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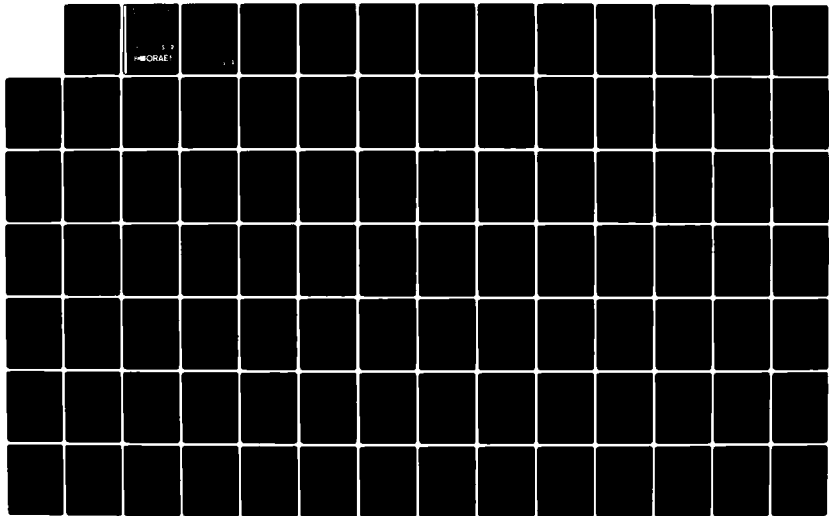
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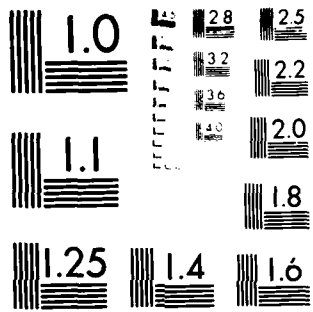
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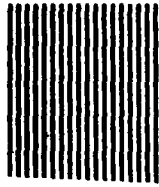
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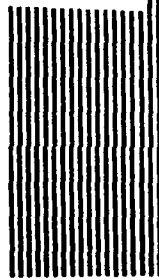


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# THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA RELATIONS IN ASIA: THE STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

by

ROBERT E. BEDESKI, Ph.D.

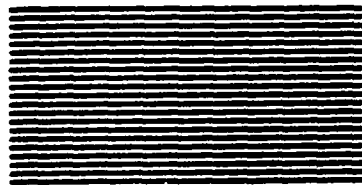


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### ABSTRACT

This report examines the strategic implications of the People's Republic of China's relations with her Asian neighbours. The primary hypothesis is that Sino-Soviet relations are the major determinant in these relations, with less influence played by the United States. Domestic factors in Chinese political and economic development are analyzed. China's strategic relations with Northeast, Southeast, South and Central Asia are reviewed in relation to the dynamics of each region and interests of the individual states, and in light of Sino-Soviet relations.

## RÉSUMÉ

Ce rapport traite des incidences stratégiques des relations de la République populaire de Chine avec ses voisins. On y pose comme première hypothèse que ce sont les relations sino-soviétiques qui constituent l'élément déterminant dans les autres relations et qu'en fait les États-Unis ont moins d'influence qu'on ne le croit. L'évolution politique et économique intérieure de la Chine est examinée. On traite également dans ce rapport des relations stratégiques de la Chine avec les pays du nord-est, du sud-est, du sud et du centre de l'Asie en tenant compte de la dynamique de chaque région et des intérêts de chaque État, ainsi que des relations sino-soviétiques.

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## AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

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In Ottawa, Mr. George Kamoff-Nicolisky suggested the project in the hectic days prior to his official retirement, and was a continuous source of guidance up to completion. I was fortunate in having two excellent research assistants whose industry and dependability proved indispensable - Ms. Song Poh-lan and Mr. Ron Garson. My wife Kathleen continued to be helpful in countless ways. Responsibility for facts and interpretations rests with the author alone.

Robert E. Bedeski

Ottawa, 9 July 1984



## Chapter 1

### OVERVIEW OF CHINA'S STRATEGIC RELATIONS IN ASIA - STRATEGIC ZONES AND POWER CENTERS

#### Introduction

Since 1978, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has been undergoing major shifts in its foreign policy. Normalization with the US as well as increasing economic and political ties with Western nations and Japan have brought China into a web of relations which at first seemed to promise the permanent orientation of China towards the US-led anti-Soviet alliance. If this re-orientation had taken place, the effects on the world balance of power would have been significant. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan hardened this convergence of interests, since China's interests were threatened most directly among the non-Middle Eastern countries. The growing Soviet support for Vietnam and the subsequent invasion of Kampuchea reinforced China's hostility towards the USSR. This culminated in China's invasion of Vietnam in February and March, 1979.

By late 1980, Chinese support for NATO in Europe, and the emerging triple entente of the US, Japan, and the PRC in East

Asia seemed to signal China's participation in a permanent united front against the USSR. It was a strategic opportunity for the West to encircle the Soviet empire, and to neutralize some of the Soviet gains made during the 1970s.

This honeymoon period began to evaporate soon after the inauguration of the Reagan administration, although his policies are not the sole cause. The Sino-US entente was the product of several factors which, in retrospect, were only temporary. First, the Chinese were embarking on the program of Four Modernizations, and needed large inputs of foreign investment and technology. Stimulation of economic interest was best facilitated by establishing close diplomatic and cultural relations with the non-communist industrial states, especially the US. Second, the post-Vietnam-War US appeared to lack the will to oppose Soviet expansionism, and so a coalition with China would help to awaken the US to the danger. Third, the haste and enthusiasm of normalization gave the appearance that the Taiwan issue would be solved in a relatively short time. This was a major encouragement to the Chinese, who were subsequently disappointed in Reagan's pro-Republic of China (ROC) positions. Finally, the USSR had demonstrated that it could encircle the PRC with clients and allies. The Soviets were building a formidable navy, and they would not hesitate to use force if necessary in pursuing their interests.

For these reasons, US and Chinese interests converged in their

willingness to resist the USSR. When Reagan entered the White House, he made it clear that Taiwan would not be abandoned, and that arms sales would continue. However, in a Joint Communique of 17 August 1982 (the so-called "Second Shanghai Communique"), the US declared its intention to reduce arms sales to Taiwan "leading over a period of time to a final resolution". He also began to increase defence spending, and emphasized his administration's opposition to the USSR expansionism. With Washington pursuing a hard-line policy toward the USSR, there was much less incentive for China to coordinate policies with the US.

The Soviets made several overtures for peace with the PRC since March 1982 when Brezhnev made a speech in Tashkent holding out an olive branch to Beijing. In October Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Leonid Ilyichov visited Beijing for the first of what was to become a semi-annual series of consultations held alternately in Moscow and Beijing. Another sign of the thaw is in "funeral diplomacy". The Chinese representative to Brezhnev's funeral in November 1982 was Foreign Minister Huang Hua, who neither sat on the Politburo nor was a vice-premier. In contrast, Vice Premier Wan Li, a member of the Politburo led the Chinese delegation to Moscow in February 1984. In this area as elsewhere, cautious normalization is taking place. There has been realization that in event of Sino-Soviet war, the US would not come to China's aid, and the Soviets would defeat China on

all fronts. Even if and when the ambitious modernization program is completed, China's inferior strategic position vis-a-vis the USSR would not be overcome.

### China's Asian Strategy

Today, as in past centuries, China holds the central position on the Asian continent. Its territories border a number of important powers in the continent. Because of this central position, China's policies and development will be major factors in the future of the region. There can be no balance of power in the continent which omits China from the equation.

The Americans and Soviets have sometimes viewed China as an instrument in their own mutual rivalry, and both seem to have made serious miscalculations in trying to play the "China Card". Now that the Chinese revolution has consolidated itself, and has its "reign of terror" (the Cultural Revolution) behind it, the PRC has become more conscious of its potential power as a nation-state, in contrast to being a revolutionary movement. It is developing the instruments and techniques of a modern nation-state, and rejects any infringements on its sovereignty.<sup>3</sup>

To understand China's strategic concerns in Asia, we can divide the continent into four regions: Northeast, Southeast, South, and Inner Asia. Each region has been intimately related to China's historical development, and plays a particular role in contemporary strategy. Northeast Asia includes Japan, the Korean

peninsula, and Taiwan. Southeast Asia includes the five nations of ASEAN (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand), Laos, Kampuchea (Cambodia), Vietnam, and Burma. South Asia includes Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Inner Asia includes Afghanistan and the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR). But mostly, Inner Asia consists of the 4,700-mile long Sino-Soviet border region.

In this configuration of regions, some states have particular strategic importance because of geographic location. Pakistan, for example, is crucial in that it participates both in Chinese concerns in Inner Asia as well as in South Asia. The country also serves as a bridge between China and the Moslem Mideastern countries. North Korea is also a corner intersection of the Sino-Soviet border and Northeast Asia. Taiwan and Vietnam are two endpoints in the arc around the Southeast China coast, and link the Northeast region with the Southeast.

#### China's Strategic Goals in Asia

What are the goals of China's strategy in Asia? First, and foremost is territorial security. Throughout imperial history, China was invaded from inner Asia. Nomadic tribes frequently pushed into agrarian China on raids and occasionally seized territory. In at least two instances, the Mongols and Manchus established dynasties after the traditional Chinese model. Inner Asian borders of China are today controlled by the Soviet Union

and its client, the Mongolian People's Republic. As long as relations remain antagonistic, there will be Chinese insecurity over these borders.

From the 1840s through 1953, a new source of border insecurity faced the Chinese - the coastal regions and Korea. The Western industrial nations, and later, Japan, penetrated China from the sea and through Korea. Today this threat has receded, and North Korea serves as a buffer on the peninsula, both from the South Korea-Japan-US complex in the south, and from the Soviets in the north.

The Chinese communist regime represented the first successful unified government in China since 1911, and it was determined to establish its control over all territory lost during the past century. In 1962, there was border fighting with the Indian army over disputed territory. There have been continued border skirmishes with the Vietnamese. These struggles have antagonized neighbors, but have served notice that China would not accept the boundaries bequeathed by the colonial regimes of the past.

A second strategic goal has been to expedite the modernization program. This requires peace and stability, and so the PRC has considerably reduced its bellicosity to Asian neighbors, except for the case of Vietnam. The less the Chinese must spend on military hardware and personnel, the more resources will be available for the modernization program. This factor also

explains Beijing's willingness to proceed with reduction of tensions with Moscow.

Development of trade and attraction of foreign investment and technology into the country have been a crucial part of the modernization program. Japan has been the most important Asian nation in this regard, while the PRC has actively sought financial support from the Overseas Chinese, who live mostly in Southeast Asia. Unification with Taiwan is also calculated as a factor which could bring in much-needed expertise and capital - if recovery could proceed without frightening off the industrial classes and elites.

A third objective in China's Asian strategy is to achieve prestige and status as a leading - if not the leading - nation in Asia. The Chinese lived in a sinocentric universe until the nineteenth century, and while the breakdown of the old regime has forced the civilization to undergo traumatic readjustments, the uniqueness of culture, the sheer size of population, the pride in revolutionary accomplishment, and the central position in the Asian continent demand that Asia and the world recognize China's pre-eminent status today and in the future. The Chinese see their nation as a leading force in the third world and as an advocate for international justice. The moralistic tone of foreign policy rhetoric is based on the traditional image of China as the "friend of the weak."

The Chinese recognize their country can no longer be the "central kingdom" of past centuries, but they are determined that they will also no longer be the "sick man of Asia." Beijing will not abandon those countries which have turned to it for help. They have established cultural exchange programs around the world, including Canada, and are active in technology transfer projects to a number of developing nations.

#### China's present international strategy

The foreign policy of Beijing has become increasingly complex in recent years. We can identify three basic modes: (1) balance of power diplomacy, (2) united front tactics with the broad range of countries which now recognize Beijing, and (3) People's Wars of National Liberation (PWNL). China today has more flexibility in its foreign policy than at any other time since 1949.<sup>4</sup>

Balance of power diplomacy was concerned primarily with countering the Soviet threat. This created a community of interest with the US and its allies, and went well beyond establishing communications with the US. Now that the US has taken the offensive against the USSR in rebuilding its security forces, China can bargain from a position much stronger than several years ago. This has prompted the PRC to seek reduction of tensions with the USSR. China now plays a central role in the regional balance of power in Indochina, and supports its clients in Kampuchea to counter the ascendancy of Vietnam in the region.



China uses the united front tactic by joining with countries in the "intermediate zones" between the superpowers. The Chinese position was summarized by Zhou Enlai in 1975:

We should ally ourselves with all the forces in the world that can be allied with to combat colonialism, imperialism, and above all, super-power hegemonism. We are ready to establish or develop relations with all countries on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence.

Zhou's statement emphasized China's ties to developing nations over the ideological bonds which are supposed to exist among all communist nations. By placing the US and USSR in the same category of "hegemonist super powers", the Chinese publicly sounded the death knell of proletarian solidarity. Zhou virtually moved China out of the socialist camp and into the developing world.

Balance of power diplomacy and united front tactics both require that People's War be de-emphasized in practice, although rhetoric and moral support may continue. How does Beijing justify the improvement of state-to-state relations on the basis of peaceful coexistence, while supporting insurgents at the same time? The excuse is an old one going back to Lenin and Stalin: the PRC pledge of non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations has no bearing on international communist party relations which are theoretically not part of the governmental apparatus.<sup>5</sup>

Three reasons for continued Chinese support for insurgency

movements can be cited: First, it is relatively safe to support movements in South Africa and other areas where the ruling regime may be internationally unpopular. Second, China cannot easily end support for movements such as the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT). This has been a long-standing commitment, so abandonment would probably lead to a re-alignment with Moscow and Hanoi. Third, continued support allows China to pursue "carrot and stick" diplomacy. If relations with Malaysia turn bad, for example, the Chinese could revitalize their support for the Communist Party of Malaysia.<sup>6</sup>

#### Zones of Chinese Asia

Because of its central position on the Asian continent, China has vital interests in all adjoining regions. For purposes of analysis, we can identify five zones of strategic importance for the PRC. These are based on historical interests as well as more recent developments. These zones overlap, and exist both within and outside the PRC. They are: (1) the Sino-Soviet border; (2) North China; (3) South China; (4) Southeast Asia; and (5) other Asian power centers which affect China directly. Note that the zones are not necessarily geographically contiguous with each other or with China. What they have in common is that they are located in the continent of Asia, and have affected the sovereignty and development of China in one or several important ways.

(1) The Sino-Soviet border

This zone stretches from Pakistan through Xinjiang and the MPR, along the Manchurian border, and ends in North Korea. Varied in climate, topography, economic level, and social structure, this frontier separates the two communist powers. This frontier has been the scene of historical struggles, and continues to be China's most vulnerable area. The Soviets exercise preponderant military power, and are consolidating their hold on Afghanistan - a fact which could neutralize China's advantages in Pakistan. The Chinese have an upper hand in North Korea, but President Kim Il-Song has been careful to avoid tilting too closely to Beijing and becoming a Chinese satellite.

China's strategic concerns in this zone deal mostly with security. In the past, the main inhabitants were non-Chinese, but major emigration in the areas has led to ethnic Chinese (Han) becoming the majority. The Sinification of the border region has raised the anxieties of the MPR that major Chinese influence could also lead to its assimilation into Greater China.

(2) North China

From Gansu province in the northwest through the provinces north of the Yangtze River to the northeast provinces of Manchuria, North China has been the core area of the PRC. It was in the north that the Communist Party of China (CCP) organized its guerrilla bases against the Japanese, and launched its war

against the Guomindang after 1945. Beijing is a northern city, and sets the linguistic and cultural standards for the rest of the country. It is the political and administrative centre of the PRC. By moving the capital from Nanjing to Beijing in 1949, the communists once again asserted the historical pre-eminence of the north. Manchuria is the industrial heartland of China of north China, and is rich in natural resources. The original ethnic Manchus have nearly all assimilated into the majority Han population. There are some pockets of Koreans living in the northeast.

The zone is the most vulnerable to Soviet intervention, and comprises the greatest security concern of the regime. The Japanese conquered Manchuria in 1931, and from there they launched their invasion into the other northern provinces in 1937. Concern over a re-enactment of intrusion through Manchuria was a major reason for Chinese entry into the Korean War in late 1950. Today, the US and Japan are no longer seen as threats to the region.

### (3) South China

This zone begins in Sichuan and Yunnan and stretches south of the Yangtze River to the coast. There are several dialects of Chinese spoken here, some of which are incomprehensible to the Mandarin speaker. A high proportion of non-Han minorities live here, remnants of the once-dominant indigenous peoples.

Inhabitants of the coastal areas have long pursued maritime professions, and have provided a high proportion of emigrants to foreign countries. Culturally, Taiwan belongs to this zone. Life-styles, cuisine, and topography differ significantly. Agriculture is more intensive. Canton (Guangzhou) and Shanghai are important regional centers in the zone.

This zone was settled later than north China in Chinese history, and penetrated earlier by maritime traders and the Western industrial powers. It tends to be more cosmopolitan in the coastal provinces. In event of war, it would provide a fallback position for the government, as it did for the Guomintang. Communications between China and abroad are more developed here than elsewhere.

A further characteristic of the three zones inside China is their capacity to become autonomous sub-regions during periods of weak central government. During the pre-war Republican period (1911-1937), provinces such as Sichuan, Shansi, Guangdong, Shandong and others were virtually independent, with their own standing armies, provincial currency, and even particularist foreign policies. Today, many of the provinces have territorial size and population greater than most of the sovereign nation-states in the United Nations. Sichuan, for example has an area of 570,000 square kilometers, and a population of over 98.2 million.

#### (4) Southeast Asia

This external zone consists of the five ASEAN nations, Burma and the successor states of Indochina - Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea. These have been subject to Chinese influences in the past, and have sizable ethnic Chinese populations. All except Thailand had been ruled by Western and Japanese colonial or conquest regimes, and have experienced a postwar wave of nationalism. This nationalism has stirred resentment not only against foreign colonial powers but against the local Chinese population as well.

After the communist revolution, Beijing sought to forge links with the newly independent states. It was most successful with Sukarno's Indonesia, which contained a large Chinese population and a strong communist party (the PKI). The Beijing-Jakarta axis was broken in 1965 in an abortive coup and a military counter coup. Elsewhere, the Chinese supported liberation movements in Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Burma. The Vietnamese communists proved to be Beijing's next major failure. Today, Vietnam is allied with the USSR, and competes against China for dominant power in the region.

The region is rich in resources, diverse in ethnic composition, and less dense in population than China. Chinese historical expansion has been in a southerly direction. Had not the western industrial nations intervened in Southeast Asia, the process of

absorption might have continued to the present. As China proper has become overpopulated, the southern regions presented opportunities for the more adventurous Chinese who had little to lose by migrating. Many settled in the southern regions and prospered as merchants, financiers and workers.

Today, many ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia face the choice of integration or emigration. These countries regard China as a long-range threat, and see the local Chinese as potential subversive elements unless they assimilate. This attitude was most graphically demonstrated in the expulsion of Hoa (ethnic Chinese) from Vietnam in the late 1970s.

What the PRC has lost in leverage over the local populations, it may hope to retain through trade and naval presence. The PRC has territorial claims which extend in the South China Sea nearly as far south as Singapore. It is apparent that China will not surrender its sphere of influence over the region.

Nationalism has been one barrier to consolidation of the Chinese influence. The US intervention in Vietnam was another inhibition, but is no longer. However, the US still remains a major obstacle to the incorporation of Taiwan into the Beijing-ruled state. Today the Soviet Union is the major competitor to China for influence in Southeast Asia. The Soviet alliance with Vietnam allows the latter to establish its own sphere of influence, with the possibility of setting up an

Indochinese federation under Hanoi's leadership. This anti-Chinese combination effectively thwarts Beijing's ambitions in the region to be the sole dominant power.

A further implication of the Viet-Soviet alliance is that it has created a new front in the Sino-Soviet dispute. Previously, the Inner Asian zone was the major theater of potential military struggle between the two communist powers. Now, the Soviets can, with their Vietnamese allies and their rapidly expanding Pacific Fleet, strike directly at the South Chinese zone with conventional military power.

(5) Other Asian power centers

Japan: In contemporary Asia, there are at least two other states besides China and the USSR which are able to project their power and influence beyond their own borders, and which lay outside the four zones of Chinese Asia. The first is Japan, which borrowed and adapted Chinese culture in the eighth century, and then closed off most cultural influences from China for over a millenium. In the late nineteenth century, a rapidly modernizing Japan rivalled the Chinese empire, and then conquered the eastern parts of the fragmented Chinese nation in the 1930s. Postwar Japan has emerged as a major economic power, and is presently not seen as a military threat to China.

Until 1972, China considered postwar Japan as an extension of US power. The two countries subsequently normalized relations,



and the PRC recognized the island nation's independence and importance in China's own economic modernization. China also recognizes the important security, political, and economic linkages among Japan, the US, and the ROK. For the present, the PRC considers Japan to be a useful friend - both in facilitating modernization and in diffusing the Soviet threat in northeast Asia. Japan, for its part, recognizes certain parallel interests with China. The Soviet threat is real, and the Chinese market has been the dream of several generations of Japanese businessmen. A military alliance is out of the question for now, but both sides are aware of the necessity of continuing the present relationship.

India: India is a second major power center, exerting significant influence in the Indian Ocean and subcontinent. Until the late 1950s, it appeared that China and India might emerge as cooperative powers to dominate the continent. China's extension of suzerainty over Tibet as well as the Sino-Indian border disputes ended of the warm relations. Subsequently, India tilted towards the Soviet Union, and has been the recipient of large amounts of Soviet assistance.

China then extended friendship to Pakistan - India's major antagonist in the subcontinent. The breakup of Pakistan in 1972 ended part of the strategic advantage enjoyed by China over India. The Chinese have also cultivated friendship with the Himalayan states, especially Nepal. They have supported

insurgents in the Northeast Frontier and communists within India to keep New Delhi off balance.

India is the major power in south Asia - a giant with interests in the affairs of its immediate neighbors. India has been building its military forces to prevent a repeat of the defeats of 1962. New Delhi has been expanding its presence in the Indian Ocean. Similar to China, the country faces problems of national unity, modernization and overpopulation. Unlike China, India has chosen a democratic path to economic and political development which includes a sizeable private sector. Thus, the Sino-Indian dispute involves not only territorial claims and power politics, but a rivalry between two different paths of modernization.

Vietnam: In analyzing contemporary China, it must be kept in mind that the PRC is the successor to over twenty centuries of imperial rule. The boundaries of the Chinese empire were established as early as the third century B.C. Each successive dynasty sought to reclaim its lost territories, and if possible, to enlarge these. Those states and kingdoms not formally incorporated into the empire could co-exist as tributaries. Korea was the most permanent tributary to the Chinese empire, and Korean kings theoretically received their legitimation as vassals of the emperor.

As the modern successor to the Chinese empire, the PRC has not abandoned all the traditional trappings of empire. Claims to

territorial jurisdiction over Tibet and the South China Sea, for example, are based on previous incorporation in the empire. The Chinese sometimes deal with former tributary states - especially Vietnam - as political inferiors who are expected to follow the way of the Chinese "elder brother."

In the strategic perspective, Vietnam is becoming a power center in Southeast Asia. Its influence and control extend over Laos and Kampuchea, at the expense of excluding Chinese power. China claims that the emergence of the Vietnamese power center is little more than an extension of Soviet expansionism (hegemonism), and tends to believe that it would collapse without Soviet aid. However, any country which could fight and stalemate the US in a long war cannot be discounted as the creature of the Soviet Union.

The emergence of Vietnam as a power center poses a greater threat to China's self-esteem and security than either Japan or India, which were never part of the Chinese imperial or tributary system. The Vietnamese threat affects the Chinese position in Zone Three (South China) and Zone Four (Southeast Asia). Now that South China includes the South China Sea, the long Vietnamese coastline has become a new troubled border area for China. On land, Vietnam borders with the provinces of Yunnan and Guangxi. (During August 1983, this author saw heavy military equipment on trains bound for Kunming. The road from Kunming to the Vietnam border is in the process of upgrading, presumably to allow heavy

truck passage. This indicates that a long-term program of increasing military presence in the south border region is probable.)

Thailand is the other country directly affected by the emergence of the Vietnam power center. In response, the Thais have followed their traditional policy of allying with the strongest opponent of their immediate threat - "The enemy of my enemy is my friend." Thus China has become closely linked to the Thais, and have reduced support to the local communists.

China does not see any military threat from the other Southeast Asian states. Ethnic and political divisions prevent the non-communist countries from consolidating into a new power center. The Chinese question continues to prevent ASEAN solidarity. For example, many Southeast Asians see Singapore as a "Chinese beachhead" in the region and therefore to be mistrusted. Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Kwan Yew has tried to neutralize these fears by maintaining political distance between his island nation and the PRC.

Korea: The Korean peninsula was divided in two parts as a result of Soviet and US occupation after World War Two. The Soviets installed their clients, and the US supported the anti-communist government of Syngman Rhee. The division was made even more permanent by the Korean War. Various proposals have been made from both sides for unification, but little progress

has been made. The divisions have been exacerbated by the extreme personality cult of Kim Il-Song and draconian socialism in the north, and the authoritarian but economically successful, anti-communist regime in the south.

Since the Korean War, the Chinese have had considerable influence in Pyongyang. They have had to defend this influence in competition with the USSR. If peaceful unification occurs in the future, and the south becomes dominant economically and politically, China is certain to lose some prestige in the peninsula. This is partly due to the fact that Seoul has been oriented towards the US and Japan, and dependent in part for their trade and support as factors in viability. Also, a united Korea would be unlikely to remain subordinate to any of the major nations in East Asia.

The Koreans are one of the most homogeneous and industrious peoples in the world. Republic of Korea (ROK) industrial and agricultural policies are studied in Southeast Asia as models for development. If unification is accomplished peacefully and if the present thrust towards modernization is maintained, it is likely that Korea could become a second Japan. This would lead to creation of a new power center on China's border - one which would be an economic threat greater than Vietnam. The free market system, non-socialist economy is a successful contrast to the slow growth of Chinese modernization thus far.

Nor would unification under Pyongyang's leadership solve China's problems. After absorption and nationalization of the South, a communist Korea would still become a formidable rival to China. The North Koreans are committed nationalists, and once in a stronger position, would not be likely to acquiesce to either Chinese or Soviet leadership. Thus, in the long run, it is not necessarily in China's interests to facilitate the peaceful unification of the Korean peninsula. Unification by force is also undesirable because of the probability of involving the PRC in a devastating war.

Taiwan: This island province can be considered a special case of a potential power center in East Asia. Had the Chinese communist revolution completed its control over all the territory included in the last Chinese empire (Pre-1895), the island of Taiwan would have been safely incorporated into the present PRC. The Nationalist forces and supporters of Chiang Kai-shek, however, set up their final base on the island and dug in for what they expected to be the last assault. It never came, in part because Beijing was distracted by the Korean War, subsequent reconstruction, the outbreak of the Sino-Soviet dispute, the Cultural Revolution, and now, the four modernizations.

Taiwan, in alliance with the US, was a security threat to the South China Zone. Guerrilla raids and infiltration units attacked the southern coast, while radio broadcasts and propaganda balloons carried messages that the Guomindang was still the

legitimate government of China. The Taiwan Straits prevents either side from launching a major attack against the other.

Until 1971, when the PRC replaced the ROC as the representative of China in the UN, Taiwan was a rival for diplomatic recognition. US recognition of Beijing in late 1978 was merely the last act in the declining fortunes of the ROC. Beijing has recognized that Taiwan's long-term trend has been one of decreasing influence on the world scene, and has therefore abstained from large scale military assault. The PRC maintains that it still retains the right to use force in the future.

