CHINA AND THE COLD WAR

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IT is widely believed that the responsibility for China's present isolation in world affairs should be placed squarely on the shoulders of the communist government in Peking. The combination of traditional Chinese isolationism, it is argued, with rigid Marxist-Leninist dogma, has erected a formidable barrier to communication which no reasonable action of ours could have possibly affected. This is held to be true even of those early months of 1950 when the West was prepared to suspend judgment on the new China. As Mr Guy Wint has put it, even at that early stage, China 'far from offering a dialogue with the outer world, conducted a hysterical monologue against it', until the United States 'was goaded into inflexibility by the insults from Peking and the apparent madness of everything that came out of China'.[1]

The corollary to this argument is very relevant today; namely, that it is still pointless to attempt to improve relations with China unless or until it changes its policies ('renounces the use of force') or its leadership (to be replaced by a somewhat nebulous 'second generation'). It is also an argument which conveniently absolves the West from any blame for the present state of affairs.

There are of course many people who do criticise the West's China policy, but their criticism is often qualified by what A. J. Liebling once described as the '*ademonai, kodemonai*' argument. *Ademonai* (Japanese for 'on the one hand'), America should have recognised China back in 1950—it is even claimed rather unconvincingly that it was about to—but on the other hand (*kodemonai*), China deliberately thwarted America's good intentions by intervening in the Korean War. Of course (*ademonai*), China should be admitted to the United Nations, but (*kodemonai*) it is quite impossible so long as it rejects a 'two Chinas' solution.

This kind of reasoning, advanced more in sorrow than in anger by those who genuinely look forward to the day when China will take its rightful place in the family of nations, but who are at a loss as to how this can be achieved, is often accompanied by a real bewilderment that China should so frequently appear to act against its own best interests. This might be called the '*num*' argument. Surely (*num*) the Chinese leadership should have realised that by allying itself to the Soviet Union in 1950 it was tying itself in an economic and political strait-jacket. (The same question has been stood on its head in recent years. Surely China should have realised that it was economically disastrous to part company so abruptly in 1959–60 with its Soviet ally.) How can China have failed to realise that the Sino-Indian border war

[1] *Communist China's Crusade* (London, 1965), p. 70.

of 1962 would alienate potential well-wishers all over the world? Why should it impose conditions on its entry into the United Nations when it is at last in sight?

Admittedly the signals emanating from Peking have not always been easy to interpret. As James Reston wrote recently in the *New York Times* (2–3 October 1965),

> China seems to be trying something new in the field of diplomacy. What she does is the opposite of what she says. What she fears she brings about. What she desires she blocks. It is all a little odd.

But there is something wrong about arguments which either deny a Western share in responsibility for the present situation, or regard Chinese foreign policy as in some way inexplicable or 'odd'. If it seems all China's fault, then perhaps we are too insensitive to the effect of our own actions. If it seems inexplicable, then we have obviously not tried hard enough to understand.

I intend to examine three fundamental themes in Chinese foreign policy as it has developed since the founding of the People's Republic. All three have become permanent features of Peking's outlook on the world, and there is no prospect of their modification in the foreseeable future. The West will therefore have to come to terms with them.

Rejection of Bipolarity

The first salient feature of Chinese foreign policy, which the Sino-Soviet dispute has thrown sharply into relief in recent years, is China's rejection of a bipolar approach to international relations by the Soviet Union and the United States. This is an area where China's foreign policy has apparently shifted most over the last fifteen years, from the decision in 1949 to 'lean to one side' (that of the Soviet Union), and the belief that no third road was open to China, to the rejection of the Soviet side and the pursuit of a uniquely Chinese road. I suspect, however, that even in 1949 China allied itself with the Soviet Union more for reasons of expediency than out of any conviction that the alliance would prove durable. This is not to under-estimate the strength of the communist leadership's ideological attachment to the cause of proletarian internationalism, but this must be balanced against the increasing evidence of anti-Soviet prejudice at that time even in the ranks of the central committee of the CCP. In 1949, China needed a 'reliable ally', to use Liu Shao-ch'i's phrase. At the height of the cold war, it would have been inconceivable for China to sit on the fence or to open its territory to the rivalries of both super-powers. Reliability rather than quantity of economic aid was again the main requirement stressed by the communist leaders for the reconstruction of their economy. Furthermore, at a time when China would be acutely vulnerable to military pressure from either super-power, alliance with one was essential in order to deter the other.

