THE ROLE OF THE NUCLEAR FACTOR
IN THE SINO-SOVET SPLIT

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DECLARATION

This sub-thesis is my own work and all sources used have been acknowledged.

Xu, Ling zh

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Xu, Ling-zhi
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Introduction

Andrei Gromyko, a veteran Foreign Minister of the USSR, shocked the world last winter with a particular revelation in his memoirs: the late Chairman Mao Zedong of China had a plan to lure United States troops into the heartland of China and then wipe them out with atomic weapons made with Soviet help.1 We may question the truth of Gromyko's memoirs. The Chinese Foreign Ministry has already done so. But the story of Soviet cooperation in China's nuclear industry, both for peaceful and military purposes, cannot be denied. It is one that tells why the Soviets and Chinese became close allies in the early 50s and why they drew apart several years later. It is the contention of this writer that the Sino-Soviet dispute cannot be fully understood without giving due weight to the disagreements the Chinese and Soviets had over nuclear technology issues.

This sub-thesis proposes to examine the role of disagreements over the transfer of nuclear technology to China in shaping the Sino-Soviet split. The nuclear issues increasingly aggravated the Sino-Soviet alliance and added heat to the political and ideological conflicts between Beijing and Moscow. It is argued that

the Sino-Soviet alliance formed in 1950 was a tenuous one brought about by a common fear of American power in the Pacific, rather than by any genuine fraternity. This alliance was somewhat reinforced by Mao's ideological commitments which made him chose to "lean on one side", namely the side of the Communist bloc led by the Soviet Union in the Cold War between East and West. Nevertheless, aid agreements under the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance, especially the nuclear aid agreement secretly signed in 1957 between the Soviet Union and China were not products of shared ideology or Soviet generosity but the results of persistent Chinese demands to have the Soviets serve some of China's crucial domestic needs. The Soviet refusal in June 1959 to share its nuclear technology with China highlighted for China its subordinate position in the Sino-Soviet alliance and pushed the Sino-Soviet relations to the edge of a deep split in early 1960.

Based on this argument the present study is divided into four chapters:

Chapter One outlines the history of the Sino-Soviet relationship from 1949, the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), to 1955. It studies the

3. See note in Chapter Two.
motives behind the actions of the two Communist parties, particularly concerning Soviet military, scientific and technical assistance to China.

Chapter Two covers the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1956 and the signing of the secret agreement on Soviet nuclear aid to China in 1957. It traces the differences between the CPSU and the Communist Party of China (CPC) over global strategy, intra-bloc relations, the pace and scope of de-Stalinization, the permissible diversity of methods used in building socialism and Communism, and the fundamental question of socialist-camp leadership. It also attempts to de-mystify Khrushchev's motive in yielding at least partially to Chinese demands and stepping up Soviet assistance to the Chinese nuclear program in 1957.

Chapter Three focuses on the nuclear question: Soviet military capabilities, differing perceptions of the Soviet and Chinese leaderships on the threat from the West, and the ways to meet the perceived threat.

Chapter Four traces the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations from the open dispute in 1960 till the downfall of Khrushchev and the first Chinese nuclear weapon test in 1964.
Chapter I

The founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 by no means marked an end of China's vulnerability as a nation. China was a country extremely underdeveloped by Western standards, with an economy in shambles. Although the poorly equipped Chinese People's Liberation Army was victorious over the Nationalist Kuomintang (KMT), it still had not conquered the KMT forces on Taiwan, an opponent of considerable potency enjoying the support of the United States.

China urgently needed a source of economic, scientific and technical aid, and it urgently needed an ally to help deter against "counterrevolution" and the "imperialist threat". There was nowhere to turn to but the Soviet Union.

In December 1949, soon after the establishment of the PRC, Mao went to Moscow, his first trip outside China, to seek an alliance with the Soviet Union. It took two months before the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance was finally signed by Mao and Stalin. As Mao later said: "Even after the success of the revolution, Stalin feared that China would be like Yugoslavia and I would turn into a Tito...He did not wish to sign the treaty."1

1. Mao's speech to the Tenth Plenum of the Eighth
difficulty encountered by the two parties in reaching an agreement stemmed from the suspicion with which each viewed the other.

The Chinese had bitter memories of Stalin's treatment of the CPC. Ever since the founding of the CPC, the attitude of the Soviets towards the CPC was highly ambiguous. They were skeptical of the revolutionary potential of the minuscule Chinese "proletariat" of the 20s and hence advised the CPC to cooperate with the KMT who, in 1927, turned on the CPC and other elements of the organization's left wing and pushed the CPC to the verge of extinction. During the early 30s, Stalin turned a blind eye to the extermination campaigns launched by Chiang Kai-shek against Mao's Communist forces. The fifth and largest conducted in 1934 with the aid and advice of officers from Nazi Germany, forced the epic 6000 mile Long March to Yenan. Indeed, Soviet support to the KMT continued until 1949.

In 1945, having beaten the Japanese in Manchuria, the Soviets removed much industrial machinery, which they regarded as legitimate war booty. Instead of handing Manchuria over to the Communists, as they could have

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done, the Soviets tried to negotiate joint Sino-Soviet management of key industries with the KMT.3

As the civil war continued and the outcome became clearer, the Soviet Union's preference was for a partition along the line of the Yangtse. In the last months before the CPC's final victory, the Soviet Union hastily concluded new agreements with the KMT forces for special mining rights in Sinkiang and with the Chinese North-east People's Government for trade.4

Yet, in 1950, China under the new Communist leadership was still militarily vulnerable and technically backward. Only with a powerful military ally to ensure peace could China devote its efforts to its urgent reconstruction. Thus the doubtful actions of the Soviet Union in Manchuria were therefore regarded in the words of Mao as "small matters compared with Russia's sacrifices in the war with Japan and with her helping liberate Manchuria."5

Stalin had good reasons to treat his Chinese counterpart with caution since Mao had risen to power in the period of least Soviet influence in the CPC's

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5. Ibid., p. 11.
affairs, whether political, strategic, or financial. Moreover, throughout the late 30's, Mao pursued his struggle against the Soviet-trained and Comintern-oriented faction inside the CPC. He rejected what he called "abstract Marxism" and demanded instead the adaptation of Marxism to Chinese conditions.6 During the "Rectification Campaign" of 1942-43, the "28 Bolsheviks" and their followers, the pro-Soviet elements, were purged. 7

As late as 1946, the CPC still hoped for a friendly relationship with the United States that would enable it to neutralize the KMT forces and maintain independence of Moscow. Throughout 1945 and early 1946, the CPC leaders made extraordinary bids for better relations with the United States.8 Even till

8. Davies, Jr., John P., Dragon by the Tail, N.Y. W.W. Norton, 1972, pp.321-404. Mao told John Stewart Service: "China’s greatest postwar need is economic development. She lacks the capitalistic foundation necessary to carry this out alone. Her own living standards are so low they cannot be further depressed to provide the needed capital. America and China complement each other economically...America needs an export market for heavy industry and specific manufactures. She also needs an outlet for capital investment. China needs to build up light industries to supply her own market and raise living standards... America is not only the most suitable country to assist this economic development of China, she is also the only country fully able to participate". Cited by Allen Whiting in Testimony to House Foreign Relations Committee in 1970, printed in "China and U.S. Foreign Policy", Congressional
the summer of 1949, Mao, while favouring some collaboration with Russia, nevertheless wanted to pursue a more independent line. He particularly desired a new relationship with the U.S. in order to obtain American economic aid and to avoid lopsided dependence on Stalin.9

However, despite Stalin's fears of China's unwillingness to become a compliant satellite and the possibility of China becoming a dissident, the unification of China under a Communist party, and therefore potentially rival leadership, was a fait accompli. Stalin's choice was between alliance with a possible rival and the U.S. encirclement of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, Stalin also wanted to obviate the possibility of Sino-American collusion.

On the positive side, the proposed alliance would have increasing propaganda value for the Soviets in the heightened East-West tension at a time when the Soviet Union remained manifestly inferior. (The Soviet Union had a small, crude, just developing nuclear arsenal but as yet no secure means of delivering that arsenal, as against an opponent that possessed the capacity to destroy her.) The alliance would give pause, as the

Soviets hoped, to the capitalists and then enhance the credibility of Soviet deterrence. It would also strengthen, at least temporarily, the Soviet Union's status as the leader of the Communist bloc, as it could show itself as selflessly offering comradely help to its weak neighbour.

We see, therefore, that both Mao and Stalin entered the discussions, fully aware of the possible benefits of the proposed treaty. Thus, in the case of both parties, the common antagonism toward and fear of the United States underwrote all other considerations in nurturing the alliance.

The Alliance officially laid the foundations for the period of Sino-Soviet cooperation which was to follow. Though the terms were not particularly favourable to China, the Treaty did promise China a Soviet "nuclear umbrella" against an attack by Japan or any of its allies, meaning the United States. This reflects the suspicion of both China and the Soviet Union that the U.S. was planning to assert its power in Asia, potentially through rearmament of Japan. In addition to Soviet strategic assurances, China was to receive military, technical and economic assistance.

The first phase of Sino-Soviet military cooperation was marked by the harshness of the terms imposed upon the
Under the terms of the 1950 aid agreements, China received $300 million of assistance in the form of loans which were to be repaid by China with exports of raw materials, thus tying Chinese extractive industries to Soviet processing facilities and Soviet markets, and deepening China's economic dependence on the Soviet Union. Even more exploitative was the joint-stock rare minerals corporation set up near Urumchi in Sinkiang province. Soviet domination of this venture resulted in all of the uranium production returning to the USSR.