This abstinence has continued, and probably will continue over the next few years, as long as all concerned parties agree that Taiwan is part of China. An independence movement, if it came to power in Taiwan, would fundamentally oppose this assumption. An independent Taiwan could survive only if it gained international credibility. This could be accomplished only at the expense of the PRC, and would signal the demise of the ROC as it presently exists. If an independent Taiwan were successful, it would either become an autonomous power center, attracting support from overseas Chinese, possibly from Singapore and the Philippines, and from other nations which wanted to weaken the PRC. Or, a Taiwan republic would gravitate towards Japan, under which it was a colony for the half century until 1945.

## Summary

This study will focus on the PRC's strategic relations with its Asian neighbors. We have seen how relations are intimately related to the five strategic zones of Chinese Asia. In the next chapter we will examine some of the internal changes in China which are introducing important modifications in foreign policy and strategy. Chapter Three looks at the strategic triangle of the US, USSR, and China, and the Sino-Soviet frontier. Chapters Four, Five and Six examine the regions east and south of China from the standpoint of present relations and probable trends. The final chapter summarizes the conclusions of the study.

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1. John F. Copper, "The Second Shanghai Communique: Need for an Adjustment in U.S.-China Relations," Asian Perspective, 7:1 (1983), p. 82.
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3. Allen S. Whiting, "Assertive Nationalism in Chinese Foreign Policy," Asian Survey, 23:8 (1983), pp. 913-33.
4. Harvey W. Nelsen, The Chinese Military System: An Organizational Study of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1981), p. 208.
5. Ibid., p. 211.
6. Ibid., p. 212.
7. Zhongguo Baiko Nianjian 1981 (Encyclopedic Yearbook of China 1981) (Beijing and Shanghai: Zhongguo Da Baiko Quanshu Chubanshe, 1981), p. 57.
8. See Renmin Ribao, 1 February 1984, p. 2, for recent statistics on economic growth.



## Chapter 2

### DOMESTIC FACTORS IN CHINESE STRATEGY AND FOREIGN POLICY

#### Introduction

Today China is re-emerging as a pre-eminent power in Asia. During the first thirty years in power, the Chinese communists consolidated their revolution and set up a political system which they hoped would realize their ideological goals. The three decades from 1949 to 1978 were stormy years of power struggles and mass mobilization campaigns. The Maoists sought to build a revolutionary society in which Soviet-type "revisionism and backsliding" would not occur. They sought to build a new "socialist man" and to create a new proletarian culture. They wanted to eliminate all vestiges of "bourgeois and feudal society".

As with many revolutionary movements in history, the Chinese communists considered theirs to be in the vanguard of social change. There was a moral mission to spread doctrines of revolution to the "oppressed peoples" of Asia and the world. The Soviets were the elder brothers in world revolution, and so, during the 1950s, the Chinese deferred to Moscow out of pragmatic

need to use the alliance for economic and security insurance. As the alliance soured, Beijing took a more independent line in policy and ideology. The Sino-Indian border disputes in 1960 and 1962 were watersheds in China's relations with Asian neighbors. After initial proclamations of friendship and peace, the Chinese became more jealous of their territorial rights, and moved to more overt support for national revolutionary movements.

This transformation in the 1960s was due in part to the break with the USSR, and the continued hostility of the US. Beijing increased support for violent revolution, such as the PKI attempted coup in Indonesia and the Malaysian insurgency. Reasons for this support included the following:

First, there were internal struggles in the highest echelons in the party. The more radical elements were led by Mao Zedong, who saw China and the world in revolutionary terms. The fighting in Vietnam was a just revolutionary struggle which had to be supported, at least as far as it did not damage China's own national interests. Claims to be an advanced revolutionary system imposed obligations of leadership on the Chinese communists to support other movements. In contrast to the Maoists, there were the moderates, whose spokesmen were Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. Underlying their moderation was the assumption that China had far to go before it could achieve the industrial foundations for building a true socialist system. In foreign policy, this required caution and a realistic calculation

of forces.

Second, the Sino-Soviet dispute placed Moscow and Beijing in competition for the loyalties of other revolutionary movements. The Chinese could not match Soviet material aid, and so tended to support more radical elements.

Third, the Maoist doctrine of "People's War" was seen by many revolutionaries as a strategy of combining military uprising and political indoctrination. The doctrine was based on the experiences of the Chinese communists in fighting the Guomindang and Japanese. It stressed the importance of building self-sufficient base areas and winning the "hearts and minds" of the population. The recent experiences of the Chinese communists gave them an edge in supporting insurgent movements. But in the long run, the Soviet ability to provide material and financial aid proved decisive, especially after the movements came to power.

#### Chinese Foreign and Domestic Policy in the 1970s

The attempted coup by Defense Minister Lin Biao, and his subsequent death on 13 September 1971 had removed a major obstacle to normalization of Sino-US relations, and undermined the leadership wing which had supported the revolutionary approach. A major shift in China's foreign policy occurred in early 1972 with the Nixon visit to Beijing. In September, the PRC and Japan normalized relations. Soon after the death of Mao

Zedong in September 1976, the Maoist revolutionaries were struck down, and removed from power. Mao's successor, Hua Guofeng, presided over the state and party for less than two years. He was eased out of power and has been replaced by the triumvirate of Deng, Hu Yaobang, and Zhao Ziyang.

At the Fifth National People's Congress, Premier Hua Guofeng delivered a three and a half hour address entitled "Unite and Strive to Build a Modern, Powerful Socialist Country." He traced the power struggles of recent years and the defeat of the "gang of four". He stated that the campaign against the gang must be continued, and that the country must look ahead and accelerate the modernization of the country. The Premier outlined the main features of the "four modernizations" concept of development of the national economy. This had been outlined by Zhou Enlai at the Fourth Congress in 1975, and referred to modernization of agriculture, industry, science and technology, and defence. Hua submitted a draft outline of a ten-year plan, which called for huge increases in agricultural yield and industrial production, as well as major increases in virtually all aspects of China's economy.<sup>1</sup>

The four modernizations and China's new pragmatism may have caused a collective sense of relief among the PRC's Asian neighbors. China now has become an active member in the non-communist international market system. For the present, economic and social development have taken priority over

political conflict and ideology.

China has great potential for improving its economic position. While neighbors are concerned about future economic competition, there is consensus that this will be far less destabilizing than sponsorship of revolution as in the past. China will seek to translate this economic power into political influence once modernization has become self-sustaining. Although defence is the fourth of the modernizations, the resulting strong economic foundations will also increase the country's security. Chinese defence planning and weapons acquisition policies have generally been oriented toward the long term, so a truly "quick fix" option<sup>2</sup> for Chinese security does not exist.

Maoist China did not emphasize legislation or the judicial process. The Leninist theory of the state conceives of law as one of the instruments of coercion held by a dominant class. Moreover, the Chinese tradition tended to stress the "rule of man," rather than the "rule of law". Few laws were enacted after the 1950-1956 period. The period of the Cultural Revolution witnessed the virtual dismantling of the Chinese legal system.

Since 1977, the Chinese leaders have sought to re-establish an orderly regime based on laws. A broad range of legislation was passed by the National People's Congress dealing with government organization, criminal trials, foreign investment, and many other subjects. This has been done in part to establish the stability

which eluded the country since the mid-nineteenth century. The establishment of legality was also necessary to create a climate of confidence which foreign investors require to participate in a nation's economy.

#### China's Security Policy

The PRC is vitally concerned about vulnerability to foreign intervention. Through much of Chinese history, there have been invasions from the north by various nomadic tribes. Two dynasties, the Yuan (Mongol: 1260-1368 AD) and Qing (Manchu: 1644-1912) were conquest dynasties. Only in the modern period did the country face intervention from the coastal regions on a large scale. From the Opium Wars of the 1840's through the various interventions by Western powers, to large scale invasions by the Japanese, China was exposed to a new threat to its existence from the east.

The communists came to power in part because the Guomindang under Chiang Kai-shek had been unable to repel the Japanese invasion. The communists organized guerrilla bases, and operated inside Japanese-held territory, while the nationalist forces generally remained in the southwest. It was during this period that Mao formulated his theory of "People's War", which was to provide the basis of military doctrine for the PLA during and after the seizure of power from the Guomindang.

Soon after taking control of the mainland, the Chinese

communists planned to complete the revolution and recover Taiwan, where the Guomindang had retreated. The communist forces prepared for the final assault. However, the Korean War broke out in June 1950, and before the end of the year, Chinese "volunteers" were fighting UN forces on the peninsula.

The Korean War had a profound effect on the Chinese. Fighting the well-armed forces of the most powerful country in the world exposed the PLA's weaknesses in the face of superior airpower and firepower. The guerrilla tactics of "People's War" had little relevance in Korea. The Chinese were forced to depend on captured US weapons and increasingly to depend on the USSR for advanced weapons in the war. MacArthur's desire to use nuclear weapons awakened the Chinese to the potential destructive force that could be used against them. In short, the Korean War was communist China's first experience in fighting a conventional war against an industrial power, and it stimulated a thorough reappraisal of strategic doctrines.

There were growing differences between the civilian and military leaders after the Korean War. During the Great Leap Forward of 1958, the party used the army as a production force. Soldiers were employed as auxiliary labor on the farms, and the PLA ran its own factories. Such diversion of the army was a distraction from its primary mission of defence. But party leaders believed that this would prevent the PLA from becoming a separate caste from the civilian population. The differences

came out in the open at the Lushan Plenum (2-16 August 1959). Defence Minister Peng Dehuai criticized Mao's policies and sought greater modernization of the armed forces. Peng was concerned over the effect which the growing Soviet split would have on the Chinese army's ability to get new arms, especially in light of problems in Tibet and the growing tension with India. Mao purged Peng and his supporters.

Lin Biao was named to the post, and proved to be a loyal supporter of Mao's policies. Until his abortive coup in 1971, Lin Biao was considered to be the heir-apparent of Mao. The army became highly politicized during the Cultural Revolution, and was called in to restore order in many places. After Mao's death, a special military unit in Beijing played a crucial role in arresting the radicals. This allowed the pragmatists to take power, and eliminate the remaining radicals from high positions in the party and government.

Domestically, the army has not maintained the same status and prestige as under the Maoist leadership. Military modernization was identified as one of the four modernizations, but the defence budget was cut several years in succession. Deng has installed his own proteges in key positions, and party control over the military has been tightened.

#### Political Trends in the PRC

Since 1976, a series of far-reaching events have changed the direction of Chinese domestic and foreign policy. In order to



understand the changing nature of China's relations with her Asian neighbors, some these internal developments will be briefly described.

Within a month of Mao's death (9 September 1976), his widow, Jiang Qing, and her associates were arrested as traitors and conspirators. A more moderate regime was installed. Deng Xiaoping, who had been stripped of all his party and government posts in 1976, made a political comeback in July 1977. He reappointed the members of the state bureaucracy, who were purged in the Cultural Revolution. This was followed by the increasing tension between Deng and Hua Guofeng, Mao's chosen successor. In February 1980 the Politburo purged members who had advanced during the Cultural Revolution. Subsequently, Zhao Ziyang replaced Hua as State Premier, and Hu Yaobang replaced Hua as Party Chairman. This new leadership consolidated itself at the Twelfth Party Congress in September 1982, following a major shake-up of party and state personnel.

The present pragmatic moderate leadership has modified the radical Maoist approaches to political, economic, and social change in a number of important areas. First, the Stalinist strategy of economic development has been altered, with greater emphasis on light industry and agriculture, and a lower rate of investment in capital accumulation. <sup>3</sup> Second, major modifications have taken place in agriculture. Peasant incomes are based on production in specific plots of land assigned to households.

There has been reduction of the powers of communes (now slated<sup>4</sup> for extinction) and other units to control peasant activity.

Third, the Maoist policy of self-reliance has been significantly modified as the country has opened to foreign trade and influence. Special economic zones have been established to encourage investment in the country, and special privileges have been given to foreign firms. Foreign influences are evident in commodities, advertising, clothes, art, music and popular tastes. The rapid changes have aroused fears of "spiritual pollution" and there is disagreement on how far these influences should be allowed to penetrate.

Fourth, the shrill political rhetoric of the Maoist period has been replaced by emphasis on economic results. Class labels and other forms of political discrimination have been removed. The personality cult of Mao Zedong has been dismantled, and many of the leaders once attacked and purged by him or his supporters have had their names cleared. This was done posthumously in the cases of Peng Dehuai and Liu Shaoqi.

Fifth, the government has enacted a major corpus of laws and regulations to make life more just and predictable. This legislation also enhances foreign investment. The legal profession has been rehabilitated, and law schools are once again opened.

Sixth, draconian population control measures have been

introduced. With over a billion people, and slow economic growth in the past two decades, gains in productivity are often cancelled out by new additions to the population. Surplus population and slow economic growth has also resulted in high (albeit often disguised) unemployment.

These and other changes indicate that China has passed a major watershed in its modern history. It must be added that none of these factors is irreversible. In early 1984, for example, articles have appeared in the Chinese press in praise of Mao Zedong, although a return to his personality cult is not likely.

The changes from 1972 to 1982 can be characterized as a shift from rule by totalitarian revolutionaries to authoritarian reformers. In 1966 the revolutionaries had unleashed a reign of terror on the country which lasted for a decade. In early 1984, the leaders appear committed to gradual and peaceful change. Where Maoists judged the nation's progress by the extent to which a classless society was implemented, the present leaders emphasize measurable economic progress and welfare of the population as the basis of their legitimacy. There has been a shift from the mass mobilization campaigns of the past to bureaucratic action.

The party hierarchy and membership is currently undergoing a "re-registration" to examine credentials. Those members who do not conform to expected standards, such as education and

political reliability, may be purged. Through such measures, the leadership hopes to prevent a future recurrence of the mass violence to return to the policies of Maoism. It must be kept in mind that millions of young people attained political consciousness during the heady days of the Cultural Revolution. For many of them, the current reforms are a betrayal of Maoist revolutionary ideals. Large numbers of university graduates found their credentials deflated in the new reforms. The exclusive stress on politics and ideology in academic courses meant that their education was misguided by current standards.

Thus the new line has been accepted with trepidation. The army was also a favorite institution of Mao, and represented a core of revolutionaries loyal to the former leader. The social prestige of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) was significantly reduced after 1977, and it is suspected that some officers harbor resentment at this political demotion.

#### The New Political System

The Dengist leaders have abandoned the Maoist approach of unifying the country through coercion and propaganda. Instead they are encouraging increased economic interdependence among provinces and regions. This is to be accomplished through reliance on effective planning and personnel management. Beneficiaries of this new approach have been the leading economic agencies. Losers were the various propaganda departments, the

military and the public security service. With regard to the latter, tens of thousands have been released from labor camps run by the public security apparatus. Those millions labelled as counterrevolutionaries were no longer under the daily surveillance of the public security service. Deng and his colleagues see the need for regularity and predictability. They have pledged that they will not return to the campaigns and instability of Maoism.<sup>5</sup>

Underlying the extensive reforms in China today, there remains a sense of insecurity - what has been termed a "lingering fear" that current reforms may someday be attacked again when the party line changes. Therefore, implementation of change has been inhibited by many who want to wait and see how permanent is the new line. No change has gone so far as to be irreversible.

Deng Xiaoping is nearly eighty years old (born 22 August 1904) and is one of the driving forces behind the reforms. His retirement will cause anxieties for supporters, and opportunities for his opposition. If his successors do not share his drive and priorities, the country may waste more time in political struggles, and reverse the gains made so far.

The Chinese political system has been traditionally vulnerable to bureaucratism and immobilism. Those in power at all levels often see change as a threat to personal power and influence. A new class is now emerging - a managerial-technical-scientific

elite which has a real stake in modernization. But this new stratum is the creation of the state. It is too weak to provide leadership itself, and will need a period of stability to establish its permanent place in the political and economic system.

Gigantic problems continue to face the country. Agricultural productivity remains low - 80% of the population is engaged in farming. The industrial system is inefficient. Among young people there is juvenile delinquency and high unemployment. Living standards remain low. Bottlenecks remain in transportation, communication, and energy. Population continues to increase at a rate considered too high.<sup>6</sup> In addition, there has been significant environmental degradation and an actual reduction in farmland because of urbanization, increasing population, and careless industrialization. China remains a developing country with many of the problems associated with a transitional economy.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Mao saw internal contradictions as an important source of change in the country. By encouraging mutually antagonistic forces, he hoped to keep the revolution alive and to prevent the stagnation of a bureaucratic society. This tactic was taken to its logical conclusion with the Cultural Revolution. At that time, young activists were encouraged to attack those in power - whether in government, educational institutions, or even in the party. This "revolutionary

creativity" proved to be highly destructive and helped to provide the economic stagnation which the country is trying to overcome at present.

Important cleavages remain in state and society which may cause problems in the future: 1) civil-military relations; 2) "generational layering", in which there have been major differences in education and experience among successive generations; 3) urban-rural differences, with greater opportunities for higher living standards and social mobility in cities; 4) tensions between coastal and inland provinces, as the former profit much more quickly from the benefits of the opening to the West; and 5) income distinctions becoming more prominent as material incentives become widespread.

The regime has also promised to raise living standards. Evidence of improved livelihood is apparent to travellers who visit after an absence of several years. The leaders may be faced with the dilemma of rising expectations at some point if there is a period of stagnation or failure to maintain the rate of improvement.

The energy sector has been one of several areas where the Chinese are pursuing economic modernization. Here we can briefly examine this sector as an illustration of some of the problems facing the Beijing regime. The Chinese leaders have been reluctant to allow foreign corporations to play a major role in

developing China's energy resources. They fear becoming dependent on foreign firms and are unfamiliar with the complex technical, legal and financial arrangements which are necessary for such ventures. Early policies in the post-Mao period relied on foreigners only to a limited extent. This resistance to foreign technology and foreign investment slowed energy development, however, and led to shortages of fuel and power.

China has vast resources of liquid petroleum, natural gas, and coal. Exploitation was inhibited in part because of the adaptation of the Soviet model of development in the 1950s which had stressed heavy, energy-intensive industry, relied on extensive energy-intensive growth, and ignored energy efficiency. Moreover, there was little attention paid to construction of mines, oilfields, railways, transmission lines, pipelines and highways. As a result, energy supplies have failed to keep up with demand.

Officials responsible for energy development have been slow to conclude sizeable contracts for the development of coal and offshore oil. Political risky decisions have to be made when they support foreign involvement. Officials fear making decisions which may come back to haunt them

There are at least four basic elements of Chinese energy policy: 1) Conservation of existing resources. Leaders have become pessimistic about increasing energy production in the



short-run. Statistics between 1976-82 showed little growth in energy production. To alleviate these shortfalls, the first "National Energy Conservation Month" was proclaimed in 1979. Oil-burning industrial boilers are being converted to burn the more available coal as one set of measures.

2) Concentration of investment in the energy sector. The shift from heavy to light industry is also relevant because the latter use far less energy than the former.

3) Foreign and domestic cooperation. Foreign firms are brought in to help exploit energy resources. The central government is encouraging cooperation between counties.

4) Improved coordination of policy implementation. A new state energy commission was established in late 1979, headed by Yu Qiuli. Its purpose was to increase the coordination of activities of the various energy ministries. It did not achieve its purposes, and was abolished in May 1982.

Prospects for energy development are not especially bright. Current economic policies are inherently political, and changes are often example, and their allies in the military are suspicious of the shift to light industry. Factional ties frequently take precedence over rational allocation of resources. Several years ago, there was a press attack against the "petroleum faction" in the government.

While the problems facing the PRC in its current drive for modernization must not be over-stated, we must also recognize that it will not be easy for Beijing to sustain the enthusiasm and momentum which have been present since 1984. Nor is there unanimous support for modernization, especially when it seems to introduce ideas and techniques detrimental to socialist ideology. But as long as the Chinese maintain their focus of attention to domestic concern, this will give their Asian neighbors some respite from the previously frequent confrontations.

#### The Chinese Military Establishment

China's ground forces are the world's largest, with over 3,250,000 men. Air and naval forces are estimated at 490,000 and 360,000 respectively, or about 20% of the total military manpower. The PLA is organized and equipped largely as a defensive force. It has little ability to project its forces to areas distant from China's borders. Ground forces are equipped with conventional weapons mostly of Russian design. Infantry forces are not motorized and have poor strategic mobility. There are 12 armoured divisions. They have less artillery and tanks than Western or Soviet forces. Four divisions are designated as airborne, but because of insufficient transport planes and helicopters, it would be difficult to put even one division in the air.

The air force has consisted of obsolete or obsolescent medium and light bombers, and about 500 new fighter-bombers. The Chinese stress air defence with more than 3500 fighter/interceptor aircraft. They have developed an improved air-defence radar system and have expanded production of surface-to-air missiles.

The navy is a coastal defence force, lacking cruisers or aircraft carriers. The PRC now has two nuclear submarines with 1600 kilometer-range missiles. In addition, the submarine fleet has about one hundred diesel-powered vessels. There are few troop transports, and there has been little effort to develop an amphibious strike force. In 1982, there were naval exercises off the coast of Fujian province in which marine-type landings were practiced, so this is changing.

As with other nuclear powers, the Chinese justify their acquisition of nuclear weapons as primarily for deterrence. The nation has had an atomic bomb since 1964, and a hydrogen bomb since 1967. is under development. It is unlikely that China would ever use nuclear weapons in a war of aggression, since this would invite annihilation. Consequently, the PRC pledge never to be the first to use nuclear weapons appears both commonsensical and genuine.

What the PLA lacks in technical sophistication, mobility, and heavy equipment, it partly makes up with size and high morale.

Many experts believe that the military forces are capable of defending the country against a conventional force invasion,<sup>10</sup> although this view is not unanimous.

In the early part of this decade, new reforms began to affect the military. Among the changes are the following: important personnel changes following the 12th Party Congress in September 1982; successful submarine-launched missile tests; and adoption of a new constitution which created a National Central Military Commission (NCMC). With progress made in dismantling the Maoist system and in economic reconstruction, the leadership has set out to modernize and regularize the military organization.

The establishment of the NCMC clarified the previously ambiguous relationship between the military establishment and the State Council. The constitution also more clearly defined the responsibilities and powers of the military in the state machinery. The result has been to shift the concept of the military from being a party organization to one of the nation-state. Nevertheless, the Party Central Military Commission was preserved under new party rules, and Deng was elected its Chairman. The draft constitution had originally stipulated a limited term of office for the Chairman of the NCMC, but this was dropped in the final version. It is speculated that this was in order to give Deng more control over the military.

It was expected that the Party Commission would be abolished.

However, it has been retained for the present, and its survival indicated that certain military beliefs could not be violated. Among these was the belief that the PLA should be a party rather than a state army. It also meant preservation of Mao's dictum that the party should control the gun. The existence of both a state and a party Military Commission indicates that there is probably some disharmony between the military and political leaders of the country.

In the autumn of 1982, there was an extensive reshuffle of military leaders. This included the Minister of Defence as well as the major military regional commanders. This type of reshuffling has been carried out in the past, and is aimed at strengthening the party leadership's control over the military. The targets this time were conservative elements and supporters of the defeated radicals. Its purpose was to rejuvenate the military leadership. In particular, replacement of the Director of the General Political Department was part of the regime's effort to remove doctrinaire opposition in the military.

Appointment of Zhang Aiping as Defence Minister was probably aimed at military modernization. The military still includes many individuals skeptical about present reform policies. If changes are carried out too fast, the military may become insecure and rebellious. In 1982, the General Political Department set up branch committees of the Communist Youth League in each battalion of the army. This was probably a measure to

increase control of the party over the army.

During 1980 and 1981, there were significant decreases in defence spending, amounting to 13% and 13.3% respectively. In 1982 there was an increase of 6.4%, which was largely due to a monthly increase of three yuan for soldiers' salaries and an estimated inflation rate of 10-20%. This modification was necessary to improve the living standard of the army and to reduce dissatisfaction over the decreased defence spending in previous years. At the Fifth Plenum of the Fifth National People's Congress, the Minister of Finance announced that defence spending would remain at 1982 levels until 1985. This was necessary because the top priorities were in civilian capital construction.<sup>12</sup>

There were reports that there was to be a sharp reduction in armed forces manpower. In 1981, total strength of active service personnel was around 4,750,000. The 1982 census showed this to be 4,238,210, and The Military Balance estimated it to be four million in 1982-83. The largest cuts seem to have been made in the Railway Corps and Capital Construction Engineering Corps. Personnel in these units are easiest to transfer to civilian sectors.

The question of ranks has been revived again. There was a system of ranking in the period 1955-65, but it was abolished with the Cultural Revolution. The Sino-Vietnamese war in 1979

demonstrated problems in operations command and discipline maintenance, as well as other personnel matters. This prompted calls for a revival of military ranks, and preparations are currently being made. This has been written into the 1982 constitution. This new system will require an enormous amount of work to assess and rank more than four million officers and men. New pay scales have to be adopted, as well as uniforms altered and personnel assigned.

China has about half of its total field strength deployed along the border with the USSR. Units in the northeast train with emphasis on winter operations, while those in Beijing stress defensive operations in fortified positions. Units in the northwest receive training in operations in desert areas.

There has been a general shift in emphasis from the conventional heavily attack-oriented training to training in organized defence in plains where enemy attacks with massive tank forces are expected. Training is also conducted in the "three-way attack and three-way defence strategy" - attacking enemy tanks, aircraft, and airborne troops, while defending against nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.<sup>13</sup>

In October 1982, the Chinese fired missiles from a submerged submarine. The missiles probably had a range of 1,200 kilometers, were propelled by solid fuel, and used the latest technologies. These tests were conducted so that China would be

able to continue its strategy of minimum deterrence against the USSR. The tests emphasized that although military modernization had the lowest priority of the four modernizations program, nuclear weapons were an exception and enjoyed top priority.<sup>14</sup>

Military exercises were held in China involving the hypothetical use of tactical nuclear weapons in the enemy's rear. The Chinese are thought not to possess such weapons at present, but the exercise suggests that tactical nuclear weapons are being developed. The Chinese showed interest in acquiring British ship-to-ship missiles and French Mirage jets, China has developed a high capability in certain fields of satellite communications. There has been progress in developing a 105mm tank gun fitted with a stabilizer and a T-59 tank equipped with infrared telescope.

#### People's Wars of National Liberation

China's condition of enforced isolation and vulnerability has required the country to make a virtue of self-sufficiency. They have based their strategy on the experience against Japan in protracted war. After 1949 they launched an international strategy which they hoped to turn their weakness into strength. In the early years of the PRC, China lacked the military and economic power to defeat the US and its allies in a conventional war.

One of the major attractions of the theory of people's wars of



national liberation (PWNL) is that it is both defensive and offensive as a strategy. It can serve a defensive purpose by tying the enemy down, away from Chinese territory. It can also be an offensive strategy in an age of nuclear stalemate. While the superpowers check each other with nuclear weapons, the developing regions of the world undergo revolutions which will presumably make them part of the anti-imperialist camp. 15

The model of the PWNL was articulated by Lin Biao in September 1965. Lin and Mao considered the Chinese revolution as providing a pattern which would enable other non-industrial countries to undergo revolutions of national liberation. These revolutions are basically nationalistic movements and are carried out independently. Revolution cannot be exported, and local conditions determine the fate of local movements. China has been willing to provide material aid, training, moral assistance, and small arms. Chinese approval is contingent on the movement having a popular base. It must be aimed against a government which is subservient to imperialist influence. These movements are generally led by communist parties and consist of "popular fronts" which include "bourgeois elements and parties."

