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**MAO'S CHINA AND  
THE COLD WAR**



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### The Role of Edgar Snow

Mao began to refocus his attention on the Americans after he had temporarily stalled what he called “a serious struggle within the Central Committee” at the Lushan conference.<sup>70</sup> Like Nixon, Mao was not happy with the “formalistic” nature of the Warsaw channel. In contrast to the U.S. president, though, the Chinese chairman probably was ambivalent about entering direct secret contacts with Washington by receiving a high-level American envoy in Beijing. Because of some complicated concerns—to be discussed below—Mao, though willing to establish secret connections with Washington, did not want to follow the pace set by and communicate under terms defined by Washington.

In October and November 1970, Beijing received more overtures from Washington through Pakistan and Romania indicating that Nixon remained willing to dispatch a high-ranking representative to China.<sup>71</sup> Beijing’s leaders decided to respond positively to these messages. On 14 November, Zhou Enlai told President Yahya Khan, who was in China for a state visit, that “if the American side indeed has the intention to solve the Taiwan issue,” Beijing would welcome the U.S. president’s “representative to Beijing for discussions.” The premier also emphasized that this was the first time Beijing’s response “has come from a Head, through a Head, to a Head.”<sup>72</sup> One week later, in a meeting with Romanian vice premier Gheorghe Radulescu, Zhou asked China’s “friends in Bucharest” to convey to Washington that the Chinese government would welcome Nixon’s representative, or even Nixon himself, to Beijing to discuss “solving the Taiwan issue” and improving Sino-American relations.<sup>73</sup> Interestingly, Zhou also advised the Pakistanis and Romanians to hold the message for a while before delivering it to Washington. As a result, the Pakistanis did not convey the message to Washington until 9 December, and the Romanians, even later, not until 11 January 1971. Kissinger reported in his memoirs that he had found such delay puzzling.<sup>74</sup> The likely reason for the delay was that Mao, for the purpose of legitimizing the coming changes in Sino-American relations, was planning to make an initiative in his own way, and his vision had fallen on the American writer Edgar Snow.

Snow had been a friend of Mao and the Chinese Communists since the mid-1930s, when he visited the Chinese Communist base areas in northern Shaanxi province and interviewed Mao and many other CCP leaders. His highly acclaimed book, *Red Star over China*, published in 1938, helped create a positive image of the Chinese Communist revolution both within and outside China. After the PRC’s establishment, Snow visited China in 1960 and 1965 and continued to write about the “great achievements” of Mao’s “long revolution.”



*Mao Zedong and Edgar Snow (far left) looking down at Tiananmen, 1 October 1970.  
Between Mao and Snow is Chinese interpreter Ji Chaozhu. Xinhua News Agency.*

During the Cultural Revolution years, Snow attempted several times to revisit China, but he was unable to get a Chinese visa. The situation suddenly changed in August 1970. Snow, then living in Switzerland, received several urgent calls from Huang Zhen, the Chinese ambassador to France who was also one of the American writer's old friends. When Snow arrived at the Chinese embassy in Paris, he was urged by Huang to reapply for visiting China. The Chinese ambassador, in response to the American writer's complaint that Beijing had ignored him in previous years, told him that the invitation "comes from the top," promising that "he will be treated as a distinguished guest by Chairman Mao himself."<sup>76</sup>

On 1 October 1970, when Snow and his wife were invited to review the annual National Day celebration parade at the top of the Gate of Heavenly Peace, they were escorted by Zhou Enlai to meet Mao and stand by the chairman's side. A picture of Snow and Mao together was later printed on the front page of major Chinese newspapers.<sup>77</sup> Mao was sending a message, which he intended not only for the Americans but also for people all over China. Kissinger mentioned in his memoirs that Washington completely ignored this signal because the Chinese "overestimated our subtlety."<sup>78</sup> But, from Mao's perspective, it

was more crucial for the Chinese people to notice it. For over two decades, the United States had been thoroughly demonized in the minds of Chinese people by the CCP's widespread anti-American propaganda campaigns and indoctrination efforts. Now, since the chairman was planning to pursue a new relationship with the United States, he would need to create a new American image in the Chinese people's minds. A subtle signal such as this one would serve to gradually prepare the Chinese people psychologically for big changes in Sino-American relations.<sup>79</sup>

Mao obviously did not invite Snow to Beijing merely to take a publishable photo, however. He also planned to use Snow in pursuit of larger goals. After several delays, the chairman received Snow on 18 December for a lengthy interview.<sup>80</sup> As far as the prospect of Sino-American relations was concerned, Mao's most noteworthy statement during the interview was that he was willing to receive Nixon in Beijing. The chairman told Snow that Beijing was considering allowing Americans of all political persuasions—Left, Right, and Center—to come to China. He particularly emphasized that he would like to welcome Nixon in Beijing because the U.S. president was the person with whom he could “discuss and solve the problems between China and the United States.” The chairman made it clear that he “would be happy to meet Nixon, either as president or as a tourist.”<sup>81</sup> After the interview, Snow received a copy of the interview transcribed by the Chinese interpreter Tang Wensheng (Nancy Tang) but was advised not to publish it “at the moment.” Snow did not publish the interview “with the use of direct quotation” until April 1971.<sup>82</sup> According to Nixon, however, Washington “learned of Mao's statement [on welcoming Nixon to Beijing] within days after he made it.”<sup>83</sup>

Kissinger regarded Mao's talks with Snow as another signal to Washington and speculated that the main reason that Beijing provided Snow with a verbatim transcript of the interview without permitting him to publish it right away was because the Chinese leaders wanted to heighten the signal's authenticity when it reached Washington.<sup>84</sup> In actuality, Mao's calculations were again related to his domestic concerns.<sup>85</sup> The chairman's five-hour interview with Snow covered a wide range of issues. In addition to Sino-American relations, he particularly focused on the Cultural Revolution. As the chairman had done on many other occasions, he argued compellingly that the Cultural Revolution was absolutely necessary because it exposed the “bad elements” by creating chaos “all under the heaven.” But he also mentioned that he did not favor two tendencies prevailing during the Cultural Revolution: one was “not telling the truth,” and the other was “the maltreatment of captives” in an “all-round civil war.” This rare confession from the chairman on the fad-

ing status of the Cultural Revolution was also linked to his ongoing political struggle with Lin Biao. Implicitly targeting his designated “heir and successor” and the “Cultural Revolution star,” the chairman claimed that it was too much and ridiculous for him to be called the “Great Teacher, Great Leader, Great Supreme Commander, and Great Helmsman” and that “one day every title will be eliminated except for the title ‘Teacher.’”<sup>86</sup> Throughout the interview, Mao jumped freely between domestic and international topics, implying that improving relations with the United States would have to be closely interwoven with major changes in China’s political and social life.<sup>87</sup> Indeed, when Mao was being interviewed by Snow, both the Americans and the Chinese people must have been his designated audience. Ironically, it appears that although he consciously defended the Cultural Revolution as much as he could, on a subconscious level he was virtually saying farewell to this most radical phase of his continuous revolution.

The transcript of Mao’s interview with Snow was another masterpiece from the chairman designed to influence the minds of the Chinese masses. The content of this message, though, was different from that of any of the chairman’s previous ones in that, rather than trying to encourage the people to enter a revolutionary movement, it attempted to convince them of the need to end an existing one. The chairman knew that such messages had to be delivered to the party and the nation in calculated ways. Indeed, Snow was the chairman’s carefully picked agent—by having a well-known American sympathizer of the Chinese Communist revolution deliver the message, the chairman, as he had done so many times in his long political career, was staging an unconventional political drama, one that he hoped would justify the rapprochement with the Americans and convince the Chinese masses that his revolution was still alive. As does any drama, this one needed a climactic episode to produce its maximum effect. This episode was something Mao much needed but could not plan well in advance, although he must have believed that it would emerge during the course of events. Indeed, in a few months, that dramatic event took place, and it was what would be recorded in history as the “Ping-Pong diplomacy.”

