Nuclear Overload,'" by Commentator, *Jen-min Jih-pao*, October 16, 1967. Cited in *ibid.*, No. 44, October 27, 1967, pp. 36, 39.

Uri Ra'anan, an astute observer of Chinese foreign policy, has written widely on the subject of Chinese factionalism, particularly

fell ambiguously between the two extremes. He referred to the United States as "the most ferocious *imperialism* in the world."<sup>104</sup> [Emphasis added.] Since the Soviet Union was clearly not an "imperialist power" by Chinese standards then, Mao implied that the Soviets might be the *most ferocious enemy* in the world.

While the military consistently argued that the U.S. military presence in Vietnam posed the most serious threat to China, others began to refocus attention on the northern border where "tens of thousands of Soviet troops have been stationed in Mongolia."<sup>105</sup> Just as

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as it pertains to the "Washington-Moscow-Peking Triangle." His findings therefore cannot be treated lightly. For Professor Ra'an'an's views on "the policies of the various factions in the Chinese leadership," see Ra'an'an, 1970, op. cit.

The essential question Ra'an'an seeks to answer is whether the views Lin and others advocated in 1968-1969 were the same ones they had espoused during the great strategic debates of 1965-1966. (See Ra'an'an, 1968, op. cit., for a detailed summary of the views Lin Piao and the "guerrillas" allegedly advocated.) Rather than reexamine his earlier findings about the views of the "Mao-Lin" line in foreign policy or trace the evolution of the strategic debates during the GPCR, Ra'an'an instead focused on the post-Cultural Revolution period. In discussing the strategic orientations of Lin Piao and Chou En-lai in 1968-1969, Professor Ra'an'an has come up with several challengeable conclusions which suggest that there was in fact no leadership disagreement on these issues:

No doubt is left that the Soviet Union is the immediate enemy....This is surely consistent with the *old Lin Piao line of regarding the Soviet Union as the real opponent*. [Emphasis added.] (Op. cit., 1970, p. 139.)

the Lin Piao and Chou En-lai groups--have been fairly consistently engaged in enunciating views on international questions, both in 1965-1966 and in recent months [fall 1969]. As far as this particular issue [international strategy] is concerned, *there is no overt sign that their opinions differed too sharply, except perhaps for the fact that Chou himself does not appear to have invariably demonstrated as much anti-Soviet feelings as other leaders in Peking*. [Emphasis added.] (Op. cit., 1970, p. 137.)

<sup>104</sup> Cable sent by Mao Tse-tung to Chairman Nguyen Huu-tho of the National Front of Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSV) Central Committee. Cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 245, December 19, 1967, p. BBB 1. The cable was publicized throughout China by a *NCNA* domestic service broadcast on the 18th.

<sup>105</sup> Excerpts from the September 13, 1967, *Jen-min Jih-pao* article coauthored by groups in the Inner Mongolian University and offices of



Lin alluded to the possibility of tens of millions of U.S. troops invading Vietnam to bolster his argument that China must not ignore the United States, the Inner Mongolian CCP publicized the presence of Soviet troops in Mongolia to enhance the credibility of those who regarded the threat from the north as highly dangerous.

In a major address commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, Lin enthusiastically proclaimed that China had finally become the epicenter of world revolution.<sup>106</sup> Although it was common to predict that the Soviet people would rise up and overthrow their revisionist overlords, Lin went far beyond this by confidently claiming that such action would "*bring the Soviet Union back into the orbit of Socialism.*" [Emphasis added.] At a time when Lin and others had consistently maintained that the aggressive anti-Chinese nature of the United States could never change, Lin's optimism regarding the Soviet Union stands out as a clear sign that in his opinion, Sino-Soviet relations need not deteriorate to an open showdown.

The following day, as Soviet troops paraded en masse beside Mongolian troops in Ulan Bator, Lin's remarks seemed to be undercut by the forward demonstration of Soviet power on the PRC's northern frontier. A major border incident several weeks later at Chenpao Island (the site of the bloody clashes of March 1969), similarly did nothing to strengthen his argument.

In the fall a campaign blossomed to criticize the Lo Jui-ch'ing line in army building.<sup>107</sup> The lessons to be learned were that the only way to deal successfully with an imperialist aggressor was to "lure the enemy deep," rely on the courage, abilities, and political consciousness

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the Inner Mongolian Committee of the CCP are cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 178, September 13, 1967, pp. BBB 1-3.

<sup>106</sup>For an insightful discussion of Lin's speech, see Michael Yahuda, "Chinese Conceptions of Their Role in the World," *The Political Quarterly*, Vol. 45, No. 1, January-March 1974, p. 80, and the speech given by Lin Piao on November 6, 1967, at a Peking Rally commemorating the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution. Cited in *Peking Review*, No. 46, November 10, 1967, pp. 5-8.

<sup>107</sup>Headquarters of the General Staff of the Chinese PLA, "Basic Differences Between the Proletarian and the Bourgeois Military Lines," *ibid.*, No. 48, November 24, 1967, pp. 11-16.

of the "ground forces," build up the people's militia, and utilize the basic principles of people's war.<sup>108</sup> The New Years Day joint editorial picked up the theme and stressed that the PLA must

consolidate the national defenses and be ready at all times to smash the *war provocations of U.S. imperialism* and its lackeys.<sup>109</sup> [Emphasis added.]

Despite the presence of tens of thousands of Soviet revisionist "monsters" perched along the border who would "stop at nothing to sacrifice others for their interest," the military continued to single out the United States as the one and only serious threat.<sup>110</sup> Yet while the military was not willing to do anything to exacerbate relations with the Soviet revisionists, it spared no energies threat-mongering with U.S. imperialism.<sup>111</sup>

The Inner Mongolia Revolutionary Committee met in early January and incorporated into their plans for the coming year the need to

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<sup>108</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>109</sup>"Ushering in the All-Round Victory of the GPCR," joint *Jen-min Jih-pao*, *Hung Chi'i*, *Chieh-fang-chün pao* editorial, December 31, 1967. Cited in *ibid.*, No. 1, January 3, 1968, pp. 10-14.

<sup>110</sup>*Jen-min Jih-pao*, commentary, January 12, 1968. Excerpts cited in *FBIS*, *DR*, *CC*, No. 10, January 15, 1968, p. BBB 4.

<sup>111</sup>Since little documentation is cited in Ra'anan's 1970 article (see footnote 103, above), it is unclear what led him to assert that the "old Lin Piao line" downgraded the U.S. threat and regarded the "Soviet Union as the real opponent" (p. 139). A subsequent article by Ra'anan reveals one reason why. (Uri Ra'anan, "The Washington-Moscow-Peking Triangle: A Re-Examination of Chinese and Soviet Concepts," *Orbis*, Vol. 19, No. 3, Fall 1975, pp. 827-837.) In this article he concluded that everyone in China "with certain fluctuations, appears to have regarded the U.S.S.R. as 'the main antagonist' at least since 1965...." [Emphasis added.] (p. 829.) Ra'anan continued in this vein by stating:

any Chinese factions that might have wished to designate America as the "main antagonist" had little to work with, at any rate after the mid-1960's; even those who advanced the "two-front" theory of Moscow and Washington both being "main antagonists" could marshal little convincing evidence for their case and seem to have been refuted with relative ease (p. 830).



consolidate the national defense. Teng Hai-ch'ing, the moderate Chairman of the Committee, chose to interpret the call broadly, for the "Decision" of the session linked their "long-term strategic mission conducive to the consolidation of our national defense" to their being located "on the frontier of resistance against *revisionism*."<sup>112</sup> [Emphasis added.] Using language similar to the threat-mongering of the MAC, Teng, who subsequently returned to the Peking Military Region,<sup>113</sup> warned:

Meanwhile the enemy [Soviet revisionism] is sharpening his sword. We must do the same. It is imperative to guard against the surprise attack which the enemy may launch. No matter whether the attack is coming from the air or the ground, the invaders must be wiped out resolutely, thoroughly, wholly and completely.<sup>114</sup>

Similar resolutions were adopted in Heilungkiang and Sinkiang, where the need for "safeguarding the sacred border defense" was justified by their position on the "forefront of the anti-revisionist struggle."<sup>115</sup> Despite the fact that the General Headquarters was advocating a "lure deep" strategy, the soldiers on the front talked about

<sup>112</sup>"Decision of the Inner Mongolian Committee Session," broadcast by Huhehot Radio on January 21, 1968. Cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, January 23, 1968, pp. DDD 1-8.

<sup>113</sup>Both Teng Hai-ch'ing and Ch'en Hsi-lien who took hard line anti-Soviet positions in 1968 and 1969 have subsequently been assigned to positions of great authority in the PLA since the fall of Lin Piao. See Brown, 1976, op. cit., for a speculative account of the role Ch'en Hsi-lien played in the Chenpao Island clash of March 2, 1969. For some background on Teng and his PLA unit, see Pillsbury, 1974, op. cit.

<sup>114</sup>See footnote 112, this page.

<sup>115</sup>See "Resolution adopted at the enlarged plenary session of Heilungkiang Provincial Revolutionary Committee," broadcast on Harbin, Heilungkiang provincial service; and "Sinkiang Rally Pledges Army-People Unity," broadcast on Peking domestic service. Cited, respectively, in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 21, January 30, 1968, pp. DDD 28-37; and *ibid.*, No. 23, February 1, 1968, p. DDD 1. Also see speech given by T'eng Hai-ch'ing, Chairman of Inner Mongolia Revolutionary Committee at committee's second enlarged session (held January 6-12); and "Heilungkiang 'comfort letter' broadcast." Cited, respectively, in *ibid.*, No. 18, January 25, 1968, pp. DDD 22-25; and *ibid.*, No. 24, February 2, 1968, pp. DDD 8-9.

protecting the *sacred border defense*. Similarly, as the MAC urged that the *U.S. threat* not be forgotten, the Heilungkiang PRC in reference to the Soviet threat demanded that: "We should discard the idea of *under-estimating the enemy*."<sup>116</sup> [Emphasis added.]

The MND soon openly opposed this "realistic" approach. On February 23 the MND sent a cable to the Soviet Defense Ministry extending "warm greetings to the great Soviet people and *Soviet Army*."<sup>117</sup> [Emphasis added.] This clearly opposed Mao's March 20, 1966, instructions which

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., No. 24, February 2, 1968, p. DDD 9.

<sup>117</sup> Cable sent from the Chinese Ministry of National Defense to the Soviet Defense Ministry on February 23, 1968, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Soviet Army. Cited in *FBIS, DR, Soviet Union*, No. 38, February 23, 1968, pp. EE 7-8. The MND's 1968 cable was not nearly as effusive as had been the message of greeting personally sent by Lin Piao to Marshal Malinovski for the 48th anniversary in 1966. In that message Lin spoke of the "glorious history" of the Soviet Army and ended with a plea for greater Sino-Soviet unity:

May the great *militant friendship* between the peoples of China and the Soviet Union and *between their armies* be tempered and show its splendid brilliance in the flames of the struggle against U.S. imperialism, the most ferocious enemy of the world people. [Emphasis added.]

Written during the height of the controversy over whether China should accept Moscow's offer for "united action," the cable suggests that Lin was not as close to Mao on this issue as we have been led to believe by the analysts who examined the strategic debates. Just a month later, Mao contradicted the spirit of Lin's cable by ordering that "We shall not depend on the S.U." While it is unclear whether Lin advocated *relying* on the Soviet Union, there is no doubt that the cable sought to *strengthen the ties* between the two countries.

Given the state of Sino-Soviet relations in 1968, and the fact that no message whatsoever had been sent in 1967 (during the height of the Red Guard anti-Soviet activity), the MND message for the 50th anniversary stands out in bold relief as one of the only positive references to the Soviet Union made by any Chinese leader since March 1966. Just six weeks later, the MFA sent a formal note of protest to the same country Lin had warmly greeted in February, accusing it of having "engaged in espionage activities" against China "for a long time."

Although the evidence does not enable us to go as far in labeling Lin Piao pro-Soviet as has Roger Brown, it certainly refutes the common assertion that Lin was the most anti-Soviet leader in China. Regardless of the motives behind Lin's 1966 and 1968 messages, they reveal a man who was not anxious to put China in the uncomfortable situation of *directly opposing the Soviet Union*.

Message of Greetings from Lin Piao to Marshal Malinovski, February 23, 1966. Cited in *FBIS, DR, FE*, No. 36, February 23, 1966, pp.



unequivocally stated that "In the future we will send greetings, but they will be addressed *only to the Soviet people*."<sup>118</sup> [Emphasis added.] This was the first time Mao's guidelines on this issue had been violated. The Chinese had uniformly disregarded Soviet Army Day in 1967, and no other ministries offered kind words to the Soviet Army in 1968. Coming at a time when Teng Hai-ch'ing and others were castigating the Soviet enemy for "sharpening his sword" for the coming battle with China, the MND cable seems to be an attempt by Lin to counterattack. Just ten days later a PD commentary returned to the subject of Soviet Army Day, but this time Defense Minister Grechko's "heinous features" and the "paper tiger" nature of the Soviet Army were vitriolically denounced.<sup>119</sup> Did the MND cable suggest that Lin sought to defuse the crisis with the Soviet Union? Regardless of where Lin stood on this issue, the contradictory handling of the event in the Chinese media is apparent.<sup>120</sup>

At the same time "some people" were calling for vigilance in the north, there were fresh developments in Vietnam that required a second look at the U.S. threat. In an unusual carrot-and-stick combination, the North Vietnamese launched the Tet offensive at the same time they floated a diplomatic offer to talk with the United States after it unconditionally halted the bombing of the north.<sup>121</sup> Although it would

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BBB 2-3; excerpts from the Foreign Ministry Note of Protest to the Soviet Union on April 4, 1968, were included in an NCNA international broadcast of April 5. Cited in FBIS, DR, CC, No. 68, March 5, 1968; also see *Trends*, No. 15, April 10, 1968, p. 15, for a short discussion of the Foreign Ministry Note.

<sup>118</sup> *Miscellany of Mao Tse-tung Thought (1949-1968)*, Part II, JPRS, No. 61269-2, February 20, 1974, pp. 375-380. This is an English translation of the Chinese source cited above, footnote 11, p. 17.

<sup>119</sup> "Soviet Revisionist Renegades Aid and Abet U.S. Imperialist Paper Tiger," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, commentary, March 2, 1968. Cited in FBIS, DR, CC, No. 44, March 4, 1968, pp. BBB 2-3.

<sup>120</sup> One author refers to the "Mao-Lin-Chou strategy" in foreign policy. See Ishwer C. Ojha, *Chinese Foreign Policy in an Age of Transition: The Diplomacy of Cultural Despair*, Beacon Press, 1971, 2d ed., p. 108.

<sup>121</sup> Speech given by Foreign Minister Trinh of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on December 29, 1967, and released on January 1, 1968. The highlights of the speech are cited in *Trends*, No. 1, January 4, 1968, p. 1.

take several months for the shock of Tet to turn around key U.S. decisionmakers, the rapidly deteriorating military situation in Vietnam appeared to bear out the moderates' assessment of a declining U.S. threat.

The military, however, saw things quite differently. Wen Yu-cheng, Deputy Chief of General Staff of the PLA, repeated the military's pro forma admonitions about U.S. imperialism, calling it "the most vicious enemy of the people of the world."<sup>122</sup> Wang Hung-kun, a leading member of the PLA Navy, went so far as to warn that the United States would "surely...continue to carry out war provocations or even engage in new military adventures against China."<sup>123</sup> [Emphasis added.]

These assessments of the U.S. threat led the LAD to urge that:

We must heighten our vigilance a hundredfold,...and promote preparations against war....<sup>124</sup> [Emphasis added.]

The PD, following the beat of another drummer, asserted that:

The Chinese people have already made all preparations [zao yi zuo hao zhun bei] and are waiting in battle array.<sup>125</sup> [Emphasis added.]

Chi P'eng-fei, a leading spokesman for the MFA and a close confidant of Chou En-lai, revealed why the moderates felt that the preparations were already adequate. He referred to the U.S. threat in the past tense and concluded that "the days of U.S. imperialism are

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<sup>122</sup>"Victory Certainly Belongs to the Heroic Vietnamese People Persevering in Struggle," *Chieh-fang-chün pao*, editorial, February 9, 1968. Cited in *Peking Review*, No. 7, February 16, 1968, pp. 7-8.

<sup>123</sup>Cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 35, February 19, 1968, pp. BBB 14-15.

<sup>124</sup>"With Boundless Loyalty to the Great Leader Chairman Mao, One Will Be Invincible Wherever One Goes," *Chieh-fang-chün pao*, by Commentator, February 15, 1968. Cited in *ibid.*, No. 33, February 15, 1968, pp. BBB 3-4.

<sup>125</sup>"Those Who Play With Fire, Watch Out For Your Heads!," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, by Commentator, February 15, 1968. Cited in *ibid.*, pp. BBB 2-3.



numbered."<sup>126</sup> Nine days later, however, the military and radicals capitalized on two recent "hard-line" public pronouncements from North Vietnam by issuing a formal Chinese Government statement on the war. Echoing the Vietnamese assessment, which in this case was comfortably close to the military's own viewpoint, it stressed that in its dying gasps the United States would "invariably...expand the war."<sup>127</sup> Thus a foreign policy coalition of Lin and the radicals was able to continue to assert its will by insuring that the Government statement rejected the moderates' analysis of the situation.

On March 7, the PLA shot down another U.S. plane over Southwest China and this gave the leading decisionmakers another opportunity to restate their positions. The PD concluded that the "PLA has forged [zhu cheng le] a great iron wall to defend the socialist motherland"<sup>128</sup> [emphasis added], while the LAD argued that the PLA "can...build a bastion of iron on land...."<sup>129</sup> [Emphasis added.] Diverse assessments

<sup>126</sup>Speech given by Chi P'eng-fei at reception given by Tanzanian Embassy on February 20, 1968. Also attending for the Chinese were Ch'en Yi, Hsieh Huai-te, and Ting Hsi-lin. Broadcast by NCNA international on the same day and cited in FBIS, DR, CC, No. 37, February 21, 1968, pp. BBB 1-2.

<sup>127</sup>The Statement of the Government of the People's Republic of China issued on March 1, 1968, was most likely linked with the statements issued on February 15 and 20 by the Central Committee of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The statement is cited in *Peking Review*, No. 10, March 8, 1968, pp. 21-22.

<sup>128</sup>"Be Sure To Destroy the Enemy Intruders," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, by Commentator, March 8, 1968; cited in FBIS, DR, CC, No. 48, March 8, 1968, pp. BBB 3-4. Also, "Defending the Skies With Infinite Loyalty," *Chieh-fang-chün pao*, by Commentator, March 8, 1968, cited in *ibid.*, pp. BBB 2-3.

<sup>129</sup>Three hours after NCNA domestic service broadcast the LAD commentary in full, containing the cited passage, NCNA corrected it and significantly altered the import of the article. Whereas the commentary had read: "Currently, U.S. imperialism,...is furthering its collusion with the Soviet revisionist ruling clique, and in league with them is frenziedly expanding the war of aggression and continuously engaging in war provocations against our country...;" it was subsequently amended to read: "...and in league with them is plotting so-called peace talks. While doing this U.S. imperialism is frenziedly expanding the war of aggression...." [Emphasis added.] While the

were also apparent over the issue of Soviet-American collaboration. The same group who felt that the defenses in the south were inadequate portrayed Soviet-American collusion as "continuously engaging in war provocations against *our country*" [emphasis added]. Those who downgraded the need for making preparations in the south, however, saw the two as "vainly attempting to wage a last ditch struggle by expanding the war in *Vietnam*."<sup>130</sup> [Emphasis added.] In other words, the two were colluding but not against China.