The PWNL has been an important element in Chinese military doctrine, both domestically and abroad. Although it no longer plays the central role it had in the Maoist period, the Chinese may once again see it as an important means of changing the balance of forces the developing world.

### The PLA as a Conventional Army

The PLA has been committed to battle in Korea (1950-53), on the borders of India (1962), the USSR (1969), the Paracel Islands (1974), and Vietnam (1979). These battles differed radically from the people's war developed before 1949. Each engagement was limited geographically and in its political aims. They were largely military operations, in contrast to the military-political-social-economic warfare of the revolution. They were mostly fought by regular PLA forces on Chinese borders or even on foreign territory.

The Chinese leaders and troops demonstrated a preference for fluid, mobile warfare, and proved competent despite unfamiliar conditions. It was only in the later stages of the Korean war that the PLA adopted a strategy of positional defence along a front line. The Chinese army is much less influenced by notions of front lines and rear areas than other conventional armies. The PLA has also trained on the assumption of enemy superiority in air and firepower. It is therefore anticipated that the PLA may be better trained psychologically than other forces for the nuclear battlefield.

In other areas, the PLA is inferior to many potential adversaries. The PLA is weak in logistics, CBR, EW, air defence, antitank defence, and naval and air power. Unless these problems are solved, China will not become a serious offensive threat to

most of her neighbors. They are not easy to correct, and represent deficiencies in leadership, organization, and training, as well as material inferiority.

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1. Excerpts of the speech are translated in Peking Review, No. 10, 10 March 1978.

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3. See Hong Ma, New Strategy for China's Economy (Beijing: New World Press, 1983).

4. Michel Oksenberg, and Richard C. Bush, "China, 1972-1982: From Revolution to Reform," in Richard C. Bush, ed., China Briefing, 1982 (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1982), p. 11.

5. Ibid., pp. 16-17.

6. Ibid., p. 23.

7. Thomas Fingar, "Energy in China: Paradoxes, Policies and Prospects," in Bush, Ibid., p. 49.

8. Ibid., p. 56.

9. See Nelsen, op. cit., p. 2.

10. Ibid., p. 3.

11. Asian Security 1983 (Tokyo: Research Institute for Peace and Security, 1983), pp. 119-20.

12. Ibid., pp. 121-22.

13. Ibid., p. 125.

14. Ibid., p. 124.

15. Nelsen, Ibid., p. 197.

16. Harlan W. Jencks, From Muskets to Missiles; Politics and Professionalism in the Chinese Army, 1945-1981 (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1982), p. 178.



## Chapter 3

### THE STRATEGIC TRIANGLE: CHINA, THE US AND THE USSR

#### The Changing Big-Power Triangle

Relations between the USSR and the PRC can be conceived in terms of triangles and circles. The triangle is the three-sided relationship of the the US, China and the USSR. The US tried to balance the Asian power equation in the 1970s, but now China is taking the initiative to move more independently with regard to the two superpowers.

Both communist powers have had antagonistic relations since 1960 because of ideological, territorial and political disputes. Following the border clashes in 1969, mutual hostility intensified. Each nation sought to encircle the other, forming links with the other's antagonists. Thus China strengthened ties with NATO, while the Soviets found friends in India and Vietnam. Stalin had once feared "capitalist encirclement", but the Soviet military buildup since the Korean war created a situation where Stalin's nightmare was no longer a paramount anxiety. The emergence of China as a major Asian power, however, created a new problem for the USSR - the possibility of anti-Soviet

collaboration on the part of the PRC and US.

After Nixon's 1972 visit to Beijing, the US moved to establish links with China because of parallel anti-Soviet interests. This created the myth of the "China card" - that the PRC would be a willing pawn in US relations with Moscow. This myth dissipated quickly with the inauguration of the Reagan administration.

Several arcs of Soviet interests can be identified. The Russian Republic is at the center of the USSR, in terms of core interests. The non-Russian republics comprise the first arc of defence for Russia. It is the "internal empire", the legacy of the tsarist empire. A second arc includes the countries of Eastern Europe under Soviet domination. The Mongolian People's Republic can also be considered part of the second arc.

China is the major component of the third arc in terms of spatial and political distances from vital Soviet interests. From a revolutionary regime, the PRC has evolved into a continuing threat on the Soviet Union's eastern borders. The fourth arc consists of the remnants of a formerly cohesive communist international movement dominated by Moscow. These are the multitude of communist parties which now exhibit greater autonomy.

The USSR currently faces the greatest challenge from China in competition for the allegiance of the fourth arc. This challenge is augmented by the parallel interests of the PRC and US.

Solution of this dilemma may be the greatest priority of Soviet  
diplomacy in the next few years.<sup>1</sup>

#### Movement toward Sino-Soviet rapprochement

The Soviets have deployed 52 divisions, or about 720,000 troops, including armored divisions, in the Sino-Soviet border region. The Chinese have 66 divisions, with around 810,000 men in the region. To the Soviets, the 6,000 kilometer border represents a frontier with a country having more than a billion people, and the will and resources to restore historic greatness. The Soviets recognize that China may not remain a giant with feet of clay forever.

Since 1979, there has been a decline in public hostility between the two giants. Both sides have been moving cautiously toward normalization of state relations. Unless there is a repetition of an Afghanistan-type expansion, it is safe to assume that Moscow and Beijing will achieve a certain measure of normalization, or even rapprochement. Signs of this movement include ideological adjustment and reduction of the propaganda war. There is also a general re-evaluation of policy toward the US and other Western nations. The Chinese have softened their preconditions for negotiations, and limited talks have already begun. In recent months, the US is again considered a "hegemonic superpower" - a status formerly reserved for the USSR for several years.

An important development has been China's moderation of its three preconditions for serious negotiations and improved relations: Vietnamese withdrawal from Kampuchea, Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, and a reduction of Soviet forces on the Chinese border with total withdrawal of Soviet forces from Mongolia.

These conditions were unrealistic, and in the past two years, Beijing has modified its position to the following: serious negotiations can begin only if the USSR demonstrates a willingness to begin partial fulfilment of any of the preconditions.<sup>2</sup>

China has shifted policy because of the changing evaluation of its domestic situation, the balance within the US-China-USSR triangle, and the changing international system. US-China relations have been lost some of their lustre during the Reagan administration. This is partly due to the Taiwan issue, and also because of Chinese recognition that hostilities with the Soviets must be reduced. Moreover, Chinese movement toward normalization with the USSR may be an important instrument in weakening Washington's commitment to Taiwan.

At present, the hard-line of the Reagan administration towards the USSR provides China with assurance that US pressures will continue on Moscow. This could make the USSR more amenable to compromising with China, while enhancing Chinese security because



of the Western threat to the USSR. It appears that poor Soviet-American relations draw the Chinese toward the USSR, while good Soviet-American relations attracts the Chinese to the US.

This softening of preconditions for normalization cannot be attributed completely to specific US policies. China needs breathing space to pursue its modernization program, and stabilization of relations with the USSR is an important priority if the defence budget is to be reduced.

The PRC program of modernization requires considerable concentration on domestic affairs. This also requires reducing external threats. As a result, defence has been placed last in the four modernizations. Anxieties of the leaders are heightened by policies of de-Maoization, decentralization of economic power, opening contacts with the West, and economic experiments.

Control of the population remains a priority of the leadership. Abandonment of Maoism has not led to any new ideology, and there are signs of a cautious reappraisal of Mao in the party-controlled media.<sup>3</sup> The opening to the West may therefore be a greater domestic threat to the Chinese system of authoritarianism than are links with the USSR.

Sino-Soviet normalization would probably have consequences such as the following: an end to reciprocal attacks in the press; expansion of various kinds of exchanges; re-establishment of party-to-party relations between the CCP and the pro-Soviet

communist parties; and an expansion of trade. In the longer run, agreement might produce mutual troop reductions and a non-aggression treaty.

The possible effects must not be exaggerated, however. A Sino-Soviet military alliance is unlikely, and restoration of friendly relations between the two parties does not seem probable soon. Mutual suspicions will remain, especially over Soviet aims in the Third World.

With normalization, China will not reduce its ties with Japan, the US and other industrial countries. The USSR desires to prevent or delay China's emergence as a great power, and will always view a strong China as a threat to its security. Closer Sino-Soviet relations will not place China equidistant between the US and USSR. China's main aim is to place itself in a better position vis-a-vis the two superpowers. The Soviets, for their part, are trying to break out of the perceived Western encirclement.<sup>4</sup>

In general, the Chinese have modified their foreign policy in a way that no longer seeks to encircle the USSR, or at least to focus on confrontation with Moscow. This has been part of a much larger trend since 1970 in which the PRC has sought to transform former hostilities into friendly relationships. The revolutionary diplomacy of the Maoist period failed in its attempt to support revolutionary movements to replace existing

governments. It was an attempt to break out of China's post-revolutionary isolation, but most often had the effect of antagonizing neighboring states. In many developing areas, the Soviets proved far more successful in supporting the winning side. Cuba and Vietnam were prominent cases where China was outmaneuvered as well as outfinanced by Moscow.

The Chinese now stress goals of sovereign independence, development, and security. There is a greater appreciation of the need to establish a complex of economic, diplomatic, and military strengths to accomplish these aims. China today is projecting an interest in the concerns of the Third World, more autonomy from the US, and a greater willingness to deal with Moscow in non-antagonistic terms. The goals are to reduce tensions and to stabilize borders. Modernization will mean more effective competition with the USSR in the developing and socialist worlds. The new policy line also serves to remind the US that China has other resources for solving its problems, and should not be taken for granted.

China's strategic situation improved considerably during the 1970s. Beijing had earlier ended Soviet tutelage, and established good political and economic links with the West. Chinese foreign policy acquired a new degree of flexibility. Some enthusiasts welcomed China as an unofficial member of NATO, and accepted the country as a member of the anti-Soviet coalition. This new relationship, and the improved links with Japan in 1978, helps to

neutralize the Soviet threat. The Sino-Soviet conflict was no longer a private affair between Moscow and Beijing, but now indirectly and directly involves many nations of the world.

China is no longer isolated from the major power centers of the world, and can now negotiate with the USSR from a position of strength. The Taiwan issue appears to be on the way to solution - at least from the perspective of the PRC. In Southeast Asia, numerous other countries share China's opposition to the Vietnamese presence in Kampuchea. There is also a broad range of opposition to Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Unlike the USSR, with its global interests, commitments and weaknesses, the PRC only has to confront a relatively simpler strategic configuration.

#### Reassessment of US-China relations

China has demonstrated determination to deal with both the superpowers on their own merits, and not allow either to use China for their particular strategic goals. There has been a reassessment of the relationship with the US, with the conclusion that the USSR is no longer gaining on the US in military power and influence.

Previously, the apparent unsteadiness of the US after the Vietnam War was the basis of Sino-American detente - the perception that the USSR was steadily increasing influence, while the US was having difficulty in defending its spheres of

influence. The Chinese calculated that the US was no longer a threat to them, and therefore cooperation was justifiable to oppose the USSR. In addition, there was the added incentive of US investment and trade.

Not all the leaders were convinced of the logic of this Sino-US detente. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan seemed to support the pragmatic position advocated by Deng Xiaoping, who may have been in a minority on this approach. Economic retrenchment and reluctance of the Reagan administration to cooperate with China on the Taiwan issue have resurrected the foreign policy debate. This debate seemed to center on mutual US and Chinese interests, and whether the Soviet threat to China could be reduced with or without strategic cooperation with the US.<sup>7</sup>

The Chinese struggled in 1960 to regain their full independence from the Soviets, who had relegated them to a junior partnership in the alliance. This movement towards independence was translated into anti-Soviet sentiments. The PRC experienced isolation from the US and USSR until 1978, when there was a brief honeymoon between the US and China - to the dismay of the Soviets. Beijing may eventually decide that it is no longer necessary to lean to either side. This would result in decreased importance for the strategic relationship with the US.

Part of China's calculations and maneuvers can be attributed to nationalism. The Chinese communists are the heirs to Chinese

nationalism, or patriotism, as they prefer to call it. "Proletarian internationalism" was rarely very strong, except in the early years after 1949. This element of nationalism assures that the Chinese will not let themselves be dominated or manipulated if other options are open.<sup>8</sup>

#### Sino-Soviet relations

The USSR continues to be the most serious threat to Chinese security. Nevertheless, both sides are seeking reduction of tensions. The last People's Daily article to refer to the USSR as "the most dangerous source of war" was on 21 March 1982. Despite past charges of revisionism and historical Russian chauvinism, the Chinese have demonstrated willingness to move toward better relations if the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) is willing to establish a relationship of equality with the CCP.<sup>9</sup>

The PRC represents a challenge to the USSR's "Two-Camp" theory that the present world is divided into two irreconcilable camps - capitalism and socialism. Beijing is also a threat to Moscow's status as leader of the socialist camp. Beijing seriously complicates Moscow's attempts to restructure international relations by its claims to represent a third force and by collaborating against Moscow with the "enemies of socialism." Until recently, there were few elements of cooperation remaining which could overcome the quarter century of disputes. Against

this background, the normalization of Sino-US relations deeply  
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alarmed the Soviet leaders.

The Soviets have made a series of proposals for normalization to the Chinese in the past thirteen years. They were designed to improve Sino-Soviet relations, and took the Sino-US rapprochement into serious consideration as well. A strong manipulative element was present as the USSR carried out policy towards the US with China policy in mind.

One month after Kissinger's return from Beijing in 1971, the Soviets invited Nixon to visit Moscow the following year. Two months after Kissinger's return, major breakthroughs were achieved in SALT and Berlin negotiations. China seems to have been a major factor in the rise and fall of Soviet-US detente. In strengthening relations with the US, the Soviets hoped to prevent Washington from moving too close to the Chinese - and  
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even tried to draw the US into an anti-Chinese arrangement.

Progress between the two communist powers is being made only in state-to-state relations. Improvements are made on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence, with no attempt to restore the former friendship and mutual assistance of the past. The five principles were originally intended to guide relations between countries having different social and political systems, were designed to apply to relations between socialist and capitalist countries, and are limited to diplomatic and consular

relations.

This practical approach indicates that the close relations of the past are not likely to be restored. Because of Soviet interference in the past, China does not want to enter an alliance. When vice-ministerial talks were held in Moscow in 1980, the Soviet side presented a draft "Declaration on Various Principles Concerning Mutual Relations between the Soviet Union and China," and insisted that China sign it.

The draft reportedly stated principles of peaceful coexistence and the non-use of force. There were articles which made it mandatory for both parties to refrain from the use of force. Neither side would seek hegemony in Asia, and would have the obligation of opposing those who seek hegemony and privileges. There were also provisions on immediate consultations in time of emergency, and provisions on halting unfriendly propaganda and holding talks by leaders of the two countries when the need arose. The draft resembled the Japanese treaty of good neighborly cooperation which Moscow had proposed to Japan in February 1978, but was rejected by Tokyo.

China rejected the document, saying that practical actions, such as the removal of the threat to China by disengagement of forces on the borders, were more important than high-sounding words. The talks were postponed indefinitely on 20 January 1980 because of the Afghanistan affair. Both countries agree that



state-to-state relations should be adjusted, but there is disagreement on how to achieve this. The Soviets want a document, while the Chinese want practical actions.<sup>12</sup>

China has addressed a number of issues in ways that give satisfaction to the USSR. Beijing has been expanding relations with communist parties friendly to the Soviets, and has established relations with Angola. Funeral diplomacy has taken place after the passage of Brezhnev and Andropov. A slap at Washington took the form of an invitation to Qaddafi to visit China.

A number of issues remain high on China's agenda of reducing tensions. The highest is getting Vietnam out of Kampuchea. For this to be accomplished, the Chinese believe that Soviet pressure is needed. It is not likely that Moscow will alienate Vietnam to achieve better relations with China.

Another issue is Afghanistan. China could help to resolve this issue if it helps the Soviets to withdraw with honor. There is a possible trade-off here, but Vietnam appears immune to external pressures and inducements. So any bargain might fail to be implemented if the Vietnamese were not satisfied that their interests were covered.

On the issue of borders, the Chinese have reiterated their position that they are not seeking the return of old territories lost by treaties. Rather they want implementation of the

original treaties, because there had been arbitrary modification of borders long after conclusion of the treaties.

An obstacle to normalization is the Chinese demand that the Soviets lift their threat to the security of China. This would involve removing the half million Soviet troops along the common borders and Sino-Mongolian borders. The Soviets have practical reservations about this. From Moscow's viewpoint, the Chinese are expected to make intangible concessions such as strategic independence from the US, ending hostility in state relations, and expressions of goodwill for the Soviet people.

In contrast, the Soviets are expected to make tangible compromises: tearing down military facilities along the border which they have built up at great cost in the past. This will alter their security position considerably in East Asia. The Chinese might turn hostile again overnight, and the Soviets would find themselves in a position of weakness. The Soviets might make some concessions in the next years, and these would be gradual, in keeping with progress in other areas. The total picture of Sino-Soviet normalization is thus likely to change slowly.  
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Long-term trends in China's trade patterns indicate that between 1965 and 1979, Sino-Soviet trade has virtually stagnated, while China's trade with Eastern Europe grew 11 times. However, this proportion grew only from 7% to 8% of the total. There has

been steady growth in trade with non-communist countries, both in real terms and in the proportion of China's total trade - from 68% of total exports in 1965, to 87% in 1979. Imports from non-communist countries grew from 69% to 88% during the same period.

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#### US-Soviet Strategic Relations in the Asia-Pacific Region

The US has been the most active non-Asian power in the Pacific region since world war two. From 1949 until the early 1970s, the US sought to contain Chinese and Soviet influence. As the US and PRC have moved closer together, the former antagonism turned to parallel interests. It is now the turn of the USSR to make moves toward rapprochement with China or the US.

While Sino-Soviet normalization will reduce the immediate security threat to the PRC, a long-range threat of containment is indicated by the buildup of Soviet naval forces in the Pacific region. This buildup also poses a threat to the US in the region.

In the past, the Soviet navy's role was strategic defence of the homeland against enemy missile and carrier-based air strikes from the sea. More recently, the role has been expanded to include greater use of coercive naval diplomacy. In the 1964-1976 period, the scale of Soviet naval operations expanded

by a factor of fourteen in terms of ship-days. The decision to deploy force for political purposes was partly based on considerations that naval deployment is more convenient and mobile and involves less risk than deployment of ground forces. There are also operational benefits of naval presence, including prompt response in a crisis, operational experience available for local commanders, and facilitation of arrangements for communications, intelligence, and replenishment. Naval presence also makes local nations recognize the possible consequences of their own decisions on superpower objectives. In other words, the Soviet navy has become an efficient instrument for projecting Soviet power and influence far beyond the shores of the USSR.

The Soviet navy has four political roles. First, it must try to counter and constrain the US in crises in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia. Second, it must protect Soviet client states around the world. Third, it can coerce other states in defence of Soviet maritime resources. Fourth, it serves to "show the flag" in various ports. The Soviet Pacific Fleet has<sup>15</sup> increasingly been involved in these roles.

Soviet naval expansion has focussed more on quality and deployment than on size. The Pacific Fleet consists of around 810 vessels of about 1,600,000 tons, around one-fourth of the total strength of 2,740 vessels of 5,850,000 tons. In numbers of ships, it is the largest of the four Soviet fleets. The fleet has 31 ballistic missile submarines (SSBN), 24 nuclear-powered,

95 other submarines, 85 major surface combatants (including one carrier), 215 minor surface combat ships, 20 amphibious ships and 77 major auxiliary support ships. The Fleet's air strength consists of 330 combat aircraft including 130 bombers.<sup>16</sup>

Qualitative improvements include high-speed, deep diving Alfa-class submarines, Trident-size Typhoon-class nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines, and continuing modernization of the naval aviation's Badger force with Backfire bombers. Among the new technologies are nuclear-powered subs, V/STOL technologies, naval cruise missiles and Kiev class carriers such as the Minsk. Deployment of recent generation missiles such as the SS-13, SS-17, SS-18 and SS-20 have also been completed. Many of the more than 1,400 deployed launchers have been updated to contain these modern missiles.

Soviet naval forces have been built around submarines and naval aircraft, supported by surface forces including the Kiev class aircraft carrier and Moskva class anti-submarine cruisers. The deployment of the Minsk has so far been the only carrier in the Pacific Fleet. It may indicate a fundamental shift in naval strategy toward forward deployment and away from merely defensive purposes. Advantages of carrier aviation include larger striking radius, reattack capability and weapon delivery accuracy over long ranges.<sup>17</sup>

Geographic obstacles have given rise to the need for logistic

needs for fuel, ammunition, spare parts and repair equipment. These needs are fulfilled either through forward bases or floating support, such as a large merchant marine tanker fleet. Three main limitations of the Soviet Pacific Fleet are obstructed access to the Pacific, severely cold climatic conditions, and a lack of forward bases. These have led to innovations in technology which have made the Fleet a credible threat.

The USSR has responded to geographic obstacles in several ways. It has built a network of canals that link principle rivers to the Black, Baltic and White Seas. It has developed a long range bomber force and a nuclear powered submarine force. The Soviets have also interpreted the international law of the sea in the context of securing access to and free use of the seas while limiting use of Soviet waters to foreign shipping.

The Soviet Pacific Fleet gained importance as a result of the instability in the Middle East since the 1967 Middle East War. Interest in the Indian Ocean increased because of US and Western Europe dependence on oil, and to inhibit Chinese political and economic expansion in the region. In addition, the Soviets are interested in countering the US buildup of submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) in the Indian Ocean.

Fleet headquarters is at Vladivostok. Ships must pass through the Soya, Tsugaru or Tsushima Straits to reach the Pacific. The Petropavlovsk base on the Kamchatka Peninsula has become the main

base for submarines because they can deploy into the open ocean without passing through the Japanese straits. Soviet naval forces in the Far East could deny access to an opponent, and disrupt Japanese shipping. However, US, Japanese, and ROK forces could block the three key straits and cut off a large part of the Soviet Pacific Fleet. Soviet submarine-launched missiles have the capability to strike the US from the Sea of Japan.<sup>18</sup>

The development of the Pacific Fleet into a multi-purpose and powerful instrument of Soviet foreign policy has been both a cause and a result of changing diplomatic relations among the countries of Northeast Asia. It is a situation which has affected the PRC and which puts pressure on Japan to rearm, and on the US to continue its strong defence presence in the region. The Soviet buildup in the Pacific has been related to tensions with the US and with China. In event of war with China, the Trans-Siberian railway would probably be cut, and the Soviets would have to supply the Far Eastern front by sea.

Although some movement towards normalization has taken place, the Soviets remain concerned about successful Chinese modernization and the threat to its Asian territories. The Chinese navy has tripled in capacity since 1960.

In the past, containment of China was a primary policy objective of the USSR. One fourth of Soviet ground forces and tactical aviation and eleven percent of the military budget was

aimed at China. The Soviet naval buildup has become more important since China has opened its borders to trade from the West, as China has become dependent on its access to the sea. Most of the PRC's heavy industry is located along or near its east coast.

The USSR has sought to surround China with pro-Soviet regimes - Vietnam being the most important. India has also played a role in Soviet policy. The Soviet Pacific Fleet has served as a symbol of Soviet military strength, and as an indication of a serious commitment in the region.<sup>19</sup>

The US has now embarked on its most ambitious program of naval expansion in the nation's peacetime history. Secretary of the Navy, John F. Lehman Jr. stated that maritime superiority must be re-acquired, and that the rapid growth of the Soviet navy has eliminated the option of planning for a regionally limited naval war with the USSR. The Ottawa Summit perceived the Soviet buildup as an implied source of world instability.

The US role has been central to developments in East Asia, and the US fought two major conflicts in the region since World War Two. The US now trades more with Asia than with Europe, but the area remains of only secondary importance to Washington. The Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea alerted the US to new threats of Soviet expansion through proxies, and Afghanistan has helped to create a new cold war atmosphere.



Large conventional forces of the USSR have carried out missions across its borders. Moreover, the strong air and naval units deployed against Japan raise serious questions about the American guarantees of Japanese security. The Kremlin has been able to upset the status quo in Southeast Asia by sending large quantities of economic and material aid to Vietnam. The Soviets have stationed planes and ships in Vietnam, and thus have established their first overseas bases in Asia since the early 1950s.

Prior to these developments, Soviet Asian policy was considered a modified failure. It had "lost" China entirely, saw Japan becoming increasingly unfriendly, was unable to penetrate Southeast Asia, and was even dissipating influence in North Korea. Soviet influence in India was achieved through expensive military and economic aid.

The USSR was blocked from pursuing an aggressive policy in Asia partly because China blocked access to much of the region. Long lines of communication by land and sea served to relegate Asia to a relatively marginal role in Soviet policy. Normal instruments of policy, such as trade, aid, and cultural exchanges, proved disappointing. Thus, the instruments of Soviet policy in Asia were reduced to the only remaining element - the military.

Until the 1970s, the military forces were largely defensive. Three major changes then took place. First, the Soviets were

able to construct a military force capable of influencing the balance of power in areas increasingly distant from Moscow. This was accomplished through many years of investment in industry and technology. This projection of Soviet influence was abetted by Carter's unwillingness to use instruments available to the US.

A second change was the increasing ease of penetration of distant areas by indirect use of military force - military aid and sales, training, base rights, and surreptitious participation in local conflicts in joint operations with Cuban mercenaries.

Third, Moscow discovered that the mere presence of strong military forces, within its borders, but directed outward, could influence events abroad. This was evident in the employment of military threat against China in the 1972 Bangladesh crisis, when the Soviets threatened military punishment if China intervened against India.<sup>20</sup>

Under these circumstances, the US leverage over events in the region has declined both absolutely, and relative to the USSR. Japan remains a strong ally of the US, but will not have much military significance unless the self-restraints on its self-defence forces are reduced. The US maintains military base and support personnel, marines and air and naval forces in Japan. The US Seventh Fleet (650,000 tons) continues to conduct maneuvers in Northeast and Southeast Asia.

In Korea, the US has around 40,000 troops, and six Air Force

squadrons. There are also US troops, aircraft and naval forces in the Philippines. The regime of Marcos has been under severe attack since the assassination of Aquino, and events could lead to problems for the US bases at Clark and Subic Bay. Under these circumstances, the abandonment of Taiwan is not likely, for strategic reasons alone. The Soviet buildup of its Pacific Fleet and its Vietnamese client may increase the importance of Taiwan's ports and bases to the US in the future.

#### Sino-Soviet War Potential

Tensions have remained high between the two communist powers. The Soviet military and naval buildup have partially intimidated the Chinese, who realize that the US would not support them in a war with Moscow. The Soviets have most advantages in weapons, and would be able to inflict heavy damage on China in any fighting, whether conventional or nuclear. In this section, we will examine some of the strategic implications of this Chinese weakness.

The Chinese took military action against Vietnam as a reaction to the invasion of Kampuchea. The Chinese were responding to the prospect of a strong, unified, and unfriendly Indochina allied with the Soviet Union. Moscow reacted in two ways. First, it seized the opportunity to improve its military relationship with Hanoi by acquiring air and naval base rights, and by deploying its fleet off south China to keep the Chinese navy in port. The

Soviets also helped move Vietnamese troops around to meet the Chinese threat. The whole affair proved profitable to Moscow, and permanent bases would change the balance of power in the region. US bases in the Philippines no longer exercise the military monopoly in the region they once did.

The second Soviet reaction was the mobilization and movement of military formations on the Soviet side of the Sino-Soviet border. Moscow perhaps believed that this would be sufficient to intimidate the Chinese, as it had been in 1972. The Soviet purpose was political - to limit China's influence in Asia, especially with regard to Hanoi. It also wanted to change the Asian balance of power in their favor by demonstrating superior military power.