### **The Ping-Pong Diplomacy**

In the first several months of 1971, the exchanges between Beijing and Washington turned quiet. Although both sides were willing to upgrade the discussions between them to higher levels, neither the Chinese nor American leaders seemed to know exactly how to take the next step. One major obstacle was determining the issues that should be on the discussion agenda. The differences between Beijing and Washington were tremendous in this regard. For Beijing’s

leaders, the key issue was America's military intervention in Taiwan. They had argued for over two decades that in order to improve Sino-American relations, Washington had to stop meddling in China's internal affairs. For Washington, however, the key to resolving the Taiwan issue lay in Beijing recognizing that the Guomindang had effective control over Taiwan and agreeing that any resolution of the matter must be reached by peaceful means. The Chinese and Americans also differed significantly on other international issues, such as how to end the military conflict in Vietnam, how to deal with the division between North and South Korea, and how to evaluate Japan's reemergence as an economic giant. On none of these questions was it easy for the two sides to reach a compromise. In fact, during their initial contact in Warsaw early in 1970, they had already found that the gaps between them were as wide as ever.<sup>88</sup> In order to close the gaps, both sides believed it necessary to hold bilateral meetings at higher levels. Before such talks could begin, policymakers in Beijing and Washington spent the early months of 1971 assessing diplomatic options and formulating negotiation strategies.<sup>89</sup>

In the meantime, both the Chinese and Americans were waiting for the opportunity to take the next step. This was especially important for Beijing. In addition to weighing the pros and cons of reaching a rapprochement with Washington strategically and geopolitically, Beijing's leaders, and Mao in particular, needed to find a "triggering event" that would allow them to mobilize and gain the Chinese people's support for establishing a new relationship with the United States. It was against this background that in April 1971 an opportunity appeared almost suddenly in Nagoya, Japan, where the Chinese Ping-Pong team was participating in the Thirty-first World Table Tennis Championships.

In 1967 and 1969, because of the chaos of the Cultural Revolution, Chinese table tennis players—the best in the world—failed to show up at the world championships. Late in 1970, Chinese players began to reappear in international competitions. Early in 1971, Koji Goto, president of the Japanese Table Tennis Association, visited China to invite the Chinese to participate in the forthcoming world championships in Nagoya.<sup>90</sup> From the beginning, Beijing regarded whether to dispatch a team to Japan as a political issue, especially because this would be the first time since the height of the Cultural Revolution that a Chinese sports team would attend a major international event. The opinions among Chinese sports and foreign affairs officials were by no means unanimous. For several reasons, such as the fear that the Chinese players might have to play with players representing the "puppet regimes" in South Vietnam and Cambodia and that they might be attacked by the right-wing

elements in Japan, the leaders of the Foreign Ministry and National Commission on Sports almost decided not to let the Chinese team go to Japan.<sup>91</sup> Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong in particular, however, finally decided that “our team should go.”<sup>92</sup>

In the early 1970s, table tennis was the most popular sport in China and the only one in which the Chinese players could defeat anyone in the world. Not surprisingly, Chinese participation in the Nagoya championships turned out to be a big national event, causing widespread “Ping-Pong fever” throughout China’s cities and countryside. When the Chinese players won one gold medal after another (they eventually won four golds out of seven events), the fever rose higher and higher. Through the extensive media coverage of the championships—which was rare for this kind of event during the Cultural Revolution years—millions and millions of ordinary Chinese paid close attention to Nagoya.<sup>93</sup> In the meantime, the Chinese team leadership, who had been instructed to make two to four phone calls back to Beijing every day, kept top leaders in Beijing abreast of any new development in Nagoya.<sup>94</sup>

During the course of the championships, Chinese and American players had several unplanned encounters. On 27 March, the Chinese players talked to a few American players at the championships’ opening reception. The next day, officials of the Chinese delegation telephoned Beijing, reporting that “some American players were very friendly to our players at yesterday’s reception, and had talked a lot.”<sup>95</sup> Three days later, Graham B. Steenhoven, manager of the American delegation, encountered Song Zhong, general secretary of the Chinese delegation, at an International Table Tennis Association meeting break. Reportedly, Steenhoven mentioned that only two weeks earlier the U.S. State Department had terminated all restrictions on the use of American passports for traveling to China and asked Song “if the American players could have the opportunity to visit China to learn from the Chinese players.” Officials of the Chinese delegation met the same evening to discuss the “implications” of Steenhoven’s comments, and they decided to report to Beijing that “the Americans want to visit China.”<sup>96</sup> Officials at the Chinese Foreign Ministry and National Commission on Sports treated the report seriously. After carefully discussing the matter, they concluded in a report on 3 April that “the timing now is not yet mature for the Americans to visit China, and the Americans should be advised that there will be other opportunities in the future.” The report was sent to Zhou Enlai for approval.<sup>97</sup> On 4 April, Zhou endorsed the report, remarking in the margin, “[We] might ask them [the American players] to leave their mailing addresses with us, and might tell their chief representative that we Chinese people firmly oppose the activities aimed at



*Chinese Ping-Pong player Zhuang Zedong presents American player Glenn Cowen with an embroidered silk scarf at the Thirty-first World Table Tennis Championships, Nagoya, Japan, 4 April 1971. Xinhua News Agency.*

making 'two Chinas' or 'one China and one Taiwan.' The premier, however, was uncertain about his decision and sent the report to Mao for the chairman to make the final ruling.<sup>98</sup>

While Zhou was writing these remarks in Beijing, another incident occurred between Chinese and American players. On the afternoon of 4 April, Glenn Cowen, a nineteen-year-old American player from Santa Monica College in California, accidentally boarded a bus carrying Chinese players. The Chinese all smiled, but no one extended him a greeting. Suddenly, three-time world champion Zhuang Zedong approached him, presenting him with an embroidered scarf with a picture of scenic Yellow Mountain on it as a gift. Zhao Zhenghong, the head of the Chinese delegation, tried to stop Zhuang, but Zhuang told him: "Take it easy. As the head of the delegation you have many concerns, but I am just a player. It doesn't matter."<sup>99</sup> Five minutes later, Cowen and the Chinese players got off the bus in front of a crowd of journalists, who most likely had gathered because it was such a big matter for the Chinese and American players to be on the same bus and friendly to each other. The next day, Cowen returned the favor by offering Zhuang a T-shirt with the Beatles' popular slogan "Let It Be" on it as a gift.<sup>100</sup> Again, the exchange was caught by journalists and cameras.