In late March and April, three events signaled to the Chinese that the situation in Vietnam had fundamentally changed. First, the Commander of all U.S. forces in Vietnam, General William Westmoreland, was called back to Washington to become Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, and was replaced by General Creighton Abrams. Second, President Johnson announced that he would *unilaterally* stop bombing most of North Vietnam, end the war through peace negotiations rather than further escalations, and *not* seek reelection. Finally the North Vietnamese responded that they were willing to talk about talking. By May the Paris Peace Talks

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original article had stressed that both the United States and the Soviet Union were provoking China, the edited version dropped the claim that the Soviets were threatening the PRC and instead limited U.S.-Soviet collaboration to plotting peace talks. Thus the portrayal of the Soviet Union as an adversary of China and a collaborator with the United States was fundamentally changed after a major *LAD* commentary had been written and broadcast.

One possible hypothesis would have outside events intervening that compelled the *LAD* editorial staff *not* to paint a picture of joint Soviet-American collaboration against *China*. Since the *PD* commentary (broadcast by *NCNA* domestic service at 0052 GMT March 8--two hours *after* the *LAD* article was transmitted and 15 minutes *before* the commentary was altered) limited Soviet-American collaboration to the Vietnam Peace Talks, possibly the editorial staff of the *LAD* was compelled to change its interpretation to better conform with the *PD* analysis. If this hypothesis is correct, it would imply (1) the *PD*'s assessment of the Soviet Union (not collaborating with the United States against China) was the preferred analysis; (2) the *LAD* was "required" by protocol to comply with the "approved" line; and (3) the question of portrayal of the Soviet Union was a contentious issue that was in the process of being resolved by higher authorities.

The incident reinforces our argument that there was serious disagreement among top decisionmakers--which filtered down to the news media staffs--over the proper depiction of the Soviet Union and of the aims of Soviet-American collusion. Further comment may be found in Pillsbury, 1975b, op. cit.

<sup>130</sup> See footnote 128, p. 75.



had begun and the threat confronting the Vietnamese and the Chinese was substantially reduced.

This thrust a new issue onto the Chinese stage. Now the leadership had to determine whether or not they would support the new Vietnamese strategy. This involved the larger question of the utility of negotiations with imperialists. Predictably, the military with some support from the radicals strenuously objected to the Paris Peace Talks by launching a series of articles that pointed out the historical reasons for not negotiating with the United States.<sup>131</sup> This coalition was powerful enough to prevent any specific discussion of the details of the Talks from appearing in the press for over five months.<sup>132</sup> While the moderates did not actively defend the Vietnamese, neither did they publicly condemn the Talks as did virtually all other major Chinese leaders.<sup>133</sup>

In a new tactical ploy, Ch'en Yi and Chou put forward the concept of "peaceful coexistence" to signal their acceptance of the general concept of consultations as a means for resolving conflicts. On May 24, Ch'en Yi reintroduced the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in

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<sup>131</sup> See the following representative articles: "Murderous Intentions Are Revealed Before the Scheme Is Fully Unfolded," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, by Commentator, April 15, 1968; cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 74, April 5, 1968, pp. A 1-2. *NCNA* international, April 22, 1968, broadcast summaries and excerpts from four articles written by PLA commanders and fighters published in *Chieh-fang-chün pao*, April 21, 1968; cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 80, April 23, 1968, pp. B 3-6. Wang Ching-yuan and Tien Tien-yu (PLA fighters), "Use the Guns of Revolution to Fight for a New, Red World," *Chieh-fang-chün pao*, April 21, 1968, cited in *ibid.* "Victory Surely Belongs to the Palestinian People Who Are Persisting in Armed Struggle," *Chieh-fang-chün pao*, by Commentator, May 16, 1968; cited in *ibid.*, No. 97, May 16, 1967, pp. A 4-5.

<sup>132</sup> *NCNA*, October 19, 1968. Cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 206, October 21, 1968, p. A 1. This marked the first time that the Chinese media publicly mentioned the Paris Peace Talks by name. Although there may be no correlation, this announcement came during the Twelfth Plenum (October 13-31) which we know dealt, at least in part, with foreign policy issues.

<sup>133</sup> An *NCNA* article of April 25, 1968, bent with the winds yet still managed to go against the tide by stating that the best way to oppose Soviet modern revisionism was to unite with other revolutionary people. Thus, rather than stressing the importance of armed struggle in opposing the United States, it stressed that people should unite to oppose revisionism. *NCNA*, April 25, 1968, cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 82, April 25, 1968, pp. A 1-5.

the context of discussing Sino-Nepalese relations.<sup>134</sup> This marked the first time in over 15 months that anyone in China had used the expression in a favorable context.<sup>135</sup> During the previous year, the Principles had been used as another brick to throw at the Soviet revisionists in condemning the capitulationist nature of their foreign policy. In November 1967 the policy of the Five Principles was equated with the Soviet policy of "prostrating yourself before U.S. imperialism."<sup>136</sup> Six months later, in different hands, it came to represent why relations between China and Nepal had been so successful. In the following months, Chou and Ch'en Yi would refer to the Principles on five occasions when discussing bilateral relations between China and Nepal, Afghanistan, and Tanzania.

In November, as Sino-Soviet tensions rose to a crescendo, the MFA discussed them again, claiming that the Five Principles represented the Chinese view of the way Sino-American relations should be conducted.<sup>137</sup>

<sup>134</sup>The "Five Principles" are: (1) mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, (2) mutual non-aggression, (3) mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, (4) equality and mutual benefit, and (5) peaceful coexistence. Cited in Allen Whiting, "The Sino-American Détente: Genesis and Prospects," *China and the World Community*, Ian Wilson (ed.), Australian Institute of International Affairs, 1973, p. 72.

<sup>135</sup>See speech given by Ch'en Yi at reception for visiting Government delegation from Mauritania on February 15, 1967. Cited in *FBIS, DR, FE*, No. 32, February 15, 1967, p. BBB 15.

<sup>136</sup>The authoritative article stated:

It is you renegades who have betrayed proletarian internationalism and the revolutionary cause of the world proletariat, made "peaceful-coexistence," "peaceful competition," and "peaceful transition" the general line of foreign policy, prostrated yourselves before U.S. imperialism and formed a new "holy alliance" with all the most reactionary forces in the world against communism, against the people, against revolution and against China.

"Advance Along the Road Opened Up By the October Socialist Revolution," by the *Jen-min Jih-pao*, *Hung-ch'i*, and *Chieh-fang-chün pao* editorial boards, November 5, 1967. Cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 216, November 6, 1967, pp. BBB 1-10.

<sup>137</sup>Note sent by the Chinese Foreign Ministry to the United States on November 25, 1968. Cited in *Peking Review*, No. 48, November 29, 1968, pp. 30-31.



On May 18, however, during the height of the campaign to denounce those who advocated taking the "parliamentary road," the Chinese unilaterally postponed the 135th session of the Sino-American Ambassadorial Talks.<sup>138</sup> The Chinese Chargé d'Affaires ad Interim, Chen Tung, sent U.S. Ambassador John Gronouski a strange letter canceling the Talks because "the Chinese Ambassador will not be able to return to his post for the time being and as there is nothing to discuss at present."<sup>139</sup> The Chinese suggested that the next Talks be postponed until middle or late November, i.e., after the presidential elections had determined who the Chinese would be negotiating with for the next four years.

The obvious question that deserves to be answered is, Why did the Chinese cancel the May 29 meeting? During the 134th Talk, held on January 8, 1968, though the Chinese Ambassador did not attend, the Chargé d'Affaires indicated that the Chinese were still eager to maintain the Talks at the Ambassadorial level. Possibly, then, the Chinese concluded that if their Ambassador missed two meetings in a row, it might possibly jeopardize future talks.<sup>140</sup>

A more compelling reconstruction focuses on the moderates' reaction to President Johnson's decision not to seek reelection and the initiation of the Paris Peace Talks. As of late March, the Chinese realized that he had been reduced to a lame-duck status and therefore was not likely to respond favorably to any Chinese offer regarding a reassessment of U.S. policy toward China. Moreover, any agreements

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<sup>138</sup>"Sino-U.S. Ambassadorial Talks Postponed," *NCNA*, May 28, 1968. Cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 105, May 28, 1968, p. A 4.

<sup>139</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup>Although the Ambassadorial Talks had been held regularly since 1953, the frequency of the meetings dropped noticeably during the GPCR. The 131st Talks were held September 7, 1966; the 132nd Talks were delayed by the Chinese from January 11 to January 25, 1967; the 133rd session was held on June 7, 1967, because of a Chinese request to not hold them so often; and the 134th Talks were held on January 8, 1968.

Since the Chinese had shown signs of dragging their feet and had substituted their Chargé d'Affaires for their Ambassador in the January Talks, it could be plausibly argued that some Chinese leaders felt it would be better to postpone rather than hold another session at a lower diplomatic level.

reached with the Johnson administration could easily be abrogated by the next president.<sup>141</sup> Accordingly, rather than go out on a shaky "pro-U.S." limb in May when the fruits to be gained from such a maneuver were not commensurate with the risks involved, the moderates backed down and deferred to the policy preferences of the military and radicals.<sup>142</sup> At the same time, however, Chou and others began to lay the groundwork for expanding contacts with the next president, by floating the "peaceful coexistence" theme five days later.

June and July witnessed a series of developments that undoubtedly heightened Chinese anxieties over what lay ahead. For the first time in nearly 18 months, Moscow's leaders announced a new willingness to exchange views with the United States on the question of "restriction and reduction" of offensive and defensive strategic nuclear weapons. The Soviet move provided the military and radicals with another opportunity to condemn Soviet-American collusion, which was not "taking a grave step in the materialization of a U.S.-Soviet *nuclear military alliance*."<sup>143</sup> [Emphasis added.] Much closer to home, and therefore even more alarming, Soviet and Mongolian troops and missile units conducted large-scale military maneuvers in July near the Sino-Mongolian border.<sup>144</sup> These maneuvers dramatized for the Chinese the extent and capabilities of the Soviet troops deployed along the border.

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<sup>141</sup>Historically, however, the Chinese had not visibly altered the schedule of the Talks when confronted with a lame-duck president. The only previous time the Chinese faced such a dilemma was in 1959 when President Eisenhower was finishing the end of his second term in office. In that situation, the Talks were held regularly: June 7, 1960; July 8; September 6; October 18; December 1; January 27, 1961; and March 7.

See Kenneth Young, op. cit., for the most complete study on the Ambassadorial Talks.

<sup>142</sup>The wave of vitriolic criticism of "parliamentary struggle," evidently designed to demonstrate Chinese displeasure with the North Vietnamese for meeting with the United States, would have made it potentially embarrassing for the Chinese to sit down with the United States just three weeks after the first meeting of the Paris Peace Talks.

<sup>143</sup>"Dirty Deal on Deal," *Peking Review*, No. 27, July 5, 1968; pp. 33-34. For background on this point see Pillsbury, 1975b, op. cit.

<sup>144</sup>Available information does not provide a detailed description of exactly when, where, or who participated in the maneuvers. *Sing-tao Jih-pao* (Hong Kong), August 3, 1968, p. 2, claimed that they occurred



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CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY FACTIONALISM AND THE ORIGINS OF THE STRA--ETC(U)

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The Chinese responded in two ways. First, the military commands of Inner Mongolia were placed under the jurisdiction of the Peking Military Region.<sup>145</sup> This greatly consolidated the command structure that monitored and protected a huge sector of the Sino-Mongolian border. In addition, reinforcement troops were dispatched to the area.<sup>146</sup> Furthermore, in early August, Inner Mongolian PLA activists committed themselves to fulfilling Chairman Mao's "latest instructions" to:

Build the border in the North of the fatherland as an iron-steel great wall against revisionism, and to be ready at all times to annihilate the enemies who dare to invade us.<sup>147</sup>  
[Emphasis added.]

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along the Chinese border. Thomas Robinson, however, stated that it was unclear whether they took place on Mongolian soil or in the Soviet Union. See Robinson, 1972, op. cit., p. 1186. In addition, Robinson cited the *Los Angeles Times* (July 10, 1968) in claiming that Soviet strength in Mongolia included six divisions, including one tank division. This is similar to Wu Chin-yu's estimate of five divisions. Evidence exists that after the Soviet-Mongolian exercises, "several Chinese divisions were redeployed to the Soviet-Mongolian border and that significant numbers of artillery pieces were being withdrawn from the Fukien region, ostensibly for shipment to the Soviet border region." Robinson, 1972, op. cit., p. 1186. See Wu Chin-yu, "Peiping's Efforts to Strengthen Defense Works on the Desert Areas," *Chinese Communist Affairs*, Vol. 5, No. 1, February 1969, pp. 17-20.

<sup>145</sup> Sometime in June, possibly because of increased Soviet agitation, actions were taken to exercise tighter control over Inner Mongolia to prevent the domestic chaos there from constraining the defense capabilities of the PLA border troops. This consolidated the command structure that monitored and controlled a huge sector of the border with Mongolia. In addition, reinforcement troops were dispatched there (although it is unclear whether their main function was to protect the border or suppress sabotage activities and clamp down on domestic strife). See *Agency France Press* dispatch, dateline: Taipei, June 9, 1968.

<sup>146</sup> As Thomas Robinson pointed out, the actual assignments for these and other troops sent to regions that bordered on the Soviet Union are unclear (op. cit., 1972). While they may have been charged with shoring up border units, they might just as easily have been sent to suppress violent GPCR factionalism. In this instance--regardless of whether they were sent in to preserve the peace or to protect the border--the net effect would be to present the Soviet Union with a better prepared front line.

<sup>147</sup> Message of the Third Congress of PLA activities held in Inner Mongolia in late July and early August, as reported by Inner Mongolian



While Mao may not have been ready to brand the Soviet Union as China's primary adversary in a major public forum, he was willing to order that precautionary moves be taken to prevent Moscow from falsely concluding that China would not fight back.<sup>148</sup>

The second aspect of the Chinese response was to expedite the campaign already under way since the spring to consolidate the gains of the two years of struggle by bringing the GPCR to an end. On July 28, a central directive was issued that expanded the authority of the PLA to dissolve leftist factions.<sup>149</sup> Within six weeks of the directive, the six remaining provinces established Revolutionary Committees.<sup>150</sup> Despite the fact that the radicals, in an attempt to forestall the inevitable, had specifically warned that the "Soviet revisionist renegades were pinning their hopes on the 'premature end' of China's GPCR,"<sup>151</sup> the PLA was finally brought in to wrestle away power from the Red Guard groups and restore order. The final end came when Mao sadly joined the forces seeking to end the GPCR because of the local factionalism and

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regional service in Mandarin on August 3, 1968. Cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 158, August 12, 1968, p. F 1.

<sup>148</sup> In addition to the "latest instructions," Mao had also demonstrated his awareness of the Soviet buildup quite early on by claiming in *January 1967* that Soviet "ground forces are on the move," and therefore Chinese troops in the north and particularly in the Sinkiang region "must be on guard and in a state of preparedness." *Current Background*, No. 892, October 21, 1969, p. 50. "Instructions to the PLA" (as relayed by Vice-Chairman Yeh Chieh-ying on January 27, 1967). Harold Hinton, however, after a thorough examination of the events leading up to the Chenpao Island incidents concluded that even after *Czechoslovakia*, Mao "evidently did not take the Soviet threat seriously...." [Emphasis added.] (See Hinton, 1971b, op. cit., p. 34.)

<sup>149</sup> Notice of the CCP Central Committee, State Council, Military Affairs Commission of the Central Committee issued on July 28, 1968, giving the PLA authority to dissolve leftist factions. Cited in *Survey of China Mainland Press (SCMP)*, No. 4332, August 5, 1968, pp. 1-3.

<sup>150</sup> The last five PRCs to be established were: Yunnan--August 13, Fukien--August 19, Kwangsi--August 26, Sinkiang--September 5, and Tibet--September 5. For a complete list of the dates of all 29 PRCs, see Richard Baum, "China: Year of the Mangoes," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 9, No. 1, January 1969, pp. 6-7.

<sup>151</sup> *NCNA*, May 21, 1968. Cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 101, May 22, 1968, pp. A 1-2.

violence that were seriously eroding political order. Mao, according to one dramatic account, on July 28, "with tears in his eyes" told a group of Tsinghua University Red Guards: "You have let me down, and what is more you have disappointed the workers, peasants and soldiers of China."<sup>152</sup> Mao sealed the fate of the radicals by bestowing a "treasured gift" of mangoes to the "worker-peasant thought of Mao Tse-tung Propaganda Teams," which were charged with the task of quieting the student violence.

As Soviet divisions moved in Mongolia, the Soviet threat began to have a major impact even on the military group. Since they could apparently no longer ignore the Soviet buildup, the military began to stress that Soviet hostility was part and parcel of a larger Soviet-American conspiracy

to form a counter-revolutionary ring of encirclement against the PRC and to create border tensions by frequently encroaching upon our territorial waters and air space.<sup>153</sup>

The military group came to fear that the two colluding adversaries were goading a ring of collaborators to impose a war on China. But they nevertheless emphasized that the gang was led by U.S. imperialism.

Despite the appearance of a diminished U.S. threat, Chief of Staff Huang Yung-sheng clung to the military assessment that the threat of the United States was the most dangerous foe facing China. In doing so he kept alive two issues: which threat was the more serious and whether the two were colluding or colluding and contending. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia later in August appeared to vindicate the moderates' estimate that the Soviet Union was the primary danger. It probably not only demonstrated that the Soviets now posed a greater threat to China than did the United States but also that the two superpowers contended as well as colluded. The military drew different lessons from the

<sup>152</sup> Baum, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>153</sup> Speech given by Huang Yung-sheng at reception given by the Ministry of National Defense honoring the 41st anniversary of the PLA on August 1, 1968. Cited in *Peking Review*, No. 32, August 9, 1968, pp. 12-14.



Soviet invasion, but the moderates had seized the initiative. By stressing the gravity of the situation, Chou used his newly won advantage, boldly moving ahead to reduce Sino-American hostility. But would the Americans meet him halfway?

AUGUST 1968-MARCH 1969: THE U.S. OPTION IN CHINA'S  
STRATEGIC RESPONSE--A TWO-LINE STRUGGLE

Although the Czech crisis had been on the verge of exploding throughout the summer, the Chinese strangely did not mention it until August 10.<sup>154</sup> Just ten days later when Soviet troops entered Prague, the Chinese responded immediately. From the very beginning the Chinese leadership split over the twin issues of how to depict the Soviet intervention and what lessons to learn from such an exhibition of aggressive Soviet military behavior.

One interpretation came in a *NCNA* article released on August 22.<sup>155</sup> The article reflected the views of the military and radical group stressing four major aspects of the Czech crisis:

in foreign policy it [the Dubcek clique] flaunted the banner of "independence" in an intensified effort to shake off the control by the Soviet revisionist clique, actively striving to have "*direct links*" and *develop relations with the West*. [Emphasis added.]

This event is a concentrated expression of the daily deepening and inextricable crises and *serious contradiction within the modern revisionist bloc*.... [Emphasis added.]

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<sup>154</sup>"Soviet Revisionism and Czechoslovakia," originally published in *Zeri I Popullit*, July 24, 1968. This article extensively summarized the history of the recent Soviet-Czech crisis referring to it as a "dog-fight." On August 10, this same article with many deletions (particularly with reference to Soviet military involvement in Czech decision-making) appeared in several Peking sources. See *Trends*, Vol. 19, No. 33, August 14, 1968, p. 18, for a brief analysis of the differences between the two versions.

<sup>155</sup>"Beset with Difficulties at Home and Abroad and Finding Itself in a Tight Corner, Soviet Revisionist Renegade Clique Blatantly Sends Troops to Occupy Czechoslovakia," *NCNA*, August 22, 1968. Cited in *FBIS*, *DR*, *CC*, No. 166, August 23, 1968, pp. A 1-5.