The Soviets were only partially successful. The Chinese did demonstrate their ability to bring military pressure to bear on Hanoi. The Chinese also mobilized their northern forces, and thus indicated their willingness to fight a two-front war if necessary. It seemed that the Soviet demonstration of military power did not have the desired effect. Subsequent movement towards improved bilateral relations were influenced by the belief that the Soviets would not attack China, and that the US was not as necessary for security as previously thought.<sup>21</sup>

A recent study of a hypothetical military confrontation between the USSR and PRC examined a wide range of relevant factors and

situations. The assumptions, analysis and scenarios are important to the present study because they indicate the kind of situations which the Chinese are seeking to avoid - direct military confrontation with the USSR.

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The assumptions of the Daniel and Jencks study include the following: 1) US interests with respect to Sino-Soviet conflict include keeping the PRC independent of the USSR; retaining US allies; maximizing Soviet troop and resource concentrations deployed against the PRC, especially in the event of a US-USSR war; minimizing American involvement and resources; and containing Sino-Soviet conflict and preventing a nuclear exchange from escalating into global nuclear war. 2) In event of large-scale warfare with China, the USSR and its allies, for example Vietnam, will use lethal chemical weapons. 3) The PRC will not initiate any large-scale military confrontation, because it could not sustain such a conflict nor hope to succeed. 4) Fearing massive Soviet retaliation, China will avoid provoking Soviet use of nuclear weapons. China is concerned that even in the absence of major war, the Soviet Union may seek an opportunity to destroy China's nuclear capability - an option the USSR evidently considered in the 1969 Ussuri River incident. 5) The US will not aid the USSR in any Sino-Soviet conflict.

As a prelude to the scenarios of a hypothetical Sino-Soviet war, it is necessary to examine the political geography of the border between them as well as other parts of the PRC territory.

On China's south and west, there are some areas of natural protection. Along the borders of Vietnam, Laos, Burma and India, China is protected by thick vegetation and rough terrain. These are also areas with large non-Han (non-ethnic Chinese) populations.

Mongolia is the principle strategic feature of the 4,700 mile Sino-Soviet border. The MPR, a Soviet satellite, was described by Mao as a "fist in China's back." Inner Mongolia is an Autonomous Region within the PRC. The Han (ethnic Chinese) population predominates, but there still remains a sizable Mongolian minority. The Gobi Desert separates the MPR from Inner Mongolia. It is a vast, dry, uninhabitable area of flat and broken terrain.

To the west of Mongolia is Xinjiang (Sinkiang) which is essentially two desert basins, the Tarim and the Dzungarian, rimmed by mountains. Most of the population live in mountain valleys. The Han Chinese are a minority, with the native population consisting of Kirghiz, Kazakh, Mongol and Uighur peoples. Most of these are Moslems, and are ethnically and culturally related to the peoples in the adjoining Soviet areas of Central Asia. From 1960 until the late 1970s, Beijing pursued chauvinistic policies which alienated many of the non-Chinese residents and exacerbated anti-Han sentiment.

Xinjiang is connected to the rest of China by the Gansu

corridor, a long rugged bottleneck between the Gobi desert and the MPR on the north and the Tibetan mountains in the south. A single railway line connects China with the capital city, Urumchi.

The northeast part of China (Manchuria) consists of a flat, central plain surrounded by mountains in the north and west. Within the basin, there is a large Han population, rich agricultural land and natural resources and about 70 percent of the nation's industrial capacity. To the east of Manchuria is located the Soviet maritime provinces and the cities of Khabarovsk and Vladivostok. The border there is low and poorly-drained with swamps and frequent floods.

China's winds and rainfall are monsoonal. Dry winter and spring winds blow out of Central Asia south and east across China favoring Soviet use of chemical weapons. In summer and autumn, damp Pacific winds blow west and north into the USSR, favoring Chinese chemical warfare.

The Soviet region east of Irkutsk has been described as a military-industrial complex capable of nearly autonomous peacetime support of major military forces. Ultimately, however, all Soviet military and civilian activities depend on the Trans-Siberian Railway and the Northern and southern sea routes to link eastern and western USSR. The railway is the weakest link in the defence complex. The new Baikal-Amur railroad will

alleviate this somewhat, but construction is far behind schedule. The northern sea route is hazardous even in summer, and is open only for about four months of the year. The southern route presents great distances - 9,000 miles from the Black Sea to Vladivostok via the Suez Canal, and 17,000 miles from Murmansk to Vladivostok by way of the Cape of Good Hope.

The Korean peninsula separates the coastal sovereignties of China and the USSR. The coast of China, in contrast to that of the USSR in the Far East, is dotted with numerous small islands, and has a wide continental shelf suitable for exploitation of natural resources and the extensive sowing of mines. There are few natural geographic barriers for restricting Chinese access to the Pacific. For the Soviets, there are several choke points which could restrict their passage in and out of the Seas of Japan and Okhotsk. Petropavlovsk is the only major naval base in the Soviet Far East not fronting a major geographic barrier, and it is located nearly 2,000 miles from the East China Sea.

Ice is a severe problem along the Soviet coast as far south as 44 degrees N. latitude, and the Soviet navy has been forced to gain experience in operating in ice-laden waters. Of all the major naval bases in the Soviet Far East, only Vladivostok, the closest to China, has no serious ice problem. The acquisition of ports of call in Vietnam has thus given the Soviet navy greater flexibility in its Pacific operations.



In their study, Daniel and Jencks outline six possible options which the Soviets might take in attacking the PRC:

Option 1: Sponsoring Minority Unrest and/or Rebellion: Since at least 1969, the Soviets have publicized anti-Han resentment among PRC minorities, especially the Moslems of Xinjiang. In addition, the Soviets sponsor "underground" radio stations broadcasting to China. In addition to escalating psychological warfare, the Soviets could recruit, train, and deploy infiltrators into PRC border areas to endanger internal security, economic organization, administrative control, and border defences. The Soviets could also threaten intervention at the "request" of a minority "liberation movement", as was done in Afghanistan.

The Soviet objective would be to punish or deter undesirable Chinese behavior by preoccupying Beijing with internal security problems or to drain its economy. Such action would deter or punish Chinese military action against Vietnam. The possibility of such action in Tibet and/or Xinjiang would strongly deter Chinese military action on behalf of Pakistan in event of Soviet or Indian invasion. The technique could also be used to keep the PRC neutral in a US-Soviet war.

Under this scenario, the PLA would move to close off the border and conduct counterinsurgency operations in the area. If extremely provoked, the Chinese might send air or ground raids into Soviet territory to destroy rebel bases, but this would be

avoided if possible. The more likely response would be to increase Chinese subversion of Soviet minorities. Here the Soviets would be at an advantage because anti-Russian sentiments are not as high as anti-Chinese feeling among the respective minorities. Also, the Soviet security apparatus is more efficient in preventing outbreaks of dissidence.<sup>23</sup>

Option 2: Attacks on Chinese Maritime Assets or Disruption of Chinese Maritime Activities: The USSR might interdict or interrupt China's merchant traffic, salt-water fishing, and offshore oil drilling and exploration. The results on the Chinese economy are difficult to ascertain. China is now becoming a major merchant marine power. The PRC now has 707 merchant transport ships, 132 percent more than a decade ago. The country is also the third largest fishing state in the world. Offshore oil has become an important priority, and the government hopes to rely on the petroleum industry to generate substantial export revenues in order to pay for imports under the program of four modernizations.

Soviet naval forces could act to seize Chinese civilian ships, and aircraft could also operate from Vietnamese and Soviet bases. Combined with mine-laying operations and submarine warfare, this would close off the East and South China Seas and would halt merchant traffic in and out of the major coastal ports. If Hong Kong remained in British hands, it would remain the only port open to the outside, and would become seriously

overburdened. Oil platforms would be easy targets for destruction.

There is little the Chinese could do against such Soviet moves, considering the present weakness of the naval forces. Most ships would stay close to home. The Soviet navy's greatest difficulty would be encountered as their ships approached the Chinese coast, but this mission could be assigned to submarines.

China could respond to a Soviet blockade by disrupting the Trans-Siberian Railway and risking a major land war. The Chinese could also disrupt Soviet civilian shipping in the South and East China Seas, but the Soviets could avoid this by merely staying out of Chinese coastal waters.<sup>24</sup>

Option 3: Bombard China: This is the most economical Soviet option involving overt military activities. It could be nuclear or non-nuclear, from ships or submarines, by missiles or aircraft. Objectives might be to punish or deter undesirable Chinese behavior or to preempt certain Chinese activity, such as development or deployment of tactical nuclear weapons. An extreme objective might be the genocide option, involving massive destruction and disruption so that China would be reduced to chaos.

Chinese air defences are minimal around industrial and political centers and virtually nonexistent elsewhere. Soviet aircraft could penetrate with little interference. Similar to

the Vietnamese when attacked by the US, the Chinese under Soviet attack could only disperse, dig in, and endure.

In event of a Soviet nuclear attack, the Chinese would attempt to launch all surviving nuclear aircraft and missiles as quickly as possible. Top priority would be destruction of ports in the Vladivostok area. Since the Soviets have excellent air defences and would probably destroy Chinese launching sites early in their attack, one or two Chinese missiles at the most might reach their target.

The Chinese would respond with large-scale commando operations to cut the Trans-Siberian Railway, assassinate Soviet leaders, terrorize the population, and demoralize Soviet troops. There might be ground attacks on the maritime provinces, but modern and mechanized Soviet forces would probably repulse the Chinese attacks. At best, the Chinese could keep the rail lines closed indefinitely.

Option 4: Punitive raids.: This would differ in that Soviet forces would actually invade Chinese territory. It could be carried out in a variety of ways, including border incidents or large-scale incursions to destroy selected targets. These could be similar to the Chinese punitive war against Vietnam in 1979. Possible targets include Urumchi, Lop Nor, Inner Mongolia, the Daqing oilfields, and various industrial cities in Manchuria. The attacks would be limited to 30-60 days, and would terminate with

planned Soviet withdrawal from most or all of the Chinese territory.

Chinese strategy would attempt to block and destroy the Soviet raiding force. This would mean localized frontal assaults or large-scale ambush operations intended to extract maximum Soviet casualties.<sup>26</sup>

Option 5: Dismemberment: Soviet forces might invade and occupy vulnerable border regions of the PRC in order to establish pro-Soviet buffer states to damage the Chinese economy and weaken its geopolitical position. The Soviets might also try to invade coastal regions or offshore islands. Xinjiang and Manchuria<sup>27</sup> would be the most likely areas for this option.

Option 6: Full scale invasion and occupation: Options 4 and 5 would apply here. Once Xinjiang was severed in the Gansu Corridor region, it could be bypassed and conquered later. Some historians believe that once China is penetrated inside Gansu and south of the Great Wall north of Beijing, the country can be easily occupied all the way to the Yangtze River.<sup>28</sup>

Three main conclusions emerge from the above scenarios: First, the PRC remains vulnerable to Soviet military threats, especially along the long mutual border. The Soviets have the capacity to neutralize the Chinese along a broad spectrum of interventions - from subversion of minorities through blockade and punitive actions, to complete destruction and disruption of the country.

The Chinese modernization program will alleviate some of this vulnerability through improvement of defences, but by making the system more dependent on the West, a new source of vulnerability has been added. Also, as the USSR increases its military and naval capabilities, the gap between itself and the PRC will remain or grow larger.

Second, the Chinese have no allies to rely on. It is not likely that the US would intervene to protect China from Soviet assault. The Chinese must depend largely on their own resources. The doctrine of People's Wars is almost an admission of weakness in the nuclear age. It would be little more than a nuisance against the Soviet military machine, unless the Soviets attempted to occupy the country. The bogging down of Soviet forces in Afghanistan is only a small sample of the kinds of problems a Soviet army of occupation would face in China.

Third, whatever modernization the PRC achieves, it is a fragile growth which can be destroyed quickly by a concerted Soviet attack. China will remain a predominantly peasant country for many decades. By involving the foreign industrial nations in the process of modernization, the Chinese have given them a stake in the survival of the PRC.

The Chinese today face a situation totally new in their history. In the past, space was a resource which could be traded for time. Inner Asian frontiers, the oceanic coast, the high

mountains and thick vegetation of the west and south provided effective barriers to outsiders on occasion. When dynasties fell, or barbarians invaded, the Chinese system always made a comeback. In the past, there were outlets for surplus population - Southeast Asia in particular.

This historical space for maneuver and emigration no longer exists for China. The barbarian hordes of central Asia have been replaced by the Soviet war machine. The territorial limits of China proper have been established - there are no more new lands to be opened to colonization. Nationalism in Southeast Asia is clashing with local Chinese residents, and pressures to assimilate are great. These are the factors which China must now face in its strategic relations in Asia. Further in the future, there may be the emergence of minority nationalism in China. This will further exacerbate relations between the Han and the minority peoples who occupy the strategic frontiers of the state.

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## Chapter 4

### CHINA AND NORTHEAST ASIA

China's primary concerns in the region of Northeast Asia have been security and economic development. The region was one of the last to be penetrated by the Western industrializing countries in the mid-nineteenth century. Late in the same century, Japan and Russia competed to annex the Chinese sphere of influence in Korea, a rivalry which led to the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5 in which Japan established itself as the dominant power in Northeast Asia. After 1949, the Chinese claimed that the US had taken over Japan's role as the "imperialist expansionist" in the region. The Korean War was thus seen as a modern replay of events in the early 1900s, when Japan annexed Korea and later expanded into Manchuria. Foreign domination of the peninsula is viewed as a threat to China's northeast.

From the Japanese perspective, Korea has served as a bridge between the Asian continent and its own islands. Occupation by a hostile power thus endangers Japan's security. Korea has been called a "dagger pointed at Japan's heart." The Korean dilemma is further complicated by the presence of the USSR. The southern

port in eastern Siberia, Vladivostok, is only 130 kilometers from the North Korean border.

Ideally, the Chinese hope to exert influence over Korea similar to that of earlier dynasties. The kingdom of Korea was an exclusive sphere of the Chinese empire, although the Koreans exercised considerable political and cultural autonomy. Today, this influence is continued only partially in the North, and Beijing must compete with the USSR. The US has considerable political and military influence in the south, while Japan has some economic leverage there. Both Koreas enjoy delicate independence which could be reduced by major power intervention, or renewed war between them.

Thus the Korean peninsula is the strategic vortex of Northeast Asia. Russians, Chinese, Japanese, and the US have been and continue to be deeply involved in the divided nation. Taiwan has been the second focus of strategic interest in the region, involving the US concern for the inhabitants, as well as investments and its strategic location. The crucial issues today are in large part a legacy of the pre-1945 Japanese Empire, complicated by the emergence of a stronger China and an aggressive USSR.

As an historical actor, Japan has fundamental interests in the affairs of the region. Under the US defence umbrella and as a reaction against the traumatic experiences of the war, Japan has

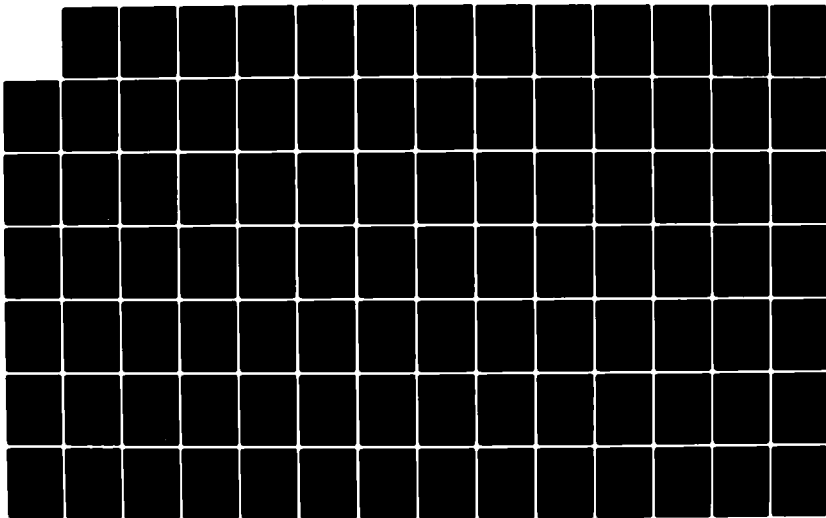
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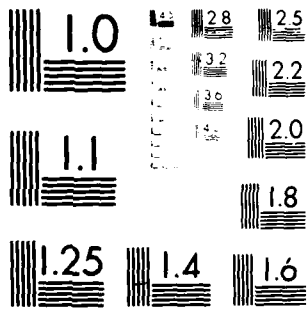
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MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART  
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maintained a low diplomatic presence in the region and emphasizes economic relations. Tokyo maintained an "equidistant diplomacy" between the USSR and the PRC until around 1978, when the attractions of the reforming Chinese market indicated the need to reconsider and to improve relations with the PRC.

Japan has downplayed the significance of the 1978 Treaty of Peace and Friendship with China. The danger was that the USSR saw the Treaty as a Chinese-led United Front. Japan continued aid to Vietnam after a brief interruption following the invasion of Kampuchea. Japan's reason was that Vietnam had to be kept from becoming completely dependent on the USSR.

Japan has abandoned her equidistant diplomacy between the USSR and the PRC. She has tilted towards China, but has tried not to offend the Soviets. Russian diplomacy and military provocations, however, have made it difficult for Tokyo to be neutral. Until 1982, China had hoped that Japan will join in a strategic understanding backed by the US to contain the USSR. This has become less important with PRC recent attempts to reduce tensions towards the USSR.

#### Sino-Japan Relations

From the first Sino-Japanese War in 1894-95, until Japan-PRC normalization in 1972, relations between the two major states of East Asia were generally antagonistic. During its imperialist phase, Japan saw China as the legitimate sphere of expansion.

This sense of victimization and aggression ran through postwar relations, as Japan was closely tied to China's major enemy - the US. After Nixon's visit to Beijing, both the Chinese and Japanese saw the possibilities in pursuing closer relations.

The dozen years since normalization have witnessed a mushrooming of investment, trade, and cultural and educational exchanges. With the signing of the Peace and Friendship Treaty on 15 August 1978, a new stage of relations was initiated which implied a common anti-Soviet stance. This was due to the insertion of the anti-hegemony clause which was interpreted by China and the USSR (but not by Japan) as directed against the USSR.<sup>1</sup>

First among the reasons for the development of close relations with Japan has been the recognition of economic and strategic complementarity. China has a huge market of over a billion customers which is slowly becoming consumer-oriented. Many of Japan's present markets have reacted against Japanese penetration, and may erect various barriers to Japanese products. The proximity of the two countries makes increased trade a logical goal.

A second factor is the large reservoir of skilled labor in China. For many processes of manufacturing, Japanese labor has become too expensive. Labor in the developing countries of Southeast Asia, Taiwan and the ROK has also been increasing in

cost. So joint ventures in China is seen as a solution to rising wages.

Third, China has many resources vital to Japanese industry. In particular, Japan must import much of its oil and gas from Indonesia and the Middle East. Although China has discovered new fields, the oil has high sulphur content, and requires different refining methods and equipment than used for "sweet" oil. Coal is another resource needed by Japanese industry which is abundant in China. At the same time, China needs these resources for her own modernization requirements and has been cautious in committing them to export sales.<sup>2</sup>

Fourth, Japan has much technology which China needs for industrial modernization. Through transfer and cooperation, China is gaining access to this technology. At the first Sino-Japan governmental meeting in late 1980, Japan pledged over US\$400 million in credits at 3% interest.

Finally, both countries claim territories which are occupied by the USSR. China has emphasized her support for the Japanese claims to the Northern Territories, but Tokyo has not reciprocated with support for Chinese claims to Sino-Soviet border areas. Since the mid-1970's, China has dropped her objections to Japanese defence increases, and sees this trend as a method of checking the Soviet threat.

Many Japanese businessmen have enthusiastically welcomed

China's modernization. The country's industrial capacity, territorial propinquity and historical and cultural ties have reinforced what some observers termed "China fever." Some of this enthusiasm was dampened as early expectations proved to be over-optimistic. Earlier plans have been modified or even scrapped because of over-ambition. The steel complex at Baoshan, near Shanghai, suffered serious setbacks because of poor planning. This and other projects caused Japanese expectations to be reduced. At present, the Chinese stress market socialism, decreased centralization and material incentives. The program of the four modernizations lays less emphasis on defence and heavy industry than earlier development plans.<sup>3</sup> If present trends continue, Japan is likely to build an economic relationship with China which fulfills the Japanese hopes of the 1930s, but without its political and military costs.<sup>4</sup>

There has been a major shift in China regarding Japan, especially in issues of security. This has helped to reduce domestic opposition in Japan to the treaty with the US and to increasing the defence forces.<sup>5</sup> There has also been the factor of Soviet belligerence, and a gradual return of increased Japanese confidence in the American commitment. This has helped a return to close links between the US and Japan.

Japan's foreign policy has generally had a high degree of internal support. The country has clearly benefited from the relationship with the US, and Tokyo tries to maintain friendly



relations with all countries, separating economics from politics. Under Prime Minister Nakasone, the country has been moving toward a more active role in the international arena. Soviet policies in Asia have encouraged the formation of a United Front advocated by the PRC. Nevertheless, there continues to be Japanese resistance to the idea of a strategic alliance with China and of arms sales to the PRC. Japanese policy makers do not want to become full-fledged participants in an anti-Soviet alliance, with the risks that this would entail.<sup>6</sup>

The Soviets believe that ultimately, economic factors will bring Japan into a more positive relationship. There is a Japanese desire to join in the development of Siberia, and to share in its rich resources. The Soviets may be anticipating Japanese disappointments in the China market, and increasing friction with the US. There was a Soviet-Japanese agreement in late 1980 on the economic development of forestry and gas resources. Optimally, Japan hopes to be the chief external agent in assisting the Chinese industrial revolution and in developing the Soviet Far East.<sup>7</sup>

Points of friction remain in Sino-Japanese relations. Chinese Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian criticized Japan for providing US\$4 billion in assistance to South Korea in 1983, and Nakasone's expression of support for South Korea's defence efforts. He denied that it was beneficial to peace on the peninsula. Tokyo assured the PRC that Nakasone's visit to South Korea was not

related to triangular security arrangements among Japan, South  
Korea and the US.<sup>8</sup>

Sino-Japanese trade in 1981 totalled US\$10.4 billion - nearly  
double that between Japan and the USSR.<sup>9</sup> In June 1983, the  
Japanese government decided to loan the PRC 69 billion yen. A  
major portion of this will be used for port construction and  
railway expansion. The remaining 19.1 billion yen will be used  
for various commodities and goods.<sup>10</sup>

The US has pressured Japan to expand its defence establishment  
for a number of years. Congressional critics point to the "free  
ride" enjoyed by Japan under the Security Treaty. The US nuclear  
umbrella allows Japan to spend less than 1% of its GNP on  
defence. The US wants Japan to protect its own sea lanes as  
American attentions shift to the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf  
region. Japan is now building new anti-submarine warfare (ASW)  
ships with onboard helicopters. More P-3Cs will enhance the  
country's ability to monitor Soviet submarine activity in the  
region.<sup>11</sup>

After the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the US suggested  
to Japan that it complete her five-year military program in four  
years. The US has also recommended that Japan play an increased  
political role in the region to counter the Soviet presence.  
Defense Secretary Weinberger, in early 1982, said Japan might  
have to assume greater responsibility for her own security. This

would also give Japan defence jurisdiction for the Sea of Japan through which the Soviet fleet would have to pass to reach the Pacific Ocean.<sup>12</sup> Japanese naval strategy has been coordinated with US naval operations through participation in joint Pacific naval exercises, such as RIMPAC.

The combination of US presence in Japan and Korea, and expanding Japanese defences against the USSR has helped to enhance China's security against the USSR. Emphasis on defence of the home islands, as well as air and naval capability poses no threat to the PRC. In addition, joint US-Japan cooperation serves to distract Soviet attention from the PRC. The growing presence of the US navy in the Sea of Japan (regarded as a "Soviet Lake" until recent years) now raises Soviet anxieties over the defence of its Far Eastern possessions.

Prime Minister Nakasone admitted that Japan had waged a war of aggression against China in the past. It was the first admission by a Japanese head of government, and was welcomed by China. Beijing leaders felt that this admission indicated that the country had learned its lesson, and would help to prevent a future resurgence of militarism in Japan.<sup>13</sup>

The PRC has tried to convince Japan of the need to increase defence spending. The PLA has sought contacts and exchanges with the Ground Self Defence Forces (SDF). There have been visits of retired military officials to the PRC, but Tokyo has avoided any

appearance of military collaboration with the PRC. China's policy has been to urge increased awareness of the Soviet threat and to increase defence preparedness - but not too much and not too fast.

The growing Soviet military presence in eastern Siberia and in the waters adjoining Japan has created apprehension. Soviet forces on the Japan-claimed Northern Islands have reached division strength. Moscow deployed ground forces on Shikotan, a small island near the Nemuro peninsula of Hokkaido, for the first time. These troops have been supplied with armoured personnel carriers, combat helicopters, temporary airfields and prefabricated barracks. Total Soviet troop strength on the Northern Islands has been estimated at 10,000-12,000. The islands are important to the Soviets because they serve as the gateway to the Pacific for the Far Eastern Fleet, and provide a "lake" within the Sea of Okhotsk for safe maneuvering of the Fleet's nuclear-powered submarines. Japan has also been disturbed by the Soviet presence in Vietnam. The Soviets have deployed 40-60 Backfire bombers and 50-60 SS-20s within striking range of Japan.

Japanese Communism: The CCP has no relations with the Japan Communist Party (JCP), which is oriented towards the USSR. The CCP has called for closer relations with the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) based on principles of independence, self-reliance, total equality, mutual respect and non-intervention in domestic affairs. In early 1983, the JSP responded favorably to the

Chinese initiative. Prospects for CCP-JCP rapprochement remain distant.

Registered membership in the JCP is approximately 470,000. Approximately 5% of the members of the House of Representatives are from the JCP. The Party began to tilt towards China in the early 1960s in opposition to the Soviet policy of coexistence, preferring China's militant stand. However a split occurred in 1967, and the Party resumed better relations with the USSR. The Party has suffered ideological factions which has undercut its electoral strength.

#### China and North Korea

The division of Korea was the result of a temporary agreement between the US and the USSR to accept surrender of Japanese troops in respective north and south sectors. As the wartime alliance became postwar rivalry, the two halves of the peninsula became separate states. After the North Korean attack on the south in June 1950, the ROK came under the protection of the US and UN. China's entry into the war in late 1950 was in response to the approach to the Chinese border by UN forces. The Chinese communist revolution was only one year old and fears of US invasion were a major factor in the Chinese intervention.

Sino-Soviet cooperation was at a high point in the early 1950s in part because of the Korean War. Around 1956, both China and The USSR attempted to intervene in North Korean affairs to prevent the purge of their partisans. As a result, relations

between Pyongyang and the major communist powers have been marked  
by suspicion.<sup>14</sup>

North Korea has played a balancing act between China and the USSR. Relations with China were cordial until Red Guards began attacking Kim Il-sung during the Cultural Revolution. Cooperation resumed in 1970 with cultural exchanges, coordination of foreign policy statements, mutual visits by top leaders, and increasing trade.<sup>15</sup> China and the USSR have supplied most of North Korea's military equipment, a factor which has created dependence on the two states. The Soviets have avoided transferring their most advanced weaponry to North Korea - a limitation which has been practiced by the US in its military aid to the ROK.