The possibility of an alliance, or even an informal understanding,

with the United States was foreclosed not only by the Chinese leaders' ideological stand but by recent history. While it is true that Russia's behaviour towards China had been as 'imperialist' as that of America and Britain in the past, it took place for the most part in peripheral areas—Manchuria, Mongolia, and the north-west—of which China's political elite had little direct experience. By contrast, the tangible evidence of Western imperialism was to be seen in the gunboats on the Yangtze, in the clubs on the Bund, and particularly in the areas of commerce and utilities, with which Mao and his colleagues had in their youth come into daily contact. Much of the inspiration behind the nationalist revolution of the 1920s had come from the Soviet Union; the object of nationalist struggle during the same period was the non-Soviet Western presence in China. American aid to the Nationalists during the civil war, while never sufficient to prevent their defeat, was more than enough to confirm communist suspicions, especially when contrasted with the 'hands-off' policy of the Soviet Union.

It is a sign of the blinkers which the cold war had imposed upon responsible opinion in the West in the early 50s that China's alliance with the Soviet Union should have been greeted with such widespread dismay. To most people in the West, alliance with Stalin meant subservience. As the *New York Times* commented editorially (18 August 1952):

> If Mao Tse-tung doesn't know what the Kremlin is doing, he is not wise enough to lead a nation. If he does know, and connives at it, he is not honourable enough to deserve the respect of his innocent followers.

The analogy with the so-called 'satellite' countries of eastern Europe was wide of the mark. The communist revolution in China had succeeded without the backing of the Red Army; Mao himself, unlike his predecessors, had gained his party's leadership without any endorsement from the Comintern in Moscow. China's geographical size and potential influence gave it rather more bargaining power with the Soviet Union than the 'satellites' enjoyed, although this was for the time being severely limited by the state of economic chaos to which it had been reduced by so many years of internal war. The Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance, was in fact concluded on 14 February 1950 after two and a half months of hard bargaining, and there are indications that the Chinese leaders had hoped for better terms than they secured, especially in economic aid, where they had to be content with a modest credit of US $300 million spread over five years.

Recent Chinese accounts trace the origins of the Sino-Soviet dispute to 1956, the year of the 20th CPSU congress and of Khrushchev's destalinisation. The same year is taken in most Western analyses as the starting point of the dispute. The story of Sino-Soviet relations between 1950 and 1956 is still virtually a *tabula rasa*, and much work has yet to be done on the subject. It can however be said with confidence that China's relationship with the Soviet Union in those years was

neither the honeymoon idyll as portrayed by Chinese propaganda, nor a period of Soviet domination as alleged in official American propaganda. A number of areas of tension in the alliance can already be identified; others would doubtless be revealed through the sort of close textual analysis which has been so successfully applied to the more recent period of Sino-Soviet relations. In two major areas of tension—economic aid and the question of Soviet privileges in Manchuria and Sinkiang—there was a marked improvement in 1954, after the death of Stalin. The Korean War was another bone of contention; first because China was not apparently privy to the decisions which led to its outbreak; second because Soviet military aid was grudgingly provided and insufficient in the first year of the war; and third over the bringing of the war to an end, which Stalin appears to have obstructed against Chinese wishes. Additional sources of disagreement included China's belief in the uniqueness of its revolutionary model and its application elsewhere in the underdeveloped world, Soviet tactics in the United Nations, which seemed at times to be designed more to keep China out than to secure its admission, and perhaps Soviet collusion in the Kao-Jao 'anti-party' plot of 1953.