The unexpected U.S. intervention in the Korean War shifted the Sino-Soviet military relationship into a new phase. Unwilling to clash directly with U.S. forces, Stalin called upon the PLA to serve as his proxy to make good Soviet miscalculations and to rescue the North Korean Communist government. In return for the successful Chinese intervention in Korea, Stalin extended new offers of military assistance to the PRC. Instead of receiving only obsolescent Soviet La-9 and La-11 piston-engined fighters and Tu-2 twin piston-engined light bombers, the Chinese received MiG jet

10. Zagoria, op.cit., p.150. "In the early 50’s, Stalin imposed an unequal treaty on China which had many exploitative aspects."
fighters. By December 1951, China had about 700 MiG-15s. By 1952, it had Il-28 jet light bombers and later, at about the end of the war, it also possessed some Tu-4's (B-29-type piston-engined medium bombers).13

The rise in the Chinese bargaining position, however, did not change the nature of Soviet military aid to China. Stalin continued in his effort to keep the PRC in a condition of dependence by refusing to provide China assistance in military production. The Chinese were held on a short leash: The MiG's and Ilyushins, and the few obsolescent Soviet submarines and destroyers, would need to be replaced in a few years, and their replacements could come only from the USSR.14 Stalin could not directly prevent the Chinese from building their own military industry, but he could withhold assistance while arguing that it was more economical to buy Soviet-produced weapons. And by saddling the Chinese with outlays as heavy as they could bear, Stalin further held back the Chinese from building an independent military establishment. To ensure the attainment of his goal, Stalin even forced the Chinese to pay for the weapons used in the Korean

14. Ibid., p. 86.
A strong challenge to the credibility of the Soviet deterrent to a U.S. attack on China was issued by President Eisenhower in 1953, in the form of a covert threat to employ nuclear weapons against mainland China if a truce were not soon reached in Korea. Shortly thereafter, on 24 February, China's leading nuclear physicist arrived in Moscow. Very probably, at this meeting the Chinese requested outright the immediate transfer of nuclear weapons and delivery systems, accompanied by a strong assurance of Soviet support. The death of Stalin shortly followed, thereby leaving the question of how much support the Soviet Union would offer China for the new Soviet leadership to decide.

15. Letter of CPC CC to CPSU CC, February 29, 1964, People's Daily, May 9, 1964. '...As for the Soviet loans to China, it must be pointed out that China used them mostly for the purchase of war material from the Soviet Union, the greater part of which was used up in the war to resist US aggression and aid Korea. In the war against US aggression, the Korean people carried by far the heaviest burden and sustained by far the greatest losses. The Chinese people, too, made great sacrifices and incurred vast military expenses. The Chinese Communist Party has always considered that this was the Chinese people's burden internationalist duty and that it is nothing to boast of. For many years we have been paying the principal and interest on these Soviet loans, which account for a considerable part of our yearly exports to the Soviet Union. Thus even the war material supplied to China in the war to resist US aggression and aid Korea has not been given gratis....'


17. Ibid.
It soon became apparent that Stalin's successors were no more willing than he had been to risk a nuclear confrontation with the United States over Korea or anything else. Indeed, in Chinese eyes, the new Soviet leadership seemed even less inclined than Stalin to take the risk of war with the United States. Lacking Soviet support, China was forced to sign an agreement with the United Nations. China lost 200,000 soldiers including POWs, in addition to bearing the expenses of the war. China thus suffered again from its dependence on the Soviet Union.

In September-October of 1954, a high-level Soviet delegation headed by Nikita Khrushchev, the then First Secretary of the CPSU, Nikolai Bulganin, Defence Minister, and Anastas Mikoyan, Minister for Trade, went to Beijing. In an effort to reduce tensions which resulted partially from Stalin's gross mistreatment of the PRC, Khrushchev, in his message of greeting on the eve of the fifth anniversary of the PRC, called the PRC a "great power" and declared that "after the October Socialist Revolution, the victory of the Chinese people's revolution is the most outstanding event in world history," with "immense" significance for the peoples of Asia. He praised the Chinese for having "creatively applied" Marxism-Leninism and proclaimed that "the USSR and the PRC are the invulnerable bastion
of the camp of peace, democracy, and socialism."19

In addition, the Soviets made supplementary agreements to the September 1953 Sino-Soviet Agreement Relating to Soviet Aid for Ninety-one Additional Industrial Enterprises in China. The October 1954 agreements provided for the return of Port Arthur by 31 May, 1955, and the transfer of full ownership of the exploitative joint-stock companies in Sinkiang to the PRC by 1 January, 1955.20 Offers of long-term industrial credit of $130 million, and more importantly technical assistance in developing peaceful atomic power were also extended.21

The new Soviet program of "scientific and technical assistance" to China for the development of "atomic energy for peaceful purposes" started in early 1955. From the Chinese point of view, this last offer from Moscow represented a long-term opportunity to develop an independent Chinese nuclear capability and hope of

19. Ibid.
20. The joint-stock companies of the same nature in East Europe were also to be abolished. See Oil and the Romanian State, by Maurice Pearton, Oxford University Press, 1971, pp.273-286.
21. On 17 January, 1955, Moscow announced that it had made appropriate proposals to Poland, East Germany, Rumania, Czechoslovakia and China that the Soviet Union would extend them scientific and technological assistance in connection with the utilization of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. "A Chronology of Events: Ten Years of New China (II)", Beijing Review, 1 October, 1959, p. 25.
liberating the PRC from its condition of strategic dependence. Progress in this direction quickly followed. In February 1955 a chemical separation plant was set up in Sinkiang with Soviet aid, though the Russians for the time being probably returned the enriched fuel to their own reactors. In April an Institute for Atomic Energy was established in Beijing, and Moscow agreed to supply it with an experimental heavy water reactor. On 29 April the Soviets signed an agreement providing China with a reactor, cyclotron, fissionable material and required technical assistance. Soon after, Chinese scientists and technicians were trained at the Dubna non-military research centre near Moscow.

It should be noted that Khrushchev, while making concessions to China in return for its support in his internal struggle for power, by no means trusted the Chinese. Like his predecessor, Khrushchev also desired to maintain China's strategic dependence upon the Soviet deterrent, and thereby to exert an influence on Chinese foreign policy. As early as 1955, if not earlier, he began to view China as "the biggest problem for the Soviet Union". He even told Chancellor

24. Liu, Xiao, Eight Years in the Soviet Union as Ambassador, in Chinese, the CPC History Archives Press, May 1986, p.95. "In September 1955, while
Adenauer of the Federal Republic of Germany in a private talk while the latter was paying a visit to the USSR in 1955, that China was the biggest problem for the Soviet Union. Khrushchev’s suspicion of the Chinese was seen to grow with the emerging disagreements between him and Mao over ideological and strategic issues. Events during 1956 began to manifest the stress in Sino-Soviet relations.

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taking a’ walk in the garden with visiting Chancellor Adenauer from the Federal Republic of Germany, Khrushchev told Adenauer that China was the biggest problem for the Soviet Union. He then added: 'we can solve this problem only with great difficulties.'
Chapter Two

The single most important event of 1956 that had great impact on the international communist movement, particularly the Sino-Soviet alliance, was the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, which was held in February 1956. By then, Khrushchev had reached a very commanding position, though not yet supremacy, within the Soviet hierarchy.1

Khrushchev opened the congress with a formal General Report and in the course of it made a secret speech on Stalin. In his General Report, Khrushchev made clear three points. First of all, he stated that war between Communism and capitalism was no longer inevitable, because the "mighty social and political forces" possessed by the Communist bloc countries would deter the imperialists from unleashing an attack.

Therefore, peaceful coexistence between the Communist and non-Communist worlds could be conceived as a long-term policy, or a "fundamental principle", rather than a mere tactic for short-term survival. There was no alternative to peaceful coexistence. The struggle between Communism and capitalism would shift more and

more into peaceful economic competition. This was Khrushchev's second point.

Lastly peaceful transition to socialism in many states was now possible as the imperialists would be less ready to oppose national liberation movements by violent means.2

In a word, Khrushchev reversed a fundamental premise of traditional Communist ideology at the 20th Congress. These modifications, translated into strategic calculations, meant that it was both necessary and possible to realize the triumph of world Communism without resort to an armed holocaust.

The new Soviet global strategic line enunciated at the 20th Congress was not at all acceptable to the Chinese. First of all, the Chinese did not rule out war with capitalist countries, although they believed that a world war could be avoided. They argued, "It is one thing to prevent a world war and another to eliminate all wars. Imperialism and reactionaries are the sources of war. In conditions where imperialism and reactionaries still exist, it is possible that wars of one kind or another may occur."3 What they meant was

2. For the text of Khrushchev's speech at the 20th Congress of the CPSU, see Pravda, 15 February, 1956.
3. "The Differences Between Comrade Togliatti and Us", People's Daily, 31 December, 1962, and
that it would be possible to eliminate all wars and to reach "a world without war" only after the imperialist system was overthrown.

Secondly, the Chinese saw the world situation changing in favour of the socialist countries. Mao's well-known analysis of the world situation given at the meeting of Chinese students and trainees in Moscow in 1957, was "the East wind prevails over the West wind" and "the forces of socialism are overwhelmingly superior to the forces of imperialism." So Communists should not be afraid of war but "make up minds" and "fight to finish". Their argument was that only resolute and united action by the Socialist camp could prevent nuclear war, not efforts to appease the western powers.

Finally, "peaceful transition to socialism" was not seen by the Chinese as the best way for national liberation. Communist governments could be established only by revolution, not by a peaceful takeover of power, as capitalists would always use force to keep their rule. These views on the question of peace and war, and "transition to socialism" were firmly held by the Chinese then, though not voiced publicly until two


years later. As a matter of fact, the difference in ideology between the Chinese and the Soviets was one of the major factors underlying the Sino-Soviet dispute.