China has supported the North Korean position on reunification, and the North Korean demand that US forces be withdrawn. Privately, the Chinese probably want continued US presence as a stabilizing influence in the peninsula.<sup>16</sup> Because of long cultural ties with the Koreans, the Chinese seem to believe that they have a special understanding of them. However, Chinese understanding of the Vietnamese, another people supposedly long-understood by the Chinese, proved to be rather faulty in retrospect.

North Korea is a major missing link in the USSR's encirclement of the PRC on the Asian continental land mass. North Korea must remain friends with both the USSR and China, but has tilted

slightly towards the PRC. Pyongyang refused to condemn China's invasion of Vietnam and also offered sanctuary to Prince Sihanouk. This did not seem to damage relations with the USSR. There followed a Soviet-North Korea trade protocol, and Moscow invited Pyongyang delegates as observers to the Comecon conference.

The North Koreans found their delicate position made difficult by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the warming of Sino-US relations. North Korea has abstained from resolutions either condemning or supporting the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. It has supported the PRC and ASEAN on Kampuchea by calling for Vietnamese withdrawal. A high-level delegation from North Korea went to the 26th Congress of the CPSU. This was balanced by a visit of the North Korea Prime Minister to Beijing's Deng Xiaoping.

Since the late 1970s, the Soviets have tried to improve relations with North Korea in order to reverse the tilt towards China. Kim claims that nonalignment is the basis of his country's foreign policy. One reason that North Korea maintains close fraternal relations with the USSR is economic aid. According to a Soviet publication, USSR assistance has been responsible for enterprises which produce 60% of North Korea's electricity, 45% of its oil products, 40% of iron ore, 34% of rolled steel, 30% of raw steel, and 20% of the country's textiles. The USSR provided North Korea with diesel locomotives, helped design and equip the

Pyongyang subway, and aided the modernization of Najin port to handle Soviet cargoes.

In 1981 there were 12 Soviet-supported projects underway in the country, including a 150,000 kw. thermal power station and cold-rolling plant, and plants to produce micro-electric motors, ammonia, bearings, aluminum and a major expansion of coal mines north of Pyongyang. North Korean workers are in eastern Siberia felling trees, and several North Korean timber enterprises are operating in the Khabarovsk territory and Amur regions. There is also a North Korea-USSR joint timber-processing partnership.<sup>17</sup> The USSR uses North Korea to supply arms to distant parts of the globe, and hopes to use the North Korean port of Najin as a wartime warm water alternative if Vladivostok becomes unusable.

North Korea has not welcomed the move towards greater pragmatism on the part of the PRC. The closer ties between Beijing and Washington are seen to contain the possibility of diluting the Chinese commitment to defend North Korea. The shift to opening the PRC to foreign technology and capital represents a major deviation from not only Maoist principles, but also the self-sufficiency line of Juche - the official ideology of North Korea. The Chinese attacks on the cult of personality have also created distance between the Dengists who are seeking to eliminate the Maoist cult, and the supporters of Kim, who have established their leader as a semi-divine figure. China's increasing alignment with the US and Japan on strategic issues



has also raised concern in Pyongyang. Since 1978, the USSR sees a two-front threat to its security. In the west, NATO forces face the Warsaw Pact countries. On the eastern front, there has been increasing cooperation among the US, Japan and China in containing the USSR. In response, the USSR has been strengthening its buffers and counter-encircling the PRC in India, Afghanistan and Vietnam.

North Korea plays a crucial role in this strategy, and has been responding to Soviet overtures. There has been disappointment in North Korea over the pragmatism of the post-Mao leadership. In late 1983, the Chinese placed some distance between themselves and the North Koreans over the Rangoon bombing incident. The People's Daily published the Burmese government's indictment of North Korea, although it also claimed to believe the Pyongyang version. This media evenhandedness was undoubtedly interpreted as Chinese betrayal. The Chinese cannot afford to alienate North Korea, and have tried to reassure their allies. The most recent visit of Kim the elder to China was in September 1982. There were reports that Kim Il-Song's son, Kim Chong-Il visited the PRC in June of 1983. The PRC refused to confirm or deny the visit.

North Korea has tried occasionally to open ties with the US. In July 1980, US Congressman Stephen Solarz visited Pyongyang, but neither side changed positions. North Korea has been concerned about annual US-ROK joint exercises, dubbed "Team Spirit". The North Koreans are also apprehensive that a three-way alliance of

the US, South Korea and Japan is emerging. North Korea poses a threat to security in the region not only because it could launch another massive invasion of the South, but its submarines can interdict supplies and reinforcements from Japan to South Korea in event of war.

North Korea continues to probe south of the DMZ, and has practiced assassination and subversion to undermine and destabilize the Seoul government. In addition to the tunnelling activities, Pyongyang sent terrorist squads to the south to kill Park Chung-Hee. Most recently (October 1983), a team of North Koreans went to Rangoon to assassinate President Chun Doo-Hwan. Although unsuccessful, they did murder a number of cabinet officials and high officials.

In January 1984, a new proposal was aired by Pyongyang for a three-power conference on Korean unification. The proposal is a departure from previous North Korea positions which have absolutely denied the legitimacy of the South Korean government and demanded a US withdrawal prior to negotiations. Seoul wants the PRC to participate in any conference on the future of the peninsula. The ROK also wants North Korea to apologize and admit guilt for the Rangoon bombing.

Neither the PRC nor the USSR wants to see renewed war in Korea. Kim Il-sung would want an easy conquest of the south, but knows that prolonged fighting would result in devastation of both

halves of the peninsula. Pyongyang has been built as a modern showcase of Korean socialism, and few North Koreans would want to risk its destruction in another protracted war.

Both sides have offered plans for reunification. In October 1980, North Korea announced its plan for a confederal state at the Sixth Congress of the Korean Workers Party in Pyongyang. It called for scrapping all military treaties with third parties by both North and South; dismantling military facilities and reducing standing armies to 100,000 to 150,000 on each side; direct negotiations between the North and the US (without Seoul's participation) to replace the current armistice agreement with a peace treaty; and making a united Korea a nuclear-free and non-aligned country.<sup>19</sup> Seoul rejects such proposals in part because Pyongyang's major allies are just across the border, while the ROK would have to depend on a return of American forces from Japan and other more distant places in event of war.

The size of the defence forces in North Korea has been nearly doubled from 393,000 in 1970 to 778,000 in early 1982. By comparison, South Korea has about 540,000 troops.<sup>20</sup> There have been reports of 100 North Korean pilots receiving training in Libya to fly Mig-23s. The USSR was to deliver two squadrons of the planes to North Korea. Seoul reports that the Soviets have helped North Korea to build T62 tanks, and that 2600 were already deployed by 1980.

North Korea is vital to the security of northeast China. The Yalu River has been the traditional border between Manchuria and Korea. Today, North Korea is a buffer between the coastal areas of north China and the east coast of Siberia. It is also a buffer between the ROK and Japan, which are considered to be part of the US political-military complex in East Asia. It is unlikely that China will dominate North Korea, but Beijing will try to keep it out of the Soviet orbit.

#### China and South Korea

The Beijing-Pyongyang alliance has endured for over a third of this century. It has been based in part on hostility to the US and the ROK. Following Japanese recognition of the PRC in 1972, and Sino-US normalization in 1979, Seoul has considered the time might be ripe for a few feelers to the PRC. China's policy of abandoning extreme ideology in foreign policy gave some encouragement that the new pragmatism might allow an opening.

For China, an opening to Seoul would help reduce tensions in the peninsula. But the North would certainly interpret any contacts as betrayal. Seoul would also be risking the friendship of its anti-Beijing ally on Taiwan. China continues to maintain its present position: recognition of North Korea and withdrawal of US forces.

In late 1982, the Chinese pilot of a Mig-19 defected to the ROK and sought political asylum. Seoul blacked out the news for

security reasons as well as to avoid diplomatic problems with the PRC. In May 1983, a British-built Trident aircraft, belonging to the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) was hijacked from China to the ROK. Seoul used this opportunity to host the passengers and crew and demonstrate the progress of the ROK. The head of the CAAC also visited Seoul, and gave the PRC an opportunity to expand "hijack diplomacy" if it chose. While further official contacts have not been pursued, new lines of communication have been opened. The South Koreans chose a middle course in resolving the hijacking case. The PRC had demanded that they be extradited for trial (and probable summary execution), while the ROC wanted them sent to Taiwan as "freedom fighters". The result was their trial and subsequent sentencing to prison terms in the ROK. There has also been permission given to a few ROK citizens to visit the PRC - a new breakthrough in relations. Beijing has been cautious not to take any action that would be interpreted as movement towards a two-Korea policy. However, now that there has been a slight opening, China might use this in the future to apply psychological pressure on North Korea - that Beijing has the option to pursue relations with Seoul if Pyongyang proves too truculent.

China had been selling coal to the ROK. However, North Korean pressure caused China to curtail these sales. Pyongyang claimed that these sales could be interpreted as unofficial recognition of the Seoul government. In 1981, China shipped an estimated

1.3-1.5 million tons of coal to South Korea on third country vessels. In this trade, Hong Kong businessmen were acting as middlemen. Now the PRC requires that the contracts contain clauses stipulating that the coal will not be resold to the ROK. In 1981, the ROK's exports to the PRC via Hong Kong was about <sup>21</sup> US\$136.8 million.

Regarding Overseas Chinese, Korea has one of the most homogeneous populations in the world. In the south, there are approximately 20,000 ethnic Chinese out of a population of over 41 million. Nearly all these Chinese are oriented to the ROC on Taiwan.

The US presence in the ROK aims at defending the country from communist aggression. The Carter administration had planned to withdraw US ground forces, but later had to admit that it had underestimated the North Korean military forces. There was also considerable congressional and US military opposition to the pullout. The US bases in South Korea provide sites capable of launching nuclear or conventional strikes against Siberia. The US continues to provide substantial military aid to the ROK, and Seoul is now capable of producing a wide range of its own weapons.

South Korea maintains it only has 70% of the North Korean military strength. The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) continues to be a tense frontier between communist and non-communist forces. The

North Koreans have tunnelled under the DMZ and continue to infiltrate their agents southward. Thus, the peninsula remains volatile in the region.

### Taiwan

Taiwan remains the last unsettled issue of the Chinese civil war (1945-49). The governments in Taipei and Beijing agree that the island is an integral part of the Chinese state, but each claims to be the legitimate government to the exclusion of the other. Nationalist rule over Taiwan is not only a source of incomplete sovereignty for the PRC, but it creates an additional anxiety for defence planning.

The Guomindang (Nationalist Party) has governed the island of Taiwan, the Pescadores and a few islands offshore from the mainland - including Jinmen (Quemoy) and Mazu (Matsu), since 1945. There have been attempts to take the offshore islands, but these were unsuccessful. Because of insufficient amphibious capacity and air cover, as well as Guomindang military strength, PRC "liberation" of the island is unfeasible.

One aspect of PRC toleration of the Guomindang presence in the offshore islands may be related to the fact that these form a symbolic link between the ROC and the mainland. By governing small parts of Fujian province - Jinmen and the Mazu group - the Guomindang government represents more than the province of Taiwan. As such it complicates easy secession of Taiwan from

China.

The PRC wants the ROC to reunify with the mainland and abandon its claims of sovereignty. The Guomindang suffered a major blow when the US transferred its diplomatic relations from Taipei to Beijing in the beginning of 1979. Unofficial relations continue to exist under the Taiwan Relations Act passed by the US Congress. Under this legislation, the US still maintains trade and continues to sell weapons to the ROC.

The sales of weapons has symbolic as well as military importance on both sides of the Taiwan Straits. To the ROC, it represents the continued commitment of the US. To the PRC, sales are an obstacle to national reunification by giving confidence to the ROC as well as the means to resist the PRC. Under an agreement of April 1982, the US binds itself to reduce and eventually end weapons sales to the ROC at some unspecified time. Beijing has been pressuring Washington to set a date for this cutoff.

The PRC has made offers to the ROC allowing it to retain a high degree of autonomy. But by referring to the model of Tibet as a precedent, Beijing has undermined the credibility of its offer. The Chinese record there has been one of repression and misrule - hardly an attractive future.

Most Taiwanese oppose reunification with the PRC. The island has been separated from the mainland since 1895, except for brief



reunification from 1945-49. The Japanese colonial regime and subsequent Guomindang rule have made the society atypical of the rest of Chinese society. Cultural differences continue to divide the mainlanders and native Taiwanese, although considerable integration between the two groups has taken place since 1945.

Approximately 85% of the people consider themselves to be native Taiwanese. Most of the army and ruling party, the Guomindang, are Taiwanese, although the top positions tend to be held by mainlanders. Economically, the residents of Taiwan have fared much better than their compatriots on the mainland. Per capita income in the ROC was US\$1420 in 1978 compared to US\$300<sup>23</sup> in the PRC.

Beijing has never ruled out force if other methods of unification fail, or if its patience wears thin. The PRC hopes to isolate the ROC, and diplomatically has been rather successful. However, the Guomindang continues to have economic relations with over 100 countries and diplomatic relations with a small number of nations. Its economy continues to prosper and its political system is more democratic than that of the mainland.

As the US attempts to keep China in its anti-Soviet orientation, there has been consideration of supplying weapons to bolster its capacity to resist the USSR. However, it is likely that US weapons would strengthen the PRC against Taiwan or

Southeast Asia, rather than intimidate the USSR. Military action is only one of several options that Beijing has in its arsenal against Taiwan. A naval blockade or even a single attack on a Taiwan merchant ship could seriously affect morale and political stability on the island.

As US support for Taiwan has softened, there has been the suggestion of a possibility of relations between the ROC and USSR. Such rapprochement is remote, even though both sides would gain certain advantages. Soviet access to Taiwan would give the Pacific Fleet ports which are almost midway between Vladivostok and Camranh Bay. By giving the Soviets a stake in the island, the Guomintang government would have an additional factor in discouraging a PRC attack.

At present, the ROC would not risk alienating the US by making any moves towards the USSR. In addition, such a move would compromise the ROC's anti-communism which has been the basis of diplomatic relations with the Vatican and several Latin American countries. It would also be a disturbing move to elements within the ruling Guomintang, and would be seen by the island's population as an effort of desperation.

Soviet befriending of the ROC would be viewed by the PRC as an extremely provocative move, and would significantly reduce the possibility of Sino-Soviet rapprochement for the future. Thus, both Taipei and Moscow would have to face rather extreme

situations to form any working arrangement.

Taiwan is acquiring the technical capacity to build nuclear weapons. It has successfully constructed several nuclear power generating stations. However, a move into the field of weapons would create severe reaction from the US, Japan or PRC.

The ROC has announced plans to develop its own advanced weapons to maintain its air and naval superiority in the Taiwan Straits. Minister of Defence Soong Chang-chin told the Legislative Yuan that maintaining air and naval supremacy was vital to defence and a major factor in deterring a communist invasion across the Straits. Alternate sources of arms are also sought, if the US becomes a potentially unreliable supplier.

The ROC has a high defence budget, accounting for nearly 9% of its GNP. Defence takes 43% of the national budget in 1983-84. A large part of the defence budget is spent on buying advanced weapons. In 1982, the ROC bought US\$600 million worth of arms from the US.

Strategic location of Taiwan: The PRC considers the US to be a major obstacle to reunification with Taiwan. Several reasons can be cited why it is in US interest not to acquiesce in a communist takeover:

1) Damage to US credibility. If the US would not stand by a long-time ally such as Nationalist China, then other countries

will not trust their security to US guarantees. US recognition of the PRC was a demoralizing blow to Taipei, but hardly fatal. Moreover, by 1978, the question of normalization was not whether or not, but when. The US pragmatically and unofficially deals with the ROC as a political entity, but does not adhere to Taipei's claims to be government of all China. For this reason, it is likely that there will continue to be US support for the continued autonomy of Taiwan. Failure to do so would raise questions in Japan and the ROK about US reliability.

2) Geopolitical factors. Taiwan sits astride the major sea routes between Hong Kong and Shanghai. It faces the Fujian coast and its military forces could disrupt communications in the coastal regions. Taiwan is a vital link in non-communist island nations from Indonesia to the Philippines and to Japan. While the PRC is no longer the antagonist to democratic capitalist nations it once was, there is no guarantee that the present Chinese pragmatism will continue. Should there be a radical change of system in Manila, for example, and an ultimatum to the US to remove all armed forces personnel, then Taiwan would take on new importance. Taiwan also looks south into the Bashi Channel, through which much shipping passes.

3) The refugee question. A communist absorption of the ROC would certainly cause large numbers of people to leave by any means possible. Already, many children of Taiwan residents have come to the US, Canada and elsewhere as students and immigrants.

A sudden communist attack would create a new wave of "boat people", while rumors and speculation about unification will induce many people to join relatives abroad.

4) Political leverage. Sino-US normalization occurred in an environment of suspicion against the USSR. The US cannot expect these parallel interests to be permanent. Some argue that relations would be more cordial if Taiwan were abandoned. It is possible that the opposite argument has more validity - that support for a non-communist Taiwan is a major source of political leverage to be used against Beijing, especially given the record of Chinese instability.

#### Summary

The region of Northeast Asia was a source of modern intervention since 1894. Today and in the future, it will be continue to be a focus of Chinese security concerns. China's immediate neighbors are among the most dynamic societies in Asia and the world - Japan, the ROK and the ROC. People in mainland China are somewhat aware of the gap between their society's performance and that of the Guomindang system on Taiwan. Incorporation with Taiwan is expected to provide the PRC with a major injection of advanced technology and expertise to assist in modernization. But if the situation in Hong Kong can be taken as a portent, an imminent communist takeover will frighten off the talented, the expert, and the mobile individuals.

Regarding Japan, the Chinese hope that the present relationship continues. Japanese interest in the PRC will depend on stability and pragmatic leadership. The Chinese will probably continue to nudge Japan into a higher defence spending in order to share some of the burden against the USSR.

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1. Bedeski, op. cit., "Chapter Three".
2. See Kim Woodard, and Alice A. Davenport, "The Security Dimension of China's Offshore Oil Development," Journal of Northeast Asian Studies, 1:3 (1982), pp. 3-26.
3. Xing-Quang Ling, "The Chinese Economy Learns from Japanese Experience," Japan Quarterly, 29:1 (1982), pp. 39-50.
4. Robert A. Scalapino, "China and Northeast Asia," in Richard H. Solomon, ed. The China Factor (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1981), p. 197.
5. See "Tilting to the Right? - Sweeping Changes in Komeito Defense Policy," Japan Quarterly, 29:1 (1982), pp. 13-16.
6. Scalapino, op. cit., p.201.
7. Ibid., p. 203.
8. Daily Report - China (Hereinafter, DR) 23 February 1983, p. C1.
9. FEER, 23 July 1982, p. 46.
10. DR, 1983 June 9, D1.
11. Sheldon W. Simon, "Davids and Goliaths: Small Power - Great Power Security Relations in Southeast Asia," Asian Survey, 23:3 (1983), p. 308.
12. Masatake Okumiya, "Why We Should Defend Sea Lanes," Japan Echo, 10:2 (1983), pp. 15-20.
13. DR, 22 February 1983, pp. D9-10.
14. Scalapino, op. cit., p. 185.
15. China has endorsed the North Korean plan for succession in

which the 42-year-old Kim Jong-il, son of President Kim Il-sung. This is seen as the world's first communist dynasty. Korea Herald, 17 February 1984, p. 1.

16. Scalapino, op. cit., p. 137.

17. FEER, 3 December 1982, pp. 96-98.

18. DR, 10 June 1983, p. D1.

19. FEER, 29 January 1982, p. 9.

20. FEER 5 March 1982, p. 26.

21. FEER 16 July 1982, pp. 52-3.

22. Ralph N. Clough, Island China, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1978), p. 116.

23. Scalapino, op. cit., p. 206.

## Chapter 5

### CHINA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

#### China's Strategic Relations in Southeast Asia

The strategic dimension of the Chinese factor in Southeast Asia is likely to involve a delicate balance - one where good relations will depend upon the perception of the PRC as not too interested in the region, but interested enough and strong enough to restrain Vietnam. Southeast Asian attitudes toward China will probably be affected by economic developments, including the degree of success of the four modernization program. Singapore sees possible roles for Chinese entrepreneurs, while other Southeast Asian countries see China as a strong economic competitor, especially if China can exploit its low-cost labor and attract foreign capital in joint ventures.

The nations of Southeast Asia do not share current US optimism about the PRC, and there is concern that the US might attempt to build up PRC military capacity. By the time China can be made into a regional balance to the USSR, it will have already become a threat to the region of Southeast Asia.



China's first adventure after normalization with the US was southward. To neighbors of the PRC who fear Hanoi, Chinese military power is sufficient as it is - enough to menace, but not enough to overpower Vietnam. If the PRC becomes too strong, it would cause the Soviets to become even more involved in the region. Therefore the regional states cooperate to prevent the Sino-Soviet dispute from entering Southeast Asia. Neither the PRC nor the USSR is considered to be a legitimate actor in the region. There is also a fear that the US will abandon the region as it becomes fascinated with the PRC.

Prior to 1978, there were less than 1000 Soviets in Vietnam. By 1980, there were over 6000. During the Vietnam war, China blocked transit of Soviet arms through the PRC. One reason cited is that the PRC hoped to engineer a confrontation between the Soviet navy and the US Seventh Fleet. It may again be in China's interest to have Soviet forces in Vietnam confront US air and naval power in the Philippines.<sup>1</sup>

The PRC and the countries of Southeast Asia have faced common problems of nation-building after the Second World War, but have moved in radically different directions. During the 1950s, the leaders of China claimed that their interests were similar to those of the neighbors to the south - to eliminate the last vestiges of "imperialism" and to achieve their rightful place in the world. The governments in Southeast Asia, however, have had ambivalent and sometimes hostile attitudes towards their neighbor

to the north.

The countries in the region have experienced reversals in their original attitudes towards China. China's closest friends in the region - Thailand and the Philippines - were once highly suspicious. Vietnam and Indonesia, on the other hand, are hostile despite close ties in earlier years.

Lucian Pye identifies three patterns of Chinese relations in the region: 1) Hostility from Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea. 2) A complex friend-foe relationship with ASEAN, as the organization supports the Chinese position on Kampuchea, but fears a southward-pushing PRC and the split loyalties of ethnic Chinese. 3) A separate pattern of Sino-Burmese relations with close parallels to the ancient Chinese tribute system through which the Celestial Empire sought to dominate Southeast Asia.<sup>2</sup>

For Southeast Asian governments, the Sino-Soviet dispute is one of the most perplexing problems they must face. It is a mix of countervailing forces which could bring the region into war, and which attracts the two disputants to intervene in the affairs of the region. The rift has divided the region and has narrowed foreign policy options. The trend has been towards increasing complexity as Vietnam has entered a three-way pull. Because of this struggle, however, it is unlikely that any communist power will dominate the region in the next decade.

The roots of the Sino-Soviet rift can be found in the USSR's

fear of a two-front war against NATO and China. China's historical impulse towards dominating the peripheral "barbarians" has led the Chinese to seek security on its borders at the expense of non-Chinese populations, and has created anxieties among the countries of Southeast Asia. Moscow has been projecting its power around the world, and particularly into the waters around the Southeast Asian region. With the Sino-Vietnam dispute, the region has become hopelessly entangled in the Sino-Soviet rift. Non-alignment may thus become a major casualty in the Sino-Soviet rivalry.<sup>3</sup>

The Sino-Soviet rift is unlikely to wind down in the next decade, and may become a permanent feature in international politics. Southeast Asia is likely to remain a region of contention in this struggle, and Vietnam will be unable to avoid involvement. It is a contest which none of the three communist powers is likely to win decisively, and so the region's prospects appear to be a continuous struggle in ideology, security and economics.

#### China, Southeast Asia and the South China Sea

The South China Sea has become an area of contention between China and Soviet-supported Vietnam. These tensions have prompted China to build up its naval forces, and may lead to further conflict in the south. At the time of the Chinese attack in 1979, the Soviets responded with military aid and a display of

naval power in the region in support of Vietnam. Many Soviet vessels remained on station near Hainan and the Paracels for months. Thus China's intention to teach Vietnam a lesson backfired, and has increased the Soviet presence in the region. China's response to this was to build up its own naval presence in the region and to increase the quality and number of vessels assigned to the South China Sea fleet.<sup>4</sup>

In the rivalry for the South China Sea, China seems to prefer a situation where it becomes a Chinese lake. Beijing's claims are extensive, and affect not only the nations in the South China Sea littoral, but other powers as well. Much of Japanese oil and trading commodities pass through the sea. It connects the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and is strategically important to the US and USSR. Now that China considers it to be her own southern maritime frontier, the South China Sea may become the scene of future confrontations.

China has a 6,700 mile coastline as well as extensive offshore territory, and thus has a highly conspicuous maritime profile in Asia. In recent years, the PRC has backed up its claims in the South China Sea with force, and appears to be embarking on a course of expanding its navy to fend off competitors. In the Spratly group alone, various islands are held by Vietnam, the Philippines, and Taiwan.<sup>5</sup> The largest of the islands claimed by China is only 2 by 6 kilometers in size. Some have some resources, such as fisheries, but the prospects of abundant

offshore oil reserves have attracted claims and counterclaims.

The strategic value of the islands is restricted by their relative isolation. Nevertheless, military occupation allows a force to monitor and disrupt shipping. This would explain the large PRC naval garrison on the Paracels as Beijing faces expanded Soviet air and maritime presence in the region. By having recognized title to the islands in the South China Sea, a nation acquires access and control over marine, continental shelf and sea bed resources. According to one author:

In effect, each islet could have its own territorial sea limit of 12 miles and a potential contiguous zone of another 12 miles. Similarly, the islands could serve as basing points for the definition of 200-mile economic zones, or, more dramatically for the establishment of archipelagic zones covering thousands of miles of sea space.

Concerning China's basic position on maritime law, the same author states:

(In the PRC's 1958 Declaration on the Territorial Sea) Peking... unilaterally declared a 12-mile territorial sea limit (i.e. 9 miles beyond the then accepted international standard), and adopted a straight base-line method for the delineation of coastal boundaries. Similarly, the PRC there declared the supremacy of the coastal state in defining its own best oceanic interests and in determining its own regulatory powers. In essence, this was and has largely remained the sine qua non of Chinese ocean policy, though the ramifications and contexts of that policy have changed dramatically since 1958.

The present contest over islands of the South China Sea involves peace and security of the region as a whole, if not all Asia. Disputes affect the Sino-Soviet contest for dominance as well as

the search for oil. In addition, island disputes indicate the re-emergence of China as a principal participant in regional and world power politics. China views the Sea as the vital and strategic southern maritime frontier.

The South China Sea has traditionally been the main corridor for China trade and the principal gateway to the world for two millenia. Thus, the islands were located at "intersections" - along the way to someplace else, either China or India or Europe or elsewhere. When China lost Vietnam in the nineteenth century, she also lost control over the South China Sea. The Sea became open to foreign domination and presented a strategic threat to China itself. The idea of oceanic sovereignty and the extension of state authority over seas had little part in traditional Chinese legal doctrines.

Disputes over the islands were shaped by the postwar political alignments in Asia. US policies of containment gave the ROC, Vietnam and the Philippines opportunities to move into the South China Sea islands. Disputes over the islands have also exacerbated Sino-Vietnamese hostilities. Hanoi rapidly took over islands in the Spratly group which had been held by the South Vietnamese government. In 1976, Hanoi published a map which showed both the Spratly and Paracel Islands as Vietnamese territory. In 1974 China took possession of the Paracels, claiming a great naval victory. It was a step which proclaimed that China would enforce its claims with force - if there was any

doubt about this after the 1962 clashes with India over disputed territory.