It reveals in full the *paper tiger nature* of the Soviet revisionists....and have exposed to the full the hideous features of the Soviet revisionists--*big nation chauvinism, national egoism, and imperialist jungle law*. [Emphasis added.]

This is the result of the *direct collusion* of the Soviet revisionist renegade clique with U.S. imperialism in a vain attempt to redive the world.... [Emphasis added.]

An important lesson to be learned, according to this analysis, was that Moscow and Washington were stepping up their collaboration. Despite the fact that the Soviet Union had pulled the trigger, so to speak, NCNA nevertheless dramatized the consequences of Sino-American *direct collusion*.

A fundamentally conflicting analysis was presented the following day by Chou En-lai and a PD commentary.<sup>156</sup> While they were in essential agreement with NCNA's first two points--regarding Dubcek's links with the West and the splits within the revisionist bloc--the two were in opposition over how to depict the Soviet Union in the wake of Czechoslovakia. While NCNA had described a Soviet "paper tiger" with all of its "hideous features," both the PD and Chou saw a gang of "social-imperialists."<sup>157</sup> Chou even drew the parallel between Moscow's "social-fascism" and Hitler's aggression against Czechoslovakia. The significance of these labels was plainly spelled out:

The Soviet revisionist renegade clique has long ago degenerated into a gang of *social-imperialists*. The relations between them and the U.S. imperialists, just as the relations among all the imperialist countries, are relations of both *mutual collaboration and mutual struggle*. [Emphasis added.]

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<sup>156</sup>"Total Bankruptcy of Soviet Modern Revisionism," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, by Commentator, August 23, 1968. Cited in *ibid.*, pp. A 5-8.

Speech given by Chou En-lai at National Day reception given by Rumanian Ambassador to China Aurel Duma on August 23, 1968. Cited in *ibid.*, No. 167, August 26, 1968, pp. A 1-2. Chou was the first major leader to discuss the Czech invasion publicly.

<sup>157</sup>This PD commentary marked the first time that the Chinese media utilized the phrase "social-imperialists." As an explanatory note in the August 30 PD pointed out, "Social-imperialism is imperialism under the flag of 'socialism.'" Cited in *ibid.*, No. 171, August 30, 1968, p. A 7.



The theoretical groundwork was thus laid for the moderates to offer a fundamentally different analysis of the nature of Soviet-American relations. Instead of revealing "hand-in-glove"<sup>158</sup> collusion between Washington and Moscow, the Czech invasion demonstrated "*extremely acute contradictions* between U.S. imperialism and Soviet modern revisionism ...."<sup>159</sup> [Emphasis added.] While one group saw expanding Soviet-American collusion, Chou saw "*sharpening contradictions*." [Emphasis added.] This theoretical distinction had crucial operational implications. For as Mao had stressed in *On Policy*, it is imperative to draw clear distinctions between various kinds of imperialism: "We must on one hand distinguish Japanese [substitute Soviet] imperialism which is invading China from other imperialist powers which are not invading China."<sup>160</sup> In such a situation when China is confronted by two adversaries, Mao had written:

Our tactical principle remains one of exploiting the contradictions among them in order to win over the majority, oppose the minority and crush the enemies separately.<sup>161</sup>

Thus, if the moderates could only demonstrate to Mao or the military/radicals that at that historical moment the Soviet Union represented the main adversary threatening China, then they could grasp the opportunities offered by any struggle, loophole or contradiction in the enemy camp and use it to combat the principal enemy.

Proceeding in this vein, Chou vividly described Moscow's most recent atrocity and exhorted everyone to digest the lessons of unparalleled richness:

That a big nation should have so willfully trampled a small nation underfoot serves as a most important lesson for those harboring illusions about U.S. imperialism and Soviet revisionism....Our great Leader Chairman Mao has pointed out:

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<sup>158</sup> See footnote 155, p. 84.

<sup>159</sup> "Total Bankruptcy," footnote 156, p. 85.

<sup>160</sup> Mao Tse-tung, op. cit., p. 218.

<sup>161</sup> See footnote 11, p. 17.

"for a while some people may not see things clearly, or may be hoodwinked, or may commit mistakes, but so long as they want to make revolution, *having once understood the true situation and seen revisionism in its true colors*, they will eventually break with revisionism and come over to the side of Marxism-Leninism in the course of their revolutionary practice."<sup>162</sup> [Emphasis added.]

Once those people who still "harbored illusions" or who had been "hoodwinked" by Moscow's sweet-sounding words finally saw the "true colors" of Soviet revisionism, then China could drive a wedge between the two adversaries, exploit their contradictions, and play one off against the other.

In the following weeks, articles of both persuasion continued to appear in the press.<sup>163</sup> Neither Lin nor any of the military/radical spokesmen invoked the image of Soviet "social-imperialism" as had Chou. At the same time, Chou repeated the concept that "the old world is going to collapse."<sup>164</sup> First discussed by Chou on June 18, it suggested that the old world system of Soviet-American hegemony in which the United States was China's major adversary was giving way to an entirely new world where China would play a major role and the Soviet Union would be

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<sup>162</sup> Chou's August 23 speech; see footnote 156, p. 85.

<sup>163</sup> For an example of the moderates' position, see "Deal Made at Bayonet Point," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, by Commentator, August 30, 1968. Cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 171, August 30, 1968, pp. A 1-3. The commentary referred to both social-imperialism and the "scrambled and collaborated" theme.

For an example of the military/radical position, see "Soviet Revisionists Insist on Armed Occupation of Czechoslovakia," *NCNA*, August 29, 1968; cited in *Peking Review*, No. 36, September 6, 1968, pp. 9-12. It referred to the "sinister schemes" of the United States and the Soviet Union of "ganging up and cooperating with each other."

<sup>164</sup> Speech given by Chou En-lai at Peking rally celebrating establishment of Revolutionary Committees in all of China's provinces (with the exception of Taiwan) on September 7, 1968. Cited in *Peking Review*, No. 37, September 13, 1968, p. 67. During this same speech, Chou reintroduced the idea that "the old world is going to collapse," which he had first discussed in a speech given on June 18. The main point here, as before, was that the old world system with the United States as China's major adversary was giving way to a new world where the Soviet Union was China's major adversary. Cited in *Peking Review*, No. 26, June 28, 1968, pp. 5-6.



China's major adversary.<sup>165</sup> An indication of the long-term nature of the Soviet threat came on September 12 when East Germany (which had assisted the Soviet Union in the invasion of Czechoslovakia) signed a 20-year treaty of friendship and mutual assistance with Mongolia. It forged another link in what the Soviet Union would soon call their "collective security system," which was taking on an increasingly anti-Chinese complexion.

While the moderates continued to expose and oppose Soviet "social-imperialism," it is unclear to what extent the military or the radicals supported Chou's policy of upgrading the Soviet threat while downplaying the American adversary. Since the radicals and military were in essential agreement that China was surrounded by a ring of colluding adversaries jointly led by the United States and the Soviet Union, they very likely would have opposed any move by Chou to demonstrate that the two threats were divisible and qualitatively different. Just such a maneuver came on September 15 and 16 when the MFA issued a formal government-to-government warning to Moscow strenuously protesting the "grave incidents in which Soviet military aircraft intruded into China's airspace;" and at the same time issued a pro forma "serious warning" to the United States for the intrusion of a U.S. plane over Chinese waters.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Note addressed to the Soviet Embassy from the Chinese Foreign Ministry protesting Soviet overflights, transmitted on September 16, 1968. Cited in *FBIS, DR, FE*, No. 181, September 16, 1968, pp. A 2-3. "U.S. Intrusion Draws 463rd Serious Warning." Cited in *FBIS, DR, FE*, No. 181, September 16, 1968, p. A 1.

The normal time lag between the overflights and the note of protest had been less than one week. While the MFA had handled the routine "serious warnings" concerning U.S. overflights, the Defense Ministry had previously issued notes in more serious cases. Since the particular issue of *Soviet overflights* had never come up before (or had come up and been suppressed) a precedent did not exist. Quite possibly, after several weeks had passed and the Defense Ministry had not generated a note in the prescribed reaction time, the MFA seized on the event rather than let it pass by unmentioned. Since the Defense Ministry had bolstered its case against the United States by dramatizing *U.S. overflights*, the MFA used Lin's trick to strengthen its indictment of Moscow by revealing the Soviet overflights.

Harold Hinton who also examined this period came up with a different analysis. He rejected the interpretation that the September 16 MFA

In juxtaposing these two announcements, the MFA highlighted the differences between the two "imperialists." The United States had been harrassing the PRC for years, yet since the Korean War the grave consequences many people in China anticipated had never materialized. The United States was the quintessential "paper tiger," as Chou put it, "strong in appearance but brittle in essence." The Soviet Union, however, was launching "frequent, barefaced, and flagrant military provocations." What's more, they were behaving in such a brazenly provocative manner precisely when "the Soviet Union sent its troops for aggression against Czechoslovakia. *And this is in no way accidental.*"<sup>167</sup> [Emphasis added.]

The note to the Soviet Union can be seen as a combination of crisis-management and a mildly deterrent statement.<sup>168</sup> It did not seek to defuse the mounting crisis, but rather confronted Moscow with its "flagrant encroachment on and violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the PRC" to dissuade the social-imperialists from applying the "Brezhnev Doctrine" to China. In a clear and nonbelligerent fashion the "Chinese Government" signaled to the "Soviet Government" that China would not respond to Soviet political-military pressure in the same supine manner as had Czechoslovakia. It concluded with a "stern warning":

Your present practice will definitely cut no ice with the Chinese people. The Soviet Government must take immediate and effective measures against the occurrence of similar incidents; otherwise the Soviet Government must be held fully responsible for all the grave consequences arising therefrom.

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note on the Soviet overflight was an attempt by the moderates (or the Chinese leadership) to signal to the *Soviet Union* that China would not be as easy to deal with as had been Czechoslovakia. Instead, Hinton connected the note with the situation in *Albania*.

A Chinese statement of September 16 alleging Soviet flights over Chinese territory during August was probably aimed at distracting Soviet attention from Albania's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact on September 12. (1971b, op. cit., p. 21.)

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> For an excellent study of crisis-management technique and the role it plays in international conflicts, see Alexander L. George et al., *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy: Laos, Cuba, Vietnam*, Little, Brown, Boston, 1971.



The note made no offensive threats, nor did it in any way attempt to escalate the crisis by provoking the Soviet Union. Yet while only mildly threatening in *content*, it represented a strong signal to the Soviet Union in the existing *context* that China would not idly sit back while Moscow prepared to invade the PRC.<sup>169</sup>

The new conditions created by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, the recent Soviet boldness towards China, and the decline in the U.S. threat, slowly were undermining certain arguments. An indication that the moderates' assessment was gaining acceptance came when a cable sent by Mao, Chou, and Lin, a *PD* editorial, and a *LAD* editorial all reflected Chou's September 7 statement by concluding that "Today a new historical

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<sup>169</sup> Precisely what various Chinese leaders thought the Soviet Union would do to China is unclear, although we can be fairly sure that expectations were at least partly determined by perceptions of the nature of the Soviet threat. Given the investment the Soviet Union was sinking into building up its forces along the Chinese border, it is not inconceivable that some Chinese imagined: (1) a surgical strike against China's unprotected missiles, possibly coordinated with a larger strike against China's key military-industrial centers; (2) a full-scale invasion patterned after the Soviet Union's eminently successful Manchurian Campaign of 1945; (3) a coordinated series of military probes to humiliate China and coerce it to adopt a more conciliatory stand toward Moscow; (4) an invasion to hold the northwest, and set up an anti-Maoist government there; or (5) an attempt to foment a civil war within China and then enter the conflict on the side of those opposed to Mao.

While we can never know precisely what the Chinese anticipated, we do have a good sense of the military situation as of 1968. Wu Chin-yu supplied a quasi-official Taiwanese estimate of the number of Chinese and Soviet troops along the western sector of the Sino-Soviet border. Wu's estimate (probably as of 1968) gave the Chinese five infantry divisions, two divisions of frontier guards, one cavalry division, two railway divisions, and agricultural construction forces in Inner Mongolia, plus seven infantry divisions, one airborne division, one cavalry division, and one division of frontier guards in Sinkiang. According to Wu this gave the Chinese a total of 250,000 troops in these two provinces as of the end of 1968 (100,000 in Inner Mongolia and 150,000 in Sinkiang). Wu estimated that, on the Soviet side of the border, there were seven to ten divisions, three armored divisions, one artillery division, and 800 planes in the Baikal and Eastern Turkestan Military Regions. In addition, there were five infantry divisions and 60 planes in the People's Republic of Mongolia. This gave the Soviet Union approximately 245,000 troops with a clear superiority in equipment and training. See Wu Chin-yu, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-20.

era of opposing U.S. imperialism and Soviet revisionism has arrived."<sup>170</sup> Yet even while Lin and the LAD were willing to accept the moderates' assessment concerning a new era, they refused to adopt Chou's "collude and contend" accusation, but rather steadfastly adhered to the "working hand in glove" formula.

These sharp differences in perception of the United States and the Soviet Union were reflected in the speeches given by Lin and Chou on Chinese National Day (October).<sup>171</sup> In the Defense Minister's major address, he failed to even mention the Czech incident, an incredible omission given the circumstances. In discussing the international situation, Lin reiterated the military line concerning the need for the PLA to "smash the scheme of collusion between U.S. imperialism and Soviet revisionism to carve up the world." [Emphasis added.] The "contending" nature of Soviet-American relations was rejected, and Lin instead stressed their collusion. Finally, Lin did not mention Chou's phrase about a new era of opposing the United States and the Soviet Union. Chou's speech was quite different. Just two days earlier the Premier had warned that the Soviet Union was heightening tension along the border by continuing to violate China's airspace and by "stationing a large number of troops along the Sino-Soviet and Sino-Mongolian frontiers."<sup>172</sup> In his National Day speech Chou highlighted the Czech incident and attributed it solely

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<sup>170</sup>"Courageous and Resolute Revolutionary Action," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, editorial, September 20, 1968. Cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 185, September 20, 1968, pp. A 3-4. This phrase was first used in a September 17 cable sent by Mao, Chou, and Lin to Albania. As an indication that the "new era" conception was also tacitly supported by Lin, the LAD also published a front-page editorial on the 20th which utilized the exact same phrase. Significantly though, the LAD editorial adhered to the "working hand in glove" approach consistently favored by the military. See "Resolutely Support the Revolutionary Action of the Albanian People," *Chieh-fang-chün pao*, September 20, 1968. Cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 185, September 20, 1968, pp. A 4-6.

<sup>171</sup>Speech given by Lin Piao at National Day celebration on October 1, 1968. Cited in *Peking Review*, No. 40, October 4, 1968, pp. 13-14. Also, speech given by Chou En-lai at National Day celebration on October 1, 1968. Cited in *ibid.*, pp. 14-16.

<sup>172</sup>Speech by Chou En-lai at reception for visiting Albanian delegation on September 29, 1968. Cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 191, September 30, 1968, p. A 12.



to "aggression committed by the Soviet revisionist renegade clique...." In contradiction to Lin's assessment, Chou stated: "U.S. imperialism and Soviet revisionism *are struggling as well as collaborating....*" [Emphasis added.] Moreover, Chou included in his speech the phrase "a new historical stage," suggesting that the old world system with the United States as China's primary threat had evolved into a new stage in which the Soviet Union represented the major adversary. The clearest indication of the difference, however, came at the end of the speech:

U.S. imperialism and Soviet revisionism are capable of evil. We must *heighten our vigilance*, intensify our preparedness against war and be ready at all times to smash any invasion launched by U.S. imperialism, Soviet revisionism and their lackeys, *whether individually or collectively*. [Emphasis added.]

While Lin had stressed how *both* the United States and the Soviet Union were planning to attack the PRC, Chou significantly mentioned the word "individually." Since the threat from the United States was greatly decreased, Chou suggested that the increased tension along the Sino-Soviet and Sino-Mongolian frontiers represented the greater threat to China.

When the two positions are analyzed in close detail, the differences in attitude become visible. Lin, by *downgrading* the likelihood of an attack, seemed to feel secure relying solely on the PLA to deter one if it came. Chou, by *emphasizing* the likelihood of an attack from the Soviet Union, suggested that a pure military deterrence would not be adequate.<sup>173</sup> The joint PD, RF, and LAD National Day editorial echoed many of the phrases used by Chou in his speech, which revealed that the

<sup>173</sup> This interpretation puts us in direct disagreement with prominent analysts of Chinese foreign policy such as O. Edmund Clubb. In an article on Sino-American relations in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Clubb appeared to discount the possibility of serious leadership disagreement and instead referred to "Peking" as if China was a unitary actor. See O. Edmund Clubb, "China and the United States: Collision Course?," *Current History*, Vol. 59, No. 349, September 1970, pp. 153-158, 179.

moderates' position was gaining support and may well have been the dominant view in Peking by early October.<sup>174</sup>

Following National Day, the military slowly began to move over to the moderates' analysis of the Soviet Union. Huang Yung-sheng spoke of the "great military force" concentrated along the Sino-Soviet and on the Chinese Mongolian borders, which he characterized as an "intensified armed provocation against China."<sup>175</sup> The issue of which was the primary adversary was temporarily put aside. However, disagreement over the collude-contend issue continued to play a major role in the foreign policy debates.

The focus of the debate thus gradually changed from analyzing the nature of the threat to resolving the nature of China's response. The crucial question was--could China oppose its adversaries on its own, or would it be necessary to form a united front? Ch'en Yi focused on this issue with a Japanese delegation by speaking of the need for a "great mobilization for opposing the aggressive wars of the U.S. imperialists and Soviet revisionists." [Emphasis added.] In a frank and revealing passage, Ch'en Yi laid out the moderates' position:

To achieve these goals, however, *China's power will not be strong enough. They cannot be fulfilled unless we are joined by the power of the Japanese people, the national liberation struggles of the Asian, African, and Latin American peoples, the Soviets, and Eastern Europeans, and the North Americans. It cannot be done unless there is world-wide consolidation.*<sup>176</sup> [Emphasis added.]

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<sup>174</sup>"Advance Courageously Along the Road of Victory," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, *Hung-ch'i*, *Chieh-fang-chün pao* joint editorial, October 1, 1968. See *Current Background (CB)*, No. 865, September 30, 1968, for an analysis of the editorial; the editorial is cited in *Peking Review*, No. 40, October 4, 1968, pp. 18-20.

<sup>175</sup>Speech given by Huang Yung-sheng at reception for visiting Albanian delegation on October 4, 1968, in *Jen-min Jih-pao*, October 5, 1968. Cited in *China News Analysis (CNA)*, No. 752, April 11, 1969, p. 7.

<sup>176</sup>Address given by Ch'en Yi to a Japanese delegation composed of representatives of the Sino-Japanese Friendship Association and the Sino-Japanese Cultural Exchange Association on October 8, 1968. Cited in *Chinese Communist Affairs: Facts and Features*, January 8, 1969, pp. 24-29.



Ch'en implicitly linked the Soviets' hostility and China's own military weakness with the need to form a broad united front. Unless China joined forces with a number of others, significantly including the *North Americans*, China would be unable to achieve its goals.

#### The Twelfth Plenum

The length of the Twelfth Plenum (October 13-31) suggests that many important policy questions were vigorously debated and a temporary consensus was finally reached at the end of the month. Consistent with this interpretation, the October 31 official Communiqué was in many respects an apparent compromise, reflecting, at least in part, the goals of virtually all the remaining decisionmakers.<sup>177</sup> The role of the PLA was enhanced, the radical contents of the Communiqué of the Eleventh Plenum were reaffirmed, and the need to step up the vigilance "a hundred-fold" was stressed. Although the Communiqué itself did not single out the Soviet Union as the prime adversary, Chairman Mao, in an unpublished "very important speech," allegedly accused the social-imperialists of being China's main and most dangerous international foe.<sup>178</sup>

Another sign that the Plenum shifted noticeably in the direction of the moderates came on October 19 when *NCNA* finally published an account of the Paris Peace Talks.<sup>179</sup> While not endorsing the Talks, the article quoted Western news reports to the effect that the Talks had already moved beyond the "big military question...to the political arena." The report suggested that Vietnam and the United States were well on their way to solving their conflict through consultation. Nowhere did it suggest that the United States was untrustworthy. Instead it implied that negotiating with the United States was a low-cost high-yield tactic.