Before the 20th Congress was over, Khrushchev made a secret speech. In the speech, Khrushchev denounced Stalin for his "crimes" against his own colleagues in the CPSU and the Red Army command. Khrushchev's unveiling of Stalin's crimes and megalomania, without any previous discussion with the Chinese and other Communist parties, annoyed the Chinese immensely. Disagreements were voiced publicly, although with caution, soon after the congress.

In the article "On the Historical Experiences of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" published in April, the Chinese defended Stalin by stating that:

After Lenin's death, as the chief leader of the party and the state, he (Stalin) creatively applied and developed Marxism-Leninism. In the struggle to defend the legacy of Leninism and against its enemies... Stalin expressed the will and wishes of the people and proved himself to be an outstanding Marxist-Leninist fighter.


The CPC felt an urgent need to limit the attack on Stalin. Their desire to limit the attack was certainly not for sentimental reasons, as the CPC had plenty to complain about when it came to Kremlin interference. What they feared was that grave consequences would ensue in the Communist world from Khrushchev's de-Stalinisation campaign.

In principle, the CPC did not believe in control over one socialist state by another, even by the Soviet Union, and particularly not when the Soviet leadership was one that had just made itself guilty of serious departures from what the CPC regarded as sound policy. But the CPC had no desire to see a disruption of the Warsaw Pact, nor an end to Soviet leadership in Eastern Europe where matters of foreign policy were concerned. It wanted to maintain the unity of the Communist world, although allowing for some decentralization of Communist power which had been growing since Stalin's last years. In other words, the CPC merely wanted to see a decline, but not the elimination, of Soviet influence on the strictly internal affairs of the East European countries. So when riots broke out in Poland and Hungary, demanding greater independence from Moscow, after Khrushchev's unveiling of Stalin's crimes, the CPC leaders (Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping) went to give Moscow their help. They discussed matters
with Khrushchev and made efforts to help the CPSU to deal with its problems with the communist parties of Poland and Hungary. For the first time in the history of the international communist movement, the CPC played an important role which the CPSU was not in the position to play.

Later the Chinese claimed credit for giving assistance when the Soviets were in trouble. They did not know until 1959 that Khrushchev was not at all grateful to them. At the time, Khrushchev was troubled not only by what was going on in Poland and Hungary, but also by the extent to which he had become beholden to Beijing for help in Eastern Europe. He did not like to see the CPC leaders playing an increasingly important role in the Communist world, and he was particularly unhappy about the CPC's criticism of the Soviets. The CPC opposed the Soviet intention to move troops into Poland and regarded it as an "erroneous method of great power chauvinism". Khrushchev felt the CPC's lack of respect for the CPSU and the increasing difficulties he might have to face in dealing with the CPC leaders who considered themselves senior to him and his Soviet colleagues.

Starting from then, Khrushchev was torn between wishing to improve relations with China and seeking to prevent the Chinese from becoming too strong. This was not
only because the CPC was seeking to play a greater role within the Communist bloc, but also, and more importantly, because it was becoming too militant, in Khrushchev's eyes, to help implement his global strategy.

In 1957, after matters were settled in Eastern Europe, Khrushchev's main concerns were shifted to Soviet-US relations. "Peaceful coexistence" was, as Khrushchev understood it, the "general principle" for all other communist parties as well as for the CPSU. To him, the CPC should follow the same principle. He did not share with the CPC the Chinese aspiration of "liberating" Taiwan and other offshore islands and did not wish the Soviet Union to become involved in conflicts with the US over China's ambitious plans, such as taking over Taiwan, which was protected by the American fleet. There was no better way to prevent the Chinese from becoming too ambitious than slowing down Soviet military aid to China, especially aid to nuclear development in China. By doing so, the Soviet Union might be able to control its increasingly militant and untenable neighbour strategically. It was apparent that China would not undertake major risks, such as attacking Taiwan, without Soviet nuclear backing.

Mao seemed to have had doubts about Khrushchev's willingness to aid China ever since the latter came
into power. He never believed that the Soviet leaderships, from Stalin to Khrushchev, ever desired an independent Chinese nuclear capability. What Mao seemed to have been doing since Khrushchev's ascent to power, if not earlier, was to press the Soviets for whatever assistance China could get without compromising Chinese independence.

Mao knew exactly the destructiveness of nuclear weapons. It was only wise for him not to emphasize the mighty force of nuclear weapons when China did not have the bomb. But Mao believed that to make China a strong nation in the world, acquisition of nuclear technology was a high priority. His desire to press ahead as quickly as possible in developing nuclear weapons production in China had been the driving force pushing him to press his Soviet counterpart for aid in this regard. But Mao had to handle the matter with care. China needed the protection of the Soviet nuclear umbrella as well as Soviet aid to its own nuclear production.

On 15 October, 1957, an agreement on "new technology for national defense" was finally concluded between the USSR and the PRC. The precise terms of the agreement have still not been disclosed, but it is likely, as some experts on Sino-Soviet relations believe, that

they were vague and general. The Chinese disclosure (in 1963) of the agreement did not specify its content, but stated that, in June, 1959, "the Soviet Government unilaterally tore up the agreement" and "refused to provide China with a sample of an atomic bomb and technical data concerning its manufacture."  

There is very little mystery about China's motivation in pressing for increased Soviet assistance in the Chinese effort to develop an indigenous nuclear weapons production capability. Given their desires for a more credible deterrent against American attack, an increased influence within the Communist world, and additional means of supporting wars of national liberation, the Chinese would welcome Soviet assistance to their nuclear production, provided that there was no Soviet control. In addition, the Chinese were on the verge of launching their Great Leap Forward, and were already in a mood to develop ambitious plans for industry, science and technology. They were ready to contemplate an acceleration of their nuclear production program with or without substantial Soviet assistance. Khrushchev's motives in yielding at least partially to the Chinese demands and stepping up Soviet assistance to the Chinese program are much more obscure. Why

8. eg. Raymond Garthoff and Alice Haieh.
should the Soviets be willing to enter into such an arrangement when they did not have political control or military presence in China as they had in East Europe? Besides there is no evidence that the Soviets ever contemplated sharing nuclear weapons with any of their East European allies, so why did they provide such strategic weaponry and technology where there was no control over its eventual end use? Here several possible explanations can be attempted:

1. Khrushchev was faced with a situation in which the Chinese were determined to go ahead with the development of nuclear weapons with or without extensive Soviet assistance. If the Soviets cooperated with the Chinese in carrying out the Chinese nuclear program, at least they would have a chance to get their technicians involved, thus get considerable information on what the Chinese were doing and some degree of control over the evolution of the Chinese weapons development program.

2. During 1957, Khrushchev was still engaged in a power struggle for the leadership of the Soviet Communist Party. In June, there was the purge of the anti-party group and then in November that of Marshal Zhukov. Khrushchev undoubtedly was anxious to seek the support of the CPC in his effort to deal with opposition inside
the Soviet Communist Party. His willingness to aid the Chinese nuclear program might have been part of his effort to insure Chinese political support and to convince the Chinese leadership that their own security would be enhanced if Khrushchev's supremacy was secured.

3. The Sino-Soviet agreement on advanced technology for defence was signed on the eve of the Moscow Conference, at which the Soviets hoped to have a manifesto approved which would form the basis for the unity of the international communist movement. It was clear that there were issues on which the Chinese and the Soviets disagreed and the Chinese had made it clear that they were prepared to argue for their own position. Stepped-up nuclear aid could have been part of the price which Khrushchev paid to the Chinese to secure at least their partial cooperation at the November conference and their willingness to compromise on key issues in dispute.

10. Liu, op.cit. pp.45-49. According to Liu, seeking support of the CPC in the internal struggle of the CPSU was the main reason why Khrushchev signed the agreement.

11. Ibid. pp. 55-61. The chief subject of controversy between the CPC and the CPSU was the transition from capitalism to socialism. In the original draft, the Soviets did not mention a word about non-peaceful transition and described peaceful transition as "securing a majority in parliament and transforming parliament from an instrument of the bourgeois dictatorship into an instrument of a genuine people's state power". The CPC strongly opposed the views of the Soviets. The final draft of the Declaration indicates that both the CPSU
4. China's active participation was needed in Khrushchev's negotiation with the United States on a nuclear test ban. Khrushchev must have recognized that the Chinese would be suspicious of his effort to negotiate a test ban treaty if it appeared to preclude Chinese nuclear tests. He may have concluded that the most effective way to secure Chinese public and private support of the test ban treaty was to make such support a precondition for the granting of nuclear assistance. Evidently, China supported Soviet test ban proposals in 1957-1958, probably with a hope that China could have a sample of atomic bomb from the Soviet Union. Only when the Chinese leaders realized that they could not get it from the Soviets and the Test Ban Treaty would also make it more difficult for them to carry out tests, did they start to oppose the treaty.