Another point of significance about China's claims in the South China Sea is that there are many areas where the PRC's national interest and the interests of other developing countries clash. The search for friends in the Third World will obviously go only as far as national interest will allow.

Aside from the South China Sea's potential resources, it is also a vital highway - a zone of economic and strategic concern to China. The PRC sees it as a corridor linking itself with an important part of the outside world. Much of Chinese trade passes through the South China Sea. As foreign trade becomes increasingly important in the program of the four modernizations, the South China Sea will play an even more vital strategic role for China.

Part of China's modernization program involves development and modernization of port facilities. Of nineteen ports scheduled for expansion, at least nine focus on the South China Sea region - from Xiamen (Amoy) southward. On the Leizhou peninsula, Zhanjiang has become Guangdong province's second largest port. Nevertheless, China still faces major problems with port capacity and modernization. The expansion of the merchant fleet also remains a problem.<sup>8</sup>

In late 1971, Malaysia and Indonesia declared that the Straits

of Malacca was not to be regarded as an international waterway any longer. They claimed that their respective 12-mile limits extended into the Straits, and so these were subject to traditional innocent passage rules. China has supported these claims because it would have restricted movements of the Soviet fleet. Naturally, the USSR opposes such interpretation, and was joined by Japan in an alliance of convenience against any moves to restrict passage through the vital waters.

..for China, the stakes were quite clear. Unimpeded military transits, and especially those of the Soviet Union, constituted a growing threat to China's own interests in the Yellow, East China and South China Seas. In effect, unimpeded military transits meant the potential encirclement of China by Soviet land and sea power. Hence, China's position on the territorial sea and international straits can be seen as part of a larger counter-encirclement strategy which served to underscore China's ocean policy.<sup>9</sup>

#### The Overseas Chinese

The Overseas, or Nanyang, Chinese remain a friction point between China and the nations of Southeast Asia. These are Chinese who emigrated from their homeland and have settled in Southeast Asia. They are variously known as Overseas Chinese, Hoa, Huaqiao, Nanyang Chinese and Hua-ren. "Nanyang" literally means "Southern Ocean". The Nanyang Chinese have lived in Southeast Asia for many years and have made substantial contributions, especially in economic development. Yet in most cases they are still regarded as a separate community with power and wealth.



The Nanyang Chinese came from China with only bare hands, skill in the use of money and faith in the possibility of individual social mobility. Through determination and energy, some were able to amass great wealth and property. Many have been assimilated into the indigenous population, but many others still feel intense loyalty to their home villages in China and to Chinese civilization. The Chinese government sought to discourage emigration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but population pressures inside the country and the promise of better life abroad made enforcement difficult.

In Southeast Asia the Nanyang Chinese played the role of middlemen between Westerners and the native population. Nearly all the Chinese came from impoverished backgrounds, and they saw social mobility as determined by wealth. In this they were one step ahead of the native peoples, whose values were based on an ascribed social order. Thus the Nanyang Chinese found it easy to fill the middle vacuum in society. This connection with the Europeans made the Nanyang Chinese anathema to indigenous nationalists, who saw the Chinese as exploiters and Western lackeys.

The various Southeast Asian governments often resort to restrictive measures through legislation to control the Chinese. However, these policies have tended to consolidate Chinese power by forcing the Nanyang Chinese to become more cohesive as a group and to resort to cooperation with corrupt officials. These

restrictive measures have also failed to help the process of assimilation, and has slowed national development by excluding a vital source of wealth and talent.

Until 1954 the PRC regime was an ardent protagonist of the Nanyang Chinese in public statements. The government used the Overseas Chinese as a bargaining lever, and organized units to coordinate policy. After the Bandung Conference in 1955, Beijing declared it would no longer interfere in the affairs of the Southeast Asian countries. Many of the Nanyang Chinese welcomed the new Chinese regime with pride, and further stimulated local apprehension that they constituted a "fifth column" for the PRC.

The Nationalist government in Taiwan has also set up Overseas Chinese organizations, while declaring non-interference. The ROC has been more cautious and less vocal in activities out of fear of offending the Southeast Asian governments, whose support is vital.

During the Cultural Revolution, many Nanyang Chinese were aghast at the rampages of the Red Guards, and remittances back to China were reduced. Another problem that has emerged is that Chinese in the PRC with relatives abroad receive aid, and have higher living standards than their neighbors. During the period

of the Cultural Revolution many such people were severely attacked.

The higher living standard of communities sending out emigrants was physically visible to this author on a visit to the city of Foshan in August 1983. It is outside Guangzhou (Canton), and many of its residents have emigrated to Hong Kong or elsewhere. Its housing and other amenities stand in sharp contrast to other areas - even to Guangzhou itself. Television antennas sprout like bamboo shoots after the spring rain, raised high to receive the programs from capitalist Hong Kong.

All the Southeast Asian countries were troubled by Beijing's revival of the concept that all ethnic Chinese, no matter how many generations their families had lived abroad, could be the legitimate concern of China. Deng Xiaoping explicitly stated that China would protect "victimized Chinese nationals", an unambiguous return to the older Chinese doctrine of ius sanguinis.

The countries of Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia and Malaysia, see the millions of Overseas Chinese as something of a fifth-column threat when linked to the local revolutionary movements. There is greater suspicion against China than against the USSR because of China's traditional hegemony in the region, and the potential domestic threat posed by local Chinese.

The Cultural Revolution damaged the image of China as either

inspiring or fearsome. The PRC forfeited claims of being a relevant model for development after it became clear that economic growth had been set back by decades, and that a generation of educated professionals had been demoralized. Even within the Nanyang Chinese communities, awe of the motherland was dissipated.

The Sino-Soviet fighting in 1969 further reduced Southeast Asian anxieties about China. Unless China restored policy to a realistic course, it would have a permanent security problem in the north and would no longer dare risk adventures to the south.

#### China and Indochina

As the Chinese threat has diminished, the leaders of Southeast Asia have taken Vietnam more seriously as an expansionist power. This was especially true following the US withdrawal from Saigon and later, from Thailand. Vietnam became one of the most heavily armed countries after taking over the weapons from the defeated South Vietnamese forces, and receiving new weapons from the USSR. <sup>10</sup> ASEAN indicated a willingness to have friendly relations, but was anxious over the large arsenal of weapons now possessed.

Under these circumstances, ASEAN rediscovered China as a strategic factor in the region. The PRC's feud with Hanoi and its determination to oppose Vietnam renewed ASEAN interest in China as a stabilizing force which could balance Vietnam. Hanoi's reliance on the USSR and its conquest of China's only ally in the

region, Kampuchea, indicated that Beijing could be expected to play a major role in the region. The Sino-Vietnamese feud is likely to be second only to the Sino-Soviet conflict in reshaping the Asian international system. It is not probable that the US could have much effect in influencing Vietnam policy with aid policy. The Chinese were not able to win Hanoi's friendship with an estimated US\$12 billion in aid provided over the years of conflict against the Americans.<sup>11</sup>

Vietnam sought to maintain symmetry in its dealing with China and the USSR during the war against the US. It tilted first towards one and then towards the other. Public treatment of the two powers was scrupulously balanced. Politburo members travelling to one of the two capitals would always stop at the other, even when it involved roundabout routes. During the war, relations went from good to bad with China, and from poor to very good with the USSR. As the war dragged on, Hanoi increasingly perceived the Sino-Soviet rift as an impediment to victory. Moreover, Vietnam saw the major communist powers as "paper tigers", although this was not publicly proclaimed. "Both had a sense of limitation of their own power and both excessively feared that Vietnamese military offensives might somehow draw them into war with the US."<sup>12</sup>

Vietnam is uneasy about the Soviet call for improved relations with China and various communist parties, including the pro-Moscow French Communist Party. Brezhnev assured Vietnam that

better relations between Beijing and Moscow would not harm Soviet ties with Hanoi.<sup>13</sup> The USSR had provided Vietnam with over US\$1 billion in various types of assistance during 1980. Beijing's insistence on Soviet withdrawing of support for Vietnam makes Hanoi view with suspicion any improvement of relations. Vietnam has immense strategic importance to the USSR, especially with air and naval facilities at Danang and Cam Ranh Bay. The USSR now has considerable leverage over China and can provide port facilities in Southeast Asia for its expanding navy. The presence in Vietnam also gives the USSR a counterweight to US bases in the Philippines.

Vietnam is trying to maintain independence from the USSR. There was a purge of some pro-Soviet officials prior to the Fifth Party Congress in March 1982. Vietnam has agreed to support improved Sino-Soviet relations as long as it is not detrimental to any third party.<sup>14</sup> The USSR has restrained its anti-Chinese rhetoric, and accepts that a genuine socialist movement exists in China. Vietnamese leaders, however, claim that the Chinese have betrayed Marxism-Leninism, and that anti-Chinese struggle is one of the most urgent political tasks of all communists. The Vietnamese do not rule out betrayal by the Soviets. A precedent was when the Soviet leaders met with Nixon a month after the US bombing of Haiphong.<sup>15</sup>

During the last years of the war, the Chinese may have made

some bad miscalculations. They expected a long, drawn-out stalemate, and the continued existence of two Vietnams. They also expected that Hanoi would continue to rely on Beijing for economic assistance. China became alarmed by the postwar strength of Vietnam and the implications of Hanoi's tilt towards the USSR. The Vietnamese victory destroyed the centuries-old Sino-Vietnamese relationship of superior-inferior. Hanoi was demanding a redefinition of this relationship based on greater equality and full recognition of its revolutionary achievements. The USSR, on the other hand, had estimated Vietnam's early victory correctly, and was in a favorable position in 1975 - at China's expense.

Vietnam is the world's third largest communist country and possesses the fifth largest standing army. It is no longer viewed as a regional pawn, but has become an ally to Moscow and a rival to Beijing. Victory in 1975 forced Hanoi to rethink all its external relations.

The leadership's tenacity had helped fight and win a long war, but this characteristic was less needed in the postwar period when amicable relations and economic development were required. Aid was diversified, and the revolution inherited a windfall of US\$12 billion worth of industrial plant from the Saigon government. It seemed that "economic takeoff" was not far off. But this did not happen. According to Douglas Pike, the Politburo made a series of decisions which had the unintended

result of bracketing Vietnam between two implacable enemies, ruining its relations in Southeast Asia, wrecking its economy, and tearing its society apart. The short-run solution to these new problems seemed in moving closer to Moscow.

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In June 1983, Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach expressed a desire to meet with Chinese officials to improve relations. The PRC refuses to hold talks until Vietnam withdraws from Kampuchea. Relations between the two countries remain cool, and are likely to remain so for a number of years.

Major factors in the relationship included the following: First, China traditionally regarded Indo-China as a region where it exercised hegemony. Vietnam now demands that this old relation be replaced by one of equality. Second, Vietnam's alignment with the USSR means that China now faces threats on two major fronts. Third, there are territorial disputes in the South China Sea which have erupted in clashes between the two nations. Fourth, both revolutionary regimes are vying for leadership in the Southeast Asian region.

In 1979, ethnic Chinese comprised around 2.5% (1.3 million) of a population of more than 51 million Vietnamese. As in other Southeast Asian countries, Vietnam has perceived the Overseas Chinese as potential or active subversive elements. In 1979 alone, 360,000 Indochinese fled the country as refugees. Many of these were Hoa, or ethnic Chinese, and entered China where they



resettled. Others have emigrated to ASEAN or other countries.

The poor economic performance of Vietnam is partly due to high military expenditures - as high as 50% of the national budget in recent years. There is the burden of 1.2 million men under arms, or 2.2% of the total population.<sup>17</sup>

This wartime footing continues, and is abetted by the growing Soviet presence. At Camranh Bay, in September 1982, there were at least ten Soviet ships, including one attack cruise-missile submarine, one major and two minor surface combat ships, an oiler, an intelligence vessel, a buoy tender, a repair ship and a stores vessel. Soviet ships use the US-built base on a continuous schedule. Ships heading to and from the Indian Ocean spend up to a month at a time in the South China Sea, and use the base for refuelling and shore leave. There are also four Tu-95 Bear reconnaissance aircraft from the Soviet base at Vladivostok on 2-month rotation. These fly missions as far south as the Natuna islands between east and west Malaysia, and ranging north into the Bashi Channel between Taiwan and the northern Philippines.

The Soviets have financed construction of a pier and shelters for nuclear submarines, underground fuel storage tanks and navigation aids, as well as an electronic monitoring station. Much of the Vietnamese navy is concentrated further to the north at Danang, which has been used as the staging area for joint

anti-submarine training exercises with elements of the Soviet navy. Although neither Hanoi nor Moscow admits it, the air and naval facilities at Camranh Bay have become Soviet for all practical purposes. There are areas which are off-limits to all but high-ranking Vietnamese personnel.<sup>18</sup>

The USSR has also constructed a communications station at Danang. Parts of the Soviet Pacific fleet have been deployed to the South and East China Seas since the Chinese attack on Vietnam. Soviet use of Vietnam's port facilities allows the Pacific Fleet to break out of the northeast Asian bottleneck and challenge the US Seventh Fleet. It also enables Soviet naval forces to flank China's South China Sea fleet. With Danang, the Soviets can now monitor all Chinese, Japanese and American naval movements from the Sea of Japan to the Indian Ocean.

Vietnam hopes that eventually ASEAN will accept its dominance in Indochina. Hanoi wants to persuade the organization, especially Malaysia and Indonesia, that there is a common interest in limiting China's growing military and naval power in the region. There have been suggestions that a major aid project from ASEAN, Japan and the US might lessen Vietnam's dependence on the USSR, and even lead to an agreement on a nonaligned Kampuchea. This in turn, would reduce Sino-Vietnam tensions. It is unlikely, however, that the Soviets would give up the strategic advantages they now have over China by their presence in Vietnam. Moreover, it is also improbable that the

non-communist nations could match the military and economic aid now received from the USSR.

The PRC blames the USSR and Vietnam for instability in Southeast Asia. China claims that ASEAN is given only two choices by Hanoi and Moscow: accept Vietnam's domination of Kampuchea as a fait accompli, or risk Vietnamese support for rebel groups in the ASEAN states. This could lead to the overthrow of all ASEAN governments and installation of several "Heng Samrins" (referring to the Vietnamese client ruler in Kampuchea). China claims that ASEAN support for Kampuchean resistance is essential for Southeast Asian peace and security.

Some leaders in ASEAN, particularly Lee Kwan Yew, believe that Sino-Soviet detente might weaken Soviet support for Vietnam, and force Vietnam to seek peace with the PRC. The Thais are also concerned that the PRC might decrease military pressure on the Vietnamese. Neither contingency seems likely in the short run. The Soviets continue to gain strategic leverage in the relationship with Vietnam. For its part, the PRC has assured ASEAN members that Chinese opposition to Soviet hegemony, and not a desire for compromise, underlay the talks with the USSR. In other words, Beijing claims that the security of Southeast Asia will not suffer from Sino-Soviet normalization.

Vietnam-USSR relations are not without frictions. Hanoi is reported to resent the manner with which Soviet aid is disbursed,

and with Soviet attempts to secure advantages in return for assistance. There are complaints about slow progress on a hydroelectric project which has been underway for a decade. Also Moscow demands greater Vietnamese cooperation in military matters, and is trying to build up its influence in Laos and Kampuchea. Vietnam dismissed the pro-Soviet party secretary in Kampuchea without prior consultation with Moscow. These differences are not great enough for Vietnam to abandon its Soviet ally and become an "Asian Yugoslavia". Hanoi continues to seek better relations with ASEAN neighbors.

Worsening Sino-Vietnamese relations have also affected China's relations with Laos, which has come under Hanoi's orbit. Vietnamese troops remain in considerable numbers at the invitation of the Laotian government, which states that they will remain as long as there exists a threat to the country. The Chinese threat has become less of a worry than it was a few years earlier, and few expect a Chinese invasion unless there is a marked deterioration of relations in the area. China seems content to back Hmong tribesman, trained and equipped in southern China and sent back to harass Vietnamese and Laotian troops.

Sino-Laotian relations drastically deteriorated in 1979 as Laos recognized the Vietnamese-backed government in Kampuchea. After the Chinese invasion of Vietnam, Laos feared Chinese military penetration and accused China of massing troops on her borders. Laos requested China to halt her aid projects in northern Laos,

and closed the PRC embassy in Vientiane. Subsequently, Laos moved closer to the USSR, and high level delegations were exchanged. The USSR has promised significant assistance, and has signed a long-term aid agreement.

There have been reports that the USSR and Vietnam are rivals for influence in Laos. However, there would be little advantage for the Soviets to dominate Laos at the cost of damaging relations with Vietnam. The Soviets have installed a satellite earth station near the capital to provide direct communications with the USSR.

#### ASEAN and China

Southeast Asia was in a state of near panic after the fall of South Vietnam. Security and stability seemed in doubt. Thailand found itself facing confrontation with Vietnam. The anxieties mostly wore off, and five non-communist nations of the region formed the Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The original members were Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines and Malaysia.

In the mid-1950s, China emulated the Soviets and advanced the argument that state-to-state relations should not preclude close party-to-party relations - even when the party in question was trying to overthrow the existing government. Beijing still clings to this notion that party and state relations are separate. This view poses a serious obstacle to improving

Chinese relations with the countries of Southeast Asia.

In Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping stated that China would continue to support the Malaysian Communist Party (MCP). In May 1980, Foreign Minister Huang Hua upset Jakarta's plans for normalization by announcing in Bangkok Beijing's doctrine of supporting revolutionary movements even in countries where China would like to have good state-to-state relations.

China persists in the "Three Revolutionary Practices" which disturbs the leaders of Southeast Asia: 1) China gives verbal support to the goal of communist insurgency in non-communist Southeast Asia. 2) China maintains communications with Southeast Asian communist parties, including those in Burma and Malaysia which are engaged in fighting the current governments. 3) Beijing welcomes and gives sanctuary to revolutionary Southeast  
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leaders who are wanted by their governments.

#### China and Malaysia

Malaysia was the first ASEAN country to recognize the PRC. The country has a large ethnic Chinese population and there is a long history of Beijing support for the MCP, so Kuala Lumpur must be careful not to provoke the PRC. China has kept a low profile in its relations with Malaysia in recent years. China supports ASEAN's stand on Kampuchea. Malaysia is not convinced that Beijing has stopped supporting the MCP. This issue remains a

major obstacle in further improving relations between the two countries. China prefers to have better economic relations with Malaysia, and has sent high level delegations, including Premier Zhao Ziyang in August 1981.

Malaysia continues to view the PRC with suspicion. Officials in the Ministry of Defence point to Chinese territorial claims in the South China Sea which come within a distance of sixty miles of Borneo and peninsular Malaysia. China wants more people-to-people relations, and has requested permission for delegations to visit. These visits are permitted only with Malaysian Cabinet approval. By the end of 1983 there had been about 5000 applications, but only one approval.

The government of Malaysia also wants trade to be adjusted according to its ethnic policies, which means funneling more business to the native Malaysians (Bhumiputras). The Chinese have refused to do this so far, since it would mean reducing the amount of trade that flows through the Chinese community. Kuala Lumpur sees this as an indication that Beijing wants to retain an important lever over Malaysian economic development - control of trade.

The Overseas Chinese community in Malaysia comprises approximately 35% of the population. (High-ranking leaders in Beijing, including Politburo members Li Xiannian and Ye Jianying, once lived and worked in the country when it was a British

colony.) Deng Xiaoping has close relatives there. Adherence to Islam is part of the official definition of Malayan ethnicity. Communal differences have played a part in domestic violence, especially in the riots of 1969. Many Malaysians hold deep suspicions concerning the true loyalties of the local Chinese, or "hua-ren". The government allows hua-ren to visit the PRC, but only for humanitarian or health reasons, and only if they are over 65 years of age. Many apparently circumvent these regulations by travelling to Hong Kong, and entering China with special documents provided by the PRC so that the visa is not recorded on their Malaysian passports. Malaysia has protested this practice, but to no avail. Even sailors on Chinese ships are not allowed port visitation rights in Malaysia. Malaysian distrust of the PRC remains high.

The Malaysian attitude towards China and the Chinese has been influenced by the MCP insurgency in the years following World War Two, by the economic domination of the country by Chinese merchants and bankers, by the resurgence of Chinese nationalism after the communist revolution, by the separation of Singapore from Malaya and by the fundamental differences in lifestyles between Muslims and Chinese. PRC support for communist insurgents and its occasional claim to speak for the Overseas Chinese community has exacerbated Malaysian anxieties.

In 1965, China described Malaysia as a "dagger thrust in the heart of Southeast Asia by US and British imperialists" and "an



implement of old and new colonialism." Chinese support for the MCP has remained a source of antagonism between the two countries, even after normalization in 1974. The Sino-Vietnam war of 1979 led to splits in the MCP, and Chinese support for the insurgents has decreased considerably since then. From the Malaysian standpoint, they desire an end to all outside support to the MCP. Beijing has declared that party-to-party relations (CCP-MCP) are separate from state-to-state relations. The Malaysians respond that there can not be completely amicable relations as long as China does not abjure support for the insurgents.

The PRC is unwilling to totally cut support for the MCP for at least two reasons. First, even a weak party dependent on China is a potential lever to be used against Kuala Lumpur if pressure is necessary in the future. Should China-Malaysia relations deteriorate, the MCP can be infused with money and arms, and regain some of its former strength. Second, a Chinese-oriented MCP is far more desirable than one aligned with the USSR - which is what might happen if China disowned the MCP. Thus, it is not likely that China will abandon their MCP allies. The Malaysian army has a Special Operations Branch which deals with the MCP. Many of those who surrender are used to uncover its network.

It is estimated that only 2000-3000 insurgents remain in the MCP, and most of these are along the Thai-Malaysia border. There is a MCP front group in Beijing, and Deng Xiaoping has reportedly

attended their meetings - much to the anger of the Malaysian government. Malaysia has asked China to withdraw support for the party. Malaysia regards China's claim that it cannot withdraw support without risking Soviet intervention as groundless, since the MCP is overwhelmingly composed of hua-ren, and could not survive if it depended on the USSR. Continued broadcasts from Kunming directed at Malaysia have also undermined good relations.

#### China and Singapore

Singapore has become one of the hardline opponents of Vietnam's intervention in Kampuchea. Prime Minister Lee is also concerned about the growing Soviet naval presence in the region. Lee advocates a strategy of isolating Vietnam, on the assumption that the ultimate objective of the USSR is to gain access to ASEAN. There had been apprehension over PRC propaganda appeals to the 85% ethnic Chinese who live in the city-state. Lee visited the PRC and found the country backward and lacking in appeal for affluent Singaporeans. He concluded that Singapore had little to fear from China. Singapore has recognized the need to penetrate the China market, and the government has given its blessing to businessmen who establish joint ventures with China.

Singapore needs ASEAN to survive. Lee Kwan Yew has cultivated good relations with both Beijing and Taipei. In May 1976, Lee visited the PRC, and Deng Xiaoping visited Singapore in 1978. In

August 1981, Zhao Ziyang visited Singapore. In addition, Singapore's armed forces occasionally conduct training exercises in Taiwan. Although Singapore does not have formal diplomatic relations with the PRC, this has not inhibited economic relations. The Chinese Trade Office is considered to be an embassy in all except name. Recently, Singapore was contracted to construct oil wells in the South China Sea. To some of the non-Chinese in the region, ASEAN is considered to be an Overseas Chinese network which is increasingly aligning with the PRC.

Singapore must necessarily be slow in cultivating relations with the PRC in order to avoid suspicions from its neighbors that the predominantly ethnic Chinese city-state is an extension of the PRC. With a majority of the population composed of ethnic Chinese, Singapore must avoid the image of being a "Chinese state". Lee has stated that Singapore will be the last ASEAN member to recognize Beijing. Thus far, Indonesia has declined to normalize relations, and so Singapore does not have to make a decision yet.

Singapore is sometimes compared to Israel, insofar as it is a small state sandwiched between two large Muslim countries - Malaysia and Indonesia. When Singapore became independent in 1963, many observers thought the existence separate from Malaysia would be short-lived. Through the shrewd leadership of Lee and the People's Action Party (PAP), the city-state has not only survived, but prospered beyond its most optimistic expectations.

Nevertheless, its existence and prosperity remain fragile and vulnerable in the turbulent environment.

In defence, for example, the country maintains one of the most advanced military establishments in the region. The territory of Singapore, however, offers no depth, and so it must have a forward defence policy. A communist conquest of Malaysia would be a very serious threat to Singapore. To preserve its water supply, for example, Singapore would have to seize the state of Johore. The US fleet now calls at Singapore. Some critics claim that Prime Minister Lee is playing up the Soviet threat in order to keep the US in the region, so that Sino-Soviet rivalries do not dominate the small states. Universal conscription is practiced, and conscription of women is under consideration. Switzerland is the preferred model for Singapore defence.

#### China and the Philippines

Diplomatic relations were established between the PRC and the Philippines on 9 June 1975. This followed visits by First Lady Imelda Marcos in September 1974 and by President Marcos the following year. The mutual pursuit of normal relations has resulted from several factors. First has been the growing Soviet thrust into the region. This threat was all the more pronounced with US withdrawal from Vietnam in 1975. Manila began to speculate that the US might also give up its presence in the Philippines. Bases in Guam had been used to launch fighter

attacks against Vietnam, so the strategic importance of Clark Field had diminished. Rents for the US bases have increased, while US economic and military aid has decreased.

Manila also realized that China was not the danger to Philippine security as was long suspected. Chinese naval power was not a significant threat. More dangerous was Chinese support for insurgent movements. The ethnic Chinese community is also a factor in Sino-Philippine relations. There are about a quarter of a million Overseas Chinese, many of whom have retained their Chinese citizenship. In order to foster better relations with Manila, Beijing has encouraged the members of local Chinese communities to integrate more with the host nation. Marcos has also firmly insisted that the Chinese in the Philippines decide which nationality they want. The Overseas Chinese prefer to have the benefits of dual citizenship and have been slow to assimilate.

Maoists in the Philippine Communist Party have been oriented towards China and drew inspiration from Mao's theories of revolution. The PRC has tended to maintain distance from these groups in the interest of good state relations, but as in the case of other ASEAN states, China would reactivate support for insurgents if interests so dictated. Another potential point of friction is Philippine claims to the Spratly islands. Manila occupies eight of the sixteen islands.

Sino-Philippine relations have remained cordial since normalization. Trade totalled US\$327.8 million in 1982. Beijing has avoided criticism of Marcos, and the Philippines has continued to distance itself from Taiwan. China's response to the murder of Aquino was that the affair was "unfortunate." The two countries have interests which coincide, so the surprising compatibility of the "odd couple" may continue well into the future.

#### China and Thailand

Since 1978, Thailand has become ASEAN's front-line state in the Indo-China struggle. China's opposition to Vietnam and the intervention in Kampuchea has created a close relation between Bangkok and Beijing. In early February 1983, the PLA Chief of Staff visited Thailand and called for increased friendship between the Chinese and Thai peoples and armies. He also mentioned the common interest of the two countries in "opposing<sup>23</sup> hegemonism" in Southeast Asia. High level visits between the two countries in recent years indicate recognition of mutual interests in containing Vietnamese expansion. Other visits include the Thai Prime Minister to Beijing in November 1982 and numerous exchanges of military delegations.

In addition to the Vietnam issue, close Sino-Thai relations are aided by the fact that there are no unsettled border issues between them because they do not share a common border.

Moreover, the local Chinese population, estimated at 5-7 million, has been more successfully assimilated in Thailand than in most other countries of Southeast Asia. Thai political elites and the Chinese business community have achieved a high degree of cooperation, and many Chinese have married Thais and adopted Thai names. Thai Buddhism, although of the Theravada persuasion, has many parallels with Chinese traditional religion, and so cultural friction is minimized. Finally, the absence of a colonial period in Thailand meant that there was no European power to create laws and customs which discriminated between Chinese and natives - as in Indonesia, for example.