In Beijing, Mao had been following the events in Nagoya from the start. According to the memoirs of Wu Xujun, the chairman's chief nurse, even be-



fore the competition started the chairman had instructed her to read to him all foreign news reports published in *Cankao ziliao* with references to activities of the Chinese team in Nagoya. Wu recollected that during the championships, the chairman was constantly excited, was losing sleep, and did not have much of an appetite. Wu noted that Mao's state was usually a sign that he was thinking about big decisions.<sup>101</sup> Zhou's report regarding the American players visiting China had been sitting on Mao's desk for more than two days when, on 6 April, the chairman finally approved it and returned it to the Foreign Ministry.<sup>102</sup> Yet the chairman's concerns were far from over. When Wu read to him foreign news reports about the encounters between Zhuang Zedong and Cowen, the chairman's eyes "suddenly turned bright." He asked Wu to read the reports again, commenting that "Zhuang Zedong not only plays good Ping-Pong but knows how to conduct diplomacy as well." That evening Mao went to bed at around eleven o'clock after taking several sleeping pills. But before he fell asleep, he suddenly called Wu to his bed, asking the chief nurse to call Wang Hairong at the Foreign Ministry immediately and to "invite the American team to visit China."<sup>103</sup> Wu did not at first trust her own ears because the chairman had reversed completely the decision he had endorsed when his mind had been clear. But the chairman, despite being under the strong influence of medicine, insisted Wu make the phone call. Only after confirming that the chief nurse indeed had made the call did the chairman allow himself to get to sleep.<sup>104</sup>

Mao's sudden change of mind caused a sleepless night for Zhou Enlai and many others at the Foreign Ministry and National Commission on Sports.<sup>105</sup> The next day, Chinese officials with the Ping-Pong team in Nagoya received the order from Beijing to extend an invitation to the American table tennis team to visit China.<sup>106</sup> Upon learning of the invitation, the White House immediately approved it.<sup>107</sup> The Americans' activities during their visit to China were widely covered by the Chinese media. Indeed, the matches between Chinese and American players received live television and radio coverage.<sup>108</sup> The highlight of the visit was a meeting held on 14 April between the American team, together with teams from four other countries, with Zhou Enlai at the Great Hall of the People, at which the premier announced, "[Y]our visit has opened a new chapter in the history of the relations between Chinese and American peoples."<sup>109</sup> A few hours after Zhou met with the American players, Washington announced five new measures concerning China, including the termination of the twenty-two-year-old trade embargo. In a few short days, Ping-Pong diplomacy had completely changed the political atmosphere between China and the United States, making the theme of improving relations

between the two countries—as Kissinger put it—“an international sensation” that “captured the world’s imagination.”<sup>110</sup>

Although we have no way of knowing exactly what had changed Mao’s mind on the evening of 6 April, we have reasons to believe that such a decision, again, was made not only for international concerns but also for domestic considerations. When the Americans were playing China’s most popular and strongest sport in front of a huge Chinese audience (especially if radio and television audiences were included) it was almost as if a modern version of the ritual procedures related to the age-old Chinese “tribute system,” wherein the foreign barbarians came to China to pay tribute to the superior Chinese emperor, was taking place. The Chinese players were very friendly toward the Americans, even allowing them to win quite a few matches. In the eyes of the Chinese audience, though, this was not just an indication of friendship but also, and more importantly, a revelation of superiority. Mao’s efforts to guide popular opinion culminated in the Chinese media’s widespread reporting of a conversation between Zhou Enlai and the American player Cowen: According to the media, when Cowen asked the premier about his opinion on American hippies, the premier provided him with some sophisticated advice, combining an understanding of the “desire on the part of youth to try new things” with profound philosophical observations on “the rules in the development of human history.” Zhou then, reportedly, received a bunch of flowers from Cowen’s mother, who wanted to thank the premier for “educating her son.”<sup>111</sup> Nothing could produce more penetrating symbolic power than this story showing how a member of capitalist America’s decadent “lost generation” found answers to questions about the truth of life in socialist China.

Mao moved quickly to fit this new Chinese popular mood toward America into the orbit of the relations he was planning to pursue with the United States. The chairman looked to Snow once again. In addition to permitting the American writer to publish his interview in the West, the chairman ordered that the complete transcript of the interview—in which he said that he was willing to meet Nixon in Beijing—be relayed to the entire party and the whole country.<sup>112</sup> Mao’s maneuvers, as it turned out, further prepared the Chinese people politically and psychologically for the forthcoming transformation of Sino-American relations.

### **Kissinger’s Secret Trip to Beijing**

In the wake of the Ping-Pong diplomacy, Beijing and Washington immediately worked on plans for the high-level meeting that had been discussed since late 1970. The Pakistani channel continued to play a crucial role in facilitating

communications between the two sides. On 21 April, Beijing sent a message to Washington that reiterated that Taiwan was "the principal and prerequisite problem, which had to be resolved before any relations could be restored." In the meantime, Beijing's leaders also made it clear that they were "now interested in direct discussions" as a means of reaching settlement and thus willing to "receive publicly in Beijing a special envoy of the president of the United States (for instance, Mr. Kissinger) or the U.S. secretary of state or even the president of the U.S. himself for a direct meeting and discussion."<sup>113</sup>

The White House received the message on 27 April. Although Nixon found that "in some important respects this message raised as many problems as it solved," he and Kissinger immediately began to work on formulating Washington's response. Because of domestic political considerations, Nixon thought it necessary for the contact with Beijing "to be kept totally secret until the final arrangement for the presidential visit had been agreed upon." In terms of who should be the person to go to China, he decided that Kissinger was the best choice.<sup>114</sup> On 10 May, Kissinger handed Washington's formal reply to Pakistani ambassador Hilaly to deliver to Beijing. The message stated that because of the importance Nixon had attached to normalizing relations with China, he was prepared to accept Zhou Enlai's invitation to visit Beijing "for direct conversations" with PRC leaders. It also proposed that Kissinger undertake a preparatory secret visit sometime after 15 June to begin a preliminary exchange of views and arrange an agenda for Nixon's visit. Beijing received the message on 17 May.<sup>115</sup> Three days later, when Washington and Moscow reached a procedural breakthrough in the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, Kissinger asked the Pakistanis to convey an advance copy of the U.S.-Soviet agreement to Beijing, with an accompanying message stating that Washington would "conclude no agreement which would be directed against the People's Republic of China."<sup>116</sup>

After receiving these messages, Mao instructed Zhou Enlai to chair a politburo meeting to work out the Chinese responses.<sup>117</sup> On 25 May, Zhou called a meeting attended by leading members of the Foreign Ministry to discuss the technical issues involved in responding to Nixon's messages.<sup>118</sup> The next day, the politburo met to consider Beijing's specific strategies toward improving Sino-American relations. Zhou followed Mao's instructions to deliver a keynote speech at the meeting, pointing out that the United States had reached the peak of its power after the end of the Second World War and thus could willingly interfere with "anything anywhere in the world" at that time. However, U.S. power had declined in recent years. America's intervention in Vietnam had lost the people's support, forcing Washington to withdraw American

troops gradually from Vietnam. In the meantime, America's economic position and, as a result, its political influence in the world had begun to decline. Under these circumstances, speculated Zhou, American leaders had to consider whether to continue their "going-all-out" policy or to reduce America's international involvement. As the first step toward the second choice Washington needed to get out of Vietnam, and the Americans thus found it necessary to establish contact with China. These developments, stressed the premier, had provided China with "an opportunity to improve Sino-American relations," which "will be beneficial for the struggle against imperialist expansionism and hegemonism, beneficial for maintaining peace in Asia as well as in the world, and beneficial for maintaining our country's security and pursuing the unification of the motherland in peaceful ways."<sup>119</sup>

The decisions reached by the politburo were summarized in a report drafted by Zhou Enlai after the meeting, which established eight "basic principles" regarding Kissinger's and Nixon's proposed visits to China:

1. All U.S. armed forces and military installations should be withdrawn from Taiwan and the Taiwan Strait area in a given period. This is the key to restoring relations between China and the United States. If no agreement can be reached on this principle in advance, it is possible that Nixon's visit would be deferred.
2. Taiwan is China's territory, and the liberation of Taiwan belongs to China's internal affairs. No foreign intervention should be allowed. Japanese militarism in Taiwan should be strictly prevented.
3. We will strive to liberate Taiwan in peaceful ways and will carefully work on the Taiwan issue.
4. The activities aimed at making "two Chinas" or "one China and one Taiwan" should be firmly opposed. If the United States is willing to establish diplomatic relations with China, it must recognize the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government representing China.
5. If the previous three conditions have not been met, it is not suitable for China and the United States to establish diplomatic relations, and a liaison office can be established in each other's capital.
6. We will not initiate the question concerning [China's seat in] the UN. If the Americans touch upon this question, we will make it clear that no arrangement involving "two Chinas" or "one China and one Taiwan" is acceptable to us.
7. We will not initiate the question concerning Sino-American trade. If the