5. Khrushchev was, during this period, seeking closer military cooperation with China, in fear of the growing and the CPC made some compromises. While indicating the possibility of peaceful transition, the Declaration also pointed to the road of non-peaceful transition and stressed that the ruling classes never relinquish power voluntarily. While speaking of securing a firm majority in parliament, it emphasized the need to launch an extra-parliamentary mass struggle, smash the resistance of the reactionary forces and create the necessary conditions for peaceful realization of socialism. Also see "The Origin and Development of the Differences Between the Leadership of the CPSU and Ourselves-Comment on the Open Letter of the CPSU CC", Beijing Review, VI, 37, 13 September, 1963.
U.S. nuclear superiority. Moscow hoped that once China had an arsenal of its own, the Sino-Soviet alliance would be transformed into an additional nuclear deterrent for Moscow. Previously the Sino-Soviet Treaty had imposed the burden on the USSR of carrying the nuclear umbrella for China while receiving no strategic arms benefits in return. In 1957, there was no way that Khrushchev could foresee the collapse of the alliance, much less its evolution into a military confrontation. Foreign policy differences had thus far been relatively minor; the PRC had just completed a highly successful First Five Year Plan of economic development in conjunction with Soviet economic and technical assistance; China had no one else it could turn to since it was subject to American economic embargo and a policy of diplomatic non-recognition. Thus Khrushchev could rationally have calculated that the dangers inherent in nuclear sharing without firm joint control guarantees were less hazardous than pitting the Soviet arsenal alone and unaided against those of the United States and Great Britain. Moreover, Khrushchev was to propose in 1958 various kinds of joint military arrangements, including perhaps an agreement to station Soviet nuclear weapons on Chinese territory and to aid the Chinese nuclear production program as a useful backdrop with which to negotiate closer military cooperation with China.
Each of the above probably contributed to Khrushchev's decision to yield to Chinese pressure and to accelerate aid to the Chinese nuclear production programme. But agreement may not always bind the signatories as it should. The hard-bargained agreement, concluded with little sincerity on the Soviet side, proved short-lived. Using nuclear aid as a leverage, the Soviet leadership tried in 1958 to exert military control over China and to influence Chinese foreign policy. The Chinese leadership refused to pay such a high political price for Soviet nuclear technology and weapons. They made sudden changes in their military and economic policies and pushed hard in bargaining for Soviet nuclear aid in order to test the reliability of the Sino-Soviet alliance. Once they found out that they could not get what they had expected from the alliance, the Chinese continued on their own course, which was contrary to the Soviet policy of seeking an accommodation with the West.
Chapter Three

1958 marks the turning point in Sino-Soviet relations. No longer was the Chinese or the Soviet leadership willing to be led by the other's national aspirations. During the last months of 1957, both sides came to see the Sino-Soviet alliance as adding burdens rather than providing convenience. Because of their new foreign policy of detente with the West, the Soviets under Khrushchev began to have second thoughts on their promise to provide China with nuclear technology. The Chinese could sense this and consequently felt angry and betrayed. The Soviets tried to appease China by honouring other agreements. But the Chinese leadership under Mao was already resolved to strengthen China's military and economy by using China's own models and people. Besides, in Mao's eyes, the Soviet Union had forfeited its claim to the leadership of the international communist movement by trying to appease the West. When the Soviet Union offered no support to China, whether military or moral, in reconquering Taiwan during the summer of 1958, the Chinese confirmed their belief of the Soviets as unreliable and unworthy allies. Indeed, the Soviet Union had nothing but spite for a neighbour that seemed to grow increasingly rash, selfish, and naive. 1958 ended the "honeymoon" period of the Sino-Soviet alliance and ushered in a period of bitter attacks.
The Sino-Soviet split, as many Western experts have written, is the product of competing revolutionary strategies, national interests, ideological pretensions, and struggle for supreme Communist authority. Underlying these antagonisms and contributing to them, however, has been the issue of Soviet nuclear aid to China which was central to the initiation and aggravation of Sino-Soviet estrangement.

From late 1957, Khrushchev's consolidation of internal support and his ascent to a position of unchallenged political authority began to diminish the Chinese influence upon Soviet leaders. The desire to maintain China's strategic dependence upon the Soviet deterrent, and thereby exert an influence on Chinese foreign policy, soon came to outweigh the initial impulse to keep China satisfied. Khrushchev felt that there was no need to favour or please Chinese leaders or their allies. Long-term concern over a nuclear-armed China and the shift in Soviet policy towards the United States from a position of hostility to one which favoured a growing detente were instrumental in pushing Khrushchev to change Soviet nuclear policy towards China.

The Soviets had discovered during the Moscow Conference in November 1957 that the Chinese at the time greatly
overestimated, partly because of Soviet propaganda, the immediate significance of the Soviet ICBM and artificial earth satellite and misjudged the world balance of power.

At the closed session of the Moscow Meeting of Communist and Workers’ Parties on 18 November, 1957, Mao gave out his well-known analysis of the world situation and then argued for a more aggressive line to be taken by the entire international communist movement:

It is characteristic of the situation today, I believe, that the East wind is prevailing over the West wind. That is to say, the forces of socialism are overwhelmingly superior to the forces of imperialism.... At present another situation has to be taken into account namely, that the war maniacs may drop atomic and hydrogen bombs everywhere.... The Political Bureau of our Party has held several sessions to discuss this question.... We Chinese have not yet completed our construction and we desire peace. However, if imperialism insists on fighting a war, we will have no alternative but to make up our minds and fight to finish before going ahead with our construction. If every day you are afraid of war and war eventually comes, what will you do then? 1

To the Soviets, Mao’s speech implied that the Chinese had been waiting for this "turning point" in the world balance of power and now the time had come for them to achieve their goals. Mao’s speech caused great concern

to the Soviets whose global strategy was based on a rather different assessment of the world balance of power. For Moscow, the Soviet weapons successes of 1957 did represent a change in the balance of forces between socialism and capitalism. But the change had only led to a situation where the East was now stronger and the West weaker than before. They did not assert that the East was now predominant or the overall strength of the socialist countries exceeded that of the capitalist countries. The ICBM certainly gave the Soviet more confidence in their deterrent power but not necessarily in their ability to launch a decisive nuclear blow against the United States. Moreover, they probably recognized that a nuclear war with the West would cause great destruction, sacrifices and losses to the USSR as well as to the West. In light of such assessments, the Soviet leadership reasserted their policy of peaceful coexistence with the West. They would seek to negotiate with the West from a position of strength rather than adopt a more revolutionary policy all over the globe. They were reluctant to foment local conflicts for fear that these might escalate into a nuclear confrontation with the more powerful United States over issues peripheral to the USSR's vital interests. In other words, they wanted to use their achievements in weapons technology not to launch an offensive against the United States but to
reach an accommodation with it. 2

Assuming that they were the leader of the Communist bloc, the Soviets required that other countries in the Bloc follow the Soviet strategy. The Chinese leadership's dissatisfaction with the strategy laid down by the Kremlin for the Communist countries can be appreciated. At the time, China was faced with a rather different situation than the Soviet Union which was, on the whole, a satisfied power with enormous military and economic strength. China was not only weak economically and militarily but also confronted with the U.S. economic embargo and diplomatic non-recognition. Unlike the USSR, China felt a consistent threat from its offshore island, Taiwan, whose regime had proclaimed its intention to reconquer the mainland. To liberate Taiwan had been the fundamental ambition of the Chinese Communist leadership ever since it had taken power. Yet, the U.S. military protection of Taiwan since June 1950 had rendered any Chinese attempts relating to this objective impossible. The recent Soviet achievements in weapons' development heightened the Chinese hope for unification, as they thought that the Soviets would commit themselves to world revolution and give stronger support to China for its fundamental ambition. The reassertion by the

Soviet leadership of the policy of peaceful coexistence with the West not only disillusioned the Chinese but also caused great resentment among them.

China was a weak power, but proud and ambitious. Seeing themselves as senior revolutionaries in the international communist movement after Stalin's death, the Chinese leaders, most notably Mao, demanded a greater role in deciding the Bloc's strategy. Hoping that Khrushchev could be forced to take a tougher line against the West, Mao demanded from Khrushchev "real, not only formal consultation" on policy making. Mao's intention was clear. World revolution had to be promoted wholeheartedly by the USSR, a much stronger member in the Communist bloc, so that China would be in a better position to fulfill its own ambitions.

In the ensuing months and years, the Chinese and Soviet divergent assessments of global power balance and conflicting strategies were to become the prime factor fuelling the Sino-Soviet conflict. Immediately affected was the Sino-Soviet military alliance, especially the Soviet nuclear policy towards China.

Liu Xiao, the Chinese Ambassador to Moscow from 1954 to 1962, revealed in his memoirs that the Chinese Defense

Minister Peng Dehuai headed a Chinese military delegation to Moscow at the time of the Moscow Conference. His visit was to meet with Khrushchev for final arrangements of some key projects discussed between the two in 1955. Among them were the building of China's nuclear industry, the production of nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles, and the creation of military aeronautic and warships industries. To Peng's surprise, Khrushchev did not intend to discuss any final arrangements when they met. The only thing Khrushchev suggested was that the Soviet navy and air force in East Asia cooperate with the Chinese military forces in China's defense.4

This revelation by Liu suggests that originally Khrushchev might have intended to make detailed arrangements with Peng concerning, among other things, Soviet nuclear assistance to China, but changed his mind at the time of the Moscow Conference. It is likely that Mao's views on nuclear war and international conflict which were spelled out at the conference were one of the main reasons affecting Khrushchev's decision. In his memoirs, Khrushchev commented that Mao's views on war were "deeply disturbing" to him.5

Sometime in the mid-1950s, Khrushchev became increasingly concerned with avoiding risks of a nuclear

4. Liu, op.cit., p. 60.
war and saw an advantage in cultivating a detente with the West. He did not wish to lessen fundamental Chinese dependence on the Soviet Union, nor did he wish to raise Chinese prestige in the international communist movement or the world at large, or to increase the risks the Soviets would run if the Chinese had capabilities that might tempt them to risk a conflict with the West. He had probably imagined that a China with atomic weapons would be more "reckless" and thus dangerous to the Soviet Union. Given the contradictory risks in building up a potential enemy and antagonizing an ally, Khrushchev probably proposed to deploy nuclear weapons in China on the condition that the Soviets retained full control over them.6 It can be imagined that Khrushchev insisted on this condition in his discussion with Peng and his condition was not accepted. Not accomplishing what had been planned for the military mission, the Chinese went home extremely disappointed. Since then, the issue of Soviet nuclear aid to China became a divisive force in the Sino-Soviet alliance.