Diplomatic relations were established in July 1975 - shortly after the US withdrawal from Vietnam. The new Chinese Embassy in Bangkok was opened on 27 April 1983 on grounds covering 2.4 hectares.<sup>24</sup> Thai foreign policy has generally been to cooperate with the strongest power in the region in order to preserve the nation's sovereignty. During the war, Thailand accepted Japanese hegemony in the region and was able to avoid the occupation suffered by other Southeast Asian countries.

Similar to many developing countries, the government of Thailand is run by the military. The postwar period has been characterized by coups and countercoups, yet the system has been able to maintain relative stability and economic growth because of the underlying social order based on the monarchy and religion. The stress on individual responsibility of Theravada

Buddhism has made the Thai people relatively unreceptive to socialism. Nevertheless, regional divisions and remote ethnic groups often threaten the fabric of social unity.

Thailand has been apprehensive of Soviet influence in the region, and has refused to allow the Soviets to increase the size of its staff in the Bangkok embassy. The Thai government has been reluctant to allow Soviet warships to visit Thai ports and to allow the Soviets to post a naval attache in the embassy.

Joint US-Thai navy exercises have been held in the Gulf of Siam. These focussed on naval engagements there and on amphibious operations by marines. Thai officials claim they need more tactical air support and aircraft with capability of interdicting enemy supply lines.<sup>25</sup> The US has responded to Vietnamese incursions into Thailand with increased military aid. This has included tanks, armored personnel carriers and anti-tank missile systems. Ground-to-air missiles have been provided, and there have been increased visits of US warships to Thailand.

In November 1982, Deng Xiaoping told Thai Prime Minister Prem that China's willingness to develop firm relations with regional governments was not simply a matter of expedience, but a long-term strategic policy. This statement has been interpreted to allay suspicions that China would increase its support for the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) when regional conditions improve for China.<sup>26</sup>



Both Malaysia and Thailand have been weakening their respective communist parties with military force and amnesty programs. On 7 September 1982, CPT Politburo member Udom Srisuwan surrendered to the government. He reportedly decided this because of some pro-Chinese hardliners' inflexibility. Premier Zhao Ziyang has offered to assist exiled members of the CPT living in China in returning home under the amnesty. The party has lost important strongholds, and its membership dropped from 12,000 to less than 7,000 in four years.

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Even after normalization of Sino-Thai relations, China continued to support the CPT. Since May 1979 the CPT's radio station, "The Voice of the Thai People", began to criticize Hanoi as a surrogate of the USSR. The broadcasts ended on July 11, possibly due to a serious split in the party between the old-guard pro-China leadership and the younger elements favoring Vietnam. It is also possible that Beijing has decided to reduce its support for the CPT in an effort to maintain smooth relations with the Thai government.

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China accepted 10,000 Indochinese refugees from Thailand, and there is speculation that they have been given military training and may be sent into Laos. China has also promised aid to Thailand if attacked by Vietnam. For several years, Thailand has allowed its border region to be used by the Chinese in resupplying forces of the Khmer Rouge.

## China and Indonesia

The present Indonesian government has been in power for over two decades. President Suharto's appointees sit in the cabinet and control the top staff and command positions in the armed forces. They guide the congress and determine policies of the huge state-owned corporations, such as Pertamina, the banks, and the key political institutions. The abortive coup by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) in 1965 and the struggle against Muslim extremists have played a major role in the outlook of the present top military officers.

In Jakarta's view, China is an unambiguous external threat. Beijing continues to support the PKI, and suspicions remain about the loyalty of the ethnic Chinese. Indonesia did not react strongly about the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea. Jakarta considered this more of a tactical error than an immoral act of aggression. The Indonesians consider Vietnam as a useful buffer between the PRC and Southeast Asia.

The present generation of military leaders in Indonesia still tends to see China as a major threat. The traumatic experience of 1965, when the Communist Party of Indonesia sought to seize power, was linked to the two million member Chinese community because of support for PKI elements and the close relationship with the PRC. The party had a hard-core membership of about 1.5 million, and was officially banned in March 1966. It is estimated

that there are now about 1,000-3,000 members, with only 10% engaged in organized activity. Indonesia has refused to re-establish diplomatic relations with Beijing. The Chinese community remains the object of suspicion, and is prohibited from even using the Chinese language in publications or signs. Those Chinese who left Indonesia for China are banned from re-entering Indonesia because of fear that some of these will return as trained agents.

Leaders in Jakarta point to Malaysia's experience after normalization as evidence that there is little to be gained. There have been few economic benefits, and Chinese support for the local communist party has not ended. China still supports the PKI, and recently, the Indonesian government captured seven members who had infiltrated into the country on false Thai passports. Government officials in Jakarta fear that a renewed Chinese diplomatic presence will facilitate infiltration and subversion. They point to the latest Congress of the Chinese Communist Party and its support for revolution as evidence that China has not changed its line in this respect.

Despite the absence of diplomatic relations, Jakarta has been importing around US\$348 million worth of Chinese goods annually, and exporting about US\$87 million to the PRC. The trade takes place through intermediaries.

In size and population, Indonesia is the most important nation

in Southeast Asia. So far the potentials of the country have not been realized, and leaders do not want rivalry from China to eclipse Indonesian aspirations of leadership. Thus, the Soviet-Vietnamese alliance against China is not undesirable from Jakarta's viewpoint. It preserves a balance which might have collapsed after the US withdrawal from Vietnam. Indonesia remains the most pro-Vietnamese member of ASEAN, and only tepidly supports the anti-Vietnamese stance of the organization.

Indonesia is the least willing of the ASEAN states to support the policy of diplomatic and economic attrition against Vietnam. Jakarta has resisted the Chinese view that an alliance is needed to resist Soviet influence in the region. Indonesia also has sympathy for Vietnam insofar as both nations were once colonies of European powers, and both gained independence after protracted guerrilla wars. In addition, both have anxieties about Chinese cultural and political dominance. There is also common concern about future Chinese economic power in the region when and if economic modernization succeeds on a major scale. It does not necessarily follow, however, that these factors will produce improved Vietnamese-Indonesian relations, or a breakdown of ASEAN solidarity over the problem of Kampuchea.

Indonesia is anxious to avoid great power confrontation in Southeast Asia, so some solution to the Indochinese impasse would be welcomed. Foreign Minister Mochtar, in June 1982, stated that China, not the USSR, is the greatest threat in the region. He

hoped that Vietnam would leave the Soviet orbit and become a Southeast Asian "Yugoslavia," rather than a "Cuba". He also rejected Singapore's suggestion that ASEAN hold joint military exercises to demonstrate and increase regional solidarity. Indonesia has turned down Soviet requests to allow naval visits. Relations have been cool since the invasion of Afghanistan, a fellow Islamic nation.

A Moscow broadcast of support for the PKI (19 December 1981) infuriated Jakarta. A large number of PKI exiles left Beijing for the USSR and East European countries when China softened its diplomatic approach to Indonesia. Jakarta ordered the expulsion of Soviet embassy officials. Some Jakarta officials want closer relations with China in order to counter Soviet advances. There was also concern about the large embassy - 40 diplomats and about 100 so-called maintenance officers.

When the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship was signed on 15 August 1978, Jakarta was concerned that Japanese purchases of Chinese crude oil would reduce Indonesia's sales. There were also other concerns that Japanese investments in China would be in competition with resource industries such as aluminum production in Indonesia.

Indonesia was among a number of Asian countries to experience Japanese military occupation during the World War, and thus has apprehensions about Japan's military buildup. Indonesian defence specialists believe that this can be tolerated if Japan is willing to cooperate with Indonesia and other ASEAN countries in defence planning. Japan should not go its own way in security

planning, but should coordinate its strategy with that of ASEAN.

Indonesia is both a Pacific and Indian Ocean nation. With the US naval base established in Diego Garcia, Indonesia now has concern about the super-power rivalry in both oceanic regions. A Japanese naval expansionary program would further complicate this equation. Jakarta is also concerned about Chinese naval modernization, especially as it affects the South China Sea.

#### China and Burma

Burma attaches special importance to relations with China, especially since the two countries share a 1900-kilometer border. Burma was the first non-communist country to recognize the PRC. The high point in relations between the two states was in 1960, when they settled a long-standing border dispute. After the Sino-Indian conflict in 1962, the Chinese singled out the Sino-Burmese relationship as a model of China's policy of peaceful coexistence with governments of non-communist countries. Relations deteriorated during the cultural revolution, when activities by local radical Chinese led to violent anti-Chinese riots. (The proportion of ethnic Chinese is estimated variously as between 1.5%-6% of the Burmese population). In June 1966, Beijing issued a harsh statement blaming the Ne Win government for the clashes. Relations improved after 1970. In 1975, Ne Win visited Beijing and held talks with Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping.

Relations with China have grown steadily since the Cultural Revolution. There appears to be close rapport between leaders of the two countries. Premier Zhao Ziyang made his first official foreign trip to Rangoon where he met with the President in January 1981. There are frequent exchanges of lower level delegations, often dealing with technical and development affairs. Burma seems to appreciate Chinese development aid because projects are completed on time, and are done with a good standard of workmanship.

Official Burmese foreign policy has been based on neutralism since 1948. This policy calls for avoiding all international commitments, except through international organizations, and an impartial approach to issues involving the major powers. In reality, Burma must take its giant neighbors China and India into consideration. Sino-Indian border disputes have made it difficult for Burma to remain isolated from outside events. The Chinese have supported the Burmese Communist Party (BCP) against the Rangoon government. It is another case of Beijing maintaining that state-to-state and party-to-party relations are separate areas of activity. Support of the insurgents gives the PRC an important lever against Rangoon when needed.

The Burmese government has faced insurgency among ethnic minorities for most of the years since independence. Border minorities have pressed for secession or autonomy within Burma. The BCP has a membership estimated at 12,000-14,000, and is

active mostly on the northeast frontier of the country. The party had been active in insurgency since 1948, but was decimated by internal struggles and government capture of party headquarters in 1968. Subsequently, the BCP was reconstructed under the Chinese-trained Thakin Ba Theim Tin and Naw Sang. At present, the BCP military organization is concentrated along the Sino-Burmese border, and support is restricted to local ethnic minorities. They do not pose any real threat to the central government, but are more of a nuisance.

Burma has stated that Chinese support for the BCP and its military forces on the Yunnan border is not an issue in state-to-state relations. Negotiations between government and BCP representatives in 1981 broke down because of what the government considered unacceptable demands - that the BCP be treated as a legal party, be allowed to keep its armed forces intact and retain control of border base areas. It is suggested that it is more in Burma's interest that the BCP be linked with China rather than with some other communist party: this relationship allows the BCP to be supervised by both China and Burma, and thus avoids having a third external power involved in the China border area.<sup>31</sup>

Rangoon was irritated when Beijing's leaders held intimate talks with BCP leaders in November 1976, and promised to promote "revolutionary friendship and militant unity." In later top-level visits from China, the Burmese demanded that the



Chinese halt or at least scale down support for the BCP. China tacitly agreed to do so, but there was little evidence that this had been done. There is widespread belief that the BCP is the best organized insurgent movement in Southeast Asia.

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1. Lucian Pye, "The China Factor in Southeast Asia," in Solomon, op. cit., pp. 252-54.
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## Chapter 6

### CHINA AND SOUTH ASIA

#### The South Asian Region

The region of South Asia includes the seven states of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives and Bhutan. A number of factors limit regional cooperation. First, there are major political differences among the seven states. Second, they have unstable economies propped up by Western loans and some of the lowest per capita incomes in the world. Third, the region does not have sufficient energy resources, and exploitation of other resources is hampered by rivalries.

The USSR, US and China all have relevance for the security of South Asia. All the South Asian states suffer from a certain degree of internal instability, and most have some fear of India as the core nation. Political friction, regional disputes and economic competition in the region further exacerbate relations, and tacitly invite superpower intervention. Soviet naval expansion in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea is helped by having a friendly Indian navy in the region. Parts and supplies are interchangeable and base facilities might be shared in the

future. India today remains independent, but the government's pro-Moscow tilt and continued apprehension of Beijing play a part in the USSR strategic encirclement of the PRC.

Since the late 1950's the Indian subcontinent has become another theater of the Sino-Soviet dispute. Moscow supported India against its one-time ally after 1962. China has reciprocated by supporting Pakistan for over two decades in attempts to counter both the USSR and India. Although the mid-1970s were marked by Sino-Soviet attention in other areas, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan has once again made the subcontinent an area of likely struggle.

A certain degree of continuity in this relationship has endured since the early 1960s. The Indo-Soviet relationship was strengthened during the 1971 crisis and with a treaty in the same year. Sino-Pakistan cooperation has persisted during this period, despite domestic upheavals in the two states. At the same time, the nations of South Asia have not been passive objects in the Sino-Soviet rivalry. India, Pakistan and the smaller states have also taken the initiative in their relationships with China and the USSR as they seek to maximize their own interests. Among the results have been large-scale economic and military aid, as well as diplomatic and political support. In addition to these factors, the US has also affected relations in the region.

## China and South Asia

Long before the British withdrew from South Asia in 1947, they had established their strategic frontiers in the north and west. These included Tibet, western Xinjiang, the Pamirs, Afghanistan and Iran. Pakistan's legacy included the geopolitical frontiers in Iran, Afghanistan and western Xinjiang. India inherited the Himalayan and Northeastern frontiers, while Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim served as buffers. Jammu and Kashmir became a zone of conflict between Pakistan and India. In 1971, Bangladesh separated from Pakistan. At that time India intervened against Pakistan. A weakened Pakistan reduced the security threat from China, who could pressure India from the east and west. With the Sino-Soviet conflict, India and the USSR had parallel interests in containing China. Thus, the Soviet-Indian Treaty of 1971 sought to contain the PRC as well as to weaken Pakistan.

China could do little when East Pakistan separated, although India's moves were indirectly aimed at China. Nor could China move when Afghanistan was invaded. As the Soviets have taken over the Wakhan corridor which separates the USSR from Pakistan, China has not been able to do much. Nevertheless, China can apply pressure along the border areas from the Northeast Frontier Agency to Ladakh at numerous military points. China commands the heights, and India would have difficulty in defending against a  
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Chinese offensive.

The USSR has been expanding in the southern rim of the Asian continent, in Africa and throughout the Indian Ocean. Russian insecurity has turned into expansionism through much of modern history as they have pressed their frontiers outward when the opportunity presents itself. The last of the classic empires, the USSR has extended its influence to most parts of the world. Currently, there is great concern over what has been called the "arc of crisis", stretching from Turkey, through Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Iran, into Pakistan and even as far as Vietnam and the Philippines.

NATO blocks the Soviet path of expansion on one side, and China is a formidable antagonist on the other. In South Asia, only India plays the role of regional power with the potential to dominate some of the smaller states around its periphery. Much of the population in this "soft underbelly of Asia" is Muslim - a religion at odds with communist materialism. But this has not prevented the Soviets from gaining allies in its "drive for regional hegemony." The US has been moving into the region, and China lacks the capability for sustained operations there.

South Asia is important to the Kremlin in large part because of its role in Soviet-American-Chinese competition for regional and global influence. A major goal in Soviet policy is the enlistment of India's participation in the balance of power as a counterweight to China. To attain this objective, it is necessary to exclude Chinese influence from India and Bangladesh, and to

keep Chinese influence in Pakistan to a minimum. Thus the USSR has tried to maintain some links with Pakistan to avoid driving the country completely into the arms of the PRC.<sup>3</sup> This explains Soviet restraint over Pakistan providing a haven for Afghanistan refugees who often harbor and supply guerrilla groups.

The Indian Ocean has become a new focus of superpower rivalry, and involves practically all the littoral states, especially India. Before 1960, the Indian navy was the most neglected branch of the armed services. From 1963 to 1974, the navy's share in capital expenditure for the services rose from 7% to 49%. The Indian navy now has one aircraft carrier, 8 submarines, 2 cruisers, 25 frigates and 2 destroyers. India's naval fleet is divided into Western and Eastern fleets, and India's Defence Minister has referred to greater responsibilities in the ocean. India has to defend the 6,000 mile long coastline, its 200 miles of Exclusive Economic Zone and its island territories.

With a continued close alliance between India and the USSR, Pakistan in particular fears the naval buildup. India has also proceeded with indigenous development of submarines, and there are plans to develop a nuclear powered sub. India has also established a major naval complex on the Andaman Islands. This could conceivably extend Indian influence over the Straits of Malacca. In the Arabian Sea, Iran's naval aspirations were halted by the revolution there, and no other state in the region is in a position to compete with the Indian navy. India has also held

joint service amphibious exercises, which are to be held annually. Pakistan has only one feasible naval base at Karachi,<sup>4</sup> and a strong Indian navy could easily blockade the country.

Following the Sino-Indian border clashes in the autumn of 1962, India made a major change in foreign policy. Nehru appealed for massive assistance from the West. Britain, Canada and the US soon provided weapons and equipment. India also requested a bomber squadron from the British during the emergency. After the border clashes, India received Soviet arms including Mig fighters. In part as a result of India's awareness of "new realities", the nation adopted a strategic doctrine which included tacit acceptance of the US and USSR as protectors. India even welcomed the entry of units of the Seventh Fleet into the Indian Ocean for the first time.

After the border disturbances halted, India continued her defence preparations. After Nixon's visit to China in 1972, India interpreted US policy as supporting China to be a counterweight to the USSR in South Asia and Southeast Asia. With the dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971 and the convergence of India-Soviet interests, Pakistan feared that India was on a course of regional hegemony. India has opposed construction of US bases in the Indian Ocean and advocates a "Zone of Peace" in the Ocean. It is not likely that India will achieve the Zone by asking the major powers to withdraw their naval strength, while herself building a formidable navy.



In 1970, British Home Secretary Lord Home proposed to New Delhi that India, South Africa and Japan form a triangular security arrangement for the defence of the Indian Ocean. This overture became irrelevant when India signed the Friendship and Cooperation Treaty with the USSR. This, along with the creation of Bangladesh and US withdrawal from Vietnam, provided new opportunities for India to play a dominant role in the Indian Ocean.<sup>5</sup>

The region of South Asia has not developed the same degree of regional cooperation as in some other areas. The region has radically different conditions than ASEAN or the EEC, for example. These organizations have the character of perceiving a distinctive outside enemy and a common perception of security, while South Asia lacks these elements. It is difficult to conceive of the region as a strategic entity because of different perceptions of threat. The region is more or less defined by the high mountain ranges in the north and the Indian Ocean in the south.

Increasingly, superpower rivalries are intruding in the region, but India-Pakistan tensions and conflicts inhibit dialogue and integration, especially in matters of security. It is unlikely that any collective agreement under the leadership of the major powers can be achieved. On 20 March 1972, Brezhnev laid out the principles for an Asian Collective Security System. These were:

renunciation of force in relations between states; respect for sovereignty and the inviolability of borders; non-interference in internal affairs; and the broad development of economic and other cooperation on the basis of full equality and mutual advantage. Asian countries have been reluctant to join in any such arrangement which is seen as a thinly disguised anti-Chinese coalition. There is general preference for a balance of power with China serving as a counterweight to Soviet influence. Brezhnev's plan would broadly serve only Soviet goals in Asia if implemented. Under the System, China would have to agree to give up its claims over disputed border territory, as would Japan. It is suggested that the proposal does not entail a single multi-lateral pact, but rather a network of bilateral treaties. The Soviet-Indian Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation of 1971 has been discussed as a model. Although the System does not exist in formal organizational terms, Soviet security ties with India and Afghanistan help in the encirclement of China. Inclusion of Pakistan would be a major blow to China.<sup>6</sup>

#### Afghanistan

After detente with the USSR, US interest in Afghanistan declined. The Chinese, once the cultural revolution ended, started taking more interest in Afghanistan affairs. They extended modest loans, but maintained a peripheral role. China wanted and received, assurances that Afghanistan would not join the Soviet-sponsored Collective Security System against China.

Later, because of a dispute with Pakistan, Prime Minister Sardar Daoud visited Moscow in 1974 and declared support for the Asian Collective Security System. Subsequently, China, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan tried to lessen Afghanistan's dependence on the Soviet Union. Moscow consistently dominated Afghan trade, and the country was among the top six of Russia's trading partners in the Third World. Soviet military and cultural penetration also preceded the takeover in 1980.

Soviet forces in the Wakhan corridor have been reinforced, and it is reported that the territory will be annexed into the Soviet state. Tajik forces comprise the principal garrison. This move by the Soviets will close off Afghanistan to the Chinese, and it will also place Soviet firepower closer to the Chinese nuclear facility at Lop Nor. Incorporation of Wakhan will give the USSR a shared border with Pakistan. This rugged mountain region is the scene of road- and bridge-building activity, and tunnels are planned to facilitate the movement of men and supplies in the area.

Afghanistan is undergoing a major metamorphosis in political and economic orientation. A number of new roads have been built between the country and the USSR in the past several years. The Marxist system has replaced the republican interregnum of Daoud, and is increasingly under Soviet control. Outer Mongolia, or the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR) is the probable model for Afghanistan's future. The MPR remains a formally sovereign

identity, but politically it is dominated by Moscow. Afghanistan is expected to undergo major modification of its social and political system. Its economic system has been intimately linked to that of the USSR for a number of years already. This development is bound to exacerbate long-term relations between the USSR and China as the latter sees a formerly neutral state on its borders absorbed into the Soviet system.

#### Regional Relations

China is a greater threat to the USSR in South Asia than is the US. From the Chinese standpoint, South Asia is linked to its interests in Southeast Asia. For the USSR, the subcontinent dominates the Indian Ocean from Indonesia to east Africa, and also provides leverage to offset Western power in the Persian Gulf region. Soviet determination to deny the Chinese an exclusive sphere of influence in Indochina necessitates Chinese continued involvement in Pakistan to pressure the Soviet friend in the region - India. China's befriending of Bangladesh also serves this goal.

India's strategic weakness in the northwest means that there is more to fear from a close Soviet-Pakistan relationship than a Pakistan allied with China or the US. This was factor in forging the strong link between India and the USSR. The 1971 Treaty removed some ambiguity in Soviet policy towards the subcontinent. There had been unease in New Delhi in the second

half of the 1960s when Moscow became increasingly nonpartisan in the region. The Tashkent Conference of 1966 and a Soviet arms aid program to Pakistan helped to convince India that Pakistan was moving into the Soviet orbit. Pakistan's "Soviet option" could further impede India's dominant position in the region. Thus, India finds it prudent to refrain from excessive criticism of the USSR on the Afghan question.

India has been slow to accept the legitimacy of Pakistan, and might welcome the fragmentation of the country into three or four new states. India lacks the capacity to absorb these states, and several new, nonviable states might easily become clients of other major powers in the region. While Pakistan continues to pose a military threat to India, it still serves as a vital buffer between India and the USSR.

Three Indo-Pakistan wars have left a legacy of suspicion and anxiety in the subcontinent over whether a new war will break out. An Indian journalist, Ravi Rikhye, has written a fairly credible account of a fictional war in 1984.<sup>10</sup> The book addresses the question of why India, a country of eight times the population and five times the GNP of Pakistan, has been unable to defeat Pakistan once and for all. He cites the main reason as that Indian military organization and doctrine remain deeply rooted in British World War Two traditions.

The hypothetical war begins with the Indians staging a commando

raid on Pakistan's nuclear installations at Kahuta and Chashma, out of fear that Islamabad will have the bomb by 1987. The Indians are unable to win quickly, and the USSR invokes the 1971 Treaty with India to send war material to India by air and sea. The Soviets keep a low profile in Afghanistan, but Iranian Baluchis proclaim an independent state. This is the catalyst for escalation of foreign intervention. China moves forces to the Tibetan border with India, and various Islamic states proclaim full and unlimited support for Pakistan. The US also tilts towards Pakistan, airlifting Jordanian troops to Quetta and Kalat to fight the insurgency in Baluchistan.

The war ends inconclusively, and the lessons (and assumptions) of the scenario include the following: 1) The USSR will support India with weapons and equipment, but would not be willing to risk war to save India from defeat. 2) Arab countries, including Iran, would give Pakistan unlimited money and weapons. 3) The US and China have parallel interests in preserving the existence of a sovereign Pakistan.<sup>11</sup> Although a work of fiction, the book does indicate the volatility of the region and the potentials for conflict.

### India and China

The largest state of South Asia, India is the second most populous country in the world. The country is the tenth largest industrial power and has a standing army which is the third largest, an air force fifth and navy eighth largest in the non-communist world. India is something of a "mini-superpower,"

with considerable infrastructure in heavy industry and the armaments industry. The inability to defeat a far weaker Pakistan conclusively and the defeats by the Chinese in 1962 have given Indians a feeling of insecurity, despite its size and development.

Since 1962, China has tried to encourage other South Asian states to resist Indian dominance in the region. The PRC has given sizable military and economic aid to Pakistan, economic aid to Nepal and Sri Lanka, and took a hard-line position against national liberation in Bangladesh. Thus China provided the South Asian nations a possible alternative to Indian dominance in the region.

None of the major powers were successful in their efforts to control the South Asian region. American and Soviet diplomacy to discourage regional conflicts and to direct attention to the Chinese threat did not get very far. Nor were the Chinese effective in projecting themselves as an effective counterbalance against India. China's aid to Pakistan in 1965 and 1971 was appreciated but did not change the outcome of events. Nor has China been able to neutralize Indian economic and political pressure on Nepal. Kissinger's visit to China in 1971 signalled to the Chinese that the US wanted to end its military involvement in Vietnam, and perhaps more importantly, to wind down its protector role in Asia which had started with the Korean War. The US wanted to relax relations with the PRC as it became a country tired of its role on the Asian mainland. Nevertheless, the

Chinese still thought of the US as a counterweight to the USSR. India saw the new detente as a new source of danger, and a few weeks after Kissinger's secret visit to Beijing, India signed the treaty of peace and friendship with the USSR.<sup>12</sup>

In the late 1970s China moderated its policies towards the region. Beijing has eliminated the more blatant anti-Indian aspects of regional policy, and has normalized political and economic relations with New Delhi. India has also appreciated the Chinese caution in supporting Pakistan over Afghanistan developments. Both India and China have exercised restraint in support for dissident movements in each other's territory. Such rapprochement was not welcomed in Moscow. China is likely to become more friendly towards India in an effort to woo New Delhi away from Moscow. However, India recognition of Vietnam-backed Kampuchea has paralleled Soviet policy.

India became conscious of its security problems in the north and northeastern frontiers soon after the communist revolution in China, with the absorption of Tibet and the Chinese military concentration in the aftermath of the 1956-59 Tibetan rebellion. The border dispute in 1959 and the border war of 1962 left anxieties about Chinese intentions in the region which were heightened by subsequent collusion between Beijing and Islamabad.

India's northeastern frontier consists of the mountain areas to the east of Bhutan that separate Assam from Tibet and Burma. It



is a region inhabited by ethnic communities different from the majority of Indians. The mountain range north of Assam was one of the two areas invaded by the Chinese in 1962, and represented a sector where Indian military capacities were most limited. The region still remains vulnerable because of logistical difficulties for India. China had tried to encourage dissidence among the numerous tribal groups, but did not meet with much success.

The Chinese have had greater success on the Indo-Burmese border, where the Nagas and Mizos have been in open rebellion against New Delhi's authority. China provided training and weapons to the insurgents, but the program was hampered by the 1971 war in Bangladesh when the Indian army overran the Chinese-operated guerrilla training camps. There were efforts to revive these operations, but they were abandoned in the late 1970s as China sought accommodation with the Indian government.