Americans touch upon this question, we will discuss it with them after the principle of American troops withdrawing from Taiwan has been accepted. 8. The Chinese government stands for the withdrawal of U.S. armed forces from the three countries in Indochina, Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia, so that peace in the Far East will be maintained.<sup>120</sup>

These basic principles clearly demonstrated that Beijing's leaders, though willing to improve relations with the United States, were not quite ready to make major compromises with Washington, especially on the Taiwan issue. Such an attitude was not surprising given the profound chasm that had existed between Beijing and Washington for over two decades. In addition, because the politburo fully understood the importance of justifying the decision to pursue a rapprochement with the United States, it knew too well that the decision should not leave any impression that it had softened the party's fighting attitude toward U.S. imperialism. The report thus specifically enumerated several possible outcomes of opening relations with the United States, arguing that a Sino-American rapprochement would impair the American people's struggle against the "monopoly capitalist ruling class" and would enhance Hanoi's position at the Paris talks, thus forcing American troops to withdraw from Indochina. In particular, the report argued that the opening of Sino-American communications represented the "victorious result of our struggles against imperialism, revisionism, and reactionary forces," as well as the "inevitable outcome of the internal and external crises facing the U.S. imperialists and the competition for world hegemony between the United States and the Soviet Union." If the opening succeeded, the "competition between the two super powers" would be more fierce; if the opening failed, the "reactionary face" of U.S. imperialism would be further exposed, and "our people's consciousness" would be further enhanced.<sup>121</sup>

On 29 May, Mao approved Zhou's report.<sup>122</sup> The same day, the premier, again via the Pakistani channel, sent Beijing's formal responses to Washington, informing the Americans that Mao was looking forward to "direct conversations" with Nixon "in which each side would be free to raise its principal issue of concern" and that Zhou welcomed Kissinger to China "for a preliminary secret meeting with high-level Chinese officials to prepare for and make necessary arrangements for President Nixon's visit to Beijing."<sup>123</sup> Nixon received the message four days later, commenting, "This is the most important communication that has come to an American president since the end of World War II."<sup>124</sup>

In order to prepare for Kissinger's visit, Beijing established a special task force headed by Zhou to deal with all kinds of technical and logistical issues.<sup>125</sup> In the meantime, Beijing's leaders paid special attention to further justifying to party cadres and members the decision to open Sino-American relations. Beginning at the end of May, the CCP leadership convened a series of meetings, including a working meeting attended by more than two hundred "responsible cadres" from Beijing and other parts of China, to relay to them the party's new policy toward the United States. Zhou stressed that it was Nixon and Kissinger who were coming to Beijing, thus "it is not we who need something from them, but they who need something from us."<sup>126</sup> This tone dominated Beijing's efforts to explain the Sino-American opening to ordinary party members and people throughout the following months.

After careful planning, Kissinger secretly visited Beijing from 9 to 11 July. During the forty-eight hours he stayed in Beijing, he met with Zhou and other high-ranking Chinese officials in six meetings lasting for a total of seventeen hours.<sup>127</sup> The two men quickly established respect for each other. While Zhou found Kissinger "very intelligent—indeed a Dr.," Kissinger found Zhou "one of the two or three most impressive men I have ever met."<sup>128</sup> Although Beijing had repeatedly emphasized that unless progress could be reached on the Taiwan issue no other question would be discussed, Zhou had a flexible attitude. The most important breakthrough was reached on the first day, when each leader tried to comprehend the other's basic stand. Kissinger spent much time explaining Washington's policies on a series of international issues, including the Taiwan question. He stated that Washington would withdraw two-thirds of U.S. armed forces from Taiwan after the end of the Vietnam War and would continue to withdraw more troops from Taiwan in concert with further improvements in Sino-American relations. Contrary to the statement made by the State Department only a few months earlier that Taiwan's status was "unsettled," Kissinger made it clear that the United States acknowledged Taiwan as part of China and would not support Taiwan's independence. Within this context, he emphasized that Washington firmly believed that the Taiwan issue should be solved in a peaceful manner. In explaining Washington's policy toward Indochina, Kissinger told the Chinese that the Nixon administration was committed to ending the Vietnam War through negotiations and thus was willing to establish a timetable to withdraw American troops from South Vietnam, if America's honor and self-esteem were protected. Zhou seemed satisfied with Kissinger's statement on Washington's recognition of Taiwan as part of China. Although he continued to emphasize that all American troops must withdraw from Taiwan and the U.S.-Taiwan treaty must be abolished, he

also stated that the differences between Beijing and Washington should not prevent the two sides from living in peace and equality.<sup>129</sup>

Immediately after the meeting, Zhou briefed Mao. The chairman's reaction was interesting. When he learned that Washington would withdraw some but not all of American troops from Taiwan, he commented that it would take some time for a monkey to evolve into a human being, and that the Americans were now at the ape stage, "with a tail, though a much shorter one, in his back." More important, the chairman told the premier, was the Indochina issue. "We are not in a hurry on the Taiwan issue because there is no fighting there," stated the chairman. "But there is a war in Vietnam and people are being killed there. We should not invite Nixon to come just for our own interests." The chairman instructed the premier not to focus on specific issues the next day but to "brag to" (*chui* in Chinese) Kissinger about the big "strategic picture," that "although all under the heaven is in great chaos, the situation is wonderful." In particular, Mao instructed, Zhou should tell the Americans that China was prepared "to be divided by the United States, the Soviet Union, and Japan, with them all coming together to invade China."<sup>130</sup>

Mao's attitude determined that Kissinger's visit would not fail. Although Kissinger stated that the United States would neither withdraw all its troops from Taiwan nor abolish the U.S.-Taiwan treaty immediately, the chairman paid more attention to what Washington would do—withdrawing U.S. forces from Taiwan gradually, acknowledging Taiwan as part of China, and not supporting Taiwan's independence. For the chairman, Kissinger had *already* made the most important concessions—had begun the process of changing from "monkey" to "human being"—and Mao was willing to provide the Americans with the time needed to complete the change in policy. Since Beijing had always viewed the Taiwan issue as the single, most important obstacle for restoring relations with the United States, such an attitude on the chairman's part meant that the Taiwan issue no longer would block Zhou and Kissinger from reaching an agreement on the agenda for Nixon's visit. Within this context, the chairman, as he always did when dealing with a superpower (which used to be the Soviet Union, and, now, the United States), consciously or unconsciously attempted to demonstrate his superior vision and moral standard. By making Vietnam, rather than Taiwan, a priority, Mao intended to exhibit Beijing's altruism in handling important international issues. By the same token, through highlighting the hypothesis that China might face a simultaneous attack from the Soviet Union, Japan, and the United States at a time of "chaos all under the heaven," Mao meant not only to force Kissinger to define Washington's strategic purposes in East Asia but also, and more importantly,

to remind the Americans not to ignore China's centrality in dealing with world affairs in general and in solving Asian/Pacific issues in particular.