From late 1957 to early 1958, the Soviet leadership took a number of initiatives seeking to explore a

lessening of military tensions with the United States. In late December Khrushchev told the Supreme Soviet that "we say to the representatives of the Western countries, and especially the United States...let us recognize the status quo...[and] renounce any attempt to alter the existing situation by force."7 The Soviet leadership campaigned for pacts against surprise attacks and the military use of outer space, for an increase in US-Soviet commercial and cultural ties, and for the convening of a US-Soviet summit peace conference. It also advocated a reduction of armaments and a ban on the testing and use of nuclear weapons.8 On 31 March, 1958, the Soviet Union unilaterally ceased testing nuclear weapons and on the fourth of April dispatched a note to both the United States and China:

Today only three powers—the USSR, the USA, and Great Britain—possess nuclear weapons; therefore, agreement on the discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests can be achieved relatively easily. If the tests are not stopped now, within a certain time other countries may have nuclear weapons, and in such a situation it would, of course, be much more difficult to obtain an agreement.9

This note must have caused the Chinese to question further whether the Soviets ever intended to aid China in its nuclear weapons development. It indicated clearly a Soviet interest in negotiating a test ban

7. __Pravda__, 22 December, 1957.
9. __Pravda__, 6 April, 1958.
treaty with the West which would, as Beijing argued later, make it possible for the nuclear powers to preserve a nuclear monopoly. How could the Soviets intend to aid China if they were interested in halting all nuclear testing? At the time, the point may not have sunk so deep into the minds of the Chinese, but it was certainly taken very seriously. The subsequent Chinese actions suggest that they had realized around this time that significant Soviet nuclear assistance could not be counted on.

What the outside world did not know was that in April of the same year, the Soviet Union sent to China a series of requests with results detrimental to the Sino-Soviet relations. The proposals were sent in the Soviet Defense Minister Malinovsky's letter to the Chinese Defense Minister Peng Dehuai. The letter proposed a joint Sino-Soviet fleet, integrated air-defense systems, Soviet submarine bases, mutual landing rights in time of war, and construction of a long-range radar station on Chinese territory under joint control. In fact, some of these had already been discussed in 1955 and 1957 between Khrushchev and Peng who had been in favour of joint military arrangements. But Mao

10. The following information was provided to the writer in private talks by senior specialists who had been closely involved with the development of the Sino-Soviet dispute, but who all wish that they would not be identified here.
viewed these proposals in a different light. He feared that they would give the Soviets too much control over China. Given the new tendency in the Soviet leadership favouring detente with the West, Mao's caution was not totally unnecessary. Mao argued that mutual landing rights in time of war could be given favourable consideration as the two countries were allied, but Soviet requests for joint control of major military facilities and for bases on Chinese territory were unreasonable demands. That would mean Soviet military control over China. On questions of sovereignty, China would never make concessions to any country.12

By this time, Mao began to question seriously the real intention behind Soviet nuclear assistance to China. He said that the Soviets were intending to "extend the Russian empire to the coast of China."13 Mao would not sacrifice China's independence in exchange for Soviet nuclear aid although he clearly wanted nuclear technology and realized what immense political leverage a nuclear capability would give China on the world stage, to say nothing of the national pride that nuclear-power status would engender internally. As the official Chinese statement declared later in 1963, the "unreasonable" Soviet demands were "rightly and firmly rejected".14

12. See note 10 on page 40.
13. See note 10 on page 40.
It was under such circumstances that the Military Committee of the Central Committee of the CPC called for an enlarged meeting which lasted for two months, from 27 May to 22 July. By July, a new military line was adopted. Mao advised the leaders of the PLA to desist from copying Soviet military codes, conventions and regulations and value China's own military experience since it was richer than that of the Soviet Union.15 A nation-wide campaign was proposed to rid the armed forces of doctrinaire dependence on foreign countries and to study Mao's military writings. The theme that men were more important than weapons and weapons alone could not decide the outcome of war was re-emphasized in various editorials in the Liberation Army Daily and the Red Flag. More important, a historical decision was made: China would proceed with the long-term development of its own nuclear capability on the basis of self-reliance.16

16. Various Chinese statements carried in the Liberation Army Daily and People's Daily starting from August. For example, one of them reads: "We should and absolutely can master, in not a long time, the newest technology concerning atomic energy in all fields....There are people who think that as long as we receive assistance from the Soviet Union and other fraternal countries, there is no need for us to carry out more complicated research ourselves. This way of thinking is wrong....Because of the natural conditions of China and the characteristics of her construction
It should be pointed out that starting from 1954-55, a tendency already emerged among the relatively professional officers of the PLA General Staff to stress the importance of modern weapons, surprise attack, and the desirability of an independent Chinese strategic capability including nuclear weapons regardless of expense, and by implication disparaged the utility of Mao's military thought and of party controls over the armed forces. By the time the conference convened, there must have been strong pressures for rapid modernization of the military. The adoption of the new military line at the conference and the decision to continue the development of China's nuclear weapons by its own effort suggest the defeat of the view held by those professional officers.

Once freed from a central reason for following the Soviet line, the Chinese started attacking the Soviet policies, challenging the Soviet leadership and involving the Soviets against their will in the Taiwan Strait crisis of 1958 to test the reliability of the Sino-Soviet alliance. It is not surprising that both the Soviets and the Chinese have pointed to 1958 as the beginning year of the Sino-Soviet split.17

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work, there is in fact no possibility for us to make wholesale use of the existing experiences of other countries." (Marshal Nieh Jungchen, 2 August, 1958)

17. Mao was quoted as having referred to 1958 as the
Beginning in May 1958, a series of sharp Chinese criticisms of "Yugoslav revisionists" appeared in Chinese publications. The Chinese attacked Yugoslav views on the necessity of coexistence with the West, the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism, and the need to adapt Marxist-Leninist doctrine to the new world. On the surface, their criticisms were directed towards Yugoslavia only. In actual fact, they were at least in part attacks on the Soviets. This soon became clear when China stepped up its attack on Khrushchev in 1960.

In May 1958, China officially launched the Great Leap Forward. A major contributory cause to the Great Leap Forward was of course, the need to build up rapidly an economic base to support China's military needs. According to the Chinese leadership, national construction had to be carried out at top speed in order to have China's security fully guaranteed. The prerequisite for modernizing national defense was the development of a modern economy.

important as domestic ones. First of all, the Great Leap Forward was a challenge to the Soviets economically. It represented a reorientation of China's economic development away from the Soviet model---centralized bureaucratic planning and resource allocation---to a social mobilization model based on Party-directed mass movements to create a communist new man.18

Secondly, it was a challenge to the Soviets ideologically. The Chinese implied in their Great Leap Forward Resolution later in the year that the building of socialism could be completed everywhere in China by the end of the 1960s or early 1970s, and the transition to Communism would follow immediately afterwards. By a proliferation of communes, the abolition of private property and want, and total participation through a national militia in agriculture, industry, and defence, the desired communist state would be brought about without the accompanying material abundance.19 The basic belief behind this was that properly organized and motivated masses could move mountains through sheer human will power.

According to Marxist theory, the stage of socialism will be entered after the remnants of capitalism have been liquidated. Only when this process is completed could communism be contemplated. The essential difficulty in this final stage of development lies in the relationship between supply and demand, because if the normal means of regulating economic relationships is withdrawn, there must either be abundance or a restructuring of human nature sufficient to bring about voluntary self-rationing. The Khrushchev leadership assumed the former while Mao apparently assumed the latter. Since Mao's new economic policy of rapid communization would make it possible for China to bypass the Soviet Union on the way to Communism, China would be the leader of the socialist camp.

It was not surprising that Khrushchev disapproved the Chinese communes programme. He ridiculed the Great Leap Forward first privately, and soon afterwards in public as well. He saw the Great Leap as a disastrous blunder which could lead to no useful results. He probably also resented the very fact that Mao had tried to develop independent and original policies for carrying forward the revolution in China. Khrushchev would have resented this attempt even if the Great Leap Forward had appeared to him to be a success, for it struck hard at the basic article of faith of every patriotic Soviet citizen, namely that the Russian
experience is and must remain the model for all revolutions everywhere. Undoubtedly, the Great Leap Forward gave more fuel to the already deteriorating Sino-Soviet relations and reinforced Khrushchev’s consideration of curbing the Chinese nuclear potential.

Another event which undermined the Sino-Soviet alliance was the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1958.

During 1958, tension was building between the United States and China. The Sino-American Geneva talks ended in a stalemate, with China unyielding to the American insistence that it formally renounce the use of force with respect to the recovery of Taiwan, and the United States reducing its representation at the Geneva talks below the ambassadorial level. In late July following the end of the military conference, China launched a major propaganda campaign for the liberation of Taiwan. The KMT forces on Taiwan also talked about reinvading the mainland. The United States started providing naval support for the garrisons on Quemoy and Matsu, two Chinese offshore islands. On 23 August, the Chinese artillery began to shell Quemoy and Matsu. On 4 September, China claimed a twelve-mile limit for its territorial waters. The United States refused to recognize the claim and increased its protection for

the KMT supply ships to within three miles of the coast. On the same day, Dulles, the American Secretary of State, issued a statement saying that Quemoy was "increasingly related" to the defense of Taiwan. The statement also suggested that the United States might bomb the Chinese mainland if the Chinese communists attacked Quemoy.21 The American military buildup in the area right after the statement further increased the tension in the Taiwan Strait. Faced with a possibility of the KMT or even American retaliation against the mainland, the Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai offered to renew ambassadorial talks with the United States on 6 September. Although this by no means resolved the Taiwan Strait Crisis, it eased the tension and marked the beginning of a new stage.