Would the Sino-Soviet alliance have lasted as long as it did without the stimulus of international bipolarisation which the cold war provided? The answer is probably yes. The Soviet Union's relationship to China was one of teacher-pupil, with all the emotional overtones usually associated with it. For a certain limited time, the teacher has something useful to teach, and the pupil responds with an eagerness approaching hero-worship—the 'learn from the Soviet Union' euphoria which Mao personally inspired. There comes a time when the teacher outlives his usefulness. For China, this was when it became apparent that the conventional Soviet economic model was totally inadequate to bring it to the take-off point for rapid economic expansion, and that Khrushchev's alliance obligations to China would be sacrificed in the interests of greater Soviet-American understanding. This is when the hate component of the classic love-hate relationship between teacher and pupil becomes dominant, and the teacher himself begins to envy his pupil's precocious achievements. The cold war did not delay this process of disenchantment so much as intensify the relationship while it lasted, so that the eventual break-up was all the more extreme.

For those in the West who are accustomed to look at international relations entirely in terms of the European cold war, regarding events outside Europe simply as extensions of the Soviet-American equation, China's decision to operate independently of and in opposition to both the two super-powers at one and the same time appears as an act of supreme folly or arrogance. However, from China's point of view, the rejection of bipolarisation is an essential step in its maturation towards national independence. In this it is not alone. Its experience is common to the vast majority of the newly-emerging nations of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. It can even be seen in a modified version among the

traditional cold-war European allies of the two super-powers. This historical process of disentanglement from the European cold war is generally taken for granted among smaller nations. It is only because China is so much larger, and therefore more able to challenge the supremacy of Russia and America, that its quest for a separate identity is viewed with such alarm, as much in Moscow as in Washington.

The force of Nationalism

This brings us to the second combustible element which stokes the furnace of China's dynamic foreign policy—nationalism. The 1949 revolution was the culminating wave in the flood of nationalism which had swept over China for the past half-century. The fact that it was inspired by a communist philosophy does not detract from its essentially nationalistic nature any more than the totalitarian nature of Chiang Kai-shek's philosophy conflicted with the pronounced nationalism of the KMT government. The belief that communism and nationalism are incompatible or necessarily at loggerheads—a belief that was not shared by scholars or sober observers of the scene—stems from the early years of the cold war when a communist country like China was regarded as little more than a 'tool of Soviet imperialism'—to use Mr Acheson's phrase. In China's case, communism is manifestly not an alien ideology imposed from outside; indeed there is a close organic relationship between it and the political traditions of the society for which it caters.

The evidence of the pursuit of national interests in China's foreign policy is sufficiently obvious not to need elaboration. The point I wish to make here is that the emotive flavour of nationalism has been and still is exceptionally strong. It is a sort of giant-size chip on the shoulder which encapsulates a hundred years of humiliation and frustration at the hands of the Western powers. It was to be seen in the first flush of victory in 1949, when China, as Mao put it, had finally 'stood up' after years of being 'insulted' and of being thought of as 'uncultured'. Although deference to the Soviet Union was at that time tactically wise, the new leadership did not scruple to advocate 'the way of Mao Tse-tung' as a unique solution to the battle against imperialism, nor to insist that while Mao's brand of Marxism-Leninism coincided with that of Stalin, it had been arrived at 'independently' and 'creatively'. Many of the recent Chinese polemics in the Sino-Soviet dispute are characterised by the same prickly sense of national identity and of resentment at the insults and outrages—real or imagined—that Khrushchev inflicted upon the country. Khrushchev's sarcastic criticism of the people's communes and of China's economic backwardness appears to have rankled as much as his more tangible sanctions in cutting off military and financial aid. China's determination to become a nuclear power and break the Soviet-American monopoly is at least partly motivated by a feeling of outraged nationalism at the Soviet refusal to assist in the process. One Chinese document put it in these words:

> Is not China very poor and backward? Yes, it is. The Soviet leaders say, how can the Chinese be qualified to manufacture nuclear weapons when they eat watery soup out of a common bowl and do not even have pants to wear? The Soviet leaders are perhaps too hasty in deriding China for its backwardness. They may or may not have judged right. But in any case, even if we Chinese people are unable to produce an atom bomb for a hundred years, we will neither crawl to the baton of the Soviet leaders nor kneel before the nuclear blackmail of the US imperialists.[2]