Following the chairman's instructions, Zhou completely changed his approach the next day. Using ideologically aggressive language to draw a picture of "great chaos all under the heaven," the Chinese premier presented Beijing's "principal stands" on a series of international issues, including Vietnam, India, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, challenging Washington's policy toward them. Zhou's "fierce litany" (in Kissinger's words), however, was not designed to block the negotiations but, in a sense, to complete a particular "ritual procedure" that was needed for socialist China to reach a compromise with imperialist America. Thus when Kissinger returned with a point-by-point rebuttal of Zhou's presentation, the premier's attitude changed again. Toward the end of the meeting, he proposed that the two sides discuss the date for Nixon to visit China, and, with little bargaining, an agreement was reached: Nixon would come in spring 1972.<sup>131</sup>

Because Zhou was to host a reception for a North Korean delegation visiting Beijing that evening,<sup>132</sup> Huang Hua, the Chinese ambassador to Canada, was assigned to draft with Kissinger a joint announcement of Nixon's visit to China. When Huang, who was late to the meeting, finally arrived,<sup>133</sup> he proposed a draft indicating that Nixon had solicited the invitation to China for the purpose of discussing the Taiwan issue as a prelude to normalizing Sino-American relations. When Kissinger made it clear that such a draft was absolutely unacceptable, Huang proposed a thirty-minute recess at 1:40 A.M. so that the Chinese could "rework on the language." At 3:00 A.M. the Americans were told that Huang would not come back until 9:00 A.M. Kissinger was puzzled by all of this. What he did not know was that Huang failed to return because he needed to get Mao's approval for a new draft to present to the Americans, but the chairman had already gone to bed.<sup>134</sup> When the meeting was resumed at 9:40 A.M., Huang presented a new draft, which Kissinger immediately found agreeable. It stated that Zhou Enlai extended the invitation "knowing of President Nixon's expressed desire to visit the People's Republic of China" and that the purpose of his visit "is to seek the normalization of relations between the two countries and also to exchange views on questions of concern to the two sides."<sup>135</sup> Thus Kissinger was able to send a one-word telegram to Washington, "Eureka," which, as agreed upon in advance, indicated that his Beijing trip was a success.<sup>136</sup> On 15 July, Beijing and Washington announced simultaneously that Nixon was to visit China "at an appropriate date before May 1972."



### **The Shock Wave of the “Lin Biao Affair”**

Kissinger's trip to China shocked America's Asian allies; it also brought about suspicion, and even tension, between China and its allies and close friends. On 13-14 July, Zhou Enlai visited Hanoi to inform the Vietnamese Communist leaders of Beijing's contacts with the Americans. Within twenty-four hours, he held three meetings with Le Duan and Pham Van Dong. Zhou emphasized that it was Beijing's belief that, from a long-term perspective, Beijing's improved relations with Washington would help policymakers in Washington to better understand the reality that America's global strategic emphasis lay in Europe, rather than in Asia, and in turn would enhance Hanoi's bargaining power at the negotiation table.<sup>137</sup> Early on the morning of 14 July, Zhou flew to Pyongyang to brief the North Korean Communist leader Kim Il-sung, and, after having two meetings lasting for seven hours, flew back to Beijing in the evening.<sup>138</sup> Late the same evening, he met with and briefed Prince Sihanouk, who was then the leader of Cambodia's anti-American exile government in Beijing.<sup>139</sup> On 17 July, Zhou met with Xhorxihi Ropo, Albania's ambassador to China, and explained to him Beijing's new policy toward the United States.<sup>140</sup> Although Zhou must have tried his best to defend Beijing's new policy, it appears that he had barely convinced many of those who listened to him. The Vietnamese regarded Beijing's contact with Washington as China “throwing a life buoy to Nixon, who almost had been drowned.”<sup>141</sup> Albania, which had been China's closest Communist ally during the Cultural Revolution, adopted an even harsher attitude, claiming that the Chinese had “betrayed” the cause of the world proletarian revolution.<sup>142</sup>

However, these international difficulties must have meant almost nothing to Mao in comparison with the huge domestic political storm that had been brewing during the same period. The potential for a battle between Mao and Lin Biao that might have distracted the chairman from taking action toward the United States in summer 1970 did not disappear after the Lushan conference. From late 1970 to mid-1971, Mao tried to uncover the “conspiracy activities” of several high-ranking party and military leaders within Lin Biao's inner circle, an endeavor that gradually exposed Lin himself.<sup>143</sup>

Kissinger's secret trip to Beijing occurred at the same time that the Mao-Lin contest had reached a crucial juncture. Late on the evening of 9 July, when Zhou Enlai and his assistants briefed Mao about the meetings with Kissinger, the chairman left the topic to spend more than one hour investigating whether or not several of Lin's close followers in the PLA's General Staff had made serious “self-criticism.” When he learned that none of them had done

so, he announced that “the struggle beginning at the Lushan conference has not finished yet” and that “behind them [Lin’s followers] there is a big plot.”<sup>144</sup> Late in August, the chairman began an inspection tour of south China, during which he repeatedly criticized Lin, revealing that he was preparing to have a political showdown with the man who, only two years earlier, had been designated as his “heir and successor.” Reportedly, upon learning of Mao’s activities, Lin’s son, Lin Liguo, who had organized a squadron loyal to himself and his father, decided to stake everything on a desperate gamble—at his order, his squadron tried, but failed, to assassinate the chairman when he was returning to Beijing by train. Early on the morning of 13 September, Lin, his wife, and his son boarded a plane to flee from Beijing. A few hours later, the plane crashed in Mongolia.<sup>145</sup>

While much is still unknown about Lin Biao’s exact motives for fleeing Beijing on 13 September 1971, the Lin Biao affair had influenced the development of the Sino-American rapprochement in two important respects. First, Lin Biao’s downfall represented one of the biggest political crises in the PRC’s history. Although Lin Liguo’s alleged coup attempt was crushed and Lin Biao died, this was by no means Mao’s victory. Since the early days of the Cultural Revolution, Lin had been known in China as Mao’s “closest comrade-in-arms” and “best and most loyal student.” He was handpicked by the chairman to be his “heir and successor.” His reported betrayal not only completely buried the myth of Mao’s “eternal correctness” but also, and more seriously, further withered Mao’s fading continuous revolution. Under these circumstances, Mao was even more in need of a major breakthrough in China’s international relations, one that could help boost the chairman’s declining reputation and authority while enhancing the Chinese people’s support for Mao’s Communist state—if not necessarily for Mao’s Communist revolution.

Second, Lin Biao’s downfall might have removed a political obstacle as well as provided additional political justification for Beijing to improve relations with the United States. Although our knowledge about Lin Biao’s exact attitude toward Sino-American rapprochement remains limited because of the lack of reliable sources, several official Chinese sources have pointed out that Lin opposed improving relations with the United States.<sup>146</sup> This claim appears to have the support of other available materials. For example, although Zhou Enlai almost always sent his reports on the United States to both Mao and Lin for approval, we almost never see any response from Lin. If silence implies objection, Lin’s downfall certainly meant that a powerful opponent to Sino-American rapprochement had been eliminated. What is more certain is that Lin’s ruin inevitably enhanced the position of Zhou Enlai, a strong advocate

of opening China's relations with other parts of the world in general and the United States in particular. Therefore, we may safely conclude that although the Lin Biao affair began as a serious challenge to Mao, it turned out to be favorable to the Sino-American rapprochement.