It is well known that in this early phase of the crisis, Khrushchev did not express overt approval of the Chinese action, nor did he give a pledge of aid. The Soviet press downgraded the notion that the US actions in the Taiwan Strait would lead to a world war. In de-emphasizing the seriousness of the situation, the Soviets revealed their anxiety to avoid involvement in the crisis and to discourage the Chinese from further escalation.

Only after tension had been eased, did Khrushchev make

a threatening statement in his letter to the U.S. President Eisenhower saying that "an attack on the Chinese People's Republic, which is a great ally, friend, and neighbour of our country, is an attack on the Soviet Union."22

Khrushchev's unwillingness to support China in its effort to liberate Taiwan had the gravest effect on the already strained Sino-Soviet relations. As the foreign policy specialist Zagoria wrote in his book *The Sino-Soviet Conflict*, China "never intended to invade the offshore island"23 and "the Chinese intention (of the artillery shelling of Quemoy) was not to go to war."24 China urgently desired a show of Soviet support of the PRC's security after the Sino-Soviet relations were sored by the issue of Soviet nuclear assistance to China. Mao needed a firm, early, public, and high-level Soviet commitment to give support to the liberation of Taiwan, a major objective closely linked to China's security. Khrushchev's thinly disguised reluctance to do this was interpreted by the Chinese as betraying China in face of an imperialist threat.25

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24. Ibid.
25. "Some people have been scared out of their wits by imperialists and reactionaries...they have even advised us to 'face sufferings', and to 'entreat' imperialists and reactionaries to show mercy....If we say that such frightened people speak for imperialists and reactionaries, this would seem harsh and unpleasant to hear. Some of them even call themselves 'defenders of peace'." *People's
Besides, China probably sensed that Khrushchev wanted to take advantage of the Taiwan Strait Crisis since he offered to help strengthen the air force in the crisis area after tension had been eased.26

By this time it was very clear that little remained in the way of a Sino-Soviet alliance. Making this plain were the Tass statement of neutrality on Sino-Indian border clashes in 1959, the unilateral Soviet abrogation of the 1957 secret agreement in 1959 and the withdrawal of all Soviet experts and technicians from China in 1960. The Soviet moves, intended as a punishment to the Chinese, slowed down the development of nuclear weapons in China, added more problems to the already troubled Chinese economy, and speeded up the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations. The Chinese leadership was further convinced that the Soviets could not be trusted as allies.

26. Liu, op.cit., pp. 62-71. Liu was invited at short notice by Khrushchev to Crimea in early September 1958. On the first day of Liu's three-day stay there, Khrushchev expressed the Soviet concern over the issue of Taiwan Strait and asked Liu to convey to Mao and the CPC CC a Soviet suggestion that the air force in the Taiwan Strait area be strengthened to counter balance the joint naval forces of the U.S. and the Chiang Kai-shek regime in the area. Khrushchev repeated twice the suggestion and the Soviet ideas for possible arrangements after Liu had agreed to report to Mao at the earliest possible time. As is stated in his memoir, Liu felt at the time that Khrushchev was intending to take advantage of the situation in the Taiwan Strait to change the Soviet balance of forces with the U.S. in East Asia and the Pacific area.
In retrospect, the Sino-Soviet secret agreement of 1957 was doomed to failure. China's heightened desire for an early independent nuclear capability derived from its dissatisfactions with the Soviet leadership since 1956. Yet, in her conflict with the United States and her relative isolation from advanced non-Communist countries, China had to turn to the Soviet Union for nuclear assistance. The Soviets apparently had no intention to help the Chinese acquire a capability that would enable them to pursue an independent course which might undermine and endanger basic Soviet policies. Soon after the signing of the secret agreement, the Soviet leadership reconsidered their nuclear policy towards China and began shifting it from giving assistance to blocking Chinese efforts to acquire an independent nuclear capability. As the Soviet reluctance to aid China's nuclear weapons development sank deep into the minds of the Chinese leaders, China proceeded with the development of its own nuclear capability on the basis of self-reliance. Freed from a central reason for following the Soviet line, the

27. The Chinese desire for an independent nuclear capability was first indicated by Mao in 1956 when he said: "...In the not-too-distant future we shall have not only many aeroplanes and guns, but also our own atomic bombs." Schram, op.cit., p. 68; Mao's "On the Ten Great Relationships" 25 April, 1956. The Chinese Minister of Defense Zhang Aiping also said: "In 1956 the CPC CC decided that developing guided missiles and atomic energy were the two key projects in our national defense modernization", in Red Flag, March 1983.
Chinese mounted an all out challenge to the Soviet leadership, and involved the Soviets against their will in the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1958. As a sanction to the Chinese, the Soviets "tore up" the secret agreement on 20 June, 1959 and cut off all aid to China in 1960. The Sino-Soviet split became irreversible, even though the full extent of it was revealed only three years later.
Chapter Four

A major symbol of the Sino-Soviet rift today is the Soviet withdrawal of economic and technical aid from China. It stands in stark contrast to a decade of propaganda about the intimate friendship and cooperation between the Chinese and Soviets. Although in the late 1950's there were signs of unease between the two allies, almost no one expected such a decisive and irreversible divorce. Without Soviet guidance, China would have to develop a new national identity. And without Chinese subordination, the Soviet Union would gradually lose its absolute claim on leadership in the socialist camp.

The impact of the withdrawal of Soviet aid was great on the Chinese economy as a whole and especially damaging to the defense industry. In absolute financial terms, Soviet aid was, to say the least, modest. But its value to China's reconstruction in the first seven years must have been immense. The Soviet Union had supplied machinery, equipment and complete plant installations which at that time, owing to the U.S. trade embargoes, China could not have obtained elsewhere. The major capital projects thus built had, by the admission of the Soviet Union as well as China, laid the primary foundations of modern industry and technology.1 The

1. A Report to the National People's Congress by Li
sudden withdrawal of Soviet technicians together with all the blueprints and Soviet demands for repayments of loans and credits placed an immense burden on the Chinese economy at a time when it was already prostrate from the devastating failures of the Great Leap Forward and the exceptionally poor weather conditions.

Yet, Khrushchev's termination of Soviet assistance to China was by no means unprovoked. Chinese propaganda had mounted a vigorous campaign in which Mao was proclaimed as "the most outstanding contemporary revolutionist, statesman, and theoretician of Marxism-Leninism". This clear challenge to Khrushchev's ideological leadership was followed shortly thereafter by an even more vigorous attack on Soviet leadership of the international communist movement and an open attack on Khrushchev's strategic policies. These attacks were contained in "Long Live Leninism", articles published ostensibly to commemorate the 90th anniversary of Lenin's birth. Though he remained unnamed, Khrushchev was attacked both for "revising, emasculating, and


betraying" the most fundamental and sacred tenets of Leninism, and for failing to pursue a policy of hostile confrontation with the United States due to an unjustifiable fear of nuclear war.

Before the articles of April 1960, the Chinese attacks on Khrushchev and Soviet strategy had generally been moderate. Since 1958 when the Sino-Soviet dispute started, the Chinese had employed "Yugoslav revisionism", a euphemism, to denote "soft" Soviet policies. The April articles for the first time dropped the euphemism. As Zagoria commented, these articles "went so far and so deep that they can be compared in importance only to such watersheds of the post-Stalin era as Khrushchev's secret speech in February 1956".3 Signaling an escalation of the Sino-Soviet dispute and the deterioration of the Sino-Soviet relations, these articles focused the fire on the very three basic ideological innovations which Khrushchev had presented to the CPSU's 20th congress and which provided the doctrinal back drop for his more flexible global strategy. These were Khrushchev's new doctrines on "peaceful coexistence, peaceful competition and peaceful transition", which put pressure on the Chinese to give up their goal for an independent nuclear capability.

Rejecting the Soviet notion of peaceful coexistence and peaceful competition as the "general line" of foreign policies of all socialist countries, the Chinese argued that peaceful coexistence was conditional, a temporary breathing space which could always come to an end. They saw no prospect for a genuine détente except for sacrificing potential gains. They contended that general war could only be avoided by persistent and defiant revolutionary struggle and a policy of strength. Local wars, they argued, were inevitable as long as imperialism remained. In their view, coexistence would have to be interrupted periodically either by imperialist-launched "unjust" wars or by historically inevitable "just" wars for national liberation. The socialist bloc must support "resolutely and without the slightest reservation" struggles for independence in colonial and semi-colonial countries, and strongly oppose those imperialist-launched unjust wars. They strongly implied that local wars would be favourable for the Bloc because they could be turned into revolutionary opportunities in which the local communists could then seize power, and they could also be exploited to communize other countries. The Chinese emphasized the impossibility of peaceful accession to power in the non-Communist world and accused those who advocated peaceful transition as

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traitors to the revolution. In other words, in attacking Khrushchev's ideological innovations and the new strategy which went with them, the Chinese argued that the West could be defeated sooner than Khrushchev thought if the USSR and the world communist movement were more aggressive. They believed that the Soviet deterrent could be invoked to protect revolutionary action in Asia, Africa, and Latin America from Western interference. Hence, revolutions could be fomented with only a minimal risk of global war. They feared that Soviet gradualism would unnecessarily delay the revolution in the short-run and perhaps lead to stagnation in the long run. And more particularly, with its pacifist thrust, gradualism would deny China of the ideological support she needed to develop her military.