Another point to be emphasised is the part which this sense of outraged nationalism plays in China's hostility to the United States. American 'aggression' against China is seen in Peking not as a comparatively recent development of Soviet-American cold war strategy, but as stemming from the century-old tradition of Western imperialism against the colonial countries. The Chinese communists have always denied that the containment of international or Soviet communism as such is the reason for America's military presence in Asia. They describe the containment policy as a 'smokescreen' intended to obscure America's real objective of colonising the Asian countries and of overthrowing China. Similarly, America's alleged instigation of the Korean War was regarded not as a flanking attack against the international communist movement but as a direct assault on China's territorial integrity. This attitude is summed up in the old classical phrase 'when the lips are gone, the teeth are cold', which applies to the whole range of China's experience at the hands of imperialism, from the annexation of neighbouring states and the spheres of influence of the nineteenth century to the war in Vietnam today.

The exclusion of China from the United Nations has been another potent source of humiliation, for which the Chinese have compensated by denying that the organisation as at present constituted has any value. (A reconstituted UN, including China, would *ipso facto* be another matter.) The UN resolution branding China as an aggressor was a further slap in the face, whose reversal Marshal Ch'en Yi has not surprisingly called for before China will consent to take its place in the United Nations.

China as a World Power

China's rejection of bipolarity in international affairs, and its desire to regain its national identity in its fullest scope, made it inevitable that it would see itself, and that others would see it, as a potential world power ranking with the United States and the Soviet Union. In view of its population, size, and influence, it could hardly be otherwise. The area where it expects and is expected to play this role most effectively is the 'third world' with which it has most in common, and the growth of Chinese influence in this area dates back to the Bandung Conference of

[2] Statement by the Chinese Government spokesman, 1 September 1963 (*Peking Review*, 6 September 1963).

1955, when China began for the first time to develop a fully articulated and independent foreign policy of its own. Most Western accounts of Chou En-lai's behaviour at Bandung emphasise that he skilfully made China appear more 'moderate' to the outside world. This is only partly true; the basic principles of present Chinese foreign policy—rejection of the peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism, support for movements of national liberation, and the need for Afro-Asian solidarity in the face of colonialism—were incorporated in Chou En-lai's speeches although in more moderate terms than are now used. Of equal importance to the Afro-Asian participants in the Conference was the fact that China had emerged as independent of the Soviet Union and an Asian power in its own right. Bandung marked the beginning of Chinese rivalry with the Soviet Union (and America) for influence in the third world.

China's progress towards an independent great-power status had brought about a marked difference of attitude towards it between the European powers and those of the third world. The latter are sometimes reproached with failing to identify the Chinese threat which the West thinks it can see so clearly. However, the great Western powers see China as a rival to their established positions. Any increase in its strength and influence automatically diminishes theirs. This attitude is partly shared by those of its neighbours and others in the third world who still have close ties with the West. But in general China's emergence is viewed with at least qualified approval as an example of the success of non-European and anti-colonial nationalism which sets the pattern for others who are in the same boat. Those who desire to thwart China from becoming a great power are mainly confined to the 'free world' and its dependent allies, for they alone see China's emergence predominantly in the context of the cold war.

The 'Chinese Threat'

While there is some confusion in the West as to the exact nature of China's foreign policy objectives, there is general agreement that they are a bad thing whatever they are. This is an area of international affairs where lack of expert knowledge is not an obstacle to sweeping *ex cathedra* statements. These can be readily found by a random sampling of official American—and Soviet—pronouncements on the question of China. Indeed, there is a close parallel between some of the wilder Soviet allegations, such as the claim that China is the principal supplier of the world opium market, and those which are assiduously spread by the CIA. Another example is the belief that China is pursuing a 'racialist' foreign policy, simply because it seeks and meets with support principally among the non-European third world. It would be equally true to say that adherence to the Atlantic Alliance by Britain reveals HMG's support for a policy of Aryan racialism.

Allegations like these are not very important in themselves, but the climate of opinion which allows them to flourish is not conducive to a

rational assessment of China's foreign policy. McCarthyism was not typical of responsible American opinion in the early 1950s towards the Soviet Union, but its existence allowed the scales of judgment to be heavily weighted towards irrational and exaggerated fears of the 'Soviet threat'. Similarly, the terms of reference according to which the majority of objective assessments of Chinese foreign policy are made, are often compromised by a number of *a priori* assumptions which have no basis in fact. Unless we can bring ourselves to identify clearly the irrational components in our attitude towards China, we are unlikely to get very far.