### **Closing Moves**

Not surprisingly, although the shock wave of the Lin Biao affair brought China's political situation into unprecedented chaos,<sup>147</sup> Mao, with Zhou's assistance, decided to continue the course toward rapprochement with the United States. The communications between Beijing and Washington became more direct after Kissinger's trip: in addition to the Pakistani channel, a new secret "Paris channel" was established. Vernon Walters and Huang Zhen, American and Chinese ambassadors to France, were assigned by Washington and Beijing to serve as messengers.<sup>148</sup>

In order to settle important details for Nixon's visit, Kissinger openly visited Beijing on 20–26 October. During his seven-day stay in Beijing, he and Zhou Enlai held ten meetings, which lasted a total of twenty-three hours and forty minutes.<sup>149</sup> In addition to exchanging opinions on a host of international issues and resolving specific items related to Nixon's visit (such as media coverage), the most difficult challenge facing the two leaders was to work out a draft summit communiqué. Before coming to China, Kissinger had prepared a draft in which he emphasized the common grounds shared by Beijing and Washington while using vague language to describe the issues on which the two had sharp differences. On the evening of 22 October, when Kissinger handed the draft to Zhou, the Chinese premier's first response was that although the draft was unsatisfactory, it could serve as the basis for discussion. When the two met again on the morning of 24 October, however, Zhou's attitude had changed dramatically. Declaring the American draft "totally unacceptable," the premier pointed out that the communiqué must reflect the fundamental differences between Beijing and Washington and not present an "untruthful appearance."<sup>150</sup>

Behind this dramatic change was Mao himself. As he was listening to Zhou's brief on his meetings with Kissinger on the evening of 23 October, the chairman told the premier, "I have said many times that all under the heaven is great chaos, so it is desirable to let each side speak out for itself." If the American side wanted to talk about "peace, security, and no pursuit of hegemony," the chairman continued, then the Chinese side should emphasize "revolution, the liberation of the oppressed peoples and nations in the world, and no rights for big powers to bully and humiliate small countries." The chairman acknowl-

edged that stressing these goals was no more than “firing an empty cannon,” yet he stressed at the same time that “all of these points must be highlighted; anything short of that is improper.”<sup>151</sup>

Mao’s sensitivity toward, as well as insistence upon, producing a summit communiqué that would “truthfully” reflect China’s overall position revealed his determination not to allow Nixon’s visit to jeopardize his revolution’s image at home and abroad. More important, though, Mao aimed to demonstrate to the Americans his moral superiority in handling important international issues. What the Americans had proposed was a conventional agreement, one that would make the chairman’s unprecedented acceptance of Nixon’s visit look like no more than an ordinary diplomatic venture. The chairman wanted to emphasize the drama of the visit and thereby put the Chinese in an “equal” (as Mao defined the term), thus more superior, position vis-à-vis the Americans.

When, on the evening of 24 October, Kissinger received the Chinese draft communiqué that had been approved by Mao, his first reaction was disbelief. But when he had finished reading this document full of “empty cannons” and had time to reflect, he “began to see that the very novelty of the [Chinese] approach might resolve our perplexities.”<sup>152</sup> The two sides then started working on a mutually acceptable draft that not only defined common grounds but also used clear yet moderate language to state each side’s views on important issues. The most difficult in this regard was, of course, Taiwan. When Kissinger departed from Beijing on 26 October, the two sides had reached agreement on almost all points except for a few specific expressions concerning Washington’s attitude toward Taiwan.<sup>153</sup>

When Kissinger was in Beijing, the United Nations General Assembly voted with the support of an overwhelming majority to let Beijing have China’s seat at the UN and expel Taipei from it. This development was immediately propagated throughout China as a “great victory” of Chinese foreign policy as well as an indication of the “significant enhancement” of the PRC’s international status and reputation.<sup>154</sup> In internal indoctrinations, the “victory” was also linked to Mao’s “brilliant decision” to open relations with the United States. At a time when Mao and his revolution had suffered the loss of the Chinese people’s inner support in the wake of the Lin Biao affair, the breakthrough in China’s external relations, which allowed Beijing’s leaders to proclaim that Mao’s revolution had indeed transformed China from a weak country into a prestigious world power, played an increasingly important role in providing legitimacy to Mao’s Communist regime.

Within this context, when Alexander Haig, Kissinger’s deputy on the na-

tional security staff, visited China in early January 1972 to make the final technical preparations for Nixon's visit, he inadvertently offended his Chinese hosts. At a meeting with Zhou Enlai on 4 April, Haig delivered an assessment from Nixon and Kissinger about the recently concluded India-Pakistan crisis, which made clear that in managing the crisis the American leaders were concerned about China's viability and believed that maintaining it was in the fundamental interests of the United States. When Zhou reported the meeting to Mao, the chairman commented: "Why should our viability become America's concern? . . . If China's independence and viability should be protected by the Americans, it is very dangerous [for us]." <sup>155</sup> On 6 January, Zhou formally told Haig that he was "greatly surprised" by the American leaders' concern for "protecting China's independence and viability." It was Beijing's firm belief, the premier asserted, that "no country should depend upon a foreign power in maintaining its own independence and viability" because the dependent country "would become that [foreign] power's subordinate and colony." <sup>156</sup> Such emphasis—or overemphasis—on Beijing's determination to maintain China's independence and self-esteem reflected the CCP leaders' understanding of the importance of the viability issue in legitimizing the Communist regime in China.

On 21 February, Nixon arrived in Beijing. He had hardly settled down at the guest house when Zhou Enlai informed him that Mao was ready to meet him. The conversation between the Chinese chairman and the U.S. president lasted one hour and seems not to have had a central focus. <sup>157</sup> The chairman refused to get into details of any specific issues, announcing that he would only "discuss philosophical questions." It appears that the chairman was eager to demonstrate his broad vision, showing the Americans that not only was he in total control of matters concerning China, but he also occupied a privileged position to comprehend and deal with *anything* of significance in the known universe. In a sense, what was most meaningful for the chairman was not the specific issues he would discuss with the U.S. president but the simple fact that Nixon and Kissinger came to *his* study to listen to *his* teachings. The chairman probably was revealing some of his truest feelings when he said that he had "only changed a few places in the vicinity of Beijing." Yet, at the bottom of his heart, he also must have believed that he had indeed changed the world—had he not, the "head of international imperialism," would not have come to visit his country in the first place.

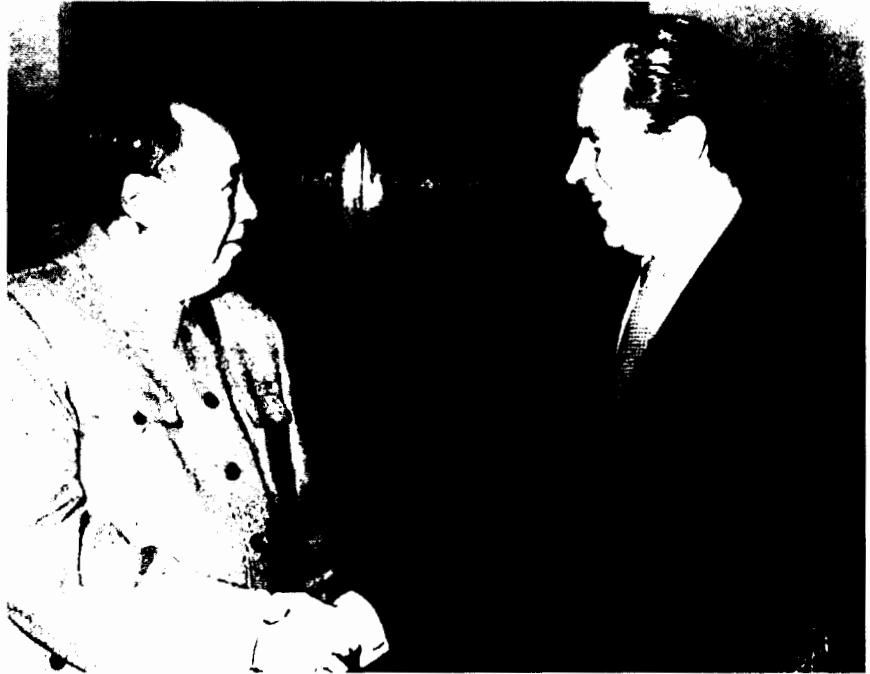
The Taiwan issue remained the key to finalizing the text of the joint communiqué, which Kissinger and Qiao Guanhua, China's vice foreign minister and one of Zhou's main associates, were responsible for composing. The main