Soviet response to the Chinese attacks came both in political and economic forms. At the Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties in Bucharest in late June, Khrushchev launched a surprise attack on the Chinese. The Bucharest meeting was supposed to exchange views and prepare for the forthcoming meeting of all communist parties of the world. On the eve of the conference, the delegation of the CPSU distributed among Communist leaders attending the conference a Letter of Information from the CPSU to the CPC.

attacking the latter "all along the line".7 Addressing the conference, Khrushchev accused the CPC of "wanting to unleash war", "picking up the banner of the imperialist monopoly capitalists", being "pure nationalists" and employing "Trotskyite ways" against the CPSU.8 Khrushchev was also reported to have attacked Mao personally and compared him to Stalin in being oblivious of any interests but his own and in spinning theories detached from the realities of the present-day world.9 Khrushchev succeeded in leading a great majority of the Communist parties to criticize China as "dogmatic" "left adventurist", "pseudo-revolutionary", "sectarian", and "worse than Yugoslavia".10

Shortly after the conference, there appeared in the Soviet press increasingly severe and explicit attacks on the Chinese leadership and its policies. In early August, the Soviet press suggested the possibility of Chinese exclusion from the world communist movement. Soon after, it warned that if China were outside the socialist camp, it would suffer an economic blockade and military blows from the West.11 Within that month,

8. Ibid.  
all 1,390 Soviet specialists were withdrawn from China. Publication of the magazines Friendship by China in the Soviet Union and Soviet-Chinese Friendship by Russia in China was stopped. And trade between the two countries quickly declined.

If Khrushchev had hoped that the Chinese would submit in face of a threat of political isolation from the socialist bloc and economic difficulties, then he had judged wrongly. Any concession would have been seen as a sign of weakness by the Chinese leadership. The Chinese, far from submitting to Soviet threats, fought even harder for economic self-reliance and at once stiffened their ideological stance.

In the months following the Soviet withdrawal of technicians and experts, the Chinese issued dozens of articles calling for a bitter, self-reliant, and persistent struggle for socialism. These articles declared that imperialists and reactionaries were trying to "isolate" the Chinese Communists and dreaming to "force the Chinese revolution to a halt". But China would respond with "rage" and "heroism". Although enemies may "suppress us and curse us", and "some of the less enlightened people" may "call us stupid fellows and charge us with attempting something

13. Ibid.
we are not capable of, we shall nevertheless carry out our revolutionary goal".14

It is evident that the deterioration of relations between Moscow and Beijing at this time was fast reaching a point of no return. Did Khrushchev ever fear that an outright split between the CPSU and the CPC would occur when he moved to the offensive in the Sino-Soviet dispute at the Bucharest meeting and took coercive economic measures thereafter? Why did he take the risk of an irreversible deterioration of relations with China by bringing such pressures on the Chinese?

As Zagoria argued, an open split would diminish Soviet influence in Asia, weaken the international communist movement and limit Khrushchev's freedom in bargaining with the West.15 Given the fact that the Soviets had consistently cited Bloc unity as one of the determinants of the correlation of forces, they must have known that an open breach with China would be as unfavourable to them as to the Chinese. A possible explanation for the Soviet moves in late 1959 and 1960 was that Khrushchev had a mistaken belief that the Chinese could not be tamed by appeasement but would ultimately be vulnerable to coercion due to China's dependence on the USSR.

It should be noted that Khrushchev had adopted a policy of compellance toward China around the time when he made his trip to Beijing immediately after the Camp David talks between him and Eisenhower in September 1959. During his visit in Beijing, Khrushchev persuaded the Chinese to accept Taiwan as an independent state and lectured them against "testing by force the stability of the capitalist system". He demanded that Communists everywhere must "synchronize their watches", presumably to Moscow time. Having failed to get the CPC leaders to surrender, Khrushchev, far from reevaluating his policy, endeavored to lock himself even more irrevocably into the compellance strategy toward China.

It might be argued that Khrushchev had justified his policy toward China by overemphasizing China's military, economic and political vulnerability. He apparently believed that China was dependent on the Soviet Union for its nuclear deterrent, not to mention Soviet economic and technical assistance. Because of China's

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17. Liu Xiao, op.cit., p.93.

18. Griffith, op.cit. p.364, and also Titarenko, "Lenin's Teachings on the Victory of Socialism and Present Day". It reads: "Could one imagine the successful construction of socialism going on in present day conditions even in so great a country
vulnerability, he must have believed that the effects of an open split would be fatal to China and the CPC would have to come around to the Soviet policies sooner or later.

Here a personality factor cannot be ignored either, as it had remained one of the important factors throughout the Sino-Soviet dispute. Khrushchev's memoirs demonstrates his strong dislike of Mao whom was pictured as chauvinistic, arrogant and bloodthirsty. Khrushchev may have believed that appeasement with such a character would be the first step down the slippery slope. With this belief, Khrushchev took a series of actions in which he conveyed his intention not to yield to pressure.

Unfortunately, the Chinese were more than willing to compete with Khrushchev in risk-taking. They immediately intensified their attacks on the Soviet leadership and its policies, as the withdrawal of

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20. Khrushchev said: "It is quite well known that if one tries to appease a bandit by first giving him one's purse, then one's coat, and so forth, he is not going to be more charitable because of this, he is not going to stop exercising his banditry. On the contrary, he will become even more insolent." Quoted in Perception and Misperception in International Politics, by Robert Jervis, Princeton, p. 61.
Soviet aid in 1959-60 had left China little incentive to do otherwise. Thus competitive escalation in the dispute quickly started. The Moscow Conference of eighty-one Communist parties in November could not iron out the differences between the CPC and the CPSU. The Sino-Soviet polemics became more violent, detailed and prolonged, and it seriously affected the relations at the state-level.

During the early years of the 1960s, the two parties had serious disagreements on many issues, one of them being the nuclear test ban. As this paper has argued, the nuclear issue had been a profoundly agitating and divisive factor in Sino-Soviet relations since 1957. It can also be seen as a victim of political conflicts between Beijing and Moscow.

The Soviets began pursuing a nuclear test ban with the United States in 1956. The Chinese government initially cooperated with the efforts to negotiate, perhaps with the belief that the Soviets would soon render China technical assistance for its own nuclear development. But by January 1960, after the Soviets had "torn up" the 1957 secret agreement relating to national defense, the PRC declared its total independence in the nuclear field by proclaiming that it would not be bound by any international arms control agreements arrived at without the full participation of the PRC and the
signature of its delegate.

From the Chinese point of view, the nuclear test ban treaty could only ban those countries which did not possess nuclear weapons, and it had very little effect on those countries, such as the United States and the Soviet Union which had already passed that elementary stage in nuclear testing. According to the Chinese, in September and October 1962 and again in June 1963, they sent notes to the Soviet government expressing the hope that the Soviet government would not accede to any agreement that would infringe on China's sovereign rights or act for China in assuming an obligation to refrain from manufacturing nuclear weapons. In light of the knowledge that they would, within a relatively short time, be conducting nuclear tests, the Chinese could not but dissuade the Soviets from entering any agreement banning such tests, thereby creating major political problems for China in relation to the rest of the world.

Unfortunately, the Soviets paid only "the slightest attention" to Chinese representations, and concluded the treaty on the partial halting of nuclear tests with the United States and Britain, thereby "ganging up with the imperialist bandits in exerting pressure on China", as the Chinese put it in their subsequent accusation.21

21. "Statement by the Spokesman of the Chinese
On 31 July, a week after the signing of the Partial Test Ban Treaty, the Chinese government issued a statement which made public the depth of the dispute as well as the Chinese resentment to and skepticism of the Soviets:

This is a treaty signed by three nuclear powers. By this treaty they attempt to consolidate their nuclear monopoly and bind the hands of all the peace-loving countries subjected to the nuclear threat. This treaty signed in Moscow is a big fraud ... (it) actually strengthens the position of nuclear powers for nuclear blackmail and increases the danger of imperialism launching a nuclear war and a world war... The central purpose of this treaty is... to prevent all the threatened peace-loving countries, including China, from increasing their defence capability.... The interests of the Soviet people have been sold out, the interests of the people of the countries in the socialist camp, including the people of China, have been sold out, and the interests of all peace-loving people of the world have been sold out.22

To this the Soviets made clear that the Soviet nuclear shield was not at the service of Chinese aggressive

intentions, and "the very idea of a need to acquire their own nuclear weapons can be conceived by the leaders of a country (China) whose security is guaranteed by the whole might of the socialist camp, only when they have developed special aims and interests of some kind which cannot be supported by the military strength of the socialist camp. Only people who are renouncing proletarian internationalism, departing from socialist positions on questions of foreign policy, discarding the Leninist principles of peaceful coexistence, can develop aims and interests of such a kind".23

This was the first time for both the Chinese to make public their skepticism of the Soviet Union's motivation and the Soviets to indicate their doubt of China's credentials as a member of the socialist camp. The official statements and articles subsequently issued by Beijing and Moscow also serve to confirm China's intent to develop her own nuclear weapons and Moscow's reluctance to see Beijing acquire an independent nuclear capability. The signing of the Treaty was the occasion and perhaps the immediate cause—the final straw—that brought the schism between the Chinese and the Soviets into the open.

From September 1963 to February 1964 the CPC published eight comments on the CPSU's "Open Letter...to Party Organizations and All Communists of the Soviet Union of 14 July 1963", unfolding the most violent "battle on paper" in the history of the international communist movement.