To begin with two of the charges most frequently made against China, that it has not yet 'renounced the use of force' as an instrument of policy, and that its actions have proved it to be an 'aggressive' power.

As far as I am aware, no nation has as yet renounced the use of force *per se*. It is considered permissible if used in self-defence (whether pre-emptive or after the event), or in 'internal matters' (a definition which Britain extends to include its colonial territories, and which the United States extends to include the whole of Latin America). Furthermore, it is generally agreed that the people of a country have the right to overthrow their government by force if necessary without outside interference. Traditionally, we condemn such people as 'rebels' if they fail, but congratulate them if they succeed. China, with a greater degree of consistency, approves in advance of all 'movements of national liberation'.

It is common knowledge that Britain, America, France, the Soviet Union, and many other countries have on a variety of occasions invoked the use of force in circumstances which are contrary to the UN Charter. Moreover, the possession of nuclear weapons by the great powers, and the intention to use them if necessary either pre-emptively or even in response to a conventional attack, does not suggest the renunciation of force. China, as it happens, is the only nuclear power to declare that it will not use nuclear weapons first. But in any case, what is the point of calling for verbal renunciations? It is surely incontestable that all great powers will use force on occasion when they wish to or can get away with it. Several examples should be fresh in our minds, and they do not concern China.

The charge of aggression against China is more precise, and is backed up by three concrete examples—Tibet, Korea, and the Sino-Indian border conflict of 1962. In the Chinese view, all three examples fall within the definition of the legitimate use of force in self-defence, or as a pre-emptive measure, or as an instrument of internal policy. Tibet is regarded as part of China where it is entitled to act as it pleases; it is also strategically vital for the protection of the western frontier. Chinese intervention in Korea was prompted by fear that the crossing of the 38th parallel by the 'United Nations' forces would endanger the security of China's eastern flank and threaten its industrial base in Manchuria. The

border attack against India in 1962 was felt to be pre-emptive—India's rather naive plans for an offensive of its own were widely reported in the Western press at the time. China's action demonstrated the strength of its commitment to the border, and its determination to teach India a lesson; it did not reveal a desire to take over the whole of Assam.

Morally, we may regard China's actions in these three cases as unjustified, but we must recognise that they were undertaken for specific reasons, not because Mao or anyone else is innately 'aggressive'. We cannot automatically deduce from China's behaviour in Tibet, Korea, or the Sino-Indian border what it is likely to do in Vietnam, Thailand, or Malaysia. Some regimes have in the past displayed a propensity for aggression as a way of life. Hitler's Germany and Japan in the 1930s are the obvious examples. They were branded 'aggressive' at the time by those who correctly forecast the purpose behind their military preparations and analysed the meaning behind their expansionist dogmas. But nothing that China has said or done reveals a desire for territorial gain in itself.

Military Expansion

The fundamental purpose of American and British policy in Asia—particularly South-East Asia—is variously explained in terms of the 'containment of China', the 'domino theory', or—to use the latest euphemism coined by Mr Patrick Gordon Walker—the 'creation of a natural balance of power'. All these explanations mean the same thing, that China must be deterred from pursuing an otherwise inevitable course of military and/or political expansion.

The military aspect is the weakest part of this argument. China has shown no signs of wishing to acquire the military capability with which to carry out physical expansion. Its armed forces are ill-equipped to mount any sustained operation beyond Chinese frontiers, and their equipment, training, and deployment suggests an intense pre-occupation with defence. Its navy has no offensive capability to speak of, and that of its air force is inconsiderable. (This assessment is shared by almost every Western expert in the field.)

China regards American 'encirclement' as posing the greatest threat to its security. America's presence in Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, Taiwan, Korea, the Philippines, and Japan has been regarded for the past fifteen years as a 'spearhead' for possible invasion of the Chinese mainland. It is no good arguing from our Western vantage-point that such an invasion is out of the question. The Chinese leaders think it is at least a credible contingency, and it will take a lot to convince them otherwise. China's military strategy and planning is based on the hypothesis of an American nuclear attack followed up by a conventional invasion. (The secret army documents recently released by Washington—the *Kung-tso T'ung-hsun*—make it clear that this is a high-level policy and not merely propaganda.) It is this belief—in addition to motives of prestige—which has led China to attach top priority to becoming a nuclear power.