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<sup>177</sup> Communiqué of the Twelfth Plenum of the 8th Central Committee of the CCP adopted on October 31, 1968. Cited in *Peking Review*, Supplement to No. 44, November 1, 1968, pp. 5-8.

<sup>178</sup> Although the speech was never officially disseminated, sources in Hong Kong reported that when Mao dealt with foreign policy questions he indicated that the Soviet Union represented a "greater threat to China than the weary paper tigers of American imperialism." See Gittings, 1969, op. cit., pp. 175-176.

<sup>179</sup> "Paris Peace Talks Termed 'Plot and Fraud,'" *NCNA*, October 19, 1968. Cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 206, October 21, 1968, p. A 1.

Mao's Plenary speech coupled with international developments must have greatly increased the strength of the moderates. Thus, despite the ascendancy of Lin Piao and the PLA on most fronts, the moderates appeared to emerge in an extremely strong position on the important foreign policy issues.

As the Twelfth Plenum drew to a close, Richard Nixon and Hubert Humphrey were rounding the last turn in their race for the presidency. Since the Chinese had stressed in May that late November would be a suitable time for the next session, they were well aware of the impact the election could have on future Sino-American relations. Therefore, they were in no rush to commit themselves to enter into substantive talks with the United States until after they knew with whom they would be negotiating.

Nixon's election was probably received as a mixed blessing. On the one hand, the Kennedy legacy would finally be removed from the Executive Branch and that was a good omen to the Chinese.<sup>180</sup> On the other hand, Nixon's long career as a hard-line cold warrior brought back memories of Korea, Dienbienphu, and Quemoy. While his 1967 *Foreign Affairs* article had spoken of the need to "come to grips" with the reality of China, it would have been a thin reed on which to support an argument that the "new" Nixon was significantly different from the "old" Nixon.<sup>181</sup> In any case, there was little incentive for the Chinese to meet with a lame-duck administration in November when by waiting several months they could start off fresh with Nixon.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> While the Chinese appeared to have been optimistic about the new Kennedy administration, they quickly reversed themselves and labeled him a "100 percent imperialist gangster." For an account of how the Chinese came to distrust and dislike the Kennedy group, see Young, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-244.

<sup>181</sup> Richard Nixon, "Asia After Vietnam," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 46, No. 1, October 1967, pp. 111-125.

<sup>182</sup> Possibly reflecting Chinese leadership disagreement or a concerted effort to get out of the November 20, 1968, meeting, the Chinese did not respond to the U.S. inquiries of September 12 and November 15. Finally, after hearing nothing from the Chinese, the United States unilaterally postponed the meeting on November 18.

Significantly, the Chinese MFA announcement of November 25 specially accused the United States of having "groundlessly 'assumed' that China



Having presumably won the right at the Twelfth Plenum to go angling for the next U.S. president, the moderates had to make sure they did not frighten away their fish. Significantly, then, *NCNA* attributed Nixon's electoral success to his plan to "reduce our commitments around the world in the areas where we are overextended" by putting "more emphasis on the priority areas," namely Europe.<sup>183</sup> The entire issue of Vietnam was avoided. In addition to the mild treatment of Nixon, the Chinese media as a whole adopted a significantly less hostile attitude toward the United States.<sup>184</sup> By toning down denunciations of the United States and stressing that Nixon would lower the U.S. military profile in Asia, the moderates undermined Lin's argument that the United States planned to escalate involvement in Southeast Asia and step up its collaboration with the Soviet Union in encircling the PRC. Since the U.S. threat to China was greatly diminished, Chou could then argue that the United States should be given secondary adversary status. This in turn would provide the moderates with the theoretical justification to warm up relations with Washington to offset the Soviet military threat.

In the weeks following the Twelfth Plenum, the moderate orientation of the Chinese media was accompanied by a significant change in the

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has no intention of acting upon its original proposal....It must be pointed out that the days when U.S. imperialism can ride roughshod over the world and order others about are long gone, never to return." [Emphasis added.] During this period, the privately operated radio-telephone link between China and the United States was suddenly severed. As Michael Pillsbury pointed out, the Chinese action was probably in response to a Soviet attack on a *Parade* magazine suggestion that a "hot line" be set up between Peking and Washington. Since the connection was restored in September 1971 (after Lin fell from power), one might infer that Lin was behind the move in November. See Pillsbury, 1975b, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

<sup>183</sup>"U.S. Imperialists Stage Presidential 'Election' Farce, Making Nixon New President," *NCNA*, September 8, 1968. Cited in *SCMP*, No. 4298, November 1968, pp. 33-34.

<sup>184</sup>For a detailed analysis of Sino-American interactions during this period, see Robert Goodwin Sutter, "Toward Sino-American Reconciliation: A Study of Three Cases of the Interaction of the CCP Leadership with the United States Since the Start of World War II," Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1975. (Also available as *Toward Sino-U.S. Reconciliation: An Analysis of Chinese Communist Policy Toward the United States*, the Johns Hopkins Press, forthcoming (1978).)

composition of the top leadership in Peking. Lin Piao left the capital to attend to domestic problems in some outlying provinces. Chiang Ch'ing made no public appearances in Peking from mid-November until mid-January and presumably was out of the capital. Finally, Huang Yung-sheng prepared to lead a military delegation to Albania.<sup>185</sup> This left Mao and Chou to hold the fort.<sup>186</sup> With the main proponents of the military and radical groups no longer present in Peking, and given the nature of relationships within the Chinese leadership, opportunities naturally arose that the moderates were able to exploit. This becomes extremely important when viewed in the light of the major statements on October 24 and 25.

#### The November Initiative

After several weeks of low profile treatment of the U.S. question, the moderates launched a major diplomatic offensive, attacking on three fronts almost simultaneously. They republished Mao's report to the Second Plenum of the Seventh Party Congress (March 5, 1949),<sup>187</sup> announced a new "latest directive" from Chairman Mao that "Historical Experience Merits Attention!",<sup>188</sup> and most significantly proposed that

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<sup>185</sup> Huang Yung-sheng headed a Chinese military delegation which left Peking for Albania on November 26, 1965.

<sup>186</sup> Lin Piao last appeared in Peking on October 31 at the Twelfth Plenum. Chiang Ch'ing last appeared in Peking on October 5. Chou En-lai publicly appeared in Peking on the following dates: November 17, 20, 26, 28, and 29. Mao publicly appeared in Peking on November 10 when he received a Pakistani military delegation and again on November 28, with Chou En-lai, when he received the Australian Communist Party Chairman, E. F. Hill. The preceding information was gathered from: *Reference Aid: Appearances and Activities of Leading Chinese Communist Personalities*, January-December 1968, CIA, CR A 69-2, February 1969.

<sup>187</sup> Report given by Chairman Mao Tse-tung to the Second Plenum of the Seventh Central Committee of the CCP on March 5, 1949. Reprinted in *Jen-min Jih-pao*, November 24, 1968, and cited in *Peking Review*, No. 48, November 29, 1968, pp. 4-12.

<sup>188</sup> The entire directive read: "Historical experience merits attention. Line and viewpoint must be talked over constantly and repeatedly. It won't do to talk them over with only a few people; they must be made known to all the revolutionary masses." The directive was first published in *Jen-min Jih-pao*, November 24, 1968, and later cited in *Peking Review*, No. 48, November 29, 1968, p. 1.



the Sino-American Ambassadorial Talks be reconvened on February 20, 1969, to "conclude an agreement" with Washington "on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence."<sup>189</sup> By linking the MFA's note to the United States with the 1949 report, the moderates shielded themselves with Mao's own assertion that in certain circumstances it was both necessary and advisable to negotiate with one's enemy.

*We should not refuse to enter into negotiations because we are afraid of trouble and want to avoid complications, nor should we enter into negotiations with our minds in a haze. We should be firm in principle, but should also have all the flexibility permissible and necessary to carry out our principles. [Emphasis added.]*

In another section the message was even clearer:

*We are willing to establish diplomatic relations with all countries on the principle of equality, but the imperialists, who have always been hostile to the Chinese people, will definitely not be in a hurry to treat us as equals. As long as the imperialist countries do not change their hostile attitudes, we shall not grant them legal status in China.<sup>190</sup> [Emphasis added.]*

The MFA note made it perfectly clear that the initiative was aimed at President-elect Nixon when it observed that on February 20, "the new U.S. President will have been in office for a month, and the U.S. side will probably be able to make up its mind."<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> See footnote 182, p. 95.

<sup>190</sup> *Peking Review*, No. 48, November 29, 1968, pp. 4-12.

<sup>191</sup> Despite the evidence that supports this interpretation, Thomas Robinson drew a significantly different conclusion from the republication of Mao's report. He linked the enemy in the 1949 report with Moscow, and therefore reasoned that it indicated "Chinese willingness, in late November, to settle differences with the Soviet Union peacefully." Thus, whereas this author has concluded that the moderates refused to compromise with Moscow and accordingly sought out the United States to counter Soviet resistance, Robinson concluded that the Chinese were in fact intimidated by the Kremlin and as a result sought to "defuse" the crisis by negotiating with the Soviet Union. Robinson, 1972, op. cit., p. 1193.

Hopeful that Nixon, possibly because of his strong anti-Communist reputation, would be able to overcome U.S. domestic opposition and ameliorate relations with the PRC, the moderates went out on a limb to give the President-elect a concrete proposal to work with. In doing so, they created a situation in which Nixon's first few public statements on China would take on added significance. If, following his inauguration, Nixon publicly indicated that he was committed to improving Sino-American relations, then the moderates could utilize such statements to quiet their own domestic opposition. Furthermore, an encouraging signal from Nixon might have prompted Mao to endorse publicly the moderates' initiative. If, however, the President was unwilling or unable to give the Chinese a positive sign, or worse yet, chose to stress the importance of strengthening ties with the Soviet Union, then the initiative would be extremely vulnerable. Under these circumstances, Mao could gracefully shift his support to the military, thereby ensuring that the moderates' policy would be overruled.

The note marked the first time since the beginning of the massive U.S. involvement in Vietnam that any Chinese leaders were willing to link the "Five Principles" to Sino-American relations.<sup>192</sup> While the MFA statement solemnly declared that China would "never barter away principles," it inferred that if Washington would stop "haggling over side issues," the two could make rapid progress on the substantive issues and eventually normalize relations. In its entirety, the note signaled to President-elect Nixon that "the Chinese" were firmly committed to begin substantive talks and optimistic that great progress could be made that would mutually benefit both countries. But was the "Chinese leadership" really behind the policy?

The unprecedented November initiative poses for us a series of interpretative questions: Who supported the move; who opposed the move and on what grounds; and why late November? The joint PD, LAD, RF editorial published the same day as the MFA announcement, which sought to explain the current significance of Mao's 1949 report, offers a solid

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<sup>192</sup> The last time the Chinese had mentioned the Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in connection with Sino-American relations had been in July 1964.



clue to the second question.<sup>193</sup> Although Mao's report had stressed, among other things, the tactical importance of negotiations, the study-guide that interpreted and explained the contemporary relevance of the report opposed the spirit of the November initiative:

Liu Shao-ch'i babbled about the so-called "new stage of peace and democracy," in a vain attempt to demoralize and disintegrate the PLA so as to turn China over to U.S. imperialism, and in a futile effort to preserve the rule of Chiang Kai-shek bandit gang so as to transform China into a colony of U.S. imperialism. Chairman Mao opposed this line of Liu Shao-ch'i's, a line of national subjugation. He called on the people of the whole country to smash the Kuomintang reactionaries' offensive, carry out a new great people's war and wage a great people's war of liberation in a resolute struggle to overthrow completely the reactionary rule of U.S. imperialism and Chiang Kai-shek. [Emphasis added.]

By denouncing Liu Shao-ch'i's actions in the late 1940s and mid-1960s in language strikingly similar to that used by the radicals and military in 1967,<sup>194</sup> the editorial vehemently criticized what the moderates were doing in 1968. Since the radicals and military still regarded the United States as a serious adversary, they naturally attempted to subvert the moderates' initiative and overturn the decision to seek a rapprochement with the United States.

If the military and radicals strongly objected to the policy, as the subsequent tenor of the Chinese press suggests, the intriguing question becomes, How could the moderates overcome such a formidable opposition? One possibility is that Lin gained tremendous authority over domestic issues during the Twelfth Plenum by compromising his right to play a decisive role on foreign policy matters, particularly those involving diplomacy. In that case, Chou quite possibly could have circumvented the greatly diminished power of the CRG provided that Mao did not actively intervene on the side of the radicals.

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<sup>193</sup>"Conscientiously Study the History of the Struggle Between the Two Lines," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, *Hung-ch'i*, *Chieh-fang-chün pao*, joint editorial, November 25, 1968. Cited in *Peking Review*, No. 48, November 29, 1968, pp. 10-13.

<sup>194</sup>See pp. 55-56 and 67-69, above.

This division-of-labor, moderates' end-run scenario is a bit far-fetched though. It is difficult to visualize what would have compelled Lin to remove himself from the decisionmaking process on an issue of such vital importance, particularly given his adamant opposition to the moderates' strategic recommendations. A far more plausible reconstruction would have Lin and the radicals both fighting the policy but losing in the end to a Mao/Chou coalition. While the radicals clearly rejected the broader concept on negotiations regardless of the situation, Lin's opposition appears to have been more specific. We know that Lin was critically aware that only one man could stop him from gaining full control of all three instruments of national power: the party, the military, and the government. With the military under control and the succession issue resolved,<sup>195</sup> only Chou En-lai could prevent Lin from reaching his goal. For this as well as other reasons a natural rivalry existed between Lin and Chou. Since a successful opening to the West would most probably have been engineered by Chou, the seasoned diplomat, rather than Lin, it would inevitably boost Chou's prestige even higher. Lin thus naturally opposed and attempted to frustrate a policy that would set China on a course of improving relations with Washington.<sup>196</sup>

A second, less personal factor was Lin's strong desire not to have China do anything that could exacerbate Sino-Soviet relations. From Lin's vantage point, as a military man not fully aware of the subtleties of international politics, an opening to the West might well be read by Moscow as a new sign of China's deep irreversible anti-Sovietism. At "best" the Soviet Union might increase the pressure along the border, but at "worst" Soviet fears of being the odd man out in the newly forming triangular relationship might convince them to act boldly now before

<sup>195</sup> The new Draft Party Constitution was discussed at the Twelfth Plenum in October 1968. A major change in the Constitution was that Lin Piao was officially named Mao's successor. See *CNA*, No. 743, February 7, 1969, pp. 2-3. Also see the *New York Times*, January 8, 1969.

<sup>196</sup> The rivalry between Lin Piao and Chou En-lai can certainly be linked to a combination of factors such as diverse "operational codes," different bureaucratic perspectives, personal attributes, and their respective experiences as a military leader versus a diplomat. The definitive book on this fascinating subject, however, has yet to be written.



it became too late. With images of a disarming surgical strike or a Manchurian-style invasion in mind, Lin would have opposed any move that would appear to place China closer to the United States than to the Soviet Union.<sup>197</sup>

With both the radicals and the military united in opposition to the November initiative--the crucial question then becomes, Could the moderates have done it alone? We argue that the policy of opening up to the United States was a collaborative effort of Mao and the moderates. First, if Mao had wanted to block the policy he seemingly could have prevented the moderates from justifying the move with an old Mao report. Second, since Mao presumably plays a large if not decisive role in writing and publishing his "latest directives," his approval of the move can be inferred from his cooperation in timing the "directive" to coincide with the report. Third, the impact of Mao's directive was to highlight the significance of the report and demonstrate that it had received official endorsement by the Chairman.

Furthermore, Mao was in residence in Peking when the statements were published. Three days after the MFA announcement and after the publication of the joint editorial revealing opposition to the policy, Mao appeared in public with Chou En-lai at a reception in Peking.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> According to Stanley Karnow, who is usually very well-informed on such matters, the Chinese began circulating a document in the fall of 1971 which "claims that Lin opposed Chou En-lai's invitation to President Nixon, asserting that he would match that move by welcoming the Soviet Communist Party Leader Leonid Brezhnev to Peking. 'If Chou can invite Nixon, I can invite Brezhnev,' Lin is quoted as having said in one heated debate." Stanley Karnow, "Lin Piao Believed To Be Dead," *Washington Post*, November 27, 1971, pp. 1, A 8.

<sup>198</sup> See *Peking Review*, No. 49, December 6, 1968, p. 3. After discussing the November 24 republication of Mao's 1949 speech and the November 25 MFA announcement, Professor Hinton concluded that the reason the November initiative was eventually overturned was because of:

Mao Tse-tung's return to active life about the middle of January 1969; he was in one of his militant moods reinforced no doubt by discussions during his absence with his extremist advisors, such as his wife, Chiang Ch'ing. (1971b, op. cit., p. 33.)

Since Mao was in Peking when the initiative was floated (see footnote 186, above), Hinton's interpretation must be reexamined. He seems to

suggest that Mao flip-flopped on this issue, but no evidence is provided to back up this assertion.

Speaking more generally, Professor Hinton offered his views on why Mao opposed Chou's initiative:

He [Mao] evidently *did not take the Soviet threat seriously* and therefore saw no reason to appease the United States. On the contrary, he apparently considered the time ripe, especially in view of the approach of the Party Congress, to *reaffirm the dual adversary strategy of simultaneous political struggle against the U.S. and the S.U., which he had followed since about 1960.* The idea of a formal agreement on American "imperialism" on any major political subject, including the *Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence*, is *questionable by Maoist standards*, if only because the U.S. is alleged to be uncooperative and untrustworthy. (1971b, op. cit., p. 34.) [Emphasis added.]

The accuracy of Hinton's interpretation must be called into question, particularly since the reference Hinton relies on to back up his analysis comes from the PD/RF editorial of December 1963 which was addressed to the Central Committee of the CPSU.

Mozingo also analyzed the significance of the November initiative. Although Mozingo was extremely sensitive to leadership disagreement during the GPCR, he chose to portray a Chinese leadership united on this particular issue. Professor Mozingo concluded that "Peking" extended a "hesitant 'feeler'" to the Nixon administration. For Mozingo, the reason that the "feeler" was "certainly not an invitation to a general rapprochement," was:

That the commitment to *total struggle with the U.S. is so deeply imbedded in China's policy* that it is hardly credible to suppose that her November gesture was more than a diplomatic probe....The more immediate purpose may have been to warn North Vietnam that any tacit agreements Moscow and Hanoi might make with the enemy at China's expense was a game more than two could play. (1970, op. cit., p. 45.) [Emphasis added.]

Mozingo appears to have rejected the possibility that some leaders in China genuinely sought to improve relations with the United States.

Of the analysts who have examined the November initiative, Whiting (1973, op. cit.), while not dealing with the issue of who opposed and who supported the initiative, nevertheless presented an insightful balanced account of a contentious policy deeply tied in with the larger issue of the overall direction of Chinese foreign policy. It is interesting to note that of the three authors, only Whiting accepted the possibility that the Chinese actively sought to improve relations with the United States. To varying degrees, both Hinton and Mozingo believed that basic Maoist doctrine was absolutely opposed to any normalization of relations with the United States. In this manner, the values and beliefs of the researchers appear to have played a significant role in structuring the outcome of their findings.