*Zhou Enlai greets Richard Nixon at the Beijing airport, 21 February 1972.  
Xinhua News Agency.*

challenge was finding a mutually acceptable expression of the United States' stand toward the linkage between Washington's agreement to withdraw U.S. troops from Taiwan and Beijing's commitment to a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan issue. Although this was a sensitive issue for the Chinese because they had to stick to the principle that anything concerning Taiwan "belonged to China's internal affairs," they showed flexibility by allowing compromises to be reached.<sup>158</sup>

On 28 February, the Sino-American joint communiqué was signed in



*Mao Zedong and Richard Nixon shake hands at Zhongnanhai, Beijing, 21 February 1972.  
Xinhua News Agency.*

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Shanghai. This was an unconventional document in that in addition to emphasizing common grounds, it also highlighted differences between Beijing and Washington, with each side expressing in its own way its basic policies toward important international issues. From Beijing's perspective, such a format best served China's fundamental interests. In a geopolitical sense, Nixon's visit did establish the framework in which a strategic partnership could be constructed between China and the United States. The Shanghai communiqué announced that neither Beijing nor Washington "should seek hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region and each is opposed to efforts by any other country or group of countries to establish such hegemony"—a statement implicitly targeting the Soviet Union. More importantly, especially for Mao, the unique format of the communiqué allowed China not only to remain a revolutionary country but also to claim an equal footing with the United States in the world. Not just for propaganda purposes did Beijing claim that Mao had won a "great diplomatic victory."

Yet this was not a victory for international communism. As one of the most important events in the international history of the Cold War, the Sino-

American rapprochement, along with the deterioration of relations between Beijing and Moscow, caused the most profound shift in the international balance of power between the two contending superpowers. Whereas the great Sino-Soviet rivalry (first in the ideological field and then in military and strategic spheres) further diminished Moscow's capacity to wage a global battle with the United States, the Sino-American rapprochement enormously enhanced Washington's strategic position in its global competition with the Soviet Union. More importantly, the great Sino-Soviet split buried the shared consciousness among Communists and Communist sympathizers all over the world that communism was a solution to the problems created by the worldwide process of modernization. Nothing could be more effective in destroying the moral foundation of communism as an ideology and a revolutionary way of transforming the world than the self-denial of such possibility through the mutual criticism of the Communists themselves. Although the Cold War did not end until the late 1980s and early 1990s, when both the Soviet Union and the Communist bloc collapsed, one of the most crucial roots of that collapse certainly can be traced to the reconciliation between Beijing and Washington in 1969-72.





## **EPILOGUE THE LEGACIES OF CHINA'S COLD WAR EXPERIENCE**

Mao Zedong died on 9 September 1976. After a short period of leadership transition (1976–78), with Hua Guofeng serving as the nominal party and state head, Deng Xiaoping ascended in the late 1970s to become China's paramount leader.<sup>1</sup> China has since experienced a profound derevolutionization process, which has undermined Mao's revolution both as an ideal and as a reality, and has sunk the Communist state into an ever-deepening legitimacy crisis.

That Mao's revolutionary enterprise had lost people's inner support had become evident during the chairman's last years of life. Following the Lin Biao affair in 1971, a societywide "crisis of faith" began, causing millions and millions of everyday Chinese to question the ultimate benefits of the continuous revolution that prevailed in China for over two decades. When tens of thousands of ordinary men and women occupied Tiananmen Square early in April 1976 to mourn the late premier Zhou Enlai, who had died in January of that year, they meant to demonstrate the profound popular dismay over the economic stagnation and political cruelty conferred on the Chinese people by the chairman's revolution. Mao, who was then only a few months away from "the moment of departing to meet Karl Marx," ordered a dramatic crackdown of the masses at the square.<sup>2</sup> By reacting this way, the chairman virtually was admitting that his revolutionary enterprise aimed at placing a new social order in the hearts and minds of his own people had failed.

Deng Xiaoping was purged by Mao, for the second time in the Cultural Revolution, during the 1976 Tiananmen incident. The purge, though, allowed Deng to understand better than Mao the depth of the widespread moral crisis existing among ordinary Chinese. When he reemerged to become China's new ruler, he immediately abandoned Mao's class-struggle-centered discourse and his practice of continuous revolution, placing at the top of his agenda modernizing China's industry, agriculture, national defense, and science and technology. Following his pragmatic "cat theory" — "black cat or white cat, so long

as it catches mice, it is a good cat”—Deng allowed economics to take precedence over politics, hoping that the improvement of people’s standard of living would help bring legitimacy back to the Communist state.<sup>3</sup>

Along with implementing these domestic changes, the Chinese government under Deng’s leadership dramatically reduced and, finally, stopped its support to revolutionary/radical nationalist states and movements in other parts of the world while adopting a new, open approach in China’s external relations. Throughout the Maoist era, China maintained only minimal exchanges with other countries. Starting in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Deng took several important steps, including dispatching Chinese students to study abroad, promoting China’s international trade, and welcoming foreign investments in China, to open China’s door to the rest of the world.<sup>4</sup> As a result, the interconnections between China and the outside world have increased significantly, strengthening the interdependence between China and other parts of the world (especially the West). More than two decades before, Mao’s China entered the Cold War as a revolutionary country, in its own terms defining many key aspects of the Cold War—and the Cold War in Asia in particular. With Mao’s death and the end of his revolution as well as Deng’s altering the basic courses of China’s external policies, the Cold War in Asia—as far as some of its fundamental features are concerned—virtually came to an end in the late 1970s, almost one decade before the conclusion of the global Cold War.

But the legacies of China’s Cold War experience will not fade away easily. A conspicuous example is the CCP’s one-party reign, which has persisted during the post-Mao age. In addition, China’s reform and opening policies, not surprisingly, have been highly unbalanced: Emphasis has been placed on the economic and technological fields, leaving politics and ideology a forbidden zone. Indeed, despite Beijing’s general abandonment of revolutionary discourses during the post-Mao age, the CCP leadership has repeatedly called upon the party and the whole nation to fight against the influence of “bourgeoisie liberalization,” warning ordinary Chinese people to boycott the “spiritual pollution” of Western influence as a side effect of China’s opening to the outside world.<sup>5</sup> As has been identified by many China scholars, the huge gap between this political stagnation and the rapid social and economic changes brought about by the reform and opening process was one of the most important causes underlying the Tiananmen tragedy in 1989.<sup>6</sup>

In international affairs, the legacies of China’s Cold War experience have been reflected in Beijing’s frequent criticism and occasional challenge to the existing Western-dominated international economic and political order. Post-Mao Chinese leaders have consistently claimed that under no circumstances

will the Chinese government allow foreign powers to impose their values on China's external behavior, or to use their norms to interfere with China's internal affairs. Since the Tiananmen bloodshed in 1989, the increasing criticism by other countries, especially those in the West, of Beijing's human rights abuses and hard-nosed policy toward Tibet and, more recently, Taiwan, have further offended Beijing's leaders. Beijing has persistently rebutted such criticism, claiming it to be a continuation of Western countries' interference with matters within the jurisdiction of Chinese sovereignty.<sup>7</sup> In these ways, a "Cold War" of another kind has continued between China and the West since the formal ending of the global Cold War in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Behind China's behavior is the profound influence of the lingering Chinese "victim mentality." As has been pointed out throughout this volume, the Chinese have consistently regarded their nation as a victimized member of the Western-dominated international systems in modern history. During the Cold War period, this belief served as one of the most important reasons behind Mao's China's revolutionary behavior. The Chinese victim mentality persists today, as revealed in the Chinese responses toward NATO's mistaken bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in May 1999. Despite repeated U.S. explanations and apologies, the Chinese government, with the apparent support of a majority of the Chinese people, claimed the bombing to be an "American plot" designed to humiliate and intimidate China and the Chinese people. As a result, the government-controlled Chinese media resumed using Cold War language to denounce "Western imperialism" and "U.S. hegemonism."<sup>8</sup> A decade after the end of the global Cold War, China is no longer a revolutionary country, but it is not a real "insider" of the international community either.