It hopes eventually to acquire at least a minimum or 'trip-wire' nuclear capability with which to deter American action. Meanwhile, the development of the nation-wide militia, recently intensified after having come to a halt during the aftermath of the Great Leap Forward, is intended to cope with the effects of a conventional invasion.

Once again, the acquisition of nuclear weapons does not make China any more 'aggressive' than any other nuclear power, and it is sheer hypocrisy for those countries who began the nuclear arms race to condemn China for joining in. Those who argue that China, unlike its more responsible nuclear betters, would have no scruples about unleashing nuclear war on the world, should ask themselves whether the Chinese are really prepared to court the massive destruction which such a war would bring on them. This is a very different matter from claiming—as China does—that it could 'survive' a nuclear war. Every self-respecting nuclear power has made similar claims—especially when it is still in a position of inferiority. As Morton Halperin has shown in his excellent study of *China and the Bomb*, China is well aware of the devastating consequences of nuclear war and extremely sensitive to the implications of the strategic balance of power.

The prospect of Chinese 'nuclear blackmail' is often raised in the West. It is regrettably true that nuclear weapons are one of the factors which contribute to a country's status and influence in the world. But again it is incumbent upon those who believe that China is in a different and more dangerous category from the other nuclear powers to specify how, why, and where, China might use or threaten to use nuclear weapons. It is difficult to envisage any Chinese foreign policy objective which (a) could be realised only through the use or threatened use of nuclear weapons, and (b) would be worth the serious risks attendant upon such action.

Why in any case should China want to expand into Asia? Short of intensive genocide, there is no part of Asia which is both sufficiently unpopulated and economically desirable to provide a net gain for Chinese occupation. The political and military disadvantages of any such expansion would be crippling for China. Its own experience teaches it that revolution cannot be imposed from outside, and that occupation of a hostile populace is bound to fail. Does anyone believe that China would—for instance—occupy a future 'power vacuum' in Indochina for the sake of five million tons per annum of surplus grain? As for the notion that China will one day walk down the island chain of South-East Asia to Australia, a map and a pair of callipers should reveal its inherent absurdity.

Political Expansion

The question of the expansion of China's *political* influence in Asia—and indeed in the world—brings us back within the bounds of rational argument. Here it is clear that China does present a significant challenge to the existing authority and influence of the other great powers.

It is also clear that a frustrated great power, as China is today, will for some time be an unsettling factor on the international scene. What is questionable, however, is the assumption that China poses a 'threat' to world stability in excess of the potential threat presented by any major power possessing a sizeable amount of military and political strength. Whatever the nature of this threat, it is even more questionable whether it can be averted by the old-fashioned policy of containment on the anti-Soviet model. The problem is not how to thwart China's growing influence, but how to come to terms with it.

It is important in the first place not to exaggerate China's desire to behave as a great power on the world scene. It has shown no inclination to acquire the kind of political and economic commitments overseas which Russia and America are prepared to assume. The classic economic incentives for colonial adventures do not apply to a country like China whose economy rests on an agricultural basis. For the foreseeable future, China is likely to be much more preoccupied with economic construction at home than with empire-building abroad.

However, the competitive instinct of great-power rivalry may well involve China in areas overseas where it has no particular interest. It will be especially anxious to do so at the expense of the two great powers whom it holds responsible for its present position of isolation. To this extent, China's foreign policy is a function of American and Soviet policies as well as of its own, and a diminution of tension with America and the Soviet Union should limit the number of areas and occasions where they come into conflict with China.

This is not to deny the theoretical importance of China's commitment to the cause of revolution and anti-imperialism. It is a doctrine which coincides with China's two main concerns in the foreign policy field, opposition to America and rivalry with the Soviet Union. But in practice, doctrinal requirements are set firmly within the context of national interest, and China's support for revolution overseas has been cautious, limited, and expressed mainly in terms of propaganda.