Mao's appearance with Chou would seem designed to communicate that he was publicly behind Chou on this issue. Finally, Mao has steadfastly adhered to the principle that it is proper strategy to negotiate with one's secondary enemy under certain conditions. Since Mao had already branded the Soviet Union as the primary enemy in his speech to the Twelfth Plenum, the logic of his position would have led him to support Chou on this issue.

If we accept that the move was underwritten by Mao and the moderates, why November 25? Although it may just have been coincidental, several signs point to a late November initiative. First and foremost, the moderates could not have done it without Mao, and Mao may not have been willing to endorse it until after Czechoslovakia and the Twelfth Plenum. Having secured the Chairman's support, the moderates then had to wait to assess the impact of a Nixon Presidency on Sino-American relations. At just that time, however (November 11-19), the United States was leading the attack against admitting China to the United Nations. The U.N. vote thus compelled the moderates to postpone the announcement, to make it clear that China's action was in no way connected with the U.S. "anti-China reactionary policy" in the General Assembly.<sup>199</sup>

A final factor, however, created an incentive for the moderates to act quickly. The key advocates of the military and radical factions were temporarily out of the capital. Since they had consistently attempted to block the moderates' policies, their absence presented Chou with an opportunity to finesse their certain opposition. While the moderates may have preferred to wait for Washington to make the next move, concluding that a *response* would be far less vulnerable to domestic opponents than an *initiative*--they also had to consider that any delay might provide the military or the radicals with an opportunity to intervene and persuade the Chairman to withdraw his support for the policy. As a result, with the U.N. vote resolved, the moderates seized the moment and publicly advocated improving Sino-American relations.

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<sup>199</sup>"UNGA Again Debates 'Chinese Representation,'" *NCNA*, November 21, 1968. Cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 229, November 22, 1968, pp. A 1-3. This is a prime example of the subtle criticism of the moderates that preceded the November initiative.

The December Counterattack<sup>200</sup>

In an unusually open admission of serious leadership disagreement, the counteroffensive that sought to criticize and reverse the policy was launched the same day as the MFA announcement.<sup>201</sup> Following the opening shot, a torrent of articles echoed the joint editorial by condemning Liu Shao-ch'i for having done what they saw Chou doing--redefining China's national interests. A December 2 PD article attacked Liu for having collaborated with Chiang Kai-shek and U.S. imperialism by calling for "mediation" with the enemy behind a "peace smoke screen."<sup>202</sup> The following day a PLA fighter specifically praised Lin Piao for opposing such a ludicrous policy:

*Comrade Lin Piao often taught Army cadres not to put any faith in the so-called "new stage of peace and democracy" and not to spread it to the Army.*<sup>203</sup> [Emphasis added.]

The message was crystal clear.<sup>204</sup>

*Wen Hui Pao* published a series of articles and commentaries on December 2 bitterly denouncing a documentary film of Liu Shao-ch'i's visit to Indonesia in 1963.<sup>205</sup> Although it claimed that "history has

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<sup>200</sup> See Sutter, op. cit., pp. 284-301, for a thorough analysis of this period.

<sup>201</sup> See footnote 193, p. 100.

<sup>202</sup> "Liu Shao-ch'i and Chiang Kai-shek Cooperated on a Two-Man Force," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, December 2, 1968. Cited in *SCMP*, No. 4315, December 10, 1968, pp. 15-17.

<sup>203</sup> "Let Us Take Vice Chairman Lin Piao As Our Brilliant Example of Boundless Loyalty to Chairman Mao's Revolutionary Line," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, December 3, 1968. Cited in *ibid.*, pp. 1-5.

<sup>204</sup> Uri Ra'anani offers an alternate interpretation of Lin's position relative to the November initiative. Professor Ra'anani compared Mao's 1949 report with a passage that appeared at the height of the attack by Lin Piao's "guerrillas" against Lo Jui-ch'ing's "professionals" in May 1965, and therefore concluded that Lin backed the policy to negotiate with the United States. (Ra'anani, 1970, op. cit., p. 139.)

<sup>205</sup> A summary of the *Wen Hui Pao* series as well as an article by Commentator entitled "Criticize and Discredit the Reactionary Film of Thief Liu's Visit to Indonesia" was broadcast by Shanghai City Service on December 2, 1968. Cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 237, December 5, 1968, pp. B 4-5.



passed a political death sentence on Liu," his "spirit" and "ideas" had not yet been thoroughly "wiped out." As it pointed out, much more was involved than a simple criticism of an old film:

[it is] a major issue that concerns the enemy's exercise of dictatorship over the proletariat in the cultural field, ...and his attempt to change the color of a country under the dictatorship of the proletariat....If we are not vigilant enough against this, *the achievements scored in the GPCR may be lost.*<sup>206</sup> [Emphasis added.]

During the height of the campaign to brand Liu a "capitulationist," the military continued to modify its public portrayal of the Soviet Union. Having previously rejected Chou's analysis of the Soviet threat, a top military spokesman, Chief of Staff Huang Yung-sheng, chose a mass rally in Tirana, Albania, to invoke the moderates' metaphors, by denouncing the Soviet Union as "social-imperialists and social-fascists."<sup>207</sup> While Huang publicly acknowledged the immediacy and seriousness of the Soviet threat, albeit in a forum outside China, he nevertheless couched his anti-Soviet vituperations in language that conjured up the specter of counterrevolutionary collusion.

The campaign reached its zenith in mid-December when the opposition dropped the pretense of criticizing the film and instead directly assaulted Liu for his reactionary pro-U.S. behavior in 1963:

During his stay in Indonesia, Liu Shao-ch'i behaved servilely, fawning on U.S. imperialism in everything and not daring to touch one single hair of U.S. imperialism. In his public speeches he never mentioned opposition to U.S. imperialism... he did not denounce the U.S. imperialists for their crimes of aggression and war, but imitating Khrushchev's tone, showed his ugly face of false opposition to imperialism but

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<sup>206</sup> Ibid. The fact that these attacks were published in *Wen Hui Pao* and that they chose to attack Liu by criticizing a reactionary film suggests that these may well have been sponsored by Chiang Ch'ing. Traditionally, she used plays and films as her medium for attacking individuals and reactionary policies.

<sup>207</sup> Speech made by Huang Yung-sheng at Tirana, Albania, Mass Rally on December 2, 1968. Cited in *SCMP*, No. 4315, December 10, 1968, pp. 29-32.

true capitulation to the U.S., for which he was loudly applauded by the imperialists and the propaganda machines of the Western bourgeoisie.<sup>208</sup>

The anti-moderate intent was apparent.

The article singled out and acridly attacked the actions taken by Chou in 1968, which directly replicated Liu's performance in 1963. The reference to the receptiveness of the Western press was especially revealing, for at that time it was praising China (and Chou in particular) for coming to its senses and ending the madness of the GPCR. A PD commentary on December 17 went on to draw the parallel between Soviet-Czech "friendship" and U.S. professed friendship for China. The lesson it drew was that anyone who put faith in the United States still had not fully realized that "avowed 'friendship' is only a synonym for aggression and enslavement."<sup>209</sup>

An interesting aspect of the media coverage of the campaign was its overwhelming onesidedness; after the MFA announcement in November there were virtually no public attempts to support the policy initiative. Aside from several factual reports from pro-Communist Hong Kong dailies, the issue of the Ambassadorial Talks was totally ignored.<sup>210</sup> Rather than support their policy, the moderates publicly backed off, giving a false impression of a leadership unified in its opposition to expanding contacts with Washington. Whether the moderates had caved in under the pressure of the attack or had ducked down while the wave of criticism rolled over cannot be ascertained. Subsequent actions would suggest that they were holding out waiting to see how Nixon would respond to their offer. While the President-elect's first reaction in late November had been positive, the Chinese were no doubt anxious to hear what he would have to say after his inauguration.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>208</sup>"Shameless Renegade, Black Sheep of a Nation," *Jen-min Jih-pao* December 12, 1968. Cited in *SCMP*, No. 4328, December 31, 1968, pp. 1-5.

<sup>209</sup>"Dean Acheson's Disciples," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, commentary, December 17, 1968. Cited in *FBIS, DR, CC*, No. 246, December 15, 1968, p. A 1.

<sup>210</sup>Ho Mei-shan, "Questions and Answers on the Sino-American Ambassadorial Level Talks," *Ta Kung Pao*, November 28, 1968.

<sup>211</sup>Since the MFA floated the initiative during the period of transition from the Johnson administration to the Nixon Presidency, the Chinese



Several factors appeared to be at work undermining support for the moderates' policies. As Mao and others realized, the arduous task of salvaging the fruits of the GPCR could not be completed without the cooperation of Lin and the PLA. The Red Guards had been discredited and disbanded while the Party and Government bureaucracies were in shambles. Therefore, if China was to pull through the difficult transition period, then Mao could not afford to alienate Lin, especially on a major foreign policy issue. Second, the number of incidents along the northern border had swelled significantly during the winter months. Among these was a rather ominous confrontation between the Chinese and the Soviet border troops at Chenpao Island on January 23.<sup>212</sup> Because of the confrontation the Soviets had threatened to shoot the next Chinese troops that came onto the island and the Chinese had retaliated by modifying their patrolling techniques to provide for a hidden backup unit to protect their troops on the ice.<sup>213</sup> The impact of the incident

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had no guarantee that the new President would even become aware of the offer. Therefore, the moderates were presumably relieved to read that retired career diplomat Robert Murphy, President-elect Nixon's go-between with the Johnson administration, reported on November 27 that Nixon would "snap up" the Chinese offer to resume the Talks. Cited in Associated Press Dispatch, November 27, 1968.

Since Nixon was thus evidently briefed on the significance of the Chinese offer, it is surprising that in his first few public statements after his inauguration he did nothing publicly to convey to the Chinese that the United States was optimistic about future Sino-American relations.

<sup>212</sup> After the first major border clash at Chenpao Island on March 2, 1969, both sides published reports indicating the high number of border incidents that had occurred in the preceding months. See especially the note sent by the Chinese Foreign Ministry to the Soviet Union on March 2, 1969. Cited in *SCMP*, March 10, 1969, p. 17. For secondary material on developments along the border, see Thomas Robinson, 1972, op. cit.; Neville Maxwell, "The Chinese Account of the 1969 Fighting at Chenpao Island," *China Quarterly*, No. 56, October-December 1973, pp. 730-739; idem., "The Chinese Approach to the Sino-Soviet Boundary Question," an unpublished manuscript, February 1974; and idem., "A Note on the Amur/Ussuri Sector of the Sino-Soviet Boundaries," *Modern China*, Vol. 1, No. 1, January 1975, pp. 116-126.

A comprehensive discussion of the January 23, 1969, clash at Chenpao Island is contained in Maxwell's 1973 article. It must be added, however, that Maxwell faithfully recorded the Chinese line on the border clashes.

<sup>213</sup> Maxwell, 1973, op. cit.

was that the likelihood of a low-level skirmish turning into a major confrontation was greatly increased.

In addition, while a major diplomatic move toward the United States *might* dissuade the Soviets from attacking *à la* Czechoslovakia, it could do little in deterring these low-level confrontations. A strong unified PLA might, however, be able to guard against such incidents. These factors compelled Mao to consider seriously abandoning Chou on this issue, and possibly even supporting Lin's position of cancelling the Talks.

A subtle indicator that the moderates were in trouble came on January 4 when the MFA issued another "serious warning" to the United States for an overflight incident.<sup>214</sup> Although the warnings had been announced with some regularity, there had been a conspicuous gap since the last one on October 30. In other words, since the Twelfth Plenum resolved to let the moderates go ahead with their initiative there had been no MFA warnings. The 466th warning possibly suggests that the moderates' hold over *policymaking* was weakening. Alternately, the MFA warning may have been designed to reassure the domestic opposition that despite the moderates' desire for negotiations, they did not intend to compromise with the Americans. In any case, for the first time in over two months, the MFA publicly indicated that it too was committed to condemning aggressive U.S. behavior.

During this time, the media continued to reflect the anti-negotiation line in foreign policy. An NCNA report of January 17 discussed the Pentagon's conscription announcement and concluded that it revealed that: "U.S. imperialism will not let up its sabre-rattling policy, nor will it halt its aggression in Vietnam."<sup>215</sup> While the media had at first focused on the aggressive behavior of the United States in the 1950s, beginning in mid-January, the attack concentrated on present-day behavior.

Once Nixon was actually inaugurated, the tone of the criticisms became even more bellicose and the attacks focused on the new administration. On January 21, NCNA discussed the inaugural address and in

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<sup>214</sup>"U.S. Intrusion Draws 466th Serious Warning," NCNA, domestic, January 4, 1969. Cited in FBIS, DR, CC, No. 3, January 6, 1969, p. A 1.

<sup>215</sup>"Defense Department Steps Up Conscription," NCNA, January 12, 1969. Cited in *ibid.*, No. 11, January 16, 1969, p. A 1.



doing so it highlighted Nixon's desire to speed up "collaboration and 'cooperation' with Soviet revisionism and social-imperialism."<sup>216</sup> It went on to state: "As everyone knows, the so-called 'peace' and 'freedom' that comes from the mouth of imperialists means 'aggression' and 'enslavement.'" The following day a PD commentary exposed how the Soviet Union "loudly applauded" the Nixon administration and "pinned great hopes...on him simply because they and the U.S. imperialists are partners sharing the same fate."<sup>217</sup> Both the United States and the Soviet Union were depicted as "number one enemies." Finally, a joint RF/PD article authoritatively condemned the new Nixon administration, claiming:

Historical experience of class struggle tells us that whenever U.S. imperialism sings "peace" at the top of its lungs, it is getting ready to take *further steps for arms expansion and war preparations....We must heighten our revolutionary vigilance a hundredfold....*<sup>218</sup> [Emphasis added.]

The lull in attacks on the United States, which had coincided with the absence from Peking of a number of key radicals and military leaders, now gave way to a frontal assault on the "aggressive" "double-talking" Nixon. Significantly, the renewed assaults were accompanied by signs that virtually the whole central leadership was back in the capital. Now that he could personally interact with Mao, Lin no doubt concentrated on winning over the Chairman without whom the moderates' policy

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<sup>216</sup>"Comment on President's Address," NCNA, domestic, January 21, 1969. Cited in *ibid.*, No. 14, January 22, 1969, pp. A 1-2.

<sup>217</sup>"Shameless Clique," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, commentary, January 22, 1969. Cited in *ibid.*, No. 15, January 23, 1969, pp. A 1-3. The article played up the collusion theme, stating: "The Soviet revisionist renegades pin great hopes on Nixon and energetically fawn on him simply because they and the U.S. imperialists are partners sharing the same fate." Thus, even before Nixon began to publicly stress his "pro-Soviet détente" position, the opposition had already rejected Nixon as a possible "friend" of China.

<sup>218</sup>"Confessions in an impasse--a comment on Nixon's inaugural address and the despicable applause by the Soviet revisionist renegade clique," *Jen-min Jih-pao--Hung-Ch'i*, Commentator, January 27, 1969. Cited in *ibid.*, No. 17, January 27, 1969, pp. A 1-5.

could easily be overturned. An indication that Lin had achieved his goal came on January 25 when Mao and Lin co-hosted a massive rally for 40,000 revolutionary fighters.<sup>219</sup> During the rally the PLA was called to follow Mao's great strategic plan in defeating any enemy who should dare to invade the PRC and exhorted it to heighten preparations for war.<sup>220</sup> Mao's presence further enhanced the prestige of Lin and the entire military. At the same time it signaled that the moderates' policy may have been in serious trouble.

The motivation underlying Mao's decision initially to support and then abandon the moderates' initiative is difficult to pinpoint precisely. One plausible interpretation, however, would have Mao using the moderates' recommendations as a trial balloon to test Nixon's response as well as to determine the domestic Chinese reaction. While we would argue that Mao would have most probably preferred to see the initiative succeed, and therefore was willing to give Chou the go-ahead, he must have realized that the policy was exceptionally vulnerable. Thus, by privately condoning yet not publicly supporting the policy, Mao was in perfect position to lean either way once the outcome was known. Therefore, because of the combination of fierce domestic opposition and a noticeable lack of enthusiasm from the U.S. president, Mao could adroitly reverse himself by abandoning the initiative that he had earlier endorsed.

With the moderates already beginning to retreat, the final outcome of the November initiative now depended, to a great extent, on Richard Nixon. His noncommittal inaugural address had been ripped apart by the Chinese press, but a clear positive signal by Nixon would have certainly strengthened the moderates' argument. While Nixon's motivations are unclear, he did not comment on the November initiative.<sup>221</sup> In his first press conference (January 27), Nixon stated:

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<sup>219</sup>"Mao, Lin Receive Revolutionary Fighters," *NCNA*, January 25, 1969. Cited in *ibid.*, pp. B 1-4. Also see Joseph Kun, "Reception in Peking," *Radio Free Europe Research*, Communist China, China/4, January 28, 1969.

<sup>220</sup>Kun, *op. cit.*

<sup>221</sup>Nixon may well have considered that improving Soviet-American relations was far more important than ameliorating tension with China. Since the two were to a certain extent mutually incompatible, and the



We look forward to that meeting [the Warsaw Ambassadorial meeting scheduled for February 20]. We will be interested to see what the Chinese communist representatives have to say at that meeting, whether new changes of attitude on their part on major, substantive issues may have occurred.<sup>222</sup>

Nixon ignored the November initiative. Instead he waited for the Chinese to make the first move. At the same time he enthusiastically supported the Soviet proposal of January 24<sup>223</sup> to begin talks on building ABM systems. The two actions were probably interpreted by many in Peking as an indication that the Nixon administration had a basic predilection toward fostering better relations with Moscow, even at the expense of exacerbating relations with Peking.

Nixon's "cool" treatment of the Chinese most likely sealed the fate of the initiative. It provided the domestic opposition with enough ammunition to force the moderates to cancel the forthcoming Warsaw meeting. An unrelated incident in the Netherlands, however, gave the moderates a face-saving way to stop the Talks. Liao Ho-shu, Chinese Chargé d'Affaires ad Interim to the Hague, defected on January 24. While he first remained in the Netherlands, on February 4 the Central Intelligence Agency escorted him to the United States. Simultaneously, the State Department issued a statement that the United States was considering granting Liao asylum in the United States. On February 6, probably after the initiative had been overruled, the Chinese Foreign Ministry demanded that the governments of the United States and the Netherlands hand Liao Ho-shu back to China, otherwise

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costs of Soviet-American hostility were higher than continued Sino-American enmity, Nixon quite plausibly could have deemphasized U.S. interest in China so as not to anger the Soviet leaders. For Chinese views on Soviet-American cooperation, see Pillsbury, 1975b, op. cit.

<sup>222</sup>See *China and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Congressional Quarterly Service, Washington, D.C., 1971, p. 82.

<sup>223</sup>One can only speculate whether Moscow's January 24 proposal was in any way designed to influence the balance of power in Peking. Subsequent Soviet behavior would suggest that they were to a certain degree aware of the splits within the leadership and willing to time their offers to influence Chinese domestic politics. Regardless of the motivation behind the Soviet offer, it prompted Nixon to stress that he desired an anti-Chinese ABM and closer relations with Moscow. As a result it harmed the moderates' cause.

they must be held responsible for all "the grave consequences arising therefrom."<sup>224</sup> The United States never responded.<sup>225</sup>

As Nixon simultaneously expressed his commitments for (1) closer relations with Moscow, (2) an anti-Chinese ABM system, and (3) adherence to the traditional policy of keeping the PRC out of the United Nations, the moderates were compelled to reassess the advisability of *publicly* leaning toward Washington *at that time*. Nixon may have unknowingly played right into Lin's hand. His position in favor of expanding Soviet-American relations was no doubt seized upon by the military and radicals as proof of his anti-Chinese sentiment.<sup>226</sup> Therefore, given the fierce domestic opposition to the November initiative--opposition that may have already led Mao to withdraw his support temporarily--and Nixon's ambivalence, Chou must have realized that the policy initiative needed greater domestic PRC support. As a result, Chou bowed to the pressure and retreated from his November 25 position.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Note of the Chinese Foreign Ministry Information Department, NCNA, February 6, 1969. Cited in FBIS, DR, CC, No. 26, February 7, 1969, p. A 1.