To seal the fate of Sino-Soviet relations, Mao announced in May 1964 that the Soviet Union had become "a dictatorship of the grand bourgeoisie, a fascist German dictatorship and a Hitlerite dictatorship", and the Soviet leaders "a bunch of rascals worse than de Gaulle". Mao characterized the struggle between the CPSU and the CPC as a struggle between the policies of "control and anti-control". And he said: "we must get prepared, prepared for the break, and try to let the situation drag. If anything should happen it must not catch us by surprise. What happens in the world is that after a long union, there will be division and after a long division there will be union.... It is only with revisionism that there can be Long Live Leninism".

By this time the PRC was within close reach of completing the development of an atomic weapon. To her

24. For the complete text in English, see document 3 in Griffith, p. 289.
26. Ibid.
leaders' great frustration, however, the Partial Test Ban Treaty had done much to make the world climate hostile to further nuclear testing. In an effort to somehow dampen this hostility, the Chinese leaders called for immediate and complete "prohibition and destruction of nuclear weapons" through a summit conference of all nations in the world. Failing the acceptance of this proposal, Beijing implied the continuation of its own nuclear program, and on 16 October, 1964, in near coincidence with Khrushchev's fall from power, China exploded its first nuclear weapon.

Conclusions

The Sino-Soviet rift had roots in that Mao achieved the Chinese Communist revolution without decisive Soviet help. The CPC received from Stalin very little support, whether financial or moral, when it was fighting the KMT. It was the common antagonism towards and fear of the United States more than anything else that brought about the Sino-Soviet alliance in 1950. Although both sides took pains to emphasize their unity and friendship, neither had much illusion about the sentiments of the other even during their "honeymoon" period. The CPC had always wished to liberate the PRC from its condition of strategic dependence on the USSR, while the CPSU all along sought to exert control over it.

A bitterness crept into Sino-Soviet relations when Khrushchev warmed to a detente with the West. Still relying heavily on Soviet nuclear assistance and nuclear deterrence, Beijing was constrained to voice its displeasures and disagreements with Moscow. However, the Chinese leadership did not wait long to reveal its anger and differences. Strong challenge was mounted to the Soviet leadership once the Chinese found out that the Soviets were not forthcoming with any meaningful assistance to China's nuclear industry and the Soviet nuclear arsenal would not be made available
to support China in its nationalistic aspirations such as taking over Taiwan.

While the ensuing ideological disputes between the CPC and the CPSU were anything but a help in closing the rift, the issue of nuclear technology was always a critical factor in the devolution of the Sino-Soviet bilateral relations. In fact, the entering into of the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty by the USSR, USA and Britain, broadened the schism into an open conflict between the former allies.

In retrospect, it can be concluded that the Chinese leadership had harboured intentions of obtaining an independent nuclear capability from the very beginning of the Sino-Soviet alliance. Although Mao was one of the first to argue that nuclear weapons were "unusable" and the United States, with a monopoly on nuclear weapons at that time, was merely a "paper tiger", it is unlikely that he failed to understand that nuclear weapons did not have to be used and that an unbalanced nuclear superiority could provide an immense advantage to the stronger over the weaker power. The desire for a more credible deterrent against an American attack, the desire for increased influence within the Communist world, the desire for extra vehicles for supporting wars of national liberation, and last but not least, the desire for additional means of achieving great
power status, pushed China towards the development of a nuclear capability of its own.

On the road to independence, the Chinese felt a growing frustration with reliance on the Soviet nuclear deterrent in their discussions with the Soviets over ideology and military strategy. As the tone of these debates grew sharper, opposing views concerning Chinese acquisition of nuclear weapons began to emerge as a key factor in regulating the Sino-Soviet relationship.

It can also be concluded that the Chinese leadership, Mao in particular, may have never expected that the Soviet Union would willingly supply China with a finished nuclear capability. The Chinese did, however, come to rely rather heavily on Soviet assistance in developing their non-military atomic energy programme, and for deterrence against threats of American interference. Indeed, it is only after acquiring the industrial base and technical skills necessary for an independent nuclear weapons programme were the Chinese willing to test their relationship with the Soviets. In 1958, this relationship unravelled when Soviet reluctance to assist in the Chinese nuclear weapons programme became apparent.

In light of the fact that the CPSU had a habit of ordering other Communist parties, while the CPC had
the tradition of a rebellion, the Soviet promise of nuclear aid to China in 1957 can be seen as but a bait intended to rein in the Chinese. In any event, the Soviets would not offer anything of vital importance to their own national interests without the possibility of getting back something of greater value. This was the case when the Soviets rescinded their pledge of nuclear assistance to China in 1959 and cut off economic and technical aid in 1960. Indeed, the Soviets took a step further in signing the partial nuclear test ban treaty with the Western powers in 1963, hoping to make it more difficult for China to continue with its nuclear development.

Now almost thirty years after the Sino-Soviet split it is worth pondering how it affected China's future, both in the short- and long-term. There is no question that the detonation of China's first atomic bomb gave the Chinese people intense national pride and the nation instant nuclear power status. But where the single-minded quest for national self-reliance during the 1960's benefited the nuclear industry and China's international standing, the same cannot be said for the Chinese economy, society, or even national security as a whole. Territorial disputes between the Soviets and Chinese increased throughout the 1960's, at times erupting into armed conflict. Soviet ground force divisions stationed along the Sino-Soviet border
increased from fifteen in 1965 to about forty in the 1970's. Even with nuclear bombs, China was vulnerable. Starting in 1969, hundreds of thousands of Chinese were mobilized from schools and factories to dig bombshelters. They were afraid of a potential Soviet attack. Moreover, to the south of the Chinese border, American bombers were tearing up the Vietnamese landscape with increasing ferocity. Chinese military assistance to the Communist North Vietnamese was never powerful enough to send the Yankees back home. The Chinese leadership had to deal with the continuing American military build-up in Southeast Asia. During the 1960's China was in the precarious position of having both superpowers as enemies.

This tense international situation took its toll on the domestic front. With doors to the outside world tightly shut, China turned increasingly hysterical. The top leadership argued bitterly among themselves over domestic and foreign policies. Although there was some loosening of government controls over the economy and society in the early 1960's, a series of political campaigns beginning with the Socialist Education

Campaign in 1964 and culminating with the ten-year long Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) brought China to a standstill, if not into reverse. Certainly after a year of chaos caused by the Cultural Revolution, Mao could see that his blessed Red Guards had gone too far in rooting out the so-called evils of China. The rebels were told that the revolution should not jeopardize the national economy and in fact should stimulate it. As if to emphasize this point, Mao implemented a policy in 1968 of sending radical city youth down to the countryside to learn about real struggle. The PLA took over the administration of the country and reinstated a semblance of order.

The Cultural Revolution brought with it a reordering of the Chinese leadership. Although Mao's greatest foes were put under house arrest where they either languished day after day or died from torture or illness, his new entourage was not any more united in formulating national policy. In particular, the new Cultural Revolution leadership was deeply divided over what course China should pursue in international relations. Generally speaking, there were three factions representing the different views. First, there was the moderate faction led by Premier Zhou Enlai. It maintained that the Soviets were the greatest threat to China. Therefore, relations with the United States should be normalized in order to end
any dreams the Soviets might have of invading China. Diametrically opposed to this view, the military faction led by Defence Minister Lin Biao would not hear of improving relations with the United States. Such a move, in their eyes, would make the Soviets irreversibly hostile, rather than friendlier, toward China. This second faction wanted better relations with the Soviets. The third faction led by the radical "Gang of Four" wanted nothing to do with either superpower. Both were "paper tigers". Although they were stronger militarily, China was stronger in ideological and spiritual terms. As the rhetoric went those days, spiritual power could transform itself into a mighty material force when necessary. China had all it needed and would do better to rely solely on itself.

For a while, Mao did not side with any of these three factions. With none of the factions strong enough in themselves to draw up a definite foreign policy for the country, China remained vulnerable. By the late 1960's, however, Mao threw in his nation's lot with the Moderates. In 1968 two events took place that may have urged Mao to do so. They were, 1) U.S. President Johnson's decision to pull out American troops gradually from Vietnam; and 2) the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the subsequent Brezhnev Doctrine. Fortunately for the Moderates, the Nixon Administration was in the midst of reviewing its China policy. When
Premier Zhou Enlai sent out feelers to Washington, Nixon had been reconsidering his personal stance toward the People's Republic. He realized that the United States could not contain communism by military means alone and would therefore have to reimpose its will through diplomacy, not military engagement. In 1969, a major border clash between China and the USSR created incentives on both sides of the Pacific to bring about a better relationship. Still, the two sides had to move carefully. The process leading to the 1972 Shanghai communique took two years. Another six and a half years had to pass before relations were normalized.

By 1979, a new cohesive leadership had emerged from the ashes of the Cultural Revolution. With Mao dead and his ultra-leftist proteges silenced, it was ready to introduce some innovative methods to China's socialist modernisation. During the past ten years, reforms in the Party, government, economy, society, and culture have been successfully implemented and taken root. They have greatly improved the quality of life among ordinary Chinese citizens and revitalized and strengthened the nation. It is in these reforms together with the policy of cooperation with the West that one can see how the Sino-Soviet split has benefited China in the long run. If the USSR were still China's big brother, it is doubtful whether China
would feel free to reform the Stalinist model it had adopted wholesale during the fifties. Today with China's new found identity, we find Moscow bending its back more to please Beijing than the other way around. Moreover, the Soviets are now trailing in many fields where the Chinese were once behind. Even if ties between the two sides are normalized in the near future, they will never be as close as they were in the fifties. China will always protect its recently acquired great power standing fiercely. Truly we can now savour the sarcasm of one of the Mao's last comments on the Sino-Soviet nuclear issue. In a 1967 reference to recent Chinese successes in the development of missiles and nuclear weapons Mao said, "We should give Khrushchev a medal weighing one ton as a token of thanks". 2

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