There have not been any border clashes since 1968 in the northeast, and a de facto border settlement seems to have been reached. The Chinese have offered a compromise settlement to India - Beijing will accept the MacMahon line as the basis for India's claims as the boundary in the eastern sector in return for Indian recognition of Chinese claims to the Aksai Chin area on the Tibet-Ladakh border.

After the border war with China in 1962, India's attitude

towards defence changed. The defence plan of 1964-69 identified the following goals: a well-equipped army of 825,000 men, with a constant review of this strength; a 45-squadron modern combat air force, replacement of old aircraft as well as improvement of air defence and communication facilities; replacement of superannuated naval ships, improvement of the road network on the border; and strengthening the country's domestic defence production and organization.

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The USSR has achieved its influential position in South Asia in large part by stressing its relations with India and Afghanistan. Moscow has backed its friend with economic aid, trade and diplomatic support. India realizes it cannot take Soviet support for granted, and so remains sensitive to Soviet concerns. The USSR remains the major supplier of arms to the continent, with commitments of nearly US\$5 billion in the period since the 1950s. (Accurate figures concerning Chinese military assistance to Pakistan are not available, and may not exceed US\$500 million.)

Soviet assistance has enhanced India's military strength and international status, and has allowed the country to maintain a firm position in its disputes with China and Pakistan. Moscow and Beijing have accepted recent moves by India and Pakistan to move from confrontation to accommodation.

Soviet activities in the subcontinent would probably have taken place even if there had not been a Sino-Soviet dispute. Support

for India might have been smaller if the goal was only to check the US. Chinese support for Pakistan would probably be less if there were no Sino-Soviet or Sino-Indian disputes. With the existence of the Sino-Soviet dispute, it becomes more difficult<sup>14</sup> for China and India to reach a settlement.

India remains fearful of a rearmed Pakistan backed by China and the US, and is uncomfortable with its own dependence on the USSR for arms and diplomatic support. The Soviets have tried to persuade New Delhi that the move into Afghanistan is only temporary and poses no threat to India. In early 1980 Moscow agreed to provide India with US\$1.6 billion in arms on rather favorable terms. India has called for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, but also suggests that the USSR has legitimate security interests there. India's ambivalent policy reflects the difficulty of balancing concern over security against China and Pakistan, with fears of Soviet military expansion.<sup>15</sup>

#### China and Pakistan

When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan on 25 December 1979, President Zia of Pakistan was asked which option his country now favored - keeping a distance from both super-powers or moving

closer to the US. He replied that he was in favor of a third option - the close relationship with China, which "had given us tremendous moral and material strength."<sup>16</sup>

This close relationship has continued since the early 1960s out of mutual interests. Earlier, in the 1950s, both countries found themselves aligned with opposite power blocs that had come into existence in the cold war. This was exacerbated by the informal PRC-India alliance of the mid-fifties and Pakistan's membership in CENTO and SEATO. Pakistan recognized China on 4 January 1950, and full diplomatic relations were established in April 1951. During the Korean War, Pakistan abstained from resolutions calling China an aggressor and placing an embargo on trade.

Sino-Pakistan relations began to improve in 1955 when Zhou Enlai and Pakistan's Prime Minister Bogra met at the Bandung Conference. Relations after Bandung were marked by increasing contacts between the two countries. Pakistan feared losing the economic and military support received from the US, and so restrained diplomatic wooing of China. The Kennedy administration underestimated the significance of Pakistan and favored closer ties with India. Pakistan was the single largest recipient of US arms in the 1950s, but it could not match Indian military power which was growing in part because of US aid that enabled the country to buy arms from Britain and France. In Pakistan the alliance with the West was losing its appeal.

Relations between China and the USSR were also cooling rapidly, and Soviet subversive activities in Xinjiang further undermined the alliance. China's relations with India were also deteriorating. India opposed the Chinese road in the Aksai Chin area, which linked western Xinjiang and western Tibet. India's warm reception for the fleeing Dalai Lama angered the Chinese.

In the early 1960s both Pakistan and China were disillusioned with their respective allies and friends, and were looking for opportunities to diversify contacts. Geopolitics also played a role, as China sought to maintain the security of its southwestern border areas. Because of South Asia's close proximity to Tibet and Xinjiang, China's control of these regions could be weakened and undermined from the subcontinent. With worsening relations with India, however, the strategy of depending on close relations with New Delhi became futile. India not only became hostile, but also provided a platform from which to threaten China's security. This situation could mean China fighting a three front war with three major powers simultaneously.

The Sino-Pakistan border agreement, signed on 3 March 1963, was a major breakthrough in their relations. It demarcated a 200-mile frontier starting at the meeting point of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Xinjiang, and running southeasterly to the Karakoram Pass. China ceded 750 sq. miles of territory in its possession, while Pakistan gave up nothing. In addition, China gave de facto

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recognition to Pakistan's claims to Kashmir. There was also exploration of a secret Sino-Pakistan military agreement, but there is no evidence that this was concluded.

Pakistan's leaders realized that it was not in their nation's interests to become over-committed to any one power, especially since the policies of the major powers were continually changing. China tolerated Pakistan's links with the US, possibly because she needed an almost non-aligned Pakistan as an advance unit for the extension of Chinese influence in the Afro-Asian, especially the Muslim, countries. If Pakistan tilted too closely towards Beijing, it could stimulate the US and USSR to move even more closely towards India.

When hostilities broke out between India and Pakistan in September 1965, the US proclaimed an arms embargo on both countries. China did not remain neutral as did the USSR, and openly supported Pakistan and condemned Indian aggression. Chinese forces on the Sino-Indian border were placed on alert, and Beijing sent an ultimatum to India. The situation was becoming volatile, and on 20 September 1965, the UN Security Council passed a resolution which demanded a ceasefire. China had proven to be a reliable ally, but Pakistan avoided the impression of total reliance on China by maintaining good relations with the US and USSR. The Tashkent Agreement of January 1966 enhanced Soviet prestige in the Afro-Asian countries, much to the displeasure of the Chinese.

Just prior to the Liu Shaoqi and Chen Yi state visits to Pakistan in March 1966, President Ayub stated that his nation's foreign policy was to have close ties with China and to develop friendly relations with the US and the USSR. During the Cultural Revolution in China, Pakistan was one of the few Third World countries with whom some degree of diplomatic intercourse continued, and it was virtually the only Asian country not attacked by Maoists. The leaders in Beijing wanted to preserve the Pakistan connection as a counterweight in a region where Indian and Soviet hostility against China prevailed. In 1968, Pakistan and the USSR concluded an arms deal which was not attacked by China. Pakistan rejected Brezhnev's Collective Security System in Asia, stating the belief that China does not pose a threat to any nation.

The Sino-Pakistan relationship was a major factor in the US decision to seek normalization with China through Islamabad. From August 1969, Yahya Khan played the role of secret intermediary between Beijing and Washington. This came to an end when Kissinger's secret visit to Beijing via Islamabad was made public in July 1971. The same year was a crucial one for Pakistan. Yahya tried to solve the East Pakistan question militarily. India was backing the secessionist movement, but China could not repeat the same level of support for Pakistan as it had given in 1965. India was much stronger in the military field, and was now linked by treaty with the USSR. Moscow had deployed three additional

divisions on the Sino-Soviet border after the treaty was signed.

When President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto visited Beijing in November 1971, the Chinese leaders refused to promise active support if another Indo-Pakistan war broke out. China denounced India and the USSR when hostilities broke out, and equated Bangladesh with the Manchukuo puppet government of the 1930s. Pakistani forces surrendered on 16 December 1971, despite Chinese verbal and moral support. China acquiesced in the dismemberment of Pakistan. The limitations of the Sino-Pakistan relationship were obvious.

With the dismemberment of Pakistan, India became the dominant and undisputed power in the South Asian region. Pakistan had to adjust to the new strategic situation. Soon after his trip to Muslim and African nations, Bhutto visited Beijing in February 1972. The Chinese refused Bhutto's request for a military pact, but did promise to help to meet the country's defence needs.

China supported Pakistan for at least four reasons. First, it wanted to maintain its reputation for standing by friends in times of need to win political support from Third World countries. Second, West Pakistan was important in China's calculations of maintaining a strategic counterweight to India. Western Pakistan shared a common border with China, and contained the bulk of Pakistan's armed forces. After the secession of Bangladesh, Pakistan still remained the main source of leverage over India. Third, the PRC saw excessive Soviet influence in the



South Asian region. In view of India's emergence as the cornerstone of Soviet policy in the region and its special relationship with Bangladesh, the only option available to China for the containment of Soviet influence was that of Pakistan. Finally, Pakistan played an indispensable role as bridge between China and the Middle East.

After the oil embargo of 1973, the US diverted attention from the subcontinent to the Arabian peninsula and Persian Gulf. The result was to make the region more open to Soviet and Chinese influence. China adopted a cautious attitude for fear of obstructing Sino-Indian normalization and driving India further towards the USSR. The pro-Soviet coup in Afghanistan (April 1978) prompted China to reinforce relations with Pakistan. In June, Vice Premier Geng Biao visited Pakistan to inaugurate the opening of the Karakoram Highway linking Pakistan and Xinjiang.

The US arms embargo on India and Pakistan in 1965 prompted Pakistan to turn to China for military assistance. Without replenishment, Pakistan would have become even more vulnerable to India. In the 1965-66 period, China provided 4 MiG-15s, 4 Il-28s, 40 MiG-19s, and around 80 tanks, having a value of approximately \$23,100,000 (1968 US dollars). There was no transfer of arms during the Cultural Revolution. Aid resumed in 1970-71, with 110 T-59 tanks, 50 MiG-19s and 3 motor gunboats. China also helped set up an ordnance factory and aided Pakistan in developing facilities and skills to service and overhaul MiG aircraft

engines in the country.

In 1965, China provided 21% of the total value of arms to Pakistan, and this increased to 43% in the following year. By 1971, it had increased to nearly 83%. Without Chinese military assistance, Pakistan would have virtually been without an air force because the US had stopped shipping essential spare parts in 1965. Chinese weapons shipped to Pakistan have been of good quality, although not of the most up-to-date technology. <sup>19</sup> The Chinese military aid to Pakistan probably motivated principal arms suppliers, including the US and USSR, to end the embargo to limit Chinese influence in the region.

After the 1971 crisis, the US was not considered a reliable source of arms because of Congressional reluctance to support Pakistan. The Soviet treaty with India ruled out Moscow as an arms supplier, and so China was again sought as the source to replenish and improve the Pakistani armed forces. China declined to sign a defence pact with Pakistan, but did agree to Bhutto's request for military assistance. Since 1971, Pakistan has received F-6s, motor gunboats, tanks, patrol craft, fast attack hydrofoil torpedo boats and, according to unconfirmed reports, SAM-6 missiles. There has also been an increase in shipments of arms and ammunition across the Karakoram Highway, which are reportedly transferred to Afghan guerrillas based in Pakistan.

There was a protocol on collaboration in defence production

signed in 1974. Pakistan refrains from relying on only one source of arms supplies, but the PRC has been the most reliable. The Chinese cannot afford to send large quantities of weapons, especially since their own defence requirements are far from being met. Moreover, there is concern in China that major infusions of military hardware into Pakistan would prompt the Soviets to increase their military aid to India. This would ultimately be against China's own strategic interests.

China agreed to play a limited role in Pakistan's nuclear program. In 1976, there was an agreement for China to supply nuclear technology. Pakistan planned to explode a nuclear device at the end of 1977, but Zia seized power in mid-year and the Chinese ended their cooperation. In 1981, there were discussions about the possibility of testing a Pakistani bomb in China to make detection more difficult, and to avoid straining relations with the US. Since 1982, China has reportedly provided Pakistan with information on the design of nuclear weapons by confirming that the design would work. However, information on this question is difficult to verify.<sup>20</sup>

The first trade agreement between China and Pakistan was signed on 4 January 1963. China agreed to buy cotton textiles, raw jute, raw cotton, leather and sports goods, surgical instruments, chrome ore and newsprint, and to sell heavy machinery, metal, steel products, coal, cement, machinery, chemicals, raw materials and cereals. With China's increased production of domestic

cotton, imports from Pakistan decreased, and the balance of payment shifted to China's favor after three years in Pakistan's favor.

China has granted several interest-free loans to Pakistan for commodities and project development. During the 1960s, neither was a major trading partner. A new trade agreement was signed in June 1972. Pakistan has had a continuing adverse balance of trade with China. No grants have been provided Pakistan since that time, although China has advanced additional loans. Development loans have been used for projects including ore exploration, small steel mills, fertilizer plants and glass, cement and textile factories. China's main contribution has been in the area of industrial development, although the disbursement has been slow.

The Karakoram Highway: The completion of the Karakoram Highway in 1978 had required more than ten years of Pakistani and Chinese collaboration. Chinese workers and equipment were brought in via Karachi to assist in the effort. The road has opened up the remote areas of Gilgit and Hunza in northern Pakistan, and significantly reduced transport costs between the previously isolated areas and the populous plains.<sup>21</sup> More significantly, this link between China's extreme west and northern Pakistan can alter the strategic configuration of the subcontinent. The road is subject to interruption by landslides and heavy snow, but these problems can be reduced with additional engineering and

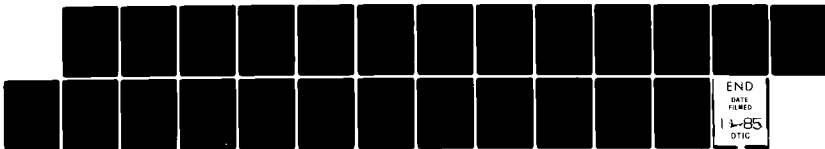
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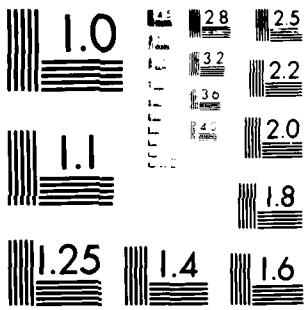
THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA RELATIONS IN ASIA: THE  
STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS(U) OPERATIONAL RESEARCH AND  
ANALYSIS ESTABLISHMENT OTTAWA (ONTAR. R E BEDESKI  
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construction.

Continued close relations between Pakistan and China mean that the road can become a channel of communication between China and the Middle East. It also opens up the Indian Ocean to the PRC by a second route. A direct air link exists between Pakistan and Chinese cities and the road further promote this connection. While the mountain barrier remains formidable, the Karakoram Highway has proven that land communication over it is feasible. As noted earlier, Chinese weapons and ammunition have been shipped via the road.

Presumably the road can be widened, and perhaps a railway and pipeline might even be constructed in the next century. While there has been no consideration of such projects so far, this author considers it might be in the interests of the two countries to examine their feasibility. Japan would be one nation with much to gain if an oil pipeline was constructed between Karachi via Xinjiang and eastern China, for example. Great distances would be saved, and the pressures for Japan to build a navy to defend its oil lifelines would be reduced. As long as Sino-Soviet relations remain tense, however, such a pipeline would be vulnerable. Another impediment, aside from technical considerations, is that India considers the present Karakoram Highway to be in disputed Kashmir territory. Finally, with the Soviets in control of the Wakhan region, any land communications are liable to interdiction.

### The Himalayan states

India thought it necessary to play an active role in the Himalayan states after the loss of Tibet as a buffer in 1951. Nehru's policy of seeking a close working relationship with China ruled out military intervention in support of Tibetan autonomy, nor did India have the military capability for such an adventure. The Indian Prime Minister sought accomodation with the PRC in which India recognized Chinese sovereignty over Tibet in return for Beijing's acceptance of India's dominance south of the Himalayas.

22

Nepal: Relations between Nepal and China were established in 1955. A boundary agreement was concluded in 1961. The relationship has been affected by Nepal's position between two of the most populous countries in the world. Sino-Indian hostility has required that Nepal pursue a cautious policy. Since India absorbed Sikkim, there has been a cooling of relations as Nepal suspects that its own sovereignty could be restricted in the future.

India was formerly the only trade outlet for Nepal. After establishment of relations with China, Nepal has been able to diversify its commercial relations and lessen dependence on India. Nepal occupies a strategic position south of Tibet, so



construction of the Kathmandu-Kodari road has been of great importance to both sides. China can now transport rice and other goods through Nepal to once inaccessible areas of Tibet.

Nepal has reportedly stopped giving aid to the Khampa rebels in eastern Tibet, and China has reciprocated by increasing economic aid to Nepal. China is the country's fourth largest source of foreign aid and has financed construction of a 250 mile road between Pokhar and Sukhet.

In 1982, King Birendra paid his sixth visit to China, and his second to Tibet. Nepal is the only country permitted to have a Consular Office in Tibet. China has supported Nepal's 1975 proposal to make Nepal a zone of peace.<sup>23</sup> Chinese visitors to Nepal have included Hua Guofeng, Deng Xiaoping and Zhao Ziyang. China has helped in constructing shoe, brick and tile factories, but most aid has been directed to road building and power generation facilities.

In 1956, Nepal adopted the principle of "equal friendship" with India and China as the basic tenet of foreign policy. This was to provide the framework for the neutralization of Nepal and implied rejection of a special relationship between Nepal and India. As Sino-Indian relations deteriorated over the 2500 mile border, Nepal became concerned over involvement in the Indian security system. The King negotiated limited supplies of British and American military equipment in 1963. Later, Nepal requested,

and India conceded, that the Indian military mission and the Indian-manned security posts on Nepal's border with China be withdrawn.

The country needs China as a counterbalance against India if neutrality were to become reality, but the Chinese were not willing to make a firm commitment to Nepal's security. In recent years, China has encouraged Nepal to come to terms with India, and no longer urges the kingdom to play a more independent role in the Himalayas.

Bhutan: Bhutan traditionally followed an isolationist policy, but the Chinese invasion of Tibet and consolidation of military power there changed Bhutan's perception of the environment. China constructed a road which linked Lhasa with India's northeast frontier. This ran parallel to the Tibetan-Bhutanese border. Bhutan could not rule out Chinese military intervention, and so aligned with India. The Indian army has constructed a road network connecting the major areas of the country to India. Most economic development programs are financed through Indian aid.

Sikkim: Since 1949, India was the de facto ruling power over the Himalayan kingdom of Sikkim. India allowed the country a limited degree of autonomy until 1975, when it was absorbed into the Indian Union. Sikkim plays a vital role in India's northern border security. It is the shortest and easiest route between Tibet and the plains of India. It is also the defence line for

the narrow access passage to northeastern India.

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  19. Loc. cit.
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## Chapter 7

### CONCLUSIONS

#### External and Domestic Factors in PRC Strategy

China's strategic relations with her Asian neighbours have been closely linked to involvement with the two superpowers, and to political and other developments within China. The PRC has made some important strides in building a modern economic sector in the recent past, but we must also recognize that the country's sphere of activity will remain inhibited by a number of factors:

External: 1) The USSR remains the greatest obstacle to Chinese leadership and pre-eminence in Asia. Facing strong Soviet military forces on the Sino-Soviet border and in Afghanistan, the Chinese must devote considerable attention to security in the north and west. Soviet ties with India and Vietnam further restrict Chinese influence in the region.

2) Local nationalism further prevents the Chinese from exerting influence. Chinese sponsorship of anti-government guerrilla movements in earlier years has created a strong suspicion among nations of Southeast Asia. Beijing's support for Overseas Chinese

has reinforced antagonism against ethnic Chinese.

3) The US defence perimeter is still intact in East Asia, although the ASEAN region receives less emphasis than a decade ago in US security planning. The US forces in Japan and the ROK are likely to remain in order to maintain the security of the region. The USSR remains the explicit threat for the next few years, but a shift back to the radicalism of Maoist days (not likely but nevertheless possible) could revive the threat of an expansionist China. The maintenance of relations with Taiwan is therefore an important part of US strategy in East Asia. If bases in the Philippines become untenable, Taiwan would provide an alternative for operations in Southeast Asia.

These factors bracket China into a condition of encirclement today. Certain opportunities have appeared which allow the Chinese to prevent the completion of this encirclement. During the 1960's, Albania was the only country to align with the PRC. Today, as China has moderated its foreign policy, alliances as strong as the earlier Sino-Soviet combination do not seem imminent. Pakistan has provided an opportunity for Chinese penetration into the Middle East and to provide for some leverage in the subcontinent. Burma is a small, non-aligned nation which also faces considerable Chinese pressures. Although North Korea presently tilts slightly towards Beijing, Pyongyang continues to depend on the USSR for economic and military assistance, and cannot afford to alienate Moscow.

China will remain vulnerable to the USSR's overwhelming military might, and may have little choice but to respond to Soviet moves in the short run. Time may be on China's side. The USSR cannot keep up support of military allies forever without stagnating or undermining the domestic economy. For the next several years, Beijing may concentrate on normalizing relations with Moscow in order to maintain a stable environment for domestic modernization.

Domestic Factors: 1) The current program of the four modernizations seeks to overcome the backwardness of the the Chinese economy, and to make up for past stagnation. The present program has precedents in the early 1960s, when the moderate faction under Liu Shaoqi attempted to ameliorate the disasters of the Great Leap Forward. Mao and his followers made a comeback, and launched the Cultural Revolution. There is no guarantee that there will not be a radical counterattack in the future, although the absence of Mao or his appointed successors on the political scene makes it less probable than before.

The present program combines the pragmatism of the reconstruction efforts of the early 1960s with certain aspects of the mass mobilization movements of the Maoist period. The control system over the population has been modified, but not dismantled. The party dictatorship remains in place. In the beginning of the post-Mao era, great expectations prevailed, but

faulty planning and bureaucratic inertia prevented attainment of the goals.

2) On the political scene, it would be premature to consider the present program of reforms and modernization as the final word. Deng Xiaoping has installed his own men in key positions, and the party is currently undergoing a re-registration of membership. When this is completed, opponents of the present line will presumably be excluded from positions of power.

Nevertheless, the record of Chinese stability has not been encouraging. The PLA is considered to be a bastion of sympathy for the Maoist line, and has seen its prestige decline since the death of Mao. The numerous mass campaigns and zigzags in communist policy line of the first third of a century in power may be moderated now that the radicals have been ousted, but it would be erroneous to underestimate the volatility of Chinese politics. Future shifts in party line which could slow or halt present progress in modernization cannot be ruled out.

3) Demographic problems will continue to act as a brake on Chinese foreign adventures and domestic modernization. Present official policy is that each family can have only one child. There are exceptions for small minority groups. According to early analysis of the 1982 census, one-third of the present population is younger than 15 years of age.

The population problem is exacerbated by the decline in arable



land since 1949. Expansion of housing, industry and transportation has reduced the amount of land available for cultivation. Food production has barely kept pace with population increases, and the country continues to import grains. Emigration of surplus population in large numbers to Southeast Asia or other regions of the world is no longer possible. With the huge population, which is largely engaged in agriculture, much of the leadership's attention will focus on the basic needs of food and employment. Should the government and party fail, the country could erupt into rebellions and civil wars. The fallout to nearby and more distant countries might be a flood of refugees unmatched in history. At the very least major dislocations in the delicate equilibrium of modern China are probable.

4) China still maintains a party dictatorship and huge bureaucracy to control the population and to carry out central planning. The more extreme forms of repression have been modified, but the Maoist-Stalinist state remains intact. As the country tries to modernize and create a better living standard, the inertia of the official apparatus will inhibit the spontaneous and enterprising factors in society and economy from developing alongside the state sectors.<sup>2</sup>

#### Strategic Implications for Asia

Neither the Chinese nor their Asian neighbours expect the PRC

to become a regional superpower in the next decade. The program of four modernizations requires sustained leadership, political consensus at home and international tranquility. To many observers, the present program seems to have much in common with ambitious programs of modernization in the past. The opening to the West and Japan is a major innovation which will accelerate economic growth, but it has created simultaneous counter-reactions among conservatives in the party, who do not want the "corrupting influence of the bourgeois cultures."

The Sino-Soviet rivalry will continue to limit Chinese influence in neighbouring states. It will also stimulate Chinese activity in diplomacy, trade and military affairs to counter the Soviets. For the nations in South and Southeast Asia, the rivalry provides a major inhibition to Chinese expansion and is therefore not unwelcomed. The North Koreans under Kim Il-song have balanced Soviet and Chinese pressures in a way to maintain their independence, instead of succumbing to the traditional policy of "sadae", or "serving the great" (i.e. China).

The Soviet factor has been much less helpful to the Japanese, who have been forced to choose between one or other of the communist giants. By signing the 1978 Treaty of Peace and Friendship with China Japan obtained privileged access to the China market, but at the cost of alienating relations with the USSR. Thus the Soviet factor looms largest in the Asian region. The role of the US has been more restricted, with most attention

given to Japan and South Korea in the northeast and the Persian Gulf in the southwestern part of Asia.

Would China seek to dominate the Asian continent if the Soviet counterbalance did not exist? Behavior of the 1950s and later indicates that the Chinese would certainly seek to influence surrounding states, using local communist parties and resident Overseas Chinese and even direct military confrontation. In future years, we can expect Chinese strategy to be more sophisticated. As noted in earlier chapters, China's strategic goals vary within the five zones of Chinese Asia, as do the methods and techniques.

The Chinese have not been very successful in exercising decisive influence over the continent and have even set in motion policies directly negating Chinese interests - such as the pro-Soviet government in Hanoi. To use the traditional Chinese cosmology as an analogy, the Maoist phase of Chinese strategy in Asia was one of "Yang" - the positive principle of light and warmth. Yang is male and aggressive. Perhaps the last expression of phase was the Chinese attack into Vietnam, where the futility of military solutions to external problems was demonstrated.

Since 1979, the second principle of "Yin" has dominated Chinese strategy. This is the principle of shade, cold, dark and negative. As the female force, it implies nurturing and holding

back, in contrast to the outward dynamism of Yang. As in Chinese cosmology, the two phases are merely aspects of the same entity. One does not replace the other, but is ascendant for a period of time. In historical terms, the Chinese are in a phase of reconstruction until such time as the nation will turn outward again.

Asian countries can expect the PRC to remain non-expansionist and non-threatening as long as the current program of modernization dominates domestic policy. The Chinese will not dismantle their overseas infrastructures of support, but it is not likely that they will be used as major instruments of policy during the current phase of strategy. Beijing will pursue a policy of diplomatic harmony with as large a number of countries as possible and generally present a face of reasonableness. Through trade and commercial intercourse, the Chinese will seek to supplement internal efforts at modernization. Through diplomacy Beijing can be expected to maintain current friends, to isolate adversaries and to build bridges with the USSR.

In the long run, that is, by the end of this century, China may be prepared to return to a more positive and aggressive strategy. This may occur earlier or later, depending on leadership changes and how patient rival factions remain.

China occupies the central position in the Asian continent. Its vital interests in all directions makes it the decisive

nation in the continent because of geopolitics, population and staying power. The Japanese, Americans and Soviets have all affected the course of Chinese development and of Asia in general. But if Chinese modernization succeeds and is followed by outward expansion (not necessarily territorial), then China will exercise a decisive influence on the continent.

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13. ABSTRACT This report examines the strategic implications of the People's Republic of China's relations with her Asian neighbours. The primary hypothesis is that Sino-Soviet relations are the major determinant in these relations, with less influence played by the United States. Domestic factors in Chinese political and economic development are analyzed. China's strategic relations with Northeast, Southeast, South and Central Asia are reviewed in relation to the dynamics of each region and interests of the individual states, and in light of Sino-Soviet relations.		

## KEY WORDS

Strategic implications  
 Sino-Soviet relations  
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