<sup>225</sup> See Sutter, op. cit., for a detailed discussion of why the Liao affair was probably not the real reason behind the subsequent Chinese decision to cancel the Talks.

<sup>226</sup> "CRP Comment on Nixon's First Press Conference," NCNA, domestic, January 28, 1969. Cited in FBIS, DR, CC, No. 19, January 29, 1969, pp. A 1-2. Also see NCNA, January 29, 1969, cited in *ibid.*, No. 20, January 30, 1969, pp. A 1-3; "Wailing of Despair," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, commentary, January 30, 1969, pp. A 1-2; and Chang Chi-hui, "Bury Imperialism, Revisionism, and Reaction Completely," *Peking Domestic Service*, January 30, 1969; cited in *ibid.*, pp. A 2-3.

The article by Chang, a PLA Air Force Combat Hero, was particularly revealing because it dealt at length with: (1) "the inherent aggressive nature of U.S. imperialism," (2) "The 'peace' professed by Nixon is just another name for war of aggression," (3) "They resort to the counterrevolutionary dual tactics of political deception and military venture," and (4) "We maintain a high degree of vigilance against the rapacious U.S. imperialists and the Soviet modern revisionist renegade clique."

The opposition to Nixon and the United States continued unabated throughout February.

<sup>227</sup> Ishwer Ojha drew a very different conclusion to the question of why the Chinese cancelled the Talks. Rather than focus on Lin's



Thus, less than 48 hours before the Talks were to convene, the "Chinese" unilaterally cancelled the long-awaited Ambassadorial Talks. In a formal statement, the MFA linked the Chinese action to the Liao affair and the general "anti-China atmosphere which is solely created by the U.S. Government."<sup>228</sup> Its significance is that it was the first policy *action* taken by the PRC, as a government, which effectively negated the November initiative.<sup>229</sup> Although the moderates may have tenaciously clung to their November strategy, more probably they realized that the time was not ripe to rely on the United States to help China deter the Soviet Union.

Thus, as of late January (if not shortly before) the military and radicals resolved the dilemma by overruling Chou and opting for a foreign policy of self-reliance. Once the decision to rely solely on the PLA had been reached, all stops were pulled and the Chinese press unleashed a relentless attack on Nixon and the United States. Although the Chinese seemingly presented a unified leadership behind a new line of "rely on the PLA," *privately* the leadership was sharply divided over the larger issue of the direction of China's foreign policy. Despite the contention in Peking, with the radical-military line in command, the rest of the month saw many articles reflecting its main tenets: reliance on the PLA, condemnation of Soviet-American collusion, and exposure of the counterrevolutionary aggressive nature of U.S. imperialism.<sup>230</sup>

The first phase of the strategic debate abruptly ended with the events of March 2 and 15 when Chinese troops clashed with Soviet troops on a deserted isolated island in the frozen Ussuri River. The inevitable

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opposition or the loss of Mao's support, Ojha stated:

*It is generally assumed that the real cause was internal difficulties in the MFA, where radical remnants were opposed to any rapprochement with the U.S. (Op. cit., p. 247.) [Emphasis added.]*

<sup>228</sup>Statement of the Chinese Foreign Ministry Information Department, NCNA, February 18, 1969. Cited in SCMP, No. 4364, February 1969, pp. 34-35.

<sup>229</sup>See footnote 225, p. 113.

<sup>230</sup>For a representative article, see Hung Tsai-ping, "Clumsy Performance," *Jen-min Jih-pao*, February 18, 1969. Cited in SCMP, No. 4364, February 26, 1969, pp. 35-37.

question of how the first clash came about, which is admittedly central to the issue of the foreign policy debate, has been the subject of at least four major fact-finding expeditions.<sup>231</sup> Unfortunately, the collective wisdom gathered from these studies does little to pinpoint with

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<sup>231</sup>The four main scholars who have researched this aspect of the Sino-Soviet conflict (Roger Brown, Harold Hinton, Neville Maxwell, and Thomas Robinson) have drawn a wide range of conclusions to the questions, Who fired the first shots and why?

Thomas Robinson sketched out a number of plausible scenarios for each of the two clashes, ranging from local initiative by either the Chinese or Soviet border troops all the way up to the deliberate moves by the Central Government of the PRC or Soviet Union. After running through all the conceivable motivations and causes, Robinson cautiously concluded that "*Although evidence is lacking*, the local Chinese border commander probably took the initiative [for the March 2 clash] in response to changes in standing orders from Peking." (1972, op. cit., p. 1198.) [Emphasis added.] As to why the Chinese would want to foment a "crisis," Robinson suggests "three plausible foreign policy arguments: a new policy of drawing the line; sowing 'dragon's teeth'; and using preemption as a local tactic to throw the Soviets off balance and deter larger blows." (1972, op. cit., pp. 1198-1199.) Of the many interpretations Robinson offers the reader, the possibility that domestic factionalism within Peking caused one group to set up the incident is not considered. The March 15 clash is seen to be an open case of Soviet retaliation.

Harold Hinton in a 1971 article concluded that "*Mao and Lin* may have calculated in early 1969 that *certain specific Chinese aims* could be served by the staging of another series of border demonstrations." (1971a, op. cit., p. 47.) [Emphasis added.] However, the speed with which Moscow responded and the fact that a more "hawkish" group was temporarily in control in the Kremlin "reinforces the hypothesis that hostilities had been intended not merely on one side but on both." (1971a, op. cit., p. 48.) In Hinton's book-length study of Sino-Soviet interactions he offered two hypotheses: "...Peking decided on a warning blow along the border. The most plausible interpretation of the ensuing clash is that Chinese troops *provoked and then ambushed* and mauled a Soviet unit..." (1971b, op. cit., p. 24) [emphasis added], and "...it is entirely plausible that Maoist elements in the army organized the first Ussuri clash as a means of *proclaiming the validity of the Maoist dual (anti-American and anti-Soviet) strategy*, including 'people's war,' and in the hope of *promoting favorable political changes in other countries, including the Soviet Union itself*." (1971b, op. cit., p. 54.) [Emphasis added.] Consistent with Robinson, Hinton concluded that Moscow retaliated on March 15.

Neville Maxwell wrote his 1973 article after the Chinese invited him to visit the Chenpao Island border area in June 1973. During his investigation, Maxwell was briefed by the PLA officer who had commanded the Chenpao Island patrol unit involved in the January 23, March 2, and March 15 clashes. Admittedly pro-Chinese, Maxwell faithfully produced



any sense of confidence precisely who fired the first shot and why. While the details concerning the first clash are subject to diverse interpretations, a variation of Roger Brown's second scenario (see footnote 231), appears to be the most compelling reconstruction of the circumstances surrounding the March 2 clash. While we are not prepared to go as far as Brown has in labeling Lin pro-Soviet, his general analysis corresponds with our understanding of factional politics during that period.

In the first place, Lin's consistent efforts to minimize the likelihood of the Sino-Soviet conflict escalating into a shooting war, when seen in the light of his political preeminence at the time, makes it seem quite unlikely that the Defense Minister would have ordered the PLA to launch an assault on Soviet troops. On the other hand, Brown's alternate interpretation that Mao and Chou were compelled to engineer the plot behind Lin's back specifically because of Lin's intransigence and extremely powerful position is compatible with our general appraisal of politics following the Twelfth Plenum.

For one, it has Chou and Mao working together to dramatize the seriousness and immediacy of the Soviet threat. After more than two

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the official Chinese version of the March clashes. He placed full guilt on the Soviet Union for inciting both clashes. While the revised Chinese patrolling procedure enabled them to withstand and defeat the Soviet attack on March 2, greatly reinforced Soviet troops with superior firepower allowed the Soviets to inflict relatively heavy damages on the Chinese on the 15th.

Roger Brown (1976, op. cit.) challenged the conclusions of the three other studies. To briefly summarize his argument, Brown had Lin Piao advocating a lean-to-the-Soviet-Union position, Chou advocating a lean-to-the-United-States position, with Mao tending to support Chou. Accordingly, Brown postulated two plausible scenarios. First, Mao, who was essentially in command, allowed Chou to be overruled in late February (on the question of meeting with the Americans at Warsaw) to strengthen his case for ordering Lin to provoke the March 2 crisis. Lin begrudgingly implemented Mao's decision, since he had just had his concerns assuaged when Mao permitted him to unilaterally cancel the Warsaw Talks. A second scenario has Mao and Chou working together to circumvent the intransigent Lin by ordering Ch'en Hsi-lien (then commander of the Shenyang Military Region) to attack the Soviet border patrol. In both interpretations, Brown concludes that Mao and Chou were the motive force behind an active policy decision that sought to provoke a small controllable border incident to enhance their positions in the domestic political arena.

years of MFA protests and articles in the *PD*, it is quite reasonable that Mao and Chou may have concluded that the best way to convince the leadership and general populace that the Soviet Union did in fact pose a grave threat to China's national security was to engineer a clash and then blame it on the Soviets with a massive media campaign. With Chinese blood spilled by Soviet "aggressors," Lin's basic argument could be effectively undermined. This in turn would pave the way for the strategic reorientation the moderates had been advocating.

Secondly, such a scenario suggests that while Lin's authority within the highest levels of policymaking was so secure as to require Mao and Chou to rely on a secret end-run strategy, his control of key regional military commanders was far from complete. That Lin could be finessed in the strategically vital Shenyang Military Region highlights the conflict that the Defense Minister had created for himself by singularly stressing the U.S. threat. While the southern military commanders may have encouraged Lin to advocate such a policy, their northern counterparts--looking across the Amur and Ussuri at some of the best equipped troops of the Red Army--most probably opposed his policy of deemphasizing the seriousness of the Soviet threat. In such a situation, Ch'en Hsi-lien or others in the front lines facing the Soviets may well have been receptive to Mao and Chou's plan, which would inevitably focus attention on the northern aggressors.

In any case, with the blood of over 800 Chinese soldiers staining the frozen wastes along the northern border, what had been a hypothetical question suddenly became the hottest foreign policy problem confronting the divided Chinese leadership.<sup>232</sup> The issues that had been discussed for several years suddenly took on a new meaning as the Chinese were

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<sup>232</sup> Although the statistics are not very clear, Thomas Robinson, who researched the two clashes, came up with the figure of 800 Chinese casualties and 60 Soviet casualties for the March 15 incident alone. Robinson concluded that "more than a regiment (around two thousand men)" was utilized by the Chinese on March 15. The battle lasted for over nine hours with the Soviet troops quickly taking the offensive by relying on their large numbers of tanks, armored cars, and heavy artillery pieces. Because of the Soviet advantage in armaments, Soviet losses were relatively light, while the Chinese lost nearly 12 times as much as the Soviets. See Robinson, 1972, op. cit., pp. 1189-1190.



compelled to consider the possibility that China would be the next victim of the Brezhnev Doctrine. Lin's recent triumph over Chou's November initiative now appeared as a hollow victory. The working consensus put together by Lin and the radicals was shattered by the developments along the Sino-Soviet border. What had been temporarily resolved in February was reopened for debate in March.

#### Post-Chenpao: The Debates Continue

A new chapter of leadership debates over vital strategic issues began in the wake of the Chenpao clashes. The Ninth Party Congress (April 1-14) certainly dealt with these issues, but as we know from Chou's report to the Tenth Party Congress (August 1973) and conversations he had with Harrison Salisbury, the leadership was still deeply split over the same issues that had been on the agenda since 1966.<sup>233</sup> While Lin's stranglehold over the PLA combined with Mao's public support enabled him to emerge from the Ninth Party Congress clearly on top, his position was not invulnerable.<sup>234</sup> As the "crisis" with the Soviet Union intensified during the summer of 1969 when thinly veiled hints of a preemptive nuclear attack were dropped by Moscow, the leadership must have reconsidered the ramifications of Lin's policy of discounting the Soviet threat.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>233</sup>Report given by Chou En-lai to the Tenth National Congress of the CCP in August 1973. Cited in *Peking Review*, Nos. 35-36, September 7, 1973, pp. 17-25; and Harrison Salisbury, *To Peking--And Beyond: A Report on New Asia*, Quadrangle Books, Inc., New York, 1973, p. 336.

<sup>234</sup>While Lin clearly enhanced the overall position of the PLA within the CCP and the government, he did not fare as well on foreign policy matters. Chou's "collude and connive" metaphor found its way into Lin's report as did a claim that the PRC's foreign policy has consistently been based on the Five Principles. The views in the report thus represent both the moderates' assessment of the international situation and its strategic recommendations for the conduct of China's foreign policy for the coming years. Report delivered by Lin Piao to the Ninth National Congress of the CCP on April 1 and adopted by the Congress on April 14, 1969. Cited in *Peking Review*, No. 18, April 30, 1969, pp. 16-35.

For a full discussion of Lin's rise to power, see Ralph Powell, "The Party, the Government and the Gun," *Asian Survey*, June 1970, pp. 441-471.

<sup>235</sup>This task became especially important as Moscow simultaneously held massive maneuvers along the border, dropped a number of thinly

Although the moderates *publicly* abandoned their attempts to improve relations with Washington, the "spirit" of the November initiative lived on. Shortly after the Ninth Party Congress, China filled 17 vacant ambassadorships. After three years of self-imposed diplomatic isolation, this trend of reaching out and making contacts with a wide range of countries conformed closely with Mao's call at the First Plenum (April 28, 1969): "We want the whole world to see that in fighting this way we are on both logically sound and advantageous grounds."<sup>236</sup>

With respect to the United States, the moderates--reflecting the nature of their domestic opposition--changed tactics and instead chose to wait for Nixon to make a number of concessions. Regardless of whether the moderates privately conveyed a message to Nixon explaining the situation, or Nixon acted on his own initiative, the United States chose to cooperate.<sup>237</sup> Beginning in late July, Nixon demonstrated his desire to improve relations by publicly relaxing visa requirements and trade

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veiled hints about nuclear preemptive attacks, and initiated a series of bloody border incidents. As the leadership debated the larger issues of Chinese foreign policy, they nevertheless took a number of steps to enhance war preparedness in the north. A massive war preparations campaign was initiated; a number of inter-branch military maneuvers were held; communication and transportation networks were expanded; and the border regions were reinforced by redeploying troops and military hardware from Central China to the northeast. See Lu Yung-shu, "Preparations for War in Mainland China," in *Collected Documents of the First Sino-American Conference on Mainland China*, Institute of International Studies, Taipei, Taiwan, 1971.

<sup>236</sup> Speech by Mao Tse-tung to the first Plenary Session of the Ninth Party Congress given on April 28, 1969; cited in *Chung-kung Yen-chiu* (Taipei, Taiwan), March 10, 1970, pp. 120-126, and also *JPRS*, No. 50564, *Translations on Communist China*, No. 104, May 21, 1970, pp. 3-8. This speech as well as Mao's address to the Ninth Party Congress were never officially published by the PRC. Both texts, however, appeared in *Chung-kung Yen-chiu* and were *allegedly* taken from tape recordings made when the speeches were given.

<sup>237</sup> We know from the Kalbs' book that in early May "Chinese leaders at the highest level" were privately informed by the French that Nixon was eager to open up a serious dialogue with the Chinese. Public sources, however, do not reveal whether these channels of communication conveyed messages both ways or simply from the United States to China. See Marvin Kalb and Bernard Kalb, *Kissinger*, Little, Brown and Co., 1974, pp. 223-227. The Kalb brothers' book remains the best available source of information on the early Nixon probes to China, at present.



restrictions, pledging to reduce U.S. military presence in Asia, and in December halting the practice of regularly sending the U.S. Seventh Fleet through the Taiwan Straits. Even more important, after having refrained from discussing the Sino-Soviet conflict since the Chenpao clashes, the United States announced in late August 1969 that it would not look kindly on a Sino-Soviet war. Coming at a time when Moscow had just indicated that it was seriously entertaining the idea of a nuclear strike against the PRC, the U.S. statements, while not wholeheartedly supporting the Chinese, nevertheless went a long way to dispel fears in Peking that the United States was encouraging the Soviets. These gestures made it possible for the moderates to make a case that the United States was willing to make a number of substantive concessions if only the Chinese would agree to open more direct channels of communication. Since normalizing relations *under these new circumstances* would not require that China compromise on any matters of principle, Chou could demonstrate how much China stood to gain from such an arrangement without being so vulnerable to charges of capitulationism. In this way as Soviet pressure on China increased and the costs of leaning to the West were steadily decreased, the U.S. option became increasingly attractive.

By December 1969, the moderates' position had been strengthened enough to instruct Lei Yang to accept the U.S. offer to resume the Warsaw Talks.<sup>238</sup> By February 1970, "the Chinese" were prepared to move well beyond the November initiative by calling on the United States to shift the Talks to Peking and conduct them at a significantly higher level.<sup>239</sup> Unfortunately, Nixon's decision to invade Cambodia, like his restrained comments in January 1969, made the position of the moderates very vulnerable by presenting Chou's rivals with an opportunity to demonstrate the aggressive nature of the United States. Once again the

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<sup>238</sup> In early December, U.S. Ambassador to Poland Walter Stoessel, Jr., told a Chinese diplomat, Lei Yang, that the United States desired to improve relations and open up new channels of communication. The two met privately in the Chinese Embassy on December 7, and it was eventually resolved to reconvene the Warsaw Talks on January 20, 1970.

<sup>239</sup> Kalb and Kalb, op. cit., p. 230.

moderates' policy was temporarily stalled. Mao's public denunciation of U.S. imperialism in May 1970, interestingly read by Lin not by the Chairman, attests to the power Lin still wielded.<sup>240</sup>

Following the purge of Ch'en Po-ta, which greatly diluted the strength of the opposition and after the Second Plenum (August 1970) revealed to Mao and others the gravity of the Lin Piao affair, Lin's policies came under increased attack.<sup>241</sup> Mao finally rejected Lin's recommendations by publicly endorsing Chou's policy in conversations he had with Edgar Snow.<sup>242</sup> With Chairman Mao publicly supporting a policy of rapidly normalizing relations with the United States, Lin was unable to overturn the decision. Lin clearly ended up on the wrong side of the fence on this issue, and his fear of being isolated contributed to his downfall. As Nixon and Mao became fully committed, the final pieces fell into place and on July 15 both capitals simultaneously announced to stunned nations that President Nixon would journey to Peking.

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<sup>240</sup> See footnote 24, p. 25.

<sup>241</sup> See footnote 234, p. 118.

<sup>242</sup> See footnote 23, p. 24.



#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

Having systematically analyzed the Chinese strategic debates of 1966-1969, what have we accomplished? First, we have provided a new interpretation of the very important yet poorly understood origins of the Sino-Soviet-American triangular relationship. It has been widely accepted that the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia (August 1968) was the spark that ignited Chinese interest in improving relations with Washington, yet our analysis suggests that the issue of ameliorating tensions was discussed and debated well before then. In fact, there is clear evidence that the Chinese "coupled" the issues of Sino-Soviet and Sino-American relations as early as 1964. We have identified what appears to have been a concerted effort in 1968 by one group of Chinese leaders to normalize relations with Washington to facilitate opposing the Soviet Union. This "November initiative" was ultimately overturned, however, for a number of reasons not the least of which was Nixon's cautious public treatment of the Chinese following his inauguration. A possible result of Nixon's action was that Sino-American détente was pushed back several years. What might have been the Peking Agreement of 1969 instead became the Shanghai Communiqué of 1972.