The subordination of doctrine to national interest is seen most clearly in South-East Asia. Here China's main objective is the exclusion or limitation of America's hostile presence in the area. It follows that it is interested in securing stability in Asia, for lack of stability leads inevitably to the intrusion of foreign influence. To take a recent example, the break-up of the Indian sub-continent could only bring about the extension of American and possibly Soviet involvement. There is no reason to believe that China wished the Indo-Pakistan war to continue, and indeed its manoeuvres and ultimatums had the effect of inhibiting both India and Pakistan from continuing to fight.

It is significant that China has so far intervened or given aid only to communist movements or governments in Laos, North Vietnam, and North Korea, the three countries bordering on China where the United States has itself intervened. Thailand is an interesting marginal case. Until this year China refrained from support for local insurgents, but has

now decided to sponsor a newly-formed national liberation movement. This decision coincides with the rapid increase in America's use of Thailand as a base for airborne operations against Vietnam. In neutralist countries like Burma or Cambodia, China maintains good relations with their existing governments rather than exploit the existing potential for communist insurrection.

Indeed, it is doubtful whether China would like to see the 'spread of communism' throughout South-East Asia, if it meant the emergence of a strong communist rival. China has shown no signs of supporting North Vietnam's objective of a Greater Vietnam, incorporating all of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Nor would China necessarily welcome the absorption of Malaysia by a communist Indonesia.

'National Liberation'

I am not seeking to rule out Chinese support for revolutionary movements in Asia or elsewhere, where this can be done safely and without harming Chinese interests. We should however recognise that these movements do not in themselves depend upon Chinese support. They exist wherever there is gross political, social, or economic inequality, in countries which are subservient to American control, or which are infected by a sense of frustrated nationalism. These movements are attracted by the revolutionary model which China offers; the *Selected Works* of Mao Tse-tung are as potent a source of 'subversion' as any amount of military aid from Peking.

Such movements cannot be averted by the containment of China. America's commitment to Vietnam has had precisely the opposite effect. Originally designed to complete China's containment and to preserve South Vietnam as a Western bastion, it has brought into being both an indigenous liberation movement and the involvement of North Vietnam and China. Not only do our military commitments in Asia compel China to assume commitments and hostile postures of its own in response, but they create the social and political conditions in which nationalist movements will assume a communist complexion. Left to their own devices, Asian countries like Indonesia, Burma, and Cambodia have evolved a variety of indigenous political forms. Those which are dragged into the cold war with China find themselves presented with an arbitrary choice between totalitarian democracy *à la Saigon*, or communism *à la Pékin*, neither of which may be what they want. But if they are compelled to choose, they will choose the latter.

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If we are to come to terms with the existence of China as a world power, then we must accept two inescapable conclusions. First, we must accept that the days of American and British influence in Asia are numbered, and that a 'natural' balance cannot be artificially created by sophisticated weaponry and foreign troops. China's influence, on the other

hand, is bound to increase. It is this, not Chinese expansion or aggression, which at present we seek to deter. As Dr Kennedy has commented in his study of *The Security of Southern Asia*, our commitment in Asia stems from 'a determination to prevent China from re-asserting her traditional influence in the areas on her southern border'. This is neither a legitimate objective, nor is it going to succeed. All we can do is to modify the *form* which the growth of Chinese influence takes by removing Asia as far as possible from the cold war arena, and by allowing the natural balance to emerge in less of a crisis atmosphere.

Secondly, until at least some of China's legitimate grievances are remedied, and as long as it is regarded with such excessive fear and hostility, it will be a profoundly disturbing influence in world affairs from our point of view. The alternative—a rapprochement with China—will be a slow and painful process. And the initiative will have to come from us, since China as the weaker and aggrieved party is psychologically inhibited from making the first move, and has been driven into a position of extreme rigidity by years of hostile containment.

There is unfortunately little to suggest that any steps towards a rapprochement are being seriously considered. On the contrary, the tendency today is towards the transference of the cold war from Europe —where it is clearly obsolescent—to Asia. Unless the West learns in time from its mistakes in the old cold war, the consequences of this new cold war will be even more disastrous than anything that has happened so far.