Many Western analysts have been concerned about the orientation of China's future development, worrying that if China becomes stronger economically and militarily, it will pose a serious threat to world peace and stability in the twenty-first century. In a few extreme cases, the PRC is equated with Hitler's Germany, and the crisis scenario that could be created by the "China threat" is compared to "a Cold War as bad as the last."<sup>9</sup> They thus argue that in order to change China into a more "responsible" or, at least, less dangerous, member of the international community, it is necessary to "constrain" or to "contain" China, so that Beijing's leaders will be forced to behave less aggressively under pressure from without.

However, as is indicated in this volume, the reality is that China's external behavior has been primarily shaped by domestic concerns—both under Mao and continuously in the post-Mao era. Here is one of the biggest para-

doxes facing both China and the rest of the world today: Although China is increasingly growing into a prominent world power, thus bearing considerable regional and global responsibilities, the orientation of China's external behavior is determined less by its connections with important regional or global issues than by an agenda overwhelmingly dominated by domestic dilemmas and challenges.

In this respect, Beijing's harsh attitude toward Taiwan—an issue created during the Cold War—is highly revealing. Despite facing great international pressures, Beijing's leaders have stubbornly refused to renounce military force as a possible means to resolve the Taiwan issue. Every time Beijing is criticized for maintaining such a coercive policy, its leaders have argued that the Taiwan issue is an internal Chinese problem and that their adoption of a Taiwan policy that does not exclude the use of force is necessary for maintaining China's sovereignty and territorial integrity.<sup>10</sup>

What should be emphasized is that, underlying Beijing's inflexible policy toward Taiwan is, again, the impact of the deepening legitimacy crisis facing the Chinese Communist state in the post-Cold War era. From a historical perspective, the CCP has justified its one-party reign by emphasizing two of the Chinese Communist revolution's fundamental missions: that the revolution would create in China a new, Communist society characterized by universal justice and equality; and that it would change China's status as a weak country and revive its central position on the world scene. Mao's revolution, although failing to end political privilege in Chinese society, succeeded in creating an egalitarian situation (though accompanied by poverty) in China's economic life. The post-Mao derevolutionization process, in challenging the economic poverty left over by Mao, has created sharp divisions between the rich and the poor within Chinese society, thus undermining Maoist egalitarianism both as an ideal and as a social reality. The Chinese Communist Party today, as the political scientist Thomas J. Christensen points out, "has all but obliterated the second of the two adjectives in its name."<sup>11</sup> As a consequence, the legitimacy of the Chinese *Communist* regime is seriously called into question.

Under these circumstances, the Chinese Communist state must attach more importance to the Chinese revolution's second mission in its effort to legitimize its existence. Appealing to the victim mentality among the Chinese people, the CCP has justified its one-party reign by promoting the view that without the CCP's successful revolution, China would have remained a weak, corrupt, and divided country with no status on the world scene. Consequently, maintaining China's unification and sovereignty becomes an issue of utmost importance for the CCP, and Taiwan represents a crucial test case in this regard.

In a deeper sense, this legitimacy crisis is not just one entangling the Chinese Communist state; it epitomizes a fundamental puzzle facing Chinese society in the post-Cold War era: If the ideology embodied in communism can no longer bind the nation together and direct the nation's path toward modernity, which "ism" (if any) could take over the mission? The lack of an answer to this basic question has caused a lingering moral crisis among the Chinese population (especially the younger generation). What is more, although this moral crisis has arisen from the failure of the Chinese Communist state, one of its direct political consequences is that it enhances the popular conviction that the Chinese Communist government must remain in power. The logic is simple: without the Chinese Communist regime—despite all of its deficiencies—things in China could get worse and, in the worst-case scenario, the Chinese nation and Chinese society could even suffer total disintegration.

The CCP's legitimacy crisis and the Chinese moral crisis not only reflect the uncertainty and extreme complexity of the course of China's political, economic, and social changes in the post-Cold War age but also increases the difficulty involved in predicting the role China will play in international affairs in the twenty-first century. Indeed, China's role in international affairs depends upon the outcome of China's political, economic, and social transformations.

China's hope of emerging from the shadow of the Cold War lies in the fate of the ongoing reform and opening (derevolutionization) process—only with its success will China become a genuine "insider" of the international community and consistently play the role as a coordinator and promoter of regional and global peace and stability. This process, indeed, involves the greatest transformation—political, economic, social, and cultural—China has ever experienced in its history. Two decades after its inauguration, the process presents tremendous challenges for the Chinese people, causing profound frustrations for China's intellectuals (especially in the face of the deepening moral crisis). The triumph of this transformation may lead China to economic prosperity, social stability, and political democratization. Indeed, these three goals of the process are closely interrelated—a China that is increasingly becoming an integral part of the regional and world economic system will have a larger stake in maintaining regional and global peace and stability; and a Chinese society that is dominated by a strong middle class will be more receptive to democratic political institutions characterized by checks and balances. At the same time, the triumph of the process will create an environment in which the Chinese "victim mentality" may gradually lose its appeal, enabling China to emerge as an equal member and a genuine "insider" of the international

community. Such a China will play a highly positive role in security, economic, and environmental affairs in the Asia-Pacific region and the whole world.

By contrast, the failure of the process could lead to China's disintegration—this is particularly true since how to identify “China” remains a tough challenge for the Chinese people.<sup>12</sup> If the process fails, in a worst-case scenario, China's nuclear arsenal could get out of control; China's efforts to protect its environment could completely collapse; over a billion Chinese could make neighboring regions panic by creating huge migratory flows; and it would be impossible for China to play a key role in promoting regional and world stability and peace.

As far as the possible outcome of this process is concerned, the first fifteen to twenty years of the twenty-first century will be crucial. This is largely due to the anticipated result of two important developments. First, Chinese leaders, as well as a majority of Chinese scholars, have targeted the years 2015–20 as a deadline for achieving a series of goals in improving China's economy, polity, environment, and quality of life. Second, in fifteen to twenty years, the last generation of Chinese leaders who grew up in the Chinese revolutionary era will have disappeared completely from the central stage of Chinese politics. As a result, a new generation of Chinese leaders, who have gained their education and political experience in a more open environment, will find it much less difficult to commit themselves to transforming China into a true democracy and thus enabling China to become a true “insider” of the international community.

Although it is impossible for other countries (and those in the West in particular) to dictate the basic direction of China's derevolutionization process, there are things that can be done to help facilitate China's continuous integration into the international community and to help China rid itself of the last influences of the Cold War:

- Great and consistent efforts should be made to understand China's perspectives and problems; under no circumstances should a “second Cold War” be waged against China.
- Exchanges with China should be greatly strengthened in all areas, especially in economic and cultural fields, and the Chinese “victim mentality” should be handled with deep sensitivity.
- China's contributions to regional and global peace and stability should be adequately acknowledged and properly encouraged.
- Long-term perspectives should be adopted in formulating strategies and policies toward China. We should never be frustrated by China's

lack of sufficient change in the short run; we should never surrender an attitude of goodwill toward China.

- China should not be regarded as a passive reactor to outside influence; in order for China to play a stabilizing role in Asia-Pacific and global affairs, the international regimes should reform themselves by incorporating China's specific concerns and values.

The Cold War ended a decade ago, and now is the time finally to say farewell to its legacies. In looking into China's future, there is reason for optimism to prevail. In the final analysis, we must remember that China is one of the oldest and most continuous civilizations in the world. We should have confidence in the Chinese people's ability to make rational choices for their nation's future development, as well as to define the role their nation should play in regional and global affairs in the twenty-first century.