This new interpretation of the origins of Sino-American détente has a number of important implications for our current understanding of Chinese politics. For one, our analysis illuminates some of the principles that underlie the Chinese approach to policymaking. If we can comprehend how the Chinese handled critical foreign policy decisions then this should provide us with clear insights into the decisionmaking process itself. The significance of the link between perceptions, assessments, and strategic recommendations certainly transcends the narrow issue of China's response to the Soviet threat. If from this case study we can understand why the leaders split apart and the impact such factionalism had on their ability to respond forcefully and consistently to Soviet political/military pressure, then we will be better prepared to analyze similar Chinese behavior on other issues or in other periods.

This raises a question that lies at the heart of our understanding of Chinese politics: Is the leadership prone to divisive factionalism? Especially with the death of Mao Tse-tung, how will decisions be made in post-Mao China? For as the sweeping purge of the radicals following Mao's death suggests, the cleavages evident since the mid-1960s have only deepened to the point of threatening to jeopardize the ability of the post-Mao leadership to rule China peacefully and effectively. While the foreign policy issues explored in this study cannot fully explain the current state of affairs in Peking, they do provide us with a window for viewing the background of the intensely bitter struggle between the radicals and other leaders in China. What does our case study teach us about the source of leadership disagreement, and furthermore, how does such behavior affect the decisions the United States must make in the near future? It is this set of questions, both historical and contemporary, that will now be addressed.

#### WAS FOREIGN POLICY A CONTENTIOUS ISSUE DURING THE GPCR?

Earlier studies of this period have argued that foreign policy issues were ignored during the GPCR. These analysts have written that following the resolution of the Lo Jui-ch'ing affair in early 1966, the leadership unanimously supported Mao's line in foreign policy, which was "in order to oppose U.S. imperialism, we must resolutely oppose Soviet revisionism." Whether a Maoist line actually existed in 1966 is unclear. What is certain, however, is that the leadership chose to interpret this vague guideline in several fundamentally different ways.

To break down foreign policy into their component parts, we found that the leadership differed on three critical issues: (1) the nature of the U.S. threat, (2) the nature of the Soviet threat, and (3) the nature of Soviet-American relations. With respect to the first issue, no one could deny that the United States was rapidly expanding its involvement in the Vietnam War. The crucial question, however, was, How does the presence of several hundred thousand U.S. troops in South Vietnam and frequent U.S. bombing raids on the north affect China's national security? In its most basic form, How likely was it that the United States would escalate the war into China? This question was



seriously discussed throughout the GPCR and signs of fundamental disagreement among top Chinese leaders were clearly evident.

Second, the leadership had to confront the issue of what were the ramifications of the Soviet military buildup against China. It has been argued by some of the most astute observers of Chinese foreign policy that, because of the slow pace of the buildup, the Chinese never felt threatened until the ominous Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Our analysis leads us to conclude that the leadership was not only keenly aware of the implications of the Soviet buildup for China's security, but that the militarization of the conflict produced sharp differences of opinion over the nature of China's response to threat. Well before Czechoslovakia, key decisionmakers debated whether the Soviet threat justified halting the GPCR or whether it demanded that they broaden the scope of the struggle to weed out every last capitulationist. Also at issue was the question of whether the threat compelled China to improve relations with the United States.

Finally, during 1968 the focus of the debate increasingly centered on the nature of Soviet-American relations. Did the two collude or did they contend? If they collaborated, was their goal to encircle, isolate, and invade China, or rather to bring about a peace settlement in Vietnam? Some leaders argued that since the two *contended*, grounds existed to distinguish between the primary and secondary enemy and ultimately to unite with the lesser adversary to oppose the most threatening foe. Others concluded that since both were equally hostile to the PRC, China had to adhere to the principles of self-reliance by opposing both adversaries simultaneously. The leadership thus not only discussed but they also sharply disagreed about these three critical foreign policy issues during the GPCR.

### THREE CONTENDING FOREIGN POLICY GROUPS

During the height of the GPCR, while Red Guards struggled against those who had lost sight of the goals of the revolution, the top leadership split into three contending groups over a wide range of foreign policy issues. Although it is largely outside the scope of this study, the foreign policy positions adopted by various leaders not surprisingly

appear to have been integrally related to their domestic policy recommendations. The linkage between these foreign policy differences and the internal political situation further reinforces the argument that the leadership has been badly divided for at least a decade.

The *moderates* consisted of Chou En-lai, Ch'en Yi, Chi P'eng-fei, and others. In essence, they argued that the Soviet Union posed a far greater threat to China's national security than did the United States. From their perspective the United States posed a threat to Vietnam not to China, and following Tet, even that was decreasing. However, the extent of the Soviet buildup in the Far East revealed a rapidly increasing threat from the "revisionists" to the north. Given the international situation, the moderates urged that the Soviets be declared China's primary adversary. Then, since the United States and the Soviet Union contended as well as colluded, the Chinese could drive a wedge between the two and isolate the main enemy by tactically uniting with the United States. Since they did not regard the United States as a hostile adversary of China, and because they believed in the tactical importance of diplomacy, they came to advocate that China normalize relations with Washington to improve their position against the Soviets.

Those of the *military* persuasion fought the moderates tenaciously on virtually every foreign policy issue. Taking their cues from Lin Piao, Huang Yung-sheng, and other top PLA commanders, the military concluded that the United States posed the main threat to China. Rejecting the moderates' assessment, they believed that the aggressive nature of the United States would inevitably lead it to expand the war to China. The Soviets on the other hand, had not yet fully committed themselves to opposing the PRC. Therefore, if China were to adhere to a policy of not provoking the Soviets, and instead occasionally remind them of the traditional friendship between the two countries, then at least they could postpone a confrontation. At best they could prevent a showdown. With this in mind, the military strenuously resisted the moderates' call to ameliorate tensions with the United States. In their opinion such a policy was neither desirable nor feasible. Furthermore, focusing all of China's energies against the northern revisionists could only further provoke Moscow by dramatizing the extent of China's commitment to



opposing it. Thus the military struggled against the moderates' November initiative.

Finally, a third group of committed *radicals* demanded that China strictly adhere to a policy of simultaneously opposing both superpowers. From their perspective China could best oppose these adversaries by following a strategy of military confrontation. The radicals shared the military's assessment of the United States and the moderates' views of the Soviets. They went beyond the moderates, however, by highlighting the subversive aspect of the Soviet threat. This required that the scope of the GPCR be expanded to ensure that all of China's potential "capitulationists" were weeded out. In addition, they reasoned that the best hedge against the Soviets' "sugar coated bullets" was a citizenry that was fully aware of the threat posed by Soviet revisionism. Thus, rather than appease the Soviets, confrontation was necessary to draw a clear line between China's revolutionary principles and the Soviet's decadent revisionism. With respect to the collusion-contention question, the radicals sided with the military. As a result they joined forces with the then more politically powerful Lin in trying to reverse the moderates' bid to normalize relations with the United States.

At first, domestic considerations as well as his style of leadership probably cautioned Mao from getting embroiled in the factional infighting over foreign policy. His commitment to a fundamental reorganization of society required that he support Lin Piao who headed the only organization capable of successfully overseeing a movement to rectify the Party. Yet at the same time he turned to the Shanghai radicals and his wife, Chiang Ch'ing, to lead the attack against the "capitalist roaders" in the Party. Later, however, when the movement fell short of his expectations, Mao increasingly relied on Chou to minimize the long-term damage to the GPCR. Because of Mao's domestic commitments, he was constrained from supporting exclusively one particular group on foreign policy matters.

By 1968, however, as disagreement increasingly turned into a two-line struggle, Mao's anti-Sovietism led him to back the moderates' move to isolate the Soviet Union by normalizing relations with Washington. Because of the strength of the domestic opposition--which may have caught

Mao by surprise--and Nixon's failure to respond positively to the November initiative, Mao probably reconsidered his decision to support the moderates. The military and radicals thereby were unable to undermine the November initiative by convincing Mao to come out against the United States. A year later after the Chinese had informed the United States in Warsaw that they wanted to move the Talks to Peking, Nixon's decision to invade Cambodia once again enabled the domestic opposition to thwart temporarily the moderates' plan to improve relations with Washington.

If our interpretation is correct, it further strengthens the case against the Mao-in-command model. In early 1969, Mao appears to have been compelled by domestic opponents to withdraw his support from a major foreign policy initiative. By this time, Lin had put together an almost impenetrable base of support which enabled him to exert tremendous pressure on Mao and others. Having transferred much of his personal authority to Lin, Mao began to discover that his chosen successor had different views on a wide range of domestic and foreign policy issues. Even prior to the reversal of the moderates' policy, Lin and others clearly did not get their cues from the Chairman. Although the question of why different leaders disagreed on these foreign policy issues is largely outside the scope of this report, our research reveals a situation where Mao's policy preferences were ignored and even opposed by domestic opponents.

#### THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC COSTS OF CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY

Although this study ends with 1969, our findings suggest that foreign policy may well remain a highly contentious issue in the post-Mao era. For one, the economic costs of continued opposition to the Soviet Union are enormous. In a country committed to mechanizing agriculture and modernizing industry by the turn of the century, supporting additional troops along the Sino-Soviet border diverts scarce resources away from other vital sectors. The commitment to opposing Soviet revisionism works at cross-purposes to the larger goal of modernizing



China's economic superstructure. With Mao gone, leaders more concerned with ideological matters would no doubt insist that China faithfully adhere to the Maoist legacy of total resistance to Soviet revisionism. Other leaders more inclined towards economic considerations might argue for a reduction of tension with the Soviet Union. The Chinese decision in late November 1976 to resume border talks with the Soviet Union after more than 18 months of steadfast refusal to negotiate with Moscow on this issue may foreshadow just such a move. As a result, the economic issue alone could provide the policy context for leadership disagreement.

The political costs of the Sino-American rapprochement could also provide fertile grounds for contention over foreign policy matters. After five years, the Chinese may be asking themselves what they have gained from Sino-American détente! While some could point to greater security against the Soviet threat, prestige, increased trading opportunities with U.S. allies, and an improved position at the United Nations, others could come back with China's serious loss of credibility with many revolutionary movements. Aside from international repercussions, the Taiwan question intuitively seems a likely source of controversy. While some Chinese may be content to go slow on the question of "liberation," others no doubt are anxious for the United States to follow through with the spirit of the Shanghai Communiqué by immediately severing all of its diplomatic and military ties with Taiwan.

Aside from the political and economic costs of continuing Sino-Soviet hostility, the issue of the reliability of the United States as a hedge against Soviet hostility has also been called into question.<sup>1</sup> If, as we argue, the rationale for improving relations with Washington was based on the impact it would have in deterring the Soviet Union, then the Chinese must determine whether the U.S. performance in Angola and SALT II foreshadows a general lack of commitment to resist Soviet pressure. If the Chinese conclude that indeed is the case, then the

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<sup>1</sup>For a comprehensive examination of Chinese sensitivity to SALT and potential shifts in Soviet-American strategic balance, see Pillsbury, 1975b, op. cit.

original justification for improving relations is gone. If the United States is neither willing to help China deter the Soviets nor capable of extricating itself gracefully from its *ménage à trois* with Taiwan, then the Chinese leaders who demand that ties with Washington be broken will have a much stronger case.

For these and other reasons, the orientation of Chinese foreign policy may well remain a contentious issue. While it is premature to assess the relative importance foreign policy issues played in the dramatic purge of the "gang of four," the fact that all of the key advocates of one group have been arrested and vilified by the leaders of the other factions suggests that factionalism may continue to play a crucial role in the post-Mao era. Whether Hua Kuo-feng will succeed in breaking the back of the radical faction or has conversely given Chiang Ch'ing's numerous and influential supporters cause to escalate the war-of-words into armed struggle thereby intensifying the divisiveness still remains to be seen. In any case, with Mao, Chou, and Lin dead, and Chiang Ch'ing currently Hua's prisoner, the cast of characters in positions of authority is significantly different than during the previous decade. Particularly in the wake of the purge of the radicals, the crucial role Mao played, intentionally or accidentally, in protecting and encouraging Chiang Ch'ing and her coterie is now clearly evident. The arrests of October 1976, may well be read by the remaining radicals in China as a signal that Hua Kuo-feng does not intend to be as tolerant of left "deviationism" as was his mentor. This fundamental change in the overarching structure of Peking politics could create the conditions for a significantly different political order; even possibly one which does not allow--let alone encourage--factionalism.

If Hua ultimately stabilizes his position in a new leadership composed exclusively of moderates and military, then it is conceivable that the post-Mao era will be potentially far less factionalized than during Mao's reign. Nevertheless, even under these admittedly speculative circumstances, if Hua continues to stress Chou's policies of industrializing, mechanizing, and general modernizing of Chinese society, he will inevitably come into conflict with the Maoist legacy of egalitarianism. Thus even without the radicals, Hua may find that his patron has provided



sufficient ammunition to support a formidable opposition group. Therefore, while it is too early to predict with any degree of confidence the complexion of the post-Mao era, the probability of some sort of leadership disagreement is quite substantial.

LEADERSHIP DISAGREEMENT ON CRITICAL FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES  
IS CLEARLY REFLECTED IN THE CHINESE PRESS<sup>2</sup>

A question of enduring importance to students of contemporary Chinese affairs is one of epistemology--on what do we base our knowledge of Chinese politics? The operating assumption of most authorities outside the government is that the Chinese press can provide a rich map of clues with which to track down the essence of what goes on in Peking. Some analysts within the government, however, scoff at the idea that scholars armed with only a circumscribed number of Chinese journals can actually see the trees through the dense forest of propaganda and deception. It is our contention, based upon our research, that this medium is in fact a gold mine, which with the proper tools will provide a wealth of information even on sensitive foreign policy issues. Access to the proper tools, a proper conceptual mental set, and access to the full range of public press materials therefore appear to be at the base of the problem.

A major reason for the disparity between our findings and those of our predecessors stems from the approach to the subject. Aside from the unquestionable benefit of hindsight, a significant factor is that at that outset the Chinese press was systematically examined for possible signs of leadership disagreement. With this in mind, abundant signs of diverse assessments and strategic recommendations were found in the medium. Various leaders interpreted international events quite differently and this showed up in their public statements. The critical task was methodically contrasting the tone and content of different articles and statements to accumulate evidence of fundamental leadership disagreement.

SINO-AMERICAN DÉTENTE: A HOTLY CONTENTED ISSUE

A lesson of contemporary significance is that the issue of improving relations with the United States has been discussed since well before

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<sup>2</sup>For a more detailed discussion of this topic, see the following section.

the Twelfth Plenum (October 1968) and has been vehemently opposed by many top Chinese leaders. Contrary to much of the literature on Sino-American relations, Mao's decision to support the policy did not quiet all opposition. It appears that Mao was willing to put his weight behind a policy of normalization in November 1968 and again in the spring of 1970 only to be reversed by a coalition of top leaders adamantly opposed to such a move. With Mao's death and the ascendancy of Chairman Hua Kuo-feng, careful consideration must be given to the possibility that Chinese interest in improving Sino-American relations may dwindle. Particularly as the United States confronts a period of critical negotiations with the Chinese over the final steps to normalization, it is disconcerting, to say the least, that three of the most influential supporters of the policy (Mao, Chou, and Ch'en Yi) are all dead. At the same time, however, the fall of Lin Piao and the collapse of the radicals suggest that current opposition may not be as formidable as it was in 1968 and in 1970. Ultimately, Peking's flexibility on normalization may be contingent on the views and the authority of Hua Kuo-feng, as well as on the extent President Carter is willing to compromise on Taiwan and other contentious issues.

During the GPCR, despite menacing U.S. involvement in Vietnam, some leaders concluded that the Soviet Union was China's primary adversary. Although it was by no means clear at the time, the moderates partially based their policy of improving relations with the United States on the belief that the United States and the Soviet Union were not irreversibly committed to collaborating against China. These two factors--the primacy of the Soviet threat and the existence of contention between the United States and the Soviet Union--created the conditions whereby China sought to normalize relations with the United States. Once the initial hurdles have been crossed, it remains to be determined under what conditions the Chinese will continue to demonstrate a willingness to make concessions to the United States to maintain friendly relations. The critical question that must be posed but cannot be answered is whether a Sino-Soviet rapprochement is likely in the near future, and if so, would that undermine the motivation for Sino-American détente? If the Chinese leadership either comes to believe that Soviet-American relations have become so



close as to call into question the tactical usefulness of dealing with the United States in a cooperative manner, or concludes that Sino-Soviet relations can be improved, then Mao's successors may unilaterally undo the last five years of Sino-American détente.

While most of the leaders who opposed improving relations with the United States during the period covered in this study have subsequently been purged, it is by no means clear that all of the opposition forces have been removed. The series of allegorical articles authored by Liang Hsiao, which go back to mid-1974, reveal that the policy is still under fire by the radicals. Even with the purge of the "gang of four," the formidable minority of radicals systematically promoted to positions of authority by Chiang Ch'ing may continue to resist Chinese efforts to ameliorate Sino-American relations. While most of the upper echelon leaders of the PLA under Lin have been removed, we cannot assume that all vestiges of the military's policies have been eradicated. Thus it is conceivable that a coalition of Chiang Ch'ing's supporters and remnants of Lin's military group might be formed following Mao's death to demand that the United States capitulate on the Taiwan issue or China will break its ties with Washington. Particularly if Hua or whoever ultimately assumes a position of leadership is compelled by the circumstances surrounding his ascent to power to be somewhat responsive to such views, then such absolute intransigence, whether justified or not, could bring an end to the era of Sino-American détente. Whether China would actually jeopardize resolving the Taiwan problem to take a more principled stand against the United States is unclear. No one should assume however that the Chinese will bite at any offer dangled before them.

U.S. POLICY TOWARD CHINA PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN DETERMINING  
CHINA'S POLICY TOWARD THE UNITED STATES

Another lesson of contemporary significance is that actions taken by the United States have in the past played a crucial role in structuring China's policy toward the United States. Nixon's public lack of interest in improving Sino-American relations in January 1969 appears to have been a key factor in determining the precarious balance of forces

in Peking in favor of normalizing relations with Washington. A similar phenomenon occurred in the spring of 1970 following the decision to invade Cambodia. On the other hand, the series of U.S. unilateral moves toward China in late 1969 appear to have greatly strengthened the moderates' arguments resulting in renewed Chinese interest in improving relations. Thus the lesson of the Nixon era is that U.S. policy is a crucial determinant of China's policy toward the United States.

Now that the channels of communication between the PRC and the United States have been improved, it is less clear whether any particular action or inaction on the part of Washington would have such a major impact on Chinese foreign policy. However, given the *potential* strength of the forces in China opposed to the United States, a string of hostile gestures from Washington could easily swing the balance of forces against further normalization. Without Mao to personally endorse the settlement of the Taiwan issue, a hard-line U.S. policy may in fact cause the Chinese to reconsider their commitment to the Shanghai Communiqué.

If an uncompromising policy could produce dire side effects, would generous U.S. offers have the opposite impact? Looking back on the historical record, we would conclude, yes. During the summer of 1969, when the Soviet Union threatened to launch a nuclear attack against China, Peking remained hostile to the United States. After the resolution of the summer crisis with the Soviet Union, however, when we might expect to find less motivation for normalizing relations with Washington, we find the Chinese exceptionally responsive to U.S. offers. While other factors were no doubt involved, we would argue that Nixon's public and private reassurances to the Chinese played a decisive role in their decision to resume the Warsaw Talks in January 1970, particularly U.S. statements indicating that Washington opposed a Sino-Soviet war. Continued U.S. interest most likely led the Chinese to propose in February that the Talks be moved to Peking. Therefore, during the Nixon administration, positive offers to China decisively strengthened the position of those in Peking who favored close ties with the United States.



If the Chinese are receptive, what can or should the United States offer? The three obvious choices are: (1) concessions on the Taiwan issue, (2) some form of military ties with the Chinese in response to possible Chinese requests for defense-related technology, and (3) a strong U.S. position against the Soviets which would minimize fears of collusion. Particularly in the wake of the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam in the spring of 1975 and the current plans for a substantial reduction of U.S. forces stationed in South Korea, Chinese leaders may conclude that the United States has lost its commitment and capacity to act decisively in East Asia. To prevent such misunderstanding, the United States should demonstrate that it intends to resist Soviet expansionist tendencies in areas that directly threaten China's national security. Similarly in Europe, U.S. actions should signal to the Chinese that NATO will not shrink from its responsibility of safeguarding Western Europe. In these ways, Washington can unambiguously express to Peking that it recognizes the global compatibility and complementarity of U.S. and Chinese national security interests. This, more than any one specific policy, will serve to preserve and strengthen the basis of Sino-American détente.

V. A POSTSCRIPT ON METHODOLOGY

As noted in the Introduction and in numerous places throughout the text, our findings consistently differed from those of the many well-informed analysts who preceded us. The crucial question that this section addresses is, Why? To compress what is certainly a complex issue, the question can be answered in two ways: First, we had the undeniable advantage of being able to go back over events that are now practically "ancient history" and factor in what six or eight years of new insights have taught us; and second, we used a methodology that put us in touch with leadership disagreement on a wide range of critical foreign policy issues. The degree of importance of each factor is difficult to assess, since each interacts in a critical way, but our view is that hindsight enables us to emphasize subtle signs of leadership disagreement that previous analysts evidently overlooked, or which can only be viewed as signs of policy conflict with a low level of interpretative confidence.

Given the nature of the task at hand--to trace through the evolution of China's policy for coping with the Soviet Union as an adversary--it would appear that particular bits of information that surfaced after the period under investigation played only a minor role in structuring our conclusions. Virtually all of the critical pieces of evidence for the period from the Miyamoto Mission to the Chenpao clashes came from sources that were readily available to any analyst examining events as they occurred. In other words, in theory at least, anyone sufficiently sensitive to the subtleties of the data should have been able to trace the evolution of leadership disagreement, much as we have done, right when it was happening.

Since to the best of our knowledge no one has examined this topic and come up with similar conclusions,<sup>1</sup> we are compelled to draw one of

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<sup>1</sup>Of all the studies we surveyed, only Roger Brown's unpublished study comes up with conclusions that are compatible with ours. However, our two studies have dealt with two different periods. Also,



two conclusions--either other analysts have come up with similar findings but rejected them for one reason or another, or others were not sufficiently sensitive to the possibility of leadership disagreement of such a fundamental nature and therefore no one found any traces of it. It is our contention that, right or wrong, these findings are relatively unique and therefore we are obliged to discuss precisely what led us to draw such conclusions. In doing so, we hope to shed some light on one of the darkest corners in contemporary Chinese politics--the interface between media analysis and an outside observer's ability to "know" what is going on in China.

To begin with, it should be made perfectly clear that most, if not all, of our "methodology" is based on techniques used by virtually every student of Chinese politics. We cannot overemphasize that it all boils down to a rather pedestrian aphorism--one rarely discovers anything one did not specifically set out to find.<sup>2</sup> Translated into "Pekingology" this reads, one's guiding assumptions concerning the nature of Chinese politics will to a great extent determine what one looks for and what one finds.

Although nearly fifteen years old, the short methodology section in Donald Zagoria's classic study of the Sino-Soviet conflict remains one of the best interpretive guides to reading the Chinese press.<sup>3</sup> In it, Zagoria presents the reader with seven "clues" for reading Communist media.

1. polemical tone
2. "divergent emphasis given to a particular point by different leaders in the same Party, different papers in the same country, or different parties"

although Roger Brown presented the kernel of the three contending groups approach, he provided his readers with little documentation to support his findings.

<sup>2</sup>For an excellent discussion of the broader implications of research that operates within the confines of a generally accepted "paradigm," see Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, 2d ed., University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1970.

<sup>3</sup>Zagoria, 1962, op. cit.

3. omission
4. distortion
5. "selective reporting or interpretations of developments in the West"
6. "highly differentiated pattern of response"
7. "sudden change in routine formulas?"<sup>4</sup>

Although Zagoria suggested that this methodology could be used to distinguish different opinions within a single country, he in fact was primarily concerned with signs of *interstate* disagreement rather than *internal* diversity. Thus, while the techniques Zagoria perfected are relevant to our study, we must move beyond his state-to-state analysis and focus our energies on signs of leadership disagreement.

Studies of Chinese foreign policy have traditionally fallen into two categories: those that are chiefly concerned with explaining actual Chinese *behavior*<sup>5</sup> and those that analyze the *political process* within which Chinese foreign policy decisions are made.<sup>6</sup> Our study focuses on the political process and from this perspective attempts to explain one aspect of Chinese foreign policy behavior--the Chinese response to Moscow's decision to militarize the Sino-Soviet conflict.

Because of the nature of the task, the first crucial question was whether critical foreign policy issues were discussed during the GPCR. If evidence was found that critical issues were confronted by the leadership, then we had to determine whether foreign policy was a *contentious* issue. The conventional wisdom on this subject is straightforward. As one astute observer of Chinese foreign policy concluded:

In a very real sense, foreign affairs was in a state of suspended animation once the Cultural Revolution began... it is difficult to imagine foreign policy, in either its

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 30-34.

<sup>5</sup> Allen Whiting's excellent studies fall into this category. See *China Crosses the Yalu*, Stanford University Press, 1968, and 1975, op. cit.

<sup>6</sup> The study by Harding and Gurtov, op. cit., is an excellent example of this type of study.



decisionmaking or implementation phases, as having been of much concern to the Central Committee.<sup>7</sup>

Another analyst put it even more succinctly:

The ending of the GPCR signaled at the CCP's Ninth Congress in April 1969 permitted the Chinese leadership to give serious thought to foreign affairs for the first time in three years.<sup>8</sup>

More than any single factor, this widely held belief has structured the operating assumptions of most analysts who have examined Sino-Soviet and Sino-American relations. Since it was generally accepted that following the "strategic debates" of 1965-1966, the leadership turned all of its attention inward to the domestic concerns associated with the GPCR, we, as a field, have come to believe that "the [Chinese] leaders *would not have had the time and energy to devote to foreign policy questions.*"<sup>9</sup> [Emphasis added.] Since no one expected to find evidence that the leadership was even thinking about such subjects, certainly no one had any reason to look for signs of leadership disagreement. Therefore, given the fact that no one was actively examining Chinese statements with this in mind, it is not surprising that diverse assessments were not uncovered. As a result, the three most detailed studies of Sino-Soviet or Sino-American relations all picked up the trail *after the GPCR.*<sup>10</sup> In justifying their decisions to begin

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<sup>7</sup>Gurtov, op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>8</sup>Ojha, op. cit., p. 108.

<sup>9</sup>Morton H. Halperin, op. cit., p. 29. Halperin was not the only other author in that series to make such a statement. Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote: "The conclusion of the more acute phases of the Chinese Cultural Revolution made it possible for Peking to turn its attention to foreign policy" (p. 25). In the introduction to an edited volume specifically on Sino-American relations, A. M. Halpern also came up with similar findings: "The first signs of reappraisal could be detected in the fall of 1968." See also A. M. Halpern, "China's Foreign Policy Since the Cultural Revolution," *Sino-American Relations, 1949-1971*, Praeger, 1972, p. 24.

<sup>10</sup>Allen Whiting, 1973, op. cit.; Harold Hinton, 1971b, op. cit.; Thomas Robinson, 1972, op. cit.

their examinations around the time of the Czech incident or the Twelfth Plenum, they inadvertently contributed to the body of general wisdom which said that foreign policy matters were largely unimportant during the GPCR.<sup>11</sup>

We approached the subject, however, with distinctly different operating assumptions. Having no prior knowledge that foreign policy was in fact a contentious issue, we were specifically on the lookout for any signs, regardless of how subtle, that these issues were being discussed or debated. The question we wrestled with throughout this endeavor, which to a certain extent lies at the heart of our "methodology," was, Where would leadership disagreement be reflected? The answer brings us back to Donald Zagoria--we had to find the "clues" that would help us "unravel the political mysteries of the Communist world."<sup>12</sup> Particularly in critical foreign policy issues, the clues, if they could be found at all, were bound to be highly esoteric, or were they?

The obvious place to begin was to compare, line-by-line if necessary, all foreign policy pronouncements by senior Chinese leaders. Even this basic exercise yielded a significant payoff. While Chou En-lai characterized the United States as "strong in appearance but

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<sup>11</sup>First, up to that time [Czech crisis] first priority was given to the Cultural Revolution and the attendant domestic turmoil with recurring waves of violence that swept Chinese cities from May 1967 to August 1968. Next in urgency was the Indochina War which escalated literally up to the border in September 1967. By contrast, the piecemeal Russian build-up spread over time and territory warranted less immediate attention than either of these two developments. (Whiting, 1972, op. cit., p. 73.)

nor is the evidence of a debate over how to deal with the threat posed by the massive Soviet deployments to the Sino-Soviet border region....it does not seem that military problems with the S.U. engendered a factional debate among China's top leaders. (Robinson, 1973, op. cit., p. 1192.)

Later in 1966 even these important issues [Sino-Soviet relations] were largely submerged by the eruption in China of the Cultural Revolution. (Hinton, 1971b, op. cit., p. 19.)

<sup>12</sup>Zagoria, 1962, op. cit., p. 30.



weak in essence," Wen Yu-cheng (Deputy Chief of General Staff) referred to the United States as "the most vicious enemy of the people of the world." Although subtle, the implication is that Chou belittled the American threat while Wen emphasized it. In another case, as Lin went out of his way to extend "warm greetings to the great Soviet people and Soviet Army," Teng Hai-ch'ing vitriolically castigated the Soviet Army for sharpening its sword for a possible surprise attack against China.

After a thorough reading of all statements as published in *FBIS*, *SCMP*, *Current Background*, *Peking Review*, *PD*, and other primary sources, several interesting findings were discovered. First, various Chinese leaders consistently portrayed the United States and Soviet Union in different ways. Some chose to *highlight* the threatening qualities of one adversary or another at the same time others *deemphasized* or even denied that such an enemy posed a serious threat. Second, these differences were reflected not only in the perceptions of the foreign threats but also in the strategy put forth for coping with such an adversary. Third, the Chinese purposely tried to obscure signs of Chinese leadership disagreement by, for example, deleting key phrases from *Peking Review* articles. In other words, the really "juicy" distinctions or phrases one might find in *FBIS* translations were often missing from corresponding articles in *Peking Review*.<sup>13</sup> This "discovery" cautioned us from relying too heavily on publications the Chinese put out with a foreign audience in mind, for had we based our investigation exclusively on *Peking Review*, our results would have probably been very different.

The solid signs of leadership diversity compelled us to confront the thorny question of who stood for what in this new "strategic debate." The general wisdom on this subject was not particularly helpful

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<sup>13</sup> For example, on February 16, 1967, Ch'en Yi in a speech to a reception for a visiting Mauritanian Government delegation brought up the Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. While the *FBIS* translation picked up the reference, the *Peking Review* article on Ch'en's speech omitted any mention of the Five Principles. See *FBIS*, *DR*, *FE*, No. 32, February 15, 1967, p. BBB 15; and *Peking Review*, No. 8, February 17, 1967, p. 30.

because of the extent of disagreement among Sinologists.<sup>14</sup> Briefly, as some analysts spoke of a "Mao-Lin-Chou"<sup>15</sup> foreign policy strategy or the essential agreement between Lin and Chou,<sup>16</sup> others saw a "personal political feud"<sup>17</sup> between the two. When it came down to the views of particular leaders, the split among analysts was just as wide. As one concluded that Mao "evidently did not take the Soviet threat seriously,"<sup>18</sup> another suggested that "the Maoist faction demanded that the struggle against 'U.S. imperialism' be given a lower strategic priority than that against 'Soviet revisionism'."<sup>19</sup>

As the question of which leader advocated which policy position was approached, we quickly realized that the speeches and statements of the key decisionmakers would not be enough to identify what were certainly complexly interlinked multi-issue arguments. Since the primary issues concerned different perceptions of the United States and the Soviet Union, we concentrated our energies on locating specific events that produced reactions in the Chinese press. The large numbers of U.S. overflights provided fertile ground for determining whether there were distinct images of the opponent reflected in the medium. Although the *PD* and *LAD* commentaries that followed each overflight were picked up by some analysts and regularly examined by *FBIS-Trends*, no one stopped to determine if the *PD* portrayal of the United States differed significantly from the *LAD* depiction. As demonstrated in

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<sup>14</sup> While analysts presented vastly different assessments, one view was particularly widespread. As David Mozingo put it: "The commitment to total struggle with the U.S. is so deeply imbedded in China's policy that it is hardly credible to suppose her November [1968] gesture was more than a diplomatic probe." (Op. cit., p. 45.)

Prior to ping-pong diplomacy in the spring of 1971, most analysts shared Professor Mozingo's belief that basic Maoist doctrine was irreversibly opposed to the idea of a Sino-American détente.

<sup>15</sup> Ojha, op. cit., p. 108.

<sup>16</sup> Ra'anan, 1970, op. cit., p. 137.

<sup>17</sup> Hinton, 1971b, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>19</sup> Clubb, op. cit., p. 156.



numerous places throughout the foregoing text, there was a consistent difference in tone and content between the two commentaries.

Having discovered one solid strand of evidence, the next problem was to try and associate views found in the press with particular policymakers. In some cases we can infer, usually with a high degree of accuracy, that if an article appears in a certain newspaper then it was authored by a particular group. During the GPCR, articles from *Wen Hui Pao* and many from *Hung Ch'i* (especially while it was under the editorship of Wang Li and Chi Pen-yu) expressed the views of the CRG, or the radicals. Authoritative articles in the *LAD*, since it was published by the General Political Department of the PLA, generally reflected the views of the central PLA leadership, or in our period--Lin Piao. From the perspective of identifying the source of particular articles, the *PD* was by far the most problematic. During this period, views of all three persuasions appeared in the *PD*, sometimes side by side.

Since the *PD* is by far the most widely disseminated source of information, this posed a dilemma: The largest chunk of data fell into a category that could least confidently be analyzed. A solution to this, on which we eventually came to rely quite heavily, was to isolate and identify key *stock phrases* that were widely used in speeches and in articles. If the same imagery was used in a similar way by both "hard" sources (ones that could be identified with some degree of accuracy) and "soft" sources (ones that were difficult to identify), then we could reasonably infer the source of questionable articles. While this would be a thin reed on which to base a study of Chinese foreign policy, when it is used to embellish other evidence then it is enormously useful.

Pursuing this line of attack, we began to single out a number of recurring phrases and mapped out when, how, and by whom they were used. Using an admittedly crude method of triangulation we found surprisingly consistent usage patterns. For example, in a particular period the moderates would bring up the "Five Principles" on a number of occasions, while neither the radicals nor the military ever used it. In another case, Chou and the moderates introduced the concept of *colluding and*

*contending* on August 22, 1968, and no one else picked it up until well after the Twelfth Plenum. While each single piece of evidence would not decisively make or break our argument, when we could trace out *consistent patterns* in both the newspapers and in speeches to key decisionmakers, then we felt confident in presenting our case for fundamental leadership disagreement.

An unexpected "discovery" complicated our task somewhat. On a number of occasions a particular phrase that had been used consistently by one group suddenly appeared in a totally different context. A prime example was the phrase "cast away illusions," or "don't have any illusions." While this was used mainly by the radicals to indicate that China should not abandon its struggle against the United States, on occasion the moderates co-opted these radical symbols and applied them to the Soviet Union. This suggests that the rules of access to phrases as well as particular media outlets is a subject that demands far greater attention by students of PRC polemics.

Despite the various roadblocks encountered, we came up with fifteen key phrases that helped to enable us to "unravel the political mysteries" of Chinese esoteric communication. We are fully aware of the incompleteness of our findings, but for heuristic purposes we will present our list of phrases and our general observations on how they were used.

#### KEY PHRASES USED BY VARIOUS FACTIONS FROM 1964 THROUGH 1969

1. *cast away illusions, don't have any illusions*  
Used primarily by radicals to indicate that China should not abandon struggle against the United States (also used on occasion by the moderates in the context of not being fooled by the true nature of Soviet revisionism). The military used the phrase in the same manner as the radicals.
2. *will never lay down its butcher's knife and become a buddha*  
Used by both the radicals and the military to indicate that the aggressive nature of the United States would never change and to oppose any move by the *Vietnamese* or the *moderates* to try and negotiate with the United States.
3. *parliamentary road, parliamentary struggle*  
Used primarily (by the radicals and the military) to criticize Liu Shao-ch'i directly and Chou indirectly. Also used to



condemn Soviet foreign policy under Khrushchev, and to dissuade the Vietnamese from negotiating with the United States in Paris.

4. *ferocious nature*  
Used by the military to indicate that the United States was still an actively hostile adversary that had to be carefully dealt with and under no circumstances appeased.
5. *anti-China fraud, tiny adverse current*  
Used by the radicals to indicate that while China appeared to be surrounded by colluding hostile adversaries, in fact she had friends all over the world and in any case the United States and the Soviet Union were not that frightening.
6. *peaceful coexistence with nations having different social systems than the United States*  
Used by the moderates to pave the way for talking with the United States.
7. (paraphrased) *sometime in the future U.S.-China relations will improve*  
Used by the moderates to reveal their intentions.
8. *colluding adversaries*  
Used by the military and the radicals to indicate that Soviet-American collusion was genuine and that China could not feasibly improve relations with the United States without either letting the wolf in the front door or the tiger in the back.
9. *colluding and contending adversaries*  
Used by the moderates to indicate that the United States and the Soviet Union were not irreversibly allied against China, and therefore opportunities existed to (1) separate the two and (2) use the United States to help China deter the Soviet Union.
10. *new historical stage of opposing U.S. imperialism and Soviet revisionism*  
Introduced by Chou to pave the way for the colluding and contending theme--i.e., one should oppose the Soviet Union by *tactically* allying China with the United States.
11. *we have already prepared for the U.S. aggressors*  
Used by the moderates to counter the military's assessment that China still had to increase war preparedness along its southern flank.
12. *enhance war preparedness, strengthen war preparations*  
Used by the military to build up China's military capabilities primarily (if not exclusively) on the southern border.
13. (paraphrased) *when discussing the U.S. threat in Vietnam to mention nuclear weapons or tens of millions of troops*  
Used by the military to alarm Chinese into regarding the U.S. threat more seriously.

14. *capitulationism*

Used by all three factions in different situations to stress different things: (1) by the moderates to criticize the Soviet Union for capitulating to the United States and betraying the interest of the people of the world; (2) by the radicals to oppose improving relations with anyone who was an ideological or military threat to China--i.e., the United States, the Soviet Union, Japan; and (3) by the military to oppose any move to appease the United States.

15. *social imperialism*

Reintroduced by Chou and the moderates to offer a theoretical justification for distinguishing between the two imperialisms and eventually rely on the United States to help oppose the Soviet Union.

What we have tried to accomplish by this probe into "methodology" is to provide the reader with a thumbnail sketch of why we reached our particular conclusions. The role of methodology still remains a forgotten corner in the study of Chinese politics. While we all are compelled by the nature of our sources to rely quite heavily on one form or another of content analysis, we have yet as a field to codify this procedure. As a result, studies of Chinese foreign policy produce widely divergent and oftentimes completely contradictory findings. Fifteen years ago, Donald Zagoria closed his methodology section with the advice that: "A major work remains to be written on the particular method for analyzing Communist communications that I have tried to sketch."<sup>20</sup> A full generation later, we unfortunately must end on the same note.

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<sup>20</sup> Zagoria, 1962, op. cit., p. 35.